

Mapping Ottersberg: Using Performance Intervention to Mediate Performance as Research

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Video Link: <http://vimeo.com/68047489>.

‘Do you know where we can find cows?’ I asked a gentleman parking his bike in front of the REWE grocery store in Ottersberg, Germany. This was one on a list of questions my colleagues and I asked the unsuspecting citizens of this tiny village during our first collaborative performance intervention entitled ‘Mapping Ottersberg’. In this project I and two other artists embarked on a journey to uncover how local villagers mentally map the social and logistical geography around them. We were looking for ways in which individuals conceive of place and space and how those conceptions might change if we were to employ linguistic filters. What would happen if we were to pose as lost tourists and ask for directions in fluent German? Would we get the same response if we asked in English? Or bad German? How does language change the ways in which we view our environment and the people we encounter? How do the ways in which we see ourselves shift when speaking with someone more or less like us?

These sorts of questions belong to a methodological framework that uses artistic practice as a research laboratory to investigate ideas. Performance as Research (PaR), a practice well-known in the academic circles of Great Britain and one which is emerging in the U.S. and Canada, uses performance as the locus for acquiring knowledge.

The innovative and critical potential of practice-based research lies in its capacity to generate personally situated knowledge and new ways of modeling and externalizing such knowledge while at the same time revealing philosophical, social and cultural contexts for the critical intervention and application of knowledge outcomes (Barrett 2007: 2).

Rather than establishing a dichotomy between theoretical objective research and personal creative practice, PaR provides an approach that works within a concentricity of both points of view. Inclusive rather than exclusive in its approach, Cecilia Lagerström argues that, although

driven by practice, PaR utilizes many elements of traditional research such as ‘critical thinking, transparency regarding methods and the conscious using of knowledge’ (Lagerström 2010: 138). PaR provides a helpful framework for artists interested in examining pre-determined ideas while also providing room for unexpected discoveries and an adaptable investigative environment.

‘Mapping Ottersberg’ began with a Call for Artists in the March edition of Theater Without Borders. The Festival of Art as Research (FAR) was inviting international artists to come to Ottersberg in the North of Germany ‘to explore the phenomenon of Translation’ (Festival for Art as Research 2012). Cory Tamler, Christina Kruse and I had been looking for an international project to use as a platform for examining intersections in our work. Cory, a playwright, commits herself to artistic endeavors that engage local communities and enjoys using citizens as performers. Christina, a graduate of a program in International Performance Research, has recently become interested in performance interventions in public spaces. I am a freelance director and professor of performance at Cornell University specializing in linguistically based cultural encounters. Could the three of us create a project for this festival that served all of our interests?

Choosing where and how to begin can be a tricky moment when constructing a collaborative artistic investigation. Baz Kershaw describes the PaR process as often beginning with a hunch or a moment of intuition, which then moves forward into a number of possibilities. (Kershaw 2009: 65) In our case, Christina was the first to suggest examining how we mentally map space. Although well travelled in Germany, none of us had ever been to or heard of Ottersberg. We knew that we would be encountering new geography with no knowledge of what lay where. The first place we would go to negotiate Ottersberg would be a map. We began to wonder how our newly constructed mental map of this small village might compare against the well traveled mental map of someone who lived and worked in Ottersberg. This initial idea evolved into a series of questions: How does one experience (or translate) a mental map of physical space? Do we use geocentric references (north, south, east, west), landmarks (around the corner from the drugstore), metaphoric ideas (looks like a coffee cup), a combination, or something entirely unexpected? Is our mental mapping cognitive, cultural, emotional, kinesthetic? Is it possible to use theatre practice to determine the source of mapping information? Does language change the ways we describe or process our personal map of the surrounding environment? Do we respond differently when working in a second language or when

conversing with someone who struggles to communicate? Each of these questions represented a hunch, a sense of the potential of the idea, or perhaps simple intellectual curiosity. This did seem a strong place to start.

