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director, studied in Moscow

M Martin Tulinius
director, Dada, Kaleidoskop Teatret

EK Elina Knihtilä
actress, Q-teatteri, Baltic Circle

AT Annika Tudeer
writes this

R Rolf Sossna
Masthuggs Teatern, Gothenburg

A Anna Vejjalainen
director, KokoTeatteri, Baltic Circle

K Kristian Smeds
director, Kajaanin City Theatre

AL Andronis Liuga
producer, New Drama Action Festival, Lithuania

E Erik Söderblom
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C Cezaris Grauzinis
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N Nina Kareis
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Written by Annika Tudeer | Photos: Yehia Eweis | Drawing: Jaakko Toijanniemi

Thou shall not...

F: This is the second discussion that we hold during the festival. These discussions are about themes that theatre today deals with. I have a theme for today, that I will return to later. First I would like to start with the Kaleidoskop Teatrets performance Dada that we saw yesterday.

M: There are two reasons why we made Dada. We were discussing what theatre today is and how we can push the borders of actually doing theatre. We tried to push the borders of how theatre is made in Europe and in the world. Of course dadaism was also one of the most important movements of how to think about art in the last century. It was a reaction of the I World War. The whole system was collapsing during that time. We felt that something had changed radically after the September 11th and with the conflicts between the Middle East and the West. There is a new way of thinking that is black and white – either you are with us or against us. The performance Dada is also a political manifestation of the way we see chaos today, in modern life. That is how we relate to dadaism. It is a play about developing art and looking at it today. The story is told by a guy called Gariban who is a hero and an anti-hero at the same time. A combination of Jesus, Mohammed and Hamlet. He has the moslem and the western inside himself, he is a melting point between the two cultures. The play is partly going on in Istanbul and partly in the west.

You have all probably heard about the Dogma films. I don't really find them trendsetting or changing film. It meant that you had to transport the orchestra to the place where you were recording, that is very impractical. We found out that we had to work with the actual way of doing theatre, so we created a basic storyline through the performance, but changing the way of doing it. The start and the beginning was to have a birth in the beginning and a funeral in the end. These two points are always the same, but there is no more logic than that; we change the 19 scenes every time we perform. Suddenly you hadn't the same kind of psychology. The meanings of the performance were changed because of this structure.

E: We could speak long about making plays, the play as a game. Everything seems to be games. I was yesterday talking to a Russian actor from the Formalny Tear rehearsing a play by Sorokin, The Dostoyevsky Trip. The play works with the clash between the new way of expressing oneself and the old classical language of Dostoyevsky. We talked about swear words; what is possible and not possible to say on stage. What is allowed on stage? This guy was very upset after the Dada performance; he said "you can't show these things on stage. In Russia this would not go. The director must be insane".

M: Or brave

E: We could elaborate the theme of borderlines today. We seem to live in a time when the formal borders between the countries are taken

away. Genre borders in performing arts are dissolving. As the social welfare system is being broken down, people are not only let out of hospitals but forced to go out. In Russia things happen in society that we could not allow to happen here, but still this actor thinks that you have crossed borders in your performance in a way that could never happen in Russia.

EK: I wanted to comment on the dirty words – for me it is easier to act when I am given a script with dirty words. It gives me strength on stage. This guy was maybe shocked by the naked woman on stage and how the women were treated. This is no news for me. You can see that on MTV all the time.

E: Also eating children –

M: There is a big difference between the old theatre tradition in the eastern Europe and the western modern Europe. They have probably not crossed some of the borders as we have done. Most of the things that is going on in our performance is mirroring real life. I push away the romantic thought of being on stage. If you want to open people's eyes and change the world, you have to mirror the world and show what is happening. Incest is going on, babies are used for scientific experiments.

E: That is a question of borders. You could not use certain words, you could not show nudity on stage, once. What happened after the 14th of September...

Female voices: 11th!

E: Whatever. It is also a border that has been crossed. A virginity that is lost forever in the cultural sphere. Your performance is also dealing with that there are no borders, no limits of what you can do.

M: I would happily admit that it is not theatrical to put a person on stage to commit suicide. It is still art. I have to show a reflection of what the real world is, not try to do the real world on stage. There are still borders to be crossed in that sense.

E: They actually are crossed. We have this performance artists here.

