

PEKKA  
NISKANEN

THE AFTERMATH OF  
THE ISIS TERRORIST ATTACK  
IN PASSAGE SAINT-PIERRE  
AMELOT IN PARIS

COMMUNITY  
TERRORS

©PEKKA NISKANEN 2017

PEKKANISKANEN9@GMAIL.COM  
ISBN 9 7 8 - 9 5 2 - 9 3 - 9 5 5 7 - 6  
PRINTED IN UNIGRAFIA HELSINKI

HELSINKI 2017

## COMMUNITY TERRORS

On Friday, 13th of November 2015, six terrorist attacks took place in Paris. A total of 132 people died. There were 90 victims in the Bataclan Theater at the corner of Boulevard Voltaire and Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. On Sunday, November 15th, the Helsingin Sanomat published ten pages on the terrorist attacks, of which the Jihadist organization Isis took responsibility. The title of the first spread was *The bloody footprints on the street made the tragedy real*. The headline referred to what I saw in the Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot the morning after the terrorist attack; bloody traces of shoes and dried blood. Just two hours before the terrorist attack I had left my apartment on that same street to attend a concert at la Gaîté lyrique. No one was allowed to leave the concert hall before 3am on that Saturday night. Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot was barricaded after the terrorist attack and I couldn't get home until the next morning. (FIGURE 1.)

In my facebook update on Saturday morning, I talked about the bloody footprints on my home street. I wrote that I was living just a few dozen meters away from the Bataclan Theater. After my status update, Finnish magazines and media contacted me. Petja Pelli, an editor at the Helsingin Sanomat, called me on Saturday afternoon. We agreed to meet at the border of the isolated area, at a corner bistro on Rue Oberkampf and Boulevard Richard Lenoir. Before the meeting, I was shooting for the first time after the terrorist attack. That Saturday I



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

had decided to start filming a new work, as producer Mirka Flander had urged me to do earlier that same day. I took the first picture through the window of my street-level apartment after I had noticed a bloody trace on the bitumen. When I left for the meeting that afternoon, I saw the bloody traces of a right foot in front of my window. I told Pelli how someone must have been running fast that night out the front of our house. Sunday's Helsingin Sanomat wrote about my observation: *Just as if someone would have painted their foot with blood. The traces of their right foot were far apart. The victim had been running fast.*

(FIGURE 2.)

In this article, I will focus on my unfinished video installation about the terrorist attack at the Bataclan Theater and about Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot after the attack. The work will be completed in November 2017 for the Turku Biennale. This very moment and place will produce the point of view for my video installation. This approach is distanced from the original plan and script, but not yet attached to the final structure, form and content of the work. Even though my video installation is based on a script, the structure of the work that will be created during the editing process will also affect the content and the way the final work will be experienced and perceived. The work cannot be detached from the places and spaces where it was filmed and where it will be shown. Every audience, place, and space produces and reformulates the work. There isn't any autonomous video installation. The work exists only temporarily at a particular venue for a random audience. The site of the



presentation always affects the form of the work. There isn't any original and real form.

I won't be able to analyze my future work or its relationship with the exhibition space and audiences because I cannot know how the finished video installation will be. Instead, I can try to remember and analyze what happened when I shot the material for the work in Paris from November to February 2015-2016 and in Helsinki the following summer. I will also consider why I started to document the situation in Paris after the terrorist attack next to the Bataclan Theater. I will pay attention to my different roles as a writer and as a performer in this research text. I am trying to define how much I want to and am able to tell about my own experiences and about my observations during the post terrorist attack period in Paris. In my text, I will discuss the different levels of my work using Peirce's semiotic theory and discourses around trauma and injustice.

The video installation is not just a documentary of the Isis terrorist attack. With the work, I'm searching to distance myself from what I experienced and saw in Paris, including the experiences of injustice. For the viewer, the work builds up an unobtrusive boundary between my private person and my role as a public artist. Only I know as an eyewitness how the primary reality was transformed into an artwork. The video installation is based on my notes, sketches, observations, notions, video and photo material that makes up my archive and is just for my own personal use. This article and my upcoming video



installation talk about the same events and experiences in two different ways.

