



PHOTO: ANDERS JUNG

THE PERFORMANCE AGENCY FICTION PIMPS AT A BUSINESS MEETING WITH LENNART GINMAN, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AT COPENHAGEN JAZZHOUSE.

FICTION PIMPING



PHOTO: ANDERS JUNG

FICTION PIMPING – THE VERBUM:

FICTION PIMPS WORK WITH THE NEW VERBUM 'FICTION PIMPING'. THEY DO NOT SIMPLY PERFORM, DANCE, ACT, INSTALL, DESIGN, STORYTELL – THEY COMBINE THESE THINGS UNDER THIS NEW UMBRELLA-VERBUM. THEY 'PIMP FICTION' ON THE STAGES OF EVERYDAY LIFE TO LIBERATE CREATIVE AND SENSORY POWER IN PEOPLE, COMPANIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS.

"THE SWAMP" - FICTION PIMPING COPENHAGEN JAZZHOUSE. AUGUST 2009: ALL OVER THE WORLD, IN DIFFERENT TIMES AND IN DIFFERENT PLACES, PEOPLE HAVE BEEN DISAPPEARING, SWALLOWED BY THE DANGEROUS WATERS OF THE SWAMP. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MANY YEARS, THE PEOPLE OF THE SWAMP HAVE REAPPEARED, STIRRING THE GROUND ON WHICH YOU WALK. THEY WERE TO BE FOUND IN AND ABOUT JAZZHOUSE ON DIFFERENT OCCASIONS IN 2009. ON THE PHOTO, ONE OF THE THREE FICTION PIMPS, MADELEINE KATE MCGOWAN.

FICTION PIMPS

THE PERFORMANCE AGENCY, FICTION PIMPS, WAS ESTABLISHED BY MADELEINE KATE MCGOWAN, INGA GERNER NIELSEN OG GRY WORRE HALLBERG. ALL THREE HAVE PARTICIPATED FOR SEVERAL YEARS IN THE CLUB DE LA FAYE, A PERFORMANCE GROUP, AND HAVE WORKED WITH THE FAMOUS PERFORMANCE ARTISTS SIGNA.

FICTION PIMPS WORK WITH INTEGRATING THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE SPACE IN A BUSINESS ORGANIZATION CONTEXT. READ MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN USE FICTION IN YOUR SEMINAR, PANEL DISCUSSION OR CONFERENCE AT WWW.HOUSEOFFUTURES.DK

MADELEINE KATE MCGOWAN has a BA in Performance Design and Visual Culture. For her, being a Fiction Pimp is about being a visionary - a person able to envision and further manifest all the latent stories, images, poetry and parallel universes within every situation; thereby creating new opportunities and opening up dimensions to life that were always there, but many forgot how to recognize.

INGA GERNER NIELSEN has a BA in Sociology and is currently stud.mag. in Modern Culture and Cultural Communication. her artistic and scientific work is driven by her passion for framing and investigating how people experience and reflect upon the world. While studying sociology she has developed new qualitative methods to document and study the subjective experience of performance art and the social situation it portrays. In

her work as a Fiction Pimp, she continuously experiments with using different aspects of the qualitative methods as part of activist strategies and the process of inspiration.

GRY WORRE HALLBERG has a Master of Arts in Theatre- and Performance Studies, with a minor in Cultural Economy and Aesthetic Leadership. She is a Fiction Pimp in order to enrich a given environment with an aesthetic dimension, and thereby opening a sensory-oriented way of being and being together in the space inhabited. It is to unfold concealed dimensions and potentials colonized in situations and to nurse the engagement in life through poetic, fictive parallel universal activity.

BY GITTE LARSEN

OH, OH, OH, IT'S MAGIC!

