

REHEARSAL

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Vienna, 2016

An improvised play in four acts.



CONSTELLATION WORK

»Doing the same thing repeatedly in order to bring it to a point of perfection would seem, at first glance, to conform to the logic of efficiency and the expectation of self-optimization that characterize today's working conditions. In contrast, strategies of rehearsal, which have long been enacted in artistic work, reveal that routine and repetition can possess a subversive potential.¹«

An already existing modular setting by Krüger & Pardeller served as stage and framing for a collaborative process with students.

Originally developed for a collaboration with a coach of organisational development, the rehearsal scenario contains flipcharts, pin boards and floor elements that are activated in the framework of prepared »scenes«. The methodologies that come into being at the intersections of institutional critique and organizational theory are not only related, they share formal solutions. They signify role dispositions and group compositions, and they open a communicative and emotional space for negotiation. The rehearsal appears as a social situation model that allows the practicing of new roles and changing power relations.

Within Krüger & Pardeller's action field, the students experimented with different constellations involving body, space, and objects. They developed works which were under constant evaluation during the process. The evaluation did not only focus on the works themselves, but principally on their potential to provide new inspiring narrative directions for the group. »The topos of rehearsal borrowed from theatre and psychodrama serves as a possibility to integrate communication, improvisation, and group-work into the performative happening.«

Based on this, the form of rehearsal offers an ideal mediation-field for the definition of work and authorship: the notions of processuality, fragmentedness, and serialism greatly correspond to the state of the

temporary, the unfinished, and the act of starting-from-the-beginning-all-over-again. The procedure of repetition overcomes the distinction of the creation process and the finished work,² so that processuality and productivity appear less like antitheses, but more like two mutually necessary sides of a coin, just like teaching and studying became inseparably conjoined in this project.

The result of the one-year-long process is a 30 minute film, which shows the procedure of the rehearsal, moments of negotiation, repetition, and decision-making. Parallel to the individual works, a common narrative is being developed, which leads to a scenic choreography. The tempo of the film is determined by the rhythm of action and reflection.

The evaluation of the procedure appears at the transcription of the conclusive discussion. It serves as the basis of a text, which accompanies the film.

The final setting contains some modular elements, several booklets including the script for a renewed rehearsal scenario and a film partially completed with language, sound, and singing.

^{1,2} Sabeth Buchmann & Constanze Ruhm, *Subjekt auf Probe*, In: *Texte zur Kunst*, HEFT NR. 90 / JUNE 2013 »Wie wir arbeiten wollen«

»The struggle itself towards the heights
is enough to fill a man's heart.
One must imagine Sisyphus happy.«
– Albert Camus



Protagonists (in order of appearance):
Lukas, Doris, Marianne, Stefan, Lenny,
Albert, Gasper, Ziva, Sebastian

ACT I

LUKAS As it feels like coming to an end now, all our experience might turn into an independent piece, which can be shown on several spots. This is the moment where the thing we did gets a *Selbstbewusstsein*.

DORIS I think we would need some more carpets!

MARIANNE Shall I get them?

LUKAS Yes, of course.

DORIS Now, it really feels like being at home.

STEFAN It would be interesting to show the project in the same space where it all happened, with us being in the film that is being projected. To show it here with all its layers.

LENNY Showing it here would take away a lot of energy.

LUKAS Yes, but at the same time the absence of us performing is stronger if we show it in the same space. It's about leaving an empty set, where the person who enters the field will turn into an actor like we used to be.

DORIS Showing it in the original place feels as if we had just left the scene, it is rather a leftover than a work on its own

right, whereas showing it somewhere else demands staging as an additional decision.

LUKAS We need to think about the question of the display in connection to the film, and the objects, too.

MARIANNE For me the rehearsing experience was rich enough, I do not need any final exhibition to be satisfied.

LENNY For me not showing it or just showing it in the same space would be unsatisfying. I feel it needs that one more step out, I think this would change a lot.

LUKAS Actually, the experiences of satisfaction and dissatisfaction are closely related with the concept of rehearsal. There is always the wish of coming to an end.

LENNY Within the process of repetition, I found it satisfying to already know what would happen next, and to be part of it.

