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MFA Thesis
Naja Lee Jensen
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the power of being lost

“Tanzt, tanzt sonst sind wir verloren”

Pina Bausch

To be lost, or to get lost - what is the difference?

To *be* lost, or to be *lost* - what is the difference?

It wasn't because I thought it would last for ever. Actually, I thought it would have stopped earlier, but the skin was too soft; too familiar I think, and I went back. I was too comfortable to step out of *the us*. We were in the US, driving around. Getting lost in details; in the nostalgia of the motion from West to East. Now I'm lost in the West, and I think I need to get out.

W F A
H U
A N L
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H O T
E F H

ARCHITECTONICAL WILL THERE ALWAYS BE A WAY OUT

WILL THERE ALWAYS BE A CENTRE

Somebody once painted a picture in my head of the earth being like a round magnet from where everything was hanging. Suddenly the world was upside down. I was no longer standing on a street in Oslo, but hanging head down on the good will of gravity with a claustrophobic feeling of nowhere to run. Underneath my head: the vastness of space, the ungraspable eternity like death - ending or beginning, or does it really matter? This fruitless

attempt to map out everything; compulsive urge to descriptions. I am choking in words, pictures and explanations, but I still need my daily fix of formulations. I know that silence is not the answer and ignorance neither. We need communication; need to communicate; to be in contact with other bodies and other thoughts.

Maybe I am still attracted to a phenomenological approach, when creating artworks. By experiencing something-not-yet-defined through the body (something unforeseeable) an expansion of mind can happen: the power of being lost and not knowing what words to use to describe the experienced. At the same time I feel quite bad with this romantic approach to the body, to believing, to experience. It so fast gets the taste of naivety and the spectacular; but can the lack of cynicism in naivety not be a strength? Can a spectacular experience not have a value, although this position feels closely connected to consumerism, capital, superficiality, entertainment, mass seduction. I don't know.

There is always: on the one hand - on the other hand. Humans normally have two hands, arguments a thousands. I am lost, but I like to go into huge cathedrals and feel the grandness of this space so painfully decorated with cries from crusades, shame, hypocrisy and believe. No that came out wrong. I got carried away with the words. I wanted to be clever and lost precision. Of course I don't like crusades, shame and hypocrisy, but I do believe or I would like to believe; again - in something

To loose something, or to loose one self

To loose weight, or to loose in Lotto

One two three four five, one two three four five. I take a step to the right. I take a step to the left. LCD Soundsystem tells me to dance myself clean and I do. I move my hips, my head, my heart to the beat to get rid of the words that have build these endless corridors. The only way left is forward, although backwards is the right way to go. So I stand still. I leave my surface on the surface of the walls. I lick, I touch, I smell, I long for the world to stretch me longer than exit, and it does - for a second - but just to throw me back, like a rubber band, into my skin; into myself and the thoughts that are sticking to me. I once believed in the body, I think I told you already. In the meeting between the body and the world over time. I had this

romantic idea that it might be possible to experience the un-thinkable through a body, like the way babies expand their world of knowledge. Now I don't know.

Between then and now my faith has faded into another picture, and it is not yet clear to me what it is. I have to wait, so I spin to make the universe move as fast as I can until I get dizzy, and then, I spin a little more to let time reveal what I got in my stomach, because time will always reveal; what you ate for dinner or how death is like, and death... death fascinated me at some point. I considered it to be the one thing that was out of our reach, because we didn't have the control to decide to enter it and subsequently to return to life again. We would either enter it or not, voluntarily or not, but in the end we would all disappear and only exist in our absence while the earth would transform the *I* into an apple, which *you* would put into your mouth, and it would become the out breath after an orgasm; the small death – not with me.

Silence. I have nothing more to say. Nothing but nakedness is left. My body against the paper. My back against the wall. My hands between my thighs to stop the words from leaving any marks behind. The speech bubbles are empty, completely empty. They are just hanging around in the landscape. Silently..... Si•lent•ly.... One two three, one two three. Arghhhh this doesn't work. Silence doesn't work in writing. How to convey silence in a text?

Movements are silent too. How to dance in a text?

Was this dance to you?

Or this?

Please dance with me. One two three, one two three, one two three, one two three, one two three - this is a waltz - one two three – your fingers between my shoulder blades - one two three, one two, one two, one two - a tango for two- one two, one two – you step on my foot - one two, one two, one two – I pray to God you don't do it again - one two, one two three four five – freestyle on the dance floor - one two three four five – this is a count down to a catastrophe – three two one

Somebody outside this text just died. Was it my mother? I stop moving and listen. I can still hear her breathing. This comforting sound of air so strongly connected to the vivid body. I want to collect this automatic statement of saying *I am still here*, like people collect stamps from letters once sent. Instead of megabytes of pictures, I will have a sound archive with the breaths from people I loved. I will create a symphony played by ghosts and mark the outline of the descending bodies to be able to remember them in real scale and not in the scale of the computer screen. When I am 90, I will bend the lines in neon and place them on a square as a final tribute to time before I quietly rest my eyes.

