



Action, participation, meeting – To come forward
Sara Erlingsdotter

Action, Participation, Meeting

– To come forward

Sirens and lament

The sound of the highway cuts through the botanical garden; sirens mix with plantings and serpentine paths of gravel.

But we are singing.

When police and ambulance sirens settle in Penelope's lament for Odysseus' war journey, then suddenly the text and the place, and the singing and the noise, become one. Wearing jeans and sunglasses, the Portuguese singer brings forth Penelope's desire for her partner, not yet home from war. Along with the sirens from the highway, this creates an association to the war refugees and their stories that I encounter in the news every day here in Porto. I shiver. I know that she, Penelope, could be one of them, one of us. The song and the music speak so well to these feelings of sadness, longing and waiting.

It is a warm September day in the Botanical Garden of Porto in Portugal, and I work with singers from the artistic college ESMAE in Porto. We investigate how the acoustic experiences of the singers and the audience are influenced by participation and creation of meaning in an artistic landscape event. How can we involve the landscape when we create an artistic event, and what does that imply for performing artists and the audience? How can we involve the audience in the artistic event, so that they become participants, co-creators, and what does that imply for the acoustic experience, for both the singers and the audience?

Penelope's lament is part of the opera "Odysseus's return" by Claudio Monteverdi performed in Venice for the first time in 1640. We work with parts of the opera, on the one hand with Penelope' lament for Odysseus' war journey, and her longing for his return, and on the other hand with the association between the Sea Choir and the Heaven Choir when Poseidon and Zeus decide to help Odysseus to come home. Fifteen singers and a theorbo player are involved. Our work focuses on the choir and the choir's function in relation to the audience, and how conditions for acoustic experiences are created.

The rooms of the garden

The botanical garden contains several different rooms. Here you can stroll along winding paths among planted roses and approach a paved open place, where a pond covered with water plants awaits. Behind the pond, a large planting of huge eucalyptus trees stretches. On the other side of a huge hedge, which forms a wall, a finely mowed grass area is contained with low hedges in the shape of an ellipse. In the past, the garden was much bigger and included a small forest. Now one of Porto's major motorways cuts the garden in two, and its noise permeates every plant, every person, every action and thought at the location.

This is our place; this is where we will examine how participation of the audience and the singers can affect the acoustic experience. Our work is part of a larger collaboration between four universities in Sweden, the UK and Portugal, where we examine how performing arts and landscapes can meet and create new impressions and experiences for artists, landscape architects and the audience.¹ What happens if we stop considering the landscape as the background of an artistic event, and instead involves the landscape and its people, its history and future, in the artistic event?

Together with the singers, I examine how they experience the acoustics of the botanical garden. They individually try different places, and share their experiences with each other. Someone feels free, another feels lonely, melancholic. A third finds it hard to hear his own voice. The highway takes over, and it is easy to feel drowned out.

We try to move together and sing choruses from Monteverdi's "Odysseus's return." The singers walk through the garden. They examine the various places' potential, given the acoustics and concentration. Finally, they opt for the lawn behind the high hedges, where the low hedges together form an ellipse. A place that accommodates both an outside and an inside. This will be the place of our work for the coming two days. To this garden room, we will invite the audience to participate, and to be involved in the choir's singing and in Penelope's longing.

¹ Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership. *Meeting place – Performing Arts and Landscape* carried out in cooperation between SADA, ESMAE, UW and the Department of Landscape Architecture at SUAS. 2014-2016.

To free yourself

In "Theatre of the Oppressed", in 1974, Augusto Boal, the dramaturg, director and educator from Brazil, writes about the human body as the main source of sound and movement. If you want to master the theatre's means of production, you must first know your own body in order to better express yourself, Boal means. Not until the spectator has come to know their own body and has the ability to make it more expressive, they can use other theatre forms, and liberate themselves from the spectator's role and take on the actor's role. Then, Boal says, you cease to be an object and become a subject instead.²

"I, Augusto Boal, want the Spectator to take on the role of Actor and invade the Character and the stage. I want him to occupy his own Space and offer solutions.

- By taking possession of the stage in the fiction of the theatre he acts: not just in the fiction, but also in his social reality. By transforming fiction, he is transformed into himself.

- To free ourselves is to trespass, and to transform. It is through a creation of the new that that which has not yet existed begins to exist. To free yourself is to trespass. To trespass is to exist. To free ourselves is to exist.

