

Life Long Burning Creative Crossroads Coproduction first year report

Jenna Jalonen - JOKE 'I just wish to laugh at you'

“My friends told me I don't really get comedy. I think they were joking...”

The first year of *JOKE 'I just wish to laugh at you'* creative process has had its difficulties due to the Covid pandemic as I imagine is the case with the majority of the creations in the performing arts field. Most of the originally planned residencies abroad and schedules had to be cancelled or postponed and this has effected as delaying the creation process.

I also made a clear decision as the choreographer/director that I do not want to compromise or adapt the abroad locations of the residencies to something local here in Budapest just to keep the schedule as planned.

I found it more important to stay true to myself and true to the idea of how I wish to make this creation rather than just make it. It will take the time and method it needs to be “ready”

Performing artist now.



Although the process has been delayed in the really active matter it doesn't mean that process and discoveries have not been done. In the past year *JOKE 'I just wish to laugh at you'* has been cooking in the following aspects:

- Two 1 week long theme suggestion and research methodology planning residencies with the collaborating artists Polett Kasza (HU), Thomas Bradley (AUS), Péter Juhász (HU) and Csaba Molnár (HU) in Tiszavasvári and Szekszárd Hungary. During these research periods we had fun together, we laughed, we made jokes, we shared inspirational sources and we discussed the possible directions of the theme and subject of the performance. We raised questions like: What is funny? Why do I laugh on certain things and not the others? What psychological role is laughing playing in my identity? Is humour always context related? Is comedy the only channel for freedom of speech in today's society? We also discussed the possible outcome of the performance and how to create an ongoing creation-performance that is never finished and is always adapting due to the given audience and participants?
- Online mentoring and coaching meetings with Bush Hartshorn on a monthly basis. Bush has and will be a conversation partner for me in the process of this creation. He has helped me to reflect on the questions and discoveries of the project as well as been a guide while I have been transforming the way I work artistically. Together we have been laughing and telling jokes to each other. We also share an interest in football as he and I are both fans of Liverpool which has turned out to be funny chatting everytime our team is playing.

- Collecting inspirational sources and learning about comedy. There is a pile of books next to my bed about comedy, humour, and psychology of laughter. Since I am really not a reading kind of person this turns out to be the most difficult way of researching for myself, therefore I have only been busy with one of the books so far; *Why is that so funny? A practical exploration of physical comedy* by John Wright. The other collection of inspiration is more focused on collecting memes and funny videos online.
- Maintaining the communication with the partners of the project and searching for new possible collaborators and support. For the moment *Workshop Foundation* (HU), *STUK House for Dance Image and Sound* (BE) and *Kinosaki International Arts Centre* (JP) are partners for JOKE 'I just wish to laugh at you'. I wish to find more international partners for residencies and possible locations/venues for performing in the future, for this I am currently in contact with Pelto residency (FIN), A Szeszgyár, Szekszárd HU), Wynkl Festival (FR) and Mamaland Farm (SLO). The project also received a small research grant of 500.000HUF (around 1400 EUR) from the Hungarian National Cultural Fund that I wish to be using in funding the additional costs of the desired residencies. I plan to apply for additional project funding at the Staféta grant in Hungary.

Discoveries so far...

- The performance to be an ongoing creation and "never finished" performance, meaning that I wish to connect 1 week research with local people, artists or groups prior to the performance that will affect, shape and define the outcome of that given performance in each location individually
- The performance takes place offsite, site specific or in an alternative venue rather than classical theater / black box.
- Besides the research team (Polett Kasza, Thomas Bradley, Péter Juhász and Csaba Molnár) I wish to keep an open door for other participants depending on location. Integrating people from different cultural backgrounds, arts fields, minority and age groups
- "Ecological / Self-sustainable performance" means that I wish not to produce new extra materials like costume, set, props for the piece, but rather use and reuse materials from a given location or venue. Aim is to minimise emissions and carbon footprint of



this performance -> natural / energy saving lighting, minimal travel by plane, excluding single use and chemical objects in the research periods and performances

- After watching several hours of american stand up comedians, knowing that it is not something I wish to connect in the project :D
- Sarcasm is perhaps my favourite form of humour.
- I have developed a “fake-laugh” to fill in gaps of not knowing what to comment in some situations
- Nothing should be taken seriously, even writing this report

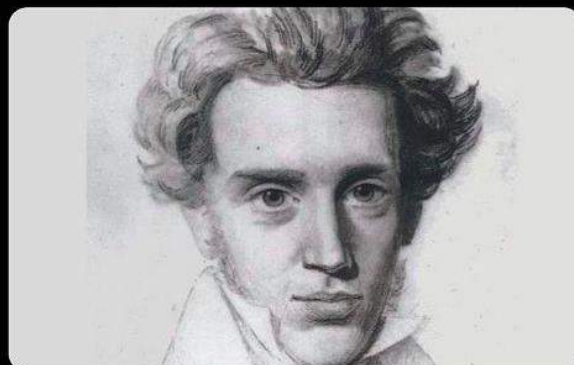
Future planning...


