

Can I be with You?

Oak Wattanai Chanakot

M.A. Art in the Public Realm
Konstfack. June 2011

Contents

Introduction 1

Methodology 2

The Performance 3

 Performance as an act of self-awareness 3

 The script and performance as conventional reality 3

 The project and attachment 5

Workshop 6

Konstfack Degree Exhibition 2011 12

Bibliography 18

Introduction

Nowadays we live individually, having the right to choose for ourselves without having to compromise so much. We are “free” to choose and yet remain unhappy. Our purpose in life becomes self-fulfillment; Charles Taylor quoted Nietzsche's 'Last men' in his book 'The Ethics of Authenticity' on individualism, "they have no aspiration left in life but to a pitiable comfort."¹ Taylor mentioned as one of his malaises toward individualism that people lost the broader vision because they focus on their individual's life. It "flattens and narrows our lives, make them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society"². He described it as 'Permissive society,' 'Me generation,' 'Narcissistic'. People now don't have God or King to turn to, even though it seems that we're free to choose for our “true” self, we find ourselves restricted by economic arrangement, media, childhood upbringing and so on. Through globalization of the media, we standardize our relationship and our self. We have certain perception of personal relationships and cannot obtain to that standard. Many people desperately seeking for close relationships or to break from this suffering.

'Can I be with You?' is a participatory process based work where individuals are invited to experience a close relationship of their choice with me. It has evolved to the form of a workshop and a modified mini workshop during Konstfack Exhibition 2011. Through the process of negotiation, 'script' writing, role-playing and reflexive discussion, we investigate our perception of close relationships, underlying needs, questioning our idea of intimacy and authenticity of the self.

My initial personal interest in the project was due my personal question of what do I want in a relationship. What influenced that thought? What is truly necessary in a relationship? As I'm in Sweden now, I would like to know how the Swedes think and hope to learn from them, as I enjoy learning from people and experiment together. As I believe that everyone has personal experience, insights, and knowledge concerning close relationships and the self that they can share with me. I feel that I can learn from anyone, and I value their opinions.

As I believe everyone has something valuable to give and share therefore individual participation is held dearly in the project. Participation is needed not only in our society, but in art. I believe that people should have the access to art and culture as much as to health care and education, and participatory artwork is a way to get people involved and interested in art.

¹ Charles T, 1991. The Ethics of Authenticity. London England: Harvard University Press.

² Same as reference #1

Methodology

The process of the work is advertisement, negotiation, performance and reflection. In search for participants, advertisements were posted in public forums; public boards, networking websites, etc, which then led to my personal website www.klyth.com where my work is presented and only there it revealed that I was an art student at Konstfack. The target group was anyone who wanted to experience a close relationship. The participants got their place in the project by first-come first-serve priority; nobody was rejected due to their particular mindset or requests. I believe that everyone should have an equal opportunity to participate in the project and that I should not discriminate against anyone. It was difficult for me as sometimes I found one participant or a proposed relationship more interesting than another, it was with patience and understanding that helps me through the dilemma. In a way I was a public person offering an artistic service therefore I shouldn't exclude anyone, but maybe the project was a mutual exchange where participant gained experience and I gained an art piece.

The participants answered an advertisement and began our negotiations which were done via email, or phone call, and at least one meeting. The participants described what character, storyline, plot and setting of the performance. The character is the role that I was going to act, this may include a dialogue or conversation topics, a set of requested actions, behavior, clothing and background information. We would set the time frame with specific actions or activities for the performance. For documentation of the performance, we decide if it was appropriate according to the situation, the nature of the characters and story in the script to take photos or videos. The participants would come up with specific idea or image of what kind of pictures and videos to be taken during the performance (see figure 1).

Since we are strangers, I remained a casual, open and friendly listener – to make them feel comfortable with me and to reveal their deep, hidden or personal desires. As this project can be very personal, I wish to gain their trust through my respect, transparency and openness. I would agree to every lawful request except sexual intercourse, which I was not open minded to. The premise of the work is self-fulfillment as participants were freely to request any kind of script and details. We would agree to the script which becomes our contract of the work. The negotiation is important as this is a participatory work as we both know exactly of what we're getting into. At the meeting, we would plan the date, time and duration of the performance.