To free yourself is to exist."³

To free yourself is to exist. What does this mean for the meeting and for the location, for the participant and the artistic event? In my artistic projects and in my teaching, I ask myself how an artistic experience can meet a landscape experience and create participation of the audience, and how we can let the audience become co-creators and participants rather than spectators.

Boal goes one step further – he speaks of the oppression of the spectator, the audience: "The spectator must be freed from his role as spectator the main oppression the theatre is guilty of", Boal writes, and continues: "As a spectator, you are already oppressed, because the theatre offers you a world that is already finished and closed."

² Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*, p. 16. Gidlunds, Södertälje.

³ Boal, Augusto (2000), publ. 1974. *Theatre of Oppressed*, preface, p. xxi. Pluto Press, London.

Boal argues that a spectator will be able to have their say during the play, but that is not possible when the dialogue after the show begins, the actors have the 'role of master of ceremonies' and everything is foreseen and nothing changes in the play. Thus, repression continues, Boal means, and therefore all forms of theatre should help the audience to get out of the role of spectators.⁴

Boal strove for a theatre that would help us to change reality. He created the forum theatre, newspaper theatre, invisible theatre – theatre forms in which participants in different ways were able to speak for themselves without the artist as an intermediary.⁵ *All forms of theatre should help the audience to get out of the role of spectators.*

As we are singing

In our workshop, we invite an audience to walk with us through the garden. Before they start, they may choose to walk with the Sea Choir or the Heaven Choir. These are in conflict with each other in Monteverdi's opera "Odysseus's return." The God of the Sea refuses to let Odysseus travel safely across the seas because of an injustice. In this way, he does not allow Odysseus to come home.

I choose to walk with the Sea Choir, and through an introduction and then an action, I get involved in the story and the location. We walk together, everyone is quiet. Once there, surrounded by the low hedges that together form an ellipse on the lawn, one of the singers steps forward and sings Penelope's anger at the fact that Odysseus has not yet come home after 10 years of waiting. She also sings her waiting for him and her longing for him.

Then more singers step in, one by one in the ellipse-shaped grass room, to sing the various gods' arguments for giving Odysseus help to get home. Finally, the God of the Sea backs

⁴ Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*. Gidlunds, Södertälje, p. 176-177.

⁵ Yes, this must be read in context. Augusto Boal was the leader of the Arena Theatre in Sao Paulo 1956-71, was imprisoned and tortured during the dictatorship and right-wing regime in Brazil, was released and lived in Argentina until 1976, was active in most of Latin America countries, fled the right-wing regime in Argentina and travelled to Europe, first Portugal and then Paris. He ran underground theatre operations in Brazil and then in Argentina, where a discovery of the activity was associated with the risk of losing your life. With Boal lies a hope of the people's revolution, of rebellion against oppression, torture, injustice. He describes the situation of the poor in Brazil, Peru and Argentina, with clear, eloquent examples. He describes how people are imprisoned, tortured and killed in open places, in the square or in the street, in front of other people. A dictatorship that sets examples, to rule and to intimidate into submission.

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down. The Sea Choir and the Heaven Choir are united in singing about humans' need for grace and help. They enclose and surround me with their song; they are near me with their bodies and their voices. For a short moment, it is as if I am singing.

Yes, it is as if I am singing. I feel that I become part of the choir. I am standing there, silent, with the singing choir around me, being part of the choir. I am experiencing the choir singing and its presence, and it is as if I myself am singing, as if my body is breathing and my vocal cords are singing with the choir. As if I and the choir have switched places with each other for a brief moment. A meeting which is changing when a sensation, an experience, switches places between two or more people. It turns out, in conversations afterwards, that many in the audience experienced the same thing, side by side with the choir in the garden room. We have become a part of the choir.

The audience becomes part of the chorus. The choir becomes part of the audience. What happens when those around us are singing and acting as if they were us? Participation. Perhaps this is an obvious role for the audience: wanting to participate. We do not just want to watch. We want to participate. Is this power? The audience's power and potential?

Spaces as actions

In "The Human Condition", the philosopher Hannah Arendt writes about the conversation, the tone between people. She writes about dictatorship and people's common spaces, and about power as an option in contrast to tyranny and violence.⁶

"Power is always potential power and not something unchangeable, measurable and stable as force or strength", Arendt writes, and continues: "Every man has got a measure of strength to call their own, but no one actually possesses power; it occurs between people who live together and it disappears as soon as they disperse."⁷

And so this expression that she uses: the space of appearance. It seems to exist with Hannah Arendt as an utopia, as a wish more than a reality, a hope more than a description of reality.⁸

⁶ Arendt, Hannah (1998). *Människans villkor. Vita activa*. Daidalos, Uddevalla, p. 237-331.