- Setting up the schedule and residencies for the upcoming year
- Applying for funding
- Searching and setting up new possible partners and collaborators
- Finalizing the date and location of the first ‘premier-research-performance’ somewhere in October/November 2022
- Continuing the mentoring conversation with Bush Hartshorn
- Sketch / Score of the performance
- Defining the methodology and score of the research with outside participants
- Continuing the collection of inspirational material and how to use them?
- Stay calm and allow the project to take its time while laughing



writers doing normal shit
@writersdoing

“A fire broke out backstage in a theatre. The clown came out to warn the public; they thought it was a joke and applauded. He repeated it; the acclaim was even greater. I think that's just how the world will come to an end: to general applause from wits who believe it's a joke.”



 pubity · Following ⋮



@ushimei ▼

if you see this, straighten ur back you
banana-shaped fuck.

Life Long Burning Creative Crossroads Co-production final report

Collective Dope/Jenna Jalonen - JOKE 'I just wish to laugh at you'

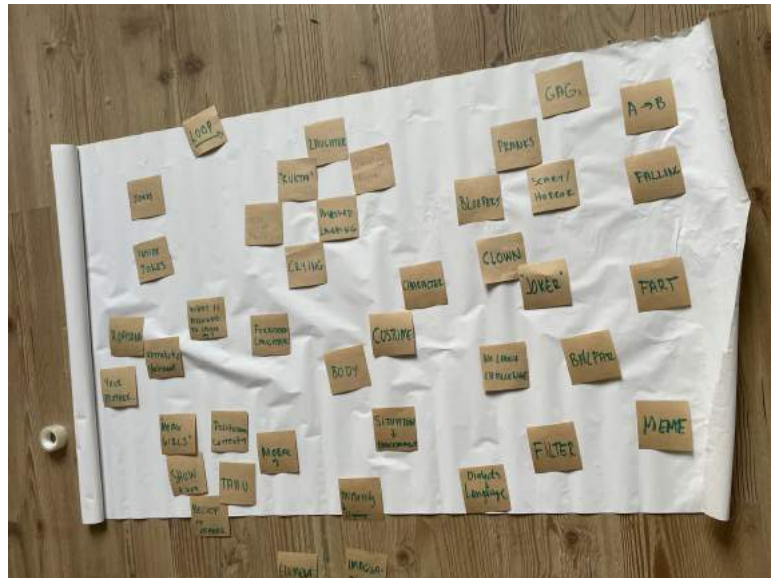
"What is the difference between a dancer and a KFC chicken bucket?"

The KFC chicken bucket can feed a full family..."

The second year of *JOKE 'I just wish to laugh at you'* creative process took its main focus towards defining the needed artistic practice, creational aspect and tools. The creative team of Jenna Jalonen (HU), Polett Kasza (HU), Csaba Molnár (HU/SK), Thomas Alfred Bradley (AUS) and Bush Hartshorn continued the research and creative process in different locations and constellations before the **first try out 'premier'** held on **19th of November 2022 in Petrol beer and barbeque restaurant, Budapest.**

The research periods of 4 days - 2 weeks took place in various formats and locations such as:

- Retreat Factory, Szekszárd, Hungary
- Montpellier, France
- International Dance Week Budapest, Hungary
- Nyirmedpuszta, Mátranovák, Hungary
- Momento Demento Festival, Croatia
- Promenade Panzió, Miskolc
- Sín Arts Center, Budapest Hungary
- Petrol Beer and Barbeque, Budapest, Hungary



During these research periods the creative team continued in collecting inspirational materials by joking, laughing and sharing funny online content of memes and videos as well as an ongoing conversation about the world of humour, comedy and what we laugh about.

Raising new questions about appropriation of jokes and the role of political correctness and censorship in comedy today. Together with all the collected materials and questions, we formed a first draft of a possible score/structure of how the first try out our premier in a restaurant setting would happen. This format, for now seems to be a one of a kind experiment that perhaps will not be maintained in the future residencies and stages of the "on-going-premier"-format.

There first your premier situation was extremely good opportunity to understand the nature and difficulties of performing in a non-theater space where focus and attention of the spectator (in this setting the restaurant customer) would be compromised and therefore quite difficult to maintain. This

lead to non understandable situations due to lack of attention to specific actions or stories/jokes at all times. Also the acoustics and sound amplifiers of the restaurant space were very poor causing struggles for the performers to guide spoken story lines and to be heard. On the other hand all visual, physical and “bigger” actions would enjoy a great success in the given setting earning loads of laughter and amusement from the spectators.

This situation was surely a brave risk taking situation that gave me the choreographer and the creative team valuable feedback and understanding of what we might be dealing with once taking performance out of the classical performing spaces and settings and how ‘off-site’ and unusual locations can carry and function for the performance we are making.

Adaptation, sensitivity and good technical requirements are essential in the future.



The future...

- November/December 2022, Co-productional residency and second tryout premier with Polett Kasza and Bush Hartshorn in Kinosaki International Arts Center, Kinosaki Onsen, Japan
- May/June 2023 residency and presentation at the Mediterranean Dance Center, Svetvicenat, Croatia (to be confirmed)
- July and August 2023 residency and presentations in Nyirmedpuszta, Matranovak, Hungary
- 2024 Application for JoJo Oulu Dance Center co-production and residency, Oulu, Finland
- 2023 autumn/2024 spring, residency and presentation at STUK house for Dance Image and Sound, Leuven, Belgium, (to be confirmed)
- Ongoing research and networking for possible future partners of residency, outreach program and presentations.
- Ongoing research of the world of humour, comedy and laughter and collecting funny content
- Still not taking anything too seriously, even a premier situation nor a final project report... ;)



SMILE!



A DAILY
REMINDER
THAT YOUR
LIFE IS STILL
A JOKE