During the performance, I strictly follow the script as I value our agreement. What I did was role-playing which is also a method use in behavioral therapy, according to Jens Lueckert - a psychologist who also participated in the workshop, it is used to train self-confident and social behaviors, to train, test, modify or become familiar with certain feelings emotions, beliefs, thoughts and situations. The role-playing session is usually accompanied by a discussion and maybe another role-playing session to affirm or retest, for example, another behavior. I used role-playing a way to fulfill their personal desires, at the same time investigating our own feelings and thoughts toward particular a role and relationship.

After the performance, we would share, discuss and reflect on our experience to create some kind of knowledge, also to clarify any uncertain feelings or attachment that may arise during the performance.

The Performance

Performance as an act of self-awareness

"Man for a Day"³ is a workshop by Diane Torr where mostly female participants got a made over to become a man by wearing a fake beard, wearing men's clothing while learning to act, behave and think like men. We got a lesson to be real men and disguised ourselves as men in public places. In one of the lessons, Ms Torr who has done many drag-king show and male character, said she likes to get some characters out and play once in awhile so she can get used to the character, and when she perform, it'd come naturally. As our action, emotions and thoughts become a routine, similar to our performance in daily life, they happen automatically, hence losing our self-awareness. Most of the roles that I had in *Can I be with You?* project were not familiar to me, unless it was similar to whom (I thought) I was, therefore while I was performing I needed to be aware of what I was feeling, doing and going to do. My mind focused on my character, seeing myself as a third person. Vito Acconci wrote in the article "Steps into Performance (and Out)": "I'm focusing on myself from a distance, as if from above: I see myself, I see the land, figures, around me...(I'm too far away to be seen as a "self": I'm seen from the outside..."⁴ Acting in this sense can be seen as an act of self-awareness, as actors direct oneself from a distance. As I was self-aware during the performance, I was conscious of my feeling, thought and action, forbidding me to act automatically. I also acknowledge my current feeling and thought toward the current situation, which many times we don't realise in daily life.

I failed somewhat the first times, as acting (and self-aware) requires a lot of concentration. I lost the character and became my usual self. I was being lazy to focus. It is difficult to be conscious of your thought, feeling and action all the time, even more so when a performance lasted a whole weekend. Other time that I lost the character was when some specific situations were close to my personal desire or psychological issues which made me emotionally involved. At that time, I lost focus of my character and dwelled into my own issues. I became confused and overwhelmed with emotions and lost my character's personalities. This happened when I said to my third participant who in script was my sister, "I know we haven't seen each other for a long time, but I want you to know that I always love you." Even though the line was scripted, this hit me personally and I became so nervous, because I've never said that to my real sister before. This is when the performance reveals what I was suffering from. This is how role-playing and self-awareness revealed underlying personal issues.

The script and performance as conventional reality

For the next performances, I became more cautious and focused on mindfulness, as my attention was on "art doing" (I was trying to perform) and according to Acconci, it means "ways to make art",

³ Torr, Diane. "Man for a Day" workshop, Kuno course at Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen. 24-25 February 2011.

⁴ Acconci, V. 1979. Steps into Performance (and out). In Stiles K., Selz P. eds. 1996. Theories and documents of contemporary art. London, England: University of California press. pp. 759-765.

while my participants were more likely "art-experiencing" or "ways to 'see' art."⁵ Similar to watching a movie, the participants know it's not real and we're strangers, but since they opened their mind to it, they readily surrendered to me and accepted it as an illusional (conventional) reality. The participants and all of us are in this physical world and many times we don't see things as they are. In the philosophy of Buddhism, conventional reality is described as "all we really see is a conceptualization, not the real thing at all. Whatever we look at, we project our prejudices, memories, fears, expectations, beliefs and so on, onto that object, so we can only see it in terms of our mind conceptions about it"⁶. The usual participants' reaction after the performance was that it was the best thing that'd happened in years. They really felt that I was their soul-mate, their brother, etc. This revealed that even soul-mate can convincingly be performed and seem just as real as one would imagine, because of participant's false projection making me, a complete stranger, a conventional reality.



