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## Aesthetics of Resistance

An investigation into the performative politics of contemporary activism – as seen in 5 events in Scandinavia and beyond

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# AESTHETICS OF RESISTANCE

An investigation into the performative politics of contemporary activism  
– as seen in 5 events in Scandinavia and beyond

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## FOREWORD (0.1.)

This Ph.D. submission deals with contemporary demonstration culture and political activism, seen as performance through performance. It consists of both a practical and a theoretical part. These are intertwined on various levels of the project. My submission, however, is made up of the two following parts:

- 1: A textual part, divided into 8 parts. Each part contains a script, an analysis and a number of commentaries. In these, 8 moments in the recent history of activism in Scandinavia and beyond, are reflected. The 8 research performances at the core of this project are reflected here as well.
- 2: An exhibition based on visual and sonic footage from the 8 performances, here transformed into an installation that present an aesthetic introduction to the project as a whole. The exhibition will be an attempt at re-staging the visual and sonic material as a new sense-event.

The claim of 'Aesthetics of Resistance' is that in recent examples of Direct Activism, politics are constituted by the aesthetic; as performance, form and style. This assumption is argued for by selecting 8 specific moments where this seems to be the case. These moments are chosen from 5 sequences of events, from a small incident in Gothenburg, Sweden in 2006 to the Egyptian uprising that gained global significance in 2011. The core part of the project is two sequences of confrontations between activists and authorities that both took place in Copenhagen, Denmark –The Youth House Movement 2007/08 and the large scale actions surrounding the UN Climate Summit COP15 in 2009 respectively.

Central to the project is an idea of 'thinking with the senses'. In order to facilitate this, an experimental set-up was created, where a sensorial reflection could be compared with an analytical interpretation of the topic in question. This experimental set-up was constituted by the two figures: The artist/researcher and the sense-event. These two figures intertwine and in various ways stage the gap between discursive and non-discursive thinking that lies at the core of this project.

The use of performance is three-fold:

- A: The specific moments chosen are interpreted as performance.
- B: The 'thinking with the senses' takes place as performance
- C: As a kind of meta-reflection, the project is performing art-research by using an artistic medium as the research tool to investigate the chosen topics.

The 8 research experiments were set up as performances. These 8 performances took place at various locations in Denmark, Sweden and China in the period 2009 to 2012. The aesthetic reflection at the core of this project evolved in these sense-events. Video documentation of the performances is included here in the Appendix, but it is important to understand that neither this video documentation nor the texts in this part of my submission can give a full account of the sense-events. These accounts will per definition only be approximations. It is in this gap – or drama – between two levels of understanding this project revolves.

## INTRODUCTION (0.2.)



Gothenburg, November 23rd 2006

### **Purple & Black**

On November 23rd 2006 I was visiting Gothenburg in Sweden. Walking down the main street, Kungälvavägen, in the center of the city, I ran into a demonstration by chance. Around 50 young people were marching along after a car. The marching youth was surrounded by a similar number of police, and the whole demonstration was tailed by 10-15 police vans. The number of police officers was quite astonishing compared to the rather small crowd of demonstrators, and this irregularity immediately caught my attention. Another strange thing was that the demonstrators only carried two banners – a small purple flag and a large black banner, both without any text. Neither the music blasting out from the front car nor the occasional shouts and rants from the youngsters gave any clues about the goal and content of this demonstration. I was really baffled by this lack of communication in a situation normally designed especially for communication. During the 15 minutes or so I followed the demonstration, two persons were arrested after very short outbursts of disturbance, a tall guy in his twenties and a young girl not more than 17, both of them more or less laughing and smiling all the way down to the police vans in the back, apparently waiting for a huge number of arrests. Apart from these two minor incidents, the atmosphere between police and demonstrators were friendly, many seemed to be chatting with the other part, and a female police officer was running around the edges of the march photographing each and every demonstrator with a large telescopic lens.

What at first sight seemed to be a very recognizable event, soon made me wonder: What was actually going on? Why the massive turn-up of police? Why the empty banners? Of course I could have asked somebody – police or demonstrator – what was going on, but by intuition I chose to stay uninformed, keeping my position as a

casual passer-by. I took a photo with my mobile phone, followed the march for some time and left, curious and bewildered. Somehow aware that something crucial, something important, was hidden in the situation that I had just stumbled upon.

A demonstration is a democratic statement; somebody wants to be heard and the demonstration is a gesture to communicate whatever it is this group of people want. What does it mean when such a platform is used to communicate silence? This silence must be a reaction to something. The situation was opaque, something was obviously hidden in it and had to be deciphered; it made me curious.

### **Searching for a method**

Back home, as I saw the photo I had taken, my curiosity grew. Here was a phenomena outside the field of art, but it had a range of visual and performative features. Could art be relevant to investigate these aesthetic aspects? Could art be used as a research tool?

How to reflect upon such a situation? Another kind of researcher would maybe start her inquiries by figuring out who the demonstrators were, conduct some interviews, gather information. By applying various theoretical positions, she would distill the gathered information into a hypothesis. The hypothesis would have to be tested against the information gathered, and an analysis would emerge.

Art-research must be conducted differently. The thinking constituting the argument must be aesthetical. What does this mean? If we define aesthetics as the language of the senses, then the inherent thinking is a thinking with the senses. The event or topic in question must be considered by aesthetic means, by the senses. So, the art-research must set up a situation, where the topic in question can be questioned by the senses.

In the case of the demonstration in Gothenburg, performative gestures constitute a large part of the features it consists of: There is a group of people acting out something that unfurls in time. There is this group of people acting and there is another group of people watching - it is an audience, or rather there are two audiences; the police force and the casual passers-by on the pavement. Then, as the signature aesthetics there is the black banner and the purple flag. These are not only scenography or costumes. In the choreography of the traditional demonstration, it is the banner that speaks out on behalf of the people in the demonstration. The banner is the site of the formulated demand of a demonstration; the headline of the demonstration. When the banner is silent, the whole demonstration is not only silent, but outspokenly silent. The silence is not acted out though – the demonstrators are talking and walking. The silence is rather the chosen headline, designating the potential action with a declamatory meaning. 'In the name of...': We walk in the name of silence. We demonstrate in the name of silence.

To question these performative gestures by art-research, it seemed appropriate to create a performative situation, where various aspects of the demonstration could be considered – where a 'thinking with the senses' could take place. In such a situation, certain features of the demonstration would be re-enacted or rather transformed into a temporal sequence of actions. The participants – the audience and the performers – would then be able to consider these actions, this sequence, not with the intellect, but with the senses.



The project would then become an inquiry on two quite separate levels:

- 1: On the one hand it would be an inquiry into the silent demonstration and the kind of activism it entailed.
- 2: On the other hand - in its set-up and in its form - it would be an inquiry into art-research. The project would perform art-research, and in this performing it would act out the problems and the qualities of art-research. It would be a probing of art-research, a case study in itself.

The use of performance would be threefold:

- A: The silent demonstration would be interpreted as performance,
- B: My 'thinking about it with the senses' would take place as performance,
- C: As a kind of meta-reflection, I would be performing art-research by using an artistic medium as the medium of my reflections.

The aesthetic thinking takes place as performance. What does this mean? How can we talk about, write about and discuss this? If the main thinking is 'thinking with the senses', wouldn't this create a rupture, a split between these sensorial experiences and the language we would use in discussing these experiences? Or would it be possible to create a performative situation where the topics in question could be considered with the senses and the intellect simultaneously?

When I first saw the demonstration in Gothenburg, I immediately and by intuition rejected the idea of asking anyone around what was going on. Instead I took a photo of it. The demonstration with the empty banners was such a strong image in itself, I didn't need any explanation. The image spoke for itself. It was only afterwards, when I had decided to make this image the topic of my research project, that the need for an explanation arose. What kind of demonstration was it? Who were these people demonstrating and why such a massive presence of police forces? This information would provide me with some kind of depth to the inquiries I was about to undertake, but it wouldn't explain the image. An image has a meaning of its own; it can't be explained. Any analysis or attempt at explanation is only an approximation, an estimate. This is the special character of the relation between words and image. They produce different kinds of meaning, and there is never a total identity between them. Even with all the information at hand, I wouldn't be able to give a total explanation of the silent demonstration in Gothenburg. My instinctual decision to take a photo of the demonstration and not to ask for explanation was very precise in this sense; only another image would be able to convey the meaning of the original image.

My hope was that by creating a situation in which to consider the demonstration as a sequence of performative actions, I would be able to convey another kind of interpretation of the event in question. By performing various aspects of the demonstration, re-enacting certain features, I would be able to consider these elements in a double manner; with the senses and with the intellect. The performance would then constitute a double meaning – a direct sensorial understanding and an analytical interpretation. These two levels of understanding

would be simultaneous, but not necessarily identical. Rather they would per definition be different.

This is my bid at art-research. The knowledge produced in the research is constituted as image. In my case here as performative images, but in general any kind of image-media could be used for art-research. This makes sense only with certain topics, within certain fields of interest. Given the right topics, though, art-research might be able to produce an imagery which creates other insights into the field in question than other kinds of scientific or academic research. Aesthetic analysis is not reserved for artistic research – it is done in many of the humanities as well, but artistic analysis is done as praxis. The reflection upon and the contemplation of the topics in question are grounded in praxis, in which the senses play an active part.

An image is open for interpretation. It has a meaning we are unable to explain fully. We can only give an approximate description of it. Approximation is a basic feature of the relationship between image and text.

The analyses of the performances constituting this project are only approximate attempts at encircling the meaning of those performances; the 'real' meaning is expressed in the performances as sensorial experience. It is meaning constituted as image and hence open for interpretation, unavailable for a complete analysis. This approximation is the basic condition of art-research. It is in this rift between the discursive and the non-discursive, between the analytical and the experiences of the senses that art-research must inquire, it is here such research is needed.

This problem of approximation is also conditioning various fields of humanistic research, especially in fields such as art history, literature, music theory. Here too, aesthetic topics are dealt with that can only be partially described in language. Artistic research is different, in that it deals with the problem of approximation from the other side; aesthetic thinking takes place as praxis – as art. The artistic reflection is thereby in another relationship to its subject, and the problem of approximation is positioned differently compared to humanistic research.

The rift between the analytical approach and the experiences of the senses is explored in the first performance, 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police' (1.1.), where a strict division between these two layers of meaning are set up. It is a general theme in all the performances, explored in various ways and in different blends according to the specific agenda of each performance.

### **Mistake**

Starting my research for real six months after I spotted the silent demonstration, I went back to Gothenburg to find out what this demonstration really was. Who were these demonstrators and what kind of activism were they engaged in? After a long day of digging into newspaper reports and a short meeting with a representative of the Swedish police, I realized that the demonstration in question was NOT a real demonstration, but a police exercise.<sup>1</sup> From a gymnasium the police had employed a large group of young people who acted as demonstrators, while the Swedish police was training new methods of dealing with violent youth.

Reality had made a practical joke on me; the police were already re-performing violent demonstrations and the result was already intriguing the viewers, in this case me, as if the whole operation had been a work of art. Of course I felt stupid and silly.

How could I let myself be guided by such a superficial gaze? But as I got a little distanced from my disappointment, I saw that this misreading actually added two new figures to the event I had imagined: The police forces as active agents and the viewer/audience, the individual person on the street, as well as the media.

Out of this initial misunderstanding my project has developed; digging deeper into the mistake I realized that a whole series of themes for my investigations lay hidden here: The strategic use of performed imagery, the underlying attempts at staging reality as well as my own misguided fascination with the picturesque surface of the event.

Now, the demonstration was fake, but it did provide a matrix for further investigations. If we – just as a sketch operation – assume it was real: What we have then is no longer a traditional demonstration, it is rather a complex mesh of performative images, active and passive agents and multiple audiences. The event evolves as scripted from various positions, each claiming the final interpretation of the images constituting the event. This scripting is intricate and even improvised, but the most radical feature is that the political message – the content or meaning – is constituted and performed as image. Here it is the image of the silent demonstration, the empty message, but if this is the mode of contemporary demonstrations, then the images produced in such situations will vary according to the context or the situation it is embedded in or evolving from.

But the demonstration was fake. Did these ideas fit real events too? Did real political activism communicate in performative images as well? And what consequences would it have for the political content of a given demonstration, if the communication was to be understood as performance? Would the problem of approximation described above adhere to such events too?

### **Topics of investigation**

To probe this I have chosen a series of ongoing struggles and confrontations, where I would be able to follow events directly as they evolved. The two main sequences of events are:

The riots following the demolition of the so called Youth House in Copenhagen, March 1st 2007 and the year-long series of 'Thursday-demos' evolving into what became The Youth House Movement.<sup>2</sup>

The large-scale demonstrations and activist events surrounding the Climate Summit COP15, also in Copenhagen, December 2009. Here it is especially two events, on December 12<sup>th</sup> and December 18<sup>th</sup> I have chosen to investigate.

An important factor in the choice of these main sequences was of course the assumption that these events would share the conditions of the silent demonstration in Gothenburg – that they to a certain degree would be constituted by aesthetic features. This assumption was based on my brief participation in a couple of demonstrations preceding the demolition of the Youth House on March 1<sup>st</sup> 2007.<sup>3</sup>

These demonstrations transgressed the format of the traditional demonstration; instead of communicating a specific demand in the framework of democratic exchange, a rupture in the institutionalised exchange of political statements and

demands occurred. The rupture was created as a kind of spectacle - often violent, complex and loaded with meaning, hard to grasp. What triggered me was that it seemed to be the rupture itself that produced meaning, and not the often vague and confusing demands that were communicated at the surface of these events. The spectacle of these demonstrations was performative; it unfolded in time and used the cityspace and its inherent power-structures as a stage. In short temporal interstices, this space was re-claimed and re-modelled, and it seemed to me as if it was in performing these other versions of public space that meaning was produced. These ruptures were not to be understood as traditional political demands for another societal order; the ruptures were in themselves another order. The new political order was constituted in the ruptures, where it was performed as spectacle.

Tantamount to this assumption was the possibility of following these events as they evolved. To be able to recognize the performativity of a given event, I thought it important to watch this event evolve as it happened. Being able to follow events directly also gave me an opportunity to select my own path through the immense web of narratives, recollections and interpretations that create the representation of such an event. Even in the very moment of a conflict, it is obvious that the various participants have very different and opposing interpretations of what is happening. The interpretations are immediate, and an inherent factor in how a sequence of actions evolves. To recognize and understand these processes it has been crucial to be present as they happened.

After long considerations I decided NOT to participate as an activist or demonstrator, although my political sympathies would have made such an involvement natural. I participated in certain demonstrations, but always trying to maintain an outside position, i.e. by following the photojournalists. This chosen distance is crucial; in order to establish a research practice it is important to define a set of distances and differences. It is by these distances and differences the positions of the various elements and figures in the investigations are defined. It is by distance the research method is structured. If we are to take the idea of artistic research seriously, it has to involve a formulated distance between the researcher and the topic of investigation.<sup>4</sup>

Each of the two main events are multifaceted, highly complex sequences of positioning and struggles evolving over long stretches of time.

### **5 events and 8 chosen moments**

After the demolition of the Youth House in March 2007 and a series of desperate, chaotic riots where large parts of Copenhagen are turned into veritable war zones, The Youth House Movement evolves into an imaginative, large-scale movement that rules the streets of Copenhagen in a consistent series of weekly demonstrations and actions in the year following after the eviction. After long and meandering negotiations, a new Youth House was finally granted the movement in June 2008. Out of this plethora of demonstrations and actions I have chosen 3 key moments which exemplifies different stages of the movement.

These 3 moments are explored in the 3 scripts/performances:

- 3.1: 'Revolution By Night'
- 3.2: 'G13greenredturquoiseyellow'
- 3.3: 'On Water'

COP15, the UN climate summit that hit Copenhagen in December 2009, was a multilayered mega event, gathering all the world leaders from Obama, the Chinese president, Hu Yao Bang, to Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales. Under the pressure of the expanding climate crisis and the turbulent financial crisis, this event was a complex and gigantic spectacle attracting the global media to Copenhagen, exposing all the post-modern, meta-medial and post-political aspects one can think of. The activism surrounding the climate summit, seen alone, was extremely complex too. Here - in the logic of such of events - it is the staging and the positioning of the various opponents in the conflicts that are the focus of the moments I have chosen to investigate.

The demonstrations surrounding COP15 are explored in the two scripts/performances:

- 4.1: 'Clone Wars'
- 4.2: 'Climate/Kettle'

In connection with another project - an exhibition commemorating the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 1989 student uprising on Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China – I stumbled upon the curious fact that the student activists staged their critique of the Communist Party as celebrations of certain crucial dates in the history of the exact same Communist Party. Doing this they re-used – reclaimed – the aesthetic features of communism; the visual design of the demonstrations, the slogans and the theme songs. This intricate and sophisticated appropriation – or cloning as I term it - of the visual and symbolic features of the opponent seemed to be an example of a kind of post-modern play with images, preceding the aesthetics constituting contemporary activism.

Choosing 'cloning' as the term to connect this historical event to certain contemporary events, I decided to use the Tiananmen Square Uprising as an outside point of reference; this is explored in the script/performance 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' (2.1.). Cloning can be understood as a reclaiming of imagery. By reclaiming communist imagery, the students reclaim the ideal values of communism; equality, justice and democracy.

Cloning occurs again as the main theme of 'Clone Wars' (4.1.), but here it develops in the opposite direction; it is the authorities that clone the aesthetic language of activism to promote their views on Climate Change. Here the cloning inflates the difference between critical opposition and governmental power, resulting in a confusing public debate, where positions are unclear and undecipherable. In the performance, 'Clone Wars', a metaphorical attempt at reclaiming this cloned imagery is undertaken as a long meandering journey through a vast space.

As the Arabic Spring exploded in the winter of 2010/11, I witnessed a global event unfolding, sharing features with the local events I was in the midst of examining. Here, in the sequence of events following the self-immolation of the young Tunesian fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, on December 17th 2010, a political movement based on performative imagery and aesthetic gestures evolved rapidly. What in my chosen examples had been either temporary manifestations of 'another world' (i.e. the occupation of Refshalevej in the The Youth House Movement) or frustrated attempts at establishing a counter-reality against a superior state force (i.e. 'Climate Justice Action' against COP15), all of sudden became the predominant language of a

wave of uprisings and protests that resonated with increasing force throughout the world in 2011. After Tunisia followed Egypt, several other Middle East countries, and then it spread to the West ('los indignados' in Spain and Occupy Wall Street in the US). To acknowledge these new developments and in pure excitement at the seemingly revolutionary momentum, I decided to include the Egyptian uprising – from the killing of a young computer nerd, Khaled Said in the summer of 2010 to the occupation of Tahrir Square in February 2011 – as another outside point of reference to my main case studies.

Mirroring the script/performance on the Tiananmen Square Uprising this script/performance on the Egyptian uprisings, 'Silent Stand' (5.1.), is researched strictly from a distance, based mostly on information found on the internet and on the news channels. Since contemporary social media – Facebook, Twitter and an array of blogs – played a crucial role in the unfurling Middle-Eastern uprisings, it seemed an appropriate (although controversial) manner of gathering information.<sup>5</sup>

### **Sense Event**

The main parts – the 5 scripts/performances dealing with The Youth House Movement and the activist-events surrounding COP15 – are researched in an intricate mesh of close distances. Investigating a range of what I call 'direct source'-material – webpages, manifestos, demo-calls, posters, video and photo documentation (i.e. on YouTube.com and flickr.com), newspaper and online reports, timelines and minute-by-minute participant diaries - I try to get an insight into these events, not as a participant, but as an outside observer. In addition, I participate in certain demonstrations, but, as stated above, always maintaining an outsider position.

How to process this material? How to create a situation where aesthetic reflection is possible? How to think about these demonstrations with the senses? How to process this material with the senses?

In a note to his foreword to *Antigone*, 'Masterful Treatment of a Model' Bertolt Brecht has included an excerpt from a correspondence between Schiller and Goethe:

"A dramatic plot will move before my eyes; an epic seems to stand still while I move round it. In my view this is a significant distinction. If a circumstance moves before my eyes, then I am bound strictly to what is present to the senses; my imagination loses all freedom; I feel a continual restlessness develop and persist in me; I have to stick to the subject; any reflection or looking back is forbidden me, for I am drawn by an outside force. But if I move round a circumstance which cannot get away from me, then my pace can be irregular; I can linger or hurry according to my own subjective needs, can take a step backwards or leap ahead, and so forth."<sup>6</sup>

Looking at my photo of the fake demonstration in Gothenburg, I am looking back in time. I am separated from the event by a distance in time. It is the photo that establishes this distance. The photo also fixes various elements in a composition. In the photo this composition is stable. It is an image of what happened back then, and this image is established already in the instant when I took the photo. If I had shot a video of the demonstration back then, as I stood on the pavement watching it walk by, the representation would have been similar; although the various elements in such a video would have been fixed, not in fixed composition, but in a fixed sequence

of time, looking at such a video would have been looking back in time, too. This is the representational conditions of documentary material. It's an image, or a sequence of images, that will take us back to another event, separated from us by time. In its raw form documentary photo and video footage are images constituted back then in the moment when things were happening, back then in that original event. The images are constituted back then in the instant when the shutter of the camera was released or the video camera was in rec-mode.

What I found so intriguing about the fake demonstration in Gothenburg was that the image I saw in it, was created as I looked at it. It was as if the image was evolving, emerging out of the situation. As if the photographic instant where an image is constituted was dragged out, and I could observe it happening. In this dragged-out moment I was able to contemplate the various elements of the situation in a manner similar to Schiller's 'moving around a circumstance'. I was able to 'think with my senses'. The constituting instant of the image was dragged out and became an open process where I could move around and reflect upon it while it was happening. Instead of being documented as in documentary photo or video, instead of being fixed instantly, the image was here being performed, as it was evolving, as it emerged. To use a Deleuzian term, the image was becoming. In this process of becoming image I was even able to contemplate its various elements with my senses. The aesthetic experience was unresolved, and thus open for reflection, aesthetic reflection.

In his introduction to "Robespierre or "the Divine Violence of Terror", Slavoj Žižek quotes Gilles Deleuze:

"They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming."<sup>7</sup>

Žižek calls this 'revolutionary becoming' a 'sense-event'. 'Sense-event' is also a concept taken from Deleuze. It is one of the central points in his book 'Logique du sens'.<sup>8</sup> To put it very briefly, the revolutionary becoming happens inside a sense-event. For Deleuze sense-event is a very broad, complex concept, but already in the translation of 'sens' to 'sense' - from French to English - a simplification starts. It is Žižek who has compressed this complex argument into one term, the sense-event.

I immediatly found the very word 'sense-event' a perfect description of that open process of aesthetic reflection I had stumbled upon in the fake demonstration in Gothenburg. An event of the senses. Deleuze, and with him Žižek, connects it to a 'revolutionary becoming' taking place inside moments of revolt. I experienced it happening there in front of me, as the fake demonstration in Gothenburg evolved into an image, that somehow separated itself from the circumstances it was emerging from. Sense-event seemed a perfect way of describing that moment of aesthetic becoming that I paradoxically experienced in the fake demonstration in Gothenburg.

Furthermore, I had a notion that this term could be developed into the central concept in my version of artistic research. If the 'becoming image' happened in a sense-event, then the aesthetic reflection and thinking with the senses I saw as the central act of artistic research could happen in a sense-event as well. The sense-event could be the situation in which Schiller and Goethe's 'moving around a circumstance'<sup>9</sup> was

made possible. The sense-event could be the situation in which an aesthetic reflection emerged and became image.

Instead of creating stable, fixed documentary imagery from the original event in question, leaving the research to be a question of interpretation, a research based in a new sense-event, would create a situation where the various pieces of information gathered from the original event could be considered in a process of thinking with the senses. This process of aesthetic reflection would in itself be a 'becoming image'.

The process of becoming is a process where the various features from the original event are coming together, an inquiry and an evaluation are taking place, various elements are sensed. In this process an image emerges, the various parts begin to relate to each other, they interact and connect. The image is shaped. As we shall see, the process of 'becoming image' is in many ways more exciting than the image itself. It is in the process, in the creation of the image, that 'thinking with the senses' is peaking. This is where it takes form. This is where a new image is created on the information from the original event.

'Moving around the circumstances' by performing it - opening up the material to the senses - creates a new sense-event, reflecting the original event, but evolving a new imagery of it.

A longer explanation of my version of the sense-event can be found in the commentary 'Sense-Event' (4.1.4.1.).

As a consequence of this, I decided not to use any kind of documentary photo and video-footage of the events I had chosen to investigate. Instead I wanted to create new sense-events where my 'direct source material' would be performed. 'Aesthetics of Resistance' - this dissertation - consists of 8 such sense-events. These 8 performances are the core research experiments in the project. These new sense-events are then documented by photo and video. However, this is another level of documentation, representing what cannot, essentially be represented.

The concept of the sense-event is introduced and explored in the performance 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police' (1.1.), where it is set up in stark contrast to another tool, invented to insert a kind of meta-voice into the performances, the figure of the artist/researcher. 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police' is a very direct probing of the concept of the sense-event. An attempt at creating a situation where the audience is overwhelmed by a direct attack on their senses. The situation is, so to speak, flooded by sensorial experience, and the text the performance is based on is demolished in aesthetic destruction.

In the other performances, the sense-event is constituted in various ways; sometimes discreetly as in 'G13greenredturquoiseyellow', sometimes intimately and participatory as in 'Silent Stand' and sometimes aggressively and confrontational as in the first part of 'Climate/Kettle'.

### **Formats**

Around the sense-events an array of text, documentation, discussion and discourse are layered. These various attempts at description of the aesthetic experience inherent in the sense-event are by definition approximations. The crucial thinking in this project is the aesthetic reflection in the sense-events, but we are bound to



discuss it from a certain distance, through other, indirect media, in the various formats layered around the sense-event itself.

The structure of these layers is:

Script

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Performance/Sense-Event

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Discussion (following directly after the performance)

Analysis

Commentary

Appendix: Video documentation of the performance, interviews, various crucial source-material etc.

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Introduction / Exhibition

Conclusion

The script is where the conditions for the performance is laid out, it is where the various source-material is processed into performative elements, edited and arranged as 'circumstances to be considered by moving around it'.

The sense-event is the central laboratory experiment in this set-up. It is where the aesthetic reflection is taking place. The performances constituting the sense-events are elaborately fitted to the given circumstances, the space and the audience. Various performers, musicians and others are employed to perform various parts. Each sense-event involves a different set-up of participants. Sometimes the audience is involved. Sometimes it takes the shape of a performance-lecture. Sometimes it is dominated by sound or visual features, sometimes it is almost entirely textbased. The sense-event is experimental in that it is based each time on a certain set of ideas or assumptions. These are then acted out, performed. Sometimes this is succesful, sometimes it's a failure. It is highly interesting that a failed experiment can be just as useful for the overall investigation as a succesful experiment. In this, art-research differs from other art forms.

How to evaluate such an experiment? How to register the reactions of the audiences involved in the sense-events? The discussions following directly after each performance/sense-event was an attempt at creating a platform for such an evaluation. Sometimes a discussion between the performers and the audience, sometimes a discussion with various guests, invited to initiate discussions with the audience. By various means we have tried to create select audiences that would have some kind of relationship to the original events dealt with in the specific performances. The discussions took on a life of their own - sometimes very fruitful, sometimes scattered, inhibited by circumstances - but as a whole they gave me a key evaluation of the degree to which the performances managed to reflect the original 'real' events and the themes inherent in them.<sup>10</sup>

At another level these discussions – or at least the 3 of them that were succesful - can be seen as a micro example of how artistic research could be envisioned to serve a different purpose and a different audience than art in general is capable of. In these discussions, the artistic research creates a contemplative space where a

reflection on the aesthetic aspects, and the implications of these for the activism in question, is undertaken. It is the underlying proposal of this project as a whole that artistic research in general might serve such purposes.

If the sense-event is the laboratory experiment in this structure, then an analysis of the experiment has to be undertaken as well. The analysis presented after each of the 8 performances/sense-events is another layer of evaluation. Here other aspects of the experiences are scrutinized:

My own experiences from within the performances – how did the actual performance differ from the intentions laid out in the script? How did specific themes the performance was intended to be a realisation of, occur? Did these themes transform into a sense-event, or did they only occur as illustrations?

The psychosocial behaviour of the audiences<sup>11</sup> - the subtle, but easily detectable movements, utterances and social behaviour of the audience, during and after the performance. What did this behaviour say about the sense-event? What kind of evaluation was to be extracted from this?

The given circumstances influencing the outcome in positive or negative ways; the problems in the set-up delivered by the script or by coincidental things, like a participant cancelling or various technical problems.

The unexpected, surplus reflection evolving in the interaction between the participants, the audience and the staging. Often there were moments of unexpected occurrences that gave certain new insights or relevant new angles on a given topic.

In other kinds of research, the analysis of an experiment might be definitive, but it is crucial to note that since the sense-event is by definition an experience open for various interpretations, the analysis of the sense-event can never be definitive. It is only one of many possible interpretations, and it was obvious in the discussions following the performances/sense-events that in every audience very different interpretations immediately occurred. Still, the analyses here work as my attempts at an approximate interpretation of the 8 performances/sense-events.

The source-material derived from the original event is often edited quite hard to make it fit the performance format defined in the script. Maybe a certain aspect of the event in question is singled out to be re-enacted in the sense-event, because it made sense to test exactly this element as a performance. Maybe other elements were just as important, but didn't fit the situation in which the performance took place. Because of this, a range of socio-political facts, theoretical references and artistic considerations are omitted. These are then reflected in the commentary texts. Although organized as commentary to the specific scripts/performances, the content of these texts criss-cross the themes and questions inherent in all the performances. The structure of the commentary is deviating and scattered, enabling a lingering reading.

The video documentation of the performances/sense-events is the prime representation of the sense-event. As documentation of performance often is, it isn't able to capture the full presence of the moment when the sense-event happened. There is a crucial difference between being present in the situation of the sense-

event and to watch its representation as video, but it provides an overview of what happened and works as another tool for evaluating the experience. The 8 videos documenting the 8 performances/sense-events are edited as straightforwardly and simply as possible. They are real-time video renderings of what happened during the performances, with as few omissions as possible.

In the Appendix we also find various interviews with other artists dealing with similar themes as well as various sources extracted from the internet.

This Introduction is a general introduction to the project as a whole. As a parallel to this textual introduction, the exhibition that, with my dissertation, forms my overall doctoral submission, will work as an aesthetic introduction, giving the viewer an overview of the project as a whole. Here, a completely different editing of the video-footage and the sound-recordings will be produced. The exhibition will be an attempt at creating a labyrinthine installation, where the aesthetic elements of the documentation are singled out and re-staged in a new sense-event. A sense-event to be explored by the viewers in a similar mode as would Schiller and Goethe:

“...if I move round a circumstance which cannot get away from me, then my pace can be irregular; I can linger or hurry according to my own subjective needs, can take a step backwards or leap ahead, and so forth.”<sup>12</sup>

If we define the sense-event as the research experiment in this structure, then another aspect of the project as a whole appears. In a sense, the project as a whole is a paraphrase of a certain simplified understanding of scientific research. Both the format of the structure as a whole, but also the format of some of the layers are paraphrases of existing formats of inquiry. The sense-event is paraphrasing a scientific experiment, the analysis is paraphrasing scientific analysis and so on. Thus the project as a whole performs an idea of artistic research. This paraphrase is not without self-irony – to a certain degree the whole project is mimicking research, imitating its own purpose. This humorous distance is not to be understood as a rejection or ridiculing of artistic research as such. It is rather an attempt at managing the above-mentioned approximations, the inherent gap between the aesthetic experience in the sense-event and the various incomplete possibilities of describing this experience. The humour is used to show how the various attempts at a description is done with a awareness of the impossibility of such a task.

### **The artist/researcher**

An important part of this imitation is ‘the artist/researcher’; a figure invented to represent myself in the role of artistic researcher. This figure is properly introduced in the first performance ‘A short course in realism from the perspective of the police’. The artist/researcher is a kind of meta-guide to the performances. It is on one hand a satirical, all too obvious, solution to the problem of art versus research. How to implement a layer of theoretical reflection into the sense-event that in its pure sensual form excludes rational explanation and leaves the interpretation up to the viewers? At the same time, the artist/researcher is a narrative tool that not only mocks the idea of artistic research, but also guides the audience through the thoughts and reflexions inherent in the performances. In this sense, it’s an ambiguous figure or, as it asks in the first performance: “Is my figure here, inside – a part – of the artwork? Or is it outside, as an all too present academic nuisance?” The artist/researcher here paraphrases the general suspicion of art-research, that it is an academization of art. Even though the artist/researcher is a representation of myself

as researcher, the figure is transformative and takes on slightly different roles in each performance. It is also performed by other persons, even of the other sex, than myself. In some of the performances by a person on stage, in others as a voice-over. All these measures are intended to create some of the above-mentioned distances. Still, the artist/researcher as a figure is an attempt at bridging the inherent gap in artistic research between aesthetic experience and rational argument. As the script, the analysis and the commentary, the artist/researcher is bound to an approximate discussion of what is going on in the sense-event, but situated within the performance/sense-event the figure makes the gap an inherent part of the performance. A constant reminder of the rupture between senses and intellect that we have to deal with, not only in artistic research, in the humanities in general, in anthropology especially, but also in the aesthetically driven political activism that is the topic of this project as a whole.

### **Back in Black**

A month after my experience in Gothenburg on December 27<sup>th</sup> 2006, I found myself inside the Youth House at Jagtvej 69 in Copenhagen, at the 7<sup>th</sup> floor, taking part in an aesthetic action to defend the house against demolition. The action itself was rather ridiculous, but being inside that house in such an agitated moment made a huge impression on me. The whole house was painted black inside and all the walls were covered with graffiti – there was a strange silence there; a silence filled with premonition of disasters to happen. It was as if the house itself took on an emotional state of rage and anger and all of us inside became one with this feeling. It was if the whole situation took on a performative, emotional character; not just the small action I was doing with my two colleagues, but the situation as a whole: The doomed architecture, the demonstration, the participants in the demonstration, the claustrophobic political intrigue involving the users of the Youth House. All this created what I would term a sense-event.<sup>13</sup>

As quoted above, Gilles Deleuze – and with him Slavoj Žižek – talks about the ‘revolutionary becoming’ or ‘becoming the people’ that happens in the sense-event.<sup>14</sup> It was exactly such a becoming I suddenly found myself in the midst of that evening inside the Youth House. All of a sudden it was as if I could identify completely with the movement – something I had big trouble with earlier on that same afternoon, as I joined the demonstration that led us to the Youth House. It was as if my personal identity merged with that of the movement, I became part of a larger body of demonstrators and activists. For a short moment my own identity evaporated and I became one with what can be termed the collective body of the action. It might be wrong to use the words ‘revolutionary’ or ‘the people’ in this connection, but there was certainly a collective becoming at play. As my further investigations would reveal, this ‘collective body’ and the way in which the activists immersed themselves into collective identity are fundamental aspects of the political cosmology these activists are struggling for. Another striking feature of my own short-termed immersion into the collectivity of the Youth House was that it happened as a predominantly emotional experience; it was the experience of the dark premonitory atmosphere inside the pitch black interior architecture of the Youth House, and the participation in a (admittedly small and completely inferior) performative activity to protect the house that triggered the feeling of being part of the collective body. It is also significant that the identification was an emotional response to the intense sensorial experiences.

### **How to use theory?**

In the kind of Direct Action I have chosen as the main topic in my doctoral submission the edges of society are tested and visions of 'another world' - an alternative to the present circumstances - are not only presented as visions or proposals, but are acted out, performed as temporal realities.

The edge of society and the borders that guide this edge, namely the law, is the topic of the performance 'On Water' (3.3.). By comparing two very similar events – an artwork and a political action – situated on opposite sides of the edge constituted by law, the premises for autonomy, real or imagined, is probed.

In the 'N30 Black Bloc Communiqué' by ACME Collective from Dec 4 '99 a section of the Black Bloc, taking part in the protests against the WTO Summit in Seattle 1999, describes their attacks on a series of shops, companies and other capitalist targets:

“When we smash a window, we aim to destroy the thin veneer of legitimacy that surrounds private property rights. At the same time, we exorcise that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us. By "destroying" private property, we convert its limited exchange value into an expanded use value. A storefront window becomes a vent to let some fresh air into the oppressive atmosphere of a retail outlet..”

The attacks by the Black Bloc has a double meaning. They are on the one hand real; real attacks on real capitalist businesses. On the another level they are a 'shattering of assumptions'; an exorcising of 'that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us'. This shattering and exorcising of the capitalist spell is both real and symbolic, but the two levels are dependent on each other. The real action can only be justified because it has a symbolic meaning, and the symbolic meaning only has an effect when it is actualized by being performed in the real. The shattering and exorcising of meaning and the poetic reclaiming of functions are about recreating the world around us, reclaiming it. Paradoxically, the destruction is meant to create another world, another society.

The reclaiming of reality and its inherent features are some of the recurring features of the riots and struggles I have chosen to follow. As I watched the two main sequences of chosen events evolve, a string of theoretical ideas were actualized. Some of these ideas I borrowed from other thinkers, some I developed myself. Because a large part of the riots and actions are constituted by aesthetic features – the form IS the message - the theoretical themes work as lenses to view these events through. They are tools in the textual layers of the structure comprising this thesis, used to describe the sense-events, both the original events and the sense-event I have constructed at the core of this project. Here, it is not the images that illustrate the theory, rather the contrary; it is the theory that is used to interpret the images.

### **Performative Devises**

In addition to this analytical use, some of the core conceptual tools are used as performative devises too. They are the performative tools that link the sense-event to the original event, the 'machinas' that are probed in the sense-events.

Apart from the sense-event and the artist-researcher which are used as the basic

research tools in all the performances, the main conceptual tools are:

Resonance:	Used as a destructive device in 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police' (1.1.) and to create transcendence and harmony in 'Clone Wars' (4.1.)
Cloning:	Used in 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' (2.1.) and 'Clone Wars' (4.1.) to analyse the original events, but also to create metaphorical images/figures in the performances.
Apotheosis of Revolt / Eros Effect:	Used in 'Revolution By Night' (3.1.) and in 'Silent Stand' (5.1.) to detect the transformation of individual identity into a collective body.
Collective Body:	Used as a performative tool and probed as such in 'G13greenredturquoiseyellow' (3.2.) and in 'Climate/Kettle' (4.2.) as one of the main political arguments constituted by form in the majority of the activist events chosen for this inquiry.
Staging the Opponent:	Used in the analytical layer of 'G13greenredturquoiseyellow' (3.2.) and probed as sense-event in 'Climate/Kettle' (4.2.).
Physical presence / embodiment:	Also a general performative tool, used in various ways to handle text in most performances. Tested as a string of sense-events in 'Silent Stand' (5.1.), where it is the ability of the physical presence of a collective body to perform imagery that is probed.
Kettle:	Used as a performative tool in 'Climate/Kettle' (4.2.), where it is used to test the possibility of a 'collective body'.
Active Time/Dead Time:	Used in 'Revolution By Night' (3.1.) as the central analytical device, and again in 'Climate/Kettle' (4.2.) where an attempt at performing Active Time is undertaken.

In the glossary - the second part of this introduction – I describe these and other theoretical terms / performative tools, and the way they are used in the various scripts/performances.

### **Amplitude<sup>15</sup>**

In the 5 events I have chosen here – from the inferior police exercise in Gothenburg to the global-scale significance of Tahrir Square – it is the performative images, open for interpretation and participation, that are the main arguments in the political struggles they express. The contents and the goals are not only argued for with

aesthetic means, they are defined in the aesthetic. When the traditional political rhetoric of the activists in the Danish examples I have chosen seems vague and out of sync with the society they are opposing, it is because this rhetoric is only a textual signifier in a much larger picture. The real visions lie in the imaginative aesthetics of these movements; it is as images and gestures their acts are to be understood.

Wahel Ghonim, one of the two administrators of the “We are all Khaled Said”-facebook-page commemorating Khaled Said, whom I mentioned above, has stated that he and most of the other young Egyptians aiming for revolution, were not interested in politics at all. They were driven by the need to react against humiliation by society.<sup>16</sup> They transformed the act of beating and killing Khaled Said into an image of fundamental inhumanity, and it was in the creation and distribution of this image the movement came to life. After the initial phase of the uprising, after Mubarak has fallen, complex political thinking is needed again, but that is another story. In the revolutionary becoming, in the expansive imaginative phase of the uprising I am focussing on here, the thinking and acting in images are central.

### **The Eros Effect**

The events in Egypt are clear examples of this ‘image-politics’ - with the Silent Stand as an emotionally charged exemplification – but it runs through all of my examples. Creating an image of another world and performing this image, thereby becoming other oneself. This process is regenerative in the sense that these images are created as variations of other images –. The cloning, copying, paraphrasing and karaoke used all through this project are various degrees of these regenerative processes. Regenerative also hints at the more psychological aspects of these processes. The ‘revolutionary becoming’ is an ‘instinctual need for freedom’ as the American sociologist, Georgy Katsiaficas, calls it. He has invented the term ‘the Eros Effect’ to describe such a development. For Katsiaficas the Eros Effect transforms the normal individual self-interest into what he calls species-interest. Here the instinctual need for freedom becomes a new collective identity.<sup>17</sup>

### **An outside to the present circumstances**

In a complex, medialisised world, where all attempts at critique are easily swallowed by an all-encompassing capitalism, it often seems hard or even impossible to imagine any alternative. There is no outside of capitalism as it is often stated. This melancholic state of acceptance and even compliance saturates contemporary culture, and threatens to undermine representative democracy to a degree where – borrowing a term from Rancière - politics are reduced to mere policing. In such a bleak political landscape, only a few dare postulate an alternative. My first encounters with the activism described in this project was coincidental and scattered; what I immediately sensed, though, was that here were in fact a group of people who struggled for exactly such an alternative to capitalism. In the beginning, their actions seemed opaque and hard to grasp, but my fascination only grew as I started my inquiries.

What these kinds of activism offer is a radical model for participation that transgresses the representational democracy to a degree that often makes it difficult to understand from a traditional political point of view. By using performative aesthetics as the lens to look at the events chosen for this project, I have gained at least a partial insight into how alternatives to capitalism aren’t argued for, but are performed and exists as temporal interstices in the regularized terrain of the Security State. In this sense, these alternatives to capitalism only exist for those who engage

actively in Direct Activism. Not only does this activism engage diverse people/participants in the sense of making them equal participants – in its radical form Direct Activism offers a transformation of the identities of the participants, a 'becoming other'. A transgression of the individual self into a 'collective body', a new political subject.

These struggles for 'another world' that at first sight might look opaque, are in fact developed as complex aesthetic performances, offering a radical, political imagery, grounded in collective improvisation and an inventive, contextual consciousness. My project has been driven by my fascination with these activists and their devoted determination to produce new consciousness and temporal autonomy, often at great risk and against all odds.

In the following, this fascination is unfolded as script, performance, analysis and commentary. A linear, progressive reading is only one of many options: I hope you will criss-cross through this material, as I myself have criss-crossed through the chosen events constituting the topic of this dissertation.



## **Glossary (0.3.)**

### **69**

The number 69 soon became the tag of the Youth House Movement. It was spread all over Copenhagen by graffiti; soon it was all over Europe as well. It works as logo for the movement, and the number is still emotionally connected to the struggles of the Youth House Movement.

### **Active Time**

In her research on the Youth House and other kinds of left-wing radical politics in Northern Europe, the Danish anthropologist, Stine Krøier, has developed the term 'Active Time' to describe how the social space and collective identity of activism can be seen as constituted by time, rather than by space, as one would immediately think. By engaging in activism, by being 'active', the activists are creating Active Time:

"People become activists by becoming engaged, absorbed or involved in common activity. Against this background, we can define as autonomy the temporal space of social relations that opens up when activists are engaged in common activities, which extends the concept from one relating to physical space. Better even, the space of social relation can be conceptualized as an autonomous bracket or interstice, that is, an interval of active time in the all-encompassing dead time of capitalism."<sup>18</sup>

Here, 'the instinctual need for freedom' results in an autonomous social space, a temporal interstice in 'the dead time of capitalism'. This autonomous rupture in the passing of capitalist time is defined by a common activity and an immersion into a radical collective identity. Krøier's concept of time and temporality as a defining factors of activism correlates with the performativity inherent in my concept of the sense-event. Krøier uses the term 'figuration' to describe the kind of activities, the kind of difference constituting Active Time. When a figuration is performed, Active Time is created.<sup>19</sup>

I use the concept of Active Time in the script/performance 'Revolution By Night' to conceptualise my experience in the Youth House, mentioned above and again in the script/performance 'Climate/Kettle', where a regular re-enactment of a specific slice of Active Time is attempted.<sup>20</sup>

### **Aesthetics**

In this project I have used the term 'aesthetic' to describe the entire range of sensorial experience. In my use, aesthetics is not limited to art and artistic practise, it is rather all kinds of experience grounded in the body and the sensorial organs. In this sense, it is opposed to rational thought and to a certain degree opposed to language – language, though, has aesthetic features as well. In several of the performances, text is embodied – it is read aloud, and by modulation of the voice it is given aesthetic features. My version of the term 'aesthetics' is closely related to my concept of the 'sense-event'.

### **Apotheosis of Revolt**

See Commentary 3.1.4.4: 'In Love, part one' and Commentary 3.1.4.5: 'Get Rid of Yourself'

### **Artist/Researcher**

Throughout the 8 performances contained in this project, 4 different persons play the role of the artist/researcher. That it is another person playing me has another layer of meaning. In an inverted way, this is an allusion to the idea of multitext or the headless as it is introduced in the last of the performances, *Silent Stand*, on the Egyptian revolution. In *Silent Stand* we meet Khaled Said, a young internet nerd who was brutally killed by the Egyptian police. In the aftermath of his death, a new movement evolved using a Facebook-profile called 'We are all Khaled Said' as its main platform. This concept of creating a movement by identifying all members as being the same person, has since then spread as one of the new paradigmatic strategies of global activism; i.e. 'We Are All Scott Olsen' (Occupy Oakland)<sup>21</sup>, 'We are all Hamza al-Khateeb' (Syrian Uprisings)<sup>22</sup>, 'We Are All Trayvon Martin' (Trayvon Martin Protests USA). It is very closely linked to another trend of the new global activism; the use of masks, most prominently expressed in the use of the Guy Fawkes-mask by the Anonymous-movement. Even though I, the artist/researcher, Frans Jacobi, am one subject writing this thesis, the *Verfremdung* of using different actors in this role, creates an ambiguity; the artist/researcher becomes more of a created figure than a stable subject; it becomes a mask to wear, a role to play. By paraphrasing the concept of 'We are all...' so that 'We are all the artist/researcher' it opens up this figure to a more playful role than that of the traditional artist/auteur or/and researcher. The ambiguity inherent in the concept of art-research is here imported into the figure of the artist/researcher who appears throughout the 8 performances in slightly different roles. The artist/researcher oscillates between critical observer, ironic commentator, a kind of tourist guide, objective researcher and sincere, artist-subject. In this sense, the Brechtian *Verfremdung* is an attempt to open up a playful research space. It is not about positioning the project in a theatre-tradition or using the political aspects of the Brechtian tool-box; it is about trying to navigate in the contradictions of art-research, trying to establish a kind of laboratory playground, where the various aspects of my investigations can be processed. By becoming multiple, the artist/researcher writing this text, conducting this project, at least acknowledges the problems and contradictions in doing research and doing art about activism and movements that at the core denounces the kind of individual identity that both art and research is defined by.<sup>23</sup>

### **Barricades**

Mikkel Bolt, a lecturer in art and modern culture at the University of Copenhagen, has worked intensively with the Youth House conflict, street-fighting and militancy. Bolt has described how a temporary free zone is established in-between the street barricades of the rioting activists. Here a momentary suspension of the capitalist exchange values is performed: Shops are looted and various goods are distributed between people with no regard to money. The social hierarchies of capitalist exchange economy are broken and a new space opens up:

"The building of barricades is a kind of bricolage, as the Situationists would call it. By using whatever means available, space is reinvented; human relations are altered in a sense otherwise impossible in a social space permeated by economic transactions. In this way street-fighting may still make sense. Another space is created and it becomes obvious that everyone has a possibility to act: the situation is not as stable as it normally seems, a sense of empowerment arises. If only for a short moment. Some kind of drift occurs in these struggles, a dangerous drift, in the energy let loose."<sup>24</sup>

The destruction of private property – a storefront window, the façade of a bank, the cash-points of a supermarket – opens up space, and a revolutionary freedom is experienced. All of a sudden, otherwise fixed values can be distributed in new ways. Here, in-between the barricades, the ‘apotheosis of revolt’, exists. The militant activists celebrate the revolt with ‘champagne from a burning supermarket’. For a short while, a small slice of space and time is cut loose from society; a glimpse of another society.

The space in-between the barricades can be described as an exodus from existing society where a temporary autonomous zone is established. The two terms – ‘exodus’ as defined by the Italian thinker, Paolo Virno, and ‘temporary autonomous zone’ as invented by the anarchist writer, Hakim Bey – are key theoretical terms in the performance ‘On Water’.

The building of barricades is the activist answer to the ‘Optical Guidance’ described in the script ‘A short course...’. By using optical guidance, the police control the movement and flow of people through the city, thereby asserting their control of space. Contesting this, the activist barricades create autonomous spatial structures and reinvent the cityscape. A prominent example of such strategies is of course the movement ‘Reclaim the Streets’, where extravagant street parties blocked large areas off from traffic and installed rave-like parties that lasted for days.

### **Black Bloc**

See Commentary 3.1.4.5: ‘Get Rid of Yourself’ and Commentary 4.2.4.1: ‘Aesthetics of Resistance?’, script for a performance at Overgaden, Copenhagen 23.2.2012’

### **Black Confetti**

I have used black confetti in various other artworks previous to the event described here. First it was part of a performance mocking the Danish right-wing party, Dansk Folkeparti, for combining rigid Christianity with nationalist rhetoric. At the end of the performance a cloud of black confetti is released from behind the faces of the two Christian priests, Søren Krarup and Jesper Langberg – both very loud members of the parliament for Dansk Folkeparti – that were hanging up under the high glass ceiling of the space. The idea was somehow inspired by some Bob Dylan lyrics (from his Christian period): ‘a darkness fell from the up high’ or ‘a black cloud coming down’. After using the black confetti in connection with the demonstration here described, it also appeared as a video in the ‘69scenes’-exhibition, and of course most notably in ‘Revolution By Night’, where it marks the highlight of the performance. My intentions with this is close to the very beautiful event the German artist, Angela Dorner, staged at Ground 69, ‘Tales of Darkness’.<sup>25</sup>

### **Cloning**

Pseudo, paraphrase, copy, fake, re-enact, re-represent. I use a whole range of terms to encircle this praxis of re-using concepts and images in new constellations. In various degrees these are active both in the events that I investigate, and in the performances I use to consider these events (as well as in my artistic praxis in general). In the events the use of these concepts occur as ‘cloning’, that is, the using of both the aesthetics, the strategies and the slogans of the counter-part (Tiananmen Square, COP15). Cloning can be used by both parts of a conflict; in 1989 in China, it was the student movement that cloned the aesthetic language of the Communist Party. In 2009 at the Climate Summit in Copenhagen, it was the UN and the City of Copenhagen that cloned the aesthetics of activism to promote their version of climate

politics. Cloning blurs the opposition between the parts of a conflict and confuses the opponent. Cloning is explored in the two performances 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' and 'Clone Wars'. A lengthier introduction can be found in the commentary 2.1.4.2: 'Cloning'

### **Collective Body**

See Script 4.2.1: Climate/Kettle, scene 2

### **Constructed Situation**

In the performances I create a 'constructed situation'. A scenario where we – the audience and me (and the performers) – can imagine what it would be like. The British artist, Liam Gillick, has made a series of works under the umbrella title 'The What If? Scenario' – my intentions here come very close to this idea. If, for instance, the 'Eros-Effect' is in play in Tahrir Square, what would it be like to experience this?

Liam Gillick writes:

"A consideration of The what if scenario. Starting to think about new parallel histories that may be constructed from a set of specific documents. This is an exercise, the establishment of a specific super-bright environment in which to consider the possibility of learning from another's errors. Once the particular space has been decided upon, a number of halogen lights should be installed, up to the point where any reasonable person would comment upon the fact that the space was extremely brightly lit. Then a list of the appropriate documents, and even some examples of the documents should be left in this place. A sight for consideration, a place to start again. A moment to ponder upon the what might have."<sup>26</sup>

Gillick is interested in the future; how to consider possible futures? The 'What If? Scenarios are sites to think about these futures. My research does not concern the future, but the idea of a certain situation, where certain ideas can be considered is similar. Another reference is the 'constructed situation' of the Situationist movement. Here, it is the urban environment that is in focus. Through a process of selecting situations and moments, maybe adding artificial elements, a new situation is created where a new consciousness can be achieved. The situationists also use the word game, and are setting up small games or exercises (Gillick also talks of exercise) to test and experience the ideas of psychogeography as they call the underlying theories. In this performance, the staging of the audience also has some characteristics of a parlour-game – an indoor- game set up to amuse a social party, i.e. a dinner party. (The place where this performance took place is called 'Samtalekøkkenet' (the conversational kitchen) and has a similar idea as its foundation. An evening is comprised of a series of performances, discussions and a meal. There is a bar and the discussions have that kind of free floating character that could also be experienced around a dinner table.)

I also use the word 'sketch'. It has a very fitting double meaning:

1: a rough or unfinished drawing or painting, often made to assist in making a more finished picture *or* a brief written or spoken account or description of someone or something, giving only basic details *or* a rough or unfinished version of any creative work.

2: a short humorous play or performance, consisting typically of one scene in a comedy program.

(New Oxford American Dictionary)

My intentions with this performance lie somewhere between all these: a sketch, a parlour-game, a psychogeographical game, a what if? scenario.

The relation to the original motifs – the Egyptian uprisings – is paraphrastic; pseudo in the sense that it is intentionally created with elements of cliché and sloppy staging. This is to create an atmosphere of relaxed humour to contrast the heavy existential politics of the motifs. In this contrast, it should be possible to consider – with the senses and with the intellect – the social and symbolic forces at stake in these events AND our own (the audience, the performers and my own) inherent engagement and distance to the motifs.

### **Dead Time**

Dead Time is the time of our societies. Dead Time is capitalism; the all-encompassing grind of entertainment, uniformity and control. Dead Time permeates us all; it permeates our bodies, our emotions, our identities. Our individualized sense of self is created by Dead Time in Dead Time. Dead Time runs through everything, all of the time. Dead Time appears permanent.

Dead Time is a concept borrowed from the Danish anthropologist, Stine Krøier, who used it in her analysis of radical left-wing activism.<sup>27</sup> Dead Time is opposed by Active Time. See also Active Time here in the Glossary.

### **Educational Speech**

”rampaging demonstrators, troublemakers, particularly aggressive and dominant participants, violent protests.”<sup>28</sup>

This quote from the police academy manual 'OPERATION' shows a quite strong use of language. Already on this level of teaching of the police students, a biased tendency can be detected. In his seminal essay, 'On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken Windows, Imaginary Jars of Urine, and the Cosmological Role of the Police in American Culture'<sup>29</sup>, David Graeber analyzes the way the American police engages in what he calls 'symbolic warfare' in the aftermath of the globalization riots in Seattle 1999. By launching a campaign of dramatic hate-speech and direct lies about the Globalization Movement, the police create a scenario of fear, whereby the militant measures taken to counter the series of following protest-events (against a Republican Convention in Philadelphia 2000, against the IMF and World Bank meeting in Washington DC April 2000, and against a range of other protests) are justified and made reasonable. Graeber wonders why the police continuously invent attacks with urine and excrement, as if they were trying to evoke the image of the largest possible humiliation of the police forces to justify the severe methods they would employ to counter the protests. My own, in comparison undramatic, encounter with the Danish police academy is presented in Commentary 3.3.4.1: Searching for an audience.

### **Eros Effect**

The American sociologist, Georgy Katsiaficas, has invented the term 'the Eros Eect'

to describe the revolutionary becoming.<sup>30</sup> The Eros Effect occurs in moments of popular uprising; in revolt. Here,

“mobilization for action occurs through participants' intuition as much as through their rational beliefs, and this intuitive species of identity forms a basis for collective activity.”<sup>31</sup>

The Eros Effect transforms the normal individual self-interest into what he calls species-interest. Here, the instinctual need for freedom becomes a new collective identity. I use the Eros Effect in the script ‘Silent Stand’ to describe how the scattered groups of activists in Egypt, suddenly and seemingly overnight – on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011 – become one movement, one voice. The ‘instinctual need for freedom’ unified the seemingly opposed groups of activists – the Islamists, the secular middle-class youth, the intellectuals; they became ‘the people’ as the ‘intuitive species identity’ formed the basis for a collective uprising that eventually led to the downfall of the dictator, Hosni Mubarak. See also Commentary 5.1.4.3: Emotional Rationality.

### **Exodus**

Active Time constitutes another social order, a temporal common, in opposition to the dominating capitalist order. Such a new public sphere is also central to the concept of ‘exodus’ as proposed by the Italian thinker, Paolo Virno. Virno uses ‘exodus’ as a term for an ‘engaged withdrawal’, where the de-humanizing social order of capitalism is left and a new alternative order is constructed. For Virno, ‘exodus’ is closely related to the crumbling of representative democracy and the emergence of a new political subject, ‘the multitude’.<sup>32</sup> The multitude as conceptualized by Virno - and by Anthony Negri and Michael Hardt in their seminal book ‘Empire’ - compares to the ‘intuitive species identity’ created in the Eros Effect, although the multitude can be said to be of a more permanent character. Here, in this project I use the concept of ‘exodus’ in the script ‘On Water’ to describe the formation of a temporary common by the occupation of a street and a piece of the harbourfront in Copenhagen in the summer of 2008.<sup>33</sup>

### **Ghost Writers**

A very important source of information for my research into the 1989 Democracy Movement is the collection of writings and speeches from the movement, called CRIES FOR DEMOCRACY.<sup>34</sup> The names of the editors of this book – Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng – are both pseudonyms, protecting the identities of the two writers. Han Minzhu means ‘Chinese Democracy’ and Hua Sheng means ‘A Voice of China’. They are both former democracy activists who escaped to USA after the crack-down on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1989. The book is a collection of writings and speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement and was collected, edited and published in the US already in 1990. Their use of pseudonyms, of course, has a very real, protective function, but on a conceptual level, it is similar to the way The Invisible Committee mentioned in my script ‘A Short Course In realism From The Perspective Of The Police’ (AoR 1.2, note 14) use anonymity. Invisibility has practical reasons, related to repression, but it adds an aspect of democratic ‘headlessness’ to the movements they spring from. This small fact, the use of pseudonyms by the two writers, is a very simple and direct manifestation of the problems inherent in the question quoted above from ‘Beijing Coma’: “...where is there left for you to go?”. Even far abroad in the US, the former activists have to disguise themselves, operating as ghosts.

### **Headless**

See Commentary 5.1.4.3: ‘Headless: Acéphale or Wiki?’

### **Invisible Committee**

'The Coming Insurrection' or 'L'insurrection qui vient', as the original French version is called, is written by an anonymous group of French contributors, Comité Invisible. The French police attributed the writing to the so-called Tarnac Nine, a group of nine activists accused of 'terrorist enterprise' by disabling over 160 trains in France. The book, 'The Coming Insurrection', became the principal piece of evidence in the anti-terror case evolving after the arrest. If the nine persons could write such a book, they were capable of "criminal association for the purposes of terrorist activity". Since The Invisible Committee is still anonymous and there is no direct evidence that the nine individuals are all part of it, the whole case was circumstantial. Despite these "juridical disputes, taking place within the police order" as Ranci  re would call it, The Invisible Committee and 'The Coming Insurrection' is a fine example of multitext and masked, headless identity. As exemplified by another movement that has become one of the paradigmatic factors in the recent global wave of protests, Anonymous, invisibility is one of the major components of contemporary activism. A strategy that has a very practical function, in the sense that it protects participants against prosecution, but also an ideological trait, referring to ideas of collectivity, hybrid identity and even the synchronic, collective body, we will come back to in the performance Climate/Kettle. In its radical refusal of capitalism and call to very direct, confrontational activism 'The Coming Insurrection' is one of the core documents of the ideas surrounding the Black Bloc. Another quote from it is used in the performance 'Aesthetics of Resistance?' (commentary 4.2.4.1.)

### **Kettle**

In his video, 'This is what democracy looks like!', the Austrian artist Oliver Ressler documents the events of July 1st, 2001 where a large-scale demonstration against the World Economic Forum in Salzburg, Austria was encircled by the police and contained in this 'kettle' for 7 hours.<sup>35</sup> The video is shot only from the perspective of the demonstrators, as the spoken commentary, too, consists of a series of statements and descriptions by different activists and participants in the demonstration. This one-sided perspective results in a very strong portrait of the police forces and their tactics; a portrait that seems to be the real subject of the video. In the first third we see how the barricades and the formations of the police forces provide the optical guidance that directs the demonstrators in certain directions and routes through the city. These measures to contain the demonstration are clear and strong: Fences and large formations of uniformed personnel make up temporary architectural structures, easy to follow and hard to break through. Later, when the conflict escalates, the police establish a ring of impenetrable fences and police units that close in the entire demonstration and makes it impossible for anyone to leave. This encirclement is kept for many hours into the late evening, creating a so-called 'kettle'. The limits of the kettle is constantly being stressed by the police by small attacks and provocations of demonstrators, as if the intention is to keep up a constant feeling of threat, thereby provoking fear. The kettle can here be seen as an example of how the police use the optical guidance as a choreographic tool that stages both the police forces and the demonstrators. The staging is not only physical, a spatial delimitation of the right to move freely through the city, but also psychological. It establishes a very clear power relationship; it subordinates the demonstrators and humiliates them. The kettle is also a tool for staging the demonstrators as violent – in 'This is what democracy looks like!' we see several examples of how the police seem to consciously provoke situations where demonstrators can be captured by the media in violent gestures. The police are even

seen collecting cobblestones from the pavement, later to be presented as confiscated from the protesters.

The concept of the kettle is further explored in the script/performance 'Climate/Kettle' where I attempt to re-enact another example of this phenomenon. In that case, the kettle seems to have a completely different effect on the activists, creating collective strengths instead of fear. See also Sci-Fi Warriors here in this Glossary.

### **Militant**

See Commentary 3.1.4.2: Violent versus Militant

### **Multitext**

See Commentary 5.1.4.3: 'Headless: Acéphale or Wiki?'

### **Policing**

See Troublemakers

### **Resonance**

See Commentary 1.1.4.3: Resonance and Commentary 4.1.4.2: On Resonance, *Budhaditya Chattopadhyay* in conversation with Frans Jacobi

### **Sci-Fi Warriors**

In the video, 'This is what democracy looks like!', by the Austrian artist, Oliver Ressler, we see the police forces portrayed as uniform, armoured creatures.<sup>36</sup> In close-up sequences, the camera dwells on the boots, the shields and the uniforms of long rows of monochromatic figures. The faces are always hidden behind helmets and face-shields, the bodies armoured with breast-shields and various hardcover protection of knees, elbows and other weak points. In the video, various units are uniformed with different small variations, but all of them have similar characteristics. The bodies are non-personal, almost un-human; it's like an army of identical warriors without individuality. They form a collective body, disciplined, but also restless, with regular outburst of aggression and even direct violence against the encircled demonstrators.

A similar portrayal of police forces as dark, aestheticised machinery can be seen in the photographs of NOH Suntag. In his photo-series 'Arrest' from 2009, he documents police violence against protesting demonstrators, but he does it with a disturbingly stylized beauty.<sup>37</sup> By using a dramatic lighting, where only the bodies of the protesters are lit up, and the police forces clad in black are only seen as glossy, black armour emerging from the dark backgrounds, the vulnerable softness of the exposed activist bodies are contrasted with the protective armour of the police-machine.

This 'collective body' of the police forces mirrors the collective body of the protestors occurring in various actions. The collective body of revolt is dealt with in the script/performance 'Climate/Kettle' and is closely linked to the terms Active Time, Eros Effect and Kettle.

### **Sense-Event**

See commentary 4.1.4.1: Sense Event



### Temporary Autonomous Zone

Another concept I use in the same script is the 'temporary autonomous zone' as the writer Hakim Bey has defined it.<sup>38</sup> The term almost explains itself and also describes an exit from the dominating discourses of society. The occupation of Refshalevej in Copenhagen, described in 'On Water' happened spontaneously and marks a carefree, positive way out for The Youth House Movement that seems to evaporate here in the warm Copenhagen summer of 2008. In the script and the performance, Refshalevej and the temporary autonomous zone it constitutes are used as a counterpoint to the relational aesthetics of a seemingly similar art-project, Havnelaboratoriet. The border between art and radical activism is here marked by the law; it is its status as illegal that demarcates the occupation from the legal art-work and radicalizes its claim for 'another world'.

In the performance, the movement disappears on the water, floating away into the mysterious land of 'forgotten pirate utopias', so vividly described by Hakim Bey in this seminal text.

This idea of leaving for 'another world' or 'another time' is central to an activism that tries to confront an overwhelming capitalism that seems to have invaded, not only our material lives, but also our psychology and inner feelings.

### Transcendence

See Commentary 1.1.4.2: Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance

### Troublemakers

In the script/performance Climate/Kettle police and politicians collaborate to stage political activists as troublemakers, thereby reducing their actions and demonstrations to mere hooliganism. This dispute on politics and troublemaking can be linked to Jacques Rancière's discussion of Politics versus Policing:

*"A political dispute concerns the very existence of politics as distinct from police. Unlike juridical disputes, which take place within the police order, le litige politique brings politics proper into existence by introducing a veritable dissensus that splits in two the shared world of the community."*<sup>39</sup>

In preparing for the Climate Summit, the Danish authorities try to denounce the dissenting political activism as troublemaking, while Rancière on the contrary, argues that what is normally perceived as politics in the established democratic societies is to be understood as mere policing, an administration of the established order, and that real politics only evolve when this policing order is disrupted by dissensus.

### Turmoil

In the performance, 'A short course in realism from the perspective of the police', we saw how the police were staging political activists as 'troublemakers'. In the crucial editorial in the People's Daily on April 26<sup>th</sup> 1989, Deng Xiaoping labelled the demonstrations and protests as 'turmoil'. This charge became one of the central points of disagreement in the dramatic events unfurling in the weeks to come. As Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng write: "From the very beginning of the protests, the government had linked student activism to 'turmoil' (dongluan). The charge of creating 'turmoil' was a serious one in China, 'Turmoil' was not just troublemaking; turmoil was the destroyer of social stability and unity, a threat to the fabric of Chinese society, for it was closely associated in the minds of Chinese with the trauma of the

Cultural Revolution, when young Red Guards had terrorized citizens, and when Chinese feared betrayal by neighbors, colleagues, or even family members. In People's Daily editorials and speeches by government leaders, the specter of the Cultural Revolution, now officially termed the "Ten Years of Turmoil" (or alternatively, the "Ten Years of Chaos") had been raised: the takeovers of campus broadcasting stations, the appearance of big-character posters, the forming of non-sanctioned student organizations, and the initiation of contacts with workers and students in other cities had all been compared to the activities of students at the opening of the Cultural Revolution." <sup>40</sup>

**Verfremdung**

See Commentary 1.1.4.1: Verfremdungseffekt

**Violence**

See Commentary 3.1.4.2: Violent versus Militant

- 1.1. A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police

Main:

- 1.1.1. Script
- 1.1.2. Performance: Inter Arts Center, Malmö 30.4.2010
- 1.1.3. Analysis

Commentary:

- 1.1.4.1. Verfremdungseffekt
- 1.1.4.2. Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance
- 1.1.4.3. Resonance

Appendix:

- 1.1.5.1. A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police, performance-documentation, video 45:32 min.
- 1.1.5.2. No Compromise:  
N30 Black Bloc Communiqué by ACME Collective

## **A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police (1.1.1.)<sup>41</sup>**

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4 performers dressed in black:  
Police-officer: Frans Jacobi  
Street-fighter: Sandro Masai  
Sound guerilla: Lonely Boy Choir aka Boris Schiøler  
The artist/researcher: Elsiné Hoss

Two texts:  
Kai Vittrup: OPERATION42  
The research-comments.

A black space.  
A mirror-shield.  
A purple flag with a metal-chain.  
A sound system with 2 microphones.  
2 spotlights in opposite corners pointing towards each other, creating a diagonal 'light-corridor' through the space.

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*When the audience is allowed into the space, it is completely dark, the only light coming in through the entrance door. When everyone is inside, the 2 spotlights are turned on, creating a diagonal 'light-corridor' through the space.*

## SCENE 1: OPTICAL GUIDANCE

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*'Police-officer' starts walking back and forth in the diagonal light corridor. He has the mirror shield lifted in front of him. The light hits the mirror and is reflected as a moving spot, as he moves the mirror. In this way the spot of light is moving around in the audience. He reads the texts in short aggressive sentences. 'Street-fighter' is moving between fixed positions, standing still looking at the 'Police-officer'.*

### **POLICE OFFICER:**

OPTICAL GUIDANCE is an operational technique to be used in various situations and in different modes.

In all its simplicity the technique means that the chief of operations places police squads, vehicles or mechanical defenses in such a way that demonstrators or other traffic is led in a certain direction.

OPTICAL GUIDANCE is and has been used often in connection with demonstrations that are expected to evolve into street riots. For example because as a rule the most aggressive demonstrators will not keep to a sanctioned route, but aim for objects to vandalize – buildings, companies etc that they are hostile towards.<sup>43</sup>

In connection with riots or potentially violent demonstrations, police squads with shields must never be placed alone as OPTICAL GUIDANCE. These units are too vulnerable to stone-throwing or molotov cocktails. In such situations armed vehicles are the solution; the police units are inside the vehicles, ready to act, with for example rapid reaction technique.<sup>44</sup>

*'Police officer' lowers his shield and they both stop. The light changes: the two spotlights go out, and a small lightbulb is turned on. Now, 'the artist-researcher' is sitting on a chair in this new weak light. She starts reading aloud.*

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Ladies & Gentlemen. Welcome to this performance. My name is Frans Jacobi and my role here is 'the artist/researcher'. I will now introduce you to the performers and to the structure and content of the performance. I will also make comments and point to references throughout the performance. I will even attempt a final conclusion when we reach that far in about half an hour.

The title of the performance - A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police - is taken from the German composer, Hans Eisler. He collaborated with Bertolt Brecht, the playwright and dramaturge who in many ways permeates the conceptualization of this performance. It is especially the function of my figure here, the meta-guide, and the fact that I am represented by another person, which is influenced by Brecht. Brecht often included a similar figure - the director, the writer or himself - in his plays. He was inspired by the classic Greek tragedies which had a choir commenting and explaining events onstage. For Brecht it was a way of spelling out his intentions to the audience.<sup>45</sup> When I introduce the figure here, it is of course an attempt at clarifying the problem of 'art as research' for you: How can art occupy these two seemingly conflicting positions at the same time? I am not attempting a solution to this problem here: I would rather leave it up to you, my dear spectator, to decide: Is my figure here inside - a part of the artwork, or is it outside, as an all too present academic nuisance?

My role here is played by another person, Elsiné Hoss. She is an art student at the Art Academy here in Malmö. This idea, this *Verfremdung* is another Brechtian feature. He used the technique of alienation as a tool to reveal the hidden mechanisms of emotional manipulation that the bourgeois theatre was ruled by in his day. Here the alienation simply works as a deconstructive tool, adding a layer of self-reflection and referentiality to the performance at hand.

This figure and this research-layer is one side of the equation art versus research. As you can already see, there is plenty, maybe even far too much talk here on this side of things. If the equation is to work, the other side, the art, has to be just as strong. It has to be potent with emotional, personal or poetic expression. The artwork has to represent the content at hand in such a way that it transcends the rational analysis that scientific research normally produces.

In this case, when the chosen subject is street-fighting, violent riots and attempts at police-control, the artistic side has to be chaotic, wild and somewhat out of control. The intention is to give you, dear spectators, a sense of how it feels to be inside such an event. To create that kind of scenario I have chosen 3 performers who each in their own way adds to the planned turmoil:

Sandro Masai is a Brazilian dancer who has a great capacity for improvisation and sudden outbursts. Here, he improvises his abstract version of 'Street-fighter'.

Lonely Boy Choir produces the sound for this performance. I have chosen him because of his ability to cross into wild chaos. In his music, with emphasis on sadness and longing, there is always an undercurrent of wild, raw expression that I find necessary for this project.

The third part, the voice of institutionalized violence, is performed by myself, Frans Jacobi. As always, I perform as part of the production – not only because this adds a certain nervous, amateur gleam to the proceedings, but also because my participation represents a personal investment in the content at hand. If not through intelligent analysis – over here – at least my physical presence – over there – ensures my engagement.

## SCENE 2: SHOW OF FORCE

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*Again 'Police-officer' starts walking back and forth with the mirror shield. He reads the second text, this time the sound of his voice is distorted by echo, repeat and reverb. 'Street-fighter' is now dancing with a purple flag and a metal-chain. He is moving fast around the space as the 'Police-officer' is moving back and forth in the diagonal of light. The tension in the distorted sound of the voice and the aggression of the dancer builds up.*

### **POLICE OFFICER:**

SHOW OF FORCE is a technique that sends a very clear message. It demands a large amount of resources and it requires that these resources are used in a manner that the technique involves.<sup>46</sup>

SHOW OF FORCE is ultimate. There is nothing to negotiate. Everything will happen as commanded by the police. This is the substance of this technique. However, if the technique is to be implemented optimally, it can become necessary under certain circumstances to communicate this resolution to the public in general, and, of course, also to the specific groups which the operation is directed towards – i.e. certain kinds of troublemakers. Mistake is not an option. Everybody should know where the police stands, and what to expect from the police force. In other circumstances it can be relevant to demonstrate the SHOW OF FORCE-technique by presenting new equipment to the public: new vehicles, new kinds of weapons or equipment etc., so as to make it perfectly clear to everyone, also to possible troublemakers, that the police is ready. In both cases, the police is directing the psychological reactions of the combatants; moral is weakened and the urge for violence and destruction is reduced.<sup>47</sup>

*After a while they stand still, and the light changes for 'the artist-researcher' to read out her second part.*

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

My dear audience – Excuse me for already interrupting again, but I do think we need a bit of explanation here: The text being read here is taken from an internal police manual, presenting various strategies on how to handle large crowds of rioting demonstrators. It shows how visual and spatial strategies are aimed at impressing, controlling and even scaring crowds to behave. There are several examples of direct aesthetic considerations in the manual. It is my argument that these aesthetic elements instead of serving their purpose, actually works



as a backdrop to and an active element in suspending the reality of the situation. Instead, the aesthetic presence of the police force - impenetrable walls of dark uniforms, blank mirroring shields and display of weapons, barricades of armored vehicles, clouds of teargas - acts as a scenography for a sealed-off territory of power games and violent performativity. Instead of avoiding conflict and negotiating peaceful solutions, the police force collaborates with the activists on the other side of the conflict in the creation of a symbolic scenario of violence and turmoil. An hyper-real arena where various political gestures can be performed. The real battle is not fought in the streets, but on another level of symbolic interpretation; what really matters is who controls the pictorial meaning of the event and its mediation. In this sense, the street-fighting in contemporary activist culture, as in contemporary police operation is 'only' theatre. But to break through this dull display of calculated tactics from both sides of the conflict, the street theatre - and this performance - needs a chaotic, orgasmic high. A moment of sheer, unmediated physicality. So here it comes - go for it boys!

