

// F - E- G //

// F - E- G // is the title of my independent degree project, created for the Master program New Performative Practices at Stockholm University of the Arts.

The project was a mere 1/4 of the semester's total points and was intended as a means for presenting and understanding my artistic practice and its various aspects (as per course's intended outcome).

// F - E- G // was presented publicly in three separate instances between the 26th and the 28th of April 2023 in the university's theatre hall at Brinellvägen 58. The format chosen was a 50 minute performance with a 10 minute participatory section at the beginning of the show. I was the performer, as well as the music and recordings' editor, text writer, and project coordinator, in collaboration with SKH's producer and staff. That the project took on a neatly packaged performance format was a slight surprise, despite it having been widely by design, due to my passion for the theatre, the stage-space, and to a curiosity for figuring out how all the seemingly disparate aspects of my practice could fit together. Fitting it all together felt like an impossibility and that challenge was both terrifying and compelling at the same time.

My aims were multiple in the project. On the one hand it was a challenge to myself, in shifting from a repertoire-dance-company-life to a solo-performer-and-creator-life. It was psychologically and physically meaningful, as well as acutely insightful on several occasions, as I wrestled with the doubt and uncertainties of not knowing myself in this kind of situation. Parallel to this personal inner challenge I was also trying to fit together the various themes and practices that I had been exploring during the two years of the course: a somatic sci-fi based practice, clown technique, the use of voice, the relationship of the performer to the audience, finding honesty and repeatability in performance, the use of chance and randomness in creation and performing, the use of language in guiding others toward physical and personal insights and experiences, what kind of social impact performance art can have, Nonviolent Communication (NVC) as a choice of life and, finally, reconnecting to my ageing dancing body. I call the method chosen to explore these various interests and curiosities a personal-experiential method, for lack of a better term, inasmuch as I endeavoured to explore the ideas by trying them out, physically and concretely, over a span of time that allowed for reflection and introspection (and, as ever, a number of unanswered questions).

The performance was meant as a metaphor for and a public presentation of my artistic practice and history.

The external dramaturgic basis of the piece is that an alien entity from the planet of F-E-G endeavours to explain to humans (the audience) its origins and the story of how it came to planet Earth and interact with homo sapiens. The alien (from now on they/them) explains in the way they can, with the means familiar to them (dance, theatre, performance), how they never really found their way, nor necessarily adapted to humaneness, how they saw the world and attempted to establish a sense of belonging. The alien goes through an array of very humanly recognisable emotions, and attempts to connect to the audience, trying to speak and explain, unaware that their language (a gibberish composition of, among others: italian, french, english, swedish, portuguese, and spanish sounds and cadences) is largely unintelligible to the listeners. The internal dramaturgic basis of the performance is, on the other hand, autobiographic. It deals with my personal and professional trajectory within dance and performance, as well as with how I feel and have felt at some moments in my life in relation to humanity (other's and my own).

The title // F - E- G // is a play on words, as it mimics the phonetics of the english word "effigy" (something to be burnt in protest, or an image to commemorate and honour) while spelling the swedish word "feg" (meaning cowardly). Here again a reference to an external phenomenon or

action (the effigy) together with an internal psychological state (fear and stuckness), both of which are relevant to my artistic process and practice.

The outcome of the project was rich in personal learnings and challenges, as well as a personal milestone in my development as an artist and a person. I hope it served as a moment of poetry and enjoyment to those who visited and participated in the performances: that they might recognise themselves in similar situations and feelings and that they might be either relieved or comforted or somehow get the chance to witness their experience through my own (or rather the character's), through the dramaturgy of the performance and the participatory moment.

The budget of the presentation was mainly spent on inviting three fellow artists to spend time with me in the studio. These were Arvid Person Westberg, Per Sörberg, and Rachel Tess. Arvid, whom I had met during the course with Per, assisted me during the work on the clown scene (with the chair). I am deeply indebted to Per, my clown teacher, for encouraging and suggesting the use of gibberish during our session. Rachel guided me through an initial shaping of the Sci-Fi practice with the jacket. More invaluable feedback was received by my peers in the NPP program as well as by my wonderful mentors: Anna Adeniji and Mélanie Demers. The finishing touches to the whole experience were masterfully lit by and with Ronald Salas. Finally, my uncle Berry Hayward helped me with the introductory text.

A concluding note on the dark-room experience, as the video cannot fully convey the experience. The session was designed after a practice I developed upon leaving the dance company. During my dance company life I was surrounded by mirrors virtually all the time. There were fewer windows than mirrors in my average day at work. Our own image was reflected back to us continuously, except for the few times in which we might explore sensing each other and ourselves without the aid of a mirror (also, we didn't have mirrors when performing, but then there still was an outer gaze that influenced the work). I wanted to get a way from seeing myself moving all the time, so I turned off the lights. As it happens, the small studio I was renting had no windows and the emergency exit signs were not working. I was plunged in almost complete darkness and I really enjoyed this new sensation. As I practiced, I noticed how my senses were stimulated differently. I lost consciousness of directions, not sure where the floor or the walls were, with a sense that the size of the room was fluctuating, expanding or contracting. I also found very interesting what was happening to my sense of proprioception. Having been steeped in the idea that reality is internalised through the sense of sight, I found that I sensed the body differently in relation to itself and the qualities of movement. This brought me to the realisation that we are living in a very sight-centred society, where the main interface we have for connecting to the world and each other is sight (largely in the form of screens). All this in connection to my strong interest for questions around racism gave form to both the design of the experience and the text. I very much thank my mentor Anna Adeniji for her constructive input and feedback on this section of the work. Some of the participants I was able to speak to after the presentation reported an experience of calm disorientation, connecting to otherness in themselves, and wonder at the question: "where do I come from?"

For a more comprehensive view of my artistic practice during the two years at SKH please visit my Research Catalogue site at <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/82db91825a5ca2dcf19ae6b16f28d33a> (to navigate the site, once exposition is open: hover cursor on the top left of the page for a menu).