

From Self to Other: Relational Spheres
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the new local, Brussels, Oct 2018

A hanging rail of T-Shirts, a special bargain of chocolate bars, the showcase of the newest smart phones.... The goods mapped from stores around the Muntplein could have been probably from any mayor city in Europe. Knowing that tomatoes in this supermarket chain in Brussels look the same as the ones in Barcelona or Warsaw, make them seem like they just appeared out of nowhere on this very spot - without a context nor a history. Yet, they all went already through probably thousands of individual hands. Here, the routine of the cashiers to scan the goods or sort the shelves are the point of departure, that shapes the relation with the multifarious stories of countless people beyond this immediate and physical environment. I observe and watch them – in the shops of the Muntplein, in the online footage of production processes – I mime and learn. My own power becomes very obvious and tangible. I can be passive or I move how they are moving, however it pleases me. My privileges become a relation.

Starting out from something that is simply an encounter, I investigate my abilities to experience from within the other. The actions of workers close-by and faraway echo for four hours into the square. Embodiment, de-contextualisation and repetition are the key elements of the four Self-as-Other-Trainings, that I integrate into the spacial environment of the Muntplein. It is the perfect weather for some outdoor performance and at the same time the heat of the sun, that I expose me and some participants to, will intensify the experience.

The space around becomes narrow, since the movements are directed by the props and the boundaries, that they create. I feel disconnected and passive from the space I inhabit. My body is with the dissected and internalised movement routines; my thoughts are with the humans of the researched material. They are not individuals, at the same time I feel deeply connected with each one of them. I am shared, I am somewhat at two places physically and mentally. And through this, I feel above the space.

I start to speculate: Do they sometimes change their movement routines? About what do they think on a daily life basis? I don't know these people personally; they don't even have a face. It is like the experience in a dream, when you see the whole scenario but you do not know the exact characters, but you are still involved into the actions. I start to doubt about time: Are 8,10 or 12 min. really so long, did I made a mistake in the sound piece or did I overhear the sound change to switch the movement?

Distractions happen, when the environment gives a sudden and clear signal, like the sound of a transporter, passing by very close. It happens when the sound, that directs the movements, becomes lower. Apparently the chattering of machines or the rustling of plants on the audio is perceived as disturbing by some passers-by. The disruption also happens, when people walk by very close or try to talk to me. Once I start to be distracted from the surrounding environment, I get out of the routine – for me an artistic and individual annoyance, in a factory it might be a collective disaster. Here again, I am noticeable aware of my individual privileges.

My muscles and my whole body starts to shake. I loose self-control, because my physical limitations are in charge. The sun is burning on my face. At moments, especially when I lead the Training participants, I feel embarrassed or unpleasant, because I sense the red in my face and I sweat a lot. I am exhausted. During the third Training "Textiles" I can not raise my left foot anymore, I have to change sides multiple times. Do I embody an equaliser, a reverse flow of established power relations? The thought off stopping the actions becomes

immediately blocked. I feel a deep responsibility for the unknown other and the critical awareness, that I *can* stop whenever I want to.

In seeking to explore a dialogue between my movements and the movements of the passers-by, I occupy the spot right in the middle of the most frequented area in front of the Muntpunt's shop windows. By this I become an attraction and I understand the quality of this very spot. Very beneficial in my spacial experiments, this central properties are also fundamentally important for the artists, who make parts of their living on this very spot on a daily life basis. It is no question for me, if I will claim this space or not, when the violin player appears and asks for the very same spot. I spontaneously change my place of interventions and this little act becomes the starting point for what I would call a collective state of mind and a fluid negotiation of the space – complemented by the overlapping sounds, the Self-as-Other-Training- participants, a child turning cartwheels and a group of activists building up their stand. I feel like we are sharing some experience together. We are an unstable community.

“It does not concern me!” does not count here. I deeply sense my active position within society and as a human and feelings of individual helplessness are questioned and deconstructed. Invisibility becomes tangible. Complexity is suddenly so simple. The actions prove myself, that we are all responsible for each other, that we are interconnected. And here, empathy becomes not only a rational capability, but a physical state of mind through which we can reshape our connections and provoke critical self-reflection as well as behavioural change.