

THE BASIC CONCEPT OF "JOURNEY TO ABADYL"

The Nordic network for media arts professionals PRAMnet, formed in 2003, is a collaboration between Nordic performance artists, film- and media producers, interaction designers and technology developers.

In 2008, PRAMnet received a pre-production grant from Nordic Culture Point to investigate a scenic media production with the working title CubeX, an interactive performance-installation with audience participation.

At the seminar WIREFRAME held in 16-18 May we introduced our research and presented ideas for the script and drama development, for game patterns and mechanics for workable models on play design, and methods of interaction.

In this publication, we present results of this research work - "Journey to Abadyl" - an innovative performative synergy between performance art, computer games and interactive film.

We hope this material can form a basis for further development of this never-seen-before performance art project.

FROM CUBEX TO JOURNEY TO ABADYL - the early concept

The working title CubeX can be seen from multiple viewpoints; the "cube" as a form is almost perfect, strictly regulated. The "cube" is also closely associated with the throwing of a dice, an old game gadget, a random choice generator.

The X-factor stands for the unknown, for the search of a logic, or an order. Or an X at the election poll. We make a lot of choices in our everyday life - a constant process - but do we really know the options? Or do we leave choices to the dice?

The theme in CubeX is based on "The anatomy of the choice", the audience is invited to a remarkable and dynamic media theatre, where they are confronted with the erratic post-modern representation of our everyday reality. A world where an offer you can't refuse is proposed every second and "free will" is regulated by the market. Ultimately, the choice in CubeX is about good or bad, life or death. A fiction, but a reality based fiction.

THE PROJECT

PRAMnet has a combined experience of artistic/research projects and collaborative works in the field of new media. In our analytical work, we have for several years worked with design theoretical models based on our combined experience and tried to take forward proposals on how to develop and expand this area.

To be able to use our experience and working methods, we decided to initiate a multi purpose project able to fascinate a modern public, big enough to give room for a good number of different artistic means of expression and possibilities, and yet realistic in terms of time and money.

This artistic project springs from a lot of different positions and experiences, from different needs, affections and inclinations, as well scientific as artistic. From a fascination of the possibilities of "the new medium" - the computer - and sheer curiosity, and from the conviction, earned from years of experience with artistic means of expression, that they cannot be tested out except in a concrete context, an actual artistic production, defined by a time, a place, a public, a theme and a topic.

Our "Journey to Abadyl" is the description of our ideas for such a project.

Background - Abadyl - The Pied Piper - The anatomy of choice

"Abadyl" is a virtual city and an ongoing project, which was initiated in 1997 by the Swedish artist Michael Johansson, together with more than 30 different people. (<http://abadyl.com>)

The name is a construction from the three Swedish words:

abstrakt (abstract), stad (city) and akryl (acrylic) (appendix 7)

Afterwards he has actually found a small town in Missouri, USA, by the same name.

(<http://abstusa.com/mo/abadyl/map> <http://maps.google.com/>)

We have chosen the virtual city of Abadyl as one point of departure, and the old story of "The Pied Piper from Hamelin" (appendix 5) as the other, in order to create a "playground sandbox" for playing with the "anatomy of choice" - e.g. the notion of democracy.

Democracy

Democracy is a subject very actual to our time, but the notion does not imply a concrete description of a way of handling matters between people, a polling system or a certain construction of a constitution. There is for instance a very big difference between the constitution of Denmark and the constitution of USA - yet both countries claims to be democratic.

The late Danish author Villy Sørensen coined democracy as "a gerundial word", referring to the Latin grammatical notion of "gerundium"- something to be desirable - as the name "Amanda": she, who should be loved.

Perhaps "democracy" must be experienced and (re)defined by every new generation, and the consciousness to the facts of wanting democracy - or the facts of the lack of democracy - must be constantly revised by the older generations, who maybe have reached a point of control with their lives, which makes them taking democracy - in their own definition and interest - for granted ? (appendix 6)

Form

"Journey to Abadyl" should be seen as a synergy of the expressions of the theatre, the exhibition, the role-play and the amusement park, using dynamic new media, a non-linear dramaturgy and theories from computer games, working with notions as "story world" rather than "script" and "game play" rather than "drama". The task is to establish a contract of fiction with the audience, based on a variety of representations, illusions and meta levels, and to create an environment, which is believable.

It is an event, which takes place over a day or a weekend, engaging its public in a structured game, using the new media in all their possibilities of creating illusions and presenting the results of intricate algorithms in a few seconds, and so able to engage the public in an interaction, which inside the structured frame will define the outcome of the game. It takes place in a larger venue for an audience of 100-200 persons, adults, youths and children above 10, together with their parents.

Content

The "plot" can be described as follows: The inhabitants of a city realize, that they have a problem, whose real nature is difficult to grasp and which may have complex causes. If the problem is not solved, the existence of the city and its inhabitants is threatened, but at the same time, the daily life of the city needs to go on. What will have to be changed, which prize will have to be paid, and who will have to pay ?

In the old story of "The Pied Piper from Hamelin", the problem is rats. The Pied Piper solves the problem, but the town council refuses to pay the price agreed upon. The Pied Piper then takes the law in his own hands and abducts all the children of the town, never to be seen again.

In "Journey to Abadyl", the virtual town plays the role of Hamelin, and the audience plays the roles of the inhabitants of Hamelin and their town council. One might say, that the producers and the group of acting performers in this metaphorical way plays the role of the Pied Piper.

The course of events

A visitor at Abadyl will arrive at the virtual airport, and have to apply for a visa. In the application form, the visitor will answer some questions, and make some choices from a list, regarding e.g. field of interests, favourite colour and which area of employment in Abadyl he/she would prefer. The visa given will bear a chip, registering and valuing all the choices made by the visitor during the event. These registrations forms the material for the outcome of the game.

But the chips - or some of the chips - might carry a secret code, which make some choices impossible, and other choices profitable. So the choices, made by every single visitor, will have an element of destiny, an element of chance and an element of choice, and not everything can be explained logically.

On a short "guided tour" in Abadyl, the visitor will be presented for the seven parts of the city. Every part of the town will have its own characteristics, its own problems and advantages, and its own values. On a central place, the visitors will meet "the Spirit of Abadyl" - an interactive screen, not only registering movements and sounds in its immediate vicinity, but also registering and expressing the valuing of the choices continuously made by all the visitors, and registered through the chips.

In some aspects "The Spirit" is like a tuning indicator ("magic eye") on an old-fashioned radio set: If everything is well, the "eye" is calm. A disturbance will cause eruptions, or the "eye" will disappear completely, leaving nothing but an awful noise.

After the "guided tour" the visitor will choose "a place to live" in one of the housing areas of the town. The rule will be "first come first served" - there will not be room for everyone everywhere, and some will have luck, others not.

As for "law and order" the rule will principally be, that the laws and good manners inside the virtual city will be the same as the laws and good manners in the outside world.

"You are not to harm others and not to put your life at stake, and else you can do as you please" ("Cardamom law" by Thorbjørn Egner)

Families, who has registered as family on the visa application, will have to stay together in the same virtual lodging.

The activities of the event will follow in three steps:

The first step will establish the "normal daily life" of the city, the visitors - now inhabitants - will go to their virtual jobs, earn "money", buy food, take contact to their neighbours and so on.

There will be "Sundays" where the inhabitants are free to go to the entertainments of the town, or to visit other parts of the town to see what life is like there.

But not everything will run smoothly. Not only will there be conflicts between the different parts of the town, and oppositions inside the areas - e.g. between the inhabitants living in bad lodging and those who have managed to get at good one - there will be failures and oversights too, and everything will be registered and make an impact on the mood of the Spirit of Abadyl.

The second step follows, when the mood of the spirit has reached a certain level, and on this state the inhabitants will have to try to correct their behaviour and make collective decisions, inside the different areas and in the town as a whole, in order to solve the problems of the town.

The third step will be "the catastrophe" - will it happen or not ? What will happen ? How can it be avoided and for which price ?

Are the inhabitants willing to pay the price ? And if not, what happens then ?

In the end the producers will break up the contract of fiction and there will be an entertainment, some food and a possibility to evaluate the experience together with your former fellow citizens. Democracy works best on a full stomach.

The role of the performers

To help the visitors/inhabitants/citizens practically, and to guide the events and the course of events, there will be a number of performers, embodying city guides, officials and citizens with special tasks and missions.

The performers will have a range of possibilities for actions and activities and will use these according to the actual needs of the actual performance. Every event will be different from any other, but it is the goal of the producers to steer the events and make the experience of every new group of visitors meaningful and interesting, through the performers skills to mediate, guide and invent solutions for the concrete conflicts, which should arise.

The role of the media and database, and the scenography

The idea of the virtual city and its seven districts is created in a new media environment where pre-recorded and live-streamed media together with physical scenographic elements, are depicting the characteristics and the properties of the districts. Through the interactive media constructions the virtual life in the city will cover job, transport, spare time activities and entertainment, according to the needs of the actual district and the course of events.

To help the "real life" performers there will be a number of virtual performers - 3D and 2D created avatars - embodying visitors, working as guides, telling stories, controlling, demanding jobs done in a certain way, not to be satisfied with half solutions, omissions or failures.

The research

To test out and describe the possibilities of "the new Media" we have explored ways and means to gather our own experiences and make them usable in spite of their different backgrounds and time - and to describe them in terms independent of obsolete and soon forgotten computer programmes and their more or less compatible versions. We try to collect and realize some of the experiences from an enormous amount of smaller and bigger projects, carried out by artists over the whole world, having very different backgrounds, and being more or less described and documented.

For this purpose we are working on two overall levels,

A: to find ways to define and describe performance animation prototypes on an objective basis, this research will be published on www.PRAMnet.org/proto

B: to develop a database, www.PRAMbase.org, in order to find easy and reliable ways of collecting and sharing various experiences as an "Open Source" project.

The overall purpose is to develop relevant theoretical design models for working in an artistic, research and production driven environment, where all the different perspectives and knowledge can be transferred in a constructive way.

PROJECT RESEARCH

As described, the aim of this project is not only to make an interesting entertainment, using fascinating new media, but also to use the project as a basis for scientific as well as practical development, descriptions and analyses. Though used in artistic productions for more than 20 years the "new media" are developing very quickly and are still in the first phases of testing out the never-seen-before fascination.

Prototypes

To overcome this and mature to a usable "tool" for creating means of expression to carry very different contents, we need categorizing and systematic descriptions of what we have chosen to name "performance animation prototypes" (PAP).

The notion "performance animation" covers the use of new media in a scenic context - as theatre, performance and installation - creating new means of expression through an interaction between the media and a performer and/or a spectator/audience.

An analogy for PAPs can be to see them as "primary colours", which you can buy and mix into an infinite number of very different and individual colours and shades.

But colours are not simply the colour, they are material too. They might for instance be oil, acrylic or water based, and might be applied on different surfaces with different textures, and for every change they will be changing their expressive potentials as well.

Because mankind is used to work with colours for 10.000 years or more, we have a good idea of these possibilities and how to describe them.

When it comes to the PAPs of the new media we are lacking such universal categories and notions, and perhaps first of all an understanding, which allow us to construct such categories and notions, outside the individual artist's or scientist's workshop. We need a vocabulary for the PAPs, to be able to speak about them.

Two other research fields need to be mentioned:

Interaction

Research in communication, interaction and group dynamics is not a new phenomenon, but the new possibilities of the computer and the different media present a new challenge. PAPs has interaction as a precondition; to use the possibility of the PAP you need not only to be aware of fundamental psychological experiences of human behaviour and group dynamics, but to widen the field of research into the field opening around human relations and reactions to "things", e.g. interactive computer screens and robots.

Fiction and reality

The notion of "mixed reality", made possible through the computer medium, also calls for research on the conditions and the implications for the human ability to distinguish between the reality and a fiction, described through a "contract of fiction".

The RS lab Model

The RS lab (Responsive Stage art Laboratory) Model is designed as a two-year laboratory and production process, based on our experience with the methodology and staging of experimental media. The process integrates new technology development, supplementary training, artistic research and production of new stage arts on a long-term strategy.

Planning for the RS lab course is based on the design methods used in the development of interactive computer systems, known as "iterative design." The approach is to create series of smaller studies, which integrate innovative prototypes of the digital media technology with artistic expressions. This work is continuously followed by workshops with participation of stage- and media artists and technology developers, and continuously tested with audiences. Results from each workshop process are collected, recorded and evaluated and further processed with a focus on a single production - in this case "Journey to Abadyl".

This combination of artistic research, concept development and production over a longer period of time ensures, that the experience and results of the experimental projects does not just "disappear" at the project's completion.

The Three Model

This model present a new angle to The RS lab Model. (see essay: "The RS lab and The Three - a multidisciplinary production model"/Katrine Nilsen) The suggestion is a strategy of focusing the investigation and development into three main exploration clusters that puts traditional roles of production aside and combine them in a new interdisciplinary way. The three exploration clusters suggested are as follows:

Expression, Play Mechanics, and Dynamic Behaviour.

The Three Model furthermore suggest to work from a principle of 'two known and one unknown'.

The idea is here to fix two elements of the three exploration clusters using already developed components and in relation to that, explore a new element of the third exploration cluster.

Each possible 'path' through the scenarios of Journey to Abadyl can this way be isolated according to the themes of the three Exploration Clusters and as such they can both individually and as a whole be developed and tested in relation to the technological and artistic intentions and possibilities.

In this way, the Three Model in combination with The RS lab Model will help setting up the right interdisciplinary testing environment for a production like "Journey to Abadyl".

1.

Abadyl - a city guide

Jette Lund - February 2009



Welcome to ABADYL, a spectacular, modern city, beautifully placed between the mountains ONRO, the forests ALTH and ARLEANS and the sea. The oldest parts of ABADYL are TRAORA and FISKMORE. As a visitor approaching from the airport of ARILLA you will pass between old TRAORA and the modern, industrious STRUKON, hidden behind the fantastic billboards, to arrive at the modern centre of the city: The illustrious political and cultural city centre of HORIZONE, the phenomenal and very sophisticated shopping centre SHINJO and the calm and serious business centre CAPPRIE with its famous "Rain Music" and the mysterious "Black Palace". The district of INDUN with the big and prosperous industries, is under strict surveillance to secure the sound and peaceful surroundings for the inhabitants of ABADYL.



SHINJO street view

Between these modern and industrious districts, we find the housing areas: The wonderful fairytale-like VILKIN STEM together with its entertaining and famous Zoo, and the older social housing area NEEBI with its old cathedral.

Situated on the outskirts of ABADYL we find a restricted area, a swamp named TRAILERS PARK. Tourists are strictly recommended to avoid the district with its poisonous and hazardous vapours. Half of the neighbouring housing area CAMPORIA disappeared in the swamp under an awful disaster. The surface was undermined and cracked, possibly caused by chemical waste from other parts of the city.

Today CAMPORIA is a very special and beautiful district. Both wealthy people, the intellectuals and the artists reside here. As a tourist you are recommended to follow tours led by a certified guide, as it is very difficult to find your way in the maze of little street and alleys.

Last to mention is the big cemetery CRYZO ZOO, also the location for the famous car races of ABADYL.

The ONRO Mountains are highly esteemed for holiday and leisure pass times, including mountain climbing and white water rafting, and the wonderful climate makes it an ideal location for a variety of numerous health resorts. As a tourist, you will enjoy the hospitality of the friendly and helpful local inhabitants and enjoy visits to both the old and the modern ABADYL.



The Stadium



The black Palace of Capprie

In the old parts of the city, you will find museums for the spaceship and for the notorious jukebox sect. In the modern parts you will find all kind of cultural events and sports, as well as outstanding and numerous shopping possibilities.

See you in Abadyll! (An abstraction in dynamic acryl)

The site - virtual city ABADYL

We have chosen the (virtual) city of Abadyl, as described by ABADYL CITY GUIDE, as the site of the events. Abadyl is an ongoing art project by artist Michael Johansson, a virtual city that “explores a complex digital space in a setting that invites to participation.”

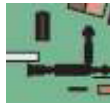
More info on Michael Johansson art-project can be found at <http://abadyl.com>.

Point 1-7 refers to “scales” of elements, which have to be described:

7) Idea /head

- 1) Environment /background
- 2) Building /middle
- 3) Room /foreground
- 4) Furniture/equipment / body
- 5) Tool /hand
- 6) Interface /fingers

Abadyl has sixteen districts, which for our purpose in the performance installation "Journey to Abadyl" are organized in seven districts for work and for living:



TRAORA/FISKMORE: Traditions and tourists

- 7) - you must take the sweet with the sour
- you can't make an omelette without breaking eggs
- the end justifies the means
-

- 1) old houses and alleys, hiding places, privacy but under strict surveillance from your neighbour
- 2) market place/museum
- 3) stalls with games and souvenirs, pancake houses/
- 4) Lucky Wheel, Jukebox, ghosts
- 5) a sacrifice
- 6) Knowledge, fortune

media/prototypes:

- a) gambling machines, share trading programmes
- b) Tags, ghosts ("Spirits on Stage") some members of the audience might have a special “tag” which calls the ghosts
- c) Jukebox ?
- d) read your palm - get a prophecy - read your stars - for what price?
- e) have your picture taken, and see the sights
- d) emotional fish/characters and things



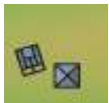
HORIZON/SHINJO/CAPPRIE (Cryzo Zoo): Power, Money, Entertainment:

7) - look, don't touch

- 1) Light, music, colour
- 2) Shopping centre, theatre, stadium, police station
- 3) Store, lobby, reception, interrogating room,
- 4) a tourist bus
- 5) a camera
- 6) relations, position/hierarchy

media/prototypes:

- a) the rain music, the palace,
- b) a race on the churchyard Cryzo Zoo,
- c) a shopping tour, an entertainment.



VILKIN STEM, NEEBI: Country Living & Shabby Chic-Family Life & City Charm

7) If you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear - freedom versus security

- 1) Sun, blue heaven/ rain and fog
- 2) neat family houses/big buildings with flats, cellars, parking areas
- 3) the living place
- 4) furniture and equipments
- 5) food, paint
- 6) recognition

media/prototypes:

- a) Wunderkammer
- b) Two sets of SIM's: in the first, you have to build a house and paint it beautifully, make a garden aso. There are competitions, and if you fail, you and your family are thrown out in the second game: Here you have to survive, find a place to live, food aso. You might go in "at night" and paint graffiti on the neat houses in the first game.
- c) A Zoo: create your own animal - be a sponsor of an animal (Tamagotchi-principle?)



CAMPORIA: Exclusivity and Elegance

7) He lives good who lives in the hidden

- 1) The nearby Trailers Park
- 2) The houses and gardens/the fences
- 3) The labyrinth
- 4) The door
- 5) The door
- 6) rules and maps

media/prototypes:

The labyrinth. Thesis to try out: Every time you open a door for someone, a door is closed for you.
Making yourself visible by helping others doesn't pay.



TRAILERS PARK: Beyond the law

7) Rather create mischief that not creating anything at all (?)

- 1) The sea, the air
- 2) the swamp, the mist
- 3) your tent/your "bubble"
- 4) the screen/the fence
- 5) the beings your are creating
- 6) Eye toy/video tracking ?

media/prototypes:

- a) artificial life programmes/biosphere experiments, balance/fragility,
- b) Michael's "stay together",
- c) Katrine's "Ice-floats"
- d) mixed reality prototypes?



INDUN/STRUKON (Arilla): Experiment, Enterprise, Industry

7) Keep the wheels turning

- 1) noise. Big, rather closed buildings
- 2) a workshop/a factory/a barrack
- 3) rooms
- 4) screens/working stations
- 5) work-out machinery
- 6) game controls/physical transmission of impulses

media/prototypes:

- a) Michael: Formula-1-race, a process that is to be kept up on any price to produce the energy needed for the town. If it fails, the light will go out all over the town.
- b) You may by accident hit a gold vein - what happens then ?
Pacman? Michael Valeur's play with rats?



ONRO (Arleens, Alth): Health and Holidays

7) A clean soul in a healthy body

- 1) The mountains, the woods
- 2) the hotels and spas
- 3) restaurant, hotel room, sauna, swimming pool, workout
- 4) the ski lift/tramway/rafting boat
- 5) money or stories
- 6) push the button and pay

media/prototypes:

- a) 3D-film with climbing, rafting, skiing aso,
- b) Storytelling/film/Do you believe in ("metabolism maligna" or the abominable snowman or the world of Rider Haggard: "She")
- c) Løvind/Wellendorf: Waterfall

THE TRIPLE-I - or "THE BIG EYE" Inspiration, Involvement, Innovation

2.

Visual Concept “Journey to Abadyl”

Scenographic notes - Katrine Nilsen - January 2008

Pre concept for “The Pied Piper” – 05.02.2002

The original concept for “The Pied Piper” was created in 2002 by Katrine Nilsen and Marika Kajo, in connection to the Research project Performance Animation Toolbox at Interactive Institute in Malmo. The idea was then to create a Mood-space that would react to the psychosocial behaviour of the participating audience.

The visual concept consisted of a virtual horizon of the city of Hamelin together with a virtual character that would change shape and appearance according to the configurations and negotiations going on at the physical stage as seen below.



[“The Pied Piper”, Interactive Institute, Malmo 2002]

New concept material for “Journey to Abadyl” – 11.01.2009

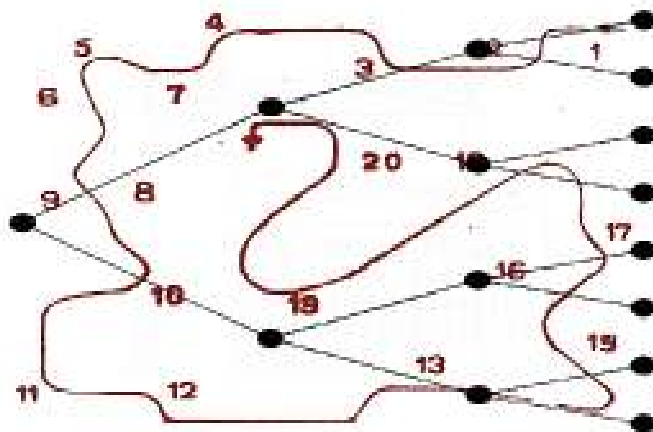
The city of Abadyl was originally constructed as separate cities, which then eventually was merged into one, mixing all their diversity into a big labyrinthine conglomerate of contrasting architecture, infrastructures, history and life styles. (see map page 10)

Every part of The City has it's own characteristic – like the confusing maze of streets and alleys in CAMPORIA where you easily (and perhaps willingly) will get lost – or the shabby blinded facades of INDUN where you only sense, but never really get at glimpse of or get access to the life that must be lived in there somewhere.



To live in and find way through this labyrinthine city requires special skills and cooperation.

