The Harbour, The Raft and The Water

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by

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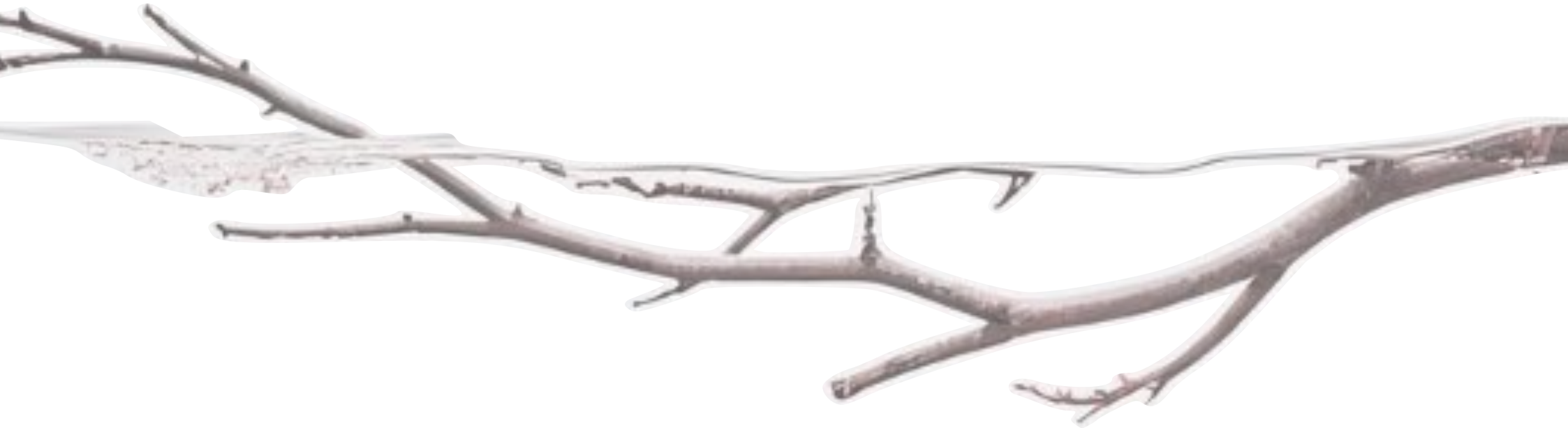
Abstract

This project investigates the methodology of TeaterPi, an Italian Stockholm-based theatre collective known for its multilingual, transcultural performances and collaborative devising practices that bridge the gap between professional and non-professional theatre-makers, and the fluid leadership used within this context. Departing from an initial exploration of film montage theories applied to performing arts, the research shifts to an in-depth examination of fluid leadership, a dynamic and adaptable approach that has organically emerged from TeaterPi's process. Fluid leadership, characterised by a conscious shifting of roles and responsibilities, a willingness to relinquish control and self determination, and a focus on facilitating collective creativity, directly reflects TeaterPi's commitment to ensemble-driven creation and the integration of diverse skill sets within a mixed ensemble. Through a detailed case study of the collective's production of *Pinocchio 2.0*, the written reflection analyses the practical application of fluid leadership and TeaterPi's methodology, highlighting how this approach fosters collective ownership, embraces emergent artistic choices, and cultivates a strong sense of belonging among the diverse ensemble. Situated within contemporary discourses on collaborative and transcultural theatre-making and evolving leadership models in the arts, the research argues for the significance of fluid leadership as a valuable alternative to hierarchical structures, offering potential benefits for artistic innovation, alternative work setting and process and ensemble empowerment in the performing arts field.

The Harbour, The Raft and The Water



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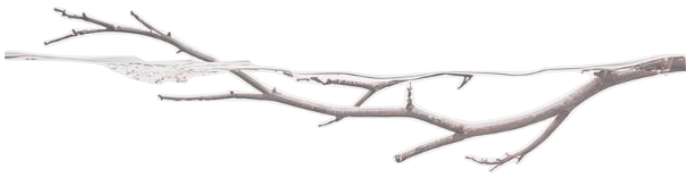
Opening Remarks : I ARE THE OTHER

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the all the people I have encountered during this journey: to my fellow colleagues of this master with their knowledge and kindness. They have contributed more than what they think. To all the amazing artist (dead or alive) which I have encountered or had the pleasure to work with, and their passion and commitments. To All Teachers and practitioners of any arts who's knowledge shaped mine. To the people met along this path with me: for many various and numerous reasons, you have changed me. I want to thank you for this and being primary source of inspiration to me by their commitment to life and creation.

To all You: "*YOU AM MY OTHER*" [1]

I also thank my supervisor at the Stockholm University of the Arts, *Synne Behrnd*t, for her guidance, support, and constructive feedback throughout this process. I am grateful to my Mum, *Clarissa Meneghelli* and Dad, L*uciano Caldognetto,* for their understanding and encouragement, especially for supporting my need for freedom and discovery. A special thanks goes to my brother, Simone Caldognetto, for being an artist and a person I admire. Three more special thanks go to Eliisa Mela Paula, my daughter, for reminding me the reason why I continue to do performing art. To my son, Dante Lucio Sandro, for reminding me the importance of resistance as a core element of a human beings life, and to the patience of Linda Jacobson, my wife.

Last but not least, the most heartfelt thanks goes to all members, people and audience of my artistic child: TeaterPi



[1] Rimbaud, letter to Paul Demeny, Charleville, 15 May 1871
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduates/modules/en354/syllabus/seminars/rimbaud_-_letter_may_15_1871.pdf

1. Introduction

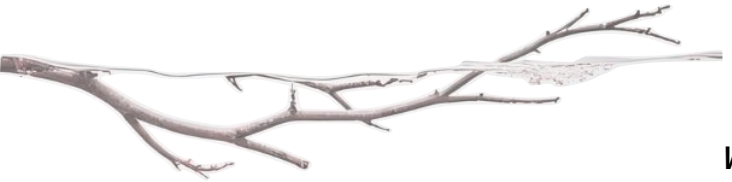
1.1. Background and Shift in Research

Dear reader

When I applied to the Master in Performing Arts at Stockholm University of the Arts, I had a very different research project in mind. My original proposal focused on the use of **film montage and editing techniques as compositional strategies for theatre-making**. I wanted to explore when the logic of the cut, the frame, and the sequence is applied to live performance, which in my view, is the way I naturally create theatre performances. That early research question, in fact, informed the initial phase of my artistic exploration and continues to influence the way I think about composition in devising processes.

But then something shifted, about halfway through my journey: the project changed direction. It didn't collapse, rather it **restarted from within**: a research from the rehearsal room and lived practice of **TeaterPi,** the multilingual, transcultural theatre collective based in Stockholm where I hold many roles and the title of artistic leader. Following this shift this project intend to be a reflection on **methodology** and **process** of creation within TeaterPi, and on my role as a **leader** within that context.

The questions that shaped this thesis came from rehearsals, meals, post-show talks, frustrations, jokes, and silences.



What is TeaterPi's methodology?

How does collective devising work in this group?

What is my role in the process? Am I a leader? And if so, what kind?

1.2. The Three Main Subjects Of Research

As mention before the three axis of this project are: *TeaterPi's Methodology and Process, My Role as a Leader and Pinocchio 2.0: A Case Study.* I will now introduce these subjects of inquiry which will be later expanded in the body of the research.

1.2.1. TeaterPi's Methodology and Process

TeaterPi is the core of the investigation. This introduction focuses as first on why TeaterPi was born. It then explores our functionality, our methodology and our process. You can find practical information about us in our website which offer a good overview of our work and goals. [2]

This collective group started in 2010 in Stockholm and over the past decade has become my artistic home: I define it as **The Harbour** (Using metaphor is something I tend to do a lot while I am trying to explain complex subjects, please bare with me). The Harbour is a gathering free space for people with or without experience who are willing to create performing art. It was born out of a need: not only to make theatre, but to **create a space where language, culture, and identity could be multiple**. A place for those who, like me, carry more than one cultural code, and who are not always at ease in a singular national or artistic narrative.

A space for *strangers*.

I use this word deliberately, drawing from *Albert Camus* notion of the "**stranger**" of which I am very found and I understand in this way: someone who exists both inside and outside, alienated but deeply perceptive .[3]

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[2] https://www.teaterpi.com/

[3] Cook, K. (2022). THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF THE STRANGER AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL USE IN LITERATURE. EPIGRAM (e-Journal), 19(2), p. 150–161.

At TeaterPi, strangeness is not a deficit but a **creative force**. Our group gathers trained and untrained artists, people with a connection to Italian language and culture, and others who found us by chance. Some come seeking community, others language, others a stage. What unites us is not a common identity, but a **shared commitment to belonging, freedom, and collective creation.**

TeaterPi's creative methodology is rooted in a collaborative and emergent process of devising. We are a multimedia and multidisciplinary theatre group where the script is just one of many other material, or as I like too call it: a **pre-text** (*"pre-testo"* in Italian means both something before a text, and a reason to start). In this perspective, a Pre-text is more something we build through explorations of different material through improvisation, collective brainstorming, and the sharing of personal experiences. This process is highly dynamic, with ideas and responsibilities constantly shifting and evolving. Diverse artistic skills like acting, music, visual arts and writing are integrated organically, creating a complex and multifaceted theatrical language.

If I introduced TeaterPi as a Harbour where strangers to feel anchored to their current social environment, another key metaphor for understanding our process is **The Raft.**

Building the raft, in our context, represents both the performance and the process: it is the vehicle for our creative journey, a platform built from collective effort to reach the audience that navigated through shared decision-making. It is not a rigid structure but a flexible and adaptable vessel, capable of accommodating diverse perspectives and unexpected discoveries. The performance is usually assembled through a series of improvisations and storytelling exercises, where each member contribute their unique experiences and interpretations of the subject. This collective exploration, the assemblage of all material created facilitate the emergence of key themes and visual motifs that ultimately shape the final performance.

1.2.2. My Role as a Fluid Leader:

This **collective** research is also a **personal**.

I am not observing from outside. I am inside it. Deeply. Which makes this investigation necessarily **subjective**.

Since I am both here subject and object, let me introduce myself: I am an Italian-born theatre-maker, pedagogue, project leader and facilitator, with education and training in acting, directing, scenography and pedagogy. Long before this research **collective and devising processes in performing arts** has been one of my deepest interest of research. As professional theatre maker I have been working with Theatre since the age of 13, and I have professional experience in both institutions and free groups dynamics. .

Within TeaterPi I act as a **Leader** among many other roles**.** . This position emerged from my practical experience of navigating the complexities of collaborative creation between professionals and non professional members. In this section I will investigate define the role I have come to name: **a fluid leader**.

Fluid leadership rejects the model of a hierarchical director imposing a singular vision. Instead, it emphasises facilitation, mediation, and the creation of a supportive environment where all voices are valued.[4]

I see myself as a catalyst, prompting exploration, challenging assumptions, and encouraging dialogue.

My leadership is dynamic and relational, adapting to the needs of the group and the stage (meaning whatever space in which the performance takes place) of the creative process. At times, I may provide structure and guidance, while at others, I step back and allow the ensemble to lead. I introduced before to the concept of The Harbour and The Raft and I would like now to continue with a new metaphor: Leadership as **The Water**.

[4] Crevani, L. (2015). Is there leadership in a fluid world? Exploring the ongoing production of direction in organizing. Leadership, 14(1), 83-109.

The fluid leader is the water that where the Harbour starts and ends, the water supporting the raft and allowing it to navigate the currents of the creative process, sometimes gently guiding its course, sometimes allowing it to drift freely.

I will continue to develop this idea further in the text, though example o and a study case. My intention for this role is to facilitating a more open-ended exploration, both aesthetically and as a performing arts methodology aiming at discovering a different leadership style able to shape alternative, sustainable and collaborative practice.

1.2.3. Pinocchio 2.0: Leadership and collective devising in Practice: a study case.

This research follows also the creation of the **Pinocchio 2.0**, a multi-medial, multilanguage performance shaped while this investigation was occurring. [5]

Pinocchio 2.0 serves as a primary case study for this research, offering a concrete example of TeaterPi's methodology and my fluid leadership approach in action. This project involved revisiting and reimagining our 2012 adaptation of Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*, exploring themes of nostalgia, identity, and the anxieties of contemporary parenthood. Carlo Collodi's *Pinocchio*, a tale deeply embedded in Italian cultural heritage, offered a rich tapestry to explore these themes from a contemporary perspective. Our initial impulse was not to create a faithful adaptation but rather to use the core narrative as a springboard for a devised performance that would reflect our individual and collective experiences of being "strangers" in a new land, constantly undergoing translation and transformation. The project was conceived through our established methodology of collective creation, where the final form would emerge from the interplay of individual contributions, improvisational explorations, and a shared aesthetic sensibility influenced by our diverse backgrounds and a sense of nostalgia for a past cultural belonging, as well as a direct engagement

[5] https://sv.teaterpi.com/event-details/pinocchio-2-0-2024-11-16-19-00

with the present. The recording of the whole performance at *Alias Teater* and the interview of TeaterPi members, which is documented material intent to support and gives a more collective view on the process, will be offered to be look at in the **Appendix,** where will be possible also for the reader to explore material produced before this master that could help to understand TeaterPi as a collective.

