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The Performative Hybrid Text As a Feedback Loop  
Artistic PhD Project by Tale Næss  
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# Compilation 3

## Reflection through hybrid forms, essays and metalogues

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Stay—Leave. Don't Go.  
— *an essay about the generating  
force of imperative addresses*

It's late November. I am living far north these days. I stand by the window, waiting for the kettle to boil. It's pitch dark outside. A dark rimmed by a deep blue. Nothing here demands anything of me. Nothing confronts me, addresses me. Forces me to answer back. Here, in this room, everything is familiar. Nothing feels imperative. There are no choices to make. I can take my time. Sort out my thoughts in a pace that suits me. Move carefully from one thing to the next.

Here, I can reflect and reevaluate, but I know all too well what it's like when things are not like that. When things are put into motion and you are, whether you want to or not, at center of things. When all you can do is respond, react – talk back.

Although my work is writing for the theatre, muddling in the business of drama, lately I have been trying to avoid it on a personal level. Lately, I have also revisited the foundations of my craft, asking myself all over again: what does it consist of? What mechanisms is the driving force behind it? What really makes the performative text spin?

D R A M A

In the last decade, there has been a great shift in the understanding of what a text for the stage can be. The classic play is no longer the all and encompassing formula a playwrights has to follow. In a modernist tradition, and in performances that use postmodern strategies, action and plot is no longer necessarily of the essence (Lehmann, Hans-Thies, *Postdramatic Theatre*, Abingdon, Routledge 2006).

The word drama comes from Greek, to act or action: Drama δράω, *drao*.

Theories diving into factors that might constitute a good drama has often focused on conflict. On plot, situations and characters. But as the understanding of performative art has developed, the idea of drama has been taken up to reevaluation. As this reevaluation has taken place, the text itself has all of a sudden become a problematized figure. To have the text as the starting-point and end-point, has by some been looked upon as a conservative praxis. Many claim that the hegemony of text in the theatre production is over, that to place text at the center of a production, confirms the theatre hierarchy.

Florian Malzacher writes in his book *Not Just a Mirror – Possibilities of political theatre of today* (Florian Malzacher, *Looking for the political theatre of today (in) Not just a Mirror – Possibilities in political theatre of today*, Berlin, Alexander Verlag 2015): *At the center of the critique of dramatic theatre stood its use of however estranged mimetic representation, which was seen as discredited and was subsequently confronted with the notion of presence. In close exchange with their counterparts in the emerging conceptual dance movement, theatre makers brought to the stage highly self-aware works, continually questioning themselves as products of ideologies, politics, times, fashions, and circumstances. Strongly inspired by de-constructivist and poststructuralist theory, they offered a new complexity of theatre signifiers revolting against the hegemony of the text, undermining the linearity and causality of drama, and experimenting with all possibilities of spectatorships and participation.*

The result is a shift in the playwright's role in the performing arts, states the theorist, director and pedagogue Paul C. Castagno. As new playwriting is theatrically based, versus psychologically based, the playwright merges traditional and new poetics, the dramatic with

the theatrical, and she often makes language itself constitute the drama (Paul C. Castagno, *New playwriting strategies*, New York, Routledge 2012). A shift in the way a writer sees herself, and the way she writes for the stage. In a text for the stage today, one does not need a plot in the traditional sense, or characters, or even conflict. That is no longer the only way for a performative text to be performative. So what sets it apart from other literary texts?

Many has said that the main thing represents an event. That it represents a here and now.

## LANGUAGE AS CREATOR OF WORLDS

I look out at the blue stillness outside my room.

The moon is up. Oval and deep yellow.

The mountain on the other side of the bay is a snowclad back, fluorescently reflecting the lights from the city.

All is still.

Today, this view offers no drama.

So, what does it take to put things into motion? What creates tension and what creates change? What kind of phenomenon can generate an ongoing exchange in a HERE and NOW?

In the Norwegian playwright Arne Lygre's plays, action is a language-based event. Paul C. Castagno states: *As such, language prevails as the dominant force in the shaping of characters, action and theme. The playwright orchestrates the voices in the text, entering into a kind of dialogue with character and language. The playwright is open to language in the widest sense... While "writing through" the other (often multiple) voices, the playwright remains the creative and orchestrating force behind the text.*

The orchestration is founded in the act of discovery. It's all about dialogism as its most fundamental level (Routledge 2012).

In Lygre's play, *Let You be*, the dialogue goes like this:

– *We are married, she said.*

Or:

– *It is me you love, I said.*

It is clear to see that here, language works as a frame. As a place for the events themselves to be played out. They actual acts – getting married, questioning somebodies love – comes to the surface in that framing in the added statement: *I said*. This is an indirect, not a direct way of addressing. The characters point to themselves, as well as to the event. And, maybe most importantly, to the act of addressing in itself. There is a doubling here. It's both the act that is important, addressing it, *and* involving the audience in the fact that it has been addressed. Through organizing the elements, or the language act like this, Lygre lets the act of addressing itself step into the foreground. It is neither the marriage, nor the questioning of the love that creates the actions, – it is the framing that goes on. The fact that "I", said it.

It is language that constitutes and brings Lygre's events and characters to life. They exist there, *in* language, and *as* language. In *let You be*, the language acts instigates and take on the form of fragments, of sub-plots. These events resembles real life changing events: Two women get killed by an accidental stranger. A man knows he is dying and befriends another, and promises him that he will inherit everything he owns, as long as he takes care of him on his deathbed. Another character, a woman, wants a divorce and confides in a friend, but rather than letting these events fully take center stage, or being played out – they more often than not fizzle out, or gets replaced by seemingly other sub-plots, or "stories". In themselves, these sub-plots or "stories" constitutes tiny tragedies, or unambitious miniature comedies, but they are never at the core of what is really going on in the text. The main events continues to be the fact that somebody is pointing to them, addresses them, and it is that that gives them, or takes away – their value. It is as if Lygre constantly insists on it doing that. On language ability to give or take away meaning and value. In this way, it's the act of addressing in itself, that gives any of this importance or real meaning. A meaning that can be taken away from it as fast and as easy as it was given. And as the focus shifts, the characters shift. One turning into another, a boy becoming a man, a man becoming a woman. Nothing is ever stable, *only* language. Language is the creator of this universe, and the form that holds it all. It is both the space and the event. The giver of time and place. The creator and the destroyer. It gives the play its drive and its rhythm. It contextualizes and emotes the characters, and it is that which takes place between them.

- *We are married, I said, it's me you love, I said, give me another chance, I said* –  
These are the opening lines in *let You be*.
- *We are married* – is a condition.
- *It's me you love*, – is an outcry, a supplication.
- *Give me a chance*.

These addresses kick-starts the play, and the relationship that constantly develops between the *condition*, the *outcry* and the *supplication*, triggers both feelings and responses. The triggering of feelings and responses happens in three parallel spaces at the same time: in the text itself, with the actors on stage, *and* in the audience. This creates a feeling of urgency. Something must solve this situation! And this urgency does not just belong to the story, the character or the plot, – it is just as much placed in the audience. After all, they are the ones who are being addressed, who are getting involved in this.

This continuous addressing of the audience is one of the main conditioning structures in the play. These simple addresses immediately generates a feeling of progress and offers the text a certain dynamic. It makes us entangled in it. It makes us ask: What has happened here?

What makes her tell us this?

And why is she telling us this right now?

Did he leave her? Did he stay? And if he stayed, did everything work out for them in the end?

Lygre's play ends in an imperative:

– *Go*.

– *Go*.

– *Go*.

It is never clear whether this is an order, a challenge or just a fact. That this is the only thing we can do at this point. Go on. Continue. And as long as the text is being played out, as long we are there in the theatre, in our lives – as long as we have a language we can go on.

There is a bit of Becket in this. An echo of *Endgame* maybe, or a way to get away from it, that places Lygre in line with the modernists. Until there is nowhere left to go. Until we have reached the end. Until we cease to breathe. Cease to be human. Until we are merely a rotting body. Matter. Mud. Earth.

## LANGUAGE AS ACTION

When we refer to «actions» or «events», to cause and effect, in this play by Arne Lygre – we are talking about language-acts acted out by physical bodies and voices, in a given space at a given time.

This might sound abstract and feeble, but language is a powerful tool. If one uses the terms from the rhetoric of Aristotle, addresses creates feelings of anger and joy, interest and disinterest (Aristoteles, *Etikk*, Oslo, Gyldendal Norsk Forlag 2018).

The way Lygre frames his character within the language makes us relate to them, or empathize with them, but in this sudden unstable shifting world, a character that one moment ago could make you cry, could the next moment leave you cold or indifferent.

Through varied artistry of addressing, the new language based playwright, has re-theatralized the play and given the actor a new set of tools.

This re-theatralization of the theatre comes from the generic and transformative qualities that language brings to the stage. Language is both real, and totally manufactured. Through insisting on the statements or addresses in a here and now, it “frames” the situations. It can make things come alive, and at the same time, it has the potential of dissolving or transforming them or letting them disappear altogether.

The act of addressing belong to the drama, states Aristoteles in his book on rhetoric. These acts of addressing influences the audience through ethos or through pathos.

In a play, characters address both each other and themselves through dialogues and monologues. They can address the audience and leave the narrative, and the combinations and types of addresses are endless. There are outbursts, confessions, and information shared. There are witness-statements, curses, attacks and seductions. In the address, and in addressing – language becomes action.

- Kill that man!
- Hang him!
- Hereby I divorce you.
- From now on you are no longer my child.

There are many types of addresses. Ways of calling each other, asking each for an opinion or an advice. Different ways of expressing our sentiment, our joy and our will. They can be physical or verbal, or both. To address someone, implies the opposite instinct that underlies the command. Instead of asserting ones power, one must be willing to give it away. To open up for that someone's response, whatever it is – and in the act of addressing lies the need for this response, and the knowledge that the consequences of the address lies with "the other".

The most active and rudimental address, is maybe the imperative. For an imperative to also become an imperative address, – a major shift has to take place. This is an extraordinary event, for by opening up for reciprocity, the order becomes a request. This shift opens up for vulnerability. By leaving the consequences of ones acts in the hands of «the other», one exposes once own desires, and herein lies the potential drama. When my will meets yours, a need for an act of response occurs right there and then. Again that feeling of urgency occurs, maybe combined with a feeling of risk taking. A feeling of having gone out on a limb. A latent elation or anticipation, maybe even dread.

#### TO ADDRESS SOMEONE

Lately, I have been thinking that the imperative address might be the most generative of all language. That it is in itself a fundamental generator, an emotive, mental trigger. A trigger that drives us to respond and to act, and since these actions are built on reciprocity, we often do not know their consequences, so we are drawn, voluntarily or involuntarily, into a feedback loop, from being addressed, into re-addressing, and re-addressing again. In other words, into a drama.

When the imperative «addresses you», a need arises. It initiates a movement from Me to You. It's a potent act. An act with potential for change and for real dialogue but also for rejection and loss.

#### PENDING REPLYES

I'm in my bedroom.

I open the veranda door. Its even darker out there. A dark, turned greyish black by the light of a single lamppost.

The road empty. None of my neighbors are out. No one is clearing away the snow. No children are playing.

Back in the livingoom, I pick up my mobile.

It has been on soundless, and I can see from the display, that I have missed three calls. Two of them is from my mother. Another is an unfamiliar number – probably some charity. I should really call my mother back. She is getting older. She has problems with her health. She might need me, or just need to talk to me. Sometimes she gets annoyed when I do not answer or call her back. Especially when she knows that I am not working. She takes it as a rejection.

I put my phone away.

I go to the sofa and turn on the computer. I write: *When you address someone, you open up for the possibility of rejection, the potential for relinquishment, a possible transformation or transcendence.*

I look at my mobile again. A little uneasy now. My mother has left a message. I know that I have no reason to think that that message entails an imperative. For all I know, she just wants to show that she cares for me, or to share some information, but still this uneasiness. I know that the sound of her voice will do something to me. That it will make me transport myself, that my mind will start to stretch itself out towards her and try to connect with her in some way or another, and that I will leave this particular frame of mind I am in now, to be with her. I will no longer be just *me*, and I am fully aware that it will be warmth in that address, but that I also must be prepared for the unexpected.

I write: *By «accepting» or «giving» an imperative address, a potential for action emerges, and with that – a possibility for change. Through addressing each other, people open up to the world and to each other.*

At that moment, language takes leave of the narrative, action turns into event. It says goodbye to the account, and as the storyteller falls silent beside her campfire, ethics stir, tragedy shakes into action, and comedy tilts its head – tenderly mocking the girl as she starts to undress for her lover, bidding him to come closer, bidding him to stay. And then, the next morning, as she puts her hand on his, searching for something there – a confirmation maybe, or a caress – he does not look at her, he does not even turn his face away. He is no longer there. He has already left – as he sips his tea, his hand dead on the table – as he gets up, as he puts on his jacket, his back, his face closed – she realizes that what she thought meant something to him, never meant anything. That he never really got involved, that he never meant anything by his embrace, his kisses, by being there. And then he's gone. He does not even bother to close the door behind him, and she wants to shout, but there is no words left in her, and her voice is but a whisper when she says:

- So why did you come?
- Why did you kiss me?
- Why did you ever say yes when you meant nothing by it?

When addressing each other, we open ourselves up.

In the yes – we surrender ourselves.

## AN UNDERWORLD

Orpheus walk through the underworld. Orpheus walks and Eurydice follows. She is right there behind him, but he must not turn and look at her. That's the deal.

As long as he does not turn around and look at her, they will be fine.

He walks. Along razor edge cliffs. Over steep mountain passes.

He crosses marshes. Do not turn around, he says to himself. Do not turn around.

Orpheus walks.

He is deep in mud. All sounds, all light is as sucked out of this landscape. It is as steering into nothing.

- Don't turn around. Whatever you do, just do not turn around and look at her.

The meadows at Asphodel. The blessed islands. It's a grey and murky place. An underworld. A place where nothing happens and nothing new will ever emerge.

There they are. One living and one dead – and all he can hear is the pounding of his own heart as he keeps repeating to himself: – She is there. I am not alone. She is there. I am not alone. Don't turn around and look at her.

And then, he does just that.

In the myth he can't help himself.

Maybe he has to make sure that she is still there. Maybe he needs to see if she is still the same. Maybe because she is begging him to do so: – Turn around, Orpheus. Stop! Turn around and look at me!

– Why don't you turn around?

– Why don't you answer?

– Don't you love me anymore?

So Orpheus turns. He breaks his promise and loses everything.

This myth has been told over and over again. Repeated in art and literature, and as such, the myth never ends. The act repeats itself, as the story is being told and retold, as generations pose the same question: – Why did he do it? And what would have happened if he hadn't?

It is as if that moment he turns, produces a desire, a desire that makes us return to it. To re-tell it. That moment he lays his eyes on her – is so fascinating to us that we can't let go of it. The febleness of the human, Orpheus' fallibility, completely exposed under the imperative gaze of the Gods. There lies the tragedy and there lies the desire. In the act and in the gaze. In that moment when he turns his head, maybe not even a decision. It was just an impulse and now it's done. Irreversible. And there is a feeling in us then of empathy, mixed with sorrow maybe. Compassion, irritation, bewilderment.

Orpheus stands in the half-light. He listens. He is searching for a sign. For the feeling of her still being there – but she is gone.

## A LITTE BROWN MOUSE IN THE THICKETS

– Die for me.



- Worship me.
- Give yourself to me.

The word imperative comes from Latin, to command.

According to the Oxford dictionary, this is the definition of what an imperative is grammatically:

*Denoting the mood of a verb that expresses a command or exhortation, as in come here! ... 'In English the indicative mood is used to make factual statements, the subjunctive mood to indicate doubt or unlikelihood, and the imperative mood to express a command. ( )*

Often, the imperative utterances are short addresses related to solicitations, biddings, claims and demands, or they relate to the appeal, or the intercession: Forgive him. Please don't do it.