DORIS I enjoyed knowing the sequences as well, but also loved the unexpected moments. It was a combination of safety and surprise that led to a specific tension. However, only after having decided and learned about the bigger structure, was I able to see the quality of the tiny steps.

MARIANNE And although we always rehearsed the same procedure, it never exactly was the same. The carpets and the boxes and how everything was placed was a bit different each time. It'll always be different.

LENNY I experienced a strong urge to put things into a specific form. Especially with the boxes and all their options. This even continued when walking home. Wherever I saw some boxes, I felt the need to put them into a specific order, to build a monument. Thus, not only looking at the film, but also the option of physically touching the objects is important for me. This is what made the magic happen between all of us.

STEFAN There's one thing that makes it exceptional: normally you just watch a film, but here you watch it and at the same time you can touch what you see, get into a physical interaction with the things on screen. You can look and feel at the same time and this interferes with the memory of the film. I think this could be interesting for the public as well. We could show the film together with the carpet and with some of the objects...

DORIS I think the film transmits the individual works and our activity with them quite well. I'm not sure if the objects should be in the field. They should not turn into *Requisiten*.

LENNY I think that all the objects should be out of the field. We should be inside!

DORIS ... or just the booklet with the script...

ALBERT It's also a question if we see it as a mere presentation, or define the presentation as an ongoing process of rehearsal.



ACT II

STEFAN Anyway, how does it feel for you to see yourself, see yourself sleeping, see yourself acting, as we are acting right now?

MARIANNE I love it! Although you are sleeping, you are so active. There is a lot of action...

DORIS ... it all looks so natural, but as we know it's not, it becomes even stronger. It's a very present representation of inactivity.

LUKAS ... and it seems as if we really knew what we were doing. We have rehearsed it and everyone knows what to do, we're sure about it, although it all might be changed at any moment.

DORIS That was a wonderful moment, when you started to connect us. It was magic, I love it. This all isn't about the quality of the final result, but the quality that lies within the interactions.

LUKAS And everyone has tension, everyone who was inside the field had the tension of taking care about what's going to happen next.

LENNY But in the *Probe* it's also allowed to do nothing. Somehow everything's allowed. So all of us were taking part, even when just watching, even when doing nothing.

DORIS Rehearsing turned out to be a mirror of different velocities. While some were already done with the individual work and found it boring to do it over and over again, some others were still in the mode of trying out. The slow ones were being rewarded, not the fast ones. The uncertain ones were being rewarded, not those who had a clear goal from the very start. And those whose work did not claim autonomy, were being rewarded, too, as the quality of their work only developed serving others, within the group.

GAŠPER I was done with my idea at an early stage and then found it distracting when we were not pushing into the same direction. Connecting this experience with the general experience of an artistic practice, or a working practice nowadays, rehearsing's just the contrary of how things are usually done. Normally, the expectation's that you get as much done in the shortest period of time, that you do your work in an efficient way. In this case we could take a lot of time...

STEFAN ... but what do you think about the fact, that you now have more time than usually? Aren't you happy about the possibility to experiment, about the chance to start it all over again and to do it once more?

ALBERT To work and create for nothing, to sculpture in clay, to know that

one's creation has no future, to see one's work destroyed in a day while being aware that fundamentally this has no more importance than building for centuries – this is the difficult wisdom that absurd thought sanctions. Performing these two tasks simultaneously, negating on one hand and magnifying on the other, is the way open to the absurd creator. He must give the void its colors.

GAŠPER We invested a lot of time which added a lot of layers, but I hardly find so much time for my own individual work, so I feel this has nothing to do with real life. Besides, I'm product oriented and want to get to a conclusion. With rehearsing the point was NOT to get to a conclusion, which is just the contrary of how the system works. It's the contrary of the capitalistic system.

ALBERT The workman of today works every day in his life at the same tasks, and this fate is no less absurd. But it's tragic only at the rare moments when it becomes conscious. Sisyphus, proletarian of the gods, powerless and rebellious, knows the whole extent of his wretched condition: it's what he thinks of during his descent. The lucidity that was to constitute his torture at the same time crowns his victory. There's no fate that cannot be surmounted by scorn.

