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**THE PERSONAL OBJECT AS AN ACTIVATOR FOR THE
POTENTIAL OF RELATING**

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VZÁJEMNÝCH VZTAHŮ**

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Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis independently on the following topic:

THE PERSONAL OBJECT AS AN ACTIVATOR FOR THE POTENTIAL OF RELATING

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.



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Abstract

This M.A. thesis researches how the personal object is an activator for the potential to relate in the theatre performance HIER, HERE, TADY. In this participative performance personal objects invite their owners, audience and performer, to research their everydayness. The performance is a meeting point for people and objects to relate. The first chapter explains the role of the performer. She opens up the meeting point by the dramaturgical propositions she makes. She proposes the time and space to sit with the personal object and she can facilitate or provoke the exploration. The second chapter accounts for the role of the audience. In this performance every member of the audience is a participant, inhabiting a creative and co-authorial relationship to the work through attentive observation and attentive action. The third chapter clarifies how the third element, the personal objects of the performer and participating audience members transform into theatrical objects. And how these theatrical objects activate the participants to research their everydayness by relating to it, to each other and to other objects of the same kind. When humans sit with and explore their personal objects, they can reveal, evoke and elicit their content. The general conclusion explains what the conditions are for the personal object to become an activator for potential of relating, as examined in the performance HIER, HERE, TADY.

Abstrakt

Tato diplomová práce zkoumá to, jakým způsobem mohou osobní předměty iniciovat a zprostředkovat vytváření vzájemných vztahů v kontextu divadelní performance HIER, HERE, TADY. V rámci této participativní performance, jakémsi uměle vytvořeném prostoru pro vzájemné setkání lidí a objektů, jsou osobní předměty diváků i performerů vystaveny tomu, aby byly zkoumány z hlediska jejich každodennosti. První kapitola této diplomové práce analyzuje roli performerky v rámci zkoumaného performativního tvaru. Performerka divákům nabízí čas a prostor, v jehož rámci si mohou s osobními předměty posedět, a provokuje je k jejich zkoumání. Druhá kapitola se zabývá rolí diváků. Do této performance je každý člen publika aktivně zapojen jako její přímý účastník, navazující kreativní a spoluautorský vztah s dílem skrze vědomé pozorování a vědomou akci. Ve třetí kapitole je ozřejmeno, jakým způsobem jsou osobní předměty performerky a účastníků se diváků transformovány do role divadelních objektů a jakým způsobem tyto objekty provokují diváky k tomu, aby začali zkoumat jejich každodennost skrze vztahování se k nim a k dalším účastníkům, i všímání si vztahů mezi objekty samotnými. Jakmile diváci usednou a začnou jednotlivé objekty zkoumat, začnou jim tyto objekty odhalovat či evokovat všemožný obsah. V samotném závěru tato práce na základě praktických zkušeností nabytých během uvádění divadelní performance HIER, HERE, TADY vyvozuje, jaké předpoklady jsou nutné k tomu, aby se osobní předměty mohly stát aktivátory pro vznik vzájemných vztahů.

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INTRODUCTION

We stand outside of the venue, you, the audience, and I, the performer. We are about to meet. I look for you, I try to make eye contact. (Are you as curious as I am?) I approach you, while maintaining eye contact.

'Hej, hi, how are you? Are you here for the performance? I am Ine. I invited you. In a few minutes the performance will start. I will take you inside. What's your name? Did you get here alright?'

We have a short talk, you and I. I let you know that you still have some time. You can take your bags and jackets with you inside. I will come and pick you up in a minute. Then I look for the others who will be joining us. There should be 15 of us who will meet for the performance. When we find each other, we walk together from the foyer to the black box. Before we step onto the theatre floor, I ask you to take off your shoes, but to take your bags and jackets with you. I do the same. Then we turn to the theatre floor.

There is a warm light covering the space, with a subtle focus of a circle in the middle. On the ground a black ballet floor. Otherwise the space is empty. No seatings, no elevation, no decor elements. We all step in. I invite you to take a seat on the ground. We sit down in a circle and we all look at each other.

'My uncle Dirk always said, whenever you leave the house, you must always take 3 things: a swiss knife, a flashlight and a roll of toilet paper. I am Ine, I am from Belgium and I have been traveling between Belgium and Prague for the past 2 years. I started wondering about the objects I carry with me. What do I take, what do I leave behind, am I traveling light or not. Whenever we leave our house we take things with us. Or do our things take us, do they carry us, do they hold us?'

I look around. Again you and I make eye contact. I look at your backpack.

'I am curious, what did you take to the theatre today ? Can we see something?'

You open your backpack and you take out your keys. It's a huge bundle!

'How many keys do you have, and where are they from?'

You walk us through, keys of your home, of your partner's home, of your parents' home, a set of keys of your work, there is a key of your bike, a key of your locker at work, a keychain you got from a friend that is made of plastic and it has a piece of red colored fabric inside, there is also a keychain that is also a bottle opener, a usb stick, and an electric key.

Then I ask 'Can we see something else?' You take out your wallet. You open it and you unpack it. There are coins and bills and a lot of ID/membership cards. With different colors. We all sit with them and look at them. Someone asks where the cards are from.

'Can we see the other things in your bag, could you unpack, is that OK?' You unpack your bag. Sometimes someone of the other participants asks something like where an object is from and if you always take it with you. Sometimes you tell an anecdote or a memory that belongs to an object, like how inside your wallet you carry an icon that was a gift of your mother and that you cannot show us because it is a secret. Sometimes I ask something 'how many pills are still left on the strip of medication?' 'How many ID cards do you have?' 'Where are they from?' 'What kind of food do you have with you?' 'How many spoons do you have with you?'. We all sit with you and your things and we look at them.



Image 1. Contents from bags of participating audience members, bunch of keys, coins, ID cards, wallet, phone, nose spray, hat, belt, notebook. Before the try out, the performer introduced the photographer, a fellow student and team member, and asked the audience for their consent. Image by Eva Roosmarijn Burgerhoudt. HIER, HERE, TADY, try out, March 2019, Studio Alta, Prague.

This is the start of the participative performance of HIER, HERE, TADY. I worked on this Master Performance during the second year of the MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre at the Academy of Performing Arts, DAMU, in Prague.

When I started working on HIER, HERE, TADY, I had been living in a foreign country for over a year. To be more precise, I had been living as a nomad, traveling back and forth from my home in Belgium to what would become my home in Prague. I was fascinated by the objects I and my fellow travelers were carrying. It made me curious about what objects we carry with us every day in our pockets, purses, backpacks (keys, mobile phone, food, water bottle, journal, book, pens and pencils, spare clothes, amulet/talisman, deodorant,...). What contents do these objects reveal of themselves and what can they evoke in us? I was curious to what these objects could reveal, not only about their owner, but also of themselves, the lives they had, and I wondered what these personal, everyday objects could reveal about our collective everydayness, if we would

collect and assemble them. To quote artist Allan Kaprow: 'these ordinary events are inherently compelling once you pay attention to them.'¹

Throughout the classes of the M.A. Directing of Devised and Object Theatre, and in the growth trajectory of making devised performances that I will describe further on, I found a fascination for objects, working with objects in a performance. This was combined with a love for simplicity, finding beauty in everydayness and 'working with what is already there.' What I mean by this, is that I get inspired by working with personal, everyday objects, that I find or that participants bring to the performance. I get excited when I create performance from objects out of a regular backpack, mine or yours. Secondly, when I speak of 'working with what is already there' I also mean providing, proposing a space for an audience to participate (through attention or actions), a space that fosters imagination and invites to play together. In this space, unexpected things are possible, people and objects can reveal something, can explore or be explored.

With *HIER, HERE, TADY* I wanted to open up a playground, a meeting point for people and objects. This master thesis will unpack how, in the performance *HIER, HERE, TADY*, the personal objects of audience members and performer, become activators of the potential to relate people to each other, to their objects and to objects of the same kind.

The first chapter explains the role of the performer. By making dramaturgical propositions the performer gradually guides the audience through a dramaturgy of welcoming, that is not dominant but invites them to tune in, unpack their personal objects, meditate on them, visit each other's objects, categorise the shared objects and pack up.

The second chapter accounts for the role of the audience. In this performance every member of the audience is a participant, invited to inhabit a creative and co-authorial relationship to the work through observation, exploration and imagination.

The third chapter clarifies how the third element transforms into a theatrical object and becomes an activator of mutual relating. When audience and

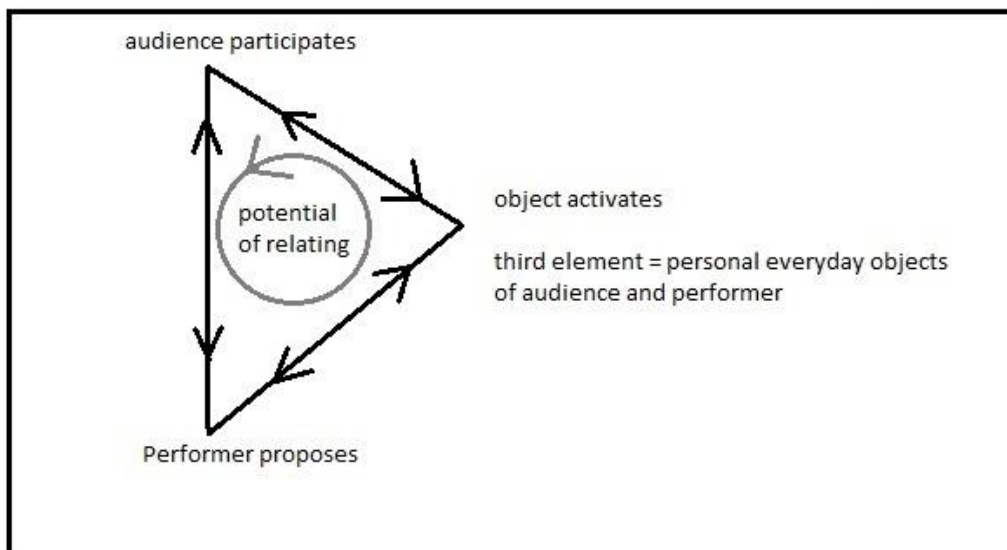
¹ Kaprow, A. (1990). Meaning of Life. In Kaprow, A. Kelley J. (ed.) *Essays on the blurring of art and life* (p236). University of California Press.

performer bring their personal objects into the theatre and place them under the gaze of their fellow participants, the personal objects are elevated out of the mundane, they create a relational space in which they reveal an aesthetics of everydayness and they become agents of different possible contents by what they evoke and elicit in the observers.

1. POTENTIAL OF RELATING - THE PERFORMANCE IS A MEETING POINT

HIER, HERE, TADY is a devised theatre performance, in which the personal, everyday objects that participating audience members and performer bring to the theatre, invite us to research our everydayness².

PERFORMANCE HIER, HERE, TADY = MEETING POINT



The performance HIER, HERE, TADY is a meeting point. In the figure of this meeting point, you see a triangle or a sail. It becomes visible that all members involved equally influence each other. In the meeting of the 3, in the exchange, we relate to each other, we co-create and the sail can catch wind, the performance comes to life. The work is created in the meeting. The dictionary states that material is 'the matter from which a thing is or can be made'.³ In HIER, HERE, TADY the material of the performance is all that happens in the meeting of performer and audience and their personal objects: how we unpack our personal, everyday objects, how we collect them, how we sit with them (observing it and listening to it and exploring it by helping it move or make a sound, looking at what is inside,...), how we can assemble them, combine them,

² Thompson, C.(1983) *Authenticity and everydayness*. (p 67) Working Papers in Art Education.

³Oxford Dictionary *Definition of 'material' in English*. Retrieved march18, 2020 <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/material>

how they can transform, what they reveal of themselves and elicit and evoke in us. All of this, how the meeting develops, is defined as 'the potential for relating'. Devised theatre has often been defined as 'collective creating'⁴. Unpacking what this means for HIER, HERE, TADY you will see that all of us encountering at the meeting point that is the performance, have equal input, have an equal say. The objects propose the participants to sit with it and explore it. They become an activator for potential of relating in what they reveal, evoke and elicit. The performer guides and facilitates this process. She opens up the meeting point and proposes the time and space to sit with the object and explore it. She invites and provokes the participating audience members, in the dramaturgical propositions she makes using verbal and non-verbal instructions: to tune in, unpack, meditate, visit, categorise, pack up. Gradually the performer herself becomes equal part of the meeting, opening up the meeting point, she waits for and responds to what she encounters in the meeting, people and their objects. The audience has a co-authorial role in the performance in how they participate, through attentive observation and/or action. As Alison Oddey states it in her description of working devised: 'There is a freedom of possibilities, for all those involved to discover.'⁵

⁴ Heddon, D. (2005). *Devising Performance: A Critical History* (revised ed. p1). Pallgrave Macmillan.

⁵ Oddey, A., (1994). *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*. In Heddon, D., Milling, J. (eds). *Devising Performance: A Critical History* (revised ed. p4). Pallgrave Macmillan.