The imperative gives associations to the instruction, or the prohibition, the sound advice: Add a tablespoon of sugar, mind the gap, ask a doctor.

Behind any imperative is an underlying – If not. An unspoken hint of a possible punishment if the address is not adhered too. A threat of a possible consequence, an unpleasantness that might follow if one does not comply.

It activates and reveals the interplay between the one that is in power and the one that is powerless. What and who that is *really* in charge. The possible threat an order implies, can be explicit or implicit. What gives the order its weight, lies in whether one can put any real power behind it. But even with or without real weight – an order always signals a will. A will to make somebody do what you want him or her to do. To bend somebody's will.

By saying: – Come here or I will ... Or: Stay with me, if not ... The one that speaks immediately displays the possible consequences that might follow if his or her needs and wishes are not met.

As I have been writing this, I realise that the way addresses set events into play, and how they open up, bridge, tear apart what's stable, and create a sense of urgency. I think it's in their very nature. I think that is what they are meant to do. Even when you wake up and cry in the night – shouting out for a God you do not even believe in, or stand in the silence of nature – the sky wide and wild above you, bending down to a little brown mouse maybe, hiding there amidst the thickets. Whispering gently as not to frighten it: – Come. Just come. Come over here. Don't be afraid. I am not going to hurt you.

You stand there, in yellow mountain grass in your rubber boots. And as you bend down, as your voice grows gentler, as gentle as your voice will ever be – you wait. You wait for what? For you know that there will be no answer. That that little mouse, that little brown furball just freezes, freezes for a second before it disappears in among the bristly branches. And as the sun moves across the sky, as the ice that has been clinging to the heather all through the night starts to melt, you stand there. To the left of you, a mountain ridge rises steep and barren in a kind of purpur grey, and you try to catch your breath as you watch it, as the clouds traverses the sky – but your chest feels too small, there is not enough space in it for this – sadness, not joy? Neither sadness nor joy, it is a kind of elevation. You feel elevated, as if you had been addressed by all this: The sky, the ridge, the mouse in the thickets – and as you walk on, that feeling stays with you for hours. As the wind picks up, and you find shelter behind a big rock, pouring yourself a cup of coffee from your thermos, as you sit there, munching at a handful of nearly ripe blueberries, you notice a cabin just a little further up the path – and there is smoke from the chimney – and then the feeling is gone.

That is all. Even then, even as you bend down to talk to a little mountain mouse, that imperative address opens something up in you. A possibility for a kind of encounter. That widening of the chest, the steepness of the ridge, the slightest stirring in the thickets.

#### WHO AM I WHEN NOBODY SEES ME?

Gregorius, shy, renounced – the human is a social animal. Left to the forces of nature, to economy, war, history. To hunger, loneliness – that which always threatens the "I" with annihilation. There we exist. At that place in me where I become You, where that which is *just Me* ceases to be that, because I forget who I am.

Maybe, at the deepest level, this is what we all have in common – this to and fro between the «I» and the «We»? Between the «We» and «Me»? Between when I am just myself and when I am the one that is together with others. When all boils down to it, one can ask oneself – Who am I when nobody is there to see me?

- Is there anybody there?
- Can you see me?

- Why can't you see me?
- Be there!
- Show me who I am.

## I 'M SINKING

– *Sara!*  
*I can't see!*  
*It's so dark here.*

*I'm sinking!*  
*I'm sinking!*

– *Here!*  
*Here!*  
*Take it! Take my hand!*

In a play I am working on, *Sweatshop – Aleppo*, a young girl is badly beaten. She works in a sweatshop and in a fit of protest, one of her co-workers, Sara, tears asunder some of the merchandize they've been producing. Without Sara knowing it, Meriam takes on the blame for the damage Sara has done, and the punishment she gets from their employer is relentless. Badly beaten and humiliated, Meriam is left in a kind of dark. She feels as if she is drowning. She is sinking into a void from which only Sara can redeem her.

Help me, she cries.

I'm sinking!

Get me out of here. Show me who I am.

And as Sara reaches out for her, things once more becomes possible. To live, to breathe, to act. As their hands grasp each other, they bridge a distance that just a few moments ago seemed unbridgeable. Meriam is pulled out of her isolation and into a feeling of togetherness, continuation, sisterhood.

There is an atonement in that gesture. In a hand reaching out for another hand. A bridging of the gap.

Karl Ove Knausgård repeatedly writes that only through singularity can we generalize. He states that only through the one, that singular unique event, happening to that one unique individual – can we fathom the experience of multitudes. That the “I” never really will be able to take part in the “communal We”. And that on the other side of that communal feeling and the language it represents, lies fascism. (Karl Ove Knausgård, *min Kamp* bind 6, Oslo, Cappelen Damm 2006).

By problematizing, quite convincingly, our ability to understand «The others» and our ability to relate to “the other”, Knausgård leaves us with a dilemma. That dilemma of the power of addresses, the bridging of the gap. Sara reaching out her hand and Meriam taking it. They are both responding to each other. Meriam's call for help – and Sara's outstretched hand. That act is then followed by an outcry: – Sara! Sister!

Through those two words, the act becomes an event.

Sara, the co-worker, is by this given an offer: To become a sister. By accepting this offer, their relationship goes through a sudden and fundamental change. What happens is as deeply personal as it is general. To cry for help, to accept that challenge and stretch out ones hand – is an iconic act, and it's an iconic gesture. A gesture so familiar and recognizable that it almost feel banal.

When Meriam sinks into her personal void, Sara is the only one that can literally pull her out of there. She is pulled out of «Herself» into «Togetherness». This is something that happens to these two particular people – and at the same time, this is not just a singular experience. It belongs to “Us”. In this banal gesture, they bridge the gap between the *uniqueness of the “I” and the communal essence of the “We”*. I, Meriam, is no longer alone. In this general and banal gesture – the *unique I* becomes complete again.

To see this gesture is to recognize it.

Whether you witness it on stage or in your own life, on film or in reality, it brings with it an understanding that goes beyond the individual. It tells us something about what it means to be a human being – about what «we» are.

*Responsibility precedes any "objective searching after truth",* wrote the Lithuanian philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas.

His thoughts on ethics was all about the encounter. The potential that lies in the «One» encountering the «the Other». The potential that opens up when we stand face to face. In that instant, we are as together as we are apart, he writes. You know that you are the person you are, and here, here am I: *The Other precisely reveals himself in his alterity not in a shock negating the I, but as the primordial phenomenon of gentleness.* He calls it a revelation. That's what the face of «the other» is. In this understanding, this dilemma, every encounter must entail both an address AND an imperative. In this moment, faced with each other, one can feel it as a reciprocated claim: *One instantly recognizes the transcendence and heteronomy of the Other, Even murder fails as an attempt to take hold of this otherness* (Emmanuel Lévinas, *Excitence and Exictents*, Pittsburg, Duquesne University Press 2001).

What fascinates me about Lévinas' understanding of what it is to be a human being, is that he acknowledges this dilemma: He denounces the division between the «Us» and the «I». I am uniquely me, and at *the same* time, I am constantly taking part in a formative dialogue with all that surrounds me. In the eyes of another, as I stretch out for a hand, or when I reach for it – I become who I am.

*A face is a trace of itself, given over to my responsibility, but to which I am wanting and faulty. It is as though I were responsible for his mortality, and guilty for surviving." The moral "authority" of the face of the Other is felt in my "infinite responsibility" for the Other.*

#### TO BRIDGE THE GAP

It is all about bridging the gap, I think, sitting in my livingroom. To go from one to a hundred and back again. The coffee is lukewarm in the jug. The table filled by notes and books and printouts. The calls on my mobile still unanswered, the novel on my nightstand still unfinished.

The things has started to talk to me.

Shouting: Read me!

Look at me!

Answer me!

They appeal to me, all of sudden clambering for my attention.

When the imperative *addresses* approaches you, they approach you from a specific place and from a specific will. They address your will by showing their own: – Do you want what I want?

A man stops us in the street. Says: – Help me.

One we think is about to leave us, says: – Stay!

A relative on her deathbed admits to a crime we did not even know had happened.

It's an event. It has the potential to change everything. To turn what you know upside down.

The address exposes a wish. It challenges. It exposes what lies behind the wish: I want to see you. I want to see your face.

I want you to face me.

The address offers us to the will of the other. It is a crack in the stream of the familiar self. It cracks open the surface, and exposes us to what we do not yet know.

The imperative addresses opens us to a language that offers itself to resistance and surrender. To the paradox: *I want to* – and the: *I do not want to*.

I want to live. Please let me die. I don't want you to touch me. Touch me!

To that which does not add up.

By imperative addresses, we are invited in or kept on a distance. Told – You can come this close, but go no further. Go. Stay – do not stay!

– Don't look at me.

– No! I do not want you to touch me, kiss me. I will not marry you, come home with you, work for you, sleep with you, steel for you, and lie for you.

– Not now!

– Not ever.

The command is the end of the road. The imperative in itself leaves us alone with one singular will. The address turns it around. That's where it starts. The address implicates

both the one that addresses and the one that is being addressed. It brings things into play. This could be the beginning or the end of everything I desire. It is a summoning. It leaves me exposed. The desire is brought to the surface – A pleasure, Roland Barthes might have called it. A pleasure activated by the utterance and the one that utters it. Herein lies the imperative of the text, or maybe its will. It's brio – embedded in its energy or style (Roland Barthes, *the pleasure of the text*, Paris: Édition de Seul 1973).

A crack appears. A crack in the language itself. And in that crack, between the imperative address and the awaited response – that's where the drama lies. A pulsating "Now" just before the encounter. This is the generating ability that lies built into the imperative addresses, an ability to kick the play into motion.

#### A HORSE, A HORSE! MY KINGDOM FOR A HORSE!

There it begins maybe. The language AND the act. The first time you cry out in the night, reach for a hand. As you awake and stare into the dark with no other words available then:

– Mummy.

And maybe that is the whole genesis of the drama. Δράω. Drao. This attempt to bridge the gap between my will and yours. Between you and me, between "the Gods" and us. Between the individual and the society.

There lies the dialogical essence. At the core of the drama. Of this hybrid form of writing we call a play. In this series of written events, where the one addresses the other. Where one utterance is followed by the next. Where one scene cries out to the next. Where the imperative addresses keep sparking off new ones, until it is all spent. Until there is no desire left, and it all calms down, eases out, or falls into place. Until the playwright can put her pen down, the reader can close the book, the audience can catch their breaths and go home.

As long as we talk.

As long as we kick, scream, shout.

As long as there is somebody there to hear us – there is hope.

And by that, we might have reached the end. In that silence, that last lonely shout into the void. Addressing your own loneliness. Maybe – Death. In the hero's last words in *Gone with the wind*:

– Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn.

In the king's last words in William Shakespeare's *Richard the III*:

– A horse, a horse! My kingdom for a horse!

In the silence that rings back. A last imperative address, that too. Or – at least a hope. An echo of something that might yet happen. The things to come. The end.

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Stay – Leave. Don't go  
– *an audio-essay based on imperative  
addresses for three voices*

1.

Tale:

I'm laying in my bed  
I am only a child  
This is a child's bed  
The wallpaper is brown  
The duvet is yellow  
I'm breathing  
I want to reach my hand out and turn on the lights  
I can't  
I do not move  
I lay there feeling the weight of my body against the mattress  
Just breathing  
Just staring at the wall  
There is something there on the other side  
There is something waiting behind the door

*Short pause*

Jørn Bjørn:

A stranger enters the room

Liv Hanne:

A darkness enters the room

Jørn Bjørn:

The door closes behind it – and it /

Liv Hanne:

stands there /

Tale:

I can't look at it  
I can't open my eyes  
I want to shout but I am not able to and it /

Jørn Bjørn:

bends over me /

Tale:

– and grows. The darkness grows  
and I'm just lying there unable to stop it unable to say anything –

Liv Hanne:

Mummy – /

Jørn Bjørn:  
You cry, but /

Liv Hanne:  
nobody hears you

Tale:  
Mummy – I'm frightened

*Short pause*

Liv Hanne:  
Maybe that's where it starts  
There in the dark  
That first time you cry out, shout, reach for a hand  
In that moment when you awake and stare into the darkness and there are no  
other words than /

Jørn Bjørn:  
– Mummy

Liv Hanne:  
Or:

Jørn Bjørn:  
– No.

Liv Hanne:  
Or:

Jørn Bjørn:  
– Me –

Liv Hanne:  
Just that which you want and that which you are afraid of.  
Just the darkness all around you and /

Jørn Bjørn:  
you say your name.

Tale:  
Tale

Jørn Bjørn:  
Your name and then: afraid

Tale:  
Tale afraid

Liv Hanne:  
Liv Hanne afraid.

Jørn Bjørn:  
Jørn Bjørn afraid

*Short pause*

Liv Hanne:  
Or – maybe it starts somewhere else  
Your hungry  
but you are too small to reach the bread bin

Jørn Bjørn:  
Liv Hanne hungry

Liv Hanne:  
You're thirsty, but cannot reach the jug of water

Jørn Bjørn:  
Liv Hanne thirsty

Liv Hanne:  
And you turn around  
looking to see if there is someone there that can help you  
that can lift you up  
or are taller than you – and you shout

Jørn Bjørn:  
Thirsty!

*A beat*

Tale:  
But now  
just now you are laying there in your bed  
staring into the dark  
Into that  
or who  
or it that is  
and isn't there  
Into your own imagination, maybe – and you do not want to be there anymore  
Tale /

Jørn Bjørn:  
– does not want to be here /

Liv Hanne:  
anymore

Tale:  
In the lack of something else you say /

Liv Hanne:  
– I do not want to /

Tale:  
be here

Liv Hanne:  
Just that

*Short pause*

Tale:  
I want to. I do not want to –

Jørn Bjørn:  
Just me. In the dark.

Liv Hanne:  
And then /

Tale:  
the one that can help you. The one that can open the door, enter the room, turn  
on the lights and make everything OK again

Why isn't she coming?

Liv Hanne:

—

Tale:

Why isn't she coming?

Jørn Bjørn:

She's coming

Tale:

She's not coming.

Jørn Bjørn:

Why shouldn't she come?

Tale:

She's just not —

She can't hear me

She —

Liv Hanne:

Wait!

Just wait.

I'm coming

I'm here

*Short pause*

Tale:

Sometimes I think these words must be the first

Words like:

— Help me

— Save me

— Stay with me through this

Sometimes I think these words must be the last

Maybe even the only ones we have

That everything we ever say centers around utterances like:

Help

Me

Stay

Here

Save me

Don't go

And then we wait

And then we listen for the answer

for someone to come

until they are there

until everything is OK



2.

Jørn Bjørn:  
A man stops us in the street.  
Says:

Liv Hanne:  
Help me.

Jørn Bjørn:  
Someone we think are about to leave us, says:

Liv Hanne:  
Stay!

Jørn Bjørn:  
On her deathbed  
a relative admits to a crime none of us even new had happened:

Liv Hanne:  
I was twenty  
I was too young – too young to know what I was doing

Tale:  
I took all her money

Jørn Bjørn:  
Or /

Liv Hanne:  
It was me that torched the place –

Tale:  
Or /

Liv Hanne:  
I had another  
All those years there was always another  
It was never just you  
You were never the one I loved

Jørn Bjørn:  
–

Liv Hanne:  
I'm sorry  
I should have told you before  
Can you ever forgive me?

*Silence*

Liv Hanne:  
As long as we talk  
As long as we kick, scream, shout  
As long as there is somebody there to hear us  
there is hope

3.

Tale:  
– Forgive me

Jørn Bjørn:  
I forgive you

Tale:  
– Do you?  
– Do you want what I want?