M: You have extreme body art on stage. Our idea was to comment on the western world. In the eastern Europe after the fall of communism, there is only one way – capitalism, we are showing the flip side of western culture. Denmark is changing a lot. Everything is more superficial, everybody is thinking about themselves. The coming generation is even more egoistical.

E: That is also a border for me. Now you can be openly selfish.

M: To cross that border is to give responsibility to the audience. Do we do this because there is a meaning in it or is only a provocation? Most people who understand the text understand that it is not about provoking. Duchamp was

provoking enormously by exhibiting that huge toilet. I cannot say that our performance has the same impact. At the end of our performance where there is a big party we are saying to people that they have a responsibility.

E: I would like to get back to strength of what Elina said about using bad words.

EK: There are no words anymore that create a scandal.

E: At the same time you have the feeling of strength that you get, although they don't work anymore. You have to use even worse words in order to get the same feeling.

AT: Äh, but swearing on stage is an utterly boring convention and cliché.

E: In Martins performance we can say – we have seen it all. It doesn't affect me at all.

M: I hope you were affected by seeing something in our performance.

EK: I have seen women treated like that. It didn't affect me. Is it our work to show and shock without giving any answers? What I saw was a man in trouble with his role as a man in Scandinavia.

M: You missed a lot because you didn't understand the text. We actually don't use swear words. The father rapes the girl in the end. Only shouting and using swear words wouldn't help, but by building the context it actually shows how this guy rapes his daughter, kills people in the name of science and mistreats his wife.

AT: Are you not working in this, not so new European tradition of shock and horrible things that this German guy and Sarah Kane work is about.

M: There is a big difference between Sarah Kane and our performance, she is very much about violence. She is also describing the sickness of modern society, but it is another story.

AT: It is a trend to use these kind of subject matters like incest, rape and bla bla bla.

M: Kane is much more real life, we are making theatre, it is much more abstract. The main characters are family. Most people wouldn't see a comparison between Kane and our performance.

AT: That is not the point. Okay – are we living in such a decadent world that we need this gore for a kick?

E: What about you guys who are involved in the Eastern part, what do you think (nodding towards Cezaris)?

C: I have only the context of today's conversation. Erik mentioned Sorokin and his play. I know that play. Maybe this is tough to say, since Baltic Circle is co-producing the play. Swear words are not the problem of that play. The problem is about swear ideas. An actor in

my company asked me to read the play, I read it and said: that is crap. It is a very dwarfish author, trying to mock Dostoyevsky, whether you like him or not, and not making a point. It is nice to listen to the story about the Russian actor who is shocked by swearing on stage. Not only Russians, but we as well, are swearing a lot in the rehearsals. We Lithuanians don't have any own swear words in our culture. We borrowed all from Russian. The worst swear word was "oh, you green frog".

I don't see any breaking borders in swearing on stage, it is easy to say "fuck you", we know 1000 ways of doing it, we have 1000 clichés and examples. But today, the big challenge is to pronounce "I love you" on stage. And make this real. It is much tougher. This is more challenging.

E: Interesting. You mentioned Dogma (looking at Martin). It is a reaction on a situation where nothing is tough anymore. You have to turn around and make more out of less, and construct rules for what is allowed in order to be able to do anything.

M: It is not hard to swear or shout on stage, but to make people realise what the story inside is. Our performance is about exactly what you are saying about loving. We try to say "I love you" in the best way. It is actually a story about one man who mistreats his family –

E: But the story doesn't come through since you cut it up. I don't think it is even very important because in a way you say that there is no sense in the world, where one thing would lead to the other. It is chaos, a mess.

M (eagerly): mhm, mhm.

E: You create a cabaret of chaos or darkness. I want to return to the theme on borders and outer and inner censorship. Theatre testing the borders. Is there censorship today?

K: No, definitely no. Not outer censor. Because of this the inner censorship must be quite strong. This is the difficult question of what we do, something about being human today. The way I can say it – the colour black is allowed, but to find the other colours is more difficult. In that sense inner censorship is important for an artist. What are the stories? The most interesting things are what is hidden, that is difficult to find and define. When you do that, then you have to find a form for staging it so that it can be possible for people to understand.

