



Young people testing art

A study on the young people's experiences of the Art Testers initiative

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Motivation to this presentation 1:

1. What you will see next, is our experiment of testing art: a **kinesthetic study of the young people's experiences of the Art Testers initiative.**
2. For us **this experiment** here today is **our performative method** to study and understand young people's diversity of ways to act, move and react in Art Testers process, us side-by-side, site-by-site.
3. In more general terms, with this live choreography we also want to study **the possibilities of a theatre clownery as an analysis method**, use it as a method and approach in performative social science.
4. As we state, this performance is our (i.e. researchers') in-depth study on **how Art Testers initiative move young people.**

Motivation to this presentation 2:

5. Methodologically, when the social setting is analysed as a live performance, the **focus is on corporality, presence and the pre-discursive**.
6. Performance theory gives central place to motion and emotions, as both actors and audiences must be moved by a performance in order it to be successful. (Eyerman 2005)
7. The adoption of performance theory allows us to better address questions concerning what happens when young people enter Art Testers, how this affects their actions and the action of others, and to ask **how social movements move**. (Eyerman 2005)
8. Contestatory performative acts may open new perspectives among both the observers and the participants, and shed light to macropolitics. (Laine 2012)



Motivation to this presentation 3: Why clowns

Some of the clowns use the word 'clandestine' in their name as they refuse the spectacle of celebrity: "Because without real names, faces or noses, we show that our words, dreams, and desires are more important than our biographies. Because we reject the society of surveillance that watches, controls, spies upon, records and checks our every move. Because by hiding our identity we recover the power of our acts." (see more: CIRCA)

"We are clowns because what else can one be in such a stupid world. Because inside everyone is a lawless clown trying to escape. Because fools are both fearsome and innocent, wise and stupid, entertainers and dissenters, healers and laughing stocks, scapegoats and subversives. Because buffoons always succeed in failing, always say yes, always hope and always feel things deeply. Because a clown can survive everything and get away with anything." (see more: CIRCA)



Around 12 000 8th graders have seen our show... and now we have also inspired two youth researchers to try this..

Photo: Tero Ahonen

Actors

Youth1 (active)

Youth2 (passive)

Youth3 (involved in arts)

Novice audience in certain art form

Researcher

Teacher

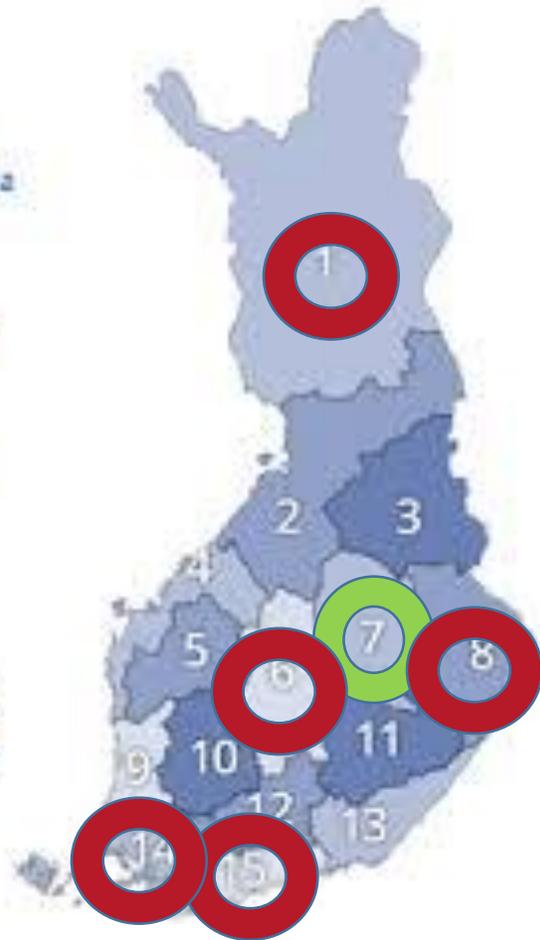
Juliet

Romeo

Research Setting

Valitse alue

- 1 Lappi
- 2 Pohjois-Pohjanmaa
- 3 Kainuu
- 4 Pohjanmaa
- 5 Etelä-Pohjanmaa
- 6 Keski-Suomi
- 7 Pohjois-Savo
- 8 Pohjois-Karjala
- 9 Satakunta
- 10 Pirkanmaa
- 11 Etelä-Savo
- 12 Häme
- 13 Kaakkois-Suomi
- 14 Varsinais-Suomi
- 15 Uusimaa
- Koko Suomi