The scenic concept for Journey to Abadyl is therefore based on two main principles –
1) ‘the anatomy of the choice’ and 2) ‘the Labyrinth as a dramaturgical model’.



The main idea for the staging of Journey to Abadyl is not to create a complete 3D virtual world, projected into a physical setup – but to construct a physical, partly computer controlled, architectural organism with glimpses of virtual elements – either as video projections or as robotic effects.

The scenography will of course function as an overall dramaturgic structure where the action takes place. But the scenery might also, both metaphorically and literally, host and even be the leading character – The Spirit of Abadyl – who, represented in different variations of expressions, as a leading “Game Master” sets the rules and decides the consequences of the participant’s actions and choices.

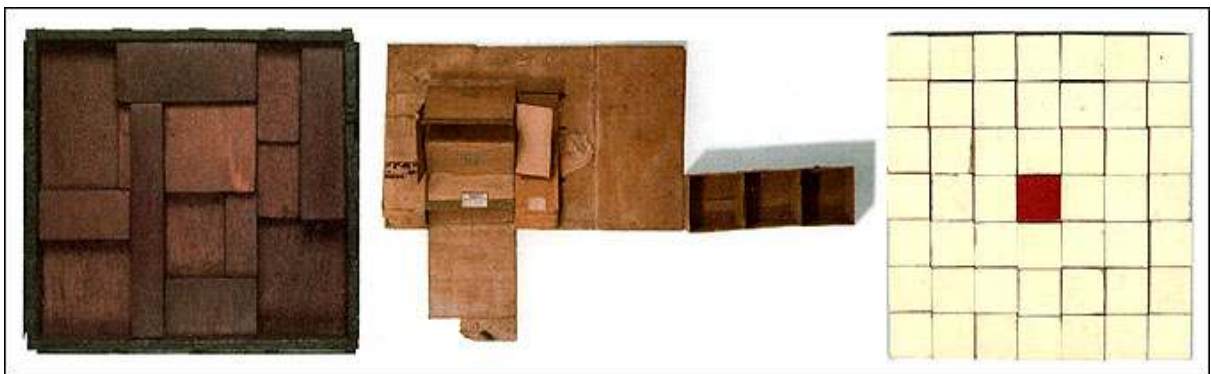
The mood of The Spirit of Abadyl will constantly change and respond to the behaviour of its inhabitants and visitors and according to their choices, it will restrict or extend their freedom of action in the installation. Certain areas might suddenly be concealed, while doors into others might open instead. Furthermore, every room might change its shape or appearance according to who enters and how they behave. (See map page 24)

The scenic installation will be constructed as a basic labyrinthine structure, build around a central chamber containing The Triple-I.

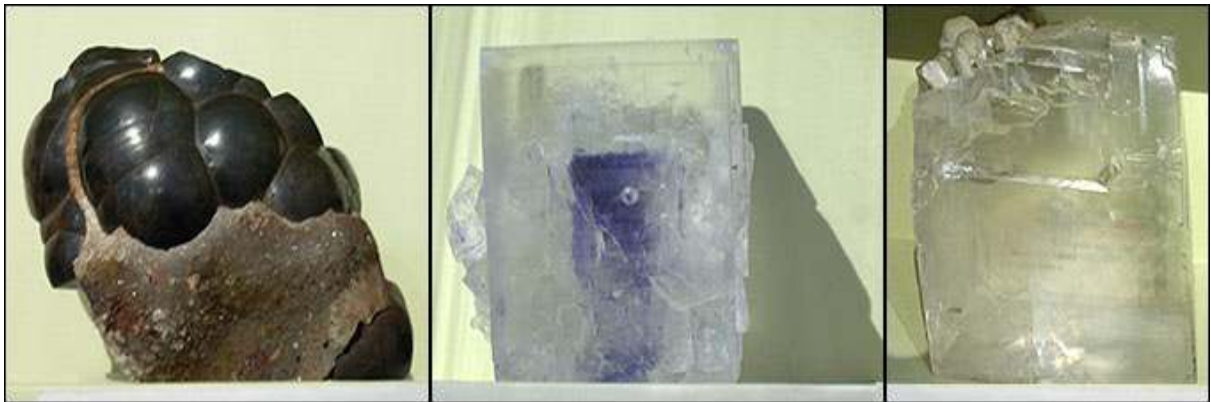
The Triple-I being some kind of a illuminated lighthouse, a globe or a floating sphere, that can be observed from everywhere in the labyrinth, always showing the state and mood of The Spirit of Abadyl.



The general expression will be based on the principles of “systematic chaos”, where irregular bits and pieces are put together like a big jigsaw puzzle.



art of the 'houses' will be carved out of or grow inside and outside each other like strange organic or crystals formations.

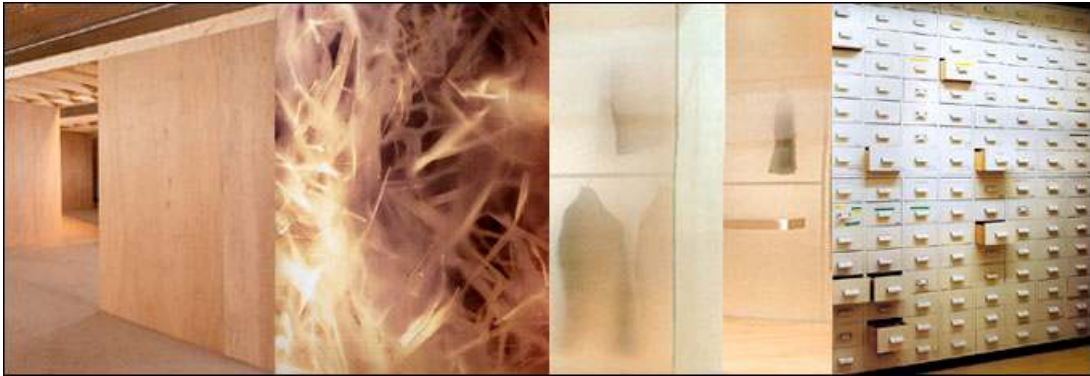


Some of the walls will be constructed as moveable set-pieces and sliding doors installed on tracks and gliders – which if possible will be controlled by the computer system – so that the labyrinth eventually will change during the session, according to the events taking place in it.



“Les Cités Obscures”, Peeters & Schuiten

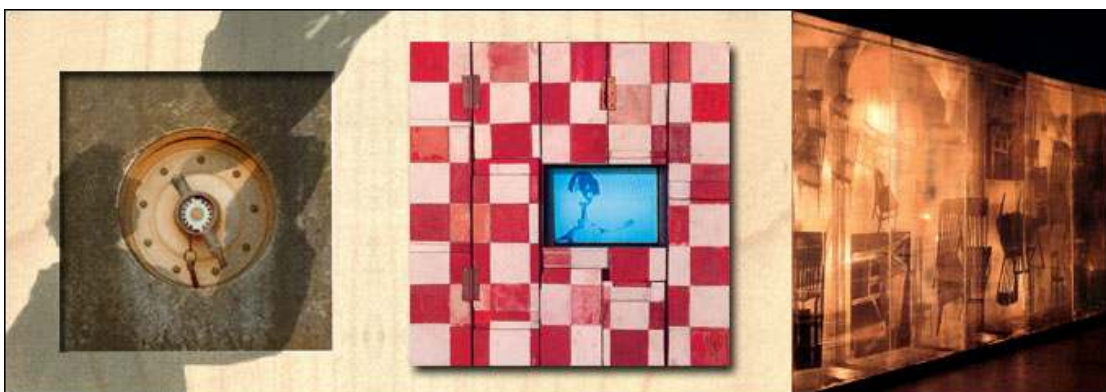
The basic material of the labyrinth will most likely be unpainted or perhaps recycled plywood, though certain parts might be made of translucent or white fibreglass, Plexiglas or organza.



All text and graphics will be printed directly on the walls or applied as light or video projections. The leading colours will be black, white, dark grey, yellow and red. The colour of the video projections might be tinted sepia – as old photographs.



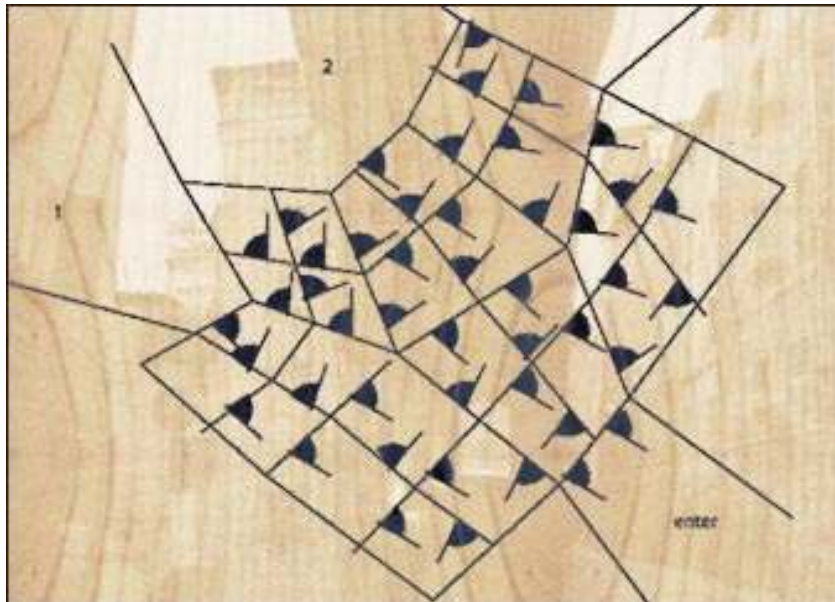
The video projections could both be used as full-framed back-projections of 3D sceneries or it could be front-projections where a specific detail or a character virtually will be given life within the physical scenery. Peepholes, openings, hatchways, buttons and handles will give access to the different parts and events within the labyrinth.



Each part of Abadyl will be presented according to the dramatic plot it represent. Some City parts will be staged purely by video projections while others will be staged through physical sceneries, light, soundscapes and robotic features. But each scenery will physically or virtually represent a challenge that symbolize a dilemma or a dramaturgic problem that, according to the storyline, has to be solved to take the participants through the installation and to the outcome of the story. Each task and every choice made in relation to it will therefore have vital consequences for how the whole group of participants will be able to solve the core “problem(s)”.

Example 1 - CAMPORIA - A chaotic “Labyrinth” of roads and buildings

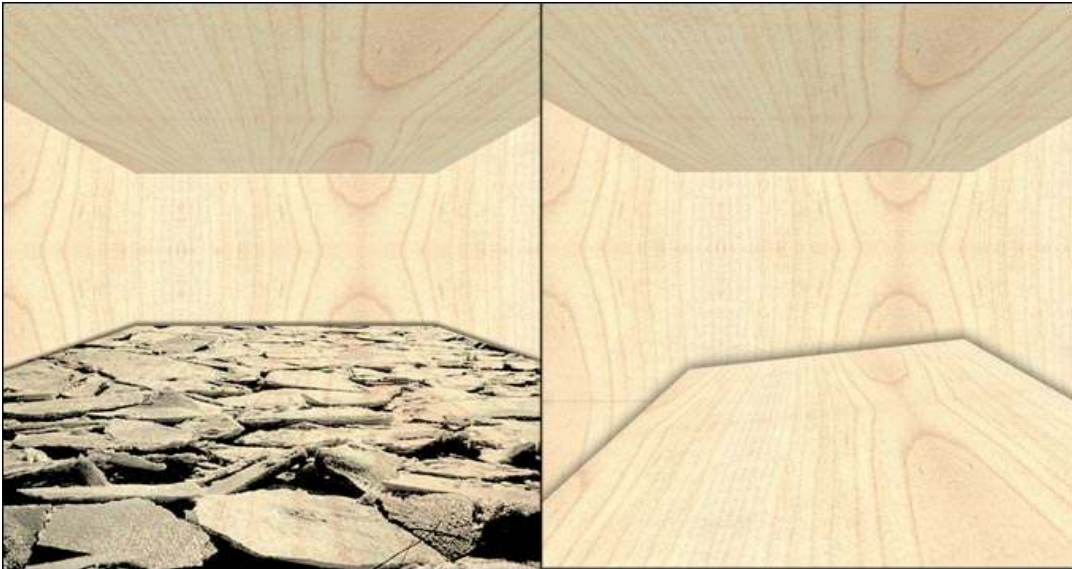
A lot of small cells connected by doors – perhaps sliding or swing doors. There is only room for one person in each cell, so each participant has to pass the labyrinth on their own. Every time a door opens in one cell, a door closes in another cell. Perhaps some doors might even open and close depending on the “value” of the participant’s Tag (Status), which means that certain doors will only ever open on the behalf of someone special. So, to successfully find way and pass through the Labyrinth, communication and cooperation with the participants in the other cells is recommended.



Example 2 - Trailers Park - An unstable and undetermined ground

To pass through this room the participants has to step over a floor constructed as a floating ice flake or another similar flexible and unstable material as for instance the madras of a water bed – either as fragmented ‘flakes’ or as one large surface.

The floor ‘register’ how you pass it – are you only concerned on how to get your self through or do you perhaps choose to cooperate with and help the others through? Every step might have vital influence on which door opens on the other end of the room.



Example 3 - TRAORA - The notorious Jukebox sect

A room full of payphones with a direct ‘Hotline’ to the Oracle. Here you can get vital guidance when you are stuck – if only you manage to decipher the cryptic message of cause. However, every call comes with a price – a part of your lifetime, your left hand or the special skill you just earned – is it worth it?



These three examples indicate possibilities and trends for the future work with Journey to Abadyl.

The actual design will also depend on the technical possibilities and choices related to the development of different prototypes (PAPs)

© Katrine Nilsen

3.

Account for a journey to Abadyl: A visitor's report

Marika Kajo (selected passages) - January 2008/JL

"I heard about the possibility, and then I jumped on "a journey to Abadyl" (Lena, 23, Malmö)

Application for VISA

At the arrival, we all had to apply for a visa. There were registrations of name - I could choose a new identity, if I wanted to - and questions to which colour and which music I preferred.¹

The VISA was used as identity card, but also for navigation and surveillance systems. Moreover, as I got to understand afterwards, there were some points made, that were not known by either other fellow visitors or myself. However, this came to mean a lot in relation to my choices and possibilities to choose on my journey in Abadyl. In addition to the VISA, you were now also part of a special interest organization and got their pin – you were already member of a team.

Get to know Abadyl

After I got my visa, I and the other "newcomers" were invited on a guided tour in Abadyl to find out in which area of the city we would wish to live during our stay. The principle of - "first come first served" - was a basic rule in Abadyl. Do you want the best seats, of course, you need to be in time...

After some discussions and negotiations with the estate agents (well, there were some possibilities to attempt to bribe) we were gathered all together in the City Centre, The Triple-I, meaning Inspiration, Involvement and Innovation.

Then it was time for a speech from the mayor for the moment. Yes, for the moment, because in Abadyl a Mayor were not secure on the post for a long time. Being the mayor was a responsibility, which was circulating among all people involved – always to find the best person, for the moment. It would be open for visitors to apply for and to be elected to the post as mayor, assuming the full responsibility for the town.

The Spirit of Abadyl

As mayor, you would also be the spokes person and medium for the Spirit of Abadyl. The mayor took us to meet the Spirit, often referred to as "Triple-I" or "The big Eye" because of its surveillance function.

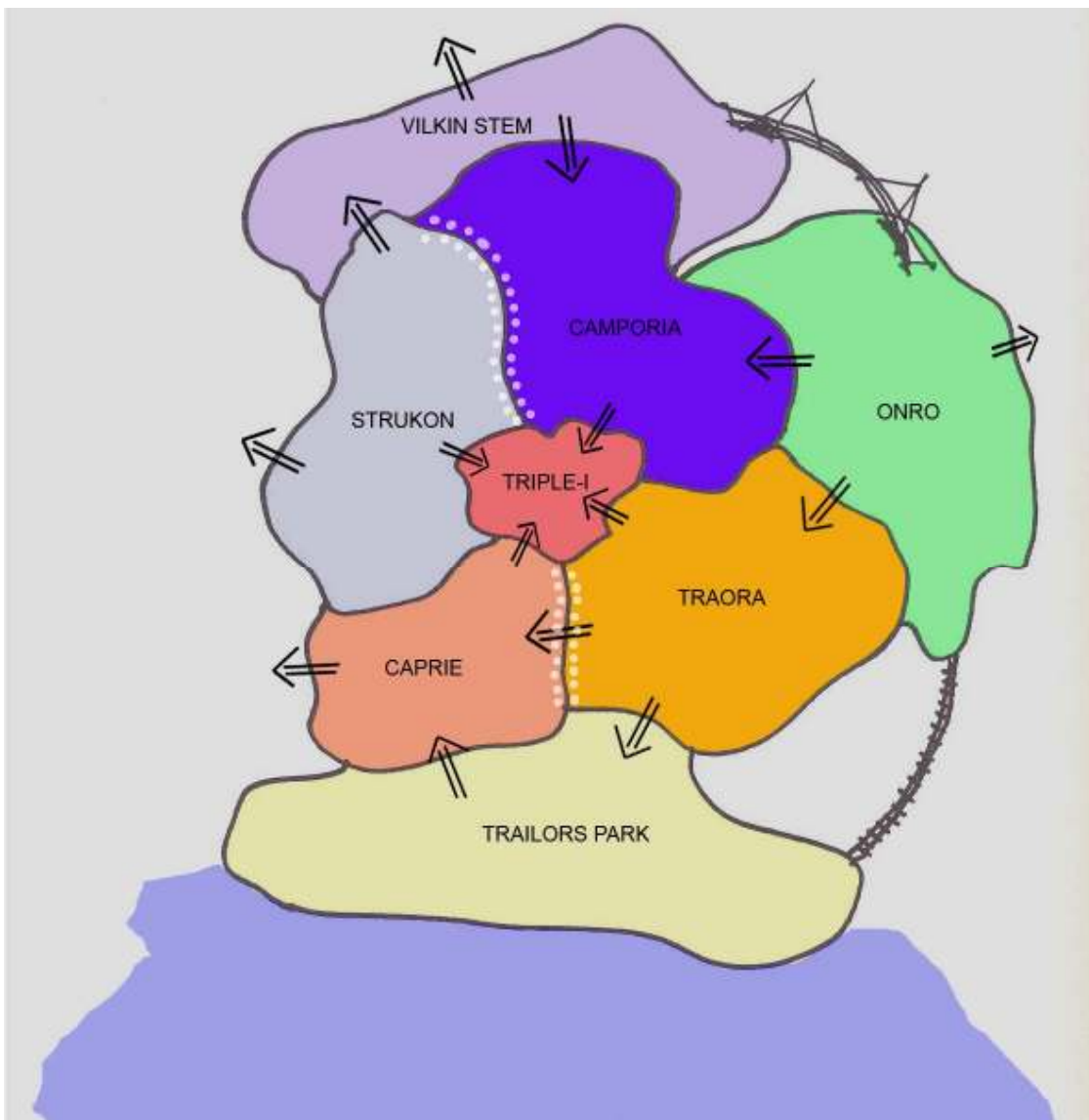
¹ see enclosed application form and visa, page 25 and 26

It was not a character easy to understand – a simple comment from any of us could make The Spirit transform into a threatening shape – something you really would try NOT to have. Everything, which happens in the city, will influence the mood of the Spirit, and if the citizens do not take care, the Spirit might change into something quite different, and the city might collapse.

The structure of the city

On our sightseeing, we were presented for the seven city parts, which were really very different. Of course I know, that the city is a fiction, a virtual set up, but nevertheless the producers had managed to give every part of the city its own character.

From the central place of Triple-I there was a direct connection to all areas, and the city parts were linked together with gateways, which could be opened and closed, mostly according to a time schedule, but there were other parameters as well.



From the living quarters of Vilkin Stem there was a bridge leading to the holiday resort Onro, and from the bridge you could see the most of the town, and see the other citizens swarming around, for example in the labyrinth of Camporia. Trailors Park was really a "forbidden area", but from Trailors Park there was an old railway leading to Onro, and Trailors Park had its inhabitants too.

There was obviously a lot to be found out. As every tourist you had to realize, that not everything, the guides told you, sounded convincing, and that there seemed to be a lot, they did not tell. The traffic system of buses and taxis was really funny - I will not tell about it, you will have to see for yourself.

Daily life in Abadyl

As in any city, there were a lot of activities to be carried out in order to secure the different functions and to respond on the internal and external challenges. After finding a place to live, we were presented with different jobs or tasks, which we - now citizens of Abadyl - were expected to take on.

All people were needed – to share both manpower, knowledge and experience. The principle for all distribution of tasks (both the easy ones and the difficult ones) was the rule of "first come first served". But here it turned out for the first time, that the secret points on your VISA might play a role. Apparently, some of us had some special gifts, which others had not ?

However, no one asked us to play certain roles or to do things, we didn't want to, but very quickly we all felt we were part of the game and wanted to play too.

By working, you earned "money" with which you could pay for food or treats, or you could save for a holiday or perhaps to buy a better house. There were a lot of children, coming with their families, and for them there were special activities and competitions. They had to "go to school" and again every part of the town had its own character in the relation to the kids.

A place to live

I choose to live in Vilkin Stem, and I had luck. I got a nice house in a nice neighbourhood, a cat and a dog to take care of, and a garden, which had to be kept tidy.

If I did not manage to keep up to the standards, I might be thrown out and go to Neebi, where the conditions were quite different. I realized, that people living in Vilkin Stem were afraid of the people of Neebi, and that the people of Neebi apparently did not want to live in Vilkin Stem. I did not understand really, until my house was covered by graffiti and tags, and I had to make a great effort to remove them again. I realized that the life in Neebi was challenging in another way.



A job

A group from Camporia had managed to hijack all the buses for some purpose of their own. Therefore, I was too late for my appointment for an interesting job in Traora, where I was supposed to assist a photographer. Instead, I was summoned to a job in Trailers Park. The task was to try to secure the unstable underground of the area. Our group had to put on a protection outfit, and was placed on the platform, which should make out the new surface. It was dark, it felt dirty, and we had to keep the balance and keep the building material and ourselves from sliding out from the platform. It felt dangerous, some fell out, and we could hear them scream and hear the material crash.



However, if we managed to keep the platform horizontal for just some minutes, it would be stable, and we could move on to the next section. Every section was a little different, and we had to adjust our behaviour accordingly. However, we earned a lot of money.

A Tourist is Waiting for You

Om intallation og teknologi

Installationen har været udført i forskellige varianter alt efter udstillingssted. Den virker ved hjælp af kontakter og bevægelses-sensorer, forbundet til en computer der mixer billeder i realtid. Alt billedmateriale er optaget på Island på 16 mm film. Værkets lydside understøttes af en kraftig subwoofer, der også kan mærkes som vibrationer gennem føderne.