2. PERFORMER MAKES A PROPOSITION.

When analysing HIER, HERE, TADY we could say that the performer makes dramaturgical propositions. The term proposition refers to the term first used by visual artist Lygia Clark. For Clark a proposition was an invitation to the audience, made by the object, to interact with it. For example in her work BABA ANTROPOFAGICA (1973) 'participants placed in their mouths a small spool of coloured thread that they unwound directly from their mouths onto another of the participants, who lay stretched out on the ground. The body of the latter was gradually buried under a mottled web of regurgitations'.⁶ Clark writes, in her manifesto-like notes on the matter of engagement and presentness: 'We are the proposers: our proposition is that of dialogue. Alone we do not exist.'⁷ In HIER, HERE, TADY the performer opens up the meeting point and facilitates a way to relate, offering a time and space for the objects and human participants to speak and let speak, to relate. She does so by making dramaturgical propositions: tuning in, unpacking, meditating, visiting, categorising, packing up. Using verbal and non-verbal instructions the performer guides, enables, facilitates and provokes so that the personal, everyday objects we carry with us can activate us to research our everydayness by means of relating to each other and to our personal objects and to other objects of the same kind. What the outcome is of this meeting that is the performance, of this potential to relate, and how the meeting is perceived by all parties, will be different every time, with different participants and other objects. Different audience members might experience the meeting differently as well. 'We are the proposers: we are the mould, it's up to you to breathe the meaning of our existence into it.'⁸ It's only throughout the meeting of all tree of us, performer, participating audience and objects, that the

⁶ Osthof S. in Cull, L. (2012). *Theatres of Immanence. Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* (p159). Pallgrave Macmillan.

⁷ Clark, L. (1983). 'Caminhando', *Livra-obra*. In Butler, C. H., Pèrez-Oramas, L. *Lygia Clark : the abandonment of art, 1948-1988* (p15). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

⁸Clark, L. (1983). 'Caminhando', *Livra-obra*. In Butler, C. H., Pèrez-Oramas, L. *Lygia Clark : the abandonment of art, 1948-1988* (p15). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

performance comes to life. In the meeting of all tree parties, 'the work becomes its enactment'⁹.

The following chapter is a personal reflection on how I as performer made dramaturgical propositions in HIER, HERE, TADY. Therefore this following chapter is written from my personal perspective.

2.1. TUNING IN

The meeting that is the performance always starts in the foyer. When the audience enters I greet them and we have a short introductory conversation. This first proposition is not verbally articulated, more subtle ways of relating are used compared to the following propositions. Through non-verbal propositions, using dramaturgical tools such as making eye contact, mimicry of gestures and posture, adjusting vocal pitch and tone, consciously working with a sense for closeness or distance and body orientation, I make an effort to make each individual participant feel recognised in their presence and to accommodate to the mood of the audience members, to what they need to feel safe in order to relate to and explore objects, to meet and relate to others present in the performance (audience members and performer), and to feel and research what the meeting evokes in personal insights and self protective mechanisms intertwined (fear, feeling of objectification, appropriation, endangerment).

2.2. UNPACKING

At the start of the performance, after we enter the theatre space together and take a seat on the empty theatre floor I start with a short introduction, as described in the introductory chapter of this dissertation. Then I gradually invite audience members to participate, in their own way, in the research of their everydayness by unpacking their personal objects.

⁹ Clark, L. (1983). 'Caminhando', *Livra-obra*. In Butler, C. H., Pèrez-Oramas, L. *Lygia Clark : the abandonment of art, 1948-1988* (p15). The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

I look around. There is a man in the audience, he carries an olive green backpack and he gently makes eye contact. We look at each other.

Ine: 'I am curious, what did you take to the theatre today ? Can we see something?'

He silently opens his backpack and takes out a set of books, copies, notebooks, a brown leather wallet, a beige leather pouch, a white laptop charger, a navy blue shirt, a laptop in a black cover and a small, black pouch. He all orders them neatly, all squares next to each other. We all observe the objects.



Image 2. Two participants observe the belongings from a backpack, books, copies, notebook, a folded shirt and a laptop in its cover. On the left side the objects that the other participant unpacked, a laptop in its case, a turquoise water bottle, charging cables. Image by Eva Roosmarijn Burgerhoudt. HIER, HERE, TADY, early try out, January 2019, DAMU, Prague.

Ine: 'There are some objects that have something else inside. Can we see what is inside?'

The man takes out the laptop from the case. Then he opens his wallet. Finally he opens the beige leather pouch, there are pencils inside.

I invite two other participating audience members to gradually unpack their personal, everyday objects. We all observe, sometimes someone asks a question about an object.

Eventually I propose to the rest of the audience to unpack, together with me. In this way we all have a collection, an assemblage of our personal, everyday objects in front of us .

2.3. MEDITATING

After the phase of unpacking, I offer an individual moment of silent meditation or reflection. The light is dimmed and I propose some questions relating the owner to her/his objects.

Ine: 'For the next phase, you can close your eyes and make yourself comfortable. I will ask you some questions. They are only for you to think of, you can just listen and reflect on them yourself. Close your eyes. Feel how you are sitting, how your body is touching the floor, what parts of your body touch the floor. How much space are you taking up with your body? Now, try if you can to direct your attention to the objects in front of you. Do you remember the objects? How much space do they take up? What is the heaviest? What is the lightest? Is there something with a specific smell? What kind of textures are there? What colors? Is there an object, that has something else inside? What is the oldest object? What is the most personal? Is there something missing? Is there something you didn't bring with you? Is there something you lost? If there would be a fire here, and you could only take 1 thing with you, what would it be? Is there a thing that makes you feel secure? Is there something here that you like? Is there something here that you don't like? Is there something a friend of you would want? Is there something you would like to give to someone? Now when you are ready open your eyes.'

2.4. VISITING

Following the phase of meditation and reflection, I propose to visit each other's objects.

Ine: 'In the next phase, we will go round, visit each other's spaces and look at each other's objects. Is that OK? Is it OK that we go through, look through yours, can we read in it, listen to it,...? If there are objects that you prefer to keep a secret, you can put them away now.'

We then walk around, visit each other's 'islands' of object, read in each other's books and journals, listen to each other's music, look at each other's photos, hold each other's things, ask for anecdotes and stories connected to the objects.



Image 3. Performer and participating audience visit objects of another audience member. Some objects carry other objects inside. Image by Roza Pogolian. HIER, HERE, TADY, second performance, March 2019, Studio Alta, Prague.

As the performance is a meeting point, and the material of the performance is how this meeting develops, the potential of relating, the outcome of each performance is different, co-created by all members, personal, everyday objects and their owners.

The premiere felt like a bee-hive. There were a lot of people in the audience who knew each other, and some of them brought in a lot of playful and extravert, talkative energy, that made the visiting phase active and loud. Everyone listened and observed attentively during the phase of unpacking and meditating. During the visiting phase, there was a feeling of curiousness that translated into a lot of walking around and talking, asking questions and the exchange of stories, memories, anecdotes. Participants asked each other where certain objects were from, what they were for, how they were obtained by the owner,...

The second performance was later in the evening and the atmosphere was totally different. There was a calm atmosphere. During the visiting phase we all sat together and read in books and notebooks. In the background there was a calm song playing from the phone of one of the participants. Then there was a reading moment where we read parts of books to each other out loud. This transformed into a photo moment, where we showed each other photos from our phones, and a 'mixtape' moment where we shared music from our phones.

2.5. CATEGORISING

What happens after the phase of visiting, is mostly determined by the impulses, needs, and propositions of the group. I propose a moment of categorising. How this develops, how many categories we make, which categories,... we decide together as a group. Gradually my role of guide becomes less important; the audience takes the center stage and I wait for and respond to what the audience members propose.

Ine: 'Is it an idea to move our objects around in space? To let them migrate? Can we make categories of our belongings? What would these categories be?'

During one of the performances, the colors of the object stimulated our curiosity. The group decided to make categories of objects by color and then we placed our bodies with our different colors of clothes, in between.



Image 4. In the phase of categorising, the group categorised objects according to their color and related their own bodies to the objects by the colors of their clothes. In the middle a subcategory of white medical products has been assembled. Image by Eva Roosmarijn Burgerhoudt. HIER, HERE, TADY, try out, March 2019, Studio Alta, Prague.

In order to facilitate this phase I do have some optional scenarios that I sometimes propose, depending on the group dynamic. For example I suggest to make a category of color, or of function, of textures, of emotions,... These examples and possibilities of how to respond to the objects, are a reservoir I have in my head. New ideas are added to the reservoir every performance again, with impulses and propositions I receive from participating group members. During one of the performances, we made 3 runs of building categories. Then there was a silent moment and we looked at each other. Someone said: 'we need a final action'. Then another participant suggested to organise a final tarot reading for everyone, with word-cards that someone had

taken from an English class. So we all sat back into the circle, and everyone got 3 word cards, representing past-present-future.

Sometimes the group makes a different decision. For example in a version of the performance, the group was smaller (usually we were with 15, now only 5 audience members attended the performance) and the atmosphere was calm and a bit timid. We built 2 categories, one with 'things you want to share' and one with 'private things'. The latter consisted of objects that people would put back in their backpacks. While in former runs, the group decided on 2 or 3 rounds of categorisation, this time we only made this one round with 2 categories. After this categorisation, the participants indicated that they didn't feel the need to talk about the objects, but that they did feel inclined to just look at the objects, and wonder who had been here, what had happened, why these objects might have been here. So we sat together, silently, observing the objects, sitting with them, sitting with each other.

2.6. PACKING UP

When the group indicates that it feels like the moment to end, I make the final proposition, I invite everyone to take back the personal objects:

Ine: 'Shall we pack back up?'

When everyone has packed up their objects, before leaving the space completely, I stand still on the edge of the black theatre floor, and by doing this I nonverbally invite the audience to do the same. I propose to look at the theatre that has just before been filled with our personal, everyday objects, our personal stories, our memories, our imagination and that is now empty again. Even though the objects are all packed up we carry the encounters we made with us, literally, in our personal, everyday objects.

Finally, there is a short afterword. I thank everyone for participating and I inform the participants that the performance was filmed. I ask for their consent and I refer to the website where they can revisit the new world(s) they created

together with their objects (<https://infoubbeni.wixsite.com/hier/>). In the end we all put our shoes back on and leave the space.

2.7. CONCLUSION

The performance HIER, HERE, TADY is a meeting point for personal, everyday objects and their owners (performer and audience). With dramaturgical propositions, the performer opens up the meeting point, in which observation and participation are possible. The performer proposes to the participating audience members to tune in, to unpack their personal, everyday objects, to meditate on the qualities of these objects (content and materiality), to visit the objects of fellow audience members, to categorise all the objects and eventually to pack everything back up. Using verbal and non-verbal instructions the performer guides, enables, facilitates and provokes so that the everyday objects can activate us to research our everydayness by means of relating to each other and to our personal objects and to other objects of the same kind.

3. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATES

The performance of HIER, HERE, TADY is a meeting point. Every member of the meeting has a say and co-creates the performance. In this performance every member of the audience is defined as a participant, in the meaning described by Allan Kaprow. Participation in HIER, HERE, TADY can be seen as the proposition of the maker to the audience to: 'inhabit a creative and co-authorial relationship to the work.'¹⁰ Each member is an indispensable part of the research of our everydayness. How to relate, is up to every participant. Participation in this sense has less to do with physical action versus the passivity of observation, rather it can be achieved through 'attentive observation or attentive action.'¹¹ According to artist Allan Kaprow, participation could be achieved through attentive observation or attentive action, on a seemingly mindless action such as sweeping the floor or shaking hands. Kaprow would adapt the speed of these actions, until they became something else than the routine task they initially were. And in the confrontation with this kind of playing at life's daily routines, Kaprow invited his participating audience (whether they were observing or actively interacting) in the art making and meaning making process.

In HIER, HERE, TADY, we can say that the whole that is the performance, develops through a dramaturgy of welcoming, that is not dominant. This dramaturgy of welcoming opens up the potential for participants to take part in a collective set of relationships that is unique to this performance.

'You create moments for things to happen. It's not about being manipulated, it's about creating something for yourself and together. You work with what we, as a group, bring.' (Anne-Catherine Kuntz, Belgium costume designer)

¹⁰ Cull, L. (2012). *Theatres of Immanence. Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* (p159). Pallgrave Macmillan.

¹¹ Kaprow, A. (1990). Meaning of Life. In Kaprow, A. Kelley J. (ed.) *Essays on the blurring of art and life* (p236). University of California Press.

3.1. DRAMATURGY OF WELCOMING

In the first phase of 'unpacking' the performer asks 3 participants to unpack their backpack, audience members who indicate (by body language or verbally) that they want to interact and want to share their objects and their stories. The others can observe, and who wants can ask a question about the personal objects that are being revealed. Then the performer suggests that we all unpack at the same time. In this way she slightly provokes active participation, but also offers a way to 'hide' in the multiplicity of the group. The focus is not on any one specific, everyone is doing the same action at the same time.

In the next phase 'meditation' the performer proposes an individual moment of reflection.

