

Introduction:

1. The idea

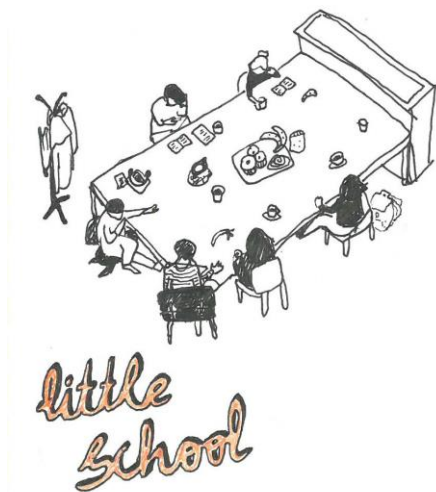
Developing a project that can be read from different angles and that touches very different subjects, when working in the field of visual communication, is a challenge that can be faced better if you find a right platform to discuss key topics. This platform did not exist for me, and I felt the need of creating it. Encouraged by the workshops held within the context of Organising Discourse, I decided to make a suitable setting to share and acquire knowledge that could be an invaluable input into my master project.

2. The everyday headphones

Ours is a tiny studio, shared with 10 classmates, each one with a different background and different projects in their minds. Most of us spend more than 8 hours a day inside the same four walls, and a big part of that time we remain silent, listening to music, audiobooks, podcasts or radio shows (maybe not even listening to anything, but just making use of the privacy that headphones deliver). We exchange a few words in the mornings, some interesting talks in the breaks, and hang out most of the weekends. We attend the same lectures once a week (Open School lectures) and participate in some scheduled activities every once in a while.

3. Little School

I am not sure how this idea came to be, but slowly, and without even noticing, we started a group we now call Little School. It was born out of the feeling that me and my classmates shared of frustration with certain aspects of our education. We scheduled a meeting to talk and have *fika* in order to share thoughts, suggestions and feelings. We immediately knew that meeting had been something extremely important and productive for our energy and our general efficiency. More meetings were arranged and their content ranged in a wide spectrum of topics. From advice for freelancing or reading circles; to party planning, or discussing Harry Potter books. It is a healthy and necessary way for us to take off the headphones and share time.



4. Unspoken limits

Nevertheless, we hardly discussed our master projects outside of the academic context, and the fact that all Little School's meetings have been held in Konstfack, reveals that the limits of our communications were unspoken but clear. No direct discussion of specific school projects during Little School, no Little School's meetings outdoors.

5. The change

Change is a word we repeatedly use and hear in our educational program, which is actually focused on making change in visual communication. So why not start with a change in our way of discussing themes that can be useful for our project?

Discursive Platform

How to design my own discursive platform within the context of Organising Discourse and can be transversal to my master program, being part of Little School meetings? During O.D. we had several meetings, workshops and lectures with different guests. I decided to select a few of them as a starting point to create an event that will serve as an example of platform and will be fruitful to share and produce knowledge within the context of my MA program.

The meetings I selected are the ones hosted by **Can Altay, Onkar Kular, Mariana Pestana and Otto von Busch.**

- Organising Discourse meeting 5-6 March - Can Altay: Toolbox for setting a setting

During this meeting we were asked by Can to involve ourselves in the creation of something (a carpet, a library, a notebook) that would be used as a setting for our future encounters. His intention was to highlight the importance and the power of arranging situations that will host discussions and produce knowledge, as well as the importance of involving the participants into the creation of this setting.

- Organising Discourse meeting 25-27 March - Onkar Kular: The cathartic institution, Doubling Konstfack

In the development of this workshop we were divided into couples, and each couple had to pick a certain place of the university's premises and describe it. Later on we had to affect that space in order to make it rupture it's normal use or meaning. By taking action into the space we could question the institution.

- Organising Discourse meeting 27-29 May - Mariana Pestana: Alternative Possible Worlds

Mariana focused her lecture on the power that fictional stories have to make us see reality in a different way. She pointed out how the different elements in a work of fiction to which we can relate to, act together with the ones that are completely invented and have the power of making us question the reality as we conceive it in the present time.

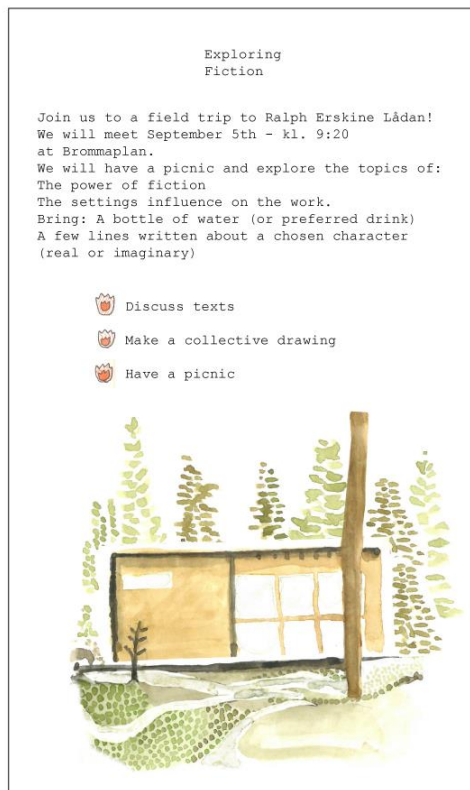
- Organising Discourse meeting 6-8 May - Otto Von Busch: Realdesign and Civic Crafts

This time, the course focused on how to hold meetings in a more democratic way (with Per Hellgren) and in how civil disobedience works and the political power it has had in the past. Also how can this be translated into crafts, more specifically, into the field of fashion design. In other

words, how by not conforming to the pre-established system and looking for alternative ways of doing, we are making a political statement that devaluates the system itself.

