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KOMME HINANDEN VED

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CREATIVE ACTIONS 2002-2008

Creative Actions, Skive Skov, Danmark

Creative Actions startede, da jeg begyndte at bevæge mig anderledes end jeg plejer i et givent rum.

25. april 2002 (s. 2-3)

MANUAL: SNORE SPOR, Skive Skov, Skive

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Snore Spor startede i en blanding af frustration og nysgerrighed. Jeg havde i længere tid følt et stærkt personligt behov for at bevæge mig på nye måder, både i bogstavelig og i symbolsk forstand. Jeg ville bruge kunsten til at ændre sociale vaner og adfærdsmønstre og fastgroede holdninger. I et samfund under konstant liberalisering syntes kommercielle interesser at diktere enhver politisk og personlig interesse, og det homogeniserede folks liv, drømme og adfærd og dominerede de offentlige rum. Den eksplosive udvikling på kunstmarkedet formåede endda at ændre og definere samtidens kunstpraksis. Jeg var nysgerrig efter at opleve mig selv fra en ny vinkel, åbne for et anderledes rum, og føle noget nyt inden i mig. Jeg ville indfange oplevelsen, tiden i bevægelse og kroppens handlinger i et sammenhængende hele og insistere på kunstens eksperimentelle natur som en nødvendighed for udvikling, både i livet, i samfundet og i kunsten. Derfor tog jeg ud i Skives skove med en rulle bomuldssnor og trak snoren efter mig og rundt om træerne. Jeg dokumenterede aktionerne fotografisk og lavede plakaten: *Manual: Snore Spor*.

Creative Actions, Cape Town, Sydafrika

I Cape Town blev *Manual: Snore Spor* forvandlet til *Kollektive Snore Spor*. Jeg var nysgerrig efter at udfordre det bestående byrum, og samtidig at åbne for et rum på tværs imellem folk. Et samhörigt

rum. Sydafrika blev valgt på grund af de store forandringer i landets offentlige rum, som havde fundet sted siden den nye forfatning i 1996 og afskaffelsen af Apartheid. Ifølge loven skulle alle kunne bevæge sig frit overalt. Der skulle ikke længere være nogen grænser mellem den sorte og den hvide befolkning.

3. marts 2005 (s. 4-5)

1.5 km KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Café Lola, Cape Town

Ved at bruge *Manual: Snore Spor* i Cape Towns hovedgade var målet at få folk til at reflektere over brug, funktioner og ejerskab i forhold til det offentlige rum. Området udenfor Café Lola blev valgt som den første lokalitet for *Kollektive Snore Spor* for at kunne udforske brydningspunkterne mellem offentligt og privat rum. I dette tilfælde blev det offentlige rum opfattet som 'fælles' og 'ejet' af alle folk, og caféindehaverens fortovsplads, lejet af regeringen, udgjorde det private rum. Spørgsmålet var, hvem der ejede rummet mellem loftet og cafébordene udenfor, og hvem der havde ret til at bruge det? Alle de deltagende borgere nåede kollektivt til enighed om visse regler for *Kollektive Snore Spor* i Café Lola: For at gøre et legende, åbent, ikke-aggressivt indtryk på caféens gæster og forbipasserende skulle hver deltager bevæge sig meget langsomt, mens de trak snorene rundt om objekterne udenfor Café Lola. Ejeren af caféen var dog alligevel fjendtligt indstillet overfor aktionen. Når folk spurgte, hvad vi lavede, svarede deltagerne: "Hvad ser du? Hvad tror du det er?". På denne måde bad de grundlæggende folk om at bruge deres egne øjne og blive klar over, hvad der foregik samt at få en reel oplevelse af brugen af det offentlige rum og dets funktion.

8. marts 2005 (s. 6-7)

1.5 km KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Rondebosch Boys School, Cape Town

Rondebosch Boys School blev valgt til det næste *Kollektive Snore Spor*, fordi den repræsenterer resterne af en gammel social orden, der kun uddanner hvide drenge – i hvide uniformer. Jeg blev inviteret til at lave 1.5 km *Kollektive Snore Spor* i skolegården i spisefrikvarteret. Læreren (som også er kunstner) organiserede reglerne for en gruppe på 12 skoledrenge fra hans kunsthold. Drengene blev sat sammen to og to og placeret rundt omkring i gården med én rulle snor pr. par. “Rul ud. Rul ind. Rul ud. Rul ind. Rul ud. Rul ind”, råbte læreren. Indtil et bestemt tidspunkt hvor de uundgåelige virkninger af at krydse snore på kryds og tværs af gården ville bryde reglerne og få drengene til at løbe i deres egne individuelle bevægelsesmønstre afhængigt af, hvordan snorene havde sat sig. “Skal jeg bede dem om at stoppe?”, råbte læreren til mig. “Nej, nej, lad dem fortsætte, det er nu det hele begynder...”, svarede jeg. Efter *Kollektive Snore Spor* samledes eleverne i klasselokalet til en evaluering. Én af drengene sagde: “Det minder mig, om da vi var børn og legede lege uden mål, ingen vinder – det er produktion på en anden proces-måde...”, og en anden dreng tilføjede: “Det er ren konstruktion. Ikke evner, men kreativitet. Ikke smadre, ikke slå ihjel, fuldstændig uden ødelæggelse.” En yngre dreng forklarede følgende til en ældre dreng: “Man kommer ikke til at gå lige med en snor foran sig. Man bliver nødt til at overveje sin egen placering i forhold til andre på grund af snorene”, og fortsatte: “Snorene er forlængelser af dine kropsbevægelser og laver udvekslinger, og tidligere handlinger bliver synlige”. Endelig konkluderede en dreng følgende omkring princippet i *Kollektive Snore Spor*: “Så dét, som man grundlæggende gør, er at ændre rummet og på grund af ændringerne, får man folk til at tænke i en anden retning”.

11. marts 2005 (s. 8-9)

0.5 km KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Cape Town Toget, Cape Town

Et par dage senere besluttede tre af drengene fra Rondebosch Boys School at lave *Kollektive Snore Spor* i toget fra den 'hvide' forstad Rondebosch til hovedbanegården i Cape Town. Selv om Apartheid officielt har været afskaffet siden 1996, er det hovedsageligt sorte mennesker, der tager toget. Normalt bliver drengene kørt af deres forældre af sikkerhedsmæssige årsager. Drengene holdt en tale om deres håb for en fremtid i åbenhed, i glæde, med positiv energi og større lighed i Sydafrika, før de trak pink og gule snore overalt i toget. Stort set ingen reagerede fysisk på aktionerne. Nogle få anerkendte åbent aktionen, men de fleste togpassagerer betragtede snoren foran deres øjne i stilhed.

11. marts 2005 (s. 10-15)

3 km KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Night Vision Festival, Cape Town

Samme aften mødtes jeg med 21 unge mennesker fra Rondebosch Boys School og Michaelis School of Art og deres venner på hjørnet af Long Street og Ludlow Street præcis kl. 19. Det var aftenen for Night Vision Festival, og alle Cape Towns indbyggere var inviteret ud på hovedgaden for at fejre natten i Cape Town med bands og performances. De unge skulle trække snor på kryds og tværs mellem hundreder af forbipasserende mennesker. Efter en kort introduktion begyndte de at trække farverig snor på tværs af Long Street fra syv søjler i den ene side af gaden til syv søjler i den anden side. På 10 minutter blev der vævet et gigantisk net. Nettet bevægede sig på uforudsigelige måder, idet folk gik, kravlede, dansede, hoppede, klatrede, vred sig og løb gennem det

i de 30 minutter, som det fik lov at eksistere. 20.000 mennesker gik igennem Long Street den aften.

Creative Actions, Barcelona, Spanien

Inspireret af oplevelserne med de sydafrikanske skoledrenge, blev en gruppe på 12 studerende fra Escola Massana for Fine Art and Design i Barcelona nu inviteret til at arrangere deres egen 'sted-specifikke' snore-aktion. De valgte tre meget forskellige lokaliteter i Barcelona og besluttede sig for at lave en non-verbal, ikke-logisk, kollektiv fysisk aktion for at stille spørgsmålstegn ved den lineære brug af det offentlige rum og dets logik, hvor folk sædvanligvis bevæger sig rationelt fra A til B inden for en fastsat tidsramme.

21. oktober 2005 (s. 16-19)

PAPIR-GAVER TIL FREMMEDE, Carré de Sant Pau, Barcelona

De studerende gav 'papir-gaver til fremmede' for at skabe en intim situation i det kriminelt belastede red light district Carré de Sant Pau. Folk reagerede meget positivt på papirgaverne. Eksempelvis blev en ældre dame så overvældet over de små papirgaver, at hun gav pigen et kys.

21. oktober 2005 (s. 20-21)

FROSNE HANDLINGER, La Rambla, Carré de Sant Pau, Passeig de Garcia, Barcelona

De 12 studerende, alle kvinder, 'fastfrøs' tiden og tempoet i det travle og højfinansielle Passeig de Garcia ved at lave en 'menneskelig grænse' af 'frosne handlinger'. Senere tog de til de prostitueredes gade, Carré de Sant Pau, og endte i det populære turist-område La Rambla. I La Rambla tog folk billeder af pigernes Frosne Handlinger som en street performance

i modsætning til Passeig de Garcia, hvor fodgængerne fuldstændig undgik enhver konfrontation med pigerne. I Carré de Sant Pau var reaktionerne blandede. Nogle hilste glade på pigerne, andre brød aggressivt gennem rækken af piger og var ligeglade med at støde ind i dem.

Creative Actions, New Delhi, Indien

I New Delhi er der bemærkelsesværdigt få kvinder på gaderne om aftenen, og såvel mænd som kvinder er ofte udsat for sexchikane. Dette afspejler et offentligt rum med en stærk hierarkisk orden. Jeg foretog research omkring sexchikane i det offentlige rum gennem filmede interviews som en forberedelse til min *Øjen Aktion* performance. Jeg talte stort set med alle jeg mødte, der var villige til at diskutere sexchikane og personlig frihed med mig. Holdningerne til emner som sexchikane, kønsroller, forældreroller, og bymæssig infrastruktur var overraskende forskellige.

26. februar 2006 (s. 22-23)

SEXCHIKANE, Saheli Help Line, New Delhi

Medlemmer af Saheli Help Line – en kvindeorganisation der bekæmper sexchikane – blev filmet, mens de sang 'kampsange' på gaden. Saheli Help Line-medlemmerne fremførte sangene for kvindelige arbejdere på fabrikker for at oplyse dem om deres rettigheder og for at debattere, hvordan man beskytter sig mod sexchikane.

1. marts 2006 (s. 24-25)

BUSRIDE, Hailey Road til Central Railway Station, New Delhi

Den unge advokat, Astha Arora, blev video-interviewet, mens hun sad i bussen på vej gennem New Delhi. Busserne er nogle af de farligste transportmidler at benytte, hvis man er kvinde i

Delhi, og Arora gav sit bud på, hvordan man kan gøre bussen til et trygt og sikkert sted. Ifølge indisk lov vil en person, der krænker en kvindes blufærdighed, sandsynligvis blive anklaget og måske endda fængslet. Men hvad betyder 'blufærdighed'? Siger loven, at alle kvinder som er blufærdige er under lovens beskyttelse, mens andre ikke er? Begrebet 'blufærdighed' er tydeligvis et redskab til social kontrol af kvinder. "Indiske kvinder forventes at være stille, ikke-aggressive, tolerante...", sagde Astha Arora. Hun fortalte om de gængse restriktioner overfor døtrene i middelklasse-familierne, hvor pigerne opfordres til at klæde sig tækkeligt, og man lader dem ikke færdes på gaden alene om aftenen efter kl. 21. Ligeledes skal de altid være ledsaget af venner eller familie. Sønnerne kan bevæge sig frit, som de har lyst til. Hun fortalte os, at det generelle informationsniveau omkring sexchikane er meget lavt, og at mange piger må bære skylden og anklagerne, som var de selv skyld i, at de blev chikaneret på grund af såkaldt 'ublufærdig' påklædning og opførsel. Hun efterlyste flere kurser i selvforsvar for kvinder, så de bliver gjort opmærksomme på at 'bruge deres egen stemme'. Hun understregede vigtigheden i lige rettigheder til uddannelse for alle, hvis kvinder skal opnå uafhængighed.

3. marts 2006 (s. 26-27)

VOLDTÆGTSKULTUR, CWDS, New Delhi

Ph.d Praktisha Baxi fra Center for Women Development Studies blev video-interviewet på grund af hendes omfattende viden om voldtægtskultur i Delhi. Praktisha Baxi talte om de mange årsager til sexchikane og fremhævede 'misogynisme', eller had til kvinder, som hovedårsagen til sexchikane. Baxi belyste de mange forskellige måder, som sexchikane foregår på – også kendt som 'Eve-teasing' der spænder fra at 'stirre på en pige', til at lave 'en lyd efter pigen' til brutal voldtægt. Hun fortalte om Road Romeos; indiske mænd,

der kører i deres biler og samler piger op på gaden under påskud af at ville bringe dem sikkert hjem, men i stedet voldtager dem. Problemet har især været meget stort i gaderne omkring Delhi University, fordi alle ved, at de kvindelige studerende for det meste er alene og bor på universitetsområdet i byen uden deres familie i nærheden. Praktisha Baxi fortalte os også, at de fleste voldtægter i Delhi begås af mænd fra den indiske middel- og overklasse og altså ikke af mænd fra de lavere sociale lag, selv om de fleste umiddelbart ville tro det modsatte.

4. marts 2006 (s. 28-29)

ØJEN AKTION, South Extension Part II, New Delhi

Jeg gik rundt på South Extension Part II torvet med et tegnet sort og hvidt papir-øje på hvert bryst. Jeg spurgte mændene jeg mødte, hvorfor der ikke var nogen indiske kvinder på gaden, eftersom jeg ville dele ekstra bryst-øjne ud til kvinderne, så de kunne stirre tilbage på mændene. Jeg benyttede mig bevidst af humor og direkte kontakt på gaden for ikke at gøre kulturkløften mellem mænd og kvinder større. Det var ikke afgørende for mig rent faktisk at finde indiske piger på gaden og give dem et ekstra par øjne. Det var langt vigtigere at få mændene til at overveje og forholde sig til, hvad jeg lavede på gaden, og hvorfor der ikke var nogen indiske kvinder. Nogle af mændene fangede pointen – at jeg lavede sjov med, at mænd har tendens til at stirre på pigers bryster. Men kun ganske få mænd var bevidste om deres egen fornærmende opførsel, eller også undlod de simpelthen at tale om det.