⁷ Ibid. p. 272.

⁸ Ibid. p. 271-287

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The space of appearance, a space where people appear before each other and before themselves, and interact with each other. To come forward is to expose yourself and to expose yourself takes courage, so I understand Hannah Arendt's reasoning. Only when humans come forward *with* other people, they live and interact. If only for a moment, a short time.

The space of appearance. It is an awkward expression; but the content seems more beautiful. I think that actually, it is not a physical space but an action, an activity linked to a meeting place. And here, if I understand Arendt correctly, the promise, and permission and forgiveness are important. Without those, no one dares to expose themselves, show themselves, appear. In order to show courage, forgiveness and tolerance are needed. Perhaps there is a message of love - in the quest for forgiveness and permission, and for power. As if exposition is a prerequisite for taking power according to Arendt's thought. To be able to do something, you must allow yourself trials and errors, to make a fool of yourself, to get forgiveness and to try again. Being able to do something is to take power in a very positive sense.⁹The space of appearance is seen as a tolerant place for action, conversation and activity. I imagine this space as a social, democratic "space", or rather as an action. I imagine Hannah Arendt's space of appearance as a right but also as an obligation to act.

The free space is a space for everyone. A space for taking action. Perhaps this is what I am trying to create together with performing artists, the landscape and the audience – a space for taking action.

Boal highlights the individual action in what he calls "the poetics of the oppressed". The spectator should not give the role player authorization to act or think in his or her place but get into the lead role, alter the dramatic action of the play, try different solutions and discuss new projects. "The liberated spectator, who is a whole person, throws himself into the action!" Boal writes.¹⁰

The action of the performing artist. The action of the audience. What are the consequences if we as an audience, become participant rather than a spectator, active rather than passive, in the course of events? That I become a subject? What happens when I experience with my own

⁹ Arendt, Hannah (1998). *Människans villkor. Vita activa*, Daidalos, Uddevalla, p. 237-331.

¹⁰ Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*. Gidlunds, Södertälje, p. 12-13.

body, am involved in acting and understand through experiencing, interpreting and bringing to life?

Participation and acoustics

When I have created artistic landscape events with music and singing outdoors, I have discovered that the audience can accept quite challenging acoustic conditions if they participate themselves. But if they have the function of spectators, listeners, if they are rather a passive audience, then they have problems with the outside conditions and require better acoustics. In a more participatory situation, I have seen the audience have a strong musical experience in roaring headwind, well storm, with pattering hail and tree branches breaking and falling down next to us. At the same location, I have spoken to audiences complaining about the audibility and acoustics when it was calm without sounds disrupting or interrupting the musical experience. In the first situation, the audience participated in a procession along with the choir and the soloist. In the second situation, the audience sat in a stage-auditorium setting with musicians and singers on a small stage in front of them, with woods and views of the ocean as a backdrop.

Perhaps the passive spectator places other demands on the acoustics and other conditions of a concert or an outdoor opera than the co-creative participant. The active participant *shares* the conditions with the singer, the performing artist, and is part of the meeting, which gives a different acceptance as well as another power. In this way, co-creation is important for the impression and experience of the audience, but also impacts on the acoustics or the experience of the acoustics.

If you participate, being a co-creator, you can also take responsibility and control of your own experience. You have not only a right but also an obligation; you are responsible of your own experience. The active participant takes part in the physical conditions of the singer, the performing artist. When we stand together in a group, and some of us make up the choir and are singing, and the rest are listening, also the bodies and the resonance of the bodies are included in the song and this should of course have a bearing on the acoustic experience. I feel the resonance of your body when you are singing near me.

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To share conditions is to meet. To meet is to come forward, to interact with other people. Only when humans come forward *with* other people, they live and interact. Perhaps the meeting and participation are more important for the acoustic experience outdoors than the technical conditions?