JL: In Russian theatre you have low style and high style. You can't say any bad words, but for Russian people it is low style what you did in your performance. It must be very theatrical, if it is not theatrical, it is nothing. My actors in Moscow – I have made two productions there, Sarah Kane and Kristians piece. One actress didn't want to say the bad words, so we left out two words from Sarah Kane's play. In Finland when you use bad words I wonder

where the meaning is. At school in Moscow I wanted to do a piece on Chernobyl, my professor said that he didn't want to see it done there, he said "do it in the west, it is too heavy". A problem in Russia is that they don't like social or political plays. It is not art for them, it is too difficult to do it as theatrical art. Therefore what is good or bad, this kind of censorship is very categorical. If you don't have a theatrical point it is nothing. The artistic directors in the theatres in Moscow are of an older generation, therefore they don't want to see new drama.

After eight years there I understand that they don't want to see anything on stage about what is done in the toilet, like peeing. But the meaning and the theatrical is left.

M: This has much to do with the border-lines between the social and the psychological. What is the limit of what you say, what touches you as an audience. I met Sarah Kane, half a year before she committed suicide. She was going to play a part in Crave, she was very poetic and shy. Her idea was not to go out and provoke, but her work was very personal. Her plays stems very much from her British culture.

It is romantic to say that you can do this and you cannot do this. Why be provoked by bad words and what is going on on the stage. There must be a reason of why we are seeing a woman being raped. Sometimes you can't see the woods because of the forest.

AL: The major question is now, how much theatre can conquer with reality. It is always a challenge. After September 11th nothing can compete with reality, that was more than can happen ever. I agree with Kristian from an ethical point of view, you can't simply shock people, because of shocking value.

M: That was also my point.

AL: The second point is the aesthetical; cruelty on stage can't be effective through cruelty. For example if you present rape on stage it loses its meaning. Theatre aesthetics can go deeper the more it provokes the audience's imagination. Through showing something but not so that the audience use the image as a consumer. This is the challenge of theatre in contemporary culture and mass culture and mass media. Because massmedia works through artefacts and gives reality, reality, reality. Everything is reality. I think that theatre should go – well, not should, nobody knows what it should do, but it could reveal reality through other means, not realistically.

Then I would like to tell one short thing, a story on the question of borders and what is taboo and not taboo. I saw a Brazilian performance at a festival in Poland. One of the most shocking performances today. It is made in a prison, it is a journey through a real prison where actors are presenting some kind of story and facts from real life in Brazil. People are tortured, they are having sex for real, they use images from mass culture, the audience is about five meters from the actors. I don't know about your opinion, but I am most against this. The most interesting thing was not to see the eyes of actors trying to frighten me, but to see the eyes of the prisoners who were looking at the audience going out. There reality was really hidden.

E: The reality was not hidden, but the reality of that performance was in the context of South America.

AL: But they wanted to make it into a universal problem.

E: Theatre makers have to deal with the border of what is allowed and not allowed in an inner and outer sense. In our culture we have no official censorship, but there are a lot of censoring elements. In Finland we have a long tradition of self-censorship. We are well trained in what you can say and what you cannot say. The censorship today deals with that you have to have an audience, ticket incomes, you have to be popular... The censorship of democracy.

C: I deeply believe that every good performance is not happening on stage, but in the mind of the audience. Everything is allowed on stage, so the question is what you choose to show. The audience sees everything. They get a lot of information. They associate very quickly in their

brains. If you choose shocking, you steal the possibility of every single person to go much further. With theatre technique you can show invisible things without showing it. It is an old truth. Actors in Japan were taught not to express, but to hide. When you hide, you get this "what – is – he – hiding – there" effect. What is behind the mask in No-theatre, what is behind that abstract movement? But the audience will never see on stage what you can see in reality.

A: For me Sarah Kane challenges me to see the inner world. She tells beautiful stories, although they are not nice. I had a problem with your performance yesterday – Dada – because I didn't see the inner world in your performance. It was only showing this and that. Everything was there. I had no possibility to build or feel anything. I sat there for one hour and then I was thinking: this is it. There came another border: am I allowed to walk out? For me it is important to see the inner world and I was pretty sure there would be no changes in that sense, so I left. I cried and walked to our theatre thinking that this is not the kind of theatre that I want to see. In that way I was touched.