*Short pause*

Tale:  
In /

Liv Hanne:  
the imperative /

Tale:  
I show you what I need  
what I want from you:

Jørn Bjørn:  
Come  
Go  
Stay  
Don't stay

Tale:  
When I /

Liv Hanne:  
address someone /

Jørn Bjørn:  
with what feels imperative *to me* /

Tale:  
When I attack  
When I reach out  
language takes leave from the narrative  
action turns into event –  
and as the storyteller falls silent beside her camp fire, ethics stirs and tragedy  
shakes into action as comedy tilts its head. Tenderly mocking the girl as she  
starts to undress for her lover, bidding him to come closer. Bidding him to stay  
– and then the next morning, while she puts her hand on his, searching for  
something there – a confirmation maybe, a caress – he does not look at her, he  
does not even turn his head away. He is no longer there. He has already left –  
as he sips his tea, his hand dead on the table – as he gets up, as he puts on his  
jacket, his back all rigid, his face all closed – she realizes that what she thought  
meant something never meant anything. That he never meant anything by his  
embrace, his kisses, by being there – and then he's gone. He does not even  
bother to close the door behind him, and she wants to shout, but there is no  
words left in her, and her voice is but a whisper when she says:  
– So why did you come?  
– Why did you kiss me?  
– Why did you ever say yes when you meant nothing by it?

I say yes to everything you are  
You say yes to everything *I* am  
And then I realize your yes was a no

The shame of it  
It's that  
It's the shame ...

- Turn around
- Turn around so I can look at you

4.

Jørn Bjørn:  
Orpheus walk through the underworld  
Orpheus walks and Eurydice follows  
She is right there behind him, but he must not turn and look at her  
That's the deal  
as long as he does not turn around and look at her  
they will be fine

Liv Hanne:  
He walks  
along razor edge cliffs. Over steep mountain passes  
He crosses

Jørn Bjørn:  
marshes maybe –  
Do not turn around /

Liv Hanne  
He says to himself

Jørn Bjørn:  
Do not turn around

*Short silence*

Jørn Bjørn:  
Orpheus walks  
He is deep in mud  
All sounds, all light is as sucked out of this landscape  
It is as steering into – nothing –  
There they are  
one living  
and one dead – and all he can hear is the pounding of  
his own heart as he keeps repeating to himself:  
– She is there. I am not alone. She is there. I am not alone.  
As he keeps on repeating to himself  
– Don't turn around. What ever you do, just do don't turn around and look at  
her

Tale:  
And we know that he is I going to do just that

Liv Hanne:  
Yes

Tale:  
Just a moment now, and he will turn around and look at her

Liv Hanne:  
Yes

Tale:  
There

There

There

There he did it –

*Silence*

Tale:

The child in her nursery

The woman on her deathbed

Orpheus in his underworld

alone

exposed

Its an outcry /

Liv Hanne

Mummy!

Tale:

a confession

an act

Jørn Bjørn og Liv Hanne:

–

Tale:

In the myth it never ends

the act repeats itself as the story is being told and retold

Liv Hanne:

– Orpheus. Stop!

– Orpheus, look at me.

– Why would you not turn around and look at me?

– Why don't you answer? Don't you love me anymore?

Tale:

The imperative answered with a question

The question answered with an action

and all is lost –

And thus

Eurydice

is erased

from history

*Silence*

5.

Liv Hanne:

Come

Come closer

Come over here

Jørn Bjørn:

Jump!

Do it!

Do it because I ask you to!

Tale:

In the address – it begins

In the imperative – it ends.

By approaching You, I enter something I don't yet know. It's a  
summoning. Its a revalation. It's what I desire.

By approaching you, I leave myself vulnerable

Liv Hanne:

It's a bridging of the gap

Tale:

Its an: /

Jørn Bjørn:

– I see you

Tale:

Its /

*possible echo sequence with all*

Liv Hanne:

Turn around

Jørn Bjørn:

Turn around

Tale:

Turn around so I can look at you

future–PRE–positions

*– a speculative essay on speculations, propositions and imaginations on individual and collective togetherness in the future*

1. THE PRE

There –

before everything

IS

Something

Is the –

PRE

Not

POST

(post-industrial, postmodern, post-dance, post-industry, post-irony)

there is

THAT

which happens

right before

Constantly

HERE

– it announces itself

as A:

PRE-LUDE

as A:

PRE-FIX

as A:

PRE–CONCEPTION

Pre-conclusions

Past past

Pre future

a radically unpredictable beginning already

PRESENT

already presenting things to come

## 2. IMAGINED FUTURES

Siri Hustvedt has said: Future is the land of our expectations, hopes, fantasies, fears and projections. Future is fiction.

This fiction, she states – rests in our memories and it is what we know and remember that builds our expectations. And I ask myself, if what we think about the future is already shaped by the things we have experienced, what happens with our perception when we are constantly surrounded by words and concepts like crises and a post? Does this not leave us with a lingering feeling of being “late” in the world, at the end of something, or in a kind of a back loop? A place where every action is based on reaction. It is as if we are constantly looking over our shoulder. Engaging in the past instead of thinking ahead.

What does it entail to be post-industrial, post-capitalism, post– dance, post photography?.

Lately I have discovered that the question I often forget to ask is – what is yet to come? Moreover, when I ask it, I can’t seem to find any answers. All I can see is a kind of blankness. A wage feeling of being out of touch.

I have made up this exercise for myself. I imagine that I put my hands on the horizon. I sort of put my hands on the horizon and I lift myself, I push myself up and lift myself so that I can peek over it. And I see how it curves. A kind of lingering light running along it – And then?

Nothing.

Sometimes, when I teach – I ask my students to do the same exercise.

What do you see? I ask

What do you see?

More than not the answer is – nothing.

And when it is not nothing – I am often met with different kinds of dystopias. The world totally covered in water or the world totally engulfed by darkness, and I wonder if this inability to look ahead makes us reactionary. That it stops us from thinking progressively or to progress, and therefore makes us shy away from every radical choice.

## WHAT IS ART AND WHAT IS POLITICS?

The French philosopher Jacques Ranciere states that to be political is to imagine new possible worlds: *Political argument is at one and the same time the demonstration of a possible world where the argument could count as argument, addressed by a subject qualified to argue, upon an identified object, to an addressee who is required to see the object and to hear the argument that he or she ‘normally’ has no reason to either see or hear* (Jacques Ranciere, *Ten Theses on Politics (in) Theory & Event*, Baltimore, John Hopkins University Press 2001).

Worlds in which things that now seem impossible, becomes possible. The slave can be free, women can vote, homosexuals can practise their sexuality freely, we can live in a world without plastic etc.

If today we feel framed by the prefix “post”, it can be hard to imagine those other or new possible worlds. And if those new possible worlds are only produced as a reaction to what is, that might also limit our capacity to come up with real alternatives.

We might get stuck in a kind of chain reaction, where criticism exists for the sake of criticism, and the radical suggestions get stifled before they reach the surface. The result us that we leave the future to the politicians.

To be true then to Ranciere's idea of the political – it might not be enough just to imagine something else than what is. A real radical preposition would be necessary, and this radical preposition would have to be presented, even made public. Only then could it become political in the true sense of the word.

The narrative, the image and the poem has always had the potential of producing such radical different realities. But what speculative propositions surrounds us today?

## SPECULATIVE PROPOSITIONS

New scientific research has discovered that our memory and our ability to plan, or to foresee future scenarios, are deeply connected. That our ability visualize the things that are going to happen in the future, is one of the main features that separates us humans from the other species. Humans have the ability to build a kind of mental model of what is to be, and by that predict the outcome of actions not yet put into praxis.

Per Magnus Riseng writes in an article in A-Magasinet in December 2012, that when the brain rests, it starts strolling back and forth between past and present, between experiences, memories, and possible imagined future scenarios. This pondering on the past goes hand in hand with planning, and with looking at things from other peoples perspectives, – and all these activities are situated in the same centre in our brains.

This default-mode network, as it's called, is where our experiences are stored. Facts are stored somewhere else, and in a different way, a bit like files in a computer, – but our experiences, the bases for our memories of the past, has to be recreated every time we "look" at them. (Per Magnus Riseng, *Tilbake til fremtiden* - <https://www.oslobrains.no/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/tilbake-til-fremtiden.pdf>). Our memory construct them. They are not stored as complete events, but as bits of information, sensation, visual signs that we then combine and put together when we think of them.

As Daniel L. Schacter and Donna Rose Addis puts it in the opening sentence of their article *Constructive memory – The ghost of past and future: A memory that works by piecing together bits of the past may be better suited to stimulating future events than one that is a store of perfect records*. (Donna Rose Addis & Daniel L. Schacter, *Constructive Memory – The ghost of past and future*, London, Nature 2007)

This makes us vulnerable. Not only can this mean that we construct what's called false memories, memories of things that never happened. That are not real, and if the default-mode network centre is damaged, this can leave us unable to foresee the future, and thereby unable to plan or to calculate the consequences of our actions. If this by happens, it can make it impossible for us to come to a decision about what to do and how to do it.

In other words, how we think about the future, influences the choices we make in our everyday life. And our way of thinking about the future, will always be a based imaginary scenarios as much as facts.

## ONESELF AS ANOTHER

Fiction do for art what the model does for maths, states the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur. Through storytelling, we can play out scenarios, take on another person's life-choices, and bend moral dilemmas. In fiction, – I can become the other. I can bend time. I can even experience an imagined possible future (Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1994).

Today it seems that we live surrounded by a story making machinery that is set on producing and repeating the dystopia.

Films and television series expose us to make believe futures filled with catastrophe, loss. A relentlessly repeated end game where cities sinks to the ground, epidemics spread, and the planet become covered in ice, in sand, in freezing cold or blazing heat. A future where viruses rage, where people eat each other. Where all that's familiar is lost or unrecognizable, where humanism itself is being tested and societies are being unveiled as failed, cannibalistic, doomed, derailed, or mere shams. Where democracy is the sugar coating on a brutal state of eternal terror only benefiting the system, the ruling class, or an imperial figure gone mad.

It is as if the modern monster are the humans themselves.

It is as if these monsters have become demonic and as a result, these demons are filling our minds. They have become the driving force behind and the monarchs of our fiction. We repeatedly project them into our fictional future, and there we turn our world, our habitat,



into a landscape of terror and ruin, destruction and fear. We build a pyramid of negatives – of forsaken hope and chaos – and on the top of this pyramid stands the hero of our lost dreams, our new Gods of disillusionment – the lone survivor looking for revenge, for compassion, for love.

## A DYSTOPIA

A landscape of children.

In the lush green, they devour a lizard. Their lifespan reduced to such an extent, that only few reach sexual maturity.

This is a world inhabited by children giving birth to children. This is a world where children bury children. Teach other children. Kill other children. Surrounded by jungle, they stumble upon the hidden stones of civilization – not even realising what the word civilizations means.

Language lost. Future lost. Memory surrendered to a harsh and eternal present.

When I think about the future, my mind starts producing scenes like this. It happens automatically, and in a strange and horrid way, I even kind of enjoy it. Enjoy imagining and giving myself over to the fascination it entails. In to this hinterland of doom.

Anders Dunker quotes the Marxist theorist Fredric Jameson latest book *An American Dystopia*, in an article in *Morgenbladet* in 2017. There is constant and ongoing productions of dystopia in the society we live in, Jameson states. The world we live in is too complex, too entangled, too established, and at the same time too unpredictable and incorrigible for us to free ourselves from it, so instead, we produce these catastrophes. Margaret Thatcher's words "there is no alternative", or "there is no such thing as society" hits us in the space where our dreams of the future should be, and robs us off them. Maybe, he writes – the time of utopias are over (Anders Dunker, *Håpet i nåtidens framtid*, Oslo: *Morgenbladet* 2016).

In the early 1500's Thomas More's mind was set on creating an alternative society through fiction. In 1516, he published the book *Utopia*, or *De Optimo Reipublicae Statu deque Nova Insula Utopia*.

## UTOPIA LOST

Thomas More was an English lawyer, writer and man of the state. He was a humanist who fought the reformation, and who was deeply engaged in questions on moral and how to better the society.

More constructed the word utopia from the Greek *eutopia*, a good place, and the Greek *outopia*, which means nowhere. In his book, originally written in Latin, More describes a society where people lead organized and rational lives, where there is no such thing as private property and all rules rests on the common good. In this society, people tend the land together, but this is also a society where the sick are eliminated and where slaves do the hard and tedious tasks.

The subtext in the book is a criticism of Mores contemporary English society. It did not intend, as many think, to portrait a perfect society, but it wanted, through describing this other «place», to make the reader more aware of the conditions she herself was living in. In this way – Mores project combines the dream of a better world, with a satirical criticism of his own society. A feature that will become prominent in the political art to come. On one hand, it takes on the task of showing a way forward. On the other hand – it criticises what is.

In the late 1800's, an explosion of utopian ideas and ideologies erupted. It was as if the air itself had become saturated with the potential of change. With the birth of the bourgeoisie came not only the need to change, but also the *will* to make change happen. This was the time of communism, feminism, anarchism, liberalism, nudism, fascism, nationalism, and modernism and with it came a will to see through the matrix and to envisage a new world order.

There was a growing incentive not necessarily to make the perfect society – but a better one. A will to undertake grand social experiments. A will based on a need to free the individual by working for what one saw as the common good for all.

The thinking was not only goal oriented, it was radical – it was all about combining political philosophy with economic theory, with science and with a new look at what was morally good or wrong, and at the same time as time gave birth to these movements and ideology, new sciences developed. We saw the birth of psychology, humanism, the idea of childhood. Finally; – this was the time that tore God out of our minds.

Then the First World War came. Then the Second World War came. Then holocaust happened, the fall of the Soviet Union, the de-masking of China, the killing fields of Pol Pot – and the dream was over. The dream of that potential future. The will to go through large social experiments. Lost. Gone. God was dead still dead, but so was the dream of a brave new world order. Only capitalism remained, saturating democracy with its relentless and merciless greed for profit.

Maybe inertia crept into our veins then, started resting in our brains, into our dreams and expectations, until we today expect no more than that which is necessary. So we can pacify our hungry hearts, our private craving, our children's private cravings, the tribe, the family – and we have started to worry. Maybe things won't get any better. Maybe we will have to defend what little we have, and the world becomes a place of fear, a horizon limited to present consumption, and our existence void of dreams beyond it.

Voiceless I am face to face with a real dilemma: I hate this society, but I know I can't change it. I fear this society – but my fear of change is greater than the fear of living in it. When I think of radical change, images appear in my mind of mass killings, of human control, of monstrous grey societies run by bureaucrats, the party, the mind controller. By totalitarian regimes. As soon as I try to imagine a society build on the idea of a common good, the ghosts of the past comes to haunt me – and I shy away from it, as if the mere thinking about it could contaminate me.

Anders Dunker states in his article *Håpet i nåtidens framtid*, that one of the place to find this inertia is in fiction. In the zombie apocalypses there is a manifestations of Hobbes natural state. In TV-series like *Westworld* or *Black Mirror*, maybe meant as criticism, but presenting a future where human kind is bereft of any solidarity or empathy. Closed up in an angst-ridden, self-sufficient existents with prosthesis and technologies that only makes the confusion greater and that eats away at the core of our social life (Morgenbladet 2016).

So I walk around in this make believe harmonizing system as if I am trapped in a maze. Dazed. Mobile, but paralyzed – inert, but filled with inertia.

#### INERTIA – PARALYSATION – LOSS OF VOICE

Lately –

I don't know

–

It's like – I can't find my voice

I wake up, and it's gone

I open my mouth, and it's not there

I can't find my voice and I don't own my own words

Not really

I mean in a way I do

but not really

I don't really own them

I mean – they are just words, so I try to speak and I just –

No voice – damned it

–

I mean –

there is a certain kind of framework that you are supposed to fit into

Consensus paralyses action

Like

when the idea of what you cannot do is stronger than the ideas about what you *can* do

What is this?

What are these times we are living in?

That we are living on – that are living, feeding on us

A cannibalistic – sad – self-hating time

Sometimes I wonder

Sometime I wonder if these are days of the sniper

## THE DAYS OF THE SNIPER

These are the days of the sniper

When he hits

I mean – there is the voice of reason and then the will to act and then – the sniper

–

These are the days of the sniper

That's what I think

It's all about what you do and what you say:

Cause and effect

Cause and effect

Like when the link is broken then – If what you say – does not mean anything

Like –

there is no effect

The link is broken, and you just pick it up

You just pick up that weapon

You go up on that balcony

into that schoolyard

out onto that busy street

you immerse yourself in the crowd and then:

BANG !