As the framework for our investigation we chose to use performance intervention, a mode of public engagement that was of particular interest to Christina. Performance interventionists use recognizable spaces, iconic objects or artefacts and/or typical situations as the platform for a performance event in order to draw attention to experiences one normally takes for granted. The intent of this form of public engagement is to frustrate or excite expectation, interfering with habit in order to draw attention to a behavior or circumstance. Whether it is Coco Fusco pretending to be an army cadet teaching torture techniques to her audience or Lián Amaris Sifuentes taking 72 hours to prepare for a date in the middle of New York City traffic, the aim is ‘to make the everyday appear differently, both for the participants and the spectators’ (Ejbye-Ernst 2007: 6). Significantly for us, performance interventions rarely happen in theatrical spaces where the rules for spectatorship are culturally defined and well known to participants. We anticipated using the streets of Ottersberg as our playing space and recognized that the process and the outcome of our project were unpredictable. Unpredictability is one of the highlights of art invention. As the artist redefines the traditional practitioner/audience relationship, unexpected outcomes occur. It was precisely this unpredictability that made performance intervention the right fit for our investigation. We did not know what we might encounter, and we sought a framework in which the improvisational nature of our project would be an asset rather than a liability. ‘Part of the experience is to not know what will happen, as the contract that defines the rights of the audience is cancelled. As part of the same move, the artist does not know what will happen to him either’ (Ejbye-Ernst 2007: 6-7). Unpredictability is also a component of PaR practice, further suggesting that our work fit well within this research methodology. ‘...within the context of studio-based research, innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined, and “outcomes” of artistic research are necessarily unpredictable’ (Barrett 2007: 3).

For our intervention we decided that the three of us would pose as lost tourists, ask people we encountered on the streets of Ottersberg for the location of various buildings or objects and then create a ‘map’ from their answers. We could not be certain what form this ‘map’ might take until we had conducted our interviews and sifted through the information we gathered.

We divided our questions into three categories: (1) Concrete location (e.g., Where is the pharmacy?), (2) Abstract location (e.g., Where is the black gate near the red billboard?) and (3) Interpretive location (e.g., Where are we?). We hoped that moving from concrete to abstract questions would elicit a wider range of response and generate more unexpected answers than those in a typical tourist/citizen encounter. Cory's work investigates how to give agency to local participants when creating a performance piece. To accommodate her interests, we planned to record all encounters and edit them into a short film, making the local residents of Ottersberg actors in our project. Although we planned to travel together and to ask for directions as a group, we wanted to rotate the role of questioner, sharing the spotlight with one another and with the local residents. To accommodate my research needs and to add another level of complexity to our encounters, we decided to ask our tourist questions using three linguistic filters. The filters would provide information about how language might influence a typical tourist interaction. The linguistic filters we would apply to each of our question categories would be: (1) English, (2) German and (3) Bad German. With this plan in place, we were confident that we could accommodate our individual research interests as well as our mutual passion for collaboration. All three of us were anxious to get started and see what would happen. Our emotionally invested motivation to conduct this research is a welcome component of Performance as Research.

A general feature of practice-based research projects is that personal interest and experience, rather than objective "disinterestedness" motivates the research process. This is an advantage to be exploited, since in terms of the acquisition of knowledge, artistic research provides a more profound model of learning—one that not only incorporates the acquisition of knowledge pre-determined by the curriculum—but also involves the revealing or production of new knowledge not anticipated by the curriculum. (Bartlett 2007: 5)

Ottersberg, located in northern Germany virtually halfway between Hamburg and Bremen, has a population of 12,000. The village is so small that many Germans have never heard of it. The obscurity of this small village made it an ideal location for our mapping project. We would not be influenced by previous experience, newspaper articles, cultural history, or anecdotes from friends and family. Ottersberg was a conceptually virgin space for us.



Figure 1: A main street in the village of Ottersberg. (All photos by Christina Kruse.)