M: It touched you, not in a feel-good way. That

In Kristian's performance of Woyzeck, in the end there was the entrance of reality. In the end Woyzeck runs out. This is shown on a big screen. He runs into the street. It is like a direct reportage. He tries to smash a car. A police car is coming by accident. The police came out, they tried to take him before they realised that he was filmed. The guy with the camera protected him from being arrested.

For a few seconds you felt reality.

C: Yes, it was very strong when the guy was smashing the car on the street, but it worked after he smashed the door of the theatre. That was really breaking a taboo. The guy jumps from the stage with an axe and suddenly starts to smash the theatre door that the audience came through. This action was completely illusionistic. There was a door made. It was an illusion. Nobody smashed the real theatre door.

N: I can get somewhat apprehensive with the idea that if we are making the audience as hard as the media makes them? We try to portray the world as it is, but are we then becoming a part of status quo? It is a question I ask myself. By hardening the audience, we prevent them from experiencing the poetry that they have



was our aim. I was saying to the Danish press before the premier that if no one walks out it is a fiasco. Nobody did it in Denmark. I don't like to shock for shocking's sake, but I want to touch people. People are looking at reality at TV and are not touched. This was not about inner pictures, but about real political stuff. Can you go and bomb a country? Can you lock up people just like that? I think it is a very, very sad thing. The main task for artists is to push the world in certain directions. We cannot do that by repeating what Dostoyevsky wrote fifty or a hundred years ago. We have to deal with life today. To look at modern life. If you are provoked, you will not be able to see the inner thing in the piece.

AL: A really short comment. My point was that. Artaud wanted to make cruelty on stage. How far can you take it? You said you cannot have a person committing suicide on stage. It simply breaks what theatre is. Theatre in general is artificial. I am talking about the principle.

E: Why theatre? A crucial question that we have to ask. What do you understand of another human being? You don't get a point of what somebody else is saying. Is it your fault when you don't understand what a person is saying, or is it their fault that you don't understand?

C: You touched this theme on nudity on stage (*to Nina*), that you wanted not to be seen as a sexual object. This comes to the theme how we treat women on stage. I was teaching at the Theatre Academy in Helsinki in 2000. There were plenty of nice and good looking ladies in the production I made. I was accused of being a chauvinist, even a fascist director by them. They said that they wanted to be portrayed as human beings. Not objects of sexual desire. I didn't understand it. If I see a naked woman on stage – what do you expect from me? First I will have some sexual associations, because it is statistics that every normal person in a normal state has a certain amount of sexual images in his head every fifteen minutes. I look at that microphone you know, who knows what is happening in my head? *Laughter.*

N: What I find interesting is that I am a chauvinist pig myself. When I see a naked woman, I ask myself whether she has nice tits. Nicer than mine. I don't judge men like that.

EK: Actually in your Dada performance, you said that all women in the west have their own bhurka. When I was studying acting I only had twenty year older male teachers. They were telling me things about my femininity and my sexuality. They always gave us advice; put in some more erotics, some sexuality and sensuality. I was always asked to seduce the male actor on stage. They never said to the men to do the same.

E: Back to the theme!

M: Women are seen as sexual objects in our society, that is what we point out in our performance.

E: It is not suitable to depict these things as they are in life. In central Helsinki there was this 30 m woman in a commercial in her underwear. She hung on the wall of a shopping mall. The people who went into the shop walked in between her legs. Nobody reacted. Nobody saw it that way. Somehow we try to provoke a little in the theatre, but not too much. If we don't provoke at all, we are nothing. To make a very boring performance could be good, it is really provocative. We have to stop now. Thank you very much for the discussion. We could continue in many directions. Let's continue on Saturday.

M: Sometimes you have to show the pain in order to show that it exists. As artists we should make people think about what they see in the world.

EK: I saw a performance in the Student theatre in Helsinki ten years ago. There were twenty people in the audience sitting in a circle. The actors were healing us, standing behind us putting their hands on us. That really shocked me. It was provocative. I was getting panic attacks. But they were giving love to us. Healing

us. I am now working with the same director – Kirkkopelto. He made me heal the audience in this play we are doing. He gives the audience all the weapons to hate my character, I am very naïve. I am like a teddy bear. A crazy girl. I try to give love to the audience. I try to meet them, cross borderlines. It is really hard. Some hate it.

E: That deals with the border-line between reality and theatre. The artificiality and theatre.

(Technical problems in the recording of the following comment of Rolf Sossna's. We hope we got the main idea right...)