- Pilot study (spring 2018)
- 10 main schools around Finland: 5 rural and 5 urban (fall 2018 – spring 2019)
- 2 researchers + 3 students from the University of Helsinki (studying pupils from Helsinki)
- 106 students from 10 main research schools (+ 10 students from the pilot study)
- Main method: Group interviews before and after the Art Testers trip
- Participatory observation in 13 sites and travelling to four locations together with the pupils studied



- All quotations are from our data (i.e. authentic experiences of the 8th graders and fieldwork notes)
- All music is from the art events or presenting the music style in the pre-events / pre-interview
- All drawings and paintings are from the youth who participated in the research project
- All analysis and mistakes are ours
- All movements have been created for this specific purpose

(On the background Mozart Concerto No 5 is played from the record)

Someone: (whispers) (blurred)

Someone: (whispers) sorry but I can't separate things... I do not know this kind of things..

Researcher: That was Mozart concerto. What comes to your mind when hearing this kind of music?

Youth2: Music teacher (laughs)

Youth3: Classical music.

Youth1: Music class.

Researcher: Anything else?

Youth4: History. Maybe. Little.

(Pre-interview, Helsinki)



...trying to do it yourself as a pre-event at school

Youth1: On a music class we were told a bit about it and we saw many years old song about that beatbox artist when he was making some sounds.

Youth3: We were speaking that how for example one can do beatbox sounds [...]

Researcher: Did you try beatboxing yourselves?

Youth1: Yes, a little.

Youth3: Yeah, **the teacher tried to get us to do some beatboxing.**

Researcher: How was it, do you have some opinion?

Youth3: Quite difficult, if you have not practiced it at all, but if you do practice a long time of course, then you can beatboxing well.

Youth3: [...] we had prepared to be quiet in the performance, not to talk when someone is beatboxing there.

(Follow-up interview, Helsinki)



...drawing main experiences from the trip...

Researcher: Do you want to tell what you have drawn about the trip to Lahti?

Youth1: Well I didn't draw so much, [...] I have drawn a microphone from where the sound comes from, because usually beatboxing is done directly to the microphone. Then I have [...] drawn] packed lunch, that was something about the journey which stuck into my mind maybe the most.

Researcher: Why did the packed lunch stick best into your mind?

Youth1: I don't know, that was all the time on my lap.

Youth 2: So what did you have for lunch?

Youth 3: Chips and candy and.. (laughs and somebody else laughs too) **But somebody took a whole mud cake, so maybe it didn't matter that much.**

(Follow-up interview, Helsinki)



Engl. "too much"



Preparing to the Art Testing: audience etiquette

Researcher: Did a teacher say to you that you need to be quiet at the performance or did you just prepare yourselves by yourself?

Youth2: Yeah, everyone understood it by themselves.

Youth1: Yes. [...] There was an announcement that you need to be quiet when the performance starts, but yes, our class understood it, that you need to be quiet there.

Researcher: Yeah. Can you somehow prepare to that, that you need to be quiet soon?

Youth1: Well, yes you can, for example, in some buildings the lights will go off. Then you understand that the performance will start.

(Follow-up interview, Helsinki)

There! Sense of Welcome (Falk & Dieking 2012)

Youth1: We needed to leave all our belongings to the bus, we were only allowed to take the packed lunch with us there.

Two other youth: Yeah [...]

Youth1: We needed to leave the winter jackets to the bus too (laugh) and then we needed to go from there to the main entrance, there were terribly freezing outside. [...] Because we were told that there is no luggage for us, but yes there were a luggage.

(Follow-up interview, Uusimaa)

There! At the lobby! Before it starts!

“However, fatigue and boredom may have weighed on some; leaning their heads on their hands and tables. Delightful atmosphere in multiple of the tables. Girls and boys at different tables, even on the bus doing a lot with each other. At one table there were many boys sitting with their hoodies; After a while, the teacher went to look and noticed that they had torn leaflet on the desk. Another teacher intervened and told them to clean up and take it to the trash, it also happened. Three girls had found a place at the corner where they could charge phones.”

(Extract from fieldwork notes / Scapegoat theatre)

There!



There!

Comparing to and competing with another schools

Researcher: Oh, they made you shout [at the theatre room], which locations different schools were sitting?

Several youth: Yeah

Researcher: And then your silence was heard there?