THE PERFORMANCE AGENCY, FICTION PIMPS, HAS A VISION OF OPENING THE AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE SPACE FOR EVERYONE. "IT MUST BE DEMOCRATIZED," AS GRY WORRE HALLBERG, ONE OF THE THREE WOMEN BEHIND FICTION PIMPS, PUTS IT. THE PLAYFUL SPACE WHERE FICTION CAN PLAY FREELY IS NOT JUST FOR ARTISTS. IT SHOULD BE FOR THE JOY AND BENEFIT OF ALL – AND, NOT LEAST, MUST BE A FAR BIGGER PART OF OUR WORKING LIVES. THEREFORE, GRY AND HER PARTNERS, INGA GERNER NIELSEN AND MADELEINE KATE MCGOWAN PIMP THEIR FICTIONS IN NIGHTCLUBS, PANEL DISCUSSIONS, CONFERENCES AND FESTIVALS. MEET GRY WORRE HALLBERG AND READ HER THOUGHTS ABOUT THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND IT. AND WHY WE NEED, IN OUR TIME, TO BE ABLE TO ALSO ACKNOWLEDGE THE LANGUAGE OF SENSE, BODY, HEART, PLAY AND MAGIC.

Q: Where do you find your stories?

GRY: Fiction is a collective product. We sit down together and begin to compose. One of us asks a question like: "Could we say three women live in the laboratory we are creating now, and that they know each other really well and go around from place to place building laboratories?" Then another asks, "Yes, but why do they do it?" What we are doing is letting our imaginations run away with us and building on each other's questions and answers. It is extremely important that we create the stories collectively, because they are much more nuanced. The collective element means that we have filled in all the cracks in the story. It becomes sustainable and serves as a parallel reality. The story must be "thick" so that we can create the genuine sensual experience.

Q: What do you mean by "thick"?

GRY: That the story is bulletproof. The audience can always challenge us, so we must be strong in our character. Just as in real life. We do not answer everything, but our stories must be, like those in literature, watertight to the smallest detail. If there are too many holes, or if the story is too thin, we cannot be authentic in the parallel reality.

Q: What does it do to the audience if you story is not authentic?

GRY: If the audience is in doubt, they find it hard to surrender. The framework should feel secure, and both the public and we must have confidence in the framework. Good frameworks are, for example, rock festivals, Christmas parties or a panel discussion. At events like these, we have already put daily life on standby. It is something else. But if you feel unsure of the framework, you won't want to go in there. In Fiction Pimps, we want to seduce people into a room. For me there is big difference between manipulation and seduction, and what we want is that others to give it a chance, surrender and indulge. And we want that, because we have learned that is where dormant potential and other dimensions of experience open up.

Q: What do I get from entering your room or parallel reality?

GRY: Fiction Pimps creates a concentrated space that effectively opens the sensuous sphere. Over time, we should not need the space - it should be a natural part of everyday life. Right now, there is an imbalance between things, and there is a need for concentrated sensuous being. "The sensuous space" was formerly reserved for artists, and I think the space must be democratized. The sensuous must be for all. If we all could also use our senses, and did it every day, we would not go amok at Christmas parties. It might be hard not to glorify the past, but what I am talking about is not a return to what was. It is something different today. Here and now in our world.

Q: Why is it relevant to work with fictions in business?

GRY: Because we need greater coherence between the aesthetic and economic spheres. Western society is dominated by economic premises: we must work before we can enjoy, and duty, needs-postponement, rationality, efficiency and discipline all come before the sensuous and especially the joyful and feeling-oriented. All of what I call "the aesthetic experience space." For me, there is an entirely different type of quality in the aesthetic sphere. Our sensuous recognition mode is also essentially different from the mental, which we use very much as employees and citizens in the knowledge society. If the sensory room was easier for us to delve into every day, we would discover the quality of being there. Some will criticize the sensuous experience and say that it does not belong in business and the workplace. And there is a risk that you cross certain boundaries, when you are in or going into fiction. We are in the "violence and power of the senses." In a nightclub, we go deeper into the sensuous space, and we have more sensuous experience than we have in the company and organization. And in daily life in general.



"THE REAPERS LODGE" – PREPARING A FULL FICTION. DYREHAVEN APRIL 2009".