Nets and meaning

For a brief moment, it is as if I am singing, surrounded by singers in the botanical garden. Before this happens, we all have fostered friendships while playing, using strings in various colours. The Heaven Choir strings have different red, pink and beige nuances; the Sea Choir strings are blue, light-blue and green. More and more people get involved, and strings of different colours mix together. The choirs bring the audience, and together we constitute a net between heaven and sea, between red and blue-green nuances, between those who wanted to help Odysseus and those who refused. The singers are tying a net, they go from one side to the other and we, in the audience, are helping, we hold a string, we raise another, we release and we stretch. When the net is tied, the choirs unite as a tribute to mankind and ask for help and mercy. Then we are all moving clockwise; the net forms a spinning wheel of strings in all colours, and Odysseus and Penelope move towards the centre. In a duet, they sing their love for each other and we are being part of it. They are united. We have united them.

In the discussion afterwards, all participants experience that they hear well, and no one complains about the acoustics – whether audience or singers. How is it possible, I think, and ask more leading questions; Was it not disturbing to hear sirens cutting through? Was it not difficult to hear each other in the choir when you were so spread out and the noise was there as a backdrop? And the theorbo, could you really hear it?

So, a discussion evolves about being close to the singers and participating in the event and how that facilitates hearing from the audience's side. The singers say that it was much easier to hear each other and to be heard when there was a purpose and the audience was involved in the event.

And those strings, the links that we made to each other, they became as resonant vocal cords between us, I believe. A net, a web of ties, that resonates between people and becomes part of the landscape.

Sceneries and procedures

In his posthumously published book "Tillvaroväven" (2009) ["The web of existence"], the cultural geographer Torsten Hägerstrand questions habitual ways of looking at life and especially the landscape. He discusses the image as a description of a landscape and sees two main versions: the landscape – drawn, painted or photographed – and the topographic map. The landscape is egocentric, Hägerstrand means, when the content is arranged in a perspective way, as the landscape is seen as observed from one single vantage point. He calls this a *scenery landscape*, as the content varies with the observer's position. The topographical map is however designed in a way so that it does not have any corresponding centre. "You can say that there is a vantage point right above each point on the map", Hägerstrand writes, and continues: "And there is virtually no limit to the possible geographical extent. It has no horizon." ¹¹

Hägerstrand goes further in his reasoning and asks for more ways to describe the landscape: "The forces of nature and live actors move and transform inanimate objects. Organisms are living through their life cycles with different periodicity and thereby providing the landscape with a changing force. Added to this are the changes resulting from migrations, and from humans producing and distributing their increasingly numerous artificial products." Hägerstrand believes that the perspective concept of scenery landscape needs to be complemented by another concept that can express the ever-progressing transformation – the *procedural landscape*.

"A scenery landscape is always a tangible reality in the moment around us, even if large parts of the content are hidden from the senses, and most parts are overlooked for other reasons. The procedural landscape must, however - despite its tangible configuration - remain more of an imagined quantity because of its degree of extension in time and space. It is the landscape of the all-seeing eye. It can be documented in some respects but not seen as a totality." ¹²

Hägerstrand continues to highlight the difficulties of defining "landscape" and says that it is a complex, no matter how it is defined. When landscape is equated with exterior scenery, the

¹¹ Hägerstrand, Torsten (2009). *Tillvaroväven*. Forskningsrådet Formas, Stockholm, p. 264.

¹² Ibid. p. 268.

world below the surface of the ground is not included in the picture and trees and other vegetation are depicted without roots. Another limitation of the landscape concept is the fuzzy boundary between stationary and moving, Hägerstrand says: "The surface of the ground, vegetation and buildings are included but it is unclear whether animals and humans are seen as constituents or as visitors."¹³

In the concept of "the web of existence", there is no equivalent exclusion. "In fact, movement is attributed to everything, unless otherwise at least along the time axis," Hägerstrand writes, and proposes that within the concept of "the web of existence", we face distinct parts that are linked to each other in countless combinations where the participating organisms, from the smallest to the largest, are tangible life situations relevant to the continued existence.¹⁴ *The landscape as a web of existence, the landscape as a process, the landscape as movement.*

Also Boal speaks of the movement, the change. His aim is the spectator's movement from being passive to being active, from being the one observing to being the one influencing, well, *creating* the performing arts event, the role play, the theatre.

"Theatre is change, movement, and not just a reflection of what exists. It is transformation and not being" Boal writes in "Theatre of the Oppressed"¹⁵ *It is transformation and not being.*

Hägerstrand means that we, in order to understand the changes of the landscape, must broaden the concept from including only what is visible to encompass *all that is present* within a given area. Hägerstrand continues: "Then it will be most natural to consider the entirety only as interdependent flows through space and time." We cannot draw a line between what is static and what is changing, everything is in some stage of change, Hägerstrand means.¹⁶ *Encompass all that is present within a given area.*

Co-creative landscapes

The highway next to the botanical garden is testing your patience. The singers try to find areas in which they hear themselves and hear each other without having to confront the noise: next

¹³ Hägerstrand, Torsten (2009). *Tillvaroväven*. Forskningsrådet Formas, Stockholm, p. 269.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 271.