DORIS We finally seem to surmount our fate too, to come to an end, to come up with a product. We're just discussing showing something to someone.

STEFAN Yes, but the capitalistic system is process-oriented too. It's not just the finished product that is valuable. The question is if we understand a product as something finished, or rather as something that's still in the production line, being continuously shaped by ongoing processes and reevaluations.

GAŠPER But the art system is dominated by deadlines for exhibitions or open calls for scholarships. So, do it fast and do it good and come to an end. Rehearsing was refreshing, but just not compatible with everyday life.

DORIS In this sense, rehearsing is rather a deconstruction of an efficiency-oriented ideology. It's a figure of thought that evokes the idea of endlessness. This however partly denies the satisfaction we usually gain from reaching a final and good result. It is a self-imposed restriction where the satisfaction needs to be found within the process itself.

ALBERT Just like it's counterintuitive to stop for a contemplation when you are supposed to produce, to stop to think, because what would happen then? In order to understand the world, one has to



turn away from it on occasion. It sounds like you had a long collective meditation on post-post-modern human existence itself, that I'll never have the chance to try. But I understand rehearsing as an ongoing improval, therefore it's necessarily dissatisfactory.

ŽIVA Yes, rehearsal is an on-going dissatisfaction. It's the dissatisfaction that keeps us going. The result is always declared to be not yet good enough...

DORIS Ongoing rehearsing is always at risk to become arbitrary, though.

LUKAS The satisfaction is closely related with the tension and the dynamics of the process. We always kept away the idea of a final result, but the satisfaction I found was within our interactions and the progress we went through.

LENNY For me the whole process was about bringing the idea of rehearsal into our minds, about making our own experience with it. If we decide to show our film in the same space again, we would still remain in the mode of rehearsing without any distance for reflection, without the opportunity to come to a conclusion...

ALBERT ... we could even continuously define the exhibition as part of our rehearsing process...

DORIS ... and continue with it until we are 100 years old: some kind of a Sisyphus-horror.



ACT III

STEFAN For me, it's all about the story we are able to tell now, because of the specific working process we went through. We could even show our film in the cinema. We constructed a narration.

ALBERT To create is to live twice.

DORIS When it comes to creation, the floor-elements play an important role for me. They constituted our working-space and now could also organise the exhibition space. It was the floor, or the stage, that held together all the different individual elements and shaped our activities that took place within.

LENNY Transferred to the exhibition space the visitors might inscribe themselves into the experience and into the narration by just entering the field, or maybe sitting on it.

LUKAS In this case, I really don't see any of our works in the field. As the works were always brought in and brought out, and always needed us to interact, the field should be finally empty, especially in combination with the film. In the end all the works should be gone. Just the booklet with the new script might remain.

DORIS I like the fact that the field is flat, almost two-dimensional, almost just an idea or a matrix. Like one basic rule...

LUKAS ... which organised not only our activities but also the way we filmed ourselves. Photographing and filming were support features, but at the same time, they strongly shaped and influenced our behaviour, even though with time we got used to being observed. Additionally, it was an individual work and an artistic contribution.

DORIS With the camera and the demand to repeat certain actions for the film, the figure of the Regisseur also appeared. There's no clear author though, only self-organised agreements and shifting decisional power.

LUKAS When taking the field into the exhibition space, it turns into a display. Maybe we should think about using the other structures too. Using the frames, the boards and the flipchart-paper to project the film upon. Maybe we add a sound layer or just have our scripted conversation, typing what I am saying right now, for example...

DORIS With the written script we could think about engaging professional actors or speakers, or we use the script to start the rehearsing process all over again, reherasing our own conversation....

ALBERT A rehearsal of a meta-rehearsal. We all go through life with the biologically determined intention of

living, not knowing what it means to live, and without the possibility of living it again. Rehearsal is therefore the temptation of immortality. So what is meta-rehearsal then? Philosophisation of the unknown and the impossible? But what are you gonna do with the sound?

LENNY Maybe we have a sound collage that is not 100% connected with the video, where we could also add what we are saying right now.

