

A My interest in *dramaturgy*, as a vehicle to develop ideas for the practices I have working on as a professor of theory and writing, came during a seminar-week organised by Tore Vagn Lid in 2018. Here it was proposed that we could understand the dramaturgist as an in part researcher, house critic and producer. I decided that this was a *good enough* vehicle to develop my practice in *performative observation* and *performative participation*, being an anthropologist working in the design & art field.

In the part of the present exposé relating learning theory and writing in the design MA, the principal focus will be on *group-work*: groups of 4 called QUADs, BlackBooks which are logbooks the students develop in *three* different phases, and the essays. The fruit of their labour is measured by the liberty they have at applying their learning outcomes to their *specialisation*. Fridays 9-12 we have classes.

B To develop this, idea I contrasted *two* main ideas of performance: one emphasising learning on and for the *stage*, the other emphasising learning on and from the *floor*. I wanted something in *between* the stage and the floor. One that would combine learning in production and learning in process. The two books on the slide are examples of this.

And I also wanted something between a dramatic and an anatomic theatre. We want a better take on how reflective contents are generated from performance in this *middle zone*. Featuring the classroom learning theatre.

So, I am not bringing backstage of teaching in the learning theatre, but rather *upstage*: in the present arrangement, if I am the conductor you are the musicians. The particularity of this orchestra, if you were class-members, is that you make your own scores (called Black Book), and depending on what I get in I would adapt the visuals on screen. We would also take turns in acting as the *conductor*. This is the general arrangement.

C During my years at KHiO I have had the pleasure of attending and participating in theatric *off stage* events, where the boundary between stage and floor is not only blurred, but where the nature of what is going on shifts into a *middle-zone* of performative work between *workers* and *guests*.

Here featuring a sample in chronological order: Martin Slaatto and his work with the transportation dance, Lisa Lie and her *Vake* project. Sally Dean's project *Give them wings & We shall see their faces*, at KHiO. The fifth experience was from PAF in France, developing group-work with the Dance dpt. This interaction has had the value of fieldwork and my artistic research. especially in developing BlackBooks as scores.

D At the design dpt. I was working to develop materials and methods to discuss ways of working with the learning *body* across the dpts. at our school. A *folder* made by Ane Thon Knutsen has of avail, to experiment with reduced *model* spaces. A couple of walls and floor. Models as these are here assumed to feature the *middle zone* between *practice* and *theory*: supporting theory development from practice. Performance is always *upstage*: the model props are ongoing *installations* and evolve at each new visit. Such as is the nature of deep semantics.

E I used a board coated recto/verso with *slate-* and *boat-paint* to emulate two ways in which surfaces is something to be *had*. A piece of *floor* from the BlackBox and a piece of *wall* from the WhiteCube. Since I am interested in the combination between performance and the acts of viewing, the two we are seeing here are key surfaces. So, we are interested in performance *upstage* of both the BlackBox & WhiteCube.

F Transported unto the realm of teaching theory and writing at the MA in design, the two previous surfaces transpose unto two key surfaces: the Black Book which a logbook developed by the MA students, in different phases, during 3 terms. The white page is a surface appropriated for the repurposing of writing through a media-rich logbook keeping: based on these prerequisites, the students develop essays. But what is the nature of the relation between these two surfaces, and what travels *between* them: what kind of work is taking place *here*? Can we conceive it performatively?

G If we are interested in the *grey everyday reality*—which designers sometimes are—there are *fictional* markers that help us to relate to things happening that catch our interest: *what* is happening, *where* it is happening in our proximal space, and *how*. Here, these fictional markers are conceived as progressive queries unto a centre (as in the iris of the eye). Here, in this case, the rings in the water originate.

H This figure gathers the three questions (*what, where and how*) into a *single* dynamic model called SWIRL: this model is based on the notion that waves causing the rings are *not* repetitive, in the sense of *identical*, but on that repetition in waves is *transductive* and thereby causes *every now and then* a bigger wave.

SWIRL is the compound of a smaller and a larger wave. It takes what takes place in time, to generate an occasional change of time. This is presently what performance *does*. If so how does it enter teaching? Like the pull and push of a kettle-bell?

I We use it to develop a line of consecutive and interrelated questions: *what have we here? Where is it going? How far has it come in terms of what has already been achieved?* The performative element, or Aristotle's *agent intellect*, emerges *locally* from this query.

The MA students in design are invited to take these questions with them and use them to develop *performative observations* of their work, and develop as *reflective practitioners* as *performative participants*, with people they *work with* as designers.

In performance, what we learn with the agent intellect are always partial views: because they are *specific* and what is interesting in what they can deliver i *precision*.

J This is a sample of first year logbooks in which I feed back using a standard form of *logkeeping* that I do for myself: flyers or leaflets. I never ask the students to do something that I am not willing to do on my own. And usually do it in the *same period* that the students are working on assignments for the 3 theory courses. This *performant participation* helps *operatively* to connect with each student individually, and make what I am here calling *performant observations*: *figurative* elements evoking the students' work.