¹⁵ Boal, Augusto (1979), publ. 1974. *De förtrycktas teater*. Gidlunds, Södertälje, p. 101.

¹⁶ Hägerstrand, Torsten (1991). *Om tidens vidd och tingens ordning*. Gösta Carlestam and Barbro Sollbe (Eds). Statens råd för byggnadsforskning, Stockholm, p. 44.

to a wall, under a roof of concrete, in the circle of the pergola, along one of the serpentine paths embedded in high rose hedges. When they finally choose a place in the garden to invite the audience, the noise from the highway is there as an inevitable part of the landscape. How can we use this sound as a starting point and involve it in the same way as we involve the space of our event? We do presence exercises and listening exercises on the spot. We are listening, not just to ourselves and each other, but also to all the sounds around us. We are listening, not only the birds' different sounds, or a child's laughter while playing in the garden, which are sounds that we can easily perceive as positive in a landscape, but also to the roar of engines and sirens, cries and screams and boring talk.

"You had to drown the din of the highway in your song, in your joint singing." One member of the audience is talking to us afterwards and turns to the singers who sang Penelope's and Odysseus' love meeting at the end of the event. "This gave me such a strong feeling that there really is a war going on out there, or a boisterous, angry sea, and that you are joined in the middle of all this. Yes, despite all this. "¹⁷

So the sound of a highway has been embedded in the landscape and the artistic event, and has become an integral part of the acoustic audience. I am surprised. I have experienced it myself; I have worked to achieve this, and yet I am surprised. Perhaps this is where one of our challenges lies, to understand the landscape as sounds, the landscape as an event, and not just as a passive location. The co-creative landscape, the landscape as an actor.

View and web

Torsten Hägerstrand writes about the landscape as a web. When I directed performances in the landscape of Österlen, on a stage in front of the sea with the audience sitting on a hillside, facing the sea and the meadows and the mighty mountain Stenshuvud – did I use the landscape as a scenery then? Did I use the landscape as a view or the landscape as a web?

The web is in constant motion; the present is never static. The web contains the history, the present and the future at the same time. It is in constant motion. The web includes plants,

¹⁷ Professor Paulo Marquez, Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at Porto University and Head of the Botanic Garden, Porto.

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humans, animals, but also buildings, things, well, gadgets. What happens if we, as performing artists, approach the landscape as a web?

We are included in the web. And the web, the location, is included in all of us. There is constant interaction. If we are there, we create the web in the present, in the history and in the future. We become a part of everything that is present. We influence the landscape, the place, with our presence. We change it through the artistic landscape events. So footprints, traces, , an event to add to past events are created.

Spaces or webs? Meeting spaces, meeting webs. Event spaces, event webs. Web better describes that there is a movement and a complex interaction between things, people, plants, animals, land, the sky, buildings, concrete, etc. A space brings connotations to floors, walls and roofs, to something that is more permanent, static, and established.

The concept of web can also be perceived as something solid, such as a woven blanket - it is weaved, solid and finished. But an event web, a meeting web, a co-creator web – such web is in motion in the present. Just as the performing arts are, and as Hägerstrand wants to describe the landscape. This is where we meet: the performing artist's creation where the present is an art form and a co-actor, and Hägerstrand's description of the landscape as a web of existence, which is in constant motion, as a moment that is never fixed.

In motion

Do not ask what you can do with the site, but rather what the site can do with you and what you can then give back – in a meeting. What happens if you start out from the site and the meeting with its people in dialogue, in relationship? The site – it can be a hillside in Österlen, a square in Sao Paulo, or a botanical garden and a highway in Porto.

At these sites, there is a web of events and people, a web of what has happened, what is happening and what will happen, and a web of living and non-living matters. How can we create an artistic event based on this web, in relation to it? Have we not all become co-creators and participants when we are included in the same web?

