

**SUPERVISOR'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE MASTER'S THESIS:**

Attachment to the state magister's examination report.

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EXPERIENCING OURSELVES BEHAVING: Creating Space and Time in the Theatre to Explore Present People's Behaviour

Eva Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt's Master's thesis is not about going to any random play at any random theatre, choosing strange audience members and performers and trying to work out how they behave. It is about Eva's hard work in developing new ways to create a specific kind of performance of her own, a performance that creates an environment for people to focus on and discover human behaviour: the human behaviour of performers and the human behaviour of the other people present in the room (or as Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt calls them: the attendees).

The idea she developed during her studies at DAMU is in fact very sophisticated. I am not saying it works perfectly, but I am saying that her explorations were developed organically and gradually, based on observations and dialogues with very sensitively chosen creative partners, and through test performances. These explorations led to a performance form that comes far in exploring a territory many theatre makers and audiences like to say they resist, a territory where the lines between performer and audience (or attendee) are blurred. As developed by Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt and her scenographer Sorcha Gibson, the physical format brings audience onto the stage right away, yet into a setting where they can feel comfortable and expectant. Here, performers and attendees sit in an ad hoc circle as equals, and the theatre lights make clear that everyone is in the light together, but that this is a moment of heightened reality. (I have watched experienced professionals struggle to find a balance like this.) Performers Jakub Vaverka and Maëlane Auffray trained with Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt on how to be guides of the experience, developing with them principles and guidelines to stay near those difficult border territories between offering of themselves and inspiring or provoking attendees, when to cooperate with each other and when to provoke each other, indirectly invite attendees to participate, and listening and responding to those attendees that actually offer to respond or participate, respecting the silence of others who prefer to just watch and listen, keeping things safe but risky.

In order to give her findings maximum clarity, she carefully explains the terms she is using first in kind of introductory glossary. Just one example is her rejection of the term audience, which suggests a sessile body of people who just listen or

watch: throughout the text she favours the term "attendee": someone who is present, a witness, but potentially able to act.

She gives her findings furthers depth and texture by comparing experiences with other performances blurring the lines between performer and attendee.

Why did I say the idea does not work perfectly? Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt herself acknowledges a problem of accessibility, not all attendees seemed able to orient themselves into what the performance was offering them with the tests and master's thesis performance she and her colleagues have created.

Above all her analysis as presented in this thesis paper clearly shows what a wide body of knowledge this experience has inspired in her.

Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt is very aware of how she has learned from this experience, what she will do things differently in future and where she needs to continue with explorations. She shows this very clearly in her thesis defense.

It is extremely encouraging to see how Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt clear analysis of how she could take her pioneering work in this direction further, taking advantage of all that knowledge. I think she is on to something. I think when she says in future she would like to "develop a training program for performers to be these facilitators for the present attendees to become the main source of the performance" she will know how to do so and there is great potential for her to create a new approach, a new training method that could be used and applied in many different performances and situations.

For a unique exploration of how to create performance environments exploring human behaviour, her clarity in language and explanation of her techniques and findings, for her thorough examination of how such an environment works, what does not yet work and what still needs to be explored, for her bold, well-founded proposal on how to work on in future,

I recommend Eva Rosemarijn Burgerhoudt's master's thesis for oral defense and recommend her for the title of "MASTER".

Date: 17th of June, 2019

Ewan McLaren

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