

The construction of experience The use of the visual in the ReflexivityLab

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During the past ten years we have conducted several research projects concerning visual experiences and visual knowledge¹. We have used photography and video as tools to aid capture the process of meaning making and get an insight into the experiences constructed by the informants. In the beginning was – not the word – but the experience². The focus in this research is on the experience of a person-in-situation using a visually based media. We are focused on capturing not just the experience that can easily be verbalized, but also the pre-reflexive experience that has not yet come into the realm of conscious expression and may never reach it. In order to catch the emotions, the knowledge, the values and the bodily actions we have developed and experimented with new methodological ways of getting closer into the experience of the person-in-situation and our methodological contribution to this field is what we call *The ReflexivityLab*³. At this network meeting we would like to present this methodological approach to a project we are working with at the moment. It is called The Vala_Project and is based on capturing and analyzing users interaction with an interactive movie on a digital touchscreen, and the interaction in the shared space between the users⁴.

The set up is very complex: The informants are interacting with the movie in couples of two, and are standing in front of a 60 x 100 cm big plasma-screen and are interacting with a interactive video film on the screen. We use four different cameras and record them on one screen (and tape) so that we can see all the different angles from the four cameras at a glance.

One camera is pointing from the back of the room towards the big plasma-screen with the two persons and recording their bodily movements. The second camera is placed near the plasma-screen and records the informants face and expressions. The third camera is a pair of video-goggles worn by one of the researchers, which shows what he looks at and how he moves in relation to the informants and the screen. The fourth camera records the two researchers when they are sitting at the back of the room.

The sound in the room is being recorded. It registers the speech: the sound from the film itself; the informants commenting and discussing the content of the film and negotiating how to continue their interaction with the movie.

In the subsequent process we develop various ways of working with the material, and including the reflexive process of the users, showing them their own process of interaction. The flexibility of using the visual material is very important: we can rewind the tape again and again at see pictures: The simple part of the visual is the tracking part. We can see in which parts of the complex interactive

film the informants are interacting, what they are talking about and relate their talk and the sound in the film to the actual strips of pictures with their storyline, their content and their aesthetic. That could be the whole argument for using video to make this tracking in time and space as the narrative develops. But the complex visuals can be used for analyzing even more dimensions and making sense of them.

As part of the research process we have made a video based on the recorded material. The intention was to make a short video that could be used by ourselves to present and show to others what kind of experiments we made and what kinds of knowledge the informants were constructing in the process of using the interactive film about Nordic mythology. But this use of editing the video meant more than making a movie - it was an integral part of the analytical process. Editing a complex material consisting of many hours of recordings was a process of condensing and clarifying the very complex material. The process was not only focused on the production of a video but was also an analytical process trying to explore the process of meaning making.

Notes

¹ We to finish the manuscript to a book about our projects called *Researching Experiences* in the summer 2007.

² A discussion of the concept of experience is in Gjedde, Lisa & Ingemann, Bruno (2001): 'In the beginning was the Experience. The

experimental reception studies' in *Nordicom Review* Volume 22, number 2, December 2001, p. 49-60. <http://www.nordicom.gu.se/common/publ_pdf/18_059-070.pdf>

³ Gjedde, Lisa & Ingemann, Bruno (2002b): 'WebArt – Methods for Investigating Design and User Experience through a Reflexivity Lab' in *Nordicom Review*, no. 1-2, septembre 2002, p. 317-329.

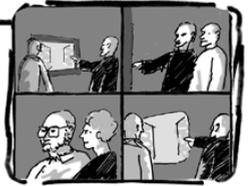
⁴ Ingemann, Bruno & Gjedde, Lisa (2005): 'Kroppen på museum – eksperimentel undersøgelse af interaktivitet mellem brugere og museale genstande og rum' in Ingemann, Bruno & Larsen, Ane Hejlskov (red): *Ny dansk museologi*, Århus Universitetsforlag. p. 165-228.

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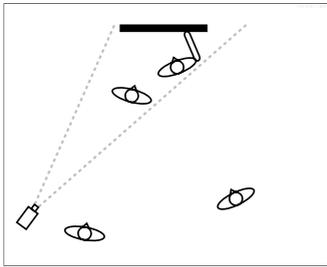
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THE QUATRO-VIDEO

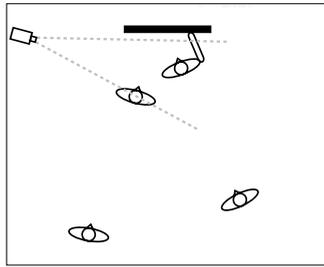


A very complex set-up. Two informants performs in front of a big touch-flat screen.



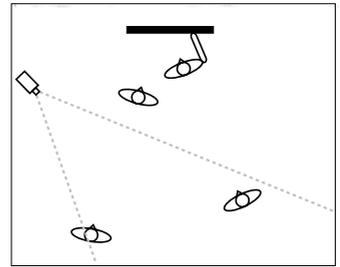
FOCUS ON SCREEN AND BODY

CAMERA 1



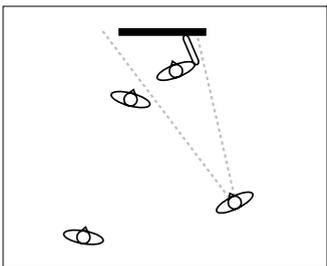
FOCUS ON FACES AND MOVEMENTS

CAMERA 2



FOCUS ON THE RESEARCHER

CAMERA 3



THE RESEARCHER WITH THE VIDEO-GLASSES

MOVING CAMERA 4

The whole set-up is recorded with four different cameras with varied focus on the persons and their activity.

The four video signals are gathered on one tape and screen to get a visual overview of the whole action.

The video recordings are edited in an analytical process in order to reduce the huge amount of information.

ANALYSIS

1. TRANSCRIPTS



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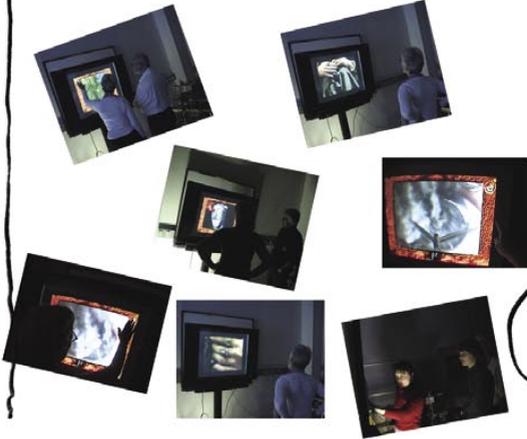
TEXT ON PAPER
TIMELINE



The written transcript focus on the dialog of the elements and more sparingly on the visual. The timeline holds it all together.

2. SCREEN DUMPS

ANALYSIS



REDUCTION
CONDENSATION



The video-tape contains a richness of information. Make screen-dumps to condensate the expression of the visual.

3. VIDEO EDITING

ANALYSIS

- > MAKE 10 MINUTES VIDEO
- > PRESENTATION
- > YOUR POINT

CONDENSATION



Look at the video-editing as more than preparing a presentation. The selection process is also part of the analysis of the material.