

## Gob Squad interview

**Hotel Laguna, 9 May 2004**

Vesna: First of all, we wanted to ask you something as a group, as you are defining yourself as a group, as a pop group or as a music group, not as collective or a collaboration. What does it mean, how do you work together, how are you defining yourselves as a group?

Simon: Well, I was going to say after the talk the other day in the symposium, and as Johanna afterwards pointed out, I kept saying that we wouldn't make the work we did unless we were a group, and after Johanna said: Yeah, but why, why is it so? And one thing I realized is that we always tend to make very ensemble pieces where there's never really a lead role in a Gob Squad piece, there's never a hero or a heroine or a protagonist. What often the work is about is us trying to fulfill these roles, but not actually and really being very ordinary in a very kind of ensemble way. So, the Room Service is very much an example of this: it's about four people and they come forward and they go back throughout the piece. And, funnily enough, the other piece that we just made, is a piece where we tried to have a hero and a hero goes out and tries to be a hero in a movie, but, of course, because it's a Gob Squad piece, it still remains an ensemble piece of work, it still remains a piece of work where it's really a group and the group is the protagonist...

Emina: ... Yeah, the group itself is a protagonist like in all antique pieces. But you have also different personalities in the group, for example in Room Service you have four almost types, characters that are in a way weird, but they become certain types. What it seems to me that these characters are more or less over the edge of speciality, that they are in a way, almost like in a comedy, it's always something social, something public. It seems to me that it's always something of private you, like using the private names for example, and something of public you. Where is this difference, do you even try to make a difference between your public you and your private you in the performance? Is it important at all? Are you using it as something that would be interesting to show, a connection between your private and your public you? And especially connected to the places where you're performing, which are not usual theatre, art, and cultural places?

Sean: I think it's important for us that we don't see ourselves as actors. I think we would find it very hard to play a role which we haven't written ourselves. We are the authors and performers of our work. That's why I'm always Sean; Johanna is always Johanna in the piece. At some basic level there is something of ourselves, the parts we portray. Yes, they always belong to us and that's why we always take our own names. And now, there are always many ways of presenting yourself, you can be funny you, or boring you, or entertaining you, or weird you, but they all come from inside, anyway.

Emina: So, you are actually performing yourselves?

Berit: Exactly, we come with a lot what we each individually bring to it, which is something like it. But then we kind push that and we push each other with it as well. So there's always

something of real or private me in there as a starting point, but then with all that kind of work and improvisation, rehearsal we do, we try to push it some kind of types.

Johanna: It's also, I mean our personality is a starting base, but because we are pushing ourselves to the frame of theater or the camera or to the audience watching us gives us the possibility to try out new ways of being, you know, so I'm in The Room Service yesterday, I did lots of things I will never do, of course, it allows me different ways of being as well, more extreme ways of being, but the things I chose, of course, somehow have to do with me, they have their starting point in my own personality. Just to add something to what Sean was saying, we believe that we can't develop a peace if we are not pause performing it to the outside, so when we are making a peace, we are always performing it, but also stepping out of it, watching it, and we are always taking part on both parts, swapping it, now you are going in and I'm watching it and the other way around and sometimes we were thinking: maybe it's easier this time when you are only watching, and in the end, I'll take in your part, but that doesn't work for us, it's very important to have some time to develop this own way of being in the peace, but to both ways...

Berit: I think it's very interesting, especially in this two recent peaces that we've done - Room Service and SuperNightShot, that we for the first time I think, develop parts, and these parts are kind of they are just a sceleton, and it could be very interesting for you if you see this peace again, other people are playing different parts in their own different way, and the part is not equal the character, or a role, it's not the same, it's more like the tasks. The work that we're doing is very much task-based. In SuperNightShot, it very much a task of a hero, but it's more about kind of feeling being a hero, in a very individual way. And here, the task is - having a party. Or the task is to have, we call it, to b more phantasy..... projecting, imagining persons. But these are more tasks very rough guided, that leads you through it, but then, you know, the way you do it, Sean was last night an art dealer, and it's totally different then when Johanna or Bastian are doing it. We always have two roles or two parts.