K This is an example of a BlackBook from the second term, by Araitz Mesanza. Here a page with annotated bibliography: how references were found, their description, and domain of relevance. This is typical of BB contents in the second term course T2.

Generally, the students produce BlackBooks each term—BB1, BB2 and BB3—alongside the theory courses T1, T2 and T3. That correspond, overlap and interact with the studio courses: S1, S2, S3. In this aspect, the MA is relatively straightforward.

L The *QUADs* are groups that are involved in different work each term. They developed from the cohorts created for teaching and walking during the pandemic. They were created not only for social contact but for the students to develop their own *professional support*.

We went on working with these, and developing them further, during and after the pandemic. Which resulted, as we shall see, in a carefully *phased* pedagogic development as the students progress in their MA. Beckett and Latour are two major references.

M This is a breakdown of the QUAD-groups as conceived by Latour, with an output after each QUAD session as they decide *what to do* with their BB-entries each Friday when they have theory for a period of about 10 weeks. To pursue the musical metaphor: if the QUAD is a quartet, the idea is the *first violinist*, the for/against is the *point/counterpoint* and the advice is the *coda*.

SWIRL = the music. In the light of the context/music provided by the QUADs, the prompt they have to start working with the BBs—after classes in the afternoon—is *specific*: so they make decisions and do their work based on the QUAD interaction as context/backdrop. *After a while they are asked to bring the BBs to the QUADs*.

N The *working habit* of keeping a logbook—*edited* but open, experimental and unfinished—to sharing and discussing is new to the MA-students as they begin their first year. Since I have have

worked several years with giving individual feedback on the students' BBs, I sense that the first challenge is *what to do with the page*: it is empty... *how* to take it into possession with contents (*what* are contents?), the initial arrangements with the QUAD is establish an ownership to the page amongst the students.

O Though the students do BlackBooks on each of the *three* theory courses—T1-T3—there are new elements adding to the curriculum if we consider the three courses in a step-by-step fashion. In T1, the students are developing a BlackBook for the *first* time. In the second term, in T2, they develop a published essay for the first time.

In T3, the exam, the students also produce an essay. But it is not for the first time. The oral presentation in which they apply *learning outcomes* from their own theorising to *practice* is also a *first*. The push of the SWIRL—according to the presented model—comes with each emergence of the *new*. And the QUADs are instrumental in developing *all three*.

P In the 3 theory-courses, the QUADs start by being *rotating*: so that, to the degree possible, *all the students have met all the other during the first term*. Ideally, the QUADs are not twice the same. They are left to explore Latour's role-structure for the QUAD, *on their own*. Just as they do with the BlackBooks in the QUADs in the first term. In the second term, however, the QUADs are *alternating* between random and chosen members. QUADs are conducted in class, on par with presentations. In Theory 3, they hold the defining elements of the Learning Theatre in the QUADs.

In the entire curriculum there are *rotating*, *alternating* and *fixed* elements. In the first year, an assignment called *design comment* is e.g. alternating because the comment is based on an interview: the interview is verbal, and then the students are asked to produce a comment in a *media* of their own choice. In the 3rd term the essay is alternating because the students are *not* allowed to paraphrase the essay, but are expected to *transpose* their learning outcomes from theory to applications discussed with the staff.

Q This is an impressionistic roundup of the elements that the students have in their baggage as they are having their exam: here, in the MediaLab's BlackBox. The wood-colour shape at the bottom-line show the chief phases of the 6 weeks before and including the exam. The essay and the presentation are drawn in the *wave pattern* that we will presently explore: the performative dimension beyond the *process* and *production* of events like these, manifested as a performative *push* transmitted from one wave top to the next.

R These are the elements that will typically make up the *world* that the students develop from facts, drawings/photos and some writing in their BlackBooks. The essay they complete in T2 and T3 are expected to develop from the *materials* compiled in the BlackBooks.

And typically will include some *research*, some poetic *turns*, philosophical *interest* along with visual *puzzle* pieces, photos and gesture in the imagery. In other words, they are essays in the literary sense *expanded* by visual thinking.

S The question is then what might be the level of precision in such fictional narratives when the genre itself is so heterogeneous. By the time the students have passed their theory development has not only gone through different stages of *maturity*, but their narratives have migrated across black book, writing and presentations in rotating, alternating and fixed arrangements.

So, they can adapt their professional narrative—pathfinding and goalseeking—to social situations, tasks and occasions in the way that will make a "fit". But then, what do we mean by that?

T The closing *video* offers a model to make a credible bid on how something as the preceding *patterns* can generate elementary *precision*, according to the requirements of the *real world* rather than *always* by the norm of metrics.

It is assumed that when ready, the complexity of design will somehow *surrender* to the relative simplicity of the performance. And may be an example of the negotiation between *image-* and *object-*perception as an ongoing transactions, that is part and parcel of world-making.