Belægningen på platformen foran projektionen er LECA-nødder. Et materiale fra byggeindustrien, der ligner lava, men er helt igennem et kulturprodukt.



An activity

I spend my money in Onro, and as I was already in Trailers Park, I took the old railway and landed in a beautiful restaurant with a view. Not only could I order a meal, but a view too!

I choose a sunset with wonderful music - and then my money were gone, and I had to worry for my next job.

A way of earning money ?

Later we heard that the hijacking of the buses had caused the Spirit to an outburst, and that the people responsible were to be hunted down. However, I was requested by the photographer in Traora. There had been a rebirth of tradition of the Jukebox sect way of thinking. By sacrificing your face to the photographer, you got a reward and a Fortune Cookie. People were photographed in front of romantic wallpaper with hearts and arrows. Later they found their faces connected to different activities, which they had no part in, or to dating profiles, which they could not recognize and had not agreed with. I did not want to be a part of such a charade, but a job is a job - or is it ? I found my own face too, because of a photo taken by the photographer to show me the technique.

Truth or consequence - or both ?

Everything you do in Abadyl is recorded on your visa card - and has an influence on the Spirit. It is not easy to find out, which activities are pleasing the Spirit, and which will lead to an outburst - or a catastrophe. At the election of the mayor, the goal was to find the person, who was likely to understand these coherences and able to guide the citizens in their choices, to avoid a catastrophe, like the one that once destroyed Trailers Park.

We had elected our representatives for each group and each part of the city, and amongst them, we were to find the new mayor.

There were different tactics and strategies, but the main issue was to put the right questions to the situation - as we were only allowed to a number of twenty. The Spirit was being more and more threatening, so it really was a matter of time.

The End

It went wrong. Although we probably managed to solve a lot of riddles, we did not find the right answer of the last one.

It all collapsed, like an earthquake, and even if we all knew, it was all virtual and not "real", we had stayed so long in the fiction that it really hurt us. I was happy to see, that the producers took care of the children and brought them to another room to treats and play - because it was really not a sight, you would want your children to experience.

Then we were all together invited to a party, the children came back, very content and full of stories of what they had tried.

Now we could meet in reality, and discuss our experiences. Some were still a little bit annoyed, as they meant to have had suggestions for solutions, which the others would not accept - but we agreed that they just had to try again another day.

Application for VISA for Abadyl

Please observe: Except your name, the choices will have to be made from a list of possible choices. Ask for further information from the immigration officer.

Name (under which identity would you like to travel in Abadyl?)

.....

Age (you will have to tell us your actual biological age. If you are caught in telling us lies on this point, we will have to expel you from Abadyl)

year of birth.....date.....month.....

Responsibility in activities of the City development

(you will have to take part in the development of the city, in which theme would you like to take part? - choose from the list, please)

1)

2)

3)

Membership of Special Interest Organisation

(Abadyl has a lot of special interests groups. We would want you to be part of at least one of them. Please inform us about your special interest - and choose from the list please!*)

1)

2)

3)

Spare Time Interests

(in order to make you feel at home in Abadyl, we would like to know your favourite spare time activities, please choose from the list!*)

1).....

2).....

3).....

Favourite Colour (please choose number from the list)

Favourite Song (please choose number from the list)

*)If your special interest or your favourite spare time activity is not on the lists, you might get permission to start a new group, ask the immigration officer.

VISA for Abadyl

from date to date

name

date of birth

You are granted with a visa for Abadyl.

We remind you of the fact, that keeping the law and order in Abadyl is an important item for the immigration authorities. However, if you follow the laws and good manners, known from your homeland and hometown, you will surely be on the right side.

If you offend these overall and common rules, you will be expelled immediately.

The immigration authorities would like to invite you to a guided trip through Abadyl, in order to inform you about certain essential facts about Abadyl and the special conditions for your stay in the city.

After this tour, you will have to find lodging and a job. Our estate dealers and employment service will be at your service.

We wish you a warm welcome and all the best for your stay in Abadyl

date.....

.....

(stamp)

4.

To live in Abadyl - Undertones, a performers voice Gritt Uldall-Jessen (selected passages) December 2008/JL

1. QUESTION

In which form, i.e. how do you imagine life ? As a road, as a fight, as a growing tree with roots, trunk and branches, as a wavy sea, as a staircase or as something quite different ?

She imagines life, as she imagines the death situation. What she has to relate to is that she maybe will die in Abadyl. Like all the others.

2. NEEBI

She has chosen to live in Neebi. Here are a lot of machines and robots. She can disappear in the crowd of them, even if she is human. She has chosen only to be seen, when she stops, i.e. slow down in the midst of people moving.

She has chosen to have a daily life in Neebi, which is like the daily life of many others. Here everyone may stay anonymous, just because there are so many.

She is not afraid of being knocked down, she can defend herself. Moreover, she is just like the other ones. That is the trick. To look like the others. Then they let you in peace. She knows how the rules are here. The rules of the street. She may choose to walk fast. Not to stop too long, dress in loose-fitting clothes and sneakers, when she is outside. Her clothes are clean and her shoes relatively new. The clothes, which fit into the landscape of Neebi, are like the clothes she is wearing as a player.

She lives in an apartment alone in a bigger block of flats. No one in the area knows much about her. She knows far too much about the others. Some live in apartments for themselves, but then there are the flats, where the newcomers live together in large groups. These flats are always on the ground floor near the lift. They are not heated in the winter. It is the newcomers without papers, who are keeping the property tidy. They make the odd jobs around the block.

It is important, that she can make her way, move and move fast; there are some big lumps of tar on the road, she wants help to get them away. They are steaming hot. Some are stuck in them and have to get help to get out. She helps some, but is stuck in the tar herself.

She can fly through the air. There are different sorts of air in Neebi. Most people buy extra air, air of different qualities. Air is like food. She lives out of air in bags.

She can sit in a Ferris wheel. She can work in a civic restaurant. Every day she races the robots in the park, to keep her shape.

"Neebi, I can disappear in the crowd. Vanish. Not drawing attention. In this room I can write. It is my job." I am writing: "Neebi, the law of the street is not for flower buds. Beauty can only be grown secretly. Loose leaves of roses in the water."

3. CAMPORIA

She has chosen to work in Camporia. She writes down the stories of how people got here, for the mayor of the township. In this way she takes part in the mapping of the roads, people use to go to Camporia. The mayor shall use this information to limit and adjust the number of newcomers. It is difficult for even her day by day to find the way to the job.

The air is thick, nearly as a piece of coloured glass. As if the air could be experienced in 3D. Petals are flying in the air. She catches them and eats them. It strengthens the immune system, and protects against the sickness, which a lot of people are catching here. They will grow old fast. On the other hand, the average of age is high. People live longer, when they once get here.

4. ONRO

You may make your holiday in Onro. Here you can recharge, find peace. However, there is such an amount of stories in Onro, that you nearly cannot find time to order a footbath and get massage. You cannot be anonymous to the many practitioners, you will meet. They ask, where you come from. They themselves are never going anywhere. You will not always tell what you know. You never know who is listening too, when you are telling something.

She looks at the practitioner, who has her foot in his hand. She kicks him over, as she find out that he is going to rob her.

© Gritt Uldall-Jessen, translated by JL

5.

The Pied Piper - background material

collected by Thore Soneson and Jette Lund - December, 2008

THE PIED PIPER - is the common English translation of the title of the German folk tale THE RAT CATCHER OF HAMELIN.

The word "pied" means "a lot of different colours" and so the title calls attention to the difficulty of evaluating and categorizing the Stranger, coming to the town. Certainly, his clothes are no normal clothes, one might say, he is wearing "camouflage", and he is playing his pipe for people to listen. But why has he come to town, who is he, and what does he want?

The younger versions of the story tells us, that Hamelin was attacked by a great amount of rats, and that The Pied Piper played his pipe and lured the rats away to drown in the river of Weser. As the Magistrate was too stingy to pay the asked price, The Pied Piper punished the town by luring the children away, never to be seen again.

The older versions of the story have no rats, and so The Pied Piper has no "legitimate reason" to take the children away. He is just a Stranger in pied clothes, playing for people what they want to hear, and following his own secret plans.



The oldest picture of Pied Piper (watercolour) copied from the glass window of Marktkirche in Hamelin by Freiherr Augustin von Moersperg.

The story differs from most of the many European folk tales by being relatively young, and might have a historical background: Czech king Premysl Otokar (1253-1278) wanted to colonize his vast region Moravia, and sent out his envoys, called "locators", to persuade people from the West - as in Hamelin in the northern parts of Germany - to go east and settle down, enjoying a 10 year long freedom of taxes. As Premysl Otokar's archbishop Bruno came from Hamelin, exactly this town might have been chosen as a special target. And on the 26th of July 1284 (and so under Otokar's son Wenceslas II 1271-1305) a locator, perhaps named Body, probably took about 130 young people of Hamelin with him and brought them on a long travel to the mountains of Moravia, where they settled down in "Hamlinkov", now called Podomi: Their parents in Hamelin were left with no heirs to there trade and their belongings, and it is very likely, that they never heard a word from their offspring again.

Historians count the number of such colonisators to be more than 25.000 people. However, these German settlements disappeared in the wars and the plague epidemics in 15-1600.

We have chosen a younger version of the story as a concept for the project "Journey to Abadyl", but certainly want to keep the cloudy picture of the man in the pied clothes: Is he taking the children away to live happily ever after, or is his goal to exploit and abuse?

In that aspect, the historical facts are not speaking against us - and "the rats" might be seen as a metaphor for a society, not giving its young descendants proper opportunities, and therefore being "punished" by their emigration.

Sources

Politiken, 3. August 2002, Dana Schmidt, Prag.

Named historians: Wolfgang Wann, Germany, Ervin Cerny-Kretinsky, Czech

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Pied_Piper_of_Hamelin

premysl refers to ploughman - a notion referring to the early bohemian kings

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/P%C5%99emysl>

Poem "The Pied Piper of Hamelin" by Robert Browning (1812-1889)

http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/The_Pied_Piper_of_Hamelin

6.

The Theme - Democracy & "The Anatomy of Choice"

Jette Lund and Katrine Nilsen - December 2008

The anatomy of choice - the notion suggests that "the choice" can take an actual physical form, which you might dissect, like a frog in the biology lessons at school.

However, there are an awful lot of different frogs, and not all of them will turn into a handsome prince, even if you kiss them.

Therefore, there are a lot of choices, and they could not and should not be measured with the same yardstick, their background and preconditions differing, their consequences more or less well known.

Not all of them are binary - as in the computer.

But the binary thinking of the computer already is dominating our human thinking, so we tend to act as if every choice could be reduced to a choice between a "one" and a "zero".

Or from the fundamentalist point of view: Between "good" and "bad" - and who is not with us, is against us.

In the computer, "the choice" might be seen as a sort of tool, which helps you to fulfil your intentions - hopefully. One click - and the program pops up as expected. Hopefully.

The computer supports "multiple choice tests", which can be answered with a click and computerized into diplomas and statistics before you can twinkle - as if any question in the whole world really could be answered with a yes or a no -

"Have you stopped beating your wife, just answer yes or no?"

The computer cannot decide how a question is asked, and is not wiser than its programmer is.

But of course, there are questions, which can only be answered in one way: We think it is scientifically proven truth, that if you jump out of the window on the sixth floor, you will fall down, according to the law of gravity.

So "the anatomy of choice" might perhaps rather be "the philosophy of choice" or "the aesthetics of the choice" - "aesthetics" meaning the question of form.

No one wants to be "left with no choice" - with the mafia euphemism:

"To get an offer, you can't refuse"

To have a choice is principally a freedom, a right, a good thing - how come, that we are left with frustration in nearly all our (conscious) choices?

"It is in the choice you recognize the sage from the fool"

writes Henrik Ibsen in "Peer Gynt" (my translation) - who's problem, as I remember, is not to be able to chose.

But all too often our choices will feel like being between plague and cholera - and even if we are allowed to pick up any sort of ice in the ice bar, the choice of the red strawberry might exclude the green pistachio, and what about the blue one, which I have never tasted before, should I risk it ? Anyone (bringing a child to an ice bar...) know how long time such a choice may take.

So - even if we have to make a choice between some very good and interesting offers, the choice of one possibility will always tend to exclude another possibility. And in some aspects, the consequence of a choice can never be (totally) foreseen.

But if you as Peer Gynt do not want to chose, but are just drifting, the choices will be made anyhow - no choice is also a choice, and you cannot escape.

So the proverbs about choice I have found always has this double character as

A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies

- a quote from Oscar Wilde. But how can I know for sure, who my enemy might be, who will become my enemy ?

That is the snake here - you cannot know how the blue ice will taste, before you have tried.

It is a question of knowledge, but how can I know about the future? I will not always be able to tell, if the consequences of my choice will follow like a result of the law of gravity, or it is a result of some bad habits, which might be changed.

A special variation of choice is the democratic choice, the right of choice that allow us as citizens or members of a group to have a voice, to be in some aspect in charge of the prevailing conditions, under which we have to live and work.

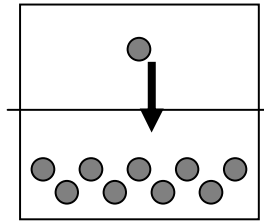
The notion in English is "suffrage" - coming from Latin "under the noise/applause from the crowd". We hardly use this term except for the "suffragettes" - that women should have a voice too or even be seen as citizens is in a historical perspective rather new. Our forefathers would not have seen it as "undemocratic", that women, children and slaves had "no voice" in the crowd.

Democracy - the word is gerundial, "what ought to be" - as the name Amanda:

"She, who should be loved". Just like Amanda is no description of the actual girl or her conducts, the notion "democracy" can mean a lot of very different things, and not all of them automatically deserves "to be loved" in all situations.

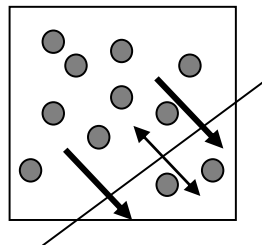
The different structures of "democracy" could be summed up like this:

A - fundamentalism



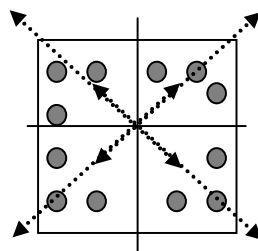
We know the truth, and just like the law of gravity, you cannot vote against it. The outsiders can't be right, they don't know the truth, and will for their own sake have to be saved/protected/dominated. In the framework of the revealed truth, one may work with some democratic methods, but he/she (though very seldom a she), who has the right to interpret the revealed truth will always have the last word.

B - democratic centralism



At first we discuss, then we vote, the minority is obliged to work loyally on the line of the majority. It could be named the "dictatorship of the majority". If an organisation is meant to fight against a clearly defined enemy, the structure is necessary/appropriate: A chain is so strong as its weakest link - and the notion of "solidarity" still might have some relevance - Nevertheless the democratic centralism is a weapon, and like any other weapon it might be misused and turned against the people, which it was meant to defend.

C - consensus

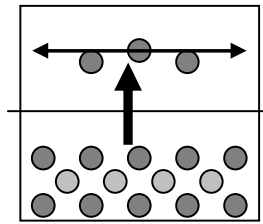


We discuss until we have reached an agreement on what to do, no one is obliged to follow a decision, he/she has not agreed on. It could be named the "dictatorship of the minority" or "who will be the first to give up" against "who will endure".

A Scandinavian folk tale has the title: "Who will be the first to get angry?".

If the majority is willing, useful and profitable solutions might come out, where (nearly) all justified interests are considered. But compromises are not necessarily the right solutions.

D - the representative democracy



We elect our spokesmen, and they decide about the controversial questions by polling. The minority is principally protected, but will exist more or less on the conditions of the majority.

There might be combinations and other variations. One structure might easily slide into another. And as to the question of knowledge and insight: - what are we told - what are our horizon of experience - are we ruled by bad habits, which make us unable to clear thinking? Is it possible at all to have insight in all de different aspects, which in the modern world might be influenced by our choices ? Who can give us the insight, and how can we know the truth from the lie ? Is there such thing as objectivity or is honesty - "this is the truth as I know it" - the best, we can get ?

When the representative democracy is no longer appealing or convincing, is it because it is a bad construction, or is it just being misused, its idea and content being exhausted ?

How can we secure, that the competence, we are delegating our spokesmen, is so clearly defined, that we might get insight - just in the question of what decisions we have given into their charge?

Maybe democracy is something about a good will amongst the involved parties, but can you make laws about "good will"?

Can the whole discussion be reduced to the question of who is the strongest - so will the strong dictator be equalled to the graffiti-anarchist:

"it is my train too, and I want to paint it!"

Perhaps "democracy" must be experienced and (re)defined by every new generation, and the consciousness to the facts of wanting democracy - or the facts of the lack of democracy - must be constantly revised by the older generations, who maybe have reached a point of control with their lives, which makes them taking democracy - in their own definition and interest - for granted ?

The cubeX project should find ways to embody many different types of choices and all these (and other) different "democratic" structures in relevant connections, and find ways to make the differences clear and meaningful.

© Jette Lund - the drawings: Katrine Nilsen

7.

Introduction to the Abadyl-project

Michael Johansson - January 2009

The City of Abadyl is since 1999 an ongoing collaborative art project initiated by artist/ researcher Michael Johansson.

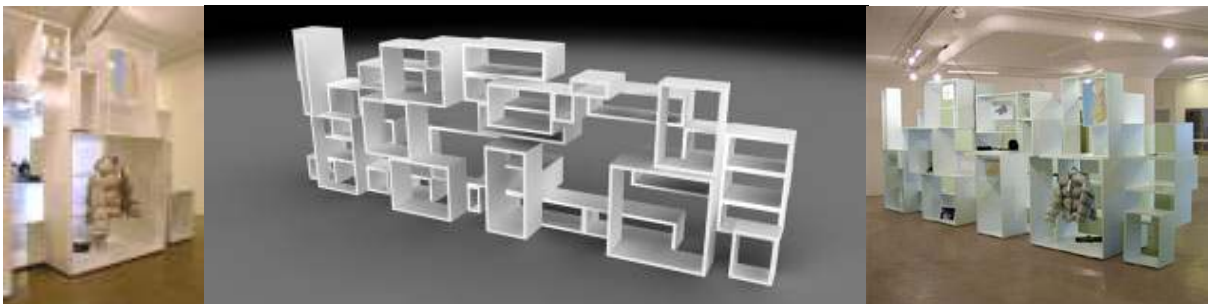
ABADYL / Building a world

In Abadyl, the overall idea is to explore a complex digital space in a setting that invites to participation. Abadyl has over the years developed to a detailed and complex, yet open setting that can be utilized in order to generate scenarios for the temporary co-creators of Abadyl, who would then interact in an optional environment, in the end producing new artefacts and narratives.

The Framework

In 1999 we ended an art project called “from an indefinite point in the Cartesian space”, which had generated 2000 low-resolution and 550 high-resolution models of buildings, interiors, objects and exteriors split up in over 50 scenes. They were later extracted and placed into a superimposed infrastructure of sixteen formula one tracks. We named the virtual world “the city of Abadyl”, and made it the initial venue for the project.

Since then we have used personas, role-playing (GURPS) film, photos and conceptual mathematical formulas to explore and furnish the world. We hope that this approach can host and facilitate artistic development in a complex production environment, such as the one of digital media, supported by invited artists, researchers (computer science) and students (interaction design), enabling diverse parties to successively transfer their knowledge into the project.



Mobela. Exhibition furniture

The Method

Here we provide a detailed and complex, yet open world that can be utilized in order to generate scenarios for the temporary co-creators of Abadyl, who would then interact in an optional environment, in the end producing new artefacts. This combination of interactive situations and artefactual production we called “fieldasy”, referring to the notions “field” and “fantasy”. Fieldasy also refers to the methods of fieldwork and of invoking imagination by using physical objects, in some kind of “reverse archaeology”. The objects constitute a shared ground for collaborative creativity; they serve as nodes in a complex narrative and as a basis for the creation of the world. While the major part of research on interactive narratives has aimed at exploring interactivity as consumption of finished art works or end products, “fieldasy” concentrate on developing collaboration in the production of new media and its artefacts. We try to create a process for engaging multiple perspectives in the creation of a world, and in the mapping of its virtual space. The method we mostly employ here refers to what Claude Levi-Strauss was calling bricolage: a thinking-experimenting which rather than devising something brand new, is solving problems by re-organising what is available, at hand. An approach by which objects are not expressly defined and reduced to a sole function, but continually can be made to generate something else, develop hidden potential. A method which applicability in no way is confined to resolute, practical problems, but which can well be used theoretically, poetically, hypochondriac, hallucinatory, phantasmatically.

The Output

While the final outcome lies ahead, the process has already produced a series of artistic expressions, eventually displayed in a series of exhibitions, driving the overall project forward, the planned interactive performance “Journey to Abadyl” being one of the latest.

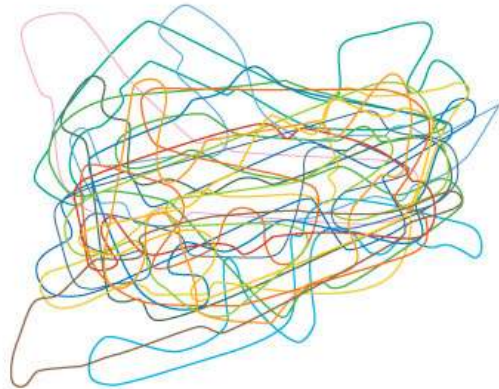


Story telling game for Abadyl 2008

Background

In The City of Abadyl, the intention is not to establish a so-called great narrative, but inspiration has been retrieved from the art of novel writing and its practice in constructing worlds. In “Postscript to the Name of the Rose”, Umberto Eco writes on the generative logic he has adopted, a logic both limiting and expanding creativity. The fundamental parameters guide what can and what cannot be included in a fictional but historically plausible universe. We have chosen to focus more on the generative itself in this logic; that is to say, it is not about parameters resulting in a watertight consistent universe, but the main interest is in what can be generated from a large number of predetermined parameters.

The comprehensive parameters are as follows: 16, 7, 100



F1 story engine prototype test 2008 and a drawing of The sixteen formula on tracks 1999

16

The locations constituting the starting point are sixteen in number, and were initially held apart. However, as the reference bulk was collected and travels increased, the idea emerged of uniting these enclaves into a connected city. As joining infrastructure, a series of sixteen Formula One-tracks was chosen, piled on top of each other to a joint figure. Hence aiming to expose architecture and cityscape to extreme strain (= life, unpredictability).