After arriving in Ottersberg, our first order of business was to scout the town. We needed to determine which locations we would use in our question encounters. Although we would pretend that we were new to town, it was important to be strategic about the locations of inquiry. Should we randomly ask after the post office, bank and pharmacy only to find that they lie right next to one another, we would end up with a small and static map. We needed to learn the layout of the town in order to make useful choices, and we wanted to remember the sensation of experiencing this place as newcomers so that we could recreate that behavior during our interview process. Our scouting trip did not take long. Within a couple of hours we had covered the village from end to end. Ottersberg's main streets are laid out in a slightly opened 'L' shape. The village contains all of the standard amenities: a city hall, a police station, a variety of grocery stores, several pharmacies, a post office, a cemetery. We also discovered some unusual residents and artifacts, including two dairies complete with cows, and a large collection of otter sculptures (hence the name). Once scouting was complete, we began to determine the questions we would

use for each category. We based these choices on geographic location, range in type of question and our own sense of fun. Using our three question categories, we chose the following:

Concrete questions:

1. Where is the post office? (located in the center of town – a typical question)
2. Where can we find a veterinarian? (located at one end of the ‘L’ – an unusual question)
3. Where can we find a gravestone maker? (located at the other end of the ‘L’ – a highly unusual question)

Abstract Questions:

1. Where can we find a fence made of pencils? (outside the large stationery store – one fixed location)
2. Where can we find cows? (in two places, each roughly in the middle of each leg of the ‘L’ – two possible locations)
3. Where can we find otters? (in many places – many possible locations)

Interpretive Questions:

1. Where are we? (literally and philosophically)
2. Where can we find fun? (in any sense)
3. Where can we find a fortune teller? (This question began as ‘Where can we find our fortune?’ but we found the phrase so difficult to translate that we adapted it to something more concrete.)

We designed the framework of our question matrix to construct a deliberate methodology. We wanted questions that provided a range of thinking, from highly concrete and factual to more abstract and subjective. Within each category, we constructed a variety of question types. This not only allowed us to test the ability of our questions to generate conversation, we hoped that the variety would add interest to the final performance tape. We were confident that our carefully constructed plan would allow us to accomplish our task within the one week time frame. But, of course, from the moment we arrived in Ottersberg, our plans began to change. Cory became shy about

performing in the piece and asked to be the sole videographer. To accommodate her, we decided not to rotate roles as originally planned, but to work with fixed performance agendas. All three of us are fluent in German, but Christina's accent was less native than mine, so she was assigned the role of Bad German. This required her to add a level of complexity to her performance, having to pretend that she did not understand and to remember what it was like to struggle to find the correct word. Because Christina's job was more cognitively complex than mine, I agreed to shoulder two performance roles. Our assignments then became:

1. Questions in German – Melanie
2. Questions in English – Melanie
3. Questions in Bad German – Christina
4. Recording all encounters – Cory

Adjustments to the original creative plan are often a gift. If the artist can adjust to and accommodate the new circumstances, these 'happy accidents' may send the evolution of a performance piece in a new (and possibly improved) direction. In our case, I had not realized the level of my own anxiety until we reduced the framing of my roles. The idea of having to invent a version of bad German had been making me nervous, even though I had not registered that circumstance as a component of my mild anxiety. Our new plan not only reduced Cory's stress level about the project, it reduced mine as well. We had not even begun to try out our ideas and we were already rearranging the rules. Robin Nelson, sees the adaptive and changeable quality of PaR projects as a natural part of the process: 'Some research outcomes are processual, emergent that is in the processes of generation, selection, shaping and editing material in practice' (Nelson, 2006: 112).