### SCENE 3: RAPID REACTION

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*Again 'Police-officer' starts walking back and forth with the mirror shield. He reads the third text, but now the sound of his voice is so distorted by reverb and cut-ups that only a few phrases are discernable. 'Street-fighter' is now using the audience as shield or erupting in aggressive moves. The sound and the abrupt moves of the dancer get chaotic and really loud.*

#### **POLICE OFFICER:**

RAPID REACTION is an active continuation of SHOW OF FORCE. This operational technique is especially useful, when riots are occurring in city-areas with small narrow streets and squares, where a dynamic, offensive strategy is required. When the requirement is the arrest of rampaging demonstrators in as large numbers as possible.

In advancing towards stone-throwing crowds, vehicles are driven at high speed with all lights on, also roof-projectors and sirens, directly into the center of riots. Here the units proceed by foot, either behind or on both sides of the vehicle.

If a number of troublemakers are to be arrested, the push forward is made in several directions, co-ordinated so that the people concerned at the given moment are surrounded by armoured vehicles and armoured police units.

In situations where riots in certain parts of the city are to be expected, specially educated civil units of arrest can be involved in advance. The task of these units is to identify and eventually arrest particularly aggressive and dominant participants in violent protests.<sup>48</sup>

*All of of sudden it turns silent, and 'the artist/researcher' starts her final round of reading out.*

#### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Well, dear patient spectators. We are now close to the end of this performance. Even though I will disturb you with yet another set of elaborations on what we have experienced here. All the babble on street-fighting as theatre and its mediation from my last little passage is not much more than average post-modern mainstream. The only really daring lines of thought here lie hidden in the color-scheme and in the use of sound.

Black and purple. The use of black is obvious: Black is of course the color of endless fractions of oppositional youth culture – punk, metal, the black bloc etc.<sup>49</sup> It is also, as stated in the police manual, the darkness of the unison monochromatic police uniforms that creates an aura of indisputable power.

The far more interesting question is the use of the color purple. In the activist movements from where it is grabbed, it often signifies 'queerness', most often in a sexual sense. To understand it like that in this context, doesn't really make sense: That the violence with all its inherent machismo transforms into purple gayness is of course rather funny, but also too absurd. It is rather a more traditional art-historical interpretation of the color purple that is relevant. Throughout the history of painting – for example in the paintings of El Greco – the color purple has been used to signify metaphysical, spiritual content. In the literature on contemporary political activism, the idea of a metaphysical aspect of street-fighting occurs again and again. In his essay, 'My friends are the Universe (Globalization's Protest Expand the Political)', the American writer, Robert Herbst, writes about the globalization protests in Seattle, December 1999:

"Highly controversial in their actions, the faceless saboteur elves of the infamous black bloc offered their actions of property destruction as a bit of transcendence."<sup>50</sup>

So here in the forceful but poetic movements of the purple flags of the street-fighter 'a bit of transcendence' is opened up.

The other dominant aesthetic element is the use of resonance. Echo, repetition, reverb. In their political manifesto, THE COMING INSURRECTION, the French group of political activists, 'The Invisible Committee', has some very interesting thoughts on resonance:

"Revolutionary movements do not spread by contamination but by resonance. Something that is constituted here resonates with the shock wave emitted by something constituted over there. A body that resonates does so according to its own mode. An insurrection is not like a plague or a forest fire – a linear process which spreads from place to place after an initial spark. It rather takes the shape of a music, whose focal points, though dispersed in time and space, succeed in imposing the rythm of their own vibrations, always taking on more density.

To the point that any return to normal is no longer desirable or even imaginable.

When we speak of Empire, we name the mechanisms of power which preventively and surgically stifle any revolutionary potential in a mutual situation. In this sense, Empire is not an enemy that confronts us head-on. It's a rythm that imposes itself, a way of dispensing and dispersing reality. Less an order of the world than its sad, heavy and militaristic liquidation."<sup>51</sup>

What we have done here is merely to take the aesthetic metaphor of resonance, so brilliantly used by 'The Invisible Committee' and tried to use it, not as a metaphor, but as an aesthetic tool. To perform it. Here the 'sad, heavy rythm of militaristic liquidation' is fused with purple resonance into mutual vibration.

My dear audience – thanks for your patience.

**THE END**

### Analysis (1.1.3.)

This performance is the first to introduce the artist/researcher and it is the first to introduce the sense-event. It is structured in 3 scenes, each scene consisting of an aesthetic part performed by the 3 performers and an analytical part read aloud by the artist/researcher. This very obvious contrast between the aesthetic and the analytical is intended to emphasize the problem of artistic research – the gap between an aesthetic experience and an analytical reflection. The text of artist/researcher is written in a slightly ironic tone and gives the proceedings a humouristic twist. The artist/researcher is continuously excusing the annoying aspects of her own presence – the interruptions in the performance, the far too long comments and the level of abstraction. Still, she proceeds. This ambiguity is important. It is as if she says: It is a difficult quest, maybe hopeless, but let's try anyway.

The other part, the aesthetic part, is sequenced, as 3 ascending destructions of a text. The text is a collage of quotes from a police manual for crowd control in connection with large scale demonstrations and riots. As the performance evolves the declamation of the text is distorted and made progressively incomprehensible by various sound effects added by 'sound guerrilla'. In parallel the dancer, 'street-fighter' is increasing the tension of his performance. In correlation with the strobe of light directed from the mirror shield of the 'police-officer' these elements merge into a loud, chaotic spectacle of noise and aggression. The sequence blurs the relatively separate positions of 'police-officer', 'street-fighter' and 'sound-guerrilla' and creates a unified emotional expression.

This sequence is then split up by the artist/researcher, commenting and explaining. Like this analysis, the artist/researcher is dissecting the aesthetic experience, explaining and interpreting it. The split creates a distance, a pause, where the audience have an opportunity to reflect on the quite overwhelming experience of the loud spectacle of the aesthetic part. Their reflection doesn't necessarily follow the pedagogical explanations of the artist/researcher, but the break from the massive emotional attack of the performance, opens up a space for reflection anyway.

The performance of the part 'the artist/researcher' is somewhat influenced by the fact that the person supposed to perform this part cancelled two days before the performance. As a fast substitute Elsiné Hoss does her best, but her reading of the text is of course influenced by the fact that she never had time to rehearse her reading. I think of this as another layer of *Verfremdung*, but it can be discussed in the manner in which she reads the text is too amateurish. It makes it hard to understand the text, but then again it adds to the *Verfremdung* – to the oddness of having another person standing in for the artist/researcher, for me.

This device, the artist/researcher as a odd, estranged intruder into an aesthetical spectacle, is highlighted by the appearance of Elsiné Hoss. Her long, curly blonde hair is glowing in the bleak singular spotlight, creating an almost angelic contrast to the aggressive up-front presence of the other performers. Her appearance combined with the clumsy reading creates a distance: This is not her text, she is only a stand-in for the author, her figure is a construction. This distance is even explained in her text. Spelled out. All these measures to establish the figure of 'the artist/researcher'. The content of the text is not that important – it is establishing the figure that is important. This is why the clumsy reading isn't a problem, it might even be an advantage. In the next performances various experiments with the figure of the artist/researcher are

undertaken - i.e. a professional voice-over in the first version of 'Silent Stand' – and it is not obvious that this works better. The necessary distances inherent in the conception of this figure can be created in various ways, and amateur recitation is certainly one of these possibilities.

As the figure of the artist/researcher is spelled out, maybe even to the limit of what is funny, the same goes for the 'performance-part'. Here the transformation from text to noise, and the parallel increase in tension and aggressive attack, are undertaken in a similar obvious manner. The point is not only to create an overwhelming experience for the senses; the point is to establish a situation, or moment, when the experience is solely of the senses. An experience where analytical reflection is blocked out. This moment is not only an overwhelming experience of the senses, it is also a representation of the cliché of aesthetic experience. This moment – when the senses are overwhelmed and rational reflection is blocked – is the sense-event.

The aim of the performance is to establish these two figures: The artistic/researcher and the sense-event.

It is obvious that the intrusion of the artist/researcher does disturb the formal unity of the performance – without this disturbance the performance might have been a stronger art-work; a more direct 'punch-in-the-face' of the audience. Short, aggressive and direct. Then again, such a performance wouldn't have made sense in the framework of my artistic research-project. Even though the artist/researcher claims that the aesthetic part of the performance can be seen alone, it is the whole – the aesthetic part and the analytical part done by the artist/researcher – that comprises the art-piece here. The artist/researcher is an inherent gap in the structure of the performance.

The aesthetic tool to destroy the operation-text is resonance. The reason for using resonance is to be found in one of the quoted texts, 'The Coming Insurrection' by The Invisible Committee. In that text resonance is used as a metaphor for the destruction of capitalist society, and as a metaphor for how various insurrections spread. It is the disastrous aspect of resonance that is used. A given system can be destroyed if induced by vibrations in exactly the resonance frequency of the system. If too much energy is induced at the right frequency the system will disintegrate.<sup>52</sup> Here, in the performance this metaphor is translated into aesthetic use, by treating the voice of 'police-officer' to repeated and accelerated amounts of echo and reverb. The voice is mutilated and resonant waves of sound fragments takes over. This translation of the recited text into disintegrated sound fragments, rolling over the audience in loud waves, is conceptual. Conceptual, in the sense that it doesn't really matter how the translation sounds – if it sounds chaotic or not. It is the transition from understandable text to aesthetic texture that is important. It is the constitution of an event of the senses, a sense-event, that is important, not so much how this sense-event sounds or looks like. The resonance expressed in sound is metaphorical too: It doesn't create a resonance disaster for real, it sounds like it. Whereas the Invisible Committee use resonance as a textual metaphor, here in the performance it is used as an aesthetic metaphor.

Did it work? This analysis is of course a selfanalysis and the distinction between what is attempted in the performance and what is the outcome is blurry. Furthermore this performance was done before the structure with discussions following each performance was invented. This means that the reactions of the audience wasn't

gathered in the same manner as in the later performances where the discussions was an integral part of each event. On these premises my evaluation is limited to an inspection of the video-documentation, the scattered comments I recieved afterwards and what I have termed the 'psychosocial behavior' of the audience during and after the performance.

Certain elements in the performance might have been sharper – the reading by the artist/researcher and by the 'police-officer' in the very first part before sound-destruction sets in – but the overall impression is that it did work. The sense-event was established and the artist/researcher did induce the necessary gap in the experience. The audience was forced into the double reflection of what was happening – an aesthetic experience and an analytical reflection. This gap in the perception was displayed in a very schematic manner, but as stated above this was exactly the intention with this performance.

How the two levels of information - the aesthetic meaning evolving in the sense-event and the analytical discourse presented by the artist/researcher – relates across the gap seperating them isn't clear. If the performance illustrates the argument or if it is the argument that interpreates the performance. On the contrary, it is up to the audience to navigate these opposed layers of meaning, to correlate them or to contrast them. The performance presents the problem of the gap, but it doesn't solve it.

In the following performances the gap between the aesthetic rendering of the content and the discourse of the artist/researcher are structured in more intricate manners but the gap between aesthetic contemplation and rational argument is a condition they are all constituted by.

#### Verfremdungseffekt (1.1.4.1.)

“Brecht’s flexible realism is dialectical, in this radical, Marxist sense. The first test of dialectical realism is whether or not, in context, it produces this effect of de-reification or estrangement.”

(Gene Ray on the radical realism of Bertolt Brecht)<sup>53</sup>

‘De-reification’? In the dictionary ‘reify’ means to “make (something abstract) more concrete or real”. De-reification must be the opposite act: To make something real more abstract. Brecht’s own word ‘Verfremdung’ gives the same operation a kind of physical, experience-oriented aspect; to present the real as ‘fremd’, as strange, unfamiliar. The de-reifying or Verfremdung is to be experienced AND thought about. It is not only a metaphysical operation, but a metaphysical operation offered us in experience. On stage, in the theater. The de-reifying is performed to be experienced. Reality is shown to us as strange. Not in a psychedelic sense, as something extra-sensuous, but dissected into observable parts, as objectives to think about. Inherent in Verfremdung is a linking of experience and thought. By Verfremdung Brecht links the aesthetical experience with rational, materialist thinking. Verfremdung creates a double presence: We are in the experience AND in the thinking about it at the same time.

When I am using Verfremdung as a model for artistic research it is exactly this double I am interested in. Aesthetics dissected into objectives to think about. Inserting the figure of the artist/researcher into the performances is supposed to create the double presence. By having an intervening commentary running parallel to the aesthetic event we are constantly forced to evaluate our sensuous experience. Does it fit? Does this affect I am experiencing fit with what the artist/researcher postulates?

The flexible, experimental realism of Brecht is translated into a similar artistic research. Using a variety of tools to dissect the aesthetic elements of the 9 performances, comprising this thesis, the experiences are opened up to inspection. Each performance establishes an aesthetic reality and a set of distancing moments; a geometry of distances and objectives to be considered. This geometry or structure includes also the texts here - the script, the analysis and the commentary.

All performances, except this one, ‘A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police’, then again refers to an original event, also comprised of a sense-event and a level of discourse.<sup>54</sup> In their manifesto ‘The Coming Insurrection’ the french group of anonymous writers/activists The Invisible Comitee presents the double presence as ‘rage and politics’:

“All the incivilities of the streets should become methodical and systematic, converging in a diffuse, effective guerrilla war that restores us to our ungovernability, our primordial unruliness. It’s disconcerting to some that this same lack of discipline figures so prominently among the recognized military virtues of resistance fighters. In fact though, rage and politics should never have been separated. Without the first, the second is lost in discourse; without the second the first exhausts itself in howls.”<sup>55</sup>

Here too, the affect, the rage, is connected to a metaphysical layer, politics. Only when connected by being performed as one, the two elements make sense. Only



when being expressed as emotion - in the real, as gesture, as action - does politics make sense. Even here, in the common expression 'make sense', this dialectics between concept and action appear: A line of thought becomes real meaning when it makes sense, that is, when it is experienceable by the senses.<sup>56</sup>

This is the space I would like artistic research to convey: A nexus of ideas and actions to be experienced as an ensemble of performative gestures. A relational format opposed to the master narrative of the traditional academic dissertation.

### **Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance (1.1.4.2.)**

"Highly controversial in their actions, the faceless saboteur elves of the infamous black bloc offered their actions of property destruction as a bit of transcendence."<sup>57</sup>

The events, the writer Robert Herbst is here referring to, took place on November 30 in Seattle. As part of the protests of the Globalization Movements against WTO the Black Bloc attacked a series of shops, companies and other capitalist targets, smashing windows and 'defacing' facades. Herbst quotes a communiqué by the the ACME Collective, one of the groups in the Black Bloc, pointing to the 'poetry of the action'; the poetry spring from the way ACME redefines the functionality of a range of objects, takes them out of their ordinary (capitalist) use and gives them new (revolutionary) functions. This is admittedly clear poetry, but what does he mean by 'a bit of transcendence'? And why did I use this phrase as a main argument?

Reading the ACME Communiqué in full length<sup>58</sup> doesn't give a real clue. Here the attacks by the Black Bloc has a double meaning: They are at the one hand real; real attacks on real capitalist businesses. On the another level they are a 'shattering of assumptions'; an exorcizing of 'that set of violent and destructive social relationships which has been imbued in almost everything around us'. This shattering and exorcizing of the capitalist spell is both real and symbolic, but the two levels are dependent on each other. The real action can only be justified because it has a symbolic meaning, and the symbolic meaning only has an effect when it is actualized by being performed in the real.<sup>59</sup> The shattering and exorcizing of meaning and the poetic re-claiming of functions are about recreating the world around us, reclaiming it. It is about creating another world, another society, not a transcendent world, but a very real, new reality. In the Communiqué it is manifested in very simple, basic ways; i.e. 'a newspaper box becomes (...) an object to improve one's vantage point by standing on it'.

In 'On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets' David Graeber also refers to the ACME Manifesto, describing the tactics of the Black Bloc and how destruction and violence is instrumentalised as a political attack on globalized capitalism, 'demonstrating just how fragile it really is'.<sup>60</sup>

In the dictionary transcendence is defined as 'beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience'.<sup>61</sup> This is not what is going on here. The poetry of the Black Bloc is very physical, in its performance, but also in its aim. The way Herbst use the word transcendence or at least the way I understand it and re-use it, is in another, perhaps quite loose sense, as something that is out of the ordinary, out of the normal, out of the norm. In my version it points to the aesthetic rather than to the immaterial. The aesthetic being a world of the senses, still experienced in the physical, material field. In this performance, it is an attempt to describe the moment when the aesthetic experience takes over, when the viewer is overwhelmed by sensual experience. The moment when the performance destroys the meaning of the text – the police-manual – and it becomes sound, resonance and emotion. I call this this moment a 'sense-event'.<sup>62</sup> This sense-event is admittely NOT 'something beyond the physical human experience', and the transcendence is too be understood differently.

In their text, '...As a Science of Apparatuses', the french philosophical collective 'Tiqqun' (named after the magazine they produced in two issues in 1999-2001), discusses the manner in which Western metaphysics predicates reality. How we tend to perceive the world only by identifying the things we already know what are. How language designates experience. How we only experience what we already know. And how these metaphysics has has been developed by Empire into enormous control apparatuses, covering the entire globe.<sup>63</sup> If the 'range of normal or merely physical human experience' as mentioned in the dictionary definition of transcendence above, has degenerated into the oppressive metaphysics of Empire – where experience is limited to a normalized set of identifications, defined by language – then transcendence from this range of normalized experience becomes revolutionary aesthetics. As Tiqqun writes:

"It is striking to see, year in, year out, how beings increasingly slip between their predicates, between the identities that THEY give them. (...) Everything becomes indistinguishable. THEY find it increasingly difficult to make "an intellectual" of those who think, "a wage-earner" of those who work, "a murderer" of those who kill, "an activist" of those who engage in activism. Formalized language, the arithmetic of the norm, has no hold on substantial distinction. Bodies no longer allow themselves to be reduced to the qualities that THEY intended to assign to them. Bodies refuse to incorporate them. They silently slip away. Recognition, which first designates a certain distance between bodies, is overrun at every point. It can no longer account for what is really happening between bodies. Thus the need for apparatuses, more and more apparatuses: in order to stabilize the relationship between predicates and "subjects" that stubbornly elude them; to thwart the diffuse creation of complex, asymmetric, perverse relationships with those predicates; to produce information, to produce the real as information."<sup>64</sup>

It is as this 'slipping away' 'a bit of transcendence' must be understood. An aesthetic transcendence. The poetic re-claiming of functions are recreating the world around us, making it accessible for direct experience. This is the aesthetics of resistance.

### Resonance (1.1.4.3.)

"Power centers obviously involve rigid segments. Each molar segment has one or more centers. It might be objected that the segments themselves presuppose a power center, as what distinguishes and unites them, sets them in opposition and makes them resonate. But there is no contradiction between the segmentary parts and the centralized apparatus. On the one hand, the most rigid of segmentarities does not preclude centralization: this is because the common central point is not where all the other points melt together, but instead acts as a point of resonance on the horizon, behind all the other points. The State is not a point taking all the others upon itself, but a resonance chamber for them all. Even when the State is totalitarian, its function as resonator for distinct centers and segments remains unchanged: the only difference is that it takes place under closed-vessel conditions that increase its internal reach, or couples "resonance" with a "forced movement." On the other hand and conversely, the strictest of centralizations does not eradicate the distinctiveness of the centers, segments, and circles."<sup>65</sup>

Deleuze & Guattari on Resonance

In physics, **resonance** describes the oscillation inside a system. In such a system there is a tendency to oscillate at a greater amplitude at some frequencies than at others. At these frequencies, even small periodic driving forces can produce large amplitude oscillations, because the system stores vibrational energy.<sup>66</sup>

In its radical form resonance can produce disaster. If vibrations are induced exactly at a systems resonance frequency, the system will oscillate ever more strongly and as the 'load limit' of the system is reached the system will swing so much, that the oscillations will cause it to break down. Such radical resonance can break whole buildings or large scale constructions.<sup>67</sup>

### Resonance Chamber

Using resonance as a social and political metaphor is a way of translating the inherent emotional energies in a social structure into a poetic physical language. What oscillates in a social group, in a group of activists or in a whole movement, is a collective emotion; the individual feelings of each participant is 'tuned' and a collective emotional state emerges. This emotion oscillates at a certain frequency, it has a certain quality – anger, determination, happiness, triumph – and it creates a certain emotional resonance, that is shared by everyone in the group.

Used in this metaphorical way, resonance have various modes; certain systems resonate at calm and stable frequencies, others are induced by periodic excitation and transfers into disaster. When The Invisible Committee talks about insurrections as resonance – it "resonates with the shock wave.." – it is the disastrous version of resonance that is paraphrased. Various protest movements, separated by geography and maybe even by ideology, is vibrating at similar frequencies, their resonance mutates into one greater vibrational force. It takes on density, oscillate deeper, until it shatters whole societies. In this sense the resonance of 'The Coming Insurrection' is a weapon, by keeping in sync, by being fuelled by similar emotional frequencies, the scattered movements and the atomized cells of resistance, are united in one big vibration, that eventually will destroy the ruling order.

Deleuze and Guattari frequently use the word 'resonance' in describing the structure of the State in their major opus 'A Thousand Plateaus'. For them resonance is the way that the State synchronizes all the different aspects in a nation; the various segments and power-centres. The State is not one point of power centralising all other powers, but a chamber of resonance for all points of power within the State. In this sense the State is defined by resonance. All different elements in the State – different classes, various smaller power-structures, different cultures, different businesses and economies – all resonate in the State. Also this use of the word resonance is metaphorical. Here, too, the oscillating energy, that binds all the different elements of a state together, has an emotional, symbolic character. A variety of cultural symbols and characteristics, belonging to the different social and structural elements of society, produces a range of emotional frequencies, that are united in the resonance-chamber. Here, in the chamber a common chord, an emotional expression of the State, is produced. This emotional expression emerges for instance as the inherent emotional aspects, connected to the symbolic representation of the nation - the national feeling so to speak – but it permeates society on all levels.

This can seem a contradiction to the way The Invisible Committee talks about resonance, but if we consider the idea of 'resonance disaster' it actually makes sense. The State or the ruling order, is already vibrating at a stable frequency, or rather, it is a stable ensemble of resonating systems. In the words of the Invisible Committee it is "a rhythm that imposes itself, a way of dispensing and dispersing reality. Less an order of the world than its sad, heavy and militaristic liquidation". When being induced by additional vibrations in the right frequency, by periodic excitation, the load limit of the system is exceeded and the system becomes unstable, the resonance exceeds the levels that the system can contain. The system becomes disastrous and it breaks down. The revolutionary movements build up a vibrational force, a collective emotional chord, that induces energy into the resonance-chamber of the State. Here the resonance oscillates to disastrous levels and the system as a whole disintegrates.

In the performance we try to build up a similar resonance by distorting the text of the police-manual being read by adding echo, repetition and reverb, thereby reducing it to a rhythmic series of noise-waves. This deranged rhythm is supplemented by the blinding light being mirrored and moved around the space and in the face of the audience, and by the aggressive moves and continuous swing of the purple flag and the chains by the dancer. These three elements, all characterized by aggressive affects, resonate in the dark, black space, creating a strong, emotional vibration.

2.1. Ghost Choir Karaoke



Blue Sky Karaoke Club (RO JI GAO LAN TIAN CLUB), Beijing 12.9.2009

Main:

2.1.2. Script

2.1.2. Performance:

Building ground in Hohot, Innner Mongolia 17.9.2009

Blue Sky Karaoke Club (RO JI GAO LAN TIAN CLUB),

Beijing 12.9.2009

2.1.3. Analysis

Commentary:

2.1.4.1. Demolition

2.1.4.2. Cloning

2.1.4.3. Contruction Site and Karaoke Club:

The Public Square as Resistance Platform

Appendix:

2.1.5.1. Ghost Choir Karaoke, video 45:32 min.<sup>68</sup>

2.1.5.2. List of Seven Demands

2.1.5.3. New May Fourth Manifesto

## **Ghost Choir Karaoke (2.1.1.)**

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Two sites in China: A building ground in Hohot and a Karaoke Club in Beijing.<sup>69</sup>

Great Ghost Ground:

Ghosts: Boris Schiøler and Frans Jacobi

Voice-over: Yvette Brackman

Camera: Lars Ravn

Ghost Choir Karaoke:

Ghosts: Boris Schiøler, Stine, Marianne, Frans, 2 Chinese, 1 more Dane?

Soundtrack, music and singing (live + playback): Lonely Boy Choir

Camera: Yvette Brackman

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## Scene 1: Great Ghost Ground

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*We are in an immense building site at night, scanning the area. The artist/researcher speaks.*

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

So here we are in China. It's early May and the night is warm. I am the artist/researcher, and I am here with my friend Boris<sup>70</sup>. We are in an immense building site, walking around, trying to understand. Going to China nowadays is often a strange science-fiction-like experience; the places you visited last time are often hard, if not impossible, to find. As the economy is growing, whole parts of the cities are being rebuilt – streets, houses, building-blocks, whole areas – everything is erased and replaced by new cities. It is as if history is being erased and the future is installed. A bright shiny design for an ultra capitalist future. As at this spot: the art academy used to be on the other side of the street, on this side there was a mess of low storage buildings and an intermezzo of small shops and bars. Now there is a huge, new hotel of glass and steel on the other side of the street, and on this side we have this big hole out of which some new superstructure, also of glass and steel, will arise.<sup>71</sup>

*Now two white ghosts enter the scene, they stand at the edge of the immense building site. Shouting.*

### **TWO GHOSTS:**

Seize the hour! Seize the day! Wake up! China! Wake up! Seventy years are too long; Seize every minute!<sup>72</sup>

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

What we are trying to do here is a kind of double commemoration. It is the 4th of May 2009 today. May 4<sup>th</sup> is almost holy in Communist China. The May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement is the name of the nationwide demonstrations staged in 1919, provoked by the Treaty of Versailles and identified and celebrated by the Chinese Communist Party as its intellectual origin<sup>73</sup>. Today marks the 90-year anniversary of the 1919 uprisings.

But why ghosts?

Ghosts represent something unresolved in history. Someone has died, but they cannot rest in peace. Something in their lives or in their death has been left unresolved; the dead has not been given the proper respect or their proper place in history. So the dead are left to wander



around as ghosts until their positions are resolved.<sup>74</sup> So these commemorations are about something unresolved.

But then why do the ghosts claim that seventy years are too long?

Ninety minus seventy makes twenty. The other event we are trying to commemorate happened on this day twenty years ago, on May 4<sup>th</sup> 1989. May 4<sup>th</sup> was one of the key dates in the Tiananmen Square Riots, or the 1989 Democracy Movement, as this crucial moment in the recent Chinese history is also called.<sup>75</sup> This movement is still highly controversial in contemporary China; so controversial that the government actively tries to erase it from history.<sup>76</sup>

So here we are, trying to commemorate May 4th in a double manner; or more correctly: we celebrate the way that the 1989 Democracy Movement celebrated the 1919 May 4<sup>th</sup> movement. But let's start with a little background history:

On April 18<sup>th</sup> 1989 a kind of alternative commemoration of the death of the former Secretary General of The Communist Party, Hu Yaobang, occurred.<sup>77</sup> In the days following, this initially small student movement gathered enormous momentum, and already on the night of April 21<sup>st</sup>, the day before Hu Yaobang's funeral, 100.000 students and others marched to Tiananmen Square.<sup>78</sup> This was the beginning of the famous riots that led first to the occupation of Tiananmen Square for an entire 48 days, a series of dramatic hunger strikes, and in the end - on June 4<sup>th</sup> - to the infamous crack-down on the student activists by the Chinese military.

One of the early highlights of the new student movement was the cloning of the traditional communist May 4th celebrations. When the new student movement used this 70-year celebration as their platform for criticizing the regime, it became very hard for the regime to label them as anti-communist or orchestrated by the West.<sup>79</sup> The new movement marched with red flags and classic communist slogans like "Democracy and Science!" quoted directly from the 1919 campaign; even the singing was classic communist aesthetics. I call this 'cloning'. It is taking the forms - the aesthetics - of the original event and re-using them for a new purpose.

Cloning and revitalizing communist aesthetics? The form is the message; if we - in the spirit of the post-modernism it closely resembles - apply this idea to the 1989 Democracy Movement, it was the aesthetics that

mobilized the masses. But what were the student leaders actually doing to achieve this? They were taking on a range of aesthetic signifiers of communist revolts of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: the red flags, the banners, the slogans, the songs. During the 70 years that Chinese communism had evolved these signifiers, these aesthetic forms had been monumentalized and standardized by the party and the regime, they had become the stiffened and dead iconography of a brutal system, emptied of their original meaning. When re-using them in 89, the students remade this iconography in a very hands-on way; they simply re-did everything by hand and by themselves. The red flags were simple pieces of red fabric attached to whatever poles available, the slogans were hand-painted in yellow on red headbands or on cardboard signboards, the songs were sung by the students themselves while marching.<sup>80</sup>

All these hand-made, spontaneous aesthetics created a new authenticity, a new raw energy that made the claim for revolt and change plausible. Sincere. The do-it-yourself attitude was accessible for everyone; it was easy to join the movement, it didn't take training, uniforms or special skills. The parades were inclusive, in a very basic democratic sense. This was the new raw decor of communist revolt.<sup>81</sup>

#### **TWO GHOSTS:**

Democracy and Science!

The purpose of news is not the deception of the people!

Do we have to wait for another seventy years?<sup>82</sup>

#### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

A central part of the whole movement, right from the beginning to the dramatic end on June 4<sup>th</sup> was the Arts Choral Group. The Arts Choral Group was a loosely assembled choir of art students who took part in the demonstrations; their function was to energize the participants with singing, and providing the movement with an emotional and artistic identity. They were singing a range of agitation songs and other worker-songs from the repertoire of classic communism. The number one song on the repertoire was of course 'The Internationale', the iconic socialist anthem. Whenever the demonstrations needed encouragement and collective spirit, the Art Choral Group started up 'The Internationale' which then united everyone in passionate singing.<sup>83</sup>

Philip J. Cunningham reports:

"Why sing a song embraced by the establishment? The idea is brilliant in its way. If you sing it enough, you own it. The Communist-indoctrinated youth of Beijing are waving the red flag to beat the red flag, employing the iconic rhetoric of rebellion to remake China in their own image."<sup>84</sup>

This is exactly what I mean by 'cloning'.

In the crackdown on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1989 the Arts Choral Group disappeared. We will now take you back to Beijing to bring the choir back into an environment that fits this idea of cloning. Here we are at the Blue Sky Karaoke Club, commemorating May 4th 1989.

## Scene 2: Ghost Choir Karaoke

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*We are now at a spectacular karaoke club in Beijing. 7 ghosts enter the stage, find their positions and stand still. Music starts. A male voice-over asks questions, bewildered, in English. A female voice asks the same questions in Chinese.*

### **DAI WEI:**

"What happened to me? I see Tian Yi and me....hand in hand....running for our lives. Is that a memory? Did it really happen? The tanks roll towards us..."

### **TIAN YI:**

"What happened to me? I see Dai Wei and me....hand in hand....running for our lives. Is that a memory? Did it really happen? The tanks roll towards us..."<sup>85</sup>

*6 ghosts now gather in front of the microphone, center stage.*

### **ARTS CHORAL GROUP:**

"Bright flame of youth! Stand tall and erect!"  
"Arise! We don't want to be your slaves!"  
"Freedom! And Democracy!"  
"Bright Flame of Youth!"  
"Unite! Under the sky! For All The People!"  
"Bright Flame of Youth! Stand tall and erect!"  
"Freedom! And Democracy!"  
"Bright Flame of Youth! Stand tall and erect!"  
"Democracy and Science!"  
"China's Soul! China's Soul!"<sup>86</sup>  
"China's Soul! China's Soul!"  
"Unite! Under the Sky! For All The People!"

*The ghosts return to their positions. Two of them unfold a long, empty, white banner. Two others climb the two dancing-poles; turning, turning. The Lonely Boy Ghost starts singing.*

### **LONELY BOY GHOST:**

"Midnight moon of Tiananmen,  
When will I see you again?  
Look for you everywhere,  
Going in circles around the square...  
Riding with you down Chang'an Jie,  
Memories I'd like to share  
Shadows dancing in the dark,  
Lovers talking in the park...  
Follow you here,  
Follow you there,

Bathing in you,  
Sweet moonlight everywhere...  
Midnight moon of Tiananmen,  
When will I see you again."<sup>87</sup>

*Still singing, the Lonely Boy Ghost follows the other 6  
ghosts off stage.*

**THE END**

### **Analysis (2.1.3.)**

Ghost Choir Karaoke was the first of the 9 performances comprising this project to be performed. It was done before the format of the sense-event and the following discussions was developed. The figure of the artist/researcher wasn't in place either. The two parts of this performance was performed at two separate sites. The first part, Great Ghost Ground was only performed for the camera and the voice-over of the artist/researcher was added much later in the editing of the video. The status of the performances and the resulting video is thus quite different from the other 8 performances.

The idea of a straight video-documentation of the performances, that the other video-documentation is based on, is not possible here. The video, included here as Appendix 2.1.5.1., is an edited version of the two performances that goes beyond the concept of documentation and becomes the art-work in itself. The performances and the video must be considered as different art-works; they are separate entities with each their characteristics.

In this sense Ghost Choir Karaoke is an exception from the defined format of the sense-event. I have decided to include it anyway; as an elaboration on the the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement it serves a vital function in the overall argumentation, even if it is an aberration from the research method employed in the other 8 performances/sense-events in the project. The character of the performances was vital for the formation of a research method as well; this was the performance, where the first shape of the sense-event appeared.

This analysis is different too, it has to criss-cross between the performances and the video, which is the result of an editing; reducing and adding to the original performance.

The story of how the two performances were developed is long and rambling. They were done as part of the 10th anniversary of the 10<sup>th</sup> OPEN Performance Art Festival in Beijing, China, but in my internal working process, they were also an answer to a question of how to commemorate the 20-year anniversary of the 1989 Democracy Movement and the so-called Tiananmen Square Massacre on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1989. A question that had arisen in connection with my participation in the exhibition 'Kina Hus', at Overgaden in Copenhagen earlier that year.

Going to Beijing and taking part in the OPEN Festival revealed how big the difference in talking about 1989 and Tiananmen Square was in Europe and in China. In China these events are a real political taboo, something one has to be careful to deal with in a precise and well-considered manner. The conceptualisation of Ghost Choir Karaoke was clearly influenced by this context. I had to find a way of dealing with this content in a manner that would make sense in Beijing in 2009.

The first performance – scene 2 in the script and in the video - took place at the Blue Sky Karaoke Club (RO JI GAO LAN TIAN CLUB) in Beijing. It was planned as a discreet, subdued commemoration of the 1989 events. The audience was given no hint of the content of the performance, and it was only as slogans were shouted out, and the final song, Tiananmen Moon, evolved that direct references to the original event became obvious. As one spectator remarked afterwards:

"At first sight the scenario looked humourous and somewhat silly, it was only as the performance evolved, as the mood became massively sad, that one realised that this was serious, that something very heavy and very crucial was at stake."<sup>88</sup>

This strategy of 'the hidden content' can of course be discussed. Had it been better to confront the situation and do a provocative, direct statement on the 20-year anniversary of the 1989 Democracy Movement? Being in the situation, I realised I had no intention of provoking a direct discussion, probably involving some kind of authorities, about how and why this historical event was such a taboo. A discussion of censorship and reclaiming history. I had the feeling that my position as an European, a Western artist, was somehow too obvious. The risk I would be taking, wouldn't be my risk, rather it would be my hosts, the organizers of OPEN Festival, I would put at risk by such an act. In the grand scheme of things, it wouldn't be such a surprise either. Rather, such a gesture would somehow be in the framework of 'what is to be expected'. The outcome would be in the line of what a massive array of Western media had tried out on June 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> earlier that summer. A small provocative gesture on my part, 3 months later, generating the expected reaction from the authorities, wouldn't really add anything, but stating the obvious.

As said, I opted for a more discreet version of a commemoration. What interested me was not so much the massacre on June 4<sup>th</sup> 1989 and the obvious censorship it is now guarded with; it was rather the intriguing cloning that the 1989 Democracy Movement used as their strategy to critique the oppressive Communist Party and the manner in which the activists used the occupation of a central public square, Tiananmen Square, as a platform for protest and as an image of 'another society'. These themes are developed further in the commentary below. Realizing the immensity of especially the latter theme, I chose to limit the performances to deal with the first theme, cloning.

A string of coincidences influenced the choice of venues for Ghost Choir Karaoke. I visited the Blue Sky Karaoke Club by chance an evening two days prior to the performance. Completely fascinated by the extravagant, completely over-the-top décor, I realized it could be a relevant setting for the performance; the fact that this was a karaoke club would place the ghosts of the student activists of 1989 in a contemporary setting, not only representing the total sell-out to capitalism of the Chinese Communist regime, but also thematizing the cloning I was trying to focus on. Re-enacting a political demonstration with ghosts in a karaoke club, seemed the appropriate way to commemorate a movement that used the cloning of the features of its enemy as one of their main strategies.

Later, we went to Inner Mongolia with the intention of bringing the ghosts out into the grasslands - these immense prairies in the border region between China and Mongolia. The idea was to give the activist-ghost some kind of release in a spiritual landscape, but we were obstructed; set at halt by a banal language barrier. Instead of the endless grasslands, we opted for the immense building-site across from our hotel in Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia. This large hole in the ground became the site for the second performance, Great Ghost Ground, scene 1 in the script and in the video. Like the karaoke club, the building site became a symbolic representation of contemporary Chinese society at large; a figuration of the collective amnesia that Chinese neo-capitalism seems to revel in these years.

The sites of the performance thus play an important role as contextualizations of the content. These are the sites from which we are now looking at the events in 1989. This is the society that evolved from the dismissal of the Democracy Movement by the regime back then. This is the society that evolved out of the Ground Zero of June 4<sup>th</sup> 1989. This is where the ghosts of the Democracy Movement are left to wander. In Ghost Choir Karaoke the sites have clear symbolic functions – in the following performances the choice of site plays an equally important part, but it is not necessarily as symbolic as here.

The ghosts have a similar symbolic function. Using ghosts to represent the activists of the Democracy Movement is a way of hinting at their status as rejected, tabooised and 'illegal combatants', not only condemned and prosecuted by law, but simply rejected from their place in history, written out of the official version of Chinese history, as if they never existed, as if their acts never happened. They are thus un-released, condemned to wander like ghost. Like a psychological trauma, their story are repressed, unresolved, as long as their acts are not given the proper place in history.

Injected into the two performances are various quotes from the 1989 events: The slogans shouted by the ghosts are the real slogans used by the 1989 Democracy Movement, most of them again quoted from slogans used by the 1919 May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement. The text of the song Tiananmen Moon is written by the American journalist Philip J Cunningham as he was taking part in the occupation of Tiananmen Square. The initial dialogue between two of the ghosts at the karaoke club is taken from the novel, Beijing Coma. These quotes all refer back to the events 1989, more or less directly. In the performance, though, they are presented as karaoke with all the *Verfremdung* inherent in this genre.

Karaoke was invented in the early 1970s by the Japanese drummer, Daisuke Inoue, who invented a tape recorder-like machine that played pop-songs without the lead vocal track. A microphone made it possible for members of an audience to sing the song themselves with the original music as backdrop. The technique quickly developed into a popular kind of entertainment, spreading fast, first in Asia and later all over the world. Inoue was later heralded for 'providing an entirely new way for people to learn to tolerate each other'.<sup>89</sup>

In karaoke a member of an audience steps up and sings a well-known pop song to the rest of the audience. By inducing her song into the soundtrack a kind of identification takes place. For a moment the person becomes a singer herself. She is re-enacting the song and with it the emotional spectrum it represents. In this sense karaoke makes it possible for the karaoke-singer to rehearse a certain set of emotions, most often in front of a group of friends. Even though it takes place in a joyful, party atmosphere, karaoke has this undertone of group therapy. The karaoke-singer reveals an emotional aspect of herself in front of her friends, and together they incorporate this new aspect of her identity in their social interaction. Each taking their turn to be the singer, each taking their turn to reveal new sides of their personalities, the group of friends little by little 'learn to tolerate each other'.

This therapeutic aspect of karaoke is one of the inherent proposals in 'Ghost Choir Karaoke'. If the 1989 Democracy Movement, the occupation of Tiananmen Square and the massacre on June 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> 1989 are repressed historical events - a historical and political taboo – some kind of political therapy is needed. Such a process is



painful, even scandalous, for all parts involved. It has to happen over a long stretch of time, as a slow process of reconciliation. By commemorating 1989 Democracy Movement as ghosts in a karaoke setting, the performance proposes some kind of collective reconciliation therapy. This therapeutic process doesn't have to take place in the form of karaoke; karaoke is rather the aesthetic form in which this idea is proposed. On a metaphorical level, though, karaoke works as a metaphor for the general cultural and political reconciliation needed. Chinese society at large needs to reconcile these events, in a collective process of 'learning to tolerate each other'.

The therapeutic aspects of karaoke resembles another interesting aspect of the cloning used by the 1989 Democracy Movement. What the movement offered China in 1989 – what the unrest, the demonstrations, the occupation of the square and all the cloned Communistic imagery offered to the regime – was exactly such a therapeutic process of reclaiming past ideals and past moral standards. The 1989 Democracy Movement wasn't a revolutionary movement struggling for a new society; what they offered was, on the contrary, an outstretched hand to the regime – a chance to reclaim true Communist glory; a chance to once again become the power of the people. On the night of June 4<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> this offer was rejected in the most brutal manner possible. The outstretched hand was cut off, and the very idea of such an offer was repressed.

In Ghost Choir Karaoke, 20 years later, the offer is still rejected. The activists are left to wander as ghost; left to sing their songs and shout their slogans, now as karaoke, in a completely estranged society, as far from reconciliation as ever. On the contrary, Chinese society seems engaged in a massive collective process of amnesia, here symbolized by the immense building-site in Great Ghost Ground. In this sad terrain, the two ghosts shout their futile Communist slogans into a void:

“Seize the hour! Seize the day! Wake up! China! Wake up!”

### Demolition (2.1.4.1.)

In his novel on the 1989 Democracy Movement, 'Beijing Coma' the Chinese writer Ma Jian uses the planned demolition of the area where the main protagonist Dai Wei lives with his mother as a metaphor for the rising threat they are living with. Dai Wei is completely numb, unable to move and without memory or consciousness. It is 10 years after 1989, and we are with Dai Wei, inside his mind, as he slowly and very painfully wakes up, and remembers his life piece by piece; slowly, slowly sampling the fragments of his memories. As he lies there, a vegetable in his mother's living-room, the demolition of the housing-blocks moves closer and closer. In the process, the mother becomes increasingly insane. She completely neglects the warnings from the city officials and turns down every offer of a new apartment. The demolition of the housing blocks parallels the erasing of her identity. It is beautifully juxtaposed with the returning of Dai Wei's memory. As the mind of the mother disintegrates, he slowly regains consciousness.

At the end of the novel the process of regaining memory is completed, when he is finally able to remember the disastrous events on June 4th 1989, the bloodshed and the brutal killings of most of the student leaders, he was then one of. In an extremely dramatic sequence, he remembers the moment, when he is shot through the head and loses consciousness. It is interspersed with the description of how a bulldozer tears down the front of the apartment, he is living in now, ten years later, and the mother finally breaks down totally. Then on the last page, in the miraculous final paragraph, we follow the bio-chemical reflexes inside Dai Wei, suddenly flashing up:

"Your blood is getting warmer. The muscles of your eye sockets quiver. Your eyes will soon fill with tears. Saliva drips onto the soft palate at the back of your mouth. A reflex is triggered, and the palate rises, closing off the nasal passage and allowing the saliva to flow into your pharynx. The muscles of the oesophagus, which have been dormant for so many years, contract, projecting the saliva down into your stomach. A bio-electrical signal darts like a spark of light from the neurons in your motor cortex, down the spinal cord to a muscle fibre at the tip of your finger. You will no longer have to rely on your memories to get through the day. This is not a momentary flash of life before death. This is a new beginning." <sup>90</sup>

In that same moment, when he loses his mother and their home in a kind of second revenge by the system, he is alive again, ready to start anew. But he is reborn completely precariously. Stripped of all connections and belongings. Even his newfound memories are now tabooed by the authorities. A naked man with a prohibited identity. Or as the novel ends by asking:

"But once you've climbed out of this fleshy tomb, where is there left for you to go?" <sup>91</sup>

Ma Jian creates an immensely complex and emotionally gripping narration of Spring 1989 and the cultural and political climate surrounding it, both backwards and forwards in history; the cultural revolution of the 1960s and the manic contemporary re-building of the Chinese cities.

In the novel, in 1989, Dai Wei is taking care of logistics; in the demonstrations and the occupation of Tiananmen Square, he is the main person responsible for the

spatial distribution of the protesting masses. He organizes the guards that direct the movement of the demonstrations and he organizes the cordons – the living fences of students – that structure the spatial divisions, and the social hierarchies in the occupied square. Later in the present time of the novel, he and his mother are threatened by the unavoidable demolition of their house and the area, where they are living. By linking the struggles and the emotional trauma of *Dei Wei* to these spatial structures, Ma Jian creates a convincing portrait of a society, where the sheer pace of rebuilding and recreating the vast Chinese megacities has taken on the characteristics of a collective mass psychosis. At an unprecedented pace, whole areas and local communities are erased and refurbished with anonymous architecture, thereby substituting the personal histories and identities connected to these areas with the new consumerist identities of present-day China. Here, Ma Jian's critique of the present Chinese rulers is as devastating as his portrayal of the dictatorship that the student revolt faced in 1989. It's not only *Dei Wei* that has been in coma: It is a whole nation that is performing collective amnesia. This is the double meaning of the title, *Beijing Coma*.

My idea of commemorating the 1989 Democracy Movement by using ghosts was partly inspired by this novel. Also my choice of sites for the two performances in *Ghost Choir Karaoke* was inspired by how Ma Jian uses the transformation of the city as the spatial expression of totalitarian rule. In my project, the building site and the karaoke club work as figurations of the neo-capitalist society the seven ghosts of the Arts Choral Group are facing when they return to celebrate yet another May 4th.

### **Cloning (2.1.4.2.)**

"Fellow students, fellow countrymen:

Seventy years ago today, a large group of illustrious students assembled in front of Tiananmen, and a new chapter in the history of China was opened. Today, we are once again assembled here, not only to commemorate that monumental day but more importantly, to carry forward the May Fourth spirit of science and democracy. Today, in front of the symbol of the Chinese nation, Tiananmen, we can proudly proclaim to all the people in our nation that we are worthy of the pioneers of seventy years ago."

Wuer Kaixi at Tiananmen Square May 4, 1989<sup>92</sup>

The 1989 Democracy Movement starts as a small student march to Tiananmen Square on April 18<sup>th</sup> 1989. It's a spontaneous reaction to the death of the former Secretary General of The Communist Party, Hu Yaobang, who died on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

That the first instances of critique towards the regime takes the shape of mourning an official Communist leader is paradoxical, but it will prove to be one of the typical features of the emerging movement. In the 7 weeks that the uprising lasts, this strategy of 'cloning' the symbolic language of the regime the new movement is criticizing, is utilized in various ways. It is also – in my view – this cloning of Communist symbolic features that confuses the regime and makes it possible for the movement to occupy Tiananmen Square and remain there for an entire 48 days.

Tiananmen Square is the central public space, not only of Beijing, but of the whole of China; it has immense symbolic importance and is the spatial expression of ultimate political power in Communist China. Mao Zedong built the square as an exemplification of the new transparent rule of The People; here power became accessible for all. Entering Tiananmen Square on April 18<sup>th</sup>, the students immediately re-activates the idealistic terminology of proto-communism, using it as the central weapon of critique in a wave of critical discourse that will explode into grand scale protest marches in the following days.<sup>93</sup>

This re-activation of Communist ideals is not only a question of political rhetorics. To a large extent, its is performed as a re-activation of various formats of communication. Communist discourse is re-activated by re-using - cloning - a range of signature Communist symbols, thereby creating a new, fresh version of Communist aesthetics, directly accessible to the dissatisfied masses.

### **Big Letter Posters**

One of the most prominent features in this re-activation of Communist form are the so-called 'big letter posters'; these hand-written posters with shorter or longer texts were a favorite propaganda medium used by the emerging Chinese Communist Party in the 1930s and 40s. It was a cheap easily-accessible medium that could be hung on walls and buildings throughout society at a fast pace. Mao Zedong liked these posters so much that he encouraged the use of them both in the 1950s campaign against intellectuals and in the cultural revolution in the 1960s. This was the mass media of the people. The right to produce big letter posters was even enshrined in the 1975 constitution. Shortly afterwards, Deng Xiaoping banned this right again, feeling threatened by the possibilities of direct popular critique. But in 1989 the use of big letter posters are blossoming in the Beijing campuses. Numerous poster-walls - so called 'democracy-walls' - are visited everyday by thousands of

students reading very direct critical comments on the regime and calls for demonstrations.<sup>94</sup> Already in the first spontaneous occupation, starting as some students just remain on Tiananmen Square in the evening of April 18<sup>th</sup>, a number of Big Letter Posters are mounted on the Monument to the People's Heroes in the middle of the square.

In the morning of April 19<sup>th</sup> a list of 7 demands are formulated and delivered to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.<sup>95</sup> Of course the members of the Standing Committee don't respond. Even though the protesters are cloning the Communist slogans, their claims, as stated in the list of 7 demands, are quite universal. These demands closely resemble the demands made by various protest movements during, for instance, the recent 'Arabic spring'.<sup>96</sup>

In the following weeks the new protest movement swells to hundreds of thousands; masses of students engaging in a series of large-scale demonstrations dominated by the new raw mix of Communist aesthetics. The slogans and big letter posters are critical, but subtle in the sense that large parts of the critique are formulated as a resurrection of the ideal Communist values. When an editorial in the People's Daily by Deng Xiaopeng on April 26<sup>th</sup> criticizes the new movement harshly, accusing them of plotting to overthrow the Communist Party, the student leaders, although being offended in a major way, even reacts by toning down their slogans, underlining a message of 'anti-corruption' and 'pro-party'.<sup>97</sup>

### **Democracy and science!**

As utilized in the script of 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' one of the major examples of cloning is the intriguing appropriation of the nationwide May 4th celebrations of the classic Communist May 4th Movement. These almost mythic riots in front of the Tiananmen Gate in 1919 led to the formation the Chinese Communist Party. When the May 4th demonstration of the new 1989 Democracy Movement arrives at Tiananmen Square, the student leader Wuer Kaixi, chairman of the newly founded Beijing Students' Federation, reads aloud the 'New May Fourth Manifesto' for the around 100.000 participants in the demonstration.<sup>98</sup> The manifesto paraphrases the 'Manifesto of All Beijing Students' written by student patriots seventy years earlier on May 4th, 1919. In emotionally charged phrases the new manifesto uses the slogan of 'Democracy and Science!' to stage the new movement and their goals as a direct continuation of the struggles initiated by the first Chinese Communists in 1919. The demands of the new movement are presented as an actualization of the historic, paradigmatic shift in the spirit of the Chinese nation:

"Now more than ever, we need to review the experiences and lessons of all student movements since May Fourth, to make science and rationalism a system, a process. Only then can the tasks the May Fourth Movement set before us be accomplished, only then can the spirit of May Fourth be carried forward, and only then can our wish for a strong China be realized."<sup>99</sup>

The 'New May Fourth Manifesto' is criticised for being 'vague and weak in ideas' by more radical observers and supporters of the movement. On the contrary, I see it as a brilliant example of how 'cloning' is manifested; by appropriating the rethoric of the Party and using this rethoric to criticise the party by its own measures, a very broad platform for criticism is created. Here it is not only the very radical protesters that want a complete revolutionary change of system who are addressed and included; the manifesto opens the discourse, making it accessible for the much larger segments of

society that somehow still believe in communism, but want it in a 'clean' democratic version, based on the original social and egalitarian ideas, far from the hegemonical and corrupt state dictatorship it has involved into. It is an intricate and complex strategy, equivalent to the post-modern ideas flourishing in the West in the same period.

### **Goddess of Democracy**

Even the famous 'Goddess of Democracy', a large-scale sculptural monument created by art students on Tiananmen Square in the last days before the crack-down, is a cloning of a classic Communist monument. It is generally interpreted in the West as a copy of the US 'Statue of Liberty', and thereby a clear marker of the supposed inspiration from American style capitalist democracy. On the contrary, it is partly modeled on Russian Communist Vera Mukhina's monumental sculpture, "A Worker and a Collective Farm Woman," which held aloft a torch with two hands on the top of the USSR's pavilion at the 1937 Paris World Fair. In an accurate description of the artistic process of creating the sculpture, the former art student Tsao Hsinyauan explains how the idea of copying the Statue of Liberty is rejected as being too 'pro-American'. Instead the sculpture is constructed with various references, among them "A Worker and a Collective Farm Woman" that is the model for the head of the sculpture.<sup>100</sup>

The American sociologist George Katsiaficas uses this fact as an argument against Samuel Huntington's idea of a 'third wave':

"Huntington framed his third wave as a tribute to US imperial power and democratic prestige. He tells us that

"...movements for democracy throughout the world were inspired and borrowed from the American example. In Rangoon supporters of democracy carried the American flag; in Johannesburg they reprinted The Federalist; in Prague they sang "We Shall Overcome"; in Warsaw they read Lincoln and quoted Jefferson; in Beijing they erected the Goddess of Democracy..."<sup>101</sup>

Here Huntington makes a critical error, a value judgment that leads him to misconstrue events. He claims the "Goddess of Democracy" in Tiananmen Square was a copy of the US Statue of Liberty. In fact, Chinese art students explicitly rejected the idea of copying the US statue as too "pro-American" and instead modeled theirs on Russian Communist Vera Mukhina's monumental sculpture, "A Worker and a Collective Farm Woman..."<sup>102</sup>

As Katsiaficas here argues, the copying – the cloning – is not a means in itself, it is crucial what is cloned, since the cloning carries with it the ideals inherent in the original. Here, in the 1989 Democracy Movement, it is crucial to understand how the political agenda of the proto-communist May 4th Movement of 1919 becomes a template for the new democratic movement seventy years later.

### **Appropriation**

My idea here of 'cloning' is of course inspired by the post-modernism that flourished in the West in those years in the 1980s; the way the student activists play with Communist iconography and political history is completely in line with other post-modern phenomena of the period. 'Cloning' is the aesthetic re-use of the imagery

and symbolism of the powers that be, to criticize those same powers. It recalls the various artistic strategies emerging in the period, such as appropriation art, neo-geo or trans-avantgarde. Especially appropriation art uses similar strategies of copying; remaking historic artworks or other kinds of cultural material. The appropriation is not only a way of questioning the authenticity of the artwork and the author, but also a way to criticize linear progression in the writing of art and cultural history. Most importantly, it is a method to re-contextualize meaning.

Even though the cloning - in Beijing in 1989 - is partly aesthetic, it is taken far beyond the sphere of art, into the domain of political discourse. Here, the traditional Communist ideology is re-freshed and made real once again.

### **Reclaim Communism!**

Choosing specific Communist celebrations as frameworks for new demonstrations creates a scenario loaded with potential; there is an immense range of classic Communist images waiting to be re-enacted, images of the people claiming their right to power. Very recognizable images. Every Chinese has been indoctrinated by these images all through their upbringing. The regime has loaded this iconography with pre-defined meaning. Revitalising such imagery is to tap into a whole range of emotions and hopes that is already imprinted on the soul of every citizen. By performing these scenarios - by marching and demonstrating, as if ideal Communism was still an option - the student movement opens up a possibility for everyone to take part, to actualize these images for themselves. The images are recognizable, but it is only by performing them, the movement makes them their own.

### **Contruction Site and Karaoke Club: The Public Square as Resistance Platform (2.1.4.3.)**

The two sites in Ghost Choir Karaoke – the contruction site and the karaoke club – are chosen as symbolic representations of public space in present-day China. Apart from this rather sardonic contextualization of the performances, the thematic of public space is not discussed directly in the performance, simply because the performance would become too long and too complicated, if it was to include a proper actualization of that theme. Even though the way the 1989 Democracy Movement utilizes public space or claims and re-invents it is highly relevant for this project as a whole. The occupation of Tiananmen Square can be seen as the emblematic mother of all those occupations of main public squares that has dominated the recent wave of global protest movements, starting out with the occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo in January/February 2011. I return to Tahrir Square in the last script/performance 'Silent Stand', where the even more recent occupations of Puerta Del Sol in Madrid and the whole series of city square squattings done by the Occupy Movement in the US is also discussed. In this note, I will try to present some of the features of the Tiananmen Square occupation, hoping to establish a kind of proto-type of this phenomenon that can be reflected in the discussion of the contemporary occupations of city squares.

The use of Big Letter Posters (as decribed in commentary 2.1.4.2.) is a crucial element in the establishment of the Tiananmen Occupation. Already in the winter of 1989, the presentations of this kind of posters increases on the university campuses in Beijing. The most famous site for these posters is the so-called democracy-wall on the campus of Beijing University. Here the growing discontent is formulated in long and quite outspoken texts. The posters and the democracy-walls become sites for debate and discussion, where critique of both the university leaders and politics in general emerges. When the former Secretary General of The Communist Party, Hu Yaobang, dies on April 17<sup>th</sup>, a new kind of texts immediately pop up on the posters; intricate elegies, where mourning for the dead Hu Yaobang is wowed together with harsh criticism of the ruling Communist Party.

As described above, this event becomes the decisive moment that engages thousands and other thousands of students and workers all over Beijing. Already the following night a large scale demonstration march to Tiananmen Square. Here the students occupy the area in front of the National People's Congress, and in the morning they try to deliver the list of seven demands (see appendix 2.1.5.2.). Of course the members of the Standing Committee don't respond. The students stay, sitting on the square for the rest of the day, a small core of the protesters even stays on until April 20<sup>th</sup>. During this first spontaneous occupation, a number of Big Letter Posters are mounted on the Monument to the People's Heroes in the middle of the square. Among them a poster with very direct questions to the main leaders of China:

#### **I'D LIKE TO KNOW (excerpt)**

"Comrade Xiaoping, I'd like to know: You realized early on that it doesn't matter if a cat is black or white; as long as it catches mice, it's a good cat. Doesn't it follow that insistence on distinguishing between "red" [politically correct] and "yellow" [liberal or bourgeois Western] thinking shows a lack of careful reflection? Reform in the political arena is an absolute necessity. But if we hear only words and see no actions, how will there be any results? Cars and residences, I want them all - and a computer to boot; so how is it



that your policy of "getting rich together" has turned out to be nothing but the same old empty promises? Democracy and freedom, the people want; how can you claim that we are too childish by this much or that much? Massive disarmament you can achieve, so just what makes it so tough to clean up corruption in the Party?"<sup>103</sup>

Trying to get in direct communication with the leading politicians with the list of demands on the one hand, and spontaneously establishing a temporary public space with statements directed towards a general audience of coincidental people passing by on the other hand are already quite strong interferences in the public order; but doing this on Tiananmen Square - the official and traditional site of symbolic representations of ultimate political power, not only in Communist China but in the Chinese Empire per se – is an extremely fearless, political gesture. By raising a critical voice, by speaking up in the same space as the political leaders, the students are claiming their right to be heard, to be taken seriously by the highest levels of society. The choice of site is crucial here. Tiananmen Square is the symbolic site of ultimate political power, and by occupying precisely that site, the students occupy the symbolic power as well.

The immense open square itself was constructed by the Communist regime immediately after the take-over in 1949. Until then, it was the gate to the Forbidden City, where the Emperor resided. The Tiananmen Gate was the symbolic point from which the ultimate power of the Emperor radiated out into the entire Chinese Empire. Mao Zedong constructed the Tiananmen Square as an open, accessible square, large enough for hundreds of thousands of people; a symbolic representation of the transparent spirit of the new regime. The American theatre director and professor in performance studies, Richard Schechner, writes:

“Clearly, the creation of Tiananmen Square was intended to refocus ceremonial - that is, theatrical - power from behind the Forbidden City's walls to the big open space, a more fitting symbol of what the new order promised. Mao, the new emperor, no longer sat on a throne behind the Gate, but was mounted in front, gazing out over the Square and from there to all of China. Power was no longer to radiate from secret forbidden places but be displayed for all people to see and share. The nation itself was renamed The People's Republic of China. And what the students who came to Tiananmen Square in 1978, 1986, and 1989 demanded, more than anything, was what they called 'transparency' - defined as an openness in government operations corresponding to the open square that symbolized the new China. In occupying Tiananmen Square the students were challenging the government, actualizing the students' belief that the government was not living up to its promises. There were precedents for such actions in the dramatic May 4th Movement of 1919 and the more recent democracy movements in 1978 and 1986 - all of which focused on Tiananmen Square.”

<sup>104</sup>

The next phase of the uprising is about demonstrations; in a series of larger and larger demonstrations the movement escalates into hundreds of thousands. On April 21-22 on the occasion of the funeral of Hu, on April 27<sup>th</sup> on the occasion of the 26 April editorial, where Deng Xiaoping labels the students as 'small segments of opportunists', on May 4<sup>th</sup> on the occasion of the May 4<sup>th</sup> Jubilee, as described in the commentary 'Cloning'. Tiananmen Square is not occupied in connection with any of

these demonstrations, but they all march to Tiananmen, claiming it as the symbolic goal of each march. In this sense Tiananmen Square is constantly inscribed as the central location of the new movement, encircled in a star-like formation by the various university campuses.

In this phase a range of alternative news-journals also appear, the most persistent being the News Herald, published from the campus of Beijing University all through the protests until the last issue on May 31. These journals expand the new space of free speech established by the Big Letter Posters. Whereas the posters have a limited outreach, because they are bound to the site where they are mounted, the new journals are printed in many copies and communicate far beyond the university campuses. A practise of copying the texts on the posters by hand and thereby spreading the message is often used, though. In the democracy-walls, the posters and new journals an intellectual practice emerges, a public debate in text continuing all through the protests. The contributions range from short poems to long theoretical proposals, but in general, there is a sincere, engaged level of commitment that ensures a lively and serious debate. In the various phases of the uprisings, the general mood of the movement is reflected directly in this ongoing debate – its swings from extremely emotional outcries to high-level theoretical considerations on the direction of Chinese politics.

On May 13<sup>th</sup>, following a period of bewilderment and contrasting forces inside the protest movement, the core of radical activists have gained the upper hand. Disappointed by the lacking will of the government to enter into dialogue and negotiations, they begin a large-scale hunger strike. Approximately two thousand students arrive at Tiananmen Square to commence the hunger strike.

“They settle down in groups, organised by school (university) in front of the Monument to the People’s Heroes on sheets of plastic, clothes and newspapers that provide little insulation from the hard cement of the square”

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Apparently not prepared for a longer occupation of the square, they nevertheless settle there in a very strong, emotional plea for respect and dialogue with the authorities. They are immediately encircled by thousands of protective supporters who by this gesture establishes the first spatial structure of the occupation: The central core of the protest - the weak hunger strikers - and the protective ring around them.

The new statements of the hunger strikers are far more emotional in language and approach. The movement has become existential, armed with desperate pathos:

“To die, hoping for the widest echo, an eternal echo.  
He will be gone, his words good and wise;  
the horse will be gone, its neighs sorrowful.  
Farewell, colleagues, take care!  
He who dies, he who survives, are equally faithful.  
Farewell, love, take care!  
I cannot bear to leave you, yet it must come to an end.  
Farewell, mother and father!  
Please forgive me, your child who cannot be loyal [to the country]  
and [meet the demands of] filial piety at the same time!

Farewell, people!  
Please allow us to use this means, however reluctantly,  
to demonstrate your loyalty.  
The vows written with our lives will brighten the skies of the Republic!

*The Entire Body of the Beijing University Hunger Strikers Group, May 13, 1989 (handbill, poster)" <sup>106</sup>*

This existential pathos is a prominent feature in the occupation of Tiananmen; with emotional outcry, the organizers try to mobilize support by even larger parts of society, i.e. the parents' generation who are being addressed directly now.

The hunger strike and the occupation coincides with the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev visiting China's leader Deng Xiaoping. Although not intended to interrupt the meeting of the two Communist leaders, the hunger strike in Tiananmen creates constant obstacles and disruptions for the ceremonies and celebrations supposed to greet the Soviet leader. Already on the afternoon of his arrival, the mass of people in Tiananmen supporting the hunger strikers swells to a crowd of half a million. The organizers try to control the masses by a system of cordons of students, protecting the area where the thousands of hunger strikers are lying on the ground, and directing the crowds into certain areas of the square, thereby giving the authorities space to carry on the ceremonial duties of the state visit. But half a million is a huge crowd, and the occupation is more or less stealing the focus of the international press gathered for Gorbachev's visit.

Even though it is highly controversial, also inside the protest movement and among the intellectuals supporting them, the hunger strike and the inherent occupation of the square is a turning point for protests. The popular support for the hunger strikers reaches completely unprecedented numbers, and on the day Gorbachev leaves China, on May 17<sup>th</sup>, more than a million Chinese march through the streets of Beijing, heading for Tiananmen. Now, the demonstrations and the occupation of the square consist of participants from all strands of society and people from all over China who have come to Beijing to support the new movement. On May 18<sup>th</sup> this million mass march is repeated and it is obvious that it is no longer a student phenomenon, but a widespread people's protest.

To understand why it is the hunger strike that creates this new momentum for the movement, we must consider the emotional and existential argument it contains. It is no longer an intellectual and rational plea for education and free speech, as the rhetoric was in the first weeks of the protests. The hunger strike addresses everyone on a fundamental human level. The sacrifice it involves has a heavy symbolic weight, and the most radical of all consequences: Death. This message can be understood by everyone, and the risk taken by the hunger strikers, the bravery and the willingness to go all the way, gains respect and support from the masses. It is no longer the students rallying for intellectual freedom, it is the children appealing to their parents, the youth appealing to the elders, the future of a society risking death for the nation.

Another important aspect is the shift from talking to performing; the hunger strike and the occupation of the square are not merely communication, as the demonstrations and poster-campaigns. It is direct action that risks the lives of each participant in a much more severe way; it has direct physical consequences and the emotional

impact of the actions becomes serious in an extreme, radical sense. By risking their bodies the hunger strikers hit an emotional chord that resonates deeply in the masses of the Chinese nation.

These elements of self-sacrifice and martyrdom are something we also see as an important aspect of the recent uprisings in the Middle East – the Arabic spring – where self-immolation and hunger strike have created key shifts in the unfurling of events.

The accommodation of the two thousand hunger-striking students in Tiananmen Square requires certain spatial interventions. First, it is simple protection against the blistering sun – umbrellas and improvised roofs of cardboard and fabrics are erected to create shadow. Later, when the students start fainting and the physical consequences of starving appear, make-shift emergency aid stations are set up, supported by corridors through the crowds, sealed off by the student cordons, making way for ambulances.

These spatial measures soon develop into city-like structures, where the various functions of the occupation are divided and sealed off by an intricate structure of cordons – living fences of students – and a organization of guards protecting the entrance to these sealed off areas. Dai Wei, the main character of the novel 'Beijing Coma'<sup>107</sup> was the head of this 'security organization' on Tiananmen Square, and the novel contains quite detailed descriptions of how the square is divided and protected. These fictional descriptions fit accurately with similar, but real descriptions by Philip J Cunningham in his memoir from Tiananmen Square. A temporary broadcast station with a system of loud-speakers is installed on the square, providing the crowds with on-going reports, interviews, statements and protest music. Of course this communication center immediately becomes one of the most important points in the power hierarchy soon developing among the activists, and it is carefully sealed off by the cordons and guards, allowing only very select activists entrance. In a similar manner, the leading core of activists are protected from the masses in the headquarters, where only the absolute top organizers have entrance. Around these central functions several rings or layers of sealed off areas create a spatial hierarchy that allows certain groups of activists entry to certain areas of various importance.

On May 19<sup>th</sup> the 'Hunger Strikers Group' declares an end to the hunger strike. Even though this step can be understood as an outstretched hand from the side of the Democracy Movement, it is immediately met by the hard-liners in the government, declaring martial law in Beijing; thereby sharpening the conflict severely. Once again the physiognomy of the uprising changes dramatically. The government announces that the army, The People's Liberation Army, will be called in to reinforce public rule in Beijing. In the following days, as the students keep up their occupation of Tiananmen, the citizens of Beijing organize road-blocks, sit-ins and other emergency measures to keep the army out of the city. As a result, the army is stopped in the suburbs, and Beijing becomes encircled, besieged. A massive campaign to convince the ordinary soldiers to realize their awkward position – the People's Army fighting the People - and change sides is set in. Now large fractions of student activists commit themselves to organize and facilitate key urban functions; traffic, security, patrolling the streets at night with bicycle brigades. A whole brigade of motorcycle gangs, 'The Flying Tigers', are acting as messengers, scouts and a fast communication network. If the daily life of Beijing is in chaos because of the enormous demonstrations and the blockades attempting to keep out the army, the Democratic Movement tries to

restore a temporary order inside the besieged city. Thus, the temporary spatial organization from Tiananmen is extended to the entire city, exemplifying how the Democratic Movement is no longer a students' movement, but a People's uprising mobilizing the majority of the entire Beijing population.

Momentum is crucial in such conflicts. As the situation in Beijing stiffens, as the army is not withdrawn, and as the hard-liners in the government seem to conquer the internal party opposition, the Democratic Movement loses momentum. Internal conflict starts brewing in the headquarters on Tiananmen Square. The leading organization, Beijing Student Federation, that had been the main organ for organizing the protest, is contested by a range of other organizations; as the occupation of Tiananmen is increasingly dominated by students from the provinces and workers, the grip on organizational power shifts from the Beijing students to other, more diverse groups. In the last phase of the uprising, it is an organization called 'Protect Tiananmen Headquarters', led by the young female student Chai Ling, that is taking the lead. There is constant and harsh debate on strategy. Can the occupation prevail? Or is retreat the only option left? As the internal conflict hardens, frustration emerges in the crowds on the square. Is the movement itself strong on democratic values? Does the security divisions and the sealed off headquarters in the square really reflect a democratic spirit? Or does the spatial arrangement, the spawn of check-points and guards, mirror the feudal, hierarchic structures of the system it is supposed to oppose? As a physical epitomization of this process, the camps on Tiananmen start deteriorating, the waste and trash accumulate, sanitation and hygiene falter.

One fraction supports the continuation of direct conflict that now has to be envisioned ending in bloodshed. Chai Ling even argues that blood will be the deciding factor in mobilizing the masses:

“..., only when the government descends to the depths of depravity and decides to deal with us by slaughtering us, only when rivers of blood flow in the Square, will the eyes of the country's people truly be opened, and only then will they unite.” <sup>108</sup>

Chai Ling's 'logic of blood' has strong elements of martyrization, also inherent in the hunger strike from which she emerged as a leading figure.

Is this spirit of martyrdom that we also see as an even stronger element in the 'Arabic spring', an aspect of the transcendence that appeared as purple flags in the first performance 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police'?

Back in Beijing, another fraction argues for withdrawal from Tiananmen, for retreating to the universities with the purpose of preparing for the next phase of the Democracy Movement, by enlarging the discussions, sharpening the political foundation and building up long-term organizations to intervene in Chinese politics and argue for reforms on a broader basis.

With the Democracy Movement for the first time undetermined, staying put on Tiananmen, the old guard of the Communist Party on the other hand is getting ready for the final countdown.

Then there is suddenly a fresh energy of new initiatives flowing into Tiananmen. First students from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing erect the famous 'Goddess of Democracy' on May 30th in the middle of the square. The statue attracts new crowds of curious spectators, and becomes an instant hit in the international media. Here it is often misread as a copy of the US 'Statue of Liberty', and seen as a symbol of how the protests are about wanting Western democracy-style reforms.<sup>109</sup> Immediately afterwards, plans for a 'Democracy University' are presented as a type of open university installed in Tiananmen Square, where the theoretical discussions and political thinking could be pursued in a liberated context. The idea is supported by a range of well-known intellectuals, university teachers and student leaders – tragically the 'Democracy University' is inaugurated on June 3<sup>rd</sup> in the morning of the day when the crackdown begins in the afternoon. On June 2<sup>nd</sup> a new hunger strike is also initiated, this time a small symbolic gesture by 4 cultural 'celebrities' – a rock-singer, a literary critic, a sociology professor and a newspaper editor - trying to stir public solidarity with the more and more desperate situation of the occupants on Tiananmen.

This last round of cultural and intellectual additions adds cultural institutions to the Tiananmen Occupation. Now there is a central monument, a university and even a class of cultural establishment added to the bricolage of the temporal city. Together with the Headquarters, the Broadcast Station, the Emergency Aid Station, the Democracy Walls, the Big Letter Posters, the News Journals, the Security Cordons, the Flying Tigers' motorbike-messengers and the Bicycle Brigades patrolling the city at night, they make up the grid of a new society, a temporary proposal for a democratic China.

How is the occupation and this new society to be understood? In the anarchist tradition it would be called a 'pre-figuration' of the society the movement is fighting for. In this concept the temporary city of Tiananmen Square would be an ideal proposal of how society at large could become, if the revolution was realised. Here it is the symbolic features of the encampment that are important. What kind of political ideas are represented in the occupational set-up, what kind of world view is expressed in the structure of micro-society. The occupation is a proposal, a model for the kind of society the activists want to realize. A kind of utopian model society.