Creative Actions, København, Danmark

Da jeg kom tilbage til København, begyndte jeg at se på mit lokale kvarter med nye øjne og bemærkede de usynlige dagligdags grænser mellem mennesker.

1. juni 2006 (s. 30-33)

9 km INTEGRATIONSMANIFEST, Julius Blomsgade, København

Julius Blomsgade, Nørrebro, er et område med en blandet befolkning af indvandrere og ikke-indvandrere. Til daglig er der stort set ingen social kontakt mellem de to grupper. Som et 'integrations-manifest' begyndte 7 unge mennesker at trække 9 km farverige snore omkring 4 byggestolper foran den røde bygning på gaden, hvor hovedparten af de lokale indvandrere bor. Efter kort tid kom indvandrerbørn og -unge ud fra det røde hus og var med til at trække snore indtil de 9 km snor var brugt op, og to timers glæde og udveksling var overstået. Snore-sporet blev hængende i to uger som et visuelt manifest for en usædvanlig integrationshandling.

29. juni – 2. juli 2006 (s. 34-41)

210.000 m KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Fusetown, Roskilde Festival, Roskilde

På Roskilde Festivalen i Danmark skiftede arbejdsrummet for *Creative Actions* fra det offentlige byrum til et kæmpemæssigt masseunderholdnings-rum. I løbet af festivalens 4 dage blev ca. 85.000 festivalgæster inviteret til kollektivt at trække 210.000 meter indpakningssnor i alle regnbuens farver ud i et 'gigantisk kollektivt snore spor' mellem 70 søjler, hver 5 meter høje, på Fusetown Pladsen. De 70 søjler var opstillet i et areal på godt 70x70 meter i et nøjagtigt mønster baseret på et kort over hele festivalen. Før festivalens åbning blev der vævet 'snore-vægge' mellem søjlerne for at markere festivalens forskellige lokaliteter og områder. Snorenes struktur forandrede sig drastisk fra dag til dag og skabte nye rum og nye funktioner som et direkte resultat af festivalgæsternes handlinger og behov: De indtog snor-roller, lavede bungy-jumping, løb om kap, kastede snorene, dansede, vævede snor-mønstre,

hvilede sig i snor-hængekøjer, hoppede i snor-trampoliner eller hang ud og bare nød *Kollektive Snore Spor*-atmosfæren.

13. oktober 2006 (s. 42-43)

LET THE TIGER OUT Metro Vanløse St. – Metro Amagerbro St., København

I den københavnske Metro på strækningen Vanløse Station og Amagerbro Station udførte 5 performere (Maria Werger, Cecilia Palmgren, Mille Rude og Karl McIlquham Schmidt og jeg) i dyrelignende kostumer *Let The Tiger Out*. Vi involverede alle forbigående i en leg med 1500 papir-lusesmækere. Lusesmækkerne stillede tvetydige spørgsmål til metropassagererne såsom: Hvor skal du af? Hvor skal du hen? Hvad skal vi gøre? Er du faret vild? Hvordan skal det hele gå? Hvad vil du gerne se?

Creative Actions, Bairro Surubi Resende, Brasilien

I en lille nation som Danmark hvor fremmedhadet er stigende, og hvor immigrations- og tredjeverdenspolitikken bliver mere og mere rigid, er det ekstremt vigtigt at producere kulturelle modsætninger. I efteråret 2006 tog jeg til Brasilien i 4 måneder for at lave *Creative Actions* i samarbejde med Associacao de Moradores da Surubi/Borgerorganisationen for Bairro Surubi i Resende syd for Rio de Janeiro. Jeg gjorde det med det klare formål at skabe visuelle kunstproduktioner i tæt samarbejde med 'lokale brasiliannere som en fremmed', for at lære af dette tredjeverdenslands sociale og æstetiske kultur og bringe erfaringerne med mig tilbage til Danmark.

17. – 19. november 2006 (s. 44-45)

VIS OS VEJENE TIL DEMOKRATI, II Forum Social Regional do Vale do Paraiba, Resende

Jeg blev indbudt til at lave 'et maleri' til udstilling på forum for '*Inclusão e solidariedade/Integration og Solidaritet*' ved 2nd Fórum Social Regional do vale do Paraíba – Resende 2006'. Jeg blev inviteret som en fremmed fra et førsteverdensland, og jeg bad den lokale kunstner Walber Da Silva om at deltage i projektet. Vi blev enige om at gøre maleriet til et visuelt manifest over den nuværende korruption i dette område af Brasilien. Vi installerede lærredet og trak 2400 meter snore spor i parken ved siden af *tent of ideas/tenta ideas* med en invitation til alle i Resende og især lokalpolitikerne: *Mostre nos os caminhos da democracia / Show us the ways to democracy*.

15. – 19. januar 2007 (s. 46-49)

23 m KOLLEKTIV MURMALERI – HVAD ER DIN DRØM?, Bairro Surubi, Resende

Et kollektivt murmaleri blev arrangeret i Bairro Surubi over 5 dage. I begyndelsen var børn og unge de mest ivrige deltagere. På den femte dag sluttede mange voksne sig også til maleriet, og børnenes familier kom forbi for at beundre arbejdet. TV RIO SUL kom forbi på den sjette dag om morgenen, og borgerorganisationen og jeg forsøgte bevidst at udnytte det til at skabe positiv opmærksomhed omkring Bairro Surubi-området. Medieopmærksomheden tiltrak folk fra rådhuset i Resende, som normalt ignorerer forstaden med den lave status og de lave indkomster både politisk og økonomisk. De var ret overraskede. Tilbage i Danmark holdt jeg kontakten med indbyggerne i Surubi og Associacao de Moradores da Surubi. I marts 2007 begyndte myndighederne i Surubi at asfaltere hovedgaderne i Surubi. Et lille, men vigtigt fremskridt for den oversete lavstatus-forstad! I januar 2008 blev vægmaleriet fjernet efter krav fra skolebestyrelsen. Folk i Bairro Surubi blev rasende. Skolebestyrelsen bekendtgjorde, at muren snarest ville blive malet gul.

26. januar – 7. marts 2007 (s. 50-55)

MIN DRØM ER ET BADEVÆRELSE MED SPEJL, Bairro Surubi, Resende

I samarbejde med Associacao de Moradores og den lokale kunstner Walber da Silva Barboza, iværksatte jeg en 40 dage lang genopbygning af den ældste villa i Bairro Surubi. Huset var 60 år gammelt og havde hverken kloakering, toilet eller elektricitet. Vægge, gulve og tag var i forfald og fulde af skimmelsvamp. Genopbygningssprojektet skulle baseres på 'Selv-organisering, genbrug, samarbejde og assistance'. Alle familiemedlemmer, venner og bekendte skulle hjælpe til for at skabe en stigende kollektiv energi. Jeg skulle også tage del i det fysiske arbejde, så meget de lokale kønsroller tillod det, og levere materialer og betale de professionelle bygningsarbejdere. Denne 'casa-recuperacao' var også et lærerigt projekt for de unge mennesker. Svigersønnen tilegnede sig basale bygge-evner undervejs. Begge døtre blev oplyst om sundhedsfarer og hygiejne, mens husets indre blev rengjort. De lærte også en del om indretning og indendørs vedligeholdelse ved at renovere tekøkkenet. Undervejs i processen lavede jeg og Amarante T. Souza en 'House Recovery' dokumentar. På den sidste aften blev alle, der havde deltaget i projektet, inviteret til at se filmen. Husets to døtre og deres venner klædte sig ud og lavede et band til lejligheden: *Sabryna e Bandidos*. At kunne invitere venner over og ind i huset var en hel ny mulighed for familien. Nu havde de deres eget hus!

Creative Actions, Esbjerg, Danmark

Mens jeg stadig var i Brasilien, blev jeg inviteret til at udføre et *Kollektive Snore Spor* i Danmark i Esbjerg Kunstmuseums indgangsparti og på torvet i Esbjerg. Afstanden mellem kontinenterne inspirede mit arbejde.

27. marts 2007 (s. 56-57)

5 km KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Esbjerg

Der blev brugt bomuldssnor fra Brasilien suppleret med dansk snor i et forsøg på at væve vibrationer fra Brasilien ind i Esbjergs offentlige rum. Esbjergensere, der kom forbi Esbjerg Torv den 27. marts kl. 15, blev opfordret til at trække farverige snore til kollektive spor – som formgav og markerede det offentlige rum visuelt. Når snorene blev trukket i nye retninger, ændrede strukturen sig gradvist, og nye rum og nye muligheder for alternative ruter og alternative møder blev skabt.

10. februar – 13. maj 2007 (s. 58-59)

TRÆK SPOR MED SNOR TIL ORD, Esbjerg Kunstmuseum

Gæsterne på Esbjerg Kunstmuseum blev inviteret til at trække snore på tværs af indgangsrummet. Gæsterne kunne rent bogstaveligt forbinde og sammenbinde stedordene 'Jeg, Du, Han, Hun, Vi, De, Mig, Dig, Ham, Hende, Os, Dem' ved at trække farverige snore til sætninger og udtrykke flydende bevægelser. På denne måde spredtes de glade aktioner henover verdens kontinenter og dækkede væggenes by- og gadenavne, hvor tidligere Creative Actions havde fundet sted. Således blev der vævet *Kollektive Snore Spor* på tværs af rummet ud fra gæsternes bevægelser med snorene, og det fungerede også som en kropsbevidsthedsgrænse, som gæsterne måtte passere, før de kunne komme ind på museet. De måtte foretage et bevidst valg om enten at gå ind på kunstmuseet med dets anderledes konventioner og adfældsregler, eller vende om.

Creative Actions, New York, USA

Jeg inviterede Jasmine Zimmerman, en amerikansk kunstner fra Seattle, til at samarbejde om *Kollektive Snore Spor* i New York City.

Vi ville tilbyde befolkningen en fælles kreativ oplevelse. Lokale og fremmede i NYC blev inviteret til at deltage i '21.000 m Collective Strings NYC' med lokaliteter i 4 forskellige parker og pladser i New York City. Vi ville således skabe en selv-organiseret *Kollektive Snore Spor NYC* festival, der kunne bevæge sig gennem byen og dække Brooklyn og Manhattan. I NYC opfandt jeg en metode til *Kollektive Snore Spor* ud fra erfaringerne i de andre byer. Først hænges et tykt grundlinje-reb højt op i de eksisterende by-elementer (træer, gadelygter, vandrør og lign.) for at udgøre formen på et grund-område. Herefter placerer man flere ruller med snor til de lokale beboere og til forbipasserende, således at snorene kan trækkes mellem grundlinjerne og by-elementerne. Nogle gange starter jeg selv med at trække snore og inviterer folk til at være med, andre gange overlader jeg initiativet til folk selv. Når *Kollektive Snore Spor* tages ned igen, bliver det foræret til forbipasserende eller lokale institutioner. For eksempel endte det fra Mccarren Park som en kæmpestor *Snore Gulvpude* på en lokal skole i Brooklyn, New York.

12. maj 2007 (s. 60-61)

KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR NYC, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, New York

I Prospect Park fandt *Kollektive Snore Spor NYC* sted spontant uden nogen form for officiel tilladelse. Et bestemt område blev udvalgt pga. dets forskellige stier til forbipasserende og gode lygtepæle og træer til etablering af 'grundlinjen'. Mens grundlinjen blev etableret, spurgte forbipasserende hvad der foregik, og de blev straks inviteret til at deltage. Performancen afspejlede den offentlige brug af parken. Brooklyn-forældre tager deres børn med i denne park, så forældre-barn relationer samt relationer børn imellem blev afspejlet i *Kollektive Snore Spor NYC*. Som børn, der lærer deres

forældre at være til stede og være nærværende igen og løsne op gennem en leg. Politiet kom forbi i bil, og på grund af alle de glade børn der var med, ville de ikke stoppe aktionen, hvis vi bare huskede at rydde op bagefter.

13 maj 2007 (s. 62-67)

KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR NYC, McCarren Park, Brooklyn, New York

McCarren Park i Brooklyn blev valgt, fordi den ligger i et område med stor social og kulturel diversitet. Denne gang indhentede vi tilladelse til at bruge parken og dens elementer, såsom træer og bænke, til *Kollektive Snore Spor NYC*. Vi sendte invitationer til New Yorkerne via Improveeverywhere's (Charlie Todd's) enorme emailliste. Adskillige hundrede mennesker deltog og opdagede de forskellige stadier af fysisk og følelsesmæssig intensitet, mens de viklede hinanden ind i snore, stod ovenpå hinanden iført string webs, legede stille og roligt og hang ud. Vi fandt ud af, at *Kollektive Snore Spor NYC* ikke var en uskyldig leg. Det tog mere end to måneder med emails og telefonopringninger fra Brasilien og København at få tilladelse til at bruge parken. Vi havde ansøgt om tilladelse til at benytte tre andre parker på Manhattan, men blev afvist fordi myndighederne ikke ville løbe risikoen ved at for mange mennesker ville samles for at deltage i vores aktion.

20. maj 2007 (s. 68-69)

KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR NYC, Central Park, Manhattan, New York

I Central Park blev *Kollektive Snore Spor* trukket på den grønne bakke ved siden af Naumberg Bandshell på dagen for 'Aids walk' som en hyldest til livet. Det kan tage op til 20 år at få en parktilladelse

til en kunstinstitution (inklusive kortvarige installationer) i Central Park, og de fleste ansøgninger bliver afvist. Derfor besluttede vi os for at tage derhen, gøre det og rydde op bagefter. Da grundlinjerebet var sat op mellem træerne begyndte folk straks at trække spor med snor om grundlinje-formen, tids nok til at personalet fra Central Park Conservatory kom forbi, hvilket var forudsat. Jeg forhandlede med dem og fik lov til at udføre aktionen i 15 minutter. (Tidsfristen blev forlænget med 25 minutter + 15 minutter til at komme i gang = i alt 40 minutter).

27. maj 2007 (s. 70-73)

KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR NYC, Union Square, Manhattan, New York

Union Square midt på Manhattan er kendt som New Yorks mindeplads for revolutionen. Sammen med vores fælles ven og fotograf, Geo Geller, hentede vi vores nye ven, kunstneren James Kusel, på 104 st. Rockaway Beach og tog hen til pladsen. Midt på Union Square satte James sig i en liggestol på et håndklæde, præcis som hvis han var på stranden. Som en intro til *Kollektive Snore Spor* bandt Jasmine og jeg snorene fast bag på James' liggestol lige under hans hoved, trak dem ud i det offentlige rum og bandt dem fast til eksisterende by-elementer. Vi forestillede os, at vi trak tanker ud af James' hoved. Union Square var en meget anderledes oplevelse, fordi det var aften og ingen børn deltog. En mand fik udtrykt sig i lang tid inde i nettet – fangede andre folk i snorene, hvorefter han endelig fangede sig selv og rullede rundt i snorene.