Vesna: So you are swinging, switching roles?

Berit: Yes.

Bastian: So, what I like by the group is that there is a special Gob Squad sound, which only exist when we are working together, and we are working individually. I do my ... outside the group, but when I do it with the group, it kind of appears that very special sound. We play together in a very special way, which alone would be different.

Simon: I would like to go back to the first question. I think the reason why we are a group, why we work as a group is that that's the most natural when none of us has a desire to be a director, other ways we wouldn't have stayed together for ten years. I think the group is the most organic way of the time and it feels the most natural, and it also, we fell it particularly in the field of theater. to make a point, but we don't have a director, because so much, the rest of cultural production is made, or it pretends to be made on this idea of the single

genius artist, and it's mostly a man, who has team. But we don't believe in that, we find it more interesting to work as a team.

Bastian: It's like sharing, sometime is like sharing the genius, you know. When you work with someone and you say: she/he is really a genius, and when she/he is directing, you say to yourself: I must fulfill this phantasy. We think that the Gob Squad is genius and everyone has to add something. It's also a phantasy that we fulfill ourselves, and none can really prove that we are all genius as well.

Emina: You are in your private lives friends, you communicate. It's not that you are just professionally connected?

Sean: Of course, our private and our professional lives totally overlap, otherways we couldn't make the things we do.

Johanna: It means, we mix business with pleasure.

Sean: It's impossible to divide between our professional and our private lives, because it's who we are, and the relationships between us are brought to our work...

Johanna: I think it has to do with the trust, maybe that's why we are so good friends by now, or that's why we can make works together, we push each other because we trust each other opinion. When someone says: You can do it, go out and do it... and you say: Oh, I can't it's far too much, it's too hard for me... And if someone says: No, no, I know you can do it. They know me and they wouldn't put me in a situation which is bad for me. And the risk I'm taking, I'm always aware of it. And if it's not working out, I know that they would tell me...

Vesna: And about the relationship to the reality, it's very much pointed in your work. There is no border between reality and what is manipulated. You are using the new technologies and thematising Big Brother...

Simon: It some kind leads from that we are using ourselves as a base in a way...

Vesna: It's could be named a theater ready-made...

Simon: Yes. We really are so much dealing with what in the art field is called found objects. We found space, often quoting film genres, popular TV genres, like Big Brother and, of course, pop songs. And with all this material we are often talking about in terms of our relationship to it, to that material and also maybe an idea of audiences relationship to that particular material. So, even a very crushy pop song has a meaning to someone. We treat it as a found object that has a resonance or a meaning and we do that on all levels from the reality of being in a hotel and being in the hotel room to listening to record by Queen taht's ten years old...

Johanna: Faking... Fake things like Hollywood films or pop music can always great feelings and emotions. That's why we like those combinations.

Sean: Someone once told me, I don't know if it's true or not, someone once told me a story which took part in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Apparently, when in the 17<sup>th</sup> century lords and ladies would go out for a walk in the country, they had a servant that talks and they also had a servant which walks around holding a frame, like a big picture frame... and this person did very carefully choose the best view and frame it. So, you can more easily look at nature, which is contained within the frame... What we're trying to do in or work is to us element of rhythmic or repetition of fake things or "fake world", or pop songs or whatever to frame a certain amount of what you call a real life in order to look at it better. It seems that both extremes are kind boring to us, just reality, reality of sitting in your house and making yourself a cup of tea is kind of boring, but also a play on the theater stage that is just concerned with itself it's also boring, so we are trying to ... both together in order to look at both pretend an art peace as well as reality banal, be able to look at tem both better.

Emina: Manipulating both, reality and the artificial, and try to put it in one direction, is it a frame or is it a long process or something like that, that you are putting in it, but I'm interesting in this context that we were talking about, about your relationship to the audience, where is the point of manipulation to the audience? How really audiences impact the performance itself? Where is this degree or something like that?

Vesna: When Danka (one of the audiences) was in the room with her friend - they were playing dogs -she told us that it was really directed. So, it seemed to us, when we were watching it from downstairs, that it was spontaneous...

Berit: Maybe...

