

Essay for bachelor degree of Fine Arts.

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Gerlesborgsskolan, Bohuslän. Here i spent two years developing my artistic practice.

After studying at the pre-art school; Gerlesborgsskolan in Bohuslän, an artists understanding started to develop inside me. After three years at the art department at Konstfack, a lot has happened. I've been making films, been welding, building, and had an internship at Roy Andersson's Studio 24. In the following, I will present my work during my bachelor education at Konstfack.

My first art euphoria experience was in 2010 at Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlin. I saw a piece by Ernesto

Ernesto Neto, "the house", 2003, white polyurethane foam, 277 x 353 x 535 cm,



One of my favourite pieces

Neto. This piece was formed and built by foam mattresses and the viewer had to change to a pyjama-like outfit if you wanted to go inside the sculpture. To get inside you had to crawl. But once you got in, there was a room which was wavy, and because of the rubber foam, the viewer could jump into the walls, roll down from a hillside, and you could play as

much as you wanted. The yellow, warm colour from the foam board was even

increasing the experience. This piece, by Ernesto Neto, have followed me since my pre-art-school.

As you work as an artist, you don't have to be in relation to the viewer. I believe that the viewer has as much responsibility to get an exchanging experience as the source, I mean that the viewer has a choice, and needs to become more active in her role - depending what she envisages.

It is different to for example; commercial TV/film/radio; which always have an open requirement and takes 100 % responsibility to entertain and have a one-way-communication-idea with the viewer. I believe that often this kind of communication is a non-intellectual experience. The viewer doesn't have to engage anything, neither feelings nor mental activity to get a full experience that will be appreciated. And this is what I believe is the biggest difference between art and media. But when you integrate with digital art works, it is really interesting to think about *how* the piece is going to be categorised. Like; video-cinema-film or as video-installation-art-work. In ordinary filmmaking, you cut the film so that one scene precedes the next. And you are aware and dedicate to show important details in a close-up, to carry on with the narrative. Contemporary video art however, does not consist of only one expression. Today, with some help from the public media and multimedia technique, video has become a wide range of different practices, such as video, video-installation, film, film-installation, net art, moving pictures and projection screens. Each one should be understood and described on it own terms. ¹

¹ Black box illuminated – by Sara Arrhenius, Magdalena Malm, and Christina Ricupero

But to get a genuine exchanging communication with the viewer is something that motivates me to keep on working, especially since I don't work fast. Often my works expands to be from a half a year to two years of full-time. This semester in my studio at Konstfack, I realised that most of my works are in a digital form and main topics are integration, family, community, and issues of identity in various social contexts. In my first year at Konstfack a classmate, and me was applying to participate in a 16 mm shortfilm course at *Dffb German Film and Television Academy Berlin*. In reality the course was meant to be for master students at Umeå Academy of fine Arts. But we were lucky and were allowed to participate. The course was for 5 days and where divided into groups of five. In every group there was a student from the dffb academy showing the students from Sweden how to work with the 16mm-camera with the clipboard, and with the negatives.²

In the course it was also included to have studio visits at Rosa Barbas, Ulrike Molsen, and Christopher Keller. We also saw original 16 mm shortfilms by Maya Deren, Bruce Conner, Anthony Balch, and Bruce Baillie.

When we arrived in Berlin and where about to board the train to Konstfack's apartment, suddenly a handsome tall 38 years old homeless guy tried to sell us traintickets for half the price. His name was Peter Bozoky and he was from Hungary and had been living in the streets of Berlin for 8 years. We talked a lot to him and he told us that he was collecting train tickets at the airport from tourists that have subway tickets left that they will not use anymore. Then he goes to the central station, selling

them to people for half price. We decided that our group should follow him one day when he is collecting and selling tickets. That day, he described for us how his days are and how long he has been living in the streets.

The final result became a 8 minutes long 16 mm shortfilit, that became really appreciated and got second place at the filmsfestival VideoGud in Gävle.



Me and Peter smalltalking in hungarian before the shooting.

I don't see myself doing video as my single art form. I want to present my ideas in the form that suits them the best, and that has been mostly video. However, I've been trying to draw and to paint, which was the two first medias I started to practice on my pre art school. To draw, I believe I can handle, but to paint I cannot. It just doesn't become what I wish it should.

² In my group we where: Josef Alexandersson, Joakim Hansson, Fabian Wigren. Mariel Baqueiro was the student from dffb that guided us through.

When I was younger, before I even considered studying fine art seriously. I always had a video camera beside me. I was filming stuff I found interesting, a reality that was mine, and this was my way to experience the world. I also filmed other realities and how other species experienced their reality. I was amazed over that you could translate an experience to a digital recorder. And save it -as a memory. Since I was a child I have been really interested in new people and to put myself in new social contexts. Nowadays, I am constantly seeking after different kinds of contexts where I see a chance to develop my artistic practice or communication.