Figure 1: Documentation of the performances.

As in many arts, movies, and music, which have strong effects on our emotion, thought and action, raising question if we are really in control of our mind. Leaving our awareness behind, we surrender to influences such as those media to empower over us. We surrender or become emotional and many times we're not aware of it. The performances show that we're not aware, we become confused of what we are really seeing.

As the scripts were somewhat vague, I would improvise by performing readymade roles and relationship that I accumulate from years of media and watching real people perform in their daily life. My goal was trying to please my participants according to their general guidance, giving them their requests or the feeling that they wanted to feel. The script themselves are from readymade relationships. As written in Charles Taylor's book, "Ethics of Authenticity" which states that "A picture of what a better or higher mode of life would not be sorts of things uniqueness that we happen to desire, but a standard of what we ought to desire."⁷ The script of an older brother isn't just a male sibling, my participant was from Hong Kong and similar to many East Asian notions of an older sibling, who should be protective of his younger sister, etc. Our relationship and ourselves are not unique. And this is what we are, we're influenced by outside forces that make us what we are, which makes us part of this conventional reality.

⁵ Same as reference number 2.

⁶ Gowans, C. 2003. Philosophy of the Buddha. New York: Routledge. pp. 95

⁷ Charles T, 1991. The Ethics of Authenticity. London England: Harvard University Press.

The Reflexive Discussion

In the first performance where I performed a boyfriend, I became emotionally involved and was really happy just like the character. But as I became aware of the upcoming plot that marked the end of the performance, I became the director of myself again. But it was too late as I had become attached to this relationship, I longed for it. I wished it was true. I felt an ache like the end of an important relationship. I didn't want this to end. I couldn't let go and I was suffering watching him leave the tram. The manipulative aspect of the work struck both me and my participants. We were so vulnerable as a human being. One of the way I let go of these attachment and ease the suffering is to rationalise it.

Since the performance can be very manipulative and create a lot of confusion on what is or isn't real. I insisted to include this part to clarify any confusion or complication that could arise during the performance. Moreover, it serves as a way to reflect and share our experience and thoughts, and to question about our existence, delusion and suffering. Saccavibhanga Sutta: An Analysis of the Truths, translated by Thanissaro Bhikkhu the following:

Right view (samyag-dṛṣṭi / sammā-diṭṭhi) can also be translated as "right perspective", "right outlook" or "right understanding ". It is the right way of looking at life, nature, and the world as they really are. It is to understand how reality works. It acts as the reasoning for someone to start practicing the path. It explains the reasons for human existence, suffering, sickness, aging, death, the existence of greed, hatred, and delusion...⁸

It is more of raising questions in the discussion; I find my answers in books and my own mind digging and analyzing. Some of the questions we raised are so complex and difficult to answer. participant and I can ask each other freely.

The project and attachment

I was interested in making art in a Buddhist way. Buddhism discourages any attachments, but the script writing and the performance part of the project encouraged the participants to dwell on their desire and self-fulfilment. These encouragement leads to more suffering. The performance fulfilled their needs and happiness but only for a short period of time. After the performance they're left with the same suffering and needs. And even if the performance could last a life time, it remains fake and scripted. The discussion part serves the participants and I thoughtful and reflexive moments. It liberates us to be conscious of our attachments.

⁸ Bhikkhu, T. Saccavibhanga Sutta: An Analysis of the Truths.

<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.141.than.html>

Workshop

In a dialogue with Heidi Grundmann (1978), Marina Abramovic talked about documentation of performance, "...there is always something missing, no documentation can give you the feeling of what it was, because it cannot be described, it is so direct, in the documentation, the intensity is missing, the feelings that were there."⁹.

Since the one-on-one experiences were so emotionally intense, and many questions and thoughts arose from them, I thought the best way to exhibit my work is to allow people to experience it themselves. Since I only have one body and limited time, creating a workshop for a group of people to experience the relationship with each other seemed to be a good solution. They themselves can create multiple different relationships and share outcomes with each other. However, the situations were different, the one-on-ones were more intimate and dealt personally with me closely and I was more than willing to accommodate personal requests, while the workshop was consisted of a small group of strangers with different kind of background, needs and expectations.

