

Henrik Andersson (performer and co-creator)

Written reflection

Socialt förenade människor (Socially United People)

A part of RoomX – 15 dance installations under one roof

Socialt förenade människor, is a performance-art piece containing text, dance and objects. The performance-art piece deals with narratives throughout time, adapting to an ever-changing world, and human struggle now and 100 years ago. It was set in a context of 14 other on-going dance installations in different spaces of one building for a duration of three hours, a dance installation called *RoomX*.

In the project I was working on how to use my writing and performing through body and voice, in an equal and balanced cooperation with Malin Astners dance and choreography. Together we aimed to find an aesthetic and a dramaturgy that was perceived as abstract in the sense of what we were proposing or asking the audience, and a format in which the audience would feel comfortable enough to involve themselves, by letting the audience walk by, sit for a while, or come back later on.

In a time of fastly developing changes of society, the adaption to these changes may be the core to how well we can handle our lives. I see people around me trying to catch up; an older person who tries to understand what a website is, a working parent who tries to balance work, children's activities and self-fulfilment, and an EU-emigrant trying to find a way to live in our so called free and flowing EU. When I read Karin Johannisson *Trötthetens problem har gamla anor (The problem of weariness has an old origin)*¹ I saw many similarities of the changes of society in the 1910^s and the 2010^s, the fast changes of society has been a dilemma through times and times again. The adaption to change became the core and the content of my artistic research for this project.

Malin Astner and I started to work with two different approaches, saying no – the opposite of saying yes as a method, and our own history 100 years back – our grandparents parents and their stories from their lives. Saying no was a way to formulate what we wanted to do, what we preferred, and to find a way to relate to the concept of adapting - or not. Working on our own history 100 years back in time was a way to find a personal connection but without getting to self-oriented, to keep things personal but still on a more general level.

The performance-art piece was performed in three different venues, in a hallway in a cellar at Palladium (Malmö), in a small café at Ystad Theatre (Ystad) and in the cellar under the main stage of Landskrona Theatre (Landskrona). The audience had the freedom to pass by, stay for a while or see some of the other 14 acts that were going on at the same time in different spaces of the theatre. Due to the three very different spaces where the performance-art piece was performed, we adapted the performance to surrounding sounds, the acoustics of the room, the measurements of the space, the light in the room and how to find ways to define the performing space and the audience space. We chose to make the performance in a circular structure of 20 minutes that was repeated once, but the second time with our performing front in the opposite direction of the first round. The 40 minutes was then repeated three times during one evening. During the performance we sometimes invited the audience to sit on our 20 stools, sometimes the stools were used as set design and props, and sometimes the stools were used as a way to move the audience to the opposite side of the room. Occasionally there were over 50 people in the audience, occasionally five, and

¹ Karin Johannisson - Trötthetens problem har gamla anor (Hämtad 2018-12-07: <https://www.svd.se/trotthetens-problem-har-gamla-anor>). Svenska Dagbladet.

occasionally none. Our performance carried on no matter the number of people in the room, but was affected by the sounds of many people being present or a few, of people leaving and entering the room, which became an important part of the piece.

It was important for us to make the performance accessible for an audience passing by, or an audience who chose to stay for the whole 40 minutes. We therefore chose a collage-like structure, in which the different parts wove a pattern of meaning. The aim was to compose a dramaturgy that was complex and simple at the same time, and to mix the perception of dance, live art, theatre and music. The passing and staying, coming and leaving of audience were a part of a room in constant change, which the audience and we had to adapt to in one way or another.

The next step as a performer and co-creator of this project is the aim to set the piece *Socialt förenade människor* in another context, without the other 14 dance installations going on at the same time, and also the component of the audience entering and leaving the room during the performance-art piece. To perform *Socialt förenade människor* by itself, without the aforementioned aspect and to see what happens with the dramaturgy and me as a performer when the audience comes at a set time and stays for the whole performance.