

In 2008 I was invited to festivals and events in various countries. In these 10 events I realized 10 new and different pieces of performance art.

The themes were changing with the place and the time. My works are dealing with up to date issues: the money crisis, globalization, the building of a port in Helsinki, the use of alcohol, the hunt for publicity and the theme of loss.

All these subjects are intensely complex and highly interesting at the same time. I take a lot of time in digesting the issues, looking at the subject from many different angles. I like simple actions but I dislike simplistic views. It needs intelligence to translate a complex issue into a simple action. It needs time to mature and patience to wait for the right occasion. Most of all it needs detachment to facilitate the most powerful communicating factor: humor.

In **January** it was scheduled to celebrate the 5 year existence of the Artists House in Aurinkolahti, Helsinki. I was asked to perform and I did agree, not knowing that a small celebration could grow out into a grand festivity with a multi thousand euro budget. At least that was the fantasy. In the end it was a small scale do it yourself party in the adjacent **Villa Lill Kallvik**. I installed a bench in the middle of the space and hung above it the silvery shining plastic bag that can be found inside the carton packed wine that is so popular nowadays. When laying down I pierced the bag with a needle so that an endless dripping started. The wine was mostly dripping into my mouth but was also spilled on my face, my shirt, the bench and the floor. As the guests entered the room the smell of wine was spreading. I spend one hour laying to catch the drops.

In **February** I was asked to participate in "**The Helsinki Meeting Point**" (see www.helsinkimeetingpoint.com), a coming together of mostly 4 dancers with 4 musicians that are all improvising their music and dance at the spot. I am not a dancer nor a musician but organizer Giorgio Convertiti wanted me anyway, curious as he was how performance art would fit in to his concept. For me it was a very new and challenging experience to improvise. Being without a concept about my action is strange to me. As it unfolded I was first drawing connecting lines with the other artists, chalking my way over the stage onto the feet of french horn player Elena Kakaliagou. In the second part I started to play with 5 cent coins that I had taken with me. On a whim I put coins on my head and more and more, onto my face so that I had to go down, almost as if the weight of the coins was pushing me downwards. At that point one of the dancers grabbed me up so I had to leave the image behind.



pictures: riikka theresa innanen

I took the image with me though in **April** at the next event, the third annual "**Contaminate**" festival in **Boston** (www.contaminate-festival.com). The money crisis was slowly getting into everybody's mind. I didn't take any money with me but asked the people in the audience to count the coins they had in their pockets and "lend" it to me. The result was a hat full. I started to play with the coins, first throwing them on the floor and then placing them carefully on my head, my face, then, laying down, my throat, my breast, cutting my T-shirt open, my left shoulder and arm, my belly. I then wrote the words "please take your money back" on the floor and the people came running to pick up their coins, first those that had fallen off, then from my arm, my shoulder, some from my belly, my throat, then very carefully from my head and face, last from my eyes. Some of the coins were not collected, left behind with the note "**please take your money back**".



pictures: phil fryer

Late **April** in **Sardinia** I did a very different action: "**Globalization of Dust**". It was a sequence of a cumulative action that I started in Cultural Center "Kannelmäki", Helsinki, Finland. I swept the floor with a broom and collected the dust in a paper bag marked with "Finnish Dust". Tomasz Szrama documented the action on video. With the paper bag and the dvd I went to Madrid to clean the Circulo de Bellas Artes while at the same time running the Finnish video on a monitor. In the end I took the paper bag, emptied the contents on the floor and crossed out "Finnish". Then I filled the bag with the freshly collected dust and wrote "Spanish" instead. This Spanish dust I brought to Sardinia, together with a video from Madrid. With two monitors showing the cleaning in Helsinki and Madrid I swept the floor in the **ArkaMax Theater** of **Assemini** In Sardinia, threw the Madrid dust on the floor and replaced "Spanish" with "Italian". In September I took the dust one station further to Seoul, accompanied with three videos on three monitors. I left the Italian dust and took Korean dust instead. A next station will be Germany. The extremely simple action of exchanging dust combined with the accumulative need for technical materials (next time 4 dvd players and 4 monitors) gives a grotesque comment on the effects of globalization.



pictures: hilario alvarez

In the summer of 2008 I knew that during autumn I would participate in 6 events within a timeframe of 2 months. I decided to come with 6 new and different pieces even as the venues would be wide apart. The restless summer had an enormous fruitful result.

