

the debate
treatment
catalogue.

Accomplishing
the performance
with same
working title at
alt cph 2010.

Sunday the19th of September 2010

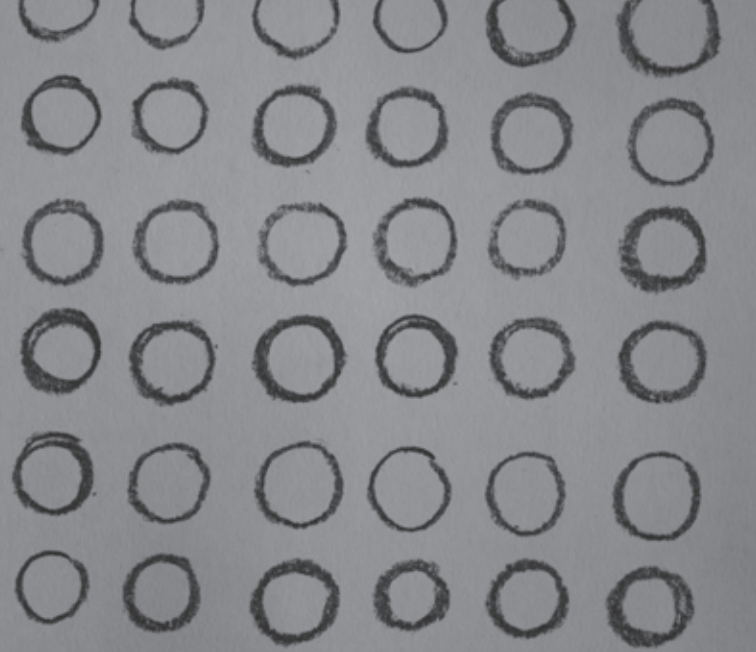


a debate treatment.

Breaking up the conventional form of debate



Photo of a photo of a painting on a website showing a group of people in a mosh pit.



While failing to make the perfect circle I found that it wasn't about geometry. All along the circles have been too consistent and way too small.

we are manipulators trying to let go.

This catalogue has its roots in the idea of trying to manipulate your unconsciousness so that we, as the artists responsible, are able to control whatever topics you and the masseur will discuss during the debate treatment.

But our whole idea with the set-up of a masseur on the debate stage treating visitors at the alt_cph art fair was initially against the manipulation of the participants.

I'll try to explain why.

We are four students from The Jutland Academy of Arts, The Funen Art Academy and The Royal Academy of Arts. We were invited to contribute to alt_cph by organizing the debate stage during the last day of the fair. But the thing is - independently of each other - we were all kind of critical or sceptical of the conventional debate form.

We imagined the debate would follow the typical contemporary form, inspired by critical pedagogical learning principles rooted in 70's Scandinavian educational theories.

I'll be a bit more specific with you: This form (I'll call it performance, since that's often the case) involves a stage: The front of a classroom, the bottom of an auditorium or the center of a round-table discussion. On the stage you have some really intelligent people expounding a lot of really clever theories and ideas to present to the interested crowd of listeners assumed to be (more or less) equal to the people on stage. The listeners or audience are told in the introduction that they are, of course, allowed to ask questions whenever they feel like it. But then the whole performance starts.

The people on stage (let's call them performers) start presenting their ideas. Maybe they use humour or sarcasm to loosen up and gain sympathy from the audience. The performers are good at rethoric, and the audience swallows their crazy ideas as if they were candy on the floor put there by Gonzales Torres himself.

But too often no questions are put during the performance. The reason could be that a pre-prepared performance doesn't allow for interruptions. Therefore, the debate itself has to take place after the performance.

How do you define the term

ME

I am not here to be judged by you. I am trying to explain myself to you.

YOU

The debate starts of with some intelligent person (often male) from the crowd questioning one specific part of the performance. Possibly he has been engaging with the topic earlier and perhaps finds the theories presented a bit too obvious. His language is academic and intimidates approximately half the crowd into not saying anything for the rest of the debate.