Vesna: Some people thought that it was really spontaneous, that it was about the improvisation, but it was actually directed. Somehow it seems that you are pointing out the fact that every show is a manipulation. Even when it seems that you can improvise or interact, it always manipulated.

Bastian: I think it's more about using the audience in a way, to create the feeling which is real. When Berit does it with her exboyfriend, you don't know if this story with her exboyfriend is true or not, but we believe it in that moment. And then, there is suddenly a stranger she's never seen, he has to play, she has to play, and it's clear which is reality and which is not, the audience knows that the other guy is just acting, and she is also just acting, but the moment is real and that's where something real appears, out of directing the thing. Of course, the guy couldn't tell his own story, but it's not the way this moment was done, it's different then what Simon did with who do you want to forget, and suddenly this dark appeared out of the audience, she was talking about the dark, and that became a topic, and this is how the audience can lead the performance.

Berit: I think it's with this example, it's different, you know, there are some kind of extremes, some scenes are more merely directed, but obviously manipulated, like the scene with the hostage, when I said: I want this, this and this, and I will do this, and this and this, it's like a very clear agreement, and of course we have control, we guide through the performance. But there are open bits where the audience is asked to step in either to play a part and to really just fulfill a very clear phantasy of one of the performer or to actually contribute to some kind of team. There are different kind of places when the audience is asked to, and it depend very much on the situation itself, sometime it's a very strict guided part and we are playing with this manipulation as well and sometimes of course it's more like a game, it's like: OK, tell me what you want, and I'll try to fulfill it. I think it's about playing with this fulfilling phantasies and being each other projection. It's the set up of this piece anyway.

Emina: And what will happen if the situation has gone out of your control? If you would have some mad guy in the audience or so?

Sean: We are working peaces, we are working whit the audience who wants us, let's say. Sometimes we call them found performers, in terms of Simons talking about the found objects, and working with other people we have other peaces where we have kind of lost control, it's kind of interesting, but also, I think, the reason why we come to structures like Room Service is when the audience knows the rules of the game, they can more confidently play the game. And they can get more from it, it stronger piece of work, because at the end of the day when people come to the more stronger experience which we know more about and you can show them the way to it and guide them. I think it makes it stronger.

Berit: I think it was interesting when I talked to the guy yesterday, when he picked up the phone he was confused and said to himself: Oh, my God, what am I doing here? He was watching himself in this situation, and he said the phantasy really got him like the tell, this is really happening now, we were both aware hat we are playing the game, but at the same time we share some kind of an intimate moment.

Johanna: you are standing into something, you know that, but it seems real...

Berit: And he said that there was a point when he really was in it, and he forgot about the conference room, about the people around him and it was for him a very intimate conversation...And I can say that exactly these moments are for us somehow precious or special within this kind of set up. That it is possible, although it is very clearly ruled and the game is obvious...

Johanna: I would like to say something on this directing... Genuinely is often something that we are interesting in, showing a construction of an image or an icon or something, you know, a cliché, and then taking it apart and bringing back again. So, we are interesting in these clichés, but we are also interesting in these moments before or after, which is different from Hollywood entertainment which is just gaps, emptiness, nothing. And sometimes we decide to let these things happen in a kind of magic was, so that the audience doesn't know

how is it happening. I think it's especially nice when people from the audience are somehow sucked into this world and when they become part of the image as well... But sometimes we also decide to make it for these reasons of showing how are the things constructed, and we have this kind of do it yourself, make your own cliché... and in this other peace that we've done - SupeNightShot - we go out in the streets, we talk to strangers and passers-by, and it's part of the frame that the audience sees afterwards that I would go up to someone saying: Do you mind doing this and It would be really good if you could now hack this other stranger and so we can have this emotional farewell scene, I need this for my movie? Then you see me kind of directing, but there are passers-by and strangers, and then you see the moment, you see how it is made and you see this little scene, it's kind of working in both ways... So, we often work with these two different options...