Advertisement text:

Want a Friend?
A Sister?
A Soulmate?
Or want to be someone's spouse?!

Have you ever wondered what would it be like to have a best friend, a sibling, or a soulmate? Have you ever thought of being someone else's daughter or son?! Lead by artist Oak Wattanai Chanakot with a guest psychologist and expert in theatre pedagogue, the two-day workshop allows you to experience and explore different close relationships of your choice. As a participant, you might be someone's children, and others might be your best friend or husband!

In the workshop, the artist will talk about his work 'Can I be with You?' where he performed different relationship roles while guest experts will give insights on roleplaying, emotions, behavior and performance. Through the workshop, you will learn about your desires and underlying needs, how we relate to each other and our perception of roles. The workshop should be fun, rich in experience and thought provoking. You're most welcome!

Saturday 9 (1-5pm) and Sunday 17 April 2011 (1-4pm).
At Konstfack, LM Ericssons väg 14, Stockholm (T-bana Telefonplan)

The workshop is FREE! Register by sending your name, phone number and a few sentences on what relationship you'd like to experience or why you want to participate, to klyth@hotmail.com
Please make sure you can participate both days. For more information or questions to klyth@hotmail.com

⁹ Abramovic, M., 1978. Dialogue with Heidi Grundmann. In Stiles K., Selz P. eds. 1996. Theories and documents of contemporary art. London, England: University of California press. pp. 758-759

Posters and advertisements were posted at public boards by subway stations, libraries, universities, online news sites and networking communities. The followings are some of the replies.

Reply number 1:

Hello,
My name is X.
My mobile number is : X

I am male and i am 30 years young man.
I came to Sweden on August 30, 2010 and I moved to Stockholm on January 2011.

I am feeling alone all the time. I need someone to make my Friend who will understand me and with whom I can share.

I will join.
Kindly let me know what I have to do ?

Regards,
X

Reply number 2:

My name is X.
I am very much interested in your session.
I play various roles- spouse, sister, friend, daughter. etc.
I would like to attend the session with my husband

Reply number 3:

My name is X, I'm a PhD student at KTH. I'd like to experience the spouse role. I've been thinking of actually getting married and it's kinda scary thought for me. Just want to see if I'm ready or not. Maybe this might help for clearing my thoughts.

Reply number 4:

Hello, my name is X and i want to be in the workshop. My number is X.
I wonder what is being itself, then i wonder what beings someone else's parter. I enjoy such layers of complicity, intimacy, mutual knowledge, learnt and shared habits, common history, silent past in present gestures... In being two, in any relation, i wonder about the unsaid, the universes coliding, the growing expectations, the speaking body, the synchronized pulse, the time shared in life..
finding a soulmate, like a mirror, unveils your own duplicity. Explore others is explore different reflections of "the self"
can i be with you?

Reply number 5:

I would like to experience a soul mate relationship, or maybe I'd like to be someones daughter. I think relationships (friends and family as well as

lovers) and how we perceive them, to a very high degree are based upon our willingness to let go of expectations, and our ability to be open to whomever is there, but that is hard work, especially if deep down all you really want, or think you want, is a soul mate - someone who really gets you. Yeah, that's it really. Apart from me generally being in to art projects! :)

Reply number 6:

I want to be register for upcoming workshop, to improve my interpersonal communication skill.

i need to improve my interpersonal skill because

sometime i get tempered when someone ask me same question twice.
 some times my expression gets so bad, while i am not that much annoyed.
 sometimes i cannot express what i mean.
 Sometimes i look very introvert.
 sometimes i go too straight forward.
 I want to grow a strong social/business network.
 I need someone to share my problems to be relieved.

I accepted participants by the first come first serves basis, unless they didn't write a motivation text which then I would ask them to reply back with one. The number of people who applied exceeded twelve people which was the maximum number of the workshop. Eleven came to the workshop, most of them are international master or PhD students or recent graduated working in Sweden.