A schematic for the seven scales

7

To subsequently fill the city with objects and create a disposition, a system was installed, a scale classification by the following:

Scale 1 - 7 theory

1. Environment
2. Building
3. Room
4. Furniture
5. Tool
6. Interface
7. Idea



The 100 objects to be found in the quarters of the city of Abadyl

100

In the various quarters of the city 100 objects would be found, each devised in a way that constituted an elegant description and was manifesting the aspects of their very own district. In this way, we happened to examine our original objects once again, when we were depicting them in every detail. To be very thorough in investigating its form, visualise other layers in the object and create conditions for both deconstruction and new narratives.

For more information about Abadyl visit www.abadyl.com

© Michael Johansson

8.

WIREFRAME - a research seminar

Thore Sonesson - January 2009

In outlining the pre-production plan for the CubeX project, PRAMnet members arranged an inspirational seminar WIREFRAME, 16-18 May 2008 in Copenhagen.

Besides the members of PRAMnet (see appendix 9) there were invited speakers:

Michael Valeur - Denmark, author and game developer

Simon Løvind - Denmark, interaction designer

Mika Tuomola - Finland, Crucible Studio, director

H.C.Gilje - Norway, video artist, researcher, Bergen National Academy of the Arts (KHiB)

Karen Kipphoff - Norway, professor Bergen National Academy of the Arts (KHiB)

Due to a strike among airport workers in Bergen, the two guests from Norway unfortunately were not able to participate.



The two main themes of WIREFRAME seminar were:

Participatory interactivity

with focus on stage production and media based artworks where audience participation and digital tools play an important role for the experience.

Key focus questions were: What are the contemporary technical tools and know-how on narrativity and pervasive computing? Which artistic developments can be envisioned /developed for future performance/installation art in a dynamic room?

Production and knowledge sharing

with focus on networked sharing of knowledge and research.

Key focus questions were: How can technology development and artistic production be combined? Can practice driven research be conducted on a networked, open source base?

These themes was prepared by PRAMnet members in a series of WORK TASKS, and presented at the seminar. The headlines for these work tasks were - **Group Dynamics & Interaction, Game Patterns & physical/virtual "Simulators", Database & digital "simulators", The Room as a Dramaturgic generator for Interaction, Film/Video as spatial and virtual "Character"**.

The invited speakers and participants in **WIREFRAME** contributed with presentations of their work and reflections around the proposed performance CubeX. From Denmark author and game developer **Michael Valeur** and interaction designer Simon Løvind presented individual work and former collaborations with a special focus on the participatory game Ego-trap, running at the Experimentarium in Copenhagen. Artistic director **Mika Tuomola** from **Crucible Studio** in Helsinki,

Finland focused on his work with the production **Accidental Lovers**, an interactive TV-series, in which viewers could interact with the main characters and influence the cause of events through SMS.

PRAMnet introduced research and presented ideas for the script and drama development of the CubeX project, for game patterns and mechanics, for workable models on play design, and for methods of interaction. Furthermore PRAMnet presented examples from past productions, setting up "dynamic environments using computer based tools" and presented a setup for workshop/production laboratory - RSlab - which combines small artistic experiments with knowledge sharing. The project PRAMbase, funded 2007 by Nordic Culture Fund, can be seen as a practical means for the accumulation of and sharing of knowledge in an open source environment.

The WIREFRAME Agenda

Friday 16th: PRESENTATIONS by invited guests

Mika Tuomola - Procedural Storytelling; Accidental Lovers & Turing Enigma.

Gritt Uldall-Jessen - Dynamic Writing for the Stage; Open Source Theatre.

DISCUSSION

How can we use each other? What do we want to achieve?

A preparation for the discussion and conclusions on Sunday.

Saturday 17th: [Internal Partners + Invited Guests and Lectures]

Introduction CubeX/ABADYL by PRAMnet

Process - production model - PRE-PROJECT /PILOT /PRODUCTION/ **Thore**

Background material - The Pied Piper / ABADYL/ **Jette Lund**

Theme & Vision - Democracy & "The Anatomy of the Choice"/ **Jette Lund**

PRESENTATIONS /DISCUSSIONS

Interactive Narrativity & Audience participation

Script and drama development for interactive game play, Group Dynamics & The performer's role as guide and Game Master etc.

Introduction by PRAMnet/ **Thore Soneson**

Michael Valeur - Dynamic Writing for Computer & Game Play.

Dynamic Spaces & Expressions

The Room as a Dramaturgical model & "generator" for the interaction, Film & Video as a spatial and virtual "Character", the use and development of technological "Game Patterns" & physical/virtual "Simulators" etc.

Introduction by PRAMnet/ **Katrine Nilsen**

Simon Løvind - The space as an interface.

HC Gilje / Thore Soneson - Fluid spaces; Video as an instrument for creating real time environments and as both a set design and a narrative element.

Mika Tuomola - "The negotiation between the virtual and the real world"

Introducing CubeX Follow Up by PRAMnet

RSLab Model - a multidisciplinary laboratory-based production method/ **Katrine Nilsen**

How can research, technology development and artistic production be combined?

PRAMbase - a working tool for media production / **Jørgen Callesen**

Can practice driven research be conducted on a networked, open source base?

Sunday 18th: [Internal Partners]

Concluding network discussion

The Result

The recognitions and conclusions of the seminar resulted in a further research, gathered in the book "**Journey to Abadyl**", foremost in the treatment "**Journey to Abadyl**" and in the three appendixes **Visual concept**, **Account for a journey**, and **To live in Abadyl**. Here we focus on the narrative and the interactive dramaturgical methods we suggest for the performance installation.

The PRAMnet-presentations and work tasks for the seminar are collected in a **WORK BOOK** (to be published on PRAMnet.org website), which together with the book "Journey to Abadyl" are intended to be a theoretical and inspirational working tool for future collaborations in developing the performance installation "Journey to Abadyl".

The discussions and presentations from the seminar WIREFRAME are documented in – **WIREFRAME _ a summary by K Gansing.** (to be published on PRAMnet.org website) A short review with highlight on some of the questions raised and reflections made during the seminar, follows :

FROM THE INTRODUCTIONS

Interactive Narrativity & Audience participation, Thore Soneson, PRAMnet

"In order to play freely, clear rules are required."

In relation to database and digital simulators, vital questions concern striking a balance between automation/simulation and implementation/narration; "How do we make the database world accessible and how do you navigate it?"

In the frames of the existing Abadyl set-up the Juke Box, described as an important element of the city area called TRAORA, was mentioned as a possible tool for navigation. Another possibility would be to use the 16 racetracks, which formed the original structure.

(See appendix 7)

The next point then concerned how to connect these interactive database structures with what happens in the installation room as a dynamic space. What is the relation between the physical and the virtual and how are events generated? The crucial issue in this kind of work is how to get people involved, according to some fundamental rules, so you will understand the process of design, involvement and consequence: "In order to play freely, clear rules are required." This connects to the narrative and interactive framework where one possible scenario would be a guided charter tour into Abadyl.

Dynamic Spaces & Expressions, Katrine Nilsen, PRAMnet

"The virtual scenery has to have a life of its own."

These issues concern the practical design of the installation space in relation to the need of creating a responsive story world. This concerns dealing with individual and group behaviour, actors/performers and objects that can take on the role as characters. All these elements are also highly dependent on the concept and content of the piece. You can't design everything when you design for an interactive stage but you can plan the framework and some of the parts.

One question then regards the choice between designing just a backdrop, as a frame of the action, or designing an action-space. This was also described as the difference between designing "outside-in" and "inside-out".

The emphasis in CubeX is clearly on the latter, holistic approach, i.e. creating an action space where everything can be seen as objects for design. A space where actions are not arbitrary to the space. This could for example be in the form of the "the scenery as an antagonistic character" reacting to or challenging the participants actions and their role in the story. The labyrinth is another structure that can be used as a metaphor for stories, which can be experienced in many different ways, and where the audience has to be active in the structure, they will not have everything served for them.

After presenting a number of earlier PRAMnet projects, dealing with the mixing of the physical and the virtual in real-time interaction, the experiences could be summed up in a number of key questions for further discussion on “how do you map the action”:

- How do we create a meaningful dialogue between the room and the participants?
- How can the different means of expression help to “animate” the participants and guide them through the experience and the challenges they have to solve?
- Do we need a guide to lead them and tell them what to do or can the “room” itself manage this?
- How can the “room” become the leading character?
- And how can we combine the technological possibilities (and limitations) with the physical and virtual expression in order to support this?

THE GUESTS

Michael Valeur, Author and Game Developer - Dynamic Writing for Computer & Game Play

<http://www.michaelvaleur.dk/index.htm>

"there is a world underneath what you can see"

Michael Valeur, originally an author, is a veteran of the Danish computer game scene, having worked with interactive media since 1996, creating classic adventure games such as Blackout and Englen (with Simon Løvind) for Deadline Media. Since computer games have become more commercial in later years, he has taken on interactive installation work, a field allowing for more freedom.

His presentation focused on the importance of dealing with flexible user-positions through a case study of an interactive installation, Ego-Trap, which was commissioned by a Danish science museum, the Experimentarium.

The main point of the story design of Ego-Trap is, as Valeur explained, that its framework is made very clear to the user/participant. As a participant “...you know what responsibility you face and it is always made clear when you have to make a choice.” (such as between trusting the male voice of “the Hacker” or the female voice of “The Museum”)

Importantly, the interaction doesn't only consist of interaction with the system but also consciously involves communication between two participating persons as part of the concept. This is not as easily controlled, but can still be an important part of creating a dynamic story world.

(Excerpt from following) **Discussion**

Through a comment on power structures being turned around in the Ego Trap narrative, Gritt Ulldal-Jensen saw the possibility to use this effect further: first you play the power, then the stakes are turned around and it is playing you. This was according to Michael Valeur also part of the original concept in a more explicit form: in the final rat-game you should be playing against the people in the first room, who then would think they are playing with the rat but are in fact playing against you. These aspects could be useful to the CubeX project as well.

For Valeur, it was interesting to find that the CubeX project as it was presented took an almost opposite approach to that of the gaming industry. In the discussions there has been talk of creating a world and a conceptual framework for the installation but almost nobody has so far mentioned the actual interface for it. Whereas the computer game industry usually works the other way around, i.e. the game genre usually is defined before the story. You decide to make a first-person-shooter style game and only later do you think, “maybe we should also put a story in it”.

Referring to the once popular idea of "random stories" in interactive media "story engines" Valeur stressed : "You need to build up personal expectations which can be worked upon in different ways, through breaking or confirming -for example breaking the expectation for a surprise effect . Just working randomly gives no meaning, you need to ask the question:

"What is my user position and what are my expectations?"

When working in 3D environments that allow a lot of user freedom it might be more difficult to distribute these expectations. One approach for solving this is so called "Sandbox games", these can be described as small things for the user to do while pursuing the bigger goals. This also means multi-functionality, that people can play the same game for very different reasons. One of the best examples of this is the online game World of Warcraft, exemplified here through the very different strategies used by Valeur's own children in playing this game. This can include inventing sub-games, which were never even thought about by the game designers.

A famous example is the "Naked Gnome Race" which is based on going together as a group, all playing the weakest character in the World of Warcraft game, the Gnome, without any armour or weapons, trying to reach a common goal. "So suddenly you have a thousand naked gnomes running past these big Orcs who just start killing off the gnomes..."

Simon Løvind - The space as an interface

<http://www.zelig.dk/>

"How to stage the user - to create a place charged with intent"

Interaction designer Simon Løvind comes mainly from a computer-game design background but has also been active in installation and sound art. His contribution focused on a number of examples from which he wished to build a discussion about the role of the user. Going from the computer game field, where the user is very much the main perspective, to installation works of art, has made him interested in "how to stage the user". That is not to, as in theatre to create a stage for the play to unfold, but how to let the presence and the movements of the user carry the meaning. This means creating spaces "charged with intent", as opposed to the idea of a totally open social environments that are so popular today, especially on the Internet. A vital element in Løvind's approach is "economy" as in using a minimal effort to achieve your goal, in other words how to keep it simple. This was for example illustrated in his project "Vivisection", an installation where a large textile shape would change according to the principle: What sensors the "world" (the room) is also what is reacting to it.

From his previous experience in the computer game genre known as adventure games, Løvind could relate to the idea of having a city like Abadyl as a main stage for the action. This was the case with the classic adventure game Blackout (from Deadline Media, with a story by M. Valeur) which "was a symbolic city all the way through." With this statement, Løvind wanted to stress the importance of congruence between the game and story space.

Relating this to the CubeX project, he pointed out that it could be worthwhile to go for a more sinister perspective than that of Democracy. Simon Løvind suggests an evil leadership emerging, rather than democracy, to create more tension of choice. However, in the following discussion "Leadership" was labelled as "the snake of democracy" and pointed out that democracy can also be seen as the negotiation of leadership.

Mika Tuomola, Artistic Director, Crucible Studio

<http://crucible.lume.fi/>

"The negotiation between the virtual and the real world"

Referring to his experiences with interactive narratives Mika Tuomola stressed, that one of the lessons learnt from this is, that because of the complexity of working with interactive narrative the production process does not follow the traditional pre- and post-production cycle. The director, interaction designer and the editor has to be on board from the start.

He further pointed out, that the negotiation between the virtual and the real world was not handled so well by all viewers, as some freaky messages showed, that some had trouble to distinguish the real-life actor from the on-screen character. This stresses the importance of the theatrical "contract" in performance, not all audience members might understand it.

Building on the notion of The Pied Piper as a metaphorical device for talking about democracy and choice, Mika Tuomola stated, that he could see "a crystal clear dramaturgical idea which seems to be dealing with the entire culture of seduction and enchantment in which we are living. This has to do with which media we choose, whose news we are watching, what it is, we spend our leisure time with."

He then formulated a hypothetical key question for the project: "To whom do you sell yourself, under the threat of loosing future, when troubles needs to be solved?" The children being the future and The Pied Piper being the one who solves your troubles now, consequently holding the future in his hands.

Mika also explicated the past-present-future framework of the concept, starting from the viewpoint of Abadyl as a "future city" which reflects the consequences of what we are choosing to do in the present. At the same time the folk tale is an old story with a cyclical aspect since it represents a typical scenario of what people have been doing in the past. The problem is how to incorporate choice, and maybe include the possibility of chance operations.

Mika Tuomola talked about the importance of the introduction to the game, which has to make it clear what you are invited into. The strength of the concept lies in letting the users themselves rather than the designer tell the story, as in the communication between users, which should be seen as a crucial point for CubeX. "You could assign the role of the observer" as Mika added, this can also be consciously part of the interactive roles to be played. According to his studio's research principle: "Story is told, drama is enacted, interactive drama must be experienced."

Mika Tuomola follows up on the problem of creating the relation between the story world and the user with four main principles: verb-sets, chance elements, destined-elements, choice-elements. This basic premise comes from game designer Greg Roach who talks about verb-sets as a list of actions that the user can do, usually generated from what people already do in everyday life. For CubeX it could mean that people can be themselves, it is about playing with what people already do in our contemporary world and then to build on that and make it interesting and new. The visitors then do not need to be performers or actors. The behaviours are modified by the system so that they are reflected upon in new ways. How can people do the same actions in Abadyl as they are already doing, and how will they be reflected? You start with the verb-set, then with elements that are pre-destined to happen, then you define what can be changed and finally you allow for chance elements. Expect the unexpected!

Finally, Mika Tuomola presented what he called, somewhat apologetically, his "directorial vision": a labyrinth based in movable screens as the framework of CubeX. You have three different leadership characters played by actors who present you with solutions. You can choose from these or make your own structure of the labyrinth. The point was made that this perhaps would make it possible to show democracy as a fluid concept.

Excerpts from summary by / Kristoffer Gansing , June 2008, edited by Thore Soneson and Jette Lund, January 2009, for the report of WIREFRAME / "Journey to Abadyl".

9.

Pramnet - history and persons

Jørgen Callesen - February 2009

PRAMnet is formed in 2003 as a small group of artists, researchers and designers, who together share a widespread Nordic and International network in research, art and creative production. In the later years, PRAMnet has consolidated itself through funding from the Nordic Cultural Fund and through project partners in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark.

The general aim with PRAMnet is to stimulate innovations in new media, electronic art and performance and also to initiate mutual productions and projects with Nordic researchers, developers and artists.

Apart from several artistic projects, publications, workshops and lectures initiated by the individual members described on the website www.PRAMnet.org, four Nordic projects have been carried out with support by Nordscen, Nordic Culture Fund, Nordic Culture Point.

1: PRAMnet August 2006 – March 2007

PRAMnet was established as a networking project where members of PRAMnet got the opportunity to present their work, ideas, methods and visions in different fora and to different institutions, such as The Sensuous Knowledge Conference, Bergen National Academy of the Arts November 2006, DemoDay at Media Lab, University of Art and Design Helsinki December 2006 and a network meeting at Centre for Advanced Visualisation, CAVI Aarhus, University, Denmark. Sponsored by Nordic Culture Fund.

2: PRAMnet workshop responsive stage art/tools and techniques - sep 2006

An intensive research and development workshop held at Centre for Stage Arts and Performance, Odsherred, Denmark. Sponsored by NORDSCEN.

3: PRAMbase August 2007 – March 2008

The PRAMbase project was a pilot project for an on-line video-based communication platform connected to a knowledge database for Nordic media artists, researchers and technology developers. It was presented to a larger group of Danish artists at the Open Source Theater Workshop initiated by Henrik Vestergaard and Gritt Uldall-Jessen at Centre for Stage Arts and Performance, Odsherred, Denmark, October 2007. This was a collaboration with The Bridge Project by Sophie Haviland and Richard Foreman from New York.

The prototype was sought developed further as a Global initiative in “the WEB bridge project” in collaboration with The Bridge Project, New York and The Open Video Institute, Helsinki, with funding from Nordic Culture Point, but the funding was not granted. The PRAMbase is a fully functional prototype and has since been used as an open source database tool by several individual artists and production teams such as Cube-X, Teater Graense-loes, Warehouse 9 and Bellevue Teatret. Sponsored by Nordic Culture Fund.

4: Cube-X January 2008 - February 2009

The Cube-X project was a pre-production project, where PRAMnet members invited artists and technology developers to discuss and outline a larger performance installation production “Journey to Abady!”, described in this book. Sponsored by Nordic Culture Point.

PRAMnet articles and publications

Via the website www.pramnet.org the members in PRAMnet have published a wide range of articles, essays and presentations on theatre research, new media, design theory, prototypes, practice based research methods and education in the performing arts. Apart from theoretical and artistic topics, the PRAMnet members have also contributed with newspaper chronicles about education, art and science.

PRAMnet workshops and presentations

An important activity has been workshops held at Centre for Stage Arts and Performance, Odsherred, Denmark in 2006 – 2007. In these workshops the members have presented their work, methods and prototypes as a point of departure for discussions and further development. The members of PRAMnet has also offered a wide range of workshops individually or in different constellations on Digital Media, Performance Art, Puppet Theatre, Responsive Stage Design, Improvisation and Group Interaction etc. These workshops have been offered at institutions such as Bergen Academy of the Arts, Norway, The Danish National School of Theatre, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts and School of Stage Arts (SOSA) Vordingborg, Denmark. PRAMnet members have been given presentations at conferences, public events and institutions including Smart Lab Centre, London, University of Art and Design, Helsinki, Centre for Advanced Visualisation CAVI, Århus University, Dramatiska Institutet (DI) (University College of Film, Radio, Television and Theatre), Stockholm Sweden, Norwegian Theatre Academy, Fredriksstad, Avenue Teatret København.

PRAMnet showcase at Warehouse 9 in Copenhagen, 8. December 2007



- exhibition - lectures - discussions - networking -

PRAMnet.org

Practice driven Research in Art & Media
SHOWCASE / 8. December 2007
15:00 – 23:00 (closed 18:00 – 19:30)

PROGRAM

15.00 – 17.00 EXHIBITION PRAMnet projects.
17.00 – 18.00 OPEN SPACE invited artists/performers.
18.00 – 19.30 / exhibition closes for supper break
19-30 – 21.00 PRESENTATIONS by PRAMnet.
21.00 – 23.00 BAR and network discussions.
23.00 CLOSING TIME

WAREHOUSE9.DK

Halmtorvet 13, Next to Øksnehallen, 1699 Cph V
INFO www.warehouse9.dk/pramnet



The PRAMnet showcase was a combined exhibition, networking meeting, discussion forum and public event hosted by the small media art space Warehouse9.

In the exhibition the following works were presented:

PRAMbase.org - Jørgen Callesen & Petri Kola

EMOTIONAL FISH - Jørgen Callesen

SPACE OF SLOW LIGHT - Bernhard Frankel

FLOSKEL 56 - Jacob Tekiela

ABADYL - Michael Johansson

PUPPETS AND PROTOTYPES - Jette Lund

THE RESPONSE SYSTEM - Katrine Nielsen

WUNDERKAMMER - Thore Soneson, Marika Kajo, Magnus Wallon, Johan Salo

The posters from the exhibition are available on
www.pramnet.org

PERSONS

Michael Johansson - artist, lecturer, researcher

michael@lowend.se

Born • 1962, Gothenburg, Sweden and lives in Beijing China. Educated at the Royal College of Fine Arts in Copenhagen 1984 -1990. Worked with digital media as part of his work practice for over 25 years. Have done about 50 exhibitions both in Sweden and abroad.

Professional experience • Since 1999 involved in research at the Interactive Institute, Space and Virtuality Studio, and between 2002-2007 at Malmö University Arts and Communication, where he taught design, digital art, animation, architectural visualization, interaction design, pervasive gaming and digital prototyping on the master level.

Besides working as an artist also supervising and creative direction work for two companies, one in the area of computer animation for games, film and TV (www.infobloom.se) and Do-Fi that works with digital prototypes in the area of interaction design (www.do-fi.se)

Publications • Computer games in architectural design, Peter Fröst, Michael Johansson, Peter Warrén, In Proceedings of HCI 2001, New Orleans 2001.- Designer or Artisan, Design versus Craftsmanship in Digital Design, Håkan Edeholt, Michael Johansson, Simon Niedenthal, 6th Asian Design Conference, Tokyo 2003. - Fieldasy; Michael Johansson, Per Linde. Pixel Raiders 2, Sheffield Hallam University 2004. Art@k3, Michael Johansson Report: Art in Relation to new Media Education, Malmö University – Malmö Sweden 2006. Place-Specific Computing – conceptual design cases from urban contexts in four countries. Jörn Messeter and Michael Johansson. DIS 2008, Cape Town – South Africa 2008

Jørgen Callesen - performance artist, lecturer, curator

joca@skydebanen.net

Born 1966, Hjørring, Denmark and lives in Copenhagen. Has worked as a teacher, researcher and new media artist since 1995. In 2001 he had his debut as performance artist with the conceptual character "miss fish".