In my second year at Konstfack I got an internship at Roy Andersson's studio 24. My job was to help in two scenes that went under the name of Karl XII. The first scene takes place in a Swedish bar when Karls XII and his army are passing by outside the window, on their way to Poltava. The second scene shows Karl XII's army on its way home, passing the same bar, a few years later when he has lost the war. Roy records everything in his studio at Sibyllegatan. Everything is done virtually analogue. This film is the last of his *The Living - trilogy*³. The studio uses a red-x camera which is a digital camcorder who's picture comes the closest to an analogue picture. During the Karl XII-shootings, Roy rented a gigantic tray that was a abandoned porcelain factory out in Gustavsberg.

My main assignment was to assist Gergely Palos, Roy's photographer. We where setting light mostly. The first month I got an internship salary, the next month after that I was employed, working in the studio full-time and I missed two month of the semester at Konstfack. This life-changing period affected my own artistic practice in many ways. I gained a deeper understanding of the cinematic language, an overwiewing understanding about how much work it really is in a major film production. For instance how the different kind of mediums are collaborating with each other, how sound and light needs to be connected so it synchronizes the picture right or which kind of settings you need to have for the postproduction, or how you need to communicate with people that are involved in the project.

In 2010⁴ when I lived in Bohuslän I became interested in my parent's drug treatment centre that they owned. This treatment centre was running in my childhood home, and now, when me and my siblings had grow up and moved out, former drug addicts moved in whereas my parents took care of them. I started interviewing the patients in front of a camera, then I started to film even more, and all of a sudden I filmed everything that happened in our house. We had totally 7 patients at the same time, some moved out -and new moved in.

2011 when I entered Konstfack I moved back to Stockholm. April 2012 was the last time I filmed. During the filming I was also trying to cut the material so it could end up being a documentary. I was very clear to all of my supervisors at Konstfack that this project was overwhelming and I needed help. Especially help to move forward. I was all by myself with the material and had no experience what so

³ Swedish title: *En duva satt på en gren och funderade på tillvaron*.

⁴ . I've been continuing this project *It revolves* since then.

ever on how to cut, neither movie nor film. And it a lot of time and excitement, specifically when I sat alone in the cutting room and didn't know how to use cutting-programs, I was just learning by doing, testing. All supervisors and others who saw my video material where very positive to the project but something more needed to be added. I had a lot of clips where people sat and just minding their own business and not so much regular "scenes."⁵

For a phase I was stuck in the editing room cutting one scene after another over and over again. I didn't know how to move forward. My working hours was 14-15 hours per day. I started working in the morning and didn't finish until 2:00 to 3:30 am without pauses.

In spring 2012 after months of work without proper food or sleep, I started to have epileptic attacks due to stress and burnout. I never had or been diagnosed with epilepsy. At this time I had countless versions of the documentary of varying durations. Fall of 2012, during my internship at Roy Andersson, I met Timo Menke by chance in the city. He told me that what I was looking for was a producer, who knows how to produce filmprojects. I didn't understand at that point what producers did, but it gave me hope that maybe one day, I could end this endless project. In 2013 I came in contact with a producer via my professor at Konstfack. I began to collaborate with him. During this collaboration I consulted Johan Carlsson, who is the production manager at Roy Andersson. Johan said something very important to me:

"If you start a collaboration with a producer," he said, "the most important thing is that you have to know that the collaboration will overlap over many years and then it is important that there is agreement on tasks, economy for example."

A short while after that, I felt that this producer and I did not agree on many things, and I cancelled the collaboration.

Now I was back to square one. I had dozens of clipped versions, and the experience of a producer and employment by Roy Andersson. I decided not to consult anybody, nor talk about this documentary to anyone until I had cut the movie precisely as I wanted it. I found a system that I thought would work to cut. I thought about how I usually think when I paint with oil, how I set up the various fields of colour and colour systems and how they complement each other. I replaced the different colours with different clips that I had put in various chapters. Then I added scenes as long as I thought they complemented each other. Not so much about what the contents of the clips where, more about what I felt was more visually attractive. Two months after I finished it I contacted another production company and applied with this project. Now in spring 2014, we are still working with each other. But now I have some help from this company and we collaborate very well.

⁵ [Scene \(film\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scene), a part of an action in a single location in a TV or movie, composed of a series of shots. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scene>