Pinocchio 2.0 emerged as a compelling project for TeaterPi, driven by a confluence of our ongoing artistic interests and a desire to revisit and reimagine familiar narratives through our unique collective lens. As a theatre collective with a diverse membership often navigating the complexities of cultural identity and the immigrant experience, we are drawn to stories that resonate with themes of transformation, belonging, and the search for self. The project's origins lie in a collective desire to engage with the original story in a contemporary way, reflecting our current experiences and concerns. The devising process was highly collaborative, drawing on the diverse cultural backgrounds and skills of the ensemble. *Pinocchio 2.0* reactivated a production first staged in 2012. This new version invited us to remake the story collectively, across time, with new people, under different conditions. The process involved revisiting both the original novel and our previous adaptation allowing us to unpick and rebuild what the tale could mean today, within our transcultural context.

The decision to use *Pinocchio 2.0* as a case study emerged early in the research process. It was not only TeaterPi's most recent production but also a distillation of our contradictions, experiments, and collaborative urgencies. The Chapters of the study case are inserted as monthly chapters in the text, using a different font and colour, to help the reader navigating the composition of the text. The inserts follow the chronological timeline of the project which goes from From December 2023 to Februari 2025. Rather than a retrospective report, this chapters follows the project from within month by month tracing how the work grew, shifted, resisted, and surprised us. It is less a logbook than a study through practice: a space where artistic research arises not from external frameworks but through the lived conditions, challenges, and discoveries of making.

Here in this text I use the study case to explain with practical examples and more in depth analyses of the subjects of my research. I also use the study case in order to navigate the emerging forms, frictions, and questions of the piece. In doing so, I also articulated TeaterPi's evolving methodology: a floating practice of devising, reassembling, and collective meaning-making across languages, bodies, and belonging.

My role as a **fluid leader** involved facilitating the exploration of these themes, guiding the development of the narrative, and ensuring that all voices were heard. The intent of focusing on Pinocchio 2.0 for this research lies in its ability to illuminate the dynamics of collaborative creation and the challenges as well as possibilities of fluid leadership within a transcultural context.

1.3. Documentation and Perspective

The documentation methods employed in this research reflects the multifaceted nature of the creative process within TeaterPi. They include:

- **Video** and **audio recordings** of rehearsals and performances, to capture the evolution of the work over time.
- **Written notes and journals**, documenting personal reflections and observations.
- **Interviews** with TeaterPi members, providing insights into their individual experiences and perspectives.
- **Photographic documentation,** seizing key moments and visual elements of the performances.

Initially, my approach to documentation aimed for objectivity, seeking to capture the creative process as an external observer. However, I recognised the inherent subjectivity of my position. As both participant and researcher, my perspective inevitably shaped the way I documented and interpreted the events.

In this context, **memory** emerges as a significant tool for documentation. The use of memory is an instinct tool embedded in TeaterPi and myself. Memory is not simply a passive recording of events, but an active process of selection, interpretation, and reconstruction. It is shaped by individual experiences, cultural backgrounds, and emotional responses. In a collaborative setting like TeaterPi, where the creative process is highly dynamic and emergent, memory plays a vital role in shaping our understanding of what happened, how it happened, and why it happened.

This reliance on memory, alongside other documentation methods, acknowledges the inherent subjectivity of the research. It recognises that the personal and the collective are inextricably intertwined in collaborative artistic practice, and that our understanding of the creative process is always filtered through our individual and shared memories.

1.4. Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations have been paramount throughout this research, guiding my approach to data collection, analysis, and representation. The following principles have been central:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants involved in the research, including members of TeaterPi, were fully informed about the purpose and scope of the study. They provided their explicit consent for their contributions to be documented and used for research purposes. This consent was ongoing, and participants were reminded of their right to withdraw at any time. It was important to have a constant dialogue about the research and to provide space for them to express concerns.

- **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** The privacy of participants was protected by ensuring confidentiality. Where necessary, names and identifying details were anonymised to prevent the disclosure of sensitive information. This was particularly important when discussing personal experiences or potentially sensitive topics that emerged during the creative process.

- **Respect for Autonomy:** The autonomy of participants was respected at all times. Their opinions, experiences, and perspectives were valued and represented accurately. Participants were given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on any material that directly quoted or referenced them. I tried to ensure that their voices were not only heard but also actively shaping the direction of the research.

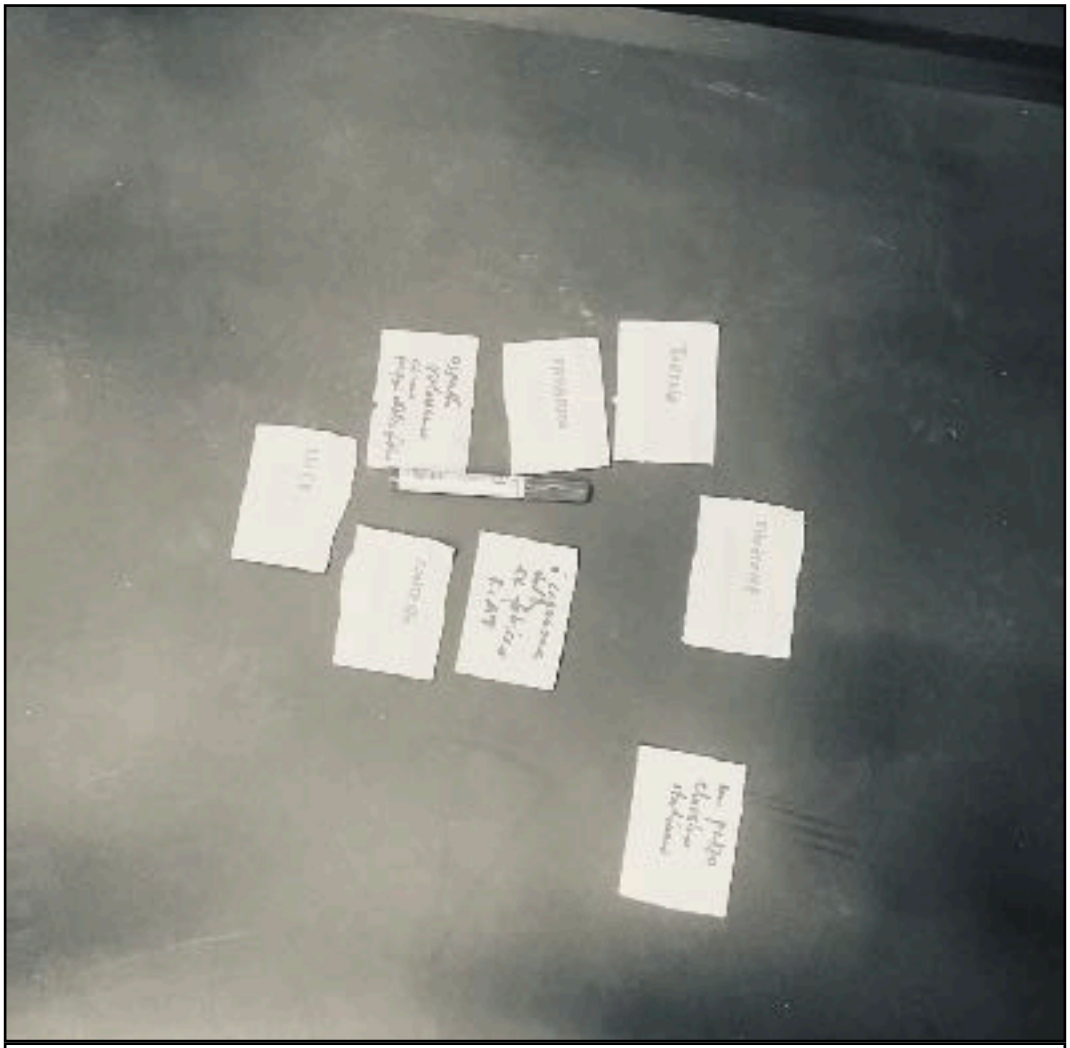
- **Power Dynamics:** I have been acutely aware of the power dynamics inherent in my position as both a researcher and a leader within TeaterPi. This awareness has been crucial, given that some members may have limited experience with performing arts or research methodologies. I have strived to mitigate these dynamics by:

- Fostering a collaborative and participatory research environment, where all voices are heard and valued.
- Explicitly acknowledging and addressing my own authority and influence within the group.
- Creating mechanisms for shared decision-making in the research process, empowering participants to contribute to the research design and data analysis. To remain flexible and to adjust my approach was a paramount to ensure that participants felt comfortable and empowered.

- **Documentation and Representation:** The process of documenting and representing the creative process raised specific ethical considerations:
  - The potential for misinterpretation or decontextualisation of creative work when excerpts or fragments are presented. I paid particular attention to provide sufficient context for all examples and to represent the works in a way that honours integrity.
  - The challenge of capturing the ephemeral and embodied nature of performance through documentation. I have acknowledged the limitations of documentation and emphasised the importance of lived experience and embodied knowledge.
  - The responsibility to represent participants fairly and accurately, avoiding stereotypes or generalisations. My strategy was to be mindful of the diversity of experiences and perspectives within the group.
  - Ensuring that the documentation process itself did not disrupt or impact the creative process. I aimed to be transparent about the documentation process and to minimise its intrusion.

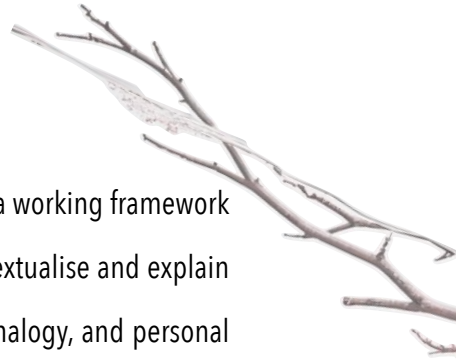
- **Ongoing Reflection:** Ethical practice also involves ongoing reflexivity. I have continuously examined my own biases, assumptions, and influences on the research process. This self-awareness is essential for ensuring the integrity and trustworthiness of the findings.

These ethical considerations are not merely procedural requirements but are integral to the collaborative and respectful spirit of TeaterPi's work. They reflect a commitment to ethical practice that extends beyond the research context and informs our artistic endeavours as well.



Doc 1. In this picture, you can see an example of exploratory material from the rehearsals. In this case, the photo showcases an exercise in collective creation, using memory and personal stories to connect with the main characters and the central theme of the project Pinocchio 2.0.

Doc 2. This picture represents some of the ethical dilemmas I encountered during this project. While asking the members of TeaterPi for consent has always been crucial and intentional, the decision to capture the intimacy of our rehearsal spaces is never simple. In this case, I wanted to document the moments just before the premiere in order to offer insight into how the audience engages with the community work of TeaterPi. At the moment it was taken, many ethical questions arose. The decision to include it here has been made possible by the fact that the way it is displayed prevents the individuals from being recognised..



1.5. Key Definitions

I will now define and contextualise a series of terms for this research. These definitions are not intended to be exhaustive but rather to provide a working framework for the specific context of this study. Using this vocabulary will connect existing theories and current discussion in the field. It will help to contextualise and explain what I consider as relevant in what we do. Furthermore I acknowledge that my approach to these definitions is often shaped by metaphor, analogy, and personal artistic vision. This is how I often "form" my understanding of complex concepts and translate them into practical application.

- **Strangers and Migrant:** In this context, 'strangeness' refers to the feeling of unfamiliarity, displacement, or otherness that arises from encountering different cultures, languages, and identities. This concept is influenced by Albert Camus's exploration of the 'stranger' as someone who exists outside societal norms and expectations.[6] While not always negative, strangeness can be a complex and multifaceted experience, encompassing both alienation and the potential for new perspectives. TeaterPi's work often explores the experience of strangeness, particularly in relation to the immigrant experience and the challenges of integration for a migrant perspective. This concept is important as it is a core feature of the devised work of TeaterPi. While the terms immigrants and migrants can have specific meaning, in this research, it primarily refers to individuals who have moved to a new country or region. Often seeking opportunities to leave the habitat behind and a context for new experiences. This definition is informed by Camus's portrayal of the stranger, as immigrants can experience a sense of being outsiders in their new environment, navigating unfamiliar social and cultural landscapes. TeaterPi's work frequently engages with our perspective and experiences of immigrants, highlighting their resilience, struggles, and contributions to society.

[6] Cook, K. (2022). THE SOCIOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF THE STRANGER AND ITS METHODOLOGICAL USE IN LITERATURE. EPIGRAM (e-Journal), 19(2), p. 150–161.