Many were very excited about the workshop, one replies.

Reply number 7:

I saw your add on the local.se about experiencing the close relationship. i am interested getting experience as a husband and want to feel it how it is and what are the responsibility comes in life as a husband. i want to experience as a husband because i want to get married in future as a I find my soulmate but before getting married i want to experience this. I will be available on both days. my name is X and my ph no is X. I hope to get reply soon.

We then exchanged many emails regarding the workshop which shows his expectation, and I was worried at first for other participant's safety, but I kept open minded and welcome him to the workshop anyway.

X:

It seems good and interesting and i think that i will be more better if me and my spouse partner in the workshop can meet with each other to think and create script and situation and do some exercise before the workshop to perform well on that day. what do you think? may i know who will be the my spouse in the workshop.

Me:

That could be a good idea, what exercise are you thinking of?

X:

I am thinking to practice or exercise on a situation or script with my workshop spouse before performing in workshop. if you think that this is a good way then tell me how we can do this.

Me:

It's a nice idea, but we don't have time to be there with you, as we supposed to be an "expert" who guides you through the process. I know you're excited, but you have to trust me on this. You will have enough time during the workshop, and there's no pressure to perform well, as one of the points of the workshop is to experiment. Moreover, I cannot guarantee that you will experience a spouse-relationship as it depends on you and your partner's decision. We will decide who will be your partner in the workshop, it could be a man or a woman. And you might have to change the kind of relationship according to your partner.

X:

No problem if it is not possible to practice the things before workshop. but one thing i want to tell you that my spouse should be female. i don't want to be spouse of male in workshop. The natural thing is that there should be one male and one female in spouse relationship.

Me:

No problem, you will not be forced to do anything you don't want to. If you have a male partner you might want to be his brother, friend, father instead - like I said it's up to you and your partner. But come open minded! After all it's about experimentation, you and your female partner pretending to be spouse may not seem "natural" for a lot of people!!

The workshop was held in room A10 at Konstfack, the workshop was part of a changing exhibition by the master class second year. The room has been used as an exhibition space and a studio space to produce works, I started the workshop by saying, "as you can see from the floor of this room, there has been a history of experimentation! I would like you to have the feeling of openness and ready to experiment." In the room, seating was arranged in a circle, most people squeezed themselves among others on the comfortable sofas except the guy (Reply number 1, see above) who sat on a wooden chair. Drinks and pastries were available for all the participants. I tried to create a casual and relax atmosphere, even though a camera was filming. When I was introducing the psychologist and performance pedagogue, I also introduced the cameraman, who was also a master student, to show that the camera was not hidden.

The following is the schedule for the workshop, planned by the psychologist, theatre pedagogue and myself.

WORKSHOP: CAN I BE WITH YOU?

First day, Saturday 9th April 1-5pm

13.00 Welcome and introduction to the workshop (Oak, Kristina)

- Oak Wattanai Chanakot warmly welcome participants, introducing himself, guest psychologist and psychotherapist Jens Lueckert and theatre pedagogue Kristina Roehl.
- Oak introduces the project Can I be with You? and the workshop – what we're going to do in 2 days and during the week.
- Oak asks participants to introduce themselves. Name, why they want to participate? What they hope to gain from it?

13.20 Psychology and psychoanalysis (Jens)

- Definition of psychotherapy, relations between emotions, behavior and thoughts, roleplaying used in psychotherapy.
- Discussion and questions about psychology and psychoanalysis.

14.10 Performance, script and character profile (Kristina and Oak)

- Oak tells about his past participants.
- Oak asks everybody to imagine the relationship with their eyes close, and later share it with the group.

Participant pair up by themselves with suggestion from the group.

- Exercise partners warm up – 1) Looking into each other eyes for minutes. 2) while holding hands.

15.00 Coffee break.

15.15 Performance, script and character profile continues

- Kristina: What consist of a character?
- Exercise (role profile): write in couples everything you need/want/wish for character, and discuss it.
- Exercise: Walking around in character.