'Do you remember the objects? How much space do they take up? What is the heaviest? What is the lightest? Is there something with a specific smell? What textures are there? What colors? Is there an object, that has something else inside? What is the oldest object? What is the most personal? Is there something missing?

How every participant deals with this moment of time, if and how they meditate/reflect on the questions, on the object, on themselves, can be kept private.

Before the continuation to the following phase of 'visiting' the audience is asked if they want to hide some personal objects. In this way the performer offers the participants a choice of what they want to reveal, and what object they want to pay attention to and interact with.

The following phases of 'visiting' and 'categorising' offers time to the group to 'sit with the objects': attentively observe, and/or to actively interact with them and with their owners. This process is defined by the group dynamics and the individual actions. For example: in the general rehearsal one of the participants suggested making categories of emotions. In the category of love, someone had collected pepper spray and working tools such as a hammer, measuring tape and a stanley knife. At the request of the other participants, she explained her choice of objects as an expression of the love and care of her partner, who

wanted to keep her safe in the streets of Prague, buying her pepper spray, and wanting to take care of her in her work as scenographer, providing her with the tools she needed. 'Wow, I now see how much he invests in me, I wasn't aware of that', she called out. In the same category of love, someone else had collected all the medications from everyone's spaces, saying 'it reminds me of a beloved friend who fought against cancer for a long time'.

3.2. CONCLUSION

The performance of HIER, HERE, TADY is a meeting point in which every member of the meeting has a say and co-creates the performance. In this performance every member of the audience is defined as a participant. Through a dramaturgy of welcoming, that is not dominant, participants are invited to take part in a collective set of relations that is unique to this performance. The performer makes dramaturgical propositions to gradually offer the participating audience moments to observe and moments to act.

4. THE THIRD ELEMENT, THE PERSONAL OBJECT AS ACTIVATOR

In HIER, HERE, TADY the personal objects of performer and audience members, are the third element in the meeting. The following chapter will explain how the personal objects work as activator for the potential of relating.

4.1. GROWTH TRAJECTORY: PERFORMANCES WITH OBJECTS

A fascination for objects, especially personal objects is a returning theme in the performances created during the master (SPEAK, MY APARTMENT and RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES). Working with objects in performances was a growing process. The information gathered throughout these experiences became the soil on which the graduation performance HIER, HERE, TADY was grown. This chapter will describe the journey of creating performances with objects, throughout the MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre at DAMU.

	SPEAK	MY APARTMENT	RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES	HIER, HERE, TADY
WHAT	One-on-one performance, in which audience and performer bring 3 personal objects to the table and	Interactive storytelling performance in which together with the audience, the performer recreates her apartment in	Performative research in which the object of a cardboard box invites the performer and participating audience to	Participative performance in which personal objects invite audience and performer to research their everydayness.

	together create a silent dialogue where the objects speak.	shared imagination.	research their permeability: how to be alone - with others.	
PROPOSITION / RESEARCH QUESTION	How can play and exploration help to let objects speak.	How can we build a home together, audience and performer, in a theatre performance.	How can a cardboard box help us, audience and performer, to research our permeability, our need to be alone or together.	How can we, audience and performer together with our personal objects, research our everydayness.
OBJECTS/ ACTIVATORS	3 objects of the participating audience and 3 objects of the performer.	Chalk marker and personal objects from the apartment of the performer, collected in a backpack.	Cardboard box.	Daily objects that audience and performer carry in their backpacks and pockets.

This overview shows which objects had a main role in the performances preceding HIER, HERE, TADY. What follows is a personal reflection per piece of what I learned from working with these objects and how this led to working with

personal objects of participating audience and myself in *HIER, HERE, TADY*. (The full scripts can be found in the appendix).

4.1.1. SPEAK - OBJECTS THAT SPEAK

In us, humans, there is a reservoir of experiences, memories, associations, imagination. This reservoir is not only stored in our conscious mind, but also in our body and in our subconscious. 'The point is that we see much more than our consciousness allows us to see and we need to find ways to access that extra-conscious perception'.¹² Tasks of instant creation and improvisation with objects can open that reservoir. When we improvise with different objects we can explore the potential of their texture and materiality, how they can move, make sound, how we can make a composition with them. We can also explore the contents these objects can hold (personal history of the object, related stories of the owner,...). This was discovered throughout classes of dramaturgy, composition and working with objects and sounds, in the MA of Directing for Devised and Object Theatre.

The performance *SPEAK* is a one-on-one performance, in which audience and performer bring 3 personal objects to the table and together create a silent dialogue where they research how objects can speak. *SPEAK* invites the audience and performer to play and explore. It is a meeting of humans and their everyday objects and personal belongings. It is a space where these 'simple' objects can evoke different possibilities of content, become theatrical objects and activate potential of relation. In this meeting the performer can facilitate and provoke the exploration. This can be illustrated by the feedback from a participating audience member: 'I had the feeling that you could sense the relationships that I was creating with my objects and you could manipulate them just slightly. Understanding the story and then telling. Understanding what kind of language I am using and then putting the objects into place.' (Martin Krupa, actor)

¹² Caygill, H. (2013). 'Hyperaesthesia and the Power of Perception'. In Cull, L. *Theatres of Immanence. Deleuze and the Ethics of Performance* (p169). Pallgrave Macmillan.

Working with personal and everyday objects I feel strongly related to Allan Kaprow's life-art research. I relate to his fascination for the everydayness: 'these ordinary events are inherently compelling once you pay attention to them.' In what he calls life-art research Kaprow finds meaning, beauty, humor in everydayness. While Kaprow in his work abstracts daily routine behaviors, I am fascinated by daily objects we take with us and what can speak through that. I also feel related to another artist, Keri Smith, that there is wonder to be found in the everydayness, in what surrounds us every day. Smith says: 'It is possible to have a much deeper experience of the world through the use of deep looking and regular documentation of everyday life.'¹³ In my work I feel this wonder can be found in the objects that we surround us with, the things we carry with us every day in our backpack, and in the objects that we keep in our house.

The personal objects that participants and performer bring in, can activate the potential of relating by their characteristics. In SPEAK, working with everyday objects and personal belongings, started intuitively. During rehearsals the participating audiences and the performer explored and played with the objects we had on us, in our pockets and backpacks. Gradually, as performer, I brought more objects to the performance. I prepared a varied collection of objects that could elicit/provoke exploration of sound, movement, texture and I chose 3 objects on the spot, in relation to the objects that the participants brought in. I always tried to make sure that there was a variety of objects on the table. Evaluating the performances, I traced categories in this collection of objects, by their characteristics: objects that could be transformed (for example: an apple can be crushed or sliced), objects that could help in building or deconstructing or transforming a construction (sticky tape, scissors, a knife, matches), food that could be tasted and possibly shared (ginger, spices, fruits), books from which we could read a random part, and personal memorabilia (photos, train ticket,...). Looking back I prepared categories of objects that I intuitively thought might be dramaturgically interesting. By their characteristics, these objects activated transformational, constructional, destructional, sensorial and transforming potential to relate humans to their objects and to each other.

¹³ Smith, K. (2016). *The wander society*. Spectrum.



Image 5. Audience member creating a construction with objects. Image by Cici Hu. SPEAK, Bazaar Festival, February 2018, Studio Alta, Prague.

4.1.2. MY APARTMENT - OBJECTS THAT BUILD A HOME

At the start of the performance of MY APARTMENT we enter an empty theatre floor. There are no seatings and no other scenographic elements, only the black ballet floor. The performance starts as an interactive storytelling: 'the first night I slept in my apartment, I was lying in my bed. It's a twin bed. I ask an audience member: 'can you lay beside me so that we can measure the size of the bed?' Then I ask another audience member: 'can you draw the outlines of the bed with this chalk marker?'. As the story builds up, we (audience members and performer) draw every room of the apartment with the white chalk marker

on the black theatre floor. A ground map. Big objects that are in the rooms are also drawn, such as the bed, a table and chairs, a sofa, a kitchen cabinet.

In MY APARTMENT the scenography unfolds itself along the way. With the white chalk marker we draw the rooms of the apartment, the walls and the objects in it (bed, sofa, chairs, table). The apartment becomes visible only gradually, with us in it. The white chalk marker works as an activator for potential of relating, in that it relates us to the space we are in (the empty theatre is filled with drawings, objects, people), to our imagination (we create the apartment and the objects and people that live their in our imagination) and to each other (audience and performer are next to each other, in the same bed, and another audience member draws the outlines of the bed with the marker.)

Why a chalk marker? Because it allows imagination out of nowhere, its drawings reveal an imaginary scenography. We enter an empty theatre space. We fill it with our imagination and we literally create it with the chalk marker drawings we make on the floor. We fill it with our bodies and the experiences we go through together. At the end of the performance, when all the participants leave the space, they can throw a last glimpse to the now 'empty apartment' and after the performance, everything is washed away. To me this is the core of theatre, this ephemeral experience that however can echo in us long after the performance is over. The object of the chalk marker makes this visible.

The proposition made in this performance is 'building a home together'. We literally build it together, by drawing rooms and objects on the floor, and figuratively by sharing stories, anecdotes that happened in the apartment, personal memories of both performer and participants as well as fantasies we make up together. They all relate to the concept of living alone, what makes a home,.... Throughout this process we try, within an hour, in the theatre, to build a home with audience members who don't know each other, with the help of objects.



Image 6. Performer and audience in the bathroom of MY APARTMENT. The bath and the sink are drawn with the chalk marker. A person 'sits on the toilet' on the right. On the right bottom the feet are visible of a participant impersonating the threshold of the door. Image by Čeněk Folk. MY APARTMENT, showcase 'Move Me - Cry Me - Smell Me', december 2019, DAMU, Prague.

In MY APARTMENT, aside from working with the white chalk marker, I bring in personal objects I collected in my own apartment. These objects lived in the apartment with me. They are utensils (a cup, a thermos of coffee, a spoon,...) as well as personal belongings (photos, stones,...). Together they reveal an aesthetics of everydayness.¹⁴ I searched for these objects in my own home, in my own apartment, collected them in my backpack and brought them into the performance. I was looking for them, but they also seemed to be looking for me, they caught my eye. What fascinated me about these specific objects, was the

¹⁴Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2015, Septembre 30). *Aesthetics of everyday*. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aesthetics-of-everyday/>

life that they held. The cup I brought had a crumbling paint, it revealed its history. Another reason why these objects fascinated me, was because of their relating potential, what they can elicit and how they can invite participating audiences to interact with them. You can do something with or to them. For instance you can taste the coffee from the thermos, you can read the book, you can feel the sheets on the bed or you can hold the sheets up as if you are a chair on which I in my apartment hang my sheets to dry. Another aspect of these objects is what they evoke: the objects are connected to stories. How I met my neighbors without ever seeing them. For example, I bring my night light to the performance. And the moment in the performance that I turn the nightlight on and off, I tell the story of how on my first night sleeping in the apartment, at midnight, just as I turned off my nightlight, I heard my upstairs neighbor playing drums. The objects are also connected to memories and fantasies. Some personal memorabilia take me back to memories of Belgium. Such as a box of small notes from my friends, with on each note one line or one word of a memory we shared together. Everyday objects can also evoke a memory. For example, when I take out an apple during the performance, I tell how this reminds me of my grandfather, back in Belgium, and how he used to peel me an apple every day after school.

There is space for new discoveries in every performance. Sometimes I bring a new object in my backpack, one that I didn't bring before, and sometimes an object I used in previous performances, all of a sudden elicits a new story. For example in one performance I had my wallet with me, and I unpacked the wallet during the performance. I discovered that inside there were pictures of my family members. All of a sudden there was a family tree on the 'table' in my 'living room'.

4.1.3. RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES - OBJECTS THAT BRING US CLOSE

In this performance, RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES, the object of a cardboard box ignited my fascination. In a one-on-one performative research I explored the concept of 'closeness' by investigating physical closeness

in the public space (a café, on the streets,...) with an object, a cardboard box, on my head and a camera in hand, inviting my audience to enter the box and be with me. Performer and box propose a relational space to research how to be alone-together.

How? The box and I made a journey together, in which different boxes were used and the script of the performance changed. Step by step I tried to unpack what propositions the box was making, together with classmates we explored the possibilities, materiality and content the box was evoking and eliciting. Step by step the box revealed itself and performative material was generated.

At the beginning of the route, I had found a cardboard banana box and was fascinated by the object, but in the beginning of the research I didn't exactly know why. During rehearsals we explored different possibilities of the box, questioning, what does this object want from me, what do I want of this object? What came out was that this object elicited me to respond with my body, to sit in it, try to crawl up in it, put it over my head and invite someone else in. The object evoked feelings, associations and questions about closeness and intimacy. I worked with the proposition/question: how can I as a performer, invite my audience to closeness/come closer? How can I invite us both, performer and participating audience, to reveal something of ourselves? How does this work with two people who don't know each other in a performative setting and what role can the object play in this?