Education • Received his MA in Information and Media Studies in 1995 from Århus University. Studied puppetry at the theatre school "Ernst Busch", Berlin (dept. for puppetry) 1998-99 as part of Ph.D.-studies. Defended the Ph.D. "Beyond the Screen - the Puppet theatre as a model for communication, aesthetics and representation in Mixed Reality Environments" at Information- & Media Studies, Aarhus University in December 2005. Has taken workshops in performance, acting technique and dance with Michael Meschke (Sweden), Kitt Johnson (Denmark), Hartmut Lorenz (Germany) and Bogdanow (Moscow).

Professional Experience • Worked as a planner for theoretical studies at the multimedia design education Space Invaders, Copenhagen, Denmark in 1995 – 1997. Worked as a Doctoral Researcher at the Narrativity Studio, Interactive Institute, Malmö, Sweden (2001-2002) where he initiated the project "The performance Animation Toolbox", now continued in the pram network. Worked as a lecturer in Multimedia Design and Production at Dept. of Arts and Communication, Malmö University College, Sweden (2001-2002) and at Information and Media Studies Aarhus University, Denmark (2003-2004). Associate researcher at the Smart Lab Centre, University of East London, UK (2001 - 2005). Teacher at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts 2007 and Odsherred Institute of Stage Arts 2006 – 2007. Founded the Live Art Venue "Warehouse9" in 2007, where he works as artistic director.

Publications • Ph.D. dissertation "Beyond the Screen – The puppet theatre as a model for communication, representation and aesthetics in Mixed Reality Environments" (Aarhus University 2005) and 5 articles in international journals about virtual puppets, Mixed Reality, performance animation and computer art.

Installations, Performances & Music • As performance artist the character miss fish has performed in installations, performance lectures, durational pieces, actions and live concerts since 2001.

Marika Kajo - drama educationalist, master of science: computer engineering

marika@kajovision.se - www.kajovision.se - Ph: +46 - 4098 9871/ Mobile: +46 - 73 7701765

Education • Drama/ Theatre Studies University of Copenhagen and Trondheim 1998-99/1995-1996, Method Acting Det Danske Teaterakademi Copenhagen 1996/1997, Computer Engineering, Lund Institute of Technology 1984 – 1990.

Professional experience • Trainer and performer applying improvisational theatre, Kajovision (www.kajovision.se), Project manager Teknopol/ Ideon Innovation 2005-06, educationalist pedagogical drama Region Skåne 1997-1998, Visiting Lecturer Open University & BBC Education England 1993-1994, R&D multimedia for people with special needs, "Hadar" 1990-1996.

Research • Researcher at Interactive Institute/ Narrativity Studio 2000-2003

Papers • "Common Playground" - Proceedings casto1// Living in Mixed Realities, MARS Media Lab, Bonn • "The Performance Animation Toolbox" developing tools and methods through artistic research, New Visions in Performance: the impact of digital technologies', Swets & Zeitlinger publishers • "Communicating Moods in Space" - presentation IDEA '01 World Congress • Playing Betwixt and Between, Bergen

Prototypes • "Konkret Theatre Festival" – workshops • "Spirits on Stage" – performance/ interactive storyspace /Kulturmanegen • "Heaven and Hell" – interactive dance/ Skånes Dansteater (collab. Callesen J, Nielsen K, Torstensson J, Lövind S) • "The Mingler" – interactive installation/ Hässleholm Culture House (collab. Johansson M, Soneson T, Salo J)

Thore Soneson - creative producer, filmmaker, scriptwriter

soneson@comhem.se - www.soneson.net - Ph: +46 - 4097 3195 / Mobile: +46 - 7343 39222

Born • 1953, work as a journalist and lecturer on film and media production, as a scriptwriter and producer of film, multimedia since 1980. Studied Directing for Film and Television at Dramatic Institute in Stockholm 1986, M.A. degree as creative producer in new media at Malmö University 2001, exam production "Speed" interactive CD-rom.

Selected productions • "In search of the militant Code", short movie collaboration with Michael Johansson 2008, "The story of A", interactive movie script 2002, "Speed" interactive CD-rom 2001, "The seventh shot" feature film, scriptwriter, 1998, "Passion" multimedia performance Malmö Konsthall, scriptwriter, video director, 1995.

Gritt Uldall-Jessen - playwright

www.grittuldalljessen.dk

Born • 1970 in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Education • as a playwright at The National School of Playwriting 1993-96 at Aarhus Theatre, Jutland.

Professional experience • Has since then worked as a playwright (also as a performing playwright) in many contemporary stage art productions in Denmark, Norway, Germany, Austria.

Currently she is finishing her MA degree in Nordic philology at Copenhagen University.

Katrine Nilsen - stage- and production designer

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Born • in Denmark 1965. Received a degree in Production and Stage Design from Denmark's Design School in Copenhagen 1998. Studied at the theatre school "Ernst Busch" in Berlin (dept. for puppetry) in 2005.

Professional experience • Has since 1998 worked with conceptual art and design for exhibitions, film, theatre and dance performances in Denmark and Sweden. Has furthermore since 2000 investigated and experimented on new possibilities within non-linear dramaturgy and various forms of physical interaction and responsive stage design. Lecture and consultant on "interactive stage design" and "the dramaturgy of the object". Initiated in 2004 the research and development project "RespOnce – design for breakdown" in cooperation with Danish Performance Theatre Cantabile 2 and others.

Selected productions/consultants • Virtual design: "Spirits on Stage" Malmø 2002; "Heaven and Hell #1+2" Malmø 2001-02. Other design: "Tid", (Exhibition - MixedMedia) Helsingborg 1999; "Working man" (Dance) Tim Rushton Copenhagen 2002; "I want to be Hip..." (Interactive Graphic installation) Charlottenborg Exhibition Hall Copenhagen 2003; "Layers" (Performance) Yvonne Levinsen Vordingborg 2006; "Storvask - Traneudstillingen" (Exhibition) Kassandra Wellendorf Gentofte 2007.

Workshops • "Interaktion, rum & fortælling" K3 Malmo 2002; "RespOnce #1+2" Cantabile 2 & School of Stage Art (SOSA) Vordingborg 2004 + 2005; "Tingenes eget liv" Odsherred Theatre School 2005; "Objektets Dramaturgi" Ellen Spens St. Theatre School 2006; "Krop & Materiale" Thomas Eisenhardt Copenhagen 2006; "Space, Object & Action" The Art Academy Bergen 2007.

Jette Lund - dramaturge

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Born • 1937 in Denmark, worked as architect 1965-1989, worked with theatre since 1980. Studies at the theatre school "Ernst Busch" in Berlin (dept. for puppetry) in 1987 and 1994.

M.A. in theatre science, University of Copenhagen 1995, "The Fictive Reality and the Real Fiction, elements to the theory of the puppet theatre".

Professional experience • Since 1992 worked as a text dramaturge, production dramaturge, director, teacher and adviser/consultant for "other theatre forms": Visual theatre, animation theatre, animation film, object theatre, performance theatre, performance animation, puppet theatre and dance theatre in Denmark, Norway and Germany.

Lectures on virtual theatre, the dramaturgy of the picture and other themes related to modern theatre forms; with Catherine Poher initiator to the Laboratory Project at Odsherred Theatre School, 2005-2006.

Selected productions/consultant dramaturge • DANCE: Thomas Eisenhardt "Psychomachia - De syv dødssynder" 2003-2004-2009, "Blueprint" 2006, CHILDREN'S THEATRE: Katrine Karlsen "Fucking alone" 2007, "Lærestreger" 2009 LIVE-ART: Gritt Uldall-Jessen "Hooked" 2002, "Hooked again" 2003, "Liveart2U" 2006, TEXT DRAMATURGY: Gritt Uldall-Jessen "Det kinesiske spøgelse" 2007, "Time-Map3" 2009 Performance: Karen Kipphoff, KHiB, Bergen 2007: "Floating Characters", Jørgen Callesen "The Family Factory" 1999-2000 PUPPET THEATRE: Aarhus Teater: Philip Pullman "Det gyldne Kompas", 1&2, 2008-2009.

ESSAYS

The Dynamic screen/room

Thore Sonesson - January 2009

Moving images, video and screens have expanded from the on-the-wall projections to dynamic and multi modulated images in different spatial settings – on multiple screens in an immersive room context.

Narratives have evolved from linear storytelling to open database structures, the dramaturgic tools have evolved from the Aristotelian catharsis format to the open-ended closure.

Pre-recorded video sequences and live-feed real-time video are combined in visual keyboards in VJ - videojockey - setups and easy-to-use software.

The expanding possibilities of media technologies have opened up the screen into a dynamic room, an interactive, real-time visual and cinematic stage. This short exposé tries to pinpoint some contemporary tendencies and prolific artwork, thus creating a reference and artistic perspective for an interactive performance like "Journey to Abadyl".

References

FUTURE CINEMA / The Cinematic Imaginary after Film / ZKM exhibition and catalogue edited by Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel 2003, a large-scale expose over experimental film and digitally based video art. The exhibition included historic and contemporary media works, and made the first comprehensive theoretical overview of the expanded narrative strategies of visual moving imagery. Using a setup of keywords, the authors formulated dramatic tools for the future cinematic art and formulated a possible future development of the art of the moving image.

In their curatorial statement, online at ZKM website, Shaw and Weibel wrote, "The Future of Cinema can be delineated from two sources. One way is the expansion of existing cinematographic methods and codes into new areas. The other way is the convergence of cinema, TV and net. The classical cinema can be defined as collective experience of one fixed stable projector projecting a moving image on one screen in one room. Therefore each change of one of these factors, for example multiple screens, panorama screens, moving projections, different rooms, is already an expansion of the contemporary practises of cinema.

On the level of the material display of the image, many new techniques are also in development. Smart materials are developed which can be new sources of light and colour. New lenses are developed which contain information as a temporal code. In general, there is a change from refractive optics to diffractive optics.

Especially new results are to be expected from multi-local and multi-user virtual environments, from massive parallel virtual worlds, which can be developed based on the global net. These new communication channels of the net in combination with GPS-Systems, satellite transmission and WAP mobile phones are allowing new forms of interactive personal and collective cinema on a digital basis."

Since this was written in 2003, we have seen online worlds like Second Life, immersive web based multiplayer games like World of Warcraft, to name but one, and numerous examples of the emerging narrative worlds Shaw and Weibel pointed out as the future. The following examples are selected as references to the interactive narrative PRAMnet have investigated.

Keywords from FUTURE CINEMA for "Journey to Abadyl"
re-combinatory / immersive

examples **RE-COMBINATORY**

Interactive cinema in its early versions meant using different user interface schemes to re-edit and re-sequence pre-recorded material. **Lev Manovich** developed "**Soft cinema**", a software which shifted pre-recorded and edited footage in random, or pre-programmed sequences on a multiple screen divided into a Mondrian grid. A sort of meta-collage with documentary content, a database cinema.



Illustration 1: Lev Manovich_"Soft cinema"

The "**Decay of Fiction**", an interactive drama documentary on DVD, are based on film sequences from interiors in a Hollywood hotel, THE AMBASSADOR. Here seamlessly narrated video and sound emerge from the corridors and rooms as you move your cursor, interfoliated with still imagery, audio and footage from film sequences shot in the hotel during its Hollywood glamour years. A labyrinthine structure, screen based and navigated by using the mouse on a DVD-platform. Multiple documentary shots are pre-edited and combined in an interface, viewing are interactive or randomly organized by software. Filmmaker **Pat O'Neill** created this expanded cinema setup in cooperation with The Labyrinth Project at the Annenberg centre, USC.



Illustration 2: Pat O'Neill_"Decay of Fiction"

Multiple screen

Video artists have used multiple screen format to construct narratives – **Eija-Liisa Ahtila** with works like "**Consolation Service**" use divided screen and multiple viewpoints to create a narrative, which change viewpoint between the characters, move freely in time and setting – this creates an associative form of experience for the audience.

Another example is **Isaac Julien**, a visual artist and filmmaker who has been working with multiple screen movies more than ten years, creating imagery that blend different point-of-views and narrative elements. In one of his recent works "**True North**", a three-channelled video screening, Julien tells the story of the first black person to visit the North Pole. The images mix landscape views with personal reflections and fictionalized documentary scenes that create a narrative flow and mix.



Illustration 3: Isaac Julien "True North"

examples IMMERSIVE

Video as texture / digital material. Here artists have developed new means of combining live-feed with pre-recorded video. Digitally synthesized image content in autonomous processes or controlled by a VJ. The emphasis of immersive video lies more on texture, emotion and creating visual imagery than on story and narrative.

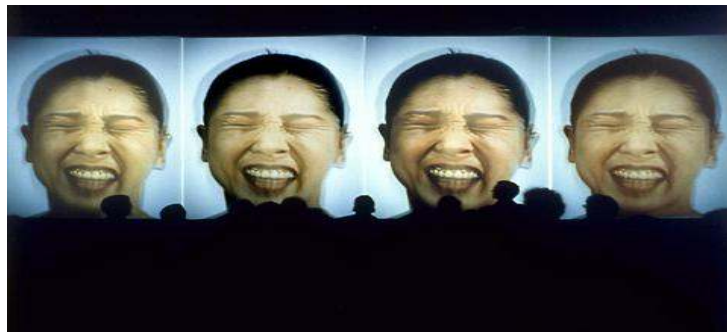
Examples of this artistic strategy include Norwegian media artist **HC Gilje** who works with manipulated video on two different stages, as video-sound-performance pieces with dancers and live musicians as the piece "**videonervous**". "The main focus of the project was to make use of the immediacy which the digital technology offers, and develop video as an instrument, but also to create fluid spaces through projections, and the ability of video to function as both a set design element and a narrative element" Another form he has developed is video installations, edited and digitally controlled pieces. One example is "**night for day**" – expressionistic impressions from an urban reality, with 13 audiovisual poems on television screens, assembled and controlled by a software programme. Another example is his ongoing work with programming visual space - a series of "**relief projection installation**" which he refers to as "*a dynamic audiovisual landscape, a spatial light painting*".



Illustration 4: HC Gilje "Videonervous 2 01"

Digital noise and manipulation

Another form of immersive performances have been made by the Austrian artist duo **GRANULAR SYNTHESIS** whose aesthetic concept has been a form of audiovisual abstraction, using digitally generated images and sounds. "How does an image fall into pixels as the resolution gets lower and what is falling into pixels, and is falling into pixels the right equivalent anyway? Any resulting algorithm or translation we see as a means to create an abstract reality with emotional substance and depth, a subjective artistic invention." One of these works are "**Model 5**", an live-feed installation where five large screens display portraits of people that slowly dematerializes into digital noise and back into images again; here the audio and visuals are manipulated live as a large scale VJ session.



Granular Synthesis "Model 5"

Other more playful and consumer oriented works include IOO Interactive, an Italian company that create environments and events using small-scale dynamic media – sensitive wall / floor where imagery and surfaces change and reacts to audience physical movements. These setups are used as demonstrators at public fairs and exhibitions on trade shows.

Navigable

Tracking devices and sensor tools can be used to create a room where physical movements are interpreted and correlated with pre-recorded video / film sequences. Examples are "**Threatbox.us**" by artist **Marie Sester**, an art installation with web surveillance interface in which a movie frame "attacks" visitors via a robotic video projector and computer vision tracking system. Installed in a gallery space, this setup creates a claustrophobic comment on how public space can be controlled and occupied.

"I Cinema" is an immersive sound and video system inside a circular dome constructed by artist Jeffrey Shaw. His first installation piece using this dome was EVE (Extended Virtual Environment) in 1993. Here the projector are controlled by the audience, as you "shoot" the beam around on the walls, you see a fragmented display of images, video clips and sound on the inside of the dome. The experience is like watching through a peephole into a secret world, you actually navigate in a constructed 3D environment with video, graphics and sound. At Future Cinema exhibition French artist **Jean Michel Bruyère** used the dome for creating a narrative interactive piece based on Ovidius: Metamorphoses.



Illustration 5: Jeffrey Shaw_"EVE (Extended Virtual Environment)"

Smaller scale projects using sensor and tracking technologies are numerous, the one-to-one sized "Men that fall" by artists **Geska Helena Andersson** and **Robert Brecević** collaborating at Performing Pictures group Interactive Institute Stockholm is one example. An interactive one-to-one video image of a person, who - if you get too close to the image - starts to fall down. Back away and the person rises again. Displayed in a public space, a shopping mall, this piece created laughs and playful interaction.

Immersive and navigable

Large-scale public interactive works using video and projection techniques are often costly and therefore rare. In 2005 Mexican-Canadian artist, **Rafael Lozano-Hemmer** developed the large-scale public art installation **Under Scan** featuring 1,000 interactive portraits. It was created specifically for the East Midlands region of the United Kingdom.

Here people walked around on a brightly lit square, in their shadows on the ground surface video-portraits emerged. Their bodies moved and their heads turned to look straight at the pedestrian. When a shadow moved away from a portrait, the portrait likewise reacts by losing interest and looking away. This large-scale work combines surveillance cam-technique and as Lozano-Hemmer describes it "...a system that automatically points 14 robotic-controlled projectors to the locations where they will intercept the trajectory of pedestrians and cues a sequence of video for them. "



Illustration 6: Rafael Lozano-Hemmer_"Under Scan"

Dynamic screen/room in relation to "Journey to Abadyl"

A variety of these techniques using video and on-screen narratives are possible to develop further. Different combinations of narratives based on computer game engines and scenarios can be investigated and tested. A multiple area of possibilities made accessible with digital tools and combinations of software/hardware techniques.

In PRAMnet we have worked with and devised different setups, where physical movements and positions in a sensor-tracked room can trigger images, sound, video and sequences of narrative elements. Callesen's "**Falling man**" is a prototype using quicktime loop and software, so a performer with his/her body movements physically control the actor on the screened video. Callesen's interactive video sculpture **Emotional Fish**, performed at Warehouse9 in Copenhagen September 2007, use computer generated images and sound set up with infrared light and sensors in a public space.

The prototype **Wunderkammer** uses a seemingly easy setup – two opposite screens and a tracking device using a webcam capturing movements on the floor. Audience control video/sound in a setup with "good-bad" imagery by moving around in the room – together and away from one screen the opposite screen are active and vice versa. In the prototype model we tested, the setup was made on a table, using black and red miniature figures mounted on a stick, almost as puppets, with two 19" inch computer screens.



Illustration 7: PRAMnet prototype "Wunderkammer"

The complexity of these setups can be scaled up to four screens and database organized sequences. It can be used as a setup for live-feed immersive video and sound environment as well as more narrative based scenarios.

In "Journey to Abadyl" context

Narrative moving images can be organized in two major models – pre-recorded and edited and live-feed set ups.

The pre-recorded can be divided up in different narrative strategies like – background story, eyewitness tales, multiple-choice scenarios of events, arguments and discussions between characters. Using these models we can establish a virtual setting, create back-stories of characters, which the audience encounter or/and recreate past or future events.

The live-feed set up use live manipulation and video feeds – used as interaction with performer/guide, viewing of simultaneous events in a labyrinthine setup, a "VJ organ" controlled/triggered by physical movements, real-time stage-set design using projected colour and synthesized images.

Here we can choose to develop media for different narrative setups, using specific story tools for different city parts. Thus creating a variety of possible interactive setups with video narration and moving images. (The JUKEBOX in TRAORA can be seen both as a visual metaphor and a real tool for eyewitness tales and ceremonies – music for the "masses" and entertainment machine. Newscasts with debates between opposing political leaders. Environments in the jungles of ARLEEANS. Historic re-creations of events. The responsive digital guide - controlled by audience movements)

The short movie IN SEARCH OF THE MILITANT CODE, a collaboration between Thore Soneson and artist Michael Johansson, is an outtake from the fictive world Abadyl, a story set in the city part NEEBI. This work explores the possibilities of combining narrative strategies and tools from traditional filmmaking and a computer-generated universe. Video and digital sceneries in 3D are interfoliated in a mockumentary style.



Illustration 8: Thore Soneson_ "In search of the Militant Code"

Expanding into 3D

If we add the possibility of using 3D graphic environments as Second Life worlds, we can create an immersive stage where the audience can move from having a first-person viewing situation to interact live with a chosen avatar in a 3D modelled room. Recreate performances with avatars. A shared environment from multiple computers.

Live interaction from users via webcam can be tested and installed in a performance space. A complex but possible future for staging live interactive works (This stage setup transforms the performance to a different level where the room can be seen as a gigantic user interface and each individual are tracked by sensors to have an on-screen identity.)

QUESTIONS - Dynamic screen/room

How can live-recorded video streams be integrated in a labyrinth structure?

Can we create a cityscape using video sequences from a database ?

Schemes for interaction with a virtual jukebox without using "press the button" ?

Schemes for tracing movements and audience reactions using tagged media and images ?

Video projection using the room as a screen, moving around in virtual 3D ABADYL.

Screenless models for integrating live images in the stage setting.

Interaction using handheld devices ? Mobile phones ?

On-line references

FUTURE CINEMA / The Cinematic Imaginary after Film

ZKM exhibition and catalogue edited by **Jeffrey Shaw** and **Peter Weibel** 2003

http://www.zkm.de/futurecinema/index_e.htm

Tracing the Decay of Fiction: Encounters with a Film by Pat O'Neill

The Labyrinth Project - <http://cinema.usc.edu/programs/imap/projects/the-labyrinth-project.htm>

SOFT CINEMA - NAVIGATING THE DATABASE Lev Manovich

<http://softcinema.net/?reload>

Granular Synthesis Model 5 - <http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/modell-5/>

iOO by Gianpietro Gai - <http://www.ioodesign.com/index.html>

Men that Fall - <http://www.performingpictures.se>

EVE (Extended Virtual Environment) **Jeffrey Shaw** - <http://www.mediaartnet.org/works/eve/>

Conversations with spaces HC Gilje project blog

<http://hcgilje.wordpress.com/2008/10/31/shift-v2-relief-projection-installation/>

THREATBOX.us by Marie Sester - <http://www.threatbox.us/>

Under Scan by Mexican-Canadian artist Rafael Lozano-Hemmer

<http://www.lozano-hemmer.com/eprojecto.html>

http://www.threecitiescreate.org.uk/_EMDA_Cultural_Quarters/

In Search of the Militant Code by Thore Soneson and Michael Johansson

http://www.soneson.net/militantcode/index_eng.htm

On Performance Animation Prototypes

Jette Lund - January 2009

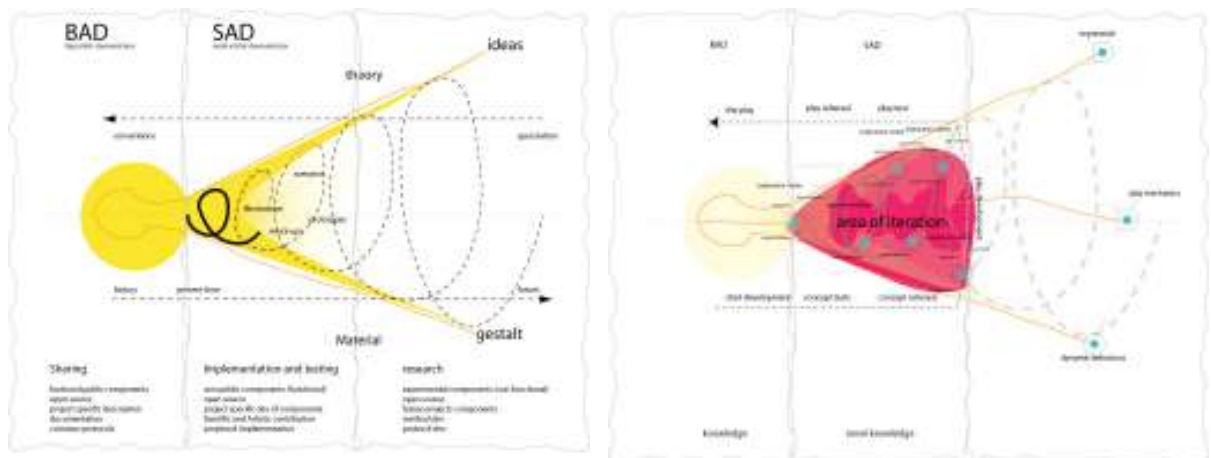
PREFACE by Michael Johansson

Since New Media itself has matured, the process is no longer dependent on the predecessors more traditional and linear methods of authoring, instead every part of the process is constantly changing the way we author, programme and express a multi-threaded open artwork.

