

Subchapter 1. 3: Interventions that disrupts, confronts and/or propose something new
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Collective Strings in the city

by Karoline H Larsen



Cheating my head with a roll of string

Performance artist Karoline H Larsen explains: "I have developed Collective Strings as a participatory creative way for people to sculpt public space in a free movement, tracking colored strings in traces across public space and between city structures. Collective Strings began with my own need to move and express myself in new ways cheating tricking my body and mind with a roll of string in order to begin playing in public spaces. I wanted to stop taking the same but efficient route from A to B and to find forgotten pathways and new traces in my mind and body as I moved through the city. I was curious to experience myself from a new angle, to open new impulses inside me, and feel something different. I was adamant that the experimental character of art was necessary for change and personal development." (Larsen 2008)



Disrupting (patterns of) movement in the urban

Collective Strings disrupts bodily patterns of movement in the city, literally by inviting everyone to track colored traces of string between city elements thus creating new spaces and new ways of moving. People are offered new pathways in their biochemistry by turning themselves upside-down and getting in touch with each other.

New tracks in the biochemistry.

Body therapist, psychologist, and psychotraumatology specialist Ulla Rung Weeke met performance artist Karoline H Larsen in an interview about Collective Strings. Karoline asked Rung Weeke: As a crisis psychologist, how do you view art projects such as Collective Strings?

“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. Collective Strings is not therapy, of course, but with art projects of this kind you can readily offer people other ways 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.” (Larsen 2008)



The body as testing-ground in the city / Ways to social rediscovery.

Rung Weeke 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 ourselves and our inherent signals.” (Larsen 2008)

Karoline states “Through artistic physical ways to involve the public e.g. Collective Strings - producing public spaces for people's physical experiences of self-expression – we can open new and alternative ways of living our lives. We can awaken and explore the process of social rediscovery.”

