

Muscle Temple Portfolio

Goro Tronsmo

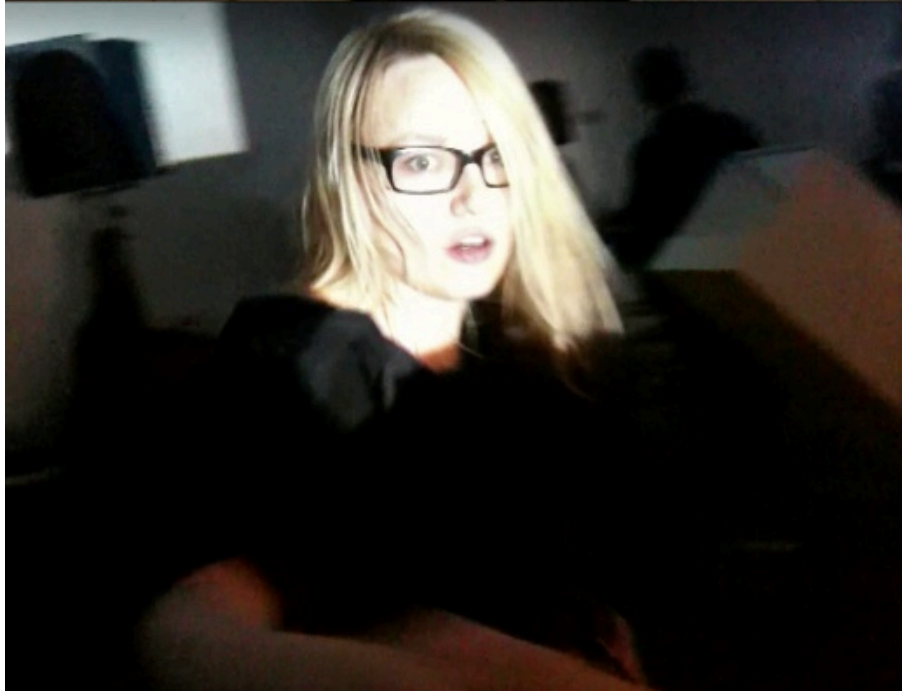
2009 - 2013



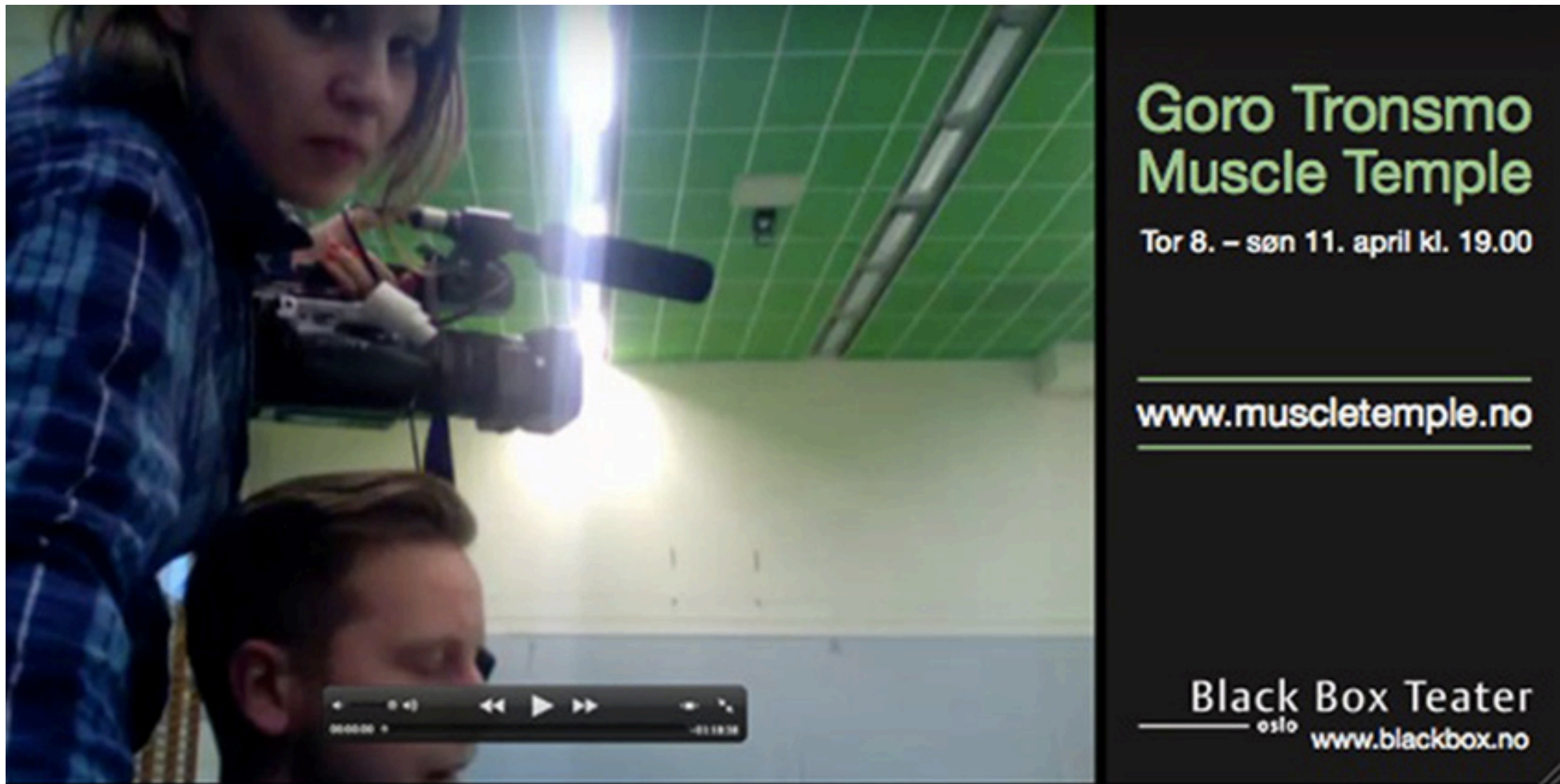
THE MUSCLE TEMPLE PROJECT

The strategy of the Muscle Temple project is based on a series of context-specific adaptations. Under the name of the Muscle Temple project, I make performances and installations that reflect and subvert the social situation, the identity of the institution where the project is presented, or it comments on the discourse connected to the scene where the project is exhibited.

The first Muscle Temple project was based on a research of the growing Scandinavian hipster scene in Kreuzberg, Berlin. We staged our studio in Adalbertstrasse as a nightclub and worked together with graphic designer Petri Henriksson to use graphic design to establish the rather common office space to appear as part of the underground Berlin scene. We "stole" the name from the banner of the fitness studio downstairs, a very hip strategy for inventing names in the Berlin art scene in 2009, we created parties, flyers, light design and merchandise that during the years has gotten renowned through Berlin. Through insisting on "coolness" I wanted to research on a hipster generation, where political correctness, simple conceptual strategies and self-representation all provoke a potential existential crisis when exposing the nothingness within the quantity of aesthetical reference.



Small hand held cameras connected to a projector inspired the audience to pose as the ultimate party goers.



The first Muscle Temple production exposed in a performance venue was a performance project mimicking a reality show. The premise of the production was that the cameras would always be filming everything we did; that there was no direction, and that there was a new location every day for 3 months. The situation developed within the ensemble in relation to the premise of the location- it being a cantina, a foyer, a library, a gym hall, a rehearsal room, an apartment or a shopping mall - triggered a continuous situation between fiction and reality- the narrative of the architectural premises bringing in story to the fictive/documentary situation.

Conceptually the project questioned the identity of the art object in performance art. Through filming each other continuously -not practicing dance or choreography in a process focusing on an end product, but rather continuously going against a final result; the project continuously researched and composed questions concerning which social situation was actually happening in front of the camera. The project ended up emptying and juxtaposing the meaning of work/non- work as a performer/theatre director, and creating a kind of Duchampian non-product with a lack of materiality. At the same time the project gathered 300 hours of footage of what appears as performers practicing a Malevichean laziness project and/or footage of performers practicing a discussion of structural circumstances of performance art. The first performance of the project transformed the total premises of the Black Box Theatre in Oslo into a nightclub and the neighboring building into a fake gym.

The installations are done in collaboration with Kine Lillestrøm, Kyrre Heldal Karlsen and Johanna Domke.