It is obvious that we have not learned how to use digital materials as a “design material”. We know how to use computers and software as tools when we direct and conceptualize traditional productions, but we still have a lot to learn when it comes to seeing digital material as a design or artistic material in itself.

However, it is not so strange, as digital design is not as mature as traditional design, and digital materials has characteristics, which differ a great deal from those with which we are accustomed. Digital materials are usually more complex and flexible, less transparent and tangible. Above all, it is more cumbersome to learn and produce than most realize.

PRAMnet has pointed out the need for a more profound relationship to digital materials and tools. We believe that increased complexity in creative development calls for both disciplinary depth and integrative skills. Building prototypes let us explore this area in a fruitful way, iterating between artistic intentions/screenwriting and digital generated expressions/script/code writing.



While the major part of research on interactive narratives has been aimed toward the exploration of interactivity in user experience of finished art works, we also aim at exploring the perspective of collaboration in production of new media. Content dealing with narrative structures and its expressions often overlook the actual complexity of writing and prototyping the content fitted for the chosen media.

Our long-term aim with research in new media is to formulate a set up of narrative tools that can be used in a creative, collaborative process.

In our prototype work we focus especially on interactive installations; we realize that the digital design process demand both new forms of screenwriting and prototyping activities to support the design of the expression of the final artwork itself. In the work of establishing a virtual dimension on stage one deal with complex relations between virtual and actual representations. Models of theatrical communication are used as methods in the process of prototyping.

Michael Johansson, January 2009

PREFACE by Jette Lund

This essay is a result of discussions in the PRAMnet-group, and a result of our personal actual need to find a common language in which we were able to communicate the problems and the wishes in the creative process.

It presents a proposal for standard "bricks" to build a performance animation prototype; that is a "New Media Object" suited for an interaction between the media and the spectator. It indicates an order of implementing the different features, in order to meet the practical needs of producers, users, artists and audience.

Its goal is to try to produce a vocabulary, which might help the investigation and development of new media possibilities on stage.

However, in relation to the use of interactive New Media - what is a stage? New Media are not only used in the different theatrical arts - dance, opera, musical, traditional theatre and performance art. It is perhaps more often used in quite different contexts - in commercials, in art installations, in museums and schools, contexts, which we do not connect with the notion of "stage".

When we find it adequate and justified to use "models of theatrical communication as methods in the process of prototyping" is it due to the interacting element, which generate a need for organizing the actions of the spectator/user, to support some, to try to avoid others, and to guide a succession of actions. This can be seen as the first step of "staging". The interaction furthermore generates a need to communicate intentions, in order to adjust the expectations of the spectators/users. This is what the theatre labels "dramaturgy", and here we can draw on experiences from the theatre.

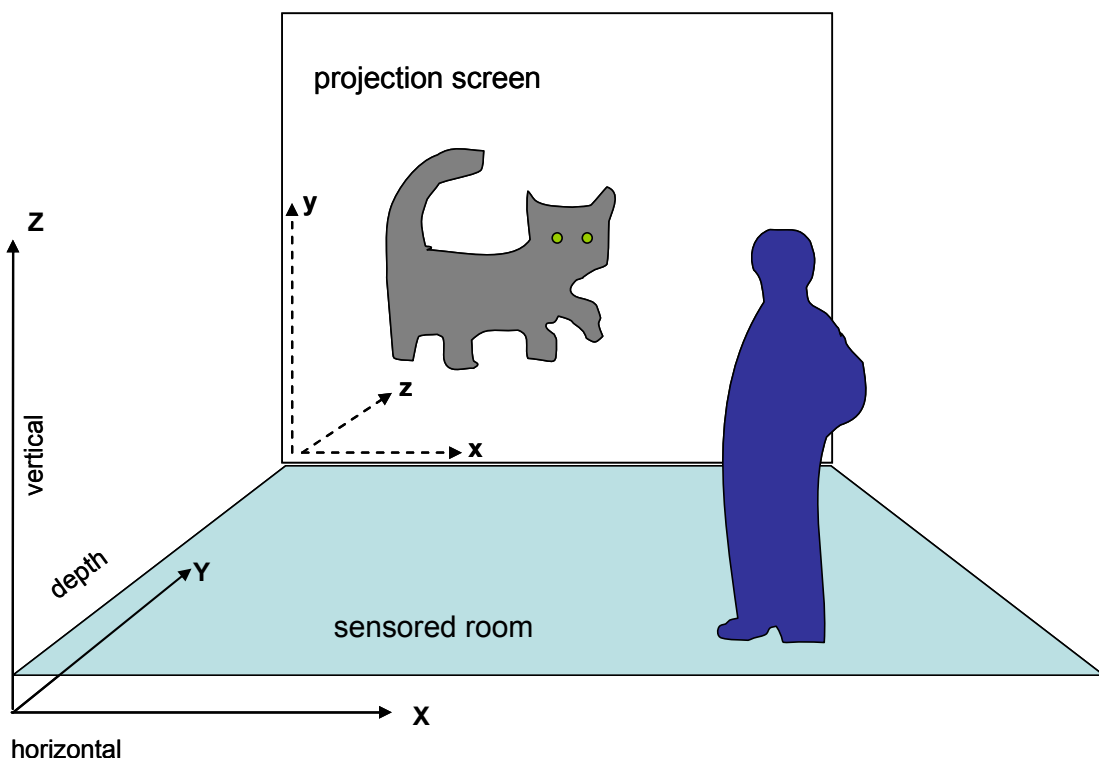


figure 1

INTRODUCTION

A performance animation prototype (PAP) can be described from different points of views, some of which might be seen as "complementary":

A **factual description** is compulsory: Name of the project, the prototype, the time and place, perhaps a genre, and the name of the constructor(s).

A **structural description** might be useful: Which dramaturgical model is used for the course of events, caused by the function of the PAP: Linear, non-linear or circular ? Or is the PAP using a database-structure, which might be organized as a "universe" or a "tree".

If an audience or a public are supposed to take part or to activate the PAP, one might ask for an interaction model (fig.2):

INTERACTION MODELS

- 1) **static** - a work to activate and to look at
- 2) **dynamic-passive** - the work change according to a parameter, which is not the spectator
- 3) **dynamic-interactive** - the work responds to the spect-actor, who is expected to react on the work
- 4) **dynamic-interactive (varying)** - besides elements, referring to 1, 2 and 3, the work comprises elements which are adding an unpredictability
- the response to the actions of the spect-actor will vary

figure 2

Under the headline "structure", one might look at the basic mathematical principles for the interaction design (fig.3):

MATHEMATICAL PRINCIPLES FOR INTERACTION DESIGN

- Cartesian room
- vectors
- set theory
- reflection
- chaos thinking
- others ?

figure 3

A **technical description** relates to notions as sensors, state, mapping and actuators, and the **description of content** might deal with intentions, ideas or with the actual dramaturgical construction of the work, and so with models of creative engagement of the spectator: attractors, sustainers and relators*, relating to the need of catching and keeping the interest of the spectator - elements which might be coined out as "fascination values"

And finally, there might be a **description of the process**, the manual and the collection of experiences and the evaluation of the functionality.

The description, here presented, is certainly not excluding any of those ways of description, but is

* attractors, sustainers, relators: On creative engagement, reflections on practice, Ernest Edmonds, Lizzie Muller, Matthew Connell, University of Technology and Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, Australia.

offering a different point of view, namely the view of the creative producer, the director, the artist and others, who will have to pick and choose between a vast number of potential possibilities, and need to transform the technical devices and their possibilities into a functional work of art. Its point of view is "the stage" but it is seeing the stage not only as a matter of theatre and performance, but as any place, where an artist wants to engage her spectators or spect-actors in an interactive and structured piece of art for some time.

Its theoretical basis is the theory of the puppet and the puppet theatre, seeing the New Media Object, the NMO, as an object for the actor/spect-actors interests and the play with this object as a play with shifting subject/object connections and relations.

THE MODEL

The model, depicted at figure 1, should give an impression of the topic for this paper. The idea of the Performance Animation Prototype (PAP) and how to handle it on the stage. As mentioned, "stage" meaning not only theatre in its classical form, but also the "stage" created by an installation on an exhibition or in the street.

A PAP contains a steering system for a "virtual puppet" - a "vuppet". By a vuppet I will understand any "new media object" which through the steering system is controlled by an actor or spect-actor and to which the actor/spect-actor (Augusto Boal/Viola Spolin) so is able to relate. The vuppet need *not* to be a depiction of a human being or an animal - any object, able to catch attention and to which the actor/spect-actor is able to relate, will here be described as a virtual puppet or a vuppet.

The notion of virtual puppet or vuppet is due to the use of the theory of the puppet theatre as a model for a theory of the use of NMO (Lev Manovich) in "mixed reality environments" (Jørgen Callesen). A more precise notion than the rather dim "mixed reality" would be "an environment for an activity, governed by a contract of fiction" (Janek Szatkowski).

It is the "contract of fiction", which allows the actor or the spect-actor to relate to a picture on a screen, to be fascinated by the interaction, and possibly for some moments regard it as a "living being". Through the actor/spect-actor, a public might get involved the same way.

In this paper, the projected image is used as an example for the PAP, but a PAP might as well generate sound, light, tactile or olfactory phenomena, the crucial point being the possibility of interaction, controlled by a persons actions.

By a PAP, I will understand a programme packet, which gives the user the opportunity to try out a certain connection between the actor/spect-actor's physical actions and performance on one side, and the physical, sensuous expressions of an NMO on the other, the actions of the actor/spect-actor controlling the NMO, the "vuppet".

The computer technology provides us with numbers of possibilities tending to the infinite. To use them and make them accessible for art installations, theatrical use, and for example use in museums or other cultural environments, it is necessary to gain control, to sort out and to arrange the vast amount of possibilities, in order to create a new material for an artist to use, the PAP.

On one side: In an art installation or a performance, the PAP is to be controlled by a spect-actor, a dancer, an actor, or a puppeteer. For these "users" of a PAP the possibility of numerous variations and parameters will have to be controlled and taken in use accordingly to the human ability to grasp, understand and so make proper use of the technology, according to the producer's intentions. It is therefore necessary to implement the different possibilities in an order, suitable to let the user gain control with one feature, before the next is introduced.

On another side: If the PAPs should be a material for artists, directors or choreographers, it must be possible for these "producers" to combine the prototypes and easily to change the different parameters, according to the actual needs. Therefore, the PAPs should follow a certain standard, in order to let the producer gain access to a rich number of possible artistic expressions.

The existing PAPs are often not seen as such. They are produced in a certain connection and often under a time pressure: They are integrated in a piece of art, and no one cares where the PAP stops and the art begins. The producer and the programmer have a primary interest in making it work *now*, and the user will have to struggle his way to master it.

In art installations, where a public is asked to interact with the installation, one will often find little consideration of the "dramaturgical" questions: How to make it interesting and easy accessible for the public, and the interaction is therefore often wavering and the possibilities little used.

It might so be useful to try to analyze the PAP, and to define and arrange its elements accordingly to the needs of the producers and of the users on a longer term, and independent from any actual and concrete artistic use. It is important to understand, that in this process the PAP integrated in a work of art will loose its status as "art", and be reduced to "a material". This might be confusing, as no one will be able to see and experience a PAP, unless embedded in a visual or otherwise sensuous expression - except of course the programmer, who will be able to analyze a written programme code.

On the other hand, the PAP embedded in a simple "demonstrator" of no specific artistic value might not show its true qualities.

For the producer as for the user it is necessary to create a tool, by which you might gain insight in and try out the many different possibilities, independent of another artist's actual choices, and what you have happened to see for yourself.

Furthermore, the formats of the sensors (cameras etc.) and the formats of the interfaces, created for you by programme producers, not always meet the needs, and it is necessary to distinguish between problems forced upon you by choices, made by the programme producers, and problems forced upon you by the expression, which you as an artistic producer want to create.

According to the actual point of view: the programmer's, the artistic producer's, the professional user's or the spect-actor's, the components of the PAP might be coined out differently.

To overcome this problem it is necessary to create a vocabulary, which can be accepted and understood by all parties.

The following analysis will try to produce such a vocabulary, presenting a proposal for standard "bricks" to build a prototype, and an order of implementing the different features, to meet the needs of producers and users, artists and audience, in order to bring the new media possibilities "on stage".

Analyzing the Performance Animation Prototype

The programme packet of a PAP will typically imply the following tasks:

- 1) the collection and transmission of impulses from the sensed room through a tracking system (input)
- 2) measurement, analysis and adaptation of data, e.g. algorithms, dynamic models
- 3) transmission of data into a sensuous expression e.g. projection system, sound generator (output)

To make the PAP accessible to the producer it will have to be showed through a "demonstrator" as mentioned above, and in some cases a "simulator" is needed to arouse and mime the function of the PAP and its possibilities. The simulator may contain some sort of randomizing and is associated to a presentation or a control situation.

The important thing is that the demonstrator will have to form a producer/user's interface, where - in the frame of the actual PAP - it is possible to make aesthetic choices, add different sensuous expressions and alter given parameters.

A given PAP so relate to three steps:

step 1 - a given tracking system, which is able to "read" the expressions (movements, sounds, heat) of the present persons in the sensed room (input), and translate them to programme codes in a given format

step 2 - a set of algorithms, which treat the collected data and translate them to new programme codes

step 3 - a given system using the programme codes from step2 to generate a given sensuous expression (output) - typically by projections on a screen, and/or sounds, olfactory or tactile expressions.

“The bricks”

STEP1 - INPUT

actual tracking system, (camera, radio, light, sound)
direct digital input, and collecting data in actual format of step1

• TRANSLATOR FOR INPUT

transforming data from step1 to actual format of step2
- here might be different "bricks" according to possible formats of step1 and step2.

STEP2A - TREATMENT OF DATA IN CORE OF PROGRAMME

algorithms, +/-dynamic models
- here might be different "bricks" perhaps taken from other PAPs or models.
collecting data in actual format of step2

• TRANSLATOR FOR USER INTERFACE

transforming data from step2a to actual format of user interfaces of step2b and c
here might be different "bricks" according to possible formats of step2a and step2b and c.

STEP2B - USER INTERFACE FOR AESTHETICS AND CHARACTER

(form, colour, size, +/- dynamic models)

STEP2C USER INTERFACE FOR MOVEMENT AND FEATURES

(speed, strength, direction, mirroring,+/- dynamic models)

• TRANSLATOR FOR USER INTERFACE

transforming data from step 2b and c to actual format for output (projector, sound generator etc.)
- here might be different "bricks" according to possible formats of step2b and c and step3

STEP3 - OUTPUT

adapting and transmitting data from step2 to actual output system,
projector, sound generator etc.

These steps constitutes the PAP

figure 4

A given PAP is so related to a given system for collecting data, and a given system submitting data for the sensuous expression, whereas the algorithms on step2 principally could be connected to other systems on step 1 and step 3

These elements can be further broken up and might be regarded as a sort of building bricks:

The demonstrator expresses some choices made on step2.

Compared with the production of a classical puppet, one will see, that the first group of choices (2b) primarily relate to the **field of the puppet maker**, and the second (2c) to **the field of the puppeteer**, who is able "read" the expression, the character and the possibilities of the technology of the presented puppet, and so try out and decide the puppet's movements and the character of the movements accordingly.

In a PAP this limit might be rather blurred, but it is important for the artist (producer) who wants to use a certain PAP for an installation or a performance, and have to design an expression according to her intentions, to realize, that some decisions can't be taken before the PAP is tested in the surroundings, where it will have to function. To choose between design and parameters, that should not be subject for change, and design and parameters, which should be tested out and therefore must be variable, is an important artistic choice.

To analyze further we will have to look at the core of the programme, step2a.

Mapping

The possible variation of a persons movement is - compared to the possibilities of the NMO - rather limited, first of all by the gravitation, secondly by the actual room, its character and design, which can be described as a Cartesian room, all elements defined by their relation to the three axes, horizontal, vertical and depth, taken from a chosen zero point.

A fundamental condition for the construction of the core of the PAP is this geographical "mapping" of the sensed room, as shown on the figure 1.

This contents two steps: The first is related to the person's movements in the sensed room, and have to define the geographical points for releasing an impulse (input), the second is related to the output, the vuppet.

Taking the projected picture as an example, one will have to define the coherence between the real Cartesian room, where the person moves, and the imaginary Cartesian room of the picture, where only two dimensions can be said to be "real". The movement on the z-axis is imaginary, due to a change of perspective - a convention or a trompe l'oeil.

The person's movements on the plane of the sensed room can be described as shifting positions on the **X** and **Y** axes, moving along the screen, and moving to or from the screen.

In the PAP, these movements may be transformed to the **x** and **y**-axes of the projection screen, moving along the screen, and moving up and down the screen. Starting with a "one to one"-relation, an input from one parameter in the sensed room, e.g. a "hotspot": The moving person crossing the "hotspot" might be tricking some figure to appear on the screen.

The "hotspot" will have to be defined by the X-Y axes on the floor, as well as the appearing figure by the x-y axes of the projection screen.

In this situation, it will not be possible to let the figure on the screen move, it will appear and vanish, according to the person crossing the "hotspot" or not.

To let the figure move, we will have to give in a series of positions - at least two - on the X-Y axes, which will be shown on the corresponding x-y axes, as well as a time-factor.

With two parameters on input and two parameters on output, we have **the two-dimensional basis situation**:

X-Y to x-y,(t)

In the example with the hotspot above, the time factor will be zero - there will be no movement to control, only an appearance. For the two movements to correspond (almost) completely, the time factor will be 1. A time factor 2 will for the x-y axes give a delay, which doubles the real-time distance between two measurements of X-Y. A time factor 0,5 will halve the real-time distance between two measurements of X-Y.

From this model, the basis-variations of the PAP can be described, as one of the "real" movements in the projection plane can be replaced by an imaginary movement on the z-axis.

These variations would be:

- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1) X-Y to x-y | 5) Y-X to x-y |
| 2) X-Y to x-z | 6) Y-X to x-z |
| 3) X-Y to y-x | 7) Y-X to y-x |
| 4) X-Y to y-z | 8) Y-X to y-z |

Coping with these variations might be basis training for a professional performer, wanting to deal with vuppets, and is mirroring the puppeteers training with e.g. hand puppets or marionettes on a technical level.

If the acting person will have to use the z-dimension of the projection screen, besides the movements on the x and y axes, she will have to use the Z-dimension of the sensed room, i.e. by a movement of hands, jumping or some other sign giving, besides the mere presence and direct movement on the X-Y axes. So a new prototype, dealing with three dimensions, is created.

Markers giving input on the Z-axis can be placed on the body of the acting person, or can be tricked by the acting person's movements in the room, but while there for the place of the actor on the X- and Y-axes will be only one value for a given time, there might in the Z-dimension be several, according to the number of markers.

The well-known motion-capture equipment with markers put on a living creature or on the body of an actor, in order to reproduce the actual body movements in a virtual figure is such a three-dimensional system.

The **three-dimensional basis situation** will be:

$$X-Y \text{ to } x-y(t), Z(n) \text{ to } z(n), (t(n))$$

- as every parameter on the Z-axis could be "delayed" differently from any other.

As in the two-dimensional basis situation there will be a number of variations (18, n=1), in which the axes of the sensed room and the axes of the projection screen might be linked to one another, and which will have to be tried out, according to the actual artistic intentions and practical possibilities of the acting person.

Until now, we have concentrated the investigation on a vuppet in a visual expression, typical a projection. If e.g. an auditory expression is used, this fundamental determination of the mutual pattern of reactions must take place on conditions valid for the perception of the sensuous impression concerned. But if the movements of the persons in the sensed room triggers different sounds, the quality of these sounds must necessarily be brought in relation to the X-Y axes, on which the person move, as well as the possible actions of the Z-axes. In this case one might say, that the x-y-z axes on the output side are all imaginary, as they do not relate to any actual plane or Cartesian room.

However, basically the task is to bind input and output together in a way which suit the project best, and in this case too it will be essential to test out the possible combination of axes. In any

concrete project these variations should be tried out, seeking the variation, which in the actual situation will suit the intention of the artist and the needs of the actor/spect-actor best. In relation to "The Bricks" shown on fig.2, p. 5 it means, that there has to be a user interface connected with the core programme, step2a, which allow the user to change these couplings, test them out and find the best suited for the actual purpose.

The content of step2a, -"the core of the programme" - will then be:

STEP2A: TREATMENT OF DATA IN CORE OF PROGRAMME

1) algorithms related to a user interface for the "mapping" of the sensed room, allowing the user to test out the possible variations for the connections between actor/spect-actor and vuppet.

2) algorithms controlling other parameters, related to the features of this specific PAP

+/- dynamic models

Here might be different "bricks" perhaps taken from other PAPs or models

Collecting data in actual format of step2

figure 5

Could there be more "dimensions"?

Depending on the number of possible markers on the Z-dimension one could say, that every marker might count as "a dimension". In this attempt to create a "vocabulary" for the PAP I have chosen to limit the number of categories, as it is exactly the vast number of possible variations, that hampers the understanding and manageability of the PAP.