LUKAS Do you remember that early session, when we experienced the border of touching and repositioning the works of others. Of taking control over someone else's work. What was so strong, was the fact that it happened without words, without talking. Nobody said a word and it got a really intense dynamic. We took a lot with us from that, even if we are more secure now. But later new borders have built up. Like when Gašper suddenly said ›no‹. You did take over control, you didn't allow us everything. This reflects well your position and your work.

DORIS Some works are more open and more accessible, but actually, the modular system of the boxes is very open too.

LUKAS We started with a modular structure, and most of the works turned to be modular too, in the end. Anna's sound work is super modular.

SEBASTIAN Not Lenny's one, not the flash – it is everywhere.

ALBERT The flash is everywhere.

ACT IV



We have two more minutes left.

Is this the beginning again?

No, it is the end.

Existence is illusory and is eternal.

See you soon!

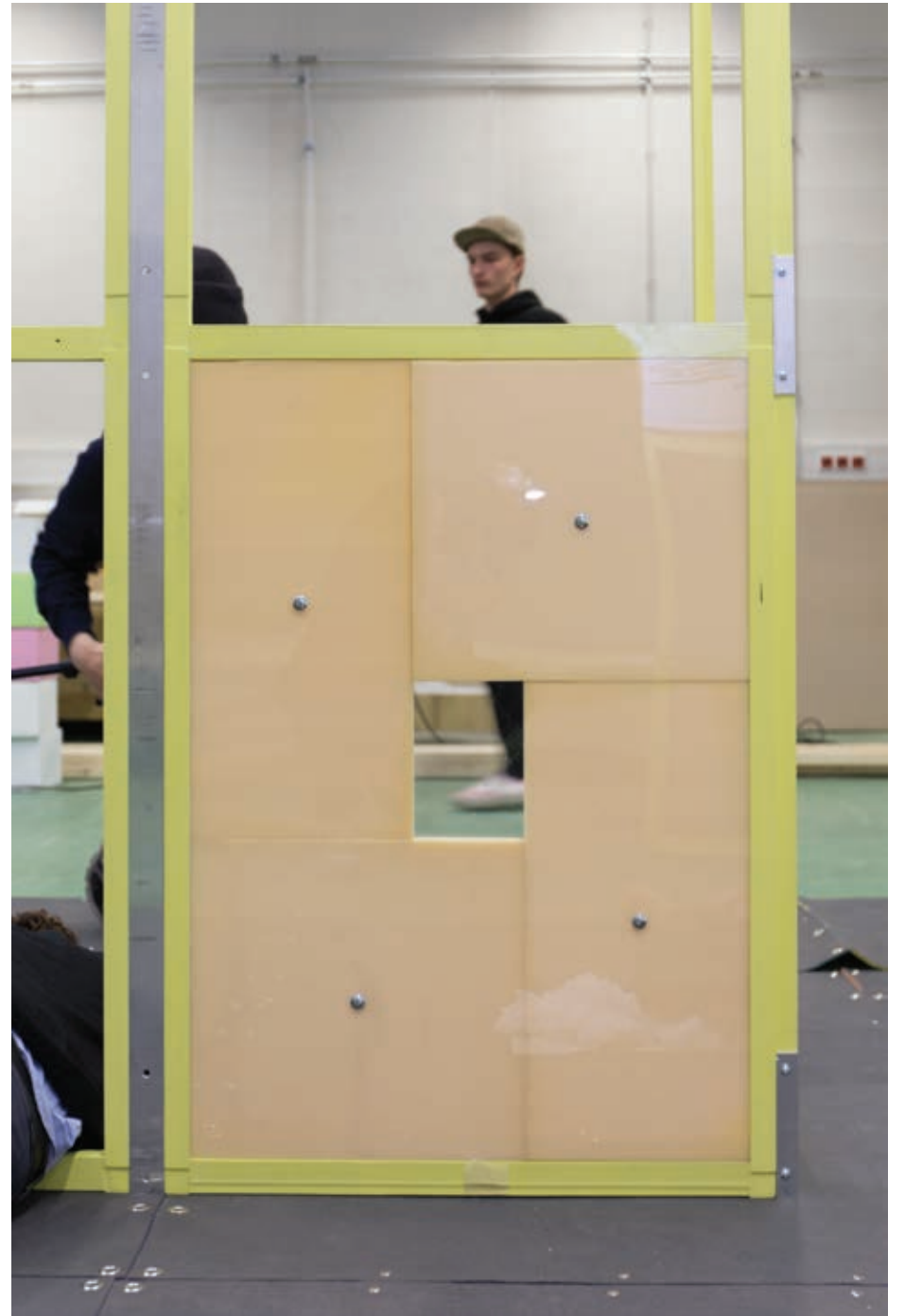
Oh, now it is dark...