The structure of the festival where we were to present was strict and specific. We arrived in Ottersberg on Monday; we must have something to present to the public on Saturday. We spent Tuesday scouting the village and reshaping our action plan. So on Wednesday, we headed to town with our camera in tow and began our encounters with local citizens. When conducting these interviews, we all three were working outside of our comfort zone. We were adopting false identities as a part of our interview process, but unlike actors on a stage in which the audience is

aware of the trick, it felt as though we were lying to our conversation partners. We were not really tourists, and we already knew the answers to many of the questions we were asking. We appeared to be playing ourselves but we were not. Rather, we were constructing a series of fictional characters whose definition changed with each question we asked, and then attempting to pass these personas off as reality. The audience was being duped. They were not conscious participants in this contract, and our performance would only be successful if we managed to convince them that our 'show' was true to life. Periodically we failed and were found out. In some cases we nearly gave ourselves away without realizing it. Almost always we found that the citizens of Ottersberg were far friendlier and more helpful than we expected, which eased the anxiety of our performance significantly. But their hospitality and friendliness began to create a moral quandary. Over the course of the day, people we had previously encountered would recognize us and go out of their way to help us, believing we actually were tourists in need. In order to gather information for our research project, we were obligated to continue to support the lie we had created. We had invented our own trap and could only be free to engage in genuine relationships with these people if we exposed the deception. It felt as though our artistic endeavor had turned us into sneaks and thieves. While trying to frustrate the habits of the citizens of Ottersberg with our performance intervention, we found ourselves more aware of our own habits and assumptions as practitioners.

We adapted the approach to our encounters throughout the day as we made discoveries about what worked and what did not. The dynamic acquisition and reapplication of knowledge during the execution of a performance is another distinctive aspect of the creative process in Performance as Research. '[PaR] asserts the primacy of practice and insists that because creative practice is both ongoing and persistent, practitioner researchers do not merely "think" their way through or out of a problem, but rather they "practise" to a resolution' (Haseman 2007: 147).

Each question in our interview process provided its own collection of discoveries:

1. Where is the post office?



Figure 2: The post office sits next to the Aleco grocery store.

Our first encounter taught us how badly we were performing the role of tourists, and that we would need to adjust our behavior quickly if we wanted these encounters to be a success. We happened to approach a gentleman who had already been accosted by another festival artist. He recognized our video camera right away. He was good-natured about the whole thing. But our question to him about the post office turned into an answer from us about what we were doing in the festival. As the video clip demonstrates, this citizen turned the tables on us and subverted our intervention in the nicest way possible. He also taught us that Cory would have to be cleverer with her camera.

2. Where can I find a veterinarian?



Figure 3: The veterinarian at the edge of town.

The nice man in the book store told us exactly where to find the vet -- at the end of the short leg of the 'L'. We left his store in the direction of a cluster of people to our left, walking opposite to the direction he had just given us. Almost immediately we heard a tap on the window. The bookstore gentleman had been watching us and saw us turn left instead of going straight ahead. He gestured emphatically to correct our error, 'Not that way, THIS way'. We had become trapped by our own game. In order to maintain the illusion, we had to follow the path he had given us, even though the people we now wanted to interview were in a different direction.

3. Where can we find cows?



Figure 4: Members of one dairy in the center of town.

One of our favorite encounters with this question was with a gentleman at the grocery store. We posed our question in English and he could not speak a word. Instead of brushing us off as some had when we spoke English, he pulled out his smart phone and opened up Google Translate. Word by word he struggled to translate what we wanted to know from English to German – a maddening process as all three of us spoke German and understood his brief German phrases perfectly. His generosity was matched by a group of people inside the grocery store who proceeded to decipher Christina’s bad German and then work as a team to seriously answer her question.

4. Where can we find a fence made of pencils?



Figure 5: The ‘fence’ located outside the stationery store.