MUSCLE TEMPLE WEBSITES

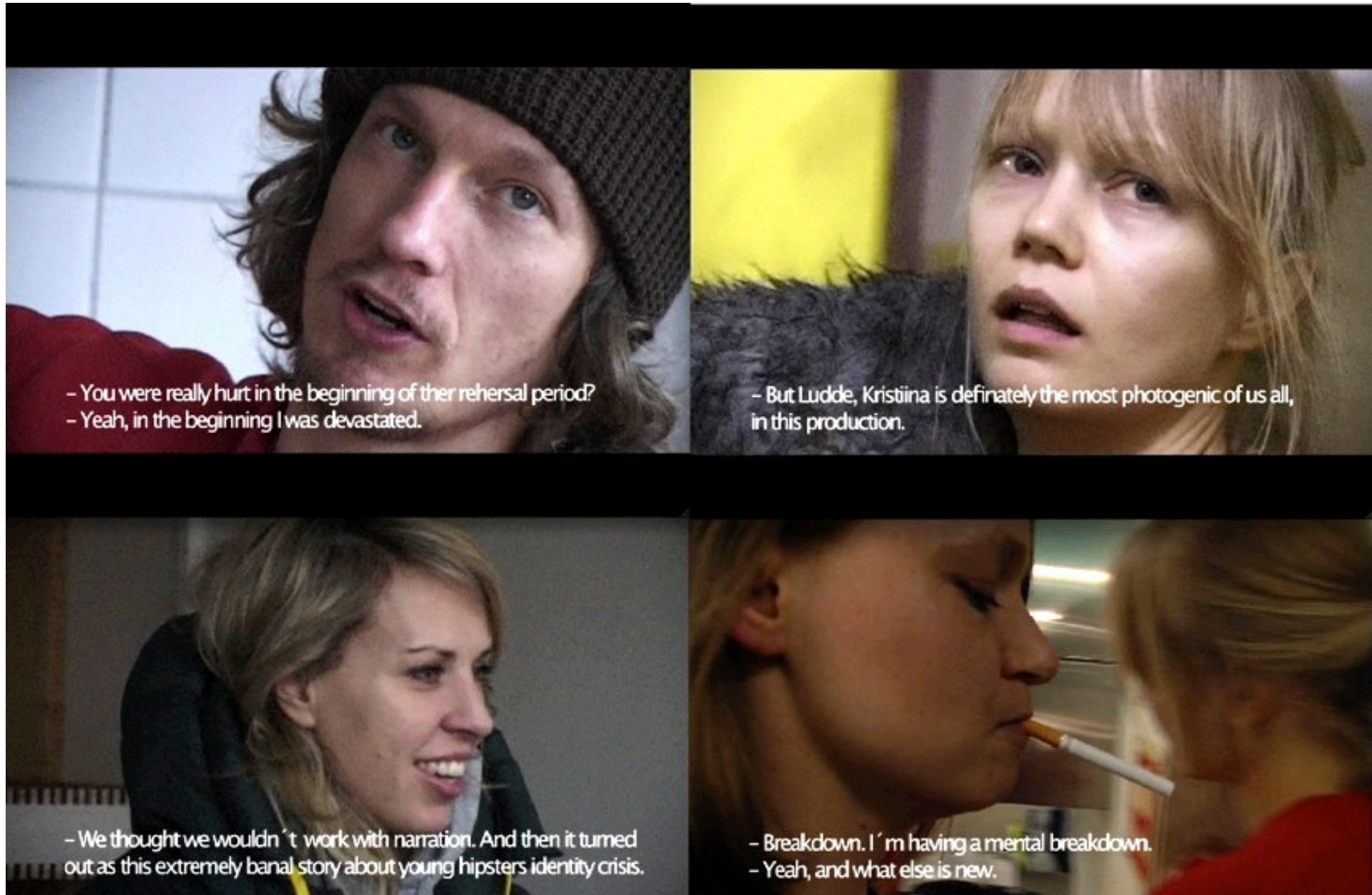


Six different websites were created to inform/subvert the idea of what muscle temple is, - of it being connected to an actual location or not, of it being a club in Berlin, a reality series from Sweden, a gym blog, an internet activist website.

www.muscletemple.org/ www.muscletemple.net/ www.muscletemple.info/ www.muscletemple.no/ www.muscletemple.se/ www.muscletemple.de

The websites are designed in collaboration with Palle Torsson.

"MUSCLE TEMPLE" - The reality project (2010)



- You were really hurt in the beginning of the rehearsal period?
- Yeah, in the beginning I was devastated.

- But Ludde, Kristiina is definitely the most photogenic of us all, in this production.

- We thought we wouldn't work with narration. And then it turned out as this extremely banal story about young hipsters' identity crisis.

- Breakdown. I'm having a mental breakdown.
- Yeah, and what else is new.

By filming a company of dancers continuously for 3 months the project realized a form of reality project portraying the actors within the performing arts economy.

MUSCLE TEMPLE COMPANY:

Ludde Hagberg, Linda Adami, Kristiina Viiala, Mathias Wiik and Goro Tronsmo



The project premiered at the Black Box Theatre, Oslos most reknown venue for contemporary performance.

The complete premises of The Black Box Theatre were turned into a blacklight-lit night club. The neon tapeworks of the Muscle Temple logo created connnotations to closed religious sects and monumentalism. The banner on the opposite building of the theatre suggested that a workout studio would open in the same street, with the same name as the performance/realityproject.

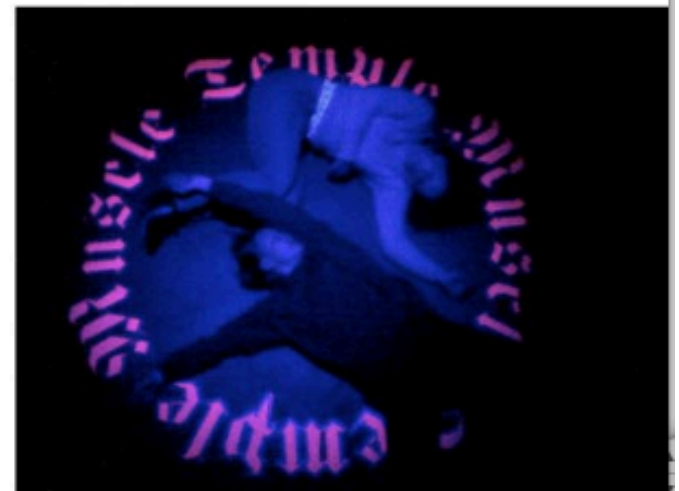


The installation consisted of the filming of the "last episode" inside the messy location of the companys last three weeks of "rehearsal"- the foyer was filled with leftover take away, used DV tapes, blankets, pillows and old beer bottles. The "live performances" were as well the four last days of our working period, the last days I had the actors on a salary.

There was live streaming to screens around the house, together with large installations of film material from the whole rehearsal period.

Lots of the audience left early, angry that the performance did not have a clear start or a clear end.

The project was context specific thematically in that it questioned the performance venues in Norway that present experimental stage art, the fact that there are only programming venues and no actual curatorial contexts or curators engaged at the venues, it questioned and exposed in which way the architecture defines the premises for the performance makers, and foremost it questioned and highlighted a debate concerning the idea of the art object in performance art.