Creative Actions, København, Danmark

Da jeg kom hjem fra New York City i sommeren 2007 inviterede jeg Jasmine Zimmerman til København for at arbejde på *Kollektive Snore Spor* og for at opleve forskellen mellem atmosfæren i Kol-

lektive Snore Spor i New Yorks byrum og i Københavns byrum. Byrumstransformationen i København blev planglagt som et 5-dages forløb på samme plads for at kunne afspejle og vise deltagernes forskellige kreative faser i dette byområde gennem forandringerne i det Kollektive Snore Spor.

I. – 5. august 2007 (s. 74-77)

40 km KOLLEKTIVE SNORE SPOR, Enghave Plads, København

Enghave Plads blev midlertidigt forvandlet fra et overset rum, et tilholdssted primært befolket af fulde mennesker og skatere, til et Snore Spor og en fælles legeplads. I løbet af ganske kort tid bredte *Kollektive Snore Spor* sig henover pladsen takket være lokale forbipasserende. Hver dag kom nye folk forbi og legede med snorene, skabte nye formationer, mønstre og lege, både alene og med hinanden. En lokal fyr kom med seks af sine hjemmelavede grønne genbrugs-hængekøjer og satte dem op i træerne ved siden af *Kollektive Snore Spor*, så alle kunne bruge dem og nyde godt af dem. Vesterbro Lokal-tv dækkede begivenheden og inviterede den lokale befolkning til at deltage. Midtvejs i processen holdt vi en fest for at fejre byrummet. Sent lørdag aften rev en gruppe fulde unge nettet fuldstændig fra hinanden. Det var en fin afslutning på gadelaboratoriet – en afspejling af områdets natteliv.

II. september 2007 (s. 78-83)

21.6 km LEDETRÅDE, Frihavnen, København

21.600 m snore blev ført gennem Frihavnen i løbet af 11 timers rituel forvandling af det arkitektoniske havnebyrum. Cirka 500 borgere deltog i et borgermøde om Nordhavns udvikling som byrum og fulgte de ledende snore fra indgangen til Frihavnen og til møde-

III

salen. I den næststørste hal (efter mødesalen) trak jeg snore spor mellem hallens arkitektoniske elementer. Jeg ville se, hvor langt jeg kunne nå rundt i hallen ved at kaste én snor (bundet fast til en plastikflaske fyldt med sand) højt op og rundt om loftskonstruktionerne og lade den falde ned igen. Derefter videre til det næste punkt i hallen og kaste snoren igen mod et nyt perspektiv. De farverige snore spor antog form af et visuelt manifest, der fremhævede menneskelig kapacitet og bevægelse som et af de vigtigste parametre for byplanlægning. Det var en rituel forvandling af arkitekturen i den menneskelige krops skala.

30. maj – 28. juni 2008 (s. 84-89)

43 km JUNGLERANKER, Tiendeladen, Aalborg

I en gammel, smal gade midt i Aalborg voksede farverige *Jungleranker* mellem bygningerne. Bilerne kunne ikke passere, og folk måtte finde nye måder at komme gennem gaden på. Forbipasserende kravlede, svang sig, hang og gyngede i *Junglerankerne*. Jungleloven tog over for en tid og efterlod et rum skabt til forskellige legende og glade måder at være sammen på. Det var en transformation af byrummets arkitektur og af brugen af den, som varede én måned.

1. juli – 8. september 2008 (s. 90-93)

80 km JUNGLERANKER, Nørrebro Markedsplads, København

I lidt over to måneder voksede et stykke jungle frem på Nørrebro i København. Det var *Jungleranker*, som krydsede på tværs imellem Markedspladsens største mure. Hver ranke var stærk nok til at både voksne, unge og børn svang sig og gyngede i *Junglen*. Alle som havde lyst kunne bevæge og flette videre på Junglen. Jeg fulgte processen nøje, og tog så vidt muligt billeder af folks reaktioner og påfund undervejs; lige fra en hængekøjlignende struktur som

tog form, til glædesudbrud og sving i rankerne, og til en aften hvor nogle unge havde skåret en lille del af Junglen ned. Det var forventet, da mange af dem går med kniv. Det værste ville være hvis de slet ikke reagerede. Rankerne blev bundet sammen igen på nye måder. Børn og unge lavede flere *Jungleranker*, og tegnede med kridt på pladsen. Når der var markedsdag blev der hængt tasker og andet til salg op i rankerne. Gennem lidt over 2 måneder var *Junglerankerne* således under konstant forandring og bevægelse fra lokale og andre interesserede. Ændringerne i rankerne vidner om netop byrummets forskellige borgere og kreativitetens forskellige faser: Skabelse, ødelæggelse, gen-skabelse, ødelæggelse, gen-skabelse etc. Byrummets arkitektur blev midlertidigt transformeret gennem Junglerankernes tilbud til folk om at bevæge sig og udfolde sig på nye måder. På den måde eksperimenterede *Jungleranker* med at skabe offentligt rum til såvel konstruktive som destruktive handlinger, som en 'naturlig' og uundgåelig del af den kollektive kreativitet folk udfolder i byrummene.

RUMMETS (U)ORGANISERING

*Det er impulsivt og forunderligt – skaber en pludselig oplevelse og sætter nye tanker i gang. Sådan lød en af de mange publikumskommentarer til Karoline H. Larsens værk, *Træk spor med snor til ord*, som var del af udstillingen *Spor* på Esbjerg Kunstmuseum i 2007.*

Placeret i indgangen til museet fungerede hendes interaktive og foranderlige værk som et 'mellemrum', der markerede, at man nu trådte ind i en anden zone, et sted med alternative spilleregler og nye refleksionsmuligheder. Mødet med værket fik imidlertid mange museumsgæster til at vende om og gå tilbage til billetsalget. Kunne det virkelig passe, at man skulle forcere endeløse baner af farvestrålende snor for at komme ind på museet? Ja, publikum skulle ikke alene stemme sindet på ny. De skulle også rent kropsligt agere på en ny og uvant måde i mødet med værket. Snorene forbandt pronominer på én væg med sætningsfragmenter på en anden, og i løbet af udstillingsperioden blev de trukket på kryds og tværs af rummet af museumsgæsterne selv. Således kunne alle være med til at skabe meninger og sammenhænge, enten ved at danne nye sætninger i forlængelse af de allerede eksisterende sætninger eller ved at trevle betydninger op og erstatte dem med nye. Væggen med sætningsfragmenterne dannede et imaginært kort – en dobbelteksponering af et verdenskort og et bykort. New Delhi, København, Barcelona, Cape

Town, Spangsbjerg Møllevej, Storegade, Strandby Kirkevej, stod der blandt andet. Således forbandt Karoline H. Larsen ikke alene Esbjerg med den store verden. Hun forbandt også værkets og stedets 'her og nu' med alle de andre steder, hvor hun tidligere havde realiseret værker og gennemført happenings under projektet *Creative Actions*.

CREATIVE ACTIONS

Creative Actions er Karoline H. Larsens betegnelse for en lang række aktioner, der direkte inddrager folk og engagerer dem i deres egen by på nye, medskabende måder. Værket på museet blev derfor naturligt suppleret af en happening på Torvet i Esbjerg, hvor fem kilometer snor i forskellige farver for en eftermiddag fuldstændig ændrede stedet og den måde, folk normalt plejer at færdes på.

Karoline H. Larsen har realiseret lignende happenings rundt omkring i verden, hvor hun har ændret folks færden ved lade dem trække snore på kryds og tværs af offentligt befærdede rum, bla. i København, Cape Town, på Roskildefestivalen og i New York. Hun har desuden gennem andre kreative aktionsformer problematiseret kvinders sikkerhed i New Delhi, foretaget 'lighedstjek' i Cape Town post apartheid og sat fokus på indbyggernes vilkår og fattigdom i Surubi, Brasilien. Med *Creative Actions* stiller Karoline H. Larsen på forskellige måder spørgsmål til de uskrevne og vanebaserede regler, der eksisterer for, hvordan vi færdes i det offentlige rum.

Hvordan ville det fx være at bo i en by, hvor flere mennesker udførte anderledes og kreative handlinger? Ville det mon ændre ved folks opførsel? Ville det ændre ved deres måde at tænke på? Ved indirekte at konfrontere os med disse spørgsmål og udfordre os til at agere anderledes end normalt, får kunstneren os til at skabe nye rum og nye funktioner i byen. Hun inddrager os på den måde i en social, lystfyldt 'leg', der får os til at bryde fasttømrede, kollektive vaner eller kodekser og så at sige opdage det offentlige rum på ny.

BESKUEREN SOM MEDSKABER

Karoline H. Larsens *Creative Actions* udfolder sig i feltet mellem handling og interaktivitet. Værkerne er på den ene side knyttet til bestemte handlinger, som enten går forud for det fysiske værk eller simpelthen udgør selve værket. Selvom disse handlinger er orkestreret af kunstneren, er det på den anden side ikke kunstneren selv, der udfører dem. Det er i stedet tilfældige mennesker, som gennem deres bevægelser og måder at agere på afsætter de spor, som kunstneren bygger sit værk op omkring. Der er således tale om værker, der har beskueren som medskabere, og på den måde opstår der en vital forbindelse mellem beskuer, værk og kunstner. Værket får nemlig kun indhold og form i et socialt rum, når beskueren involverer sig og deltager aktivt. Gennem sine værker synes Karoline H. Larsen altså på en meget direkte måde at stille en række spørgsmål, dels til den sociale og politiske virkelighed, der omgiver os, og dels til, hvad det overho-

vedet vil sige at skabe kunst. Hendes værker består af ud-sagn uden materiel eller blivende form. De fungerer som åbne og foranderlige tegn, der kræver en aktiv beskuer mellemkomst, og på den måde er de traditionelle roller og forestillinger om værket, kunstneren og beskueren også faldet bort. I stedet sætter kunstnerens aktioner spørgsmålstejn ved, hvor og hvordan kunst bliver til og udfordrer samtidig forestillingen om, at værket er afsluttet, når en form for kunstnerisk proces er tilendebragt.

BEGYNDELSEN

Med *Creative Actions* er det altså især de offentlige, urbane rum, kunstneren har interesseret sig for. Det begyndte imidlertid med mere klassiske værker i gallerirummet, og ser man på Karoline H. Larsens forskellige værker retrospektivt, udgør eksperimenterne i netop gallerirummet en logisk forudsætning for aktionerne i byrummet.

I 2001 sprængte Karoline H. Larsen for alvor maleriets grænser og lod bogstavelig talt sine værker invadere rummet. Med væggene som lærred organiserede hun en på én gang virkelig og alternativ rumlighed, hvor farvede bånd (eller imaginære snore, om man vil), bredte sig ud over væggene. Alt efter beskuerens position udgjorde disse bånd enten et perfekt perspektiv med ét forsvindingspunkt eller en forstyrrende rumlig forskydning. Perceptionen af rummet og dets organisering – eller mangel på samme – var bundet til betragterens synsvinkel og kropslige ageren, og således pegede Karoline H. Larsen

på, at vores omgivelser ikke alene udspringer af forskellige, vedtagne konstruktioner. Vi er til stadighed selv med til at organisere og konstruere de rum, vi færdes i. De første skridt uden for gallerirummet blev taget i Skive Skov i 2002, hvor kunstneren for første gang med snorene som rekvisitter afsøgte det åbne rums muligheder og sine egne bevægelser i det. Assistens Kirkegård var næste stop, men rumundersøgelserne blev stadig foretaget af kunstneren alene indtil 2005, hvor de store, kollektive aktioner blev iværksat. Siden er det offentlige byrum også blevet afsøgt som arkitektonisk rum og rumeksperimenterne udbygget til at omfatte det digitale rum, senest i forbindelse med *Urbanartscape*.

I MELLEMRUMMET

Fænomenet 'rum' har således altid været et omdrejningspunkt for Karoline H. Larsens praksis. Igen og igen har hun afsøgt og udfordret dets betydninger, muligheder og begrænsninger med afsæt i, hvordan vi som mennesker afkoder og forholder os til de rum, vi færdes i.

Med projektet i Esbjerg i 2007 vendte Karoline H. Larsen atter tilbage til gallerirummet. *Træk spor med snor til ord* var skabt specielt til Esbjerg Kunstmuseum og fungerede parallelt med kunstnerens andre snorehappenings, men det havde samtidig karakter af en slags status-statement. Det pegede nemlig både fremad og tilbage. Det udgjorde et logisk bindeled mellem Karoline H. Larsens forskellige projekter, mellem organisering og kaos, mellem værk

og proces, mellem det lokale og det globale, mellem institution og borger og ikke mindst mellem kunstrum og byrum. Larsen bevægede sig så at sige på kanten af både det institutionelle og det urbane rum, i mellemrummet mellem de forskellige rumlige former, hun primært arbejder med og i. En vigtig pointe i forhold til Karoline H. Larsens kunstneriske praksis er samtidig, at hendes udfordring af et traditionelt kunstbegreb hverken udfoldes som en gængs protest, hvor kunstneren definerer sig selv og sit værk i modsætning til det bestående, eller som et ønske om at overskride én type rum til fordel for en anden. Museumsrummet og byrummet er ikke hinandens modsætninger. De er blot to typer offentlige rum med hver deres organisering og sociale betydning.

De nyeste ideer, som kunstneren har i støbeskeen, indebærer, at aktionerne i byrummet i hvert fald for en tid erstattes med værker og statements, der finder sted inden for museumsinstitutionens rammer. Spørgsmålet er, om bevægelsen fra det urbane rum tilbage til gallerirummet vil ændre forholdet mellem værk og proces i Larsens praksis. Hvilken værkkarakter vil projekterne i kunstinstitutionen få i forhold til de happenings, vi møder på gaden? Hvad betyder eksperimenterne ude i byens rum for værkerne inde i kunstinstitutionen? Hvordan kommer forholdene fra det offentlige, sociale rum til at præge både produktionen og perceptionen af de nye værker? Og hvordan vil erfaringerne fra de forskellige rumlige kontekster spille ind? Disse spørgsmål finder sandsynlig-

vis aldrig et entydigt svar, da det for Larsen netop gælder om at holde kategorierne og dermed mulighederne åbne. Og ved således at trodse de gængse, rumlige regler og konfrontere os med det tilsyneladende uorganiserede, organiserer Karoline H. Larsen rummet på ny, så nye betydninger og adfærdsformer opstår.