Here we encountered a linguistic rather than a geographic trap. In order to distinguish our super large pencils from ordinary pencils we had to describe them as a fence (it was more of a sculpture). When Christina was doing the bad German version, the woman with whom we were speaking could tell she was foreign and began to speak English with her. We wanted to remove English from the equation in our bad German encounters, so in order to keep the linguistic filter in place Christina spontaneously invented a new nationality. Because she had been living in Serbia and knew a few words of the language, she impulsively decided to identify as Serbian. As her cohorts, we instantly became Serbian as well. We were not required to speak as we knew no German, but we had to watch ourselves and make sure we did not appear to understand our interviewee. This nice woman was unable to help us find the pencils although it was clear she wanted to. About fifteen minutes later, when we were wandering to another encounter, she ran to us full of excitement. She had found the pencils! She explained in enthusiastic German just where they were. We had been preparing for the next encounter and were mentally functioning under a different set of performance parameters. We had to stop, silently recalibrate and instantly become the Serbians who do not speak English or German (with the exception of Christina) in order to maintain the illusion. At this point we had developed quite a repertory of performance personas and it was becoming more and more difficult to keep them all distinct.

5. Where can we find fun?



Figure 6: City hall.

This question revealed that local citizens do not believe that fun can be found in Ottersberg. One woman we encountered suggested that we attend the arts festival at the train station on the coming weekend, creating a semi-metatheatrical moment for us. We did not reveal that we were already a part of the entertainment or that she soon would be also (via our film). Our encounters at the city hall revealed interesting information about local identity. The woman in charge spoke only a little English and had no idea what we might find to do in Ottersberg. She pulled out a map and immediately directed us out of town. In her opinion (as the official representative of the village), Ottersberg was not a place to stay and have fun, just a place in between other places of greater interest.

6. Where are we?



Figure 7: A local sign identifying the major river in town.

Cory had hoped that this question might inspire a philosophical conversation. Rather it prompted many directions about how to get to Ottersberg proper (when we were still on the outskirts) or raised questions regarding our sanity (once we were already in town). We endeavored to modify the prompt to produce more geographic/spatial information; this only managed to lower the perception of our combined I.Q. This question demonstrated that expectation is often aggravated by reality, and reinforced the need to see what is there rather than try to force a result. It also demonstrated why watching for a specific outcome can be less satisfying and effective than leaving room for unexpected results to appear.

7. Where can we find otters?



Figure 8: An otter sculpture marking the center of the village.



Figure 9: A mosaic near the edge of town.



Figure 10: A wall plaque.



Figure 11: A sculpture near city hall.

With this question, we had hoped to find as many references to the sculptures and paintings as possible. But citizens kept sending us to the same statues in the center of town. This inspired us to search for live otters, which, alas, we failed to find.

8. Where can we find a gravestone maker?



Figure 12: What they thought we were seeking.



Figure 13: What we were actually seeking.

Here Christina became locked in a linguistic dance with a young woman who generously tried to understand her bad German but kept struggling not to laugh at the ridiculousness of Christina's questions. I began to lose track of the boundary between Christina's performance and the reality of her linguistic skills. I was not sure if she actually knew the words for gravestone and cemetery. She spent a lot of time talking around the problem, exchanging bits of information with her interlocutor until they finally arrived at a conclusion that ultimately never provided the information we needed.

9. Where can we find a fortune teller?

The most memorable encounter from this question was with an old man sitting at the bus stop. He did not want to talk about fortune tellers but he needed to talk to someone. So I listened. And I learned that he had lived in Ottersberg his entire life. This place was his home and he loved it here. There was nowhere else he would rather be. If the woman at the city hall was one extreme of local identity (Ottersberg is nowhere; it lies between several other somewheres), then this man was at the other. For him, Ottersberg was the center of the universe.