- **Rhizomatic:** Drawing on *Deleuze* and *Guattari's* concept, 'rhizomatic' describes a non-hierarchical network structure characterised by multiple entry points, interconnectedness, and the absence of a central authority. In this research, the term is used to describe the fluid and decentralised nature of leadership and creative collaboration within TeaterPi. This concept is crucial to understand my role as a fluid leader.[7]

- **Joker:** Borrowing from Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, the 'Joker' is a facilitator who guides and mediates theatrical exercises and discussions. While my role shares similarities with the Joker, it also diverges in significant ways, as I strive to blur the lines between facilitator and participant, fostering a more egalitarian and collaborative environment.[8]

- **Fluid Leadership:** This term describes a dynamic and adaptive approach to leadership that emphasises facilitation, collaboration, and shared decision-making. It rejects the traditional model of a hierarchical director and prioritises the empowerment of the ensemble, as well as the responsiveness to the evolving needs of the creative process.

- **Devising:** In the context of TeaterPi, 'devising' refers to a collaborative process of creating performance that does rely on a pre-written script, an ongoing writing proposal or a collection of texts. It involves generating material through improvisation, brainstorming, research, and the integration of diverse artistic skills and personal experiences. [9]

[7] https://thoughtleader.co.za/what-is-a-rhizome-in-deleuze-and-guattaris-thinking/, Dörnberg, G. (2006)

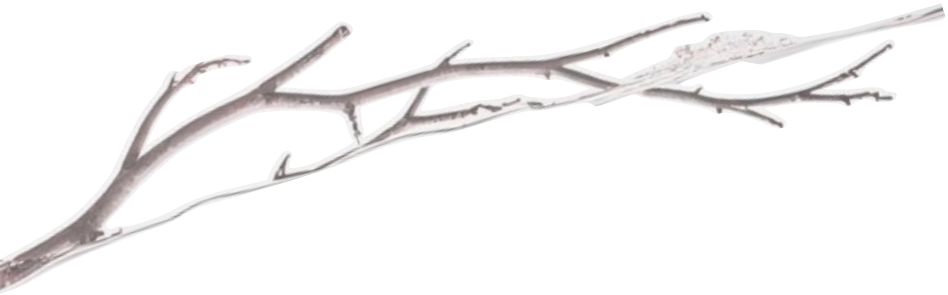
[8] Telly D. Arendell's "Devised Theatre's Collaborative Performance, May 27, 2024 by Routledge Chapter 3: Giving Voice to Augusto Boal's Forum Theatre p.33-.47

[9] Telly D. Arendell's "Devised Theatre's Collaborative Performance, May 27, 2024 by Routledge A Brief History of Devised Theatre p.10-13

- **Transcultural:** This term refers to the interaction and exchange between different cultures, leading to the emergence of new hybrid forms and identities. In TeaterPi's work, transculturalism appears in our multilingual performances, our collaborations with artists from diverse backgrounds, and our exploration of themes related to cultural identity and belonging. My interest in this term is due to the nature of the group and the work we do, reflecting the core values of TeaterPi and informing our artistic practice.[10]

- **Translanguaging:** This concept describes the dynamic and fluid use of multiple languages and linguistic resources in communication. It recognises that individuals do not always use languages in isolation but rather draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to express themselves. In TeaterPi's multilingual performances, translanguaging is both a creative tool and a reflection of the diverse linguistic backgrounds of our performers and audiences. [11]

Further elaboration and contextualisation of this vocabulary will be provided in subsequent chapters, and the reader is encouraged to revisit these definitions as needed.



[10] Multiculturalism or Transculturalism: Towards a Cosmopolitan Citizenship. London Journal Of Canadian Studies, 2001/2002 VOLUME 17(https://web.archive.org/web/ 20160417212459/http://www.canadian-studies.net/lccs/LJCS/Vol_17/Cuccioletta.pdf

[11] Anna Haglund, Annica Styrke, Karin Wiklund, Antologi för en flerspråkig scenkonst, 2020, Stockholm: Johanssons pelargoner. p.64-73

2.0. The Harbour, The Raft and The Water

This chapter will offer reflections and descriptions that aim to explain the dynamic relationship between theory and practice of my work. The chapter is structured around three main central metaphors: ***The Harbour, The Raft and The Water.*** I offer a quick recap of the metaphors introduced in the previous chapters and soon to be explained in depht:

TeaterPi is a 'harbour,' a space of encounter, exchange, and creative refuge for diverse artistic voices.

The 'raft' represents our collaborative devising process, a vessel navigated collectively, carrying us through the unpredictable currents of creation.

Finally, 'water' symbolises my role as a fluid leader, a guiding and mediating force that supports the flow of the creative journey. Through these interconnected metaphors, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the collaborative and emergent nature of TeaterPi's work, and the challenges and possibilities of leading a transcultural artistic ensemble.

2.1. THE HARBOUR: TeaterPi

Founded in 2010 by Nicola Pierini and my self, TeaterPi is an Italian based theatre company with a mix of professional and non professional artists from different background, nationality and experience. TeaterPi emerged from a desire to create a space in Stockholm where diverse languages, cultures, and artistic traditions could converge. The collective's commitment to transculturalism and multilingualism is not merely a stylistic choice but a fundamental principle that shapes our artistic vision and practice. We believe that language is not just a tool for communication but a powerful expression of identity and cultural heritage. Our productions often incorporate multiple languages. Either in form of sub/over-titles in English and Swedish, or by using different languages and dialects simultaneously on stage: a method also called translanguaging, which reflects the diverse backgrounds of our performers and audiences.[12] This multilingual approach challenges traditional notions of linguistic homogeneity in theatre and opens up new possibilities for intercultural dialogue.

Doc.3: Teaterpi's ensemble during the production of Pinocchio 2.0 at Alias Teater in `Stockholm, November

[12] Anna Haglund, Annica Styrke, Karin Wiklund, Antologi för en flerspråkig scenkonst, 2020, Stockholm: Johanssons pelargoner. p.64-73

2.1.1. A Space of Encounter: Transculturalism in Practice

TeaterPi is more than a theatre company; it is a laboratory for transcultural experimentation. Transculturalism, as defined earlier, is the context in which TeaterPi works on bringing cultural understanding and fostering audience inclusion enriches the exchange of ideas, perspectives, and artistic traditions. It influence mine and the group creative process leading this to creation of unique and alternative performances. This commitment to transculturalism is deeply intertwined with our understanding of **strangeness** and our engagement with the experiences of **immigrants** as defined in the Introduction. The encounter with the **other** is not always easy, but it is essential for fostering empathy, understanding, and social change. As a harbour, TeaterPi provides a space where these encounters can take place, where differences are celebrated, and where new forms of cultural expression can emerge. While having developed this subject in recent studies,[13] in this project I am more interested in exploring our methodology and process.

Doc 4: TeaterPi´s rehearsals at Stockholm University of Arts. 2024

[13] Caldognetto, S. F. (2021). STRANGESPACES : Studies and structure for an itinerant transcultural performing art festival (Dissertation). Retrieved from https://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:uniarts:diva-993

2.1.2. Building Bridges: Community and Non-Professionalism

TeaterPi's commitment to transculturalism extends beyond the stage and into the community. We see ourselves as a cultural bridge, connecting people from different backgrounds and encouraging dialogue through artistic engagement. Our relationship with the region of Stockholm is crucial to our artistic identity. We actively engage with the Italian and expats community as much people showing interest in Italian language and culture within Sweden. We do this through various projects and performances where we offer a space for encounter and inclusion which also contributes to TeaterPi: our members often comes from those communities which are usually constitutes of non-professional performers.

Working with individuals who may have limited theatrical training or experience brings a unique energy and authenticity to our performances. It also challenges traditional notions of who is considered a 'performer or actor' and expands the possibilities of theatrical expression.

In this spirit we channel what well known actor **Willem Dafoe** once stated in an interview about a Pinocchio performance in Naples made by non-professional actors. He observed that the bond with the community of Naples, and try to explain the reason why everybody was so moved, him as well, by this performance:

" I saw a play in Naples that really inspired me. And it was Pinocchio. I was so moved from the beginning to the end, not only by the performance, but also the audience's relationship to it. Naples is a great theatre town but these people were so connected to this production. I felt it. But the thing that was really interesting is I thought: why am I so moved? I mean, it was a beautiful script and beautifully staged and everything. And I thought it was interesting that there was such grace to what they were doing because they were not performers and they could only do what they were doing. There was nothing extra. There's a beauty to it because nothing else is going on but that. It's in the same league why sometimes it's so beautiful to work with non-actors because they don't have an identity of an actor. So they don't overthink things and they go to it. They do what they can do and they get out of the way. They let the nature, you know, roll. And I guess I was, once again, I was moved by that fact that how important it is to disappear into the actions. The most beautiful things I see are usually when performers just commit to something. And it's like the grace of an athlete. What they're doing is what they're doing. And something happens to them. And then you can be with them because they aren't pushing you away with an idea. They aren't selling you anything. " [14]

Doc 5: William Dafoe and Robbert Eggers in the interview for GQ

[14] https://www.gq.com/video/watch/epic-conversations-willem-dafoe-robert-eggers - min24:25-25:30.

This according to William Dafoe is what you want to see as an audience, and actors are searching for.

This interview was sent to me by *Davide Valentini,* one of the members of TeaterPi, while we were rehearsing our latest performance and study case in this research, Pinocchio 2.0. It perfectly captures what I see in our group. The presence of non-professionals is not a gesture of inclusion: it is a **creative choice** that shapes our aesthetic, our ethics, and our process. It is important to understand that the people I work with, are not performers. They are **actors** in the very sense of the meaning of it: they bring life to stage. But TeaterPi is also a **collective,** which work with improvisation, multilingual dramaturgy, translanguaging, media layering, and other methods. These are not aesthetic choices, they are natural responses to who we are. And as a transcultural collective group it requires a specific approach to leading and facilitation.

A method that prioritises collaboration, empathy, and a willingness to adapt. The focus shifts from achieving a polished performance to fostering a genuine connection between the performers and the audience. It strive to create a safe and inclusive environment where all participants feel valued and respected.

While the demands of community engagement and working with non-professionals can be significant, the relevance of the work relies also on it choices and aesthetics which in the case of TeaterPi lies both on a collective and personal level. The work of TeaterPi is important thanks to alternative methods and aesthetics, which could inspire the field of performing arts and finds it's contextualisation in the contemporary social and political context.

2.1.3. The Role of "Le Bestie"

In addition to myself, founding member and artistic leader, there are at this day, about 24 members actively participating in TeaterPi. Around 60 persons have crossed paths with the group since it's first stages. The Harbour is not just a metaphor. Teater Pi is a place were people are coming and going, as is the destiny of migrants. Some of the former members are now spread all over the word, but still hold a tight connection with teaterpi. While difficult to present each of us, we like to call ourselves with a name that defines our spirit: **Le Bestie.**

Le Bestie which can be translated as *Wild Besties* in English, refers to the raw, untamed energy that emerges when a group creates collectively. It's about acknowledging and embracing the unpredictable forces that arise when diverse individuals come together, bringing their unique perspectives and creative impulses. In TeaterPi, we strive to move away from rigid structures, empowering every member to contribute to the creative process. This can sometimes lead to what might appear as chaos, a flurry of conflicting ideas, moments of uncertainty, and a non-linear progression of work. However, we believe that it is within this seemingly chaotic environment that genuine innovation and discovery often occur. In TeaterPi, the term Le Bestie is frequently used between us. Is a sarcastic term to describe with ironic connotations both the chaos that constitutes our DNA and the not really knowing what we are doing. But it also finds its core in what TeaterPI constitutes: a respond to the animal instinct of following a need. For us it might be a desire of belonging, a need for creative environment and for community, or a need to get closer to the Italian culture and language.

Le Bestie is also a key concept that encapsulates our approach to creative collaboration and challenges conventional theatrical norms.

To fully grasp this concept, I find helpful to draw parallels with influential artistic figures and movements. I will now offer some of them, for the pleasure of discussing and contextualising TeaterPi in the field of Performing Arts.

Doc 6: A picture shared in the TeaterPi group chat by Rosaria Galanti, a member of the collective, trying the fit of her mask for Pinocchio 2.0. This picture later became an inspiration for my final master's exposition: a staged rehearsal about TeaterPi titled Le Bestie..

Antonin Artaud's "Theatre of Cruelty" provides a significant point of reference. Artaud advocated for a theatre that would shake the audience out of their complacency, confronting them with the primal and visceral aspects of human existence.[15] He sought to break down the barriers between performer and audience, unleashing a raw and intense energy in the theatrical space. Similarly, "Le Bestie" in TeaterPi intend dismantling hierarchies and embracing a more direct and energetic exchange among performers. It's about being unafraid to explore uncomfortable truths and challenge theatrical conventions. Artaud's idea that "Actors are athletes of the heart" also resonates with "Le Bestie," where performance is less about "playing a role" and more about "channeling a state of being". It also resonate with Artaud with what sometimes we call our rehearsals: shit. " where there is a shit, there is a smell of life," [16] once Artaud stated. And once again, with this ironic qualification of our attempts we actually hide the very sense of our truth: a need of brining life on stage.