Christiane Mosegaard Finsen
Museumsinspektør, mag.art.

AT VENDE OP OG NED PÅ SIG SELV – OG AT KOMME HINANDEN VED!

Samtale mellem kropsterapeut, psykolog og specialist i psykotraumatologi, Ulla Rung Weeke, billedkunstner Karoline H. Larsen og Cand.litt Cecilie Høgsbro.

Cecilie Høgsbro og jeg (Karoline H. Larsen) tog op til Ulla Rung Weeke i Espergærde, Danmark en forårsdag for at diskutere *Creative Actions*, kunst og kreativitet, ud fra en biokemisk og traumatologisk synsvinkel. Ulla Rung Weeke er dansk kropsterapeut, psykolog og specialist i psykotraumatologi. I mit arbejde med *Creative Actions* har jeg især været inspireret af mine møder med Ulla, hvor jeg gennem 12 år har besøgt hendes praksis efter eget behov i et kropsterapeutisk behandlingsforløb. *Creative Actions* baserer jeg bl.a på mine erfaringer med kropsterapi. Terapi har skærpet min opmærksomhed over for egne kropslige signaler og følelser og det 'sociale ræsonnerende felt', som jeg mener, vi alle er forbundet i gennem vores sanser.

Cand.litt Cecilie Høgsbro inviterede jeg med på turen, fordi hun kan sætte mit arbejde med *Creative Actions* i forhold til en kunstverden. Hun siger "Ved at blande terapeutiske erfaringer med kunstnerisk praksis bryder du et årelangt tabu inden for den professionelle kunstverden. Samtidig gør du op med ideen om politisk kunst som et fortrinsvis intellektuelt eller kritisk forehavende, idet du insisterer på kroppens nærvær som en grundlæg-

gende forudsætning for politisk og samfundsøkonomisk forandring.” Her kommer et redigeret uddrag af vores samtale, og først en introduktion til Ulla’s speciale:

PSYKOTRAUMETOLOGI

Ulla Rung Weeke har speciale i psykotraumatologi og har især arbejdet med psykosomatik, det vil sige sammenhængen mellem kroppen, nerve- og hormonsystemets tilstand og erindringer og udviklingen af kroniske lidelser. Weeke baserer en stor del af sit arbejde på ny biokemisk forskning, der i dag gør det muligt – også på et videnskabeligt grundlag – at forstå forskellige følelser, og traumer som mere end rene psykiske fænomener.

Ifølge Weeke kan et traume forstås på et basalt biologisk niveau som en kropslig mangel på bevægelighed. “Et traume er et fastlåst chok,” forklarer hun, “der har sat sig som en biokemisk fastlåsthed eller stivnethed i kroppen. Psykotraumatologi består i, gennem forskellige former for reguleringer og bevægelse, at løse op for denne stivnethed. Formålet er at skabe nye ‘spor’ i nerve- og biokemien, det vil sige åbne nye veje, kroppen og bevidstheden kan bevæge sig ad, så den igen bliver robust og bevægelig.”

Rung Weeke sammenligner sin praksis med et begreb fra arkitekturen, ‘tensegrity’, der refererer til forholdet eller integrationen af spænding og tryk i en bygning. Begge dele skal indgå i et synergetisk forhold til hinanden. “Byg-

ger man et hus, skal hver del af huset kunne bevæge sig sådan, at kommer der et tryk fra eksempelvis nordsiden, skal resten af huset, fundament, tagkonstruktion osv., kunne give sig. Tilsvarende med en krop, hvis du trykker på håndleddet, bør det være sådan, at alle led og knoglestrukturer, muskler, facier, bindevæv og nervesystem kan give sig, således at trykket forplanter sig ud gennem kroppen og bliver mindre og mindre og til sidst bare er ekko. Vi er grundlæggende skabt med denne bevægelighed, denne tensegrity, men ting som kronisk stress, chok og traumer fastlåser os og koster mange kropspenge. Det går ud over vores mentale og fysiske sundhed.”

CREATIVE ACTIONS – NYE SPOR I BIOKEMIEN

Vi spurgte Rung Weeke: Hvordan ser du som krisepsykolog på kunstprojekter som *Creative Actions* i forhold til dette at påvirke folk kropsligt og forbedre deres livsrum?

“Det, der er så spændende med netop Karolines snorehappenings,” siger Weeke, “er den form for bevægelighed, du tilbyder folk. Den betyder, at folk kommer til at gøre en hel masse andet end de plejer at gøre med sig. *Creative Actions* er naturligvis ikke terapi, men gennem kunstprojekter som dette kan man oplagt tilbyde folk andre måder at agere på, at bevæge sig på, se på tingene på og derved ændre deres perception. Når man opfordrer dem til at vende op og ned på sig selv, påvirker man ikke mindst deres opfattelse af sig selv og derved også af andre.

Man giver med andre ord folk nye spor i deres biokemi. Når man på den måde tilbyder folk nye spor forekommer det dem, rent erfaringsmæssigt, enten vældig truende eller vældig nyt og dejligt. Der vil være mennesker, som i kroppen har fleksibilitet og som tør være kreative med sig selv, som kan bevæge sig, kan forandre sig, som tør mærke 'hov, det gjorde noget ved mig det her'. Mens hvis man er traumatiseret og stivnet, så bliver man begrænset i sin bevægelsesfrihed og man bliver hurtigt bange og stresset.

Creative Actions er ikke en behandlingsform, men en invitation til noget. Til at se at der er en anden mulighed. Det er som at så et frø. Det kan være, at der er nogle mennesker som fanger det, og tænker Gud, det var fuldstændig anderledes det her. Nu skal jeg altså begynde at gå til pilates eller stunt eller jeg skal lære at stå på hoved, eller jeg må hellere gå i terapi, eller jeg skal til at drikke appelsinsaft efter frokost. Det kommer an på, hvordan de griber den inde i deres eget system. Og så vil der være nogen, som det slet ikke virker på, fordi de er et andet sted."

DET KROPSLØSE SAMFUND

Så er spørgsmålet hvordan man kan forstå dette personlige niveau i forhold til det fælles åndshistoriske plan i samfundet. Hvordan påvirker de samfundsmæssige superstrukturer, som politiske, religiøse og filosofiske ideer så vores forhold til kroppen? Kan bestemte samfundsværdier være kollektivt traumatiserende?

“Hvis man ser lidt mere åndshistorisk på det,” siger Weeke, “er vi påvirket af arven fra Descartes. Descartes’ fejltagelse bestod i at han, i kraft af han både var læge og kardinal, fik en uheldig aftale med biskoppen. Han fik alle de her kroppe, som han gerne måtte undersøge og dissekere, men han fik samtidig, at vide at han skulle forstå sig i at lede efter sjælen, fordi det var kirkens område. Han skulle slet ikke pille ved det. På sin vis er det, om ikke andet så lidt humoristisk, begyndelsen til den fraspaltning/dissociering der er fundet sted imellem hoved og kroppen. Vi lader, som om kroppen ikke findes.”

“Tendensen er i dag, at i både mit fag og mange andres fag, også kunstens, er det ofte kropsløst!” siger Weeke og fortsætter “Det bliver for mig uinteressant. Der er ikke sanselighed på en måde, så jeg tænker, det her er dejligt og inspirerende. Vi er på sin vis blevet et samfund, en del af en verden, hvor vi tænker vores liv. Vi har konstruktioner i vores hoved, men vi er holdt op med at lytte til den sanselighed og magi, der er i kroppen. Kroppen fortæller os noget hele tiden. I virkeligheden er det sanseligheden, der fortæller os om vi vil være raske eller syge. Og når vi ikke lytter, og i stedet konstruerer og på den måde ofte kommer længere og længere væk fra os selv og derved hinanden, så bliver vi nemmere syge. Når vi til gengæld begynder at lytte og også tager de kropslige signaler alvorligt – i virkeligheden prøver at knække den kode, der er inde i hver eneste sanselige biokemi – så begynder vi processen mod at blive hele, raske, stærke

og veltilpasse mennesker igen. Det er det, jeg ser hver dag i min klinik.”

Ulla Rung Weeke mener, at denne grundlæggende kropsløshed afspejles samfundsmæssigt i både kulturprodukter som film, billedkunst og litteratur og i de samfundsmæssige institutioner som sundhedsvæsenet, skolevæsenet, ja selv nationaløkonomien. Ganske vist er der en stor bevidsthed om denne kropsløshed, men den forekommer at være rent retorisk og hypotetisk. Som hun siger: “I mange fag er der ganske vist rigtig mange, der snakker om kroppen. Men de er ikke altid nærværende i den. De har de rigtige ord, men hvis nærværet ikke rigtig er der så opstår forvirring, tomhed og en ensomhed i kontakten med det andet menneske. Det er meget tydeligt sammen med børn. Vi kommer simpelthen ikke hinanden ved i ordets allerdybeste betydning.”

Men hvad vil det konkret sige at komme andre folk ved? Hvordan mener du at kunst rent faktisk bliver relevant for andre end afsenderen?

“Karoline’s snorehappenings er et ganske godt eksempel”, siger Ulla og fortsætter, “Det der er så genialt ved det med snorene er, at det ikke er en ‘hovedting’. Man kan ikke hæfte noget på dem, for man er simpelthen nødt til at mærke det. Karoline har ikke sat et teoretisk koncept op og hendes intention er ikke intellektuel. Den er til gengæld tydelig kropsligt. Det betyder, at man ikke kan gå hen og blive optaget af at hæfte en masse intellektuelt på

snorene, man er nødt til at mærke ideen. Det er dér, der bliver tilbudt nye spor. Hvis man kan gå ind i det og mærke Karolines intention og blive nysgerrig og ville være med, så bliver man tilbudt en helt ny måde... det der er så fantastisk er jo, at kroppen/biokemien hele tiden ændrer sig og der dannes nye nervebaner hele tiden, også mens vi sidder her. Det holder aldrig op. Vi skal bare være vågne og opmærksomme. Og det er vi ikke. Det gør os rigtig syge, kede af det, triste og deprimerede. På apotekerne tonser de smertemedicin og anti-depressive over disken til over halvdelen af Danmarks befolkning. Vi orker ikke at mærke os selv og vores iboende signaler.”

SPEJLNEURONER

Noget tyder altså på at menneskelig tilfredshed hænger sammen med dybere oplevelser af ‘kropslighed’ og ‘nærvær’. Kan man beskrive hvad *Creative Actions* gør ved folk ud fra nyere biokemisk og neurologisk forskning?

Det mener Ulla Rung Weeke og hun fortæller, “Vi har biologiske, medfødte strukturer til at indgå i social kontakt/en interaktion med et andet væsen, eller de andre derude. Vores evne til at overleve specielt de første år af vores liv og tilknytning afhænger af at vi kan spejle, imitere og afstemme os med de andre. Det er sådan, vi er skabt. Vi er skabt til at fornemme den andens intention og hvad de gør derovre. En af disse medfødte strukturer kaldes for præmotoriske neuroner – spejlneuroner. Det er bla. de spejlneuroner, vi benytter os af,

når vi går over en vej. Uden at være helt bevidst om det, så ved vi på et kropsligt plan, hvor de andre kroppe er i fodgængerfeltet, og vi ved også om den bil kører eller ej. Den orientering vi har i kroppen er også den vi benytter os af, når vi laver sådan en leg som Karolines snoretræk. Vi er en hel masse kroppe, som bla. orienterer os via vores sanser og spejlneuroner og som finder ud af, hvad vi skal gøre for ikke at bumpe ind i hinanden eller for ikke at skade hinanden. Det er samme evne, vi bruger for at være tilstrækkelig territoriale og afgrænsede i forhold til hinanden. Der ligger i os biologiske strukturer, der er designet til at gøre sådan her.” Weeke forklarer videre, “En del af vores læring er kropslig og følelsesmæssig, før den bliver mental. Dette niveau kan også være det, vi benytter os af, når vi laver kunst 3-dimensionelt, og ikke bare som noget visuelt, hvor vi står og kigger på det, men hvor vi faktisk beder folk om at vende tilbage til en oprindelig tone i sig, bla med de her spejlneuroner.”

DET RÆSONNERENDE FELT

Ulla Rung Weeke fortæller nu, at der endda er en ekstra social eller kollektiv sans, som har betydning for vores følelse af “at komme hinanden ved”. Hun forklarer: “Spejlneuroner er altid afhængig af dine øjne og dine ører, og afhængig af at du kan se og sanse det, der foregår biologisk. Men der er en anden sans. Eksemplet kunne være at der lige nu inde ved siden af er håndværkere, men at vi ikke kunne høre eller se dem. Pludselig skete der noget alvorligt – en af dem kom til skade. Hvis vi, der

sidder herinde, i samme stund fik målt vores hjerterytme, ville man kunne se en pulsstigning. Så der er et ikke-bevidst, biologisk niveau som 'opsnapper', at der er sket noget i nærheden som kunne være farligt!!! Der eksisterer med andre ord et slags ræsonnerende felt, som vores nervesystem er vældig, vældig optaget af. Er der noget, der truer os? Kroppen er konstant optaget af, om det er trygt, om det er farligt eller livsfarligt det der sker, både på indersiden og ydersiden af kroppen. Dette biologiske niveau, som opsnapper, er ikke afhængig af vores øjne og ører. Jeg beskriver det som en energetisk sansning, som kommer et andet sted fra. ... Lidt som historien om de hundrede aber, der fik andre aber på nabøen til at blive inspirerede til også at vaske deres rodfrugter på en speciel måde. Aberne var forbundet med hinanden, men ikke forstyrret af deres frontallapper, der fortæller dem at det kan jo ikke være rigtigt."

Weeke uddyber, "Dette biologiske/energetiske felt kan faktisk rejse et voldsomt elektromagnetisk felt, kollektivt og globalt. Data fra vejr satellitter har for eksempel vist, at den 11. september viste sig en række stærkt forhøjede værdier i atmosfæren som kunne tyde på en voldsom orkan var på vej. Men der kom ingen orkan. Måske var den samlede mængde kollektive menneskelige uro og stress så massiv, at den kunne måles på en vejr satellit."