In rehearsing with the box, I researched closeness and what could be revealed, physically and emotionally. The object of a video camera was added to the object of the box. I walked around in a public space (cafe, courtyard,...) with the cardboard banana box on my head and a video camera in my hand. From inside I filmed the outside, through the holes in the cardboard box. People passing by would see a person walking with a box on her head.



Image 7. Performer films from inside, the audience member looks at the close up on the screen through the holes of the banana box. Image by Tasya Nafigina. Premiere RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES, May 2018, Cafe Damu, Prague.

Sometimes someone approached me, sometimes I took the initiative to stand (box on head) beside someone and start talking. After a short introduction (I am Ine, I am performing an artistic research) I asked if the audience wanted to know something about me. If the answer was yes, I filmed a close up of a part of my face and tell an anecdote about it (a crooked tooth that needed care but that I left uncared because I was too ashamed of wearing dental braces. Or a scar and telling how it had come there.) Then I invited the audience, if they wanted, to come inside the box. From there on the performance was led by the actions of the participating audience, their impulses would lead the way. To give some examples: sometimes we were in there, silently looking at each other for a while. Sometimes we talked about closeness, sometimes we physically researched how the rectangular form of the box still allowed us to take more space further away from each other or come even closer. We talked about how even though we only had the box on our head, how this still made us feel as if our whole body was in the box,... Sometimes we looked outside, through the holes of the box. Sometimes we read notes, observations and reflections that I made inside the box. Before the participating audience left the box, I asked if I could draw their silhouette. That way, everyone who visited the box, left a mark. Then the audience member left the box and I moved on.

In feedback and reflection on working with the box, I discovered that sometimes the physical closeness, being with two heads inside a banana box, in the performative setting of the meeting between a performer and a participating audience, felt uncomfortable and created a sense of distance. We literally crossed each other's borders of social distance.

This set me to thinking about what the box meant to me, why I felt I actually needed a box. I discovered that I had a longing to be close to others. But not always. Sometimes I would much rather like to be alone. Living in Prague as a student, far away from home, faced with a feeling of longing for connection – feeling lonely, I wanted to propose a space within theatre, that would create a sense of togetherness, closeness, by means of playfulness and imagination. The banana box for me represented a frame of connection, a shield from the outside world and the layers of our own being, that we can reveal ourselves if we come closer. I thought being together in the banana box would bring us closer. I thought it was about “seeing each other in close up” and getting rid of the layers, to be with each other, core to core. While performing I realised that, contrary to my expectations, it showed the distance between us (and made it even bigger sometimes). When I tried to analyse why I used words as frame, border, wall, shield and reflected on why performing with the box revealed something different than I expected, I found that the box taught me something about my own boundaries and borders.

The box learned me that it was possible to be semi-permeable¹⁵, which means allowing certain things can pass through but others cannot. Hereby I refer to the semi-permeability of our body cells. Each body cell has a membrane around itself. This is how the body protects the inside of the cells, but allows the cells to stay in contact with the environment around itself. An example of a semi-permeable membrane in the body is the colon, a membrane where useful nutrients are being filtered into the capillaries of the portal system, the portal vein, that collects the nutrients and transports them to the liver where they get metabolized and the blood brain barrier, that lets through whatever the brain needs and keeps out whatever is harmful to the brain. Things can come in,

¹⁵ Schilling, R. (2017, October 4). *What are some examples of semi permeable membranes?* Quora. <https://www.quora.com/What-are-some-examples-of-semi-permeable-membranes>

things can go out, things can come in and stay in, things cannot come in. An encounter can be nutritious, or sometimes you don't want to relate, you put up your shield/you hide within your walls, sometimes the encounter can be hard to digest, sometimes the reciprocal flow can feel very organic. The box worked in the same way as these membranes when I researched how to connect (if at all) with the outside world. While performing I related the concept of semi-permeability to my own varying needs for interpersonal contact. Sometimes there is the need to connect (speak, sit beside someone, cut a hole in the box, take off the box,...), sometimes there is not.

And then I lost the banana box, and I needed to find another one. The second box was white, covering half of my body, it didn't have holes in it, so there was no connection to the outside world, and it was slimmer than the first one, it might fit one more person, but our noses would literally touch. This box felt much more like a space for myself, a space in a space, a place for refuge. I made some adjustments to the script. I drew, on the outside of the box, the tasks and questions that I would be researching. And with the box on my head I went again into the public space (inside a cafe, on the sidewalk outside of the cafe).

The following text was written on the outside of the box, together with drawings to clarify the concept:

'In this improvisation I research the permeability of my membranes. Researching how to be alone - with others, contained-opened. Within these different permeabilities of the membrane I let things in, I let things out, I let things in and out, or nothing at all. I question myself "when is the moment of ...'

Drawings clarify the text and provide different possibilities: being alone in the box, being in the box and someone outside the box, being together in the box, both being in the box, both being without a box.



Image 8. Audiences pass by and interact with the performer, walking around with the box on her head. On the outside of the box the audience can read the research questions. The text (see above) is written on one side, and drawings on the other side accompany the questions. Image by Hradec Králové Open Air Festival. RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES, Hradec Králové Open Air Festival, June 2018, Hradec Králové.

Different encounters took place. For quite some time I just sat, alone, in my box. Sitting in it by myself. Observing myself in this box. Observing the world around me. Writing, journaling, about my observations, on the inside of the box. Other times, I just stood in the public space (on a sidewalk outside of a cafe, in a cafe, on the stairs in the middle of a hallway,...). I walked around and approached people and asked them if they wanted to interact. Asking them if they could relate, in their own life, to the questions written outside of the box. Throughout conversations participating audiences would tell me how the box reminded them of a 'hiding space in plain sight' and how they would do it in their lives (being on the mobile phone so that you don't have to interact with the ones next to you for

example at the bus stop, in a cafe writing in or hiding behind a notebook as if you are hard at work, during a long meeting running off to the toilet in order to find a moment of alone-time,...) At other moments people approached me, asking what I was doing and why. They also started to talk to the box, to me inside the box. I discovered the box worked as a kind of 'confession booth', an object (with a performer in it) that people apparently felt comfortable talking to (about their thoughts, worries, fantasies,...). Sometimes participants asked if they could be in the box by themselves, stand in the space or walk around and observe how that made them feel. Sometimes participants wanted to be in the box to read the notes I and other participants made inside. Occasionally a participant would ask to be in the box with me. I didn't always allow this. Once a participant invited me to take off the box and be with him in the world, both without box, to have a conversation and a drink together.

So when I had been searching for a place to be together with the audience inside of the banana box, 2 people looking directly at each other in a close physical distance, I realised it created more distance and uncomfotability. When I had researched with the new box a space to be alone, I had found different ways that the participating audience would connect or invite me to connect. In my search for closeness I discovered that an object can provide a comfortable distance and that there is more potential to relate when an object is part of the meeting, when 2 people can look at the object and relate to and through the object. In this performance the object becomes an activator of closeness, by offering a comfortable distance.

Then the box had one last transformation. For the festival 4+4 Days in Motion 2018, I got the task of my mentor, Cristina Maldonado, to let the box travel through the space, without me being in it. To hand it over to audiences and see where this would lead to. What I observed was that mostly the box looked lonely, left alone, lost (in the corner of a room, in a doorway, on it's side). It felt like the box was losing content instead of gaining it. So I made another version of a box hanging in space, fixed in one spot, with a chair underneath and a marker attached to it on a rope. This box was situated in a hallway between two intimate performances. People started to interact with the box. After the festival I discovered participating audiences had been journaling in it, writing down their

observations about sitting in this box and writing down associations of this box and of course they had been doodling and drawing images inside it. The box activated a potential of relating to the object itself for participating audiences (audiences wrote about the feelings of calmness and finding a space to retreat when sitting inside the box) and a potential of relating people to their own thoughts and to other participants.

4.1.4. HIER,HERE,TADY - OBJECTS THAT ARE HERE

As stated above I often work with everyday personal objects. Searching and finding the objects I will work with, is always a combination of careful preparation and also a big aspect of coincidence and trust is involved. When I started creating SPEAK and MY APARTMENT I started with a proposition: what do I want to make, who do I want to invite, and what is the proposition I am offering. In SPEAK the proposition was about playing together and letting the objects speak. In MY APARTMENT the proposition was how to build a home together and how objects can help with that. I searched for objects in my own home, and collected them in my backpack. I was looking for them, but they also seem to look for me, how my eye caught them or how someone pointed them out. In RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES, the object of the cardboard box, found me. And only through interacting with it, bringing it to meet the audience, I found what it was proposing (through and with me): a space for performer and participating audience to research permeability, the need to be alone or with others.

Throughout creating performances, I discovered my own love for simplicity, finding beauty in everydayness and 'working with what is already there'. By this I mean working with objects that participants bring or objects that I found in my own house. I get excited when I create a performance from objects out of a regular backpack, mine, ours, yours. There is already so much, so many objects, so much stuff. I get inspired by working with objects that I find or that participants bring to the performance. To look at the world, at what is there,

with wonderment¹⁶, with the eyes of a child, sit with things, and wait until you start seeing something that you had never noticed before, colours, shapes, forms,... makes me happy. When I speak of 'working with what is already there' I also mean providing a space for imagination, participation and playing together. Opening up a meeting point where we relate to each other, people and objects and where that what lives in us, can come bubbling up to the surface. In this space, unexpected things are possible, participants can try something, can surprise each other and possibly themselves. To give an example when performing *MY APARTMENT* in Malostranské gymnázium, we drew, with the white chalk marker, the bathroom of the neighbors. One of the participating students took on the role of my neighbor singing in the shower and started singing the Czech anthem. This was such a beautiful, moving surprise to us all that when he lost his words, spontaneously the whole group joined in singing. All of this is what it is, just us playing around. It is what it is, the objects are what they are, but there is also so much more than that, that together we can evoke and let floating up.

In the graduation performance *HIER, HERE, TADY*, everyday objects lead the performance. They are personal belongings of the participating audiences and me. They are everyday objects that we carry around with us in our pockets and backpacks. We explore our everydayness by mapping the objects we carry with us, in our pockets and bags. I find it beautiful and inspiring to work with daily, personal objects. In our daily life we are entangled¹⁷ with them (literally, I need my key to enter my house, and figuratively, I cannot imagine leaving the house without my phone) and we take them for granted. Through thorough looking and documentation, we may find that there is more to discover. By paying close attention, questioning them and exploring their materiality and content, we may find that they reveal something, about themselves, about us as individuals and about us as a collective. When I created the performance of *HIER, HERE, TADY* I wanted to create a space for observation, exploration, collecting, documenting,

¹⁶ The Oxford dictionary describes this as: 'a state of awed admiration or respect'. Oxford Dictionary (n.d.). *Wonderment*. Lexico Retrieved february 20, 2020, from <https://www.lexico.com/definition/wonderment>

¹⁷ Hodder, I. (2012). *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things* (1st ed.). Wiley-Blackwell.

discovering, questioning,... I wanted to propose a relational space¹⁸ of wonderment¹⁹. When I speak of wonderment I mean: looking with the eyes of a child in the world that we inhabit as grown ups. And then stumble upon new things that we didn't expect to find (how an object feels like, how it moves, how it tastes, what content it holds, what stories it carries, what it can evoke,...). When I speak of a relational space, I mean that we do this research not on our own, but in relation, in a meeting of a performer, an audience and objects.

4.1.4.1. OBJECTS THAT LIVE IN OUR POCKETS

The journey of HIER, HERE, TADY started with a fascination for objects that live in the pockets and backpacks of humans.

I remember as a child how familiar and yet strange the pockets of my family members were. In the coat of my grandfather there were always lots of coins on one side (to play ward with his friends on Sunday morning over coffee) and a bar of chocolate in the other (or another trophy from winning a card game). From the pockets in the coat of my mother, I mostly remember the smells (mint of her tic tacs, the smell of a nose spray, the smell of lip balm) and the textures (the cotton of her handkerchief, the wood from a little IKEA pencil).

I researched with my classmates what objects we carry today with us, now that we are grown ups ourselves. I asked to look into our backpacks, and take out 3 objects that we always take with us. Soon the table was filled with wallets, phones, keys, id cards and pencil cases. My classmate Wayne pointed out that, much to his own surprise, all of a sudden both his parents were on the table. His father in the object of a brown leather wallet and his mother in the object of a shiny pin and he himself in a bright, pink pencil case.

¹⁸ Tate (n.d.). Relational Aesthetics. Tate. Retrieved february 20, 2020, from <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/r/relational-aesthetics>

¹⁹Smith, K. (2016). *The wander society*. Spectrum.

4.1.4.2. SHARING A SPACE WITH OBJECTS

In the next phase of the research I was curious about other, daily objects that humans live with. Objects that live in a space (chairs, tables, plants,...), abandoned objects that people had brought in and left there (a piece of paper, a mattress, a wooden board,...) and personal objects that we, participants of a rehearsal/performance could bring in (notebook, calendar, pencil case, phone, keys,...). I wanted to research how we could share a space with these objects. Could we become an object amongst objects?