In a discussion on the temporality of contemporary activism, the Danish anthropologist, Stine Krøijer, suggests skipping the 'pre' and terming similar events 'figurations of the future'. Trying to designate the political cosmology of radical activism, she argues that this kind of events are in a sense carved out of ordinary (dead) time – our present (capitalist) time - and establish a slice of the future. Not the near future, accessible by reform and social development, but a far off radically different future, where all the 'unjust and morally wrong' elements of contemporary society are transformed in an apocalyptic revolutionary situation. She calls this future 'active time'. In this argument, an event like the Tiananmen Occupation is not a proposal for something to come – it is already here. The future utopia already exists, directly there, on the square, as a temporal figuration of the future.<sup>110</sup>

In his essay on the 1989 Democracy Movement Richard Schechner discusses Tiananmen Square as street theatre and festival. He is using Bakhtin's 'carnavalesque' and inscribing Tiananmen in a tradition of radical political street theatre

“Doubtless, there has been a mutually fruitful exchange between art performances and symbolic public actions. By the 1960s, these actions constituted a distinct liminoid-celebratory-political-theatrical-ritual genre with its own dramaturgy, mise-en-scène, role enactments, audience participation, and reception. This theatre is ritual because it is efficacious, intending to produce real effects by means of symbolic causes. It is most theatrical at the cusp where the street show meets the media, where events are staged for the camera.” <sup>111</sup>

Schechner sees Tiananmen as a ‘carnival-demonstration’ in this tradition, where an “utopian mimesis whose focused, idealized, heated, magnified and transparent clarity” is acted out. In this ‘direct theatre’

“large public spaces are transformed into theatres where collective reflexivity is performed, and fecund and spectacular excesses displayed. Parades, mass gatherings, street theatre, sex, and partying – everything is exaggerated, ritualized, done for show.” <sup>112</sup>

By the carnivalesque a temporal zone outside of ordinary life is established and normative power-structures are suspended. Here in this carnival-zone, a spontaneous and excessively playful re-figuration of hierarchies takes place. The zone has utopian features; it works as ‘rehearsals for the near future’, a ‘spontaneous communitas’. But once the show is over, society returns to normal – or if revolution succeeds, the festival decays into dirty power politics.

“The carnival (...) can act out a powerfull critique of the status quo, but it cannot itself be what replaces the status quo.” <sup>113</sup>

My own interpretation is a kind of synthesis of these ideas. The occupation of Tiananmen Square is a performance and enactment of an ideal society. It is not so much ‘another society’ – in the logic of cloning proposed above, what the Democracy Movement is fighting for is not a revolution or a completely different society. They are, on the contrary, constantly referring back to the foundation of Chinese Communism and demanding a realization of the ideals of Communism; the transparent democracy and egalitarian freedom for ‘all of the people’. All through the many Big Letter Posters and other statements run a very strong focus on reform. In this sense, the Democracy Movement is not revolutionary, it is rather reformist, but in a very radical sense; reform from inside the depraved system is totally unrealistic, and the Movement argues for a return to the idealistic, transparent forms that the system was once supposed to be. The Tiananmen Occupation provides a platform for an enactment of that ideal system, a scenario where these forms can be performed as symbolic gestures. They are performed exactly ‘at the cusp where the street show meets the media’, and in the crucial moments, the performances are loaded with an emotional attack, a precise critique or an intellectual clarity that engages millions of citizens. The various elements that make up the new city of Tiananmen all have this double feature – they are at once very real, but temporal functions in the temporary settlement, AND at the same time, they are symbolic and often moral signifiers for how society is supposed to be. On Tiananmen the Democracy Movement performs an image of how society should be/could be, but this image is performed in reality, in a really dangerous, real situation, with extreme potential consequences for the participants. This ‘performing in the real’ - the incredible courage involved, the extreme risk taken, the sheer physical presence – is

what creates the emblematic image that Tiananmen Square 1989 becomes, not just in China, but all over the world. An icon of liberation. Of course the famous image of 'tank-man', a lone, unarmed activist in his white shirt, trying to stop a brigade of armed tanks, simply by standing still in front of the first one, is an almost too obvious, example of such a moment – an act becoming image by being performed in the real – but the Democracy Movement is full of similar examples. Courageous activists becoming The People by performing ideal and moral acts of political disobedience.

In the evening of June 3<sup>rd</sup> it all ends. The 'river of blood' flows through the streets of Beijing. The crackdown on the Democracy Movement has been called a massacre. Estimates vary, but at least 500 and maybe several thousand citizens are killed by the People's Liberation Army. Especially the 27<sup>th</sup> Army is said to be extremely brutal in the manner they clear Tiananmen Square and the nearby Changan Avenue, in an operation lasting all through the night into the early hours of June 4<sup>th</sup>. In the following months, thousands of activists are arrested, many disappearing and a few escaping China. The rest is silence. Autocratic rule is reinforced, the old guard of the Communist Party rejects all reform and the 1989 Democracy Movement becomes an absolute political taboo.



3.1. Revolution By Night<sup>114</sup>



The New Youth House, Dortheavej 61, Copenhagen, February 24<sup>th</sup>

Main:

3.1.2. Script  
3.1.2. Performance: Ungdomshuset / The New Youth House  
Dortheavej 61, Copenhagen  
February 24<sup>th</sup> at 20:00

3.1.3. Analysis

Commentary:

3.1.4.1. 69scenes  
3.1.4.2. Violent versus Militant  
3.1.4.3. Active Time versus Dead Time  
3.1.4.4. In Love, part one  
3.1.4.5. Get Rid of Yourself  
3.1.4.6. In Love, part two

Appendix:

3.1.5.1. Revolution By Night, video documentation 35:49 min  
3.1.5.2. Revolution By Night/Discussion, video documentation  
01:02:19 min <sup>115</sup>  
3.1.5.3. Tales of Darkness, reconstruction of poetry event  
by Angela Dörrer, sound-piece, 07:30 min.  
3.1.5.4. Appendix69

### **Revolution By Night (3.1.1.)**

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Frans Jacobi: Frans Jacobi.

Henrik Have: Søren Thilo Funder - in love.

Soundtrack and music: Lonely Boy Choir

A car, a confetti-canon, 1 chair, a box with cobblestones.

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*We are in the new Youth House at Dorteavej 61 in Copenhagen<sup>116</sup>. In the concert hall. A car stands in the center of the space, spotlights framing it. In front of it a simple chair. A canon-like object is fastened to the roof of the car with duct tape. Behind the car there is a stage, on the edge of that stage a green box is placed, filled to the brim with cobblestones.*

## Scene 1:

*Frans Jacobi stands on the stage in the spotlight with his foot on the cobblestones. He starts talking.*<sup>117</sup>

### **Frans Jacobi as Frans Jacobi:**

My dear audience, welcome! My name is Frans Jacobi – I have initiated this performance and the discussion afterwards. I would like to start by telling you about a small, inferior experience – a very personal, but in fact also a political experience. The performance tonight is my attempt to present this experience in an artistic format.

Back in 2006 I received a phone call from a colleague, the visual artist Hanne Lise Thomsen. She had taken part in a rally in support of the now former Youth House, Jagtvej 69. Here a line-up of famous Danish musicians had been performing in support of the Youth House that was under threat of closure. Great names showing their solidarity with a scene some of them had been kindled by. Hanne Lise found it sad that no visual artists had come forward at any point to express their support, and she wanted to try organizing something similar, some kind of supporting event, including a bunch of visual artists.<sup>118</sup>

I was myself rather agitated by the absurd fight taking place around the Youth House. The surreal conflict between the triangle of the Youth House, The City of Copenhagen and the religious sect, The Fatherhouse, escalating to ever more absurd levels. The atmosphere surrounding the Youth House was at an all time low, and the situation became increasingly desperate; The users of the Youth House had lost all legal cases and were now awaiting eviction and the demolition of the house. Everyone was waiting; waiting for the final demolition of all hopes.

So I was all eager and said yes instantly. We discussed the possibilities of various actions. How to manifest our solidarity? Sadly, only one other artist had agreed to participate. Emil Alsbo. Kind of miserable actually. But Hanne Lise was in no mood to stop; she managed to get us involved in an already planned demonstration between Christmas and New Year, back then in the winter of 2006.

The only thing that came to my mind was black confetti. I wanted to spray huge amounts of black confetti over the demonstration as it were moving through the streets. Black rain. A dark, symbolic gesture, staging the demonstration as a damned, dystopian carnival.<sup>119</sup>

I tried to figure out the point on the route from which I could throw all this confetti onto the marching protesters, a roof-top, an apartment or somewhere else, but somehow I failed.

Then Hanne Lise saw to it that I could get inside the Youth House, up on the upper floor and throw out my confetti as a kind of finale, when the demonstration reached its final destination: Jagtvej 69. That sounded perfect, actually. While darkness fell on Nørrebro, all the angry activists would be dancing in a haze of black confetti, falling from the sky on an already condemned address.

The demo started out from Skt. Hans Torv, and even though I had taken part in several similar demonstrations in the months leading up to this, I felt quite awkward, outside of events, sneaking around on the outskirts of the crowd, trying to gain focus, preparing for my little intervention. In fact, I felt a bit too old and a bit too well off in the midst of all this rebellious – well, yes – youth. And this was maybe exactly what I was: Detached and observant.

There was anger, furious speeches and raw, rebellious music. Hanne Lise and Emil made some quite nice video-projections of the number 69 on the walls and houses surrounding the square.<sup>120</sup> It worked really well, a kind of loose visual design to follow the protests. So far so good.

When the demonstration finally started moving through the neighbourhood, out through Nørrebro, heading for the Youth House, the 3 of us jumped into my car and went out there in advance. Loaded with video-equipment and my 3 plastic bags of black confetti, we were led into the heavily barricaded Youth House through a small window at the back of the house. It was now completely dark, and the atmosphere there in the back of the house was really desolate; sleety hard wind.

Once inside the house we had to crawl up through an ingeniously constructed staircase barricade, blocking all entrance to the upper floors from the more open downstairs spaces. A guard opened up a passage and let us up and in.

Up here the scenery was pretty hard-core. Everything was painted black, and there was white grafitti all over the place. The mood was completely quiet, but in a wild intense sense. We passed a kitchen with a bunch of completely stoned Germans, just sitting there, drinking

in silence. Bleak and tense. I felt like a tourist on a guided tour in a really exotic, dystopian landscape.

Then we reached our destination, a small space on the upper floor facing the street – from here I was able to throw my confetti out the window, and Hanne and Emil could project their video-69s onto the neighbouring houses.

It was a wild place that room. All four windows covered by lattices. On the floor 30-40 crates with cobblestones and bottles, lined up ready for fight. Everything in this space is ready! A clear message. The Youth House has to be defended, by whatever means necessary. And it is gonna be a hard fight; a battle with whatever available weapons: No surrender!<sup>121</sup>

The strange thing is that the moment I step into that room, my attitude changes instantly. All my cynical skepticism disappears, all my emotional distance collapses. It is a radiant, exuberant moment; all of a sudden I am at one with the situation. I know exactly why I am here; instantly I feel like a natural part of a collective body. This is in no sense a rational deduction, or any kind of intellectual process – it is a completely unexpected shift of consciousness.

From being an unacquainted, distanced spectator to a fascinating, but strange protest movement, sub-culture or whatever the Youth House Movement is called, at that moment in time, all of a sudden and with no delay, I feel completely at one with a desperate, furious battle against the unjust systemic power. At this moment, a pure, lucid feeling of collectivity sweeps through my body.

If it becomes necessary, I will not hesitate to grab those cobblestones and throw them directly in the face of whatever threat arises. That kind of militant resistance, indicated by the storage of cobblestones, is now completely justified. Here, at this site, in this situation.

We're in the space for about half-an-hour. Waiting for the demonstration to arrive in the street in front of the Youth House. The other two are working on their video-projections. I'm just pacing the space, trying to act normal. In fact I am ecstatic, a strange, unfiltered joy, high on rebellion. But I am confused at how to share this feeling with my accomplices, not knowing how to verbalize it. I am just lurking around, preparing to throw my confetti out the windows.

In her ph.d thesis, the anthropologist Stine Krøijer discusses the perception of time in radical leftwing activism. She describes what she calls Active Time. Active Time is the opposite of Dead Time.<sup>122</sup>

Dead Time is the time of our societies. Dead Time is capitalism; the all-encompassing grind of entertainment, uniformity and control. Dead Time permeates us all; it permeates our bodies, our emotions, our identities. Our individualized sense of self is created by Dead Time in Dead Time. Dead Time runs through everything, all of the time. Dead Time appears permanent.

But Dead Time can be broken. In the cracks of society, collective pockets of Active Time can be realized. In short intense moments, or in long calm stretches of time. The fight against Dead Time creates Active Time. Active Time is autonomous. Active Time is quite simply a completely different time than the normal time of society. Outside of the capitalist regime, an alternative exists. Active Time is collective time. In Active Time we are individuals in a completely different mix than in Dead Time.

Active Time is no utopia. Active Time is exactly this, time activated, realized. Made real. Actualized.

When I enter that room, high up inside the fortress of the Youth House, I enter Active Time. Unaware and unprepared, by coincidence, I open the door, and at once I am connected. Tuned in, turned on. In explanation, it sounds pretty weird. But at that moment, it makes perfect sense. It is obviously not an argument, a rationale, but an emotion, an almost physical feeling of presence, responsibility and intense involvement.

Much later, at a large demonstration, celebrating - or rather mourning - the one-year anniversary of the demolition of the Youth House on Jagtvej 69, I heard a tune being played from the soundtrack of the demonstration. "In Love". A kind of rap. Revolution is like being in love. In upfront language the insurrection and the destruction are described like an infatuation. The tune hit me straight up - this is exactly the way I felt up there, in that room, inside the Youth House. At that moment, when I was for once ready to do anything.

As by a strange coincidence, the song was written by a good colleague, Søren Thilo.<sup>123</sup>

Back in the space on Jagtvej 69. After awhile the

demonstration arrived. I got the windows and the lattices opened. With the help of my two friends I emptied my three bags with black confetti out into the darkness. Outside it was snowing, a dark wet snow and a pitch black darkness. We couldn't see the confetti at all. I don't know if anyone down in the street discovered it at all. In a sense, it wasn't important any more. In a sense, it was already passé.

The idea that I as an artist could contribute with anything at all in such a situation was passé, hopelessly gone. Somehow, in the half hour passing up in that room, I had already given it up. Later on, when we arrived downstairs, in the street, the party had already gained momentum. I detected a bit of my black confetti mashed into the snow; a mash of grey pulp. The vibe of the partying crowd was in a different, completely colorful mood.

I myself felt pretty shattered by my own emotional reactions. Completely confused by my exalted ecstasy, I walked around the street-party for awhile, now feeling alien again. Then I lurked off, heading home. Home as in suburbia. As in family. As in sofa.<sup>124</sup>

It has taken me a long time, a really long time, and a large, pathetic and very complex art project to attempt to understand my experience that evening in the Youth House.

This performance, you are now witnessing, is that attempt. My attempt at responding to that experience.

*As Frans Jacobi is finished speaking, he picks up a large knife and fastens it to the microphone with duct tape.*

## SCENE 2:

*The soundtrack starts, a large symphonic sound, interspersed with the sound of huge crowds shouting and cheering. An older man, the poet and conceptual artist Henrik Have,<sup>125</sup> enters the scene, sits down on the chair in front of the car. He starts reading a text aloud. As he is reading, Frans Jacobi starts scratching long lines in the lacquer of the car. The action of the knife makes long violent sounds. He crawls around on top of the car leaving it scarred and demolished.*

### **Henrik Have as Søren Thilo:**

I think of revolution as an infatuation.

Even if this is the most banal and worn-out example, but believe me, there is nothing more beautiful, clean and musical than just the banal and worn-out.

I'm in love.

A woman has stolen my heart, and I can't think rationally, even though my whole sensory apparatus is desperately trying to pump me up with reason, rationality and perspective. This person who dances in my cortex, who tags my heart, who gets drunk on my vocal cords, is this person in fact the right one? I do not know and I fucking don't care.

I'm in love.

Fuck the consequences. I don't want to see, I wanna be blind and dumb, I wanna mock ambition, career and future prospects. Nobody is right. I'm so goddamn wrong myself, that we match perfectly at this moment.

I'm in love.<sup>126</sup>

In this sense revolution is an emotional expression, and when the revolution is truly evident in our hearts, the systems will reveal their inner meaning and everything will crumble and bloom in an ecstatic breakdown of time and space.

Revolution is love.

While one institution after another crashes into fire and destruction, I don't consider where my children are supposed to go to school, how to get medicine, who will now maintain the law. I fucking don't care.



I'm in love.

In my senseless love-intoxication, I can only see schools as buildings where young people are being systematically demoralized, I can only see a constant medication of entire societies, everything is disease, everything needs a pill and a price, I can only see those chosen to maintain the law, as those constantly breaking precisely that law.

I'm in love.

I stand in front of the ATM machine, not considering for one moment my balance, my overdraft, my rescheduling of loans, my profit margins, my value (value), I have my pockets full of stones and I'm in love.

One bank after another is sinking; at no time do I think about globalization, welfare, wages or pensions. In my love-craze I see nothing but oppression, exploitation and inequality. My personal financial adviser flies through the shattered window, his expensive suit is on fire and I can't help a certain glee at the fact that I still can't remember his name.<sup>127</sup>

I'm in love.

And while one apartment after another loses value and I hear people screaming and crying into cell phones to their parents in Jutland, I drink champagne from a burning supermarket, toasting the flames of a huge bonfire of all the surveillance cameras on Nørrebro.

I'm in love and can never sympathize with their loss.

From my love-bubble I see only their greed, their exclusion of anything that does not fit into their Euro-Woman-slash-Euro-Man world. I only see their desperate hunt for more, more, more, more.

When they run with their baby carriages, and their eco-crisp bread, and their soya lattes, I see only their lousy, stinking double standards.

I'm in love.

And as TV2 News fix their ties and exert their compassion, grimacing and twisting their brains, inventing whatever disintegrated, rapidly urgent news to fill their 24-hour bullshit, we keep totals of the burnt-out police vehicles with spray paint on the wall of the Assistens Cemetery, and from my love-delirium I can in no

way see the beauty of the traditional yellow brick wall and its amazing history, the only thing I see is life communicating.

I see a generation who were told to shut up, now screaming back in the face of society. It is with pride that I read this wall of creativity; portraying a society, where government is not for or of the people, where the government doesn't have the faintest idea who the people are.

I'm in love.

As one American chain-store after another is plundered, demolished and mocked, I can in no way tolerate the Western world's dependence on production and consumption. From my love-fever I see only rich white men washing the blood off their hands, and when our knives tear their billboards, I see it only as retribution for promoting women as objects, spreading scary clichés of the unattainable nuclear family and steadily backing up the general homophobia.

I'm in love.

And while Christiansborg crumbles and falls under its own weight and all constitutions, restrictions, laws, penalties and regulations are covering Copenhagen in an immense cloud of confetti, we are thousands dancing on the roof of the Opera House until the architectural mausoleum gives in and collapses into ruins. From my love-mania, I can only see it as the end of a culture and a society not ashamed of using the words "Danish values". With my hand on my heart, I say goodbye to phobic nationalism and normalization. I can certainly no longer behave normally, I'm in love and must behave accordingly.

I'm in love and my love spreads worldwide like a wildfire.

As all trade-committees, security-organs and climate-councils are wiped out, sinking into eternal dissolution, I don't give the free market a single thought. I don't consider the danger of terrorism, or the preservation of the environment. From my love-exaltation, I only see a world where people work themselves to death for a salary that is less an actual payment, than an insult. I only see a production of fear that gives rise to surveillance and imprisonment. I see only water-boarding, blind-folding and various other authorized torture methods, I see only big companies assessing how much of nature you can smash without the complete extinction of humanity.

Don't forget that this same humanity are the consumers.  
As the EU collapses, it is a fortress subsiding.

I'm in love.

As the buildings of NATO fall into ruins, I see only the  
end of yet another lie and the liberation of all the  
people who have been subject to their human rights  
abuses.

I'm in love.

And when everything ceases to function and we've lost  
everything that was so hard to build up, I can only think  
of how small a part of mankind on this planet is actually  
living above the poverty line.

So what comes after the revolution? Perhaps the price of  
our ignorance. What must we abandon? Perhaps all that, to  
which we have denied everyone else access.

I'm in love and from my love-rapture I can only see the  
destruction of everything we have robbed others of.

Everything dissolves. There is no knowledge. There is no  
education, no security, no law and order. The civilized  
world is dead and you know what? I fucking don't care - I  
am in love.<sup>128</sup>

Revolution is a thought; mercy on us if one day there  
will be thoughts we can't think or don't dare to think.

*In the last part of the reading Frans Jacobi turns on the  
confetti-canon and black confetti is shot up into space.  
Three times. A slow black rain of confetti covers  
everything as the music rises in a last crescendo.*

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**THE END**

### **Analysis (3.1.3.)**

The questions posed in 'Revolution By Night' are about the personal investment in riots. What kind of personal engagement is invested in activism, and how does this engagement relativize the individuality of the activists? Activism establishes a radically different social space which challenges our normal perceptions of identity. What are the features of this new collectivity, and how is it expressed in the often dramatic riots that characterized the first phase of The Youth House Movement?

'Revolution By Night' is built around two texts, and the relationship between text and performance differs from the other performances.

The first text is an attempt at positioning myself, not as the artist/researcher, but on a more direct personal level. Since this performance took place in direct 'confrontation' with an audience of activists from The Youth House Movement, I felt it necessary to clarify my own position. I wanted to establish a kind of personal trust between me and the activists that would enable them to engage more freely in the discussion organized after the performance. I saw such a personal trust as fundamental to the success of the discussion, but it was also something I needed to establish on a more general level of the project 'Aesthetics of Resistance': Who am I to engage in such a project? Why am I engaging in such matters at all? From what position do I speak about those things?

The first text is written with this purpose. For once, I don't introduce myself as 'the artist/researcher', but as the I that has 'initiated this performance and the discussion afterwards'. The performance is presented as 'my attempt to present this (...) in an artistic format'. For once, it is the 'real' Frans Jacobi speaking and not the ambiguous figure of the artist/researcher. The story that I am about to tell is presented as concerning a 'very personal experience'. The beginning of the story is constructed as an admission of my distance to The Youth House Movement and my difficulties in identifying with it. Then, an experience of engagement and being part of the social space of activists is described. Even though this connectedness is described as temporal and short, it still marks a point of real active engagement, meant to create a kind of bond between me and the 'real' activists. Combined with the admission of my position as an observer at a distance from the movement, it establishes a kind of truthful, unpretentious position, from which I am somehow allowed to speak about an activism that I didn't really take part in.

This positioning of myself is referred to several times by various participants, not only in the following discussion, but also in other discussions following other performances. Each time mentioned as the reason for the acceptance of me as a speaking partner on the part of the activists. Here, it proves crucial to position myself; positioning is not just an academic question relating to the idea of research, it becomes a premise for my dialogue with the activism I am inquiring into.

In the performance I stand high up on stage, dressed in black, with one foot on a box of cobble-stones. A typical rebel stance. This cliché posture, combined with the obviously self-ironic tone of the text, create a disarming humorous atmosphere, where the intended collective trust is easily established.

The first part is thus about establishing a relaxed, trustful atmosphere between the performers and the audience. Furthermore, the personal narration has elements that

thematize the content of the entire performance. The concept of Active Time vs. Dead Time, taken from the writings of Stine Krøijer, is here exemplified in a very direct personal manner, as it appears as the dramatic high point in the narrative unfolding in the first text. The connectedness experienced in Active Time becomes the underlying premise for the second part of the performance, and for the discussion to follow after the performance. The general question becomes, whether the second text and the staging of it in the second part deliver a plausible interpretation of connectedness, of Active Time. In the discussion, this is also the underlying theme: how to describe the emotional engagement and the commitment, obviously felt by the activists in the first phase of The Youth House Movement?<sup>129</sup>

The second part of the performance is based on a song text, 'In Love', by the Danish artist, Søren Thilo. The text delivers a humorous rap-version of the engagement thematized in the first part, and it describes the engagement in orgiastic terms, as being 'in love'. The staging of this text is not a participatory event including the audience, as in some of the other performances, but a staged dramatization of the text. The eventual participation by the audience is on the level of emotional identification.

In a sense, the staging of the text realizes the image of 'a darkness falling on Nørrebro, all the angry activists dancing in a haze of black confetti, falling from the sky on an already condemned address' that is presented in the first text, and that was never really unfolded in the ineffective action from inside the Youth House. Here, in a more theatrical version, this image unfolds in the slowly evolving collage of Henrik Have's dry, experienced voice, the cinematographic soundtrack of Lonely Boy Choir and my own withheld, but desperate and shrieking scratching the lacquer of the car with a large knife.

If the actions of The Youth House Movement are images, they are confrontational images, images provoking political thought or establishing another social space. The image unfolding here, in the second part of 'Revolution By Night', is a reflective image. Its function is to be a reflection on the original events, on the first phase of The Youth House Movement. It is an afterthought, a contemplation. It offers an aesthetical space for contemplation. This goes for this project as a whole, and it is somehow the premise for my version of research as well. The research is a contemplation of certain crucial events which I find it interesting and important to reflect upon. In this case, it reflects the emotional structures in the engagement, in the other performances, other aspects of the original events are contemplated.

This reflective character of my research in general, and especially of the image here in 'Revolution By Night', was questioned by some of the activists in the discussion afterwards. Does the movement need such a reflection? From which position is it undertaken? What political goal does it serve?

If we look beyond the often heard discussions of the relationship between artistic research and the academic system – the debates on how art and academia can or cannot connect – this would be one of the areas, where my version of artistic research might serve a function: As a tool for critical reflection inside the groups of people the content relates to. This was also part of my intention in choosing the various sites for the last round of performances; an attempt at reaching audiences that might be interested in such critical reflection. In this case, activists from The

Youth House Movement and users of The New Youth House, where this performance took place.

The choice of the text 'In Love' has to do with this as well. Not necessarily a precise analysis of the emotional commitment in The Youth House Movement, it still proposes an interpretation of this commitment. Activism is like 'being in love'. This statement provokes a reflection in the audience; each member of the audience has to consider if this is how he or she sees it. In addition, it provokes a reflection on the emotional aspects of engagement. What kind of emotional commitment did he/she experience when taking part in the actions or demonstrations in question.

So, even if most parts of the audience feel that the statement 'activism is like being in love' is wrong or superficial, it provokes a discussion on the character of emotional engagement in activism.

The staging of the text adds to this; by presenting the argument as aesthetics, as an event in sound, scenography, music and performative action, the audience is induced into a reflection with the senses; they are incited to a reflection on how their participation in various riots was felt, how their commitment was expressed as physical and emotional actions.

In the following discussion, the term 'in love' is rejected by more or less all participants as too positive and too superficial, but it is substituted by other emotional terms, like 'anger', 'rage' or 'sorrow', as more fitting to describe the emotional engagement in the struggles concerning The Youth House. In this sense, the performance did succeed in engaging the audience in a reflection on the emotional character of their commitment. As described in the commentaries 'In Love part one' and 'In Love part two', this led to a discussion of the relationship between this kind of emotional engagement and the political and symbolic contextualization of these collective emotional structures.

By posing these questions as an aesthetic event, as a sense-event, the performance opens up for another kind of reflection on the original events. The destruction in 'Revolution By Night' has a dark, mythological character that is obviously present in the real riots as well. These poetic aspects of the riots are often neglected, but here a space is opened up for reflections on such terms.

How to open such space for poetic reflection? In the performance, various elements create a slight displacement that unsettles the obvious illustration of the text 'In Love':

The fact that the rebel, impersonated by the person reading the text, isn't a young black-block-like type, but instead an older man, with a very distinct and very un-rapper-like intonation, disturbs the preconception of such a figure. It forces us to consider the content of the text more carefully, exactly because it is recited by a person, from whom we wouldn't expect such a statement.

The same kind of unsettling of preconceptions is attempted with the way destruction is represented in the performance. By choosing to scratch the lacquer of the car with a large knife instead of burning it down, as it is done in one of the dominant images of property destruction circling around in our culture, another disturbance is offered. To destroy the car in another way than expected opens up the image for fresh

reflection in a different way from a reuse of the stereotyped image of the burning car would do.

The slow, dragging tempo of the performance adds to this disturbance; the kind of event that is normally conceived as fast, dramatic and eventful is here represented as slow and without dramatic development. The two main activities, the reading of the text by Have and the scratching in the auto-lacquer by myself, are interspersed with explosions of black confetti and repeated applauses from a large crowd on the soundtrack, but none of these add to a dramatic high or a release of tension. The tension is rather kept at the same steady pace throughout the performance, dragged out in time. This undramatic use of a set of dramatic features creates an ambiguous situation, a suspension where the audience is provoked to simultaneously experience and reflect upon these experiences. Or as a participant in the discussion commented:

“After a while I became increasingly irritated, and wished that the performer would just get on with it and smash that car for real...”<sup>130</sup>

It is exactly such an irritation, or unsettling of the viewers' preconception that provokes the reflection intended with this performance. The performance talks about something the activist knows very well, but it does so in a manner slightly different from what is to be expected. It presents a statement about activism that the activist might disagree with, but it is not so important, if the views presented in the performance are more or less correct or truthful compared with those of the activist. The important thing is that the irritation provokes a reflection in the activist and in the audience in general. A reflection, either as expressed by participating in the discussion, or in more general terms as individual reflections done by each member of the audience afterwards.

### **69scenes (3.1.4.1.)**

The story of The Youth House at Jagtvej 69 is long and strange. The dramatic circumstances surrounding the demolition of the house at Jagtvej 69 was the subject of my exhibition '69scenes' at Bendixen Contemporary Art in September 2008. '69scenes' was one of the first projects done in the framework of this phd-research. What follows here is a selection of the 69 small texts that was connected to the 69 art-work comprising the exhibition. The selection is here intended to give a kind of short summary of the extremely labyrinthine narratives that make up the history of The Youth House. My references for this timeline are a maze of texts found on the internet: Newspaper articles, activist manifestos, political comments, blog-entries etc. All in Danish. Many of these are not available on the internet anymore. I have made an appendix, Appendix69 consisting of pdf-copies of all the relevant texts from this material. After each timeline entry, there is a reference to the relevant documents in this appendix.

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#### **1982: Jagtvej 69**

The Youth House was given by Egon Weidekamp, the then mayor of Copenhagen, to a group of squatters, the so-called BZ, back in 1982. After a long series of violent fights and general trouble with the very active BZ-movement, the city of Copenhagen wanted to calm the situation down by giving the BZ a house to develop their special branch of punk-culture in. The strategy didn't really work, and trouble, squatting and street-fighting continued. The house was there to stay though, and all through the 1980s and 1990s it became a central platform for the alternative punk and activism culture in Copenhagen. The house itself had a long and glorious past: It was built in 1897 as the community centre of The Workers Movement. In 1910 it accommodated the Second International Women's Conference, and throughout the 20th Century, it was an important political address in Copenhagen. As The Youth House, it became especially important as a non-commercial concert venue. A impressive range of great musicians have played concerts there; Nick Cave & The Birthday Party, Bjørk among others. (Appendix69: a)

#### **Autumn 1999**

After a series of quarrels with the activists about a fire and the necessary restoration of The Youth House, the city of Copenhagen decided to sell Jagtvej 69. The activists using the house would thereby be evicted. They, on their side, reacted by hanging a highly satirical banner on the facade of the house:

"FOR SALE INCLUDING 500 VIOLENT PSYCOPATHS FROM HELL".

The raw self-irony of this sentence became a crucial factor in the further development of the sale. (Appendix69: b)

#### **November 16, 2000: Human A/S**

After rejecting a couple of buyers as 'unserious', the City of Copenhagen sells Jagtvej 69 in November 2000. The buyer is the newly established foundation Human A/S that buys the house for 2.6 million Danish kroner. Human A/S is led by the relatively unknown lawyer, Inger Loft, and some other anonymous persons. To Ritzau Newsagency Inger Loft states:



"The plan is to continue Jagtvej 69 as a youth house, but it not yet specified how. It has to be discussed with the various partners in the process".

The users of The Youth House are not especially optimistic about this dialogue, though. When Inger Loft arrives at Jagtvej 69, she is greeted by a bucket of water in her face.

"She claims she wants influence. The little lady doesn't understand that the only way to get influence in The Youth House is by participating in the collective meetings. We don't speak the same language, and she seems incredibly naive",

a spokesman for the users states. (Appendix69: c1, c2)

### **September 2001: The Fatherhouse**

A clause in the contract of the sale states that The Youth House cannot be sold again, without offering it first to the City of Copenhagen. This clause, though, doesn't prevent the buyer, Human A/S, from selling out. Which is exactly what happens, when the fundamentalist Christian church, The Fatherhouse, buys Human A/S and thus becomes the owner of The Youth House. The Fatherhouse and The Youth House. The Fatherhouse had been trying to buy the house in the first round, but was rejected as an 'unserious buyer'. Immediately after the take-over, The Fatherhouse announces that they want to develop the house as a Christian Youth House. They terminate the agreement with the users with three months' notice. The head of The Fatherhouse, Ruth Evensen, later states that she was provoked into action by the infamous banner "FOR SALE INCLUDING 500 VIOLENT PSYCOPATHS FROM HELL". Seing it, she immediately felt obliged to God to clean up, rinse out the evil of The Youth House. The Fatherhouse is hierarchically centered around Ruth Evensen. Apart from The Youth House, their main themes are fights against homosexuality and free abortion. But the The Youth House case is by all means Ruth Evensen's claim to fame, and she is given almost unlimited speaking time in the mainstream media. (Appendix69: a)<sup>131</sup>

### **August 28, 2006: The Fortress of Trekroner**

On this day the High Court reaffirms the judgement of the District Court from 2004 in the case between The Fatherhouse and The Youth House:

"The case is not to be ruled under the Rent Act. The users of The Youth House must recognize that their users' agreement has terminated and furthermore have to recognize that all other agreements concerning the use of The Youth House is terminated."

Ahead of the conclusion of the High Court The Youth House had stated that

"decisions concerning the fate of The Youth House will be taken by the Monday Meeting inside The Youth House and NOT by the High Court".

The users still reject leaving the building, proposing a political solution. After the conclusion made by the High Court, activists from The Youth House occupy the Fortress of Trekroner, an island in the harbour of Copenhagen. Dressed as pirates, they organize a press meeting at the fortress, stating their views on the judgement of

the High Court. Subsequently, the 20 activists are arrested by the Copenhagen Police. (Appendix69: a)<sup>132</sup>

### **September 24, 2006**

268 activist are arrested in Nørrebro, Copenhagen, when a demonstration supporting The Youth House, evolves into turmoil. According to the activists, it is the behavior of the police that provokes the incident. A spokesman for the demonstration states:

“Quite unprovoked, the police choose to drive their vehicles straight into our demonstrators; obviously, people want to defend themselves in such a situation. It is complete madness, and I don’t understand what’s going on at the operational level of the police”,

According to the police, though, it was a quite different situation. As the spokesperson of the police, Flemming Steen Munch states:

“When the demonstration reached Queen Louise Bridge at 17 in the afternoon, some activist were masked, thereby breaking the law. Various objects – mostly fruit – was thrown at the police. The police estimated that the demonstration wasn’t heading for the City centre, but instead moved towards Folkets Park (The People’s Park). Here cobblestones were dug up, there were several fires and barricades were built. Stones and bottles were thrown at the police. The situation escalated and brought back memories of the infamous May 18th riots in 1993.”

(Appendix69: d1 + d2)

### **September 2006: The Jagtvej 69 Foundation**

In September, The Jagtvej 69 Foundation is created for the purpose of buying back The Youth House from The Fatherhouse, giving it back to the users and thereby securing

“an active, dynamic and exciting environment for the youth of Copenhagen”.

The Foundation offered 5 million Danish kroner, but The Fatherhouse rejected the offer. Commenting on this, the head of the Copenhagen Police, Hanne Bech Hansen, said she hoped that The Fatherhouse would eventually sell the house, because this would prevent a confrontation. Even the mayor, Ritt Bjerregaard, recommended The Fatherhouse to sell, which led to criticism by the local right-wing politicians, claiming the mayor was giving in to “burning down the streets of Copenhagen”. A professor in public law stated that such a pressure from the mayor was controversial, but legal. The Fatherhouse pointed out that for them, the case is one of principle, and they were in no mood to give in to the attacks they had been subjected to. (Appendix69: a)

### **December 16, 2006: Jagtvej**

This Saturday a dramatic street-fight evolves in Nørrebro. The police encircle an unannounced demonstration in favour of The Youth House, driving their armed vehicles directly into the protesters. They reply with paint-bombs, stonethrowing, clubs and fireworks. There are bonfires in several places on Nørrebrogade, and in the side streets. Several storefront windows are broken. After the encirclement, the demonstraton is scattered, but the street-fighting explodes again later in Nørrebros

Runddel. As evening falls, everything calms down, but there are still burning barricades in Nørrebrogade and several streets are blacked-out. According to information by the police, 273 are arrested, even more injured, of these, two severely. After this rampage of violence and destruction, many ordinary residents of Nørrebro deny their sympathy for The Youth House. Some supporters claim that the violence is the responsibility of the politicians, while others – among these some figures of the cultural elite – denounce the violence, but maintain their support for The Youth House. (Appendix69: e1, e2, e3)

### **March 1, 2007: Copenhagen**

After months of tense waiting, the police evict The Youth House from Jagtvej 69 in the very early hours of March 1st. In a well-organized surprise action, the police attack the building from above with the support of two military helicopters. The maneuver is fast, effectual and fierce. The still-sleeping activists are removed immediately. Witnesses speak of massive doses of tear gas and direct fighting, while the police insist that the eviction is undramatic and relatively peaceful. (Appendix69: a + f1, f2, f8)

### **March 2007: Nørrebro**

The eviction of The Youth House is answered by massive demonstrations, dramatic street-fighting and vandalism on an unprecedented scale. Burning cars, barricades, bonfires in the streets, a grammar school vandalized. The riots last for several days and spread to the entire city, escalating day by day. (Appendix69: a + f3, f4, f5, f6, f7, f9)

### **March 5, 2007: Jagtvej 69**

By request of The Fatherhouse, the demolition of The Youth House starts early in the morning. Since none of the companies in charge of the demolition want to be recognized, fearing reprisals, all equipment is painted over in silver, and all company logos and signs are removed. An army of ghost machines destroying The Youth House. The demolition is guarded by the police. (Appendix69: a + g1, g2, g3, g4)

### **March 2007: Jagtvej 69**

A few days after the demolition a group of policemen that took part in the eviction of The Youth House are spotted on the empty ground, where they stand pissing, marking the territory won in battle. Territorial pissing. The incident leads to public debate on the lack of emotional distance in the motives driving the police forces. (Appendix69: h1)

### **March 2007: Ground 69**

Even though the riots and the street-fighting fade out, a new widespread network emerges around the loss of The Youth House. The address, Jagtvej 69, becomes increasingly mythical, and an omnipresent campaign of graffiti, stickers, badges, posters etc scatters the number 69 all over the world. Even the empty lot on Jagtvej 69 now becomes the assembly point of demonstrations, parties and other kinds of lament. In this spirit, the lot is called Ground 69, with reference to Ground Zero in New York. (Appendix69: i1 + i2)

### **2007/2008: 70 Thursdays in Copenhagen**

Out of the lost Youth House emerges the so-called Youth House Movement; the logistic platform of the movement is the weekly Thursday demonstrations. Every week for one and a half year, demonstrations are organized, rallying for 'More Free

Spaces Now!' or 'More Operahouses Now!' or 'Feminists for Free Spaces!' The Thursday demos are organized by shifting organisations, and over time huge and creative manifestations conquer public space in various ways. (Appendix69: j)

### **September 9, 2007: Grey Block**

The so-called Grey Block consisting of BZ-veterans from the 1980s has organized the weekly demo:

"The Thursday demo on 6.9. has the theme '69' (we wonder why?). From 69 different places, a variety of groups will meet at 17h at a huge number of streets, meeting in front of number 6-9 or 69. From there we walk to Blaagaards Square, where everyone is greeted by Folk-Kitchen, music etc. At 19h we all walk in a huge demo to the City Square, where we have music and protests. If the police think this will be too chaotic, then they are probably right. But that's the way it goes, when Copenhagen is lacking a Youth House. If the police want to block your star-demo, just walk around them or continue on the pavement (this is not illegal). It will be impossible for them to stop 69 demos at the same time. If you are scattered, then just go directly to Blaagaards Square, where we will all meet. Fuck, it's gonna be great! Bring your friends, your cell-mates, your colleagues and grandchildren to a 69-demo, close to you!"

(Appendix69: k1, k2)

### **October 6, 2007: G13**

In the largest manifestation of the Youth House Movement, several thousand activists attempt to occupy an empty building on Grøndalsvænge Alle 13 on the outskirts of Copenhagen. The action has been prepared for months and has been announced weeks ahead. This strategy is inspired by the large actions surrounding the G8-meeting earlier the same year in Rostock, Germany. The action is named G13, and both activists and police are extremely well-prepared. The action evolves violently, but this time with the police as aggressors. In a controlled operation, it is the activists that show restraint and refrain from violence. At the end of the day, several hundred G13-activists occupy the well-guarded house for a couple of hours, raising the pirate flag on the rooftop. (Appendix69: L)

G13 is the topic of the performance 'G13greenredturquoiseyellow' (Aor 3.2)

### **October 2007: City Hall**

In the days following G13, even the chief police officer of the police operation, Per Larsen, announces his respect for the "disciplined non-violence of the protestors" and calls out for a political solution to the Youth House problem, urging the mayor of Copenhagen to start negotiations. And the mayor, Ritt Bjerregaard, immediately starts the negotiations she has rejected for months and years:

"We are always open to dialogue with serious people who don't use violence",

as she states to a local news-channel, TV2Lorry. (Appendix69: m1)

### **December 20, 2007: Ground 69**

On one of the darkest days in the year, the German artist, Angela Dorrer, organizes a collective performance, 'Tales of Darkness', following directly after the weekly demo:

“The Demo ended at the former site of the house which they now call Ground69. The organizers liked my idea and had asked in their demo-sms (organized in a kind of a flash-mob strategy) to bring Dark stories along and read them on one of the darkest days of the year’. So we read... Baudelaire: ‘Flowers of Evil / Abel and Cain’, T.S.Eliot: ‘The Waste Land’, Celan: ‘Death Fugue’, Allan Ginsberg, Peter Laugesen, Michael Strunge etc., and some people came up and improvised. I was impressed by their sincerity and honest anger. It is a very dark chapter in Copenhagen’s younger history. To me personally these people represent something like the good conscience of this city.”

(Appendix69: n)

Also included as an appendix is my sound-reconstruction of ‘Tales of Darkness’. Here, it is done as a collage of readings by 4 performance artists and poets:

Olof Olsson reads Allen Ginsberg  
Claus Handberg reads Peter Laugesen, Celan og Claus Handberg  
Stine Marie Jacobsen reads Beaudelaire  
Frans Jacobi reads Mikael Strunge og Kim Larsen

Sound collage by Martin Kern (Appendix .. )

### **Spring 2008: Blue Garden**

Discreetly, a group of activists occupies an unnoticed lot in between two buildings on Åboulevarden and design the temporary ‘Blue Garden’ – a kind of anarchistic park open for everyone. (Appendix69: o)

### **May - July15 2008: Refshalevej**

In a spontaneous collective action, a large group of activists occupies a whole street behind Christiania, the old hippie free city. As the occupied area lies in an unclear legal zone in between the authority of the City administration and the military, it takes a while before the authorities react. As spontaneous as it started, the occupiers stay, and soon a new mini-society evolves. The activists call themselves ‘The Upbuilders’. They release a press statement, and now the occupation is a topic of public debate. The occupation expands and consolidates. A source talks of “a buzz of reggae, free socializing and total summer”. The UpBuilders make a formal application to the City Administration for continuing the experiment until September. In July the application is rejected, and the City of Copenhagen and the police collaborate in the eviction of the settlement. In a few hours one summer morning, the entire environment of social experimentation is erased. The UpBuilders disappear as fast and spontaneously as they appeared. (Appendix69: p)

The occupation of Refshalevej is the topic of the performance ‘On Water’ (AoR 3.3.)

### **July 1, 2008: Dorteavej 61**

After hard and extended negotiations between the Mayor of Copenhagen, The Jagtvej 69 Foundation and the Youth House Movement, the City of Copenhagen has agreed to provide the Movement with a new house. The new house, that is found after a long list of proposed buildings has been rejected by the various parts, is given to the new users in a ceremony on July 1st. Apparently a solution to the paradoxical demands has been found: The City provides the house for free, AND the users have

complete autonomy, and the internal collective meeting, the Monday Meeting, has full powers of decision. The first act of the activists is to hang a banner from a window in the new house: STILL NO FUCKING THANKS TO THE SYSTEM! (Appendix69: q)

### Violence versus Militant (3.1.4.2.)

The word violence is a key term in the debate on direct action. It was Tommy, an activist who helped me organize this performance at the new Youth House, who really made me understand the various positions on this, as we were writing the press release for the performance together. He made me realize that the use of the word 'violent' is already biased. He preferred the word 'militant' or 'confrontational'. As seen in the 'N30 Black Bloc Communiqué by ACME Collective' the demarcation between violence and non-violence is marked differently in the activists' circles than in society at large. ACME differentiates between private property and personal property:

"The premise of personal property is that each of us has what s/he needs. The premise of private property is that each of us has something that someone else needs or wants." <sup>133</sup>

Destruction of private property is not violence, since private property is part of the capitalist repression. It is rather a redistribution of functions. In society at large and in the media this is different, destruction of private property is clear violence, it's illegal and it's unethical. Already here a grey zone is opened up, a field of actions that is viewed completely differently by the two parts of the conflict. In the activist milieu surrounding The Youth House, there is a quite tough ethical stance on violence and repression. The vegan groups, for instance, consider killing animals for food violence, there are tough stances against commercialism, homophobia, class and gender related repression. So it's not because there is a general lack of ethical standards that the so-called violence appears so often in the struggles of these movements – it is because the demarcation is defined differently for political reasons. The militant activism is partly about marking this political territory. To redefine functions in an area of society seen as unethical and repressive. Another aspect is to challenge or - more accurately - to reveal the monopoly on violence given to the police by the state. By engaging in direct confrontation with large, armed police forces, the police is provoked to obviously violent behavior. Thereby an image of the violent police is created. An example of a successful action in this latter sense is the G13-action that is the topic of the performance 'G13greenredturquoiseyellow'. The problem with this strategy of revealing the violence monopoly of the police is, though, that often, maybe even in most cases, the activists are themselves framed as violent by the media and a public sphere that doesn't share the activists' views on violence. In any case, it is interesting to see how the use of words becomes a major factor in the struggles between the police and these movements. The words are used to frame the opponent in various ways – here it is the word 'violent' that stigmatizes the opponent and renders any rational argumentation from that side impossible. On a larger international scale, we can see how the word 'terror' is used in a similar way to stage an opponent as somebody whom we don't negotiate with, somebody who is evil to such a degree that all human rights are suspended.

On the other hand, this kind of framing the enemy is mirrored in activist circles. In her study of the 'Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe' the anthropologist Stine Krøyer describes how the police forces are often degraded to a non-human status in the internal rhetoric of the activists:

"What kind of beings are the police? The stories do not only convey a picture of an unaccountable police who may resort to either trickery or violence to get

the upper hand in a situation, but activists also often seriously doubt their humanity. I talked to another activist, Katrine (...), about the legitimacy of different means in the street, and how this depends upon the particular situation and the injustice committed. She said:

“Of course nobody believes that a bomb is OK. The boundaries [of what is acceptable] are read between the lines: not [damage to] people, but materials, and cops [police] who – at least to some people – are not really human, at least in this context. They are definitely an army who is the enemy, right?”<sup>134</sup>

In the grey zone between the various definitions of violence, not only material private property can be attacked and destroyed, even the police force in itself can be framed as an ok target. This de-humanizing is of course a psychological tool in the creation of an obvious enemy, but it also follows as a logical mirroring of the sci-fi-like aesthetics of the combat gear and the choreographed formations of the police forces. Stine Krøier also recalls a confrontation between activists and police, where in the midst of battle a chant emerges from the crowd of activists: ‘We are humans, what are you? We are humans, what are you?’

In this sense, a constant battle of terming the other part as the enemy is going on. By using the word ‘militant’ instead of ‘violent’, though, the struggles are described as an equal fight between equal parties. Equal parties with equal rights to define the territory where the struggle is taking place. As we saw in the section on ‘Show of Force’ in ‘A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police’ a large part of the operational strategy of the police is about defining the field of battle as theirs and theirs only:

“SHOW OF FORCE is ultimate. There is nothing to negotiate. Everything will happen as commanded by the police.”<sup>135</sup>

What we see here is thus a struggle, not only on the ground as a struggle for territories, but also a struggle of language, a struggle for the right to define what is going on; a struggle of where the border between accepted militancy and unacceptable violence lies. A struggle for the monopoly on violence, generally issued by the state to the police.

As Tommy argued, it is important for the activists to define their own rules of engagement. This re-definition of the border between acceptable political gestures and illegal violent destruction creates a dissension; the ruling order of the state is threatened. The activists break the law, but do it in a claim for another moral standard than the normative ethics expressed in the media and by society at large. This concept of politics as a confrontational civil disobedience closely resembles Jacques Rancière’s discussion of Politics versus Policing:

”A *political* dispute concerns the very existence of politics as distinct from police. Unlike *juridical* disputes, which take place within the police order, *le litige politique* brings politics proper into existence by introducing a veritable dissension that splits in two the shared world of the community.”<sup>136</sup>

Militant/confrontational activism challenges certain juridical laws in society – private property or the state’s monopoly on violence. These laws are presented by the state



as universal facts, but the activist attack reveals them as constituted by moral conventions that are up for discussion. By insisting on confrontation as politics, the activists create a political dissension. In terms of Rancière, militant activism forces 'politics proper' into the normative policing of representational democracy.

The attempts from the police and the politicians to denounce the activists as violent troublemakers can be seen as society's attempt to protect the police order.

Again, the militant action is performed. The dissension is created by performing another view on, for instance, private property. The 'split in the shared world of the community' is very direct. The challenge to the ruling order is acted out directly by destroying various symbolic manifestations of private property, i.e. smashing the facades of banks and certain chain stores, burning cars etc. In the temporal interstice that this performance creates, another moral codex exists for a moment. It is this performative intrusion into the normative policing order, Rancière calls 'politics proper'. Tommy also referred to militancy as Direct Action. Direct Action doesn't discuss politics, Direct Action performs politics in a direct confrontation with the policing order of representational democracy.

Such an attempt at maintaining the policing order is treated more directly in the script/performance 'Climate/Kettle'.

### Active Time versus Dead Time (3.1.4.3.)

The Danish anthropologist, Stine Krøier, develops her ideas of Active Time from investigations into the social life of The Youth House. She discusses the notion of 'autonomy' and this term is a key in the arguments on both sides of the conflict.<sup>137</sup>

By the outside world, by the politicians involved in the conflict, and by society at large, as it is expressed in public debate on the conflict, the Youth House Conflict is first and foremost seen as a generational conflict. From both sides of the public debate, The Youth House activists are described as 'young' and their behavior is seen as part of 'becoming adult'. Those against The Youth House - the right-wing politicians, the leader of The Fatherhouse, Ruth Evensen, and other public voices - argue that their behavior is unacceptable and that it is the failure of their parents to restrict them in an orderly manner that is the main problem; the activists are seen as irresponsible teenage troublemakers acting out the lacking control of their parents. The supporters of The Youth House and The Youth House Movement - left-wing politicians, emerging groups of parents-supporter groups (i.e. Parents Against Police Violence) and other public defenders of the movement - also use 'youth' as a central argument. Here it is the basic rights of the coming generation to experiment with various lifestyles, and to a certain amount of rebellious behavior as part of their coming of age, as part of their initiation into adult life, that is the argument.

In both cases, autonomy is seen as individual and closely related to the formation of an adult self. As Krøier writes:

"In the public debate, the activists were depicted as young troublemakers who were expected to acquire autonomy and status as adult members of society by going through a process of 'finding themselves'."<sup>138</sup>

When I was lurking around the demonstration at Skt Hans Torv, feeling 'a bit too old and a bit too well-off in the midst of all this rebellious – well, yes – youth' it was an emotional expression of exactly that view on the activists: They are young and in a process of finding themselves, and I am adult, I have been through that process myself, and I am here to support them in exercising the right to be young – young, rebellious and chaotic.

But, as Krøier argues, crucial points are missing in this debate. First of all, quite a large part of the activists in The Youth House Movement aren't that young. Yes, there are teenagers taking part in the activities inside The Youth House and in the riots afterwards, but large parts of the Movement are adults who very consciously choose this kind of activism and this kind of struggle. Then most participants in the public debate, no matter which side they are on, are quite ignorant of the activists' own discourse in general. Following from the definition of the activists as 'young' - either 'spoiled young troublemakers' or 'creative youth' – is a general attitude that the young activists are not serious in their political claims. The radical critique of society at the core of the movement is not recognized or taken seriously by any of the sides in the public debate.

Stine Krøier argues for a temporal understanding of autonomy "tied to the common activities that activists are absorbed by" inside The Youth House.

"The particular form of sociality found in The Youth House departed from entirely individualist notions of autonomy by depicting individual freedom and creativity as the offspring of a collective space of autonomy."<sup>139</sup>

In these social practices, in the activism – organizing of punk concerts, running the vegan kitchen, restoring the house, organising the anarchist bookshop and taking active part in meetings built on consensus democratic processes – she detects a collective form of autonomy. The two main duties in The Youth House – to be active and to be engaged – are political in themselves. If you are actively taking part in the day-to-day running of the activities in the house you are political. The activities are political in themselves. What is really interesting is that the activists, the individual persons, don't initiate the activities, they are rather absorbed into the activities. The activities or actions form a social space that a person can become part of by being active. Instead of seeing these actions as determined by the spatial circumstances they are taking place in, Krøijer looks at the temporal circumstances of these activities. This is what she calls Active Time. Active Time is defined by the collective activity:

"People become activists by becoming engaged, absorbed or involved in common activity. Against this background, we can define as autonomy the temporal space of social relations that opens up when activists are engaged in common activities which extends the concept from one relating to physical space. Better even, the space of social relation can be conceptualized as an autonomous bracket or interstice, that is, an interval of active time in the all-encompassing dead time of capitalism."<sup>140</sup>

An activist is a person who are active – not active in just any kind of action, but in a certain set of common activities that defines and constitutes a new social space and reconfigures "norms, values and social relations". These activities are political in themselves – they are "world-making procedures", implying "that a new world comes into view."

I will go deeper into Active Time later, in the performance 'Climate/Kettle' that is partly an attempt at re-enacting a certain version of Active Time for a short period of time. For now, two questions remain to be discussed: How can the activists be absorbed by the common activity – how is it that in a sense, it is the activity and not the activists that is active? And what separates these activities, the actions in Active Time, from other kinds of normal activities?

"Activism (...) depends on being involved in common activities and thus has a radical unchosen quality: it was talked of in a passive voice as something you are either absorbed by (bliver optaget af) or become engaged in (bliver engageret i). This very widespread way in which activists talked about how they became involved implies that the person is seen as the recipient of the action rather than its initiator. Following this understanding, activism is less a reflection of the existence of an intentional agent pursuing political goals, than something defined by the common activities which persons are absorbed by."<sup>141</sup>

The common activities are crucial here. It is the activity that defines the activism. The term Direct Action has to do with this. The political is defined by the action, not the other way around, as one would normally think. But then, what separates this action

from other kinds of action? The action is a 'figuration' of a 'new world' or of 'another world' or, as Krøijer states, of 'the future'. I will come back to the idea of the future in 'Climate/Kettle', but what about 'figuration'?

The various actions or activities the activists are being absorbed by – "for example through decision-making procedures, in cooking a vegan meal or in organizing an action together" – are political figurations. Krøijer doesn't use the often used anarchist term 'pre-figuration', meaning that an action can be a kind of model activity for another society to come, i.e. after the revolution. She uses the term 'figuration', implying that this activity is now, it is not pre- anything to come, it is a reality in itself, now as it happens. But it is still a figuration of something. It has an image-quality, in the sense that it is an activity that has a symbolic or political meaning. The activity represents a world-view, an attitude towards something. It makes a difference. It creates a difference. The action constitutes a difference from the rest of society. And it does so, as it happens in time. It is temporal. The difference only exists as an interstice in time. The activity has to be performed in time.

For example cooking a vegan meal; it is not only cooking a meal without any content from animals involved, it is an activity that represents an attitude and a worldview. Cooking a vegan meal is a political act. A gesture.

So we have a figuration – a kind of image – and this figuration has to be performed to create an interstice in time, to constitute a difference. The participants are performing these figurations and are thereby becoming activists. In the film 'Get Rid of Yourself' that I will come back to in the last commentary in this chapter, Werner von Delmont uses a similar passive description of the Black Block activists:

"You see, they made it. They were made, but why – if they are made – why are they so confused?" <sup>142</sup>

'They were made'? I was wondering why he was using this passive form 'they were made', but they too are performing images as political figurations, and they too are being made by these figurations. It seems an important point that the participants are becoming activists by performing the figurations of difference. To enter Active Time you have to take active part in the common actions, constituting the Active Time.

It was only in the short moment I was myself taking active part in the struggle for the survival of The Youth House – up there in the small room with my two partners in crime – I was able to connect to the common social space of that struggle. If only for a short moment and only as an emotional rush, still it 'made me'; it changed my conception of the movement and of activism in general, even though it has taken me a long time to understand.

### **In Love? Part One (3.1.4.4.)**

In the discussion organized after the performance at The New Youth House, my first question to the audience was if the term 'in love' made any sense speaking about activism and protests. The question sparked a long debate, where most participants in various ways rejected the idea that activism, even militant activism, could be compared with 'being in love'. Most participants in the discussion argued that 'in love' was an all too positive feeling to fit the state they had been in during the riots. Words like rage, sorrow, anger or passion was used as being more fitting. In general, though, emotional expressions were used to describe the reasons for the collective struggle. This confirms my idea that a large part of the engagement in such struggles has an emotional character.

Henrik Have - the poet who was reading the text 'In Love' in the performance – proposed an understanding of the the text that defined 'being in love' as something completely different from 'inferior nice feelings between two young people', and instead saw it as an incomplete attempt at formulating that moment of apotheosis, when the rage of the riot clears away any kind of context, when the protesting person is finally free, and that this moment is felt through the body:

"I think the writer tries to work towards a description of a climax (and I don't mean an orgasm) in that moment of fighting - in that moment where we can rule out any kind of goo, any kind of moral or emotional thoughts, because they have no meaning whatsoever in a people's uprising. There, in revolt, he finds himself as a free being, totally free, not subject to anything (but one who can't go any further in any kind of liberation, because that would mean death). That moment he experiences as a physical body. And this bodily experience he calls 'in love'." <sup>143</sup>

The use of 'in love' as a metaphor points to the experience that revolutionary freedom is experienced as the presence of the body, and in this sense resembles the sexual act. This analogy between 'in love' and 'sex' was criticized quite strongly by other participants, and even by Henrik Have himself, but if we think of the term 'in love' as a metaphor (in a pop-song), maybe the quest is to figure out what is meant by the use of this metaphor.

Only at the end of the discussion of 'in love', the idea of protests as emotional and physical phenomena was contested; comparing the 69-activism with football hooliganism, one of the activists present argued that activism was quite different and couldn't be seen as purely emotional expressions, collective feelings of adrenaline rush in the fight against the police, but were to be understood in political terms as well. Without a political framing and a political staging of such events, they are meaningless. The hard struggles in the 69-movement become completely underestimated, if they are seen only as such 'letting off steam', a collective adrenaline-valve, completely identical with mere hooliganism. 'Letting off steam' is also one of the common descriptions of protests used by the police and the politicians.

This last argument resembles an argument I made on transcendence and violence in the commentary 'Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance':

“.. This shattering and exorcising of the capitalist spell is both real and symbolic, but the two levels are dependent on each other. The real action can only be justified, because it has a symbolic meaning, and the symbolic meaning only has an effect when it is actualized by being performed in the real.”<sup>144</sup>

It is only when the rage and its physical expression in street-fighting, and maybe even destruction, is inscribed in a symbolic system of meaning that it becomes a political act. The collective emotional states have to be linked to a symbolic, political discourse – the emotionally charged performance has to be staged as a political image to become meaningful.

‘The Apotheosis of Revolt’ introduced in the discussion by Henrik Have is also found in the film ‘Get Rid of Yourself’ to which the next commentary is devoted. In the film an activist describes the riot as an orgy:

“....if I must define an orgy, I’d say it happens when one person or another starts breaking the links between affects and gestures, affects and words, and then everyone else joins in.”

The total freedom Have describes is here described as a collective becoming. As such, it’s not only a liberating bodily emotion experienced in the ultimate moment of revolt; it is a political goal in itself. Individual subjects are dissolved into ‘whatever singularity’, a new open collectivity. As one activist says in the film:

“.....I become a whatever singularity. Everything that isolates me as a subject, as a body endowed with a public configuration of attributes – I feel it dissolve, bodies fray at their edges, at their limit, they blur little by little, I achieve a new nakedness – that’s what the need for communism is. The need for nocturnal spaces, where we can find each other beyond our qualities.”

Here the shattering of the ‘public configuration of attributes’ – the normative identity offered us by society – is political in itself. In the apotheosis of revolt, the activists find each other, freed from normative expectations and prefigured qualities. It is in this collective sense, in this collective becoming something new, that the metaphor of ‘in love’ is to be understood.

### **Get Rid of Yourself (3.1.4.5.)**

“They say, “Another world is possible.” But we do not want another world, another order, another justice: another logical nightmare. We do not want any global governance, be it fair, be it ecological, be it certified by Porto Allegre. We want THIS world. We want this world as chaos. We want the chaos of our lives, the chaos of our perceptions, the chaos of our desires and repulsions. The chaos that happens when management collapses. Capitalism defeated traditional societies because it was more exciting than they were, but now there is something more exciting than Capitalism itself: its destruction.”<sup>145</sup>

With their film 'Get Rid of Yourself', the New York- and Paris-based artist collective, Bernadette Corporation, delivers the by far most convincing artistic portrayal of the Black Bloc and the 'apotheosis of revolt' discussed in previous commentaries. The film is made during and in the aftermath of the 2001 protests against the G8 Summit in Genoa in collaboration with Le Parti Imaginaire, the group of post-Situationist militants and intellectuals behind the magazine, Tiquun, and The Invisible Committee, presented in 'A Short Course....', note 13. The text above scrolls past the title sequence and can be read as the thematic undertitle of the film. 'Get Rid of Yourself' is a visual and theoretical meditation on destruction as the favoured tool of political action by the Black Bloc. The radical thing about this film is that it so directly admits to the 'excitement of destruction'. From the opening sequence of ornamented images of the World Trade Center collapsing on 9/11 to the exalted smashing of an ATM machine with a heavy hammer, the film unashamedly describes the exciting joy of destroying the symbolic features of a capitalism on the verge of dying. Through a series of reflections on their experiences and strategies in the riots by a group of Black Bloc activists, the film also gives an insight into how the violent riot is seen from within, from the other side of the massive staging of the 'violent rebel' that the Black Bloc is treated to by society in general.

The cityscape of Genoa has been transformed into a reality event by the heavy security measures taken by the authorities, trying to protect the G8 Summit. But as the Black Bloc moves through the city in scattered formations, this pre-described scenario is fragmented and split up:

“We advanced through the city, not knowing where to go. Sometimes we blocked the streets to keep the police away. We put up barricades for protection using trash containers we found in the street. We set them on fire. And then we would move on. People were looting all the shops along the streets. Newsstands, real estate offices, travel agencies. Breaking everything, burning cars.”<sup>146</sup>

In this new terrain, the value systems break down and the rules of consumerism are suspended:

“..... It's very strange, the store's shelves without any lighting, the darkness. You get the impression of stepping into a territory that's familiar and at the same time totally bizarre. It's like going into a cinema, but there's no movie playing. The lights remain half on, as if something will be ending or starting. It was just like that when I was in the supermarket. Really odd. No cops, no security guards, no cashiers, nothing at all. Just darkness, and all the products you can barely see, with plenty of people around, taking

whatever they want. It's a funny experience. You know, when you're in a normal supermarket under normal conditions, sometimes there's this little voice that wakes up inside you, and it says: "All this could be different." And maybe then you start to sneak things into your pockets, because the rules of consumerism are just too stupid to deal with." <sup>147</sup>

In the suspension of the prescribed scenario, the state of the subject changes, something beyond the subject unfolds:

"Well I think it's the moment where there is no more scenario. No prescribed scenario, as to which objectives, which direction to go, or what to confront. There's a moment when you arrive at these kinds of situations with some people you know, friends, people you meet, chance encounters. And then you begin to lose them, because the action makes everybody scatter. It's at that point that you feel something that goes beyond you. You're no longer a subject, the points of reference are lost. And then it's about what you observe around you and the way you begin to imitate what's happening. In my opinion, that's the improvisational element."

This is the crucial point, the moment when reality is loosened from pre-description. Even perception is altered, and the situation is experienced in another way:

"What's more is that you don't see much in these moments. You don't have a wide field of vision. There's a general opacity, because everyone's masked, the cops as well as the rioters, plus there's the tear gas, and also there's the opacity of the crowd. And so the greater part of perception of what was going on was organized by sound."

In the film there is a sequence where this kind of perception is imitated. For a few minutes the image is completely dark, almost pitch black, but there is a dramatic soundscape evolving – shouts, sirens, crashes; the sound of street-fighting – and in a sense it feels closer and more real than other parts of the film, where we see scenes of combat between police and rioting youth. So, we are presented with an altered perception, an altered reality:

"If I must define the old world, I'd say it's a way of linking affects to gestures, affects to word. It's a sentimental education that we've had enough of. And if I must define an orgy, I'd say it happens when one person or another starts breaking the links between affects and gestures, affects and words, and then everyone else joins in."

The riot is an orgy. The coding of affects are broken – this resembles the description of 'aesthetic transcendence' I attempted in note 11 in 'A Short Course...':

"The poetic re-claiming of functions are recreating the world around us, making it accessible for direct experience. This is the aesthetics of resistance."

"....and then everyone else joins in": These aesthetics are always described as collective. Individual subjects are dissolved into 'whatever singularity':

".....I become a whatever singularity. Everything that isolates me as subject, as a body endowed with a public configuration of attributes – I feel it dissolve,



bodies fray at their edges at their limit, they blur little by little, I achieve a new nakedness – that’s what the need for communism is. The need for nocturnal spaces, where we can find each other beyond our qualities.”

The film flickers between scenes of chaotic street-fighting and mundane, calm scenes from a seaside suburbia, where the activists from *Le Parti Imaginaire* and Bernadette Corporation relax and reflect on the previous insurrection. This trivial suburban setting gives the film a melancholy atmosphere that adds to the feeling of being trapped inside a set of prescribed configurations that is described in the testimonies of the activists. But in this melancholia, there is a certain beauty; at one point we see a young couple setting fire to a pink parasol in front of a Mediterranean sunset. A sad, funny image of a lifestyle burning out.

“This attempt to freeze the unpredictable corpse of my becomings between the veils of an identity. The attempt to convert me to the religion of the coherence I do not choose. The *oikos*. I need to become anonymous in order to become present. The more anonymous I am, the more present I am.”

Everyone in and around ‘Get Rid of Yourself’ are anonymous to various degrees. Bernadette Corporation is the collective name of a group of artists, never named directly in any of their productions. *Le Parti Imaginaire* is a loosely assembled group of activist philosophers, producing among other things the magazine *Tiqqun*, also never defined directly as the work of any specific persons. And the voices in the film, reading out their testimonies, are completely anonymous; we don’t know who they are, if they are members of Bernadette Corporation, *Le Parti Imaginaire* or the Black Bloc, if they are fictitious or real. We don’t know if they are any of the persons we see in the images, if the voices we hear speaking belong to the same persons who have written the testimonies. But seen together, as in this film, all these people portray an attitude, a certain attention. In connection with her work on ‘Active Time’, Stine Krøyer talks about ‘style’ as a defining political tool; the political is not to be found in arguments or ideology –the political is to be found in the style of action chosen in a given situation. Here, style appears all over the film, in its harsh aesthetics, in the wild editing, and in the fragments of fashion-shots that are interspersed with the riot-scenes as emblems of the empire the rebels seek to destroy. Style is *Tiqqun*:

“Becoming attentive to the *Tiqqun* place of things, of beings. To their *eventness*. To the stubborn silent edge of their own temporality. To open up spaces where the act we commit is no longer assignable to a given body. Where bodies rediscover the ability to perform a gesture. The all-knowing distribution of metropolitan dispositives. Computers, cars, schools, cameras, telephones, hospitals, television, sports, cinema, etc. have stripped from them, by recognizing them, by immobilizing them, by making them turn and avoid, by making the body exist separately from the head. To liberate space liberates us one hundred times more than any free space does.”

In this last sentence we might find an explanation of the curious character of The Youth House Movement. Why did this movement swell to thousands after The Youth House was demolished? And why did these thousands of active participants in the Thursday demonstrations and in the other large scale protests suddenly disappear into the blue, when the new Youth House was finally established? How come that the Movement only existed, really existed, temporarily in the interval between the two Youth Houses? It might be as obvious as this: “To liberate space liberates us one

hundred times more than any free space does.” Only the struggle for a new Youth House, the struggle for more liberated spaces, was really liberating.

This continuous liberation of space resembles very closely the becoming I discussed in my introduction:

“In his introduction to “Robespierre or ”the Divine Violence of Terror”, Slavoj Žižek quotes Gilles Deleuze: ”They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming.””<sup>148</sup>

Is this ‘revolutionary becoming’ or ‘becoming the people’ as Žižek puts it, what happens in the exciting destruction of prescribed scenarios and capitalist values, in the undetermined physical presence of the riots? When the configuration of subjectivity dissolves, when the ‘links between affects and gestures, affects and words’ are broken? At the ‘point where you feel something that goes beyond you’? In these moments, disguised and dressed in black, the activists of the Black Bloc lose individual identity and become anonymous: “The more anonymous I am, the more present I am.”

The American sociologist, Georgy Katsiaficas, calls the revolutionary becoming the ‘eros-effect’.<sup>149</sup> I discuss this in the performance ‘Silent Stand’. Here, it is enough to compare this to the remarks made by Henrik Have in the discussion following ‘Revolution By Night’ – that the ‘apotheosis of revolt’ is experienced as a purely bodily presence, and that this presence must be described in sexual – erotic – terms. In the anonymous presence of destruction and looting, the bodies ‘rediscover the ability to perform a gesture’. And it is this state of collective bodily becoming that can be termed ‘revolutionary becoming’. The riot is an orgy.

As another reflective layer in the film, we meet two quite odd characters, both caught in a state of ‘becoming other’. The famous actress, Chloe Sevigny, is rehearsing various lines and sentences from the testimonies of the activists we hear in other parts of the film (some of them quoted here). She is still trying out various modes of tone, intonation and formulation. Of course her figure casts a little doubt back on the ‘real’ testimonies – are they also staged and fictional – but in my view, the really interesting function of her figure is the paradoxical way she embodies the process of becoming another person. In a sense, her rehearsals illustrate the kind of ‘sentimental education’ mentioned a couple of times elsewhere in the film. As every actor, she is rehearsing to become another. But because the statements she is learning are about shredding off subjective identity, shredding off the ‘public configuration of attributes’, the other whom she is rehearsing to become is a ‘whatever’, a body stripped of identity. So she is rehearsing to become anonymous. And we never see her completing this process; she is caught in the undetermined state of becoming.

The other character is the artist Stephan Dillemath, here acting as his alter ego, Werner von Delmont. Wearing a blond wig and a weird, sloppy halfmask, he looks strangely dressed up, also caught in-between himself and his persona. Like Chloe Sevigny he is present exactly in the zone between real person and fictive person. In the zone of becoming image.

Werner von Delmont is sitting by a pond, contemplating his blisters and criticizing 'the young people of today':

"They are a little bit too confused about their own – you know – what they are supposed to do. You see, they made it. They were made, but why – if they are made – why are they so confused? They are themselves, so astonished that they can do these things. And they have so much fun in doing it. But they miss a little bit more of intelligence. Strategic intelligence."

Asked about the violence, Werner von Delmont is very clear:

"It's not violence – smashing things. It's to create pictures, you know. You create pictures. (...) I mean, there were very good images yesterday. There was a whole underpass burning. The police couldn't go through. And all these things."

This is what he is looking for: strategic images. Images in which the rebels 'are being made'. It is when the activists 'rediscover the ability to perform a gesture' such images are made. In the gesture an image is being performed.

There is a dispute in the film between Delmont wishing for the youth to realize their 'being made', their becoming strategic subjects, and on the other hand the "potential of community based on a radical refusal of political identity" that Bernadette Corporation and Le Parti Imaginaire present as the topic of the film. Through the strange figure of Delmont, this dispute is presented as generational, which is also orchestrated in the harsh rejection of the older generations of activists in other parts of the film.

This is also what is so hard to grasp in the activism of the Black Bloc: The radical lack of political ideology, the lack of any kind of rational argument. The politics of the Black Bloc is being performed in dramatic images of destruction. And the other world being produced by these images is to be sought inside the production of the images: it is already there, in the collective improvisations of the activists, in the eventness of the moments when 'the points of reference are lost', in the 'unpredictable corpse of becomings'.

The artistic language of 'Get Rid of Yourself' matches this; it is as raw, improvised and direct as the actions it portrays. In an abrupt, crash editing, various blocks of images, sounds, interviews are layered in a chaotic assemblage, filled to the brim with cheap video effects and harsh camera moves. The riot is an orgy. Get Rid of Yourself!

### **In Love? Part Two (3.1.4.6.)**

“Everything dissolves. The civilized world is dead and you know what? I fucking don’t care - I am in love”.<sup>150</sup>

It is this becoming through destruction I found so fascinating in the text ‘In Love’; it is formulated as a pop-song, with humour and catchy phrases, but the agenda is similar to the radicalism of ‘Get Rid of Yourself’: The exciting destruction of Capitalism. Here, after ‘Get Rid of Yourself’, I might even attempt my own interpretation of the use of the term ‘in love’ in that song: Isn’t loss of identity exactly what characterizes the person who has fallen in love? All of a sudden, one sees oneself as the object of the gaze of the beloved other, one’s identity is shattered, and all one hopes for is to become another, to unite with the beloved other, and become new. And there one is hanging, in-between identities, lost to one self and not yet found by that miraculous other. Hanging in-between reality and fiction, like Chloe Sevigny and Werner von Delmont, caught in becoming. This becoming, the becoming in ‘in love’, could be similar to the becoming an anonymous bodily presence in the apotheosis of revolt. In this sense ‘in love’ might not be such a bad metaphor after all.