Bambuser | (muscle temple)

http://bambuser.com/channel/muscletemple/broadcast/852395

Wikipedia TriTrans SendRegning.no Stadtplan Berlin Box.net Speed Test goro tronso Valutakalkulator DnB NOR.no Norwegian MySpace :: KUNSTKRITIKK.NO :: Underskog Apple (132) Amazon eBay

http://www.hebbel-am-ufer.de/... Bambuser | (muscle temple)

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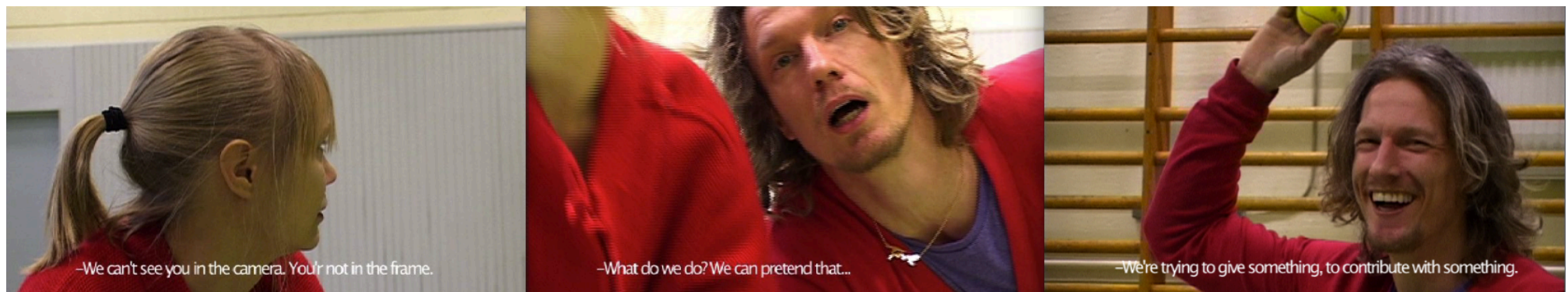
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MUSCLE TEMPLE LIVE STREAM Berlin- New York City

As part of a durational performance at The Collapsable Hole in NYC The Muscle Temple project was exposed as a video edited to dialogue with the other projects during the durational live installation. In addition a live broadcast form the Muscle Temple studio in Berlin aired until the early morning hours, exposing a jetlagged dialogue between NYC and Berlin time zones.

The hipster portrait of the Muscle Temple performers stands for something the crew behind The Collapsable Hole is in opposition to. This way the nonchalance of the Muscle Temple characters - juxtaposed with the absurd fun scenario of the sleep deprived live broadcast - created a gap for the audience to get irritated, entertained and in a situation where they didn't manage to hold on to a consequent point of view.



MUSCLE TEMPLE at CORRECT ME IF I'M CRITICAL

The exhibition *Correct me if I'm Critical* happened on venues all over Berlin in 2010, curated by Adnan Yildiz

Based on a collaboration with the Swedish embassy, it brought together works that questioned a sense of political correctness within Swedish society, it borrowed the phrase "Correct me if I'm wrong", and put this in opposition to Hannah Arendt's terminology of agency.

The video material from the Muscle Temple project was edited emphasizing the confusion between the politically correct statements, the slacker self-absorbed behavior, and an intense disbelief in direct political approaches in theatre.

The screening was combined with an artist talk between Goro Tronsmo and Adnan Yildiz, during which the discussion circled around situationist agenda out of boredom, the relation between the un-intended and intended incorrect behavior, and the fact and confusion of if this project was actually a staging - or a reality- of such behavior. The screening and the talk happened inside an old ballhaus theatre, and the talk was at center stage with theatrical spots on the artist and the curator. The context made the audience eventually question if the talk was also part of the act, if what we said was calculated to raise irritation etc. The confused state within the audience at the end became the identity of the performative act.



...then I was thinking that this project could evolve into a sort of philanthropy project...



-We could do some kind of political action performance, where we have direct contact with vulnerable areas, around the world...

And collect money, at the fringe festival... lighted candles and such things...



MUSCLE TEMPLE AT PODIUM/HAUSMANIA, OSLO

LIGHT SIGNS AND LARGE SPRAY WORKS TO CONFUSE THE CURATORIAL PLATFORM OF THE VENUE



HAUSMANIA is an occupied building in Oslo, consisting of various cultural activities, venues, cafe and also the visual art venue PODIUM.

The project questioned the context of having a venue for upcoming visual artists in an occupied facility and put up a critical function towards the possibility of curating exhibitions in this location without referring to the circumstances. The Muscle Temple logo and a fake name of a shop (which also was the same name as the ongoing exhibition) was printed for a light box in front of Hausmania, suggesting the opening of a shop for protein powder and muscle building equipment at Podium- exposing a confused mixture of political correctness with the romantic idea that art will transgress the fact that the place constantly smells of a mixture of hashish/urine.

LAISSEZ FAIRE



The light sign was created in collaboration with Petri Henriksson.



The installation of the spray work at Podium was done in collaboration with Kine Lillestrøm.

We made a 3x3m large spray-painting on one of the "white cube walls" of Podium. This wall was also the door to the common toilets of all of the facilities of the occupied house. The spray installation commented on the graffiti culture at Hausmania and questioned the ability of Podium to function as a neutral gallery space when sharing premises with Hausmania.

