

INTERNSHIP IN PRIVATE a project initiated by Saskia Holmkvist

Dear Olaf,

I was delighted to receive the information that you want to participate. I appreciate it enormously.

(---)The general debate about the 'generation praktikum' is a starting point for my project. A defined group within labour in today's society working under precarious working conditions. (---) I wanted to make a self-reflexive project about Shedhalle and bring in the situation of the interns of the Kunsthalle. (---) My aim is to represent other voices within the structure of Shedhalle saying other things than the official ones. It's about finding or re-enacting a situation that is not in the frontline of the institution. My intention is to find personal reflections upon a shared situation in which different roles are played and therefore these persons confront different dilemmas. (---)

Dear Saskia,

I find your thoughts and the questions, you want to ask, very interesting. (---)Translated in my terms - I'm a psychoanalyst - I would say, that you are focussing on the unconscious conflicts of the institution "Shedhalle" as a concrete example of a place in which the "generation praktikum" is at work. Perhaps you could say, that it is a work of deconstructing the understanding of an institution or a person or - as the linguistics and in other way Derrida probably would say - a text about itself. And from my point of view I would add to the dilemma of the conflict between the private and the political, which is and would be a conflict between inside and outside, that there are also conflicts - in the same matter - between different aspects of the private, different aspects in the inside and - in the same way - different conflicts in the political or social or normative sphere, that means different conflicts in the outside itself. And there are relations between these conflicts inside and those between inside and outside. (---) Your informations and explications made me imagine why you don't pose the questions, you want to ask, yourself. This could be, because you want to have or want to get a "therapy session" with the interns of Shedhalle to get not only the official statements and representations. And for such a "therapy session" you want to have a therapist, because he would perhaps be able not only to ask questions but further on to get the conflicts and dilemmas on the point.(---)

Dear Olaf,

(---)I think you analyzed the idea of involving a psychoanalyst very well. To involve a psychoanalyst in an artproject is on a symbolical level already a sign that the issue is about a private conflict. Then ofcourse you can contextualize the questions being a psychoanalyst in a much better and much more interesting way than I could being an artist. Also in art everything doesn't have to be 100% realist which is also something I'm trying to take advantage of in this situation. I believe that the 'mismatch' of a psychoanalyst together with a political question gives an extra dimension to the thinking about the question. I hope you get me right here.(---)



<<The relation that I wanted to get closer to was how today's internships affect the work climate at work and, in extension, the interns' as well as the employers' private domain. The investigation ended in a film, *Internship in Private*, a kind of docudrama built upon documented meetings with a psychoanalyst. The film is therefore enacted at the psychoanalyst Olaf Knellessens' practise in Zurich, where two curators, Sönke Gau and Katharina Schlieben, as well as three former interns, Lisa Mazza, Christoph Schneider and Valerie Thurner, were asked to take part in therapy sessions. By listening and asking questions around descriptions of their private lives, Olaf Knellessens leads his 'patients' into self-reflection around what happens in their work situation. The intention of taking the curators and former interns of Shedhalle to a psychoanalyst was to bring into focus the complex and problematic sides of internship.

The intrigue arises from the assumption of an antagonistic relation between the employer and the intern based on the debate about the "Generation Praktikum". However, in the filmed therapy sessions a much more complex exchange of services and favours than just a default of payment is visible. The film is a site-specific downbeat in the institution Shedhalle that, like many other of today's work places, partly run their enterprise with the help of highly educated interns. In the exchange for free labour, the interns receive valuable knowledge and experience for the future, a symbolic capital that is balanced around feelings and engagement.

The interns, on the other side, tell us about being part of a system that doesn't leave many alternative solutions. "Some employers say that internships are demanded to get employed today but I wonder if it isn't sometimes just a way of persuading us to take on poorly paid internships," says one of the former interns during a therapy session. Interns often have difficulties to demand their rights depending on position, unspecified areas of responsibility, age, and so on. And it's true that interns are easily made to do uninteresting tasks. The intern is exposed and dependent on a benevolent employer to get the chance to gain insights into and experience of a profession. Today it's predominantly the employer's conscience that will decide whether these opportunities are offered. In *Internship in Private* we get to meet such an employer but that's far from saying that the problem is solved.>> Saskia Holmkvist