### The Youth House versus The Father House (3.1.4.7.)



*September 2001 The Father House*  
ink and acrylic on paper  
53x76cm  
2008



*Fall 1999 (for sale including 500 violent psykopaths from hell)*  
acrylic on banner  
154x154cm  
2008

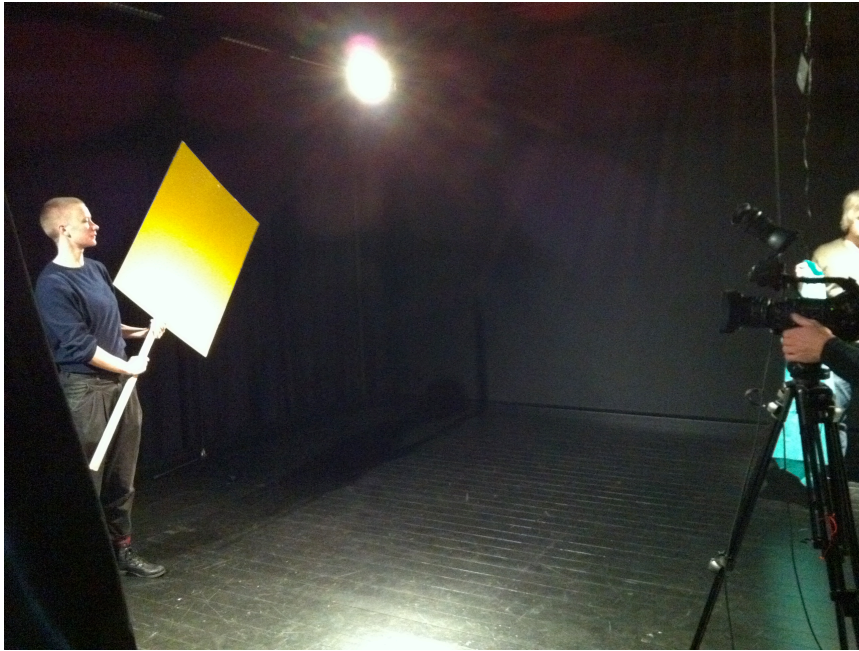
Autumn 1999 – after a series of quarrels with the activists about a fire and the necessary restoration of Ungdomshuset, the city of Copenhagen decided to sell Jagtvej 69. The activists using the house would thereby be evicted. They on their

side reacted by hanging a highly satirical banner on the facade of the house: "FOR SALE INCLUDING 500 VIOLENT PSYKOPATHS FROM HELL". This text later on became one of the principal reasons for the religious sect The Fatherhouse to buy and destroy the house. My version of the banner is a half-size replica, made from an unclear photo of the original banner. Its a sculpture 'in between reproduction and ready-made' – a formula used several times throughout the 69 works in the exhibition '69scenes'.<sup>151</sup> Its intended to give a double sense of 'the real event' and a museological artifact.

The banner provoked Ruth Evensen, head of the fundamentalist christian movement The Fatherhouse, immensely. She felt obliged to God to clean up, rinse out the evil of Ungdomshuset. In a slow but effective deceptive operation she managed to buy up the foundation which first bought the house from the city of Copenhagen in september 2001. The Fatherhouse is hierarchically centered around Ruth Evensen. Apart from Ungdomshuset their main themes are fights against homosexuality and free abortion. But the Ungdomshuset-case is by all means Ruth Evenesnes claim to fame, ad she is given almost unlimited speaking-time in the mainstream media.

My portrait of Ruth Evensen is made from a official portrait photo of her, found on the web-page of The Fatherhouse. The use of black background and white figure/foreground is inspired by the graffitti and banner design in and around Ungdomshuset. It also adds to the mask-like character of her face. Ruth disguised as The Father (or is it the other way around) on a mission from God – The Father, as a stand-in for the will of God, hunting and haunting the evil Youth – The Youth disguised as psykopaths from Hell. God has many faces. Hell has frozen over. Ghosts.

3.2. G13 greenredturquoiseyellow



Inter Arts Center, Malmö, 09.02.11

Main:

- 3.2.1. Script
- 3.2.2. Performance: Inter Arts Center, Malmö, 09.02.11
- 3.2.3. Analysis

Commentary:

- 3.2.3.1. There's a large gap in the fence: G13
- 3.2.3.2. On Style
- 3.2.3.3. Image Politics

Appendix:

- 3.2.4.1. *G13 greenredturquoiseyellow*, performance documentation, video 45:32 min.
- 3.2.4.2. *GOING THROUGH A FIELD*: Oliver Ressler in conversation with Frans Jacobi, Nørrebro 23.7.2011, video 53.25 min.
- 3.2.4.3. There's a large gap in the fence: G13, pdf<sup>152</sup>
- 3.2.4.4. *Ungdomshusbevægelsen er defensiv*, interview with Mikkel Bolt by Niels Fastrup/Monsun, Modkraft.dk 21. August 2008, pdf<sup>153</sup>
- 3.2.4.5. *Now released activists on convalescence on Vesterbro*, as published on Modkraft.dk, Sunday 7. October 2007 (translated by Susanne Jacobi), pdf<sup>154</sup>
- 3.2.4.6. *G13-aktion banede vejen for nyt ungdomshus*, Martin Lindblom/Monsun. Modkraft.dk 27. November 2007<sup>155</sup>
- 3.2.4.7. *Fingerplanen*, Aktion G13 October 6, 2007<sup>156</sup>

**G13 greenredturquoiseyellow (script 3.2.1.)**

*A reading-piece for 6 voices:*

*The swarm: Anna Rydén, Robert Bolin, Agnes Forstenberg,  
Jenny Jensen*

*The artist/researcher: voice-over by Yvette Brackman*

*The guide: Frans Jacobi*

*An empty black space, a sound system, a video camera on a  
tripod; 2 banners, 2 flags, a signboard ; 4 rolls of  
yarn: green, red, turquoise and yellow. An audience.*



## **SCENE 1: GREEN**

### **THE GUIDE:**

"14.31 - It's become a little easier to get a general view of the size of the demonstration after it has started to move. A witness on the spot calls it "very, very big", possibly up to 10.000 participants. The different blocks of the demonstration include activists in black wearing ribbons around arms and heads in the colours of the block. There are several hundred demonstrators in each block."<sup>157</sup>

*The guide positions the tripod with the video camera pointing in the direction of the green member of the swarm. The green person picks up the green banner, walks to a person in the audience and hands her one pole of the banner. The green person walks back and stretches out the banner. She turns to the camera and starts reading aloud her text.*

### **THE SWARM / GREEN PERSON:**

"Green bloc rambles in sick ninja style. On G-day, we will be the totally green bloc of the demo, with push-tru-cops-gear and other extravaganza. The fun bloc with a heavy, confrontational, unified visual expression. We distribute the coolest green ninja masks. The mission is to reach and conquer our new house. You can help us by being in total control and one with the bloc - we will push through the armored chains of the cops, blocking them out, exploiting their weaknesses, and we'll be mega crafty. Our strength is our numbers, our cunning and a high level of information. We care for and stand up for each other. So come along in the green bloc; whether you're mega-fresh in the front line, super skilled in pushing ahead; whether you're good to climb the fences or if this is your first squatting; whether you are 12 or 60 years old - you are all needed here."<sup>158</sup>

### **THE GUIDE:**

"15.45 - Now teargas is hurled onto Borups Allé. Masked police forces are advancing against the demonstrators. Protesters are standing still; clinging to each other. There is police behind the protesters too; they are locked up here."

*The voice-over fills the space. The guide picks up the green yarn, ties one end to one pole of the green banner and starts unfolding a long line of yarn. When reaching a member of the audience, he winds it round a hand and continues, slowly creating an intricate 3D web of colored lines, criss-crossing through space.*

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Now, my dear audience, I think we need a bit of explanation. This is a portrait of a so-called swarm. In his essay 'Network Maps, Energy Diagrams: Structure and Agency in the Global System' the writer Brian Holmes identifies 'the swarm' as "a specific form of organization being put to multiple uses", by various social movements in the last decades.<sup>159</sup> First observed as the general strategy of the Zapatista Movement in the early 1990s by John Arquilla and David Ronfeldt:

"Swarming occurs when the dispersed nodes of a network of small (and perhaps some large) forces can converge on a target from multiple directions. The overall aim is sustainable pulsing – swarm networks must be able to coalesce rapidly and stealthily on a target, then disperse and re-disperse, immediately ready to recombine for a new pulse."<sup>160</sup>

Brian Holmes argues how this technique of swarming has been used by first the counterglobalization movement, later even by the US Government in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, where a "swarm doctrine" was set to work. The swarm is a strategy of attack, used to combat an enemy of greater power. Apart from its strategic qualities, it has a symbolic function as well; the swarm is a great metaphor for the people, this is how even the poorest equipped 'people's-army' can conquer even the mightiest army by their sheer numbers. We are many, we are smart, so no matter how invincible an enemy you are, we can defeat you.

The G13 action is one of the most monumental of the many, many actions and demonstrations of the so-called Youth House Movement in Copenhagen in 2007/08. G13 marks the turning-point of the severe fight between the movement and the enemy-triad: the city administration, the police and the religious sect, The Fatherhouse. This dark drama of the Youth House versus the Fatherhouse is a long labyrinthine complex of absurd culture politics, far too long to dwell on here – it is addressed in other parts of this PhD-project.<sup>161</sup> What is interesting right here is how G13 is organized as a swarm structure and how it turns the tables in a conflict that up to that point was frozen in fixed positions.

## **SCENE 2: RED**

### **THE GUIDE:**

15.54 - 300-400 activists from Turquoise Bloc has entered the railway tracks that runs along the G13-grounds. They are pursued eastwards by a group of police officers.

*The guide positions the tripod with the video camera pointing in the direction of the red member of the swarm. The red person picks up the red flag and starts waving it. She turns to the camera and starts reading her text aloud.*

### **THE SWARM / RED PERSON:**

The strength of our movement is our numbers, our mobility and our creativity! These are the key elements in our bloc! We encourage you to turn up in red, in as many red clothes you have! If you forget the red masking at home, we will help you! Follow the red bloc and show the politicians, police and the rest of Denmark that we mean business, and that we can't be stopped! Be prepared to climb every fence, every barricade. We will push and stress the police so we can create holes in the blockades and break their chains!<sup>162</sup>

### **THE GUIDE:**

16.40 - The Turquoise Bloc, crossing the railway tracks and making their way through the communal gardens behind the G13-grounds, was greeted by 30-50 police officers, who struck the demonstrators hard and without provocation, beating them up.

*As the voice-over of the artist/researcher fills the space again, the guide continues the slow construction of the web of lines, now with the red yarn.*

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

G13 is a large, political action taken by between five and ten thousand people in Copenhagen. The masterplan for G13 is announced months before; on October 6, 2007 the movement will squat a certain empty house on the north-western outskirts of Copenhagen. If they succeed, this house will function as the new Youth House, a public culture house for different, alternative subcultures that will replace the former, now demolished Youth House. A series of workshops, where participants train their combat skills are set up, and a massive sms-campaign secures a huge turn-up of protesters on G-day, October 6<sup>th</sup>. The crowds are organized in 4 groups, each identified via a certain color – green, red, turquoise and yellow – and a specific strategy on how to approach and enter into the G13-grounds. The name itself, G13, comes from the

address of the desired house, Grøndalsvænge 13, but is also a marker of where the inspiration comes from for the strategy of announcing everything, time, methods and goals, in due time before the action itself. The G8-protest movement surrounding the G8-summit in Rostock earlier the same year deployed a similar strategy.

As the day progresses and G13 is met by a very large police force, a series of dramatic street-battles evolve. During the day, around 450 people are arrested, at the time a national record for arrests in a single day.

G13 doesn't manage to squat the house for more than a few hours, and only a few hundred of the many activists make it that far. But the flag of the movement, the pirate flag, is raised on the roof of the building.

### **SCENE 3: TURQUOISE**

#### **THE GUIDE:**

16.50 - There is a large hole in the fence around the G13-grounds. 400-500 protesters have got through the hole at the KPMG building which is the adjacent property. Protesters are making speeches from inside the ground, and there is cheering while more and more people penetrate the fence. Police forces are now clearing the neighboring grounds and are preparing to enter the G13-grounds to hunt down the protesters.

*The guide positions the tripod with the video camera pointing in the direction of the turquoise member of the swarm. The turquoise person picks up the turquoise flag and starts waving it. He turns to the camera and starts reading his text aloud.*

#### **THE SWARM / TURQUOISE PERSON:**

In the turquoise finger the style is black with a marker of turquoise. You have to be practically dressed for off-road running and climbing. The plan is to stick together, but force the pace on a wide front. In the struggle for more autonomous houses we are creative, flexible, mobile, fast, prepared, united and ready to take our new house with unbridled energy and real street style.<sup>163</sup>

#### **THE GUIDE:**

17.01 - About 200 protesters are now inside the central G13-house and on the roof, where a large pirate flag is raised. Police have surrounded the area but stay calm so far.

*As the voice-over of the artist/researcher fills the space again, the guide continues the slow construction of the web of lines, now with the turquoise yarn.*

#### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

The swarm moves in apparently coordinated and correlated ways. But how? In his essay 'The hard core can't be arrested' the Danish writer and former activist Nikolaj Villumsen explains how the Youth House Movement is structured like a network of loosely associated groups, small and large. In such a structure, there isn't a traditional power hierarchy; there is no 'hard core' that leads the rest of the movement. Each group has very different modes of decision-making and quite different agendas as well. Still, the movement as a whole depends on fast and joint decisions:

"To get other parts of the network engaged, the contact between the groups in the network is crucial.

The connections between the groups are maintained by personal contacts. These are essential for communication. It is not necessarily the internally important persons in a group who have personal contacts in other parts of the network."<sup>164</sup>

Two factors are central for this networked decision-making: the means of communication and the mutual respect between the different groups in the movement.

The journalist, Ulrik S. Kohl, describes how chains of SMS develop into the central media of communication and decision-making in the Youth House Movement.<sup>165</sup> By sending an sms-message out into her own personal network, a person or a group in the movement can organize an event. If the message is well received, it will be sent further out into the next circles of personal networks, and in this way a single message can be circulated to thousands of mobile phones within a very short time. The receiver of the message immediately senses, if this is a message that has widespread support; if so, he will receive the same message, maybe in different versions, many times on his mobile, "like a hail-storm". Kohl describes how at certain crucial moments, whole waves of sms-messages spread extremely fast, and a crowd of thousands of activists can be mobilized within half an hour to meet up somewhere and start protesting. If the message doesn't gain support, it won't be circulated, and it dies out fast. In this way, the chains of personal contacts make collective decisions via the sms-waves. Soon a special activist-lingo develops – N.Villumsen has a quite funny explanation of how the word 'creative' in this lingo means 'violence': if for instance a message says "...go out and show your creativity..now", it actually means "meet up for vandalizing, stone-throwing and civil disobedience...now!"<sup>166</sup>

The other basic factor is the mutual respect between the different parts of the network. This is manifested as a general codex of not criticizing each other. If a message contains critique, it will soon die out in the chains of communication. Even hard violence and vandalizing are supported on a broad basis in the movement. The lack of internal critique secures a large and united movement.

So, these are some of the basic features of the swarm. The pulse that Arquilla and David Ronfeldt so poetically described above is fuelled by the sms-waves and internal solidarity. The swarm moves.

## SCENE 4: YELLOW

### THE GUIDE:

17.19 - Approximately 1,000 protesters are in the tunnel under Bispeengbuen. The police announce that the demonstration is dissolved because of violence and vandalism, and that people should retreat to Nørrebro. Massive amounts of teargas are thrown against the sealed-off demonstrators. An eyewitness compares it to a war-scenario.

*The guide positions the tripod with the video camera pointing in the direction of the yellow member of the swarm. The yellow person picks up the yellow signboard, gesturing with it. She turns to the camera and starts reading her text aloud.*

### THE SWARM / YELLOW PERSON:

Yellow bloc is G13's queer feminist bloc. We can be recognized by the yellow wagon, and the many yellow banners with monsters. Our main strategy is to stick together and push obstacles away, using the fact that we are many, and don't subside. We move together into Grondal Vænge 13, and try to avoid it being about sex, age and experience; whether you mean to participate in the squatting or not; the only prerequisite is that you want a Youth House in Copenhagen. The style is very direct. We will go forward in a massive bloc, with the front of the bloc – the fingernail of the formation – wrapped in ladders and foam to push away the police. We must be a solid, yet flexible bloc. We must have a solid communication between the different parts of the bloc, so that we can change the plan or move forward together fast, if necessary. If the police choose to shoot with teargas against us, we will try to navigate away together. All those in need will get lemon and a piece of cloth to breathe through, and we will also have a limited number of diving goggles to wear up in the front. This should make better navigation possible, maybe even helping somebody else get out. The aim is wherever possible to avoid panic and move forward as a bloc in spite of the teargas. When we enter the new premises, the idea is to squat a separate building, a queer feminist house, where those of us who think it's important and want to can create one of the things we lack in Copenhagen: A public, accessible space that potentially can be free of gender power and heterosexism. Once we have taken our new Youth House, we have plenty of time to find out, how to do it. The proposal of a specific queer feminist space / house will be presented at G13's first communal meeting as an up-and-running Youth House.<sup>167</sup>

**THE GUIDE:**

17.46 - Inside the G13-grounds 80 protesters are detained by the police. They are picked out one at a time by police officers and put in a 'train'; locked in rows on the ground with wrists strapped. According to TV2 News, at least 200 people are arrested. Politiken, the newspaper, writes 300; two people are knocked unconscious by teargas grenades, and several people have been hurt severely by truncheon blows and dog bites.

*As the voice-over of the artist/researcher fills the space again, the guide continues the slow construction of the web of lines, now with the yellow yarn. At the end of this sequence, the guide picks up a pirate flag, and erects it by fastening the pole into the now intricate web of the colored lines. This flag is now held aloft by the audience holding the strings of the web. When the voice-over stops, he returns to the computer for the final time-note.*

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Another important aspect of G13 is the way it is conceived and acted out as a purely symbolic action. Already long before the action itself, the website of G13 announces it as an incredible success, and so are the general reactions afterwards. How can a squatting of a house that only lasts a few hours become such a success? The obvious symbolic victory is the raising of the flag on the roof of the G13-house. Even though this is a quite banal sign of triumph, it's a marker that's easy for everyone involved to understand. As a funny note, it reverses an earlier incident where police officers were spotted pissing on the empty ground where the Youth House stood before the demolishing. Territorial pissing. And since the squatting only lasts a few hours, the conquest must be understood as purely symbolic.

In public opinion, the Youth House Movement is considered violent, destructive and out of control right up to G13. This is partly true, but it is interesting to note that even with this negative aura of revolt, the movement still gains huge amounts of sympathy and engages more and more followers, also of completely different ages and backgrounds than what is to be expected. This sympathy probably stems from a general feeling of desperation and despair that the demolition of the Youth House creates in far wider circles of society than those who had actually used the Youth House when it still existed.

Given these negative public expectations, another not outspoken aim of G13 is to change the image of the movement from 'spoiled violent youth' to 'creative smart-



mob'. Not an easy task with thousands of violent protesters in a crowd that has spent most of the last six months burning cars, crashing shop windows and throwing stones at the police. By displaying strict non-violence and collective self-control G13 manages to win public opinion. Exactly because everyone are expecting violent street-fighting, the non-violence is seen as a conscious retreat from violence. A retreat that the opponent – the police forces – aren't able or willing to match. The heavy use of teargas, the confrontational show of force and the massive waves of arrests portray the police forces as the violent aggressors.

This shift of roles is the real outcome of the events. The whole narrative of squatting a house, of announcing everything in advance, of cunning urban hide and seek, can be seen as camouflage. A kind of Hitchcock-McGuffin-like plot that lures the police forces into acting out the role of aggressors. The real victory of the protesting activists is the self-discipline and the retreat from violence. Their retreat leaves the stage open to the police forces who willingly perform the image projected onto them.

A new theatre of the streets: In the days that follow, even the chief police officer of the operation, Per Larsen, announces his respect for the "disciplined non-violence of the protestors" and calls for a political solution of the Youth House problem, urging the mayor of Copenhagen to start negotiations. And the mayor, Ritt Bjerregaard, immediately starts the negotiations she has rejected for months and years: "We are always open to dialogue with serious people who don't use violence", as she states to a local news-channel, TV2Lorry.<sup>168</sup>

#### **THE GUIDE:**

23.02 - According to reliable sources, several hundred arrested activists are held in an underground garage at Valby Police Station. Among these are those who entered the G13-house. They have all been kept sitting on the rough concrete floor for many hours, since around 17.00. They are wearing strips, and according to the sources, they can't get water and they can't get to the toilet. Among them are allegedly minors.

#### **THE END**

### Analysis (3.2.3.)

In the performance two assumptions inherent in the discourse on G13 of the artist/researcher are tested out in the temporal reality of the situation:

Is it possible to give a text a voice, to embody it in actual time, without retreating to fictional time? Is it possible to establish a collective body consisting of the actual persons present in the space of the performance?

Why these two questions?

The latter is quite obvious. The concept of the swarm as a strategic form of activism is based on the assumption that it is possible to establish some kind of collective body; that it is possible to connect a group of people, small or big, and that this group can act, not in unison, but like a body with different limbs. In the performance I wanted to test this by connecting the members of the audience and the 4 actors in a collaborative act.

The first question might seem less obvious. It has to do with the dialectics between physical/emotional action and politics I discussed in the commentary 1.1.4.1: *Verfremdungseffekt*. There I used a quote by The Invisible Committee:

“... rage and politics should never have been separated. Without the first, the second is lost in discourse; without the second the first exhausts itself in howls.”<sup>169</sup>

From this I argued:

“... the affect, the rage, is connected to a metaphysical layer, politics. Only when connected by being performed as one, the two elements make sense. Only when being expressed as emotion - in the real, as gesture, as action - does politics make sense. Even here, in the common expression 'make sense', this dialectics between concept and action appear: A line of thought becomes real meaning when it makes sense, that is, when it is experienceable by the senses.”<sup>170</sup>

It is this double presence – something is present as text and as experience for the senses, as action – I wanted to test by embodying the four G13-manifestos.

What does this mean: Embodying a text?

Each manifesto is read up by an actor carrying a flag or a banner in the color of the respective block. The fact that these relatively short manifestos are read up by various persons creates a variation in the presentation of the texts and it situates each text in a different position in the space, thus creating a spatial distribution of the text. Most importantly it embodies the 4 texts: Each text is connected to a specific person, to a specific voice, to a specific body. The text is given a voice. The actors are asked to keep strictly to reading aloud, no acting is allowed. This accentuates that it is a text and the ready-made character of the texts. So there is a text and an embodiment of this text. It is imperative to keep this distinction alive in the performance – that the text is performed and not acted.

Working with actors recently in another production I experienced how the script was transformed in the process of rehearsing: In the beginning of the rehearsals when the actors still didn't know their roles and the dialogue perfectly, the text and the actor were still separate entities. The text was being performed by a voice and a body. As the acting process proceeded the text and the actor became increasingly united to the point of completion where text and actor became one. Now the text was internalized and the actor became a fictive persona. A kind of illusion evolved, a naturalism; all of a sudden you believed in the fictive person in front of you. In a sense it was a magical moment. I guess this is the magic of theatre. That a fictive situation is created and that you as an audience are led to believe in this illusion.

To me, performance is something different. It is grounded in the given situation; the space, the audience, the performers, the various objects or effects being part of the situation. It is real. Real, in the sense that all eventual illusions are revealed and the various elements constituting the performance are accentuated and objectified. This real has to do with time. The performance evolves in real time, it is happening now. In fiction the viewer - the audience, the reader, the listener - is taken to another time, outside of the present time. Performance is present. It constitutes a presence, a now. When it works, this now is shared by everyone present, the audience and the performers. It is this now I call a sense-event. In the various performances in this project I approach it in various ways, and it has different characteristics. Sometimes it is dramatic, sometimes it is contemplative; the mood changes according to the script and the problematics it is addressing.

A continuous problem in these performances is that they are each addressing a certain event, that happened at another time, at another place – a demonstration, a political action, an arrest etc. How to present this original event in the format of a performance, with the intention to create a presence, a present now, at the same time as referring to those other times and other places? This is a formal problem that fuels all these performances and the various inventions contained in them. It is also the basic quest of my artistic research: I want to test my ideas of the original events in a performative situation. It is my assumption that the original event is constituted as performance; that in the various original events various aspects of performativity are acted out by the activists and/or other active participants – the police, authorities or others. How to represent and test this original sense-event as a new and present situation? Instead of recreating the original event in a naturalistic manner - as in the tradition of realism in film or in the format of traditional re-enactments - I have chosen to perform the information gathered in my research process and the circumstances of the gathering of this information. Here a set of distances are established, and it is a premise that these distances are kept identifiable in the performances.

For these reasons it is important that the 4 manifestos in G13 are performed, read, and not acted. To keep the distance between the text and its embodiment observable. In a sense this is my version of Brecht's *Verfremdung*. As viewers we are not transported to another place and another time; we are still here in this space, together with the actor reading up a text, and that happens now. The text is given a body, it has a voice and it is connected to a specific person, to a specific body. It is present in this space, now.

The presence of the voice-over is different. It is already hinted at by the word 'voice-over'. The voice lies over something else. The voice is hovering in the space above

everything else. It doesn't come from a specific position in the space, it doesn't come from a specific body present in the situation. This voice is not part of the situation in the same sense as the actors, the performer, the audience, the banners, the flags and the web of color-lines. The voice-over is over, above the situation. It is a meta-physical voice. It is commenting on the situation, narrating it from outside, from above.

It is precisely this - commenting from the outside of the situation - that is the intention with the figure of the 'artist/researcher'. It is a device intended to give the audience a double layered experience; to give them the possibility of being a part of the situation and at the same time to consider it from a distance.

This performance, G13, is special because it is the voice-over that carries the central narrative. In this sense it is a kind of performative essay. The other elements are either illustrations or inserts in the text of the voice-over. But these illustrations and inserts are performative; in contrast to the voice-over they are grounded in the temporal presence of the performance.

In the periods where we hear the voice-over a performer is constructing/performing the main visual element of the performance: a growing net or maze of lines in the 4 signature colors. This 3-dimensional web is carried by members of the audience; as the performance and the colored web evolves Jacobi is fastening parts of the strings to almost every member of the audience. In this way the audience is becoming part not only of the web of strings, but also of a collaborative network, participating in the event by holding up the web of lines. The participation is easy and passive but it is a central point that the web of strings is only kept up in the air by the participating audience.

The web is of course a very obvious symbolic representation of the swarm and the inherent lines of communication constituting the collective body of the swarm. It works as an illustration to the description of the swarm in the voice-over, but the web has another function too: By engaging the audience as participants in the network a collective body is established, here in the space of the performance. It is a soft and passive version of the collective body, but it is there, present. The maze of colored lines connect the persons in the audience and each of them has a small responsibility in keeping the network floating in the air. No one do actually let go of the string they are holding. The web of colored lines is not only a symbolic representation of a collective body, it is also an actual realisation of it.

This is how the performance works as a research experiment. Now, the G13-performance is done before I developed the format of 'performance followed by discussion' that later became the standart format of the last series of performances. Hence there is no organized discussion following the performance, and I have only my own impressions and some scattered comments, to evaluate how the two questions or tests were answered, not by the audience, but by the development of the performance.

Both tests are carried out discretely while the main narrative of the performance develops as a performative essay. In both cases the action or performativity involved in the test is stripped of any dramatic gestures. It is simple, very neutral acts that constitutes the two tests. The act of reading up a text. The collective act of holding a

set of strings up in the air. Furthermore, both acts are already containing the approval of the tests in themselves:

When a person reads up a text, this text is embodied; it is 'experienceable by the senses', by hearing. Already in the simple act of reading up a text, the double presence I am looking for is manifested. We are simultaneous in the actual space where the person is reading up the text, and in the space inside the text - wherever that is.

When a group of people are holding a set of strings together, when these strings connect them, they become one large entity. Together – their individual bodies and the connecting strings – they make up one organism, a collective body. Because the connections are simple and physical – it is constituted by the strings of yarn that connects one person to the next and so on – the collective body is in a physical sense a simple fact. The members of the audience are connected by colored strings of yarn and thus they become a collective body.

So both test are actually already confirmed positively, just by acting them out.

In the performance these very simple acts of physical presence are interlaced into the narrative of the political action G13. The texts the four actors are reading up are activist manifestos from G13 and the web of colored strings of yarn, that connects the members of the audience, is a 3-dimensional, symbolic representation of the swarm, that is the main strategic figure in the G13 action. By this the two acts establishes the double presence of now and then, too. We are right here in the space of the performance, and at the same time we are contemplating something back then, on the day of G13.

In the sequence of actions undertaken by The Youth House Movement in 2007/08, G13 was by far the largest and in one sense the most ambitious. G13 was basically about restraint. At the time it was important to change the image of the movement from 'violent youth' to 'creative smart mob'. By refraining from violence and keeping to the overall plan the activists shows the necessary restraint and thereby changes the direction of the conflict with the authorities, opening up for negotiations that was until then completely unimaginable.

The development of the colored web of yarn in the performance reflects this restraint on a small scale. As the web gets more complex and fills up larger parts of the space, the performer is increasingly restrained maneuvering in and out of the web as he adds more and more lines to the web. In the collective body of the audience a certain level of restraint and trust is taken as a given too: If one or more persons let go of their piece of string, parts of the web will fall to the floor and the general impression of a network of lines occupying the entire space will falter. The theme of restraint is in this sense embodied, too. Not represented as an image, but grounded in the situation of the performance by small and relatively neutral gestures. By taking part in the small scale acts of restraint, the audience are able to consider the larger acts of restraint performed by the thousands of activists on G13-day. Thus it is not only the image of the colored web that is an illustration or symbolic representation of the swarm; the participatory process of creating the web is a performative reflection on the concept of the swarm, too.

What about the aforementioned 'bridges' in between the various parts of the performance? The small bits of time-coded reports from the G13-action read aloud by the performers in between his work on the web. This is where the performance becomes unclear. These small reports are descriptive like the text in the voice-over, but ready-mades and read up like the 4 manifestos; their position in the relationship between the present space of the performance and the past space of the G13-action is unclear. Intended as bridges between these two realms they blur the intricate relationships between the various types of texts, voices and presences in the performance. Still, they pace the narrative by introducing the progression of the time codes - but this is also confusing since it is the time of the past event they refer to and not the present time of the performance.

Also part of these bridges is a feature I call 'the camera as performer': After experiencing numerous times how the filming of a performance becomes a very dominant part of the aesthetic situation - unintended the cameraman becomes an active performer - I decided to let the camera become an integrated part of this performance. This idea also relates to how the press and an army of photojournalists and cameramen are an active part of the demonstrations and activist events I am interested in; one of the aspects of 'performative activism' is that the media and its representatives are one of the main audiences of the demonstrations and actions. It is partly for the media activist images are created and this logic counts just as strong or maybe even stronger for the opposite part, the police and the authorities in general. To incorporate this 'logic of the camera' as an active part of the performance I decided to let the filming, the documentation, of the performance become a self-reflective performative feature in itself. In the bridges the performer repositions the video-camera and the tripod, directing it towards the action to come in the next sequence. On a conceptual and performative level this works quite well, but as documentation of the performance it has quite disastrous consequences: Crucial parts of the performance happens off screen and the resulting video-footage is more or less useless. The concept is interesting though and I have tried to develop it to a more well functioning device in the later performances. Taken to its full consequence this principle should become a guiding structural element in the editing of the video-footage afterwards.

These two more or less faltering elements in the performance are minor problems. The overall impression is that the performance accomplishes the intended goals. The audience is taken back to the G13-action, a presence is established to ground the tale of G13 in the present moment and a some kind of collective body is established. As an research experiment though, this performance lacks an organized feed-back. To a certain extend I am still guessing how the audience experienced the situation; if a sense-event really evolved. This performance differs a bit from most of the other performances in this project, by being mainly essayistic and in that the performative elements are relatively discrete. This makes it slightly harder to detect the reactions of the audience. This problem of reception and feed-back, that was a part of my set-up for the first three performances in this project, led me to develop another format for the last part of the performance-series, including a discussion-session with the audience after each performance.

**There's a large gap in the fence: G13 (3.2.3.1.)**

Please see Appendix 3.2.4.3. for a pdf of this note.

### On Style (3.2.3.2.)

"Green bloc rambles in sick ninja style."

"In the turquoise finger, the style is black with a marker of turquoise."

"(...) we are (...) ready to take our new house with unbridled energy and real street style."

"The style is very direct."

In the four activist manifestos being read in this performance, the word 'style' occurs again and again. Style is in a strange manner substituting political content. How to understand this ongoing references to 'style'?

In the note on the film 'Get Rid of Yourself' by The Bernadette Corporation, we saw how style was an integrated element in both the aesthetics of the film and in the Black Bloc activism it describes. There, style was hardcore and black. Here in G13 it is colorful and carnivalesque.

Stine Krøijer has written about the special use of the word style in Danish activist circles. 'God Stil' as it is called Danish; good style. To her 'style' is fundamental in understanding what direct action politics mean. Style concerns the form of an action; it is a way to describe the form of a given action. If it is supposed to be a broad and peaceful demonstration, the style can be described as family-friendly, if it is supposed to be militant, the style can be described as 'confrontative' or 'destructive'. By describing the style of an action, the activists communicate their intentions to each other, but style has other implications – it is the format in which an action takes shape, in which it is conceptualized. Krøijer argues for three aspects of style: Appropriateness, persuasiveness and effectiveness:

Appropriateness is the way in which the form of an action relates to the given situation, to the context. Right after the demolition of the Youth House, people were outraged, extremely sad and very, very angry. This situation called for very direct and very militant action. The styles and the forms of this sequence of actions had to fit this very dramatic situation, they had to be contextualised as an appropriate answer to the demolition, an appropriate answer to the unjust brutality they felt they were treated with by the authorities. Here at G13, six months later, the situation is different; the Youth House Movement has expanded and have become bolder. It is time to make a different kind of statement, it is time to re-position the movement in relationship to the authorities. G13 is an attempt at a style and a form that is appropriate for that aim. That this aim can be argued, is discussed below, in the note 'Image Politics'. If the the style of G13 really was appropriate at that time, if a chosen style is appropriate in a certain situation – that is of course a political question.

Persuasiveness is the measure of the degree to which a form of action is able to persuade the various actors – on all sides of a given conflict - to engage in the action. The 4 manifestos in the G13-script are examples of such attempts at persuasiveness. They are part of a large campaign meant to mobilize activists to participate in the G13 action. The campaign consisted of a very active website, training camps for activists, support parties and a series of press releases announcing the action and the civil disobedience it would contain in advance. The campaign was exceptionally persuasive in the sense of mobilizing participants; an unprecedented number of participants showed up, and made G13 the largest action in the history of the Youth House Movement.



But persuasiveness also entails persuading the opponent to engage in the conflict of an action. For an action like G13 to really unfold as a political event, it has to persuade the media and the politicians to engage in both the build-up and the follow-up of the controversies and the debate surrounding such an event. The style of action also has to persuade the politicians and the police to engage in the roles of being targeted by a specific action. Civil disobedience plays an important role in this respect; by breaking the law, the activists provoke the police and the politicians to come forward, to take a stance in the conflict. In G13 the strategy of announcing in advance the civil disobedience to be undertaken can be understood in this light. The announcement is meant to provoke the authorities to come forward and play their roles in the conflict that is being created as part of the action.

Finally, it is of great importance in many actions to persuade the police to engage in the conflict on a large scale. Since confrontation with the police forces plays an extremely important role in the imagery of many actions, it is necessary to engage the police in the conflicts. The confrontations with the police come in a great variety, and most often carry violent drama; in general, the police act as representatives of the oppressive capitalist society the movements oppose, and in this function, the police play an integral part of the imagery performed in the actions. For these reasons a massive presence of police forces is often a prerequisite for a successful action.

In G13 we see a very intelligent and unexpected performance of the roleplay between activists and police, as described in the note below, 'Image Politics'. Two other similar events are the topic of my essay, 'In a Stolen Moment'.

The last aspect of Krøijers definition of activist style, effectiveness, can be understood in a simple, direct way as a tool of selecting and evaluating of the forms employed in action; what forms will work according to the needed appropriateness and persuasiveness? And did the chosen forms create the intended effects? Krøijer uses the term in a much more complex and radical manner, though. I will come back to this, but first let's look at the simple version.

If we assume that the purpose of a given action is to perform a certain kind of imagery, a sequence of images, then the effectiveness of the chosen form is a kind of measurement of how the performance of these images evolves. Since the images are performed, they evolve in time, and since they are created collectively and in relation to - even in a kind of opposed collaboration with- the opponents, there is a lot of unpredictability involved. The performance of the images evolves by collective improvisation. It is not spontaneous. There is an important distinction between improvisation and spontaneity. Spontaneity evolves out of a state of unpreparedness, improvisation is always developed from a basis of pre-defined concepts or decisions. A jazz musician improvises on the basis of a certain melody or a set of notes. In this sense, the style of an action can be understood as the chosen set of forms that the participating activists use as the basis for a collective improvisation. The effectiveness of style, then, has to do with how well that works: Whether a chosen style forms an effective basis for the collective improvisation, for the collective performance, and whether an effective image evolves in this performance. Of course the effectiveness of an action also has to do with how disciplined the participants act; whether they respect and adhere to the style of an action. The effectiveness of style is dependent on participants taking part in performing it. If everyone digress and do something else, it's not 'good style' anymore. G13 was exemplary in this sense. A

very large crowd of participants restricted themselves under severe circumstances and acted according to the style of action laid out by the organizers.

The effectiveness of the performed images is of course also an important aspect inherent in this ongoing evaluation and balancing of various intentions inside the movements. As I describe in the next note, the images performed in the G13-action caused a great deal of debate afterwards. The premises for the effectiveness of an action have a lot of political implications, and it will always be up for discussion on what premises an action is effective.

Stine Krøijers notion of the effectiveness of style is more radical:

“The last element in the concept of style concerns the effectiveness of form. As previously mentioned, activists distinguish between effective and symbolic actions. Obviously, symbolic actions such as a demonstration can also have effects depending on the extent to which elected politicians are incited to make policy changes. However, if we apply Austin’s typology of speech acts in relation to the symbolic/effective division the conceptual reach of the effectiveness of form may become clearer.<sup>171</sup> In this light, demonstrations could be classified as perlocutionary (speech) acts that may initiate a series of consequences, but where the enunciation, or in this case the performance, and the consequences are temporally distinct.<sup>172</sup> An effective action, on the other hand, can be considered a kind of illocutionary act, which is saying something and doing something simultaneously.<sup>173</sup> In other words, effective actions are supposed to produce effects without any lapse of time. I believe that this points to something essential about the magic of left radical politics: first, that form and content cannot be distinguished from one another; what we usually think of as political intentions or the content of a message are embodied within and evoked by a skilful form (epitomized in the activist notion of good style). Second, this evocation takes place without time delay.

Performances in general, and the protests analysed here in particular, are not performed to have a meaning, but to have effect. These effects are not consequences intended by a rational subject, nor do the effects necessarily correspond to activist-stated success criteria prior to an action (such as closing down a retention centre), but are inherent to and elicited by a skilful form. The concept of style that I have drawn out so far elucidates how what we conventionally think of as political form and content are joined together. This implies that the form is the message, and, moreover, that style is a scale or measure for the form’s appropriateness, persuasiveness and effectiveness.”<sup>174</sup>

The form is the message. There is no meaning. The form is the effect, and the effect is the message. Or rather: The effect is the result of the performance of the form.

Meaning is mostly expressed in an argument. This is the perlocutionary acts Krøijer mentions. An argument produces meaning. Performance of form produces an image. An image cannot be an argument. This is why we always have problems when an artwork is made to carry too much political meaning. The image has an effect, not a meaning. An image is open for interpretation, in a sense an argument can never be. If an argument were open for interpretation, it would be a weak argument.

Style, form, effect and image. These are all aesthetic terms. Stine Krøijer uses a very

limited notion of the term aesthetic, referring it only to 'an abstract Kantian sense of beauty'<sup>175</sup>. I, on the contrary, will insist on a simpler and more open use of the term. To me, aesthetics concerns all phenomena experienced by the senses. Krøijer distinguishes between 'meaning' and 'effect': "... protests ... are not performed to have a meaning, but to have effect." This is exactly what I mean by 'the aesthetics of resistance'. If I change the words a bit, my version of the same sentence would be: "Protests are not performed to become an argument, but to become an image." This new sentence would be very close to a second definition of what the 'aesthetics of resistance' are.

In her discussion of style, Stine Krøijer lists different forms of action, often occurring in the leftist activist scene she is analyzing: The Black Bloc, The Pink Bloc (i.e. The Insurgent Clown Army), Tute Bianche and Reclaim The Streets. These various forms of actions offer a variety of styles that can be employed in various situations, according to what is considered appropriate under the given circumstances. She argues that it is the contextual circumstances that are decisive for the choice of style, and NOT the inclinations or identities of the activists involved. For this reason, it is not possible to define certain individuals or certain groups of persons as Black Bloc-activists or as belonging to the Clown Army. Each individual activist chooses what style of action to take part in from situation to situation, and can thus be part of a typical militant black bloc riot one day, and then become a creative Tute Bianche Civil Disobedience activist the next day. It is the chosen style that defines the forms employed in an action, not the identities or political affiliations of the participating activists.

The problem with listing the various forms of activist styles is, of course, that as soon as we give them a name, they become labelled and thus identifiable. It is a central argument both by Krøijer, myself and other researchers in this field that a form of action is never repeated twice. The style is always re-invented according to the given circumstances. Of course there are tendencies and various pre-dominant modes of activism in different periods and locations, but a basic condition of direct action is that it is precisely 'direct'; it is performed directly into a specific situation in a style and a form that is developed exclusively for that specific situation. In the moments when it succeeds, this is what makes direct action unpredictable and unidentifiable.

If we connect these arguments to the discourse on identity contained in the title of the film 'Get Rid of Yourself', we can glimpse the contours of the new collective subject emerging in these actions. It is a subject refusing traditional political identity, it is fluid, constantly evolving in improvised collective performances of sequences of imagery defined by carefully chosen styles. It is first of all hard to grasp, because it is never the same. It is always defined anew according to the given context. It emerges as a collective improvisation in a specific situation, and it exists only there in that temporal slice of active time.

### Image Politics (3.2.3.3.)

G13 is the action that changes public opinion of The Youth House Movement. Up until G13, the movement was considered desperate and aggressive. Even though a variety of actions has used other more creative forms, general opinion in the media and of the politicians in the City Hall is that it is the typical Black Bloc movement. G13 changes this. After G13 negotiations between representatives of the movement and the politicians are undertaken. The image of the movement has been changed, and because of this, it is no longer political suicide for the mayor to start negotiations. The Youth House Movement has become 'reliable'. This change of image is of course something that happens first and foremost in the perception of the opponent; the police, the politicians and the media. It is their view on the movement that changes. It is not necessarily an image change that the movement as a whole agrees upon or even works on collaboratively.

If we accept that the Youth House Movement is controlled by 'networked decision-making' as described in the script above - that it is the swarm that decides - then it is the sheer number of participants and their adherence to the proposed styles of action that designates G13 as a success. The change of image comes about simply because so many people are involved in an action that 're-designs' the movement. This ties very well in with Stine Krøijers proposal: "(...) what we conventionally think of as political form and content are joined together. This implies that the form is the message (...)"<sup>176</sup> The style of G13, the way the 4 colored blocs adhere to their designed forms of action, is the message. This message is the new image of the movement.

Of course the new image is controversial, at least inside the movement. In an interview with Niels Fastrup on this new development, Mikkel Bolt, a theoretician who followed events from the inside, criticizes the movement for lacking radicalism:

Niels Fastrup: "Right after the eviction (of the Youth House (translators note)) it seemed that there was a great openness and radicality of demands. They insisted on 'free spaces for everyone'. But then claims were narrowed, and it became a struggle for a new, existing house, a new 'youth club' as you have called it. It seems that in the moment negotiations started in the autumn 2007, the movement transformed itself into a credible, reasonable subject, with small, realistic demands."

Mikkel Bolt: "This is the lesson of the G13-action in October 2007. It worked incredibly well. But it worked well on exactly the premises established by the media, police and politicians. From then on, it became clear who was good at spin. It was in many ways a fine action, but who really needed that action? By all means, it was an action that made it easier to turn The Youth House Movement into a very recognizable subject. Someone to negotiate with, someone that doesn't use violence in the form of smashed windows and looting and raiding of shops and so on. This is of course the very hard act of balancing that is undertaken all the time within the movement."

Niels Fastrup: "What is the strength of the subject the movement was before the G13-action? The un-articulated, not-negotiating subject?"

Mikkel Bolt: "The strength was obviously that it was NOT recognizable. All of a sudden there was something, a mass, something odd and floating, a stain."

Who was this? What the hell were the demands? One day they said one thing, the next something completely different. This kind of ambiguity isn't incarnated by many now afterwards, but back then it confused and threatened the already established political agenda. All of a sudden a lot of youngsters wanted something else than what everyone thought they would. Actually, no one really understood what was going on, what their demands were.”<sup>177</sup>

This 'not recognizable subject' echoes the “potential of community based on a radical refusal of political identity” we saw in the film 'Get Rid of Yourself'. The problem with such imagery is that it is identified quickly by the dominating cultures of society, either in positive, as in the 'creative smart mob' we see here in G13, or in the negative as 'violent troublemakers' that confirms the need for more police and more security. There is an ongoing war about these images; activists strive to keep their identity open and unresolved, while society constantly identifies and stabilizes the image of the resistance. Once identified as a recognizable subject, the rebels take part in the general confirmation of the fixed positions of society, as specified and pre-defined roles.

If we translate the critique of Mikkel Bolt into images, there are two sets of images at play in the sequence of actions following the demolition of the Youth House on Jagtvej 69:

First, there is a set of un-articulated, chaotic actions, an odd and floating mass of unpredictability. These often violent actions, cut up the pre-defined social order of the Copenhagen city space and create new temporal, spatial situations – for instance in between the barricades - whereby another order is opened up, made possible. This sequence of images is what I tried to describe in the previous script/performance 'Revolution by Night'; it is characterized by 'the apotheosis of revolt' and a 'radical refusal of political identity'. As we saw in 'Get Rid of Yourself', and as also Mikkel Bolt clearly states, it is all about destruction; the destruction of capitalist society. But in the destruction, in the same move, it is a clearance of space, an exodus that opens up space for something else. There, in the turmoil of the smashed-up and raided supermarket a new collectivity takes shape, a new subject arises.

But as Bolt also argues, this style of action, too, is in danger of being frozen in the predictability of a pre-described role, as the Black Bloc. I will come back to this appropriation of the image of the Black Bloc by the police, media and politicians in the script/performance 'Climate/Kettle' on the activist scenario surrounding the Climate Summit COP15 in Copenhagen 2009.

But for a while, in the aftermath of the eviction from the Youth House, it worked. A chaotic ambiguity ruled, and Copenhagen was in a state of becoming something else, if only for awhile. In the interview, Mikkel Bolt mentions the sign 'Jagtvej 69' or simply '69' that popped up everywhere around Copenhagen and all over the world as graffiti or stickers in the aftermath of the Youth House eviction, as an empty signifier for the un-articulated subject of the first phase of The Youth House Movement. An empty signifier that no one really knew what meant and that everyone could fill with their own, yes, imagination.

The second set of images is introduced by G13. Bolt calls it the action that turned “the Youth House Movement into a very recognizable subject.” But what kind of images produced this transformation?

The G13-action produces three large images.

First, there is the starting line-up as characterized by the 4 activist manifestos, included here in the script. It divides the action into 4 sections, each coded by a bright color, and in the manifestos 4 different styles are indicated. This division creates an image of diversity and inclusiveness; everyone should be able to find a bloc according to their own taste. The diversity is especially obvious in the presentation of the yellow bloc. The yellow bloc is the 'queer feminist bloc'. A close reading of the four texts reveal a striking similarity, though. All 4 blocs go for 'pushing away the police', 'flexible and fast', 'climb every fence', and 'our strenght is our numbers', but there are slight differences in the descriptions of the style to be employed: 'Green bloc rambles in sick ninja style', the red bloc 'means business and can't be stopped!', the turquoise bloc is 'ready with unbridled energy and real street style', while the yellow bloc 'can be recognized by the yellow wagon, and the many yellow banners with monsters'. In this sense, the diversity is more symbolic than real, the overall impression of colorful diversity, energy and creativity is present in the carnivalesque dress code and rhetoric of each block. But the line-up of the action as a whole manifests a clear image; an explosion of colorful, unbridled, creative energy, open for everyone to participate in. To participate, though, you have to dress up, wear a mask, and thereby submit to the collective creativity in this initial image.

This image is inspired by the new activist imagery introduced in the globalization movement in the years before G13, mainly in the Peoples' Global Action against the G8 Summit in Gleneagles in the UK 2005, and in the anti-G8 protests in Heiligendamm in the summer of 2007. In an interview I did with artist Oliver Ressler, who took part in the Heiligendamm-protests and produced a film about them, he describes how a new, more diverse imagery emerged in the globalization movement as a reaction to the quite aggressive, macho aesthetics of the Black Bloc that dominated the protests in Seattle and Genoa in 1999/2001. The shift in imagery was also influenced by the shift in locations of the political summits that form the chain of events that the globalization movement is reacting against. Instead of the big city venues that made street-fighting and barricades an obvious medium for protests, the G8 Summits moved out into often very isolated places far off into the countryside. Here, the protests took on completely new forms. As Oliver Ressler describes:

"Visually, the predominating image in demonstrations like in Gleneagles in 2005 and in Heiligendamm in 2007, was actually activists going through the fields in small groups wearing different kinds of flags, not only red flags; you can find orange flags, black flags, all different kinds of flags with skulls or whatever. And this produces a completely new kind of imagery."<sup>178</sup>

These large scale protests were also organized in various colored blocs and moved through the landscape as swarms. So, if the form is the message, both form and message of G13 are inspired by the recent anti-G8 protests. This goes for the initial line-up image of G13. Diversity and creativity, but also a touch of political correctness.

The next image produced in the G13-action is that of police brutality. During the action, the police twice set up a so-called 'kettle'; by fencing in large numbers of demonstrators at strategic places – under a motorway bridge and under a railway bridge – and spraying huge amounts of teargas onto the kettled crowds, tension and

panic is created.<sup>179</sup> But by showing restraint and refraining from fighting back as expected, the activists manage to stage the police forces as the aggressors, the instigators of an unrequited violence.

The mass arrest and the harsh treatment the detainees are treated to during the following night in prison add to this image. In a public letter, published on Modkraft.dk, a group of activists describe the conditions like this:

"The police were brutal as always, and we were told several times that when you are under arrest, you have no rights as regards food, drink, heat and basic human rights. Police officer Michael Larsen from Alfa 4 thus said "I don't give a damn for your rights. This is not a hotel." He then made to strangle a girl who refused to sit down on the cold concrete floor after having sat there for 5 hours."<sup>180</sup>

If the aim is to portray the Youth House Movement as peaceful, creative people fighting for a just cause, this image is perfect. At several large-scale occasions during the day, the G13-activists appear victimized by brutal police forces. Victimized, but in control; it is the activists who show restraint and prevents the situations from getting out of control.

The third image is the temporary occupation at the end of the G13-action. After a long day of being chased by the police, several hundred activists manage to enter the sealed-off house at Grøndalsvænge 13. The occupation is short and turbulent, but a small group of activists manage to raise their flag on top of the building. It is this image of the pirate flag being raised on the roof of the building that travels the media the following days. In one specific photo, it is reminiscent of the famous photo of American soldiers raising the flag on Iwo Jima during World War 2. It is a classic image of triumph.<sup>181</sup>

The triumph is the fact that it is possible. That the Youth House Movement is now strong enough to advertise in advance that they are going to take a certain house, and then, when the day comes, that they are able to occupy the house in front of a major police force without resorting to violence.

The problem with this last image is that it is symbolic and too realistic at the same time. No one, not even the organizers of G13 expected or had any ambition of occupying the house for real – for a longer period than a few hours. That would be totally unrealistic in consideration of the massive media attention the action sparked in the previous weeks. In this sense, the occupation was always meant as a symbolic quest. The image even carries a promise of recognizability; it is performed in an understandable visual language and signifies a clear and limited demand.

At the same time it is very realistic in the sense that the organizers had carefully scanned the northern parts of Copenhagen for a house that could become a new Youth House. The geographical placement, the spatial circumstances, the size and architectural conditions, even the status of ownership made exactly this house a plausible solution for a new Youth House.

In this sense, the third image is almost like a project application to the mayor of Copenhagen. Seen together with the two first images it says: Look here! If you give us this house, the ever escalating conflict can be solved, and we can transform into

something manageable. We can be colorful, creative and non-violent. It is the combination of the three images – the triptych of images – that turns the Youth House Movement into a 'recognizable subject' and makes them a plausible negotiation partner for the mayor of Copenhagen.

Six months later, a new Youth House was found, not on the G13-ground, but in another area close by, on Dortheavej 61. The Thursday demonstrations ended after 70 weeks of continuous demonstrations, and soon afterwards the movement dissolved and disappeared. It had reached its goal – a new Youth House – but the discussions linger on. Even today, 2-3 years after the inauguration of the new Youth House, there is a discussion going, whether it was right to engage in negotiations with the City of Copenhagen, and whether it was right to say yes to the new house, or whether it was in a sense giving in to the authorities and cancelling the ongoing protests. This discussion surfaced briefly in the discussions after the performance 'Revolution By Night' that was performed exactly at the new Youth House.

That the time for Black Bloc-like style of actions was running out any way, we see in the script/performance 'Climate/Kettle' that deals with two large protest events on the occasion of the climate summit COP15 in 2009.

G13 was the turning point, but as we will see in the next script/performance 'On Water', the Youth House Movement still had unexpected actions to offer. The Thursday demonstrations continued all through the negotiations, putting pressure on the Copenhagen City Administration and only ended at week 70, when the new Youth House was opened up for the first time.



### 3.3. On Water



Mayhem, Copenhagen. January 17th, 2012

#### Main:

- 3.3.1. Script
- 3.3.2. Performance: Mayhem, Copenhagen. January 17th, 2012
- 3.3.3. Analysis

#### Commentary:

- 3.3.4.1. Searching for an Audience
- 3.3.4.2. Exodus
- 3.3.4.3. Organising Freedom?

#### Appendix:

- 3.3.5.1. *On Water*, performance-documentation, video 40:34 min.
- 3.3.5.2. *Jon Vedel* in conversation with Frans Jacobi, , video 53.25 min.
- 3.3.5.3. Merel Pit, Karel Steller, Gerjan Streng: *Parasitic Architecture #1*
- 3.3.5.4. *Refshalevej is a new free community!* (The Up-Builders manifesto)
- 3.3.5.5. Hakim Bey: The Temporary Autonomous Zone
- 3.3.5.6. *The Upbuilders Application* (danish version)

### **ON WATER (3.3.1.)**

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The artist/researcher: Amira Jasmina Shalaby Jensen

Patti Smith, Lars Bang Larsen, 3 dutch architects & Hakim Bey: Molly Haslund

Parfyme: Stinus Duch Andersen, Johann Ebbesen

The Upbuilders: Frans Jacobi, Kim Jezus, Tobias Kirstein

A stack of building-materials, tools and microphones. An audience sitting in a circle. A discussion afterwards.

Soundtrack (live): Tobias Kirstein, Kim Jezus

Discussion: Appolonia Susterjec, Frans Jacobi

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## SCENE 1:

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*The space is dark. A single spot is turned on. An accordion is playing a single chord. Patti Smith climbs onto the stack of building materials, into the spotlight.*

### **Patti Smith:**

Outside of society, that's where I want to be.  
Outside of society, they're waitin' for me.<sup>182</sup>

*As Patti withdraws the music fades and the artist/researcher starts her talk.*

### **The artist/researcher:**

Dear audience, welcome to this performance - or performance-lecture or maybe even more precisely: Lehrstücke as Bertolt Brecht would have called it<sup>183</sup>. Lehrstücke. Learning-play. My name is Frans Jacobi. I am the artist/researcher. We are here to learn and we are going to collaborate on this learning. If you will be so kind to take a seat on one of the chairs or on the floor here in a circle. Thank you.

So here we sit inside an art venue. Sitting in a circle. Such a circle is a basic symbol of collaboration and equality, in the circle we are all equal. The only person out of the circle is me. I am above you and in control. In this sense this is a manipulated equality; you will feel manipulated during the next hour or so. But if you look at it as a kind of game, a social game, I hope we can reach a kind of simulated collaboration here, a simulated equality.

One of the key issues here tonight is exactly this difference between open collaboration inside art and open collaboration outside art: In a sense we are safe here, inside this art project; the collaboration is simulated, afterwards we can all go home on our own.

I am going to present two projects here tonight. They look very much alike, but differs exactly on their context: One is inside art and the other one is outside. Before we start though, I would like to present you to the danish art historian Lars Bang Larsen.

*Lars Bang Larsen rises from the circle of sitting persons. As he is talking four persons - Parfyme & The Upbuilders - starts building a strange structure of the building materials. They will continue building this structure all the way to the last part of the performance. As part of the structure there are various platforms. When they are ready parts of the audience are guided to sit on these platforms. In the end the whole audience sits on the structure which takes the shape of a very unregular raft.*

**Lars Bang Larsen:**

One can propose that the political in art consists in the potential for working through concepts and representations as unfinished and becoming, in temporal periods you share with others. It is in such periods - where the reality of the real becomes controversial - that one can glimpse an outer side to the present circumstances.<sup>184</sup>

*Lars Bang Larsen takes his seat again. As the building of the structure continues the noises from the tools - the hammering, sawing and screwing - are captured by a set of microphones. The sound is manipulated, echoed, distorted by a musician (Kirstein). An unsteady rhythm echoes back and forth.*

**The artist/researcher:**

This is what we are going to attempt here - on a small scale - 'working through a concept in a temporal period' we share with each other. And this exactly what the two projects we are going to discuss tried to develop on grand scale. Lars also mentions 'an outer side to the present circumstances'. This is the border we are trying to look across tonight: Does an outside exist at all? How can we approach it? Who can claim it? And why is it so goddamn slippery?

May 2008. By large media-attention a group of activists - lets call them 'The Up-Builders' - squats a street in Copenhagen. Situated in between the so-called freetown Christiania and a quiet stretch of Copenhagen harbour, Refshalevej is a kind of forgotten backside on the edge of the city. In the following 2 and a half month a new 'free' community develops spontaneously in cars, tents, temporary huts and houses both on the barricaded street and out on the water by the side of the road. On july 16th the police and the city authorities clears the settlement and The Up-Builders disappear as fast as they arrived.

From june 2008 and 6 months ahead the danish artist-group Parfyme establishes The Harbour Laboratory in the other end of Copenhagen harbour. The Harbour Laboratory is part of U-Turn, the new quadrennial for contemporary art. It is situated close to the citycenter on an expensive part of the harbour owned by the large architechtrual foundation Realdania. Under the slogan 'The harbour is for All' Parfyme explores the waterways of Copenhagen in various ways and tries to build up a community of adventurous participants.<sup>185</sup>

The Upbuilders and Parfyme. On the waters of Copenhagen. Well, in a sense its easiest to start with Parfyme:

## SCENE 2:

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*One of the Parfyme, taking a break from the construction work:*

### **Parfyme:**

..half a year on this parking lot, we wanted to test new ways of using the harbour, it was all part of an exhibition, but could it be part of everyday life? Could the harbour of copenhagen be used by everyone? The complicated story of how our idea made a lot of people happy...Some people angry, And Some people slightly richer. Well we're not sure about that But what else?? But what now?!<sup>186</sup>

*Parfyme then continues working on the structure.*

### **The artist/researcher:**

Invited by U-Turn to make a proposal for a project in public space Parfyme proposes The Harbour Laboratory. U-Turn then connects them to Realdania who is the largest fund for contemporary architecture in Denmark. Realdania owns property all over the country and is known for developing and financing a whole string of large new building complexes.<sup>187</sup> Here Realdania supplies Parfyme with the needed property on the harbourfront.

Already from the beginning Parfyme are aware of the precarious position they put themselves in. At one hand trying to open up the harbour for 'the people', exploring new and adventurous ways of using the harbour. At the other hand being representatives of - or at least being used by - Realdania and the city of Copenhagen to camouflage the quite disastrous architectural development of the harbour in recent years. But they choose to go ahead anyway.

During a long summer they struggle hard to realize their ideas about an open creative use of the harbour in spite of a long series of economical and bureaucratic obstacles. They build a temporary base out of two containers and some haphazard wooden constructions, supplying the project with an air of anarchistic creativity. Out of this platform a long series of adventures is undertaken - 24hours boat trips, camping on the water, romantic dinners, swimming, cooking, concert under the bridge, places under other places, bottleship workshop, movie night, birthday party, ferry service, marimba playing and a seasick monster singing sad love songs to the opera house.

Well, its time for a break. Lets hear what the 3 dutch architects Merel Pit, Karel Steller & Gerjan Streng, has to say:

*The 3 dutch architects rise from the audience.*

**Merel Pit, Karel Steller, Gerjan Streng:**

Parasitic architecture can be employed as a mediator between the changes in society on the one side and the urban systems on the other. The parasite is informal compared to its host. Therefore, the parasite can be used to stimulate and accommodate spontaneous processes and informal initiatives. This is achieved because the parasite provokes, explores mental boundaries in order to offer opportunities for the elusive and new propositions. In this way parasitic architecture can start a process of changes. The parasite functions as a medium used by a group of people to negotiate with existing systems and to propose certain changes of these systems. So, the parasite is a political means. It is a clear sign and symbol of a desire, of an urban problem, of a hidden possibility existent in society. The parasite provokes both opposition and support for its proposal. To overcome indifference is a goal in itself.<sup>188</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Both the architecture and the activities of The Harbour Laboratory are carefully designed to express a quite specific notion of freedom: a carefree adventurous lifestyle filled to the brim with laughter, outdoor activities and naive, colorful creativity. Parfyme are positive people; if the project is critical it is in the sense that it works as a positive example on how public space could be activated.

The address is double: First of all The Harbour Laboratory is directed towards what Parfyme calls 'the people'; anyone who wants to participate, anyone who needs this kinda place to hang out. Out of these more or less coincidental passer-by's Parfyme builds a community, a group of people taking part in the creation of the situation.

By this they 'have a voice'. Its not a voice in the sense that some kind of slogans or critique is formulated - the activities are an expression in themselves. Being active, being playfull is communication. So the first audience are participants and by participating they become 'the people having a voice'. There is a seamless identification between the tree members of Parfyme and their participating audience - they are all one big happy family.

The second audience are the beaurocrats - the board of Realdania, the politicians in the citycouncil, the establishment, society at large. As a response to the role they suspect they are given in the grander scheme of gentrification, Parfyme offers The Harbour Laboratory as a way of implementing regular peoples idea's about public space. The project is not a model or proposal for something to be done in the future; it is a temporary realization of how things could be done all of the time.

Lets take these ideas again: 'A temporary realization of how things could be done all of the time' and 'having a voice consists of being active'. So the alternative public space in question here exist by being performed. Temporal and performed. Remember this; it will become crucial also when we reach Refshalevej.

The double adress is only allowed because The Harbour Laboratory is an art-work. The fact that the project is both being sponsored by Realdania and being critical of Realdania at the same time is only possible because it is art. It is even expected of an artwork of this kind to be critical of its context.

*The other Parfyme, now standing high up in the structure they are building, starts talking.*

**Parfyme:**

What do we think about all this?? Ok there was:

#1 money problems

#2 bureacracy, control, bla bla

is that what we want to say? Well, then you might say: go suck your mummies titty. We guess that's how it is and so what? Same old story but could projects like this be used to develop space? This was not a vacation!

Could this be continued? Could people's voices be heard?

"participation" should be more than a buzz-word

"innovation" my butt hole

"public hearings" HA!

Through this project we can conclude: People are ready to rumble! The question is: Will anything happen in the future? Who decides how our public space should look and what it should be about??<sup>189</sup>

*Parfyme continues their work.*

**The artist/researcher:**

Parfyme clearly accepts their role as artists, they even accept the existence of their patrons, even though they are struggling with them. Their aims are realistic in the sense that they wish Realdania and the other big players of Copenhagen city planning will pay attention and learn from their accomplishments. They see their activities as corrections to the already existing superstructures of society. We are still inside 'the present circumstances' that Lars Bang introduced earlier. But what now? Could this be continued? Two years afterwards the site houses a cayak-rental and a mainstream café.

But lets leave Parfyme now; in the other end of the harbour The Up-Builders aims for higher goals:

### SCENE 3:

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*The Up-Builder stands on a platform above the audience. He starts reciting a manifesto, speaking in rhythmic dialogue with the music.*

**The Up-Builder:**

Refshalevej is a new free community! A free self-organizing collective!<sup>190</sup> Our goal is to create a self-managed, economically and ecologically sound, sustainable society, shaped by the myriad of diverse individuals who constitute it! This is achieved through direct democracy, ie. flat structure, communal-meeting as decision-making authority, no closed groups and no hierarchy, mutual help, respect and engagement!

A society without war and destruction, without persecution and torture, instead of the Danish State, which in foreign countries stands as creator and even the guarantee of exactly war, destruction, persecution and torture, conspiring with the United American States, whose actions more and more assumes an attempt to establish a global fascist empire! War brings no peace!

We are a demonstration of an alternative to existing society! We are the world that lies ahead! The existing system of ideological and social organizational principles belongs to the past and to history! We bring the future, we bring freedom!<sup>191</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Hey, stop now! Please....stop!!!!

*The Up-builder, the musicians and Parfyme, still building, stop for a moment.*

**The artist/researcher:**

Lets considers this before you go on! A 'free' community? What defines this freedom?

After a demonstration with no clear agenda ends up at Refshalevej, the occupation develops spontaneously. The first afternoon people start building what they think could be some kind of playground, but soon the idea of staying spreads. Already the next day around 200 people are staying overnight in intermistic shelters and sleeping-bags.<sup>192</sup>

As the police isn't showing up, the building of huts and houses, becomes a collective fever. Hammering and sawing is heard all day and the new city is growing fast. Even though people come from very different backgrounds a community is established and soon the rest of Copenhagen seems far, far away.

What differentiates this new settlement - or 'Reffen' as



it is also called - from The Harbour Laboratory is its legal status, or rather its illegal status. By occupying a whole street and moving in without any kind of permissions the 'Up-builders' are breaking the law. This, of course, places Reffen on that 'outer side of the present circumstances', as Lars Bang called it. By being illegal 'Reffen' establishes a real alternative situation. Something that has real consequences for those involved.

Although Reffen resembles The Harbour Laboratory in the sense that it is an image that is being performed, this image has another kind of consequences; it exists as lived reality and not in the greyzone reality of 'relational aesthetics'. By performing the image of a free community, not as art, but outside the law, the Up-Builders can claim freedom to a much larger degree than Parfyme. The unclear contextual restrictions that The Harbour Laboratory struggles with - its status as art, its debt to the sponsors and the inherent political roleplay - is substituted by a much clearer opposition to society at large.

Like The Harbour Laboratory Reffen is a temporary realization of how things could be done all of the time, but the scope is different. Its not a correction or an ad-on to existing society; its a refusal of the present circumstances and an attempt at realising another kind of society.

*The Up-builder, the musicians and Parfyme now starts the reciting, the music and the construction-work again.*

### **The Up-BUILDER:**

We want a society based on peaceful, voluntary initiative and direct influence on the world, the processes and the structures that directly affect us as vibrant, creative and sentient beings; as free, untrammelled people, whose skills and talents will not be forced into a hierarchical class society!

We don't need a system that can't house its members, can't feed them, isn't based on respect or engagement, can't resolve the psychological distress, it itself creates; where the people are in fact impoverished, never asked whether they want this position! We learn to believe that we need representatives to defend our interests because we are told that we are not able ourselves, and by this power is concentrated by the top of the hierarchy!

This is in fact a dictatorship, because a society where individuals are not included in the directly relating processes of decision-making - where the leadership, the government does not provide space for individual and collective existence on other premises than those of itself - can not be considered as being democratic if we

understand democracy to mean, freedom and equality for all!

We are born, without choice, into a system where power over the necessities of life to be mobilized for a society to exist, is assigned only to a privileged and rich upper class. This governing class then tries to dictate - by whim - what to say where to go, what to wear, what sexuality to be, what ethnic or cultural background that is right, just to name a few of the big blunders of the existing system! In other words the controlling elite presses its own self-image down our throats, and all those who will not subordinate themselves in barbarism and slavery, shall be punished with economic sanctions, detention and threat of physical harm, if they do not fall into line!

We reject this ruthless selfishness and instead says YES to the world you can experience if you come out on Refshalevej, where you unhindered can drive through, because there are only roadblocks to reduce motorists' speed, like on any other common road, or get yourself a nice cup of coffee at the free soup kitchen! We are not aggressive and we will only defend ourselves against police violence by passive resistance, like Gandhi did in India!

We hoisted the flags of revolution and pushed the ship off shore!<sup>193</sup>

#### SCENE 4:

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*As the last tones of the music dies out the parasitic structures is finished. The Up-Builder and Parfyme guides the last parts of the audience up onto the structures where they all sit down. There is a small platform somehow on the edge of the structure. From here the artist/researcher takes her last round of comments. As she speaks the lights fades and a series of video-projectors is turned on. The space and the structure is now enveloped by images of water, waves and the sea. As she speaks the musician with accordion slowly starts a new tune, a longing romantic tunes that comes to full force as the last comment is uttered.*

#### **The artist/researcher:**

One of the beauties of Reffen is the temporality of the whole thing. Living on the waterfront in intermistic huts and tents is only fun in the summertime; when the danish winter kicks in the Up-builders would have to leave anyway. No matter how successful the revolutionary experiment will be, it has a natural ending. It will only last for awhile and then it will disappear. Now, the police and the City Authorities are much faster; they clear off the settlement already in mid-july.

The Up-Builders disappear when their community is erased by society. Havnelaboratoriet disappear when their time on the sponsored lot runs out. But both leave behind a question: Why the harbour, why the water, why the sea? If we take seriously the idea that both projects are performing images of something, then the image common to both projects, is the image of 'living on water'. Exactly here both projects share a symbolic, poetic language.

Living on the water is temporal and fluid. Its not a stable, solid situation. We are drifting. We are nomads. This is the core of the new society being performed here.

'We hoisted the flags of revolution and pushed the ship off shore!' With the last sentence in the manifesto of the Up-Builders we become pirates. The mysterious writer Hakim Bey starts his seminal text 'The Temporary Autonomous Zone' describing a global network of pirate communities:

*Hakim Bey stands up.*

#### **Hakim Bey:**

THE SEA-ROVERS AND CORSAIRS of the 18th century created an "information network" that spanned the globe: primitive and devoted primarily to grim business, the net nevertheless functioned admirably. Scattered throughout the net were islands, remote hideouts where ships could be watered and provisioned, booty traded for luxuries and necessities. Some of these islands supported "intentional

communities," whole mini-societies living consciously outside the law and determined to keep it up, even if only for a short but merry life.<sup>194</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Hakim Bey calls these inclaves 'Pirate Utopias' and see them as historic examples of Temporary Autonomous Zones, temporal realizations of alternative societies. Today such situations can still be found: Places where the oppressive structures of the 'megacorporate information State, the empire of spectacle and simulation'<sup>195</sup> can be escaped for a while, places where real freedom can be performed and experienced. 'Reffen' can be understood as exactly such a 'temporary autonomous zone'.

So lets push this ship off shore! Lets hoist the flag of revolution! Lets pretend that this intermistic platform here is out there: out on the sea, outside the present circumstances! Lets head of for another Pirate Utopia, another fluid situation!

Outside of society. They are waiting for us.

*As the structure floats on images of the sea, we all sit listening to the music; slowly growing like the ebb tide.*

### **Analysis 3.3.3.**

Mayhem: An avantgarde music club in a run down abandoned factory on the outskirts of Copenhagen; an audience of 50-60 persons placed on old chairs in a large circle; in the center of the circle a stack of building materials and some tools; 5 performers, a sound-artist and an accordion-player; the accordion plays a single chord; a female performer steps onto the stack of building materials, raises a piece of paper with the name Patti Smith in front of her face, and reads up a quote from Patti Smith; 3 performers start moving the building materials and begin the construction of an improvised 'parasitic' architectural structure; another female performer introduces herself as Frans Jacobi - the artist/researcher, and start reading up a long introduction; the 4 performers each take turns reading up quotes from various sources; as the architectural structure evolves the sounds of the building process is caught by a set of microphones and used in an improvised soundtrack being mixed by echo, reverb and other soundeffects by the sound-artist.

Midsection a long manifesto of the Upbuilders is being read. Here the voice of the performer is also distorted, mixed into the echoing soundtrack.

When the architectural structure fills the space the building stops, the artist/researcher reads up the last round of commentary. Lights are turned off and a series of video-projections are turned on. The space is filled with images of water. The architectural structure becomes a raft floating on the sea. The accordion set in with a beautiful romantic tune. This is where the performance ends. Everyone is enveloped in this romantic image.

The performance is followed by a discussion between Appolonia Susterjec and Frans Jacobi.

### **Bad Luck**

This is the performance where everything went wrong by a series of independent, but unfortunate incidents:

First the musician I had conceptualized the soundtrack with, Boris Schiøler/Lonely Boy Choir were forced to cancel his participation for private reasons. In collaboration we found a substitute, the brilliant sound-artist Tobias Kirstein, but he wouldn't be in Copenhagen until the morning of the performance. We decided to collaborate anyway, having a whole day to prepare. Arriving at Mayhem in the morning to set up and prepare for the performance, I found the whole area hit by power cut. Furthermore Tobias called and said that one of his kids were sick so he would come by later, but since there was no power we were not able to set-up any sound-equipment anyway. Raving around in the darkness I tried to organise the set-up. The power only returned in the afternoon, but by then the whole family of Tobias had fallen ill and he had to stay home taking care of them, so he only managed to arrive short before the start of the performance, setting up the sound-equipment in a hurry. We ended up having only 5 minutes to hastily go through my ideas for the sound without any chance of testing anything. The result was that the rhythm of reverb and echo produced by the sound from the tools never really happened. Tobias did his best but it would have required contact-microphones fastened directly to the building materials, a fact we would have detected in a rehearsal of the idea. So the soundscape that played an important part in my intentions with this performance

became somewhat diminished. I am thankful to Tobias that he ventured out into the performance in such horrible conditions anyway.