Carmelo Bene, is one of the most inspirational source of theories to me. He was an Italian actor and director who contributed enormously in dismantling the classical and tradition of Italian contemporary theatre, offering very provocative and alternative ways of performing and being. [17] He is to me another important point of comparison. Bene famously rejected the traditional notion of the director as the sole author of the theatrical work, emphasising the performer's creative power and the immediacy of the

15 Comment M. Antonin Artaud compte organiser le "Théâtre de la Cruauté" in: Commedia n. 7.371 Samedi 15 Avril 1933 septembre 1932, pag. 2

16 Artaud, Antonin."Theatre of Cruelty (First Manifesto)." The Theatre and Its Double. First published in French 1964

17 https://nuovoteatromadeinitaly.sciami.com/en/carmelo-bene-biography-spectacle/

theatrical event. His "anti-theatre" approach aligns with "Le Bestie" in its **rejection of rigid control** and its celebration of the collective creative force of the performers. In TeaterPi, similar to Bene's perspective, we prioritise the performer's contribution and allow the performance to emerge organically from the group's shared energy. [18]

A last compelling visual analogy for Le Bestie can be found in the and the paintings of **Francis Bacon**: to me Bacon's distorted figures and raw depictions of the human form capture and evoke a similar visceral, animalistic intensity. His subjects often appear to be in a state of flux, their forms fluid and unstable. This resonates with how TeaterPi performers are encouraged **to exist in becoming, shifting, and resisting fixed form.** Just as Bacon's paintings convey the energy of transformation [19] TeaterPi's performances often embrace a dynamic and unpredictable quality.

Here I propose an examples of how how those aspects influence our work. **Irony and sarcasm** are not merely stylistic devices; they become tools for navigating power dynamics and questioning authority. They provide a way to deflate pretension, challenge assumptions, and maintain a sense of perspective, reminding us not to take ourselves too seriously. This makes it our common communicational tool.
In the rehearsal room, this might manifest as playful jabs at directorial suggestions or witty remarks that challenge established ideas. It's a way of fostering a critical dialogue and ensuring that all voices are

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[18] Balestreri, Silvia. (2018). Carmelo Bene, a Stuttering War Machine. Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença. 8. 82-98. 10.1590/2237-266072337. p1-12

19 Žukauskaitė, Audronė. (2015). Nomadic Performativity and the Immanent Ethics of Life. Nordic Theatre Studies. 27. 10. 10.7146/nts.v27i1.24235. 11-14

heard and considered. This isn't about being disrespectful or undermining the creative process; rather, it's about creating a dynamic and engaging environment where everyone feels empowered to express their opinions. As a non professional you might feel sometimes difficult to find a way of expression opinions. Irony and sarcasm has therefore the ability to break down barriers between people who might have different interpretations or understandings of a situation, creating instead an environment where people can interact playfully and connect through shared jokes.

This use of **irony** and **sarcasm** is closely linked to "Le Bestie" in that it disrupts hierarchies and power structures. It embodies the idea that we're all in this together, and no one person has a monopoly on good ideas or decision making. Echoing **Schiller**'s notion of "serious play": we don't just aim for seriousness in our work; we cultivate a deeply engaged and playful approach.[20]

This atmosphere can also cause a distractive, chaotic and non-efficient environment which I personally sometimes find difficult to navigate my self. While I do not want to interrupt this flow of craziness and distraction, as it has effective and positive results in term of creation and co-creation, it also tends to procrastination, deadlines postponed and flow interruptions like any other dysfunctional dynamics. It is a difficult challenge of trusting the process. Especially as a leader and as the experienced member in the group.

Doc n. 8 : This pictures document sarcasm and ironic exercises in the group. It shows a member of TeaterPi wearing a T-shirt with the name of the city Pisa. In Italy, Pisa is commonly the subject of a well-known joke and is playfully mocked (in this case PISA MERDA — "Pisa is shit")..

[20] https://www.poliscritture.it/2022/07/06/magris-e-schiller/

But this element of **playfulness** it also acknowledges the inherent absurdity and unpredictability of the creative process, where things rarely go according to a plan. Embracing and learning how to navigate these moments becomes essential for our method and process to arrive to the performance.

In practical terms, this translates to rehearsals filled with laughter, spirited debates, and moments of self-deprecation. We use irony to cope with the challenges of collaboration, to navigate artistic disagreements, and to maintain a sense of balance. This doesn't diminish the seriousness of our work; on the contrary, it fosters a more dynamic, resilient, and ultimately more creative environment. I noticed during this research that I constantly foster instinctively this atmosphere instead of just offering a more structural line of work. Making myself a leader to laugh about and laugh with helps to deconstruct possible power dynamics and establishing a cheerful and shared possibility of contribution.

To better understand how we, Le Bestie, could possibly work together, I propose to you a little detour, delving for the first time in this text to the chapters of the study case logbook.

Doc n.9: This picture was taken by another member on the day of the premiere of Pinocchio 2024, just before the theatre doors opened. It highlights how irony and humor are constantly present in our group and in every moment of our work together.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0 PROJECT - CHAPTER 1

December 2023: Waiting for... an idea to appear.

December is rarely a time of resolution. It is a waiting room, a breath before something unknown arrives. In December 2023, my research focus shifted and at that time no major TeaterPi project had yet been confirmed for the following year.

Our process began as we often do, not with a script, but with a question:

What do we want to talk about?

The board was tasked with initiating proposals to be discussed at the upcoming annual meeting. During one of our final gatherings of the year, this process began, not with certainty, but with a shared need. There was no clear theme yet, only an impulse to listen, to open space. The need to decide collectively, so central to TeaterPi's ethics, inevitably slows the timeline. But this friction is also part of the practice. Decision-making is not a step before the art; it is part of the art.

TeaterPi constantly navigates a tangle of constraints: logistics, availability, venue access, budget, rights. These negotiations are not separate from creativity but entangled with it. Planning unfolds like a score partly improvised, partly structured. In this in-between space, the foundations of

Pinocchio 2.0 began to form. Not through inspiration, but through the difficulty of not knowing. Through the refusal to rush. Through the act of holding the question open.

Doc 7: a picture taken in Botkyrka December 2023, at Rosarias Galanti's place. A board meeting searching for and idea.

2.2 THE RAFT: Collaborative Devising

As mentioned in the introduction, TeaterPi's creative process is fundamentally collaborative, a journey undertaken together on what I often metaphorically refer to as a '*raft*.' This 'raft' is not a rigid structure but rather a flexible and adaptable platform that allows us to navigate the unpredictable currents of artistic creation. It is built from the collective contributions of all members, each bringing their unique skills, experiences, and perspectives to the process. Not being professional or having a professional education, doesn't mean lacking experience, perspective and ideas. To the contrary. While I appreciate and I am very thankful to all education I received in my field, I see how my ordinary life and all jobs I worked with has a similar influence in what I do.

Doc. 8. This picture was taken after our first rehearsal at Stockholm University of the Arts in 2024. It expresses the sense of collaboration, collectivity, and community that TeaterPi represents

2.2.1. Devising as Collective Navigation

TeaterPi does work with **Collecting Devising** which, in all honesty, many of TeaterPi members do not even know what it means. They practice it anyway, and also shape the way we use devising. In our methodology, **Brainstorming** sessions provide a space for collective idea generation, where all members are encouraged to contribute their thoughts and suggestions. Research, both textual and embodied, informs our understanding of the themes we are exploring and provides a rich source of inspiration. The dynamics of collective decision-making are crucial to the success of our devising process. We strive to create a fluid horizontal structure where all voices are heard and valued. Due to my experience in the field, I my role is to make sure that this happens. However, this does not mean that we always agree. Artistic differences and disagreements are inevitable, and they can even be productive, leading to unexpected discoveries and innovative solutions. Conflicts is a necessity and are part of our process, as much as failure. In this collaborative journey, theoretical concepts like **Gilles Deleuze** and **Felix Guattari**'s ***rhizome*** provide valuable frameworks for understanding our process and offer a powerful metaphor for our non-hierarchical and interconnected creative work. The rhizome, with its multiple entry points and lack of a central root system, mirrors the fluid and decentralised nature of our collaboration. Ideas can emerge from anywhere within the group, and there is no single *centre* who direct the artistic vision. The raft itself can be seen as a

rhizomatic structure, constantly evolving and adapting to the changing conditions of the creative journey.[21]

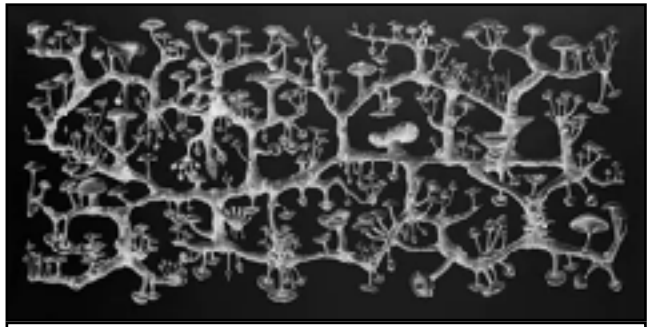
As the collective devising process within TeaterPi relies heavily on improvisation and collective brainstorming, in the initial stages of a project, these techniques are used to explore the themes, narratives, and characters. TeaterPi also uses devising techniques like personal research, floor explorations, and many other methods to build our theatrical work. While brainstormings can initiate in any moment of the process, our projects often begin with a thematic impulse, a question, or a social concern, rather than a fixed narrative. We try alway to answer to a general question, the same that generated the idea of Pinocchio 2.0: **what do we want to talk about?** From this starting point, we embark on a collective exploration, generating material through a variety of techniques. The non-linear nature of devising demands a high degree of flexibility and openness from all participants. It requires us to embrace **uncertainty** and **trust** that something meaningful will emerge from the apparent chaos. Improvisation plays a central role in our devising process. It allows us to explore ideas, characters, and situations in a spontaneous and playful way. For example, we used improvisation to explore characters development and story development. We also use it to write the final script. A scene is created, then changed, then scrapped entirely, then resurrected in a new form. This can be challenging, but it's also where the most exciting discoveries are made.

The creative process rarely follows a straight line. There are often false starts, dead ends, and moments of

[21] https://thoughtleader.co.za/what-is-a-rhizome-in-deleuze-and-guattaris-thinking/, Dörnberg, G. (2006)

frustration. Ideas that seem promising at first might turn out to be unworkable, and the group might have to backtrack or change direction. This "messiness" can be uncomfortable, especially for those who are used to a more structured and predictable way of working. I Have noticed during this research that it's in these moments of uncertainty and exploration that the most original and innovative ideas often emerge.

Members need to be willing to take risks, to experiment, and to let go of their egos. There has to be a shared understanding that failure is not the opposite of success, but a necessary step on the path to discovery. The more a performance get closer to a premiere the more devising transforms into a shared editing and bricolage work.



Doc. n.10 : drawing of a Rhhizome. This picture is used in the documentation to provide a image of our devising process.
source: https://thoughtleader.co.za/what-is-a-rhizome-in-deleuze-and-guattaris-thinking/, Dörnberg, G. (2006)

Doc n. 11: TeaterPi general meeting at Stockholm University of arts. January 2024. Free discussion, reflection, ideas, projects, economy revision, election of members of the board and year planning are the subjects of discussion.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT - CHAPTER 2

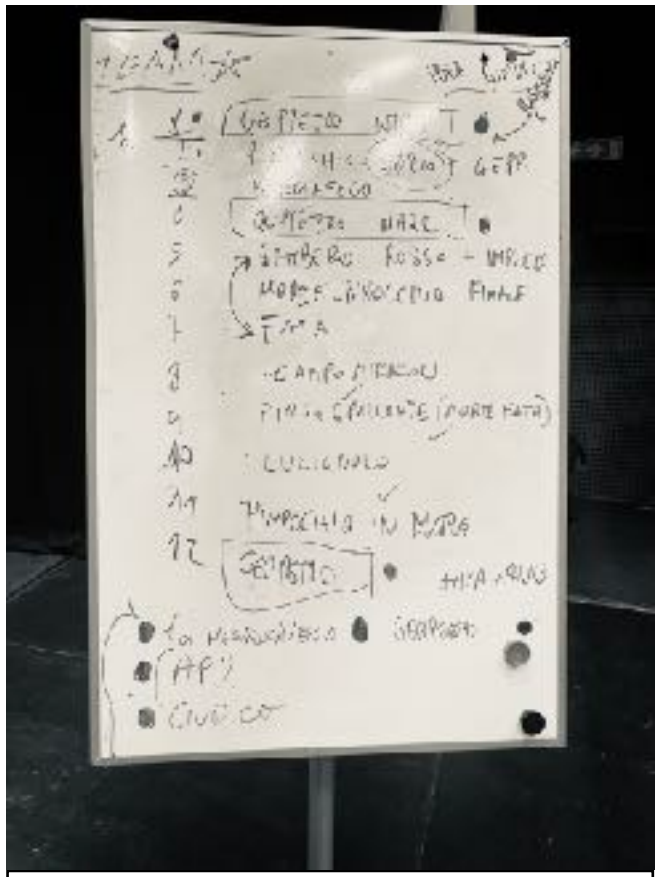
January 2024: The Annual General Meeting: How TeaterPi Transforms Ideas.