WE ARE LOOKING FOR THE PRESENT. FOR COOPERATION WITH THE SITUATION. WHEN I AM IN A FICTION, I AM THERE AND WORK WITH THE WHOLE, WITH THE SITUATION. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IS TO BE "IN TUNE." IT'S ABOUT "TUNING" INTO THE SITUATION AND BEING PREPARED TO HANDLE IT. YOU CAN ONLY DO THAT IF YOU ARE PRESENT. ARE CLOSE. THEREFORE, WE NEED A DEFINED FRAMEWORK WITH LOTS OF ROOM FOR IMPROVISATION. OUR FICTIONAL FRAMEWORK IS VERY LOOSE, IF YOU COMPARE IT WITH A PLAY. WE HAVE NO SCRIPT.

Q: Is there anything you cannot 'fiction pimp'?

GRY: No. Maybe we will find something one day that we cannot. I have been asked if I would fiction pimp a funeral. But it would be in advance, of course. The religious rituals do it already, and we go into a more sensuous space when we are in a church for a funeral, for example. In that space, we let go of the mental for a while and trust that we can experience with mind, heart, stomach and brain. I believe everything can be pimped – even a finance meeting. And there are many situations in our everyday life in which we have more and more need to be able to open a sensual space to do something different than what we normally do, and expand our recognition and experience horizons. We need some new rituals.

Q: Can you name one of your challenges in working with this area?

GRY: It is an academic challenge that I understand it so broadly. Current systems cannot accommodate it. Art is a bouillon cube of aesthetic being – but I understand the aesthetic experience space very broadly: it can be the corporal experience in the fitness center, avant-garde art, poetic activism at street level and a living marketing campaign. They are systems in opposition to each other, but for me it's all aesthetic experience space, because they activate the aesthetic dimension – the sensuous and bodily being and togetherness.

Q: You've said magic is exclusive. Can you elaborate?

GRY: Magic and games are reserved for the few. It is exclusive to play when you grow up. Unless you are an artist or magician. Fun and magic should not be exclusive experiences that are available only for certain groups of people. We need it in our everyday lives. Need to balance the individual, in organizations and society.

Q: Why is the framework important?

GRY: If our fiction is, let's say, a B-movie called "Killer Brides," I cannot suddenly choose to become a troll. If you break the framework, the fiction collapses. It is the only premise we cannot shake. I've thought about my character before I go in, but not what I will say or do. We build the characters, but we do not plan scenes. Some may be more dominant or involved in creating the frame than others, but we need to collectively surrender to the fictional frame, which we can later evaluate if we want. The situation depends very much on everyone surrendering to the situation. The set up is not what we talk about along the ways – there we are more composers. We work within a framework of co-creation, co-sharing and co-composition. When we go in, we give it all freely and it always works.



FICTION PIMPING A PANEL DISCUSSION AT MUSIKPARLAMENTET WITH THE FICTION "THE REAPERS LODGE". IN VIEWING THE WHOLE EVENT AS ONE BIG RITUAL, A NEW AESTHETIC LEVEL WAS BROUGHT TO THE ARRANGEMENT. IN THIS CASE, THE GUESTS, WHEN ENTERING THE BUILDING, WERE MET BY THE FEMALE REAPERS WHO INITIATED THE RITUAL OF THE ONE HUNDRED CARDINALS: "THE CARDINAL OF LOVE HAS ENTERED THE BUILDING."

"THE CARDINAL OF NOISE IS ALSO WITH US TONIGHT" - THE SOUND OF THEIR VOICES MIXING WITH THE SOUNDSCAPE OF BIRDS AND BREAKING GLASS...



THE CARDINALS TABLE. THE REAPERS LODGE WAS IMAGINED AS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WOULD SOMETIMES APPEAR TO FACILITATE PARADIGM SHIFTS IN THE WORLD OF MUSIC. THE PERFORMERS AND THE SETTING THEN ACTED AS ELEMENTS IN THIS FICTION. EVERY DETAIL IN THE ARRANGEMENT WAS THOROUGHLY DEVELOPED TO FIT THE FICTION AND THE SPECIFIC PLACE. THE TABLE WAS DECADENTLY SET IN A FOREST-LIKE SETTING, THE SMELL OF SUGAR, BIRD-SOUNDS AND MONOTONOUS VOICES LAY IN THE AIR, ALL TO SEDUCE THE GUESTS INTO THE FICTION.