R: There was a play in Sweden in the 60's where the theatre makers wanted to say something important about the war in Vietnam by burning a living butterfly on the stage. They certainly raised a big debate, but no-one mentioned the war. We are not talking about what is happening in society, but whether it is alright to have nude women on stage or not, what I felt or not felt.

A: I was not shocked by your Dada performances.

M: But maybe you will instead sit and think about what really goes on in life.

A: Hmmm.

E: Why theatre? A crucial question that we have to ask. What do you understand of another human being? You don't get a point of what somebody else is saying. Is it your fault when you don't understand what a person is saying, or is it their fault that you don't understand?

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NEXT (AND FINAL) DISCUSSION:
Saturday 29th Nov, 11 a.m. in the Puoli-Q



A: Anna Vejjalainen
artistic director of KokoTeatteri; a member of the Baltic Circle artistic planning group. Age 30, has a child

E: Elina Knihtilä
actor, chairwoman of the board of Q-teatteri; a member of the Baltic Circle artistic planning group. Age 32, has a child

J: Johanna Ropponen
poor free lance director; a producer and a newsletter editor in the Baltic Circle Festival. Age 30, no children

AT: Annika Tudeer
artistic director of Oblivia Company, performer, journalist; a newsletter contributor in the Baltic Circle Festival. Age 39, no children

Early in the Wednesday morning in the Puoli-Q stage...

AT: Me and Johanna asked you to come here because we wanted to hear what you as the female part of the artistic planning group could add to the discussion on networking, gender etc. We could start talking about a gender perspective, especially in the perspective of the situation in the East

J: Quite many of the director students in Russia are women, but after graduating they disappear. There are maybe five female (sic) directors that have done well, like Kama Ginkas wife –

E: Whom we know as “the wife of Kama Ginkas”.
J: She is actually the artistic director of their theatre, and she has been directing for years.

AT: I wonder if you have been discussing a gender perspective in the artistic planning group? For instance, whether you have consciously been thinking about including female directors from the Baltic area and Russia?

J: It sounds always bad, that one should include the token woman. But what really interests me is how the talk about the openness of the Baltic Circle network corresponds with reality? What does this “openness” actually mean for the festival? Who are the ones not showing their work here? Many of the presented directors are very established and not that young anymore nor radical in the ways they make art.

E: The choices from Russia and the Baltic area have been built on old contacts. Germany and Scandinavia are newer.

J: That is fine, but one should not be talking about presenting new and interesting stuff but be straightforward about that these are our old pals.

E: You can't sell a festival telling the media that we are now going to present our old pals and the choices are partly made by the need for partnerships.

J: But that is a danger. It lies in the need for trademarking that is prevalent in our consumer society and enforced by the media. To be the newest and hottest lies in the nature of trademarks. If you want to be the newest and hottest then you really have to be that – where are the groups sweating in their cellars?

AT: You have been seeing a lot during the past two years when you have been working for the festival, even if we can't see much of it here there is hopefully a future that makes it possible to bring in stuff the next time. Or maybe this is not the place for that – which is fine.

E: I have been privileged to work for this festival. It has been amazing. After this festival it will be much easier to know what it all is about.

J: But two years is quite a long time –

AT: What I find difficult in the discussions during these days is that we all have different interpretations of what words like political mean.

J: Because of different cultural backgrounds etc. To be a marxist is completely different for someone in Latvia than for someone in Sweden.

AT: So, what is political theatre for you?

A: It is part of the work that I am doing all the time at the Theatre centre and in my theatre Kokoteatteri that is small with very little money. The reality that I work with is lobbying, meeting members of parliament, politicians and all kinds of important people. The basic question is to have porridge on the table in the morning. That is one part of my politicality. The other parts are questions about men and women – sex and gender, how to bring new things to the festival and how to deal with difficult subjects in performances. There are many levels of political work in theatre.

J: Anna is really doing the crude heavy work. One of the heaviest workloads in this field concerning money and wages – that we should be paid properly. But she does not do political theatre.

AT: On the contrary I think that Anna deals with very political themes in her performances.

J: But it is not like Tribunalen.

Women's Corner

AT: But is Tribunalen the only form to do political theatre?

A: It is a very straightforward way of doing political theatre.

J: Anna really works on affecting the politicians in this country, she works for the rest of us. That is not something you usually talk about in discussions about political theatre.