Og Weeke fortsætter: "Så vi er alle sammen forbundet i et ræsonnerende rum/felt, som er større end det vi umiddelbart sanser. Det er det rum, vi positivt påvirker,

når vi leger sådan en leg som snoretrækket. Man kan sige, at Karolines intention om at gøre det her er et rum eller ramme, der skal skabe regulering og tilfredshed frem for stress og fastlåsthed. Jeg tilbyder jer et rum, jeg holder det her rum for jer, jeg har designet det her rum, hvad kunne I tænke jer at bruge det til? Og der kommer de kroppe ind, der leger. Effekten er afhængig af, hvad det er for nogle hoveder der styrer kroppen. Hvis vi er vant til at undertrykke de impulser vi har fra kroppen, så er det ikke sjovt, så gør vi ikke den slags, og så giver vi os ikke hen, så regulerer vi os ikke. Men hvis vi er vant til at turde gå ud i noget, hvor vi svinger lidt og bevæger os, så har vi muligheden for at gribe nuet og få noget nyt ud af det.

KUNSTEN SOM 'HOLDING'

Hvordan vil du beskrive dette at holde et rum for andre og invitere dem ind for at kommunikere på et dybere fysisk niveau, dette at give mennesker en mulighed for en dybere biokemisk oplevelse af forskellige følelser, fx glæde og tilfredshed?

Ulla Rung Weeke svarer, "Det at have en positiv intention i forhold til andre, som Karoline, kan beskrives som en 'holding'. Jeg har en intention om at ville noget her, vil I lege med mig, og være sammen med mig om det? Det er i sin dybeste instans en 'holding', som man siger. Det er jo at lave en ramme og holde et energetisk rum til dig, vil du lege med mig, eller vil du være sammen med mig

om det her? Vil du skabe noget sammen med mig?”

Karoline tilføjer: “For mig hænger forskellige følelsers regulering og udtryk uløseligt sammen med begrebet kreativitet, selvom man ikke taler meget om dette niveau i professionel billedkunst. Det er kreativiteten, som kan åbne rummet imellem os, og som opstår, når vi kommunikerer på et dybere plan i det her fælles energetiske rum, som vi deler som mennesker.”

Man taler ganske vist meget om kreativitet i dag, men det sker ud fra et livsstilsmæssigt og kommercielt frem for et humant synspunkt, med begreber som ‘den kreative klasse’, ‘art management’ ‘bruger-dreven innovation’ ‘identity-building-proces’. Hvor er den konkrete, reelle, menneskelige kreativitet henne i forhold til disse markedsbaserede æstetikbegreber?

“For mig er kreativiteten ikke bare at skabe et produkt,” svarer Weeke, “Det er også, måske primært, det sociale, impulserne. Simpelthen glæden ved en samhørighed med nogen eller noget...Kreativiteten i sin egentlige form er der bare ikke plads til. Den skal i øjeblikket tilpasses et økonomisk rationale. Men der er jo intet i kroppen, der er lineært, den er organisk. Vi snakker ganske rigtig meget om innovation og kreativitet, men bliver det levet eller er det mest varm luft? Jeg synes, at der er mange som ikke lever som hele mennesker. Det går den gale vej. Og der kan man sige, at sådan et tilbud med at gøre noget

andet med sig – hvis der kunne være noget mere af den slags overraskelser, hvor det ikke lige præcis er lineært, hvor der er muligheder for at prøve sig selv af, og blive klogere på sig selv, og bare mærke måske et milisekund, at der er noget der er anderledes end det plejer at være, så ville vi have det sjovere og være sundere. Og det er jo billigere i længden!”

Karoline afslutter: “Det er netop kunsten i det offentlige rum, som kan være ‘bærer’ af den udveksling imellem mennesker. Dette niveau omtales sjældent i professionel byudvikling og byplanlægning. I det 21. århundrede bliver det stadig ofte anset for noget, som ‘kun er for sjov’ og ‘uden at det fører til noget’, når man arbejder professionelt med det dybere kollektive kommunikationsniveau, sådan som jeg gør det. Det fortæller mig, at der stadig foregår en stor grad af fraspaltning af det kropslige niveau. Når man ser på de ‘rå’ eller ‘livløse’ byrum, som opstår rundt omkring, vil det være afgørende at begynde at tænke konstruktivt om den menneskelige bevægelse som kan produceres via kunsten.”

“Jeg står gerne ved at jeg er en form for ‘neo-hippie’, som holder på at kunsten tilbyder et sansebart rum, hvor vi kan udtrykke os i fællesskab”, fortsætter Karoline og uddyber, “Absolut ikke for at vi skal udtrykke os ens, tværtimod. Det er netop for at skabe rum til hele spektret, også de mere negative udbrud i vores samfund, for det er uundgåeligt med den slags. Vrede er jo en menneskelig driv-

kraft. Det kan forandre sig, hvis der er steder hvor folk får lejlighed til at opleve bare et kort tidsrum at de kan vende op og ned på noget, og gøre noget anderledes med sig. Ud, det kommer det jo under alle omstændigheder før eller siden. Om det så viser sig som stress, sygdom eller magtmisbrug eller hærværk. Tænk bare på alt det, som kunne gribes noget før, og få plads og vendes til noget godt!”

17. april 2008

Redigeret af Cecilie Høgsbro og Karoline H. Larsen

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GET IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER!

Dansk s. 94

CREATIVE ACTIONS 2002-2008

Creative Actions, Skive Skov, Denmark

Creative Actions began when I started moving differently from my usual way of moving in a particular place.

April 25 2002 (pp. 2-3)

MANUAL: STRING TRACK Skive Skov, Skive

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The *String Tracks* started in frustration and curiosity. For a long time I had felt a strong personal need to find ways to move differently in both literal and symbolic ways. I wanted to use art in order to change social habits and behavioural patterns and mindsets. In a constantly more liberalized society commercial interests seemed to dictate every political and personal interest, homogenizing people's lives, dreams and behaviour, controlling public spaces. The exploding art market even altered and defined contemporary art practice. I was curious to experience myself from a new angle, to open a new space inside, and feel something different. I wanted to capture experience, time in motion and actions of the body and mind in a coherent matter insisting on the experimental character of art, as a necessity for development in both life, society and art. Therefore I went into the woods of Skive with a roll of white cotton-string and began tracking the string after myself and around the trees. I documented the actions and made the poster: *Manual: String Track*.

Creative Actions, Cape Town, South Africa

In Cape Town *Manual: String Track* was turned into *Collective Strings*. I was curious to challenge the existing public space and at the same time to open up a social space between people. A space for getting in touch with each other. South Africa was chosen because of the

great changes in public space that had taken place since the New Constitution in 1996 and the abolition of Apartheid. According to law everyone should be able to move freely everywhere. There should be no boundaries left between the black and the white.

March 3 2005 (pp. 4-5)

1.5 km COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Café Lola, Cape Town

Using *Manual: String Track* in the main street of Cape Town, I tried to make the citizens reflect on the function, use and ownership of public space. The area outside the Café Lola was chosen as the first location for *Collective Strings* to explore the intersections of public and private space. In this case, public space was regarded as 'collective' and 'owned' by all citizens, and private space was regarded as the café owner's space on the pavement, leased from the government. The question was who owned the space between the ceiling and the café tables outside, and who had the right to use it? All participating citizens agreed collectively on certain rules for *Collective Strings* in Café Lola: To give a playful, open, non-aggressive impression to the guests in the café and to the passers-by, every participant had to move very slowly while pulling the strings around objects outside Café Lola. The café owner reacted towards the action with hostility, though. When people asked what we were doing, the participants would reply: "What do you see? What do you believe it is?", basically asking people to use their own eyes and become aware of what was happening and get a perceptual feeling of the use and function of public space.

March 8 2005 (pp. 6-7)

1.5 km COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Rondebosch Boys School, Cape Town

Rondebosch Boys School was chosen for the next *Collective Strings*, since it represents the remains of an old social order, educating only white boys – in white uniforms. I was invited to do 1,5 km *Collective Strings* in the school yard during the lunch break. The art teacher (also being an artist) was setting up the rules for a group of 12 school boys from his art class. The boys would couple up two and two and were spread out in the yard with one roll of string per couple. “Unwind. Rewind. Unwind. Rewind. Unwind. Rewind”, the teacher shouted. Until a certain point where the inevitable effects of crossing strings across the yard would break the rules, and leave the boys to their own individual movements depending on the strings’ attachments. “Should I stop them?” the teacher shouted at me. “No, no, let them carry on, this is where it all begins...” I answered. After the *Collective Strings* the pupils would meet in the classroom and elaborate. One of the boys said: “It reminds me of when we were kids and played games with no objectives, no winner, it’s production in another process way”, and then another boy added “It is pure construction. No abilities, but creativity. No destruction, no kill, no destroy at all”. A smaller boy explained to a bigger boy: “You are not going to walk straight with a string in front of you. You have to consider your own position in relation to others, because of the strings” and continued “The strings are extensions of your body movements, and make exchanges and past actions visible”. Finally one boy concluded the principle of the *Collective Strings*: “So basically what you do is, you change the space, and because of changes, you make people think in another direction”.

March 11 2005 (pp. 8-9)

0.5 km COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Cape Town Train, Cape Town

A few days later three of the boys from Rondebosch Boys School

decided to make the *Collective Strings* on the train from Rondebosch 'white' suburb to Cape Town Central Station. Even though Apartheid has been officially abolished since 1996, practically only black people take the train. Normally the white boys have their parents take them by car for security reasons. The boys gave a speech about their hopes for a future open-mindedness, for joy, positive energy, and sharing in South Africa, before they pulled out the pink and yellow strings all over the train. Hardly anybody reacted to the actions in a physical way. Few openly acknowledged the action, but most train-riders were silently observing the string in front of their eyes.

March 11 2005 (pp. 10-15)

3 km COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Night Vision Festival, Long St., Cape Town

The same evening 21 young people from Rondebosch Boys School and Michaelis School of Art and their friends met with me at the corner of Long Street and Ludlow Street at exactly 7 pm. It was the night of the *Night Vision Festival* and all inhabitants of Cape Town were invited to walk down the main road celebrating the Capetonian night with bands and performances. The young people would track strings crisscrossing between the hundreds of people passing by. After a short introduction, they began tracking colorful tracksuit string across Long Street from seven columns in one side of the road to seven columns on the other. In 10 minutes a grand web was woven. The web would start to move in unpredictable ways as people would walk, crawl, dance, jump, climb, twist, run through it during the 30 minutes it was allowed to exist. 20.000 people walked Long Street that night.

Creative Actions, Barcelona, Spain

Inspired by the experiences with the South African school boys, a group of 12 students from the Escola Massana for Fine Art and Design in Barcelona were now invited to arrange their own 'site specific' string action. They chose three very different locations in Barcelona and decided to make a non-verbal, non-logical, collective physical action, in order to question the linear use and logic of public space, where citizens usually move rationally from point A to B within a set time frame.

October 21 2005 (pp. 16-19)

PAPER-GIFTS FOR STRANGERS, Carré de Sant Pau, Barcelona

The students would hand out *Paper-gifts for Strangers* to create an intimate situation in the criminal red light district Carré de Sant Pau. People reacted very positively towards the paper-gifts. For instance an old lady was overwhelmed by the little paper gifts and gave the girl a kiss.

October 21 2005 (pp. 20-21)

FROZEN ACTIONS, La Rambla, Carré de Sant Pau, Passeig de Garcia, Barcelona

The 12 students, all women, froze time and speed in the high-speed high-economical Passeig de Garcia by setting up a 'human boundary' of 'frozen actions'. Later on they went to the prostitutes' street, Carre de Sant Pau and ended up in the popular tourist zone, La Rambla. In La Rambla people would take photographs of the girls' frozen actions as a street performance, contrary to the Passeig de Gracia where the pedestrians completely avoided any confrontation with the girls. In Carre de Sant Pau the reactions were mixed. Some people were happily greeting the women, oth-

ers would break aggressively through the row of girls not caring about hitting their shoulders.

Creative Actions, New Delhi, India

In New Delhi there are remarkably few women in the streets at night, and sexual harassment of both men and women is considerable. This reflects a public space with a great hierarchical order. I researched on sexual harassment in public space through filmed interviews as a preparation for my *Eye Action* performance. I talked to practically everyone I met, who would like to discuss sexual harassment and personal freedom with me. The opinions on the issues of sexual harassment, gender roles, parental roles and urban infrastructure were surprisingly varied.

February 26 2006 (pp. 22-23)

SEXUAL HARASSMENT, Saheli Help Line, New Delhi

Members of Saheli Helpline – a women's organization that fights sexual harassment – were filmed singing *Fight songs* in the street. The Saheli Helpline members perform these songs in factories for female workers to inform them about their rights, and to discuss how to protect themselves from sexual harassment.

March 1 2006 (pp. 24-25)

BUSRIDE, Hailey Road to Central Railway St, New Delhi

The young lawyer, Astha Arora, was video-interviewed riding the bus through New Delhi. The bus is one of the most risky means of transportation for a woman in Delhi, and Arora was discussing how to make it a safe, fearless place. According to Indian Law, a person in India is likely to be charged and even imprisoned, if the person affronts the modesty of a woman. But what does 'mod-

esty' mean? Does the law say that all women who are modest are protected while others are not? 'Modesty' is obviously a means of social control of women. "Women in India are expected to be quiet, non-aggressive, tolerant...", Astha Arora said. She told us about average Indian middle-class family restrictions towards their daughters. The girls are asked to dress modestly, and to not go out in the streets alone after 9pm in the evening, and to always be accompanied by friends or family. The sons are free to move as they please. She told us that the general information level on sexual harassment is very low, and that many girls are blamed and accused as if they themselves were to blame for being victims of sexual harassment – due to what is called 'un-modest' clothing and behavior. She proposed more self-defense courses for women to make them aware of 'raising their own voice' and stressed the importance of equal rights to education for everybody in order to promote female independence.

March 3 2006 (pp. 26-27)

RAPE CULTURE, CWDS, New Delhi

At the Center for Women Development Studies, Ph.d Praktisha Baxi was video-interviewed on her great knowledge on *Rape culture* in Delhi. Praktisha Baxi talked about the manifold reasons for sexual harassment, and pointed to 'misogynism', or hatred against women, as the main reason for sexual harassment. Baxi explained the many different ways of sexual harassment, also known as 'eve-teasing', ranging from 'staring at a girl', making 'noise after a girl' to brutal rape. She told us about 'road Romeo's', who are Indian men driving their cars and picking up girls walking in the streets. They pretend to want to take the girls safely home but they end up raping the girls instead. Especially in the streets around Delhi University the problem has been huge, because everyone knows

that girls who are studying are mostly on their own, living alone on the city campus without their family around. Praktisha Baxi also told us that most rapes in Delhi are committed by middle-class and upper-class Indian males and not by lower-class people though most people would assume the opposite.