From now on the debate is taking place between the performers and an exclusive group in the crowd. Most of the crowd will find themselves siding with of one of these academics.

Then there are the question-askers who ask questions because they fell it's important to ask questions because it's part of the whole critical-thinking thing. They don't really have any ground-breaking questions to ask since the whole performance is so well articulated and convincing - difficult to pick holes in. Therefore, there will be nothing but questions about formalities and in-depth explanation.

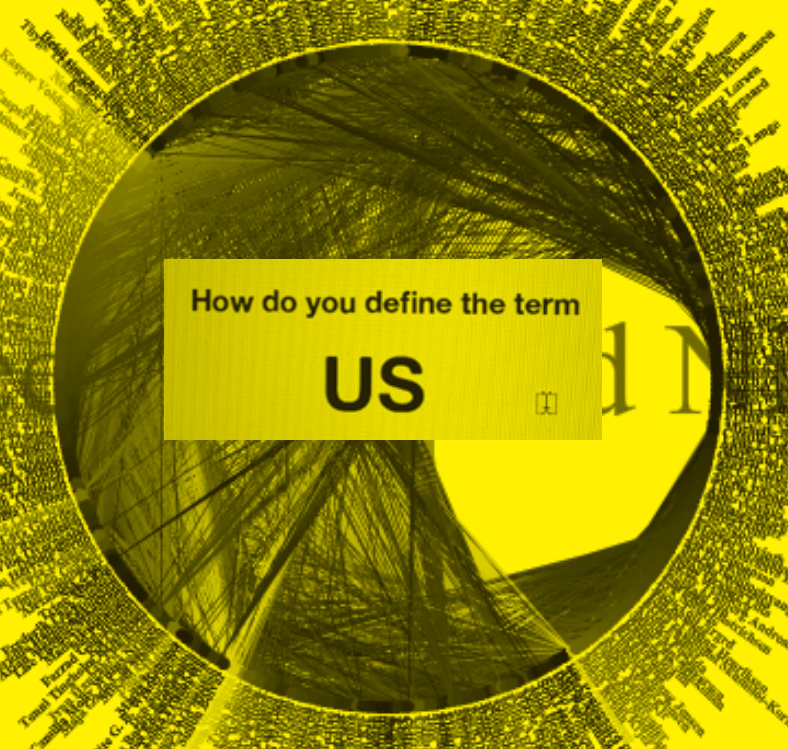
Only one person could really disturb the debate; the embarrassing one who always asks stupid questions, and whose presence gives a semi-sadistic satisfaction to the rest of the crowd - But also keeps the silent even more silent.

The debate goes on for a while, primarily as a performance of academic exchange within a small group. The debate will leave some people with new ideas and inspiration, some people will be left confused, some people will fell angry and won't have had the opportunity to express this, and some won't care at all.

We wanted to try something different. We had a desire for breaking up conventional debate and move towards a genre of conversation with space for a broader audience.

Therefore, we developed the concept of **debate treatment** - the on stage two-person debate. The only instruction we've given the masseur is that he's not allowed to talk about massage or any topic directly related to massage.

