

FEBRUARY - JUNE 2017



STUDENTS GIVE STAGED LECTURES ON CLIMATE CHANGE

How can academic research and knowledge be staged with performative elements?

For a long time Theatre Grob has been working on a series of plays, which all have dealt with the subject of being a Danish citizen in a globalized world. Each of these plays has also been touching upon the subthemes; vulnerability, time, making a difference, freedom, confidence/paranoia and death. The students from Theater and Performance Studies were given the task of delivering a series of performance lectures with a new perspective on these themes both in regards to content and format.

THE PROCESS

The course entailed two parallel tracks. A practical track in which the students should work in groups with minor stage productions of academic research and sociological knowledge as well as a theoretical track that gave the students thematic and processual inspiration for their productions. In addition, the theoretical track contained introduction to a number of cultural and sociological concepts and frameworks for reflection. The practical track was based on an understanding of the process of performing arts as collective design processes and was facilitated with inspiration from Design Thinking. The students thus went through a process, which progressively entailed; research, concept development, idea development, prototyping and implementation. In theater terms; research, concept development, material generation, composition and staging.

As a source of inspiration to the work a Probing Kit was handed to the students, which they subsequently exchanged with each other. A design tool that gave them the opportunity to create new creative insights about the themes. The whole process was initiated with a lecture held by the American climate activist Amy Larkin.



FAKTA

Course: Theater sociology and -process participation with special focus on cultural entrepreneurship (in Danish)

Course responsible: Mette Obling Høeg

Participants: 33 students from UCPH

Period: February-June 2017

External partner: GROW - the youth department for independent theatre and talent development at Theatre Grob

Guest: climate activist and entrepreneur Amy Larkin, USA

The project received funding from the Danish Foundation for Entrepreneurship

RESULTS

The students created and presented 6 performance lectures about climate change in a globalized world. Each of these were based on one of Theatre Grob's 6 subthemes. The students' presentations thus aligned with the theater's agenda of socially and politically committed performing arts, while contributing to this agenda with a new perspective and an alternative form of communication.

In addition, a small group of students were given the task of acting as production managers for the project as well as planning and implementing a PR and communication strategy. This group coordinated the practical production process and collaborated with the theater's PR employee to make posters, flyers, press releases and social media updates about the two performances. Both performances were played before an almost full house.

The students have gained experience in delivering a concrete performative communication product based on a delimited assignment and gained experience with working together in a collective design process that required them to create and develop a shared vision for the result. The students have experienced that their academic and rhetorical skills have created value in a professional context outside of the university and the process has sharpened the students' understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the academic genre as a form of communication by continuously relating (and contrasting) the academic genre to performance elements and artistic communication. The project has thus increased the students' awareness of their own specific academic competencies. Such recognition is a valuable starting point for being able to act proactively and entrepreneurial in the professional arts and cultural labor market as well as in the industry in general.