The spray work was also made to have a durational format: it activated the architecture during the night, - during the opening it was lit to have a Katarina Grosse- eye-candy effect as a visual art piece, - selling the mesmerizing visuality of the floating colors, lit with blue light, at the same time creating a strange situation when the audience had to go through the door where the wall painting was to enter the graffiti stained and urine smelling toilets outside. When the opening turned into a party, the gallery light was turned off and the wall painting got activated by black light, which made the fluorescent colors "pop", and the piece created a three-dimensional club atmosphere.

Left over spray cans initiated the audience to continue the artwork: As the night passed the graffiti work was continued by the audience over the rest of the "white cube walls" of Podium- underlining the contextual identity of the occupied house as the dominating identity of the site.

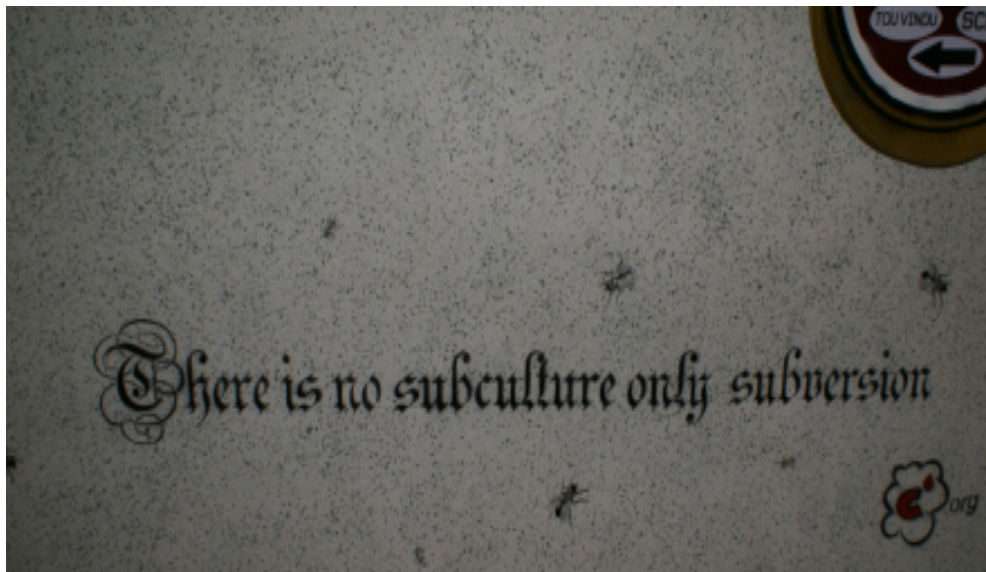
MUSCLE TEMPLE
AT TOU,
STAVANGER
2011



The installation of the spray work at TOU was done in collaboration with Kine Lillestrøm.

Stavanger is one of the most important scenes for graffiti-art in Norway, and a famous tag inside the cafeteria of TOU says, "There is no subculture, only subversion".

At the same time the art scene and audience in Stavanger and at TOU were in 2011 rather conservative in terms of defining performance art. The programming of performance art was still only concerned with autonomous performances- using a clear distinction between the performance and the context. Being a venue with the statement "There is no subculture, only subversion" in their foyer and on their website we found this fact as an inspiring contradiction and at the same time as a rich contextual gap to respond to.



The project was part of an evening with many autonomous works of performance art as an event for promoting TOU as an important critical artistic scene in Stavanger. However there was no curatorial concept other than that the performance artists were all supposed to react "site specific" within the complex of the worn down buildings. By programming a series of short performance art pieces in a row, the intention of the night was to show Stavanger audience how vital the dance /performance scene in Norway is and what they can accomplish once they have locations to produce within. The performances shown during the night were all autonomous pieces adapted to the architecture, reflecting the sites architecturally but not contextually (if the walls were painted white, how narrow the rooms were, if they had windows, if they had carpets etc.) The performances did not reflect the context in which they were performing within- it being the structural/financial framework in relation to TOU, an ongoing discussion relating to spatial parameters of performing arts, nor the context of the guided audience tour creating an atmosphere of a sheep crowd of audience expecting to be entertained.

We made a 15 x 4 m large spray-paint installation over the walls of one of the former beer halls at TOU. Inside the spray-painting there were projections from the video material of the reality project. The video material was this time edited so that it told a story of the actor's misanthropy concerning the art form and the future of it. The arrogant hipsters were constantly- but lazily - critically questioning the format of performance art, questioning the actual social situation you are witnessing when watching autonomous performance art. This editing was done to create a framework for the rest of the night.

The same characters that the audience had intensively watched in the film were during the night walking around TOU, posing as audience members. They were working with constantly confusing their identity as characters of the film, being in the role of the arrogant hipsters, and never entering the role of the performer "in private"- not accepting the flowers, the congratulations, the after performance collegial beer drinking, but still relating to people reacting to the actual situation. This "positive confusion" created another dramaturgical level for the audience to react to and experience- bridging language of subversion into a tool for performing arts.

MUSCLE TEMPLE COMPANY: *Ludde Hagberg, Linda Adami, Kristiina Viiala Mathias Wiik and Goro Tronsmo*

The performance at TOU was supported by Arts Council Norway.