By using our normal human relations to space described in three dimensions + time, I try to sort out the possible variations and make them manageable.

The parallel from the classical play with puppets is the elaborated marionette depicting a human figure, equipped with a vast number of strings, and so able to move every finger separately, roll the eyes and so on. When the puppeteer must operate the many strings, she will necessarily have to slow down the movements of the puppet in general, and so loose the intended "naturalism" on another parameter. There is a limit for how many features an actor can cope with, and a limit for how much a spect-actor can decode before losing interest. The features of the X and Y-axes are given through the human body's movement and the gravitation, the features on the Z-axes should be chosen carefully as the necessary and sufficient.

Classification of PAPs

We have seen, that the transfer of impulses from the sensed room to an output in some sensuous form can be described through two basic situations, a two-dimensional and a three-dimensional, and seen how these basic situations can be varied regarding how input is coupled to output in relation to a Cartesian room.

To these basis situations and their variations a number of variable features can be tied, which together with the sensuous expression - picture, sound, light - will produce very different expressions based on principally the same PAP. However, another factor has great impact for the accumulated expression or statement; that is the actual technical character of the accumulation of impulses: Is the sensed room described by cameras, radio transmitters, infrared sensors,

interruption or deploying of rays of light, or is it a matter of more directly forms of transmitting an impulse, such as push buttons, play stations or equals ?

These different technical possibilities are experienced differently and generate different associations, and are in this aspect producing very different expressions, as well in an actor as in a spect-actor situation.

Different PAPs could be said to relate to the notion of "virtual puppet" as the different types of classical puppets: Hand puppets, marionettes, shadow figures etc., relate to the notion of "puppet theatre", and might according to the aesthetic choices made produce very different expressions. Even if a virtual "puppet", expressing itself e.g. through chaotic sound will take an effect very different from a humanlike figure, appearing on a projection screen, it must - like it is the case by the classical puppets - be the character of the steering system which forms the basis for a categorisation.

This is due to the fact, that the crucial point by virtual as by classical puppets is the connection/ relation (for the difference between "connections" and "relations", see later) between the puppet and its player, as it is this connection/relation, which makes the whole project interesting and fascinating.

A PAP is so primarily described by the character of the transferring of impulses.

Examples to be mentioned

- sensors fastened to or controlled by the player reads the player's movement
("1:1", "family factory")
- sensors for e.g. light, colour, sound, heat or pressure, installed in the ceiling or the floor respectively "sees" or "feels" the movements of the player
("baskervision" and "voice control")
- the player acts in front of a camera, which reads the movements of the player
("eye-toy", "isadora")
 - playstation-like tools
 - any other possible ways ?

figure 6

The first mentioned indicate at first a theatre situation with a player, acting for a public. The three last mentioned involve the possibility of an interacting spect-actor, which in the point of departure might or might not be aware of its possibility to influence the expression - as in "eye toy" or "play station" - or as in a sensed room.

It is essential, that this decoding of the set-up is a fascination value for the spect-actor, and it can - (should!) be an important aspect of the dramaturgy of a performance or an installation.

As for all fascination values it is a point, that the fascination can only be maintained if the decoding is neither too difficult (complicated, slow, without known references, or scary) or too easy (well known, boring)

Steering systems and aesthetic expression

As it is the case by the different classical puppets one might expect to find, that a given steering system will tend to support certain aesthetic expressions more than others do. To what extend the known steering systems for PAPs as such will influence the possibilities for movement and

interaction will have to be tested out. It will demand access to and comparison of identical sequences with different systems for the transmission of impulses. Such experiments have until now not been possible.

DRAMATURGY

This leads us to the aspect of dramaturgy, the dramaturgy of the PAP. The notion of dramaturgy should here not be understood in the classical sense as "the theory of theatre", but rather as "the theory of staging a sequence", and so including e.g. the exhibition and the performance installation, where the artist wants to engage her spectators or spect-actors in an interactive and structured piece of art for some time.

As mentioned, it is principally possible to start in the sensed room with only one parameter. Even this very simple (predictable) situation contains dramaturgical basis material - or narrative elements. The two- or three-dimensional basis situation and its variations gives the PAP its basis playing possibilities; its ability to sensuous (visible) reaction in relation to a persons movements in the sensed room.

It is so the point of departure for the PAP to form a part of a semiotic system as a sign - again with the visual expression as an example:

VISUAL SIGNS - kinetic and proxemic signs:

- 1) direct correspondence between movements of player and movement of NMO, on three axes:
 - horizontal
 - vertical
 - "in" or "out" in relation to projection-screen
- 2) movement against the movement of the player
 - horizontal
 - vertical
 - "in" or "out" in relation to projection-screen

figure 7

Direction

The direction of the movement - The NMO following or going against the movement of the actor/spect-actor - is a very important dramaturgical element:

Examples:

Movement away from: repelling contact or a request to follow

Movement against: attraction or attack

The same basic movement might so "mean" very different things, depending on the form and structure of the NMO, the different aesthetic choices and of course the context.

The "connections" will basically be identical, the "relation" different.

Velocity and delay, character of movement

To this basis of the time factor being 1, the delay and/or velocity of movements on the screen in relation to the acting person's movements can be added. The character of the movement can be further developed through features as "elasticity" or "nervousness".

Dynamic models

A "dynamic model" is for example a programme for movement of wings, certain sounds and others, which might be started and stopped by the player, but basically works independently.

VISUAL SIGNS - kinetic and proxemic signs

Aesthetic choices

Aesthetic shades, character, independence

- the movement of the NMO **accelerate** or **slow down** in relation to player's movement
- the movement of the NMO is characterized by fx.. **"elasticity"**, **"jumping around"** or **"nervousness"**
- the NMO is provided with features as fx. **eyes**, following player, or **hair rises** as player comes closer
- the NMO is provided with **"dynamic models"**, connected to players movements on the three axes.

figure 8

Visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile expression

In "real life production" it is mostly the wish for a certain, sensuous expression, which comes first. It is exactly this wish, this idea, which will have to be split up in its different components, in order to - as a start - to find an adequate PAP and the basis variation, which is suitable for the purpose. Which solution will - as a whole - give the best expression? Which solution will give the actor/spect-actor the best possibilities and be the most easy to manage ?

"AUTONOMOUS AGENTS" and animated figures

- **having their own project**, which a player/spectator can only influence to a certain extent
- being treated as a **living creature**, seemingly being able to **perceive - evaluate - react** on events on stage ..

"anthropomorphication"

figure 9

Independence

From a starting point of one parameter and f. l. a flash of light it is possible to develop more and more sophisticated PAPs, until the other extremity, the "autonomous agent" - a NMO which is seemingly independent of the actor/spect-actor and her actions, and seemingly able to perceive, evaluate and react on the events of the sensed room.

Here the resemblance with the classical puppet is obvious.

But the complexity of this NMO might not necessarily presuppose a complexity of the connections on the X-x, Y-y and Z-z axes. On the contrary, these connections might need very few parameters and be very simple. The kind of complexity concerning an autonomous agent will primarily be tied to the algorithms and programme packets of step2a,2 (fig.4, fig.5).

Connections and relations

Speaking of the "meaning", the narrative potential of a PAP, it is necessary to distinguish between the "outer" connections, described through the connection of the axes, the character of the sensuous sign, the direction of a movement and other features, and the actual "meaning" - described with notions as e.g. anxiety, anger or attraction. An "outer" connection might describe an "inner" relation between the NMO and the actor/spect-actor. The narrative potential lies in these decoded relations.

THE SIGN SYSTEM OF THE ACTOR:

signs, which might be used to control a NMO:

- linguistic signs: sound intensity, speech/ring of speech
- kinetic signs: movement over three axes, speed of movement
- gestic signs: fx. movements of hands
- proxemic signs: distance/nearness of other players
- colour, shape and sound

actor's signs, which can't be used to control a NMO*:

- linguistic signs: character of speech
- paralinguistic signs: sub-text
- mimic signs: bodily carriage/attitude, facial expression

THE SIGN SYSTEM OF THE NMO:

actors signs, which can't be used to control a NMO*:

- can be replaced, supplemented or contradicted by the NMO:

- linguistic signs: character of speech
- paralinguistic signs: sub-text
- mimic signs: bodily carriage/attitude, facial expression

The NMO can use all sign systems

- speech, linguistic and paralinguistic signs
- kinetic signs
- gestic and mimic signs
- proxemic signs
- colour, shape and sound

*) with the actual known means/2008

figure 10

The PAP - a material

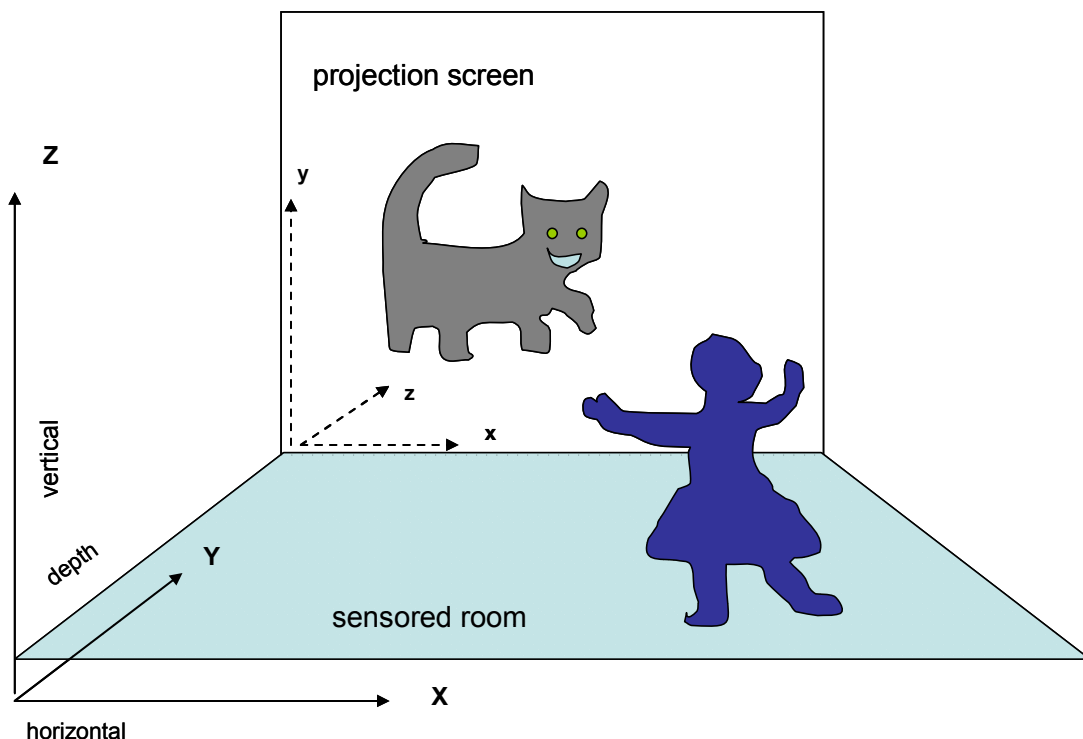
Its is important to understand, that the PAP in this definition is a material. An analogy for PAPs can be to see them as "primary colours", which you can buy and mix into an infinite number of very different and individual colours and shades. However, colours are not simply the colour, they are material too. They might for instance be oil, acryl or water based, and might be applied on

different surfaces with different textures, and for every change, they will be changing their expressive potentials as well.

Because mankind is used to work with colours for 10.000 years or more, we have a good idea of these possibilities and how to describe them.

When it comes to the PAPs of the new media we are lacking such universal categories and notions, and perhaps first of all an understanding, which allow us to construct such categories and notions, outside the individual artist's or scientist's workshop. We need a vocabulary for the PAPs, to be able to speak about them.

This paper is a first attempt to create the necessary notions.



Alice and the Cheshire Cat, adaptation for a concrete fictive universe,

figure 11

The development of PAPs

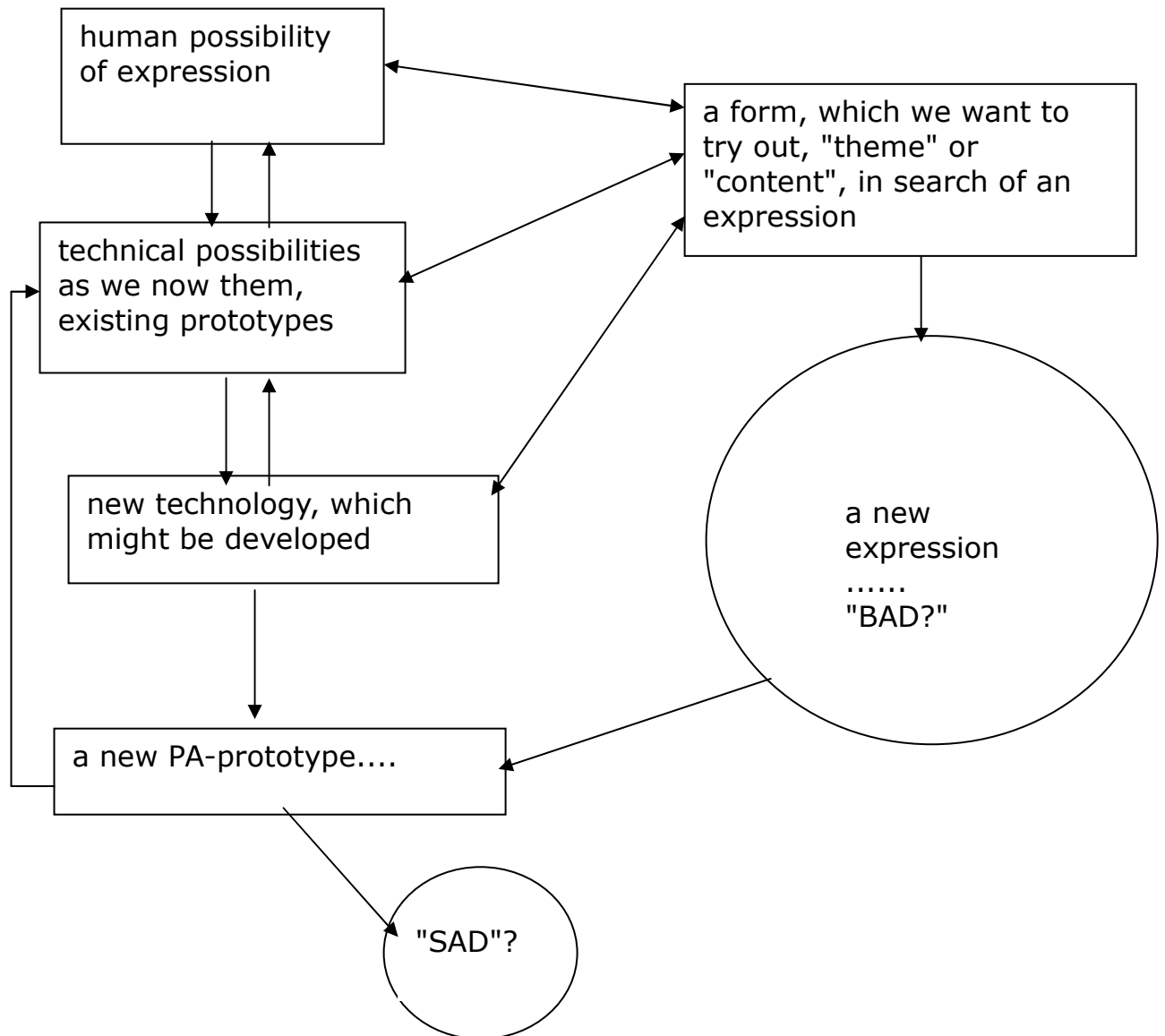
Basically, a PAP is a way of transmitting impulses from the human body into a virtual media.

How many different ways will there be ? Movement, visual, tactile, sound - ?

This technology-based approach is one way of developing new PAPs.

Another way, more guided by content, is to have a project, which makes certain demands, and so forces the producers to think differently and find new ways of exploiting or specialising the techniques.

The best way may be a continuous interplay between these two movements. It might be described as research and development with artistic means and purpose.



SAD: Small artistic demonstrator
 BAD: Big artistic demonstrator

figure 12

© Jette Lund

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The RS lab and the Three – a multidisciplinary production model

Katrine Nielsen - January 2009

1. Background – new multidisciplinary productions

As the computer controlled digital media have been integrated in live art, installation art and experimental theatre, narratives have evolved from traditional linear storytelling to open database structures, and together with the automated and responsive environments and characters, this has opened up for a dynamic and audience participatory room - an interactive real-time visual and cinematic stage.

However, this introduction of audience participation and new types of interaction with the scenography, performers and media, requires new multidisciplinary approaches and production methods.

The aim with the project **Journey to Abadyl** is therefore not only to create an actual production, but also to frame the different problems and challenges connected to this kind of productions – and through practise try to develop a doable production method.

With **Journey to Abadyl**, we operate with a complex combination between a physical and a virtual environment that is prepared for both staged and improvised interaction with a participating audience together with a group of performers who have received direction (acting, movement, choreography). Furthermore new ways of staging for both individual and for group interaction will be introduced, along with a responsive, partly computer controlled, stage design that apparently sense and react to what is going on, on stage.

What makes a production like this unique and new compared to the production of more traditional performances and installations, is that it requires a highly advanced mixture between investigation and development of new technological solutions, different means of expressions and ways of establishing both individual audience participation and group interactions, all in relation to the construction of a suitable overall non-linear dramaturgical structure. The dramaturgic idea and the choice and design of game engines, databases, sensors, simulated characters, behaviours and not least, the physical and virtual environment is strongly dependent on each other. According to that, 'the piece' has to be developed experimentally as a collaboration between artists, producers, test audiences, evaluators and technology developers. This is necessary to invent the new means of expression, to ensure an agreeable artistic level and to create a robust and functional media technology.

Knowledge from other professions like game writing, can serve as useful sources for us. But even though it focuses on some common areas of interest, it is not directly transferable into a play like **Journey to Abadyl**.

So we have to develop our own design theory and come up with new roles, rules and methods for handling the production complexity as well as research methodology and prototype development.

2. The Responsive Stage arts laboratory model – The RS lab model

Through The **RS lab model** we have developed a way to successfully integrate methods, which are normally not well known in traditional theatre production – such as Interaction Design, Performance Animation Prototypes (PAP), artistic prototypes and user testing, Mixed Reality Research, Improvisation and Devising theatre.

The originally RS lab project was based on a model and a production plan for a two-year laboratory process in experimental media- and theatre production. It was initiated by members of PRAMnet to coordinate a mutual Nordic project from 2006-2008 between researchers, designers and media, stage and performance artists from Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. The overall goal was to establish a common testing and production environment for creating and sharing knowledge in-between different professions and stakeholders – based on a narrative and interactive framework, which would not only facilitate production specific developments, but also generate more common knowledge and results that could be shared and used by others, both researchers and artists.

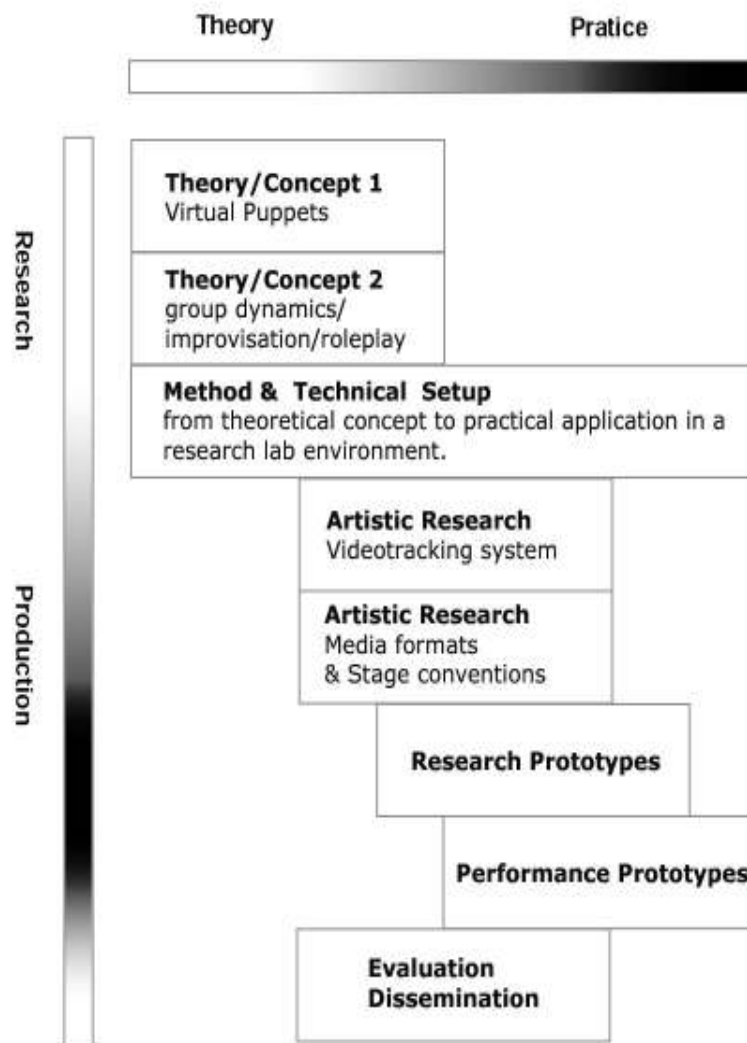
RS lab

RESPONSIVE STAGE ART laboratory 2006 - 2008

	SUMMER 2006	FALL 2006	SPRING 2007	SUMMER 2007	FALL 2007	SPRING 2008
COPENHAGEN	MEETINGS/ PLANNING PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet DK/SE lecturers/consultants ACTIVITIES Mutual Nordic Workshops. Laboratories and productions will be planned and coordinated regarding content, organization and funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • concept development • formats • financing • methodology • the establishment and development of a Nordic Network 	WORKSHOP01 Odshøved Tester Center TIME (3 days) 13 - 15. September PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet DK/SE Undervisere/konsulenter ACTIVITIES Resultaterne fra PRAMnet 2002 - 2005 præsenteres, testes og evalueres. Udvikling af fælles digital format og metode. FUNDING Nordboen, The Arts Council	LAB01DK Odshøved Tester Center TIME (3x5 days) 1. January - 1. June PARTICIPANTS Kathina Nielsen, Jacob Telieks, Jørgen Callesen ACTIVITIES Development & testing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • digital media formats • sensor technology • responsive scenography FUNDING Nordic Culture Fund, The Arts Council	WORKSHOP02 Location not planned (OT/NOR/ST) TIME (7 days) PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland Invited artists & consultants ACTIVITIES The results from LAB01 are presented, tested, evaluated and coordinated FUNDING Nordic Culture Fund, The arts council, Friends of Odshøved	LAB02DK (Odshøved Tester Center) PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet Denmark, External theatre groups who have participated in workshop02 who wish to prepare a production. ACTIVITIES Techniques and ideas from WORKSHOP02 is integrated in productions. FUNDING Participating groups apply	PRODUCTIONS Location not planned PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet External theatre groups & artists who participated in LAB02, who wish to produce a piece ACTIVITIES Techniques and prototypes from LAB02 will be integrated in the production. FUNDING Participating groups apply
MALMÖ	ESTABLISHMENT OF NORDIC NETWORK PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet DK/SE new Nordic pramNET members/ collaborators ACTIVITIES Participants in PRAMnet visit potential collaborators in Helsinki and Oslo Crucible Studio Media Centre Lumen Media Lab University of Art and Design Helsinki CONTACT PERSON Mikael Yarnote FNEK Produktionsnetværk for elektronisk kunst CONTACT PERSON Jensine Steing Dahl O/S Mønst Nord Oslo FUNDING Nordisk Kulturfond	LAB01SE Location not planned (SK/ON/ST) TIME (3x5 days) 1. January - 1. June PARTICIPANTS Michael Johansson, Thore Sandeen, Marika Kjøp ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3D animation • digital dramaturgi • improvisation FUNDING Nordisk Kulturfond, Friends of Kultur	LAB02SE Location not planned (SK/ON/ST) PARTICIPANTS/ ACTIVITIES PRAMnet Sweden, External theatre groups who have participated in workshop02 who wish to prepare a production. ACTIVITIES Techniques and ideas from WORKSHOP02 is integrated in productions. FUNDING Participating groups apply	MUTUAL PRODUCTION CUBE X - interactive performance installation PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet DK/SE Invited Nordic artists & consultants.		
HELSINKI/ OSLO		LAB01NO/FI Location not planned (LUME/FNEK) TIME (3x5 days) 1. January - 1. June PARTICIPANTS Not specified ACTIVITIES Not specified. We hope to involve both Crucible Studio in Helsinki and FNEK i Oslo to do a parallel workshop FUNDING Nordic Culture Fund	LAB02NO/FI Location not planned (LUME/FNEK) PARTICIPANTS/ ACTIVITIES PRAMnet Norway, Finland External theatre groups who have participated in workshop02 who wish to prepare a production. ACTIVITIES Techniques and ideas from WORKSHOP02 is integrated in productions. FUNDING Participating groups	OWN PRODUCTIONS (in progress) WIENNA 1000 - interactive concert installation PARTICIPANTS PRAMnet DK/SE SCENOGRAPHY Signe Krogh CHOREOGRAPHER/ PERFORMER Kjetil Johnsson WOLIN Anders Alsted MEDIA ARTIST Jacob Telieks		

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A Nordic Network for Electronic Art & Performance



The project was supported from Nordic Cultural Fund in 2006, which enabled PRAMnet members to present themselves, their work and methods to a group of Nordic Collaborators. Through a series of meetings, lectures, workshops and presentations, a network was established, which among other initiatives led to the project **WIREFRAME CubeX**, funded as a pre-production project by Nordic Culture Point in 2007. The project material **Journey to Abadyl** is developed as a result of this pre-project from 2008-2009.