When we create music and theatre outdoors, we often begin by discussing and planning for the technical conditions. We start out from the stage indoors and transfer it in some form to the outdoor space. A view becomes a background, a forest becomes a backstage, though there is no backstage in a landscape; everything is a matter of how you move, how you approach a place. But if we instead start out from the landscape with everything that it implies: sound, light, smell, movement, historical traces, future opportunities, our artistic landscape event can be part of the changing landscape, the co-creative landscape. If we create meaning and participation with the audience, the technical means and the conditions can be complementary to our event and action in the landscape. In this way, the meeting itself becomes the starting point for the qualitative acoustic experience of both the singers and the audience. The audience's power and co-creation is a precondition for this.

The action of the site

Language philosopher and action theorist James Meloe writes about the site and the action, the activity. They cannot be separated. The site cannot be understood without the activity. The activity cannot be described, explained, without the site. He uses the movement pattern of a berry picker as example. How can you understand the movement of a blueberry picker, without the site, without the blueberry bushes? Removing the site from the action, the action becomes incomprehensible and difficult to interpret for those who are not familiar with the activity or have not seen a berry picker before.¹⁸ Another example is the area with permanent snow in the mountains in Lapland called "jassa". The expression and the snow area it is referring to are difficult to understand without understanding the activity that gave its name - namely reindeer herding. The activity, the act, cannot be separated from the site, the landscape.¹⁹

Meloe mentions the stone "Kveita", in the Norwegian archipelago, that has got its name because you can moor your boat, or step ashore, there. There were other and larger rocks nearby, Meloe writes, but they had no names because they were not used for anything.²⁰ A name of a site that originates from the site's function. When the event, the activity, does not

¹⁸ Meloe, Jakob (1973). *Aktoren og hans verden*. *Norsk filosofisk tidskrift* Nr 2/1973, p. 135-137.

¹⁹ Meloe, Jakob (1988). *The two landscapes of Northern Norway*. In *Inquiry* 3/1988, p. 395-397.

²⁰ Meloe, Jakob (2003). *Steder*. In Eva Erson and Lisa Öberg (Eds). *Erfarenhetens rum och vägar. 24 texter om kunskap och arbete*. Mångkulturellt centrum, Tumba, p. 109.

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occur there, then the stone's name does not exist, and thus, strictly speaking, not the site either. The stone, yes. But it is not *that* site. We create the place through our actions, through the activity.

In meeting

The space we created in the botanical garden was a meeting place where we became involved in two people's destinies, whether we wanted to or not. Ulysses is a warrior who has committed terrible acts: he has plundered and burned villages, he has raped women, and he has murdered men, women and children. He is smart and strategic, and he has managed to deceive and torment Cyclops, the son of the God of the Sea. He is also a missed father and partner. Many are those who want to take revenge on him, and he has lost everything. He has survived a perilous journey across the sea and needs help.

We are told this story when we step into the Botanical Garden of Porto and follow one of the choirs. We are invited to take action and we build links between the different camps in the story. Through our activity, the meeting place was created, and only when links are built, Odysseus can unite with Penelope and come home. A lawn becomes a meeting place and a place for taking action, a place where Odysseus can expose himself and get help. But also a place where we, as the audience, can take action and come forward.

To meet is to dare to come forward, to interact with other people. In order to show courage, forgiveness and tolerance are needed. We create the meeting and the place through our action. We come forward.

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Since 2012, she works at Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts developing the project *Meeting Place – Performing Arts and Landscape* with a focus on education, research and international cooperation. She creates and directs performing arts projects linked to this. The project focuses on how artistic experiences might meet experiences of a landscape and create participation from the audience. She is also an artistic director at Himlabacken where, since 1990, she has created high-profile productions and genre-crossing development projects. Through her career, she has directed on stages in Sweden and other countries, but also extensively worked with outdoor theatre in different landscape settings.

Sara Erlingsdotter has developed and lead the artistic project *Meeting Place – Music, Theatre, Landscape* that includes both exploring performances and research activities in collaboration with Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, SADA; the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, SUAS; and Malmö Academy of Music. The project has also developed joint master courses where Sara Erlingsdotter has lectured, and international exchanges have taken place with ESMAE, Polytechnic Institute of Porto, Portugal; the University of Winchester, UW, UK; and Sao Paulo, Brazil.

She is leading the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership *Meeting place – Performing Arts and Landscape* carried out in cooperation between SADA, ESMAE, UW and the Department of Landscape Architecture at SUAS. She is also developing an international network involving South America in connection to this with Escola Superior Celia Helena, Sao Paulo, Brazil and the University of Sao Paulo. The international cooperation has resulted in international courses on advanced level.