E: I think that our play Comedy Blues is political theatre. It has a political theme. In one of the monologues one of the actors quotes the famous Jesus words “that the last one comes first”. Once listening to that I realised that we are living in a world where the motto is “the first one comes first”. For me Kirkkopelto tries to ease the pain and wants to heal the audience, but at the same time there is a strong message in the play.

I have been working in many places as an actress – TV, film...and I can say that theatre is the only place where the market does not rule so much. It is the only place where you can be political, because you can't be that it in politics anymore.

J: You can do it in all forms of art.

E: Sure, but not in TV or in media.

AT: Is politicality also in the structure of how you work in the Q-teatteri, where you are the chair?

E: Still we don't get enough money to earn our whole living in the Q-teatteri, so we are all working on the side. I think that we are working as democratic as one can. We don't have an artistic director. We have 50 members and a board of six members – actors, directors and authors. The members choose the board once a year. The board have the power to make the artistic and economic choices. I haven't heard about this kind of structure in other Finnish theatres. People thought it would not work, but it has worked for seven years.

AT: This means a lot of meetings and discussions –
J: Which is good!

A: Politicality is different in different places. Like my good friend Gudrun Enslin once said – politics are everywhere – in bed, in the kindergarten, in the shops, at your job. It is different to see it everywhere than to do it and still a different thing to take politics into your art.

J: But is it necessary to be political in art?

E: I try to influence my audience, to get them to listen to the story that I am telling and I want them to listen to my stories. That is manipulating and I want to stand behind what I am saying.

J: As a director I never think that I try to manipulate people, I don't even try to communicate with them. I never think about my audience.

E: You don't have to stand in front of them. I want the audience to listen to what we are doing.

J: Like Alvis said in Tuesday's discussion - it is arrogant to think that you can influence the audience, that the masses should listen to us. We are doing our work, our art, and if someone finds something it is wonderful. Its enough that the art work exists, it doesn't have to influence.

A: When I choose a play, I don't think that “now I am going to be political” but I want to be in contact with this time and what happens here and now. Sometimes the form is structured after the thing itself. Politics come into the performances because of the time we are living in.

AT: I was first going to say that the performances that my company does are not political, but what is a conscious political choice is how we work – collectively with a lot of responsibility on each individual, for me it is hard to trust people fully. But actually the work we are doing is thematically dealing with structures – power structures in various places from civil war to the art world. They are truly political themes, although I still would not brand us as a political company. Is not all theatre dealing with structures, violence, underdogs, death etc.? So what is political theatre then – is it to make a manifesto? Probably what I see as political theatre is to have a stand point and claim it – analysing it and aesthetising it. It is a rather simple way to put it. But can one do political theatre without knowing that it is political?

E: Manipulating or not. As an actress theatre is the king of acting, you are there with the audience. The contact between audience and acting is what I mean by influencing the audience. They influence me as well. Theatre doesn't exist without an audience.

J: You are talking about that acting doesn't exist without the audience, but perhaps theatre itself does. The contact stuff is more about acting.

E: That is my work – to manipulate people.

J: Why not to be with people.

E: Thinking about gender. It is so funny to see all those guys here because theatre is a very feminine form of art. It is social work, it has strong emotions. These are features that are seen as feminine. Most of the audience is middle aged females. Sometimes it feels really silly.

J: So you are there on the stage – to manipulate these middle aged women –

E: Not that so much, but that the angry young men are shouting at their mothers, trying to influence their mothers. It is really funny when to see a male actor acting super masculine.

J: Besides of Kate Pendry here at the festival, I see a strong division between stage and the audience which is very undemocratic. Very manipulating. You talk, they watch. This is also a political choice. Nobody even walks away from a performance in Finland, because it is not a nice thing to do. One rather cuts his veins than walks out of a performance here.

I have made a lot of street performances. There people always can walk out if they want to, they can smoke a cigaret, even interrupt the play.. Since I don't want to manipulate people I want to give them their choice.

AT: It is also a matter of entrance, of ticket prices. If you have to pay 10-100 euros to see a performance then it is meant for a certain group of people.

J: Like the Helsinki Festival's slogan “Art belongs to everyone” ha-ha, for a ticket price of 30 euros.

E: In Teater Tribunalen you pay according to your wages.