March 4 2006 (pp. 28-29)

EYE ACTION, South Extension Part II, New Delhi

At 22pm I walked the South Extension Part II square wearing a black and white paper-eye on each breast. I asked the guys I met why Indian girls were missing from the street, since I wanted to hand out extra breast-eyes for the girls to stare back at the men. I worked deliberately with humor and direct contact in the street, not wanting to expand the cultural gap between men and women. It was not crucial to actually find Indian girls in the street and give them an extra pair of eyes. It was much more important to make the men question and debate what I was doing in the street, and why the Indian girls were missing. Some of the men got the point – that I was joking about the fact that men notoriously tend to stare at women's breasts. But only a few men were aware of their own offending behaviour, or they simply didn't mention it.

Creative Actions, Copenhagen, Denmark

Back in Copenhagen, Denmark, I started looking at my local neighbourhood with new eyes, noticing the invisible daily boundaries between people.

June 1 2006 (pp. 30-33)

9 km INTEGRATION MANIFESTO, Julius Blomsgade, Nørrebro, Copenhagen

Julius Blomsgade, Nørrebro, is a neighbourhood with a mixed population of immigrants and non-immigrants. On a day to day basis there is hardly any social contact between the two groups. As an *Integration Manifesto* seven young people started to pull nine kilometers of colorful strings around 4 construction uprights in front of the red block in the street, where the majority of the local immigrants lives. After a short while immigrant kids and youngsters came out from the red house and joined the string-pulling until the 9 kilometers of string ran out, and two hours of joy and exchange had passed. The *Collective Strings* was left for two weeks as a visual manifesto of the non-traditional integration act and for passers-by to carry on.

June 29 – July 2 2006 (pp. 34-41)

210.000 m COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Roskilde Festival, Roskilde

At the Roskilde Festival in Denmark *Creative Actions* made a workspace switch from public city space to a giant space of mass entertainment. During the four days of the festival approx. 85.000 festival guests were invited to collectively pull 210.000 meters of wrapping string in every color of the rainbow into a 'gigantic collective strings track' between 70 building uprights, each 5 meters high, in the Fusetown Square. The 70 uprights were organized in an area of 70x70 meters in a precise pattern based on a map of the entire festival. Before the opening of the festival, 'string walls' would be woven between the columns to mark the different locations and areas of the festival. The string structure would change remarkably from day to day, creating new spaces and new functions, as a direct result of the actions and needs of the festival guests; throwing string-roles, bungee-jumping, racing, dancing, weaving string-patterns, resting in string-hammocks, string-trampolines, or just hanging out in the *Collective Strings* atmosphere.

October 13 2006 (pp. 42-43)

LET THE TIGER OUT, Metro Vanløse St – Metro Amagerbro St, Copenhagen

In the tunnels of Copenhagen's metro-system between Vanløse Station and Amagerbro Station five performers (Maria Werger, Cecilia Palmgren, Mille Rude, Karl McIlquham Schmidt and I) dressed up in animal-like costumes involved all passers-by in playing with 1500 cootie catchers. The cootie catchers posed ambiguous questions to the Metro-passengers such as: When do you get off? Where are you heading? What shall we do? Are you lost? How will it all go? What would you like to see?

Creative Actions, Bairro Surubi, Resende, Brazil

In a small nation like Denmark, where xenophobia is growing and immigrant and third world politics are getting more and more rigid, it is extremely important to produce cultural counterparts. In the autumn of 2006 I left for Brazil for 4 months in order to make *Creative Actions* in collaboration with Citizens Organization of Bairro Surubi in Resende, south of Rio de Janeiro. It was with the clear purpose of making visual arts productions in close collaboration with 'local brazilians as a foreigner', learning from this 3rd world country's social and aesthetic culture, and to bring the experience back to Denmark.

November 17–19 2006 (pp. 44-45)

SHOW US THE WAYS TO DEMOCRACY, II Forum Social Regional do Vale do Paraíba, Resende

For the *2nd Fórum Social Regional do vale do Paraíba – Resende 2006* I was invited to do 'one painting' for display at the forum of *Inclusão e solidariedade/Integration and solidarity*. I was invited as a foreigner

from a first world country and I asked the local artist, Walber Da Silva, to join the project. We decided to turn the painting into a visual manifesto of the current state of corruption in this region of Brazil. We installed the canvas and 2400 unrolled meters of string tracks in the park next to the *tent of ideas/tenta ideas* with an invitation for everybody in Resende and especially for local politicians: *Mostre nos os caminhos da democracia/Show us the ways to democracy*.

January 15–19 2007 (pp. 46–49)

23 m COLLECTIVE MURAL – WHAT IS YOUR DREAM?, Bairro Surubi, Resende

A collective five-day mural was arranged in Bairro Surubi. In the beginning children and youngsters were the most eager to take part. On the fifth day a lot of adults joined the painting too, and the children's families came by to admire the work. TV RIO SUL paid a visit on the sixth morning, and the Citizens Organization and I tried purposefully to use them to create positive attention for the Bairro Surubi area. The media coverage attracted people from the City hall of Resende who usually ignore the low-income and low-status suburb, both politically and economically. They were quite surprised. Back in Denmark I kept in touch with the citizens in Bairro Surubi and the Citizens Organization of Bairro Surubi. In March 2007 the authorities of Resende started to asphalt the main cross road in Surubi. A small but important progress for the abolished low-income suburban area! In January 2008 the *Collective Mural* was erased on demand from the school board. People were furious in Bairro Surubi. The school board said the wall would be painted soon in plain yellow.

January 26–March 7 2007 (pp. 50-55)

MY DREAM IS A BATHROOM WITH A MIRROR, Bairro Surubi, Resende

Together with Associacao de Moradores and Walber da Silva Barboza I initiated a 40 days recovery of the oldest family house in Bairro Surubi. The house was 60 years old and had no drains, toilet, or electricity. The walls, floor and roof were dilapidated and full of mould fungus. The house recovery project would be based on 'self-organization, recycle, collaboration and assistance'. Any family member, relative and friend would join and help in order to make a *collective energy raising*. I would take part in the physical work too as much as the local gender roles would allow, supply materials, and pay for professional construction workers. This 'casa-recuperacao' was also an educational encounter for the young people. The son-in-law acquired basic building skills. Both daughters were informed about health risks and hygiene during cleaning of the interior of the house. They also learned about decoration and interior repair while renovating the kitchenette. During the process Amarante T. Souza and I produced a *House Recovery* documentary. On the last evening, everybody involved was invited to watch the film. The two daughters of the house and their friends dressed up and formed a music band for the night: *Sabryna e Bandidos*. To be able to invite friends over and inside the house was a totally new opportunity for the family. Now, they had a house of their own!

Creative Actions, Esbjerg, Denmark

While I was still in Brazil I was invited to do *Collective Strings* in Denmark in the entrance room of Esbjerg Art museum and at the Esbjerg Main Square. The distance between the continents inspired my work.

March 27 2007 (pp. 56-57)

5 km COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Esbjerg Square, Esbjerg

The cotton strings from Brazil supplied with Danish strings were used in an effort to weave vibes from Brazil into Esbjerg public space. Citizens passing by at Esbjerg Square March 27 at 3pm were invited to pull colorful cotton strings into collective strings and tracks – sculpting and marking public space visually. When the strings were pulled in new directions, the structure gradually changed and new space and new possibilities for alternative body movements and alternative meetings were created.

February 10 – May 13 2007 (pp. 58-59)

STRING TRACK YOUR WAY (TO WORDS), Esbjerg Art Museum, Esbjerg

Visitors at Esbjerg Art Museum were invited to pull strings to words across the entrance room. Visitors could literally connect and inter-connect the pronouns 'I, You, He, She, We, They, Me, You, Him, Her, Us, Them' pulling colorful strings to sentences, expressing fluid movements, and the joyful actions spread across world continents covering city and street names written on the wall, where former *Creative Actions* had taken place. Thus a *Collective Strings* was woven across the room from the visitor's movements with the strings, serving as a body-awareness boundary for the visitors to move through before entering the Art Museum. They would have to consciously choose to go inside the Art Museum with its different conventions and rules of behaviour, or to turn around.

Creative Actions, New York, USA

I invited Jasmine Zimmerman, an american artist from Seattle, to

collaborate with me on *Collective Strings* in New York City offering a shared creative experience to the public. Local and foreign people in NYC were invited to join the *21.000 m Collective Strings NYC* located in 4 different parks/squares of New York City, thus we intended to create a self-organized *Collective Strings NYC* festival moving across the city covering Brooklyn and Manhattan. In NYC I invented a method for *Collective Strings* based on my experience from the other cities. First a thick baseline rope is put high up in existing city elements (trees, street lamps, water pipes etc.) to define the shape of the base area. Subsequently rolls of string are placed in the area for local people and passers-by to use for tracking strings between the baselines and the city-elements. Sometimes I will start the string tracking and invite people to join, at other times the initiative is left to people. When the *Collective Strings* is taken down again, it is given away. E.g. *Collective Strings* turned into a giant *String Floor Pillow* for a public school.

May 12 2007 (pp. 60-61)

COLLECTIVE STRINGS NYC, Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NYC

In Prospect Park *Collective Strings NYC* took place spontaneously without any official permission. A specific area was chosen because of the different kinds of pathways for passers-bys and good park lamps/trees to set up the 'baseline'. While the baseline was being set up, passers-by asked what was going on and they were immediately invited to join the *Collective Strings NYC*. The performance reflected the public use of the park. Brooklyn parents go to this park with their children, so the child-parent relations and child-child relations were mirrored in the creative actions. Like children learning their parents to become aware and bodily present again and loosen up through a game. The police stopped by in their car, and because of all the happy kids involved they didn't stop the

action if we would just clean up afterwards.

May 13 2007 (pp. 62-67)

COLLECTIVE STRINGS NYC, McCarren Park, Brooklyn, NYC

McCarren Park in Brooklyn was chosen because it is an area with great social and cultural diversity. This time we got a permission to use the park and the park elements, such as trees and benches for the *Collective Strings NYC*, and we used Improveeverywhere's (Charlie Todd's) huge email list to invite people from all over NYC. Several hundred people joined in, exploring the different stages of physical and emotional intensity wrapping each other in strings, standing on top of each other wearing the string webs, playing relaxed games, and hanging out. We realized *Collective Strings NYC* was not an innocent game. It took more than two months of emailing and phone calling from Brazil and Copenhagen to finally get the Park permit, after having applied for three other parks in Manhattan and being rejected, because the authorities would not allow the risk of having too many people involved in the action.

May 20 2007 (pp. 68-69)

COLLECTIVE STRINGS NYC, Central Park, Manhattan, NYC

As a Celebration of Life in Central Park a *Collective Strings* was arranged on the green hill next to Naumberg Bandshell on the day of the Aids Walk. To get an event permit for an art installation (including ephemeral ones) in Central Park may take up to 20 years, and most applications are rejected. Therefore we simply chose to go there, do it, and tidy up afterwards. After the baseline rope had been suspended between the trees, people would immediately start *Collective Strings* just in time for Central Park Conservatory staff to arrive after 5-10 minutes. I negotiated with them and was

allowed to do the web for 15 minutes. (Expanded to 25 minutes + 15 starting minutes = total of 40 min).

May 27 2007 (pp. 70-73)

COLLECTIVE STRINGS NYC, Union Square, Manhattan, NYC

Union Square in the heart of Manhattan is known as the NYC revolution square. Together with our friend and photographer Geo Geller we picked up our new friend and artist James Kusel at 104 St Rockaway Beach and went to the square. In the middle of Union Square James sat in a beach chair on a towel exactly as if he was at the beach. As an intro to *Collective Strings NYC* Jasmine and Karoline would tie strings to the back of James' beach chair right under his head and pull them out in public space tying them to existing city elements. We imagined we were pulling thoughts out of James' head. Union Square was quite a different experience because it was evening and no kids were involved. One man expressed himself for a long time inside the web – trapping other people in the strings and finally trapping himself and rolling over in the strings.

Creative Actions, Copenhagen, Denmark

When I got back from New York City in the summer of 2007 I invited Jasmine Zimmerman to Copenhagen to work on *Collective Strings* and experience the difference between *Collective Strings* in the atmosphere of NYC parks and squares and Copenhagen city space. The transformation of the city space was set to last for a course of 5 days at the same square, and to be able to reflect and show the different creative stages of the participants in that particular city area through the changes in the Collective Strings.

August I–5 2007 (pp. 74–77)

40 km COLLECTIVE STRINGS, Enghave Square, Copenhagen

Enghave Square was temporarily transformed from a neglected space, mostly inhabited by drunks and skaters, to a *Collective Strings* and a common playground during a course of 5 days. Within very short time the *Collective Strings* expanded across the square, thanks to the local passers-by. Every day new people dropped by and played with the strings, making new formations, patterns and games alone and with each other. A local guy brought six of his homemade green recycle hammocks and hung them in the trees next to the *Collective Strings* for everyone to use and enjoy. The Vesterbro local tv-channel was broadcasting and invited local people to join in. Halfway through the process, a party was thrown to celebrate the city space. Late Saturday night a group of drunk young people totally tore the web apart. This was a fine end to the street laboratory, mirroring the night life of the area.

September II 2007 (pp. 78–83)

21.6 km GUIDING STRINGS, Frihavnen, Copenhagen

21.600 metres of guiding strings were tracked through Frihavnen during 11 hours of ritual transformation of the architectural harbour city space. Approximately 500 citizens attended a citizens meeting on the Nordhavn city space development, and followed the *Guiding Strings* from the Frihavnen entrance to the meeting hall. In the biggest outdoor hall next to the meeting hall I would weave guiding strings between the architectural elements in the hall. I wanted to test how far I could go inside the hall throwing a string (tied to a plastic bottle filled with sand) up and around the top ceiling constructions and letting it fall back down again. I would move on to the next point in the hall and throw the string again, this

time towards a new perspective. The colorful string tracks worked as a visual manifesto claiming human capacity and movements to be one of the most important parameters in urban planning. A ritual human body scale transformation of the architecture.

May 30 – June 28 2008 (pp. 84-89)

43 km JUNGLE STRINGS, Tiendeladen, Aalborg

In a narrow old street in the middle of Aalborg colorful *Jungle Strings* grew between the buildings for one month. The cars were not able to pass and people had to find new ways of moving through the street. Passers-by were climbing, swinging and hanging in the strings. The law of the jungle took over for a while, and left a space for different joyful happy ways of being together, and alternative ways of testing oneself in a playful setting. It was a month-long transformation of the city architecture and the use of it.