The **RS lab Model** makes it possible to integrate technology development, artistic research, production and education in a long-term project, involving several partners from different countries. This effort differs from more traditional workshops and co-productions, because it gives a larger group of people insight and competences to share and use a whole "catalogue" of new media techniques and concepts in actual productions.

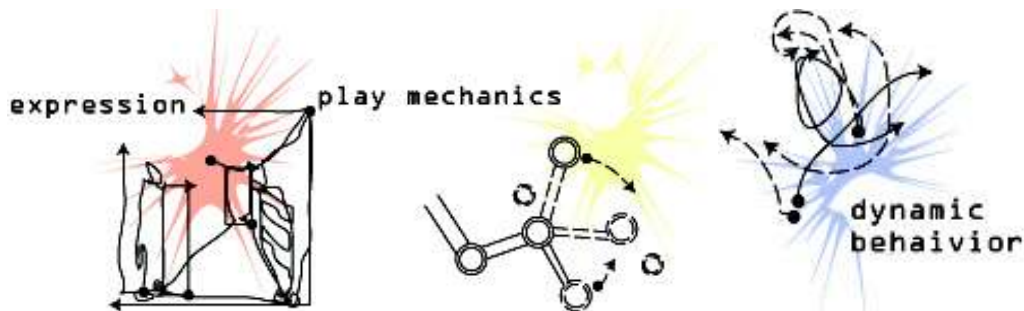
The **RS lab Model** is based on design methods used for interactive computer systems known as iterative design. The basic idea is on laboratory basis to create a series of smaller 'test productions', which experiments with the integration of interactive media technology in stage art and installation productions. This is continuously followed by workshops for participating artists, producers, technology developers and also tested on different types of audiences.

In this way education, artistic research, concept development, production and consultation are coordinated in several long-term projects to ensure that experiences and results will be shared and used by a larger group of people.

Though, setting up different test without placing them in a bigger picture of an actual production will not be meaningful in itself. It will only serve as technology demo or further exploration of things we already know. So the long-term planning and dissemination strategy in The **RS lab Model** should also serve to ensure that successful artistic ideas, which initially only works as artistic prototypes, eventually could be produced with the expertise from professional production teams and meet broader audiences.

3. The Three Model

PRAMnet member and media artist Michael Johansson has through his article “CubeX pre-study” from 2008, presented a new angle to this part of The RS lab Model. Among other things, he here suggest a strategy of focusing the investigation and development into three main exploration clusters, that puts traditional roles of production aside and combine them in a new interdisciplinary way. The three exploration clusters suggested are as follows:



Expression – is about everything that has an actuation and presence in the play/performance/installation. Here all the traditional media producers put forward examples that can be tested and tried out in different ways. It is about calibrating and creating expressions in relation to the other exploration clusters.

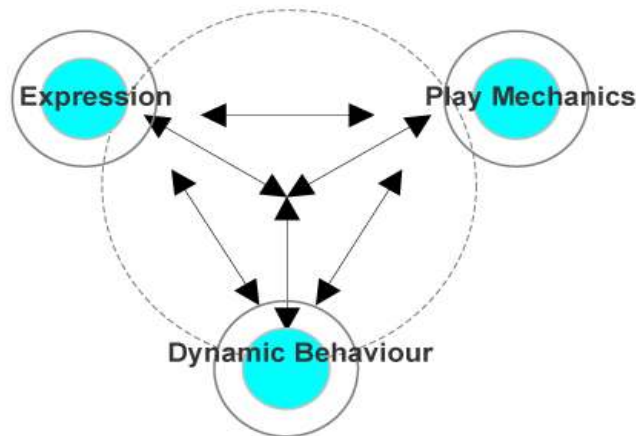
Involving: *actors, groups, audience, film, sound, scenography, images etc.*

Play Mechanics – is about matching the story and the audience/players development through spatial interaction, actuation and sensory input, designing the underlying structure that supports the possible outcomes of all scenes in the play. Here scriptwriting, dramaturgy, scenography and interaction design propose and test different set-ups. This will be a layout of time and space to establish a dialogue with the other two exploration clusters.

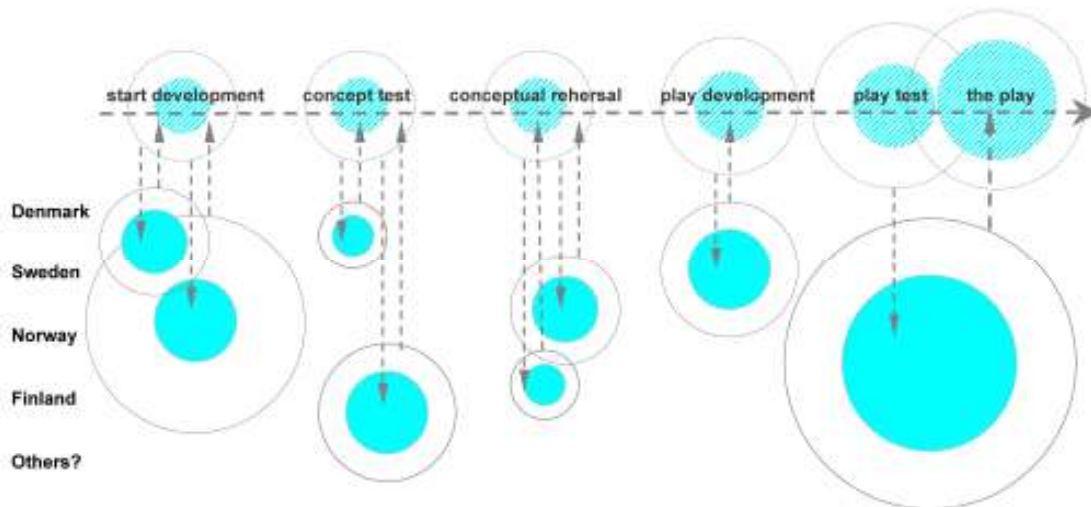
Involving: *spatial and dramatic models, dramatic tension, sensors, actuators, spatial functions, interaction methods, interaction sequences, deliverance, believability etc.*

Dynamic Behaviour – is about matching every aspect of programming with time, space interaction and narrative progression. This will address computer models and program cores, that opens up and establish relevant in- and outputs to the other two exploration clusters.

Involving: *processes, computer models, game-play architecture, state machines, sensor calibration, computer-vision, narrative progression, discrete mathematics etc.*



The Three Model indicate that we do not necessarily need to decide every part of the project from the beginning – only so much that we know **where it will begin, how it is played and how it ends**. With this framework in order, it will be possible to go into specific details and explore these thoroughly – from tests through rehearsals and from prototypes into the finished production. The idea is that the different parts of the three exploration clusters can be investigated and produced simultaneously through the **RS lab process** in cooperation with the different stakeholders, either specifically aimed towards the production **Journey to Abadyl** - or by letting other ongoing projects 'host' the investigation and development of certain topics vital for this project.



The Three Model furthermore suggest to work from a principle of **'two known and one unknown'**. The idea is here to fix two elements of the three exploration clusters using already developed components and in relation to that, explore a new element of the third exploration cluster. Each possible 'path' through the scenarios of **Journey to Abadyl** can this way be isolated according to the themes of the three Exploration Clusters Expression, Play Mechanics and Dynamic Behaviour – and as such they can both individually and as a whole be developed and tested in relation to the technological and artistic intentions and possibilities.

The Three Model in combination with **The RS lab Model** will in this way help setting up the right interdisciplinary testing environment for a production like **Journey to Abadyl** – to avoid just producing 'already familiar things'.

PRAMbase.org

- a database for new media, electronic art and performance

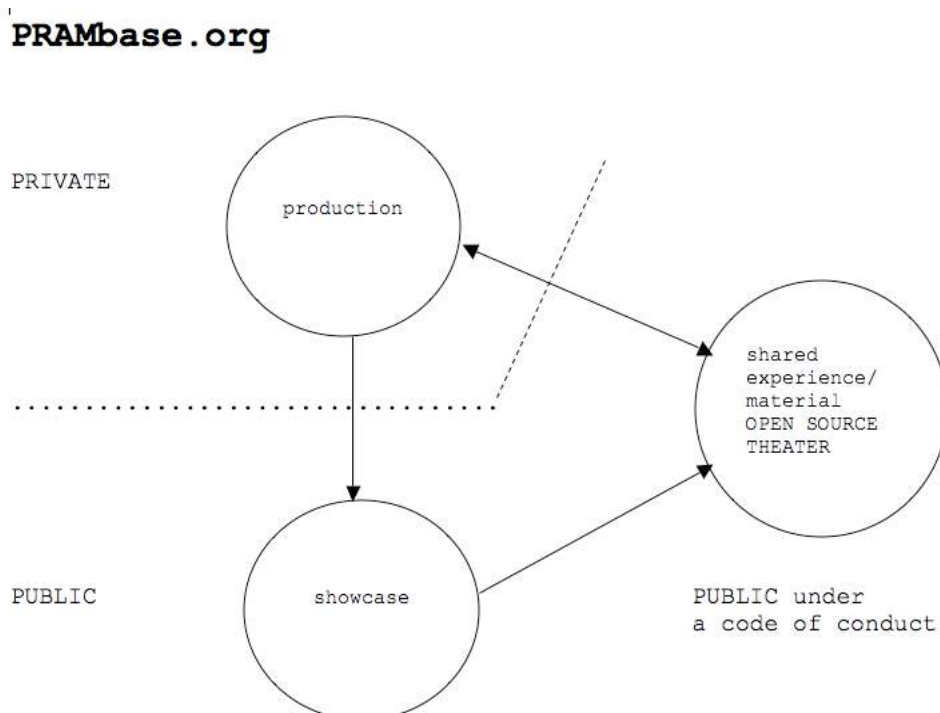
Jørgen Callesen - January 2009

The PRAMbase is a project initiated by PRAMnet for an on-line video-based communication platform connected to a knowledge database for Nordic and International media artists, researchers and technology developers.

The PRAMbase

The project was initiated in spring 2007 by Danish PRAMnet members Jette Lund (dramaturge), Jørgen Callesen (media designer/performance artist) and Jacob Tekiela (artist/graphic designer) together with the main collaborator Petri Kola (media artist/researcher) from the Open Video Institute in Helsinki.

The first phase of the project, funded by the Nordic Culture fund, was focused on the design, implementation and testing of a functional prototype for the database. The PRAMbase prototype is a communication platform for distributed creative production, which in the future is intended to be combined with an online-library for broadcast quality video footage developed by Petri Kola and the Open Video Institute.



CONTENT

The communication platform and the database consist of three different elements:

- 1) The showcase portal, presenting different productions and projects.
- 2) The production portal, used as an actual production design tool and communication platform during productions.
- 3) The knowledge base and experience portal, for artistic experiences as well as experience with technology and tools from ongoing and finished productions and projects. In this portal, the production experiences are communicated through the presentation of functional prototypes and via photos, sound and on-line video as well as texts. Thereby the users can make their internal tacit knowledge accessible to other users within an agreed framework, in a uniform format and from a mutual point of department.

The project differs from known methods for art and production databases, which are mainly focused on the final production and the biography of the artist. The PRAMbase communication platform is directed towards the production phase and a generic accumulation of the artistic and technological innovations that emerge the process, but are not necessarily present in the final production. This knowledge is for many reasons often not made public and stays within the production team. One main reason is competition, artistic rights and questions of copyright, as well as a lack of resources and methods for documentation and dissemination.

PRAMnet has developed an advanced and believable model and method for this type of documentation and dissemination of artistic and technological innovations, paying attention to the working conditions and interests of the professional artists and technology developers.

LONG TERM GOAL

The long-term goal with the professional media database "PRAMbase" is to give Nordic technology developers and artists, who work as "free players", an opportunity to benefit from each other's knowledge in a systematized fashion, which also allows mutual long-term planning and thereby to collaborate with established research institutions and companies on an equal level.

On a long term, the media database will become a valuable resource - not only for the participating "free agents" but also for researchers who wish to analyze the artistic process and communicate its results and nature to other environments.

The first prototype was presented and tested at a workshop 16.- 25. October 2007 in Odsherred, Denmark, at the Institute of Stage Arts, arranged by the Open Source Theatre project (Gritt Uldall-Jessen and Henrik Vestergaard-Pedersen) in collaboration with The Bridge Project (Sophie Haviland and Richard Foreman) and funded by The Danish Art Council.

The PRAMbase prototype has since been tested by practicing artists and used in different productions. The project was also presented at the PRAMnet.org showcase 7.-9. December 2007 in the media art gallery Warehouse9.dk in Copenhagen.

From June 2009 the PRAMbase concept will be used as a model for an online media database for the project LIVE ART CONTEXT in the venue Warehouse9.dk in Copenhagen, funded by the Danish Arts Council in the period 2009-2011.

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The Danish Art Council 2009 - 2011 - www.kunstradet.dk

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The Bridge Project - www.bridgefilm.com
PRAMnet.org - www.pramnet.org
The Open Video Institute (Helsinki) - openvideoinstitute.org

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The Bridge Project (INT) (Sophie Haviland & Richard Foreman) - www.bridgefilm.com
Theatre Graense-loes (DK) (Katrine Karlsen) - <http://www.graense-loes.dk/>
Secret Hotel (DK) (Christine Fentz) - www.secrethotel.dk
Core Act (DK) (Helene Kvint) - www.coreact.dk
Emotional Fish (DK) (Jørgen Callesen) - www.warehouseg.dk/emo_fish
Bang Bang - A space Cabaret (DK) Kenneth Bager - www.bellevueteatret.dk
Warehouseg.dk - Live Art Space - www.warehouseg.dk

info: www.PRAMbase.org

The Room as a Dramaturgical Model and a “Generator” for Interaction

Katrine Nilsen - February 2009

The scenography as playground, “acting machine” and antagonist.

A ball reacts to your action by bouncing up and down - depending on the flexibility of the material it is made of, the surface it hits and of how hard you hit it. You might say that this defines its “character”, but - for all we know - it has no will of its own. ‘Mechanically’ it remains a “dead” object as long as we do not play with it, even though it has the potential for action.

Nevertheless, the way the ball is shaped, its colour and the specific way it bounces etc. has a certain influence on how we perceive and interpret it, and according to that we might perhaps find that it bear a resemblance to a human or some other living creature. This is what I normally refer to as The Dramaturgy of the Object.

However – for a ball to become a true living character, it is not enough that it reacts on our actions. Its reactions also has to be believable in some specific way, by having real consequences for our “dialogue” with it.

The same is the case when a scenography is to become a *character and a space for interaction*. That is – to function as **A/** a dramaturgical model and a playground for the action, the scenery has to embody the overall story in the architectural structure (and expression) in a significant way – and for it to become **B/** an Antagonist and a “generator” for the (inter) action, the scenery should furthermore be able to react to and challenge the participants in a way that has consequences for the flow of the action and the overall story.

REFERENCES A - the Scenography as a Dramaturgical Model

In Lars von Tries’ *Psykomobile - Verdensuret* in Kunstforeningen Gl. Strand 1996, the structure of the stage design consisted of different sceneries, spread around the building, which were parts of an overall story – or rather a “community”. The “inhabitants” were trained performers, who was improvising according to their predefined characters and a computer controlled game pattern system.

This opened up for the possibility that the spectators could freely choose for how long, from which angle and in which order they would observe a specific act(ion) – rather like going to the Zoo or visiting a museum exhibition. But even though the spectators were never themselves an active part of the performance, they had to face an important dilemma in this setup, because whenever they chose a specific action in one part of the installation, there were always a risk that they would miss another important action going on somewhere else.

Other examples of this spatial dramaturgical model, is Peter Greenaway's *Flying over Waters* in Malmø Kunsthal 2000 and Robert Wilson's *Anna didn't come home that night* in Kunstindustri-museet the same year. Both artist worked with some kind of an overall storyline build into an installation or exhibition. *Flying over Waters* displayed the myth of Ikaros' rise and fall and *Anna didn't come home that night* the fatal day of a person's life – Anna's. For the spectators, both characters were staged in a fragmented flashback perspective, as a more or less Still-Life reconstruction, displaying “the scene of the crime” – opposite to the improvised progressive action in *Psykomobile – Verdensuret*.

Both Hotel Pro Forma's *Jesus_C_Odd_Size* in Malmø/Copenhagen 2000/2002 and Signa Sørensen's *Black Rose Trick Hotel* in Malmø 2005 used the same kind of fragmented setup, where the audience were confronted with living performers, live installations, Still-Life elements, robotics etc. In both cases the spectators were - as in the other examples mentioned above - let free to go wherever they liked and could therefore observe, talk to and even in other ways interact with the different “performing” elements. However, their own sudden *performative* role as a spect-actor in this connection was not really made clear.

Whereas in Maeder/Sennek's (Udflugt Network) site-specific performance Excursion *The invisible reality show #4* – 2. edition in Copenhagen 2007, the role of the participants were made crystal clear. As a true "spectator" they were send out into the real world to *watch* - but with a new selective and performative point of view, created by performers, audio-vision, objects and other effects mixed into the sceneries of the daily life, which the participants were guided through.

REFERENCES B, the Scenography as an “Antagonist” and a “Generator” for Interaction (Acting Machines)

I have actually not yet seen very many examples on interactive stage designs that intentionally has been designed for and successfully staged as an antagonist in the way that I imagine it, except perhaps in puppet theatre and in some theatre forms, where circus, slapstick and performance theatre has been combined - as for instance the Icelandic performer Kristján Ingimarsson's “*Mike Attack*” from 2006 and “*Creature*” from 2008, and Danish artist and acrobat Lars Gregersen's “*Sisyphus Ascending*”, also from 2008.

My inspiration on this field therefore comes from various other sources such as installation art, exhibition design, old museum archives, old robotics and children's mechanical toys, pop-up books, payphones, jukeboxes and other self-service automats, together with computer, role and adventure games.

But - as example on the scenography as a “generator” for interaction - I would like to mention Popova's stage design for Meyerhold's theatre play *The magnificent Cuckold* in 1922, which RoseLee Goldberg has once named as an Acting Machine.

Oscar Schlemmer's scenic experiments with “live mobiles” during his Bauhaus period in the 1920'ies and 30'ies should also be mentioned, together with Anna Viebrock's different, more resent stage design for Christoph Marthaler's theatre plays in Berlin/Hamburg/Salzburg. Her stage design is often a construction of different fragments inspired from real locations, which represent a natural daily life action – like getting on or off the bus, going through the swing door at your office etc. This way she creates at the same time a symbolic and a interactive physical frame for the performative action.

Partly could also be mentioned Thomas Schenk's & Sasha Waltz's stage design for Sasha Waltz's dance performance *Gezeiten at Schaubühne*, together with Andrij Zholdak's stage design, and dance performance *Medea in der Stadt* at Volksbühne in Berlin 2005. Both performances used the stage design choreographically to its full extend and literally to its breakdown.

In Journey to Abadyl context

One of the topics I personally would like to investigate in the *Journey to Abadyl* project in relation to the stage as a dramaturgical model and a playground for the action is, how and whether physical and architectural element's isolation and limitation of our senses, action- and communication possibilities will restrain or totally stop the interaction, or whether this kind of obstacles would perhaps rather strengthen the inclination and ability to achieve contact – and thereby facilitate the invention of new forms of communication and interaction!?

Another challenge in relation to the stage as a "generator" for the (inter) action will be to explore and develop new relations between the physical stage elements and the interactive digital technology.



The magnificent Cuckold

©Katrine Nilsen 2009

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We also thank our guests and contacts in the Nordic countries for their interest and cooperation, and for valuable information and inspiration.

We are publishing the work in the hope, that we might inspire colleagues to work with "New Media" in a scenic context, and that it some day will be possible to build the virtual city Abadyl and travel to it - See you in Abadyl !

NordScen



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