You get it over with

You starts shooting

At random first

then more methodically

You pace yourselves

You seek higher ground

It feels good

It feels nesecarry

It feels like this is all that is

\*

A heron takes off

An artist in her studio

she sits in the dark

stearing at her art

She has no past that was pleasant but has now passed.

She has no dreams of another life, different and better

She does not have anybody

She does not have a body – and somewhere deep in the forest the Fox sniff

and snarls

(The texts are from the material produced under the collective writing process tied to the EU Collective Plays! project)

\*

We are living in the time of crisis. We are living at a place that has left us no alternatives. The perspective have become one eyed. Brutalised. Rigid. Blunt. But what if this perception of a post society in crises is just that? A perception? Maybe this existence, where we are at, in this “back loop”, at the end of the world and of society, as we know it is just a way of perceiving it. That if we changed the perspective, looked at it from another direction – then we would discover that this is not the age to end all ages. That we are living in a time that for the first time gives us a real opportunity for change, because now we have experience, scientific knowledge and tools that we did not have before, and that this perception of the state of post, – that is often said to lead to inertia – is something we have to shake off. That it is just that – a “feeling”. An idea. The idea that we are in a space that makes action impossible and where individual freedom is limited by overriding economic and cultural structures that we are unable to change or bend. Some have asked who benefits from that?

If we constantly repeat to ourselves – this is a crisis, then maybe the idea of us being in a crisis does not lead to action for most people, – but to fear. It awakes a need to preserve, save. To reactionary and reactive behaviour where old prejudices reappear like nationalism, racism, misogynism etc.

So, – to be able to produce change, we need to see our situation from another point of view. To rediscover that we are never at the end of something but in the beginning of something, in the flux of a pre. And that at times when it feels that all is lost, most likely the new has already begun.

If we look at change as something positive, to be in a back loop offers the potential to change. The question is, should we use this possibility to preserve what is already there, or to create something new. (<http://brooklynrail.org/2017/06/field-notes/Field-Notes-from-the-Anthropocene-Living-in-the-Back-Loop>)

### 3. DETROIT, JULY 2017

I awake to sunshine. The sound of crickets, sun across the floorboard and a kitten playing with my toes. Outside my window is a meadow littered with blue flowers. Huge oak trees. A narrow road, the surface cracked and worn. The labourers are already hard at work tailing the roof on the house across the street. Four black guys in denim and bright t-shirts balance across the roof-construction as if there is nothing too it, as the fifth keeps on tossing roof-tiles up to them with an unprecedented precision on a rhythm resembling a dance.

The atmosphere is relaxed. Sundrunk. Laid-back. Peaceful. Lazy even.

The sound of a lawnmower from a nearby garden. A few hundred meters further down the road, the impressive profile of our local skyscraper. The Fischer Building, build by the Fischer brothers in the 1920 to be a monument saluting the fine arts.

This is a Detroit morning. A Detroit morning on Horton Street. In the north end.

A car starting up.

Sunflowers in the front yard.

The dark soil between cabbage and sweet peas to the left of us.

A dog barking.

A cat licking its paws.

At the height of summer. At the end of recession. It seems lazy, but it is frantic.

Commerce, speculation, enterprise is rapidly entering this area. Houses are no longer being torn down. They are being rebuild.

Detroit was the most spread out city in the United States.

Three million people lived here. Now the population is down to around 670 000. In a period of no more than twelve years, the city collapsed. The industry broke down, the housing market tumbled and people started to move out. Unemployment soared. Violence was on the rise. The streets was no longer safe. The Detroit night rang with gunshot and Detroit, Motortown, the city that for a period had the fastest growing economy in the world, was now under administration. Bankrupt, finished – for many an example of everything that was wrong with capitalist society.

The city found itself in what the father of resilience theory, C.S. Holling, is calling a back loop.

### LIVING IN A BACK LOOP

The term “back loop” refers to the adaptive cycle, the main heuristic used by resilience ecologists to describe the four phases of life experienced by all natural systems – a human being, a city, a society, a civilization, a swamp, a forest, or a company.

On one hand, the adaptive cycle contains a “front loop” of early rapid “growth,” leading to a “persistence” or “stability” phase dominated by a few species, and characterized by rigidity and the capture of earlier energies. But this “stable” state is not a permanent state. Gradual or sharp disturbance can cause systems to slip into a “back loop,” seemingly a crises, – but also marked by a “release phase” where energies and elements previously captured in conservation phases are set free. Many say that this is what happened to Detroit. In this time of crises, people not only showed resilience, but new types of thinking occurred. Urban farms were build, there were pop up markets, parties, cinemas. People started to produce honey from rooftops and parkinglots, and as the houses tumbled down, were set afire or bulldozed by the city. As the weed spread along the roadsides and the streets became emptied of both cars and people – new connections and new ways of hooking up came

about. Some were talking about a new time, a potential new Detroit: Detroit-open-city. Detroit maker-city. Detroit green-city. A place of agro-hoods and craft. A hub for a new form of city planning, for collaboration and fresh produce.

The resilience researcher call this back loop a face where new combinations emerge. A time where wild, exuberant experimentation becomes the modus operandi. The most understudied aspect of ecological systems, back loops are also one of the most exciting. As observed in ecological systems, the back loop is the phase of life in which individual organisms or small groups of individual organisms interact across previously unbridgeable divides, and in doing so, create something fundamentally original. In contrast to life in the regimes that are left behind, where innovation was stifled and influence limited to a few actors with the greatest power— in the modus of the back loop, beings and things are released and open themselves up to new potentials.

Hollings state that today: we are at the time of a large-scale back loop, a global situation in which each of us must become aware that he or she is a participant. “Crisis”, as seen in this perspective, brings to the surface the presence of the pre. An act of active listening where the post sinks into the background and we look for the potential of the new per se, instead of focusing on how it relates to what was.

In this potential time of change, – depending on the perspective one chooses – one is left with two options: One – to try to restore everything back to the way things were. Two – to observe and learn from what is going on at the moment, to synergise with it, and see the potential of other modes of production, for cultivation, for organisation, transportation. For distribution of power, and for living together.

The main question to ask, Stephanie Wakefield writes in her *Field Notes from the Anthropocene: Living in the Back Loop*: Is this a world coming apart, or piecing itself back together?

## DON'T FIGHT THE FORCES

R. Buckminster Fuller, the American architect, system theorist, author, designer, and inventor said: Don't fight the forces.

For Fuller it was all about "doing more with less". What he wanted, was a kind of zero sum game – where what you make creates at least as much energy as what you put into it.

He visualized a future way of building and being – that was not about spending the planets resources, but being with them.

Fuller did his most important work in the 1950's and 60's, but his way of thinking is a big influence on eco-philosophy, for artists and maker societies even today.

Fuller was a pioneer in thinking globally, and he explored principles of energy and material efficiency in the fields of architecture, engineering and design.

His work bridged the gap between science and poetics, between invention and art for art's sake. For Fuller, doing was a way of thinking, – and to be able to think, you had to accept the unknown. The unknown in you and around you.

All through his life, he held on to an environmental focus. He believed in sustainability – and his influence on the art-scene has been fundamental. He saw the artist as an inventor and the inventor as an artist. At the chore of this relationship, Fuller placed neither beauty nor knowledge, – but praxis. He was not looking for a goal outside the deed, but inside the deed itself. In this respect, the artist was just as much an objective economist or an evolutionary strategist, or an image-maker, or a poet.

So, if we could say: Yes, we are the obliterators of other species. Yes, we often do not understand the consequences of our deeds. Yes, we pollute the air we breathe, destroy the space we live in – but if we listen carefully, we can open up to a new possible world. A world that we are not only living “in”, but that we are “a part of”.

In this potential world, it is our capacity for the artificial, the manmade – that gives us the tools to reassemble the cracks between “that”, the world, and “us”. To mend what's broken. To see the world as a continuum of ourselves. To see the things we make as a meeting-place between it and us. A place where the world shows itself: The poetics of the metal, the radical force in a piece of wood, the brutality and the voicelessness of movement. And then – as it is rediscovered – turn it into song.

Frederic Jameson talks about a need for revitalization. We need once more to believe in the collective. And we have to charge this belief with a kind of exalted feeling of freedom.

What Jameson is looking for, is what one can call “double power”. We have to create a society inside society. These double powers already exists, for good and for bad he states. He talks about the mafia, or organizations like the Black Panthers. The job is to make these

structures grow independent of the totality that surrounds it, for then in the end to take over society.

The idea is that through these power-enclaves, we can create independent and radical movements and power structures within the one that already exist. This can prevent us from the feeling of being paralyzed by the totality of today's ruling system, and we can use these ideas, or concepts as tools that can help us to be more progressive. To think in real radical alternatives and by that project us into a landscape that makes the impossible possible.

Many small communities, for instance eco-villages, look at themselves as experimental enclaves that strives to detach themselves from the global economy, but although today's experimental enclaves are real, I still I think that Jamesons suggestions must be seen as more therapeutic than a real way forward. The question is can eco-villages, artist communities, even the maker-societies develop a real double power?

In the maker societies, we can see the influence of Fullers thought. Here people meet up to make things. For fun, for the sake of the experiment itself, or as a kind of understated political act. They create a working environment where one can make something outside of the established economy. Where preservation and innovation go hand in hand. Soft technology goes together with old fashion carpeting and metalwork. 3D printing goes together with bolts and spanners.

The maker movements cultivate shared spaces. Flux and movement. Here artists, computer geeks, hackers and artisans can meet and merge.

At the chore of it is maybe a reaction to the growing sense of disconnection from the physical world. A protest against the de-valuing of physical exploration. The people inside the movement insists on falling in love with that which surrounds us. With matter. In a communal spirit, they engage in conversation with the objects that surrounds them. In this exchange, man and matter come together in a dialogue built on creativity, sustainability and curiosity. The maker movement tries sees everything as it is, not just a potential or a way to gain profit. It's all about re-alignment and communication. About striving to find ways of making it all a zero sum game. Together they combine new and old technologies. Constituting autonomous systems that can do things dispatched from the consumer society to bring forth another kind of synergy, another mental framework than the idea that you do things for cash or for yourself. Some of the members in the maker societies have an ideology they follow – others do not. Some wants to change the society, some just wants to establish and alternative inside it.

For many today, this is biggest challenge is to find a way to be really be free from the system. To make something that exists outside of it. For an alternative future to become reality, it might be necessary to create these autonomous power structures outside the consisting ones. Not so that they can finally take over, but to show that those alternatives are at all possible. That there is not just one all-encompassing reality. That there is a potential other way to go about things– and that there can be meaning and joy found in it.

## A WORLD SATURATED WITH IDEOLOGY

Stephanie Wakefield puts it like this: *If we accept being in a back loop, the question becomes, how do we respond? Do we try desperately to maintain the old "safe operating space," freeze a process already in motion? Or could we let go, allow a time of exploration and experimentation, see what becomes of the pieces of us and the world?* (Stephanie Wakefield, *Field Notes from the Anthropocene: Living in the Back Loop*)

She continues:

*Instead of looking for final answers, what if we accept that we are living in a transitional time, where things are in disarray, where the future's uncertain, but where more is now possible and authorized than ever before? From this perspective our time is a time for audacity, experiments on the same playing field where our future is already being written for us. In short, living in the back loop. This new orientation and way of life entails finding new modes of nourishing ourselves, designing and raising buildings, staying warm or cool, and accessing clean water as it is does learning to face the unknown and learning to look into ourselves and ask what kind of life we want to make live, what kind of life is worth living, and really asking previously unaskable questions. What on earth could being be? By "we" I don't just mean designers, city governments, planners, or resilience theorists who have already become back loop participants, as testified by the existence and growth of the resilience paradigm. By "we" I mean everyone: common people where they are, how*

*they are, people who will bear the brunt of climate change, people who already needed the world to end yesterday so they could finally get a chance to live.*

Today, Detroit is once again left open to the predators. As farmers, artists and hardworking workers and middle class citizens, have tried to salvage and secure parts of their city, value on property is on the rise. This attracts the entrepreneurs, and once again buyers, the investors and developers and the entrepreneurs are moving in. Property is the new gold and money is moving fast through the cities financial food chain, leaving the big sharks with the big bites, forcing the poor out of the centre and even threatening the agro-hoods. As the value of the land grows, the city no longer want to lease the land to the farmers who have been cultivating it. It's more tempting to sell it off for profit. Yet again the landscape is rapidly changing. Forcing back the community gardens, the beekeepers and the farms to make way for big development projects that need space and speed.

Soon, some predict, the power and the property will be back on even fewer hands than before. The equilibrium will be re-established and an even stronger mono-culture will dominate as the rich grow richer – until the next collapse and the next back loop.

## THE END OF DUALITY

The process, the cannibalistic behaviour of our current global economy seems unstoppable. The question is, – what can we learn in the process?

In a world where the global capitalist experiment has become the only possible reality, it is hard to think outside that framework. To remember that it is just that. That it is totalitarian, deadly, default. That people starve in it, species become extinct in it, that if set free, – this system will feed the rich and ignore the poor. The air we breath is saturated with ideology. Its just so everyday that we do not notice it. We are living inside an ideology that celebrates the individual, the human endeavour. It is all a power game. Not a zero sum game – but a game where the winner can take it all.

This is the engine of enterprise. Its winner against looser. The once who have against the once that have not. This is the age of dualism. In this world it's those who have power against the powerless. It's the strong against the weak. Man against nature

In his book *Times of Crisis*, – the French philosopher Michele Serre calls for an end to duality as a way of viewing the world. If we are going to survive as a species on this planet he says, we have to understand that there are always a third party, our planet – and we have to start to understand this party as an agent. Because, he writes – we are not living *in* nature, *on* the planet and *inside* a universe. We are living together *with it*.

We have to understand and accept the world as an equal partner, even as an opponent.

The struggle in the world has never been just between rich and poor, slaves and free men, females and males. If we do not recognize the force of the storm, the brutality of the drought, the production of oxygen by the algae's in our oceans – there will be no battles to win. We, the humans, will be gone.

Serres even suggests making the world's ecosystems, forests and streams juridical agents. So that they can be represented by, and protected by the law. Something we cannot handle at whim, but that are entities treated and protected the same way as we are (Michele Serres, *Times of Crises*, London, Bloomsbury Academic 2015 ).

In an age of dualism – what belongs together often end up in opposition to the other – or literally torn apart. The “one” is torn away from “the many”. The individual is set apart from the common.

The unique I – becomes something that we see in opposition to the “social we” – when we all know that every we is constituted by a plural of I's. Without individualisation – no society. Without public life – no democracy. And as Hannah Arendt so rightly concludes: A public sphere is a sphere where individuals act together from their own free will.

As Arendt sees it – we are pluralism. We are multitudes. This is the human condition – Man – not men, inhabits the earth. The life in the public is the political life. Living together is the fundament for all human activity. Hanna Arendt state that for an act to be political, the act has to be free and, it has to be performed in public. Arendt separate the private from the public life. She says that the life of action, *vita active* – takes place in the private sphere. Here a human acts outside the frame of the private, and for an act to be political it does not only need to be free, to be present outside the private – it needs to see beyond a person's life, or situation. Maybe one can put it like this – for an act to be political – one needs to choose a perspective that makes it possible to envisage possible imagined future. (Hannah Arendt, *Vita Activa*, Oslo: Pax Forlag A/S 1996)

Plurality is our essence. We can forget about it. Walk around in it, feel apart from it, like an island in our unique “I”. After all, that’s where our senses are situated. This is where our experience are stored. Whether we like I or not, we have to experience this plurality through one gaze, ponder about it through this one mind, touch it, smell it, feel it with this one body.