16.45 Q&A and artist's experience, tip and conclusion of the day.
Final words from Kristina and Oak. End of the day.

During the week

Participants perform their scripted relationship.

Second day: Sunday 17th April (13:00-16:00)

13.00 Introduction to second day: the analytic, self-reflection and realization day

13.15 Everyone share their own experience, and if they want they can put down a question for the group to answer.

14.15 Coffee Break

15.30 Continue

Everything seemed to go smoothly, the scripting part was difficult to write for some participants. Many partners, instead of doing 2 performances where they take a turn to direct one another, merge the script together with requests for and from each other. A few partners prefer to do one performance as one wants to be only a 'performer' rather than a 'director.' One participant decided to leave the workshop on the first day because she wasn't satisfy with her role, she wanted to be a performer, she was pair up with the guy Reply number 1. She was going to be his friend, but she refused to because she hated being a friend in real life. I don't know if that was her real reason or not. I tried to find solutions for her but she refused to come back. I then asked her partner if he would like me to perform as his friend and he readily agreed.

One participant mentioned that she didn't feel too safe because she felt that many are using this workshop as a way to find a real girlfriend. Some might have had that expectation and didn't come back to the second day of the workshop. For me, I see this workshop not only as a place to investigate about role-playing, relationship and the self, but also a meeting place for future relationships. Therefore I do not prohibit any possible relationship. However, safety was a concern for the work, I recommended all my participants to be in the public places and follow the script that they agreed precisely.

Eight days past and it was time for the second part of the workshop, the discussion part, 5 participants came back, 8 people (including me) did the role-play. One participant said that she learnt more about herself from role-playing requested by her partner, she said she could be more happy and laugh even more in real life, like her role-play character. Many people were interested in my partner (#1) as why he didn't have a friend, we asked questions and give advices. Others were interested in memory, and we had a challenging discussion about if we role-play in real life and if that was our true self. Since it was a small group we spent the discussion in the sun, having a picnic. It was like friends discussing and sharing ideas.

If I was going to create another workshop, I would say 8 people maximum to let everyone be able to share their voice more clearly and without being too physically tired to listen to everyone. I would also have the 2-day next to each other as it would be more condense and restrictive.

Another interesting point for me in the workshop is also connected to individualism; people want what they want, sometimes self-satisfying to a point regardless of others. Every participant wants to participate in this workshop to experience a relationship, for whatever motivation or reason. To experience the relationship they have to compromise, and if they're not willing to then they will not experience it. We will not reach our goal without negotiation and compromise. This is not a participatory art that allows full self-satisfaction; it's based on self-satisfaction in regards of others.

After both the one-on-one relationships and the workshop, I remain friends with all my participants. Some are closer than others. Some participants are also participating in the degree exhibition as a performer. We may have created some art participation followers!

Konstfack Degree Exhibition 2011

"The situationist game does not appear distinct from a moral choice, deciding what ensures the future reign of freedom and play"¹⁰. Situationist International.

At the degree exhibition in the common space of the art department which is designed to be a resting place, a space for live performances, a starting point of guided tour and to art pieces from our department, spectators can borrow a volunteer performer to be in a close relationship with. They can also sign up to be a performer themselves.

I decided to recreate the space for social interaction rather than competing with the excessive number of objects presenting at the exhibition. It can be a meeting place, a place for experimentation, for play, or a place to start a relationship. It's a place where participation is encouraged. I used the existing colorful wood blocks in the common space to create an inviting meeting place. Volunteer performers are instructed to be open and friendly, and to be able to negotiate freely with the participating spectator. The participant is to write a short script, then negotiate with the performers. They perform the relationship while walking around the school and afterward share experience together.

During the exhibition I act as an 'Info Guy' who helps performers and participants to have a smooth experience. I would share my thoughts if needed.



-
- ¹⁰ The Situationist International, "Definition" In Stiles K., Selz P. eds. 1996. *Theories and documents of contemporary art*. London, England: University of California press. Pp.702



The advertisements seeking for participant (performer) are posted at public boards around Stockholm, couchsurfing community, facebook, thelocal.se, statis.se, theatre and art schools. We held usually 40 minutes of briefing of the project where I share my experience and answer all queries. The following is the instruction for performers:

Text for performers

The schedule for performance with starting time: Performances are for 2 hours, please arrive 20 minutes before the starting time.