We finished our filming Wednesday evening, having managed to ask all of our questions using all three language filters. In the end we had a large amount of data on our digital devices, as well as a day filled with unexpected and illuminating experiences. We now had two days to find a way to make sense of what we had learned and to determine a mode of expression for the festival. In analyzing our data, we focused on trying to answer our initial questions. The discoveries we made did not neatly fit within the parameters established by the range of questions we had constructed at the beginning of the project. We did find that we were able to create a series of 'maps' of Ottersberg for our presentation in the festival, but mental mapping was only one component of the larger and more complicated set of information we had gathered. These were some of our unexpected discoveries:

1. The performance as obstacle

Our role-playing became a blending of realities as we conducted our interviews. We were tourists playing tourists. We already knew about what we were asking, but had to pretend that we did not. We could understand what our interviewees were saying in all of the languages we used, but we had to play as though we were linguistically ignorant. The shifting performance paradigms were a challenge, particularly when we encountered our targets later in the day. What began as one role – lost tourist – became 27 roles: 9 questions times 3 language filters.

2. The influence of geography

Our intention was to create a map, so we chose specific locations with this in mind. From the start, the geography of the town began to dictate what we asked and why. From among the dozens of possible sites in the village, we included the gravestone maker and the veterinarian based entirely on location. These businesses were situated on each edge of town. Every geographically based question lent itself to constructing a specific personality. The video documents Christina's spontaneous invention of an ill pet cat, for example. The *where* determined the *who* we became. In order to maintain the illusion of ignorance, we were obligated to follow the instruction provided to us, forcing us to travel in certain directions and along certain paths as a way of protecting the 'reality' of our intervention.

3. Local celebrity

As can happen with film, we developed the illusion that our citizen actors had become friends, even though it was highly probable that they did not even remember us. The editing process, which required us to play the clips many times, allowed us to relive our introductions to these individuals over and over, constructing a one-sided intimacy that turned each of them into minor celebrities in our minds. Over the next three days, as we went into town to run errands, we would see some of our 'actors' going about their business. These encounters generated an emotional response in each of us. 'There's the guy we asked about where we are'. 'There's the woman from the bakery'. We longed to approach them and make contact and thank them for their unwitting role in our art project. In one case we did just that. We purchased rolls from the woman in the bakery with whom Christina had spoken bad German. We explained who we were and how she had helped us. She confessed that she did not

really remember much about it. As with all film celebrity, the viewer perceives a greater intimacy in the relationship than does the movie star.

It is also worth acknowledging that the use of real people as part of our research lives in ambiguous territory. On the one hand, this is an art project not a science experiment, which implies greater latitude when interacting with human subjects. On the other, these encounters were designed as pseudo interviews in order to extract specific information about participants' perceptions of place and space. The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research (1979) established the following ethical principles when using human subjects for research: (1) Respect for persons, (2) Beneficence and (3) Justice (Institutional Review Guidebook 1993). Mandate (1) covers issues of informed consent, which film-makers often encounter when including the public as extras in their work. Our project would not have been possible if we had complied and provided consent forms to our participants. Such an effort would have exposed our role playing and destroyed the tactic we were using to gather information. Mandate (2) asks the researcher to avoid all harm to the participants. With the possible exception of disappointing or annoying our subjects, our project was harm free. We may not have been honest about the nature of our interviews, but we never obligated someone to speak with us. Mandate (3) asks the researcher to be fair in the selection of subjects and to avoid taking advantage of anyone who might be at a disadvantage in the decision making or research process (like children or the disabled). As our subjects were never given the option of choosing to participate in the project, only the choice of whether or not to answer our questions, I must conclude that we did not comply with Mandate (3). And perhaps this is the specific area that made me most uncomfortable. We were playing a game with our interviewees – a harmless game, but it was deception none-the-less. Our initial relationship with everyone we encountered was built upon a lie and it did not sit well with me at various points during the project.

4. Need for closure

We all agreed that, in spite of the success of the presentation of our work during the festival, the piece was incomplete without having the stars of our show see the

presentation they had made possible. We wanted to ask them questions about what they saw and what they might have learned about the place in which they live and/or work. The point of the intervention – to allow us and the local citizenry to rethink our mental maps of culture and place – was only partially finished. Without the experience of having them see how we had tricked them, we were missing the intervention part of the project. We were changed. They were not.