PHOTOS: RIKKE PØDENPHANT



FICTION PIMPS AT THE OFFICE.

BY GRY WORRE HALLBERG

I NEED MY SHOT OF FICTION!"

AESTHETIC ENGAGEMENT IN AN ECONOMICALLY-
PREMISED SOCIETY. BACKGROUND COMMENT.

–"I need my shot of fiction!" – "It's like a drug, you get totally hooked ... I'm a Junkie!" – "Give me my doses two times a year..." – "It's about escaping from the restrictions of everyday life and freeing yourself" – "The norms are gone – the ones that the society put upon you – and that enables you to express yourself more truly and fully – I also hope that that is what the audience is left with – that they can think: Why should we all be so normal?"

These are quotes from performers who have dwelled in the fictive and physical parallel universes of the performing art group SIGNA. I have been one of them. And I have experienced the attraction they hold, their power to create and the potential they hold, the power to unfold. Being a more or less avant-garde experiment operating within the art system, few willingly or by chance find their way to this magical parallel realities, where performers and the interactive audiences love, fight, eat, sleep – live. Where there is no division between stage and audience once you have entered the building or the

arena where the play happens. Questions like: Why do the certain performers and interactive audiences find this participation so attractive? And can the potential of the participation be open to more people than the relatively small group that find their way to perform or participate in this arena? For example through a professional organizational context, where a larger number of people can be reached?

In Fiction Pimps, a central aim is to democratize aesthetic enrichment on the stages of everyday life. Not to make the aesthetic experience an exclusive experience, but a common yet extraordinary, one. We do this by constructing fictive landscapes in the middle of everyday life. That is, in your canteen, your fitness center, at your opening reception, at your party, your teambuilding course, at your demonstration for better causes, at your desk, at your panel discussions, in your innovation box, in your dreams... Within the fictive frame we create, everything is considered real, even though strange and extraordinary things are happening all the time.



ONE OF THE THREE FICTION PIMPS GRY WORRE HALLBERG.

To illustrate what I mean by fictive landscapes: entering our manifestations could possibly seem like walking through the screen of a movie theater and entering the film and interacting with this universe that before was available to you only on a two-dimensional screen. By entering, the world becomes three-dimensional and you are part of it. Imagine you were all of a sudden there in, let's say, Twin Peaks. You could go to the diner have a cup coffee, or to One Eyed Jack's, or maybe you would be very puzzled and shy and hurry out again. That is also why the level of interaction varies a lot. Interaction is not a requirement, but something we aim for. We work at making the fictive landscapes so attractive and inviting that people wouldn't consider not participating to some degree.

Concept of "Fiction" and "aesthetic"

Within theatre and performance research, the concept of fiction can be understood as part of the concept of theatricality. Based on the works of the theatre researchers Josette Féral, Erika Fischer-Lichte, Willmar Suater, and inspired by the definition of theatricality that Solveig Gade presents in her dissertation, I constructed an analysis-oriented definition of theatricality: *A frame within which a parallel reality that is staged in a specific manner becomes the operational reality – and following this premise – which effects the being and interaction of and between people that take place within the frame. That is: You have a place, then you frame an*

area, and within that area you have theatricality, because it is staged in a way that differs from the surrounding place – The surrounding place of everyday life.

Aesthetic critical philosophy (e.g. the Frankfurt School) has emphasized the liberating power of the aesthetic sphere. Their starting point is a critique of modern civilization as repressive, due to its roots in the capital system, and thereby in the economic premises and terms – those being among other: rationality, efficiency, duty and discipline. The aesthetic sphere on the other hand, which is found in a concentrated form within art, is based on sense, emotions and delight, and art thereby represents a dimension where one can escape the repression of modern civilization based on the economic premises. But the modern art system can be understood as exclusive and exclusionary due to the establishment of the autonomy of the arts and the art genius – in short, only 'the exceptional artist' is given the possibility of participating and experiencing within the exclusive and autonomous bubble of the modern art system. Even though relational and interventionist strategies are currently provoking these positions, artists using these strategies, for example, Signa, attract few visitors/participants.