THU 19, 14.30. SAT 21 and SUN 22, 12.30. SAT 28 and SUN 29, 14.00

Information for performers

Make your own 'performer' sticker badge and hang around the Art in Public Realm common space. Be friendly and inviting. You can approach (or let them approach you) potential participants who might be reading the board, asking if they may be interested in participating.

You can explain the process "first you'll write a short script of a close relationship that you'd like to experience with a help from our guideline if needed. Then we discuss the script then perform the scripted relationship together around the school area. After the performance, we will discuss our experience together. The duration of the performance is up to us." You can change it in your own words. I will be there all the time to help you if needed.

When they agree to participate, ask if they already have an idea or they need the script guideline. You can write for them or leave them to write the script but tell them to let you know when they've finished or need help. Read and talk with them about the now finished script. Ask, if something is unclear. Decide together and with one line cross out things you're not going to do (so we can still see what they wrote). You don't have to do things that

you don't want to but be open minded first. Also decide when the performance ends, by a certain time or when reach a certain destination.

You might need some time to prepare for the role, decide how long you will take and both of you can decide when and where to start the performance. Take off your badge and script to the Info guy. During the performance, focus on your role and listen to your partner. Have fun and improvise!

After the performance, pick up a discussion guideline (if needed) and talk with your participant, you can sit anyway outside/inside – fika will be available for you both.

Note:

- Recommended minimum duration of performance of 30 minutes.
- There may be different kind of participants, one may truthfully want a friend or a relationship, others may just want to play or participate in an art project. Please be patient and understanding. Listen to them.
- During the performance, you may run into people you know, think beforehand what you might do, or ask the Info Guy for ideas.
- If you need help with performing, or anything please ask the Info Guy!

The Talk

There will be a discussion MON 23 and FRI 27, 18.00 (for 30-60 minutes), please come and share your experience with others. It will be held at the common space. Ask the Info guy for more information.

Thank you for your participation!

The following text is the script guideline which is only used if the participants needed.

SCRIPT GUIDELINE

You and your performer will be in a close relationship around the school for a short period of time. Please write on a blank sheet, a short script to let your performer know who s/he going to be. What is s/he supposed to do or act? What is the relationship between you two? etc.

When you've finished the script, please read with your performer so s/he knows the character and relationship. Negotiate with your performer for

the things you feel important, s/he may refuse to do certain things, the script is decided by you and your performer. After coming to an agreement, please set a starting and end time (or location) of the performance.

So if you don't have an idea yet, you may want to follow the script guideline, you can use it as much or as little as you like.

1. Describe the nature of your relationship.
2. Describe the character.
3. How you feel toward each other? How do you think of each other?
4. Imagine in your everyday life, what do you do, or like doing together?
5. What kind of things you say to each other, or talk about? Any specific dialogue?
6. Any habits the character has? Any specific goal in life?
7. What kind of gesture or actions does the character do?
8. What are the things you and character will do?
9. In this performance, what kind of person are you? Are you yourself? What personalities do you have?
10. Other requests for the performer.

If you're still stuck, please ask your performer or the Info Guy for help.

The finished script is then post on the Now Performing board, and the performer took their badge off. After the performance, they would discuss the experience together, I provide them with fika to make them stay even longer. Usually after the whole process they have become much closer than strangers, many hugs and exchange contact details with each other. The following is the discussion guideline, even though it is forceful and very difficult to answer in one discussion, I would like to raise some questions, and they can discuss as much as they like. The selected questions are from my on-one-on and workshop experience.

Discussion Guideline (Participant)

Interview each other! This paper is for the participant. Please do as much or as little as you please.

1. (For both the performer and participant) How was your experience? Anything unpredictable-exciting-strange happened?
2. What do you think of the character? Do you like the character?
3. Was it difficult? Were you more of yourself or the character?
4. (For both) What did you like or dislike the most about the performance?
5. (For both) Do you think we perform and role-play in real life? If yes, when we role-play are we being our true self?
6. (For both) If you have one question to ask me what would you ask?
7. (Please continue as you like...)