Youth3: It was something like 'wohoo' and all the other ones were like "Wrääää" (roars)

(Laughter)

Researcher: How did that make you feel? (give a laugh)

Youth3: I don't know, it was little

Youth2: Depressing

Youth3: Yeah (laughs)

(Follow-up interview, Uusimaa)

There! Hearing young people's authentic (?) comments during the show

“On the wedding night Juliet undressed her shoes, throwing them briskly on the ground. Romeo opened the shoelaces very slowly, and carefully placed the shoes aside. The intensity was a strong feeling, the show's grip remained, and the youth seemed focused. Someone behind us commented a couple of times out loud, e.g. "Don't take the shirt off," "Yuck," and "Everybody is Waiting!"

(Extract from fieldwork notes / Juliet and Romeo theatre)



There! Learning the applause code – or not

Youth1: At least I noticed that if you compare this concert to for example those concerts that are taking place every Thursday at the Karelia Hall, the basic Joensuu City Orchestra concerts, then you notice that when young people on this age, or who haven't attended any concerts never before, can't applause (laughs): when it [ref. to orchestra] leaves from there it bows, and then it leaves, so at that point you can't stop clapping, you need to clap more [...] they [novice/youth] do not understand to clap long enough.

(Follow-up interview, Joensuu)



On the way back from there!

“On the way back, I heard a lot of talking about breaks and especially what food to buy. The young people asked if they could bring pizza or burgers to the bus. Teacher estimated that they probably could eat that food neatly enough on the bus. The Kotipizza restaurant was pondered, as were the Burger King and the Hesburger and what could be found from the store. The beginning of the journey had been a little bit quieter, and gradually the conversation and interaction became louder. ”

(Extract from fieldwork notes / Scapegoat theatre)



Youth1: Someone said that someone died, but I didn't even know that someone died

Youth2: I think someone died there

Youth3: I think it could have continued on

Youth4: Well I don't know

Youth2: I saw death.

Youth5: (whispering) Why did they have those black hoods on that robe?

Youth6: Hey, why there were some smoke on the stage, and that one guy who was jumping there at that smoke? (laughter in the background)

Youth4: Because .. they want to

Youth7: No. They all freaked out totally (laughs) at the end

Youth8: Because, it was, artistic

Youth4: Artistic but (unclear, laughs) I got the feeling that they are angry (unclear) at the end

Back at school – post-event: drawing the experience



Follow-up interview (1): Accessibility to and Availability of Arts

Youth1: Many of our classmates have never attended any symphony concerts, or [...] many others may never get anywhere like that. So, it was a unique experience.

(Follow-up interview, Helsinki)



Follow-up interview (2): Cultural engagement

Researcher: Well, from your opinion, how did you get involved, during those performances?

Youth1: Well, at least not in Kuhmo, I couldn't participate in any way at all, you were just sitting and staring (laughs)

(Follow-up interview, North Karelia)

(Researcher's note: "That's interesting to catch what seems to be happening in addition to being seemingly passive!")



Follow-up interview (3): Experiences of the Arts

Researcher: Was there some specific scene from Romeo and Juliet that you would especially remember?

Youth1: For me the end.

Researcher : That very end?

Youth1: Yeah. After that when they died, and then after that.

Researcher : Yeah. As they walked hand in hand

Youth1: Yeah

Researcher: away, there, deep into the stage

Youth1: Yeah

Researcher: kind of away from the audience. Did you come up with some thoughts, what does the scene tell about or what does it symbolize or something?

Youth1: Well, I had a little bit melancholic feeling, but anyway, that was a good feeling.

(Follow-up interview, Varsinais-Suomi)

Follow-up interview (4): Experiences of the Arts

“Clowns are fake.”

“Clowns are scary.” (ref. *IT* & clown murderers)

“I didn’t understand the clown show **AT ALL.**”

“The only thing I learned was that the poor party won the elections... if it even was true.”

(Follow-up interview, Uusimaa)

Follow-up interview (5): Cultural engagement

Researcher: What would you have done differently? If there was something about your visits, preparing for them, anything related to them. If and what other way you would have wished?

(break)

Youth1: Well, maybe in a certain way, more interactive. Not shows you should go to, but those ones that you would have needed to think a little deeper...

(Follow-up interview, Turku)

Approaching the final remarks..

”Huge Finland,
Enormous Art,
Massive Youth,
Colossal Finnish Cultural Foundation,
Huge Excel sheet,
Enormous Complexity,
tiny Maaria.”
(Researcher Maaria Hartman 6.9.2019)



...SO...

How successful we were
from your point of view?!

NOW it's time for your reactions!

WHAT WAS THE ART LIKE?