I created a viewpoint-like²⁰ movement exercise to research this. The instructions of this exercise guided the participants to become aware of their bodily presence inhabits the space and how to research, through movement or stillness, how they co-inhabited the space with the objects (that lived in the space, that were left in the space and that people had brought in the space). The full script of this exercise can be read in appendix D 'viewpoint exercise for humans and objects'.

Working with the idea of human bodies and objects in a space, what came out of these rehearsals was feedback on object-ness and human-ness. 'You become a thing amongst the other objects', said my classmate Wayne Jordan, after the rehearsal. 'You never become yourself. As if you are on the edge of being a person or a non-person, the edge of belonging or not-belonging. You actually really see the thing once you forget its function, name, purpose.'

4.1.4.3. PERSONAL OBJECTS ON THE BORDERS OF MY PERSONAL SPACE

Through writing and rewriting the instructions, I observed that my fascination shifted from sharing a space with other humans and objects, into becoming aware of a space for yourself. I redesigned the instructions of the dot-exercise, so that they guided the participants to research if they could imagine a space for themselves and for each individual to mark what they defined as the borders of

²⁰ Overlie, M. (2016). *Standing in Space: The Six Viewpoints Theory & Practice*. Artcraft Printers.

Lotker, H. S. (n.d.). Course Expanded Viewpoints - Time Space and Improvisation. Retrieved february 20, 2020, from <https://sp.amu.cz/en/predmet204RUP1.html>

that personal space using personal objects that they carried on/with them (earrings, socks, a sweater,...). The full script of this adjusted exercise can be read in appendix E 'adjusted viewpoint exercise for humans and objects'.

For some participants this dot-exercise brought a sense of 'becoming an object amongst objects'.

'It felt neutral, I don't have to be human, I can be an object' (Sophie Johnson, director).

'It was an excuse to be childish and to play around with myself, trying to imagine myself as a dot. Leave myself, my character of self, behind. Which I didn't succeed in completely, but I tried. Not caring about being Tom, or about expectations or whatever, but being a dot.' (Tom Johnson, visual artist).

For others the exercise felt too abstract. They indicated feeling 'objectified' and in need of a human connection or human point of recognition.

'It wasn't clear what the meaning was, the undercurrent. In MY APARTMENT it felt like we were adventurers, in this together, we were helping you and at the end we are a family. Also the situation of MY APARTMENT was recognisable, I had comparable human experiences. In this exercise I had no reference, I didn't know what I was doing and it wasn't clear why we were doing this' said my classmate Tinka Avramova.

It became clear that, at this point, without context or theatrical situation, some participants found a clear task to do but others were plain improvising and mostly lost. They didn't feel safe to risk and experiment. They felt restricted and choreographed. As if they could only follow, but had no idea what they "should or could be doing". Instead of feeling free and capable to participate or not in this situation. Braňo Mazúch, director and mentor of HIER, HERE, TADY said: 'I am not sure what we are researching. In My Apartment there have been memories connected with the first impressions connected with the new place/flat/home, with such a natural situation when you start to build your own home. It was too abstract for me and it was hard to imagine something real, physical... If it would be exercise for students of philosophy only, I can imagine, it could work on that abstract level, but usually you perform for human beings

with human feelings and with human imagination. There was one concrete and specific moment when my place/border/bubble touched the private zone of somebody else. That made me think whether this was disturbing or not. When you are in the theatre as a spectator your private zone necessary crosses the private zone of the other spectators and performers etc. And then the question is what kind of theatre structure to build around it. Maybe My Apartment changes now into My Theatre for example.'

What became clear with this feedback was the need for comparable human experiences (why are we doing this) and for more decisiveness and selectiveness on what objects would be used (why these objects). 'There were too many random objects,' said my classmate Alyssa, 'I didn't know what to do with them.'

4.1.4.4. OBJECTS THAT CONNECT US

In the next rehearsals, we started with conversations about shared human experiences and then create, build something together in the space. The conversations started from the concept of 'a space for yourself' and a 'shared space'. This brought us to memories about our childhood and spaces we would define as our own, such as forts, cabins, secret hiding spaces. Here I was also influenced by the books of Keri Smith I was reading at the time. In 'The Imaginary World Of...'²¹, the reader is invited to create their own world, guided by tasks such as: create a place that is based on a memory. The idea of this book was translated into a task of improvisation:

'Did you ever as a child build a fort or a cabin or a cave?

Where did you build it?

What was it made of?

Did you always go back to the same place or create it over and over?

Did you, as a child, have to share your room with someone else?'

²¹ Smith, K. (2014). *The imaginary world of*. Penguin books UK.

Through questions I guided the participants to compare these situations of their childhood to their current life situation.

'And now, today, how does it feel, when you live alone or when you live together?

As an adult, do you have a space for yourself?

When do you need space for yourself and where do you find it?

What spaces do you share with others and how do you feel about that?

What are your associations with how we, as adults, live and how we move in society?'

Then we built a space of our own. Soon it became clear that these installations/buildings were always primed by the memories of our childhood forts. We worked with childhood memories and recreated this memory palace. Tinka: 'It's about building myself a place, but I was influenced by the fort part and the child part.' We found ourselves stuck in these childhood memories. Personally I felt that we were missing something. Through reflections of different participants, I realised that what I was interested in, were not childhood memories but that, to me, they had been a way towards wonderment, and that I was more interested in the here and now, with the objects we carry. I wanted to know: 'how to provide context for wonderment without limiting it to only childhood memories?' This I related to another book of Keri Smith: 'The wander society'²². In this book, Smith talks about wandering as the act of unplanned, aimless walking, exploring, ambling with a complete openness to the unknown. Looking with the eyes of a child, in the world that we inhabit as grown ups. I wondered how we could be wanderers amongst our own belongings. How to relate to our everydayness, activated by the objects we take with us every day. And how different wanderers could relate to each other through their personal belongings.

²²Smith, K. (2016). *The wander society*. Spectrum.

4.1.4.5. THE OBJECTS WE CARRY WITH US

In the following rehearsals, these questions about wonderment and everydayness, brought us back to conversations about the objects we carry in our backpacks and pockets. During rehearsals with scenographer Rufina Bazlova and dramaturg Eva Roosemarijn Burgerhoudt, we asked each other: 'Which objects do we take with us when we leave the house, why, what effect does that have on us?' For some, their backpack would be a survival kit, containing everything they needed that day (food, water, charging cables,...). Others talked about the joy of traveling light.

Eva: 'Sometimes I need a break from my things. Then I go out, like today, and I don't even take a bag with me. Nothing on my shoulder, nothing that weighs me down, nothing that will determine who I am or what I should do (you can't read a book when you didn't bring one).'

We talked about the wish to be freed from our stuff but also holding onto our belongings.

Rufina: 'I collect a lot and when I want to travel I don't know what to do with my things. So I don't travel. These things keep you down somehow, they keep you in a certain place.'

Starting from the practical, everyday tools we carry with us, the conversation moved towards collecting objects. We asked ourselves: 'what kind of objects do we hold onto and why do we do this? For instance because of a memory that is connected to them (a traincard of the first date with your boyfriend). Where do we keep these objects? We talked about creating an altar or a specific place to put objects that had a special meaning or that reminded us of someone.

Rufina: 'I have an altar in my house. It's a box on the wall, and there are things from traveling. There is an icon, some gifts from my friends, stones, pictures... An altar, for me, is something in my home, where I have things with memory. Usually, in your bag you have useful things, but objects on your altar are completely not useful.'

Eva: 'Do you call it an altar?'

Rufina: 'Yes'

Eva: 'Why?'

Rufina: 'I like the ritual, when I move to another place, to make it. And in every flat that I lived in, it is different.'

Eva: 'I never called that an altar. I never thought about it. I always put pictures on the wall, postcards and images I like, photos of people I love. But I suppose you could look at that as an altar as well. It might be a way of formulation.'

After these conversations, we experimented building altars with our daily things. Placing the everyday objects and personal belongings under a bell jar. We noticed that the moment you put an object on display, it triggers your imagination (why is this object there, what would it mean). It is somehow elevated out of the mundane and it becomes more than just the random, daily object it was a minute ago.

These conversations and experiments led us to the final form of the performance, unpacking our personal objects from our backpacks (both performer and participating audience members). The theatre floor became the display on which our personal belongings were placed. I introduced the proposition of researching our everydayness, starting with the sentence of my uncle Dirk (*'always take these 3 things when you leave the house...'*). Then I invited the participants to unpack the objects in their backpacks. One by one, all the participants unpacked their backpacks and laid out their objects in front of them. Sometimes people told a story about an object. Sometimes someone asked a question about an object. When I saw the participating audiences unpack and exhibit their belongings, I strongly felt that it was necessary to work only with what was there, what we had on us. I felt there was value and potential there. I discovered that in restricting the objects in the performance to personal objects, from participating audience members and myself, that could only come from our pockets and our backpacks, triggered my inspiration. It felt like connecting to the beginning of the research of HIER, HERE, TADY, but it also felt as if all the previous works I created during the master came together. And all of a sudden, with the things we unpacked from our backpacks, every one had created a 'space of one's own'. And working with our personal objects provided

us with a shared humanity and a context. Feedback of participating audiences revealed that when the object in the meeting, was a personal belonging of another participant that we are meeting, the object became a stronger activator of potential to relate. In personal objects, a personal connection with the owner could be felt and made it possible for the observers to empathize and relate with. For example a participant reflected: 'when observing a pair of glasses, knowing it matters to know that they are yours. I know there is more to them than just their function. They are yours, you need them. So I will handle them with care. I can relate to the object and to you. And I also discovered their color, shape, texture! Seeing the owner made me curious about the object and vice versa.'

In rehearsals and try outs the final dramaturgical structure was created, in collaboration with classmates, artists and teachers. Inviting participating audiences to go through a journey with their personal, everyday objects, from unpacking their backpack and meditating about the objects we carry with us, to visiting each other's objects and creating categories with shared objects.

4.1.5. CONCLUSION ON GROWTH TRAJECTORY OF CREATING PERFORMANCES WITH OBJECTS

A fascination for objects, especially personal objects is a returning theme in the performances created during the master (SPEAK, MY APARTMENT and RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES). Working with objects in performances was a growing process. The information gathered throughout these experiences became the soil on which the graduation performance HIER, HERE, TADY was grown. This chapter described my journey of creating performances with objects, throughout the MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre at DAMU. The full scripts of the performances can be read in the appendix.

Throughout all the performances created in the first year of the master, the objects were often intuitively found and revealed, throughout the developmental process of the performance, their activating capacities.

In SPEAK, audience and performer brought 3 everyday and personal objects and in a silent dialogue they researched how objects can speak, with the help of humans. People (performer and participating audience) related to and through the objects. The everyday objects and personal belongings activated relating potential in their constructional, destructional, sensorial and transformational characteristics. We can smash an apple, burn a tissue or build a tower with chopsticks and sticky tape. We can taste food. We can observe what is revealed when we simply place our objects on the table, when we place them in relation to each other and when we place them in relation to ourselves. Reactions of participants revealed that improvising with everyday objects and personal belongings opened a reservoir of experiences, memories, associations, imagination.

In MY APARTMENT the performer proposed to the participating audience members to build a home in the theatre, together with objects. We found that the object of a white chalk marker activated the relating of performer and participating audience to the space they shared (the empty theatre is filled with drawings, objects, people), to their imagination (the marker reveals the imaginary scenography of the apartment) and to each other (the marker draws up the space that performer and audience share). Also in MY APARTMENT, everyday personal objects of the performer revealed an aesthetics of everydayness, their materiality revealed the life they had (crumbling paint of a cup, letters written in Dutch brought to Prague from Belgium) and elicited participants to interact with them (to taste the coffee from the thermos, to read the book,...). Also these objects evoked stories, anecdotes and fantasies (real anecdotes the performer experienced living in the apartment and new fantasies created together with the audience in the performance). Lastly the objects activated the participating audience to become objects themselves (sheets activated the audience to become the chair to hold them, a cup activated the audience to become the water tap to fill the cup with water, a drawing of a door invited the audience to make squeaking sounds). In this process the performer acted as a facilitator. She guided the story and invited audiences to participate.

In RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES two people (performer and participating audience) related to and through the object of a cardboard box. The object of the box became an activator to research (for performer and participating audience) a need to be alone (inside the box), or together (with one of the two inside the box, or both outside of the box). Interactions with participating audience members indicated that it felt more comfortable to relate to the performer with the object of the cardboard box in between and the performer or the audience member inside the box. Participants asked more (why are you here, what are you doing, what is the meaning of the box,...) and shared more (confessions , associations of what objects we use in our everyday life comparable to this cardboard box,...). The box became an activator of closeness, by offering a comfortable distance.

This information was collected in an intuitive backpack and led the development process of HIER, HERE, TADY.