After the discussion, if you're interested in being a performer, please sign up on the board at the Art in the Public Realm the common space. You and your performer are also invited to a talk where we all share our experience from this project with others. MON 23 and FRI 27, 18.00 also at the common space. Thank you for your participation.

Discussion Guideline (Performer)

Interview each other! This paper is for the performer. Please do as much or as little as you please.

1. (For both the performer and participant) Why did you choose to participate? What did you expect from it?
2. (For both) Were there any moments you thought this was real? If yes, why did it feel real?
3. Why did you choose this character? Why the character the way s/he is? What influenced you to create this character? Where does the idea come from?
4. What do you think of my interpretation of the character and relationship?
5. (For both) This is an art project, what is art about this?! What do you think of this project?
6. (For both) What did you gain from this experience?
7. (Please continue as you like...)

You and your participant are invited to a talk where we all share our experience from this project with others. MON 23 and FRI 27, 18.00 at Art in Public Realm common space. Thank you for your participation.

Spectators may not catch the performers there in the common space as they perform around the school. However, the scripts are posted on a board under "Now Performing" for visiting spectator to see. The performances may not be easy located as they can be a subtle performance. By not seeing the performance, it reveals the nature of performance.

The volunteers and participating spectators play an active role in the artwork, rather than being a passive audience. For other spectators who read the Now Performing board and try to spot the performance by looking at other people might find themselves being watched, then they have played an active role of the piece also.

Like in the workshop where a lot of unexpected things happen, I suspect we would have the same condition of unpredictability at the exhibition.

Also in the exhibition, as a publication of my work, I reviewed roughly my thoughts on the project while occasionally asking questions regarding the work. I also included an equal amount of free space where readers can write their own thoughts and reflection onto the publication. The questions and the free space encourage readers to think critically, and reflect their thoughts and

feeling.

Marina Abramovic also mentioned in the dialogue that "the performance you do in fixed time and in that fixed time you see the whole process and you see the disappearing of the process at the same moment and afterwards you don't have anything, you only have memory."¹¹ I have memory in form of photographic and video documentation from my one-on-one experiences. But the memory in me is more interactive with the audience, but maybe not as factual. I'm leading a talk where I and participants from the one-on-one to the exhibition to share these memories and open up for questions and discussion. This talk also serves as a place of exchange of idea and to meet.

Claire Bishop stated about participation art works that they striving to collapse the distinction between performer and audience, professional and amateur, and production and reception. Decreasing the role of an artist, increase involvement of people making for more democratic work¹². Since participants have to work with others to perform, they have to negotiate, which making it difficult for self-satisfying art works (or individualism in a sense regardless of others). I believe the project help participant and me to grow together as we meet and exchange different ideas and experience.

¹¹ Abramovic M. See reference #8

¹² Bishop, C. 2006. Participation. London: Whitechapel Ventures Ltd. pp16

Bibliography

- Abramovic, M., 1978. 'Dialogue with Heidi Grundmann'. In Stiles K., Selz P. eds. 1996. *Theories and documents of contemporary art*. London, England: University of California press. pp. 758-759
- Acconci, V. 1979. 'Steps into Performance (and out)'. In Stiles K., Selz P. eds. 1996. *Theories and documents of contemporary art*. London, England: University of California press. pp. 759-765.
- Bhikkhu, T. Saccavibhanga Sutta: An Analysis of the Truths.
<http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/mn/mn.141.than.html>
- Bishop, C. 2006. *Participation*. London: Whitechapel Ventures Ltd. pp16
- Charles T, 1991. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. London England: Harvard University Press.
- Gowans, C. 2003. *Philosophy of the Buddha*. New York: Routledge. pp. 95
- The Situationist International, "Definition" In Stiles K., Selz P. eds. 1996. *Theories and documents of contemporary art*. London, England: University of California press. Pp.702
- Torr, Diane. 'Man for a Day' workshop, Kuno course at Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen. 24-25 February 2011.