July 1 – September 8 2008 (pp. 90-93)

80 km JUNGLE STRINGS, Nørrebro Market Square, Nørrebro, Copenhagen

For more than two months a patch of colourful jungle grew forth at Nørrebro. *Jungle Strings* spread criss-cross between the biggest walls of the Market Square. Every string was strong enough for adults, youngsters, and children to swing themselves through the Jungle. Anyone who felt like moving and weaving to develop the Jungle could have a go. I followed the process closely, taking as many photos of people's reactions and ideas as I could; from a hammock-like structure taking shape, to outbursts of joy and swinging in the strings, and to one night when some youngsters cut down a minor part of the Jungle. This was expected because

many of them carry a knife. The worst thing would be if they did not react at all. The strings were tied together again in new ways. The children made more jungle strings and used chalk to draw on the ground. Bags and other goods were attached to the strings on market days. During more than two months the *Jungle Strings* were in a process of constant change and movement thanks to locals and interested passers-by. The changes reflect this city room's different citizens and the different stages of creativity: Creation, destruction, re-creation, destruction etc. The city architecture was temporarily transformed through the *Jungle Strings*' offer to the public of moving differently and expressing oneself in new ways. In this way, *Jungle Strings* experimented with the creation of public space for constructive as well as destructive actions as a 'natural' and inevitable part of the collective creativity people bring out in the city rooms.

THE (DIS)ORGANISATION OF THE ROOM

It's impulsive and strange – creates a sudden experience and sparks off new thoughts. This was just one spectator reaction to Karoline H. Larsen's work *String-track your way (to words)*, part of the exhibition *Traces/Tracing* at the Esbjerg Art Museum in 2007.

Placed at the museum's entrance her changeable and interactive work served as a 'transitional space', marking the crossing to another zone – a place with alternative rules and new modes of reflection. However, many of the guests turned around and headed back towards the ticket sale at their first encounter with the work. Could it really be true that you had to work your way past endless tracks of colourful string to actually gain access to the museum? Yes indeed – the spectators were not only required to retune their minds. They also had to act physically in a new and unusual way when presented with the work. The strings connected pronouns on one wall to sentence fragments on another, and during the course of the exhibition period the strings were drawn criss-cross across the room by the museum guests themselves. In this way, everybody could participate in creating meanings and contexts either by creating new sentences in extension of the already existing sentences, or by shredding up meanings and replacing them with new ones.

The wall with the sentence fragments formed an imagi-

nary map – a double exposure of a world map and a city map. New Delhi, Copenhagen, Barcelona, Cape Town, Spangsbjerg Møllevvej, Storegade, Strandby Kirkevej, were just some of the sites. Consequently, Karoline H. Larsen not only connected Esbjerg with the big world. She also connected the ‘here-and-now’ of the work and the place to all the other places where she formerly had realized works and carried out happenings with the project *Creative Actions*.

CREATIVE ACTIONS

Creative Actions is Karoline H. Larsen’s term for a range of actions which directly includes people and engages them in their own city in new, co-creative ways. The work at the museum was naturally complemented by a happening at the city square in Esbjerg where 5 kilometres of string in different colours completely changed the place for one afternoon, including the way people normally go about the streets.

Karoline H. Larsen has realized similar happenings around the world where she has changed people’s movements by letting them draw strings criss-cross in busy, public spaces e.g. in Copenhagen, Cape Town, at the Roskilde Festival, and in New York to name some. She has also brought attention to the issue of women’s safety in New Delhi, carried out ‘equality checks’ in post-apartheid Cape Town, and put focus on living conditions and poverty in Surubi, Brazil. Through *Creative Actions*

Karoline H. Larsen in various ways asks questions about the existing unwritten and habitual rules that control our actions in the public space. E.g. imagine living in a city where more people engage in unusual and creative actions. Would it change people's behaviour? Would it change the way they think? By indirectly confronting us with these questions and challenging us to act differently, the artist makes us create new spaces and new functions in the city. She includes us in a social, playful 'game' that invites us to break out of firmly cemented collective habits or codes and rediscover the public space, so to speak.

THE SPECTATOR AS CO-CREATOR

Karoline H. Larsen's *Creative Actions* unfold in the field between action and interactivity. On the one hand, the works are attached to certain actions which either precede the physical work or simply make up the work itself. Even though these actions are orchestrated by the artist, it is on the other hand not the artist herself who carries them out. In stead they are carried out by randomly selected people who through their movements and actions leave the tracks through which the artist creates her work. These works include the spectator in the role of co-creator thus creating a vital link between spectator, work, and artist. The work only assumes meaning and form in a social space when the spectator gets involved and participates actively. In this way, Karoline H. Larsen appears to be asking us a range of questions in a very direct manner – in part about the

social and political reality that surrounds us, and in part about what it fundamentally means to create art. Her works consist of statements without material or lasting form. They function as open and changeable signs which require the intervention of an active spectator, and as such the traditional roles and ideas surrounding a work of art cease to be valid too. In stead the actions of the artist question where and how art is created, at the same time challenging the idea that the work is finished when some sort of artistic process has been completed.

THE BEGINNING

With *Creative Actions* the public urban spaces have consequently been at the center of the artist's focus. However, it all started with more classical works in the gallery room, and taking a retrospective look at Karoline H. Larsen's works, the experiments in the gallery room serve as a logical precondition for the actions in the city space.

In 2001 Karoline H. Larsen broke the confinements of the painting for real, literally letting her works invade the room. With the walls serving as canvas, she organized a spatiality, at the same time real and alternative, where coloured bands (or imaginary strings, if you will) spread over the walls. Depending on the position of the spectator, these bands either made up a perfect perspective with one vanishing point, or a disturbing spatial displacement. The perception of the room and its organisation

– or lack thereof – was closely linked to the viewpoint and physical actions of the spectator, and consequently Karoline H. Larsen pointed out that our surroundings do not solely originate from various commonly agreed constructions. We are ourselves constantly part of the organisation and construction of the spaces in which we live and act.

The first steps outside the gallery room were taken in Skive Forest in 2002 where the artist explored the possibilities of the open space and her own movements in it, using the strings as accessories. The Assistens Cemetery in Copenhagen was the next destination but explorations of space were still conducted by the artist alone until 2005 when the big collective actions were launched. Since then the public urban space has also been explored as architectural space, and the explorations of space have been expanded to include the digital space, most recently with *Urbanartscape*.

THE SPACE IN BETWEEN

The ‘space’ phenomenon has always served as a focal point in Karoline H. Larsen’s work. Again and again she has explored and challenged its meanings, possibilities, and limitations, starting with the way we as human beings decode and relate to the spaces in which we live and act. With the project in Esbjerg in 2007, Karoline H. Larsen once again returned to the gallery room. *String-track your way (to words)* was created especially for the Esbjerg

Art Museum and made up a parallel to the artist's other string happenings, while simultaneously serving as a kind of status statement. It pointed to the future as well as to the past. It constitutes a natural connection between Karoline H. Larsen's different projects, between organisation and chaos, between work and process, between local and global, between institution and citizen, and between art space and urban space. Larsen moved on the edge of both the institutional space and the urban space, so to speak – in the space in between the different spatial domains she primarily works with and in. Simultaneously, a significant point in relation to Karoline H. Larsen's artistic practice is that her way of challenging a traditional idea of art neither unfolds as a conventional protest where the artist defines herself and her work in opposition to an established order, nor as a desire to break the confinements of one type of space in favour of another. The museum space and the urban space are not each other's opposites. They are simply two types of public space, each with its own organisation and social meaning.

The artist's newest ideas imply that the city space actions are replaced by works and statements inside the confinements of the museum institution. The question is whether the transition from the urban space back into the gallery room will alter the relation between work and process in Larsen's practice. Which character of work will the projects in the art institution attain in relation to the actions we encounter in the streets? What kind of

impact will the actions out in the city space have on the works inside the art institution? And how will the experiences from the various spatial contexts play their part? These questions are unlikely to ever find one unambiguous answer because according to Larsen, the categories, and hence also the options, must be kept open. And by defying the conventional spatial rules and confronting us with what looks like disorganisation, Karoline H. Larsen reorganises the space making way for new meanings and modes of behaviour.

Christiane Mosegaard Finsen
Curator, Master of Arts

TO TURN YOURSELF UPSIDE DOWN – AND TO GET IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER!

A conversation between body therapist, psychologist, and psychotraumatology specialist Ulla Rung Weeke, visual artist Karoline H. Larsen, and Master of Literature Cecilie Høgsbro.

Cecilie Høgsbro and I (Karoline H. Larsen) paid a visit to Ulla Rung Weeke on a spring day in Espergærde, Denmark to discuss *Creative Actions*, art and creativity, from a biochemical and traumatologic point of view. Ulla Rung Weeke is a Danish body therapist, psychologist, and psychotraumatology specialist. My meetings with Ulla have been a primary source of inspiration for my work with *Creative Actions*. I have visited her practice to fit my personal requirements in a body therapy treatment scheme through 12 years. *Creative Actions* are in many ways based on my experiences with body therapy. Therapy has heightened my awareness towards own bodily signals and feelings, and ‘the domain of social reasoning’ to which – I think – we are all connected through our senses.

I invited Master of Literature Cecilie Høgsbro along because she is capable of producing a perspective on my work with *Creative Actions* in relation to the art world. She says, “By mixing therapeutical experience with art practice, you are in fact breaking a lasting taboo within the professional art world. Simultaneously, you do away

with the idea of political art as a primarily intellectual or critical enterprise because you insist on the presence of the body as a crucial precondition for political and socio-economic change.”

The following is an edited excerpt from our conversation. First though, an introduction to Ulla’s major:

PSYCHOTRAUMATOLOGY

Ulla Rung Weeke majors in *psychotraumatology* and has primarily worked within the field of psychosomatics, i.e. the connection between the body, the state of the nervous- and hormone system, memories, and the development of chronic diseases. Weeke bases a substantial part of her work on recent biochemical research which makes it possible today, also on a scientific level, to understand different feelings and traumas as more than merely psychological phenomena.

According to Weeke, a trauma can be understood on a basic biological level as a bodily lack of movement. “A trauma is a locked shock”, she explains, “which has realised itself as a biochemical lock or stiffening in the body. Psychotraumatology is about loosening this stiffening through different kinds of regulations and movement. The aim is to create new ‘tracks’ in the nervous system and the biochemistry, i.e. to open up new paths for the body and the consciousness to move along in order to obtain strength and movability again.”

Rung Weeke compares her practice to an architectural term, 'tensegrity', which refers to the relationship between or integration of tension and pressure in a building. Both must be joined in a synergetic relationship to each other. "If you are building a house, every part of the house must be able to move in a way that if e.g. a pressure is coming in from the north, the rest of the house, the foundation, the roof construction, etc., must be able to give. The same is true of a body – if you squeeze the wrist, all joints and bone structures, muscles, facies, tissue, and nervous system should be able to give so that the pressure manifests itself through the body and gradually wanes until it is just an echo. We are fundamentally created with this movability, this tensegrity, but factors such as stress, shock, and traumas lock us and cost us a lot of bodymoney. It has a bad influence on our mental and physical health."

CREATIVE ACTIONS

– NEW TRACKS IN THE BIOCHEMISTRY

We asked Rung Weeke: As a crisis psychologist, how do you view art projects such as *Creative Actions* in relation to affecting people physically and improving their life space?

"What is particularly exciting about Karoline's string happenings", Weeke says, "is the kind of moveability you offer people. It means that people will be doing all sorts of other things than they usually do physically. *Creative*

Actions is not therapy, of course, but with art projects of this kind you can readily offer people other ways to act, to move, to regard things, and as such change their perception. When you encourage them to turn themselves upside down, you affect not only their perceptions of themselves but also of others.

In other words, you give people new *tracks* in their biochemistry. When people are offered new tracks in this way, it appears to them, by experience, that it is either a very threatening scenario or something new and wonderful. There will be people who have flexibility in their bodies and who dare to be creative with themselves, who can move, can change, who accept the feeling of 'whoa! This did something for me'. But if you are traumatised and locked, you become limited in your freedom of movement and you are easily scared or stressed.

Creative Actions is not a treatment form but an invitation to something. To see that there is another way. It is like sowing a seed. Some people may get it and think 'God! That was something else. Now I'm gonna have to start doing pilates or stunts, or I'm gonna learn to stand on my head, or I better get into therapy, or I must start to drink orange juice after lunch.' It depends on how they catch it inside their own system. And there will be some who remain unaffected because they are somewhere else."

THE BODYLESS SOCIETY

The question is how to understand this personal level

in relation to the level of society's common intellectual history. How do the social superstructures, such as political, religious, and philosophical ideas influence our relationship to the body? May certain social values be the source of collective traumatisation?

"If viewed through the perspective of intellectual history", Weeke says, "we are influenced by the heritage of Descartes. Descartes' flaw was that he, being both a doctor and a cardinal, made an unfortunate deal with the bishop. He got all these dead bodies that he could examine and dissect, but at the same time he was told to completely refrain from looking for the soul, because that was the domain of the church. He had to keep his hands off it altogether. If not at least slightly laughable, this is the beginning of the splitting up/dissociation between head and body that has occurred in time. We pretend that the body does not exist. We have a tendency today, in my line of work and in many other lines of work – including art, to leave out the body! That is highly uninspiring to me. It is not sensuality in a way that makes me think 'this is nice and inspiring'."

Weeke continues, "We have more or less become a society, a part of the world, where we *think* our lives. We have constructions in our heads but we have stopped listening to all the sensuality and magic of the body. The body tells us something all the time. In reality it is our sensuality telling us if we want to be healthy or ill. And

when we do not listen, constructing instead and moving further and further away from ourselves, and in that process also from each other, we are more readily exposed to illness. On the other hand, when we start to listen and seriously acknowledge the physical signals – really trying to break the code that is inside every single sensual biochemical event – then we start the process that will make us whole, healthy, strong, and comfortable people again. That is what I see every day in my clinic.”

Ulla Rung Weeke thinks that the fundamental bodylessness is reflected socially in cultural products such as film, art, and literature, as well as in social institutions such as the health department, the school department, even the national economy. There is, however, a great awareness of this bodylessness but it appears to be rather rhetorical and hypothetical. As she says, “In my line of work, it is true that many people talk about the body. But they are not always present in it. They have the right words but if that presence is not there, feelings of confusion, emptiness, and loneliness will infuse the relationship to the other person. It becomes very clear when working with children. We do not get in touch with each other in the most profound sense of the word.”

But what does it mean to get in touch with other people on a profound level? How do you think that art in fact becomes relevant to others than the sender?