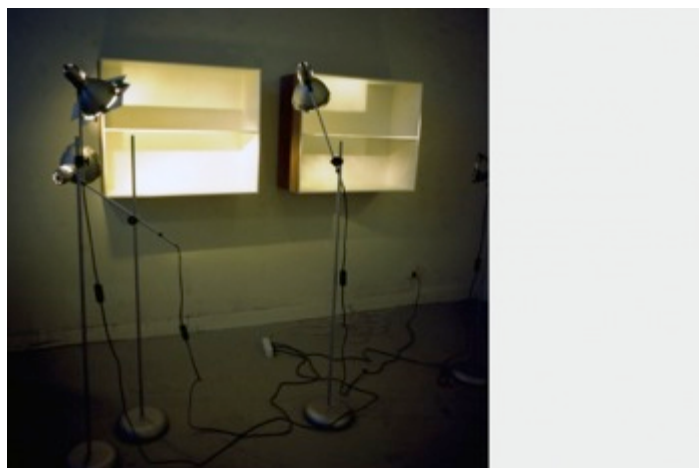
The work on *It revolves* has been really good practice for me, to help me understand video as a material and form and understand how complex it is to do a normal regular video⁶, i.e. handling sound, light, camera and production, and to involve the right people. All of this, I've started to understand by my own experiences without any theoretical education. I have learned by all the mistakes I've done, whether it was about recording sound, filming in a wrong format or bad lightning. I've done these mistakes over and over again. Kept asking people I thought knew something I needed to know. But that experience helped me to get some different kind of work-assignments beyond my regular school-schedule at Konstfack, which gave me some extra money. These assignments I wouldn't have been able to accept, due to lack of experience, if it wasn't for my long exhausting work with *It revolves*.



In december 2012 I was doing short information films about how you can do your own video. This was an assignment by Gotogo Media. At first, I did an information film, that I liked and was pleased with. But after the company saw it, they had lot of comments and requested me to redo it, but now with guidelines.

The picture above is a still from the second video, the video with the guidelines from the company.

When I returned to my studies after my fulltime work assignment with Roy Andersson, I was only interested in working with light, setting light, and above all, how to use and to relate to lightning in photography and film making. I had an idea to do large, spacious light installations. I was really inspired by Jakob Krajcik.



TURN OF THE CENTURY Installation, wood, paint and lamps Iaspis Stockholm, 1999. Jakob Krajcik.

⁶ Which it does not have to be in a certain way if you work with art-moving pictures, but for television or other commercial forms you have to go after a certain recipe.

My first thought was that the audience should be able to enter the art piece and interact with it. I often have a vision about creating a cosy, safe space, which can represent a home or a shell, and inside these installations I want the audience to interact with the piece. My initial idea was to create a major “light cave”. To do so, I needed to build a skeleton in steel that could carry the lamps inside installation. So I applied for a three-weeks metal-course at Konstfack. Later, the teacher who was in charge of the course told me that if I wanted to build this light-sculpture, I needed to buy at least 80-meter 4x4 cm black steel. He also helped me asking a steel company called BEE-Group if they were interested in giving me steel as a scholarship. Later, I received the scholarship from BEE Group and I got 100 meters of black steel from them. To achieve my goal to build the skeleton⁷ I needed help. I couldn't carry the poles by myself, they were too heavy. So I asked my friend, whom I started to know during the Roy Andersson-period, which also worked there but was unemployed at the moment. Since I had courses daytime and could not start welding until four pm, we had to work from four to midnight for a couple of weeks. The original idea was bending the steel, so the skeleton would look like an igloo. But the steel was too hard and thick so we were forced to cut them in one-meter lengths where the ends were in 45-degree angles. Then we welded them together and it became nine curved 2.5 meters lengths. Then we created a circle that would be the hub in the sculpture, and welded smaller rods.



From left: Oscar Molinari, welding smaller rods to the circle. Right: Me building models for the welding. Which is needed during the welding so the steel does not expand.

⁷ The size of the skeleton was going to be 2,5 x 6 meter.



The steel got a lot of attention at the yearly group exhibition together with my classmates in March 2013. I realized that a light installation would not be implemented because of financial reasons and lack of time. So I chose to exhibit the steel sculpture as it was, by itself. And I liked it like it was, it was very heavy and stable but at the same time it looked really fragile, like a drawing, thin black lines in the air. I was very proud of myself for having successfully maneuvered this gigantic material. That was for me, (only three months earlier) impossible to even handle such an overwhelming heavy material. I was very interested to be a part of this process whereas a small person trying to maneuver this black really thick steel-material. It felt like I was communicating with a material that was something that is essential for the living.

This project was something artistically changing for me. I got a whole another confidence after doing this sculpture. This sculpture became something more than just another piece. I often use this sculpture in my daily speaking when a need to convince that I can handle unlimited goals.

I categorize my works into different sections; one section where the big projects are, for example, the steel sculpture, Roy Andersson or *It revolves*. In another section I have as I call it “resting work” that helps me to have a pause or move forward with my big works. Often they are smaller, and faster done. Which I do not consider as less good than the big pieces, often they are also much more enjoyable to do.



Example from a video I created from a cruising with Viking Line.

My bachelor exhibition its called “Please try again later” which is a sound installation. Four telephones loops four different kinds of voicemails from people that passed away. Inside this installation I want the audience to interact with the piece somehow. I enjoy being involved and to involve the viewers to develop different kind of polarisations and mental frequencies. Often between the public and the private. That is the motivation for me to keep on working with fine arts.

The end

Bibliography

Book title:

Arrhenius Sara, Malm Magdalena, and Ricupero Christina, *Black box illuminated*, Kristiansstads Boktryckeri, Sweden 2003.

Internet

About different kind of scenes:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scene>

About steel:

<https://sv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stål>