MUSCLE TEMPLE AT PAKENFESTIVALEN, BODØ, 2011

CONFUSING & ICONIZING THE IDENTITY OF MUSCLE TEMPLE

MERCHANDISE, LIGHT SIGNS, LIES, AND IRONIC DANCE MOVES TO CREATE A PARTICIPATORY ART PLATFORM



The installation and performance at Pakenfestivalen was done in collaboration with Johanna Domke and Linda Adami. Commissioned by Kjersti Solberg Monsen.



Two Muscle Temple light signs were installed on the social sculpture/party hut at the rock festival "Parkenfestivalen" in Bodø 2011, insisting on Muscle Temple being the hottest club-phenomenon/subculture touring continuously through Berlin, New York, Los Angeles, Barcelona, Paris, Tokyo etc. By insisting on the labeling, and spreading stickers around in the uprising party hut, and using a NRK microphone as a gadget in a karaoke blast, the Muscle Temple soon became the place to be on the festival. Not exposing the identity of the project as art, but just as irony and fun, became the strategy to engage the audience in a celebration of subversion and irony of merchandising.

On an interview on the national television news channel we staged ourselves as the ultimate hipsters, coming to North of Norway, finally, with the definite party blast.

The performance at PARKEN, BODØ was supported by Arts Council Norway.

MUSCLE TEMPLE MERCHANDISE



MUSCLE TEMPLE T-SHIRTS

The T-shirts were made for Parkenfestivalen, used as gadgets to spread the rumor of the club phenomenon; they were sold in clothing stands at festival booths together with artists merchandise.



MUSCLE TEMPLE BASEBALL SHIRTS AND BASEBALL CAPS

The Baseball gear was put strategically on selected people at Parkenfestivalen, to confuse the identity of the project as of also being a baseball- team.

4

XT003 White
30 stick
PMS 814



XT003 White
30 stick
PMS 814



XT003 White
40 stick
PMS 805



EP70 Organic Bag
Natur
60 stick
PMS BLACK



MUSCLE TEMPLE CITY BAGS

These bags were made for Parkenfestivalen, the merchandise suggesting the real existence of a Muscle Temple club. The bag with the many city names suggested an international tour of the project - and was copying American Apparels Design. The bag with the square logo and the text "Shit up and train" was originally made for the clubs arranged in Berlin, insisting on it being an actual club.

The graphic design is done in collaboration with graphic designer Petri Henriksson.



*Hanging the Muscle Temple banner on the front of Inkonst, Malmö, Sweden.
The 5x4 m large banner suggested to bypassers that we were opening a gym in the old Mazetti chocolate factory.*

MUSCLE TEMPLES ARCHITECTONICAL AND SITUATIONAL INTERVENTIONS AT INKONST, MALMÖ 2012

The intervention at Inkonst was the largest Muscle Temple intervention since Black Box Theatre in 2010, where we used the complete 1000 m2 of the Inkonst institution for the staging.

All the rooms of the venue were lit and manipulated in a way that made it unsure for the audience where they were. The light installations also created an ongoing narrative through the space. Each room used the connotations in the architecture, but was lit in ways that had never been done in the venue before, and lead the audience through entrances they had never yet been led.

The strategy of the Muscle Temple project is always to make complete illusions, through the light and architecture, so that the social situation is defined through this.

The overall concept of the project at Inkonst was to make an installation that made the place feel like Berghain in Berlin, the most iconized club for Malmö inhabitants.



THE FOYER



The nostalgic old wallpaper of the Inkonsts foyer bar was changed into a neon-striped wallpaper lit with black light. All the comfortable nostalgic furniture was exchanged with hard plastic fetish connoted couches. All the black molton in the room was removed and the sight into Inkonsts administration was exposed. Through three different levels of podiums the audience could watch the DJs playing in the Inkonst administration. By removing the black molton the architecture of the old factory hall was exposed, creating the feeling of it being 500 m2 and not the intimate 70m2 coffee shop atmosphere, as the foyer bar is usually used. The bar was lit with red light from underneath the bar counter, and the bartender was dressed in Goth makeup and fetish clothing.

Transformation of the foyer



From the cozy coffee shop to a black light-lit nightclub
Materials: 600 meters of fluorescent tape and black light.

THE CINEMA



The installation of the black box as a cinema creates connotations to feature movies and the social rules connected to this: the audience agreement and willingness to emerge into the fiction, the audience can eat candy and popcorn during the show etc.