WE ALL KNOW IT’S GOING TO HELL – AND THERE IS NO  
ALTERNATIVE  
OR  
INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE TOGETHERNESS

Living late in capitalism is living in a global economy. This has been described as living in a limbo-like state somewhere between inertia and nostalgia, but living together is what we do and freedom and action is a necessity. Without it, there would be no politics. For Arendt, the world would only be a pile of objects. Through our senses and our interaction, through language – we can connect with them and see them, and make them into something.

Today we know that our existents and survival is connected to the existence and survival of other species. Nothing lives in isolation. Maybe the way forward is to understand the limitations of individualism per se – because as new science suggests – we are not so much different, but mainly the same. The art of the future is not about living apart, but living together with each other and *with* other species. Our senses limits us. We have to see beyond them – and maybe the stories we tell can set us free.

THE END OF CRITICISM

When Jacques Ranciere says that a political act is the act of creating new possible worlds, this gives art a special place in the “political” per se. For a long time, political art has been almost synonym with criticism. The idea has often been that art should unveil the power structures of society. Through criticism, “we”, the artists, will awake people from their slumber, and this will give them the tools and energy to fight the system.

In his book “Utopia”, Thomas More described an alternative world to make visible the challenges and problems he saw in his own time. Like in Mores case, – satire, fables can expose power. Through mirroring what we know, we can feel for those who have been wrong and want to fight the wrongdoers. The parable, even in its hidden and subtle form, can be the harshest kind of criticism.

The idea is that by identifying the enemy, you expose the problem. Or the other way around: By identifying the problem, you expose the enemy.

By exposing the problem and by making people aware of it, you can awake the will not only to solve the problem, and to fight the enemy or the system. In this way, political art that uses criticism, has been seen as a way of liberate the freedom fighter from his chains.

To make people aware of what supresses them is, and will always be important.

Today many Sami artists produce radical and critical art that exposes the mechanisms of suppression inside the Sami society and from the Norwegian state. At the same time, – European political art seems to be in crises. In the introduction to the book *Not Just a Mirror – Looking for the Political Theatre of Today*, the German curator Florian Malzacher takes a close look at political theatre of today, and he claims that theatre is struggling to find its place in the current events and debates.

His arguments are familiar. We find ourselves deep in crisis: *The time seems out of joint. Economical disasters, outrageous social imbalance, growing right wing populism, millions of people forced into migration, various religious fundamentalisms, and an unprecedented ecological catastrophes to come* (Florian Malzacher, *Looking for the political theatre of today, Not just a Mirror – Possibilities in political theatre of today Berlin: Alexander Verlag 2015*).

The crises in democracy has hit the representational machine of the theatre at its core, but our strategies prevail.

Maybe, if the system is already unveiled, then we need new strategies?

If we know who the enemy is, if we recognise the powers changing forms, shapes and sizes – then art that produces criticism only confirms what we already know. We see it, we acknowledge it, we went our frustrations and then the world goes on like before.

Maybe critical art even just oils the machine and keeps us busy while preaching for the choir.

Maybe we are at the end of criticisms capacity for change.



Maybe you do not achieve change by exposing that which is, but in the potential of the new.

Political art does not only limit itself to criticism. It can be interventional, action based or even take form as hidden theatre – but since critical art is always based on the reaction against something that already is – it might have become a blunt tool in a time that hungers for radical, alternative visions.

Maybe our work is not to “show” art as an “autonomous” alternative – but as a potential for radical alternatives per se?

Lately I have even asked myself: Maybe our time offers the end of criticism.

What really makes us human – states Yuval Noah in his bestselling book “Sapiens” – is not our ability to walk on two, to speak or, our ability to use tools. It’s our ability to create stories. Fiction. That is what unites us.

Maybe what the art needs today is to change the focus from criticising what is, for a more productive strategy. To make the stories to form the tomorrow to come.

Each time has its consensus and stories that confirms them. Once the story was that of the black man being a mere animal. Once the story was that of women not having a soul. Once the stories confirmed our right to beat the slave, to look at women as property. That the king was closer to God. Even chosen and instated by divine powers. Today it is the story of humanism and individualism that connects us all. This is a story of dualism. But if we no longer believe in that story – what story is going to replace it and what stories are we going to tell in the future?

## THE RETURN OF THE POST AND THE PRESENCE OF THE PRE

What we see is also, what exists.

What we see and what we repeat is what we give importance.

By repeating a story, a term, a fact I give it relevance. We give it weight. What we see as relevant shapes our agenda. That which is on our agenda makes us prioritise what we do. Doing is thinking.

Now we are stuck in terms like post–humanism, even post-history.

If humanism is no longer the story we tell – If historicism can do no more for us? If we are past all that – then it is time to look at what the void exposes. Who are we, the humans that are living inside “post-humanism”? Who are we, if we no longer see history as history?

If we measure things by what is no more – we also have to take on the task of discovery.

Sitting on that porch in Detroit – history was everywhere. In the house I was living lived the grandson of a slave owner. Let us call him Joe. The descendent of poor Polish and poor Italian farmers – now buying up the houses in the area. This black area. This black street. This black community, slowly bought up by a white man.

We stand over by the sweet-pies across the street from where we live. The light is low and golden. The air fresh from the last rain-shower.

The showers come heavy and sudden in Detroit.

Sabina, a black girl in her late forties, with a plain, purple uniform is standing by the curb. She is taking pictures with her iPhone. Of the rows of sweet pies, of beat and different coloured cabbages.

– Isn’t it lovely?

We agree. It is lovely this stretch of green land, of food and hope stretched out on this elongated piece of land that once was urban wasteland.

Then we get talking.

She works with animals. She loves horses. She wants to leave the city and travel down south.

She wants to raise horses there – down in Alabama, and I ask – why Alabama? – and she looks at me, this European in her nice white singlet and her lime green silk scarf.

– I have folks down there, she says.

– Family.

And then she says:

– Have you heard of the time of slavery?

– That’s what they were. And some of us came up here for work, she says – when we were freed.

Joe is a developer. He has 16 cars and trucks and runs several companies. He is into real estate. He rarely talk of the tobaccofarm back in Virginia. How his great grandparents lost

it when the slaves were freed and his whole family had to come up here. To Michigan.

In the evenings, we have a beer together.

Looking at pictures of this lakeside property he is thinking about buying – and here we stand.

On the other side of the street is one of the first urban farms in Detroit. Established some 11 years ago. Just a few hours go I stood at the rim of it, admiring the blossoming sweet-pies in those last, golden rays of sun, together with a woman my own age, the great grandchild of a freed slave, and I think of Joes ancestors. The tobacco-farm in Virginia. And I think of those sugar-plantations in Alabama. And I think of the cotton-pickers, the bent backs, the whips, those ships filled with slaves off the coast of Africa, with poor European farmers of the coast of Europe. Of how the oceans connected us then, and how they connect us now. Oceans of water and oceans of time. Slave-ships crossing them. And I feel an anger growing inside me. Against that prefix of the post. Nothing is over. It is still here. Engrained in the tarmac on the pavement in Horton Street and I want to tear it all loose. I want to jump out of this framing. I can feel the events of the past moving, and shifting and I can feel the will for change and something new as well. Something unfamiliar as I sit on this porch with Joe, and my beer, in this city torn between different stories and different potential futures. It is a fight, – and I think this neighbourhood, this farm is going to lose it.

Joe is an energetic man. A man of the moment. A man of ambition. A funny man, a brutal man – a man with no time for thinking about the consequences of his actions.

He demolished some houses, and he buys them.

He takes on the hardest work. The most dangerous. He used to be in fights. Some say he still is. He has more than 30 properties, but he lives in none of them.

For what?

For profit? Because he can? Maybe is just not able to stop. Buying, selling, working, fighting – hoping to last as long as possible. That he will be able to keep on bringing in the cash – and my fantasy is there again. My dystopia. There he is. In it: A young boy. A survivor. Now with a stone in his hand. Running through the jungle, shouting, screaming, – searching for his name.

#### CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE AND OBSERVATION AS A TOOL RE-ALIGNMENT

The dystopias feed our fantasies and fear. The stories of the good life, the happy endings are supposed to soothe and comfort us, but they are growing fewer. We believe in love – but can a kiss save this planet? We believe in families, but know that this system we live in, tear families apart. So we believe in that which is there.

Dystopias are a part of who we are, and in a way I will always enjoy them. I love allegories. Even the darkest once. Sometimes I think that dystopias might even calm us. They give some sense to it all. Maybe even a feeling of recognition. We need our demons. They are a part us.

I can see them in Joes eyes. As I can see those horses galloping in Sabina's mind as she longs to raise horses in Alabama.

In the anthology *Deleuze and the City* – the editors ask – what can a city do? (Hèlèn Frichot, Catharina Gabrielson and Jonathan Metzger, *Deleuze and the City*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 2016) A city is not just one thing, it's an assemblage. It interacts with itself. It behaves (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, New York, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC 2013/1980).

The “assemblage” of the city, is not just something we live in, a dead “milieu”, a mis-en-scene – it's an organism. It does something too us. It is all about fluidity, exchangeability, and it has multiple functionalities The relationships of component and parts within the city are not stable or fixed; rather, they can be displaced and replaced within and among other bodies. It's all about relations interacting within a systems.

In theatre, that which happens is at the chore of the drama. Where things happens, there is potential for drama to unfold. If the city is not just a place, but also an event – it can function not just as a setting, but as an agent. It performs actions. One can even say that it has a will. The question then is – what has the city of Detroit done with Sabina. What has it done to flatmate Joe. What does it do to them right now, and what it can do to them in the future.

Will Sabina still wear her purple uniform?

How long can Joe go on working the hours he does, make the kind of money he does?  
How old will he be before he gets a second, a massive and deadly heart attack?

Will they still go on planting multi-coloured cabbages here in Horton Street?

In Sabina's memories and in Joes memories, lays the knowledge of once being a slave and once owning one. Maybe even a decision never to be a slave again. Never to own a slave again. Never to live in a world that allows a man to own a slave. For a human to be a commodity that one can sell off.

I will remember Sabina for a long time.

She worked with animals. Animals in danger and animals in need.

– It must be hard I said.

– The animals, no – she said. It's the people. All those people self-medicating, – not being able to take care of themselves, of their animals of anything.

I might not remember her directly.

If I saw a photograph of her, I might see that her uniform was blue, not purple. Maybe it was no uniform at all.

As mentioned earlier, episodic memory – the kind that allows us to remember our personal experiences – is not a literal reproduction of the past. It's an ongoing construction in which we piece together different types of information from different sources. (Donna Rose Addis and Daniel L. Schacter, *Constructive Memory – The ghost of past and future* "NATURE 2007)

People draw on experiences in order to imagine and simulate episodes that might occur in their personal future. In this way, we project ourselves into the future based on what we recall of the past. We extract, combine and reassemble.

One could say that present and past walk hand in hand.

To change the perspective, to force oneself to think differently about the future – even imagine a time beyond our own lifetime, should not only be within our reach, but actually a part of what makes us human. We are made to do it. The way our memories are operating conditions us to do so.

This is, according to Hannah Arendt what makes the human into a political animal, that is what makes us able to live together with other people. To create societies. And that is what makes us able to act outside and beyond our personal gain.

Everything we do is personal, but we project it into the public. Public life is as much an imagined field, a field of fantasies, hopes and predictions. Of simulated and possible futures as it is "real". That is why, the way I see it – a preposition about a common future must always be both political and personal.

Before, I thought of the revenge of the post. How it would always come back and get me. But now it's the pre staring me in the eyes.

What do you see?

What do you lose and what do you win?

Do you see the beginning, or do you see the end?

## PRE – FUTURE – POSITIONS

We all live our lives in such different circumstances.

I do not live in Detroit, I live here. In Norway.

To understand the other – is to take on a different perspective.

To change once perspective, can entail changing once point of view. Changing ones point of view can lead to changes in once framework, even in once value system.

We humans can do that. It is in our reach. We have always done it.

We make up the story of what it is to be human as we go along.

The word humanism might be dead, but humanism is not.

We might not be able to place the human being at the centre of the universe anymore, but we might be able to expand that valuesystem that humanism entail. Not cast it aside, but widen it.

Grow flexible. Grow wider.

The way our mind works is not a one-way street.

There is always room in us for more. More languages, more knowledge, more stories, more perspectives, more love.

To write – is also to think. Every text is based on an exchange – between people, events, other texts, past and present.

These experiences forms our cognition. It shapes our access to language and the way we use it. It defines the borders for our understanding of our self, and the role we play in public life.

To think differently – is to act differently.

A new time – need new praxises.

Matter is matter – has always been matter and we have always been a part of it.

It's just that now – we can see it.

Now we can recognize how entangled we are. How plural we are.

We have to discard that old story where Man is both the hero and the villain. The victim and the thief.

Anders Dunker states in his article that “the future” is an ideological construction. And not least an imagined reality. A mental image.

That this mental images have consequences. There is a fundamental relationship between hope and action, he states – and also between hope and our ability to act. This relationship bears witness to the fact that humans are more than the circumstances we are given.

## THE ACT OF LISTENING

I am convinced that artistic practise, given the right circumstances – can create its own field of experience. That it, when it bumps into and rub shoulders with reality can create a field where experience no longer belongs to the one, but is shared. Where what “I” have can be met by and merge with that which belong to the other.

Where other stories can set the agenda. Where the unique I are at one with the communal we, and were we see ourselves as living together with our surroundings.

In my texts, I want philosophy to merge with pain and politics to merge with pleasure.

I want to stop being afraid.

I want to stop being so afraid of the world I live in. I want to stop being afraid because it stops me from seeing it as it is.

I do not want to go blindly into the future.

I want to stop up and listen.

Just listen.

Just ask – what do you see?

Is this the enemy?

This tarmac, these walls, your face, that weed growing at the curb, those children playing, that aeroplane cutting across the sky, that puddle of rainbow-coloured oil, that first snow in November? The snow that does not come? My hands deep in my pockets, your hand reaching for the butter, birds migrating, people migrating, letters being thought, languages being forgotten, a new star being discovered? Our telescopes reaching deeper into space. The realisation that space might not end, that this might not end, that this, this is not the end – A mice in the undergrowth, a war about to break out, the discovery that the structure of some of our cells are the same as the structures of the cells in some distant star, the realisation that we are all matter, that matter matters, a girl showing her tits to a boy she likes.

To stop up and listen.

To see : A boy putting down his weapons deciding that he wants to grow wheat, starvation, demolitions, a single white man on a shooting-spree, a transportation of bread, of weapons, of grain. The heaviness of the plain as the rain fall – all that which goes on when all the other things go on. A writer writing his poem, a dancer stretching his arm out – a bird dying, a day dying, a star dying – this not the end – this is only beginning?

To stop up and listen.

To turn my listening into language.

To force myself to say – this is just the beginning – this is it. This is what we have. To brace myself for the yes, for the now, for the consequences.

We are a continuation.

This is where we're at.

Even if all of this disappear.

Even if I disappear.

Even if art disappears.

This is just the beginning.

We are here – not at the end of times. We are at the edge; we are at the point where the current turns. We are the current. We will not bend our heads. We will not look up. We will not be stargazing – this time – I say.

This time, I repeat – this time I will not get lost in the unknown.

It's time to embrace it.

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future–PRE–positions

– *a speculative audio-essay on an imagined togetherness  
in the future*

1. THE PRE

C  
There –

B  
before everything

C  
IS

B  
Something

C  
Is the -

PRE

Not

B  
POST

A  
(post-industrial, postmodern, post-dance, post-industry, post-irony)

C  
There is

B  
THAT

C  
which happens  
right before  
Constantly

HERE

– it announces itself  
as A:

B

PRE-LUDE

C  
as A:

B  
PRE-FIX

C  
as A:

B  
PRE-CONCEPTION

C  
Pre-conclusions  
Past past  
Pre future

a radically unpredictable beginning already  
PRESENT  
already presenting things to come

2.