The journey of HIER, HERE, TADY started with a fascination for everyday objects and personal belongings that live in the pockets and backpacks of humans. Following, we researched how people could relate to daily objects that lived in a space (chairs, tables, plants,...), abandoned objects (a piece of paper, a mattress, a wooden board,...) and personal objects that we, participants of a rehearsal/performance brought in (notebook, calendar, pencil case, phone, keys,...). How we could share a space with these objects. This led us to conversations about 'a space for yourself' and a 'shared space'. This brought us to memories about our childhood and spaces we would define as our own, such as forts, cabins, secret hiding spaces. Recreating these memory palaces brought us back to the here and now, with the objects we carry. 'Which objects do we take with us when we leave the house? What content do they reveal?' In the final form of the performance we researched these questions throughout the dramaturgical phases we go through as we unpacked and displayed the personal and everyday objects we carry with us, meditated about them, visited each other's objects and assembled them in categories.

4.2. HOW THE PERSONAL OBJECT TRANSFORMS IN HIER, HERE, TADY INTO A THEATRICAL OBJECT AND BECOMES AN ACTIVATOR FOR THE POTENTIAL OF RELATING

In HIER, HERE, TADY personal, everyday objects of performer and audience members are brought into the theatre to research our everydayness. They are the third element in the meeting that is the performance. They remain personal and at the same time they are on display and in relation with people and other objects of the same kind. When examining what it means that they are an activator of the potential for relating we first have to ask: 'how can personal objects successfully transform into theatrical objects and form a material relational space that enhances both aesthetic and personal experience, but definitely provokes a change of gaze?'

The answer to this question is that by bringing personal, daily objects into the theatre, placing them on display under the gaze of another participating audience member, they are elevated out of the mundane and open up imagination and curiosity of the owner and the fellow participants. Participants reported finding aesthetical potential in the performativity of how different participants unpacked their personal objects from their backpacks and in the materiality and content of objects that came out of this disclosure. 'To me the moment of aesthetic and meaningful discovery was when another audience member took out the scarf of his dead mother out of a small, black pouch and told her story.' (Ewan Mc Laren, artistic director Bazaar Festival Prague).

When they 'sat with', observed and explored the personal objects of themselves and of their fellow participants (read them, listened to them, looked into them), participants reported that they were fascinated by the materiality of objects (colors, textures, what is hidden inside an object) and by their content (I am curious if there is a story behind this object, why does the owner carry this object, this object makes me think of a memory, an association, a fantasy...) and that this triggered their imagination. Or as one of the participants indicated: 'For me the most important part was that it was a disclosure first (taking objects out of the bag) and what the disclosure allows.' (Cristina Maldonado, artist)

From this we can deduce that when in HIER, HERE, TADY a personal object transforms into a theatrical object, the object becomes an activator for the potential of relating, because it triggers attention, it heightens awareness, it invites to explore it and relate to it, to other people and objects of the same kind. For example, in one performance the participants were fascinated by the color of the objects in the room. When we engaged in the dramaturgical proposition of categorisation, the participating group of audience members decided to categorise all the present objects by color and place their own bodies in relation to the objects, mediated through the colors of our clothes.

How this transformation happens in HIER, HERE, TADY is by minimal theatrics and imagination. The purpose of the theatre is to always experience something. It offers us a space to focus on what is presented. In HIER, HERE, TADY when we bring in personal, everyday objects into the theatre, into the meeting point that is the performance, we 'look for minimal theatrics, minimal imagination.' To quote one of the participants: 'We come to the theatre with the expectation of something bigger than the daily. What we do here together is to look for minimal theatrics, minimal imagination. Imagination here is being with things and people in a different way than the utilitarian. HIER, HERE, TADY provides this moment, creating this minimal daydreaming that is shared. This experience can affect the way you think of things. It changes perception.' (Sodja Zupac Lotker, course leader MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre)

A factor that influences the transformation of personal, everyday objects into theatrical objects in HIER, HERE, TADY is the engaged distance and change of perspective that are gradually generated throughout the dramaturgical propositions made by the performer. The objects remained personal and at the same time they were on display and in relation with people and other objects of the same kind. When we placed our personal objects under the gaze of someone else (by unpacking and revealing) and when we allowed the personal object to become shared instead of private (when other participants visit my objects and when we as a collective make categories with all of our objects), this change of distance and perspective opened up multiple contents and transformed the meaning and function of the personal object in the theatres space and the kind of agent the object became. In one performance the personal object transformed

from being an everyday utensil to an agent of identity when a participant unpacked her backpack. 'When the first person opened her backpack, I could suddenly see her, I could see her personality, I could see her life.' (Ran Jiao, MA director)

In another performance personal objects of a participant suddenly revealed more content and they became agents of love for their owner when she placed them on display and by bringing her personal objects under the gaze of other audience members. She had collected all the tools she could find in her own backpack (hammer, screwdriver, box cutter) and 3 pepper sprays that were also in her backpack. She explained that all the objects were gifts of her boyfriend, the tools to help her with her work as scenographer and the pepper spray to keep her safe. She said: 'wow, look at all these objects, look how much (literally) he loves me... I had forgotten that.' (Olga Ziębińska, scenographer)

We can deduce from these examples, that engaged distance and a change of perspective influenced the potential of relation that is activated by the personal objects. This can be illustrated by another example in which, 'by observing the objects and what they offer, it is possible to go beyond the personal relation to the object and the individual is exchanged by the categorical' (Cristina Maldonado, artist). In the course of one performance the group decided to categorise all the medication that was in the room. The personal object became a collective object, and all the medication became an agent of love when one participant shared that this reminded him of a beloved friend who had died after a long fight against a severe illness.

4.3. HOW THE GUIDING OF THE PERFORMER CAN OPEN A SAFE SPACE THAT ENABLES THE OBJECT TO BECOME AN ACTIVATOR

A prerequisite for the personal object of the audience to become a theatrical object, is that participants feel encouraged that the work with their personal belongings is the performance. In performances with participation and personal objects, things can easily feel unsafe (what are we doing here, where is this

going, if I share something, an object or a story or an action, what will happen to it). What follows is a personal reflection on my own role as performer/guide in HIER, HERE, TADY, of how the performer can enable to open a safe time and space of creativity, criticality and complexity of content, gazes of views and not cut-off strategies such as self-protection, cynicism, and irony encourages

In HIER, HERE, TADY, through a dramaturgy of welcoming, that was described in chapter 3, the performer, by her instructions, makes an effort to create a playground, in which participants are gradually invited and challenged to experiment and to risk, and where it is safe to feel and research both personal insights and self protective mechanisms intertwined (fear, feeling of objectification, appropriation, endangerment). This requires presence²³ of the performer. 'Presence means to be fully aware and present in the here and now. It also entails to listen deeply, to be open without biased or prepossessed ideas. The different aspects of presence lead to a state of letting it come, of conscious participation in a larger field of change.'²⁴ These aspects are 'observing what happens around, then becoming present and tuning in to your 'intuitive knowing' and then reacting'²⁵ The more I, as performer, am present in the here and now, the more participants indicated that they felt safe, contained to share something, to risk something. This requires that I am prepared in body and mind, so that I can be open and receptive to what comes from the group dynamics as well as the individual impulses, and the more I can stimulate, challenge, propose certain actions. What helps me in this preparation is studying, playing and working with the viewpoints²⁶ that make up time and space and the expanded viewpoints. I hereby refer to the Expanded Viewpoints Framework (EVF) designed by actor Howard Lotker and taught in the classes 'Expanded viewpoints improvisation' at DAMU. EVF in Time: Musicality; Timing / Kairos. EVF and in Space: Gaze / Eye Focus; Stillness / Silence; Effort; and Performance / Audience Relationship. Practicing the expanded viewpoints²⁷ helps me to raise my awareness of time and space, see them more clearly, experience

²³ Senge, P., Scharmer, C. O. (2015). *Presence*. Academic Service.

²⁴ Senge, P., Scharmer, C. O. (2015). *Presence*. Academic Service (p12-13).

²⁵ Senge, P., Scharmer, C. O. (2015). *Presence*. Academic Service (p93).

²⁶ Overlie, M. (2016). *Standing in Space: The Six Viewpoints Theory & Practice*. Artcraft Printers.

²⁷ Lotker, H., S. (n.d.). Course Expanded Viewpoints - Time Space and Improvisation. Retrieved february 20, 2020, from <https://sp.amu.cz/en/predmet204RUP1.html>

them more deeply and become more able to use them more fully in the performance. For example: when I am aware of how we, all members that relate in the performance (people and objects), are working with musicality or silence/stillness, as performer, I can support the impulses that come from participating audiences and from the objects. I can propose or provoke variation. For example during one performance, all members of the group were visiting each other's personal objects. At a certain moment the whole group was silently reading in each other's book and journals, carefully and silently walking around and looking through personal objects. When I became aware of this atmosphere, I invited a participating audience member, who talked about the music on his phone in the phase of unpacking, to play us a song on his phone.

This remains a point of attention, to persevere and carry on training myself in the expanded viewpoints, during rehearsals as well as during performances. When I consciously work with the viewpoints, I am more present and open to 'support spontaneous impulses from participants' as one of the audience members indicated (Ewan McLaren, artistic director Bazaar Festival Prague). When I am present I can be more aware of an object inviting me to let it move or make a sound, or I am more aware of an audience member who is trying to propose a new category.

With presence also comes recognising what is there and naming it. One of the participants said: 'it can happen that there is a moment in the performance that it gets boring. Acknowledge that sometimes something like this happens. Let the stillness be. Experience it together. This is a performance that is creating conditions for the now to happen' (Sodja Zupac Lotker, course leader MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre and dramaturg). From participants' feedback it became clear that this performance offers a space in which a lot is possible: wonderment, excitement, playfulness, but also confusion, boredom,... By being present of what's there, owning it and being vulnerable in it, its performative power might invite the audience members to become active participants. Some received feedback also relates to this: 'It was about spending time with us, without assuming how to entertain.' And a tip: 'while it is happening, you can name what is happening, how we are behaving as a group. Safety has to do with the feeling of being together in the now, not being behind

or ahead. So as performer you can help us with that, articulate that.' (Sodja Zupac Lotker, course leader MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre and dramaturg)

Offering possible scenarios (which categories can we make, how can we relate to our objects either by talking or by moving our objects and our bodies,...) for some groups facilitated a feeling of safety and a way into exploring how to relate with people and objects. For other groups these scenarios were unnecessary or even intrusive. For example in one performance, in the phase of categorisation the group went ahead playing around with the objects. Sometimes audience members stepped out to the sidelines to observe this 'beehive of playfulness'. In another performance the participants stated that they were completely fine with only one category (objects you want to share) and observing the objects in that category. In another performance the dynamics felt very calm, almost meditative and at the same time very open and willing, everyone seemed to be curious to read and listen to each other's objects. However, in yet another performance, the dynamics felt lost and scattered (what are we doing here, what is possible and what not,...). In balancing when to provide scenarios versus when to support the initiatives and impulses that come from the members of the group, presence of the performer is essential. This balance remains a point of attention in following performances.

4.4. WHAT HAPPENS IN THE MEETING POINT - WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE OBJECT IS AN ACTIVATOR

'For me the most important part was that it was a disclosure first (taking objects out of the bag) and what the disclosure allows'. (Cristina Maldonado, artist).

In HIER, HERE, TADY, when the personal, everyday object transforms into a theatrical object it becomes an activator for potential of relating in what it can reveal, evoke and elicit. By 'sitting with' the object (observing it and listening to it) and exploring the object (helping it move or make a sound, looking at what is inside,...), the participating audience and performer can help the object reveal

its content. In HIER, HERE, TADY we do not need to manipulate the theatrical object, but we let the object speak to and through us. In actions (movement, sound, position in space) or in words (sharing memories, fantasies, associations,...), the participating audience and performer can respond to what the object evokes and elicits. In this way we become, together with the object, co-creator of the performance. The content will be different every performance again and for every participant.

4.4.1. REVEAL

First the object can reveal something about itself. It can also reveal something about its owner. For example in HIER, HERE, TADY a participant unpacked a passport. This object revealed the travels its owner had made, but the crumbling paint on the cover also revealed the life of the object itself.

When we collect and categorise these objects they can reveal even more. The individual can be erased or exchanged by the categorical. They can reveal a collective, shared content, for example when we collect and categorise all the beauty products or all the electrical devices that are in the room.

4.4.2. EVOKE

Second, the object can evoke feelings and content in us. The materiality of the object can surprise, amaze, fascinate, repel,... us. The object can also evoke multiple contents, associations, fantasies, memories (comparable to the Proustian experience of eating a madeline²⁸).

In HIER, HERE, TADY we unpack objects from our backpack. Sometimes there is an object of food in the meeting. In one of the performances there was vegan bread inside of a glass jar. The combination of the jar and the unfamiliar looking bread drew the attention of several participants. It evoked a feeling of curiosity: 'what is inside the jar?' 'How does the bread feel?' 'How does it taste?' The

²⁸Proust, M. (1913). *A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu*. Bernard Grasset, Gallimard.

owner took the bread out of the jar and shared it. This sharing of bread evoked a memory with one person about eating together with her family and sharing bread. With someone else it evoked a memory of going to church and sharing the Holy bread. For someone else the bread became an agent of closeness.