TeaterPi's project initiation varies. While some productions emerge from ongoing conversations and collective decisions over time, others are tied to specific dates or themes, such as our annual performances commemorating Italian Liberation Day (April 25th) or International Women's Day (March 8th). These events provide a clear framework, guiding our creative focus. However, for the majority of our projects, including Pinocchio 2.0, the initial spark often comes from exploring shared experiences of displacement, cultural translation, and personal transformation. There's a raw, human quality to this approach that I find profoundly compelling.

In the case of Pinocchio 2.0, the project involved re-imagining both the original novel and TeaterPi's previous adaptation of the story. Following the final rehearsals of our previous production in late 2023, we dedicated several gatherings in January 2024 to brainstorming and initial discussions. These sessions aimed to synthesise the diverse ideas and perspectives within the ensemble. The annual general meeting served as a formal platform for approving Pinocchio 2.0 as our next major project. This decision then triggered the practical planning phase, which included the crucial step of securing performance venues for the autumn of 2024. This early focus on

performance spaces significantly influenced the project's timeline and, potentially, our artistic and aesthetic choices.

The question of cultural identity is central to TeaterPi's work. I often perceive our creative process as a space where meaning transcends linguistic boundaries, finding expression in the physicality of the performers, the rhythms of the performance, and the shared cultural heritage and experiences of "being lost together" – a sense of collective displacement. This pursuit of shared meaning, despite the inherent challenges, is, in my view, a core element of TeaterPi's methodology. The ensemble comprises individuals with diverse backgrounds, ages, experiences, and artistic tastes, and the process of unifying these diverse elements is often complex and demanding. TeaterPi's solution lies in its commitment to democratic principles and shared decision-making. This begins with the voting process for board members and project selection but extends to the devising process itself, where every member is empowered to contribute ideas and shape the performance. This inclusivity allows TeaterPi to navigate the complexities of "finding something to say" collectively, knowing that the devised work will resonate with the individual experiences and sense of belonging of each member. My role as a leader in this context is to facilitate these dynamics, ensuring that they remain central to our methodology.



Doc n. 12: TeaterPi general meeting at Stockholm University of arts. January 2024. Results of the meeting are usually written on whiteboards as well as shared in the group .

2.2.2 TeaterPi Rehearsals: Fika and the functional un-functionality

Rehearsals or gatherings in TeaterPi are most of the time scheduled but not planned. As until the last minute absence or problematics can happen, it is more useful to navigate in the moment. This can be done thanks to **improvisation** training and theories we apply to many aspects of our creative process. In this context, isn't just about actors making things up on the spot. It's a structured way of exploring ideas and generating material. It can involve improvising scenes, improvising dialogue, or even improvising with movement or sound. Our collective brainstorming is about generating a large number of ideas as quickly as possible, without judgment or criticism. The goal is to tap into the collective creativity of the group and discover unexpected possibilities. Collective brainstorming sometimes happen at the beginning of our rehearsals, were late arrivals, slow waking up need to be taken in consideration.

Therefore Rehearsals start with coffee and food, or "**fika**" as it's called in Swedish: what should be a 10-15 minutes session, often turns into a 45 minutes.

This minutes, while can be considered a waste of time (and some time is the case) have an important functionality: they are about grounding, downloading the outside world. This unloading of baggages spontaneously leads to brainstorming about the play . After this gathering and warming up exercises, the actors face different improvised tasks. Here, my pedagogical and training education can comes in

handy as I might present exercises of exploration. Which in turns are twisted, challenged and transformed by the members offering something different each time. One of the explorations we use is **personal research**, which could involve actors bringing in stories or images from their own lives, cities that connect to the themes of the play. Sometimes we face the difficulty to transform ideas into theatrical solution. Then we switch to floor explorations, involving actors moving through the space, experimenting with different ways of embodying the characters or creating visual images. This is also a way of devising, creating a safe and comfortable space for the actors to share their thoughts and feelings, which can then be used as material for the play. My role in this functional / non-functional process is something I will try to explain in the next chapter. I now offer a now chapter of the study case that can exemplify the context just explained.

Doc. N.13: TeaterPi members having "Fika" before rehearsals.

Doc n.14: rehearsals moment februari 2024. Photo by Paolo Barbieri

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 3

February 2024 - from idea to practice.

Rehearsals often begin with a period of informal socialising over coffee and food. However, punctuality is rarely a strong suit. Delays due to traffic, personal emergencies, or forgotten schedules are common occurrences. This reality also shapes our rehearsal methodology.

Approximately thirty minutes (or more) later, the rehearsal transitions to focused artistic work. Rehearsals typically involve intense sessions lasting five to six hours, often on Sundays, with occasional evening rehearsals scheduled closer to performance dates. However, outside of these scheduled gatherings, ensemble members often have extended periods of individual time, sometimes spanning days or weeks. These periods are characterised by an absence of structured rehearsal activities where members are left to engage with the project on their own terms. When a text is ready, come mandatory line memorisation sessions, which are mostly not respected and deadline postponed. This approach may seem inefficient from a traditional perspective. However, I argue that it serves a vital purpose, particularly within the context of TeaterPi's ensemble. The non-professional nature of many members means that the creative process extends beyond the confines of the rehearsal room. The project accompanies them in their daily lives which than might contribute

unexpectedly: Lines of dialogue may surface, scenes may replay in their minds, and ideas may germinate subconsciously.

This "time away" provides crucial space for absorption, reflection, and experimentation. Members can process the material, explore ideas without pressure, and allow their subconscious to engage with the creative challenges. Some return to rehearsals with fully formed ideas, others with nascent insights, and some with little or no conscious engagement with the project. The devising process then unfolds from this diverse range of individual experiences and contributions.

Rehearsals are characterised by a flexible and spontaneous approach. There are no rigid agendas or pre-determined schedules. The ensemble gathers, assesses the energy of the room, and collaboratively shapes the rehearsal. Exercises are interwoven with scene improvisations, readings, and discussions.

The devising process itself is fluid and emergent, guided by the collective exploration of ideas and the reshaping of material that arises organically. It is a process of artistic osmosis, rather than adherence to a strict plan.

Therefore, the intervals between rehearsals, while seemingly unproductive, are not a flaw but rather an integral feature of TeaterPi's methodology. Memory and creative insight do not operate on demand; they require periods of incubation, of processing, and of subconscious exploration. What

may appear as "nothingness" and procrastination in our process can be a fertile ground for artistic discovery I discover.

While acknowledging that certain aspects of "professionalism," such as punctuality, line memorisation, and efficient time management, could enhance our process, I have observed that this flexible approach fosters a crucial element for creative work: enthusiasm. [22]

Doc n.14: rehearsals moment februari 2024

[22] https://www.lacanonline.com/2010/06/what-does-lacan-say-about-the-signifier/

2.3 THE WATER : The discovery of the Fluid Leader

My role within TeaterPi can be characterised as that of a **Fluid Leader.**

Fluid Leadership is a concept born from my practical experience within TeaterPi, and from the need to navigate the complexities of collaborative creation. It's a move away from the image of the hierarchical director or leader with a singular vision. Instead, it places emphasis on facilitation, mediation, and creating a supportive environment where diverse voices are not just heard but valued. It's about leading through influence and collaboration, rather than command and control. [23]

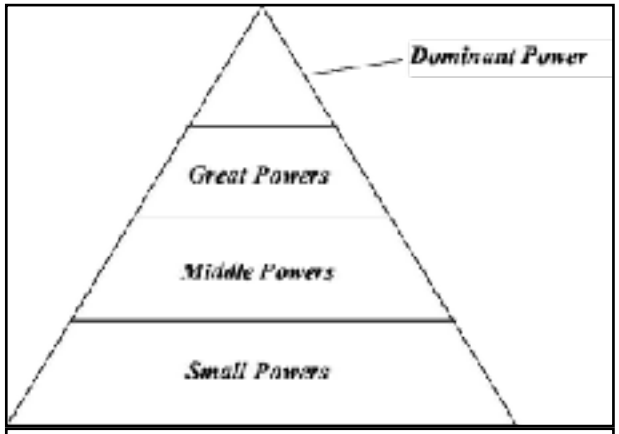
In TeaterPi, fluid leadership is not a static role; it shifts and adapts in response to the group's needs and to the demands of each project. I might, at times, take a more active role in structuring the creative process, offering guidance, and ensuring that we stay on track. Yet, at other times, I intentionally step back, creating space for other members to lead, contribute their unique expertise, and make key decisions.

Doc. N.15: Viareggio (Lucca, Italy), 2024. The idea of fluidity in leadership has been with me for many years, and it is thanks to the reflections I had by the seaside that I was able to connect the possibility of fluid leadership to my artistic practice.

[23] https://beinginorbit.wordpress.com/essays/dismantling-the-author-challenging-individual-authorship-through-collective-participatory-art/

2.3.1 Contrasting Fluid Leadership with Traditional Models

As mentioned before, Fluid Leadership directly challenges the more hierarchical leadership models that are often prevalent in theatre, especially in institutional theatres. This statement of mine is not intent to be critical. I offer here a personal point of view of what I often encounter when I work in institutional theatre structures. The hierarchal models I speak about often position the director or the "*autor*" at the apex of a pyramid, wielding ultimate authority over all artistic choices.[24] The director is seen as the primary creative force, with other members of the team, such as actors and designers, expected to contributes to the director's vision.



Doc. n.16: Example of classic pyramidal power. Source: https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Classic-Power-

[24] https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1695946/3143505

Besides recognising the challenges and the huge responsibility associated with the director's role, including the complexities of power dynamics, I am more interested in exploring leadership styles that can respond to and reflect the needs I found in contemporary society, such as increased cultural exchange, community engagement, and addressing power imbalances. I often wondered in my artistic life if this disposition of power wasn't stifling collaboration, limiting input from other members, and ultimately hinder creativity. I understand that this can be seen as controversial, but I embrace the challenge we face while offering alternatives to the field. I am committed to foster a more egalitarian environment where everyone's contributions have the same potential value.

Fluid leadership is instrumental in achieving this, distributing power and decision-making throughout the group, and fostering a sense of shared ownership and collective responsibility.

Doc. n.17: The Harbour, The Raft and The Water. Ai generated.

2.3.2 The "Water" Metaphor: Flowing with the Creative Process

The "water" metaphor provides a powerful visual and conceptual framework for understanding Fluid Leadership. Just as water adjusts to its container and effortlessly flows around obstacles, fluid leadership involves adapting to the ever-changing needs of the creative process and the individuals within the group. It necessitates flexibility, responsiveness, and a willingness to allow the creative energy to flow naturally.

In practice, this means that I strive to "go with the flow" during rehearsals, remaining open to unexpected discoveries and avoiding rigid adherence to a preconceived plan. I pay close attention to the group's dynamics, the energy in the room, and the emergence of new ideas, adjusting my approach accordingly. At times, providing more structure and guidance might be necessary, while at other times, I step back, allowing the group to explore and discover independently. This is captured in the idea of leading the way water does: not by pushing, not by pulling, but by allowing others to float and sir the raft.

This approach wants to empowers performers and foster a sense of ownership. It also involves embracing the possibility of productive failure [25], encouraging experimentation and risk-taking, even if it leads to unexpected outcomes. The challenges of being fluid is being able to read the room and vey much focus on the group need instead of my own desire and will. I very much enjoy this practice of

[25] House, et al. Strategic Leadership Across Cultures, p. 17 2014, https://thedecisionlab.com/reference-guide/anthropology/great-man-theory

cancelling my self and shaping my self thanks to the others. As a matter of fact, I am more interested in other's perspective than mines. It is not a lack of confidence, from what I tried to explore during the self analysis in within this research, but a goal: "**I is an other**", French poet **Arthur Rimbaud** once wrote, and I find this methodology of mine an amazing opportunity to put this beautiful poetic statement into practice. [26] I also found out during this research that, although I try to establish this **fluid and shared responsibility and leadership**, my fellow partners keep certain expectations towards me: being the person to reach out when in need. It takes time to build trust in each others capability of creation. The pedagogical experience I have accumulated over more than 20 years as a teacher offers me tools for both understanding the group's needs and focusing on the other's journey more than mine.