Raving around in the darkness, I changed my plan for the placement of the audience, instead of having them create a circle themselves when asked for by the artist/researcher in the beginning of the performance, I decided to place the chairs in a circle from the beginning, so people would form a circle just by sitting down. This would later prove to be a quite fatal decision.

As if these troubles were not enough, one of the invited participants in the discussion to follow the performance, Rene Karpantschoff, called in sick late in the afternoon, leaving me with absolutely no time to find a substitute. I had to take over his role myself, which made the discussion disgress and become quite unbalanced.

The performance went ok anyway - the script saved it – but looking back at it now I can see that some important points were missed. An analysis will be more of an evaluation, since the conditions to do this performance were not optimal. Lets try anyway:

### **Analysis**

The first part of On Water works like a performative essay in the same manner as the G13 performance, but the elements here are more action-like.

The text is narrated by the artist/researcher who uses a lot of small phrases to guide and take care of the audience. In the beginning she uses the term 'learning-play' to describe what we are going to experience and the tone of language used in her text has a fitting pedagogical character. She is a teacher presenting us to the content of the performance. The intention is a kind of self-mockery on my part; a way of dealing with the role of the artist as researcher. To point to the problem of forcing so much content into an artwork and then at same time trying to make it work. With an ironic humouristic twist, but still an attempt at solving the problem of integrating this content and commentary into the performance, without restricting the performative, aesthetic elements too much. The role of the artist/researcher is precisely forged like a figure, seemingly narrating the performance from the outside. In this performance though she is 'on stage' with the other performers, which makes her a part of the cast. She is at once inside the performance and outside. This positioning of artist/researcher is something that I am experimenting with throughout the nine performances in 'Aesthetics of Resistance' – in each performance the role is cast slightly different.

Here it is performed by Amira Jasmina Shalaby Jensen, a young actress, that I have worked with on several occasions. She reads up the text from small cards, in a manner, often used on televisions, i.e. very often in the news-programmes on danish television. Her appearance, and the system with the cards, merges the figures of the teacher and the news-presenter in a perfect manner. Reading up the text in english gave her problems though; since she is not used to acting in english her reading of the text became insecure and often slightly stumbling. I was on more occasions criticised for using her, when this was so obvious, but it was a very conscious decision. Her hesitating manner of reading inserts yet another distance into the figure of the artist/researcher which I really appreciate. She is acting the role of the teacher/news-speaker, but at the same time she is just Amira trying to get a grip on the often complicated text. She is here with us, together in this space, struggling with herself to become another.<sup>196</sup>

The other performers are reading up texts as well. Here it is various quotes appearing in the text of the artist/researcher. To create a variation in the presentation of the text, each quote is read up by another person. This person reads up from a piece of A4-paper. On the backside of this paper the name of the author of the quote is written with large letters. The performers are instructed to hold up the paper in front of their faces as they read up. This creates a simple figure, where the white A4-paper is like a mask and the large letters of the name is like the facial features. In the way the authors of the various quotes are shaped as present figures in the performance. Patti Smith, Hakim Bey and Lars Bang Larsen are actually present as performed figures. This feature is part of my attempt to perform the information gathered in my research process, and this part of the performance actually works quite well.<sup>197</sup> The texts become present in the space as performative reality.

The presentation of the central quote in the script, read up by myself, is problematic though. The manifesto by the Upbuilders was intended to be read over the dub-like beat that would have evolved out of the noises from the building-process. The first part should have been read up straight on top of this beat, then the second part should have been fragmented by resonance and reverb and mixed into the heavy beat. When this beat is never happening I am improvising another reading, dramatising my voice as Kirstein adds other effects to the voice. This results in a completely different expression than originally intended but the circumstances dictates us to attempt another solution. As a member of the audience explains to me in an email afterwards, the distortion of the reading of the manifesto deprives the Upbuilders of 'having a voice' in the performance. The other quotes stands sharp in the performance, but it is a major problem that the voice of the central group of activists is not represented in a sober manner in the performance.

Now, let's look at the architectural structure. Based on an idea of parasitic architecture, three performers improvise an chaotic free-form structure of the wooden materials placed in a stack in mid-space at the start of the performance. Quite fast this structure evolves into space and creates a kind of maze of wooden plates, wooden beams and other building materials. The improvisation works well, the evolving building process is fascinating to follow and the atmosphere of chaotic creativity dominates the space. The intention was to include the audience into the structure by placing them and their chairs one by one onto various parts of the structure as it becomes possible. This didn't happen and the circular structure that chairs and thereby the audience were placed in from the beginning somehow counter-acts this. The circle establishes a quite stable relationship between audience and stage, that isn't easy to break once established. The audience thus becomes on-lookers instead of participants in the performance. This is a subtle detail; the difference between participation and spectator can be very small, but it is conceptually important. Here it becomes a problem both in the parasitic-architecture-part, and in the last image driven part.

The problem of the circle is the direction of the gaze. Sitting in the circle the audience looks at the area in the center, that thus becomes a stage. If they were scattered inside the parasitic structure their gaze would have pointed in various directions and towards other members of the audience; they would comprise the stage themselves, and the relationship between audience and performers would be different. The fact that I am always referring to them as audience and to the other participants as

performers of course already establishes a relationship, but it is still variable. There are subtle differences to be considered.

Still the parasitic structure evolves around the audience, thereby enveloping them in chaotic atmosphere. This enveloping was intended to be radically enlarged by the soundscape created from the sounds of the building-process; the hammering and the screwdriver was to be echoed and distorted into a heavy repetitious beat. This never really works out and the chaotic enveloping of the audience in a parasitic audio-spatial sense-event is somewhat diminished.

Another more fundamental problem with the idea of the parasitic architecture in this performance is precisely that of architecture. Parasitic architecture is an anarchistic addition to an existing architectural structure; for this addition to be effectively parasitic the host architecture has to be the opposite: Formal, square and well-organised. The architecture of Mayhem, where this performance takes place is parasitic in itself. It is a temporary, no-tech, sloppy, second-hand interior, inserted into a derelict factory building. It is already as parasitic as can be. To erect another parasitic architectural structure into this space is an unprecise action; the drama inherent in the concept of the parasitic architecture is cancelled and the result is not as unpredictable as intended. It would be a far more drastic act to create such a structure in an institutional white cube architecture.

When the parasitic structure is completed, and the manifesto of the Upbuilders is read, lights are turned off and three video-projections with footage of water, waves and the sea are projected from the ceiling and onto the central part of the space. The accordion player, Kim Jezus, starts playing a simple tune, full of longing. Here the enveloping works. The space is turned into an image and we are all, performers and audience taken somewhere else, out on the sea, on water. The intention here is to create an imaginary space, an illusion. To take the audience from the present very real situation of the building and the reading, out into an image. This is an interpretation of the squatting of Refshalevej; it is to mark the exodus from society at large into some kind of temporary autonomous zone. A transition from the real into the imaginary.

In a sense this transition in the performance reverses the *Verfremdungseffekt* of Bertolt Brecht. Where he wanted to cancel out illusion in the theatre, revealing all effects and technical tricks in the creation of a materialistic reality, I here go from the brechtian presence of performance in the first part, into an illusionistic imaginary scenery in this last part. This transition is inspired by the concept of 'deus ex machina'. This concept comes from the theatre of the antique and is both a technical and a narrative tool to solve an intricate and seemingly locked dramatic situation. Flying in from above a deity - a god or goddess - solves the problems in the plot, from the outside, bring it to the denouement. The term has later been generalised to mean any kind of unexpected event that solves a seemingly hopeless situation. Here in my version it is the move from one kind of reality to another kind of reality that is brought in 'from above'. The 'deus ex machina' is the system consisting of the video-projections and the accordion player, a kind of filmic machinery, that introduces a completely different ambience; a romantic cinematic ambience that all of a sudden envelopes the audience in an illusionary scenario.<sup>198</sup>

The passage from real to imaginary reflects the difference between the two projects described in the script – Havnelaboratoriet and the occupation of Refshalevej. My



interpretation is somewhat paradoxical; the artist group Parfyme is caught in the struggles with the authorities and in 'the present circumstances'. Their project, Havnelaboratoriet, exists in that struggle, in the in-between space of proposal. Partly an imaginary space, partly an all too realistic performance of the various interests of their sponsors and patrons. It is an image realised on the conditions of the authorities, it is what was possible on these conditions. Parfyme is painstakingly aware of this and it is encouraging that they speak so directly about it in the video I am quoting them from. The activists, the Upbuilders on the other hand, completely leaves 'the present circumstances' by their act of civil disobedience. By rejecting reality as we know it, capitalist reality, they are to a much larger degree establishing an imaginary space. Their version of imaginary becomes another reality. This is the difference I wanted to test with the transition in this performance; from performing in the real in the first part to leaving the real, exit into an imaginary space in the last part.

Reality vs. Imaginary. Upbuilders vs. Parfyme. Art vs. Activism. Performance vs. Theatre. Audience vs. Participants. Legal vs. Illegal. Obedience vs. Disobedience. Since the narrative in this interpretation is build on comparison between the two projects, this duality is reflected in almost all parts of the performance. The difference between the two are presented in an array of subtle dualities through the performance. They mirror each other in various ways and shift positions in a complicated play of differences.

Where Parfyme, as artists, try to establish a similar temporal autonomous zone as the Upbuilders, I, as an artist/researcher, try to establish a temporal performative space, where these problematics can be contemplated, reflected. Parfyme takes art into the streets, into society – I stay strictly inside the framework of art. Even when placing these performance out in various other contexts - the new Youth House, Mayhem or Copenhagen City Hall – they are always presented as artistic reflections. This is crucial. There is no attempt at leaving art, rather an attempt at testing how artistic research might be able to engage with topics outside of art.

'On Water' is hit by bad luck. This influence various parts of the performance, but even the choice of venue is problematic. If a suitable occasion occurs I will definitely try to redo it. The next time it shall be inside an established art institution, in a white cube. For now it works as an experiment in the series of performances in 'Aesthetics of Resistance'. To a certain degree a failed experiment, but even from this there are lessons to be learned – the reflections made here in this evaluation influence the way the next performances are set up, some of them even influence my thinking about the problematics presented in this performance.

### Searching for an audience (3.3.4.1.)

In June 2011 I saw a small exhibition by Trine Falch at Oslo Kunsthall. Theatre for a New Time. The exhibition 'reworks materials from the archives' of the Hålogaland Theatre, a 40-year old norwegian theatre institution, 'uncovering its beginnings as a radical 1970s collective that sought to reinvent theatre 'in the service of the people''. What stroke me as relevant for my own work with 'Aesthetics of Resistance' was the manner in which Hålogaland Theatre worked with their audiences. Working on 'the principles of the revolutionary left' they staged their productions at the same places and for the same audiences that the plays concern. I.e. the play, 'Det e her æ høre tel', were staged in the villages Senjahopen and Mefjordvær for the local people that the play were about:

*Det e her æ høre tel (Here is where I belong), (1974).*

The play is based on the local people in the fishing villages Senjahopen and Mefjordvær on the outer side of Senja that went to tax strike when they failed to get the road access they were promised. The play was a great success and contributed to the fact that the road was built.<sup>199</sup>

In our discussions on artistic research at Malmö Art Academy the problem of how to collect or register the reactions and experiences of an audience to an exhibition or another artistic-research-event surface again and again. In my case performance is the media I have chosen for my research experiments. These performances in most cases involves an audience in one way or the other. How to work with these audiences? How to gather their feed-back to a given performance? And ultimately, what audiences to work with? For a performance to work as a reasearch experiment I need to find solution to these questions.

When I present a performance in the context of my artistic work outside of the phd-framework, it usually takes place within an art institution of some sort. The audience is most often some version of the usual art-crowd. The performance is delievered, the audience reacts during the performance or afterwards, by the level of attention they are showing. With some experience, this is quite easy to 'read'. It is actually a quite interesting topic – how an audience reacts to a performance by their presence, by collective psychosocial behavior. I often recieve a few direct comment, most often by the people who are positive. But as a rule the way one receives the reaction and reception of such a performance is scattered and neither precise or comprehensive in any sense.

The first performances I did in the framework of 'Aesthetics of Resistance' were staged in a similar manner. I was focussed on other problems in the attempt to use a performance as an artistic research experiment. Two were presented as parts of two phd-seminars at the Inter Arts Center at Lunds University and one were presented as part of a performance festival in Beijing, China. Maybe I thought that the framework of a phd-seminar would grant a different reception of the performances; that it would somehow supply me with a critical response, I could use in my further work. Since that didn't really happen, I felt a growing need to work more directly with the problem of audience and reception.

During 2010/11 I followed a program called Samtalekøkkenet (The Conversation Kitchen) in Copenhagen. Set-up as a forum for performance art in a club that usually serves as the base for the buoyant Burlesque-scene in Copenhagen, the

Samtalekøkken presented 3-4 performances in one evening once a month. Each performance followed by a discussion with the artist. Samtalekøkkenet was a rare attempt to connect the performance scene of the visual arts with the performance scene of theatre, and an attempt at developing a critical discourse around performance as a genre or media in itself. To everyone's surprise this forum gathered a quite large attendance and there would be around 100 persons in the audience to each installment.

When I was invited to do a performance at Samtalekøkkenet, I chose to do one of the performances, that I were planned in the frame of 'Aesthetics of Resistance': 'Silent Stand'. The performance in itself had a lot of problems – I will get back to that in the analysis of that performance. Directly after the performance though, there was a long discussion. Even though the questions to me were often quite critical and the discussion was in a sense way to long, it was a great revelation to me. In the direct response to the performance some questions were raised that were really useful to me afterwards. Combined with my usual evaluation of 'the presence of the audience', their psycho-social behavior, I had, maybe for the first time, a sense of a relevant response to the performance.

Here was something to develop for my further 'research experiments' in the framework of 'Aesthetics of Resistance'.

A problem with the discussion at Samtalekøkkenet though, was that it evolved around artistic and formal questions. This was somehow a given, since that kind of discussion was at the core of what Samtalekøkkenet did. It was the context that the performance was presented in. The audience was comprised of people from the artworld, from theatre and the visual arts. The discussion dealt with the status of my performance as artistic research, if it was theatre or performance and other very relevant questions. The performance 'Silent Stand' is about the uprisings on Tahrir Square in Egypt and some of the protests leading up to this. It was done only months after the events in Cairo. In the response to the performance only a very few comments on this content occurred and these few comments were quite superficial. Of course this had to do with how the performance presented this content – there was a lot of problems here that I will get back to in my analysis of it – but it was also my impression that this audience was not interested in or capable of relating to that content. Their interests were primarily the artistic questions, which is of course not a problem, I got a lot of relevant feed-back on those aspects of my performance. The problem was specifically mine; I also needed some kind of response to the content I was working with.

When trying to figure out how to proceed - how to develop an audience-situation and a discussion format, that would suit my needs for a proper response to my research performances – I reasoned that I would have to work with who the audience are, in a similar manner as the Hålogaland Theatre, mentioned above. Hålogaland Theatre was working in the 1970ties, they were part of a strong discourse on art 'in the service of the people'. A whole movement, working directly in the tradition of Bertolt Brecht and his idea of the 'learning play'. In my case it was slightly harder to detect who 'the people' are. My aim was also quite different than the revolutionary leftwing politics of Hålogaland Theatre. Whereas they saw themselves as instigators of a revolutionary momentum, I was rather running after some revolutionaries – or more appropriately - some political activists, trying to establish a practice of reflection, reflecting on their activism. In order to situate my reflections in relation to the events that they were reflections upon, I had to develop an idea of who the persons, or the

groups of persons, relevant to each performance would be. Who the audience for each performance could be, and of course, how to engage them.

For each performance I made a list of who could be considered as audiences. I envisioned to invite to or three select groups that somehow had relation to the events I had chosen as subjects for the specific performances. The performance would then be presented to this select audience, and wouldn't be open for anyone else to attend. A closed arrangement for a select, limited audience. It could be a certain group of activists that took part in a certain demonstration, it could be a group of employees working in a part of the city administration dealing with a certain topic.

I then contacted an organiser I had previously been working with, Tijana Miscovic, and together we started to organise a plan for which groups of people to contact and try to engage as audiences and participants in the discussions. It soon became obvious that the site of the performance would be an integral part of these considerations. By presenting a performance at a certain site, it would more plausible to attract certain groups of people. Or so we thought.

The project soon proved far more difficult than we imagined. One obvious problem was that most of the events were at that point already quite far off in the past. It is incredible how far away a couple of years are, when dealing with events that take place not only in the present, but in a kind of medialised present. Participants in the original events had already moved far beyond the problematics and agendas they were then engaged in, and in general had no obvious need to engage in any reflections on these past events. For the same reason it was also quite difficult to address certain activists groups, simply because the group had ceased to exist shortly after the events I had chosen to work with.

Another quite surprising experience was that in most cases people showed discomfort with being addressed as a group. As we contacted various groups of people it was a repeating factor that people were hesitant to engage in anything identified as a group; no one directly denied belonging to a group, but our invitation to come and see a performance were somehow misunderstood, rejected or just talked around. We didn't manage to engage any groups and after a while we had to give up the plan.

For 'Silent Stand', the performance dealing with the Egyptian uprisings, we wanted to bring in a group of Egyptians living in Denmark and a group of activists from Occupy Denmark, since Occupy was obviously inspired by the Tahrir Square Occupation. Tijana made a large effort to find an Egyptian community or Egyptian cultural society or something similar in Denmark, but they never really answered our approaches. I never managed to find anyone that could be identified as representing Occupy; as someone mailed me back - Occupy don't believe in representation.

For 'On Water' we tried to address Real Dania, the architectural foundation that owns the lot in which Parfyme created Havnelaboratoriet. They weren't interested in taking part in anything like that – or simply didn't want to take time off for such a purpose. We tried to address an organisation called Havn & By (Harbour & City) that deals with developing the harbour areas for the City of Copenhagen. Here I experienced the old joke of being referred to several persons that ended up making a circle so the last one referred me back to the first one. No one wanted to take on the responsibility of dealing with our invitation. We also approached the department of Mur & Rum (Wall&Space) at The Royal Danish Art Academy (this is the department of professor

Nils Norman). My idea was to engage on one side some representatives of the City Authorities, as for instance Havn & By, and on the other side a group of students from the art-academy, specifically from that department, from which several students took part in the occupation of Refshalevej, that was the main topic of the performance. Here too, our invitation seemed to end up in a maze of indifference, with no clear answer in sight. I first envisioned doing the performance in a newly defined project-space inside the art-academy and even made arrangements for a date with the person organising this. But as I learned that the students of that specific department I wanted to engage boycotted the project-space in protest against the way it was funded by a private sponsor, I gave up that idea as well, and moved the project out of the visual arts context, into the avantgarde music club Mayhem.

My most ambitious failure was the attempt to place the performance 'Climate/Kettle' in the Police School in Copenhagen and let two different audiences – a group of students from the police school vs. a group of students from Det Fri Gymnasium (The Free High School) – confront each other, first as part of the performance and later on in the following discussions. From an artist colleague I got a very good contact to the head of the Police School, who actually engaged in an hour-long telephone conversation with me, explaining the reasons why the police school would not engage in such a project. I was quite baffled with his explanation, but I must give him the credit, that he was actually the only person in this whole series of approaches who gave us a serious and sincere answer. In a research sense, I regret that I didn't tape our conversation or turned it into a real interview, but I don't think I would have gotten such an open minded answer had it been for the public record as in an interview. As it is now it is part of this tale only as my personal recollection, but I still think it is relevant:

He gave me two reasons. First of all, one of the events in question, the large scale arrest of 944 participants in a demonstration for a better climate on december 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, was now an ongoing court case with a high level of media attention. This made it impossible for anyone in the Police Forces to engage in any kind of public debate about the case. If I wanted a comment from the police on this event I would probably have to go all the way to the top of the hierarchy, to the police director of Copenhagen for instance. No one else in the system would be able to speak in public about an ongoing court case. But this was not the only reason – if it was I would of course come back to him after january 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012, when the courtcase was to be settled – no, the substantial problem with my proposal was that involved a critical discussion of what he called the chain of command.

In the teaching at the police school they talk about two kinds of operations:

The individual operation, where one, two or a few police officers have to engage in an arrest or some other kind of maneuver. Here the officers in question take stock of the situation and decide for themselves what to do. The individual operation will often be the topic of critical discussion in the teachings at the school, i.e. a person who have been detained in a brawl in a bar could be invited together with the police officer who have detained him, and they will discuss their respective experiences and perspectives on the operation in front of the students. Such a discussion will optimize the abilities of taking the right decision in a critical moment.

Collective operations on the other hand – operations involving large units of

police forces – will never be the topic of critical discussion in a similar manner. Such an operation is completely dependant on the heirachy of command. Decisions are taken on the top level and has to be deployed 100% by everyone in the field. There is no space for any kind of individual considerations. For this reason a critical discussion , like the one I suggested, would interfere in the systemic manner such operations are taught to the students in the Police School.

This was clear talk; there was no way to proceed and I had to figure out a completely different set-up for this performance. I decided to move the project to the other school in my first idea and make it a confrontation between a group of pupils from that school and an unspecified audience from the outside. We approached Det Fri Gymnasium and they were of course enthusiastic about such a project. We had a very fine meeting with a couple of teachers, but the problem was to ensure a group of pupils that would take part in a performance and a discussion. After a quite long process we ended up with a very sympathetic class of visual art pupils, but even they were a bit reluctant to take part in the project.

After all this uncertainty and impossibility of engaging the various groups we had envisioned as audiences for the performances we finally dropped the idea and changed our concept. As Tijana reasoned: If we approach someone and ask them to engage as a group they apparently become suspicious. They are unsure about what we want from them, why we identify them as a group and what their role will be. It is somehow obvious that we want something from them, we want them to contribute to something that they feel unsure about, they fear they are going to be exploited or pointed fingers at. If we as a new strategy ask someone as an individual, if they can attend the performance and afterwards take part in a debate, on the basis of their individual knowledge of a given topic, then that might be easier.

We then changed the format. The performances would be open for an unspecified audience by 'normal' invitation. We would then ask two or three persons to take part in a discussion after each performance, thereby hoping to engage the audience as well in a discussion on the topics presented in the performance. This actually worked quite well. The persons we approached were all very positive and in most cases it was only a question of possible dates that we had to discuss. The format of the discussions and the relationship between the audience and the 'panel' was more traditional than originally intended, but I guess this was the price to pay for including the debates in the last series of performances in a realistic manner.

What remained from the first format, though, was the choice of venue. By placing the performances at places, chosen as specific contexts for each performance, the performances were opened up for audiences that wouldn't otherwise attend such events. This proved especially important in case of 'Revolution By Night' that was placed at The new Youth House at Dortheavej.

If I had known all these troubles beforehand, I would probably have limited the number of performances and tried to establish one or two audience groups with whom to work on a longer term. This would have been a much longer process than what was here possible and would have taken a kind effort that was not realistic in this framework. In this somehow troublesome process I can glimpse a format of performance, where the mix between performers and audience, between expression and reception, between participation and collaboration, is organised in a far more radical manner, resembling the direct democratic processes of the activism I have

been researching in this project. Such a project though, would have to be the main focus of an entire project. A radical update of Brecht's Learning Play and the theatre activism of Hålogaland Theatre.

The russian art group Chlot Delat? is at the moment working with a series of contemporary 'Learning Plays' and similar considerations appear in the work of the polish artist Artur Żmijewski.<sup>200</sup> The problematics have fuelled parts of the so-called 'relational aesthetics'. Still, there is a whole new format of performance/audience-relations to be explored. This might be a possible topic for further investigations.

Here in this project though, our aspirations met the reality of possibilities. What we arrived at was not an ideal, radical method for engaging an audience in discussion. What we had to settle on was more pragmatic, a series compromises that enabled things to actually happen. In connection with the five performances in the last round of research performances only three of the discussions worked well, the last two were obstructed by coincidental mishaps. Out of the three working well, two were really great; far beyond whatever one could have expected.

The general question in this 'search for an audience' still stands: How to retrieve the reception of a performance from an audience? Even in the cases where the discussions worked out extremely well – in 'Revolution By Night' and in 'Climate/Kettle' – the outcome of the discussion still gives only a part of the complex set of collective emotions that constitutes the 'reception'. The collective psychosocial behavior mentioned earlier in this text is an important part as well. My intentions with staging the discussions was to retrieve some kind feed-back from the audience, especially concerning the content of the performances, the various hypothesizes on activism they each contain. Now, afterwards I can see that the quality of the performed images inherent in the performances is at stake as well. If the audience is included in the performative reality in a convincing manner. This is not possible to detect in a discussion afterwards, it has to be 'read' immediately, in the moment when it happens. The mode of this inclusion is the collective psychosocial behavior of the audience and the performers. (If we quote the american sociologist Georgy Katsiaficas, used elsewhere in this project, we can also call it the eros effect of performance.)

In the analyses I have written on each performance I have tried to evaluate these various modes of reception. The analyses also go through the discussions and how they did or did not supply valuable feed-back.

The discussions might not be the optimal format for contracting the feed-back, still they actually delivered a lot of information. They were a possible format.

They were valuable for another reason as well. By setting up a discussion and presenting it as part of an evenings program, the invitation to the audience was different than if they were just invited to see a performance. By including discussion in the invitation the audience was invited into an active role, to experience something AND to talk about it as well. As Tommy, who helped me organise the performance at the Youth House so clearly stated when I was in doubt as if to include the discussion in the event at all: "If we don't organise a discussion, people will not get the possibility to talk about the topics we are presenting. The discussion is a main part of why they are interested to attend. They are not interested in performance as such. Thats why we cannot leave out the discussion."

### Exodus (3.3.4.2.)

“The State will crumble, then, not by a massive blow to its head, but through a mass withdrawal from its base, evacuating its means of support. It is important, however, that this politics of withdrawal also simultaneously constitute a new society, a new republic. We might conceive this exodus, then as engaged withdrawal or a founding leave-taking, which both refuses this social order and constructs an alternative.” (Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt)<sup>201</sup>

The occupation of Refshalevej happened spontaneously, as a surprise act. As Jon Vedel, an activists (and artist) who took part in the occupation, tells in an interview I did with him, the plan was to do a demonstration that would end up at Refshalevej, where people would try to build a intermistic playground. A group had prepared the action by sampling some building materials, leaving them at the site to use when the demonstration arrived. By collective improvisation, people stayed overnight, and began building huts and primitive shelters instead. Words spread fast and soon a lot of other people joined the occupation. Jon tells how he went home, fetched a hammer and then moved out into the settlement. It was as easy as that. The first night around 200 people slept over.

Already on the first day after the spontaneous sleep-in, the first communal meeting was held. The first assembly. Due to the very mixed assemblage of people – the larger part were skillful veterans of the Thursday Demos, but others were young kids with no collective experience, or homeless people seeking shelter, yet others the pirate party people looking for fun – the discussions in the first assemblies were difficult and it was really hard to reach agreement. A basic lesson in the hardship of consensus democracy. How to establish a common language? How to reach consensus on decisions? How to manage logistics?

All this happened in the early summer of 2008, a couple of years before the first protest camp hit Tahrir Square in Cairo, in what was soon to be a global wave of protest camps to occupy major squares in a range of big cities all over the world. The image of the protest camp was already there long before Tahrir, as a sleeping myth waiting to be released by the right circumstances. It appeared already back in Beijing in 1989, in the occupation of Tianenmen Square, and it has probably appeared in smaller, unknown versions in countless places since then. It appeared here in Copenhagen, in a long warm summer in 2008, but as Jon recounts in the interview, it was like a mirage, a fleeing dream, that was soon to be forgotten. Something barely believable. Or as he says: “The fact that it happened is an image in itself.”

Jon recalls how everyone very fast became completely absorbed in the occupation. In the warm summer atmosphere, the rest of the city was forgotten, soon nothing existed outside of this new community. One side of it was the joy, the carefree living outside in the summer. The parties, the ongoing open-air festival, the collective feeling of happiness. Another side was the practicalities. The building of huts, houses, rafts and house-boats. The folk-kitchen, the sanitation solutions. Lots of stuff to organise.

And then there were the exercise in democracy, the ongoing disagreements, the impossibility of reaching overall agreement. This is where the occupation became political. Jon recalls how there was an ongoing internal disagreement on what was going on. Various groups wrote completely different manifestos and expressed different ideas on what the settlement was about. It didn't even have one name, but



many names. Jon describes these disagreements as a strength. It was an unsettled debate, an ongoing dispute. It was real anarchism in the sense that the opposed groups stayed opposed; a compromise wasn't reached and this continuous unresolving was the dynamic that kept the community going. It might also have been the reason why the authorities didn't react, they simply couldn't figure out what was going on, who was responsible and what kind of measure to take against it.

This unsettled state, the unrecognizability, closely resembles what Mikkel Bolt calls the 'not recognizable subject'. He found it in the first chaotic phase of the Youth House Movement, fuelled by anger and revelling in destruction. Here, at Refshalevej, it appears again, but this time in a peaceful, constructivist mode. Peaceful, but still unruly and unresolved.

The Italian thinker Paolo Virno talks of 'exodus'; a term developed from the biblical story of how the Israelites fled the Pharaonic armies in ancient Egypt by departing through the Red Sea, where the waters waned and a safe, dry passage opened up. Once on the other side, in the desert, the fleeing communities, led by Moses, established a new law, and thereby constituted a new society. Virno uses 'exodus' as a term for an 'engaged withdrawal', where the de-humanizing social order of capitalism is left and a new alternative order is constructed. For Virno 'exodus' is closely related to the crumbling of representative democracy and the emergence of a new political subject, 'the multitude'.

In their seminal book 'Empire' Anthony Negri and Michael Hardt describes the transformation of the People, who was the central proletarian subject in Marxism into the new term The Multitude, a complex many-layered subject of radical differences. Hardt and Negri describes the Multitude as "an open network of singularities that links together on the basis of the common they share and the common they produce". The Multitude is thus connected to the Common as opposed to Empire, which is the manifestation of globalised international power. Common is public space, an attempt to propose a new public sphere. Another social space.

For Virno, who is closely connected with Negri and Hardt, it is exactly this Common, the founding of a new public sphere, that is the central task in Exodus. The Multitude in its complex character of 'an ensemble of acting minorities' is not representable and none of its parts 'aspire to transform itself into a majority', that can rule the others:

"Exodus means, more than taking power or subduing it, exiting. Exiting means constituting a distinct context, new experiences of non-representative democracy, new modes of production."<sup>202</sup>

Virno describes the common as a 'score', an 'acting-in-concert'. It is not some kind of specific composition, rather a 'score in the broadest of senses':

"It consists in making Intellect resonate precisely as attitude. Its only 'score' is, as such, the condition of possibility of all 'scores'."<sup>203</sup>

Virno calls this 'resonating intellect' the 'general intellect'. It is a collective intellect, that connects the Multitude. In a sense 'general intellect' is a defining factor of the multitude. It is the 'acting-in-concert', that the term 'general intellect' implies, that constitutes the multitude.

The Multitude is not a new political subject to be defined in the flight from capitalism, in the exodus. It already exists. It has emerged with the transformation of work, from industrial Fordist labour to Post-fordist immaterial labour. The 'acting-in-concert' is already meticulously orchestrated by capitalism. It is the reverberatory pulse that runs through all immaterial labor. All the immaterial, computerized operations that makes up increasingly larger parts of our daily labor. It is not necessarily an ongoing communication, it is rather 'the condition of possibility' in the ever present communication. The fact that we are all tuned in, all of the time. Available.

Here, in capitalism, this new collective presence, is paradoxically both fulfilling and exploiting all the buzzwords that comes with it; creativity, innovation, nomadism, flexibility, etc. General Intellect exhaust and collapse the traditional structures in work/leisure, public/private and substitutes the hard-won working conditions and democratic rights in representative democracy with an omnipresent servitude. We are permanently available – even in leisure, as consumers, we are productive, fulfilling society's need for increasing economic growth. Empire is the common of capitalism. It is the omnipresent, omnicomplex structure that we all feed into - by working, by consuming, by being.

Exodus is a withdrawal from Empire. Not a withdrawal to the past, as an attempt to re-install the old orders, before everything went wrong. Exodus is a withdrawal on the conditions of the Multitude. It is an attempt at creating another General Intellect than Empire. A refusal to engage in the 'acting-in-concert' orchestrated by capitalism, and in the same move constituting an alternative 'acting-in-concert'.

Virno quotes Hobbes: "Our obligation to civil obedience, by virtue whereof the civil Lawes are valid, is before all civil Law."<sup>204</sup> The foundation of the State rests on this obedience. The State is comprised of a set of Laws, these Laws are only valid, if we presuppose our 'unconditional acceptance of command'.<sup>205</sup> No matter what the content of a law is, we have presupposed that we will obey the law. In the post-industrial societies, the Nation State has become increasingly important as the reference of power. The war on terror and the inherent set of new security laws utilizes the State as the highest organ of power, to which we as citizens are expected to obey. The State is now before democracy. With reference to security, the state can suspend the civil rights that used to be the foundation of the state. The State has loosened itself from its foundations and has become an ultimate power. As representative democracy crumbles, as our experience of direct influence is waning, our 'unconditional acceptance of command' transgress into servitude.

Civil Disobedience, or Radical Disobedience as Virno calls it, is the exodus from this servitude of the State. By disobeying one law in an act of civil disobedience, it is not only that certain law that is disrespected, it is the general obedience to all of the laws of the State that is targeted. It is the very foundation of the State, the 'unconditional acceptance of command' that is challenged. This is the reason why the State apparently invests considerable more force and capacity in encountering collective acts of civil disobedience, as The Youth House Movement, than in battling other kinds of crime. Civil Disobedience is not only a security threat in certain - proportional - limited parts of the city. It is a general threat to the symbolic foundation of the State.

The occupation of Refshalevej isn't a 'mass withdrawal' from the base the State – it is rather a 'temporary autonomous zone' - but on a smaller scale it fulfills the traits of Exodus as laid out by Paolo Virno. The argument on legal versus illegal in the script

is crucial in this respect. It is only by breaking the Law that the occupation can challenge society on a general level. It is exactly in refusing to obey the Law that the occupation is a refusal of capitalism. 'Havnelaboratoriet' in the other end of the harbour is still defined as art; it still operates within the Law and in this sense respects the system with all its institutionalised channels of critique.

The beauty of the occupation of Refshalevej is that it goes beyond refusing capitalism. Whereas the tactics of the Black Bloc has massive focus on exiting society, on performing the destructive powers released in the exit, the new community on Refshalevej goes beyond the destruction and establishes another common, an alternative public sphere. In the daily assemblies consensus democracy is explored; its very interesting to note that the continuous disagreement in these assemblies are seen as a quality, a fuel that keeps the community going. It is not an ambitious result – a cohesive proposal for another kind of community – that is the quality here. It is the chaotic, unresolved process of trying to become another kind of community that is interesting. If the occupation is already in the initial dismissal of the law, by the fact of the occupation itself, a refusal of the State, it is in the following two months, in the process of evolving and performing the new community, that the occupation is 'constituting a distinct context, new experiences of non-representative democracy'.

This is how to understand Jons remark: "The fact that it happened is an image in itself."

### Organising Freedom? (3.3.4.3.)

In his seminal text, 'The Temporary Autonomous Zone', Hakim Bey writes about maps:

"The 'map' is a political abstract grid, a gigantic con enforced by the carrot/stick conditioning of the 'Expert' State, until for most of us the map *becomes* the territory – no longer 'Turtle Island', but 'the USA'. And yet because the map is an abstraction it cannot cover Earth with 1:1 accuracy. Within the fractal complexities of actual geography the map can see only dimensional grids. Hidden enfolded immensities escape the measuring rod. The map is not accurate; the map *cannot* be accurate."<sup>206</sup>

It is in these 'hidden enfolded immensities' that the Temporary Autonomous Zones can unfold.

By mere coincidence the occupation of Refshalevej occupies ground that is administrated by no less than three different offices, two in the City Administration of Copenhagen and one in the State Administration. The road is guarded by an office in the City Administration, the water-side of the road by another office in the City Administration, while the 'Christiania-side' of the road is guarded by an office in the State Administration. In the interview Jon explains how this complexity makes it hard for the authorities to decide what to do, it is not one authority, but three authorities who has to agree upon some kind of standpoint and which action to take. By uniting these three separate items the occupation confuse the authorities and create a new temporal site to be considered.

In a similar vein Jon talks about the loopholes of jurisdiction connected to sailing. One is permitted to stay three nights each place you land. A community on water moving from place to place, would thereby be able to escape the radar of the Law. This way of thinking with and around the law, reminds of the brilliant way Egyptian activists circumvented the law in the action Silent Stand - I'll get back to this in the script of the same name.

The exchange with the authorities takes a new turn when the activists write an application to the City Administration of Copenhagen, proposing to redefine the occupation as a 'festival' and asking to be granted permission to stay on the premises for a certain period over the summer. How to look at such an application? Is it a joke? Or is it the project-entrepreneurship of the involved artist-activists that comes to play? By submitting an application to the authorities the activists recognizes these authorities and their right to govern the site. All of a sudden the occupation resembles Havnelaboratoriet in the other end of the harbour – its is recognisable project that respects the conditions given by the authorities. The occupation subdues to the authorised channels of critique.

In the cultural self-image of Copenhagen there is a slot for this kind of activity. If you are young and rebellious, if your activity is creative and artistic, if you belong to the so-called 'layer of cultural growth' there are places for you to exercise your critical creativity. Empty factory buildings, vacant lots and temporary festivals in certain parts of public space. There is even funding available if you are experimental enough. As also discussed in the script on G13, this field of critical cultural activity, to which also the new Youth House belongs, can be seen as the way the authorities neutralize

political critique. By accepting its existence, by providing spaces for it to unfold, society secures that these activities are limited to certain subcultural groups, where they don't get out of control. This is the authorised critique to which also art belongs.

My point in this script/performance is that it is the distinction between legal and illegal activity that separates authorized critique from real exodus. Only by employing civil disobedience a radical rejection of society at large can be reached. If the Upbuilders really mean it when they reject the Danish State in their manifesto, then an application to the same State Authorities is no-go. A permission to continue as a festival would neutralize the political potential of the occupation. It would reverse the exodus. The exitants would re-enter into society. The occupation would become a project.

I don't know if the decision to make an application was taken in an assembly, if there was consensus on this decision or if it was done only by a fraction of the occupiers. I also don't know the real intentions behind it – maybe it was done in order to gain time, as yet another way of confusing the authorities. In any case, it was rejected.

All of sudden, on July 16<sup>th</sup>, the authorities show up, decisive as ever and the entire occupation is cleared of in a couple of hours, leaving almost no trace behind. The clearing is a clean cut. It leaves the occupation as a clear image. It existed. It fulfilled its potential as an exodus. A temporal autonomous zone.

The occupation of Refshalevej can be seen as the poetic demise of The Youth House Movement. It started out in anger and sorrow, in an explosive rage that turned the streets of Copenhagen into a month long rampage. Through a year of intense weekly experimentation with a wide range of protest forms, it won over the sympathy of large parts of the city population and reached its ultimate goal, a new youth house. The new Youth House is another story though. The Movement dissolves in the summer heat at Refshalevej. In a 2 month long party it 'hoists the flags of revolution and pushes the ship off shore!' It disappears – not into a permanent realistic solution like the new Youth House – but into an imaginary exodus. At Refshalevej The Youth House Movement becomes image.

This is the legacy of The Youth House Movement – that it for a period and in various versions – managed to create imaginative alternatives to capitalist society; holes and scars in the surface of an all encompassing regime.

#### 4.1. Clone Wars



Copenhagen City Hall, Feb. 29th, 2012

##### Main:

- 4.1.1. Script
- 4.1.2. Performance: Copenhagen City Hall, Feb. 29th, 2012
- 4.1.3. Clone Wars Analysis

##### Commentary:

- 4.1.4.1. Sense Event
- 4.1.4.2. On Resonance: *Budhaditya Chattopadhyay* in conversation with Frans Jacobi

##### Appendix:

- 4.1.5.1. *Clone Wars*, performance-documentation, video 45:32 min.
- 4.1.5.2. *Budhaditya Chattopadhyay* in conversation with Frans Jacobi, , video 53.25 min.

## CLONE WARS script

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Atlas: Frans Jacobi  
Buddha: Budhaditya Chattopadhyay  
Helena Christensen: Viola Dröse

The artist/researcher: Amira Jasmina Shalaby Jensen  
Hopenhagen, Vattenfall, Climate-Action-Blog & Evo Morales: Claus Handberg  
The Media: Vilhelm C Iversen

The large hall of the City Hall of Copenhagen, a carpet in bright green colors on which rests various packages, 20 cans of coca-cola, two large loud-speakers on wheels and some sound-equipment. An audience sitting in a circle. A discussion afterwards.

Soundtrack (live!) by: Budhaditya Chattopadhyay

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*We are in the enormous entrance-hall of Copenhagen City Hall. Out at one end of the space two rows of chairs are placed in 'horse-shoe'-formation. Close by a strange looking assemblage of cardboard-boxes, Coca-Cola cans and sound-equipment is spread out on a green carpet; an island. Two men and a woman (Atlas, Buddha and Helena Christensen) wearing green t-shirts with the text HOPENHAGEN, are sitting on this island, waiting,.*

*A woman, the artist/researcher, is waiting in front of the formation of chairs. The audience walks in, find their places. When everyone are sitting down, she finds her scrip-cards and turns to the audience.*

### **The artist/researcher:**

Dear audience, welcome to this performance. My name is Frans Jacobi – I am the artist/researcher, but tonight I am also your tour-guide. I will ask you to follow me, as we move out onto the floor in a little while.

In a moment, our three friends over there will embark on a metaphorical journey, croosing this enormous space. Meanwhile I will try to give you an insight into the background of their symbolic quest. They will be trying to...well, what they will attempt here tonight, is no less than to try saving the world.

But first, let me introduce you to our three activists:

*The artist/researcher urges the audience to follow her. She guides them over to the carpet-island, where the three activists are waiting.*

This is Atlas, the greek Atlas, who where condemned to carry the earth and the heavens for fighting against

Zeus. In this connection his plight is of course symbolic; he represents us all, citizens of the earth, forced as we are, to take upon us the quest of carrying our dear planet on our shoulders.

Atlas is accompanied by Helena Christensen, the famous model, who – after finishing her career as a top model – turned her skills towards adventurous do-good-ing.

The third member of the brave crew is Buddha, the indian prince, who renounced wealth and family to become an ascetic and thereby became the founder of buddhism. Here, tonight, Buddha will be contemplating the state of the earth in sound.

As you have probably already noticed they are carrying t-shirts from HOPENHAGEN, and this is exactly what this performance is about. As a kind of symbolic re-enactment; our three friends will perform an allegorical journey through this wast space. To see if they can revive HOPENHAGEN and all the hope for a better future that was contained in this concept.

*Now Atlas rises and graps one end of the carpet. With huge effort he drags the island a few meters. Then he unpacks a card-board box, taking out a small plastic pump and a green rubber balloon. He leaves the emballage on the floor and starts pumping air into the balloon. The noise from the pump fills the space. The artist/researcher is forced to move the audience away from the island as she takes up her introduction again. Simultaneously Helena Christensen starts an improvised dance.*

**The artist/researcher:**

As some you might remember HOPENHAGEN was a huge public campaign, branding Copenhagen as a new center of hope, during the global climate summit, COP15, back in december 2009. In those weeks HOPENHAGEN was everywhere, in advertising, on busses, on billboards, on the internet and with a massive presence here outside on the City Square.

The stakes for COP15 were high, extremely high. The summit gathered all the top rank, major players of global politics; everyone came to Copenhagen to solve the climate crisis and make the future better for everyone. Obama was here, the chinese president was here, even Hugo Chavez was here, everyone hoping to close a deal for a better future.



*Back at the island the green balloon has now become quite large, larger than Atlas himself. He disconnects the balloon from the air-pump, seals it with gaffa-tape and leaves behind the pump on the floor. He drags the carpet another few meters. Buddha turns on his equipment and resonance fills the space, faint echoes of sounds from far away. Atlas straps the balloon to his shoulders and, carrying this green globe, drags the carpets with Buddha another few meters out into space. Helena is now far out on the floor, improvising simple movements; her body reflects the calm waves of sound emitting from the island. The artist/researcher moves her group of attentive listening people further away.*

**The artist/researcher:**

COP15 was organised by the United Nations as their bi-annual Climate Change Conference number 15. HOPENHAGEN was a campaign generated by the International Advertising Association representing the global advertising industry in support of the United Nations and COP15. HOPENHAGEN was adopted by the city-council of Copenhagen as their way of marking the climate conference and a new possible role of Copenhagen as a progressive climate city.

As it is still claimed on the web-site of HOPENHAGEN:

*The artist/researcher calls out for HOPENHAGEN.*

**HOPENHAGEN:**

"Hopenhagen is a movement, a moment and a chance at a new beginning. The hope that in Copenhagen this December – during the United Nations Climate Change Conference – we can build a better future for our planet and a more sustainable way of life. It is the hope that we can create a global community that will lead our leaders into making the right decisions. The promise that by solving our environmental crisis, we can solve our economic crisis at the same time. Hopenhagen is change – and that change will be powered by all of us."<sup>207</sup>

*Atlas drags the island even further and a kind of meditative rhythm is evolving between the three activists: Sound, dance and dragging.*

**The artist/researcher:**

These super positive and energetic intentions were communicated with all state-of-the-art designers tools; billboards, nice handwritten slogans, vivid green colors, T-shirts, large-scale photos of beautiful landscapes, smiling positive middle-class youth from exotic countries announcing their hopes for the future, hope and friendliness on all kinds of social platforms, on the

internet, facebook, twitter, blogs and endless, global sharing. Everything done with that special advertizing flair for up-beat, smooth and healthy effectivity that harms no-one and criticizes no-one.

HOPENHAGEN was created by some of the largest advertising companies in the world: Ogilvy, OgilvyEarth, OgilvyPR, Ketchum, Colle+McVoy, T-sign, Mannov, Zazengo, TakePart, GroupM and Havas.

HOPENHAGEN was supported by a range of multi-national business corporations: Coca-Cola, Sap, Siemens, BMW Group, The Climate Group, DuPont, Gap Inc., Hub Culture, Method and Vattenfall.

Each of these corporations made an effort to present their versions of environmental ambitions on the Hopenhagen web-site. Lets take Vattenfall as an example:

*The artist/researcher gives the word to Vatenfall.*

**VATTENFALL:**

Vattenfall wants to be part of the solution. We take the climate challenge seriously, investing massively in our own power-plants and production-facilities to make them CO2-neutral. Vattenfall also engages in the international climate-debate. Vattenfall hopes to bring the climate to the agenda of the COP15 Summit in Copenhagen as well as in other foras. By supporting Hopenhagen, Vatenfall is part of evoking how important it is that everyone takes actively part in the re-directing the developemetn of the climate. By 2030, at the latest, the Vatenfall production of power and heating in the entire Nordic region will be CO2-neutral. Its an ambitious goal, craving investments of billions in biomass-facilities, windpower, wave-power and CO2-storage in the underground.<sup>208</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Yes, it is quite optimistic, but apart from the joyous tone, the other astonishing thing in the HOPENHAGEN campaign is the use of the word 'movement'. What the advertizing companies behind the International Advertising Association, were trying to do with HOPENHAGEN was to create a new global movement; a people's grassroots movement:

**HOPENHAGEN:**

"Our mission is to connect every person, every city, and every nation to Copenhagen. To give everyone hope, and a platform from which to act. To create a grassroots movement that's powerful enough to influence change. Change will not happen unless the people demand it.

That's why Hopenhagen exists – to give you a rallying cry and the tools to demand a positive outcome in Copenhagen. This needs to be a people's movement, with enough people involved that our leaders can't ignore it."

**The artist/researcher:**

Yes, that's is actually what HOPENHAGEN was: A global grassroots movement designed by some of the worlds leading advertizing agencies. A designed movement.

I call this cloning.

*Now Helena Christensen picks up a stack of green A4-paper, imitating pamphlets, and as part of her bodily improvisations, starts distributing them in space and on the floor. Atlas is still dragging the island slowly across the floor, inbetween unpacking new packages. He unfolds a green banner and ties it to the chairs, erecting it over the island.*

**The artist/researcher:**

In another performance I have shown how the chinese students of the 1989 Tiananmien Square riots cloned the slogans, dates and aesthetics of the communist regime to critisize the communist regime. By performing this cloning of political language the students managed to engage up to a million chinese people in peacefull protest that lasted for several weeks, apparently confusing the regime into letting the protest grow and grow.

Here in HOPENHAGEN the cloning is similar, but invented. Here it is the political power in charge that clones the forms and language of the protest, activist culture.

HOPENHAGEN had all the usual features of contemporary activism: the internet communities, the global info-sharing, the DIY workshops, the creative visual energy, the micro-city that works an illustrative model of the ideal future – established right here outside in the City Square.

An uncanny alliance of public institutions, the global advertising industry and a range of multinational business conglomerates tries to engage a world wide movement into supporting their leaders in doing the right thing. As is claimed on the the website:

*Hopenhagen starts proclaiming:*

**HOPENHAGEN:**

"The hope that we can create a global community that will

lead our leaders into making the right decisions."

**The artist/researcher:**

Lets take that one again, in all its friendliness it is quite thought provoking:

**HOPENHAGEN:**

"The hope that we can create a global community that will lead our leaders into making the right decisions."

**The artist/researcher:**

There is no question of replacing the leaders. The same leaders and mega corporations that has lead the world into this disastrous situation are here believed to be able to change their decisions. Without criticizing anyone HOPENHAGEN support our leaders, in the hope that they will be able to change their worldview and attitude themselves. In a sense HOPENHAGEN is beautiful in all its naive hopefulness. Wonderful Hopenhagen.

One problem is of course the quite obvious green-washing of the supporting corporations: Through the endorsement by the public institutions – in example the UN and the City Council of Copenhagen – the supporting corporations are cast as 'clean' and 'idealistic', they become businesses working for the common good.

My own little expirience with Vattenfall can work as an illustration:

*Climate-Action-Blog steps forward and talks:*

**Climate-Action-Blog:**

Yesterday on the news I saw a story about the swedish corporation Vatenfall and their involvement in the german coal-industry. How they where demolishing whole villages and huge areas of land to install large scale coal-mining facilities; facilities that keeps the global warming going on a gigantic scale. In the same sequence of news there was a presentation of a huge air-ballon installed on the City Square in Copenhagen as a symbol for the new global spirit of changing our attitude. On the balloon will be projected pictures of activists from all over the world, agitating for change. This balloon is the main symbol for HOPENHAGEN as they call this campaign that is really dominating the streets Copenhagen these days.

As I passed The City Square today and saw the balloon-globe, I also saw the signs of the two main sponsors: Siemens and Vatenfall. The idea that this whole climate-conference is only a cover-up from the global corporations to continue their devastating activities

immediately came to mind. To have Vatenfall as a main sponsor certainly puts the agenda of HOPENHAGEN into doubt.

**The artist/researcher:**

Well, apart from this quite obvious green-washing of the supporting corporations the really scary thing is the cloning: To use the language of democracy and critical public opinion in an inverted manner. The cloning confuses the positions of the players in the power game.

If you, for instance, took part in the gigantic popular demonstration on december 12<sup>th</sup>, walking out to the Bella Center, where COP15 was held, to support a positive climate agenda, you couldn't help wonder how many of the around 100.000 participants that were paid by Coca Cola, MNW or Vatenfall.

*Atlas and the island has now reached the middle of the huge hall, leaving behind a track of emballage, empty Coca Cola cans and other rubbish.*

**The artist/researcher:**

If we see through all the middleclass optimism and smooth design, HOPENHAGEN resembles the demonstrations and campaigns organised by diverse dictators around the world. In North Korea, Iran or Syria for instance. To divert the public attention from real protests the regime organises huge campaigns of pro-regime demonstrations. Public acts of support for the powers to be, public praise to the ability of our leaders to make the right decisions.

It seems no coincidence that one the main producers of HOPENHAGEN shares name with a figure in George Orwells dystopian science-fiction novel 1984, Comrade Ogilvy.

*Atlas now unpacks 3 tubes with green neon-light and connects them to a mesh of entangled electric cables being dragged after the island. The scenery takes on a strange synthetic greenness.*

**The artist/researcher:**

What to think of all this? Was it all in vain? Was HOPENHAGEN only a scam? Was HOPENHAGEN in fact preventing capitalism from change instead of promoting change?

Of course COP15 failed. Not only in a small way – COP15 failed big time. On a global scale. The idea that capitalism could turn green and that we all, as consumers, could change anything, simply by consuming differently – of course this idea was naive – and it

failed.

The idea that that Lars Løkke Rasmussen, the former danish prime minister, could head a meeting changing anything was absurd. The images of Løkke in the role of chairman, acting like a complete idiot, should not have surprised anyone. The current debate on the Copenhagen 'betalingsring' shows all too well how impossible it is for this system to change anything in the direction towards a healthier, green economy.

What to do then? Should we just give up? Accept climate change as irreversible? The three years gone since COP15 hasn't been too optimistic.

As our 3 friends over there struggles forward I would like to end my presentation here by pointing to two different solutions, both frighteningly radical.

As one of the speakers in the official part of Cop15, Bolivian President Evo Morales was crystal clear in placing the responsibility for the climate crisis:

**Evo Morales:**

The real cause of climate change is the capitalist system. If we want to save the earth then we must end that economic model. Capitalism wants to address climate change with carbon markets. We denounce those markets and the countries which promote them. It's time to stop making money from the disgrace that they have perpetrated.<sup>209</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Morales argues for local democratic revolutions and the re-introduction of socialism as the tool to confront the current spiralling towards disaster of global capitalism.

In a similar vein the slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek has flirted with the idea of 'the dictatorship of the proletariat' as one way of overcoming the apparent incapacity of the liberal capitalist democracy to handle the climate crisis in any way whatsoever. I will not go into that idea here, but instead combine it with an idea by the italian thinker Paolo Virno: 'The communism of capitalism'. Virno argues that inherent in the development of post-industrial capitalism, a range of elements from communism is injected into capitalism, by for instance the nordic well-fare states, to soften a brutal, hard-line liberalism.

*Atlas has now unpacked a huge light-projector and erects it just behind the island. As he turns it on, the island*

*looks like at film-set, casting everything in a stark white light.*

**The artist/researcher:**

So lets try – in the spirit of our absurd quest for a hopefull change here – to apply these ideas to the problems we are discussion here today. If HOPENHAGEN is defined by the inverted cloning of democratic opposition, then it can be seen as the new ‘dictatorship-of-the-proletariat-of-capitalism’.

Dictatorship-of-the-proletariat-of-capitalism?

Maybe it is here, we can glimpse a possible way out. If we can't give up our role as consumers – and there is apparently no sight of this – and if our capacities as critical participants in contemporary democracy is completely inflated, somebody else has to take responsibility.

HOPENHAGEN made a huge effort at mainstreaming all our differences, smoothing out our critique and making us all look in the same direction. If this kind of soft dictatorship is necessary to engagage us all – the whole mega mass of global consumers – in the climate questions, to give us all hope and to give us power enough to influence change, then why not give it at try?

Hmmm....how far have they reached, while I have been standing here talking? Will they make it?

*Atlas, Helenea and Buddha are still travelling across the floor , now entering the last third of the floor. Helena is now moving around the island and in the crass light of the projector a strange dramatic atmosphere is created among the debris of the green pamphlets, the empty cola cans and all the littered emballage.*

*As the island comes to a halt, this atmosphere intensifies. The audience now stand in a large cicle looking at the scenario, the sound resonances calm down now and Atlas and Helena finds a slow groove of small movements and everything seems to settle. A long contemplative moment evolves. Then it stops. The journey is over.*

**THE END**

### **Analysis (4.1.3.)**

An enormous empty space. Copenhagen City Hall. The house is built in the late 18th century. It is rigorously ornamented. Two rows of chairs are placed in 'horse-shoe'-formation at one end of the space. Close by a strange looking assemblage of cardboard-boxes, Coca-Cola cans and sound-equipment on a green carpet; an island. Two men and a woman wearing green t-shirts with the text HOPENHAGEN, sitting on this island, waiting. A woman in front of the formation of chairs. Ready.

The audience walks in, find their places, on the chairs. When everyone are sitting down, the woman finds her scrip-cards and turns to the audience.

What now evolves is a double performance in that the woman, presenting herself as the artist/researcher AND as a guide, in the manner of a tour-guide, or tourist-guide, guides the audience around on the enormous floor while she and her assistant is talking/reading the audience through a 'guided' introduction to the phenomena of Hopenhagen. The tour covers the entire space in a meandering, steady pace. At the same time the three performers perform their tour across the floor, in a slow and tedious, linear progression – or rather - the 'carpet-island' is dragged through space in this tedious manner while the dancer covers the entire space in her own improvised movement, but still, her moves are spatially related to the movement of the island.

The two separate performances only meet when the guide introduces the three performers on the island, in the beginning, before they have embarked on their journey. In a sense they meet again in the last part when the guided tour is over, as the audience stands looking at the last third of the other performance.

By dragging the audience around like they were tourists, the guide is staging them. They become spectators. Of course they are already an audience and in this sense already spectators. In the staging the touristical aspects of their role is accentuated, but it is the staging in itself that is most important. The feeling of being staged. That the audience feels they are being staged, and thereby becoming passive participants in something controlled by someone else.

This role of the passive participant illustrates the the role of the passive consumerist participants in an inflated representative democracy being described in the introduction of the guide. Maybe illustrate isn't the right word. The staging is subtle, unspoken of. It is going on throughout the performance in manner that some members of the audience might not even think of as being staged. It is up to each member of the audience to make the connection to the consumerist passivity mentioned in the text of the guide.

As this group – the audience and their guide – moves across the floor, they are taken away from the object of their gaze – the island and the three performers. Instead of following what they are supposed to follow, or at least what the guide has pretended they are supposed to follow, the guided tour takes on a life of itself. The introduction is so extensive that the object of it gets out of focus. The introduction text becomes a goal in itself. Each member of the audience has to ask herself what is most important here, the text or the sensual experience of the 'real' performance. Again, it is not the text or the performance that is most important, but the split experience, the uncertainty that the split casts.



The text – meta-text – and the sensual experience of the performance – the sense-event. The meta-text and the sense-event. This is the two basic tools of my research through performance. How to concretize them in a specific performative situation? How to establish such a situation, in a given space, with an audience, with some performers? And what is the outcome of such a concretization? Can the interaction of the meta-text and the sense-event tell us something about the original event in question, that we didn't know beforehand? What kind of inquiry is actually going on?

The content of this performance, Clone Wars, is extremely complex. The event of the climate summit, COP15, is a multilayered mega event, that involves almost every possible complexity of post-modern, meta-medial, post-political agenda one can think of. The activism surrounding the climate summit, seen alone, is mega complex. Even Hopenhagen, the limited object of this inquiry, is highly complex. How to stage such a content in manner that makes sense, both for an audience as well as an artistic inquiry?

The position or the role of the audience is central, at least in this performance. Its is through the positioning of the audience that the parameters of the inquiry is set up.

So, what we have here is an audience that is staged as passive participants in something controlled by someone else. The control is in the hands of a guide. A guide is normally a mediator – someone who presents something on behalf of someone else. Compared to the role of the artist/researcher in the other performances there is a slight shift here. The artist/researcher is here more of a guide, she is more of a mediator on the behalf of someone not present in the performance. This points to some larger power in control of the situation, some murky presence behind everything, reminiscent of 'the International Advertising Association' lurking behind Hopenhagen.

What then, is this audience supposed to look at, what is the guide supposed to present? The green 'island' with the three figures: Atlas, Buddha and Helena Christensen. On a quest to save the world. Presenting the three figures with these names and with such a quest fictionalises the scenario to a somewhat silly degree. It becomes a humorous ensemble. The way of narrating an action is reminiscent of the narrative methods of Disney and other big players of the global culture industry. A random pick at some well-known figures in the universal memory bank, inscribed in a easy-to-understand, somewhat silly narration with a bombastic feel-good morale.

Narrating the scenario like this is a sarcastic irony on the intentions of Hopenhagen, and how it was set up. It also casts that part of the performance as purely symbolic, thereby indicating the purely symbolic functions of the real Hopenhagen as well. But what is the underlying quest of the performance then? The aesthetic quest underneath the all too obvious humoristic/sarcastic narrative surface?

The positioning of the audience, the artist/researcher and the three performers in the narrative structure, sets up the parameters of the quest, of this inquiry. As a last figure completing this image of a an overmedialised, cloned situation, the cameraman documenting the performance is here included in the rolist as another performer. He is acting as 'the media'. Everything is already image, allready seen through the lenses, allready representation.

The aesthetic quest of the performance is to break through this 'spell of pre-scribed images'. This quest is both real and symbolic. Can all these cloned fragments be sampled to establish a sense-event. A sense-event that situates the experience in the given space, that constitutes a now; a present that transgress the many layered distances established both in the original event Hopenhagen and in the scenario of the performance. If such an aesthetic presence can be established - here, now – it will also have a symbolic meaning, referring back to the cloned reality of Hopenhagen.

On the symbolic level it means that we are actually able to reclaim the images stolen from us by projects like Hopenhagen.

The first part of the travel undertaken by the three figures on the island is about unravelling the tools. Atlas unpacks the baloon and fills it with air, Buddha initiates the waves of resonance later to become the core element in the aesthetic experience, and Helena Christensen makes her first probing moves out on the immense floor. This unravelling continues all through the movement across the floor as Atlas is little by little unpacking more packages and adding new elements to the moving scenario. It is a scenario in becoming.

At some point midway Atlas unpacks three tubes of neonlight, connects them to the power, and leaves them as three points of green lighting on the floor. These three neon tubes are discrete signifiers of Hopenhagen. They are actually ready-mades from the original Hopenhagen-camp that resided outside of this building on the City Square of Copenhagen. The greenish neon light was very prominent in the ambience of that camp; it was illuminated by that sick green light. Here, in the performance, they create a sequence, where the island is also cast in the same green light. This lasts as long as it takes Atlas to drag the island past the neon tubes that is being left behind the island on the floor. This green sequence leads up to the culmination of the performance and introduces the element of light to the proceedings.

When Atlas has dragged the island two-thirds of the distance across the floor, he unpacks a large spot-light, places it on a tripod and turns it on. It beams a strong light unto the green island and the scenario – the island, the debris left behind it, the empty coca-cola cans, the loud-speakers, the large green baloon, the struggling Atlas, the scattered green 'pamflets', the methodically moving Helena and the deeply concentrated Buddha – the whole set-up is lit up and in that moment it becomes an image. It is as if the whole process of moving across the floor, leads up to this moment. It coincides with the moment when the guided tour is over and the audience is 'set free' to focus directly on the three performers.

The word 'illustrate' in the sense of 'illuminate, shed light on' origins from the verb *illustrare*, from in- 'upon' + *lustrare*.<sup>210</sup> To shed light upon something. To illuminate it. The word illuminate has to do with spiritual or intellectual enlightenment. The moment we shed light upon something we can see it clearer, we get to know it better. Illustrating something means to clarify and visualise ideas. It is in this context the act of turning on the large spot-light in the performance has to be understood. At the moment the spot-light is turned on the whole scenario is illuminated. It takes on another quality, everything becomes brighter and clearer.

One aspect of this illumination is of course the filmic, dramatic quality the scenery gets from the beam of light. It is quite obvious in the way the spot-light and the tripod

is handled by Atlas; it stands there on the floor as a signifier of the filmic quality. The spot-light divides the space in a scenographic way. What is inside the beam of light, the area that the light hits, is 'on stage' – central image. The area outside of the light is 'off stage', background imagery. The beam of light focusses the attention on the island and creates a drama by adding shadows and contrast to the image evolving. The attention in the whole enormous space is focussed now. The scenario that Atlas has been building up has this filmic quality; the debris left on the trail, the green banner, the sound- and light-equipment being dragged along and the large balloon adding a comic twist to the proceedings.

The sound environment being build up by Buddha and the improvised movements of Helena add another layer to image though. The reverberating resonance that fills up and dominates the entire space creates a contemplative calm rhythm with obvious meditative and spiritual undertones. This focus on repetition is mirrored in the improvised moves of the dancer, her body rehearsing variations on a ranges of moves. Together the two repetitive elements gives a spiritual air to the proceedings, adding to the illumination suggested by the strong beam of light.

The new image vibrates for a while, like an apparition. Then it recedes, as Atlas stops the slow movement and Helena and Buddha stop their actions.

The quest was to reclaim the images cloned by Hopenhagen. This reclaiming is a central point in my entire work as an artist. How to counter the massive cloning of all kinds of images taking place in contemporary capitalist culture? There is no way of going back to some kind of primordial existentialist level of image production. That kind of innocence is lost forever. Only by reclaiming and re-working images from the immense culture of cloned images it might be possible to establish an imaginative presence, otherwise lost in the ever expanding experience-industry.

Here it is various features from the cloned event Hopenhagen that is recirculated and reclaimed in an attempt to create a vibrating presence, open to the senses in an immediate NOT pre-scribed manner. This sense-event is similar to the kind of presence created in some of the original events I have chosen for this survey. If it is established here at the City Hall, it is not as an illustration of the original events, it is more about establishing something similar, something with similar features as the original events. This is where the research becomes artistic – the working-through the original events, doesn't produce as straightforward explanation and direct illustration of certain concepts as would other kinds of research. The artistic research produce situations that – in the successful cases – has an indirect and metaphorical relation to the original events. In the next script/performance 'Climate/Kettle' we will see an example of a more direct attempt to re-enact a certain action that originally created a sense-event; a re-enactment that falters and doesn't evolve the necessary intensity and presence needed to create a new sense-event.

If 'Clone Wars' succeed in creating a sense-event it is still contrasted by the meta-text of the guide. If the sense event breaks through the spell of pre-described images in Hopenhagen, the meta-text on the contrary suggest how we might be forced to capitulate to cloning in order to do something serious on the grand scale of climate cultivation. The sense-event is an option on a small scale, a way out into active time, for small active participatory groups. The climate crisis needs action by the masses.

It is this open contradiction that is the outcome of this inquiry.

## Discussion

The discussion organised after the performance of 'Clone Wars' was seriously distracted by an unfortunate circumstance: The extremely difficult sound-ambience in the space. The enormous size of the space and the stone floor made it very difficult to hear voices on distances larger than the most intimate. In the intermission between the performance and the discussion, the City Hall generously served drinks and fruit for the audience and the performers. This was served on a long table at the end of hall. As the discussion began, the two hosts of this serving started clearing off this table and started dishing somewhere adjacent to the large hall. The scrambling noises from this act somehow reverberated into the large hall and made it even more difficult to hear what anyone was saying in the discussion.

Of the three invited speakers one fell ill and cancelled by not showing up. The other two made very monumental statements, both highly relevant, but hard to discuss in their lack of suggestiveness.

Rene Karpantschoff - a social researcher, who has been researching political activism in a danish context extensively - argued that the activist movements lost the battle on COP15 and that in some ways this had been the end of activism on the danish scene for the entire period afterwards. 'Absolutely nothing is happening at the moment', as he stated. In some sense he might be right, but the determination in his argument was so clean cut, that it left no space for any discussion afterwards, apart from a couple of obviously offended remarks from some activists present.

Colonel, the artist, asked to comment on the theme on the account of his participation in various artistic events surrounding the COP15, gave a condensed and very inspiring account on a string of global events post-COP15, proving that cloning is in no way a feature limited to Hopenhagen, but occurs continuously as an increaslingly intense feature of almost every contemporary political event.

In different ways both arguments supported the somewhat misanthropic fatalism of my meta-text and I didn't succeed in my role as moderator to bring into the discussion the more optimistic undertones introduced in the performance by the sense-event. Given the extremely lousy sound conditions in the space - and a guard who several times asked me to cut off the arrangement so he could close off the hall according to the agreement - the discussion fell short and never really started.

#### **Sense-Event (4.1.4.1.)**

"The point is thus not the shift in relations of power and domination between actual socio-political agents, the redistribution of social control, etc., but the very fact of transcending – or, rather, momentarily cancelling – this very domain, of the emergence of a totally different domain of 'collective will' as a pure Sense-Event in which all differences are obliterated, rendered irrelevant. Such an event is not only new with regard to what was going on before, it is new 'in itself' and thus forever remains new."<sup>211</sup>

The term Sense-Event stems from this quote by Slavoj Žižek. It is from his introduction to 'Robespierre: Virtue and Terror'. The term immediately struck me as something useful for my research project. Žižek has it from Gilles Deleuze, for whom it is a central term, occurring as one of the main points in his book 'Logique du sens'<sup>212</sup>. That is, I think it is Žižek himself who has given Deleuze's vast and highly complex elaborations on 'sens' and 'event' the simpler name Sense-Event. What I want to do here is NOT to use Deleuze's ideas about the Sense-Event to conceptualise, structure and analyse the performances inherent in this project, 'Aesthetics of Resistance'. It's not even to use Žižek's somewhat simpler, more direct version of it. What I intend is to appropriate the term and redefine it to my own means. Sense-Event.

Žižek connects it to some thoughts on 'revolutionary becoming', to the 'apoteosis of revolt' as I called it in 'Revolution by Night'. Also that term, 'revolutionary becoming', stems from Deleuze:

"They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming."<sup>213</sup>

So, both Žižek and Deleuze connect the Sense-Event to revolutionary situations, similar to the situations of riot and protest I have chosen as the subjects of my inquiries. For Deleuze though, it is a term that has far wider importance. It is central to his ideas on time, time and becoming, which again are central to his ideas on film and cinema.<sup>214</sup>

In Deleuze the Sense-Event has to do with the relationship between matter, light and images, thought of as based in time. It has to do with how the perception rests in the thin membrane between reality and language. In a 'thin depth', as he calls it. He operates with two concepts of time, Kronos and Aion. Kronos is the 'always limited present, in which bodies act'. The evolving time as we know it; future becomes present and present becomes past. There is a force that evolves time. Aion, on the other hand, is 'the essentially unlimited past and future, that collects events on the surface as effects'. Aion is eternal. The Sense-Event is inscribed in Kronos, the present is marked by it, but the event itself exists in Aion. If we call the event an image, this image rests in Aion, it stretches unlimited in time. We see this image from Kronos, from the passing time, constituted by the action of our bodies, by our interactions. The Sense-Event is the passage opening up between these realms of time. In the Sense-Event we are glimpsing the eternal. In the Sense-Event something is in the becoming.

Becoming image. It isn't necessarily something to do with us, with persons,

individuals, human beings. It happens all the time in nature as well. The becoming is a general condition. A tree becomes greener as spring turns into summer. It is this 'greening' that constitutes it as a tree. If the tree wasn't always 'becoming green' it wasn't a tree. Here the event is the 'becoming green', and it is a general quality for every tree. Still, it is something that happens with every particular tree at a certain time and at a certain place. The particular event of the particular tree becoming greener is happening in Kronos, but simultaneously it is the event that classifies the tree as a particularization of the image 'tree' that rests in Aion.<sup>215</sup>

So, there is a general image, stretching out in a kind of transcendental time, in Aion. Then there is a particular event happening in the passing of time, but because this event fits a general image in Aion, it opens up that 'thin depth' - the veil, membrane or film – that connects the two concepts of time. The event becomes a Sense-Event and there in the 'thin depth' it performs the 'becoming image'. It is only in the Sense-Events we experience the images, stretching out in Aion. In the Thin Depth, on the surface of the world, we sense the creation of the world, but we only sense it as temporary appearances on the surface.

Deleuze starts these elaborations in 'Logique du sens' by reading Lewis Carroll's 'Behind the mirror'.<sup>216</sup> In 'Logique du sensation' Deleuze moves on to an analysis the paintings of Francis Bacon and the ideas later become a vital part of the two books on cinema, 'Cinema 1' and 'Cinema 2'.

There is wonderful logic in this development from talking of mirrors and 'the sharp edge between language and reality' over the 'thin depth', the 'membrane' and the 'surface' to 'film'. In this logic we detect the very material of cinema - the thin semi-transparent membranes upon which the images are appearing, the film-strip itself and the screen - as inherent and obvious manifestations of the 'thin depth'. On both these thin membranes the images appears as a modulations of light, that connects and separates reality and image. This is of course also the case in all lense-based images – photography and video – but the beauty of the film-example is that here the two different realities of reality and image, with their two separate time-frames, meets on a very concrete, thin surface or membrane. The role of light as the illuminating power is also very obvious in the case of cinema, both as the light that beams through the lenses of the camera and the film-projector and as the light that transports the images to the surface of the screen.<sup>217</sup>

The thoughts of Deleuze regarding the Sense-Event is obviously far more complex than the very limited condensation I have given here. My aim is in no way to give any kind of introduction to his thinking, rather to extract a few ideas that I can use for my own purposes in my definition of what a Sense-Event could be.

My understanding of 'sense' is connected to the senses. It is all that is experienced by the senses, all that is experiencable by the senses; sight, smell, hearing, taste, touch and move. The visual, the audible, the smell, the taste, the sensual, the spatial. This is the realm of the aesthetic. For me there is a thight correspondance between 'sense' and 'aesthetic'. The aesthetic is the entire field of experiences experienced by the senses. 'Sense' is of course connected to the body, it is the experiences of the body, but it includes the experiences of the body meeting the world; meeting other bodies, the landscape, the city, culture in its vast forms. In aesthetics a language of the senses arise, the sense is no longer individual, there is a whole field of collective experiences evolving, and a whole language of aesthetic references to be used in

conjuring new meaning and dissecting established aesthetic meaning. 'Sense' is the tool of aesthetics. It is with the senses we experience the aesthetic.

Of course 'sense' also has other meanings, i.e. as a reasonable or comprehensible rationale. 'In this sense' is a phrase often used in these texts. Here it links reason to the body, it is as if reason is only reasonable if grounded in the everyday experiences of the world. In 'sense-event' though it is the sensorial meaning of the word that is important.

'Event' is something that happens, it is temporal, it is happening in time, unfolding time. An event marks a specific moment in time. Event has vast and varied meaning in both philosophy and art; here I will focus on event as something that happens in time, something specific, that constitutes a certain moment in time.

'Sense-event' is an event consisting of an ensemble of sensorial experiences. It unfolds in time. It is specific. A specific ensemble of sensorial experiences unfolding in time.