4.4.3. ELICIT

Third, the object can elicit something in us. It can elicit movement or sound. The object can trigger us to help it move. Or to move our own bodies and relate to the object in the position that we take. Or it can elicit us to make a sound in response to it. Or we might want to share (through words or/and actions) the memory or fantasy that is being evoked in us, by the object.

Throughout performances there were multiple examples of participating audience members and of myself responding to what the objects elicited in us. After the unpacking of the objects, a collection of objects revealed itself. This elicited a playful arranging of the objects and creating compositions with them.

Sometimes we placed all objects with comparable colors together and then related our bodies and our clothes to the colors of the objects.

In one performance we explored the sounds that objects could make, we made a composition with glass jars, and we explored the sounds these jars could make. Other times the songs participants collected on their phones would elicit a jukebox-moment where different songs from different phones would alternate with each other.

In other performances the objects elicited associations and memories. In one performance, a participant had brought nunchucks, and this opened a conversation about defending yourself, weapons of defence and the difference or comparisons in feeling safe or needing to defend yourself when you are a woman or a man. We categorised our objects based on their defending potential, spray deodorant being the number one daily object that participants would see as a weapon of defence, together with keys stuck between your fingers (in order to scratch or stab your attacker).

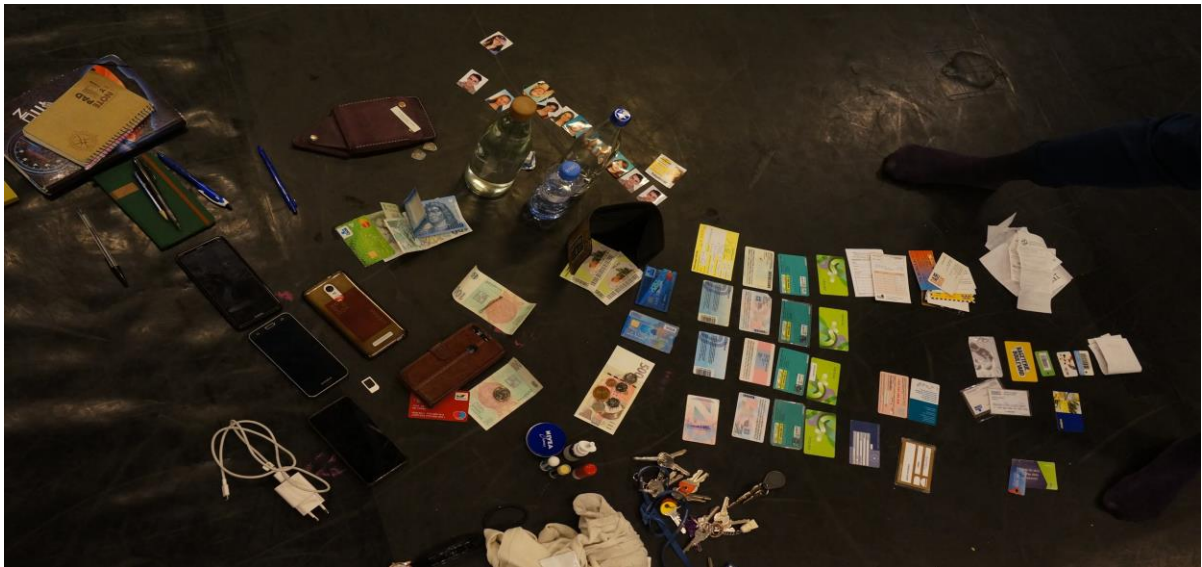


Image 9. objects as agents of identity, ID cards, photos, mobile phones, keys, notebooks, medical products. HIER, HERE, TADY, try out, March 2019, Studio Alta, Prague.

4.5. CONCLUSION

In this chapter firstly we described the growth trajectory of creating performances with objects during the master. What we found in SPEAK was that objects can have an activating potential (of construction, destruction, sensation and transformation) and that by interacting with them these objects can speak to and through us. Improvising with everyday, personal objects opened a reservoir of experiences, memories, associations, imagination. In MY APARTMENT we found that objects can reveal an aesthetics of everydayness and can relate people and objects to the space they share, to their imagination and to each other (the empty theatre is filled with drawings, objects and people). In RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES we found that the object can become an activator of closeness, by offering a comfortable distance. We concluded this growth trajectory with the performance of HIER, HERE, TADY, in which personal, everyday objects of performer and audience members are brought in the theatre to research our everydayness.

Secondly, we deduced that in HIER, HERE, TADY personal objects transform into theatrical objects when participating audience and performer put them on

display, under the gaze of their fellow participants. In a form of minimal theatrics, a minimal daydreaming that is shared, people and objects are provided a way to be together that differs from the utilitarian. The object becomes an activator for the potential of relating, because it evokes imagination, it triggers attention, it heightens awareness, and it invites to explore and relate to it. This potential is increased by the engaged distance and change of perspective that is generated when the objects that we relate to in the performance are personal. Multiple contents open up and the meaning and function of the personal object transforms in the theatre space, as well as the kind of agent it becomes.

Thirdly, we found that a prerequisite for the personal objects unpacked by the audience and the performer, to become theatrical objects, is that participants of the performance feel safe. Feedback of participants and self-reflection of the performer showed that presence of the performer is essential. When the performer is present and aware of what is happening in the performance, and when she acknowledges this verbally or non-verbally (there is silence, there is excitement, there is confusion,...) she provides a feeling of safety by making her audience members part of the now and she can support the impulses that come from participating audiences and from the objects and she can propose or provoke variation.

Fourthly we concluded that the object becomes an activator for potential of relating in what it can reveal (about itself, about its owner, about the collective), evoke (the materiality of the object can surprise, amaze, fascinate, repel,... us and the object can also evoke multiple contents, associations, fantasies, memories in us) and elicit (the object can trigger us to help it move, or to move our own bodies and relate to the object in the position that we take, or we might want to share the memory or fantasy that is being evoked in us).

5. GENERAL CONCLUSION

This master thesis analyzes what it means that the personal object is an activator for the potential of relating, in the participatory performance *HIER, HERE, TADY*.

The personal objects that audience members and performer unpack from their pockets and backpacks, are the activators for people and objects to relate to each other in the performance. The performer enables this process, she is a guide, a facilitator and at times provocator. Through a dramaturgy of welcoming the performer makes an effort to provide a safe space for her audience to co-create. She gradually proposes ways for the audience members to participate by observation and exploration of their objects.

The performer opens the 'playground for relating'. After tuning in, she proposes to her audience to unpack their pockets, purses, backpacks. Then the performer proposes an individual moment in which every owner can, in silence, meditate on the qualities of their objects. How they feel, smell, taste, sound, look like, what kind of memories they hold and what kind of multiple contents they can evoke. Following a visiting phase is proposed, in which the participants read, listen, look into,... each other's objects. Finally, the performer opens up the time and space for the group to collect, assemble, categorise the objects according to their own needs and desires. Using verbal and non-verbal instructions the performer guides, enables, facilitates and provokes this process of co-creating.

A prerequisite for real co-creation of the participants is that they feel safe to step into this way of working, safe to share their objects and safe to act on their own impulses. Otherwise self-protective mechanisms will be activated (laughing, irony, silencing). The performer can support the feeling of safety by being aware and present of what is happening in the here and now and by sharing this with her audience (there is silence, there is excitement, there is curiosity, there is confusion,...). In this way she acknowledges the meaningfulness and performative power of all that happens in the meeting.

When participating audience members and performer bring their personal, everyday objects into the theatre space, on display and under the gaze of others, in relation to people and objects of the same kind, these personal objects

transform into theatrical objects. What this means is that they become more than just tools for everyday life. They trigger our imagination, they reveal content about themselves, about their owner or about the collective. This transformation happens in HIER, HERE, TADY in a form of minimal theatrics, a minimal daydreaming that is shared, in which people and objects are provided a way to be together that differs from the utilitarian, and that stimulates imagination. The object invites us to 'sit with' it (observing it and listening to it) and explore it (helping it move or make a sound, looking at what is inside,...), the participating audience and performer can help the object reveal its content and become aware of what the object evokes and elicits. In this way the object becomes an activator of mutual relating.

All of this, how people and objects relate, by talking or being together in silence, and the content that is revealed, evoked and elicited by personal objects, reveals a theatricality of everydayness, in the here and now, HIER, HERE, TADY.

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7. APPENDIX A - SCRIPT HIER, HERE, TADY

HIER, HERE, TADY was created in the second year of the MA Directing of Devised and Object Theatre at the Academy of Performing Arts, DAMU, in Prague. The performance was developed under supervision of Braňo Mazúch and Sodja Zupac Lotker. Team members were dramaturg Eva Roosmarijn, scenographers Nitish Jain and Rufina Bazlova, actors Jiří Brnula and Jakub Vaverka, productional team Ran Jiao and Cici Hu. The performance went in premiere on March 21, 2019 in Studio Alta in Prague.

HIER, HERE, TADY is a participative performance in which personal objects invite audience and performer to research their everydayness.

We start outside of the venue. The performer welcomes the audience members, makes a short introduction (who are you, how did you get here, how are you feeling now,...). Then they walk together from the foyer to the black box. Before they step onto the theatre floor, the performer asks everyone to take off their shoes,ut to take their bags and jackets onto the floor. Then everyone steps on the theatre floor.

There is a warm light covering the space, with a subtle focus of a circle in the middle. On the ground a black ballet floor. Otherwise the space is empty. No seats, no elevation, no decor elements. Everyone steps in. The performer invites the audience to take a seat on the ground. They sit down in a circle and look at each other.

The performer starts: 'My uncle Dirk always said, whenever you leave the house, you must always take 3 things: a swiss knife, a flashlight and a roll of toilet paper. I am Ine, I am from Belgium and I have been traveling between Belgium and Prague for the past 2 years. I started wondering about the objects I carry with me. What do I take, what do I leave behind, am I traveling light or not. Whenever we leave our house we take things with us. Or do our things take us, do they carry us, do they hold us?'

Then the performer asks one audience member to share what she/he is carrying in her/his pocket/backpack/handbag.

'I am curious, what did you take to the theatre today ? Can we see something?'

The audience member unpacks an object. Performer and audience observe it. Then the performer asks to see another object and eventually she asks the participant to unpack his/her entire backpack. Together the group observes the objects.

Sometimes someone of the other participants asks something like where an object is from and the owner always takes it. Sometimes the owner tells an anecdote or a memory that belongs to an object. Sometimes the performer asks something like 'how many pills are still left on the strip of medication?' 'How many ID cards do you have?' 'Where are they from?' 'What kind of food do you have with you?' 'How many spoons do you have with you?'

This proposition of unpacking is repeated with 2 or 3 other audience members. Eventually every member of the audience is invited to unpack.

Then the performer shares some anecdotes and information on her own objects.

the light is dimmed and the performer proposes some questions relating the owner to her/his objects.

'For the next phase, you can close your eyes and make yourself comfortable. I will ask you some questions. They are only for you to think of, you can just listen and reflect on them yourself. Close your eyes. Feel how you are sitting, how your body is touching the floor, what parts of your body touch the floor. Try to feel and imagine how you are sitting in this room. How much space are you taking up with your body? Now, try if you can, to direct your attention to the objects in front of you. Do you remember the objects? How much space do they take up? What is the heaviest? What is the lightest? Is there something with a specific smell? What kind of textures are there? What colors? Is there an object, that has something else inside? What is the oldest object? What is the most personal? Is there something missing? Is there something you didn't bring with you? Is there something you lost? If there would be a fire here, and you could

only take 1 thing with you, what would it be? Is there a thing that makes you feel secure? Is there something here that you like? Is there something here that you don't like? Is there something a friend of you would want? Is there something you would like to give to someone? Now when you are ready open your eyes.'

Following the phase of meditation and reflection, the performer proposes to visit each other's objects.

'In the next phase, we will go round, look at each other's spaces and objects. Is that OK? Is it OK that we go through, look through yours, can we read in it, listen to it,...? If there are objects that you prefer to keep a secret, you can put them away now.'

The members of the group then walk around, visit each other's 'islands' of object, read each other's books and journals, listen to each other's music, look at each other's photos, hold each other's things, ask for anecdotes and stories connected to the objects.

What happens after the phase of visiting, is mostly determined by the impulses, needs, propositions of the group. The performer proposes a moment of categorising. How this develops, how many categories are made, which categories,... is decided by the group. Gradually the performer herself becomes equal part of the meeting, she waits for and responds to what the participating audience members propose.

'Is it an idea to move our objects around in space? To let them migrate? Can we make categories of our belongings? What would these categories be?'

In order to facilitate this phase the performer has some optional scenarios that she sometimes propose, depending on the group dynamic. For example she suggests making a category of color, or of function, of textures, of emotions,... These examples and possibilities of how to respond to the objects, are a reservoir the performer has in her head. This reservoir of options is complemented every performance again, with impulses and propositions received from participating group members.

When the group indicates that it feels like the moment to end, the performer makes the final proposition, she invites everyone to take back the personal objects:

'Shall we pack back up?'