On **August** 14th I did a performance in Anna Wilhelmus' exhibition "**Ajantaju Kankaalla**" in **Vuotalo** Gallery, **Helsinki**. I picked up her theme of time based works and invited audience to write down a for them important date. With each date I dropped a blue glass pearl on the floor, following its unpredictable track and marking the spot where it came to rest. With the time dates written down and the places marked in the space I looked at the audience and took off my hat thereby freeing the leftover of pearls that were kept in my hat on my head.

A week later I was in the same place to cooperate in a work called "**Satama**", the third part of a trilogy about projects in **Vuosaari, Helsinki**. Pekka Sassi and Hepa Halme were responsible for the video and sound art. Pictures of endless hacking, breaking, transforming the landscape till it fits into a usable terrain for port activities were underlined with distorted sounds and noise. At the same time I emptied a box with a load of pebbles and swept them with a little broom from the right side of the stage to the left. When I was finally there I put the pebbles on a caddie so that they together formed an exclamation mark. I then rolled the caddie from the left side to the right.

In the first week of **September** I was in **Seoul**. I performed twice during the **KEAF** (Korean Experimental Arts Festival, see http://kopas08.cafe24.com/keaf/2008/01_about/04.html). One as described above ("Globalization of Dust") and the other in a basement theater space. This time the huge amount of state of the art cameras, videos and stills alike, inspired me to put an older idea into praxis. I asked an assistant to go around with a spotlight in the pitch dark space. His task was to catch me in the light. Mine was to avoid the spotlight. During the cat and mouse game I shouted "Willem, **where are you?**" in different languages, pointing out the great possibilities for publicity and fame. After some hilarious interactions with the audience I escaped unseen behind the curtain exclaiming: "Oh, There You Are!" (no pictures)

Mid **September** I participated in the 4th **La Muga Caula** festival (www.lamugacaula.cat) in **Les Escaules**, a small village Northwest of Figueres in Catalonia. For my performance "**Los Oblivados**" ("to those who are forgotten") I was inspired by the civil war that raged in that area. Strange enough the other source of inspiration was a series of huge colored pictures of executed "reds" during the Finnish civil war. On top of this all this summer I had been intensely busy with (the theme of) loss. It all got its translation in the following performance.

I started with dropping some blue glass pearls, picking them up to store them in a little leather bag that was strapped around my neck. Then I took a big black piece of textile and ripped it in two pieces. I put these on the floor and lay myself down in between these pieces. Standing up I ripped one of the pieces, laid them on the floor and positioned myself in the spaces in between. After repeating this a few times I had to adjust my body into an ever more grotesque position (resembling those of the execution victims). Hereafter I took a red woolen thread and started to sew the broken pieces together, singsonging all the while. I asked for help in sewing so in the end we were 5 (wo)men repairing the black textile. Finally I brought the scarred but whole piece of cloth outside and hanged it over a balustrade. I finished the performance standing next to the "flag" in silence. The church bells gave the final touch.



pictures: pietro pellini, http://art.pietropellini.com/MC4/YPH_WW_DB/

A week later the stock market crashed. In **Vaasa's Kuntsi Museum** the third **MoPe** festival was organized by artist run "Platform" (www.platform.fi). I took the news to work again with money. This time I sold money for money. I offered 10 coins of 5 cent for one Euro. I had created a new shopping bag out of the plastic bags of two of the most famous shops in Finland: **Stock(mann)** and **(City)market**. My buyers could throw their coins in the bag and add a glass of water each time. The promise was that when the bag would break, the last one who threw in the money (and water) could keep all the coins. This gambling game, so close to the core of our capitalistic order, put the audience in an electrified state of expectation. Unfortunately the bag started to leak and never broke so I had to keep the coins as well.

My latest performance was in **Göteborgs Konsthallen** at the **Live Action** festival (www.liveaction.se). Again money, the same start as in Boston, but now I used the collected money in a different way. I threw a handful on the floor and laid down on top of the coins, in positions that reminded of those used in "Los Oblivados". As soon as I laid still three assistants would come to me to mark the outlines of my body with chalk and disappear again. In this way six prints appeared on the floor in the middle of the audience. I collected the money that had fallen outside the prints. Holding my hat with the money in an outreaching gesture I invited the audience to take back their money. Most of the money on the floor was picked up, only a few took their money from my hat.



pictures: peter lind, http://gallery.me.com/peter_lind#100063&view=grid&bgcolor=black&sel=179