C  
I put my hands on the horizon.  
I put my hands on the horizon and I lift myself, I push myself up and lift myself  
so that I can peek over it –

B  
I put my hands on the horizon and I lift myself  
I push myself up and lift myself so that I can peek over it –

A  
And then?

C  
Nothing.  
Just darkness.  
Or maybe the edge of something – white. An icecap – a sunstorm – clouds of  
dust

*Short pause*

C  
Sometimes, when I teach – I ask my students to perform the same exercise.  
Put your hands on the horizon – I say  
and lift yourselves gently over it.  
What do you see?  
Nothing.  
The majority of them see nothing, and when there is something more than  
nothing

– the world totally covered in water  
totally covered in sand  
they see a planet engulfed by darkness.

3.

B

I am blind  
I cannot see  
I am standing at the edge of an icy cleft and there is nothing in front of me  
It is as if  
                    – reality itself has been etched away  
eroded  
erased  
A picture cut open

4.

A  
The French philosopher Jacques Rancière states: – to be political is to imagine new possible worlds. Worlds in which things that now seem impossible, becomes possible. The slave can be free, women can vote, homosexuals can practise their sexuality etc etc.

C  
Siri Hustvedt has said: The future is the land of our expectations, hopes, fantasies, fears and projections. The future is fiction.  
This fiction, she states – rests in our memories and it is what we know and remember that builds our expectations.

B  
I close my eyes and I see

A  
I close my eyes and I see

C  
I close my eyes and see nothing.

*Short pause*

B  
I close my eyes and I see

A  
I close my eyes and I see

C  
I close my eyes and see a landscape of children.  
In the lush green, they devour a lizard. Their lifespan reduced to such an extent, -

A  
– that only few reach sexual maturity.

C  
This is a world inhabited by children giving birth to children.

B  
This is a world where children bury children. Teach other children. Kill other children.

A  
Surrounded by jungle, they stumble upon the hidden stones of civilization – not even realising what the word civilization means.  
Language lost.

B  
Future lost.



C  
Memory surrendered to a harsh and eternal present.

5.

C  
I hate this society, but I know I can't change it.  
I fear this society – but my fear of change is greater than the fear of living in it.  
When I think of radical change, images appear in my mind of mass killings, of human control, of monstrous grey societies run by bureaucrats, the PARTY, the mind controllers. By totalitarian regimes.  
As soon as I think the thought of a society build on the idea of a common good, – the ghosts of the past comes back to haunt me, and I shy away from it, as the mere thinking about it could contaminate me.  
So I walk around in this make believe harmonizing system as if I am trapped in a maze. Dazed. Mobile but paralysed – inert, but filled with inertia.

B  
Lately –  
  
I don't know  
–  
It's like – I can't find my voice

I wake up, and it's gone

I open my mouth – and it's not there

I can't find my voice and I don't own my own words  
Not really  
I mean  
I do  
but not really  
I don't really own them  
They are just words, so I try to speak and I just –  
No voice – damned it

A  
–

C  
–

A  
I think it's psychological

B  
Damned sure it's psychological!

C  
We know how you feel

A  
I know

B  
It's like that – That's the terrible thing – like when you have the feeling that you don't even own your own words  
Not even your feelings  
They are – They are not even like /

C  
*original?*

B  
Original  
Yes – They are – They  
feel even /

C  
Made up?

B  
Made up –  
the moment you say them – As you say them – As you speak

*Silence*

B  
I get so frustrated sometimes  
Just so fucking FRUSTRATED–

I just feel like screaming

Silence

B  
What if I can't function  
What if I'm like  
                    broken  
Like a piece of machinery, like – just  
                    PUFF – and then – no more  
Just like scrap

A  
You are not broken

*Short pause*

B  
I mean – There is a certain kind of framework that you are supposed to fit into

C  
You are not broken, Torgny

B  
Consensus paralyses action  
I mean  
When the idea of what you cannot do is stronger than the ideas about what you  
*can* do

Like the sniper

A  
What *about* the sniper?

B  
When he hits  
I mean – there is the voice of reason and then the will to act and then – the  
sniper  
–  
These are the days of the sniper  
That's what I think  
It's all about what you do and what you say

Cause and effect  
Cause and effect  
Like when the link is broken then – If what you say – does not mean anything  
Like –  
                  there is no effect

A  
And the sniper?

B  
That's what I mean

The link is broken, and then: The time of the sniper  
Just

BANG !

That's that

6.

A  
Sometimes I just wish it would all explode, all of it, just so that we don't have to  
worry about it any more

C  
She keeps roaming through the fur coats  
the shoes  
the filth  
a piece of art  
a piece of shit

A  
I cannot bear it anymore  
Its everywhere  
like acid – corrosion  
(shouts) I hate things!  
Why can't they just self-terminate!  
Why can't they just explode!

No

C  
She says

A  
No

C  
She is leaving the bedroom  
She is in the living room  
She is holding a jug  
some candlesticks  
a Danish statue of white children grimacing  
A pair of handmade coasters  
an African quilt  
Linen  
napkin-rings  
A dozen silver spoons

B  
And she opens a drawer

C  
What's in it?

B  
And she takes out a case

C  
What's in it?

B  
And she lifts it up and its  
Heavy  
And its  
Fully loaded

C  
And she starts pointing it at things  
The napkin-rings  
The silverwear  
The paintings

B  
A pair of shoes and then she

C  
—starts to shoot

B  
randomly first

C  
just randomly at her stuff  
at her paintings  
her china  
her silver wear  
her pots and pans  
at the leftovers  
the garbage cans  
her mothers jug  
passers by  
through the window in her living room  
the window in her bedroom  
one, two, three, four

B  
Drop the gun Line  
Just drop the gun!

*Short pause*

C  
And she goes out  
She is pacing herself  
She is heading for higher ground

B  
Let go of the gun!

*Pause*

A  
You get it over with

You start shooting  
And then you just go on doing it  
Randomly at first  
then more methodically  
You pace yourselves  
You seek higher ground  
It feels good  
It feels necessary  
It feels like this is all that is

7.

C  
The narrative, as the image and the poem has always had the potential of producing radically different realities, – but today it has become hard to imagine those other or new possible worlds. And if Siri Hustvedt is right – and those new worlds are only produced as a reaction to what is, what is might limit our capacity to come up with real and radical alternatives.

We might get stuck in a mode where criticism exists for the sake of criticism, and the radical suggestions get stifled before they even float to the surface.

Today it seems that we are living surrounded by a storymaking machinery that is set on producing and repeating the dystopia.

Films and television series expose us to make believe futures filled with catastrophe, loss. A relentlessly repeated end game where cities sink to the ground, epidemics spread, and the planet becomes covered in ice, in sand. In freezing cold or blazing heat. A future where viruses rage, where people eat each other. Where all that's familiar is lost or unrecognizable, where humanism itself is being tested and societies are being unveiled as failed, cannibalistic, doomed, derailed, or as mere shams. Where democracy more often than not is portrayed as the sugar coating on a brutal state of eternal terror, only benefiting the system, the ruling class – or an imperial figure gone mad.

It is as if the modern monster are the humans themselves.

It is as if these monsters have become demonic and as a result, these demons are filling our minds. They have become the driving force behind and the monarchs of our fiction. We repeatedly project them into our fictional future, and there we turn our world, our habitat, into a landscape of terror and ruin, destruction and fear. We build a pyramid of negatives – of forsaken hope and chaos – and on the top of this pyramid stands the hero of our lost dreams, our new Gods of disillusionment – the lone survivor looking for revenge, for compassion, for love.

It is as if we have arrived at a place that has left us no alternatives.

The perspective has become one eyed. Brutalised. Rigid. Blunt.

But what if this perception of a post-society in crises is just that? A perception?

Maybe this existence, where we are at, in this “back loop”, at the end of the world and of society, as we know it – Is just a way of perceiving it, and that this perception of the state of post is something we have to shake off. That it is just that – a “feeling”.

Maybe what we need to discover, is that this is not the age to end all ages. That if we changed the perspective we would see that we live in the time of opportunities.

Opportunities for change we did not have before because we have knowledge we did not have before.

If we don't.

If we continue to constantly repeat to ourselves that this is a crisis – then maybe this does not lead to action, but to fear. It awakens a need to preserve, to save. To reactionary and reactive behaviour where old prejudices reappear like nationalism, racism, misogyny, etcetera, etcetera

*Long silence*

B  
I close my eyes and I see

A  
I close my eyes and I see

C  
I close my eyes and see  
white linen.

*Short pause*

B  
I close my eyes and I see

A  
I close my eyes and I see

C  
I close my eyes and see a landscape of children.  
Grass  
Houses spurting out of the ground covered by green  
trees and a fast running river

*Short pause*

*A beat*

A  
Oh – this need to rid oneself of the fear of simplification

B  
Oh this need to stand in the complex  
and embrace it

A  
It's like I am under a spell  
a spell in which my brain is like a huge maze  
I know I entered the maze at some point, and I am desperately looking for an  
exit – but I cannot find it. There are more and more alleys, there are more and  
more walls. There are more and more problems. There are more and more  
meaningless actions, meaningless relationships, meaningless locations,  
meaningless dreams, meaningless worries.

C  
The main question to ask, I think – is:  
is this a world coming apart, or piecing itself back together?

*Long silence or sound*

B  
What was that?

C  
Somebody singing.

*Pause*

C

What was that?

A  
Something entering the room

Pause

A  
What was that?

C  
A change in the weather

B  
What was that?

C  
–

A  
–  
I did not hear anything

*Pause*

C  
I was just thinking –  
How plural we are.

B  
Sometimes I don't understand a word you're saying

C  
No  
Wait – I mean – Just listen – think about it  
Is this the enemy?

B  
What enemy?

A  
Who's enemy?

C  
This tarmac, these walls, that weed growing at the curb, those children playing,  
your face, that aeroplane cutting across the sky. That puddle of rainbow-  
coloured oil, that first snow in November. The snow that does not come. My  
hands deep in my pockets, your hand reaching for the butter, birds migrating,  
people migrating, letters being taught, languages being forgotten, a new star  
being discovered.

B  
A boy putting down his weapons deciding that he wants to grow wheat

C  
Our telescopes reaching deeper into space, the realisation that space might not  
end, that this might not end, that this –  
Is this the end?  
Who has told me so?

B  
– a mouse in the undergrowth, a war about to break out, the discovery that the  
structure of some of our cells are the same as the structures of the cells in some  
distant star,

C  
the realisation that we are all matter, that matter matters, a girl showing her tits  
to a boy she likes –

B  
Or

C  
starvation, demolitions,

B  
Or – a single white man on a shooting-spree, a transportation of bread, of  
weapons, of grain. The heaviness of the

C  
plain as the rain fall – all that which goes on

A  
when all the other things go on. A writer writing his poem, a dancer stretching  
his arm out – a bird

B  
dying, a day dying, a star dying – is not necessarily the

C  
end – what if

A  
this is only the beginning?  
What if

C  
This is

B  
What if this is what we have

Pause

B  
The main question to ask, I think – is:

C  
is this a world coming apart, or piecing itself back together?

A  
The main question is

B  
To see the world as it is  
the radical force in a piece of wood, the brutality and voicelessness of  
movement.

A  
And then –

B  
as it is rediscovered –

C  
turn it into song.



## The heaviness of palaces and plains – *an essay on beginnings, perspectives and places*

Have you ever seen such a plain? Bland and bleak and seemingly endless.

On windy days, the dust swirls from the ground, turning the sky grey – and in winter, with the occasional snowfall, the plain turns hard and white, as if glazed over.

There is a weight about this place, only balanced by the castle and the road.

It is as if the castle and the road have been placed there to make the weight bearable, or maybe it is the other way around. That it is the fact that the palace is there, with its spears and halls and helicopter decks, with its casino, and fortified doors and tennis courts, with its barracks and dungeons, that gives the plain its weight, its bleakness, this feeling that it goes on forever.

Only sometimes, in the spring, after a swift and rare rainfall, when the sun is out, before the blazing heat of summer, the weight lifts. As if the perspective shifts, and as the feeble grass starts to sprout on the horizontal spread, a lush green spreads across it. For a few weeks, it is a place for grazing herds of goats and sheep, with the ringing of tiny bells breaking the monotony.

Now it's late September.

All is still. Nothing moves.

It's as if there is no change from day to day. Overcast, greyish days. No cars coming or going. The barracks filled with sleeping, gambling, restless men, too bored to leave the palace grounds.

And then, – two lonely figures at the edge of it all, one leaning against the other as she says:

*Some people say that it was always there  
But I think that once the plain was just a plain  
not heavy at all  
In the time before  
before humans walked it and gave it its name  
In the times of the grazing  
or even before the time of men or palaces or roads  
before words like plain, or heavy, or grass  
Before any name was given  
Before the comprehension of anything having a name  
When all was still open  
They sky, the wind, the hare, the fox, and the mice  
a worm worming its way through the grass  
Before there was anything here – then maybe there was no heaviness at all*

There they are.

Can you see them?

Two figures at the edge of the picture. They are there. It is there: the palace, and the road crossing the plain – and at the same time, none of this exists. It's just something I've conjured up. Just language. These are just words. Language brought them about and can erase them again.

For now, this is a beginning.

For now, in this text, it is all there is.

## BEGINNINGS AND TIME

Beginnings deals with *time*, and time to me is inseparable from place. To understand *when* something starts, one have to investigate from *where* it came.

Time is never just one “thing”. On one hand, it is factual, measurable, shared and universal, and on the other, it is fundamentally subjective. Time is experienced by me, – but I share it with others. One could say that we live in the time of the clock *and* in the time of the self – at the same time.

In Gilles Deleuze’s books *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, he observes time as a phenomenon in cinema. Inspired by Bergson’s *duree* and Augustin’s first contemplation on time and man, he points to the simple fact that time is a diverse phenomenon connected to subjectivity, and due to that, – it can be both smooth and metric. An event, and uneventful even at the same time. Measured in the tick of a clock, but experienced by a subjective human being, in a universe that seems to spin beyond time.

These times are at the same time simultaneously present, and will never add up.

They are as separate as they act and interact with each other, and as such, time can be as measurable as unmeasurable. As steady as it is in flux. As physical and factual, as it is abstract. (Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, London, Bloomsbury Academic 2013).

As a maker of text, I write places in time. I conjure up a plain, build a palace, make people speak. In a space/time composition like a play or a performative text, time works its magic everywhere. It is not only narrated or exposed, – but it acts. It moves and shifts and modulates, inside the text.

I imagine a city. A city almost as vast as the plain, spreading out in all directions. Not a European City, not an Asian city, – a city like you’ve never seen before – and there are no streets running through it, but rivers. And there are no rooftops – but forests, so when you pass over it by air, all you can see is the lush green of the roofs, and the sparkling waters of the rivers. And a voice says:

*This is what we’ve had: Earthquakes, storms, floods. Water, suddenly bursting past the skyscrapers like reoccurring dreams. Bewilderment. Sudden loss of orientation. Crowds to get lost in. Buildings to get dressed in like a dark disguise.*

*Then we had to reinvent the city. After the storms took it, and the floods. After we returned. Or, maybe it reinvented itself. After all – it’s never quite the same, and it is always itself. Turning us in to another, in a constant displacement, like a continuous shifting of gravity.*

## THE SPATIAL TURN

We all inhabit the same space. This earth is where we sleep, eat, live, die and although some very few prepare for a space-shuttle travel to Mars, the rest of us has to stay here, no matter what comes our way.

We live in Anthropocene times. This home of ours is shaped by human actions. There is soon not a corner of it that has not been touched by man, but the world has its own language. It has become heavy by our hands, but it reacts at its own will, not really paying attention to whether it suits us or not.

In their book *Land/Scape/Theatre*, Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri writes about what they call the spatial turn in theatre. Theatre has been associated with culture, not nature, they state. By entering landscape into the mix, one can offer a fresh framework for thinking on modern theatre.