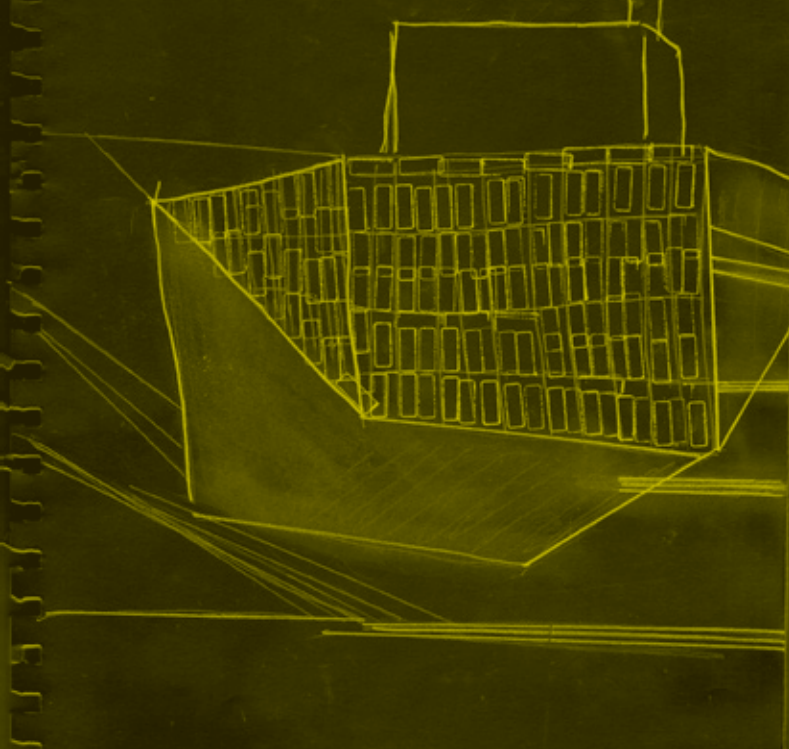
After having involved yourself in todays performance of **a debate treatment**, we hope that you have had the chance to discuss topics and ideas that you find of interest and relevance.



Audience at Copenhagen Art Fair 2010.



◀ An application on facebook gives you a graphical representation of the network between your facebook friends.



