Choreographing nothing

Gabriel Säll-Exhibition at Galleri Mejan, October 26th- 2016

A large group of people, creating something almost like a congregation waiting for something in a church. What does the eternal waiting do with groups of humans? The preparation for something known or unknown. In the end you cannot be prepared for anything. Even if you have a very specific assignment, waiting for something that turns out to be nothing. Does the space in itself make us forget why we are there? Perhaps some of us remember it more clearly after waiting a while, than they did on their way there?

Nervously or perhaps bored parts of the congregation starts moving around, floating in a cold white environment, where suddenly wine is offered. Small talk, whispering, nervous laughs, exchanging of looks. This eternal waiting creates thoughts. Does anyone know why and what? And more importantly does some members in the congregation know more than I do? And in that case why?

Who is assigned to film, record or take notes? Did they know? How would such material be used? How can this be anything in the end? How can anything be formulated from nothing?

Everything dissolves in to something, the seemingly pointless can depending on the congregation be charged with content, value and meaning.

The arrival of a late and seemingly confused solicitor. He very calmly explains that he was invited by Gabriel. He states that he doesn’t know more than anyone else about this. He doesn't where Gabriel might be, or if he will show
up at all.

He doesn’t know much about how examinations at Art schools work. In general he asks questions concerning the formally bureaucratic and ethical in relation to the ongoing. What is the absolute lowest standard possible of achievement and production in the institution? What are you really required to achieve? Is a seemingly great progress in your practice enough? Understanding a process-is doing nothing in itself a process, can we be sure it is a failure?

18:15 a professor present asks everyone that is filming to stop doing it, since none of the present has agreed to be filmed and/or recorded.

-I really don’t know what to say.

Creating a carefully directed structure, disarming the situation as well as the directed parts. Putting the argument forward “I did nothing”. We are hijacked. Hostages of the setting that is floating, a stage without a director. Parts of preprational uninformed conceptuality (David Horvitz). It brought us together, created discussion.

-If more structured this discussion could have been very powerful.

Is this created from the fact that reality within the school is inadequate? The students who are trying to find themselves in nothing, from nothing. Is the only way out to create nothing-to fail? This installation is like nails on a blackboard-inviting us to take part in nothing, but creating discourse beyond the ethics of the school.

-It is important to keep talking.

-This nothing is unfolding creativity on a stage, testing what you can do and how. In addition to what can you get away with, although, our perception of it would have been different if Gabriel was here. He would have been a
support to the installation.
-We are participants in a conversational piece, do we all agree? Is this an exam or not? How can it be without the student? Critique whilst the performance is going on, without the artist here to defend, explain or talk back...I just don’t know...

Solicitor: Is it required to be present at your examination?
-Why exactly are you here?

Solicitor: I am here from a legal standpoint, I am here to supply facts, but also ask questions. What is acceptable standards? Is it possible to have a definition on paper covering as an interpretation of what is artistic enough or not? Is it good or bad, interesting enough?

What are you expected to produce after five years? Adding to this the complexity of the examination characterized by certain criteria, what exactly are those criteria?

[Frederick Oscarsson]
MFA THESIS
Contextualization for
Public Examination

Gabriel Säll. Royal Institute of Art 08.05.2017

For any contextualization regarding references, intentions, strategies, methods, as well as anecdotes and stories of personal experience relating to Public Examination, call our switchboard operator to be put in touch with a contributor of your choice:

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Mon-Fri 09:30 – 16:00
Among the contributors so far

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Contributors’ comments

“It was fun! Your exam was so insane!”
-David Horvitz, Artist

“From a therapeutic point of view it is fucking terrible”
-Olivia Plender, Ph. D. Fine arts

“a cool way to manage networks”
- Simon Denny, Artist

“Man får vara väldigt anpasslig som förälder till ett vuxet barn!”
Birgitta Säll, Mother

“Finns det någon ansvarig här eller?”
-Fredrik Engström, Lawyer