5. Language and Helpfulness

It appeared that the citizens of Ottersberg were the least willing to be helpful when we spoke pure German and the most willing to be helpful when we spoke English. This inspired many questions about cultural prejudice, the projection of identity, and our ability to play the role of ‘German’ as well as we were able to play other nationalities.

6. Layers of Translation

The theme of ‘translation’ was a strong component in our work in a variety of ways. Some elements of the translation involved in our project were obvious and easily identifiable:

1. Translating our questions from one language to another.
2. Translating our interviews into subtitles for the final film.
3. Translating our traditional role as foreign travelers into specific performance behavior as lost tourists.

Some elements of the translation of our project were more subtle:

1. The camera lens as translator, restricting or highlighting elements of what we experienced. In some cases, the camera failed to function or missed critical elements of what we were seeing. In other cases the camera helped highlight an element of our experience.
2. Translating the richness of a day-long event into a 16 minute short film. As with any film, we had to leave cherished moments on the cutting room floor. What we

left behind could have created an entirely different story for the viewer and this knowledge was always present for us as we watched them watch the film.

3. Translating the presentation space using a specific architectural location at the festival. The architecture available (this blank wall not that one, too much sun here so put it there) helped dictate how we translated the information we presented to the public.
4. Translating the expectations of the festival organizers (who had received our initial proposal), the festival participants (who had heard about our project and witnessed us putting it together), and the festival attendees (who came to see our work free from any preconceived ideas). Based on many conversations, all three constituencies seemed enjoyed our exhibit. At least two festival attendees recognized me from the film (translating me into a festival celebrity) and reported that our exhibit was memorable.

With our data and analysis in hand, we needed to create something to show. This was a gallery exhibition rather than a theatrical event, so we knew we would be working in an unfamiliar format. How to present one's research is an ever evolving struggle for the PaR practitioner. Some artists argue that conforming to traditional reporting practices restricts the opportunities to convey the real the discoveries in PaR projects.

Practice-led researchers believe it is folly to seek to only 'translate' the findings and understandings of practice into the numbers (quantitative) and words (qualitative) modes preferred by traditional research paradigms. They argue that a continued insistence that practice-led research be reported primarily in the traditional forms of research (words or numbers) can only result in the dilution and ultimately the impoverishment of the epistemological content embedded and embodied in practice. (Haseman, 2007: 148)

We felt strongly that what we had discovered would require a multi-faceted approach when communicating our work to the public. With two artist/scientists in the group (Cory and myself), we recognized the value of charts and numbers to help add perspective to the information we had

gathered and did not believe that a quantitative demonstration of our data would dilute our results. We decided to utilize a variety of data formats in order to convey as many of our discoveries as possible. Our four modes of presentation comprised the following:

1. A 16 minute 33 second looping DVD of excerpts from our interviews. This was the most popular component of our presentation.



Figure 14: Looping DVD.

2. A map of Ottersberg expressed through photographs, strings, push pins, and post card iconography that identified where the objects were located according to the answers provided by our interviewees. Although an actual map of the village lived behind the photo and string montage, the literal geography was overwhelmed by the expression of our subjective response to the experience of getting to know the town.



Figure 15: Mapping project presentation long view.