☒ = ARTIST

◻ = STAGE

▣ = ART FAIR

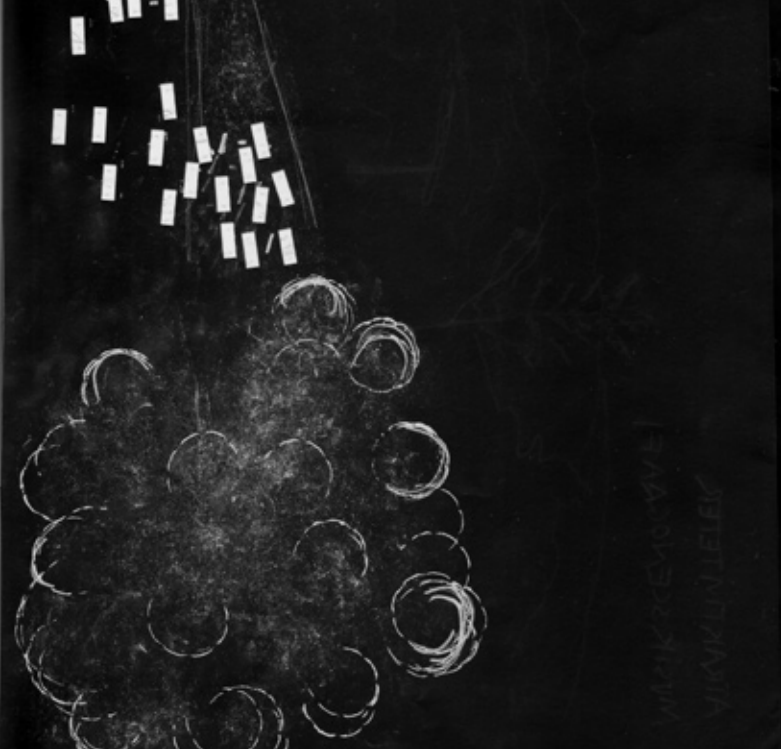
□ = MASSEUR

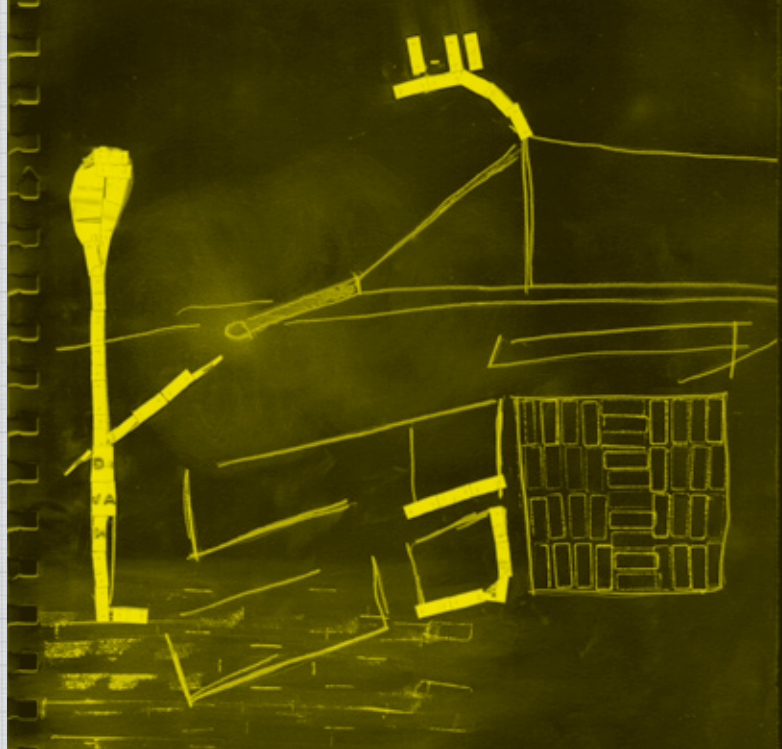
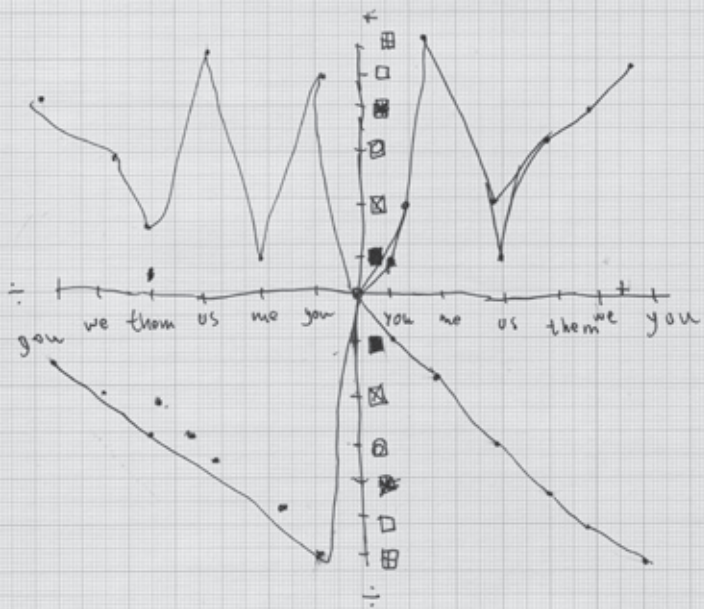
⊠ = THE DEBATER

■ = ART FAIR VISITORS

☒ + ◻ + ▣ = □ + ⊠ + ■

A DEBATE TREATMENT







relation and communication between two persons in a constructed situation.

A debate can be defined as a meeting and information exchange between at least two persons.

There are always unwritten rules in a debate, about who can express themselves, and how they can do it. And of course about the subject being discussed.

Sometimes the fixed setting of the debate shapes the debate to an extent where it becomes rather artificial. What the debate lacks is open and possibly spontaneous conversation between people.

The debate is shaped by the situation, the participant's backgrounds and experiences, intentions and relations. This can result in inequality between the participant, and how they each experience the debate.





The term the Socratic conversation is build on the idea that two participants in a conversation are on the same level and take part to learn from each other through questions and answers. None of the two participants act to be smarter than the other, but are equal, and thereby play an equal role in the conversation.

