

Report by Ofelia Jarl Ortega

One week at Workshop Foundation, Budapest, 4-9 November 2019

I spent one week in Budapest, giving a workshop at Workshop Foundation. We were seven participants in total, including me. I started with defining the workshop as inviting the participants to work on my practices with me, rather than teaching. It gave me a physical experience of my practices of femininity and vulnerability in a place that is not Stockholm or Scandinavia. We learned a lot together, creating space for not knowing and a space open enough to investigate things together, despite our different backgrounds and expectations. It was a smaller group than I had hoped for, but maybe because of this, we quickly got to know each other and could dive deep into the research.

The whole trip pushed me in the direction of not knowing and both wanting and needing to discover and figure new things out. I didn't spend much time in the studio after the workshop in the afternoons. Instead I saw Budapest. Visited the more touristy spots but also followed the recommendations from my newly made friends from the group. Placing my work in different contexts is important to me, and it always puts it in a different light. I wanted to get to know the context I was in a bit closer. I spent most afternoons walking around the city or at cafes, and the evenings with my friends from the group and their friends at shows or bars after shows, talking and understanding more and more about the Budapest dance scene.

I was fascinated to see a contact improv performance on a late Tuesday evening being so crowded. They were about twelve on stage plus six live musicians, and we, the audience were around 40 people. And it was for free. And the audience loved it. And those who didn't they loved to be there to support. Maybe it was an exception, it being November and a busy period for performing arts, but every evening there was another one or two shows I could see, which I found to be a lot. Wherever I went it was packed, with an audience that covered ages between 20-70 years old. Being an outsider it's hard to understand micro and macro politics during a week only, but apart from seeing how age at least was widely represented among the audience (it was hard for me to read backgrounds) I could sense a lot of urgency and agency there. Especially from talking to my friends from the group and their friends, hearing how they cope and navigate under scarce working situations.

At the end of the week we had an open presentation, a small sharing of the content of the workshop and some of the practices. Most of the participants were traveling or working (it was a Saturday) and some got sick. Me and two valiant participants, shared thoughts and practices from the week to a, what by then shouldn't be so surprising to me, for the context a quite big group of about ten persons. It got clear that the *thing* we had built up over a week was not transferred to the spectators in only an hour in the format of a sharing. That made some of the invited guests uneasy, since they still could understand that it had been a great week. But in the end it was clear to us in the group what we were doing, which was most important to me, and I think we managed to convey at large what the workshop had taught us,

and what we had discovered during the course of the week. Afterall it was fun for us to close the week with a sharing.