When everyone has packed up their objects, before leaving the space completely, the performer stands still on the edge of the black theatre floor, and by doing this nonverbally invites the audience to do the same. She proposes to look at the theatre that has just before been filled with our personal, everyday objects, our personal stories, our memories, our imagination and that is now empty again. Even though the objects are all packed up we carry the encounters we made with us, literally, in our personal, everyday objects.

Then follows a short afterword. The performer thanks everyone for participating and she informs the participants that the performance was filmed. She asks for their consent and refers to the website where they can revisit the new world(s) they created together with their objects (<https://infoubbeni.wixsite.com/hier/>). In the end everyone puts their shoes back on and leaves the space.

8. APPENDIX B - SCRIPT SPEAK

The theatre performance SPEAK is a one-on-one performance, in which both audience and performer bring in 3 personal objects and together create a silent dialogue where the objects speak.

SPEAK was created through improvisations, in collaboration with my classmates, Wayne Jordan, Tinka Avramova, Alyssa Dillard, Maria Huber, Yannick Stasiak. In collaboration with Eva Roosmarijn Burgerhoudt as dramaturg and Cici Hu as production manager. Teachers Kristýna Täubelová and Philipp Schenker mentored the project. It premiered at DAMU's Student Winter Festival, Process 013, in January of 2018.

At the start of the performance, the performer sits at a table. When participants arrive, she greets them and invites them to partake, by taking a seat at the table. After a short introduction of who is who, the performer gives verbal instructions: 'I am a curious person. I always want to know what will happen in the future or why something happened in the past. I discovered that objects can give us the answer to our questions. But we have to help them, because they cannot move by themselves. Do you want to participate? You can take 3 objects that you have with or on you, and place them here on the side of the table. I also brought 3 objects that I will place next to yours.' She waits for the audience to place 3 objects on the table. Then she chooses 3 objects out of her own collection of objects, and lines all of them up on the table. Then she continues with the instructions: 'If you have a question on your mind, the objects might help you find the answer with our help. You might feel that an object wants to move, then you can help it. Do you have a question that you would like an answer to? You don't have to tell me, just keep it in your head. You might get an answer to it, within the next 15 minutes. Let's start.' Then both performer and participant observe the objects, and move them, one person after the other, a bit like a chess game, although sometimes their movements can overlap. After about 15 minutes usually there comes a silent agreement between the participant and the performer, that the performance can finish. Sometimes in the last minutes of the performance, the performer adds a new object,

sometimes she opens a book at a random page and invites the participating audience to read in it. That is usually the last action of the performance.

9. APPENDIX C - SCRIPT MY APARTMENT

The theatre performance MY APARTMENT is an interactive storytelling performance in which, together with the audience, the performer recreates her apartment in shared imagination. Personal and everyday objects that the performer brings from her own apartment, reveal an aesthetics of everydayness and relate people and objects to the space they share, to their imagination and to each other (the empty theatre is filled with drawings made with a white chalk marker, everyday personal objects and people).

MY APARTMENT was first presented during PROCESS 013 Festival at DAMU Prague for an audience group of 20 people. With the support of a grant from DAMU, the performance was developed into a one hour show for 60-70 participating audience members. The performance had tryouts at Malostranské gymnázium in the English classes of Marina Dowden with groups of 30-50 students from 13 to 18 years old, and in the context of Hradec Kralove Open Air Festival. MY APARTMENT went in premiere October 1, 2018 at DIVADLO DISK in Prague.

At the start of the performance, the performer goes outside, into the foyer, and greets everyone in person, eye to eye. Taking the time to see who is there, what the atmosphere is, who is eager to interact and who is more shy. Then they all go inside together, after the necessary informational talk about turning off phones and leaving jackets and bags at the cloakroom or inside the theatre space right behind the door, but out of the way for the performance. They enter an empty theatre venue. No seats, no decor elements. The performer takes a stand in the middle of the space. She carries her that inside has all the objects she will use in the performance. She invites everyone to stand around her. She once again greets everyone by looking them in the eyes, one by one. Then she tells an introduction of how she came from Belgium to Prague and asks some members of the audience for their experiences with moving, moving abroad, living on your own. Next performer and audience imagine and explore the apartment together, starting in the bedroom. The performer asks an audience member to lay beside her to measure the size of a twin bed, and ask someone

else to draw the bed and the shelf above it, with a white chalk marker on the black ballet floor. Next she takes a nightlight out of her backpack and asks another participant to hold the nightlight, as if (s)he is the shelf. The performer reads from her favorite book, and invites the participant sitting with her on the bed, to read a bit as well, out loud, in Dutch. From there the group moves throughout the apartment. Encountering neighbors by their sounds, while participants make the sounds (of the drumming upstairs neighbor, someone singing in the shower next door, the neighbors playing computer games,...). We encounter objects, and sometimes participants take on the role of these objects (the dripping kitchen sink, the squeaking door in the living room), sometimes objects have a memory anecdote attached to it, that the performer shares with the audience. For example an apple, just like the ones her grandfather and she shared every day after school sitting at the dinner table. She tells the story while she peels an apple, and then shares the pieces of the apple. Then she takes out another apple, and asks a participant if (s)he wants to take on the role of grandfather, peel the apple and share the pieces. The stories and memories are mostly from the performer, sometimes someone in the audience adds a memory or association of what an object or a story evokes in her/him. In the last part of the performance, there is a total blackout. Only the nightlight remains on. As if they are in the apartment together, now in the middle of the night. The performer tells the story of how she, as a child, had much trouble falling asleep. How she called out for her mother. "Mama...?" ... and then, while calling out for her mother into the theatre, she waits for someone in the audience to respond. She is prepared to take on the story on her own if needed, but she leaves the space open and truly asks for a response of someone in the audience to take on the role of her mother (so far someone always did). After the character of the mother comes and leaves the space, the performer summons her grandmothers, who always tried to comfort her. She asks if someone from the audience wants to act as her two grandmothers. After this intervention, where both grandmothers can't help the girl to fall asleep, she tells the last story of the performance. In the ending monologue, the performer shares with the audience how she had to learn to find a home for herself. How she had been flying back and forth between Belgium and Prague over the last months, after her mother got diagnosed with cancer, in the same year as she started studying in Prague.

And how this apartment, the sounds, and being there alone, became her safe place of belonging, her home.

10. APPENDIX D - SCRIPT RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES

The performance RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES is a performative research in which the object of a cardboard box invites the performer and the participating audience to research their permeability: how to be alone - with others.

RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES premiered at ZLOMVAZ Festival in 2019 Prague, and was performed that same year at Hradec Králové Open air and at the 23th edition of the International Festival of Contemporary Art in Prague, 4 + 4 DNY V POHYBU, 4 + 4 DAYS IN MOTION. This performance was created under supervision of artist Cristina Maldonado, in collaboration with dramaturg Eva Roosemarijn Burgerhoudt.

VARIATION 1 WITH A CARDBOARD BANANA BOX

A performer walks around in a public space (cafe, courtyard,...) with a cardboard box on her head and a video camera in her hand. People passing by see a person walking with a box on their head. Sometimes someone approaches the performer in the box, sometimes the performer takes the initiative to stand (box on head) beside someone and start talking. After a short introduction (I am Ine, I am performing an artistic research) the performer asks if the audience wants to know something about her. If the answer was yes, she films a close up of a part of her face and shows the close up, on the screen of the camera, through one of the holes of the banabox.

Then the performer tells an anecdote about the close up (she shows a scar and tells how it came there.) Then she invites the audience, if they want, to come inside the box. From there on the performance is defined by the actions of the participating audience. They lead the way. Sometimes both performer and audience member are together in the box, silently looking at each other for a while. Sometimes they talk. Sometimes they look outside, through the holes of

the box. Sometimes they read notes, observations and journaling that the performer made while she was alone inside the box. The performance ends when the performer draws the silhouette of the visitor on the inside of the box, leaving a mark. And then the audience member leaves the box and the performer and her box move on.

VARIATION 2 WITH A WHITE, NARROW CARDBOARD BOX

A performer walks around in a public space (cafe, courtyard,...) with a cardboard box on her head. People passing by see a person walking with a box on their head, and instructions written on the side.

'In this improvisation I research the permeability of my membranes. Researching how to be alone - with others, contained-opened. Within these different permeabilities of the membrane I let things in, I let things out, I let things in and out, or nothing at all. I question myself "when is the moment of ...'

Drawings clarify the text and provide different possibilities: being alone in the box, being in the box and someone outside the box, being together in the box, both being in the box, both being without a box.

Different encounters can take place, in which the performer and her audience research their semi-permeability, research how to be alone - together. Sometimes someone approaches the performer in the box, sometimes the performer takes the initiative to stand (box on head) beside. Sometimes there is talking, sometimes not.

VARIATION 3 THE CARDBOARD BOX AS AN INTERACTIVE INSTALLATION IN THE SPACE

A brown cardboard box hangs in space, fixed in one spot, with a chair underneath and a marker attached to it on a rope. Instructions written on the side:

'RESEARCH ON THE PERMEABILITY OF MEMBRANES

In this improvisation you can research the permeability of your membranes. Researching how to be alone - with others, contained-opened. Within these different permeabilities of the membrane do you let things in, let things out, let things in and out, or nothing at all. You can question yourself "when is the moment of ...'

Accompanied with the text there are drawings that provide different possibilities: being alone in a box, being in the box and someone outside the box, being together in the box, both being in the box, both being without a box.

People start to interact with the box. They journal in it, write down their observations about sitting in this box and write down associations of this box and/or they doodle and draw images inside it.

11. APPENDIX D - VIEWPOINT EXERCISE FOR HUMANS AND OBJECTS

This viewpoint based exercise was developed during the creation process of HIER, HERE, TADY to research how people and objects can share a space and if we can become an object amongst objects. See chapter 4.1.4.2 'sharing a space with objects'.

At the start of the exercise the performer greets the participants, makes a short introduction about the project, the goal and the research questions. The performer asks if the participants are willing to partake in an experiment researching these questions. Then she invites them into a classroom. At the start, in this classroom there are objects that belong there (chairs, table, a plant) and abandoned objects that people left there (a piece of paper, a mattress, a wooden board). Over the course of this research, the performer occasionally brings in daily objects into rehearsals (kitchen utensils, food,...). On the spot, during the rehearsal, the performer asks participants to take out their own objects, personal belongings that they have with them (pencil case, notebook, calendar). The performer gives instructions from the side, to the participating audiences.

'We start by choosing a position in the space, and imagining yourself as a dot in this space, like the one on your gps. At this moment the dot is standing still in the space. Then the dots start to move.'

The performer proposes to explore the space, explore its boundaries, borders, walls. She proposes to vary in tempo, duration, stillness, repetition. Then she raised awareness of the other dots in the space, and proposes to explore the relationship with the other dots and the space, to work with the spatial relationship of being a dot yourself, the relationship to the other dots (moving together, moving behind each other, moving towards each other or moving away from each other. Standing still together. One standing still, the other moving and so on...) and the relationship to the walls of the space (being in the center of the room, being close to a wall,...). This exploration of options continues for a while. Then the objects that are in the room, are brought under attention:

'In this room, there are not only walls that define the space, but also objects that have a specific position in the space. We will explore, while moving and standing still, what objects are present in the room. Which ones we can see, and also the ones that we brought in and might still be in our backpacks, pockets.'

Then the performer guides the audience to listen and feel what objects speak to them and to gather these objects and to explore the spatial relationship to these objects, each other, the space.

'There are 3 objects in this space that speak to you. Hear them, find them. Pick them up, give them a new place in the room and place yourself in relation to them'.

This goes on for a while and then the audience is invited to experiment more freely with movement, distance, objects versus bodies, each participant in their own way, in their own tempo. The group is invited to raise awareness on the other objects and human dots in space. Afterwards, the group reflects on this exercise of working with the idea of dot-ness, bodies and objects in space.

12. APPENDIX E - ADJUSTED VIEWPOINT EXERCISE FOR HUMANS AND OBJECTS

This viewpoint based exercise was developed during the creation process of HIER, HERE, TADY. The previous viewpoint based exercise, see appendix E, was adjusted. The following instructions were designed to guide the participants to research if they could imagine a space for themselves and for each individual to mark what they defined as the borders of that personal space using personal objects that they carried on/with them (earrings, socks, a sweater,...). See chapter 4.1.4.3 'personal objects on the borders of my personal space'.

The performer asks the participants to imagine themselves as a dot in the space. And then to research the connection between themselves as a dot and the other dots in the space and to explore forming a group with the other dots. Finally she invites the members of the audience to try to feel the space each of them needs for themselves and to mark the borders of that space with their personal objects and with tools that are provided.

'You become aware of the other dots. You are in relation to the other dots. Ask yourself: are we all part of the same group? Am I part of this group? What happens when you take another tempo than the rest of the group?

Can you move more closer to each other? What do you feel?

How much space do you need for yourself? Can you make your space visible with your personal belongings, the things you have on you or with you? Mark the borders, place your objects on the borders of your space.

Look at your objects, your space. How is it to be in your space, here.

Can you move, and take your space with you?'