In the Debate Treatment this is not the case. The two participants (the masseur and the client) are not equal;

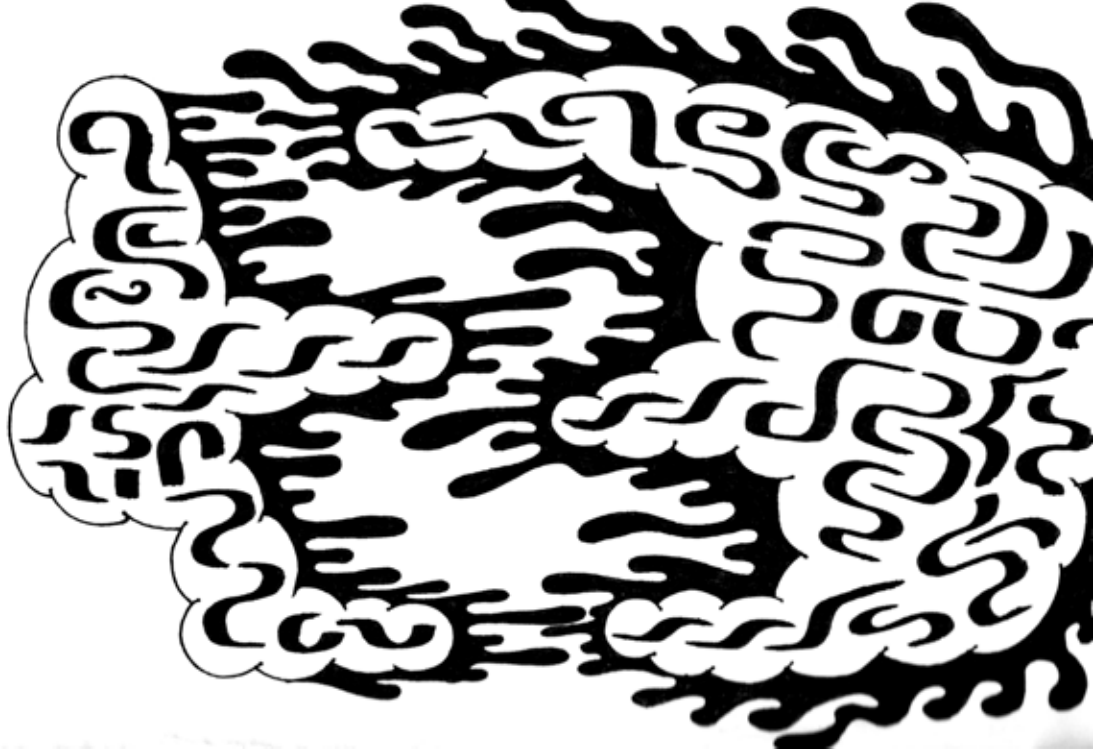
the masseur is active in the situation while the client is passive.

the masseur is in this context the businessman who offers a product, which the client has to approve.

Which consequences do these circumstances have on the conversation between the two participants?

Furthermore, the conversation is combined with physical contact between the parties involved. This could result in a more intimate spear between the masseur and the client, but the clients personal space is challenged, however.

Will this have any impact on the conversation?





conversation piece

The artists responsible

Louise Vind Nielsen, uglydots.dk (p. 3-11)

Stine Gro (p. 12-19)

Kim Sandra Rask, kimsandrask.dk (p. 20-23)

Christian Bang Jensen (p. 24-26)

With great help from

Philip Tonda and Mathias Hvass Borello, kunsten.nu

Special thanks to

Masseur Ivan Hangaard Nielsen

www.massagetak.dk

Den sejeste far nogensinde.

a debate treatment.

We want to break up the conventional form of debate and illustrate the terms conversation and relation. In order to do this we invite you to get a massage from a professional masseur. By doing so, it is our intention to create a situation where informal, verbal interaction will result in an equal measure of (intimate) conversation and debate.

**The project will run all day Sunday at Alt_Cph.
If you would like a massage
just show up at the debate stage.**