Do you see it?
Are you still here?
Was it you who passed away?
In *quietly*?
Between the *u* and the *i*?

Roland Barthes killed the author. I might have killed the reader, but on the other hand, it might as well have happened accidentally. People die, all the time, like me now... I'm dead

No I didn't fool anybody. Although it is possible to die on paper, just cover the floor with it, slit your wrist and avoid the temptation of using it to stop the bleeding. That wasn't funny. In Denmark, Claus Beck-Nielsen has tried to declare himself death for almost ten years. He is still alive, but now his name is Helge Bille Nielsen. Last autumn he, once more, stated the end of his existence and buried a wax doll of himself at the cemetery; stretching the boundaries between life and art even further, but this was not the final resting place for this project. Helge Bille Nielsen keeps on trying to twist a little more blood out of this (dead) concept, and that isn't funny anymore either.

Time doesn't always make things better, it just makes them different. Sometimes it's good to know when to stop, but when stopping isn't a possibility you have to continue knowing that an end will come. To give time to loose time to use time to keep time to have time to pass time to take time to waste time on spending time to stop time. No start time for God sake I need to breath. The air is getting thin in here, and my muscles are dancing on my bones, trying to shake of the skeleton. If this continues I will become a pile of chalk sticks, on which Marina Abramowic will sit and sing her childhood folklore songs again and again and again; looping time in the endless circle of the re- . I can't take this anymore, but I don't know where to go, so I stay. I throw a hand in the air. A leg to the side. I move my feet to the rhythm, and I loose myself to the moment to see what it will bring.

It didn't bring anything, so I wait, like the movement of Occupy Wall Street that knows something is wrong, but doesn't have the answer to how to save the world. While we're waiting, I fold myself into a paper airplane to see, if I can float on your out breath. Oh no I forgot, you're not here any longer so I lie and wait - ready to take off - or I yodel. I always found the thought of singing a duet with the mountains very poetic, although people laughed when I told them. Anyway: "yodel-eh-ho-hooooo" This room is very muffled. It has no resonance. It hasn't got the slightest possibility for a dialogue; not even an echoed one with yourself; unless of course

N 1: So welcome Naja! Nice to have you here.

N 2: Thank you. Nice to be here.

N 1: You told us that you mostly work site-specific outside the white cube. Can you tell a little about that?

N 2: Well yes, I used to believe that I could twist and play with the understandings we have of the surrounding world, by using “reality” as the main material in my works. I was interested in this because I was wondering, whether these understandings weren’t build on some sort of imaginative conceptions of reality. Something that made it impossible for us to really look at the things that is in front of our eyes; not just see our own mental picture or mental prejudices of it. So I wanted to explore what would happen, if the “audience” met “reality” with their bodies instead of through their mind, because if they got lost in reality and time as bodily funded beings, would this then open up for a possibility to experience or to see the world in a new way, so to say.

N 1: I’ve been told that the audience always have been of big importance to you, when you’re creating your works.

N 2: Yes that’s true. I first started with doing interactive theatre. Here the notion of the “audience” is everything, and I brought this notion with me to the field of fine arts. Although, now I don’t really know; neither when it comes to twisting “reality” or to the importance of the “audience”.

N 1: Would you like to tell us more about that?

N 2: I just think, I had it up to here with “reality”. It seems like in the last 10 years with all the “reality” programmes, staging of “reality” on stage and using “reality” in the fine arts, that reality has become more fictional than fiction. I get tired just to think of discussions about authenticity and representation, the real and the fictional. I must admit, I’m not sure if I see the same kind of potential in reality anymore. Also now with the economical crisis where the arts, to a greater extend, are demanded to justify its’ functionality in society, or you could say social reality. When I saw Vegard Vinge and Ida Müller’s staging of Henrik Ibsen’s “The Wild Duck” at Black Box Theatre, I got a revelation. I suddenly saw possibilities in theatricality combined with time. But Naja...

N 1: Yes.

N 2: Where are we?

N 1: I don’t know.

N 2: Naja...

N 1: Yes.

N 2: Did Theseus ever get out of the labyrinth?

N 1: Yes, Ariadne helped him by using a thread.

N 2: Did they live happily ever after?