[26] Rimbaud, letter to Paul Demeny, Charleville, 15 May 1871
https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduates/modules/en354/syllabus/seminars/rimbaud_-_letter_may_15_1871.pdf

Doc n.18: rehearsals moment march 2025. The discovery of Mangiafuoco.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 4

March 2024: Devising Multimodal Atmospheres and Reinterpreting Characters

March 2024 saw a significant shift in our devising process, moving from initial explorations to the practical creation of multimodal scenes within Pinocchio 2.0. This phase was characterised by a collaborative approach to design elements, with ensemble members drawing on diverse artistic references to shape the performance's atmosphere and reinterpret familiar characters.

A key activity in March involved assigning specific scenes or episodes from Pinocchio to different groups within the ensemble. Each group was tasked with developing a distinct artistic concept for their assigned section, incorporating sound, music, visual imagery, and physical performance. This exercise directly reflected TeaterPi's commitment to multimedia and multidisciplinarity, as outlined in Chapter 2.

For instance, the Mangiafuoco scene became a focal point for experimentation. One group, led by a member with a background in music, proposed a soundscape that juxtaposed traditional Commedia dell'Arte music with electronic elements, aiming to disrupt expectations and create a sense of unease. Another member, inspired by Fellini's 8 1/2, suggested a visual design incorporating surreal

Doc n.19: The result of Mangiafuoco finally completed in the theatre, the day before the premiere. Here, Federica De Luca as Mangiafuoco, together with costume designer Floria, making final adjustments and fitting details.

imagery and distorted perspectives. This led to a discussion about the character of Mangiafuoco, traditionally portrayed as a powerful male figure.

Challenging this stereotype became a central objective. The decision was made to cast a female performer in the role of Mangiafuoco, subverting audience expectations and prompting a re-evaluation of the character's motivations and power dynamics.

This decision, which emerged from the collective exploration of visual and sonic elements, significantly impacted the scene's staging and dramatic impact.

The scene also incorporated elements of Commedia dell'Arte, specifically the characters of Arlecchino and Pulcinella. Drawing inspiration from our 2012 adaptation, where these characters engaged in physical altercations as shadows, we explored the potential for stylized movement and choreographed violence. This experimentation, remotely guided by a member (Cecina) with dance training relocated to London, resulted in a dynamic and visually arresting sequence which led to a new content: the scene featuring a welcome dance to the Puppets Theatre Of Mangiafuoco scene, which incorporated Balkan dance influences to evoke a sense of street circus energy and roughness. This choice, driven by a member with knowledge of Balkan folk music, added a layer of cultural specificity and visceral energy to the performance

The costumes and set were also consequentially designed with elements shaping the scene's

atmosphere. The set design team, committed to TeaterPi's sustainability principles, utilised recycled materials to create a post-apocalyptic environment, contrasting with the Commedia dell'Arte costumes. This juxtaposition of styles and materials further emphasised the scene's themes of disruption and reinterpretation.

Throughout this process, my role involved facilitating collaboration, encouraging experimentation, and ensuring that individual contributions aligned with the overall vision of Pinocchio 2.0. This often required balancing diverse artistic perspectives and mediating between conflicting ideas. The emphasis in March was on creating a shared artistic language that could accommodate a wide range of creative voices.

The work in March demonstrated the power of multimodal storytelling and the potential for collective devising to generate innovative and unexpected theatrical moments..

Doc n.20:. The discovery of Mangiafuoco led to the creation of other characters such as Arlecchino and Pulcinella, interpreted here by Alessandro Mastrototaro and Luca Orsali..

2.3.3 The Joker and the Absent Leader

In this section, I want to explore contextualisation and interconnection of my fluid leadership approach. I believe it's crucial to understand the dynamics of my role in the collaborative creation within TeaterPi, by offering a contextualisations which might allow to understand better my position and my fluidity.
For instance this role I often assume has many connections with the **Joker** figure, drawn by **Augusto Boal**'s work ,but also offer a strategic difference in the use of **absence**.[27]

My role as leader assume many times the face of a **facilitator** in TeaterPi: this allows me to have an analogy with the "Joker," drawn from Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed*, which provides a valuable framework.[28]
Boal, a Brazilian theatre practitioner and theorist, developed this methodology in the 1960s and 70s as a tool for social and political change, aiming to empower marginalized communities and give them a voice in shaping their own realities. His work was deeply rooted in the context of Latin American social and political struggles, seeking to transform theatre from a passive spectacle into an active forum for dialogue and action.[29]

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[27] Gökdağ, Ebru. (2014). AUGUSTO BOAL'S THE JOKER SYSTEM. Idil Journal of Art and Language. 3. 10.7816/idil-03-14-03.

[28] Gökdağ, Ebru. (2014). AUGUSTO BOAL'S THE JOKER SYSTEM. Idil Journal of Art and Language. 3. 10.7816/idil-03-14-03.

[29] Gökdağ, Ebru. (2014). AUGUSTO BOAL'S THE JOKER SYSTEM. Idil Journal of Art and Language. 3. 10.7816/idil-03-14-03.

In Boal's work, the Joker (or "**Coringa**") is a facilitator within **Forum Theatre**.[30] Forum Theatre is a participatory form where a scene depicting social oppression is presented, and the audience, whom Boal calls spect-actors, are invited to intervene and propose solutions. The Joker's role is to guide the "spect-actors" in their exploration of the problem and potential solutions. They facilitate discussion, provoke critical thinking, and ensure diverse perspectives are considered, without imposing their own views. The Joker's power lies in their ability to create a space for collective problem-solving, rather than in providing answers themselves. As Boal states:

the Joker must provoke the participants to act, to try out their ideas on stage, to rehearse reality.[31]

This resonates very much with my understanding of our community work and our internal process.

My role in TeaterPi shares similarities with Boal's Joker. I often act as a facilitator, creating space for members to contribute, challenge ideas, and take ownership of the creative process. This involves guiding exploration, asking questions, and offering suggestions, without dictating artistic choices. For example, in our devising process, I might introduce a theme and encourage the group to explore it through improvisation, ensuring everyone's participation and keeping the focus on our goals. I try to avoid telling people *how* to do something, and instead, I try to create the conditions for them to discover it themselves.

However, I also recognise that there are key differences between Boal's Joker and my role.

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[30] Aleepayam, Hamze (2021) "Augusto Boal's joker and pedagogy of freedom," Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Journal: Vol. 6, Article 3.

[31] Gökdağ, Ebru. (2014). AUGUSTO BOAL'S THE JOKER SYSTEM. Idil Journal of Art and Language. 3. 10.7816/idil-03-14-03.

Focus: Boal's work often addresses explicit social or political oppression, whereas TeaterPi's work, while certainly socially engaged, explores a broader range of themes, including personal and cultural identity. We might be exploring issues of immigration, but we're also interested in individual stories and experiences, and how those intersect with broader social and political issues.

Context and Internal Transformation: Boal's Joker works primarily with audience members in a Forum Theatre setting, often in explicitly political contexts, while my facilitation work occurs within a group of collaborators over an extended creative process. We're not just working together for an evening; we're building a shared artistic practice and a community. Perhaps the most crucial distinction is that in TeaterPi, the "spect-actor" dynamic is primarily internal. The group members themselves become "spect-actors," challenging my assumptions, their own assumptions, and transforming perspectives, which then shapes the performance. It's a process of collective self-reflection and discovery that occurs within the rehearsal room. [32]The internal dynamic, I believe, is significant because TeaterPi's methodology is driven by both social and individual needs. There's a desire to challenge traditional power structures within the performing arts and create a sense of belonging (social needs), coupled with a need for freedom of expression and a more liberated working environment for everyone involved (individual needs). This dual focus, I argue, necessitates a fluid and adaptable structure, with a "fluid facilitator" at its helm.

[32] Aleepayam, Hamze (2021) "Augusto Boal's joker and pedagogy of freedom," Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Journal: Vol. 6, Article 3.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 5

April 2024 : Challenging the Old, Devising the New Script.

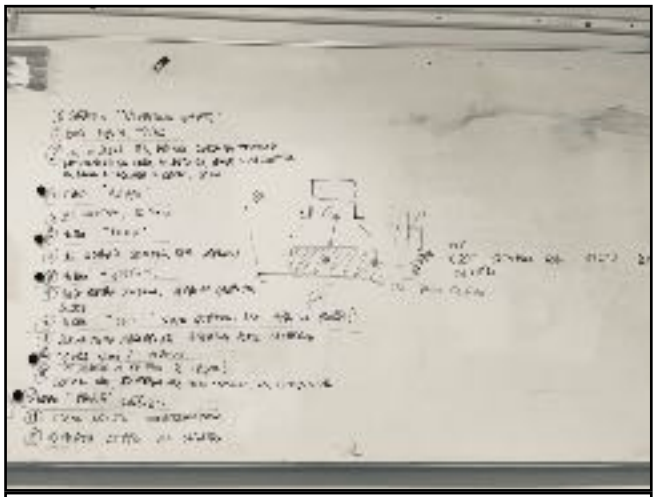
April marked a crucial turning point in the Pinocchio 2.0 project, as the devising process began to directly challenge our initial plans and necessitate a significant re-evaluation of the existing script. This month highlighted the fluid nature of our methodology and the importance of embracing unexpected discoveries.

At the start of April, we returned to the 2012 script, intending to use it as a foundation for the new production. However, the material generated in March, with its emphasis on visual spectacle, character reinterpretation, and thematic complexity, felt increasingly at odds with the original text. To navigate this tension, I proposed a series of "script improvisation" exercises. By the end of April, a consensus emerged: the old script needed a major overhaul. The devised material had injected new life into the story, offering a more vibrant and contemporary interpretation of Pinocchio. This decision, while initially daunting, was embraced as an opportunity for creative renewal.

The April devising process also highlighted the importance of delegation within our methodology. As the need for a new script became apparent, three members with strong writing skills, Davide Valentini, Nicola Pierini and Rosaria Galanti, volunteered to take on the primary responsibility for

the re-writing. This delegation, while seemingly practical, also reflected a shift in creative ownership, empowering ensemble members to take on leadership roles within their areas of expertise.

The work in April laid the foundation for the intensive script development leading up to the summer break. The devising process had not only generated new performance material but also provided a clear direction for the re-writing of the script, ensuring that it would reflect the collective vision of the ensemble.



Doc n.20:. Stockholm University of the Arts, April 2024. Rehearsal.Reinterpreting the early version of the script and engaging in collective creation exercises for the Pinocchio 2.0 version.

2.3.4 The Absent Leader

In addition to the Joker analogy, another crucial element of my approach to fluid leadership is the strategic use of **absence**. As I mentioned earlier, I often define my role and creative process as

"always reaching for the void of the self."

This might seem counterintuitive, as leadership is often associated with presence and assertiveness. However, I believe that embracing a degree of "absence" can be a powerful tool for fostering collaboration and creativity.

For me, "absence" is not about a complete abdication of responsibility. It's not about being disengaged or uninvolved. Instead, it's about consciously creating space for others to step forward, to contribute their ideas, and to take ownership of the creative process. It's about resisting the urge to fill every silence, to provide every answer, and to control every outcome. In a way, it's a practice of letting go, trusting in the collective intelligence and creativity of the group.

This concept, I find, resonates with Carmelo Bene's notion of **manque** which refers to a sense of incompleteness or lack at the heart of the performative act. Bene suggested that this absence is not a weakness but a source of power, highlighting the importance of what is not there.[33]

The absence of leadership manifests in various ways within TeaterPi. For example, during rehearsals, I deliberately step back to allow other members to take the lead in problem-solving or scene development. This could involve, for example, allowing the actors to explore different staging possibilities without my immediate intervention, or encouraging the designers to present their ideas

[33] Panizzo L, Francesco. Quel me smedesimo. Il manque-à-être di Jacques Lacan nella poetica di Jerzy Grotowski e Carmelo Bene. Ediz. italiana e francese di Francesco 2012, Psychodrama, p 140

directly to the performers. It's about empowering them to take ownership of their work and discover their own solutions.

Another example is, while facing challenges, instead of providing the answer, I pose questions that vencourage the group to think critically and to find its own way forward. This approach not only fosters problem solving skills but also cultivates a sense of collective responsibility for the artistic outcome.

Furthermore, a significant aspect of absence in my practice involves the use of memory as a directorial tool. I intentionally avoid pre-setting elements like performance details, scene blocking, or even text interpretation in the traditional directorial sense. I cultivate an internal void, an absence of rigid direction, allowing the performance to emerge from the collaborative process in the moment. This, in my view, allows for a greater sense of immediacy and prevents the actors from simply executing pre-established choices. Devices and frameworks become crucial to support this self-absence. In this context, the primary trace of my directorial presence becomes memory. I allow the **collective memory** of the group, including my own, to act as an **editorial force** between rehearsals. What remains in our shared memory from previous sessions is what we collectively deem important and worth pursuing. It's a kind of natural selection of ideas and actions.

