

OPPONENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE MASTER'S THESIS:

Attachment to the state magister's examination report.

STUDENT: UBBEN Ine

Branch of study: MA in Directing of Devised and Object Theatre

Opponent: Ewen McLaren

Ine Ubben: THE PERSONAL OBJECT AS AN ACTIVATOR FOR THE POTENTIAL OF RELATING

Master's thesis review by Ewan McLaren

Ine Ubben's Master's thesis reflects on the culmination of her practical research into using actual personal objects carried by audience members as catalysts for live creation of a changing, engaging and revealing live performance work called *HERE, HIER, TADY*. While her writing addresses other works and études of hers during her studies that led to up to it, the main focus is on this main work. This performance masterfully led audience members to share their own personal belongings with each other, compare them, and play with them as willing co-creators of the performance, revealing along the way important observations, evoking associations, emotions and memory, evoking movement and action in its participants-cum-collaborators, changing, in fact, their way of perceiving.

The thesis itself catalogues what specific conditions related to performer, audience and objects make a work like *HERE, HIER, TADY* a revealing theatrical experience and not an intrusion, then goes back in time to show how this gentle and calibrated performance for learning about ourselves through our things was arrived at as part of a considered, gradual yet natural progression based on diligent experimentation, surprising impulses and observation. It becomes clear that in order for personal objects to activate relations in a performance context, special conditions have to be developed to bring audience members into the right state of awareness, curiosity and readiness to share, which are precisely described in Ubben's conclusion.

While I feel that the description of the research aim, process and process research, and final work are clearly presented and good arguments made for what worked and what didn't work in *HERE, HIER, TADY*, I have an important question regarding the theoretical and historical context of the project. In the

thesis, references are made to the work of Allan Kaprow and Lygia Clark's *BABA ANTROPOFAGIA* from 1973 is touched on at the start to suggest how the artist / performer can make a proposition to the audience of an installation event. Yet surely there are telling examples of such approaches beyond performance art works and installation experiments of the 1970s in the Americas. Because I am sure Ubben's developed her research and practice quite independently, I would like to ask the author which other artists used related approaches, the entanglement of humans and their things. A quick google search for the terms "experimental performance" and "personal objects" together yields not a few different such examples, but it is important to know fundamentals of which artists were or are leaders in pioneering work with everyday objects in spontaneous performance or live art works. What are key examples of such artists or works? Could there be related practices described in anthropological studies, or in ancient ritual?

My other comment is related, and it regards the next steps Ubben will take in her work. It seems to me *HERE, HIER, TADY* and her other works developed at DAMU form an important vantage point for future work. One can imagine several different possible directions both related to art, therapy, community work, and more. It would be good to hear from Ubben what future trajectories her research and practice are setting her out for. What next steps is she planning? Could her discoveries be applied for larger audiences? Should they?

I recommend the thesis for the defense.

Date: 10.9. 2020

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