'A specific ensemble of sensorial experiences' sounds very much like an image, but an image is not 'unfolding in time'. An image is stable in time, it is 'forever'. If we go back to Deleuze we could say that the image rests in Aion. It is something that stays the same over time. It lasts, all thru the past, the present, the future. Once it is created an image stretches time. It is permanent. An image can be interpreted differently in different epochs but the image stays the same, it is unchangable, even by opposing interpretations.

This characteristic of an image goes for all kinds of 'traditional' images; for painting, drawings, graphic prints, sculpture, all the various forms of images in the tradition of art, and before art in religious and other historic image-traditions. As soon as the image is created, we can look at it again and again. It also goes for the technical images, photography and other forms of singular images. As soon as the photograph is taken it is stable and stays the same. Of course it can be altered in the dark-room (or in Photoshop), but these processes must be counted as part of the 'taking', in each process a final image is processed and it is this image that stays the same.

With film, theater and music it gets more complicated. Here the images are sequenced and involves the passing of time. They are time-based. The experience unfolds in time. For the sake of the argument I will make a distinction here between timebased images, that are 'recorded' and presented as a stable, finished sequence of images - i.e. a film, that is always the same everytime it is shown – and those kind of timebased images that are evolving in time, always different each time they are experienced. As a work of art, a film or a recorded piece of music, has a lasting quality that is unchangable and permanent in the same manner as a singular image. It is the other category of images that are interesting to look at in connection with the sense-event. What kind of image production is at stake in art-forms that rely on temporal performative gestures?

The Sense-Event differs from other kinds of sensorial experience in that it is focussed in a certain way. It doesn't just pass like reality passing with time. In the sense-event a set of sensorial experiences are sampled and form an ensemble. The ensemble form something similar to an image, but this is an image evolving in time. If we say that the normal sensorial experiences are momentary and dissolves with the

passing of time; if we say that images are stable and lasts beyond time – then the sense-event is something in between. It is an image in becoming, unfolding. The sense-event might produce a stable image, but in the sense-event the image is still 'in the making', becoming.

The sense-event evolves in a time-frame in between the passing of time in everyday-life and the permanent time of images. It opens a passage between these two incommensurable realms of time. Again, we can compare with Deleuze - his idea of Kronos and Aion and the 'thin depth', the veil, separating them. Here, though, for the sake of simplicity, I will limit myself to talking about the time of images and the time of the everyday. The permanent stable time of images and the fluid passing time of the everyday. In between these the sense-event establishes a passage. A kind of time that is at simultaneously passing and permanent.

In a recent discussion on performance, the queer performance artist Mary Coble, talked of a situation in one of her performances, 'Fighting Cocks', where she was performing together with a young guy she didn't know and had not performed with before. The performance consisted of the two of them in the confined space of a locker-room, slapping each other with wet towels for three hours. In the mids of this performance the young guy see one of his friends in the audience and while continuing the slapping 'in' the performance he starts small-talking with his friend 'outside' in a casual tone, completely foreign to the tense atmosphere 'inside' the performance. This irritating moment when the young guy is slipping out of the performance marks exactly the fragile borderline between the sense-event and the everyday passing of time. Inside the performance a different mode of time is established and it is one of the basic rules of engagement that the performers respect this. By chatting with his friend the performer 'broke the spell', blending the two modes of time, whereby the conditions for the performance were confused.<sup>218</sup>

In the performance a specific situation is established. It is on one hand imaginary, in that it constitutes an image that is extracted from the reality of the situation it is grounded in – here the locker-room and the audience standing somewhere peeking in. On the other hand it is real in that it is evolving in time, undetermined and still unpredictable. Inside the parameters of the performance unexpected things might happen, and, since this performance is only done once, the outcome is not pre-defined. In the case of this specific performance, Mary Coble decided afterwards to present the recorded sound of the performance as another art-work, 'The Sound of Fighting Cocks'. Here, the sense-event of the performance is tranformed into a permanent art-work, a stable image. This new art-work is in principle accessible for us forever, whereas the performance itself were only accessible in exactly those 3 hours in a sex-club in Toronto, where it was performed.<sup>219</sup>

An image in becoming. The sense-event is the event of creation. The moment of inspiration. Creation and inspiration; both terms are central to the idea of art and both terms are heavily exhausted as prime carriers of the myth of art. Here it not so magical or mystical. On the contrary, what I attempt here, is to instrumentalize these terms; to describe a situation where creation is a possible outcome of an organised conceptualisation, not the coincidental beam of inspirational light from above.

Sense-event covers the field of art-forms that rely on temporal performative gestures. It can be music (live), some versions of theatre, performance-art, the so-called relational aesthetics and other contextual and socially based art-forms within the



sphere of visual arts. Performance is the central tool in the sense-event, whether it is the artist(s), the art-work and/or the audience that performs. It is the performative gestures that defines the way time evolves in the sense-event. The performativity can take on many shapes and act in various ways. It can be discrete or expressive, slow, fast or explosive; the key feature is that it is somehow shaping and evolving time 'inside' the frames of the sense-event. The performativity is the 'becoming'. The sense-event is constituted by this becoming. The inherent performativity defines the frame, the platform for the sense-event.

A simple, schematic version would be that the sense-event is defined by:

(1): A conceptual frame-work that separates the event from the situation in which is occurring. This frame can be a temporal frame, a spatial frame or any other kind of frame and it can be defined from the outset or it can develop from within the event.

(2): A performative action that defines and evolves time within the event. Here action must be understood in the widest terms. It can entail everything from the tiniest micro-level occurrences to large-scale dramatic action, from completely computerized mechanic development to collective, social interaction.

The sense-event might produce a final, stable image as an outcome, but it isn't necessarily so. The image character might be suggestive or only underlying the event. It might be completely ephemeral. The permanence of image is of such a disposition, that even if the image only occurs as a fleeting sensation, a transient glimpse, it is still a permanent image. It exists in the outstretched eternity of image-time, no matter how extremely short it occurs in 'real' time, in everyday-time. This is the exciting thing about the sense-event; that it gives us a glimpse into the creation of images, into the vibrating matter of becoming, where things are still unresolved and in the making. In the sense-event an oscillation takes place between the fleeting everyday-time and the eternal image-time.

The sensorial input - the percepts as Deleuze call it – all that is experienced by the senses belongs to the everyday-time. The sensorial belongs to the body, to the senses. In becoming image these percepts are freed from the body, untied from the subject perceiving them. The percepts are arranged in an ensemble, composed. This process, untying the percepts from the subject perceiving them, is what we usually call artistic creation – aesthetics. The composition of percepts take on a life of itself, it becomes image. In this process the images is also freed from everyday-time; the percepts are untied from the sensation of subjective perception and become accessible for everyone as a distinct ensemble of sensorial data. As an image the sensorial ensemblage now rest in image-time, accessible forever.

If we consider the performance in question here, 'Clone Wars', in the light of these considerations, there is actually two sense-event at play. There is the 'central' event, the island on the green carpet, travelling across the immense floor of the City Hall, with its three performers carrying out diverse performative acts within this event. This sense-event is dominated by 'pure' percepts; the waves of resonating sound, the spatial moves of the dancer, the green balloon and the scattered debris produced by Atlas in his quest and the light in its various appearances. Most of these elements have references or literal meaning that adds to the meaning of the scenario, but they

all have strong perceptual qualities, that becomes part of the ensemble of sensorial experiences, the composition of percepts, constituting the sense-event. In the first part of the performance, these singular sensorial elements each performs their own string of actions. Each oscillating between the reality of their presence in the space and in everyday-time and the postulated imagery – Atlas, Buddha and Helena Christensen on a quest to save the world – in image-time. In short moments maybe touching upon something that could be part of such an image, but most of the time performing scattered and probing acts, not yet coming together as a specific ensemble. It is when the spot-light is turned on, that the scenario generates a specific quality. It is the beam of light that organises the various parts, gives the overall image a focus and structures the composition. The beam of light is the frame-work that constitutes the sense-event and connects all the singular performative acts to a specific ensemble. As the spot-light is turned on the scenario of scattered acts becomes an image and the sense-event is evolving. For awhile what is happening is happening both in image-time and in everyday-time simultaneously. The sound is crucial here; it is as if the resonating waves of sound pulsing in the enormous space, creates a resonant space, a certain mood, where the oscillating between the two time-aspects in the sense-event is rendered possible. This image evolving is certainly not a realisation of the postulated pseudo-image of Atlas, Buddha and Helena Christensen, it has a entirely different character of its own. The pseudo-meaning of the postulated image rather exists in the composition of the grander image as an ironic element performing its own irritating, little layer of meaning, adding to or rather relativating the religious overtones of the overall image.

The other sense-event to be considered in 'Clone Wars' is not as 'pure' sensorial. If we consider the entire situation, including also the audience, the guide, her assistant and the camera-man in the event, there is another sense-event evolving. Here the relative 'purity' of the image of the quest of the three activist on the green island is inscribed in a far more complex contextual situation. The event now includes a whole set of power-relations and representations, a complex set of social correlations, that performs a set of politically charged percepts. The image evolving in the sense-event of the entire situation is thus far more complex and has sharper edges than that of the green island seen as a separate entity. The temporal progress outlined in the description of the sense-event of the green island above - the idea that the sense event only starts when the spot-light is turned on – is here in the entire ensemble quite different. The sense-event starts at the very moment the artist/researcher says welcome to the audience and evolves in all its labyrinthine aspects all thru the performance until the spot-light is turned off at the end of the performance.

Now, these considerations spring from my practice as a performance artist, but the aim of this project, Aesthetics of Resistance, as a whole is to probe if these ideas about the sense-event make 'sense' if applied to contemporary political activism and protest events. Can we understand aspects of these riots and other activist-events in another way if we try to look at them as sense-events?

Deleuze, as well, starts his inquiries into the relation between 'sens' and 'event' by looking at some works in the field of aesthetics, namely the novel 'Through the Looking Glass' by Lewis Carroll and the paintings of Francis Bacon. For Deleuze the concept of sense-event though applies to nature as well, and is somehow part of the constant creation of the entire world. At various points he also applies these ideas to specific political events, such as the Iranian revolution<sup>220</sup> or revolutions in general<sup>221</sup>. Slavoj Žižek certainly uses the term sense-event with this purpose.

Here, in my own project, I have selected a string of events, that seems interesting to consider as sense-events. What attracts me in these specific events is that the imagery involved is not only strong, but seems to be the determining factor of the events. It is through the imagery the political 'content' is communicated, fought about or simply happens. The political content happens. Elsewhere in these commentaries I argue that the form is the message – a similar idea is that the content is what happens during an action. The imagery, or the images, appear in different ways in the various events chosen, and the role the images play in these conflicts is different, but the thread running through the 8 specific events I inquire is that it is the inherent imagery that defines the events.

Political action. Direct action. Take action. Be active. Activism. Activist. The words act and action are central to the understanding of radical political thought. In the kind of political activism I have been interested in it is not enough to present or represent an argument in the public sphere as in the more traditional forms of demonstrations. The political activist has to act upon the problem or issue in question. She has to do something about it. It can be as a re-action to a certain problem or it can be as a positive manifestation of a political or even philosophical idea. It is crucial though that these ideas are expressed as active gestures. That they are performed and not presented as an argument.

Already in the word 'act' this double meaning is present; it means 'to do something', but it also means 'to perform a fictional role in a play or a movie'. In between these poles the word 'act' can be used in a whole variety of interpretations of those meanings, but already in the opposed meanings of the word the basic structure of the sense-event appears: 'To do something' is happening in everyday-time, while 'to perform a fictional role' is happening in image-time. In the events I am interested in, it is not either or, it is not a choice between 'to do something' or 'to perform a fictional role'. It is both at the same time, it is to do both simultaneously. The 'fictional role' though has to be understood in a quite broad way as to 'perform an image'.

The noun 'action' supplies us with the last basic element of the sense-event, the frame. By defining a certain set of acts as an 'action', as a specific action, a frame is defined. The acts being performed inside this frame, inside the action, is forming an ensemble, an image to be performed. In the commentary 'On Style' we saw how activists communicate their intentions to each other by describing the style of an action. Style indicates a certain set of guidelines for the participants to follow – it is the format in which an action takes shape, in which it is conceptualized. Style defines the frame-work for a political action beforehand. Within this frame certain acts are performed and an image or a set of images emerges. This is how the political content happens.

In the various activist events selected the sense-event is defined differently and the inherent action plays out differently. Sometimes the set-up is quite straightforward as in the occupation of Refshalevej (On Water), sometimes it is extremely complex as in G13 or the Climate Justice Action (G13greenredturquoiseyellow and Climate/Kettle), sometimes it is even arguable if the event in question is even a political action as in Hopenhagen (Clone Wars). Sometimes the acts performed are overtly emotional, stemming from sadness and aggression as in the first sequence of the Youth House Movement (Revolution by Night), sometimes they are creative acts of collectivity as in G13 or on Tahrir Square (G13greenredturquoiseyellow and Silent Stand),

sometimes they are conceptual redefinitions of what politics can be as in the Tiananmen Square Occupation and in the Egyptian Silent Stand (Ghost Choir Karaoke and Silent Stand). In most cases the opponent – the police, the politicians, society at large – is an inherent part of the game, active participants in the sense-event, either in complete control as the police-forces in Copenhagen on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009 (Climate/Kettle) or unwillingly staged/framed by the activists as in G13 (G13greenredturquoiseyellow). In all these events, though, a specific frame-work is defined, a series of acts are performed and something that can be termed as an image, or a sequence of images, emerges.

The radical feature of the sense-event is the inherent conceptualisation of time. Whereas mainstream politics – i.e. representational democracy - is firmly rooted in the pragmatism of everyday-time, direct action and the related forms of political activism, opens up image-time. As Slavoj Žižek states in the quote above, "...it is new 'in itself' and thus forever remains new."<sup>222</sup> Through the evolving imagery, direct action deals with world-views, other ways of thinking and acting existence, often far beyond what is normally perceived as 'possible'. By creating sense-events, the riots and the direct activism, manifests other world-views. Not as proposals or arguments for a different order or a "shift in relations of power and domination between actual socio-political agents, the redistribution of social control"<sup>223</sup>, as Žižek puts it, but as direct manifestations of those other worlds; acted out, performed in temporal redefinitions of time.

The sense-event creates a rupture in time. The rupture can be apocalyptic as in Stine Krøiers interpretation of Never Thrust A Cop, orgiastic as in The Bernadette Corporations film on the Black Bloc or existential as in the Silent Stands of the We Are All Khaled Said Movement.

In my inquiries on the sense-event I have encountered a set of other ideas, circling around the same complex field of activism, namely the concept of 'Active Time' in the writings of Stine Krøier<sup>224</sup>, the concept of the 'Eros Effect' in the thinking of George N. Katsiaficas<sup>225</sup>, the 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' invented by the Hakim Bey<sup>226</sup> and the concept of 'Exodus' by Paolo Virno. Even though these concepts vary from my idea of the sense-event as the constituting factor of contemporary activism, these terms have been decisive inspiration in various stages of the project and some of the scripts/performances in this project builds directly on these concepts.<sup>227</sup>

In the research inherent in this project I have used the idea of the sense-event not only as an analytical tool in analysing a series of specific events, but also as an artistic tool to re-enact or contemplate those same events as new sense-events. As probings of my thoughts on the original events I have set-up a series of performances – one for each original event – where I try to create new sense-events based on various ideas, data, information, images from the original events. This idea – to research an event by creating a new sense-event – of course creates a set of problems I have tried to overcome by various means in the different performances. The basic claim is that in this new sense-event we are able to contemplate the original event in an artistic manner. The research and the inherent thinking is artistic, or maybe the word aesthetic is better – aesthetic thinking. The sense-event is the laboratory where I claim to be researching. My idea is that only by establishing a situation where we are immersed into a sensorial experience of the problematics at hand, we are able to consider these problematics in an aesthetic manner – by aesthetic thinking. The sense-event is, thus, my bid on how artistic research can

materialise.

The research done in this project is of course more extensive than that. There is a long process of selecting, observing and analysing the original events, another process of reading and thinking about other thoughts in the field, but these processes are quite similar to the research an academic researcher would have undertaken. I.e. it has been an interesting and revelatory experience for me to read the PhD thesis of Stine Krøijer – 'FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe' – since it is dealing with almost the exact same events as I have chosen to research, but from her viewpoint as an anthropologist. Of course my viewpoint is artistic already in the initial process of selecting, observing and analysing the original events, which means that I see other things, other things seem important to me and most importantly, my analysis is based on my artistic knowledge and references. Still, it is in the probing of the collected material my research really claims to be artistic. Choosing to do this probing as performances, as new-sense events, is the crucial point in this process. This is where the artistic/aesthetic thinking is put to the test: Does it really produce any relevant results?

For artistic research to make sense, the main conclusions in the process of evaluating the material at hand has to be based on artistic/aesthetic thinking. In scientific research a laboratory experiment is a test of a theoretical question. Out of a theoretical analysis a question arises: We think that this is what is going on in a specific sector of nature, but is it really so? Then an experiment is set up, nature is put to test. The experiment will either prove the hypothesis right or wrong. In an artistic experiment, such as the sense-event, an answer like that is not possible. At least not in the case of my project here. There is not even a clear question asked. The sense-event rather creates a complex image where the answers are multiple and open-ended. The sense-event produces a temporal image, that can be considered and contemplated, but it doesn't produce a straight answer. As with all images the meaning is open, it is to be interpreted by whoever who wants to engage with it. To me, this is a fundamental feature of artistic research. It doesn't produce a straight answer.

What kind of answer is then produced in the sense-event? Well, let's look at the problems it creates first.

First of all there is a problem of past and present. The original events – the riots and the activist events – happened in the past. The new sense-event evaluating the original event happens now. This is a question of representation: An action can never be repeated. The imagery it creates, happens in correspondance with the given context; the political circumstances, the spatial situation etc. This means that the imagery is both temporal and contextual. It happens there, once and for all. It is not possible to re-actualise such an image again. In a sense it is already always there. It exists as an image forever. How to evaluate this?

One possibility would be to re-enact the event in question. To re-create it as realistically as possible. This would in the best case create a situation, where the original event could be considered without the temporal context that constituted it as an event. In 2007 when I initiated this project, re-enactment was in vogue on the art-scene. Jeremy Deller's 'The Battle of Orgreave' and Mike Figgis documentary on it, both from 2001, had made a big impression and a string of other artists were using

the format of re-enactment to re-visit past events, often controversial political events is the near past. It was my initial intention to use re-enactment as the performative tool to inquire into the original events I were to chose as my case-studies. To create a kind of lab-situation where the original event could be re-enacted and studied in detail. This idea was founded on the presumption that there would be a form and an aesthetic style in the activism in question, that could be re-created and then analysed in its visual and performative appearance.

I gave this idea up for two reasons:

First of all the events I started investigating revealed themselves as so complex that a re-enactment would only scratch the surface of the inherent problematics – the imagery in a certain event evolves out of the given context and a given reality that is tied intricately to a specific moment in time . It involves the political momentum of a certain period and a certain temporal sequence of previous events. It involves an intense emotional and aesthetical role-play between the opposed participants in a conflict, also build up in an exact moment of time. I seemed to me that a re-enactment would isolate the aesthetic features of an event from its constituting temporal context and that this would be a misunderstanding of the role of aesthetics in those events.

The other reason has to do with my ideas of artistic research. What I wanted to do with this project as a whole was to test art as a research tool. Early on I took the decision not to use any kind of image-based documentary footage; no photos, videos or other kinds of documentary representations of the events chosen as subject for my investigations. These are all techniques of image reproduction based on a direct technical relation between the subject of the image and the resulting image. By omitting the documentary aspects of art, I wanted to focus on the creative act as a performative characteristic of art. I wanted to use the creative act as a research tool. Contemplating this I found that a strict re-enactmant of an event would be too technical, in a documentary sense. If I had used these documentary techniques – photo, video, re-enactment – as my visual tools, the analysis would come after the documentary re-production. The scheme would be:

Event ----- visual documentation -----analysis

Of course documentary isn't as simple as I here describe it. A lot of analysis is included already in the process of documenting, but using it would lead me into a complex inquiry and postioning in the field of documentary that I felt would sidestep my intentions. What I was interested in establishing was a scheme like this:

Event-----data, information-----event/analysis

To test arts ability as a research tool, I thought it necessary to define the analysis as art, as aesthetic. What does this mean? A rational analysis of something is founded on a logic founded in language. In reason. Aesthetics aren't founded on the same kind of reason. The logic of aesthetics is founded in imagery. In sensorial information. What I wanted to do was to create aesthetic analysis. To establish a situation where the reasoning in the analysis is substituted with an aesthetic analysis. This aesthetic analysis takes the form of an event, of an image evolving in time. It is rather an interpretation than a strict analysis. This is the restriction that working with imagery instead of argument creates, but instead of a strict reason it offers analysis based in

the sensorial.

Choosing the sense-event as the medium for my inquiries and my interpretations of the original events created another problem of representation; if not a realistic re-enactment of the original event, then how to incorporate the narration of that first event in the new sense-event? Here, I chose to perform the information I had gathered, all the documents and various statements found in my attempt to figure out what happened in the 'first place'. The information wouldn't point as directly to the past as a realistic re-enactment would. I.e. a manifesto is not bound to a specific moment in time, it works as a text and a statement at any given time, it can thus be used as an element in a new ensemble, establishing a new situation. Using the information as elements in a new composition, marks a distance to the original event; we are here, now – and we cannot go back to the past, we are bound to look at the past event from a distance, a temporal distance. The new performance is thus able to establish a new situation, a new sense-event, in which a new now happens. This new situation refers back to the original event in various ways, but it is not an attempt at re-creating it. There is no attempt to go back there. Instead we can contemplate a new ensemble of percepts relating to the problematics of the first event. We can contemplate them directly in a new ensemble of sensorial experience, now. Not as a futile attempt at going back.

In the new sense-event an image evolves. It is not the same image that evolved in the original event. The first image happened there, once and for all. It is not possible to re-actualise such an image again, but by performing various information from the original element and carefully sampling this information into the presence of the new situation, grounding it in the present context, a new image might emerge. The new image is an actualisation, not of the first image, but of the problematics inherent in the first image.

Imagery is slippery. It is open for interpretation, and it doesn't produce a straight answer. Even a strong image might not reveal what it is an image of; it has a life of itself. In 'Revolution By Night' when I scratch the lacque of the car with a large knife, a strong image evolves – it is an obvious symbolic demolition of one of the prime symbols of private ownership – but it is not so obvious that this image is part of an interpretation of a certain sequence of riots that happened right after the demolition of the Youth House in Copenhagen in 2007. To narrate this connection and similar connections throughout the nine performances comprising this project, I have invented the figure of artist/researcher. This meta-voice introduces the references and guides the audiences through the performances. The artist/researcher even offers analysis and interprets what is happening on-the-go.

This figure is both an attempt to solve the problem of the slippery image and to manifest this problem as an inherent obstacle in artistic research. If we are to take the concept of artistic research seriously this problem arises unavoidably. Imagery is slippery.

The artist/researcher takes on different roles throughout the nine performances. In some she is strictly outside the event, commenting. In others, like here in 'Clone Wars' she is part of an intricate roleplay between audience, performers and artist/researcher that becomes part of the sense-event of the performance. The artist/researcher is even played by various persons throughout the performances. Sometimes it's myself, sometimes it's an actress, sometimes it's a voice-over. These

various personas positions the artist/researcher differently in each performance and the relation between the sense-event and the meta-text is thus modulated to fit the specific content of each performance.

The figure of the artist/researcher is not always as straightforward as she appears. Especially here in 'Clone Wars', there is a kind of pretense at play. The artist/researcher pretend to introduce the audience to the performative quest of the three figures on the green island. Instead she is abducting the audience, staging them as passive participants in an act controlled by someone else. This play with the distribution of roles between the artist/researcher and the audience throughout the performances is also an ironic play with the concept of artist research; In this respect the artist/researcher takes on and experiments with different modes of what such a role can imply. In a slightly humoristic way she acts out the various obstacles of artistic research.

In general the voice of the artist/researcher creates a meta-text that is accompanying the sense-event. We are in two places at once; we are inside the sense-event experiencing it as sensorial impulses, as aesthetics, and we are simultaneously outside of the sense-event, contemplating it from the outside, as an illustration of the problematics presented in the meta-text. These two levels of information doesn't necessarily fit. Sometimes the imagery is a fitting illustration of something in the meta-text, sometimes it doesn't fit at all. The discrepancy between these two levels is a point in itself. The aesthetic interpretation occurring in the sense-event is never equivalent with the analysis presented in the meta-text.

This is the point and the problem – both in the original events and my research events. The imagery produced in the sense-events communicates as form. As Stine Krøijer states: "The form is the message."<sup>228</sup> This form has a logic of its own. It is based in the sensorial and it is aesthetic. The message of the form is not an illustration of a content formulated elsewhere as political theory – it IS the message in itself. That is why all the theory, all the text and all the discourse produced on the direct activism – by me, by Stine Krøijer, by Mikkel Bolt, by everyone else discussing activism from a distance – is only approximate. There will always be a discrepancy. The images evolving in the sense-events of activism speaks in a language of their own, emerging in their specific contexts and their specific temporal circumstances. The politics of these images is a politics of the senses.

On a smaller scale my research events share these features. The core of the research is the series of sense-events attempted in the nine performances. The meta-text of the artist/researcher is sometimes inside and sometimes outside of these events. The analysis and the commentary texts – here in this written part of the project – can only be approximate. These texts surround the sense-events, discusses them, but they can never be anything but approximations, estimates. The sense-events can never be described thoroughly. They are to be experienced, either as a temporal event or as an image afterwards. The analysis and the reflections are only approximations. The answers produced in the sense-events have to be experienced.



**On Resonance, *Budhaditya Chattopadhyay* in conversation with Frans Jacobi  
(4.1.4.2.)**

Please see Appendix 4.1.5.2. for the video-documentation of this conversation.

#### 4.2. Climate/Kettle



Det Fri Gymnasium, Copenhagen 6.3.2012

##### Main:

- 4.2.1. Script
- 4.2.2. Performance: Det Fri Gymnasium, Copenhagen 6.3.2012
- 4.2.3. Analysis

##### Commentary:

- 4.2.4.1. Aesthetics of Resistance?, script for a performance at Overgaden, Copenhagen 23.2.2012
- 4.2.4.2. Climate Justice Action
- 4.2.4.3. Active Time Revisited
- 4.2.4.4. In a Stolen Moment (ALLOTRIA versus HYSKENSTRÆDE)

##### Appendix:

- 4.2.5.1. Climate/Kettle, video documentation 26:03 min

#### **Climate/Kettle (4.2.1.)**

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The artist/researcher: Frans Jacobi

Two groups of audience: inside and outside.

Soundtrack (live!) and music by: Lonely Boy Choir.

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*We are in the canteen of Det Fri Gymnasium (The Free Gymnasium). First the internal audience – a group of students at the gymnasium and a few people related to the production of the performance – find their seats in two rows of chairs. The lights are turned off.*

*The external audience – anyone who is attending from the 'outside' – is waiting outside in the corridor. After a while, they are let into the canteen. The space is dark. As they enter, they find themselves fenced in by a prison-like structure of metal fences. A low bass-tone is hovering in the space. Nothing happens.*

*After awhile, as everyone has come in, the doors are shut behind the audience. A row of strong spots are turned on, one by one, blinding the audience. The bass tone is still the only sound.*

## **Scene 1:**

*A voice-over starts speaking. The voice is calm and authoritative.*

### **The artist/researcher:**

Dear people, welcome to this performance – or more precisely: this re-enactment. Together we are going to re-enact two scenes from recent political history. I am the artist/researcher and I am going to conduct you through these two scenes.

Re-enact? Oh my God, you might think, but don't worry, it won't be that stressful. Apart from the mental nuisance it will cause you, it will be easy; already by entering this prison-like structure here you are re-enacting the first scene.

Together we are going back to the COP15 Climate Summit in Copenhagen, December 2009. The first scene, that we are already inside here, has been actualized recently by the court case digging into the legal conditions at stake within it. Although the Eastern High Court, Østre Landsret, gave a very clear verdict, the case is still controversial and has been the object of several political media stunts in the month since the verdict.

We are, of course, dealing with December 12th 2009, and the arrest of those 905 demonstrators taking part in the large demonstration, urging to strong political action against climate change at the COP15 conference. The 905 persons were cut off from the rest of the demonstration, arrested and forced to sit on the bare asphalt, chained together in long rows, in so-called 'choo-choo' formations. Here they sat in up to 4 hours in the cold December evening, until they were transported to the temporary 'climate-prison' on Retortvej in Valby.

We are not going to go into the legal circumstances here – others have done that convincingly in the court case and in the media. What we are interested in are pictorial and performative aspects of this event. Or more precisely, seeing it as a staged event. As staging.<sup>229</sup>

The story starts with Brian Mikkelsen, the by-then Minister of Justice of Denmark.

### **Brian Mikkelsen :**

“Autonomists cannot be allowed to take charge, playing games with the authorities and the police, the police can easily handle such a bunch of

autonomists. Although there are many of them, they're not very smart, certainly not as bright as a new penny. And they're not particularly strong, they're stoned and cock-eyed by drink. They are drunk, and so on, so the police can easily control them, and they should also do so the next time."<sup>230</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Staging. To stage something or someone, that is: To present a situation, where this something or someone is on, as if it or he/she were on stage or in a scene.<sup>231</sup>

What does it mean to be on stage? To be staged? First of all, it means that someone is watching you. That what you are doing is being watched, and that what you are doing is seen as having some kind of dramatic or image-like character. You have become an image.

Staging is an act that involves 3 participants: The one who stages, who sets the stage – the director – or at least the active part. Then there is the one that is being staged – the passive part – or at least someone whose actions are being directed by someone else. The third part is the audience; those who look at the staging – the recipients.

In the sound-clip we hear the Minister of Justice staging a group of activists. No matter how silly and confused Brian Mikkelsen sounds here, it is actually an attempt by the State to stage a group of citizens as something other than what they see themselves as.

The statement was made after a much debated episode, where a group of activists barricaded a small side street in the center of Copenhagen, Hyskenstræde. Inside two barricades a wild pirate-party evolved. Even though it is funny, this short, bewildered statement by Brian Mikkelsen became the starting-point for a large-scale campaign of staging that ended up at the climate-prison at Retortvej.

Soon afterwards, the Minister of Justice presented a proposal for a set of new laws, popularly referred to as the 'hooligan-package'. This was a set of laws, designed to handle potential riots in connection with the forthcoming Climate Summit, COP15, where top leaders from all over the world were coming to Copenhagen. An aspect of the Hooligan-Package was the introduction of 'preventive arrest'. The police would now be able to arrest somebody, not because they had done something illegal, but on the mere suspicion that they would possibly do something illegal in the near future.

Preventive arrest. In the very language, an element of staging seeps in. The police imagine that you will do something illegal soon, therefore they have to arrest you. Imagine. They got the impression. Created an image of you in advance.<sup>232</sup>

The spokesman for the Danish Liberal Party, Venstre, Peter Christensen, presents the Hooligan-Packet in the newspaper Jyllands-Posten on September 14th, 2009:

**Peter Christensen:**

"Venstre wants to raise the fine to ten times the current level for street-rioting, destruction of public or private property or for forcing oneself through the barriers of the police in connection with the Climate Summit in Copenhagen. I expect that this will prevent some of those persons who are already now planning to destroy Copenhagen during the Climate Summit from actually doing it. And those who do it anyway, for them it will be very costly. They can start talking with their parents now about raising their childrens' savings."<sup>233</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Those planning to destroy Copenhagen. Peter Christensen here makes a reference to the German network, Never Trust A Cop. As a prelude to COP15, Never Trust A Cop released a kind of action-trailer on the Internet. Across a montage of street-fighting, burning cars and black-clad activists, direct combat is requested:

**Never Trust A Cop:**

"In Copenhagen 7th to 18th of December.  
COP15 will try to get capitalism back on track.  
We don't.  
We will go to Copenhagen.  
To show a dead system how to die."<sup>234</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

This 4-minute video on YouTube is a determining factor in the arming of the Danish police, preparing for the Climate Summit. Thousands of ravaging, black-clad hooligans are expected in Copenhagen. In numerous statements from both the politicians in Government and top police brass, references to Never Trust A Cop and the coming destruction are made.

Parallel to the preparation of the Hooligan-Package, the Danish police prepare for the Climate Summit by

organizing the largest police force ever seen on Danish ground. New extraordinary equipment is bought, i.e. the impressive fire and clearance vehicles which are presented to the public on December 3rd.<sup>235</sup> A whole series of similar presentations in the media showcases the armament of the police forces. As if to say: "Come on, we are ready to fight!"

Why these repeated public presentations of the massive armament of the police? Apparently it is about deterrence, discouraging the opponent. If the enemy realizes how strong the police are going to be, it will discourage 'those planning to destroy Copenhagen'.<sup>236</sup>

Deterrence is only the public facade, though; 'those planning to destroy Copenhagen' are sitting somewhere out there in Europe. They don't watch TV2News or DR1News. The deterrence is communicated to a Danish audience – it is much more about creating an image of the enemy. Staging the arriving activists as ravaging troublemakers – as hooligans.

This staging deprives the activists of a political agenda. In the view of the authorities, the protests have no political content; it's all about vandalism and destruction. About destroying Copenhagen. Destroying our society.

The Black Bloc is a militant form of action on the European Far Left. In a sense, The Black Bloc represents the typical cliché of the violent demonstrator: The stone-throwing troublemaker, clad in black. It is this stereotype troublemaker that the Danish authorities try to conjure up by a massive effort ahead of the Climate Summit.

The stereotype covers a deliberately militant form of action. In direct action society can be confronted. But what does it mean that this is a form of action? A form?

A form of action is a way of demonstrating, a way of enacting political activism. A variety of action forms exists, The Black Bloc is just one of many others. The Clown Army is another. Activists can choose between different forms of action. In a certain situation, one form is appropriate, in another situation, another form is more effective. As an activist, you are not identical with one of these forms, the form of action is something that you can choose according to the given situation.

In the rhetoric of the politicians and the police, The Black Bloc is not a form, but an identity. It is

something that you either are, or are not. Something that you can be convicted of. Somebody who is expected to behave in a certain manner. Someone that can be arrested preventively, in advance, because we know what you are going to do.

The Black Bloc is the antithesis of mainstream politics – the enemy that the state needs in order to justify the massive arming of the police forces and the suspension of civil rights inherent in the Hooligan-Package.

In a sense, The Black Bloc has been appropriated by the state apparatus. From being a form of action, created by European activists, it has now become a completely one-dimensional identity – the subversive enemy activist, scheming to destroy society.

On November 26th 2009 'L 49 Om straffeloven og lov om politiets virksomhed' – the Hooligan Package – is passed by the Danish parliament.

When the Climate Summit hits Copenhagen, The Black Bloc is in the streets, but in numbers very, very far from the expectations of the police. Riots are few and sporadic. Dispersed and somehow at random. In the 11 days the Climate Summit lasts, there are demonstrations registered for every day, but none of them evolves into the huge destructive street-fighting scenario that has been conjured up by the authorities in advance.

The large-scale projects by the activists are entirely different. Civil disobedience and non-violent confrontation is the code of conduct. New and creative forms of action are being developed.

When 100.000 people march on December 12th in a very peaceful and very colorful demonstration, it is a strange and perplexing surprise that this is the moment the Danish police choose to perform their massive, collective arrest. What is going on? What is the rationale?

Do they really need to justify the image of The Black Bloc they have so meticulously shaped in the media by trying to stage all 905 arrestees as The Black Bloc, arresting them and treating them in a humiliating manner, as if they really were a threat to society? Do they really need to justify the excessive arming in terms of personnel and material, simply by using this personnel and material on a large scale like this? Does the Climate-Prison on Retortvej lose all meaning, if it is not filled up with furious protesters at some point in



the process? Is it really necessary to implement the concept of preventive arrest to justify it?

The staging is certainly effective. The wholesale arrest steals the picture, as you say. In the media, this is a great topic in the following days – it doesn't matter whether there were 100.000 or 12 people demonstrating for a better climate that day.

To steal the picture. This is exactly what staging is about. By their dramatic interruption, the police forces steal the picture from the demonstrators. They become passive participants in the image the police is staging.

As is written in the ruling of the Eastern High Court, Østre Landsret, from January 25th, 2012:

**Eastern High Court:**

"The operation of the police took place with great media attention, and images of the detained persons, positioned in 'choo-choo', with their hands chained on their backs, were shown in newspapers and on television. The placing of the detainees in 'choo-choo' were commenced around 20 minutes after the initiation of the pincer movement at h 15.26, and the Eastern High Court therefore concludes that most of the detainees sat on the cold asphalt for several hours, in some cases for up to 4 hours, until they were transported from the scene."<sup>237</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

The staging is sustained and physical. The street, Amagerbrogade, is turned into a stage and the detainees are exhibited on this stage to the world, the media, for all to see, restrained and humiliated in long rows. Forced to perform the image of the violent, but now defeated troublemakers.

Now, on January 25th, 2012 the Eastern High Court ruled the wholesale arrest illegal with reference to the lack of probability that so many of the 905 participants in the demonstration had a feasible connection with the Black Bloc that they could be considered potential troublemakers.

Where does this leave the 905 detainees? Well, in a sense they are still sitting there on Amagerbrogade, now as innocent extras, cast as the enemy by the authorities.

Well, this must be enough on this case for now. We will now leave Amagerbrogade and the Climate-Prison on

Retortvej, to move four days ahead, to December 16th 2009. But first we need a break. I will now dismantle the prison here – out here on the other side you will find some chairs. Please sit down and relax for a while. Meanwhile we will play a piece of music by Lonely Boy Choir for you. I will return after the music with yet another tale about a completely different kind of image formation.

**Break:**

*The audience is sitting in two seperate groups listening to 'Kettle Blues' by Lonely Boy Choir.*

## Scene 2:

*The artist/researcher stands up and starts speaking, this time 'live'.*

### **The artist/researcher:**

Before we attempt the second re-enactment here tonight, I will introduce you to the background for this performance experiment. It is an attempt to reconstruct a moment of so-called Active Time. I will return to this concept in a while.

The kind of staging we experienced before is rather well-known and quite common, not only in art and politics, but also in a lot of more everyday situations. It is a way of establishing or challenging a power relation between two or more parts.

The kind of collective image production we will now investigate is more radical. It is not so much about the opponent in a conflict, but rather about using a conflict to establish another, alternative reality. The image produced is not being projected unto others or shown to an audience; it is an image created by a group of participants and experienced from within this group.

This image is only active when it is performed. What does this mean? It means that a reality is created, and that this reality only exists in the moment it is performed. A reality that is simultaneously an image. A performed reality.

Maybe image isn't the right word; in any case, it is a social, spatial image, existing in time. In a given moment of time.

Yes, I know it sounds rather abstract – I hope it will be a bit more clear, when we try to re-enact an example of such an image.

On December 16<sup>th</sup> 2009 a large group of Danish and international activists tries to break through the barricades of the police surrounding the Bella Centre, housing COP15, the Climate Summit. It is the non-violent, civil disobedience action 'Reclaim Power – Pushing for Climate Justice'. Their goal is to establish a People's Convent, a critical alternative to the by then already stalled, official negotiations, and to protest against the total lack of real commitment amongst the world leaders inside the Bella Centre.

For the COP15, the Bella Centre has been fenced in by

extensive barricades of concrete and fencing, seemingly impossible to break through. 'Reclaim Power – Pushing for Climate Justice' is structured with several 'fingers' with different strategies. The activists can choose to meet up at different points of departure and to attack the fences in different ways.

The main group starts off as a more traditional, large-scale demonstration, crossing Amager. After an hour, around 5000 activists reach a corner of the Bella Centre, flanked by large police forces. At arrival an additional set of armoured vehicles and another set of police units await them.

The participants in the demonstration now gather in a large unified group in front of the barricades with the sound-truck at their back, immediately to be surrounded and fenced in by chains of police forces.

Such a situation, where a large crowd of demonstrators is confined by police forces, occurs quite often in connection with protests all over the world. This way of fencing in and confining crowds is one of the often used operational maneuvers of the police. In the internal jargon of the police, this maneuver is called the 'kettle'. But as with water boiling in a kettle, pressure evolves inside the kettle. The compression of activists results in a powerful eruption of collective energy inside the kettle.

Up on the sound-truck a woman starts shouting into a microphone. The crowd repeats her guide-lines:

**Shouting-choir:**

"The woman: First we will take three steps to the left,  
All: First we will take three steps to the left,  
The woman: then we will count down from ten,  
All: then we will count down from ten,  
The woman: then we will push and push until we can get over the fence.  
All: then we will push and push until we can get over the fence."<sup>238</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Simultaneously the crowd of activists pushes against the chain of police and vehicles blocking the fence around the Bella Centre.

The anthropologist, Stine Krøijer, whom we will meet later tonight, has written her phd-thesis on radical

leftist activism. Like me, she was present that day in front of the Bella Centre, and like me she kept outside 'the kettle'. She writes about the shouting-scene:

**Stine Krøijer:**

"I believed that she did this because not all people assembled there were able to hear what she said. Later, I thought it was an exercise to make people feel confident about the collective, illegal endeavour, but now I am inclined to believe that her words, and the fact that everybody repeated them, generated a bodily synchronization or sense of belonging to the same time. In that situation, the activists proceeded in accordance with her/their words, but in not managing to cross the fence, a tight pack of people was produced between the sound-truck, the police and the fence. Aske, who later described the experience of pushing against the police line as that of 'one big body acting together', confirms my understanding of the emergence of a synchronic body in moments of confrontation."<sup>239</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

A synchronic body. A mass of people, individuals, who suddenly turn into one big body. A collective body. All shouting with one voice. One body with one voice. All pushing and moving in the same direction, synchronically, in sync. One body one push. One body, one huge breath.

Even though this body emerges in confrontation with the police in dangerous and stressfull combat, it is experienced as a mutual strenght, a collective platform.

Stine Krøijer calls this phenomenon Active Time. Active Time is a figuration of another society, fought for by the activists. A figuration? In a sense, it is an image of this future society, but then again, an image is an unprecise description. It is rather so that this other society actually exists in Active Time – in that short timespan, where for instance the synchronic body emerges.

In those 30 minutes in front of the Bella Centre, in which the Push!-action takes place, a huge synchronic body emerges. In that moment when the whole crowd of demonstrators inside the kettle has become one. The synchronic body is another society, a temporary glimpse of how we could relate to each other, of how we could be living together.

This other society only exist in that short moment, while the activity is happening, while the figuration is performed by the activists.

Now, this is a very dramatic and confrontational moment – but Active Time can also be peaceful and contemplative. It is, though, always a moment torn out of, a rupture from normal, capitalist society time, Dead Time.

Dead Time is the all encompassing time of capitalism; entertainment, surveillance, consumption. Passive time.

Active Time is a concrete, realized alternative. A real, present proof that something outside of capitalism actually exists. That we can come together as something else than consumers. An active, political image.

Now, here tonight, we're not in any kind of confrontation. Still, we will attempt to recreate such a kettle, as I have been talking about here. It can, of course, never be real to any degree that compares with what was happening back then in front of the Bella Centre. It will only be a reconstruction, a kind of social game, wherein we will try to create that synchronic body.

The idea is, to let the part of the audience, who sat over here watching the others enter the prison in the beginning, act as activists being 'kettled'. They will have to shout in unison. Really shout it all out, to get in sync , to become a collective, synchronic body. We, the rest of us, will confine them in between 2 sections of fence here. So, lets try to make this work, please come over here and help me.

*One part of the audience, the students from Det Frie Gymnasium, rises and gathers in the middle of the space. The artist/researcher and 4 helpers from the other audience bring the sections of metal fence onto the floor and fence the group in between them.*

**The artist/researcher:**

Boris will now introduce a simple effective rythm that will help us in creating the right atmosphere. When you are ready, I will act as the woman shouting. Then we will see, if it is possible at all to get anywhere near that intensity and rage, anywhere near Active Time. You inside the kettle please shout after me.

*The artist/researcher starts shouting and the group of activists shouts after him. The 4 helpers put pressure on the fences, and tension between the two groups builds up.*

**Shouting-choir:**

"The woman: First we will take three steps to the left,  
All: First we will take three steps to the left,  
The woman: then we will count down from ten,  
All: then we will count down from ten,  
The woman: then we will push and push until we can get over the fence.  
All: then we will push and push until we can get over the fence."<sup>240</sup>

*The shouting and the pushing goes on for about 7 or 8 minutes. Afterwards the fences are removed and the group inside takes their seats again.*

**The artist/researcher:**

Well, that was kind of wild. But did it work? Did the synchronic body emerge?

Of course the physic and psychological pressure here was completely superficial, so the tension rising might be more like an illustration. But still, thanks for taking part and trying to get into this state – it's absolutely not an easy thing to enter into such an active image. Also thanks to Boris – Lonely Boy Choir – over here, for delivering the soundtracks for these scenarios. Please give him a hand.

Now, we will take a real break – the interim bar is open over there. Afterwards, there is a discussion where we will try to adress differnt aspects of what we have just been through together. I might finish off this part by introducing the 3 guests I have asked to initiate the discussion:

Stine Krøjier is the anthropologist I referred to; her ideas on Active Time versus Dead Time is the foundation for the last part of the performance. As said, she has written a phd-thesis on radical left-wing activism, called Figurations of the Future.

Tannie Nyboe and Stine Gry Jonassen are both activists. They were standing on the sound-truck and kept the action 'Reclaim Power – Pushing for Climate Justice' organized and going. They were both arrested during the action, and were later prosecuted for their part in the planning of this action. It will, of course, be really interesting to hear their version of the events. They experienced this whole thing from within, and have afterwards been forced to live with the retaliations of society.

But first – 20 minutes break. Thank you!

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**THE END**



### Analysis 4.2.3.

Climate/Kettle inquires into two ideas: 'Staging the opponent' and 'collective body'.

It is organized in a high school, Det Fri Gymnasium, that is known for its left-wing traditions and has fostered pupils that took an active part in the activist-scene in Copenhagen.

These themes are explored on two levels; by a textual analysis of two events taking place in connection with the protests surrounding the COP15 UN Climate Summit in December 2009. The texts are read out by the artist/researcher: in the first part as a voice-over, in the last part live. On the other level the themes are probed as two performative scenarios involving the audience as passive participants in the first part, and as active participants in the second part.

The textual level delivers a didactic presentation of the two events in question. Events are seen from a distance from, an analytical, non-personal angle. This as a stark contrast to the position of the narrator in 'Revolution By Night' (3.1.), where events were presented from a very personal angle, positioning myself, Frans Jacobi, in a truthful and authentic manner. Here, in Climate/Kettle it is rather the artist/researcher speaking, observing everything from the outside.

In this vein the format of the two performative situations, the two sense-events, are re-enactments of two quite specific situations from the original events, chosen to probe the two themes by 'aesthetic thinking'. Re-enactment chosen as a relatively objective way representing an event as a performative situation.

Whether the two scenes can be termed re-enactments is of course up for discussion. The practical circumstances force a drastic editing of which features of the original event are to be re-enacted. This editing is of course an interpretation. Even in more traditional re-enactments done outside, maybe on the exact site of the original event, re-enacting also the duration of the original event, an interpretation takes place. In the case of Climate/Kettle here, re-enactment is rather to be understood as an attitude in staging the sense-events, than as a strict, realistic format.

Both concepts to be explored in Climate/Kettle are derived from direct confrontations between activists and authorities. The intention in the performance is to stage these confrontations in a kind of laboratory situation, where the relevant aspects of the confrontation can be considered and contemplated, isolated from the extremely complex context they evolved in. Whether this selection of certain aspects of the given situation is productive, is one of the questions to be probed by the performance. In short, it works well in scene 1 and it doesn't work at all in scene 2.

The performance operates with two audiences; an internal audience from Det Fri Gymnasium, and an outside audience mobilised in the same manner as the audiences for the other performances. These two audiences are kept separate all the way during the performance, thereby allowing for various confrontations between these two groups.

The original intention was to organize the performance as a closed event for the students from Det Fri Gymnasium and a similar student group from the Police Academy. This plan had to be given up, when the Police Academy rejected the

idea.<sup>241</sup> The pragmatic solution that we managed to organize didn't create the same kind of tension between the two audiences as originally intended. The difference between the two groups were simply not as dramatic as intended. In spite of a long process of negotiating with and presenting the project for the students at Det Fri Gymnasium, only a few students showed up and we had to improvise an inclusion of a few persons from the outside audience in this inside group. As a result, the two groups were more or less identical, both in age and apparent personalities. This lack of difference becomes crucial in scene 2, where an active confrontation between the two groups is set up. In the discussion following the performance, another difference in the audience evolves. I will come back to this.

The two audiences are positioned in different relations of power; one relation in scene 1 and another in scene 2. These power relations are expressed in the spatial arrangement and in the gaze defined by these spatial circumstances.

Since both initial themes of inquiry deal with individuality versus collectivity, it is important that these themes are probed by audience groups. Whether the performative situation set up in each scene creates the kind of collectivity in question, and whether this collectivity evolves in the sense-events the audiences are directed into. Or rather, what is interesting might not simply be whether or not the collectivity in each scene evolves convincingly – but what we can learn from the way these collectivities evolve, and why or why not they happen. As we shall see, we might learn as much from the fact that scene 2 doesn't work as intended, as we might learn from the success of scene 1.

In both cases, the physical, bodily experience of collectivity is probed. The physicality is central, not only to Climate/Kettle but to my project as a whole. It is by probing the various themes as physical, performative scenarios an 'aesthetic thinking' is evoked. It is in 'thinking with the senses', the audiences and the various persons, including myself, are probing the themes in question. Here, it is the direct physical experience of being led into collectivity that is tested. Does this physical experience add to the analytical understanding of the themes we are presented with by the artist/researcher?

### **Scene 1:**

The 'staging of the opponent' is here inflicted upon the group of outside audience. They are asked to wait outside in the yard or in the staircase before entering the space, where the performance takes place. When the door is finally opened, it is completely dark inside, and they enter into an unknown situation, the only thing greeting them apart from the darkness is a loud annoying alarm-like tone. Walking into this threatening ambience, they realize that they are fenced in by metal fences. After a while, 3 large strong spotlights are turned on, blinding everyone; causing the ones closest to the fence to back off. Regaining sight, they realize that another audience group are looking at them – that they are themselves 'on stage'. Only after a quite long while, the annoying tone is lowered a bit, and a voice-over starts.

It is here, in the opening of scene 1 that this part of the audience is staged. They walk into a fictive situation, a prison-cell, resembling closely the so-called climate-prison, described in voice-over. They are imprisoned. The stage-light and the realization that there is another audience present, makes it obvious that they are the ones being staged – quite literally – they are standing in a scenographic situation in front of an audience.

They are on stage, but they are pacified. There is a subtle double play on the given site: On one level they are in a fictive place, the prison-cell – a representation of the real climate-prison at Retortvej – on another level, they are in a school. The voice-over is very didactic, spelling everything out in almost too clear terms – it is the voice of a schoolmaster, over-explaining the content to a group of pacified kids.<sup>242</sup> This understated injection of pedagogical aesthetics is the addition of this performance to the ironic figure of the artist/researcher. For the outside audience this double staging adds to the feeling of being threatened to passivity.

In the discussion afterwards, a member of this group stated that the thing provoking her the most in this situation was the two camera-men circling around the fence of the prison cell, filming the group inside. For her the cameras were a double threat – they reminded her of how the police are filming the participants in demonstrations and political actions to identify and register them in the archives of the police, but the cameras also provoked an anxiety over how the video-footage was going to be used here in connection with the performance. She felt she was unwillingly being cast as a participant in some kind of film, she had no control over and had no wish to appear in.

Here, as in some of the other performances, the camera-men are present both inside the fiction created by the performance and outside in the reality where the performance is set up. They are, so to speak, both inside the sense-event, and outside of it, recording it. Their position paraphrases Gilles Deleuze's beautiful example of the thin membranes of the film-strip and the screen as exemplifications of the 'thin depth' between image and reality. Here, it is the lense of the video-camera that marks the edge of fictionalization. The intricate arrangement here, though, is that both sides of the lense is fictionalized to various degrees. The audience - who would traditionally be in the real world, looking at a fictional world when looking at the stage – is here staged as well.

This intricate mesh of fictionalizations set up to create in the audience inside the fences not only the very obvious feeling of being staged as prisoners, but also a more subtle sneaking feeling of being manipulated as an audience – as participants in a set-up out of their own control. This unexplained staging, underneath the obvious prison-staging is where the collectivity is probed for real. The outside audience doesn't know each other from before and is only gathered here by way of common interests. Will this scattered crowd of 10-15 people feel united? Will they unite in a common irritation at the staging they are treated to? Will the fact that they are trapped together for awhile make them feel some kind of communality?

The entrance sequence is extremely effective – it is obvious that the audience stepping into this scenario feels overwhelmed by the attack of sound and darkness/light they are treated to. The cell-structure is at first an almost funny symbolic trap, but as the voice-over drags out over a long period and the camera-men keeps recording the people caught in the stark spotlight, the entrapment becomes real. This transition from a symbolic set-up to something that is actually felt as a physical condition is important. This is where the experience becomes performative, and where contemplating the theme – staging of the opponent – becomes an event of the senses.

In the obvious layer of the scenario, the audience becomes stand-ins for activists in the demonstration described in the voice-over. They are treated to a small-scale, but similar staging as the 905 imprisoned climate-activists. This transformation from individual members of a small scattered audience to 'innocent extras, cast as the enemy by the authorities', is self-evident. It happens as soon as they walk into the dark space; in that moment they become a cast, united by the staging. The obvious layer of staging creates that collective identity instantly. This is how staging works. It is a kind of conceptual re-arranging of power positions – here in the performance it is not really threatening, because it is a recognizable theatrical measure.

The other subtle 'hidden' staging is not as easily recognizable, and it doesn't take place in such a clear fictional space as the first layer. This second staging evolves in the reality of this specific evening at Det Fri Gymnasium; it rearranges the reality of the audience directly, and there is no invisible 'fourth wall' protecting it. In this sense it is relational; it evolves directly in the social relations we are part of. It isn't conceptual either. It evolves in a process of physical presence; the irritation and feeling of 'this is too long and too didactic' that unites the audience inside the cell evolves in real time in real space. It is a collective emotion that performs in the social space of the group.

## **Scene 2**

The second scene is far more problematic. The theme of the 'collective body' is radical, controversial and strange to another degree. It is also far more difficult to stage as a performative experience. The 'collective body' is set up as the kind of 'constructed situation' roughly outlined in the Glossary (0.3.). A kind of social game, where the participants play out an idea amongst them. Intended as a reversal of the power relation in the first scene, it is now the internal group of (mainly) students from Det Fri Gymnasium who is trapped between two parts of the fence. Here, they repeatedly shout a chant together from the 'real' event in front of the Bella Centre. In addition, they should be pushing the fences together, up against the other group that should push the fences from the outside. My idea was that this repeated chanting and shouting would enable a feeling of synchronization inside the group, and that this collective feeling of being 'in sync' would transgress into the collective body.

Evaluating this, I can see that various factors made this situation somewhat unfocussed. First of all, the introduction was far too long – whereas the very long and monotonous voice-over in the first part served an explicit purpose, here it somehow took the drama out of the situation. Familiarizing myself by reading the text in the second scene live also relaxed the atmosphere too much. The drama that was still in the air when the outside group was released from the prison-structure faded out during this all too friendly introduction. My intention with the friendliness was to create a humorous playfulness that would make the participation by both groups possible.

What happened was a quite short performance of the collective body by the internal group that displayed an open, but also anti-dramatical attitude during the shouting and chanting. Right before the action started, I took the spontaneous decision not to use the outside group to push the fences from outside, sensing that it would be too dramatical a set-up for the people present. The act was rather funny, and it demonstrated the various factors constituting the collective body, but it obviously didn't transgress the situation. It was an illustration, rather than a performative act where the collective body would emerge as a physical and emotional fact, felt by the group as a whole.

The real collective body, though, evolves in situations of extreme pressure and consequence. To re-create such emotional pressure takes another kind of drama. In retrospect, the stylistic aggression displayed in scene 1 might have been a better strategy to continue the pressure on the audience in scene 2. Such pressure might have evoked collectivity as a direct reaction to the circumstances, instead of as now, to be a playful illustration of a thematic idea.

The synchronic body arises as a reaction to extreme powerful measures taken by the police forces. A reaction is not an alternative. It is rather an inherent part of the system it reacts against. If the experiment of scene 2 can tell us something, it might be this: That the collective body and the inherent Active Time isn't as much an alternative to the Dead Time of the Security State, as it is a mode of critical survival. The collectivity in the synchronic body is an emotional tool to reclaim the subjectivity that is under extreme threat, not just in large-scale police actions like the examples described here, but on all levels of the capitalist Security State.

In the discussion following 'Climate/Kettle', one of the activists present describes how the authorities individualize the activists by registration and surveillance; thereby creating a psychological pressure. This individualization can be seen as a psychological version of 'staging the opponent'. By staging the individual activist as a 'troublemaker', thereby de-politicizing her, by registering her and stalking her around the city, the activists' right to act as a group is denounced. Collectivity, in the form of internal solidarity and supportive friendship, are important factors in challenging this pressure. The concept of the collective body is an attempt at describing the emotional bonds evolving under this kind of circumstances.

In the court case concerning the 905 demonstrators who were arrested on 12. December 2009 at Amagerbrogade - as described in scene 1 – it was evident that the police tried to argue for the individual guilt of each of the detainees, whereas the the activists' lawyers argued that the suspicion of 'disturbance of the public order' couldn't be pinned down to any of the persons arrested.<sup>243</sup>

The strict insistence on collective decision-making and flat, leaderless power structures are the more ideological aspects of this collectivity, manifesting a collective political subject.

The apparent failure of scene 2 also shows the importance of physical presence – bodily presence – not only in constructed situations like these, but first of all in the real confrontations. Here, the risk taken under extreme pressure and the consequences, legal and physical, create a radical engagement that can only be hinted at in my performative experiments.

Another important factor is the way in which the synchronic body evolves in an improvised collective process; it is not something created after a specific plan by one or more persons taking decisions on behalf of the crowd. As explained in the discussion by the invited activists, it is rather a scenario, where a set of goals and directions are decided in advance at various group meetings as a general framework for the specific action. This framework is termed the 'style' of the action. Then, when in the situation, confronted by the police forces, the collective of activists improvise according to the agreed style, and the action evolves as a collective improvisation.<sup>244</sup>

My direction of scene 2 is individual, based on my own interpretation of the 'collective body'. What is re-enacted is only the aesthetic surface, the performative gesture of the 'collective body'. All the inherent psychological and political circumstances constituting the 'collective body' in its real context cannot be re-enacted in the framework given here. The immense drama it arises in isn't reproducible in a context like this, or at least it wasn't part of my version here. The collective process of decision-making and improvisation in the moment of action is also missing. Whether such a collectivity can be produced in the framework of an artwork is a question. Or maybe it is, as one participant in the discussion proposed, a sign of respect for the existence of the 'collective body' that a 'real' re-enactment isn't attempted. By refraining from trying to reproduce it for real, by illustrating it as a kind of social game, we show respect for the fact that it is out there, in the very real confrontations with the massive powers of the state, that the real collectivity evolves. It is out there the risks are taken, the hard consequences are felt and the struggles for another political subject are fought.

The physical presence and the subsequent risk in confronting a repressive state are some of the topics dealt with in the last performance 'Silent Stand'.

#### **Aesthetics of Resistance? (4.2.4.1.)<sup>245</sup>**

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The artist/researcher: Frans Jacobi

The Invisible Committee, Never Trust A Cop, Kai Vittrup: Claus Handberg

Camera-men: Claus Handberg & Frans Jacobi

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##### **The artist/researcher:**

Dear Audience

My name is Frans Jacobi. We are here together to make a short introduction to the form of performative artistic research I do in my phd-project, The Aesthetics of Resistance.

You have to help me a little here: I'm going to ask you to change places, so that all of you who are dressed in black sit down over here on my left, while all the rest of you who are not dressed in black sit over there on my right.

(Yes, I really mean it, would you mind ... black over here, Thank you! The rest of you over there ... Thank you!)

Thank you! Very good.

In a way, the idea behind this is reasonably illustrative: In the trial concerning the 905 demonstrators who were arrested on 12. December 2009 at Amagerbrogade in connection with the Climate Summit COP15, the police tried to argue that 1883 demonstrators within the appr. 100,000 strong demonstration belonged to the so-called Black Bloc.

The Black Bloc is a militant action formation on the extreme European Left. In a way, The Black Bloc represents the common cliché about the violent demonstrator: The stone-throwing troublemaker dressed in black.

The cliché covers a deliberately militant action form. Only through direct struggle can society be confronted. Or as the Black Bloc's secret lodge, The Invisible Committee, writes in the manifest, "The Coming Insurrection":

##### **The Invisible Committee:**

"All the incivilities of the streets should become methodical and systematic, converging in a diffuse, effective guerilla war that restores us to our

ungovernability, our primordial unruliness. It's disconcerting to some that this same lack of discipline figures so prominently among the recognized military virtues of resistance fighters. In fact, though, rage and politics should never have been separated. Without the first, the second is lost in discourse; without the second the first exhausts itself in howls."<sup>246</sup>

### **The artist/researcher**

In the run-up to the large-scale Climate Summit COP15, the German network, Never Trust A Cop, released a kind of action trailer on the Internet. Across a series of images of street fights, burning cars and activists dressed in black, direct struggle is called for:

### **Never Trust A Cop:**

"In Copenhagen 7th to 18th of December.  
COP15 will try to get capitalism back on track.  
We don't.  
We will go to Copenhagen.  
To show a dead system how to die." <sup>247</sup>

### **The artist/researcher:**

This 4-minute long video was a decisive factor in the mobilization of the Danish police before the Climate Summit. Thousands of vandalizing hooligans in black are expected in Copenhagen. The then minister of justice, Brian Mikkelsen, is instrumental in the passing of a new law – the so-called hooligan package – which opens up the possibility of so-called "preventive arrest".

When the largest police force in Danish history on 12. December 2009 arrested 944 persons, left them sitting on the cold asphalt of Amagerbrogade and then confined them in the so-called climate prison at Retortvej in Valby, it's based on the presumption that the 944 persons belong to the Black Bloc.

When the police on 16. December 2010 lost a civil action from 178 of the 944 arrested persons in the City Court, they immediately appealed the case to the High Court. Here they tried to convince the judges that there was a well-founded suspicion against the 944 persons. That they constituted a potential danger and therefore should be arrested for preventive purposes.

When I attended the court case in the High Court on 7. November 2011, the police were putting witnesses on the stand. It's a question of rendering it probable that The Black Bloc is so big that it justifies the 944 arrests.



The argument is two-sided:

On the one hand, a video is shown where a number of demonstrators change their clothes on the street close to the place where a couple of windows are smashed in the Bourse. The demonstrators change rapidly into black clothes, take part in the window smashing and then change back to clothes in other colours, thus disappearing in the crowd. The police estimates that 300-400 demonstrators change identity in this way in the middle of the demonstration. However, on the video film only 12-15 persons are seen.

On the other hand, aerial photos of the demonstration taken from a relatively great height are shown. With a stretch of the imagination these photos show that part of the demonstration is possibly dressed in black. The police have enlarged the photos and framed a particularly suspicious area in red. Then they have engaged a surveyor to calculate the size of this area based on buildings, street crossings etc.

By the way, this critical area is situated exactly out here at Torvegade between Knippelsbro and Christianshavns Torv.

Back at the Police Academy, they then make some tests where police trainees are positioned in close formation on previously surveyed areas corresponding to how closely people march in a demonstration. Based on these tests, it is possible to calculate how many demonstrators are located in the critical area within the red frame. According to police calculations, 1800 persons are thus located within the critical area, in the Black Bloc.

The two arguments are, paradoxically, diametrically opposed: Either the Black Bloc change their clothes on the way, and are only dressed in black for a short moment while they engage in an after all fairly limited amount of vandalization directed at 2 windows at the Bourse. Or they are dressed in black all the way and marching in close order across Christianshavns Torv on the way to new violent riots.

Now, the High Court rejected the arguments of the police, and the police lost the case on 25. January 2012. The Court determined that the arrest in question was illegal, made on far too slender suspicion.

However, the interesting thing here today is not so much the legal aspects of the case, whether the police win or

loose. The interesting thing is that the police arguments are based exclusively on purely aesthetic observations. The crucial point for them is who are dressed in what colour at which time? Are you dressed in black or are you not dressed in black?

Now, the colour black is in no way neutral – all of us who ordinarily wear black know that it means something. We also know fairly well what it means, what signals we are sending, when we wear black. But that it should be connected with a directly anti-social attitude is perhaps to draw the line too close.

Now, you could be tempted to believe that in this way I want to prove the quite extraordinary naivety, the hair-raising incompetence or the brutal black-or-white view of society or the Danish police. In no way is that my intention.

Even if you do not in any way approve of the acts of the police or their argumentation, you may well presume that the Black Bloc on some scale or other was present on 12. December 2009. Maybe the 944 persons arrested do not precisely make up the Black Bloc, but that the Black Bloc is engaging in militant action forms, there is really no doubt.

What I would like to illustrate with our small collective exercise here is rather that the aesthetic, in this case colour and the use of colour in public space, is one of the decisive agents in the game between police and demonstrators, played out around the ever more visual and performative protest movements of later years.

To illustrate that this theatre of the street is not only played by one side of the conflict – by a hugely aesthetically conscious generation of new protest movements worldwide – I'll finish this introduction with a quotation from the textbook "Operation", written by one of the grand old men of Danish police, Kai Vittrup:

**Kai Vittrup:**

"The technique of Show of Force should be carried through to its extreme consequence. Thus all the movements, positions etc. of the police should be marked by discipline and a clear line of command. The colour of the uniforms and of the police vehicles should be the same, at least within the individual units. The police vehicles must be brought forward on line with or immediately behind the police positions, so that the size of these are

visually included in the picture and thus  
strengthens the effect...."<sup>248</sup>

**The artist/researcher:**

Thank you for joining in this small exercise. Thank you!

**THE END**

#### **Climate Justice Action (4.2.4.2.)<sup>249</sup>**

##### **1:**

From an activist point of view, one of the highlights in these past two weeks was the Climate Justice Action on Wednesday, December 16th. Planned for months and publicized and discussed for almost as long, the main purpose of this demonstration was to break through the fence and police barricades surrounding the COP15 area at Bella Center. Once inside, the aim was to meet with a group of like-minded delegates from all over the world and establish a People's Assembly. This Assembly would then discuss and change the agenda for COP15 – taking decisions in their own hands; the hands of the people.

The action is organized as two separate actions. The first, a legal demonstration called the Blue Bloc, set off at 8am from Tårnby Station, a couple of kilometers from Bella Center. The other, the Green Bloc, met an hour later at Ørestad Metro Station close to Bella Center. This second bloc is not legally announced as a demonstration, and is supposed to split into smaller groups and seek possible ways of entering the Bella Center area. Green Bloc is immediately surrounded and fenced in by the police, and after some running around the police arrested around 200 activists. Pacified.

The Blue Bloc, though, gathers more protesters and is estimated at around 2000 people as it moves slowly towards Bella Center. The police are following the demo very close and have a whole train of cars fencing off one side of the demo. There is constant protests over police intrusions into the demonstration from the organizers who are speaking from a truck in the mids of the demo. The demonstration is large, noisy and completely international. There is a wild, anarchistic joy in the air as the parade passes through the rainy gray suburbs.

When the demo arrives at Bella Center the futility of the plan to break through the heavy fences surrounding the COP15 is obvious. It's a heavy double fence with huge concrete bases and the presence of the police is massive. After an hour of pushing – the crowd of activists using their sheer number and the collective weight of bodies, trying to push their way through the police barricades - the police decide to cancel the demo and to clear the cross-road where the battle is taking place. They bring in dogs and a whole brigade of armored vehicles. Now a dramatic battle takes place, and there is violence from both sides and a lot of arrests. Standing on the fringes of the battle, I see a constant flow of hurt demonstrators – hurt by pepper-spray or hit by the police - who are brought out to the small groups of medical supporters who have been following the demo all day. The police manage to force the demo a few hundred meters down Vejlands Alle, the road in front of Bella Center, and keep it there, now fenced in on both sides by police barricading the street with their vehicles.

Here, on the street, the temporary People's Assembly is established on a huge carpet in red and blue. It is reported that a similar assembly is established inside the Bella Center Area by the supporters inside. Now a series of short speeches start, and there is a lively, positive atmosphere. After a while, the demonstration starts moving back to Copenhagen City, where it dissolves as darkness falls.

##### **2:**

The two main images that the Climate Justice Action tried to establish were the breaking-thru-the-barriers-of-the-COP15 and the People's Assembly. Both are to be seen as symbolic gestures in the sense that neither event was plausible, and the

People's Assembly could easily have been held in another place without police restrictions. So, the only reason to create those two situations was symbolic. Then how to describe the symbolic value of the two images:

The breaking-thru-the-barriers-action presents the desire and the power of the movements, not only to confront the police, but also to conquer the barrier. The barrier is a strong symbol of the undemocratic exclusiveness of COP15. It's only a conference for the selected few. If the demonstration had succeeded in breaking into Bella Center, it would have been a symbolic break through the symbolic barrier, opening up the conference for everybody, for the people, the multitude.

The People's Assembly is the symbolic realization of this new openness. And it symbolizes a democratic process, where everyone has the possibility to join. Even though the actual assembly would only have been shared by a few hundred people, it would have worked as a symbolic representation of an open, all-inclusive version of democracy.

What really happened was more blurry. The idea of breaking through the barrier was obviously unrealistic, as the police presence was far too overwhelming. The number of demonstrators was also too small to push through the barricades. So the push became a manifestation of confrontation with the police. Two opposing forces meeting in a clash. This is where my doubt comes in; if the purpose of the symbolic gesture was to break open COP15, the result was quite different. The event manifested an image of confrontation. This negative image is of course not only produced by the Climate Justice Action, but also by the police, maybe even mainly by the police. But I think it is a problem that the Climate Justice Action chose a symbolic gesture that had such a strong element of confrontation – mainly because this confrontation was what the Danish government and the police had been building up as a negative expectation in the media in the month preceding COP15.

At the same time, I am really astonished and suspicious about the way the police handled the situation: The sober solution would have been to wait out the activists' big push. There wasn't at any point any threat of anybody breaking through the defence line of the police. If they had just kept this line and waited that extra half an hour, the defining moment of Climate Justice Action would have blown over, and the push would have dissolved by itself. Instead, the police chose to close down the demo, threaten everybody with arrest and clear the street in front of the barricaded entrance to Bella Center. This – unnecessary - police action created turmoil and violence on both sides, but it seemed like a consciously violent act by the police forces. A show of force. And it could be interpreted as a strategic way of fulfilling the negative expectation of the violent activist. A strategic move that produces the image of the violent activist.

### **3 :**

I am still pondering over the Climate Justice Action last Wednesday: The second image that the Climate Justice Action created was The People's Assembly. It was realized in two places instead of one; inside the perimeter of Bella Center by the inside supporters of the action (removed by the police after only a short session), and outside on the street in front of Bella Center. In the street-version I took part in, a crowd of activists were sitting on a large blue/red circular carpet. A megaphone was passed around as a row of speakers from all over the world made short speeches addressing the climate justice themes. It was a beautiful moment full of sincerity and

joy. Even though this street-summit had only a couple of hundred participants, the inherent symbolic meaning was performed in a clear and poetic sense.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0ZzPI3Pc6s&NR=1>

This is a non-aggressive, positive image, and it is very hard to argue for attacking it. Looking at the whole Climate Justice Action in retrospect, I think it would have been a much stronger gesture to make this image the central focal point of the demonstration; instead of trying to push through the police defences – an obviously unrealistic quest – it would have been a stronger move to establish the People's Assembly immediately when the demo arrived at the perimeter of Bella Center. If the police had attacked such an event, they would have had a very hard time explaining why; they would have staged themselves as the fight-seeking aggressors I think they actually are.

In my view, this is what the fight is really about: Who controls the symbolic gestures of the day. Who gets their messages communicated in the proper sense. On December 16th this game ended unresolved. Neither the activists or the police seemed to gain the upper hand. What is unsettling, though, is that the police are an active player in this game. In a true democracy, police forces should be staying sober, neutral. The escalation of police power with an independent political agenda, we have seen over these last two weeks, raises an unavoidable question: Is Denmark now a police-state?

#### Active Time Revisited ( 4.2.4.3.)

'Active Time' is a complex and rich idea that fuels the inquiries into left-wing activism by the Danish anthropologist, Stine Krøijer. Active Time is a 'figuration of the future'. By engaging in certain collaborative activities – by being active – the activists create an 'interstice of time', a temporal rupture in the all-encompassing time of capitalism, Dead Time. The activities constituting Active Time have a double quality; they are Direct Action, in the sense that they have a direct purpose in the autonomous social space that Active Time creates, but the activity also represents a world-view, an attitude towards something. It is in this latter sense Active Time is political. It is a figuration of a world-view, another world. Figuration means that the actions defining the specific interstice of Active Time are being performed by the activists, and therefore, a part of the other world actually exists; exists in the moment it is being performed. The performance of an action is what brings this 'other world' to exist as a temporal interstice. When the action is over, the autonomous social space it created evaporates, and the participants slide back into Dead Time as individuals. It is important that Active Time constitutes a collective identity, a collective body. This new identity is a crucial part of the political difference created by Active Time. Krøijer calls Active Time a 'figuration of the future'. The other world represented in the world-view of Direct Activism is radically different from capitalism to such an extent that no plausible transition seems possible, no democratic reforms, not even a revolutionary take-over, seems possible. There are no visions of any possible progress. There is no near future. The only possibility seems to be the total destruction of capitalism. Then, after the destruction follows another world – in the far future. This is the apocalyptic aspects of Active Time. But, if progress is not possible, figuration is. In Active Time, aspects of the far-off future are brought to exist, here and now. The 'other world' comes alive, it exists in a time-pocket, as a gap in the Dead Time of capitalism.

My concept of the sense-event is very close to that of Active Time, and I have been deeply inspired by it. There are differences, though. It is especially the idea of the future I have problems with. It seems to me that the term 'future' in itself involves an idea of a linear progress of time that is then contradicted by the idea of simultaneously existing, but radically different, time-zones. To me it is an important point, also in political terms, that the other world that appears in Active Time exists now. It is present. It is even more present than the dead flow of consumerist time, defined by passivity and distance, when we are submerged in capitalism. Active Time constitutes a presence. Therefore it is possible. As a critique of capitalism, this possibility is crucial. We are told that there exists no possible alternative to capitalism, that there is nothing outside of capitalism. By inducing Active Time into Dead Time, Direct Action proves that a possible other world exists, that an alternative is possible. Now. In my slightly schematic formulation of the sense-event, there is also a double presence involved, but the image being performed exists simultaneously in the present and in an outstretched forever. Image-time is not in the future, it is a category of time out of this world. A kind of meta-time uniting past, present and future; stretching out as a layer over the continuously developing everyday-time.