This concept of the "void" and "absence" also connects, as I mentioned, to the work of the sculptor **Eduardo Chillida**. Chillida's sculptures often explore the relationship between form and space, presence and absence. His use of negative space, the "void" within and around the sculpture, is just as important as the solid material. I take this suggestion and transform it by using my self as a void which

gives meaning to the form, a void that defines lines and creates a dialogue between the performance (the raft) and its environment (the harbour). [34]

By consciously "absenting" myself, I find out during my research that I was able to cultivate a more democratic and empowering creative environment within TeaterPi.

Doc. n.21: Eduardo Chillida, Buscando la luz, 1997. I chose to include a photo of one of Chillida's artworks to help the reader understand a possible connection between his work and mine.

An Source: Flickr

[34] https://www.thedecorativesurfaces.com/en/eduardo-chillida/

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 6

May and June 2024 - The Gathering of the Material and The First Selection of Material.

While the improvisational explorations yielded a wealth of material, May and June marked a phase of convergence and initial selection. The fragmented work on text, movement, and design elements began to coalesce. While the dramaturgy team took the lead in drafting a more concrete script, the overall vision remained fluid, shaped by the collective discoveries on the rehearsal floor. I observed a fascinating layering process, where members brought in music, images, and objects to disrupt and reshape emerging scenes. Our cyclical methodology, moving from improvisation to physical exploration to adaptation workshops, followed by collective reflection, allowed us to identify recurring patterns and thematic undercurrents. A significant revelation during this period was the pervasive **sense of nostalgia** within the group.

This wasn't a pre-planned theme but rather an organic emergence from our collective subconscious, perhaps influenced by the story combined with our shared experiences of cultural displacement and a longing for familiar touchstones. This nostalgia then became a conscious aesthetic choice, manifesting in our deliberate over-quotation of cinematic and musical references, and the incorporation of imperfect, low-resolution footage from our 2012 Pinocchio production.

Doc n.22 :Pontepetri (Pistoia, Italy), 2024. This is the football field where I used to play when I was young. In the picture: Eliisa, my daughter, and her cousin Gabriel, following the footsteps of me and my brother Simone Caldognetto. A nostalgic picture that inspired the creation of a Pinocchio 2.0 scene with Nicola Pierini and Davide Valentini playing football on stage.

Role assignments also began to solidify, often driven by practical considerations and the evolving needs of the performance. My role during this time was primarily that of an observer and a guide, posing questions like "**Where does this material leads us?**" and "**What patterns are forming?**" to encourage collective reflection and the articulation of our emerging artistic vision. I acknowledged and embraced the significance of the nostalgia theme, allowing it to take on a central role in our interpretation. We explored it through a systematic strategy of quoting films an approach that became both structural and expressive. These film quotes, designed in various multimedia forms, were woven into the performance as vehicles for evoking and sharing a sense of collective nostalgia with the audience.

Doc n.23 :. Stockholm University of arts. May 2024. The nostalgic picture that inspired the creation of the Pinocchio 2.0 football scene, here transformed by the actors themselves.

2.3.5 Specifics of Fluidity: Facilitating, Forging, and Maieutics

This section delves into the other specific methodologies I employ in my creative process, these emerge from the interplay of these three key elements: **facilitating, forging,** and **maieutics.**

Doc n.24: Stockholm University of arts. august 2024. Rehearsals. A picture that, to me, captures both my absence and presence — and the fluidity of power within the group during the exercise.

2.3.5.1. Facilitating:

In my practice, "facilitating" goes beyond simply "helping out." I understand it in its deeper etymological sense, as making the action in progress easier. It's a pedagogical aspect of my role as a leader with extensive experience in theatre, as I have been teaching theatre and acting since the age of 17. I see it as my responsibility to share my knowledge and experience with other members, providing them with tools and guidance so that they, in turn, can confidently take the lead. This involves helping them find a clear trajectory for their work, a path that can be effectively communicated and shared with others. My aim is to empower them to develop fluidity in their own roles, even if they approach the work with different tools and perspectives. However, "making easier" is not always a straightforward process. Sometimes, it involves introducing elements of discomfort or obstacles to stimulate progress. For example, I often use irony and a playful approach to lessen the perceived weight of theatrical work. This allows us to access responsibility from a more subconscious level, fostering a sense of exploration and discovery where mistakes and successes are equally valuable. In a rehearsal setting, this might manifest as me posing challenging questions or proposing unexpected tasks that push the performers out of their comfort zone, ultimately leading to a more profound understanding of the scene or character. Sarcasm and irony, as explored before are an example of how to forge an environment where we are always searching and never reaching for a kind of perfection that doesn't belong to the performing arts.

Doc n.24: Stockholm University of arts. august 2024. Rehearsals.

Doc n. 24 and 25 :. Summer 2024. Italy. TeaterPi

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 7

June, July, and August 2024 - The Summer Madness: The Rhythm Zone of Delegation Shapes New Material.

The summer months brought a shift in the intensity of our collective work. This "summer madness," as I termed it, was characterized by a "rhythm zone of delegation," where individual members took primary responsibility for their assigned areas. They became free to organise gathering and rehearsals without my presence. The actors focused on memorising the evolving script, while the designers dedicated their time to gathering materials and developing their concepts. For me, this period represented a deliberate step back, a manifestation of the "absent leader" approach. Having facilitated the initial devising and established the key delegations, I trusted the individual members to take ownership of their tasks and progress independently. My role became one of availability for consultation and support, rather than direct involvement in regular rehearsals. This period highlighted the self-directed nature of our ensemble and the trust inherent in our collaborative model. The quiet individual work during the summer months allowed for a different kind of processing and integration of the devised material, a necessary counterpoint to the intense collective exploration of the preceding months.

2.3.5.2. Forging:

"Forging," in my methodology, draws a powerful analogy with the work of **Hephaestus**, the Greek god of the forge, metalworking, and craftsmanship. Hephaestus, often depicted as an outsider or even a disabled god, was nevertheless a master of his craft, capable of shaping raw materials into objects of great beauty and power. This resonates with my own approach to the creative process, where I often work to shape and mould the raw materials of collaboration – disparate ideas, individual impulses, raw emotions, and diverse skills – into a cohesive and impactful artistic whole.

This "forging" process involves several key elements:

- **Bringing Together:** Just as Hephaestus brought together fire, metal, and tools, I bring together the various elements and individuals involved in the production. This might involve connecting actors with designers, musicians with dancers, or different cultural perspectives within the group.
- **Transformation:** The raw materials undergo a transformation, heated in the "fire" of collective discussion, debate, and experimentation. Ideas are challenged, refined, and reshaped through the collaborative process.

- **Shaping:** Through careful guidance and intervention, I help to shape the emerging form of the performance, ensuring that it becomes both strong and aesthetically compelling. This might involve suggesting structural changes, clarifying thematic connections, or helping performers to hone their skills.

The "forging" I engage in is about building connections, strengthening the ensemble, and refining the artistic expression of the group. It's a process of collective creation, where everyone contributes to shaping the final form, much like a group of **artisans** working together in a forge, each with their own tools and expertise.

For example, in a devising process, this "forging" might involve taking a series of improvisations generated by the actors and, through careful editing and structuring, shaping them into a coherent scene. Or it could involve working with a performer to refine their character development, helping them to find the right balance of vulnerability and strength. The "forge" in this case is the rehearsal room, and the "hammer" is the collective creative energy of the group based on elements such as Need and Enthusiasm.

Doc n.26 Stockholm, Folkuniversitetet. august 2024. Rehearsals.

Doc n.27 and 28,´. September 2024. Pr and production material generated for promoting Pinocchio 2.0..

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 8

September 2024: The First Gathering of People After Summer.

The return to collective rehearsals in September marked a new phase, starting to integrate where the individual summer work. While the break had brought fresh energy and ideas, this gathering also focused on crucial practicalities, from administrative tasks to the procurement of design materials and the development of our PR strategy.

The TeaterPi board members took on a more visible supervisory role, acting as points of contact for those with specific responsibilities. When we turned to the script, my approach remained one of observation and suggestion, consciously avoiding imposing pre-conceived staging ideas. Recolling the scene with Alessia Bubbola working on the fairy tale, my role was rather than dictate her interpretation, to offer experience in staging and directing to help her shape her vision in alignment with the overall goals of the performance. My reliance on memory and even dreams as potential staging solutions continued during this phase, a way for me to relinquish direct control and allow less conventional impulses to influence our choices. This felt like a practical application of creating a "void," allowing space for unexpected solutions to emerge.

2.3.5.3. Maieutics

"Maieutics," often referred to as the **Socratic** method, is central to my approach.[35] In essence, it's the art of facilitating birth not of a child, but of ideas and creative expressions. Just as a midwife assists in bringing forth new life, I see my role as helping the group to bring forth its own unique artistic vision and to find out our own creative expression. My role is to support and guide this process, ensuring that the "offspring" (the performance, the scene, the idea) is not solely my creation but rather the collective achievement of the group. I am there to ease the transition, to make the *birth* easier. This involves a process of careful questioning, active listening, and creating a space where everyone feels empowered to contribute their insights.

Throughout the devising process, maieutic conversations take shape, both in formal discussions and in the organic flow of rehearsals. My aim is to constantly provoke the question "What do you mean by that?" in the minds of the collaborators, encouraging deeper exploration and clarity of thought. I avoid imposing my own interpretations, instead guiding the group towards its own discoveries.

Doc n.24: Stockholm University of Arts. September, 2024. Rehearsals.

[35] LEIGH, FIONA. (2008). Platonic Dialogue, Maieutic Method and Critical Thinking. Journal of Philosophy of Education. 41. 309 - 323. 10.1111/j.1467-9752.2007.00561.x.

Doc n.24: Stockholm, Alias Teater. October, 2024. Technical Rehearsals.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 9

October 2024: The final Gathering and The Imaginary Space: Decisions, Dreams, and Distortion

October was a month of intense preparation and, in some ways, a rehearsal in the imaginary space. While we didn't have full access to Alias Teater, we did have the opportunity to visit the space, allowing its potential to influence our planning. This period was characterised by crucial collective decision-making, often under pressure, and a reliance on intuition and even dreams to guide our choices. My role in October was less about than facilitating and, at times, making difficult choices. I was often called upon to provide guidance and expertise, especially when technical challenges arose. However, I consistently tried to avoid imposing my will, preferring to allow the creative process to unfold organically. This approach is rooted in my belief that the best decisions often emerge from a more subconscious place.

A key example of this was the integration of live music. While Michele Benincaso, the musician, was eager to contribute, he needed guidance on how his music would fit within the overall performance. I resisted the urge to dictate specific musical cues, instead encouraging him to explore the space and

Doc n.25 and 26: screenshots of the film for Pinocchio 2014, Stockholm.

the existing material. Ultimately, the placement and nature of the live music emerged from a collaborative process, guided by the musician's own creative instincts.

Another significant challenge involved a short film we created for our 2012 Pinocchio production. This film, intended as a self-referential quote, suffered from poor visual and audio quality. The time constraints prevented us from creating a new version. The question was: what to do?

After a collective discussion, we decided to embrace the imperfections. Working with the technicians, we applied a cartoon filter to the video, transforming the low quality into a deliberate aesthetic choice. This distortion, combined with the compromised audio, created a dreamlike atmosphere, strangely fitting the overall tone of the production. This decision, I must admit, was heavily influenced by a dream I had. In the dream, the film's visual and audio were even more distorted than in reality, yet the narrative remained comprehensible thanks to subtitles. This dream experience led us to retain the subtitles, ensuring that the story remained accessible despite the technical limitations.This example highlights how even technical limitations can be transformed into artistic opportunities, and how subconscious processes, like dreams, can play a crucial role in creative decision-making. It also demonstrates how the "Multilanguage" factor, the presence of subtitles, emerged not from a deliberate choice but from a practical solution to a technical problem.

October, therefore, was a month of embracing the imperfect, trusting our instincts, and allowing the unexpected to shape the final form of Pinocchio 2.0. It was a period where the "imaginary space" of the rehearsal room, combined with the influence of dreams and memories, guided our choices and ultimately enriched the performance.. to me specifically dreams are an important tool. I incorporate insights from my **dreams** into the rehearsal process. I often dream about rehearsals and performances, and I consider these dreams a valuable subconscious contributions. I thus allow the dream solutions to be explored in the rehearsal room

Doc n.27: Stockholm University of Arts. November, 2024. Rehearsals.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER 10

November 2024: General, Technical and Performance day: Conflict, Montage, and the Art of the Void

November 2024 was a crucible, a period of intense pressure and creative transformation where the theoretical frameworks of conflict and montage found vivid practical expression. The transition into Alias Teater was not merely a change of venue; it was a descent into a chaotic and exhilarating whirlwind, a space where control was relinquished, and the unexpected reigned supreme.

My memory of this time is fragmented, a montage of sensory overload and emotional extremes. The cacophony of technical instructions, the relentless pace of rehearsals, the sheer volume of information to process – all contributed to a sense of disorientation and heightened awareness. This experience resonates with Eisenstein's theory of montage, where the collision of disparate elements creates a new, more potent meaning. In November, the "collision" of artistic visions, technical demands, and spatial constraints forced us to confront conflict head-on.