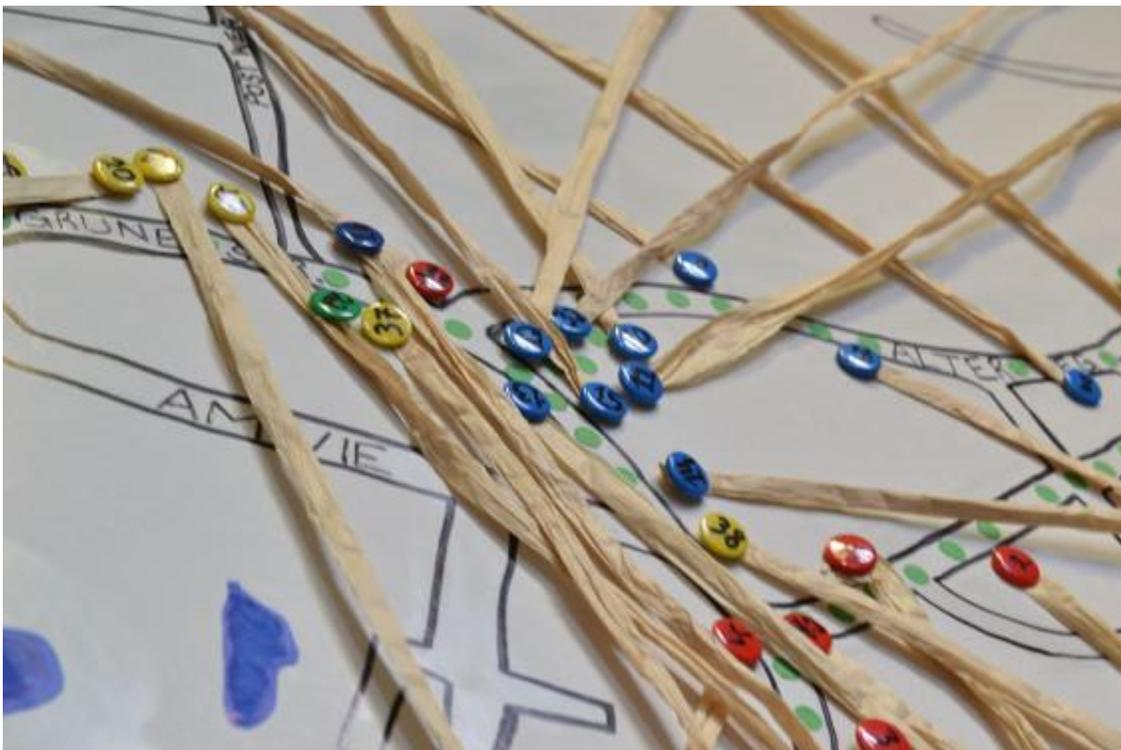


Figure 16: Mapping project display close up.

3. A workstation where festival attendees could create their own maps of Ottersberg. We received a range of contributions, from detailed accuracy of the location of actual places to a lone figure on an empty background.



Figure 17: Festival attendee posting her map of Ottersberg.

4. A slide show featuring graphic representations of some of the data we had gathered. These charts graphed relational data elements including the length of the conversation, the language filter of the prompt, the frequency of the landmarks used to guide us to specific locations, and the level of willingness to help. We presented this slide show with graphs and explanations in a Power Point presentation that played alongside the film.



Figure18: Presentation of data analysis in Power Point (on the right).

What began as a hunch about mental mapping had turned into a dimensional aesthetic investigation of how we see ourselves in relationship to where we are. Using our three research agendas as a point of entry, Cory, Christina and I had managed to create a performance intervention that, rather than reframing the citizens' relationship to their small village, exposed our own habits and assumptions about how we create art. We had intended to investigate the mental mapping of the local citizens and determine how cultural filters might shape, distort or inform their sense of place. What we seemed to discover was that it was our point of view that needed constant recalibration. The citizens of Ottersberg provided us with rich data that shaped our project and enhanced our understanding of their town, but they were not changed by what we created. We certainly were. And we were inspired to continue this kind of work. The ideas embedded in Performance as Research practice had paved the way for us to engage fully in the unpredictable, improvisational nature of our festival project. Had we approached this endeavour using a traditional objective framework with immovable goals, we would have missed some of the most valuable discoveries that were made. By embracing the ideology and practice of

Performance as Research, we could welcome obstacles and forks in the road during the creation process. Events that under the rubric of other research methodologies, might have appeared as research problems became opportunities for us. 'Mapping Ottersberg' provided a useful case study for investigation of how performance intervention fits within the framework of Performance as Research.

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