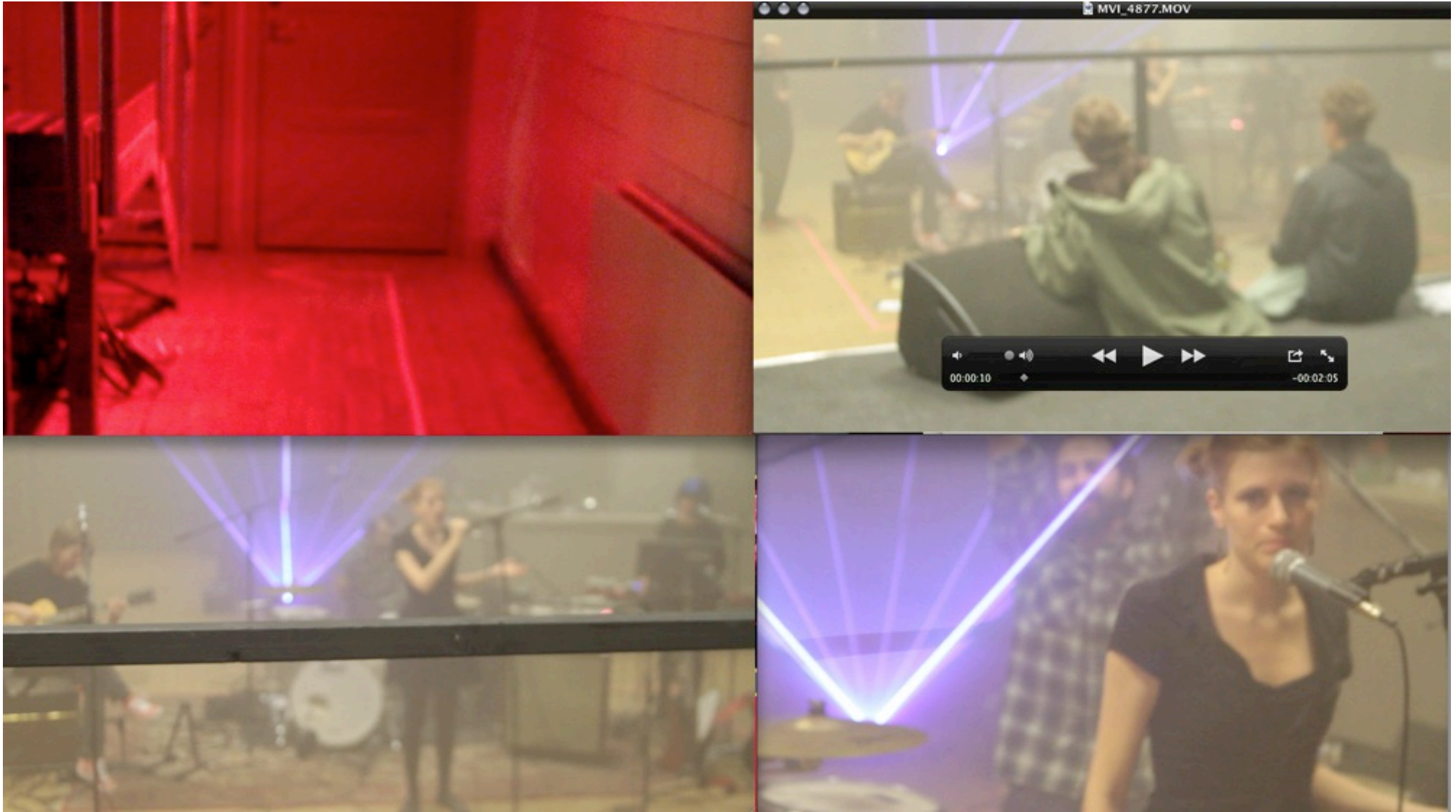
THE CORRIDORS



Red-lit corridors lead to the 20 m drop to the dance floor

The red filtered neon lights created a feeling of being haunted/ being on the point of view perspective of the film "Irreversible"/ feeling of pushing yourself to the limit existentially, which often is the aim amongst club audience. The wired "chicken net" we installed in the corridor, with the 20 m drop to the dance floor, makes the black box feel like it is 5 times larger than it is and that it is connected to a maze of hidden rooms.

THE BACK DOOR



The pathway to the clubroom

Audience enters the room from the red-lit corridors. They then enter the club room from above, - onto what is usually the stage, so it is an angle from which they have never before seen the room. The floor of the clubroom is barred by a barrier and is not possible to enter for the audience. The room is completely filled with smoke and resembles an art installation with connotations to Anthony Mc Calls " Line Describing a Cone". The band is playing inside the cloud of smoke. The situation resembles a scene from David Lynch "Mulholland Drive"

MUSCLE TEMPLE CITY BAGS

1

XT003 Black
60 stick

PMS GRAY 11



XT003 White
10 stick

PMS GRAY 11



Bag #1 was made for Malmö, as Goth aesthetics is very popular in this city, thus proposing the consuming hipster of this city being a gother.

The installations at Inkunst were done in collaboration with Kyrre Heldal Karlsen, Daniel Goody and Jorge Gonçalves.



MUSCLE TEMPLE AT NYC ART FAIRS

Mirroring of structural issues in the performance art field has been part of the thematic and structure of the Muscle Temple project since its first stagings as fake clubs.

Therefore the project was adapted as performative acts during New York's busiest week for buying and selling performance art. The first week of January is when most decisions of programming take place internationally, and a major hub for performing arts colleagues to exchange goods.

The main art fair in the city is called Association for performance art productions (APAP) and is arranged inside the Hilton on the upper west side. Unlike art fairs for visual art, this art fair is surrounded by patterned carpets and in wild colors, fake old furniture, and everything opposite a neutral esthetic surrounding. There is no curating inside the fair- Military Tattoos, clown shows and modernistic performance art from Norway stand side by side in an esthetic chaos, and makes the esthetic paradigm of the black box seem like the Avant garde form.