My role during this period was multifaceted and often paradoxical. I was simultaneously the conductor of the orchestra and a musician within it, the architect of the building and a bricklayer on

Doc n.28: Alias Teater Stockholm. November, 2024. General and technical Rehearsals.

the construction site. As the director, I had to maintain a sense of overall vision, guiding the ensemble through the technical complexities and artistic challenges.

But as an actor (Geppetto) and a designer (with significant input in set design), I was also deeply immersed in the practical details of the production.

The technical and dress rehearsals were characterized by a relentless cycle of **problem-solving** and **adaptation**. Mistakes were not only inevitable but, in a strange way, generative. A missed cue became an opportunity for improvisation, a technical glitch sparked a creative solution. This process highlights the crucial role of improvisation in TeaterPi's methodology, not as a mere technique but as a fundamental way of navigating the inherent uncertainties of live performance. We didn't shy away from mistakes; we actively embraced them, transforming them into moments of theatrical discovery. However, I often found that the most effective decisions emerged from a space of openness, from allowing the unexpected to enter and shape the performance. Perhaps the most telling example of this dynamic was the incorporation of a moment from the introductory film into the live performance. My spontaneous decision to step onto the stage as Geppetto, recreating a filmic image, was a direct response to a technical problem. This "collision" of film and live performance, this "montage" of different media, became a powerful and recurring motif.

Doc n.28: Alias Teater Stockholm. November, 2024. General and technical Rehearsals.

Doc n.29: Alias Teater Stockholm. November, 2024. Night of the premiere.

The integration of live music presented another set of challenges. The musician, Michele Benincaso, needed guidance, but I also wanted to preserve his artistic autonomy. This **tension** created a creative friction where musical and theatrical elements edited the decisions (not vice-versa) and enriched the performance.

The sheer volume of work during the technical and general rehearsals brought a kind of **storm**: fast-moving, chaotic, demanding. I was flooded with questions, decisions, details. The limitations of time and resources often hindered my ability to delegate and share knowledge effectively. This was a source of frustration, as I believe deeply in the importance of collective learning and shared ownership. The intensity of the experience made it difficult to pause, reflect, and transmit the accumulated wisdom. However, this too generated some knowledge and insights useful for further projects.

Interestingly, in my first attempt to remember this experience, I thought I was the storm, disrupting and overwhelming the space. But in practice and thanks to the documentation materials and interviews with TeaterPi members, I realised I was instead embodying what I had always been: water. It was not the storm I was causing, but the storm I was holding, absorbing its force, amplifying its urgency, and moving through it.

Doc n.30: Alias Teater, Stockholm, November 2024. Night of the premiere. One of the scenes, taken and shared by a former member of the group who was in the audience that night.

In this moment, my fluid presence might allowed others to find what they needed: points of anchoring, direction, propulsion. I also thought I might become an "Anchor" for the members of TeaterPi. But I wasn't that either: using my knowledge and my role, I merely provided the place where the anchor could fasten.

This fluid role, one of movement, reception, pressure and flow allowed the ensemble to navigate the critical passage between rehearsal and performance. The storm became a shared state, not of danger but of concentrated play. And within it, waves of irony and seriousness revealed themself as something we dove into, together.

In conclusion, November 2024 was a period of intense creative risk-taking and profound artistic discovery. It was a time when the theoretical frameworks of conflict and void were not mere abstractions but lived realities, shaping our creative process and pushing us to the limits of our capabilities. The challenge of documenting this experience accurately reflects the overwhelming and transformative nature of the theatrical event itself.

Doc n.31: Stockholm Folkuniverisitetet Februari, 2025. Pinocchio 2.0 at a new venue. Back stage.

STUDY CASE - PINOCCHIO 2.0. PROJECT- CHAPTER II

Post perfomance and following months: Expanding Reach and Reflecting Forward

The months following the premiere of Pinocchio 2.0 marked a necessary step forward in the important phase of expansion and reflection. Between December 2024 and February 2025, TeaterPi moved from performing to re-examining what had been made, how it could travel further, and what seeds it had planted for future growth.

A practical focus emerged around the possibility of re-staging the performance. This involved adapting Pinocchio 2.0 for different venues and formats ensuring it remained transportable, light, and environmentally conscious. Sustainability here was not only a question of resources but of ethics.

At the same time, the ensemble entered one of its core cycles: new performance planning. The annual general meeting provided space to assess the project, name its successes and tensions, and imagine what might come next. It was also a moment of restructuring. One of the crucial moment for this project was the documented interviews held among ensemble members (included in the Appendix) which heavily contributed to this research insights.

Doc n.31: Stockholm University of Arts. Februari, 2025. Film Crew Jonas Wallin and Paolo Capelli planning the documentation of the interview.

Doc n.31: Stockholm University of Arts. February, 2025. Run through of the a non site specific version of the performance.

I intentionally stepped out of the recording process to allow freer expression. The conversations, conducted in Italian with English subtitles, became a resource in themselves: not mere documentation, but a continuation of the practice.

This period became a porous extension of the creative process where reflection, documentation, and future planning unfolded together. As we looked forward, we were not leaving Pinocchio 2.0 behind. We were letting it echo, carry, and inform the next raft to be built.

2.4 Overview of The study case

The journey of *Pinocchio 2.0*, as traced through its developmental timeline, offers a tangible illustration of the principles of Fluid Leadership and the practical application of TeaterPi's unique methodology. Through the various stages of the project – from the initial germination of the idea to its final realization on stage – we observe a consistent interplay between structure and freedom, individual initiative and collective ownership, and a dynamic shifting of roles within the ensemble.

My leadership throughout this process was characterized by a conscious effort to balance presence and absence. In the early phases, I often adopted a more "absent" stance, creating space for collective exploration and empowering the group to shape the project's direction. As the work progressed, my role evolved into that vof a facilitator ("Joker"), guiding discussions, posing questions, and providing a framework for creative exploration without imposing a rigid vision. In later stages, particularly during the intense final preparations, my presence became more pronounced as I took on the role of an "editor," helping to synthesize the various artistic elements while still fostering autonomy and distributing decision-making within the ensemble.

The *Pinocchio 2.0* case study highlights several key aspects of TeaterPi's methodology in action:

- **Embracing Emergence:** The project's trajectory was not linear or pre-determined. Significant artistic choices, such as the central theme of nostalgia and the structural framing of Geppetto's dream, emerged organically from the devising process.

- **Collective Ownership:** From the initial decision to undertake the project to the final performance, a strong sense of collective ownership permeated the ensemble. Members were empowered to contribute ideas, take on responsibilities and shape the artistic outcome.

- **Trust and Delegation:** The willingness to delegate significant artistic responsibility, even to members with varying levels of involvement, underscored the trust placed in individual talent and initiative.

- **Adaptability and Resourcefulness:** The site-specific approach to scenography and staging, adapting to the unique characteristics of each performance space, demonstrated TeaterPi's resourcefulness and commitment to making theatre within its means.

- **"Serious Playing":** The integration of irony, humour, and a playful approach fostered a creative environment where experimentation and failure were embraced as valuable parts of the process.

Ultimately, the *Pinocchio 2.0* project serves as a compelling example of how a fluid leadership model can function in practice. By consciously navigating the spectrum between presence and absence, by facilitating rather than dictating, and by empowering the ensemble to take ownership of the creative process, I aimed to cultivate a dynamic and generative environment where individual voices could contribute to a cohesive and impactful artistic whole. This case study underscores the potential of this approach to foster a strong sense of belonging, harness the diverse perspectives of the ensemble, and ultimately lead to unexpected and enriching artistic outcomes.

3.0 Conclusion

This research embarked on an exploration into the complexities of leadership within the performing arts, specifically through the lens of my practice as the artistic leader of TeaterPi. My initial inquiry stemmed from an awareness of the limitations inherent in traditional, hierarchical models and a fascination with the potential of more fluid, collaborative approaches. The challenge of documenting and objectively analysing such a dynamic and subjective process has been a constant consideration throughout this investigation.

The case study of *Pinocchio 2.0* provided a valuable opportunity to ground these theoretical explorations in the practical aspects of a specific project. By tracing its developmental timeline, we witnessed the tangible application of a Fluid Leadership model, characterised by a dynamic interplay of presence and absence, facilitation, and the empowerment of the ensemble. The project's journey underscored the significance of embracing emergence, fostering collective ownership, and trusting the diverse talents and initiatives of individual members.

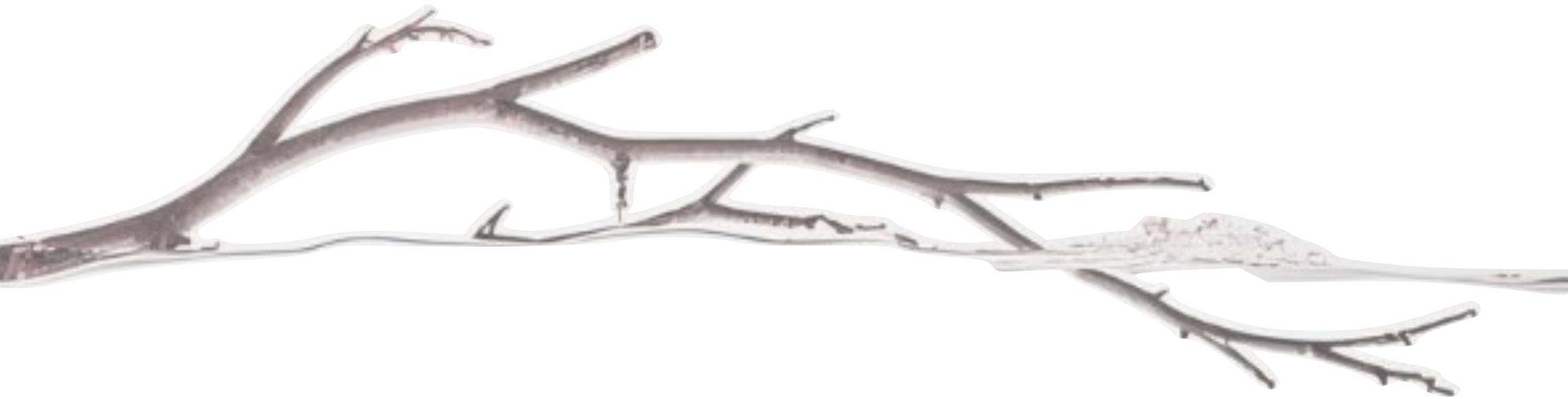
The aesthetic landscape of *Pinocchio 2.0* was subtly yet profoundly influenced by the collective experiences of belonging and displacement within TeaterPi. Our shared sense of cultural heritage, intertwined with the immigrant perspective of navigating new environments, manifested in a performance that layered nostalgia with a contemporary sensibility, creating a unique theatrical language. The very act of reinterpreting a familiar Italian narrative through our diverse lenses speaks to the power of personal experience in shaping artistic expression.

The success of *Pinocchio 2.0* and the insights gleaned from its creation reinforce the potential of Fluid Leadership as a viable and enriching alternative to more conventional leadership models, not only within the performing arts but potentially in other collaborative fields as well. This research suggests that by consciously cultivating a space for shared creativity, by valuing diverse perspectives, and by embracing the inherent uncertainties of the artistic process, leaders can foster more dynamic, engaged, and ultimately more innovative outcomes.

Moving forward, several avenues for further analysis and development emerge. The application of assembling, editing, and montage theories, initially my primary focus, could be revisited through the practical lens of how these principles manifest within a devised performance created under a Fluid Leadership model.

Furthermore, the potential for codifying the principles and practices of Fluid Leadership into a more accessible framework, perhaps even a "manual," could offer valuable guidance and inspiration for other creators seeking to adopt more collaborative and empowering approaches.

Ultimately, this research has been a personal journey of reflection and articulation. While acknowledging the inherent subjectivity and the difficulty of capturing the nuances of a dynamic creative process, I hope to have illuminated the potential of Fluid Leadership as a powerful catalyst for artistic innovation and collective growth. The story of TeaterPi and the creation of *Pinocchio 2.0* offers a testament to the transformative power of shared creation and the potential of a leadership that flows with the currents of collaboration.



Doc n.28: Alias Teater Stockholm. November, 2024. General and technical rehearsals. Actors rehearsing a scene without me, independently fixing new details themselves. This moment reflects the growing autonomy within the group and the decentralisation of leadership.

Appendix

Pinocchio 2.0 perfomance

at Alias Teater, stockholm , Nov 2024

https://youtu.be/ATJK0E0EOeI?si=PvxgXl0HoqhcgoYS

TeaterPI for dummies

Video about TeaterPi and their members

https://youtu.be/1hbD0dk02h8?si=v1F6fsvCKt5AALAd

Interviews

Teaterpi

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HCbzfK_Gmo

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