“Karolines string happenings is a very good example”, Ulla says and continues, “What is so brilliant about the strings is that it is not a ‘head thing’. You cannot label them because you simply have to feel it. Karoline has not stated a theoretical concept and her intention is not intellectual. In turn, it is clearly physical. That means that you cannot just go and get caught up in intellectual labelling of the strings, you have to feel the idea. This is where new tracks are offered. If you can enter it and get a sense of Karoline’s intention, become curious and wanting to join in, you are offered a completely new way....what is so fantastic about it is that the body /the biochemistry is everchanging, new neural paths are created all the time – even while we are sitting here. It never stops. We just have to be awake and aware. And we are not. That makes us really ill, sad, downhearted, and depressed. The pharmacies are throwing painkillers and anti-depressives over the counter to half the Danish population. We are no longer able to feel our ourselves and our inherent signals.”

MIRROR NEURONES

It seems that human satisfaction is connected to more profound experiences of ‘sensuality’ and ‘presence’. Is it possible to describe what impact *Creative Actions* may have on people in relation to recent biochemical and neurological research?

Ulla Rung Weeke thinks so. “We have inherent biologi-

cal structures to enter into social contact/an interaction with another being, or the others out there. Our ability to survive especially the first years of our lives and emotional attachments depend on us being able to mirror, imitate, and harmonize ourselves with the others. That is what we are made to do. We are made to sense the other's intention and what they are doing over there."

"One of these inherent structures is called pre-motor neurones – mirror neurones." Weeke explains, and continues, "We make use of the mirror neurones when we are crossing the street. Without being completely aware of it, we know on a physical level where the other bodies in the pedestrian crossing are, and we also know if that car moves forward or not. This sense of orientation we have in the body is also taken into use when we are doing a game such as Karoline's string-pulling. We are a lot of bodies which among other things keep us informed through our senses and mirror neurones, and which figure out what we must do to avoid bumping into each other or causing damage to each other. It is the same ability we use to be adequately territorial and well-defined in relation to each other. It is inherent in our biological structures, they are designed to do this."

Weeke elaborates, "Part of our learning is physical and emotional before it becomes mental. We may be using this level when we are making 3-dimensional art, and not just as something visual to stand and look at, but

where we actually ask people to return to an original tone in themselves, among other things with these mirror neurones.

THE DOMAIN OF REASONING

Ulla Rung Weeke now tells us that there even is an extra social or collective sense which is significant to our feeling of 'being in touch with each other'. She explains: "Mirror neurones always rely on your eyes and ears and depend on your ability to see and sense what goes on biologically. But there is another sense. An example: Right now there is a crew of carpenters next door but we cannot hear them or see them. Suddenly something serious happens – one of them is hurt. If we, who are sitting in here, could have our heart rates measured at the same time, you would see an increase in pulse beats. It is a non-conscious, biological level that 'intercepts' that something has happened close by which may be dangerous!!! In other words, there is a kind of domain of reasoning which our nervous system is very, very pre-occupied with. Is something threatening us? The body is constantly assessing whether what is happening is safe, whether it is unsettling or highly dangerous, on the inside as well as on the outside of the body.'

Weeke elaborates, "This biological level, capable of intercepting, does not depend on our eyes and ears. I usually describe it as energetic sensing which comes from somewhere else...A bit like the story about the hundred

monkeys which inspired the other monkeys on the neighbour island to also clean their roots in a special way. The monkeys were connected to each other, but they were not disturbed by their frontal lobes telling them that this simply cannot be right. This biological/energetic domain can actually form an intense electromagnetic field, collectively and globally. E.g. data from weather satellites have shown that on 9/11 a range of highly increased values appeared in the atmosphere, indicating that a raging hurricane was on its way. But no hurricane ever came. Maybe the collective amount of human anxiety and stress was so intense that it could be registered in a weather satellite.”

And Weeke continues: “Hence we are all connected in a space/domain of reasoning which is bigger than we immediately sense. We are making a positive impact on this particular space when we play a game such as string-pulling. It is fair to say that Karoline’s intention to do this is a space or a framework made to create regulation and satisfaction in stead of stress and deadlock. I offer you a space, I hold this space for you, I have designed this space, what would you like to use it for? And the bodies that are playing can make it inside. The actual effect depends on the kinds of heads that control the bodies. If we are used to suppress the impulses we get from the body, we will have no fun, we do not do this sort of thing, we will not let ourselves go, we will not regulate. But if we are used to just go ahead with things where

people are swinging a bit and moving around, then we have the opportunity to seize the now-and-here and get something new out of it.”

ART AS ‘HOLDING’

How would you describe this, holding a space for others and inviting them inside to communicate at a deeper physical level? Giving people an opportunity for a more profound biochemical experience of different feelings, e.g. joy and satisfaction?

Ulla Rung Weeke answers, “Having a positive intention in relation to others, like Karoline, can be described as a ‘holding’. I have an intention to do something here, do you want to play with me and do this with me? That is, so to speak, ‘holding’ in the deepest sense of the word. To present a framework and hold an energetic space for you, do you want to play with me, or do you want to join me in doing this? Do you want to create something with me?”

Karoline adds: “To me, expression and regulation of different feelings are closely connected to the idea of creativity, even though this level is largely ignored in the context of professional art. It is that creativity that opens up the space between us, that occurs when we communicate at a more profound level in this common energetic space that we share as human beings.”

There is a lot of talk about creativity today but predominantly in relation to lifestyle and commercial interests rather than to a strictly human perspective. We have concepts and phrases such as ‘the creative class’, ‘art management’, ‘user-driven innovation’, ‘identity-building-process’. Where is the definite, real human creativity in relation to these market-based concepts of aesthetics?

“To me, creativity is not just a product,” Weeke answers, “It is also – maybe even primarily – the social factor, the impulses. Simply the joy of being part of something or doing something with someone... Currently, there is simply no room for creativity in its original form. Today, creativity must be adjusted to fit financial thinking. But the body is organic, there is nothing linear about it. We talk a lot about innovation and creativity, but do we live it, or is it mostly just hot air? I think that there is a lot of people out there not living as complete human beings. It’s going the wrong way. And that is when you can say that an offer to do something different with yourself – if we could have more of this kind of surprises where things are not exactly linear, where there is an opportunity to test yourself, and to get to know yourself better, and maybe just for a millisecond feel that something is different from what it usually is, then we would all be healthier and have more fun. Which will consequently reduce expenses in the long run!” Karoline concludes: “It is precisely art in the public domain that can ‘hold’ this exchange between people. This level is rarely mentioned

in professional city development and city planning. In the 21st century it is still looked upon as something 'just for fun' and 'without purpose', when you work professionally with this profound level of communication, like I do. It tells me there is still a considerable level of dissociation of the body taking place. Looking at the 'raw' or 'lifeless' city rooms that evolve, it would be groundbreaking and necessary to start thinking constructively about the human movement that is produced through art."

"I am quite comfortable with being some sort of 'neo-hippie' who insists that art offers a sensual space where we are able to express ourselves collectively," Karoline continues and elaborates, "Certainly not to express ourselves uniformly, on the contrary. We must create space to cover the complete spectrum, including the more negative outbursts in society as they are unavoidable anyway. Anger is a driving force for human beings. That may change if there are places where people get the opportunity to experience, even if it is just for a moment, that they can turn something upside down and do something different with themselves. It is going to come out sooner or later anyway. It may be related to stress, illness, abuse of power, or vandalism. Just think of all the things which could be addressed earlier, be given space, and turned into something good!"

April 17th 2008,

Edited by Cecilie Høgsbro and Karoline H. Larsen

Creative Actions

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Creative Actions 2002-2008 Karoline H. Larsen

The (dis)organisation of the room Christiane Finsen

To turn yourself upside down and – and to get in touch with each other Ulla Rung Weeke, Cecilie Høgsbro, Karoline H. Larsen

Text editing Cecilie Høgsbro, Karoline H. Larsen

Translation and proofreading Lars Wichmann Lund

Concept and design Anni's (annis.dk)

Printing Narayana Press

Bookbinding Jysk Bogbind

Cover photography Marco Germinario, Tina Louise Hunderup

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Acknowledgments Karoline H. Larsen acknowledges all the following people and institutions without whom *Creative Actions* would not have been realisable

Creative Actions, Cape Town Dustin Ryan, Neil Lloyd, Dean Cornwell, Chris Auret, Paul J., Keric Allenbrook, Tyler Smith, Swain Hoogervorst, Warren Papier, Mark Davis, Simon Kohler, Andrew McNally, Stuart Ziegler, Gregory Maybery, Ruth Cousins, Moa Lindh, Rowan Smith, Jessica Brown, Bianca Baldi, Elgin Rust, Niklas Wittenberg **Contacts** Thomas Mulcaire ICA Cape Town, Angela Biram and Craig, Rory and Ruth Sacks, Michaelis School of Art at the University of Capetown S.A., Andrew Putter, Ronde-

bosch Boys School, Christopher Till, Generator Space. Andrew Lamprecht **Camera** Christian Friis Hansen and Dylan Culhane **Editing** Yrsa Wedel **Sound** Thomas Knak **Photography** Karoline H. Larsen

Creative Actions, Barcelona Pei, Ester, Sofia, Jessica, Elianne, Diana, Britta, Anna, Irene, Adi, Valentine and Emilie from Escola Massana for Art, Craft and Design **Contacts** Jordi Canudas, Escola Massana for Art, Craft and Design **Camera and editing** Christian Friis Hansen **Photography** Karoline H. Larsen

Creative Actions, New Delhi Jasmeen Patheja and www.blank-noiseproject.blogspot.com, Praktisha Baxi Center for Women Development Studies, Astha Arora, members of the SAHEL Helpline, JAGORI Center for women research and study, Crime Against Women Cell in Delhi police, Abhijeet Singh, Sadan Jha at Sarai Programe Center for the Study of Developing Societies **Camera and editing** Christian Friis Hansen **Photography** Karoline H. Larsen

Creative Actions, Julius Blomsgade, Copenhagen Mille Rude and members of The Association Artificial Sara Møllegaard Flyvbjerg, Mette Woller, Karl Mcllquham Schmidt, Andreas Christensen, Thomas Adelhorst, Julie Hennecke Hartmann, Mie Arndt Larsen, Sara Gornitzka, Jens Dan Johansen, Tirsdag Josephine Kjølner **Photography** Marco Germinario

Creative Actions, Roskilde Festival, Roskilde Mille Rude and members of The Association Artificial Sara Møllegaard Flyvbjerg, Mette Woller, Karl Mcllquham Schmidt, Andreas Christensen, Thomas Adelhorst, Julie Hennecke Hartmann, Mie Arndt Larsen, Sara Gornitzka, Jens Dan Johansen, Tirsdag Josephine Kjølner

Contacts Jes Vagnby, Bodil Nielsen, Michael Larsen, Magnus, Karin Gottlieb, string supplier Twine and Rope **Photography** Marco Germinario, Thomas Graver **Camera** Nikolaj Viborg, Amdi Brøner **Editing** Nikolaj Viborg **Sound** Thomas Knak **Production assistant** Mille Rude **Inspiration** Jeanne Jensen (jeannejensen.dk) and her Continuum Movement courses.

Creative Actions, CPH Metro, Copenhagen Maria Werger, Cecilia Palmgren, Mille Rude, Karl McIlquham Schmidt **Photography** Marco Germinario

Creative Actions, Bairro Surubi, Resende Children, youngsters, adults, and basically everyone interested from Bairro Surubi, Resende. **Contacts** Walber da Silva and Jasinto Pereira Leles Citizens Organization of Bairro Surubi, TV RIO Sul **Photography** Amarante T. Souza and Karoline H. Larsen **Camera and editing** Amarante T. Souza **Building technician/Artist** Walber Da Silva

Creative Actions, Esbjerg Christiane Finsen, Inge Merete Kjeldgaard, Esbjerg Art Museum. Esbjerg Culture School, BGK School, Johannes Wium Olesen, Cecilie, Nikolaj, Christian, Claus, Simone, Martin, school children and friends **Photography** Torben Meyer, Karoline H. Larsen

Creative Actions, New York City Jasmine Zimmerman, Charlie Todd and ImprovEverywhere and everybody invited via their NYC email-list, and art event-lists in Brooklyn. NYC Parks & Recreation, Danish elastic string supplier ELAS A/S. **Camera, editing and location scout** David Felix Sutcliffe. **Interview** Paul Burn. **Photography** Lindsay Clipner, TrespassersWill, Amir Mikhaeil, Jess Pillar **Production assistant** Mohammed Bah **Spe-**

cial guest Union Square James Kusel (www.jameskusel.com)
Camera and photography Union Square Geo Geller

Creative Actions, Enghave Plads, Copenhagen Jasmine Zimmerman, Mille Rude, Sara Gebran, DJ-Dyr, Allan Myrup and his hammocks. All citizens on Vesterbro and passers-by joining the *Collective Strings* **Contacts** Trevor Davies, Metropolis Laboratory 2007, Copenhagen International Theater, string supplier Twine and Rope. **Camera and editing** Joacim Hamou **Camera** Christian Pagh. Vesterbro Local TV **Photography** Tina Louise Hunderup

Creative Actions, Frihavnen, Copenhagen with Djawed Kimouche, Bülent Dilek, Maiken Thorsen **Contacts** 2+1 Idébureau, Mike Lippert, KIT, Trevor Davies **Photography** Tina Louise Hunderup

Creative Actions, Galerie Wolfsen, Tiendeladen, Aalborg Locals and Kim and his working crew **Contacts** Kent Wolfsen, Anne Marie Knudsen **Photography** Karoline H. Larsen, Peter G. Christiansen

Creative Actions, Market Square, Copenhagen Locals from Nørrebro, Djawed Kimouche, Cille, Sofie, Hanna **Contacts** 2200x-Kulturelt Krydsfelt, Mads Bech Paluszewski, Jesper Christensen, KIT, Metropolis Lab, Trevor Davies **Photography** Karoline H. Larsen, Ghislain Taschini **Camera and editing** Joseph Barnett

Creative Actions is supported by DA-NY Arts, Danish Arts Council, The Committee for the Visual Arts, Danish Arts Council, The Collective 1/3 of Copydan Blank Tapes, Karl og Dagmar Thyrrer Grant, Danish Arts Council, Talent Grant (2004), Danish Arts Foundation, The Committee for International Visual Art

This catalogue is sponsored by Danish Arts Council, The Committee for Visual Arts and Grosser L. F. Foghts Fond



KUNSTRÅDET

ISBN 978-87-992441-0-2

