

Drawing Work On Stage¹ **Cenotaphs for Missing Bodies - Artefacts and Affordance**

The LISTA Works+Words Project

Presented in this sequel to our participation in WORKS+WORDS 2017 is a layer-upon-layer Artistic Research discussion entailing distinct works in all three categories outlined by the curators of the biennale. Our aim is to demonstrate the significance residing in the affordance of already 3) *Realized Projects* for the making of new 1) *Abstract Projects* that in turn and sum again can and will make a future 2) *Project Proposal*.

The LISTA Works+Words Project centers around the following artistic research questions: how does a distinct performance practice engage, act and resonate with the visible and hidden affordance that resides in a particular and complex environment, how does this acting and practice in turn again make incentives towards new abstract projects and/or architectural subjects, and finally, how does this in sum allow for and stimulate the creation of a greater public and/or creative awareness; i.e. how does it become a continuous durational participatory event for the making, thinking and sensing of a rapid changing environment.

The environment this project is sparring with and drawing its affordance from is the Lista Peninsula in Southern Norway. Lista is known for its dramatic and multi-faceted landscape, the saturated light and a harsh climate with almost constant gale winds. The inland and coastal wetlands are home to a unique flora and fauna, but Lista also features a vast amount of (partly unexplored) relics dating back several thousand years, being one of Norwegians earliest settlements. Nazi Germany's Festung Norwegen too literally infested the peninsula with wartime installations, many of which directly built on top of ancient tombs and gravemounds...

Nominated as Norway's candidate for The Landscape Award Alliance of the Council of Europe 2018-2019, the municipality of Farsund prepares Lista for tourism while at the same time parts of the diverse cultural heritage, its most distinct features, are being demolished. The land is undergoing great transformations. Sand drift becoming already a problem.

We engage with Lista by making site-specific works since 2014. Those site-specific works are leading towards new abstract works: Cenotaphs in the form of books and an architectural installation are the main artefacts for this year's exhibition. Our goal is to bring that work in form of a larger multidisciplinary engagement further into the realm of a public creative consciousness: The LISTA Research-Creation Project Proposal.

Ultimately, we wish to present the viewpoint that academia to a large degree still is driven by issues of detachment and market conditions, and that the competition between singular seemingly airtight minds is put before any kind of cultural activity that is inclusive, multifaceted or truly trans-disciplinary.

¹ *Drawing Work On Stage* is the title of an elective course kept in CAFA, Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing/China, May-July 2015. The course worked on *the problem of the body* teaching students of all creative disciplines in interdisciplinary and experimental arts. Book in the making (Gerstlauer & Dind, 2015).

Drawing Work On Stage

1. Abstract Projects

Cenotaphs for Missing Bodies

“We know more about the physical body - how it begins, how it responds to illness, even how it decomposes - than ever before. Yet not all bodies are created equal, some bodies clearly count more than others, and some bodies are not recognized at all.”²

Displayed in our previous exhibition were the filmic and photographic studies on *the meaningless moving autistic human body*³ performing a non-rehearsed immediate kind of *dance-brut*. The aim was to draw this already performed work (the actual butoh dance of NN aka Julie Dind had occurred in March 2013 on The Pier of the Benesse Art Site in Naoshima/Japan) into an investigation that makes various artistic necessities to pursue *the extended human body*; i.e. searching for infrastructures that either support or contain that beforehand *meaningless moving autistic human body*.

The extended human body pursued was not the critique of the former performing *meaningless moving autistic body*, rather it was the idea and awareness about the *Missing Body* itself. What we looked at when we looked at the multiple and simultaneously screened human body dancing were both true but also distorted and contradicting representations on and of something a body we can only understand as missing. What we see is not that what we look at - we see that which the looking makes in us, through us, as the cenotaph that contains a missing and imagined (or remembered) body.

As a work in progress, the exhibition intended to show a praxis that in its nature is open and while it has no clear architectural problems to inquire in (except for the mentioned capacity “to architect by looking” and hence construct meaning from any kind of visual material), it nevertheless makes strong incentives towards various other, also literal, architectural initiatives – e.g. the continuous work with the images of the missing body that danced the cold bare feet on the rough concrete of The Pier in Naoshima became memetic in the way it remembered the Japanese Geta sandals that NN walked in on her way to and from the performance.

Suddenly this makes the sketch for a work on several architectural cenotaphs... Geta have to be handmade in clay, wood, plaster and porcelain. They become the first generation of cenotaphs to contain and support the missing body. ...and from the reiterated making of the Geta, the images of the missing body show the flat Triangle-shape of a nearby island hovering or floating in the moist air of that cold early morning. The Geta support, while the Triangle turns horizontal and is suspended by a beam piercing through its two openings. Once in the purview of the dance, the triangle now encloses and makes its own horizon. Both cenotaphs are meant to be containers.

For a container to work, it must be able to contain as much as it necessarily also has to leak. A container can only be one if an equal entity of that which enters it simultaneously moves out if it. Light replaces darkness, movement replaces stillness. The missing bodies are always there, they constitute the morphology of body and space, they are all in one, and cenotaphs too.