CONFUSING 18%

SKILLFUL 17%

WEIRD 17%

FUNNY 11%

BRILLIANT 11%



- **CONFUSING**
= rise right arm up
- **SKILLFUL**
= rise left arm up
- **WEIRD** = stand up
- **FUNNY** = laugh
- **BRILLIANT**
= shout it!

HOW DID THE ART MAKE YOU FEEL?

HAPPY 22%

CONFUSED 19%

PEACEFUL 14%

WHO CARES? 14%

WIRED UP 11%



- **HAPPY** = rise right arm up
- **CONFUSED** = rise left arm up
- **PEACEFUL** = stand up
- **WHO CARES?** = laugh
- **WIRED UP** = shout it!

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE?

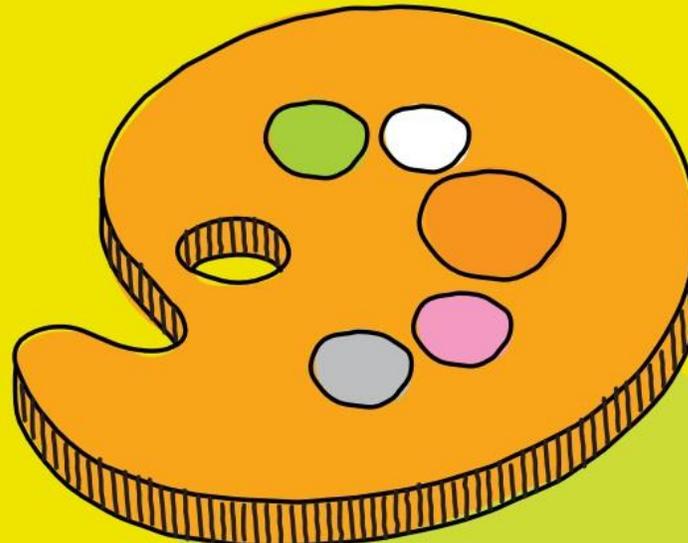
INTERESTING 20%

SUCCESS 13%

BORING 13%

DIVERSE 13%

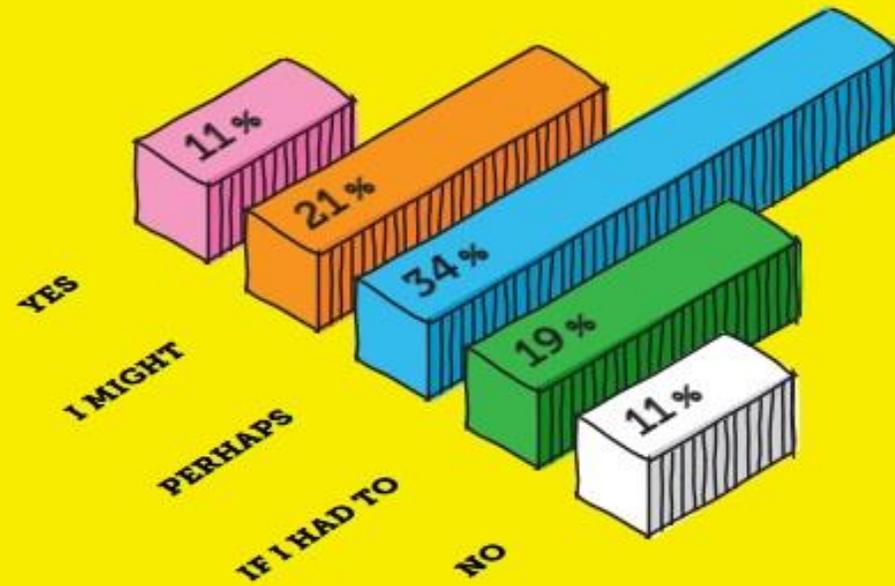
ORDINARY 11%



- **INTERESTING** = rise right arm up
- **BORING** = stand up
- **ORDINARY** = shout it!

SUCCESS = rise left arm up
DIVERSE = laugh

WOULD YOU DO IT AGAIN?





Thank You! Kiitos!

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MUSIC PLAYED: PICTURE AT AN EXHIBITION: Promenade I & I. The Gnome & X. The Great Gate of Kiev / Mussorgsky; VIOLIN CONCERTO NO. 5 IN A MAJOR, K 219 "Turkish" I. Allegro – Adagio – Allegro Aperto / Mozart; WON'T SAY A THING (Beatbox intro) / Felix Zenger; DESTINY / Benin International Musical; LET THE SUNSHINE IN / Heavy Tiger; COME AS YOU ARE / Nirvana