We printed specially designed business cards as the new prop in our merchandise trick case, brought stickers, city bags and printed new signs, and fitted absurdly well in between the clowns and the military tattoo shows. The actors were in character, flipped merchandise, muscle temple signs and slogans of "Special price- just for you"- staging the situation of the shopping of theatre.

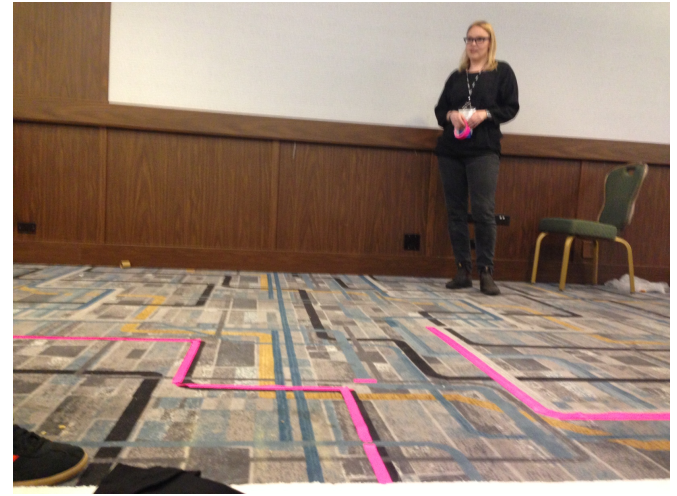
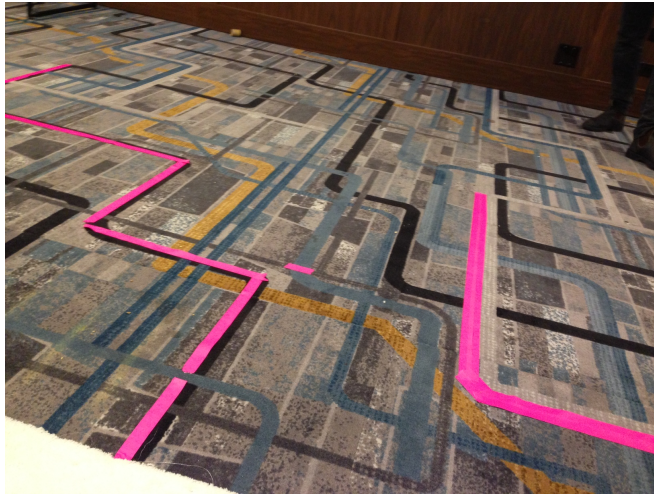
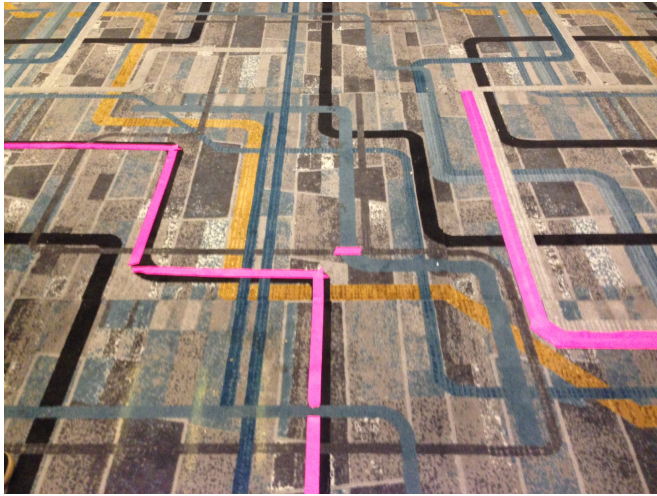
We also printed a sign that mimicked the sign of gold retailers around Hell's Kitchen- stating both in English and Spanish that "WE BUY GOLD" The signs traveled around the Hilton art fair and various iconic institutions in the city- and later on internet as an act of APAP MOCKERY- a critical hash tag joking with the relevance and functionality of the art fair.



BUSINESS CARDS

The business cards were made for the art fair APAP in New York 2013, subverting the idea of the business card. The cards had all the six different website addresses, together presenting a confused identity of what Muscle Temple actually was. In this way- by giving confusing instead of transparent information, the business card became a tool for introducing the discussion of context specificity while giving the contact information. It lead to a situation of confusion, and of the exchange of business cards in itself becoming a performative act talking about the art market structures.

The graphic design is done in collaboration with graphic designer Petri Henriksson.



Tape work done on the Hilton carpet, by Tove Dahlblom, Ludde Hagberg and Mathias Wiik.

Following the Muscle Temple methodology and strategy/aesthetics, the fluorescent pink tape is installed in dialogue with the existing architecture - joking with the present interior design.

The carpet of the Hilton becomes a signature of the non-chalance of the organizers (APAP) towards the choice of venue for selling an aesthetic good. The Norwegian delegation DTS handled the situation by hanging neutral white curtains around the booth - doing the modernistic move of neutralizing its surroundings rather than entering into a dialogue with it.

We started taping in dialogue with the pattern on the carpet - the neon color gives a three-dimensional effect, transforming the floor from an annoying distraction to being an asset to show the spatial program of the Muscle Temple project. The action created an uproar from the DTS organizers, who required us to remove the artwork. We thus continued filming throughout the debate and the removal process, creating a new episode of the Muscle Temple film.

The project in NYC was done with support from Arts Council Norway