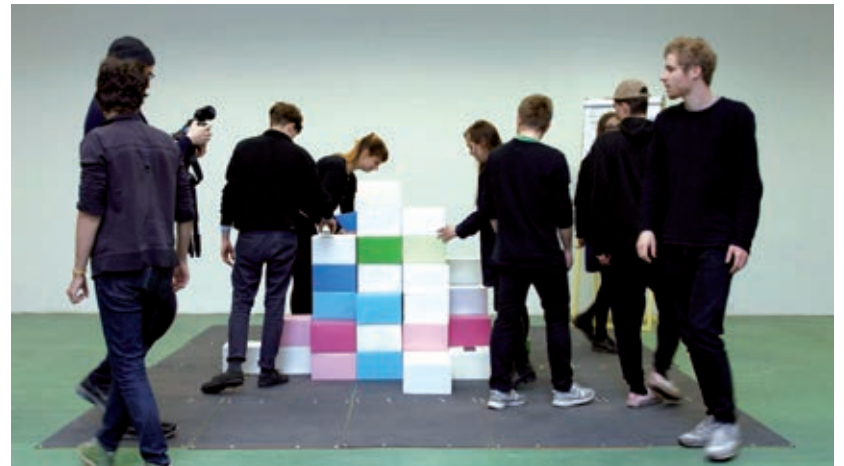
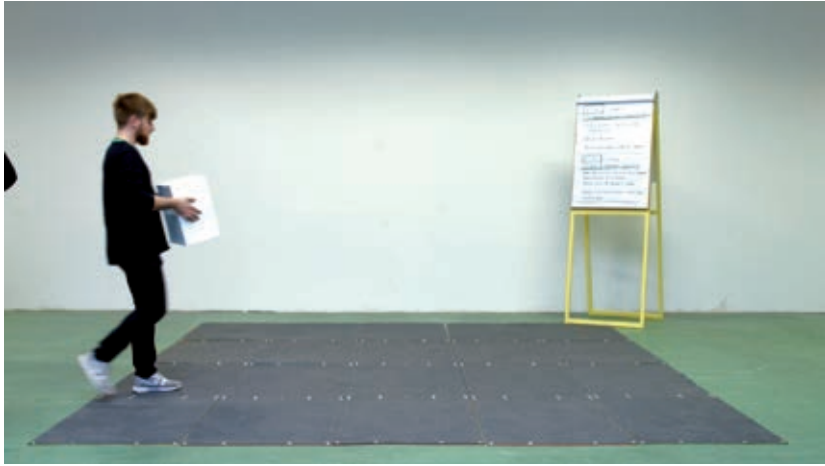
We all know that we are performing...

It is the *kollektives Wissen*.















CONSTELLATION WORK,
SZENEN IM RAUM

(Works in order of appearance)

The Objective Preset, Lukas Maria Kaufmann
Sleep, A Pre-Subjective State, Marianne Stålhös
The Externalised Authority, Leonard Prochazka
Reflection, Seeing Oneself And Others, Živa Drvarić
Turning The Mirror, Lukas Maria Kaufmann
Subjectivity, Or The Individual Voice, Ida Bö
Synchronous Flash, Interaction And Coincidence, Sebastian Köck
The Collective Monument, Internalised Authority, Gašper Kunšič
Collective Subjectivity, The Chorus Of Emacipation, Anna Zilahi

Concept / Set:

Krüger & Pardeller,

A Model of Possible Action 2013/2016

Film, Cutting, Editing:

Stefan Arztmann

Script and Translation:

Anna Zilahi

Photography and Graphic Design:

Sebastian Koeck

Text:

Krüger & Pardeller

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