Lådan

With this four meetings in mind as a framework I planned a class trip to Lådan. Lådan is a place we visited with the O.D. group for one of the meetings. It is the replica of the house that the Swedish architect Ralph Erskine, built for his family to live in at the start of the war.



(Invitation to the event)

To get there, Oskar Laurin, Hannah Stenman, Benedetta Crippa, Monika Vaicenaviciene, Sigridur Sigardursdottir, Agga Stagge and me met in Brommaplan with some supplies and drawing material. After the trip on the bus with the mandatory hot coffee in our hands, we walked up the path to the cabin. None of my classmates had ever been there, the feeling was of excitement and outdoors joy only a field trip can bring you on a Monday morning.

My aim was to create a setting together that would stage discussions and activities for exploring the power of fiction. I divided the event in four parts:

- 1st part: Reading set of text fragments together (Thoreau + Why we read fiction). Discussion.

For starting with this part we agreed on pulling down the bed that is sustained by a mechanism at the ceiling of the cabin. I had done it before and it is as easy as pulling a crank hidden in one of the covers. This didn't seem to work, though, we could make the bed go upwards but not downwards. Something seemed to be broken. Hanna and Oskar took a look at it together while the rest of us observed or tried pushing the bed upwards to see if that would help. I suggested to sit on the floor instead but Oskar insisted: "Let's give it 5 more minutes and then we give up". Only a second later Hanna realized there was a loose piece, that seemed to be the lock we needed to twist to unlock the mechanism. She tried placing it back but it was hopelessly broken. She then pulled the lock with her own hands and asked someone to pull the crank at the same time. It worked! The bed was going down and we would soon be sitting in the mattress and reading together.

The texts I chose were a fragment of Thoreau's *Walden*, and a fragment of Lisa Zunshine's *Why we read fiction*. My intention was to discuss them together, in the context of the power of fiction. I wanted the second text to bring a new light into the first one. To create a second reading that could be deeper and more interesting. After all, Thoreau's work is a story (fictional or not, that can be argued) and I felt like bringing a new perspective to it could enrich my project. But the discussion soon diverted into how the possibilities of creating different meanings are many, but in the system we are sustained by these meanings will have a very limited reading. All works can attempt to get out of the pre-established structure but they will only be interpreted according to the structure.

Interesting reflections came from then on, about how the work, if it's part of a system (capitalist system) it never get better than what the system allows to. In this way, capitalism doesn't allow autonomy.

We then wondered what is our role as visual communicators? What is communicative and why? What codes do we read as what and why? What is a hierarchy of symbols?

We had lunch break and enjoyed a bit of sun in the rocks. We shared some pasta that Benedetta had made.

- 2nd part: Make a collective drawing of an imaginary village.

After the break it was time for getting into action. As soon as I took out the paper and pens, my classmates started drawing. I didn't really explain the task, because I wanted to see where this would bring us. Discussion continued as we let our hands almost automatically draw. When the drawing was done, we flipped it over and on the other side I suggested to make an imaginary place together. The drawing turned out to be a sort of cabin in the woods. I wonder if this drawing would have looked similar if we had made it in school.

- 3rd part: Individual work. Write a story of a fictional character that takes place in the village we drew.

Unfortunately, we didn't write this down, because all of us just started rambling about us as a class being in that place. Who would live where, who would own what, who would do what ...

- 4th part: Share and discuss

We took this part on the way home, waiting for the bus. The exercise awakened interesting questions and discussions around the way the space had affected our thinking. We discussed how healthy this little escapade had been, and how we should do them more often.

Conclusion

As a physical result I have a relatively big amount of material (mainly notes, and also the collective drawing). Interesting questions I want to include now in the growth of my project. But just as important, the fact that we broke the routine of the classroom was extremely refreshing and beneficial for our minds and bodies. All of us bonded in a different way than we would have done in class, and I think we all did a bit more of talking than we usually do, which is great to get to know each other better.

It is interesting to observe how my proposal for this course started from the search of a place to host introspection. A place of one's own to focus on the work in a more intense level. This proposal has changed little by little, affected by the course itself, and it has developed into the finding of a shared space. A space to work collectively.

What could have been better?

For the next time, I need more careful planning. Especially regarding time management and delegating tasks. I didn't want to pressure the group by saying when and what we had to do every moment. As I have learnt with Per Hellgren during the O.D. meeting, I should have delegated the tasks and make someone specifically responsible for keeping time. The tasks were a bit unclear and flaky with the purpose of letting them open to improvisation and flow. Only now I realize I should have defined them more accurately (even in a step by step way) so we could improvise upon a more limited tasks. It is good to have limits, even to improvise better.