Berit: It's kind of showing the making of at the same time you are making the perfect image

Emina: I was just thinking, is it a difference or a line in-between the traditional faction-fiction thing... For me it seems more that it's on the one side reality, that means the real life, and from the other side a life through the media, so it's another point then when you say fiction, cause when you have those media, new media, video, you bring the reality into something else, which is fiction itself, something that came through media become something else, something in-between...

Simon: It's interesting, because the faction - fiction thing, the real and the alter, it's a debate which stretches through time, it goes all away from the beginning of everything, although it's hard for us to imagine that there was time when actually these distinctions didn't exist...between faction and fiction...

Emina: In mythical times...

Simon: In a kind of more mythical way... And although these distinctions between faction and fiction serve us as a way to make sense of life, especially in 20<sup>th</sup> century and 21<sup>st</sup> century times, because we are surrounded by fiction, perhaps isn't it actually reality itself that we are constantly in terms that we construct ourselves or identity in the way that we see the world, we are in a way always operating with both these concepts in a way... You know, Sean spoke about it, at the day of symposium, when he was talking about "What Are You Looking At?", trying on different looks and what we discovered powerful in this work was that on outfits actually really somehow they didn't look like theatrical costumes, it looked like we are really working together, and when it didn't work, when it just look like theatrical costumes, it was clear that it was completely fiction. It's a kind of debate between these facts and fiction...

Vesna: It's like when hunter in the Stone Age times drew the picture of killed animal, because he believed it's an image of the future... In that case there is no line between reality and imagination...

Simon: Yes, all of these attempts to draw in the Stone Age times or to record the video nowadays, it's all kind of attempt to hold on the experience, to hold on to the moments,

which are significant to us, moments of strong emotions, or adrenalin or excitements. What we are trying to do in all of our woks is trying to look at something that is the most plastic or the most fake object of our culture, like the really bad pop song and nevertheless try to grap hold of what someone want sour(?) in that song, the real strong emotion, something that can directly relate to important moment of someone's life and try to look at that and take out of it, that's throwing back what media... back to someone's real life.

Vesna: That's in a way what Johanna said that there are empty spaces where everybody can inscribe something, like clichés, when everybody has pretty much the same experience,

Emina: ...personal, emotional, just your own connection to that song or something, but it's completely artificial, and it went through the media and was completely manipulated and then you can play with this connection... What come out is that the people have mostly the same emotions about the same songs, when it's about some sad song, about the boy who left the girl, all the girls have more or less the same connection to that song. It's interesting, when we think about that emotional reality, which is just ours and unique, being manipulated by the mass media...

Johanna: That's typical for our generation that we know it's cheesy and we know it's manipulated, but we can't help crying or feeling touched or kind of romantic when a certain song is played.

Simon: If only Ricky Martin was sitting here now... What would he say?

Bastian: It's funny when we say we live our real life, with all these cameras around, and then you put people in the box and we put camera and call it Big Brother. And we say: God, it's so real... But we don't know...

Johanna: As we said before (we are just repeating ourselves), we are interested in this in-between state. How we worked in Room Service, costumes or roles, because sometimes we are not ourselves in it, as we are ourselves anyway, but we even calling ourselves, giving ourselves names, we clearly dressed up, becoming a man or a man becomes a woman, in the family scene for example, taking on these roles, but even then it's about showing the construction and always very apparent that it's us, it's a kind of building it and building it down, Sean has this image that I like very much, an image of a child in the DVD game, playing sheep for example, you see the eyes behind the mask because they didn't put it properly, like proper actors, they have this emo becoming a sheep, you see child taking the mask off because its too hot, you see the eyes behind the mask. That's what we are interested in...

Berit: It's about struggling with the fact becoming a sheep...

Sean: Like in all those Christmas plays, when someone is Jesus, someone Mary or sheep... They are always really rubbish, but of course they touch our hearts.

Johanna: That's why our costumes are so pathetic in Room Service. These costumes are signs for the audience, signs that signify something...

Emina: I would like to go back to the audience question, when you see Room Service or What Are You Looking At? It seems that you are always having a really clear structure, very clear boundary between you and audience. Mostly you don't see the audience, you don't know what are their reactions, and so I'm interesting in how does it work for you, what is your relation to the audience when you are standing blindfolded in front of the audience.