AT: Performances are also esteemed by how expensive the tickets are. The more expensive tickets the more professional and presumably the better the performance is. If it is free or just a couple of euros it is considered amateur-theatre. Unless you make a point of charging a ridiculous small sum.

J: Art should not be a product. But when you apply for money you have to have some kind of self sufficiency in your budget, that implies that you need the ticket income. Buy and sell.

E: Since the state doesn't have anymore money to give to culture, there is the question of sponsor money. We have to fight with sport. Since the doping scandals we should have a good situation and get money from the companies.

J: Another way is not to make any money, and work in the streets with no backing. That is a choice, but then you are not recognised... but you can do your work.

AT: I would go back to what you said about masculinity and femininity – are you saying that all the bearded male directors are actually very feminine?

E: They are. Since Jouko Turkka we have had very masculine men as the model for male actors. I have been a student of his students, working with these guys who are great actors but very over masculine in their shouting and grunting at their mothers like angry young men.

Besides in these gender discussions it is funny that it is always the women discussing this, here we are four women discussing as if it would be our problem. It is everyone's problem. It is about justice and human rights. We are treated as female this and that – actor, director, comedienne. I don't like that at all. I want to be on the same line as the bearded ones.

J: There are female authors and authors.

AT: What is this super-masculinity grunting away in the theatre world – is it a parody? In order to analyse gender structures you have to analyse men and masculinity to make their invisible gender visible. We are very visible, we female species.

A: It is not our problem, but their problem.

E: The guys have problems with their role. Ten years in the future women are going to be controlling our society. Most of the academic students are women.

J: But will they really control the place, like in Russia with the disappearing directors. Nearly all of us doing this festival are women, but where are we seen?

E: It will change. Think – a hundred years ago we would have been diagnosed as hysterical women and put into the loony-bin.

J: There is a risk though, that the invisibility will happen and go on. There are many female directors in Finland, but they are never considered as good as their male counterparts. When professions that are male dominated will be taken over by women the esteem of the profession is diminishing.

E: But who is going to give birth to all the Finnish children?

AT: The problem is that children are considered a problem.

A: That is one of the hidden political issues – I have children, I have never had a salary, I might not get a pension. I have done this for seven years. I am still alive. Nobody dies of hunger here. The difference is if you are used to something and then jump to something like this you are going to be horrified. Short-term work is a normality for me. These structures are a part of the reality of my generation. But it is also a choice for me.

J: We are living in consumer society, you can give a damn about all the stuff you are supposed to need and say; I just need to do my work. It's not the money I need but other things.

AT: Still it is not only a personal choice but part of a bigger structure.

J: You are not supposed to talk about in-equality in Finland, because we are sooo equal - compared to Russia or Mocambique.

E: When I was studying at the Theatre Academy I was a very angry young woman. I felt somewhat betrayed by the fact that 1000 people are trying to get into the school. 700 women. Our class consisted of 9 boys and 7 girls. Because girls don't get jobs they said.

As a woman you should not be blaming others for not giving you space etc. Today we have Tarja Halonen as president. She is a woman in power, not acting like a man. Most women start to act like men when they get power. There will be a change of how women are dealing with power.

J: Hasn't it become fashionable to listening to the group in companies, the same goes for directors.

A: A possibility for the future is to look for directors and authors of different sex, not as the main aim but as something to put in the back of your mind.

J: What has been left out, what did we forget about.

E: Talking about this subject about gender I always feel very embarrassed. Basically it is about getting the same rights. As an artist I can do what I want to do. If I am not given a job I do it anyway.

J: One problem is that media still are looking for the next young genius. Who never is a woman. Look at the photos of how male directors and how female directors are represented. There are always these genius posing by the men. How is it still possible to nurture the romantic myth of the male genius?

AT: There we go back to good old consciousness raising. Be aware, and say it aloud.

ERIK SÖDERBLOM: (*pops his head behind the curtain*) What is going on in here..?

J: Hey, there is the bad guy!

E: The bearded bad guy!

ERIK: (*trying to sneak closer to the table*) Yeah yeah I'm the really bad guy...

J,E,A,AT: Go away, Erik, we don't want you here. This is the conversation about the problems we are having with you bearded ones!

ERIK: Yeah yeah but I think I have some things to say about it...

J,E,A,AT: NO, ERIK!