Fiction in business

In Fiction Pimps, though, we work with what one could call a democratization of the art, in that "ordinary peo-



ple,” as opposed to art-geniuses, receive the possibility of experiencing the aesthetic enrichment. Our idea is that everything can be “fiction pimped.” So, instead of opening the aesthetic dimension of sensory-oriented being through, for example drugs, alcohol or women, we do it through fiction, which one could argue might be a more sustainable way of entering the aesthetic mode of being and being together.

The business organization appears to be an obvious context to be fiction pimped - a territory full of potential to be explored and unfolded. Using art in a business organizational context can be understood under the term and concept arts-in-business. Bringing arts into a business organizational context is, though, not without challenges - both practical and value oriented: one could ask if the employees are able to live “their aesthetic, sense, emotion and delight-oriented, self” while being at their working place. Especially since the day is full with tasks and expectations. And, if you work with managers, one can ask if they are able to take off their “manager-mask” and be their “aesthetic self.” Or one could ask if this is really for the people, as we propose and wish, or for the sake of the profit, as many might suspect once business is involved. If the capital does not just exploit and use the aesthetics to become even more powerful - having the exact opposite effect of the one of “harmonizing” a society build to intensely on economical premises, by instead strengthening the economic/capital system. As Lazzarato suggest: now it is not only the crafts labor that is being exploited, but also the emotions of the workers. But this is only true if the only purpose of the capitalist system is profit.

However, many argue that those times have passed. With parameters such as CSR (Corporate Social Re-

sponsibility) and CSI (Corporate Social Innovation), other values and bottom lines are introduced in the business organizational context. And with a capital system that is opening itself towards the art and aesthetics as in arts-in-business a whole new approach is on its way. As the prominent business consultant, Margaret Wheatley, argues:

“Well capitalism is in deep trouble ... Global capitalism is all about the flow of money and about the complete disconnection of people ... Decisions are made only on behalf of very short-term profit, or how we can make money this instant ... it is not about sustainability, it is not about building for the long term, and it has been completely disruptive and destructive for human communities everywhere ... I do not see any future for capitalism in its current form ... We really have got to focus on the human side of it now, if we are going to make any changes.”

Unfolding new potential

Movements like arts-in-business, fiction pimping and new ideas about companies being more of a movement instead of a fixed “industrial” organization, are currently challenging the capitalistic and artistic systems. The systems have the ability to transform to something else - something else where e.g. aesthetic engagement and enrichment is an available choice and source for everyone interested, not only art-geniuses - and where this new modus can possibly change individuals, organizations, societies - the world - and hopefully into something better, something more harmonic and sustainable, something richer, more creative and clever. The world is full of unfolded potential. Our aim is to unfold it.



FICTION PIMP INGA GERNER NIELSEN
IN THE SWAMP

FICTION PIMPING COPENHAGEN
JAZZHOUSE. THE SWAMP. 2009.

SIGNA (www.signa.dk) The partners in Fiction Pimps have been performers in and are inspired by the art group SIGNA. SIGNA is a pioneer in building vibrant performance-installation parallel universes and has recently been presented their recent performance Vila Saló at Teater Republique (www.villa-salo.dk)

THEATRE-IN-BUSINESS Gry Worre Hallberg is a member of the research forum Theater-in-business, which she helped establish in 2006. Theatre-in-Business is working with the decoding and translation of the theater’s many potentials for business organizational contexts. Currently, Theater-in-Business is compiling an anthology: theatre-in-business - udfordringer og potentialer. Read more here: http://kunstogkulturvidenskab.ku.dk/forskning/forskerfora/t_in_b/

CLUB DE LA FAYE (clubdelafaye.blogspot.com) The partners in Fiction Pimps are all active members in the artist collective, Club de la Faye, which also works actively with the enrichment of everyday life through the activation of the aesthetic dimension.

GRY WORRE HALLBERG has a Master of Arts in Theatre- and Performance Studies, with a minor in Cultural Economy and Aesthetic Leadership from Copenhagen Business School. She is Working Member in House of Futures. gry@houseoffutures.dk

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