Simon: In both of these two plays, we realized that that screen or that interface between audience and us is something all the way through our work. Perhaps one could say it's about using a vocabulary, it's a very contemporary vocabulary, or growing up in the culture where most of us spend our time in front of the screens, the mobile telephones or the computers screens or TV or whatever. So in that aspect it is the most natural vocabulary to use, but also in another way it's often as well mean or condition where we set up quite an artificial situation to allow an audience to somehow become witness to us, attempting to – what we say – lose ourselves in this situation. So, in “What Are You Looking At?” for example one of our aims was to attempt to forget the situation we were in and to really get on the flow and lose it. Similar to “Room Service”.

Berit: The set up was the starting point and when we started working on it, we didn't have a hotel yet, but we really created this thing, which was completely new to us, because we were always together, this was completely new situation, Sean was really scared about it, this was an exercise, to go through, to be on our own in a room, but it allowed us... you don't forget the camera, but there is a possibility to lose yourself, you don't have to cut out, you don't have to deal with the reactions at the same time.

Johanna: It's very protected and safe environment in a way...

Sean: When I said earlier that we don't see ourselves as actors and that the theater which is just the play is boring, the strangest convention of the theatre is this imaginary forth wall, when you are on the stage and you pretend that there isn't few hundred people watching at you, so closed it completely saying let's have a forth wall or we interacted already with the audience, it's all about finding a convention...

Emina: and it's so obvious that you know that you are exposed, that people in audience know that you are exposed. In that way, this isn't really a secure situation... It's secure in a way that you don't have physical audience in front of you, but in a way you are exposed and you don't know how are you exposed, and you can't look in their eyes... It's a special situation; it can produce some special fears and incommodity...

Johanna: For us as performers it's... I'm spending hours alone in the room, but different... I never felt lonely, because I have my mirror image in the camera, you know we have this little monitor on the camera... You can control your own image. So, it's if you are playing with yourself, if you are in your parents' bedroom in front of the wardrobe and big mirror and you



can eye on the different ways of being. And that's certain pleasure in a way... And that has lot to do with the control. I can control my image, I can control how far can I go an all that. And then come this little points of this very clearly frame, points of contact where we found that in a way it's allowing maybe even greater intimacy with the stranger because it's in the frame and it's all limited. It's paradox, but sometimes you come closer to a person in this strange set up. And if you were just in the room with them and talk to them directly, you wouldn't be honest, you know, it's like being in the chatroom in Internet.

Emina: Lots of things in your play are childish, but directed childish, as you just said, you are taking your mother's dress out of the wardrobe and you are pretending you are older. Then the make-up. You have many of this childish things also connected to the different freedom things. It's a completely different way to go to the audience, to talk to them. You get the audience in it cause you pretend to be much more naive then you really are in a way.

Sean: definitely. I often feel like a child when I'm in it, especially I think because when you are a child, you can just play by yourself, you can amuse yourself for hours, you know, playing one and the same record. With a few objects in front of you, you can construct the whole world of new realities...

Johanna: Some of us have imaginary friends as well...

Simon: Majority was obtaining the seriousness... The child in the play is absolutely genuine and absolutely sincerer, but at the same time it's only a game...

Berit: But of course, we are not children and we know that there is someone out there... Again and again we are repeating: I'm actually doing it for you. You know, the situation is very clear. I wouldn't just sit in my hotel room for six hours, if you weren't watching me. So it's about this relationship: look at me and at occasionally re-assuring yourself: are you still there? And then maybe coming closer. The set up for these things is very moved, sometimes allowing us to come closer to someone. We wouldn't do that, all that things with the strangers, if there weren't this very, very moved distance. We started with this moved set up which is artificial again and that's what we found at the peace SuperNightShot when we go out in the streets and cerate these moments, we are always amazed how is it possible, but we use the camera and the frame is within the set up and the people step into it as well. Ti start with the peace, I mean, ... it created to us some kind of freedom to lose ourselves. It's a set up with the forth wall and the frame around us and actually we realized that we could do it for the audience as well - occasionally let them step into it. We have visitor in "What Are You Looking At?", people came in to the box and realized... It was more like exceptions, but we realized that the people were quite amazed by how it is inside and we thought, it's quite nice to give the audience occasionally the chance to get in, so we come to real debate when we were preparing "Room Service": should we let the people really in, would it completely break the peace? Then we realized that that's essential...