In regard to describing the world-views of Direct Activism, though, certain features of Active Time can't be dismissed. The idea that Active Time is constituted by collective practice, and thereby creates a new collective identity, is fundamental in understanding the political and existential impact of the temporal ruptures created in

contemporary activism. The whole idea of looking at concepts of time as the difference-making tools is crucial. By this, Krøijer is able to conceptualize the very complex socio-political foundation of contemporary activism in a manner that departs from the politically charged clichés and mis-interpretations that is dominating the public debate on these issues.



#### **In a Stolen Moment (ALLOTRIA versus HYSKENSTRÆDE)( 4.2.4.4.)**

overwrite |ōvər'ritl

verb ( past -wrote; past part. -written) [ trans. ]

1 write on top of (other writing) : many names had been scratched out or overwritten.

- Computing destroy (data) or the data in (a file) by entering new data in its place : an entry stating who is allowed to overwrite the file.

- another term for overtyping .

2 write too elaborately or ornately : there is a tendency to overwrite their parts and fall into cliché.<sup>250</sup>

#### **We are the ones who decide, when we want to fight!**

On January 11th 1983, a large police force had gathered around the squatted house Allotria in Nørrebro, a former working-class area near the center of Copenhagen. The so-called BZ-movement was at that time large and had squatted around 6 or 7 houses in the same neighbourhood. Society at large were provoked and tired of this expanding counter-culture. Both police and squatters had been building up tension and prepared for the final struggle about the squatted houses. Allotria was selected as the first battlefield; it was here that the real fighting would start, and it was here that the symbolic fight would be fought. The police had gathered more than 1000 police officers - the largest police force aimed at one situation in Denmark since the Second World War. Large parts of the neighbourhood were sealed off from normal traffic and curious citizens. A team of voluntary medicals and a huge media delegation was in place. The rumour was that the police was prepared for violence on a scale never seen before, even fatal casualties could be the sad outcome of this monumental confrontation. What then happened was a completely unexpected rearranging of expected positions.

In the weeks up to the confrontation, the squatters in Allotria had been digging a tunnel from the house under the street and into the ground below the opposite house, where a plumber had his small workshop.

In the morning when the house was surrounded, the police lifted up a container with a group of armed, special forces to the third floor of Allotria, where they hoped to be able to access the house easily. The squatters hurried down to the basement. They filled the house with so-called stink bombs and hung a huge banner out on the front of the house: "We are the ones who decide, when we want to fight". Then they left the building through the narrow tunnel under the street. The astonished plumber and his wife let them pass out through the back of his workshop to the other side of the street, where a truck was waiting for them. Hidden in the back of the truck they passed out through the police fences and disappeared in the crowds of people gathering around the battlefield.

The police forces stormed the empty house from their container, using heavy amounts of teargas. Only after considerable time did they discover that no one was there to fight them. The gathering crowds outside became more and more amused, while the heavy police forces seemed ridiculous.

Already the same afternoon Allotria was demolished completely. In the following days, the squatters became the heroes of the Danish media. The successful escape from confrontation had completely turned around public opinion. They received

outspoken support from all levels of society, and the police was ridiculed and laughed at for a considerable time to come.<sup>251</sup>

The interesting aspect of this event – apart from its dramatic, riot-romancing elements – is how the act of retreating becomes the decisive move that turns around public opinion. The squatters are taking part in the building-up of tension on equal terms with the police force, but by leaving the conflict at the perfect strategic moment, they are winning the conflict, at least in the sense of public discourse. Activism is here turned into a carefully choreographed public theatre, where the entire police force is unwillingly included as actors on a stage they have somehow set for themselves.

Inside the movement the following time wasn't experienced as a victory – although public opinion was won, Allotria itself was lost, and in the months following, all other squatted houses in the area were conquered by police forces. So, in a paradoxical way, the great positive impact that the Allotria Tunnel made for the movement also marked a change; instead of being a fairly peaceful squatter movement, the BZ became the BZ-brigade: A far more militant and disillusioned movement that somehow lost momentum by the end of the 1980s.



Allotria 1983

### **Fight for your right to party!**

In the late evening of May 8th 2009 a so-called pirate-party blocked off a street in the central shopping district of Copenhagen. Gathering 4-500 participants by an effective sms-chain, the party continued for some hours, and in this short interval marked a new turn for the activist movements in Copenhagen.

Hyskenstræde is a small side street off the main pedestrian street, Strøget, in the old city center of Copenhagen. Strøget is the central shopping area in Denmark, and in this sense it is a strong symbol of both commercial capitalism and Danish tourism. It is on Strøget that all the international shopping chains and all the large and exclusive malls are situated; from Magasin du Nord to Hennes & Mauritz. The smaller sidestreets are narrow, the houses are old and beautiful. Shops are small, exclusive and expensive. The area has only a few people living there; it's more a zone for shopping and leisure; full of cafés, restaurants and cinemas.

By choosing Hyskenstræde as the site for the pirate-party, the organizers made a clear choice: Instead of operating mainly in Nørrebro or the farther outskirts of Copenhagen – in their own areas so to speak – it is now one of the main areas of capitalism that is being targeted.

The street was blocked off at one end by a van carrying a large sound system, and at the other end by a row of old oil-barrels with fires, marking the sealed-off area. In between these barriers loud electronic dance music was blasting, while the crowd was raving and spray-painting graffiti all over shop windows, walls and parked cars. A tall ladder was even provided, so that graffiti could be painted on the second floor level of the buildings. One or two cars were destroyed by people dancing on the roof or by being set afire. After some hours of heavy partying the event ebbed out, and a few real hardcore participants moved on to smash some shop windows and spread the vandalizing further into the city.

*During the whole event a large police force surrounded the pirate-party, but by order from the deputy-in-chief they remained calm, letting the raving and vandalizing continue, giving the participants a chance to 'let off steam'.*

### **Street Dancing part 3, communique no. 1 & 3**

In 3 short statements released a week after the pirate-party, the organizers try to explain.<sup>252</sup> They talk of pirates and of the end of politics; of Foucault and Carl Schmitt. They talk of vandalizing as sex, they talk of an orgy of vandalizing. They talk of being pissed off, of being bored by capitalism and of tearing down without building up. They talk of politics as rude, violent and unmediated. They talk about an explosive urge for freedom.

Not quoted but constantly roaming around between the lines is Hakim Bey and his TAZ – the temporary autonomous zone. In his text 'The Temporary Autonomous Zone' Hakim Bey starts out with a worldwide network of pirate societies in the 18th century, and from these 'pirate utopias' develops a proposal for a new political paradigm: TAZ. The phrase, temporary autonomous zone, more or less explains everything; it's about uprising being its own goal and "insurrections blossoming spontaneously into anarchist culture". It is NOT about revolution, but about creating (secret) unmediated zones of self-governed micro-societies.<sup>253</sup>

The Hyskenstræde Party is exemplary, classic TAZ. Temporary both in scope and in real time. Autonomous in all its illegal, anti-everything attitude. Zone in its apparently clean-cut slicing off a limited area out of capitalist normativity.

Hakim Bey even offers a plausible motto for the event: "'Fight for your right to party" is in fact not a parody of the radical struggle but a new manifestation of it."



Hyskenstræde 2009

### Nights in This City

In his book, 'Site-specific Art', the English theatre theoretician Nick Kaye describes what he calls 'writing over the city': In the performance 'Nights in This City' by the English theatre-group Forced Entertainment, a performer/tour guide takes an audience in a bus on a 'strange tour of various locations in Sheffield'. In an increasingly distracted and fictionalized narration of the city that the tour is driving through, a new storyline is added on top of the reality the audience is accustomed to. The city is being 'written over'. But the new story or text doesn't establish a new solid interpretation of the sites visited; instead the writing over suggests a 'moving on' through the sites – a half fictional, unstable, temporary relation to the city that enables a performative and loose (superficial) attitude, vibrating in layers of quotations and references to other sites and other cities. As Kaye quotes himself: "The space that we really live in is a kind of electronically mediated one. And it feels like one's landscape – the sources of one's images, the things that haunts you – are likely to be second, third, fourth-hand".<sup>254</sup>

Even though the idea of the 'writing over', and the graffiti done by the partying pirates in Hyskenstræde is an almost too obvious analogy – graffiti as written text on a public surface already inscribed with historic and established meaning – the transitive interpretation of the city offered by this idea could be a clue to understanding the event of the pirate-party. Instead of conquering the street, as the general interpretation seems to be, the party-pirates are only 'passing through' the site. But in the 'passing through' they are partly erasing the established interpretation of the site, giving it a new and ambiguous meaning.

### A fall into cliché

*During the whole event a large police force were surrounding the pirate-party, but by order from the deputy-in-chief, they remained calm, letting the party and the vandalizing continue, giving the participants a chance to 'let off steam'.*

Seen from the point of public opinion, though, it was the police officer-in-chief who made the most unexpected creative move that night. By remaining calm and not interfering with the wild and escalating vandalizing, the police forces managed to completely ridicule the party-pirates in society at large. By NOT engaging in violent confrontation, the main argument of the pirates was cancelled out; the claim that they are spied upon, controlled and held down by the police didn't come true. As they were allowed to rave, vandalize and even leave the scene unnoticed, all of a sudden they were the ones asked to explain and justify their acts. When morning broke,

public opinion in all its overwhelming entirety, from the far right, through mainstream and far into the radical left, united to condemn the 'autonomous bullies'. The old cliché of the irresponsible, spoiled middleclass youth gone beserk in untamed egoism became the predominant mode of interpretation.

Hyskenstræde and Allotria mirror each other in the sense that the act of retreating from conflict becomes the defining act of the event. Or at least it defines how public opinion about the event is created. To use the 'writing over' term: The act of retreating from conflict creates a narrative that overwrites all other narratives and becomes the main narrative signifying the event.

Even though the police force was scorned by politicians in the following days - "how could they sit passive and let obvious crime pass right in front of them?" - the turn of public opinion stems from this strategic passivity. By avoiding confrontation the police creates a scenario, where the partying pirates are cast in all too much light - an explosive urge for freedom falls into cliché.<sup>255</sup>

But Hyskenstræde also mirrors Allotria in the sense that seen from inside the movement, everything is seen from a different point of view:

### **Street Dancing part 3 commune no. 2**

We don't exist. Only the need of Denmark to find us exists, but we are not to be found at all.

YO YO YO. We would like to send a huge thanks to everyone who took part in one of the best parties that ever took place in the desolate heart of Copenhagen! We might have built your house, we might have taken care of your children, we might have sat behind the cash register in your supermarket, we might have written the chronicle in your newspaper, we might have made the pictures hanging on your wall or we might even have cleaned the buttocks of your grandparents. But right now we are not to be found – by anyone.

WHAT WHAT WHAT! We celebrate you! You were so wild. Your disciplinary dancing, your crawling and caps are our happiness! The other day we found some of those that also don't exist. And we created a party that don't exist. And we left some traces that were found – by someone.

SAY SAY SAY! We wanted to mess up the claustrophobic market for a while and we were spooning with you for two and a half hours, and that was really a nice spoon! The traces doesn't point to our quarters, to our working places or to who we are voting for. Or to who we don't vote for. The traces don't point to our parents or to our childhood. The traces don't point to our level of income or to our friends.

FRESH! FRESH FRESH! We really like you all. And we hope to see you around. The traces are crude lines. They prove that we had sex up against a street, down thru Strøget, thru the market. They trace 50 meters of an endless city

that don't exist, but is owned by someone else.

DEF DEF DEF! In a stolen moment owned by us that don't  
exist.<sup>256</sup>

## 5.1. Silent Stand



Kulturhuset Islands Brygge, Copenhagen, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

### Main:

- 5.1.1. Script
- 5.1.2. Performance: Kulturhuset Islands Brygge,  
Copenhagen, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012
- 5.1.3. Analysis

### Commentary:

- 5.1.4.1. Martyrs
- 5.1.4.2. 3 notes on Violence
- 5.1.4.3. Headless: Acéphale or Wiki?
- 5.1.4.4. Emotional Rationality

### Appendix:

- 5.1.5.1. Silent Stand, video documentation 35:49 min
- 3.1.5.2. Silent Stand, script first edition, pdf
- 3.1.5.4. The Eros Effect, pdf

### **Silent Stand (second edition) (5.1.1.)**

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The artist/researcher: Amira Jasmina Shalaby Jensen

Several Eye Witnesses, Someone On Facebook, The Truth Army, Wael Ghonim, Georgy Katsiaticas, We Are All Khaled Said, Omar Suleiman, Defend The Egyptian Revolution and Gilles Deleuze: Frans Jacobi

5 belly-dancers: Maizena, Linnea, Zasja, Jannie (Danmarks Mavedanserskole), Helle Winther (Zahfia).

Soundtrack and music: Lonely Boy Choir.

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## **Scene 1: SADNESS**

*Soundtrack 1: the sound of electronic waves fills the space as the audience find their seats.*

### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Well, my dear audience, welcome to this performance. During the next half an hour we are going to Egypt together. My name is Frans Jacobi and I am the artist/researcher. I will ask you to participate in this session in various ways which I hope you will do in the good-spirited manner it is meant.

What you are listening to here is the sound of waves breaking on the shore.<sup>257</sup> Well, actually its two different sets of waves and two different shores they break unto. And, of course, it's not just any shores in the world: it's the seashore of Alexandria and the banks of the river Nile in the middle of Cairo. The word Cairo – Al Qahira in Arabic – means 'the triumphant one',<sup>258</sup> and this is actually what this story is about: triumph!

But before we reach Cairo and the triumphant conclusion, we are going back to Alexandria, to the waterfront in the hot summer of 2010. Up on the curb by the balustrade along the street, a long line of people are standing, silently looking at the sea. They are all dressed in black, standing silent. It's a strange moment, a sudden calm in the middle of the chaotic traffic. Silence spreads and covers the entire esplanade. A calm, sad silence. Hundreds of black silhouettes, just standing still.

Today we are going to recreate that moment together. I know it's not Alexandra, and it is certainly not summer. But right here behind me we have another shoreline – the harbourfront of Copenhagen. The idea is to walk to the harbourfront right out here – all of us together – and stand in line with appr. 5 meters between each of us. You just have to stand still and look out over the water.

No action, no movement, just relax, standing there for a while. Silently looking at the water. Just let the silence sink into you, let the world in. This is called The Silent Stand. Afterwards, I will tell you more about this action and how it changed Egypt forever. So, lets try it. If you will please put on your coats again and follow me out. I will tell you when to stop and come back in.

*The artist/researcher guides the audience and all performers out to the waterfront. They spread out and*

*stand in line, silently. After around 5 minutes they are asked to go back in. They are guided to sit along the walls.*

## Scene 2: BLOOD

*Soundtrack 2: the sound of strange humming voices and shrieks fills the space. While the music is playing, Frans Jacobi takes a piece of fabric and forms a red pool in the center of the floor.*

### THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:

Thank you! That was perfect. Please sit or stand if you like. We just have to clear the middle of the floor here, thanks. What you see here on the floor is a pool of blood – or rather the image of a pool of blood. It is closely connected to the idea of the Silent Stand we have just performed.

We have now moved back into the city, into a small side-street, where we find a small internet café. This is where Khaled Said, a 28-year-old internet nerd, was arrested on June 6<sup>th</sup> 2010. His crime was that “he posted a video on the Internet of police officers sharing the spoils from a drug bust among themselves”.<sup>259</sup> He was on his way out of the café when two police officers grabbed him and dragged him away. He was then beaten to death.

*Frans Jacobi holds a piece of A4-paper with the text SEVERAL EYE WITNESSES up in front of his face. The text works like a mask. He is now SEVERAL EYE WITNESSES.*

### SEVERAL EYE WITNESSES:

“Khaled was taken by the two policemen into the entrance to a residential building, where he was brutally punched and kicked. The two policemen banged his head against the wall, the staircase and the entrance steps. Despite his calls for mercy and asking them why they are doing this to him, they continued their torture until he died.”<sup>260</sup>

### THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:

To commemorate their friend, Khaled Said, and to protest against the way he died, a small group of internet enthusiasts invented the Silent Stand. A group of people meets up by the waterfront or elsewhere in their city, dressed in black, and stand in a line with about 5 metres between each, facing the water. They stand silent for some time, maybe reading the Quran or the bible.<sup>261</sup>

The Silent Stand was designed to bypass the strict Egyptian emergency law that had been in place for 30 years, banning mass public assemblies; mass meaning 5 people or more. By keeping the 5 meters between them, the line of people in the silent stand does not become a public assembly. Signs, banners, slogans and other kinds

of direct communication are also banned by the emergency laws, but by using the strict silence, this ban is also not relevant. Or as someone commented on Facebook:

*Frans Jacobi holds up another A4-mask in front of his face.*

**SOMEONE ON FACEBOOK:**

"if speaking up only brings more violence, then silence will have to articulate our grief."<sup>262</sup>

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

I will take that quote again since it is so brilliant:

**SOMEONE ON FACEBOOK:**

"if speaking up only brings more violence, then silence will have to articulate our grief."

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Exactly by respecting the emergency laws, and inventing another way of acting accordingly, the silent stand circumvent these laws. The main goal is to express sadness:

*Jacobi becomes WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID.*

**WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID:**

"We will just stand silent, upset, wearing black clothes. Black because we are sad at what happened to our country, and at what is happening daily to our people."<sup>263</sup>

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Sadness is a fundamental, human feeling. Sadness cannot be forbidden. Sadness is also a feeling everybody knows and can connect to. Sadness connects everyone. This is wrong, and we are all sad.

The group behind the Silent Stands use Facebook to mobilize others to participate. Creating a Facebook group called 'WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID' they soon mobilize large crowds of people in Alexandria and all over Egypt to participate in the Silent Stands. At the third one on July 9<sup>th</sup>, hundreds of people gather along the coastal line of Alexandria and the banks of the river Nile in Cairo, and by the fourth and fifth – on July 23<sup>rd</sup> and August 20<sup>th</sup> – there are several thousand, standing 'silent, upset, wearing black'.<sup>264</sup>

The turning point comes, when two photos of Khaled Said is made public on Facebook.<sup>265</sup> The first one is a portrait of Khaled – just a normal young guy with a smart haircut

and a grey sweat-shirt. The second is a horrifying picture of Khaled's tortured face after he is killed. His face is completely demolished, one eye closed by the swollen eyelids, the lower lip split as if by a knife, several parts of the face swollen and his skull and chin looking almost amorphous. A pool of blood is seeping out beneath his head.

The 2 photos state the basic argument of the 'We are all Khaled Said'-group: Khaled was a human being like everyone else. But the way he was treated is inhuman. We are human. The way we are treated is inhuman. Human. Inhuman.

*Soundtrack 2 (again): the sound of strange humming voices and shrieks fills the space again.*

### Scene 3: REVOLUTION

#### THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:

Now my dear audience, if you will collaborate on this next part, it will be nice. Please come closer and help us spread out this fabric. The pool of blood has now become larger, it's a whole area now. I know it's not a real square, but maybe you can imagine it as a square, a public square. In this narrative, it stands in for Tahrir Square, the famous Freedom Square in Cairo. Please gather around it and imagine that you are there, we are there.

In the same sense, of course, these dancers are not the Egyptian people, but my translation of 'the crowd becoming the people'. It's now January 25th, 2011. We are in Tahrir Square in Cairo, and it's time for a revolution:

*The fabric is now extended to its full size, creating a kind of square in the middle of the space. There are 7 holes in the fabric. The belly-dancers find their places in these holes.*

*Soundtrack 3: Sounds of murmurs and voice-fragments echoing start in the background.*

*Frans Jacobi becomes THE TRUTH ARMY. The dancers perform a series of sign-like postures with their arms.*

#### THE TRUTH ARMY:

"Worldwide Revolution! 2011 - Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, The World. SHARE IF YOU SUPPORT THE REVOLUTIONS!!! The whole of humanity has finally woken up! We have had enough of the corruption and destruction of the evil illuminati! God willing, we will destroy this worldwide corruption and replace it with a system of sovereign nations working together to build up economies, with real money based on credit systems (NO DERIVATIVES), and placing the HUMAN SPIRIT as the bottom line, NOT fake money and consumption. We are too intelligent to buy into false notions of 'communism' or 'capitalism', these things don't exist as systems, they are only aspects. The only good government is that which protects and benefits The People, anything contrary is illegitimate. PEOPLE OF THE WORLD UNITE!!! WE DON'T NEED THE ILLUMINATI!!! WE DON'T WANT THEIR NEW WORLD ORDER OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION!!! WE ARE HUMAN BEINGS!!! WE ARE CREATED BY GOD WITH A PURPOSE!!! LET US UNITE AGAINST OUR COMMON ENEMY AS ONE HUMANITY!!! VICTORY IS WITH THE BELIEVERS. MAY ALLAH REWARD YOU! PEACE!"<sup>266</sup>

#### *Soundtrack 4: The fanfares of revolution.*

*When the fanfares start, the dancers start an improvised slow belly-dance. The fabric is now being lifted up and down by the audience, so they see the dancers from over the fabric and under the fabric at various times.*

*After a while, the music changes to a single instrument, and the fabric is kept on the floor. The artist/researcher starts talking while the dancers are continuing their dance.*

#### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

The revolution starts January 25th 2011. It's like an ongoing explosion of fearless engagement. Thousands and other thousands of new protesters swarm into Tahrir Square, to be part of the uprising. The movement is now consisting of a whole range of independent groups and persons. Even though the different groups have completely different agendas, they act with sober restraint.

Even the Muslim Brotherhood – feared by the whole European elite for possibly taking over with a new fundamentalist regime – refrain from taking the leadership or pushing their own agenda. "This is an uprising searching for a leader" as AlJazeera is repeating over and over again scanning Tahrir Square for possible candidates. But they are wrong: this revolution is headless, there is no leader.

Wael Ghonim is one of the two administrators of the "We are all Khaled Said"-facebook page. In an interview on the CBS talkshow 60minutes he states:

*Frans Jacobi becomes WHAEL GHONIM.*

#### **WHAEL GHONIM:**

"Our revolution is like Wikipedia, okay? Everyone is contributing content, but you don't know the names of the people contributing the content. This is exactly what happened. Revolution 2.0 in Egypt was exactly the same. Everyone contributing small pieces, bits and pieces. We drew this whole picture of a revolution. And no one is the hero in that picture."<sup>267</sup>

#### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

But if there is no direct leadership and still more and more people participating, how does the movement develop? How are decisions taken and how is the correlated, highly disciplined and extremely focussed attitude of

non-violence kept? How do these millions of individuals and a seemingly dispersed bunch of small activist groups suddenly – in one day – become one? How do the masses become 'the people'? Overnight and out of the blue?

The American sociologist, Georgy Katsiaficas, has invented the term 'the Eros Effect' to describe such a development. Yes, its not a joke, he actually calls it 'the Eros Effect':

*Frans Jacobi becomes GEORGY KATSIAFICAS.*

**GEORGY KATSIAFICAS:**

"Essentially, the Eros Effect refers to the transcendental qualities of social movements, to what occurs in moments of suddenly popular social upheavals which dramatically transform established social orders. ... the Eros Effect occurs in moments when the basic assumptions of a society –... the authority of the government, the hierarchy...- vanish overnight. During moments of the Eros Effect, popular movements not only imagine a new way of life and a different social reality, but millions of people live according to transformed norms, values, and beliefs."<sup>268</sup>

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

For Katsiaficas, the Eros Effect transforms the normal individual self-interest into what he calls species-interest. Here, the instinctual need for freedom becomes a new collective identity. In Tharir Square, the opressed masses are now becoming human, human for the first time in 30 years, and the whole state system of repression is fought back. And soon, very soon, everyone is actually participating. High and low, rich and poor, young and old, woman and man, Christian and Muslim, even the secular, join in.

After a couple of days of dramatic street-fighting with the police forces, Tahrir Square is taken. People are now staying overnight, living on the square. Tahrir becomes an image, a model of a possible society. A model of public space. Truly public, open for all. It is the power of this image that overthrows the regime. It is not so important if the number of protesters are 1 million or half a million, as soon as the true symbolic image of Tahrir Square is established, all resistance becomes futile.

The image of open participatory democracy as performed by the millions in Tahrir Square is so strong that no one can resist it. It's a new icon of liberation. And as long



as the revolution can hold Tahrir Square, this image radiates out to the rest of Egypt, to the rest of the Middle-East, to the whole wide world. Tahrir becomes the center of the world, a new site of hope in bleak and dark times.

*Jacobi becomes WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID.*

**WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID:**

"Welcome to the Republic of Tahrir Square, Cairo: In addition to Freedom of Speech & Democracy for all, we have the following FREE services: hospital, daily newspaper, kitchen for hot meals, security, artists' corner, singing & slogans club, poetry competitions, border control, signs, exhibition & political brainstorming sessions. Not only that, a free school has just started where several languages are taught free."<sup>269</sup>

*Soundtrack 4 (again): The fanfares of revolution at full blast again. The fabric is lifted up and down again while the dancers continue dancing.*

*All of a sudden the music is cut and the dancers freeze. The fabric is lowered.*

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

On February 11<sup>th</sup> in the evening, there is a short communiqué by the vice-president, Omar Suleiman, on national TV:

*Frans Jacobi becomes OMAR SULEIMAN*

**OMAR SULEIMAN:**

"In the name of Allah the most gracious, the most merciful. My fellow citizens, in the difficult circumstances our country is experiencing, President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak has decided to give up the office of the President of the Republic and instructed the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces to manage the affairs of the country. May God guide our steps."<sup>270</sup>

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#### **Scene 4: POSTSCRIPT**

##### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER:**

Dear audience, if you like, please sit with us here on the fabric. Lets share this last part together. Yes, thank you, thats nice.

*Soundtrack 5: A dark drone starts and continues under the last spoken part. The audiences sits down on the fabric with the dancers. The artist/researchers also sits down with them.*

##### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER (sitting):**

We did this performance the first time in May, a few months after the defeat of Hosni Mubarak, and what we thought was the new beginning of Egyptian democracy. Back then we ended the performance here on an optimistic, exhilarated note, inviting everyone to dance with us to an Arab disco beat. Back then, the triumphant feeling of revolution was still fresh and magical.

Now, when I am writing this last and new part, it is December 20th, still 2011. Tahrir Square is again a fierce battleground of fighting between demonstrators and the police forces of the new Egyptian regime. The recent and still ongoing elections might lead to a new democratic parliament, but the imprisonment and torture of critical opponents continue, even more violently this time. Hosni Mubarak and his close family have disappeared, but the brutal police state continues.

Again, I receive horrifying messages like this:

*Jacobi becomes DEFEND THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION.*

##### **DEFEND THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION(sitting):**

"A woman protesting against General Tantawi, head of the military committee, was detained and then tortured by having the letter "T" in English carved into her scalp with knives."

"Hassan Mostafa, an engineering student, was killed today. He bled for 50 metres as he was carried away from the front line."<sup>271</sup>

##### **THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER(sitting):**

The revolution is not won yet. The struggle continues. The outcome is still unclear. Whatever happens, it might be worth remembering the words of the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, writing on the Iranian revolution that took a dramatic and disappointing turn after the

revolutionary take-over:

*Jacobi becomes GILLES DELEUZE.*

**GILLES DELEUZE** (*sitting*):

"They say revolutions turn out badly. But they're constantly confusing two different things, the way revolutions turn out historically and people's revolutionary becoming."<sup>272</sup>

**THE ARTIST/RESEARCHER** (*sitting*):

Revolutionary becoming. The people's revolutionary becoming. What ever happens in Egypt, the military leaders cannot take that away from the protesters. They risked everything and became a revolution. They became the people. In Tahrir Square they even created a new worldwide matrix of freedom and real democracy.

During the year now gone since January 25<sup>th</sup> the concept of the occupied square as a platform for performing peaceful revolt has spread, not only throughout the Arab world, but also throughout the Western capitals.

In Spain, 'los indignados' occupied the Puerta del Sol in Madrid and other main squares in other large cities for 4 weeks from May 15<sup>th</sup> and onwards. 'los indignados' evolved rapidly and mobilised large crowds all over Spain, protesting against neo-liberal capitalism, welfare cuts and political corruption.

In the US, the Occupy Wall Street movement spread like a nationwide wildfire from New York City to all large cities, also using occupied public space as their main symbolic platform. Here, the occupation of Liberty Plaza became the inspiration for an unlimited number of similar protest camps all over the Western world, uniting an unprecedented number of critical citizens in protest against crisis-ridden neo-liberal capitalism.

Khaled Said didn't die for nothing; the outrage over his death became a spark that ignited a global revolutionary becoming. Tahrir Square has become a matrix for all kinds of protests. An icon that can be performed by anyone, anywhere.

My dear audience! Thanks for your patience! And thanks for your participation!

**THE END**<sup>273</sup>

### **Analysis (5.1.3.)**

#### **Note**

'Silent Stand' was done twice. The first version, done at 'Samtalekøkkenet' in Copenhagen, was quite unsatisfying and had a variety of unfortunate features. 'Samtalekøkkenet' is a regular forum for performance. Each month, an evening is organized with 3 or 4 performances, each followed by a discussion. In the first season, the program attracted large audiences, and the discussions were always lively and serious. I thought this the perfect platform for presenting a 'research-performance' like 'Silent Stand'. It was done only a few months after the occupation of Tahrir Square, and I was working filled with fascination and enthusiasm for the, at that point, very recent events. I was also keen to explore the possibilities of the voice-over to the full. The result was a very long performance with a very long narrative by the voice-over, dominating and controlling the action. I tried to tell the whole story of the Egyptian revolution with as many details as possible. This gave the 7 scenes a character of illustration, and the interaction with the audience was closer to manipulation than to participation.

The discussion following the performance was interesting, though. I was criticized up front for some of the problems I just mentioned, especially for manipulating the audience. Also, the fact that I chose not to go to Cairo, but did my research on the internet instead was debated at full length. The main part of the discussion, though, turned into a discussion of art-research in general, and whether the format I was using was performance at all. It had more to do with theatre, it was argued.

If the performance was somehow a failure, the discussion gave some very important clues for the next series of performances. To have a discussion following each performance on the basis of the sense-event the audience had just been a part of, could be a tool for attaining the reactions of the audience, and discussing the themes inherent in each performance on the basis of my 'thinking with the senses'; Another realization was that if I wanted a discussion of the content and of the way in which this content was thematized in the sense-event, I might have to go beyond the art-scene and try to connect to audiences much closer to the themes of each performance. This led me to the long meandering search described in the commentary 'Searching for an Audience' (3.3.4.1.)

The unresolved, unsatisfactory state of 'Silent Stand' urged me to redo it in another setting. This became possible 7 months later in January 2012 at Islands Brygge Kulturhus by the harbourfront in Copenhagen.

#### **Analysis**

In 'Silent Stand' (second version) a fundamental aspect of this project as a whole is put to the test as collaborative performance. The possibility of creating images as collective performances.

It is one of the strongest features in the Egyptian uprising – here, the scattered crowds came together and through the performance of collective acts of disobedience, they created strong critical images. By participating in these actions, the scattered crowds became 'the people'. There is a parallel, if not quite identical, process here. As the participants act, they are creating an image. This image is becoming. At the same time, the participants are becoming 'the people'. So either it

is a double becoming, or it is simply the same thing. Becoming image and a collective subject, simultaneously.

This was what we wanted to test with this version of 'Silent Stand'. Simple, physical presence and participation are crucial here. By being present and part of the group, one contributes to the performance of the image.

The audience is asked to participate in 3 different scenes:

- 1: The re-enactment of the original Silent Stand, by standing in a line with 5 meters between each person, facing the water, out on the harbourfront, outside of Kulturhuset.
- 2: The poetic translation of Tahrir Square into a floating carpet with belly-dancers, where the audience is gathered around the fabric lifting it up and down as the dancers move in slow ornamental figures.
- 3: Sitting together on the fabric as a group listening to the sad post-script. Also, here it is a representation of Tahrir Square, but in another more naturalistic manner.

In between these collective acts are interspersed sections with the artist/researcher explaining, with music and a small illustrative part, where a rough image of a pool of blood is formed out of the fabric.

The first action works well. The meditative effect of standing silent looking at the water for a while creates a serious attentiveness that is felt all through the rest of the performance. Standing in the line also separates the participants from other people strolling along the harbourfront, and one immediately feels like performing an image for others to see. Even from afar, this image is a simple, but marked presence in the harbour landscape.

In a constructed re-enactment like this, far far away from the tense context of the uprising in Egypt, the 'revolutionary becoming' is not possible to test. It is a collective body emerging under extreme pressure, and it would be pathetic to attempt imitating such a becoming in a safe situation as this. The distance involved is, on the contrary, included in the performance, as a layer of 'kitsch'.

The inclusion of 5 belly-dancers marks a touristic distance. Here in the West, the belly-dancer is one of the absolutely kitsch icons of Arab culture. Using this figure as an illustration of 'revolutionary youth', moreover represented by 5 Danish women, creates a kind of silly situation contrasting the quite heavy content of the performance. By this I hope to give the audience a chance to both think about the social forces at stake in the real uprising and at the same time to take part in a playful recreation of some of the inherent aspects. The belly-dancers are not dressed in their usual dance-gear, but are also in black, and they are improvising a dance to a completely different kind of music. This combined with the fabric floating in the air around them create a poetic dreamlike atmosphere. Of course, it's not possible to create 'revolutionary becoming' as a staged emotion, but by playing with the thought, it might be possible to give a hint of what it would be like.

In the discussion following the first version of Silent Stand at 'Samtalekøkkenet' in Copenhagen, one of the topics was my position in relation to the revolution in Egypt: Had I been travelling there? Had I been in Tahrir Square myself? As I stated, I cancelled my trip to Cairo at the last minute and decided to stay at a distance, looking at events from afar. Trying to make this distance a part of my inquiries and of my analysis. Even if I had been there on Tahrir in the mids of events, I would still have been a tourist; the distance isn't geographical, it's a cultural distance. First of all it's a distance in urgency. There is an urgency in the Egyptian uprising that we as Westerners can sympathize with, but we can never identify with it.

The kitsch gaze that the figure of the belly-dancers introduces is an attempt at formulating the distance from which I am looking at Tahrir Square.

Here, in the second version with a smaller audience, where everyone in the room could take part in lifting the fabric up and down, a much more intense feeling of being together, collaborating, evolved. That everyone was gathered around the fabric, around the dancers, looking at each other, over the fabric, under the fabric, created a playful atmosphere of doing this together. Everyone were participants, and no one – apart from the two cameramen - were watching the situation from the outside.

The performance took place a Sunday afternoon, and several members of the audience had brought their children. This added to the relaxed atmosphere, and especially the dance-section was fun because the children also took part in lifting the fabric up and down.

This playfulness was an important part of the experience. It dissolved the often sceptical criticism in an art audience that sometimes makes participatory art frustrating. Here, the relaxed atmosphere made everyone participate on equal terms. When scripting these 3 situations, it was important to create situations that would be open for participation in an easy and friendly way – this was the lesson I learned from the first version, where this obviously didn't work.

As Joen Vedel, an artist/activist, commented in the discussion afterwards:

"This clearly shows one of the most important aspects of activism. It is only by physically taking part a person contributes to the struggle. What we did here was to do 3 things together. Being there. Together."<sup>274</sup>

Being there is crucial; and this is such a simple gesture that it is open for everyone to do. By being there one becomes part of the action, and one becomes part of the collective body.

Here, on this relaxed Sunday afternoon, there is of course no risk involved at all. This is an exercise, organized for contemplation and reflection. In Egypt, being there was an enormous risk. By being there, the participants risked being beaten up, arrested, even tortured and killed. As we saw in 'On Water', civil disobedience – breaking the law - radicalizes an action. The engagement becomes serious to a degree that makes it an argument in itself. In the Egyptian examples we are dealing with in this performance, the risks taken can be fatal. In Northern Europe, the frequent reference to martyrdom and the pathos connected with the 'wall of martyrs' for instance, can be hard to grasp. Seen as a consequence of the immense risk taken by the fearless

crowds of activists, the concept of martyrdom becomes an integral part of Direct Action.<sup>275</sup>

The post-script section is where the emotional aspects of the Egyptian uprisings are addressed most directly. An interesting thing about the mobilization of the Egyptian people was that it was done by very simple political demands, but with maximum emotional impact. Many of the actions leading up to the occupation of Tahrir Square were organized as platforms for emotional expression. The sadness expressed in the Silent Stands, the anger expressed on Anger Day.<sup>276</sup> Here, the last scene becomes a stark contrast to the joyous celebration of the dance scene. The artist/researcher sits down on the fabric, and takes on a pathos and a sincere direct tone, different from the first part. This tone is matched by the fact that everyone is now sitting together on the fabric, creating an intimate social space. Again, everyone sat down and took part in creating this last image.

It is important to note that this was not an image in the sense of a composition of people to be looked upon from the outside. It was rather an emotional state that everyone participated in performing, simply by sitting there together, in mutual sincerity, listening to the artist/researcher. This kind of image is seen, or rather experienced, from within. The same goes for the dance-scene; in this second version it became a situation to be experienced from within. This is performed quite literally – by gathering around the fabric, a ring is established, and the action can only be fully perceived from inside this ring. In the video documentation, one can see how the audience turn their back to the camera and to the rest of the room. From the outside position, one would only see the line of backs.

The first scene, the re-enactment of the Silent Stand, works as an image seen from the outside as well, as does the iconic image of the Egyptian people occupying Tahrir Square. Also, here it is important to note that these images have an urgency and intensity as they are being performed. They can be reproduced, on video, photo or television, but the moment that really matters is when they are being performed. Again, it is the crucial risk taken by the anonymous activists by being present, performing their protest physically, for real, that makes all the difference.

Paradoxically, this relaxed, loose, second version of 'Silent Stand' came much closer to the emotional re-enactment of collective commitment that was my intention. It was obviously a decisive factor that everyone in the audience was able to, and actually did, participate. The intended collectivity became real – even if only lasting for a short while.

## **Discussion**

The ensuing discussion was agitated and took us for long stretches to Egypt in a debate on Egyptian classes and their abilities and interests in engaging in the uprising and the following reforms of society. Of direct interest to my project was when the Egyptian activist, Amany Turk, reported on how she had felt an emotional rush by participating in the direct confrontations with the Egyptian police. How in these situations she forgot her normal role as a mother and her other duties and took risks in the confrontations that she would never have imagined herself taking. This corresponds with the idea of 'apotheosis of revolt' we discussed in 'Revolution By Night'. Also, Jon Vedel's statement as quoted above connected to this – it is by the direct presence of the body, in the performance of various collective gestures, or even collective emotions, that politics are produced.

Researching into the Egyptian uprising has been an emotional experience. In a relaxed and quiet manner, this second version of 'Silent Stand' and the discussion afterwards became a moving emotional experience too.



#### **Martyrs (5.1.4.1.)**

If one accepts the death of Khaled Said and the invention of the Silent Stand and the two facebook groups (Arab and English) as the beginning of the events that led to the Egyptian revolution<sup>277</sup>, it is highly interesting to note that the first two successful uprisings in the Middle East – Tunisia and Egypt – both started with performative, symbolic acts. On December 17th 2010, the young Tunisian fruit vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, was harassed by a police officer; frustrated and desperate he went to the square in front of the local governor's office and set fire to himself. This suicidal sacrifice was the spark that set off the Tunisian uprisings that led to the flight of President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali on January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011. The act of burning himself spoke directly in a visual symbolic language without words; without any political statement or ideological framework. The sheer desperation of this act was immediately understood by a large crowd of people in his hometown, Sidi Bouzid, and the demonstrations and riots that eventually led to the downfall of the Tunisian regime started. The communication Mohamed Bouazizi makes with his act is emotional and symbolic. It is also – as is the Silent Stand – free of any direct political meaning or message. It is a basic human statement, a statement open for everyone to connect to. Here it is not sadness, but frustration and desperation that is being expressed. Mohamed Bouazizi had just lost his license to sell fruit at the local market, and was facing unemployment and a desperate lack of money to sustain his family with. Burning himself to death on the city square was a pure act of desperation, but to his followers it became a symbolic act expressing all the anger and frustration of the poor, unemployed Tunisian masses. His act became an icon for the revolution.<sup>278</sup>

Since the early 1960s, there has been a widespread international tradition of self-immolation, as the act of setting fire to oneself in public is also called. Starting with some Vietnamese Buddhist monks protesting the Vietnam war, it became a very effective political tool. As, for instance, the 1969 suicide of Czech student, Jan Palach, protesting the Soviet occupation of his country that became an inspiration for political activists all over the world. In the recent uprisings in the Middle East, Mohamed Bouazizi's self-immolation has inspired a whole wave of similar self-immolation protests.

Since no one else is hurt in this act, it is a very strong symbol of self-sacrifice for the common cause.

“Self-immolations are often public, dramatic, political, and thus newsworthy. They can be seen as a type of altruistic suicides for the collective cause. Unlike suicide attacks, self-immolations are not intended to inflict physical harm or material damage. They attract attention and become glorified as martyrdom – it maximizes pain and personal suffering, but does not guarantee death.”<sup>279</sup>

Both Mohamed Bouazizi and Khaled Said became ‘martyrs of the revolution’. In the new Middle East uprisings, there is already a whole range of new ‘martyrs’, and the idea of fighting for the revolution ‘until death if necessary’ is widespread and occurs again and again in interviews and statements from central actors in the uprisings. As performance, the self-immolation is irreversible: the act only works, if it is a real sacrifice. The image is only conveyed, if it is performed for real. The performance transforms the performer from a real person to an image. An icon.

Self-immolation is a symbolic act, performed in the real with fatal consequences. In a sense it reverses the argument made in the commentary 'Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance' (1.1.4.2)<sup>280</sup>, where the Black Bloc argues for destruction of private property as a 'shattering and exorcising of the capitalist spell'. Here too, a performative act in the real has an extra layer of symbolic meaning:

"The real action can only be justified because it has a symbolic meaning, and the symbolic meaning only has an effect when it is actualized by being performed in the real."

The self-immolation is strictly non-violent though; as are the whole range of activist strategies employed in the Egyptian and Tunesian uprisings. In contrast to the Black Bloc strategies, the risks taken and the violence inherent in these actions are always something that the activists expose themselves to.

This willingness to sacrifice oneself for the common cause – in all its fatal consequences – can be hard to grasp as a secular Westerner, but as also described in connection with the 1989 Democracy Movement, where thousands of hunger-strikers pushed themselves close to death, self-inflicted martyrdom is a key factor in the mobilization of the masses, seen both in China 1989 and in the Arab Spring 2010/11. The fact that someone is willing to sacrifice their lives for the common good, is a testimony to the truth. An argument performed as an irreversible act of self-immolation is indisputable; in contrast to the intricate corruption of the political elite, such acts with fatal consequences are conveyed as pure and truthful on behalf of the suffering masses.

There is a close connection, but also a sharp demarcation, between this phenomenon of self-immolation and the fundamentalist Islamic tradition of suicide bombers. Both the self-immolator and the suicide bomber are seen as martyrs, but whereas the suicide bomber also inflicts damage and death to others - often innocent civilians – the self-immolator only takes his own life. The tradition of self-immolation doesn't spring from a specific religion – it is not especially connected to Islam as one would assume at first glance – but as described above from a variety of political events in the recent history of global politics.

The willingness to take extreme risks for the sake of the common cause, and the strict non-violence accompanying it, has to be seen as a reaction to the extreme brutality of especially the Egyptian regime. The famous wall-of martyrs on Tahrir Square is not only testimony to the brutality of the regime – to how many were killed by the police forces – but also to the extreme risks taken by the activists for the sake of the common cause. As Mohamed Bouazizi and Khaled Said, these activists become 'martyrs of the revolution'. In martyrdom they are purified. They become icons. They become rolemodels for the masses of illiterate poor, who can identify directly - on a basic emotional level – with these exemplary heroes.

### 3 notes on Violence (5.1.4.2.)

#### **Extraordinary Renditions<sup>281</sup>**

In the aftermath of Khaled Said's brutal killing in the autumn of 2010, another 4 people are beaten or tortured to death by the Egyptian authorities: Mohamed Ali Darweesh, Elsayed Belal, Mostafa Atteya, Ahmed Shaaban.<sup>282</sup> The Egyptian state is notorious for its brutal and inhuman treatment of its enemies. By using the state of emergency laws - in function for 29 years - the government and the police forces keep up a hard-core regime of surveillance, arrests, torture and killing that oppresses all legal opposition.

Although Western governments have been quick to declare their support to human rights groups and democratic movements in the Middle East, a straight line goes from the AbuGhraib scandal in Iraq to the killing of Khaled Said and the other dead torture victims in the last desperate autumn of Hosni Mubarak's regime. When the systematic use of torture by the US military in Iraq and Afghanistan – in the prison-cells of AbuGhraib, Guantanamo and Bagram – was exposed in the international media around 2004/05, the 'coalition of the willing' had to find other ways of interrogating the prisoners taken during the ongoing war on terror. Building up an intricate web of secret, so-called 'renditions', a vast number of prisoners, or illegal combatants, as they are called, are transported around the world by the CIA, to secret prisons in a number of countries in the former eastern Europe and in the Middle East.<sup>283</sup> Here they are being interrogated by local officials who have no problems in using the whole palette of techniques that in other countries are labeled as torture. Egypt was one of the key knots in this network. In the government of Mubarak, CIA was always able to find a reliable partner when torture was needed.<sup>284</sup> The rendition program was secret, but as recent documents revealed by WikiLeaks<sup>285</sup> have probed, a range of European countries more or less willingly let the secret airplanes of CIA cross through their airspace and use their airports. In this sense, the US and their willing coalition did not only work with Mubarak in the light of day as a close Mid-Eastern ally, they were also with him down in the dark torture-cells; paying him off to do the dirty work for them. Encouraging and expanding the business.

#### **Image Politics**

The Norwegian writer, Inger Elisabeth Hansen, has described how the Egyptian regime all of a sudden was seen naked at Tahrir Square. How the up till then 'secret' procedures of humiliation and torture in an instance was caught in the spotlight of the new ever present media:

"They, the security police, did what they were asked to do and what they had always done: They acted the security police in a dictatorship, they shot, kidnapped, and tortured. But on Tahrir Square they were seen. With all the new media focussed on them as a facet-eyed mirror, they couldn't recognize the image of themselves. They lost dignity, respect and fiction. The leaders of the security police were wrong, they miscalculated the audience. They looked outdated, as without any kind of communicational strategy, completely out of time."<sup>286</sup>

By acting with strict non-violence, the activists in Tahrir Square are able to stage their counterpart as the aggressors. In the new sequence of images being performed directly in the global media, the Egyptian security police are revealed as brutal and unjust.

It is interesting to note that while the 'secret' Egyptian praxis of torture was generally known and accepted before 2010 – the Western governments even used the Egyptians to conduct their own 'extraordinary renderings' – it is only when the Egyptians themselves reveal the monstrosities and risk their lives protesting against it, that the Western democracies – and the Western public voices – react. My point is that it is the imagery performed by the Egyptian activists that turns public opinion, not only in Egypt, but on a global scale. The two images of Khaled Said (before and after his brutal killing), the protests performed in the Silent Stands, on Anger Day and finally on Tahrir Square are by far more convincing than any amount of UN reports, Amnesty petitions and political debates. The images and the radical risks taken in performing these images are what turns the tables and creates the paradigmatic shift in Mid-Eastern politics, now known as the 'Arab Spring'.

### **Non-violence**

The Egyptian opposition consists of a variety of different groups and smaller movements, some then active for years. The most important ones are assembled under the umbrella of 'Coalition of the Youth of the Revolution': We are all Khaled Said, April 6 Youth Movement, Kefaya, Muslim Brotherhood, National Association for Change (led by Mohamed ElBaradei), RS = Revolutionary Socialists. It is generally acknowledged that the April 6 Youth Movement has been one of the deciding factors of the revolution, central in galvanizing the masses to take action. Starting out as a support group for a workers' strike in the spring of 2008, they were from the beginning using facebook, flickr and twitter to mobilize large crowds of people outside the traditional working-class cadres. Already then, in the first round of strikes, they were promoting the idea of wearing black which would later be a central feature of the Silent Stands. April 6 Youth Movement is one of the main reasons that the uprising in Cairo in general and on Tahrir Square especially was so extremely well-organized. They applied and kept to a strategy of strict non-violence, setting up check-points at the entrances to Tahrir Square to prevent armed protesters to steal the focus. Even when the protests were attacked by the counter-revolutionary gangs of Mubarak supporters on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, the answer was surprisingly non-violent. Even though April 6 leaders played this central role, they continuously downplay their role and praise the uprisings as 'headless', just as Wael Ghonim, the administrator of the 'We Are All Khaled Said' website (see note 9 and 10).

In the February 9th episode of 'People & Power' on AljazeeraEnglish called 'Egypt: Seeds of Change' by Elizabeth Jones, there is an interview with Srdja Popovic of the Serbian Otpor Movement who is in Cairo to supervise the April 6 Youth Movement on riot strategies:

"One of the key things is to understand that non-violence struggle is a form of warfare. Non-violence discipline, this is key. Because violence contaminates your movement. And creates your opponents' excuse for using police and military forces, also there is this big problem with media and violence. If you have a march of one hundred thousand people and one single idiot throwing a stone, he is going to be the star of the day. And this is how media operate, so you need to avoid this violence in many different ways, and this is specifically crucial at this stage."<sup>287</sup>

This is exactly what the April 6 Youth Movement is so brilliant at: guiding the masses and keeping a strict non-violence discipline. The Egyptian movements differ from

many of the Scandinavian movements I have investigated in this sense. Here on Tahrir Square, it is the activists who have control of the images projected via the international media. The Egyptian regime looks disorganized, brutal and unfocussed time and time again. To a large extent, the success of the revolution is a consequence of the powerful 'image-politics' of the activist movement.

In the 3 weeks following January 25th, the struggle of images turns Cairo upside down in the sense that the control and guidance of public space and security is deliberately left unguarded by the police forces in an attempt to designate the consequences of the uprising as chaos and turmoil. The regime even organizes gangs of thugs and criminals to raid the now uncontrolled areas of the city, instigating the chaos needed to portray the uprisings as turmoil and insecurity. These miscalculated and ruthless attempts at staging the opponent – the rapidly growing protest movement – as violent aggressors fail and instead add to the image of the regime as brutal and inhuman.

At the same time, the April 6 Youth Movement and other parts of the new movement manage to secure Tahrir Square, monitor every single person entering the square for weapons and create a peaceful protest with a mass of a million. Even when the protesters in Tahrir Square are attacked directly on February 2nd, they manage to keep the defense of the square relatively peaceful. In contrast to the regime, the new movement are very successful in staging the opponent as aggressors.

The strange images of thugs on camels riding directly into the masses, beating up everyone around with metal-bars, still stand as an enigmatic feature of this uneven struggle for the image politics of Tahrir Square.

Inger Elisabeth Hansen calls Tahrir Square the next great icon of liberation after Che Guevara.<sup>288</sup> The monstrous conglomerate of torture, violence and severe dictatorship is the frame from which the new icon emerges. By performing a visionary mixture of strict non-violence, radical self-sacrifice and an expansive and uncontrollable use of social media, the new movement re-defines the meaning of liberation. Tahrir Square, the new icon of liberation, erases the old images of the Arab people as either Islamic fundamentalists or disillusioned, compliant supporters of dictatorship.

### Headless: Acéphale or Wiki? (5.1.4.3.)

Khaled Said is turned into a martyr or a legend, when his friends invent the Silent Stands and the Facebook-group "We are all Khaled Said". Khaled Said becomes an image, a symbolic figure. It is one of the extremely interesting and brilliant imaginative moves of this group of activists that they stage a dead person as their leader. His figure becomes a void to be filled with the emotions of the movement that evolves out of his death. His absence becomes a point of identification. It could have been me who was being killed. It could have happened to all of us. Because Khaled Said was so normal – 'so middle-class that all of us young educated Egyptians could immediately identify with him', as one of the 'We are all Khaled Said'-administrators Wael Ghonim states in an interview with on the CBS talkshow 60minutes<sup>289</sup> - he is open for everyone to identify with. Khaled Said is a passive figure, and because of this passivity it is impossible to criticize him. Because he is dead, he is untouchable.

Wael Ghonim and his still anonymous collaborator, are both anonymous all the way through the process, until Wael Ghonim is arrested during the first days of protest after January 25<sup>th</sup>.<sup>290</sup> Their anonymity has very real practical reasons; in the first long phase of protests, they will immediately be targeted and imprisoned if they go public as organizers of such protests. Later, after Tahrir Square is occupied and the revolutionary momentum has become a global factor, security isn't the prime aspect of their anonymity. Now, it is the headless character of the new movement that is symbolized by anonymity.

Of course there are persons who are more central to the events than others - Ahmad Maher of the April 6 Youth Movement, Wael Ghonim of We Are All Khaled Said and a whole range of other strong figures – but all downplay their personal roles and refrain from taking public leadership. This is an ideal democratic attitude, but it might also be a tool to overcome the stark ideological contrasts within the movement. Consisting of a very disparate myriad of organizations and smaller movements, from the religious Muslim Brotherhood to the secular socialists in RS (Revolutionary Socialists), the new movement spans an enormous political spectrum. Part of the gigantic mobilization of the masses at Tahrir Square must be explained by this miraculous ability to include and open up for almost any kind of political fractions in Egypt. In Tahrir, it is really everyone, 'high and low, rich and poor, young and old, woman and man, Christian and Muslim, even the secular', who joins in.

### Acéphale?

The concept of 'headless' refers to George Bataille who wrote about leaderless or headless secret societies, using the term 'acéphale'. Bataille was co-founder of the magazine 'Acéphale' and of an esoteric "secret society" with the same name. What actually went on in this secret society is rather unclear. Bataille only gives fragmented hints in his writings. *The Sacred Conspiracy*, which prefaced the first issue of *Acéphale*, contained an appeal *to go beyond the world*:

"It is time to abandon the world of the civilized and its light. It is too late to be reasonable and educated which has led to a life without appeal."<sup>291</sup>

Furthermore:

"A world that cannot be loved to the point of death, in the same way that a man loves a woman, represents only self-interest and the obligation to work. If it is compared to worlds gone by, it is hideous, and appears as the most

failed of all."

Acéphale is, he states, "*ferociously religious*," yet this religion is atheological:

"The *acephalic man* mythologically expresses sovereignty committed to destruction and the death of God, and in this the identification with the headless man merges and melds with the identification with the superhuman, which is entirely the death of God." (Absolute, Enthousiasme). God is the enemy of community, or a creator of false community, associated with tranquillity, absence of movement, the finished, time made finite: a prison." <sup>292</sup>

The Swedish artist duo, goldin+senneby, are currently researching a project called 'Headless'. Here, they investigate the realm of off-shore economy as a contemporary version of Acéphale. As the curator, Lisa Rosendahl, writes:

"Goldin+Senneby are interested in how the juridical construction of offshore financial centres can be seen as performative acts of fictionalizing place and staging realms of invisibility." <sup>293</sup>

Here, the metaphor of Acéphale makes perfect sense, off-shore invisibility is about secrecy. What is different from the Egyptian uprisings is the urge for invisibility. Tahrir Square is on the contrary a site of visibility. In Tahrir, the incoming masses of protesters become visible as 'the people'. Tahrir is a stage to be performed, a place to become visible.

The headlessness in Tahrir has to do with how the uprising is organised by a mesh of small independent activist groups who create a non-hierarchical structure. Anonymity is not about secret invisibility. Its rather about the opposite: To become visible, not as an individual, but as one of the many. To become part of the collective body, to synchronize into one.

#### Wiki<sup>294</sup>

Ward Cunningham and co-author Bo Leuf, in their book *The Wiki Way: Quick Collaboration on the Web*, described the essence of the Wiki concept as follows:

- A wiki invites all users to edit any page or to create new pages within the wiki Web site, using only a plain-vanilla Web browser without any extra add-ons.
- Wiki promotes meaningful topic associations between different pages by making page link creation almost intuitively easy and showing whether an intended target page exists or not.
- A wiki is not a carefully crafted site for casual visitors. Instead, it seeks to involve the visitor in an ongoing process of creation and collaboration that constantly changes the Web site landscape.

"A wiki enables communities to write documents collaboratively, using a simple markup language and a web browser. A single page in a wiki website is referred to as a "wiki page", while the entire collection of pages, which are usually well interconnected by hyperlinks, is "the wiki". A wiki is essentially a database for creating, browsing, and searching through information. A wiki allows for non-linear, evolving, complex and networked text, argument and interaction." <sup>295</sup>

When Wael Ghonim compares the Egyptian revolution to Wikipedia, it is exactly this 'non-linear, evolving, complex interaction' he is evoking. Again, it is an image, an attitude that he is evoking. By denouncing his own role, giving all credit to the anonymous many - just as he himself was anonymous until he was arrested on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2011 – the movement becomes all-inclusive. Everyone contributes in equal measure. The power is spread out into the masses. There are no heroes, no leaders, everyone is equal. This is the pure image of democracy, an icon of ideal democracy.

Using the wiki metaphor also links the revolution to new social media on the internet. In his 'normal' life Wael Ghonim is working for Google, and the movement has used facebook, YouTube, twitter and other socials media on the internet extensively. Of course this has huge communicative and logistic functions in connecting activists in fast and uncontrollable ways, but it also gives the revolution a strong profile as 'young, intelligent and connected on a global scale'. The Egyptian revolution was soon named the 'facebook-revolution', a label with massive positive connotations in the international media. This branding made it a revolution for the future, not a fundamentalist return to the dark past, as many in the West feared in the beginning.

### **Paranoia**

In *Study Guide: Egypt and Organization*, the American right-wing commentator, Glenn Beck, traces the international network that the April 6 Youth Movement is part of.<sup>296</sup> He is focussed on an organization called 'Alliance of Youth Movements' (later renamed to 'movements.org'):

"So what is the Alliance of Youth Movements (AYM)? From their Mission page, they describe themselves as "a not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping grassroots activists to build their capacity and make a greater impact on the world." And boy, do they offer a lot of help. AYM was co-founded by Jared Cohen (Director of Google Ideas who formerly worked for the State Dept.) and Jason Liebman (Howcast founder.) AYM partners with MTV, Google, CBS, MSNBC, Facebook, YouTube, National Geographic, Columbia University Law School and even our own State Dept. Annual summits feature workshops from the best in the social networking business."

Ahmad Maher, one of the leaders of the April 6 Youth Movement, takes part in a conference organized by Alliance of Youth Movements in December 2008. Glenn Beck uses this fact to link April 6, not only to the above-mentioned leaders of the global internet-industry, but also to the American Government. Another active member of Alliance of Youth Movement is Maajid Nawaz. Nawaz is formerly on the UK national leadership of the Islamist party Hizb ut-Tahrir. After spending 4 years in Egyptian prisons, he changes his views and is founding the Quilliam Foundation:

"Quilliam Foundation is the world's first counter-extremism think tank set up to address the unique challenges of citizenship, identity, and belonging in a globalised world. Quilliam stands for religious freedom, human rights, democracy and developing a Muslim identity at home in, and with, the West."<sup>297</sup>

In a statement on February 4, 2011, Maajid Nawaz strongly supports the Egyptian uprising, connecting it with his personal experiences of torture "in the dungeons of Hosni Mubarak's torture facilities".



In a rather paranoid argument, Glenn Beck uses these links to prove that not only is Hizb ut-Tahrir, but also the American Government, the real organizers of the Egyptian revolution. Glenn Beck is way out into conspiracy theory, but the interesting thing is, how he actually points to what kind of network the April 6 Youth Movement already soon after their founding was engaged in. The use of Facebook and other social media on the internet was already from the start backed up by personal contacts to some of the main actors in this field.

### **Flash Mob**

It is not only the communication, networking and mobilization that evolves in social media as facebook, YouTube or twitter. Also the format of the political actions on the ground are inspired by phenomena in the rapidly expanding internet culture. Silent Stand and a variety of other actions – i.e. Anger Day - are formatted after the popular phenomenon, Flash Mob. A small or large group of people agree to meet up somewhere in a public space and perform something collectively: It can be a certain dance taken from a music video, it can be a collective prank or some kind of silly action that surprises the unsuspecting audience of chance passers-by. The action is video-taped and published directly on the internet, most often on YouTube. Flash Mobs are cloned by advertising and commercial music business, but also by political activists, such as the Occupy Movement. In Egypt, the combination of strong, emotionally charged actions in public space and a rapidly growing community of online followers, are crucial in the explosive mobilization of an unprecedented number of protesters.

It is in the intricate double space of cityscape and its media representations on the internet that the 'non-linear, evolving, complex interaction' explodes. This multitextual collectivity is a basic, democratic becoming. It is the development of a new political subject; a leaderless, synchronic identity, where 'everyone contribute small pieces, bits and pieces'<sup>298</sup>.

Even though this process is partly taking place via the social media, the physical presence in the actions on Tahrir Square is a crucial element. As described in the commentary, 'Martyrs', the immense risk taken in confronting the authorities is a basic human factor that everyone can identify with. The genuine focus on creating actions that work as platforms for emotional expression – sadness, anger, joy – opens up the movement for the masses. The risks and the very basic human emotions that the actions facilitate are something everyone can connect to, identify with and engage in.

#### **Emotional Rationality (5.1.4.4.)**

“Traditional theories, even those which postulate the rationality of social movements, fail to comprehend the merger of instrumental and aesthetic rationality during moments of the Eros Effect. (..) The emergence of an emotional rationality in the midst of political struggle itself transcended the categories of action which established theories of social action and collective behavior assume.”<sup>299</sup>

The merger of instrumental and aesthetic rationality. It is exactly this merging of aesthetic, performative imagery and political action that characterizes the Egyptian (and the Tunesian) uprisings. By creating large-scale participatory scenarios – the Silent Stands, Anger Day & Tahrir Square – the activists enable a massive collective emotional identification. These scenarios are aesthetic in the sense that they are based on basic human emotions: Sadness, anger, solidarity, freedom. This instrumental emotional rationality facilitates the revolutionary becoming, the Eros Effect. The millions of individuals become the people, the millions become one. This is the ‘revolutionary becoming’ – the formation of a new headless subject.



Kulturhuset Islands Brygge, Copenhagen, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2012

- 6.1. Conclusion
- 6.2. Bibliography
- 6.3. List of Appendixes
- 6.4. Notes

## Conclusion (6.1.)

When I stumbled by chance upon the silent demonstration in Gothenburg on November 23rd 2006 described in the introduction to this project, I followed the march for some time, curious and bewildered. What was going on? By intuition I chose to stay uninformed; instead I took a photo with my mobile phone and left, somehow aware that something crucial, something important, was hidden in the situation that I had just stumbled upon.

This decision – not to ask anyone what was going on, but instead taking a photo of the demonstration – became crucial in the development of this project, *Aesthetics of Resistance*, as a whole. The ~~inferior~~ intuitive decision defined the optics for the rest of the project. What I de facto decided was to see the demonstration as an image and not as a specific social event consisting of a group of specific persons with a specific purpose of doing what they were doing there.

I was lured by this image; I misunderstood the situation in front of me and thought it to be something quite different than what I much later realized it was. Still, the decision to view the demonstration as an image was more important than what it turned out to be. Or, rather: The gap between what the image told me, and what was really going on, became the central problem - the inherent drama - in the project that evolved out this small misunderstanding.

The demonstration was not a demonstration, but a police exercise. The Swedish police were training, preparing for violent riots. The demonstrators were not political activists. They were students from a nearby gymnasium asked to re-enact an especially violent demonstration that took place on the exact same route a couple of years earlier. The Swedish police used Danish instructors. They had long experience with violent riots and had developed new techniques to handle such events.

The reality beneath my mysterious image of the silent demonstration was complex and intriguing. It comprised an intricate role play between various real and acted persons. The students acted as activists, the Swedish police acted as pupils, while the Danish police acted as instructors. In this web of changed roles, various images and preconceptions of the identities of the groups taking part were projected. The activists were portrayed as violent, but potentially open for dialogue. The police were portrayed as positive and engaged in friendly dialogue. The Danish instructors were portrayed as having constructive knowledge to share.

I realized that the reality hiding beneath my somewhat naive misconception of the silent demonstration was loaded with just such potent imagery as what I imagined it was. The layering of images, pre-conceptions and projections were a kind of constructed performative situation, where various roles and an underlying world view were acted out, performed. This performance sampled time in a highly interesting manner: In the present, an event of the past was re-enacted with the purpose of preparing for a similar event in the future. Past and future met in the present.

Taking the decision to make the incident in Gothenburg and the inherent themes the starting point for an art-research project led me to a string of questions about the nature of art-research:

Could art be used as a research tool?

What would this mean?

What kind of situation would be suitable to inquire into events such as these?

Opting for performance as my main artistic tool, I realized that my research in addition to the inquiries into 'real' events, such as the police exercise, would be a performance of art-research as well. A proposal of how art-research might work, when used to investigate a topic outside of art.

Taking the clues hiding in the silent demonstration as my first evidence, I was led back to Copenhagen, where I live. The participation of the Danish police instructors led me to the internal teaching manual 'OPERATION' from the Danish police academy. Here, the author, the well-known Danish police commissioner Kai Vittrup, set up an operational system on how to handle large crowds of rioting protesters and large-scale demonstrations. The manual can be read as a choreography of how to use public space to control and pacify crowds threatening to disturb the public order.

The manual became the main text in the first performance conducted as part of 'Aesthetics of Resistance'. Here, in 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police', the reading of texts from the manual was destroyed by an aggressive use of resonance in the form of various sound-effects. The discourse of the text was so to speak flooded by sensorial experience, both in the form of sound and in the form of movement by a dancer acting as the street-fighting rebel. This first performance introduces the figures of the 'artist/researcher' and the 'sense-event'. These two levels of discursive and non-discursive meaning is used to articulate the above-mentioned gap between the knowledge of the image - sensual knowledge - and rational discourse. In this performance, the contrast is stark and the two levels are completely divided.

The artist/researcher and the sense-event create the basic structure of all the 8 performances comprising 'Aesthetics of Resistance'. Their relation varies, though; in each performance the artist/researcher plays a slightly different role, and the sense-event is constructed in various ways according to the specific content and context of each performance.

Back in Copenhagen an intense drama evolved around the demolition of the so-called Youth House on Jagtvej 69. Up to the eviction of the activists who had been using the house as their cultural base for more than 20 years, and in the aftermath of the demolition on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007, an explosive sequence of demonstrations, street-fighting, occupations of other houses, evolved. After the first round of desperate, wild riots, lasting for several weeks and turning large parts of Copenhagen into battle scenes, a new imaginative movement, The Youth House Movement, evolved. During the weekly Thursday-demos, that lasted for 70 Thursday in a row, the movement grew large and strong, until it finally after long troublesome negotiations was granted a new house from the city administration of Copenhagen.

Watching these events evolve directly in front of me, I decided to make this sequence of events the first central part of my investigations. To what degree and in which specific situations did this movement use performative imagery as their main political tool?

Out the myriads of actions, occupations, street battles and demonstrations comprising the Youth House Movement, I selected 3 moments that would both

represent the enormous span of these events and feature elements that would fit my purpose: To see how aesthetics – performance, form and style - played a defining role in the formation of political meaning.

'Revolution By Night' deals with the militant, chaotic riots in the first weeks after the demolition of the Youth House on Jagtvej 69. Here, the focus is on the apotheosis of revolt. What happens in that ecstatic moment of rampage, where all forms of identity and reason seem to dissolve into 'an orgy of destruction', as it is called in the film 'Get Rid of Yourself'. 'Get Rid of Yourself' by the artist group, Bernadette Corporation, is here used as a central reference point, adding to the understanding of the actions of the so-called Black Bloc which also dominated this first phase of the Youth House Movement.

'G13greenredturquoiseyellow' describes a crucial large action where the Youth House Movement managed to change the image of the movement from 'spoiled violent youth' to 'creative smart-mob'. This change of image opened up for negotiations with the mayor of Copenhagen – negotiations that would later result in the New Youth House. In the performance, the focus is on the swarm-strategies used in the G13-action and the collective body constituted by such a swarm. A collective body is established by the audience to the performance, thereby making them part in a discreet re-enactment of certain aspects of the G13-action.

'On Water' compares the occupation of Refshalevej in Copenhagen in the late spring 2008 with a very similar art-project, 'The Harbour Laboratory' by the art group Parfyme, taking place in the same period at the other end of the Copenhagen harbour. The borderline of the law is used to discuss how the seemingly similar relational imagery of the two events have very different consequences and thereby very different meanings. In the performance, the aesthetics of parasitic architecture and the use of water as the symbolic site of these events are explored in a chaotic and romantic manner.

In the summer of 2009 I was invited to China to take part in the 10th Open Performance Festival in Beijing. The preparations for this project coincided with the 20th anniversary of the so-called Massacre on Tiananmen Square on June 4th, 1989. June 4th was the tragic end of a month-long sequence of large-scale peaceful protests, all centered around Tiananmen Square as the central symbolic representation of absolute political power in China. Given my topic of investigation, 'Aesthetics of Resistance', I thought I would use the opportunity to research into the 1989 Democratic Movement as the student activists and their millions of followers were called.

In these investigations I found out that the student activists staged their critique of the Communist Party as celebrations of certain crucial dates in the history of the exact same Communist Party. Doing this, they re-used – reclaimed – the aesthetic features of communism; the visual design of the demonstrations, the slogans and the theme songs. Their large-scale demonstrations that rapidly attracted hundreds of thousands of participants, looked like primordial communist demonstrations; the same songs, the same colors, the same slogans. This intricate appropriation of the aesthetic language of the Party they were criticizing, displayed a surprisingly post-modern play with symbols and images. The content of the critique followed a similar pattern; the students reclaimed the ideal values of communism; equality, justice and democracy.

Thereby criticizing the regime for corruption, lack of democratic standards and moral deroute.

I found this activist parallel to the artistic strategies of appropriation and re-enactment highly interesting, and I adopted the strategy – calling it cloning – as one of my central terms. Using it both to interpret the 1989 Democracy Movement and some of the events I was about to choose in the second core part of the project: The activism surrounding the UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen, December 2009.

With this new term, cloning, in mind, I chose to incorporate a performance dealing with the 1989 Democracy Movement in the project. ‘Ghost Choir Karaoke’ is set up as a commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of May 4th, 1989. In the performance, a group of ghosts from The Arts Choral Group – a choir of art students playing an important role in the first sequence of large-scale demonstrations back in 1989 – revisits two sites of symbolic character to celebrate the anniversary of one of the key dates, not only in the 1989 Democratic Movement, but also in the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. On May 4<sup>th</sup> 1989, the student activists staged an immense demonstration, celebrating the 70-year anniversary of the 1919 Tiananmen Riots. This double cloning becomes the melancholic context for the strange symbolic performance by ghosts in an enormous building site and in an extravagant karaoke bar. In this performance, it is the sites that constitute a discreet symbolic critique of contemporary China, by pointing back to the now completely tabooed 1989 Democracy Movement.

Later that year 2009, the UN Climate Conference COP15 came to Copenhagen and with it an array of global activism, manifesting all sorts of activist strategies. It seemed the perfect case study for my continuous research, and I chose these events as the other main topic of my project.

COP15 was staged as a decisive moment in the global fight against climate disaster. All major world leaders came to Copenhagen, and the ambition was to negotiate a new global contract that would turn about the development in global climate politics once and for all. To promote these sky-high ambitions, the UN and the City of Copenhagen engaged a group of leading advertising companies to design a campaign that would engage populations all over the world in the struggle for a better world. This campaign, HOPENHAGEN, dominated the public space of Copenhagen, until, all of a sudden, it completely disappeared, as the negotiations at COP15 fell flat on the last day of the conference. HOPENHAGEN was designed as a fictive activist movement, complete with internet sites, a climate camp at the City Square, and color-coded activist t-shirts, stickers, banners. In a smooth mainstream design, HOPENHAGEN cloned all the aesthetic features of the movements criticizing the governments and the UN for being in the pocket of the multinational corporations, now trying to ‘greenwash’ the activities. HOPENHAGEN was even sponsored by an array of the same global corporations, Coca Cola, Siemens, BMW and others.

In the performance ‘Clone Wars’, a symbolic quest to save the world under the auspices of HOPENHAGEN is set up for the 3 mythological figures Buddha, Atlas and Helena Christensen. The performance takes place in the enormous entrance hall of Copenhagen City Hall, opening up to the City Square where HOPENHAGEN Climate Camp was situated. In an hour-long struggle, Atlas drags an island with Buddha across the immense floor while Helena is improvising a ritual dance. In this new double cloning, the activists’ imagery stolen by HOPENHAGEN is re-claimed.

The performance also explores resonance as a tool for performing a sonic balance between the symbolic quest and the surrounding architecture.

The real activists staged two large scale-manifestations to confront COP15 as well as a range of smaller events.

On December 12, 2009, around 100.000 people marched from the city center to the Bella Center on the outskirts of Copenhagen where COP15 took place. This was the largest demonstration ever on Danish ground. In a spectacular operation, the police used the new law of 'preventive arrest' and arrested 905 participants in the demonstration. They handcuffed them and forced them to sit on the bare asphalt for 4-5 hours until they were finally transported to the so-called 'climate-prison' installed in a warehouse in the suburb of Valby. The mass-arrest completely 'stole the image' of the day and the 100.000 people marching almost disappeared in the media uproar created by the spectacular police action.

On December 16<sup>th</sup> the Climate Justice Action took place, organized by an array of global grass-roots organizations, all loosely connected to what could be termed Direct Action. The aim of the action was to break through the fences surrounding the Bella Center and establish an alternative People's Convent inside the perimeter of the COP15 conference. The action didn't succeed in breaking the heavily guarded barriers around COP 15 and the People's Convent was instead held directly on the street outside of the Bella Center.

These two events are the topic of the performance 'Climate/Kettle'. Here, two themes – 'staging the opponent' and 'kettle' – are explored and tested out as performative sense-events, incorporating the double audience in an internal power-play. An additional performance lecture, 'Aesthetics of Resistance?', deals with the courtcase about the December 12<sup>th</sup> event, and how the color black was discussed intensely as the marker of the Black Bloc, and thereby an indication of who to arrest preventively.