² *Missing Bodies: The Politics Of Visibility*
Monica J Casper-Lisa Jean Moore – <https://arizona.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/missing-bodies-the-politics-of-visibility>

³ *Drawing Work On Stage: A Neurodiverse Acting Towards A Primal Body And Space Morphology, 2012-*
Rolf Gerstlauer-Julie Dind – https://adk.elsevierpure.com/ws/portalfiles/portal/60755508/ww_2017_avis_14_marts

Drawing Work On Stage 2. Project Proposal

The LISTA Research-Creation

“Research-creation can be described as the complex intersection of art practice, theoretical concepts, and research. It is an experimental practice that cannot be predicted or determined in advance. It is trans-disciplinary and is used by artists and designers who incorporate a hybrid form of artistic practice between the arts and science, or social science research; scholars attuned to the role of the arts and creativity in their own areas of expertise; and educators interested in developing curriculum and pedagogy grounded in cultural production. Research-creation is attuned to process rather than the communication of outputs or products.”⁴

“If all architecture sets the stage for all human behavior”⁵, the Lista peninsula condenses both nature and its architecture of human behavior in a unique, multi-layered and diverse landscape. Yet that landscape is being heavily processed as we speak. The changes – manmade and not - are drastic. In the development of strategies for a resilient environment, various interests and purviews both mingle and mangle. Therefore, Lista avails itself to various competences and areas of expertise ready to enter, act and reflect on the future, present and past of that particular stage.

“Research-creation pairing art and philosophy” [...] “different practices working in a variety of materials and media, both linguistic and non-linguistic (sound, image, movement, embodied interaction)”⁶ aims at finding new ways to create a deep knowing of the issues at stake. Trans-disciplinary teams and/or specific artistic practices engage with the affordance residing in this particular landscape. Involving local resources and capacities, the inspired experimental practice is making a dialogue; one that is capable of demonstrating a new body of knowledge affected by, and hopefully with effect on, (the fate of) Lista, the human condition, and/or/also that which is and can be, or not, beyond.

We engage with the Lista peninsula since 2014 by making site-specific works as part of our own artistic research (Gerstlauer & Dind – the *Drawing NN* works). In our mutual teachings for AHO’s Body & Space Morphologies studios (Catharsis : Acting and The Collective), synergies are drawn between our work and the way teaching can explore research creation through and with the works of our students – some of which now also creating a material practice directly related to Lista. In this capacity and in close collaboration with students and alumni, various local resources and both national and international academic institutions and research programs, we established in October 2018 the *B&SM LISTA Project Working-Group*.

For the WORKS+WORDS 2019 Biennale in Artistic Research in Architecture, the *B&SM LISTA Project Working-Group* presents a selection of site-specific works, performances, projects, exhibitions and writings. This material is collected and exhibited in the form of a book-box as our PROJECT PROPOSAL – a work in progress - for the development of the actual proposal for a trans-disciplinary *Body & Space Morphologies: the LISTA Research-Creation Project*.

⁴ *The Pedagogical Impulse: Research-Creation*
Stephanie Springgay-Sarah E. Truman – <https://thepedagogicalimpulse.com/research-methodologies/>

⁵ *Drawing Work On Stage: A Neurodiverse Acting Towards A Primal Body And Space Morphology, 2012-*
Rolf Gerstlauer-Julie Dind – https://adk.elsevierpure.com/ws/portalfiles/portal/60755508/ww_2017_avis_14_marts

⁶ *Immediations*
Erin Manning – <http://erinmovement.com/immediations>

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3. Realized Projects

Drawing NN - In Lista

*"This chapter is concerned with the interpretation of mute evidence, that is, with written texts and artifacts. Such evidence, unlike the spoken work, endures physically and thus can be separated across space and time from its author, producer, or user. Material traces thus often have to be interpreted without the benefit of indigenous commentary. There is often no possibility of interaction with spoken emic "insider" as opposed to etic "outsider" perspectives. Even when such interaction is possible, actors often seem curiously inarticulate about the reasons they dress in particular ways, choose particular pottery designs, or discard dung in particular locations. Material traces and residues thus pose special problems for qualitative research. The main disciplines that have tried to develop appropriate theory and method are history, art history, archeology, anthropology, sociology, cognitive psychology, technology and modern material culture studies, and it is from this range of disciplines that my account is drawn."*⁷

We work since 2012 as an artist couple on a research and development (R&D) project registered in the Current Research Information System in Norway (CRISStin). The work is conducted in Rolf's capacity as professor, architect and multimedia artist/researcher at The Oslo School of Architecture and Design AHO and Julie's capacity as butoh dancer, performance and multimedia artist as well as PhD student in Theatre Arts & Performance Studies at Brown University in Providence. Both also teach together at the Body & Space Morphologies elective studios for master students at AHO and abroad.

Drawing Work On Stage investigates body and space morphologies through Julie's immediate performed Butoh as resonance of and in time, place, space and humanity at large. The work seeks to bring aspects in her intangible and ephemeral danced resonance into the state of a "drawing". Video and photography installations supported by sculptures and ready-mades serve as mnemonic tools in a try to create a timeless particular reading of her Butoh dance – and what this dance resonated in.

Still a work in progress, the project was performed live in various places in Japan, France, Switzerland, Norway, Thailand, China, and the United States. Since 2014, we are engaged particularly with the Lista environment. That work produced numerous performances and photographic/filmic material that will be further developed for The LISTA Works+Words Project.

In the works we make, the making is a place and time layered thinking, sensing and creating. We first agree on a time and place to meet for a series of life dance performance. The reason why we gather for making the performances happen are manifold, yet always intuitive based entirely on felt or expected affordance in a place, garment, preparation and concentration. Some of the performed danced works make necessities for new ones, some places are rich in the sense that we wish to engage in this area several times and over longer periods.

The filmed and photographed "raw drawings" of the realized performed dances can be considered our *mute evidence* – danced artefacts or performances that make new artifacts and again new documents. Rather than being concerned about the interpretation of our own doing, we wish to stay inspired and in the place of affordance we call imagination.

⁷ *The Interpretation of Documents and Material Culture*
Ian Hodder – https://www.academia.edu/12454323/The_interpretation_of_documents_and_material_culture