As the theatre of the last century has challenged the Aristotelian hierarchy, it has been undermined by a flux of dramatic structures and a gallery of fractured subjectivities, – *A pervasive new spatiality, of which scenography is only the most obvious site, has turned the Aristotelian hierarchy on its head, now spectacle may be the “soul” of the dramatic enterprise.* (Elinor Fuchs and Una Chaudhuri, *Land/Scape/Theatre*, Ann Arbor, The University of Michigan Press 2002)

Although landscape has always played a part in classic theatre, King Lear’s storm-lashed heath, Segismundo’s desolate cave, something changed with modernism. Theatre begun to manifest a new spatial dimension. For the first time, landscape held itself apart from the character and became a character of its own.

In his book *Thirdspace*, Edward W. Soja looks at the return of space in social sciences, art and architecture. His claim is that never before has the spatial dimension of our lives been more vitally present, practically and politically. We are spatial beings, he writes, and there are social consequences to this fact, on a local and a global scale.

To be able to encompass this, Soja puts forward the term Thirdspace. He explains it as a purposefully tentative and flexible term that attempts to capture the constantly shifting and changing milieu of ideas, events, appearances and meaning. He sees it as a transdisciplinary term that can be used to fathom the simultaneity and interwoven complexity of the social, the historical and the spatial, in one. To expose how they are both inseparable and interdependent.

It's all about combinations of perspectives. A multiplicity that also entails the not real or the imagined (Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 1996).

The first part of Soja's book draws heavily on the theoretician and situationist Henri Lefebvres "triple dialectics" and postmodern theory deriving from basic Marxist analysis of society. Thirdspace can be described as: *a creative recombination and extension, one that builds on a Firstspace that is focused on the "real" material world, and a Secondspace perspective that interprets this reality through "imagined" representations of spatiality.*

Soja is looking for a multiplicity of *real-and-imagined* places.

A vital part of both these books is the rediscovery of the fact that the world does not end at our doorstep. That there are more to the world than Europe and the United States. Fuchs and Chaudhuri turn their gaze away from the Eurocentric, to theatre praxis of the third world. Soja, as Foucault, has his mind set upon power and social equality, and especially in urban contexts. He is interested in spatialities of class, race and gender, and he pays special attention to the post-colonial criticism and critical feminist theory as an opening up for the vital importance of space, when it comes to understand inequality and the play of power. And both return to the urban space. To the city. The city as a Thirdspace in itself.

Soja's Thirdspace is an open-ended system, as is Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's term assemblage and their understanding of the city's a mega-machines, composed of overlapping human and non-human entities and relations (Frichot, Gabrielsson and Metzger's *Deleuze and the City*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 2016). An assemblage is any number of "things" or pieces of "things" gathered into a single context. Together and interacting with each other they are capable of producing any number of effects, rather than a tightly organized and coherent whole producing one dominant reading (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, New York, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC 2013).

## CITY DWELLERS

I live in reality. My experience of time runs paralleled with thousands and millions of others. With it comes an infinite of potential beginnings and ends. Thoughts forgotten. Motives hidden. Mind-sets and ideologies out of sight, and still continuously played out and spilling over into my world, entering my thoughts, my words and my actions.

A

*I live on the fifth floor  
I grow lemon trees in my windowsill, and apple trees and tomatoes  
I take the kernels out of the fruit and then I plant them there  
I've also tried to plant an avocado, and ginger and apricot*

B

*I can't stand it any longer  
In two months' time it will be five years since I last left this building*

C

*These last weeks we have been arguing – constantly  
We have bought this new flat  
this penthouse  
this wonderful five bedroom place with a rooftop garden and an ocean view  
and now he wants to get rid of everything  
Everything we have  
all the furniture  
all the family portraits  
even the TV*

*He says it makes no sense anymore  
to keep all those things we have loved and cherished  
that generations have loved and cherished since we are moving into this new  
flat  
He says that we pay so much for the view, for the space, for the vicinity that  
that will have to do*

D

*I decided to walk straight across town  
I started at the left corner by the old slaughterhouse and then I just continued  
west, all the way through Newtown and the upper district – just stopping to  
drink – and eat maybe once a day  
I have decided to walk all the streets  
and then circle town  
See how long it would take me  
Sleep as little as possible  
I do one street at the time  
Circle them on the map  
the once I've walked and the once I'll do next*

E

*Once all the madhouses and all the jails was outside town  
Now the city is catching up with them*

F

*A Sunday morning, at 10.30 – this man starts going bananas at the main square,  
shooting at anything in sight. I mean anything. Not people but signs and  
busses, and commercials and doves and even the tram as it passed*

(The texts are from the )

\*

Some say that soon 75% of the world's population will live in the city. A city is in itself layers of time, one on top of the other.

I remember entering Cairo for the first time. Staying at the Hilton in the middle of town, then branching out into the old town, still mediaeval in its form, shaped by earthquakes hundreds of years ago. Then taking the bus out to the pyramids, seeing the shantytown of the potential urban sprawl, the timeless pace of rural life at the edge of that again, and then as we approached Giza, the looming shapes of the three pyramids, almost mythical in their brutally concrete forms.

And then everywhere, on the bus, in the streets, on the patchworks of field, at the pyramid gates – a throng of people. Talking, laughing, feeling, experiencing, surviving. The smell of garbage and dust and cigarettes. Of streetfood and perfume. Children playing. An aeroplane roaring overhead. A schoolbuss passing. The streetsweeper. A man selling sunglasses, and napkins and rubber sandals, – and in the background, the modern city with its banks and finance district.

All this cramped together in one space. The multitudes of perspectives, times, even realities fluctuating and intermingling. Small scale and big scale. A myriad of time, place, history and social interaction – the Thirdspace that is cities like Cairo.

Currently, I am writing on a large voice-piece, the *City Dwellers Complex* that currently consists of 400 text-fragments, dialogues, monologues, quotes and outcries – sometimes being played out in as many as 37 parallel scenes or events. Voices simultaneously played out in space and time. I want to populate space with parallel actions. Letting these actions represent the space. To do so, I have to trust in the generating powers of language. To see if these voices, played out collectively, could be both the place, and the events being played out in it.

In a way, I am composing.

Voice-composing. I want to create a coherent flux of time and voice, tone and rhythm. A place where the words' inbuilt meaning and musicality work together in sentences, combined in fugelike patterns.

In his book *Thirdspace*, Soja elaborates on Louis Borges short story *The Aleph* and Lefebvre's love for music, and start to think of presentation of the production of space as a musical composition, with a multiplicity of instruments and voices playing together at the

same time. Soja writes: *More specifically, I found that the text could be read as a polyphonic fugue that assertively introduced its keynote themes early on and then changed them intentionally in contrapuntal variations that took radically different forms and harmonies.* This, he states, would be a way of spatializing the text. A way to break out of the conventional temporal flow of beginnings, introductions, developments and ends. In this manner, one could explore new rhythms and tear away from the traditional dialectical way of thinking, always adding another – both, and also, even introducing discursive or disruptive dissonances.

#### PLACE UPON PLACE OR THE THRILL OF DISCOVERY

In his book *New Playwriting Strategies*, Paul C. Castagno points to new forms in playwriting. Forms that exposes, utilises and play with this potential. They construct hybrids, he says. Creating work that combine different genres and language strategies. *The hybrid play may take on a myriad of forms and combinations: from literary pastiche to a collage-like performance piece. The collage is an apt corollary form of art, since collage transforms diverse found material into a new, aesthetic whole.*

In the hybrid, the playwright is flexible to juxtapose, deconstruct, or reassemble space and time. It opens for clashes and tensions inside the play itself, and – he states: *When language alters space and time, established moorings are loosened, as conventions are interrupted or replaced* (Paul C. Castagno *New Playwriting Strategies*, New York, Routledge 2012).

Before I had even read Castagno's thoughts on the hybrid play, I had started to think differently about the performative texts. Both the ones I was reading and the ones I was working on myself.

When I write for the stage, it varies from my prose or my poetry, and when I read Paul C. Castagno's definition of a hybrid play, there was something that clicked in me. I recognized the texts and the reality he was the describing.

First of all writing for the stage involves combining different text types: dialogues, stage directions, monologues, situations, outbreaks, confessions, the one addressing the other. They are montages where different types of texts are put together to communicate something very specific. They offer this assemblage of different layers and text-types, to tell a skilled reader how to deal with it performatively – directly or indirectly. They offer themselves to a praxis.

The genre in itself is dirty, and when I call my texts dirty, – I mean that they are conglomerates understood in a geological way.

The shift in playwriting, states Castagno, is that language has become the arbiter of character and mis-en-scene. Although it focuses on language, its task is to create unique theatrical worlds, creating polyvocal texts, interactive systems in which each element is in dialogue or dialogized with the other elements. As Bakhtin discovered when looking at literature in his own time, the plays Paul C. Castagno has been looking at are plural. Contradictory even, stagings of different voices or discourses, and thus they can entail clashes of perspectives and point of views.

*Language playwrights have been particularly effective in creating shifting scenes, usually in the form of landscape altered and formulated by language. The seemingly desultory relationship between scenes is mitigated because the language provides a structural linkage* (Routledge 2012).

Language constitutes the text. The text as an artefact is a laboratory. In it, we can do what we want. Change the rules and change the perspective. As long as the universe holds. As long as the game is sound. As long as the reader or the audience wants to “play”.

#### THE TEXT IS A CRISIS IS A CRISIS IS A TEXT

In my daily life, I do not feel this freedom. I feel conditioned. I feel heavy as the plain, and I do not know why.

Sometimes, I find my life as a consumer in today's economy unbearable. It makes me redraw. I want to take part in the public and political life, but at the same time, I live with a feeling of not having real access to it, and I think – is it possible to *be* free, but at the same time not to *feel* free? I can't seem to find the space for me to act. Sometimes it feels like this democracy I live in is a kind of theatre. A pretence world. A game we have made up, where we are all playing out our different parts, and that the only thing I am really free to do is to buy things. That I am first a consumer, *then* a citizen.

I live, I produce, I consume. I dance, I shout, I write, I make performances, but sometimes it feels like I am the one that is being performed. That what I am really doing is sinking deeper and deeper into a pattern that won't change anything. That all I am doing is shouting, writing, acting out inside my own echo chamber, like a shadow-dance with my own ghost, and I can't get out.

Many of today's influential playwrights, like Roland Schimmelpfennig, Kristin Èiriksdottir, Jonas Hassen Khemiri and Lisa Lie expresses dance-macabres like these. In their play's, one can feel the struggle between the ethic longings and the system these longings exist inside. These texts does not only expose or narrate crises, the texts themselves are in crises, and these crises are played out both in language and in composition. It goes on between the characters and it is based in the structure of the plots and dramaturgies. Many of them are played out in hybrid-like forms that re-theatricalizes the spaces they exist in. Here you can meet democracy masked, and unmasked. Here worlds are made up, and worlds are torn apart. As real as they are constructed.

The texts asks questions like – when all can be sold, if everything, even a child can be turned into a commodity, then comers has become performative in itself. Comers plays out its own spectacle, its own tragedies and comedies, and through that, it even performs us, through that it even performs the public sphere itself.

In a play, language gives freedom to begin where one wants, and to open up a Thirdspace. A space where time, history, place and social interaction exists at the same time. This gives freedom. This gives a possibility even to merge and combine perspectives. To turn the macabre dance of comers into allegory, and allegory into song. To change and transform. To make possible and impossible worlds.

\*

Two little figures at the edge of everything. They see the palace, they see the plain. The empty road. A helicopter circling overhead.

The sky is dull, their voices faint, as the first one starts saying:

B  
Are we there now?

A  
Yes we are

B  
So this is it

*Silence*

B  
What happens next

A  
Just lay down on your back.  
Just for a second  
How do you feel?

B  
Fine  
Light  
Relaxed

A  
What do you see?

B  
Clouds, I think, Blue sky mainly – and some clouds

A  
Is that enough?

B

I think so – Actually – I think I could stay like this forever

A

What do you hear?

B

The wind

A

What do you smell?

B

Grass. Moss. Wait!

What was that?

It sounded like a somebody crying, yelping –

A

A buzzard maybe

B

No, it was something else

A

A fox?

B

Smaller

A

A little mouse?

B

I think its dying

A

Don't turn your gaze!

B

Now it's gone silent

All silent

Not a sound

Please let me see! Let me check

A

If you see, you change your perspective

If you see

You might change this story

B

–

A

Ok

Where are you now?

B

Deep in the moss. On my belly

A

What are you now?

B

A worm I think

Gliding through the grass

A  
What do you smell?

B  
Everything  
Blood  
Blood in the grass

There it is

A  
What?

B  
The mouse  
The thing I heard  
The head is gone  
Its innards

A  
What do you feel?

B  
Hunger

A  
What do you want to do?

B  
Swallow it  
I want to eat it  
Please let me  
Please let me eat it  
Please let me swallow it whole

A  
—  
Now – do you understand?

B  
What's to understand  
I am hungry  
I want to eat

A  
If I were there, would you eat me too?

B  
Yes

\*

I know that my texts are a part of me. That whatever I do, they will reflect who I am and the time I live in. The life experiences I've had, and the way I foresee the future. Still, they are something of their own.

The last years I have started to see them as entities in themselves. As intact and unique systems that consist of events, text-surfaces, intertextuality etc. – and that all these separate parts interconnect.

These interconnected systems has a «behaviour», and it is the way the different parts are put together that gives them this behaviour. This is something the texts is, and at the same time it is something it does.



Due to that, the text itself entails an imperative that is not necessarily mine. It wants something. It demands something. Not only in the way it may ask to be performed or interpreted – but in the way it wants to be understood.

This praxis also endorse a worldview and an aesthetic. And this aesthetic, and the world view it represents – is there – inscribed in its structure as something self-explanatory and given. This, that is given, does also entail an ethical stance, and it is the way that I structure my texts, the way I compose them – or put them together, that gives each texts its specific behaviour.

It all comes from somewhere. So the question I often ask myself is *where* am I speaking from. Sometimes I even ask – what speaks in this one.

The place does something to you. Space, to me, is not passive or neutral.

As when we enter the mace of an old part of a city. All of a sudden lost. Disoriented. Staring up at the sky to see what's south and what's north.

Spaces can changes who we are. As a city forces us to wait for a red light. Slow down as we pass through a crowd. It teaches us patience. It keeps us on our toes. It closes us in and it leaves us exposed and alone in the open.

## THE PERFORMATIVE TEXT AND ITS BEHAVIOUR

Some settings for a play, can force private dilemmas to collide with public, even political ones. It could be children living in a burnt out oil-tanker, it could be a small place on Americas east coast cut off after a snow storm, it could be a street in Turkey full of sweatshops that employs Syrian refugees to produce flawed life-vests.

Topois carry their own rhetoric. They can be lexical, emotional, clinical – A place after death where one sees everything clearly for the first time, when one knows it all.

A  
Can't you feel it?

B  
I feel kind of tingly

A  
Can't you smell it?

B  
Oh – that's wonderful  
Like honey  
Or

A  
You are flowering  
You are in flower  
big purple flowers

B  
If I was a girl I would have picked me

A  
She wants to pick you

B  
Let her!

Let her pick me!  
I have been her long enough  
Let her uproot me, take me  
Please

A  
–  
If I let her pick you

B  
I know  
I know – I've got it  
Then we will change the perspective

A  
Then we will –

B  
Change the story

## LEAVING THE PLAIN AND ENTERING THE CITY

A single field of flowering grass. All else grey and muddy. The plain crisscrossed by car-tracks.

Night's falling – Airplanes ahead. There are cars on the road. Somebody is shouting. All of a sudden a column of smoke. A fire in the barracks. The floodlights are on. Missiles are falling. A group of soldiers breaking down the palace door. Shouting at each other. Shooting at everything. Slamming the doors open, and at the edge of this image – our two figures are gone. They are nowhere to be seen. Maybe they have left the place. Maybe they are hiding in an underground cave. Maybe they were never there to begin with. Maybe this whole place was just a metaphor. A mental place, something they imagined. A part of a therapy session or a story they told each other while sitting up all night, drinking maybe, or getting to know each other.