As the Arabic Spring exploded in the winter of 2010/11, a new wave of activism evolved on a global scale. Uprisings in a series of Arabic countries was followed by large-scale mass movements such as Los Indignatos in Spain, the fierce protests in Greece, Occupy in the US and worldwide. Many of these new uprisings and protest spectacles shared features with the local events I was researching. A new awareness of performative modes of action and the power of collective images seemed to be at the core of these movements. Surprised and excited at the seemingly revolutionary momentum, I decided to include the Egyptian uprising as the last topic in 'Aesthetics of Resistance'.

In 'Silent Stand' three scenes from short history of the Egyptian insurrection are re-enacted as collective images. Here the audience takes part in the creation of these images. Their bodily presence is the crucial act that constitutes the images. In the narrative connecting these images, the bodily presence is thematized as well, here as risk and martyrdom in the face of a brutal regime, ruling by torture and killing its opponents. The performance evolves around the story of Khaled Said who was brutally murdered by the police in the summer of 2010. To commemorate his death, his friends started the Facebook-group 'We are all Khaled Said' and organized the emotionally moving series of actions called 'Silent Stand'. These two imaginative platforms for protest gained a huge following, and became one of the prime elements in mobilizing the masses that finally broke out of compliance on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2011.



The following occupation of Tahrir Square has been called the new global icon of freedom, following the icon of Che Guevera. In the performance I use 5 Danish belly-dancers to represent the revolutionary masses on Tahrir Square. This awkward representation is an attempt at formulating the distance from which I see the Egyptian uprising. The belly-dancers mark this touristic distance in a humorous gesture, like the ghosts in 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' mark a distance in time. The important aspect of 'Silent Stand', though, is the creation of collective images by the participating audience.

## **Discussions**

At some point in the process, I realized that it would be necessary to attain some kind of direct reaction from the audience of these performances. For this purpose, I decided to organize a discussion to follow directly after each performance, either between me, the various participating performers and the audience, or between a couple of invited guests, the audience, the participants and myself. With the same purpose I decided to move the last series of performances out of the artworld into sites and locations, where there would be a chance of engaging an audience who somehow related to the content of the given performance:

'Silent Stand' was performed in a culture house on the harbourfront of Copenhagen, where the audience was asked to re-enact the original 'Silent Stand' by standing, facing the water.

'On Water' was performed at the alternative noise-music venue 'Mayhem' in a context of parasitic culture similar to the architectural theme of the performance.

'Clone Wars' was performed at the enormous entrance hall of Copenhagen City Hall by generous invitation from the City Hall which was the Danish partner in the campaign HOPENHAGEN, pinpointed in the performance as an example of cloning.

'Revolution By Night' was performed at the New Youth House at Dorteavej 61 in Copenhagen NV. in the house that was the controversial prize won by The Youth House Movement after years of struggle.

'Climate/Kettle' was performed at Det Fri Gymnasium that has a history of supplying movements like The Youth House Movement with young, dedicated participants.

The discussions following the performances developed a life of their own. Since a small group participated in more than one of them, a kind of continuous debate developed; even though these debates were often unresolved and marked by diverging interpretations of both my performances and the events they dealt with, they somehow became the highlight of the project as a whole for me. In the cases where the discussion worked well, I was met with arguments and interpretations that gave my project a response. Many of these arguments are included in the analysis and comments in the textual parts supplementing the performances. In these discussions, my research was met by groups of people that potentially could use this research as a discussion of their own activities. Here, I glimpsed a potential function of art-research that went beyond the framework of the institutionalized art-scene.

The opaque, apparently silent demonstration in Gothenburg led me into a field of riots and often dramatic confrontations between activists and authorities. Did my initial ideas of political activism as political communication, using images as the prime format, prove consistent? Are performative gestures an important part of the intricate role play between the police forces and the insurgent groups?

The recent wave of global protests seems to prove this beyond any doubt. Large parts of these new movements use symbolic spectacles as their main mode of protest. The occupation of Tahrir Square was an image that beamed out through television and computer screens all over the world and made resistance on the part of the old-fashioned regime futile. This image was so convincing that it didn't really matter how many occupied the square or who they were. On the large scale of media communication, it is obvious that images rule the agenda.

What is more interesting, even controversial, is what goes on at the microlevel of activism, inside the events, inside the often opaque confrontations with a seemingly far stronger Security State. Here, the collective performative gestures have even more drastic consequences than I imagined at the beginning of my investigations. Here, political content isn't communicated by images and in performative actions. Here, it is constituted by performative imagery. In a radical sense, the form is the message. In this kind of activism, the above-mentioned gap between what the images communicate and the way in which we can talk about them is a drama evolving at the very core of the political content. Since the content is constituted as performative images, it can only be experienced as such. It can't be explained in a discursive manner.

To understand this kind of Direct Activism, I thought it necessary to invent a similar kind of 'thinking with the senses' that would enable me to consider the aesthetic elements of this kind of activism in a form that was on a par with the topics it was to explore. Thus the structure of the artist/researcher and the sense-event which is utilized in all 8 performances. Because of the special nature of the sense-event, it is not an easy task to draw conclusions from the 8 performances; this was attempted in the discussions following the performances, and in the analytical texts trying to grasp the aesthetical message of each performance. Also, the specific questions and themes introduced in each performance make it hard to formulate an overall conclusion. Some of the questions were answered in relatively straightforward terms, others gave rise to unexpected developments in the performances, and in the assumptions of the themes they each contained.

In general, though, a résumé of this complex mesh of 'thinking with the senses', of performing questions and answers to often complicated matters, can be summarized in a conclusion close to what I wrote in the introduction: Contemporary Direct Activism is in fact developed as complex aesthetic performances, offering a radical, political imagery, grounded in collective improvisation and an inventive, contextual consciousness.

Especially two radical features of this activism seem important:

- 1: The political content is constituted as form. It is performed as image and it only exists in the temporal interstice it creates within the surrounding society.
- 2: In this performance, the individual identities of the activists merge into what

can be called a collective body. A new collective identity. This collectivity is a political statement in itself.

1+2: A collective body in a temporary autonomous zone.

This is –in an extremely condensed form –the ‘Aesthetics of Resistance’.

### **We Are All Khaled Said**

On February 11th 2011 at 17.54, in the tumultuous moment just after president Mubarak had resigned, admin wrote on the Facebook page of ‘We Are All Khaled Said’:

“THANK GOD. THANKS TO ALL THOSE WHO DIED FOR US TO LIVE IN FREEDOM. THANKS TO ALL EGYPTIANS WHO SLEPT ROUGH IN TAHRIR, ALEXANDRIA AND EVERYWHERE. THANK YOU ALL ON THIS PAGE FOR YOUR SUPPORT & YOUR AMAZING GREATNESS & HELP. THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO CALLED HIS LEADER AND HIS REPRESENTATIVE. THANK YOU TUNISIA. WE ARE ALL EGYPTIANS. YOU ARE ALL EGYPTIANS. WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID”<sup>300</sup>

As a much smaller, but similar act of gratitude, I would like to dedicate this work to all the unnamed and often anonymous activists who participated in the long sequence of demonstrations, occupations, direct actions and other performative gestures that make up the topic of this thesis. I have been very careful in positioning myself as an outside observer to all these events. My work here is to be understood as a humble reflection of their activities, and I hope that at some point it may be useful to these movements in one way or another. Their performance of the real events I have investigated was done at great risk and often against all odds. This fearless engagement in performing another world has been and continues to be a great inspiration. Thank you.

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## List of Appendixes (6.3.)

### Performance-documentation Appendix:

- 1.1.5.1. A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police, performance-documentation, video 45:32 min.
- 2.1.5.1. Ghost Choir Karaoke, video 45:32 min.
- 3.1.5.1. Revolution By Night, video documentation 35:49 min
- 3.1.5.2. Revolution By Night/Discussion, video documentation 01:02:19 min
- 3.2.4.1. *G13 greenredturquoiseyellow*, performance documentation, video 45:32 min.
- 3.3.5.1. *On Water*, performance-documentation, video 40:34 min.
- 4.1.5.1. *Clone Wars*, performance-documentation, video 45:32 min.
- 4.2.5.1. Climate/Kettle, video documentation 26:03 min
- 5.1.5.1. Silent Stand, video documentation 35:49 min

The video documentation of the performances are edited as straight as possible, each performance is reproduced in its full length. Variations this is The first two performance-documetations differ from this. 'A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police' is edited as an extract of the performance, due to special circumstance regarding the video-material recorded. 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' is done art-video to be understood as a work in itself, not a documentation of the the twp performances it takes as its source material.

### Video Interview Appendix:

- 3.2.4.2. *GOING THROUGH A FIELD*: Oliver Ressler in conversation with Frans Jacobi, Nørrebro 23.7.2011, video 53.25 min.
- 3.3.5.2. *Jon Vedel* in conversation with Frans Jacobi, , video 53.25 min.
- 4.1.5.2. *Budhaditya Chattopadhyay* in conversation with Frans Jacobi, , video 53.25 min.

4.1.5.2. is included as Commentary 4.1.4.2.

### Other Media Appendix:

- 3.1.5.3. Tales of Darkness, reconstruction of poetry event by Angela Dörrer, sound-piece, 07:30 min.

### Text Appendix:

- 1.1.5.2. No Compromise: N30 Black Bloc Communiqué by ACME Collective
- 2.1.5.2. List of Seven Demands
- 2.1.5.3. New May Fourth Manifesto
- 3.2.4.3. There's a large gap in the fence: G13, pdf
- 3.2.4.4. *Ungdomshusbevægelsen er defensiv*, interview with Mikkel Bolt by Niels Fastrup/Monsun, Modkraft.dk 21. August 2008, pdf
- 3.2.4.5. *Now released activists on convalescence on Vesterbro*, as published on Modkraft.dk, Sunday 7. October 2007 (tranlated by Susanne Jacobi), pdf
- 3.2.4.6. *G13-aktion banede vejen for nyt ungdomshus*, Martin Lindblom/Monsun. Modkraft.dk 27. November 2007
- 3.2.4.7. *Fingerplanen*, Aktion G13 October 6, 2007
- 3.3.5.3. Merel Pit, Karel Steller, Gerjan Streng: *Parasitic Architechure #1*



- 3.3.5.4.        *Refshalevej is a new free community!*  
(The Up-Builders manifesto)
- 3.3.5.5.        Hakim Bey: The Temporary Autonomous Zone
- 3.3.5.6.        *The Upbuilders Application* (danish version)
- 3.1.5.2.        Silent Stand, script first edition, pdf
- 3.1.5.4.        The Eros Effect, pdf

The Text Appendix os submitted as part of the dissertation, but in a seperate pdf.

**Internet Document Appendix:**

- 3.1.5.4.        Appendix69

Appendix69 is an extensive collection of internet sourvce matrial, functioning mainly as references for the Commentary 3.1.4.1: '69scenes'. It will be made available on athe internet, but will not be part of this part of my submission.

## Notes (6.4.):

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<sup>1</sup> Emma Berthling: *Kravaller igen – men bara på låtsas*, in Göteborgs-Posten 24.11.2006

<sup>2</sup> see Commentary 3.1.4.1: '69scenes' for extensive accounts of these events

<sup>3</sup> These encounters and my position in/out of the demonstrations are described in the script and performance 'Revolution By Night' (AoR 3.1.)

<sup>4</sup> This 'geometry of distances' that structures my concept of artistic research is further elaborated in the commentary 1.1.4.1: *Verfremdungseffekt*

<sup>5</sup> The problem of positioning is a constant theme of negotiation running through all parts of this project. In my work with 'Silent Stand', the script/performance on the Egyptian uprising, it became even more crucial. My decision NOT to go to Cairo has been controversial and up for debate in each of the fora, where I have presented this work. In my own reasoning it still makes sense; I would have been a tourist in someone else's revolution. Of course my experience of the events on Tahrir Square would have been different, if I had been there on site, but for the purpose of my entire project, where 'Silent Stand' works as a point of reference, rather than one of the main topics of research, I think the distance marked by the chosen format of inquiry is appropriate. A further discussion of the 'touristic gaze' employed in this script/performance is undertaken in the Analysis of Silent Stand (AoR 5.1.3.)

<sup>6</sup> 'Schiller-Goethe correspondence, 26 December 1797' as quoted in 'BRECHT on theatre – The development of an AESTHETIC', edited and translated by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang 1964) p. 210

<sup>7</sup> Slavoj Žižek: "Robespierre or "the Divine Violence" of Terror" in Robespierre: Virtue and Terror (London: Verso, 2007), pp. xxxiv – xxxv

<sup>8</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Logique du sens* (Paris: Les Édition de Minuit 1969)

<sup>9</sup> 'Schiller-Goethe correspondence, 26 December 1797' as quoted in 'BRECHT on theatre – The development of an AESTHETIC', edited and translated by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang 1964) p. 210

<sup>10</sup> The adventures and problems that arose in the process of organizing these discussions and the audiences envisioned to take part in them is described in the commentary 'Searching for an Audience' (AoR 3.3.4.1.)

<sup>11</sup> Psychosocial Behaviour is a term, also discussed further in the comment 'Searching for an Audience' (AoR 3.3.4.1.)

<sup>12</sup> 'Schiller-Goethe correspondence, 26 December 1797' as quoted in 'BRECHT on theatre – The development of an AESTHETIC', edited and translated by John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang 1964) p. 210

<sup>13</sup> This situation is the starting point of the performance 'Revolution By Night' (AoR 3.1.2.) and further interpreted as an occurrence of 'active time' in the script (AoR 3.1.1.)

<sup>14</sup> Slavoj Žižek: "Robespierre or "the Divine Violence" of Terror" in Robespierre: Virtue and Terror (London: Verso, 2007), pp. xxxiv – xxxv

<sup>15</sup> In physics amplitude is the maximum extent of a vibration or oscillation, measured from the position of equilibrium, or the maximum difference of an alternating electrical current or potential from the average value.

<sup>16</sup> Whael Ghonim interviewed on the CBS talkshow 60minutes:  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7346812n>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF> included here as Appendix

<sup>18</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011) p. 95-96

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<sup>19</sup> The notion of Active Time as figuration being performed by activists is explored further in the comment 'Active Time versus Dead Time' (AoR 3.1.???)

<sup>20</sup> For further discussion of Active Time, see the scripts 'Revolution By Night' and 'Climate/Kettle' and the comments 'Active Time vs. Dead Time' and 'Climate/Kettle Analysis'.

<sup>21</sup> <http://rt.com/usa/news/olsen-occupy-vigil-oakland-031/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/hamza.alshaheed>

<sup>23</sup> See also Silent Stand (AoR 6.1) note 9: Acéphale? and note 10: Wiki

<sup>24</sup> Niels Fastrup: *Ungdomshusbevægelsen er defensiv (The Youth House Movement is defensive)*, Interview med Mikkel Bolt at [www.modkraft.dk](http://www.modkraft.dk), 21. august 2008 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2008)

<sup>25</sup> My cover-version of 'Tales of Darkness' is included here as Appendix 3.1.5.3.

<sup>26</sup> THE WHAT IF? SCENARIO PART 1, 1995 <http://www.liamgillick.info/home/work/projects-and-work-5/the-what-if-scenarios>

<sup>27</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011)

<sup>28</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p.97

<sup>29</sup> David Graeber: 'On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken Windows, Imaginary Jars of Urine, and the Cosmological Role of the Police in American Culture' in David Graeber: *POSSIBILITIES, Essays on Hierachy, Rebellion, and Desire* (Oakland: AK Press 2007), p. 375-417

<sup>30</sup> George N. Katsiaficas: *The Eros Effect* (<http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF>), included here as Appendix 5.1.???

<sup>31</sup> George N. Katsiaficas: *The Eros Effect*, p.8

<sup>32</sup> Paolo Virno: *A Grammar of the Multitude* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004)

<sup>33</sup> The comment 'Exodus' (AoR 3.3.4.2.) contains a further elaboration on exodus and how it is used in interpreting the occupation of Refshalevej in Copenhagen 2008.

<sup>34</sup> Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng: *Editors' Foreword* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. xxi

<sup>35</sup> Oliver Ressler: 'This is what democracy looks like!' (Vienna: INDEX 2002) dvd

<sup>36</sup> Oliver Ressler: 'This is what democracy looks like!' (Vienna: INDEX 2002) dvd

<sup>37</sup> excerpts of the series 'ARREST', 2009 by NOH SUNTAG was to been seen in the exhibition 'DEMONSTRATIONS. Making normative orders' at Frankfurter Kunstverein 20.1.-25.3.2012

<sup>38</sup> Hakim Bey: *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (<http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/taz3a.htm>)

<sup>39</sup> Glossary of Technical Terms: Dispute (Le Litige) in Jacques Rancière: *THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS* (London: Continuum 2004), p. 85

<sup>40</sup> Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng: *The declaration of martial law and the army's attempt to enter Beijing May 19-27* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 269

<sup>41</sup> The title is taken from a composition of the german composer Hans Eisler

<sup>42</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003)(translated by Frans Jacobi and Susanne Jacobi)

<sup>43</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p. 125

<sup>44</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p. 127

<sup>45</sup> Chto Delat?, the russian collective of artists, critics, philosophers and writers founded in St. Petersburg in 2003, has worked intensely with the theories and the artistic tools of Bertolt Brecht. Coming out of the Soviet-Union their work deals with both post-communism and the contemporary ideological

state of Russian politics. Their use of Brecht is obviously a way of handling their position in the tradition of communist aesthetics, but by using it to discuss highly contemporary issues, they are, in a very exemplary manner, actualizing the Brechtian aesthetics. Chto Delat? has in fact produced a series of Lehrstücke – learning plays – where a group of invited participants meet for a short intense workshop, 36 hours or 48 hours, improvising the script collectively from a given theme. The play is then performed by the same participants in front of an audience, with several inserted discussions and other alienation effects employed. 3 examples can be seen at the web-site of Chto Delat?: “The Russian Woods”, at Tramway, Glasgow 25.03.2012, “The urgent need to struggle” at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London 10.09.2010, “Where has communism gone?” at SMART project space, Amsterdam February 2011 ([www.chtodelat.org](http://www.chtodelat.org)). They have also used the idea of a commenting choir intensely in their ‘Songspiels’ – a form derived from soviet theatre tradition. For a lengthier discussion of the post-communistic aspects in the work of Chto Delat? see ‘What Remains? – Chto Delat?, Post-Communism and Art’ by my phd-colleague Simon Sheikh.<sup>45+45</sup> My own adaption of Brechtian techniques is not as strict as the way in which Chto Delat? uses the Lehrstücke. It is rather a varying use of different Brechtian tools combined with my own inventions of other distancing effects. But my general conception of artistic research is very much influenced by Brecht.

<sup>46</sup> The idea of Show of Force is concretized in the performance Climate/Kettle (AoR 5.2.), where it is shown how the danish police used this technique in connection with the Climate Summit, COP15 in december 2010.

<sup>47</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p.97

<sup>48</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p.117-118

<sup>49</sup> The use of the color black by the lawyers of danish police is further explored in the performance ‘Aesthetics of Resistance?’ (Commentary 4.2.4.1.) Also in Climate/Kettle the controversial Black Bloc and the use of them as emblematic troublemakers is discussed. See also Commentary 3.1.4.5. on the rationale of the Black Bloc.

<sup>50</sup> Robert Herbst: ‘My friends are the Universe (Globalization’s Protest Expand the Political)’ in The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest, volume 1, issue 1 (Los Angeles 2002), p. 6

<sup>51</sup> The Invisible Committee: THE COMING INSURRECTION (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2009), p. 12-13

<sup>52</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical\\_resonance#Resonance\\_disaster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical_resonance#Resonance_disaster)

<sup>53</sup> from Gene Ray: Radical Learning and Dialectical Realism: Brecht and Adorno on Representing Capitalism (First published at Historical Materialism 18.3 (2010), found at: [http://www.chtodelat.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=1024%3Agene-ray--radical-learning-and-dialectical-realism-brecht-and-adorno-on-representing-capitalism&catid=241%3A10-34-in-defence-of-representation&Itemid=490&lang=en](http://www.chtodelat.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1024%3Agene-ray--radical-learning-and-dialectical-realism-brecht-and-adorno-on-representing-capitalism&catid=241%3A10-34-in-defence-of-representation&Itemid=490&lang=en)

<sup>54</sup> The content of this performance, A Short Course in Realism from the Perspective of the Police, is derived from a string of coincidental findings: As described in the introduction I stumbled into a mysterious silent demonstration on November 23rd 2006 in Gothenburg. This demonstration turned out to be false – it was a police-exercise. The swedish police were using instructors from Denmark to teach them how to use dialogue based strategies of communication in order to avoid violent confrontation with radicalised activists. By coincidence, around the same time as i was contemplating my misreading of the situation, I was offered a copy of a police manual by an artist colleague. He had gotten this copy of a copy from someone with connections at the police-school in Copenhagen. The police manual, Operation, proved to be highly interesting, offering a range of obviously aesthetical tools for crowd-control, spatial staging of city space and encountering riots and violent demonstrations. This manual might very well have been part of the instructions that the danish police-instructors offered their swedish colleagues that day in Gothenburg. In any case I decided to use the manual as the text to be destroyed in this performance, thereby following up on the trail of coincidental findings starting up my research in this project as a whole.

<sup>55</sup> The Invisible Committee: THE COMING INSURRECTION (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2009), p. 110-111

<sup>56</sup> The same quote from ‘The Coming Insurrection’ is used with different aim in the script/performance ‘Aesthetics of Resistance?’ (Commentary 4.2.4.1.).

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<sup>57</sup> Robert Herbst: 'My friends are the Universe (Globalization's Protest Expand the Political)' in *The Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*, volume 1, issue 1 (Los Angeles 2002), p. 6

<sup>58</sup> see Appendix 1.1.5.2.

<sup>59</sup> The difference between 'performed in the real' and 'performed as art' is one of the themes in the script/performance 'On Water', AoR 3.3.

<sup>60</sup> David Graeber: 'On the Phenomenology of Giant Puppets: Broken Windows, Imaginary Jars of Urine, and the Cosmological Role of the Police in American Culture' in David Graeber: *POSSIBILITIES, Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion, and Desire* (Oakland: AK Press 2007), p. 375-417

<sup>61</sup> New Oxford American Dictionary:

Transcendent  
adjective

beyond or above the range of normal or merely physical human experience : *the search for a transcendent level of knowledge*.

- surpassing the ordinary; exceptional : *the conductor was described as a "transcendent genius."*
- (of God) existing apart from and not subject to the limitations of the material universe. Often contrasted with immanent .
- (in scholastic philosophy) higher than or not included in any of Aristotle's ten categories.
- (in Kantian philosophy) not realizable in experience.

New Oxford American Dictionary

<sup>62</sup> See commentary 4.1.4.1: 'Sense Event'

<sup>63</sup> The term EMPIRE stems from the seminal book EMPIRE by Anthoni Negri and Michael Hardt. EMPIRE is a metaphorical way of describing the entire western hegemony, the neo-liberal late capitalism, as covering the entire globe. In contemporary activism EMPIRE is now used as a general term, denouncing the system as such as the enemy. Here in the text quoted below, Tiqqun, transfers a kind of subjectivity to EMPIRE by using the word THEY as the operative subject of EMPIRE. Hardt, Michael and Antoino Negri: *EMPIRE* (USA: Harvard University Press 2000)

<sup>64</sup> Tiqqun: '...As a Science of Apparatuses' in *Tiqqun: This Is Not A Program* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2011), p. 161-162

<sup>65</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: *A Thousand Plateaus* (London/New York: Continuum 2004), p. 247

<sup>66</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resonance>

<sup>67</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical\\_resonance#Resonance\\_disaster](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mechanical_resonance#Resonance_disaster)

<sup>68</sup> Ghost Choir Karaoke was the first of the 9 performances comprising this project to be performed. It was done before the format of the sense-event and the following discussions was developed. The figure of the artist/researcher wasn't in place either. The two parts of this performance were performed at two separate sites. The first part, Great Ghost Ground was only performed for the camera, and the voice-over of the artist/researcher was added much later in the editing of the video. The idea of a straight video-documentation of the performances that the other video-documentation is based on, is not possible here. The video here is an edited version of the two performances that goes beyond the concept of documentation and becomes the art-work in itself. In this sense it is an exception from the defined format of the sense-event. I have decided to include it anyway; as an elaboration on the the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement it serves a vital function in the overall argumentation, even if it is an aberration from the research method employed in the other 8 performances/sense-event in the project.

<sup>69</sup> Ghost Choir Karaoke was performed as part of the 10th anniversary of the 10<sup>th</sup> OPEN Performance Art Festival in Beijing, China in September 2009. It was then two separate performances: 'Great Ghost Ground' performed without audience in an anonymous building ground in Hohot, Inner Mongolia and 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' performed at the Blue Sky Karaoke Club (RO JI GAO LAN TIAN CLUB) in Beijing.

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<sup>70</sup> Boris Schioler aka Lonely Boy Choir, the composer, singer and Lonely Boy Ghost in these performances.

<sup>71</sup> We are in Hohhot, the local capital of Inner Mongolia in northern China. The art academy is now outside of the city where its new shiny campus is as big as a whole suburb.

<sup>72</sup> These slogans are quoted from:

Philip J Cunningham: *Tiananmen Moon* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009) and Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990)

<sup>73</sup> Zhao Ziyang: *Prisoner of the State* (London: Simon & Schuster UK Ltd 2009), p.11

<sup>74</sup> ghost *lgöstl* noun - an apparition of a dead person that is believed to appear or become manifest to the living, typically as a nebulous image : the building is haunted by the ghost of a monk / figuratively the ghosts of communism returned to haunt the living. (New Oxford American Dictionary)

<sup>75</sup> 'New May Fourth' was the title of a journal on political reform, founded by the student activist Wang Dan in the winter of 88/89. Wang Dan was a central figure in the emerging student movement, organizing those 'democracy salons' at Beijing University. It was also from Beijing University the first large-scale demonstration, where three thousand students marched to Tiananmen Square, started out shortly after midnight on April 18th 1989.

See also Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p.15 and p.9

<sup>76</sup> An example of this censorship is the 'umbrella-tactics' employed by the Chinese authorities on the 20-year anniversary of the crack-down on June 4th 1989. On June 4th 2009 all Western television reporters trying to film and report from the Tiananmen Square were curiously blocked by young men holding up umbrellas in front of the tv-cameras. A nice example is still to be seen on:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8080437.stm>

The American artist, Annamarie Ho, has done the dance and video work 'The Umbrellas of May 35th' about this incident. Her video was first shown at the 10th anniversary of the OPEN Performance Art Festival in Beijing, China, which 'Ghost Choir Karaoke' was also part of. Her statement on 'The Umbrellas of May 35th':

"For the 20th anniversary of Tiananmen Square on June 4, 2009, the Chinese government prevented memorials from occurring and blocked many popular websites. Furthermore, any online postings originating from China were censored from using "June 4"; bloggers creatively began referring to the date as "May 35" instead.

Western journalists attempted to report on the anniversary from the square; however, Chinese policemen posing as tourists blocked cameramen with umbrellas. The Umbrellas of May 35th reimagines the umbrella-wielding undercover policemen as Red Guard dancers from Red Detachment of Women, a propagandist Communist ballet from the Cultural Revolution."

<http://www.annamarieho.com>

<sup>77</sup> List of Seven Demands: Students from different Beijing Universities gathered to mourn Hu Yaobang, whom they felt were being cast as a scapegoat by the government to justify anti-reform politics. The students used the occasion not only to mourn the deceased but also to formulate a list of 7 demands for the government:

- (1) affirm as correct Hu Yaobang's views on democracy and freedom;
- (2) admit that the campaigns against spiritual pollution and bourgeois liberalization had been wrong;
- (3) publish information of the income of state leaders and their family members;
- (4) end the ban on privately run newspapers and permit freedom of speech;
- (5) increase funding for education and raise intellectuals' pay;
- (6) end restrictions on demonstrations in Beijing;
- (7) hold democratic elections to replace government officials who made bad policy decisions.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen\\_Square\\_protests\\_of\\_1989#Protest\\_development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square_protests_of_1989#Protest_development)

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<sup>78</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen\\_Square\\_protests\\_of\\_1989#Protest\\_development](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiananmen_Square_protests_of_1989#Protest_development)

<sup>79</sup> As the American journalist, Philip J Cunningham, writes in his personal account of the uprisings that he took part in as a young exchange student: "There it is again. The students are willfully making parallels between their situation and the progenitor of all student demonstrations. The social and creative explosion that followed the May Fourth demonstration at Tiananmen Gate in 1919 led to the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. Once the party took over, it enshrined the 1919 student demonstration as an icon of Chinese Communism."

Philip J Cunningham: *Tiananmen Moon* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009), p.?

<sup>80</sup> See commentary 2.1.4.2.: Cloning

<sup>81</sup> See commentary 2.1.4.2.: Cloning

<sup>82</sup> These slogans are quoted from:

Philip J Cunningham: *Tiananmen Moon* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009) and Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990)

<sup>83</sup> Modern History Sourcebook: "The Internationale is the international song of both Marxist and non-Marxist socialist parties. It was written in French by Eugene Pottier, a woodworker from Lille, after the fall of the Paris Commune of 1871, and set to music by P. Degeyter. The "Internationale" referred to is the International Working Men's Association, the so-called First International (1864-76), part of which had supported the Commune. It has been used across the world as a song of resistance to oppression. Perhaps its most dramatic use in recent years was its repeated singing by the students in Tiananmen Square in 1989 - although, curiously, the Western press did not comment on this."

<sup>84</sup> Philip J Cunningham: *Tiananmen Moon* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009), p. 22

<sup>85</sup> Dai Wei and Tian Yi are characters from the novel 'Beijing Coma' by Ma Jian (see commentary 2.1.4.1.: Demolition). Their questions are a direct quote from the beginning of the novel. Dai Wei was shot and severely hurt in Tiananmen Square in the early morning of June 4th 1989. The question is his first conscious thought after 10 years of coma. Here it is doubled and turned into a conversation between two ghosts.

Ma Jian: *Beijing Coma* (London: Vintage 2009), p.3

<sup>86</sup> The slogan China's Soul! refers to the former Secretary General of The Communist Party Hu Yaobang. He was generally seen as one of the only Chinese leaders with high morals and progressive ideas.

<sup>87</sup> The text of the song, Tiananmen Moon, is by Philip J Cunningham taken from his book Tiananmen Moon. He composed the song after a midnight bicycle ride to Tiananmen Square a couple of years before the 1989 riots, but he uses its title for his book of personal memoirs about the Democracy Movement. In all its banal reverie the text has a nice subdued undertone of something else. I gave the text to Lonely Boy Choir (Boris Schiøler) who made up a new tune for it and recorded it in his bathroom in the hotel in Beijing, where we were preparing the two performances that make up Ghost Choir Karaoke. We were searching for subdued references to the 1989 Democracy Movement; the heavy monitoring of every kind of communication by the Chinese authorities for references or criticism, especially from foreigners, on everything concerning the anniversary of June 4th 1989 was felt quite strongly, even in the social circles surrounding the OPEN Performance Festival. After a rather unpleasant confrontation with a translator in a seminar, I decided to do a kind of 'hidden' commemoration of 89 – this resulted in the toned-down mysterious references and use of texts from the Democracy Movement. The use of the Tiananmen Moon song was part of this 'camouflaged criticism'. Ghost Choir Karaoke was intended as a kind of lament, an emotional memorial, situating the sad return of the activists in a present as far from their hopes and aspirations as one might think possible.

Philip J Cunningham: *Tiananmen Moon* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc, 2009), p. ix (preface)



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<sup>88</sup> Undocumented remark by an unknown member of the audience at the Blue Sky Karaoke Club (RO JI GAO LAN TIAN CLUB)

<sup>89</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaoke#cite\\_note-ignobel\\_2004-5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karaoke#cite_note-ignobel_2004-5)

<sup>90</sup> Ma Jian: *Beijing Coma* (London: Vintage 2009), p.666

<sup>91</sup> Ma Jian: *Beijing Coma* (London: Vintage 2009), p.666

<sup>92</sup> *NEW MAY FOURTH MANIFESTO* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 135-137 (included here as Appendix 2.1.5.3.)

<sup>93</sup> more on the history of Tiananmen Square in commentary 2.1.4.3: Construction Site and Karaoke Club: The Public Square as Resistance Platform

<sup>94</sup> see Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng: *Editors' Foreword* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. xxi

<sup>95</sup> see appendix 2.1.5.2.

<sup>96</sup> Aspects of the 'arabic spring' are treated in the last performance here, 'Silent Stand'.

<sup>97</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s\\_Daily\\_editorial\\_of\\_26\\_April](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/People%27s_Daily_editorial_of_26_April)

<sup>98</sup> *NEW MAY FOURTH MANIFESTO* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 135-137 (included here as Appendix 2.1.5.3.)

<sup>99</sup> *NEW MAY FOURTH MANIFESTO* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 135-137 (included here as Appendix 2.1.5.3.)

<sup>100</sup> Tsao Hsinyuan: *The birth of the Goddess of Democracy* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) pp. 343-8.

<sup>101</sup> Samuel P Huntington: *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late 20th Century* (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press 1993), p.286

<sup>102</sup> George Katsiaficas: *Rethinking Huntington's Third Wave* (<http://www.erosseffect.com/articles/huntington.pdf> 2010), p.4

<sup>103</sup> *I'D LIKE TO KNOW* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 13-15

<sup>104</sup> Richard Schechner: *THE STREET IS THE STAGE* in Jan Cohen-Cruz, editor, *Radical Street Performance: an international anthology* (New York: Routledge 1998) p. 200

<sup>105</sup> Han Minzhu and Hua Sheng: *The Hunger Strike May 13-19* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 119

<sup>106</sup> *Hunger Strikers Statement* in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 201

<sup>107</sup> see commentary 2.1.4.1.: Demolition



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<sup>108</sup> excerpt from an interview with Chai Ling, in Han Minzhu, editor, *Cries for Democracy: Writings and Speeches from the 1989 Chinese Democracy Movement* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 327

<sup>109</sup> See commentary 2.1.4.2.: Cloning

<sup>110</sup> Stine Krøijer: 'Other worlds are possible: a political cosmology of capitalism' in *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011), p. 45-70

<sup>111</sup> Richard Schechner: *THE STREET IS THE STAGE* in Jan Cohen-Cruz, editor, *Radical Street Performance: an international anthology* (New York: Routledge 1998) p. 199 + p. 204-206.

<sup>112</sup> Richard Schechner: *THE STREET IS THE STAGE* in Jan Cohen-Cruz, editor, *Radical Street Performance: an international anthology* (New York: Routledge 1998) p. 199 + p. 204-206.

<sup>113</sup> Richard Schechner: *THE STREET IS THE STAGE* in Jan Cohen-Cruz, editor, *Radical Street Performance: an international anthology* (New York: Routledge 1998) p. 199 + p. 204-206.

<sup>114</sup> Title taken from a song by the American metal-band Blue Oyster Cult,

<sup>115</sup> Photo Ban:

Organizing the performance and especially the following discussion at the Youth House presented a series of interesting obstacles. The Youth House has a general photo ban. It is prohibited to take photos inside the house, or more precisely, it is not allowed to take photos of any persons using or visiting the house. This ban has developed out of extensive negative experiences with the police and journalists acting undercover inside The Youth House or in related situations, photographing people, using the images either in the police archives or directly in the media. The photo ban influenced even the filming of the performance and the discussion afterwards. I had to negotiate with Tommy, the organiser, on the camera angles, trying to avoid images of the audience. In preparing for the event with Tommy we also discussed the potential presence of journalists in the audience. Stemming out of the same bad history with the press, there is a tradition in The Youth House for rejecting journalists' entry to meetings and debates – occasions that are otherwise open to everyone who wants to participate and influence the decisions in the house. We agreed that prior to my introduction of the discussion, I would announce that journalists were not welcome. Tommy felt that this would ensure a more free discussion, that the activists present would relax and speak more directly if we tried to keep journalists away. In the press release we even ask the press to mail us in advance if they were coming, with the intention of sorting them, thereby preventing 'the bad guys' to enter our event.

No journalists showed any interest, and when we came to the discussion part, I simply forgot to ask members of the press to leave. Later, while editing the documentation of the discussion, though, I deliberately left out any names in the title and end texts.

Tommy's preoccupation with these matters and the general rules and traditions of The Youth House might seem a bit paranoid, but it is a general attitude in the activist milieu. There is a long history of negative, misleading stories in the press, and the media in general is seen to have played a very biased role in the various struggles around The Youth House. The intense and unreflected focus on violence in the media, as discussed above in the note on militancy, is a large part of this conflict with the media, but also the general staging of the activists has been experienced as negative. These problematics is of course another aspect of the invisibility and anonymity discussed elsewhere in this thesis. The photo ban and the other measures described here are means of protection. They protect the persons using the Youth House and they protect the meetings and the democratic process of self-governance practiced in The Youth House and other similar places. The photo ban is part of the invisible border between the autonomous zone and the rest of society.

<sup>116</sup> This is the new Youth House, created in the summer/autumn of 2008 as a substitute for the former Youth House on Jagtvej 69, which was evicted and torn down in March 2007 (see commentary 3.1.4.1.). The new house was granted the activists in the Youth House Movement after a year of constant struggles, weekly demonstrations and an array of wild and creative protests.

<sup>117</sup> This is the only performance in this project where I am not presenting myself as 'the artist/researcher'. The text in the first scene is spoken in first person, without filtration. This is myself speaking.

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<sup>118</sup> Punk Culture: The fact that a lot of musicians supported the Youth House stems from the way music, especially punk, but also other genres, was an inherent part of the Youth House culture. A range of bands that later became famous started out there. Visual arts was never a part of that culture in any significant sense. This might explain the lack of engagement from the Copenhagen Art Scene.

<sup>119</sup> Black Confetti: see Glossary 0.3.

<sup>120</sup> 69: see Glossary 0.3.

<sup>121</sup> No Surrender! Is one of the central slogans of The Youth House Movement. See also commentary Violent versus Militant.

<sup>122</sup> See commentary Active Time versus Dead Time

<sup>123</sup> The song 'In Love' ('Forelsket') is written by the video-artist Søren Thilo Funder and the pop-musician Pato, 'after a pirate-party and a bottle of Red Label.' The track was played for the first time at the demo commemorating the 1-year anniversary of the Youth House Demolition. It is in Danish – translated by me. The track can be heard at: <http://www.myspace.com/srenthilofunderpato>

<sup>124</sup> See commentary: The very personal note: I'm Not There

<sup>125</sup> Henrik Have (born 1946) is a visual artist and poet. Have's multimedial art stretches from objects and collages through painting and sculpture to poetry and publishing (he has been running Edition After Hand since 1973). His work has roots in Absurdism and in the form experiments in the new French novel, in the radical art movements of the 1960s and 1970s, such as fluxus, minimal, conceptual and processual art. Both as a poet and as a visual artist Have was early on attracted to the anti-psychological art that downgrades the role of the Author, but involves the reader and the viewer in an open reflection, guided by language itself, material process and the creation of meaning is central.

Henrik Have is one of the lesser known heroes of Danish conceptual art. To me, Henrik Have as a person and as an artist is a permanent rebel. In all he does there is a rebellious attack. My idea with including him in the performance had to do with displacement. By using an older man – Henrik is 66 – as the voice of a young rebel, I wanted to add a slight displacement, to give the text an existential weight; to suggest that the state of exaltation described in the song, could be seen as a general aspect of the human condition, that the rioting is not something left over to the young to engage in.

And then he has a great voice, a cool, sturdy detachment in his recitation that creates a perfect distance to the text.

<sup>126</sup> See commentary In Love part one (3.1.4.4.)

<sup>127</sup> See Glossary: Barricades

<sup>128</sup> See commentary: In Love part two (3.1.4.6.)

<sup>129</sup> See commentaries 'In Love part one' & 'In Love part two' (3.1.4.4. and 3.1.4.6.)

<sup>130</sup> REVOLUTION BY NIGHT discussion AoR 3.1.2.1 (video documentation). The translation of comments is done by Frans Jacobi.

<sup>131</sup> Ruth Evensen: Ruths beretning om Ungdomshus-sagen (uddrag af Ruth - det ik' slut), Ruth Evensen reading the chapter on The Youth House from her self-biography. Online at: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=Z8LA9WjNB1c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=Z8LA9WjNB1c))

<sup>132</sup> The occupation of the fortress is documented in the film: '500 Stenkastende Autonome Voldspsykopater fra Helvede / Squat 69', film by: Morten Revsgaard Frederiksen, Anders Hornstrup, Toke Gade Crone Kristiansen, David B. Sørensen (Copenhagen: Beofilm 2007)

<sup>133</sup> N30 Black Bloc Communiqué by ACME Collective 10:48am Sat Dec 4 '99 A communiqué from one section of the black bloc of N30 in Seattle - <http://www.nocompromise.org/news/991204a.html> included here as Appendix 1.1.5.2.

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- <sup>134</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011). p. 182-183
- <sup>135</sup> Kai Vittrup: *OPERATION* (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p.97
- <sup>136</sup> Glossary of Technical Terms: Dispute (Le Litige) in Jacques Rancière: *THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS* (London: Continuum 2004), p. 85
- <sup>137</sup> All quotes in note 9 are from: *Chapter 2: BECOMING ENGAGED: youth and interstices of active time in Ungdomshuset* in Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011) p. 71-96
- <sup>138</sup> see note 137
- <sup>139</sup> see note 137
- <sup>140</sup> see note 137
- <sup>141</sup> see note 137
- <sup>142</sup> Werner von Delmont aka Stephan Dillemtuth in *Get Rid of Yourself*, Bernadette Corporation 2003, DV, 61 min, The transcribed text of the film is published by appliednonexistence as *PILFERED SERIES: TWO* at: [http://appliednonexistence.org/?page\\_id=24](http://appliednonexistence.org/?page_id=24), this quote at p.13
- <sup>143</sup> *REVOLUTION BY NIGHT* discussion AoR 3.1.2.1 (video documentation). The translation of Henrik Have's comments is done by Frans Jacobi.
- <sup>144</sup> From 'Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance', Commentary 1.1.4.2.
- <sup>145</sup> *Get Rid of Yourself*, Bernadette Corporation 2003, DV, 61 min, featuring Chloe Sevigny and Werner von Delmont, distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix. Online viewing: [http://www.archive.org/details/get\\_rid\\_of\\_yourself](http://www.archive.org/details/get_rid_of_yourself)  
The transcribed text of the film is published by appliednonexistence as *PILFERED SERIES: TWO* at: [http://appliednonexistence.org/?page\\_id=24](http://appliednonexistence.org/?page_id=24)
- <sup>146</sup> *Get Rid of Yourself*, Bernadette Corporation 2003, DV, 61 min, featuring Chloe Sevigny and Werner von Delmont, distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix. Online viewing: [http://www.archive.org/details/get\\_rid\\_of\\_yourself](http://www.archive.org/details/get_rid_of_yourself) The transcribed text of the film is published by appliednonexistence as *PILFERED SERIES: TWO* at: [http://appliednonexistence.org/?page\\_id=24](http://appliednonexistence.org/?page_id=24)
- <sup>147</sup> *Get Rid of Yourself*, Bernadette Corporation 2003, DV, 61 min, featuring Chloe Sevigny and Werner von Delmont, distributed by Electronic Arts Intermix. Online viewing: [http://www.archive.org/details/get\\_rid\\_of\\_yourself](http://www.archive.org/details/get_rid_of_yourself) The transcribed text of the film is published by appliednonexistence as *PILFERED SERIES: TWO* at: [http://appliednonexistence.org/?page\\_id=24](http://appliednonexistence.org/?page_id=24)
- <sup>148</sup> Slavoj Žižek : "Robespierre or the "Divine Violence of Terror" in: *Robespierre: Virtue and Terror* (London: Verso, 2007), pp. xxxiv – xxxv
- <sup>149</sup> George N. Katsiaficas: *The Eros Effect* (<http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF>)
- <sup>150</sup> The last sentence in the song 'In Love', see note 10
- <sup>151</sup> "69scenes", Bendixen Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, 2008
- <sup>152</sup> From *G13: Modkrafts liveupdate*, 7. October 2007 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2007)(published at: [http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=print&id\\_article=6342](http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=print&id_article=6342))
- <sup>153</sup> *Ungdomshusbevægelsen er defensiv*, interview with Mikkel Bolt by Niels Fastrup/Monsun - 21. august 2008 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2008) (published at: <http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?article8499>)

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- <sup>154</sup> from *G13: Modkrafts liveupdate*, 7. October 2007 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2007)(published at: [http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=print&id\\_article=6342](http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=print&id_article=6342)) )
- <sup>155</sup> *G13-aktion banede vejen for nyt ungdomshus*, Martin Lindblom/Monsun - 27. november 2007 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2007)(published at: [http://modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=nyheder-artikel&id\\_article=6812](http://modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=nyheder-artikel&id_article=6812))
- <sup>156</sup> *The Fingerplan*, (Copenhagen: Aktion G13 2007) (first published at: <http://aktiong13.dk/index.php?ufo=arkiv>)
- <sup>157</sup> All time-based entries by the Guide comes from: *G13: Modkrafts liveupdate*, 7. October 2007 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2007)(published at: [http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=print&id\\_article=6342](http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=print&id_article=6342)), included here as Appendix 3.2.4.3, translated by Susanne Jacobi
- <sup>158</sup> from *The Fingerplan*, (Copenhagen: Aktion G13 2007) (first published at: <http://aktiong13.dk/index.php?ufo=arkiv>), included here as Appendix 3.2.4.7. Translated by Frans Jacobi
- <sup>159</sup> Brian Holmes: *Network Maps, Energy Diagrams: Structure and Agency in the Global System in ESCAPE THE OVERCODE Activist Art in the Control Society* (Eindhoven, Zagreb, Istanbul: Van Abbemuseum WHW 2009), p. 55
- <sup>160</sup> D.Ronfeldt, J.Arquilla, et al, The Zapatista "Social Netwar" in Mexico (Rand Corporaton, 1998), chapter 2, quoted from Brian Holmes: *Network Maps, Energy Diagrams: Structure and Agency in the Global System in ESCAPE THE OVERCODE Activist Art in the Control Society* (Eindhoven, Zagreb, Istanbul: Van Abbemuseum WHW 2009), p. 55
- <sup>161</sup> see AoR 3.1. 'Revolution by Night'
- <sup>162</sup> see note 158
- <sup>163</sup> see note 158
- <sup>164</sup> Nikolaj Villumsen: 'Den hårde kerne kan ikke anholdes' in '*Kampen om Ungdomshuset – studier I et oprør*', ed. René Karpantschof & Martin Lindblom (Copenhagen: Frydenlund & Monsun, 2009), p.218-219 (quote translated by Frans Jacobi)
- <sup>165</sup> Ulrik S. Kohl: 'Glødende Mobiler' in '*Kampen om Ungdomshuset – studier I et oprør*', ed. René Karpantschof & Martin Lindblom (Copenhagen: Frydenlund & Monsun, 2009), p.201-214
- <sup>166</sup> Nikolaj Villumsen: 'Den hårde kerne kan ikke anholdes' in '*Kampen om Ungdomshuset – studier I et oprør*', ed. René Karpantschof & Martin Lindblom (Copenhagen: Frydenlund & Monsun, 2009), p.219
- <sup>167</sup> see note 158
- <sup>168</sup> Quoted from '*G13-aktion banede vejen for nyt ungdomshus*', Martin Lindblom/Monsun - 27. november 2007 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2007)(published at: [http://modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=nyheder-artikel&id\\_article=6812](http://modkraft.dk/spip.php?page=nyheder-artikel&id_article=6812)), here included as Appendix 3.2.4.6.
- <sup>169</sup> The Invisible Committee: *THE COMING INSURRECTION* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2009), p. 110-111
- <sup>170</sup> from commentary 1.1.4.1: Verfremdungseffekt
- <sup>171</sup> Who is Austin?????
- <sup>172</sup> Perlocution, *l.pərleˈkʏo̯ sh ənl*, noun: an act of speaking or writing that has an action as its aim but that in itself does not effect or constitute the action, for example persuading or convincing. Compare with illocution . (New Oxford American Dictionary)
- <sup>173</sup> illocution, *l.ɪləˈkʏo̯ sh ənl*, noun: an action performed by saying or writing something, e.g., ordering, warning, or promising. (New Oxford American Dictionary)

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<sup>174</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011) p. 225-226

<sup>175</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011) p. 218

<sup>176</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011) p. 226

<sup>177</sup> *Ungdomshusbevægelsen er defensiv*, interview with Mikkel Bolt by Niels Fastrup/Monsun - 21. august 2008 (Copenhagen: Modkraft.dk 2008) published at: <http://www.modkraft.dk/spip.php?article8499>, now included here as: Appendix 3.2.3.4. This quote translated by Frans Jacobi.

<sup>178</sup> *GOING THROUGH A FIELD*: Oliver Ressler in conversation with Frans Jacobi, Nørrebro 23.7.2011. the video is included here as Appendix 3.2.4.2.

<sup>179</sup> see Appendix 3.2.4.3. for a detailed on-the-spot reporting from these events.

<sup>180</sup> See Appendix 3.2.4.5. for the full letter (translated by Susanne Jacobi)

<sup>181</sup> See Appendix 3.2.3.6. for the photo of the flag

<sup>182</sup> Quoted from the chorus of the song '*Rock'n'roll Nigger*' by Patti Smith and Lenny Kaye (Kobalt Music Publishing Ltd., EMI Music Publishing, Warner/Chappell Music, Inc., Universal Music Publishing Group)

<sup>183</sup> The *Lehrstücke* are a radical and experimental form of modernist theatre developed by Bertolt Brecht and his collaborators from the 1920s to the late 1930s. The *Lehrstücke* stem from Brecht's Epic Theatre techniques but as a core principle explore the possibilities of learning through acting, playing roles, adopting postures and attitudes etc. and hence no longer divide between actors and audience. Brecht himself translated the term as *learning-play*, emphasizing the aspect of learning through participation, whereas the German term could also be understood as *teaching-play*. (this note quoted from: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning\\_play](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_play))

<sup>184</sup> From Lars Bang Larsen: *Projektløshedens problematik* in Lars Bang Larsen: *Spredt væren* (Århus: Det Jyske Kunstakademi 2010) (quote translated by Frans Jacobi)

<sup>185</sup> These 2 events were not connected in any way. Still the striking similarity in both aesthetics and their expressed social/cultural aims is interesting. The intention here is to explore those similarities and as a natural consequence, contemplate the differences. This investigation includes the quite obvious themes – art versus activism, legal versus illegal, social movement versus artistic authorship – but it also touches upon the aesthetics of temporality and the meaning of water/sea as a metaphor for...yes for what?

<sup>186</sup> This and the following quotes by Parfyme are from the video 'Everyone Can Use The Harbor' to be found at the webpage of Parfyme, where also photo-documentation and other video-clips from The Harbour Laboratory can be found: <http://www.parfyme.dk/projects/harbor-laboratory/>

<sup>187</sup> A curious detail here is that in this period Realdania was in serious and complex negotiations about taking part in the financing of the new legalized Christiania. The resulting proposal was later dismissed by a small majority in Christiania and the process of legalization became a court-case.

<sup>188</sup> Merel Pit, Karel Steller, Gerjan Streng: *Parasitic Architecture #1*, p. 8. published at: <http://www.gerjanstreng.eu/files/T02%20essay%20parasitic%20architecture.pdf>, here included as Appendix 3.3.5.3.

<sup>189</sup> see note 186

<sup>190</sup> In order to make the script work as basis of the performance some parts of the manifesto by the Upbuilders are taken out. The first excerpt occurs here. Excerpt 1: "Refshalevej is not a part of

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Christiania! Christiania is our neighbor and Christiania has our total love and respect!"

<sup>191</sup> This manifesto was presented as a press-release and a poster at the occupation of Refshalevej. It can be found online together with photo-documentation from occupation:

[http://www.graffitigalleriet.dk/main/gaden/opbyggerne\\_08/index.html](http://www.graffitigalleriet.dk/main/gaden/opbyggerne_08/index.html)

Here it is included as Appendix 3.3.5.4.

<sup>192</sup> The location directly on the edge of Christiania creates confusion. In the media the first idea is that this an expansion of Christiania, which stir up a lot of aggressivity. Christiania is in the middle of long complicated negotiations on legalization with the authorities and has no need of a new illegal little-sister. So both parts has to announce their independency of each other. Still the new community resembles Christiania a lot, also in their ideas about democracy and their claim for independence from the rest of society. But in a young fresh and contemporary version.

<sup>193</sup> See note 191

<sup>194</sup> Hakim Bey: The Temporary Autonomous Zone (<http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/taz3a.htm>), included here as Appendix 3.3.5.5.

<sup>195</sup> see note 194

<sup>196</sup> This, being caught in becoming another, closely resembles the way Chloe Sevigny is present in the film 'Get Rid of Yourself', see AoR 3.1. note 16.

<sup>197</sup> See G13analyzis for a longer elaboration on performing the information gathered in the research process.

<sup>198</sup> For a longer, brilliant contemplation on 'deus ex machina' see the chapter 'Theater Machines' in Gerald Raunig: *'A Thousand Machines'*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2010), p. 35-56cli

<sup>199</sup> quoted from: *the Exhibition Guide, Anja Kirschner and David Panos: The Empty PlanTrine Falch: Theatre for a New Time*, Oslo Kunsthall, May 14th - June 26th 2011 (published online at: [http://www.kunsthall oslo.no/images/stories/KO/Anjadavidtrina/ny2\\_emptyplan\\_falch\\_english.pdf](http://www.kunsthall oslo.no/images/stories/KO/Anjadavidtrina/ny2_emptyplan_falch_english.pdf)) included here as Appendix ???

<sup>200</sup> Chto Delat?, the russian collective of artists, critics, philosophers and writers founded in St. Petersburg in 2003, has produced a series of Lehrstücke – learning plays – where a group of invited participants meet for a short intense workshop, 36 hours or 48 hours, improvising the script collectively from a given theme. The play is then performed by the same participants in front of an audience, with several inserted discussions and other alienation effects employed. 3 examples can be seen at the web-site of Chto Delat?: "The Russian Woods", at Tramway, Glasgow 25.03.2012, "The urgent need to struggle" at Institute of Contemporary Arts, London 10.09.2010, "Where has communism gone?" at SMART project space, Amsterdam February 2011 ([www.chtodelat.org](http://www.chtodelat.org)). They have also used the idea of a commenting choir intensely in their 'Songspiels' – a form derived from soviet theatre tradition. For a lenghtier discussion of the post-communistic aspects in the work of Chto Delat? see 'What Remains? – Chto Delat?, Post-Communism and Art' by my phd-colleague Simon Sheikh.

<sup>201</sup> Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt: *'Glossary of Concepts'* in 'Radical Thought in Italy – A Potential Politics', ed. Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press 1996), p. 262

<sup>202</sup> Paolo Virno: *A Grammar of the Multitude* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), pp. 70-71

<sup>203</sup> Paolo Virno: *'Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus'* in 'Radical Thought in Italy – A Potential Politics', ed. Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press 1996), p. 195

<sup>204</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *De Cive* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1983), chap.14, sec.21, 181

<sup>205</sup> This and other quotes in this section are from Paolo Virno: *'Virtuosity and Revolution: The Political Theory of Exodus'* in 'Radical Thought in Italy – A Potential Politics', ed. Paolo Virno & Michael Hardt (Minneapolis, London: University of Minneapolis Press 1996)

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- <sup>206</sup> Hakim Bey: The Temporary Autonomous Zone (<http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/taz3a.htm>), included here as Appendix 3.3.5.4.
- <sup>207</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/user/hopenhagen>, included here as Appendix 4.1.5.4.
- <sup>208</sup> [www.hopenhagen.org](http://www.hopenhagen.org)
- <sup>209</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/dec/16/evo-morales-hugo-chavez>
- <sup>210</sup> British Dictionary: illustrate: ORIGIN early 16th cent. (in the sense 'illuminate, shed light on'): from Latin *illustrat-* 'lit up', from the verb *illustrare*, from *in-* 'upon' + *lustrare* 'illuminate'.
- <sup>211</sup> Slavoj Žižek : "Robespierre or the "Divine Violence" of Terror" in: Robespierre: Virtue and Terror (London: Verso, 2007), p. xxxv
- <sup>212</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Logique du sens* (Paris: Les Édition de Minuit 1969)
- <sup>213</sup> Gilles Deleuze: *Negotiations* (New York: Columbia University Press 1995), p. 171
- <sup>214</sup> Again, it is not my intention here to give any kind of comprehensive introduction to Deleuze's version of the Sense-Event, just a hint on the premises for my appropriation and transformation of the term. I owe my very short and superficial presentation of Deleuze's ideas on the Sense-Event to the danish interpreter of Deleuze, Bodil Marie Thomsen and her highly informative essay '*Alt stof udsender billeder. Om det visuelle som begivenhed*' (All matter projects 'images'. On the visual as event), in '*FLUGTLINIER. Om Deleuzes filosofi*' (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanums Forlag 2001), p. 217-244.
- <sup>215</sup> This example with the tree is taken from Bodil Marie Thomsen's text, she refers it to Deleuze and Husserl.
- <sup>216</sup> In Bodil Marie Thomsen's introduction to this thought-complex, she starts with a discussion of the phenomena of the mirror, taken from a classic text by Lucrezi.
- <sup>217</sup> This elaboration on the film-strip and the screen are my own responsibility, misleading as it might be.
- <sup>218</sup> '*Maneuvering*': A panel discussion on performance and performativity with Dominic Johnson, Mathias Danbolt, Al Masson and Mary Coble. Overgaden, Institute of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen. August 2nd, 2012
- <sup>219</sup> *Fighting Cocks* was part of *Commitment Issues: A Night of Performance*, FADO Performance Art Network, Toronto, 2011. *The Sound of Fighting Cocks* were presented as part of Mary Coble's solo exhibition *Maneuvering* at Overgaden, Institute of Contemporary Art, Copenhagen, 2012
- <sup>220</sup> see note 211
- <sup>221</sup> Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: 'Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?' (Paris: Les Édition de Minuit 1991), danish translation 'Hvad er filosofi?' (Copenhagen: Gyldendal 1996), p. 223
- <sup>222</sup> Slavoj Žižek : "Robespierre or the "Divine Violence" of Terror" in: Robespierre: Virtue and Terror (London: Verso, 2007), p. xxxv
- <sup>223</sup> Slavoj Žižek : "Robespierre or the "Divine Violence" of Terror" in: Robespierre: Virtue and Terror (London: Verso, 2007), p. xxxv
- <sup>224</sup> see Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011)
- <sup>225</sup> George N. Katsiaficas: The Eros Effect (<http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF>)

<sup>226</sup> Hakim Bey: The Temporary Autonomous Zone (<http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/taz3a.htm>), included here as Appendix 3.3.5.4.

<sup>227</sup> For further introductions to these concepts see the commentaries to specific scripts/performances where they are used. Active Time is used in 'Revolution By Night' (3.1.), the Eros Effect in 'Silent Stand' (5.1.) and Exodus and the Temporary Autonomous Zone in 'On Water' (3.3.).

<sup>228</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011) p. 226

<sup>229</sup> <sup>229</sup> staging l'stāji ng l

noun

1 an instance or method of presenting a play or other dramatic performance : *one of the better stagings of this Shakesperean classic / the quality of staging and design.*

• an instance of organizing a public event or protest : *the fourteenth staging of the championships.*

2 a stage or set of stages or temporary platforms arranged as a support for performers or between different levels of scaffolding.

3 Medicine diagnosis or classification of the particular stage reached by a progressive disease.

4 the arrangement of stages in a rocket or spacecraft.

• the separation and jettisoning of a stage from the remainder of a rocket when its propellant is spent.

<sup>230</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y2n4SkWQINc> (translated by Frans Jacobi)

<sup>231</sup> scene l'sēnl

noun

1 the place where an incident in real life or fiction occurs or occurred : *the emergency team were among the first on the scene / relatives left flowers at the scene of the crash.*

• a place, with the people, objects, and events in it, regarded as having a particular character or making a particular impression : *a scene of carnage.*

• a landscape : *thick snow had turned the scene outside into a picture postcard.*

• an incident of a specified nature : *there had already been some scenes of violence.*

• a place or representation of an incident : *scenes of 1930s America.*

• [with adj. ] a specified area of activity or interest : *the country music scene.*

• [usu. in sing. ] a public display of emotion or anger : *she was loath to make a scene in the office.*

2 a sequence of continuous action in a play, movie, opera, or book : *a scene from Brando's first film.*

• a subdivision of an act of a play in which the time is continuous and the setting fixed and which does not usually involve a change of characters : *beginning at Act One, Scene One.*

• [usu. as adj. ] the pieces of scenery used in a play or opera : *scene changes.*

PHRASES

behind the scenes out of sight of the public at a theater or organization. • figurative secretly : *diplomatic maneuvers going on behind the scenes.*

change of scene another way of saying change of scenery (see scenery ).

come (or appear or arrive) on the scene arrive; appear.

hit (or make) the scene informal way of saying come on the scene above.

not one's scene informal not something one enjoys or is interested in : *sorry, that witchcraft stuff is not my scene.*

set the scene describe a place or situation in which something is about to happen. • create the conditions for a future event : *the congressman's speech set the scene for a bitter debate.*

ORIGIN mid 16th cent. (denoting a subdivision of a play, or (a piece of) stage scenery): from Latin *scena*, from Greek *skēnē* 'tent, stage.'

<sup>232</sup> Forestilling

In the performance, the text as a whole was presented in Danish. In this paragraph the Danish word used instead of 'imagine' is 'forestilling', which has a multiple meaning of 'presentation/performance/theatre-play/projection/presumption/presupposition.

<sup>233</sup> [http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Kbh/Nyheder/Hovedstadsomraadet/2009/09/15/051810\\_10.htm&regional](http://www.dr.dk/Regioner/Kbh/Nyheder/Hovedstadsomraadet/2009/09/15/051810_10.htm&regional) (translated by Frans Jacobi) <http://jp.dk/klima/article1816632.ece>

<sup>234</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWEzLoUgXw0>

<sup>235</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2beLujOvf4k>



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<sup>236</sup> Show of Force: On the concept as introduced in Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003)

<sup>237</sup> Udskrift af Østre landsrets Dombog B011400P – AHA: Dom afsagt den 25. Januar 2012 af østre Landsrets 12. Afdeling, p.152 (translated by Frans Jacobi & Susanne Jacobi)

<sup>238</sup> taken from Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011). p. 229

<sup>239</sup> Stine Krøijer: *FIGURATIONS OF THE FUTURE Forms and temporality of left radical politics in northern Europe*, PhD thesis (Copenhagen: Department of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen 2011). p. 229-230

<sup>240</sup> see note 238

<sup>241</sup> More on this attempt in the commentary 'Searching for an audience' (3.3.4.1.)

<sup>242</sup> The tone of recitation is modelled on the famous, all-reassuring voice of the Danish hero of childrens' television, the now late Thomas Winding.

<sup>243</sup> The arrest was a so-called 'preventive arrest' which complicated the matter even more. The persons arrested were suspected of being able to commit 'disturbance of the public order', turmoil or even violence. The police had to argue for the relevance of such a suspicion, while the lawyers of the activists argued that the possible threat to the public order was far overrated, and the massive arrest illegal. The police lost the case.

This court case is the topic of the small performance-ecture 'Aesthetics of Resistance?'. The script is included here as commentary 4.2.4.1.

<sup>244</sup> The themes of style and improvisation are discussed in depth in the commentaries 3.1.4.5: 'Get Rid of Yourself' and 3.2.3.2: 'On Style'.

<sup>245</sup> 'Aesthetics of Resistance?' was performed as my part of the seminar: 'Artistic Research?', at Overgaden, Copenhagen 23.2.2012

<sup>246</sup> The Invisible Committee: *THE COMING INSURRECTION* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 2009), p. 110-111

<sup>247</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWEzLoUgXw0>

<sup>248</sup> Kai Vittrup: OPERATION (Copenhagen: Copenhagen Police 2003), p.97

<sup>249</sup> This commentary was first published as 3 entries on my blog on the activism surrounding the Climate Summit: <http://climate-action.blogspot.dk>

The argument presented in it reflects my thinking about these matters at that point. My research since then has showed me other possibilities of interpreting the push-thru-the-fence action. These more recent views are presented in the script of Climate/Kettle.

<sup>250</sup> New Oxford American Dictionary

<sup>251</sup> <http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allotria-huset>

For a longer version of the story see: ULRIK DAHLIN: *Tunneler fra Allotria*, Information 11. januar 2003

<sup>252</sup> All 3 statements were presented in this article:  
Os der ikke findes: *En eksplosiv frihedskraft*, Modkraft.dk, 15. maj 2009  
(<http://modkraft.dk/sektion/kontradoxia/article/en-eksplosiv-frihedskraft>)

<sup>253</sup> Hakim Bey: *The Temporary Autonomous Zone* (<http://www.t0.or.at/hakimbey/taz/taz3a.htm>)

<sup>254</sup> Nick Kaye: *site-specific art*, (London and New York: Routledge 2000) p. 8

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<sup>255</sup> The Danish art-theorician, Mikkel Bolt, has a completely different analysis of this event than mine in this interview: CAMILLA STOCKMANN: *Kunstekspert roser hærværk i Hyskenstræde*, Politiken 22. AUG. 2009 (<http://politiken.dk/kultur/ECE773474/kunstekspert-roser-haervaerk-i-hyskenstraede/>)

<sup>256</sup> All 3 statements were presented in this article:  
Os der ikke findes: *En eksplosiv frihedskraft*, Modkraft.dk, 15. maj 2009  
(<http://modkraft.dk/sektion/kontradoxa/article/en-eksplosiv-frihedskraft>)

<sup>257</sup> There is a discrepancy between the 'gentle synthesizer wave, rising and falling' and the sound of the real waves that the artist/researcher here announces. This small difference is used to introduce a distance between the textual information and what the audience is actually experiencing, thus pointing at the two levels of information - the textual and the sensual – that this story is told on. The two levels don't fit exactly, thereby questioning the order between them.

<sup>258</sup> *New Oxford American Dictionary* (Apple, Inc., 2005-2009)  
+ <http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo>  
+ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cairo>

<sup>259</sup> <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/home-khaled-said-full-story-background-truth-what-happened-torture-in-egypt-by-egyptian-police/>

<sup>260</sup> <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/home-khaled-said-full-story-background-truth-what-happened-torture-in-egypt-by-egyptian-police/>

<sup>261</sup> <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/silent-stands/>

<sup>262</sup> Nadine Wahab: Flash Mob in Egypt: *Protesters find a way around Emergency Law*, huffingtonpost.com 19.06.2010, ([http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nadine-wahab/first-flash-mob-in-egypt\\_b\\_618412.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/nadine-wahab/first-flash-mob-in-egypt_b_618412.html))  
+ <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/2010/07/02/flash-mob-in-egypt-protesters-find-a-way-around-emergency-law/>

<sup>263</sup> We are all Khaled Said: *FAQ Jul.22, 2010* (<http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/faq/>)

<sup>264</sup> <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/silent-stands/>

<sup>265</sup> <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk/home-khaled-said-full-story-background-truth-what-happened-torture-in-egypt-by-egyptian-police/>

<sup>266</sup> [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxfMzHnFbh4&feature=channel\\_video\\_title](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxfMzHnFbh4&feature=channel_video_title)  
+ <http://www.youtube.com/user/TheTruthArmy#p/u/4/gxfMzHnFbh4>

<sup>267</sup> Wael Ghonim interviewed on the CBS talkshow 60minutes:  
<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7346812n>

<sup>268</sup> <http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF> included here as Appendix

<sup>269</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/elshaheed.co.uk/posts/191307190893133>

<sup>270</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/feb/11/full-text-hosni-mubarak-resignation?intcmp=239>

<sup>271</sup> DEFEND THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION on Facebook, 20.12.2011  
<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Defend-the-Egyptian-Revolution/213838755356454?fref=ts>

<sup>272</sup> Gilles Deleuze quoted in: Slavoj Žižek: *ROBESPIERRE, OR, THE DIVINE VIOLENCE OF TERROR* in Robespierre: Virtue and Terror (London: Verso, 2007), pp. xxxiv – xxxv

<sup>273</sup> End-sign in the performance:  
SILENT STAND a reading-piece for 2 voices & 7 performers by Frans Jacobi  
thanks to all involved + Susanne Jacobi, Boris Schiøler, Sarat Maharaj  
WE ARE ALL KHALED SAID: <http://www.elshaheed.co.uk>, <http://www.facebook.com/elshaheed.co.uk>

<sup>274</sup> Joen Vedel in the discussion following 'Silent Stand'

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<sup>275</sup> see also Commentary 5.1.4.1: 'Martyrs'

<sup>276</sup> There is a scene in the first version of the script devoted to Anger Day – but it became difficult to include in the toned-down second version. The first script is included here as Appendix 3.1.5.3.

<sup>277</sup> The term 'revolution' is debatable. In a strict sense the uprisings centered on Tahrir Square were not a revolutionary movement. The general intentions of the movement are rather reform-oriented, but the reforms suggested are on such a massive scale that the term 'revolution' might be reasonable anyway. The movement itself uses the phrase 'the Egyptian revolution' again and again. I am also using it at various points throughout these texts, but with a consciousness of the arguments against this use.

<sup>278</sup> David Rosenberg: *Self-immolation spreads across Mideast inspiring protest*, Jerusalem Post 25.1.2011 (<http://www.jpost.com/MiddleEast/Article.aspx?id=205180>)  
+ Biggs, Michael (2005). "Dying Without Killing: Self-Immolations, 1963–2002". In Diego Gambetta. *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*. Oxford University Press

<sup>279</sup> from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-immolation>

<sup>280</sup> quoted from the commentary: 'Transcendence? Violence? The Aesthetics of Resistance' (1.1.4.2)

<sup>281</sup> British Dictionary: rendition *lren'diSHən* noun

**1** a performance or interpretation, esp. of a dramatic role or piece of music: *a wonderful rendition of "Nessun Dorma."*

- a visual representation or reproduction: *a pen-and-ink rendition of Mars with his sword drawn.*
- a translation or transliteration.

**2** (also **extraordinary rendition**) the practice of sending a foreign criminal or terrorist suspect covertly to be interrogated in a country with less rigorous regulations for the humane treatment of prisoners. ORIGIN early 17th cent.: from obsolete French, from **rendre** 'give back, render.'

word trends: Although recorded as far back as 1980, the new sense of **rendition** is generally regarded as a product of the 'War on Terror.' It refers to the morally and legally ambiguous practice of sending suspects to be questioned in countries known to use harsh interrogation techniques and even torture. The Oxford English Corpus has shown a steady increase in examples throughout the last decade, with a particular rise in the phrase *extraordinary rendition*, which is now the most common use of **rendition** by far. The practice has also spawned a new sense of the verb **render**, meaning 'send someone abroad for interrogation.' Like *extraordinary rendition*, this has seen a surge in use in the last two years: *he was seized in Pakistan and later secretly rendered to Morocco.*

<sup>282</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/elshaheed.co.uk> January 14th 2011 + January 7<sup>th</sup> 2011 + December 9<sup>th</sup> 2010 + November 15<sup>th</sup> 2010  
<http://ireport.cnn.com/docs/DOC-526968>  
<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,729527,00.html#ref=rss>

<sup>283</sup> An informative and in-depth article on secret renditions is to be found at:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraordinary\\_rendition\\_by\\_the\\_United\\_States](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extraordinary_rendition_by_the_United_States)

<sup>284</sup> MATTHEW COLE and SARAH O. WALI : *New Egyptian VP Ran Mubarak's Security Team, Oversaw Torture* (<http://abcnews.go.com/Blotter/egypt-crisis-omar-suleiman-cia-rendition/story?id=12812445>)  
+ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar\\_Suleiman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omar_Suleiman)  
+ Lisa Hajjar: *Suleiman: The CIA's man in Cairo*  
(<http://english.aljazeera.net/indepth/opinion/2011/02/201127114827382865.html>)

<sup>285</sup> John Goetz and Matthias Gebauer: *US Pressured Italy to Influence Judiciary*  
(<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,735268,00.html>)

<sup>286</sup> INGER ELISABETH HANSEN: *HVORFOR LUKKET INGEN ØYNENE PÅ CHE (Che i pysjamas med lukkede øyne)* (Why didn't anyone close the eyes of Che (Che in pyjamas with his eyes closed))  
folkebiblioteket april 2011, Forlaget Attåt 2011, <http://blogg.deichman.no/folkebiblioteket/217-2/>

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<sup>287</sup> <http://english.aljazeera.net/programmes/peopleandpower/2011/02/201128145549829916.html>

<sup>288</sup> see note 27

<sup>289</sup> Wael Ghonim interviewed on the CBS talkshow 60minutes:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7346812n>

<sup>290</sup> Wael Ghonim administers the Arab version of the 'We are all Khaled Said'-page. His anonymous collaborator administers the English version.

<sup>291</sup> All 3 quotes taken from: *The Secret Society of Acéphale in Encyclopaedia Acephalica Comprising the*

*Critical Dictionary & Related Texts* (Edited by Georges Bataille), Appendix?, p.152

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*Propositions on the Death of God, Visions of Excess, Selected Writings, 1927-1939*, ed. Allan Stoeckl, UK: Manchester University Press, 1985; USA: University of Minnesota Press, 1985, pp.199, 201

<sup>292</sup> Bataille's version of God and 'the world of the civilised' compares surprisingly well to 'Dead Time' as it is described by Stine Krøijer and used in various other parts of this project.

<sup>293</sup> <http://www.goldinsenneby.com/gs/?p=116>

<sup>294</sup> wiki l'wikēl noun

a Web site that allows collaborative editing of its content and structure by its users. ORIGIN coined by programmer Ward Cunningham (1949- ), from Hawaiian *wiki-wiki* 'quick-quick.' (New Oxford American Dictionary)

<sup>295</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiki> + Black, Peter; Delaney, Hayden; Fitzgerald, Brian (2007), *Legal Issues for Wikis: The Challenge of User-generated and Peer-produced Knowledge, Content and Culture*, 14, eLaw J., p. 245

<sup>296</sup> GLENN BECK The Fusion of Entertainment and Enlightenment

<http://www.glennbeck.com/2011/02/14/study-guide-egypt-and-organization/>

<sup>297</sup> <http://www.newstatesman.com/middle-east/2011/02/egypt-brotherhood-uprising>

<sup>298</sup> Wael Ghonim interviewed on the CBS talkshow 60minutes:

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7346812n>

<sup>299</sup> Georgy Katsiaficas: *Eroeffectpaper*, p.10 - <http://www.eroseffect.com/articles/eroseffectpaper.PDF> included here as Appendix

<sup>300</sup> <http://www.facebook.com/elshaheed.co.uk/posts/163270607057045>