ERIK: ... Hmmpff... (*leaves*).

AT: So, where were we...

JUKKA HYTTI: (*pops his head behind the curtain*) You can finish your beard conversation in peace but we are gonna go to Takomo now.

E: Oh man I promised to take Mellika to Takomo!

AT: Ok, let's close up this conversation for now. But, to be continued.

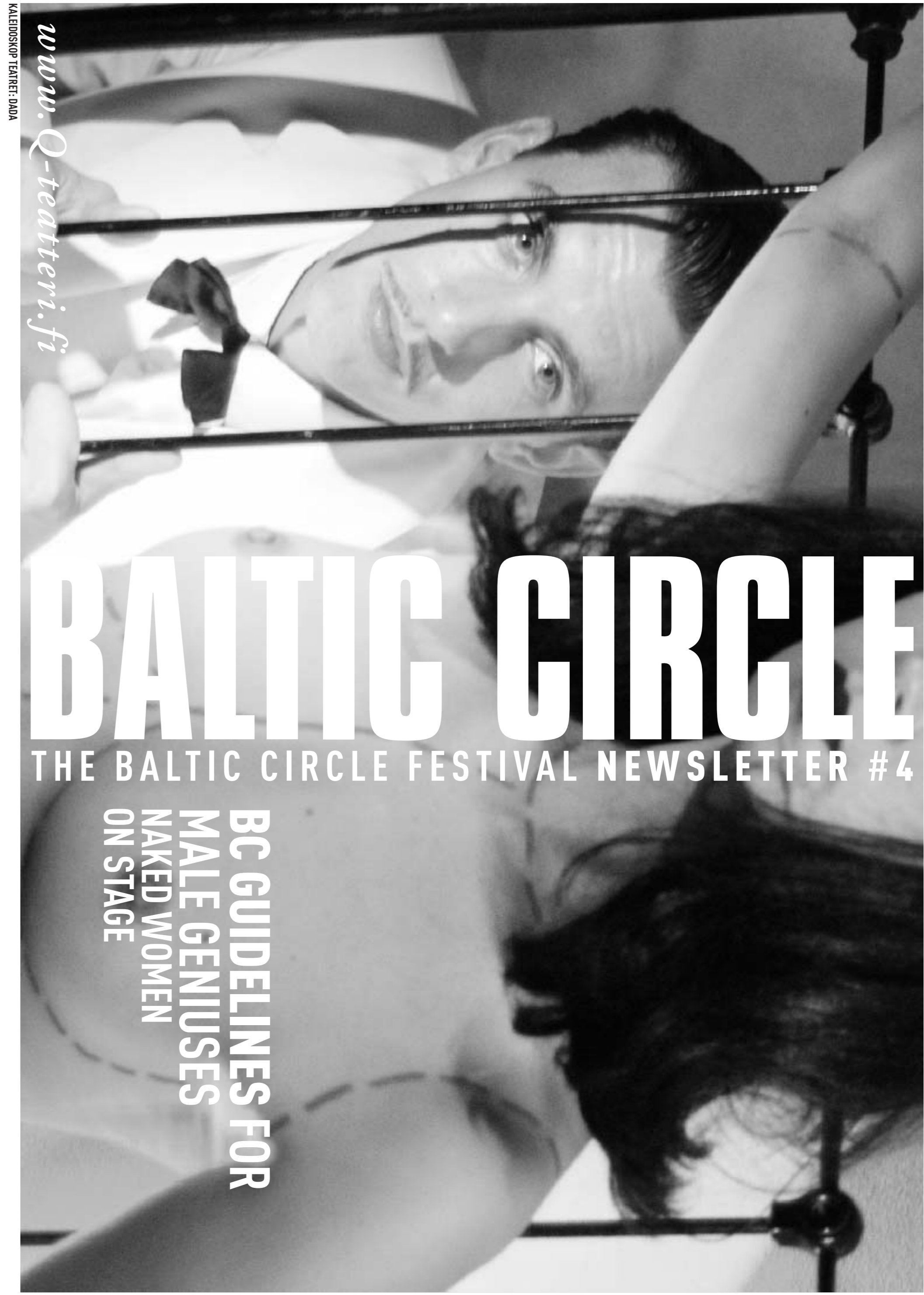
E,A,J: (running towards the door): Yes! See you later!

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