Emina: I think there is a pretty big difference when you have something like "Room Service" and you have audience who has come to some kind of show there and who know that they

are going to participate and when you were doing this last show, when you are on the street and you could have somebody who doesn't know that she/he is audience... It's particularly interested to us, because we have in the festival's program many things that are happening on the streets, when you don't have invited guest, but you have accidental audience. I think this is a completely different experience with the audience, and I would like to hear about these experiences.

Bastian: The development actually, then we first did our shows at the theater and then came out with our mobile phones. The people from the streets were inside, but they were passive as an audience. The second step was going to the hotel and asking the audience to come to the hotel... And then we have "SuperNightShot" that was kind of mixing, people were ... and we like this two or three different audiences, the one was going to the show without knowing if there is an interaction or not, the one was just passing by and the combination of these... Sometimes in "SuperNightShot" we have different people meeting different performers, they are building their stories through this film as well.

Emina: Because we have these passers-by situations, the situation between reality and the theater, theatre as artificial, it is very possible to have someone who really don't understand this is not reality in a real sense, you know the story from the American West, when the first theater show came there, and the bad guy was shot by someone from the audience. You really have this situation when you have art, artificial, something from reality and you cannot make a boundary and the frame out of it. I think it is very interesting situation because you don't know if it is an art, and if it is, what kind of art, what genres is it? We have some man walking through the street, maybe it is just a little bit different of that what she/he will do in, let's say, normal situation, but it really build p some kind of strange relationship with the audience, because it is even more private, but also more artificial. There is a strange levels going on...

Sean: Obviously you have lots of peaces coming to your festival, and they deal with it in a very different way. In "SuperNightShot" we say at the beginning that we are going to streets with our own weapons or our cameras. We present ourselves as some kind of ... activists, kind of border on terrorist and we apply this kind of terrorist mentality to a very Hollywood romantic moment... And of course in that context is actually a very aggressive thing to just go on to the streets and without any license or whatsoever just to point camera in someone's face. Where is the control and who is in control? And of course if someone in his everyday life feels that he/she is not under control, this can provoke all kinds of reactions. What we often like to express in our works is how easy that can be to step into his other world. And in "SuperNightShot" for example we have our cameras pointed in our faces and we turn to someone on the street and we say: Right now I'm in the movie. Do you wanna be in a movie with me? And if they like to, you just turn the camera on them and say: Now you are in it!

Johanna: Widening the frame and putting it round them as well...

Bastian: It's also about vocabulary that the Gob Squad isn't looking at weird things by surprising, more like taking it with us, you know. You take the real thing and then you build up something. Now it's real, come on, do something!

Berit: We are not interested in this kind of confrontation; it's more an invitation. Our relationship with the audience is more invitation, and we use more seduction maybe, and playfulness...

Emina: You have to seduce somebody to get in...

Berit: And then of course the elements of manipulation come.

Emina: It's interesting to see how people let themselves be manipulated. Last year we had an interesting piece "Cinema Into the Real", it was on the tram station, movie lights and things like that, and everything looked like it was some kind of shooting, but there was no camera and it was interesting to see how people react when they step into it, when they realized: oh, now I'm in, I'm filmed. And how are they really listen to the director and they really moved after his direction. They wanted to be manipulated just to be on the screen. You could notice that there was no camera there, but the people were really reacted strange... You could find interesting things about society and things like that... So, it was just a comment. I wanted to ask you completely other thing, I think somehow your pieces, your works could be seen as political or at least some kind of social activism. So what do you think about that, I suppose some people read your pieces in that context, I would like to see your position about that political issue, social issue of your work?

Johanna: Actually, people are rarely commenting our work like this and I think it's because we are doing entertaining things and therefore it's not seen as political and especially in Germany you can be either political or entertaining... You have to be serious to be political. Locating art in reality or taking art into the real world mixing it both, is political, definitely.

