

A world in motion: landscapes of Institute of Interconnected Realities

The Lynghøj Lakes is a site for a polyphonic motion that folds and unfolds, curls up and expands, whooshes past, and stands still.

The movement can be seen in the geological layers of time revealed by excavation works, heard in the constant passing of traffic on the Holbækmotorvejen, sensed as increasing warmth as the Earth's axial tilt directs the Northern Hemisphere towards the Sun. The eye cannot detect the electric currents of the power lines running along the pits, but the skin cannot help but feel the steady winds blowing from the North Sea.

The mining activity punctured the soil and exposed the underground to light, subsequently affecting the surrounding ecosystems. The nutrient-poor soil of the area is proving to be an ideal environment for flora and fauna such as sea buckthorn, which spreads with strong, horizontal roots, and the sand martins that dive into their nests in the steep, exposed slopes of the Lake Flæng.

However, if the human attempt is to preserve the newly created essence of the area, it would need to become frozen in time as the natural movement of the ecological cycle seeks to fill the voids. As nutrients in the soil and water increase, different species steadily take root and turn the glimmers of the turquoise water into more usual grey-scale ripples. First to arrive are the willow and birch, followed by the larger deciduous trees such as oaks and rowans that eventually shade the now ubiquitous sea buckthorn into decline.

The new choreography by Institute of Interconnected Realities *Spacing Out* approaches this former gravel pit as a wound, an injury to living tissue caused by a cut, and in the process of regenerating. The performance reaches out to ways in which to deal with personal trauma and the collective damage that extends to the surrounding landscape and echoes back to the human experience of the site.

Institute of Interconnected Realities works with the concept of *decentralised choreography*, where performances are sites that aim to make visible the complex and layered relationships that are present in given situations. The multiple scales of human, material, and more-than-human elements - from the structure of the galaxies to the sound of a crawling ant - are in an endless feedback loop and viewed as equally important.

This text is informed by Ana Vujanović's writing on *landscape dramaturgy*: performance as a space of perception, sense, and sensation that one wanders through as one of its components, without the need to arrive at a fixed narrative or conclusion. Vujanović describes this modality as a common affective space, "spending time with".

In their earlier performance *Song of 8* (2021), the thrusting, infinite figure-8-like movement of the group of three dancers was counterpointed by the perpetual loop of the Earth's rotation on its axis as the performance took place in natural light over the hour of sunset.

While continuing their concurrent forward and backwards 8s, the dancers slowly made their way across the performance space. The subconscious energy echoed from the performers' looping bodies to the orbiting and spinning of the Earth among the celestial bodies. Through repetition, change emerges, bringing forth new ways of experiencing the felt reality.

Taking place in Husets Teater, *A Play* (2022) navigated the complex layers of time, tradition, and imagination that create the here-and-now shared between the audience and the performers. It

extended to the material elements of the situation: the architecture, materials, light, sound, and atmosphere of the theatre building.

In the performance, dynamic bursts of movement extended and bounced back from the swarm-like assembly of four performers toward the audience sitting in the auditorium and beyond, reaching out to the myriad extensions of time and place inside and outside the black box. The performance would start with the performers pinning down their physical location in a city on one lone planet of the Solar System, nestled in one of the Milky Way's outer spiral arms. In our imaginations, we'd be pushed back in time to the theatre of Ancient Greece and pulled towards unpredictable futures.

Spacing Out steps out of the controlled theatre space into a situation where the increasing daylight, weather conditions, and other unexpected variables subvert the human position of authority. Instead, the performers work with the conditions of the location, negotiating with what is already there.

Tucked between the steep slopes of Lake Flæng, a gravel path descends towards a sandbank. A huddle of performers are piled close to the shoreline. Pushing and pulling, gently and harder, they navigate their positions as layers of the huddle: feeling their weight and giving weight, gently pushing and pulling. The performers shift positions according to their own needs while trying to sense those of others, feeling their boundaries to others through seemingly slow acts of holding, caring, and caressing.

The sense of material and emotional weight carries through in the composition by S. Rieser who has collected sounds present around the Lynghøj Lakes, rearranging and intensifying the existing sensorial textures of the site. In contemporary artist Niina Tervo's installation local sand slowly trickles through the organically shaped jute sacks, eventually dissipating. The porous surface of the sculptures blurs the material limits of the inside and outside, questioning where the borders between materials and objects lie.

How to work with this sense of intimacy and weight together with the at times contradictory elements at work in the landscape? To heal, the emotional body needs to feel out the outlines of the physical body. The physical reaction to one's environment and the sense of space are integral to trauma recovery. Coming together with the landscape in other ways and adjusting to its push and pull, and at times indistinct boundaries could create a space for rehabilitation. It is a structure that aims to heal itself, even if that means some matter needs to give way to others.

The performance, the sound, and the sculptures act as singular elements through which moments pass. Just as the Earth's multitude of layers press on top of each other, they collapse, shift, and separate as part of the geological cycle, preserving time and events in their folds.

Riikka Thitz is a Helsinki-based curator whose projects range from exhibitions and performances to site-responsive works. Her practice is informed by dramaturgical tools and especially by the concept of landscape dramaturgy.