I should know.

I am the one writing this.

One of them is newly divorced, she says.

The other one has just come back from a trip abroad.

They've met in a bar. Now they are sitting on a balcony, looking out over the cityscape, spreading out underneath them like a never-ending curving landscape of green.

We argued all the time, the woman says. We had bought this flat. A spacious, wonderful flat with a rooftop garden, and a terrace and all – and then it all just fell apart. He wanted to sell everything we owned. He said that none of it fitted the style of the place. Who needs a TV with such a view, he said. Such an incredibly expensive view.

– And did you? Sell the stuff?

– Yes. In the end.

– And what did you do with the money?

– We lost it.

And the sun is setting on the many rivers. On tiny boats tied to moorings along the riverbanks, little lanterns lighting up the steps leading up to the bric-a-brac system of flats and apartments, as the garden rooftops, with their trees and plant-life and birds of prey, sends out this sent that it always does after a warm day followed by an afternoon shower. And the man says: For a long time I thought that this was what we had – earthquakes, storms, floods. Bewilderment. Before we reinvented the city, I did not know what to do. I hated this place. The smells, the noise, how the streets were always dark, how it took forever on the underground to get from one place to another. How there was never time here for anything – and so I decided to go walking. I decided to walk the streets, all the streets in the whole of the city to see how long it would take me. Sleep as little as possible. Do one street at the time. And so I did. I wanted to befriend the place. To see if what I saw was all there was, – or whether there was something more. Something yet to come. Something I had not noticed. Whether this was it.

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The Heaviness of Palaces and Plains  
– *The dramatic metalogue*

A  
You know my son  
the choice of heaviness  
Is not the choice of the plain

Some people say  
that it was always there  
But I think that once the plain was  
just a plain  
In the time before  
before humans walked it  
and gave it its name  
In the times of the grazing  
or even before the time of men or grazing or names  
before words like

Plain

or

Heavy

or

Grass

Before this palace was built  
Before the comprehension of anything being built  
or of anything existing such as a palace  
When all was still open  
They sky  
The wind  
The hare the fox and the mice  
A worm worming its way through the grass  
Before there was anything  
here worth fighting for  
then maybe there was no heaviness at all

*Silence*

B  
Are we there now?

A  
Yes we are

B  
So this is it

A  
Yes

B  
What do we see?

A  
It depends

B  
On what?

A  
The perspective

What we see depends on the perspective

B  
What is our perspective?

A  
Well you see my son  
that's the choice

B  
The choice –

A  
Yes

B  
–

A  
But be careful  
One has to be careful when choosing the perspective

In this story

B  
What story?

A  
Again – That also depends

B  
–

A  
That is also a choice

B  
Of what?

A  
Of perspective

*Silence*

A  
Ok  
Just lay down on your back for a second

B  
–

A

How do you feel?

B  
Fine  
Light  
Relaxed

A  
Are you on your back?

B  
Yes

A  
Are you comfortable?

B  
Yes  
I think so  
Actually I feel quite – I don't know – The moss and the grass is soft  
The sun is shining in my face

A  
What do you see?

B  
Clouds, I think  
Blue sky mainly  
and some clouds

A  
-

So – Just sky

B  
Yes

A  
Is that enough?

B  
I think so  
Actually – I think I could stay like this forever

A  
-

What do you hear?

B  
The wind

A  
What do you smell?

B  
Grass  
Moss

Wait

A  
-

I am waiting

B  
What was that shriek?

It sounded like a somebody crying, yelping –

A  
A buzzard maybe

B  
No, it was something else

A  
A fox?

B  
Smaller

A  
A little mouse?

B  
I think its dying

A  
Don't turn your gaze!

B  
Why not?  
I cannot continue looking at the sky when somebody

A  
Somebody?

B  
Ok – something is dying here right beside me

A  
How do you know its dying?

B  
I don't know –  
It feels like it's dying  
It sounds like it's dying

A  
And the sky is still blue?

B  
Yes

A  
And the smell is still the same?

B  
Yes, but –  
Oh

Now it's gone silent  
All silent  
Not a sound

Please let me see!

Let me check

A

If you see, you change your perspective

If you see

You might change this story

B

–

A

Ok

Where are you now?

B

Deep in the moss

On my belly

A

What are you now?

B

A worm I think

Gliding through the grass

A

What do you smell?

B

Everything

A

Where is the sky?

B

I cannot see it

Not from down here

A

Lift your head

If you lift your head, you can see it

B

Now – now I can see it

A

What more?

B

Blood

Blood in the grass

A

And then?

B

There it is

A

What?

B  
The mouse  
The thing I heard  
The head is gone

Its innards

A  
What do you feel?

B  
Hunger

A  
What do you want to do?

B  
Swallow it  
I want to eat it  
Please let me  
Please let me eat it  
Please let me swallow it whole

A  
—

Now – do you understand?

B  
What's to understand  
I am hungry  
I want to eat

A  
—  
If I was there would you eat me too?

B  
Yes  
Probably

A  
So you see  
Now this is a different story  
Different perspective  
Different story

—

B  
Oh!  
What happened now?

Where did you place me?

Where are my eyes?

It's so cold

A  
Now are you hungry?



B  
No

A  
Now are you a worm?

B  
No

A  
What are you?

B  
I am disappearing

I am nothing

I am  
Dead

A  
You are a dead mouse

You are disintegrating  
You are rotting flesh  
You are earth  
You are the grass growing

What do you feel?

B  
Wind

Wind in the grass

A  
Yes

What do you smell?

B  
Earth

A  
And

B  
Just earth

A  
And

B  
I hear voices  
Feet  
There are feet in the grass  
They are passing me  
Digging  
They are building a road

A  
What are you now?

B

Still grass

A

What kind of grass?

B

A tall one

The type that grows by the roadside

A

How beautiful you are

B

Am I?

A

Can't you feel it

B

I feel kind of tingly

A

Can't you smell –

B

Ah – that's wonderful

Like honey

Or

A

You are flowering

You are in flower

big purple flowers

B

If I was a girl I would have picked me

A

She wants to pick you

B

Let her!

Let her pick me!

I have been her long enough

I am tired of being grass of being weed

Let her uproot me, take me

Please

A

–

If I let her pick you

B

I know

I know – I've got it

Then we will change the perspective

A

Then we will –

B

Change the story

A  
Can you see her?

B  
Yes

A  
Can you feel her hand?

B  
Yes

A  
Can you feel her take you?

B  
–

*Silence*

A  
Where are you now?

B  
In a vase  
On a table  
In a big room  
By a window

A  
What do you see?  
Out of the window – what do you see?

B  
The plain

A  
What plain

B  
The plain outside the palace

A  
Yes

B  
Clouds gathering  
Rain  
It's raining  
There is a road out there  
Tanks on the road  
They are passing

*All the lights have been turned out*

A  
Do you feel the heaviness now?

B  
Yes

It wasn't there before – but now it's there

The plain is grey and muddy

Nights falling

–

Aeroplanes ahead

Missiles falling

Fire!

A group of soldiers breaking down the palace door

The girl nowhere to be found

The soldiers running up the staircase

Shooting at everything

Slamming the doors to this room open

kicking over the table

the vase

trampling on the flowers

on me

I am trampling

Breathing

I am excited

I am scared

I am opening the drawers

Breaking the china

I know this soldier

Who is he?

I know his story

A

Can you see him?

B

–

A

Can you see them

B

We are setting the room aflame

Amid the ruins

a pile of metal

It's me

This story –

I can see it

It is me

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Radhouane El Meddeb – Au temps où les Arabes dansaient...

<https://vimeo.com/109633296>

<http://usuncut.com/news/oregon-woman-evicted-senior-housing-328-late-rent-freezes-death-parking-garage/>

## Timeline

2016

2. March

Fellowship presentation at Kunstnernes Hus in Oslo

Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/events/745093175590854>

27. April

Fellowship presentation and reading of *Where the Children Sleep* at Scenetekstivalen in Tromsø

Go to: <http://www.ferskescener.no/scenetekstivalen-2016/1100/>

14. May

A reading of *Where the Children Sleep* for Vega Scene at Ingensteds

23. June

A reading of the polyvocal collage *ArtLab # 24 - the 22. of July-lab*, a collaboration between Tale Næss and Nina Wester at the Arctic Arts Festival in Harstad.

Go to: <https://festspillnn.no/nb/program/2016/artlab-24-22juli-et-tabu-i-kunsten>

24. June

Opening night of the performance "State and Extacy" by STATEX at the Arctic Arts Festival in Harstad.

Go to: <http://festspillnn.no/nb/program/2016/stat-ekstase>

31. June

Opening night of the monologue *Corridors and Rooms/ Corridoi e Camere* on site in Vitorchiano, Italy

Go to: <https://quintaepoca.it/tra-viterbo-e-vitorchiano-il-programma-di-appuntamenti-con-quartieri-dellarte/>

17. September

A reading of *Where the Children Sleep* at SAND-festivalen in Kristiansand

Go to: <https://www.facebook.com/events/teateret/sand-festivalen-der-barna-sover-where-children-sleep/943276429132967/>

2. November

Fellowship presentation with reading in collaboration with NTNU at Teaterhuset Avant Garden in Trondheim.

Go to: <http://teaterlosjen.no/arrangementer/tale%20naess.html>

18. November

Open improvised theatre performance under the heading Script Tease, and the start of project *Baltic* in collaboration with the det Andre Teater in Oslo

Go to: <http://detandreteatret.no/pub/detandreteatret/shows/?aid=3692&cid=268>

## Week 4

Listening-station with essay and audio essay – *Stay. Go – don't go* at the Research Week at Oslo National Academy of Arts

27. January

Workshop-presentation/reading at Dramatikkens Hus of the co-writing project *the Odyssey – everything is a remix* in Oslo

8. April

Open reading of the first draft of *1084 Baltic* at Oslo National Academy of Arts

25. April

Workshop and presentation of the second leg of the *State and Ecstasy-project* with STATEX at the Peripheral Center in Tromsø at Vårscenefest

15. June

Opening night of *the Odyssey - everything is a remix* with Ida Løken Valkæpâå and DJ Runther at Rådstua Teaterhus

Go to: <http://www.raadstua.no/arrangementer/odyss-en-everything-is-a-remix>

16. June

Reading from the Hybrid Play-project *Darkness, the Enemy Inside*, a part of EU Collective Plays! in Oxford at the conference Translation into theatre and the Social Syncs

Go to: <https://translationtheatresocialsciences.wordpress.com/>

16. September

Opening night of *THE HUMAN GENOME PROJECT AT THE HOLLIDAY JUNCTION* – a collaboration between ULTIMA Academy, KHiO and Musikkhøgskolen.

Go to: <https://khio.no/events/410>

1. November

Reading of the first draft of *Darkness - the Enemy Inside* at Oslo National Academy of Arts

8. November

Reading from the collective writing-workshop MOTforestillinger. An artistic meeting between Norwegian and Palestinian playwrights and theater-makers at Oslo National Academy of Arts

Go to: <https://www.motforestillinger.com/motforestillinger-iv>

11. November

Opening night of the oratory *Book of Prayer* at Vår Frue Kirke in Trondheim

Go to: <http://www.nidarosdomen.no/kalender/jubileumskonsert-v%C3%A5r-frue-%C3%A5pen-kirke>

17.–19. November 2017

Workshop and reading with the project "PROSPEKT- " at Propellen playwrights festival in Trondheim.

21. November

Collective live-writing-session at Black Box's ++ project. The *essay future–PRE–positions* was written for the event

## Week 4

Listening-station with essay and audio essay/metologue of - *future–PRE–positions* at the Research Week at Oslo National Academy of Arts

26. January

Fellowship presentation at Research Week at Oslo National Academy of Arts.  
See a YouTube publication/documentation of that [here](#).

7.–11. March

The audio-essay/dramatic metalogue *future–PRE–positions* is aired as a part of the BOREALIS festival radioplay-program

Go to: <https://www.borealisfestival.no/2018/radio-space-2/>

23. and 25. April

A reading of the live version of the audio essay *future PRE positions*, *PRE* opens Scenetekstivalen in Tromsø.

Go to: <http://www.ferskescener.no/scenetekstivalen-2018/offisiell-apning-av-scenetekstivalen-2018/>

8. May

Midway-seminar with readings at KHiO mellom 12.00 og 15.00

8. June

Staged reading of *Darkness, the Enemy Inside* at Oslo International Acting Festival.

Go to: <http://osloactingfestival.com>

29. June

Opening night of *DIY – manuals for a Potential Future* by STATEX at the Arctic Arts Festival in Harstad

Go to: <http://festspillnn.no/nb/program/2018/diy-manual-en-mulig-fremtid-no>

15. August

PhD-presentation and reading SAAR`s PhD-school at IAC in Malmö

16. August

Two paper presented: *Future- PRE - positions* and *Collective Writing - a game-changer?*, at Nordic Migration Days in Norrköping, Sweden

7. September

A lecture performance at University of Groningen, in the Netherlands. Title: *On collective writing - and arts potential for social change*

Go to: <https://www.hanze.nl/eng/research/centre-for-applied-research/art-and-society/professorships/professorships/image-in-context/research-projects/Being-Political/timelinegallery>

27. October

Performance of *DIY – manuals for a Potential Future* by STATEX at Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Go to: <https://khio.no/events/718>

13.–16. November

Opening night of the performance *the Island*, a shorter version of *Darkness, the Enemy Inside* at Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Go to: <https://khio.no/events/719>

2019

23.–24. januar

*DIY - manuals for a Potential Future* with STATEX performs at Festival Trejectoares in Nantes

Go to: <https://festival-trajectoires.com/diy-manual-for-a-potential-future/>

Week 4

Listening-station with three essay and audio essay compiled, at the Research Week at Oslo National Academy of the Arts

13. February

Presentation at IAC in Malmö, Sweden - focusing on thirdspace and the project *City Dwellers*

Go to: <https://www.iac.lu.se/projects/city-dwellers-1/>

9.–10. March

Four try outs of the project *City Dwellers* at KHiO at Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Go to: <https://khio.no/events/841>

10. March

Book launch of a book with three plays: *S O A R E/Sweatshop - Aleppo/Korridorer og Rom* published by Transit at Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Go to: <https://khio.no/en/events/842>

15. June

Staged reading of *Sweatshop - Aleppo* at Dramatikkfestivalen at Vega Scene in Oslo.

<https://vegascene.no/incoming/article1390898.ece>

9. July

Three audio essays broadcasted at fr-bb, Freie Radios – Berlin Brandenburg

14. September

Opening night of the performance *Sweatshop - Aleppo*, produced by Vega Scene.

Go to: <https://vegascene.no/incoming/article1405826.ece>

18.–28. September

*DIY – manuals for a potential Future* by STATEX plays at Hålogaland Teater.

Go to: <https://halogalandteater.no/produksjon/2019/diy>

17. oktober

Presentation/lecture and reading of collective work in cooperation with CornerTeateret in Bergen at Meteorfestivalen.

Go to: <https://www.cornerstones.no/talenaess>

14. November

Opening night of the performance *Darkness - the Enemy Inside* at North Carolina University.

Go to: <https://uncw.edu/events/2019/11/enemy.html>

14. September –22. November

*City Dwellers* # 5 and 6 presented at Vega Scene, in Oslo

2020

Week 4

Lecture talk with Maziar Raiens and Martin Asbjørnsens at the Research Week at Oslo National Academy of the Arts

Go to link for more: <https://app.cristin.no/results/show.jsf?id=1790692>

29. February

Presentation of *City Dwellers* # 7 at gallery Bananaz, in Oslo

24 - 25. April

Presentation of *City Dwellers* # 8 at Intonal Festival in Malmö, Sweden – in collaboration with composer Ulf C. Holbrook

29. April – 4. May

Presentation of «*City Dwellers* # 9 at Vårscenefest, Nord-Norsk Kunstforening in Tromsø

(N.B. all links viable on the 29th of February 2020 and publications are not included in this timeline.)

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