Simon: I always say, our approach to art and again coming back to how we present ourselves, but also how we present our art, may be a reason why people don't interpret it as political. All political has to be serious, but it also has to stand on the pedestal somehow. We are not into that at all, we are into opening our doors wide open to people and saying: Yes, this is a piece of art, but you can touch it, you can smell it, you can drink along to it, you can walk out of it when ever you like. There is no convention; you don't have to sit on your knees and worship it.

Johanna: You have to take responsibility as a viewer, you define your role as a viewer as well and how close you come, how involved you get, when you are leaving, when you are coming and all these things.

Simon: And we often talk, sometimes we say: Let's not make it too holly. Because we are not inviting people to church to worship something. So I think that's definitely a political thing.

Emina: especially when you have this audience's responsibility. But thematically also, because you are talking about simulacrum of the capitalistic society and showing something behind it. It all: What you see is what you get. ::::But you point that is not like that. And I think that is important political level in your work.

Sean: Let's come back to those Ricky Martin's song again, it's saying to the industry of mass culture, you've kind of stolen these emotions from us and you're selling it back to us. Well, they were out in the first place, we can use your song again, reclaim those emotions...

Simon: Social discos and political discos. We are presented as victims and we are presented as subjects, where we are all the victims of mass culture which is manipulating us and operating on us and in a way I think, as Sean says, we like to turn back to ground again, I think the people are very creative, and I don't believe that the human beings are so ... to the rules, people make mistakes, even when they set some set of rules and interpret them and they still make mistakes. We are not as passive as often is suggested, we have the power to interpret...

Berit: And we really hate to stay in that very, very shielded art, in that ivory tower we really like to reach out and bring art to people in the shopping centers and then the passers-by become the main audience of the show actually and we often find it as our best audience. It's kind of audience that is not used how to view art, and then often the most amazing thing happen...

Johanna: This popular culture, this Ricky Martin's song for example, they are common ground, something that people share, we could go anywhere in this world and we can have a starting base together and that's an amazing thing. It's somehow democratic as well. I don't see Ricky Martin as an enemy, I don't want to make differences between higher art and popular art, I don't want to label anything with good or bad or important...

Berit: We want to create the environment where the audience isn't like passive, like a mass, passive consumerist mass and especially the set up you are used from the television to, they have to relate in a very individual way, but when the phone rings, people are watching at each other asking: Who's gonna take the risk? And of course you are watching each other in order to know how to deal with this situation, you are out of your safe, passive, mass position, you have to step out, make a step...

Vesna: And the others from the audience also see this particular person and his/her steps/reactions...

Johanna: It has a lot to do with the empowerment of us, we are hoping to inspire people, that's why we like to deal with the audience as well or with the passers-by at the streets, empower people to think: I could be an icon myself. And it has a lot to do with our 'do it yourself' aesthetic. We use all these materials; we use the technology that is around, available to the most people. It isn't complicated technology that we use, the cameras people use to document their holidays...

Sean: You can be Ricky Martin as well. Or you are Ricky Martin as well. Or you are better than Ricky Martin.

Emina: I think this is a good thing that came out of these reality shows, that people realized that they can also be stars. You can really use this, because people get finally used to participate, of course in a completely different way. I think this audience is somehow raised differently than it was the audience before reality shows. Before, when you were at the television it was a special moment, but nowadays it isn't.

Vesna: There are no stars anymore, because anyone could be a star. The process of becoming a star wasn't visible; it was mysterious in a way...

Emina: When you say you are not into the concept of an artist as a genius, it goes with it that you don't want to see art as some special field, but the practice that is connected to all other fields. I think, this is the switch in general, which distinguishes the traditional theater or some other art form from what we call contemporary art, which deals with everyday life with other art forms

Berit: It's not l'art pour l'art concept...

Johanna: I just want to point to that what Vesna said about the stars, we have in Germany that program 'Deutschland sucht den Superstar', and this guy Alex became a superstar, for him it was like turning himself from normal person to a star, and he is a star now. It seems that being a 'normal' person is something you have to overcome...