For the first time I am performing as a character in my future video installation. During the shooting process, I became interested in the relationship between my character in the work and my entire identity, in which the artist's role only produces a limited part. I have studied William Kentridge's and Anna Estarriola's works to understand my character in my video installation. Estarriola's and Kentridge's performances and video works influenced my decision to appear in my work, or rather my decision to create a distanced figure of myself in my new piece. I visited William Kentridge's exhibition, *NO IT IS!* at Martin-Gropius-Bau in Berlin in early May 2016. Kentridge acts and performs in several of his films and videoworks. In the end of May, I went to see Anna Estarriola's *Ventriloquized* performance at the Kiasma Theater in Helsinki. (FIGURE 3.)



### PEIRCE'S SIGN THEORY

I analyze my experiences and observations on the terrorist attack in the light of the three categories of Charles S. Peirce's semiotic theory. They are firstness, secondness and thirdness. I use the same names as Merja Salo in her research *Imageware, kuvajournalismi mediafuusiossa*. [1] Firstness relates to unanalyzed, momentary and immediate emotion; secondness to facts; and thirdness to consistent knowledge. The categories of Peirce's sign theory are not isolated from each other but function in interaction. Together, these three categories make it possible to





represent observations and interpretations of a subject or event  
in a commonly shared reality. [2]

Firstness describes a way of experiencing that is dominated by an immediate and unexpected feeling. There are experiences that are difficult to translate into words and to understand. When the perception of reality is filled with something unprecedented that is hard to express with words, the relationship with reality is dominated by firstness. [3] I do not link firstness with any particular aesthetic way of experiencing the world, neither to a technical or visual quality, but with immediate experience and perception. I incorporate firstness with the relationship between representation and sensory experience. Conscious actions, such as connecting events to a larger entity, are part of the secondness category because they are based on knowledge and learned practices in the surrounding world. Secondness is associated with art to narration and stories - to give words for firstness's unique experiences. Thirdness, on the other hand, is based on the logical and analytical examination of the world and its events, often with language, though we can consider that art uses its own way to express and represent reality. In art, thirdness is manifested as a control of the whole entity of the work as opposed to the surprise of firstness-related observations and events.

Thirdness represents order, categorization and regularity, unlike firstness, that is characterized by randomness and chaos. [4] Linking the events of history to one single entity, combining individual, personal history, and autobiography into a certain





## COMMUNITY TERRORS

period covered by an artwork all belong to the category of thirdness.

### THE FIRST DAY AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACK

A picture has the capability to represent a certain experience of firstness. Eyewitness observations for something we cannot immediately understand and accept, function in a similar way as a picture that documents an event. The first description of my observations and experiences that I published on Facebook on the following day after the terrorist attacks in Paris refers to an unprecedented experience. I was not able to find the right phrases for the injustice of the terrorist attack, for the mute firstness of my experience. [5] On my way back home on Saturday morning I noticed the first traces that I could relate to the terrorist attacks at the corner of Rue Commines and Boulevard des Filles du Calvaire [6], approximately 400 meters from the Bataclan Theater. On the sidewalk, I saw a blouse and a shoe covered in blood. On the Rue Amelot barricade, the police asked me to prove my identity. I also showed them the rental certificate that I coincidentally had with me.

When I walked from the Rue Amelot barricade towards my home, escorted by two police officers, I saw a pool of dried blood outside my front door. I had yet to notice any bullet holes or marks on the walls of the houses on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot or on the Bataclan Theater. A neighbor who lived in an adjacent house died in the terrorist attack. A bullet hit them in the back through an open window. Another neighbor had



died on that same night just a few meters from my front door. A year after the terrorist attack, a man from the house opposite brought candles and flowers to that same place. I talked with him for a while. It was ten to eleven on a Sunday night. (FIGURE 4.) The isolated street, its silence, and the traces of the terrorist attack on the street became part of my trauma. I understand trauma to be an experience similar to firstness. Initially, it doesn't have any rational explanation. If it is not possible to link the experience to a narrative or see it as part of the surrounding reality, it can be neither understood nor discussed. The only thing that is left is the unprecedentedness of the experience, the firstness of the unexplained horror of the terrorist attack and the unique traces of death in the bloody street. The terrorist attack on the Bataclan Theater became a traumatic event that affected a large number of people. Terrorist attacks have been classified as mass traumas. In the narrowest definition, the concept of trauma refers to an event that is overwhelmingly

devastating for the individual who has experienced it. [7]

An individual may encounter in a trauma the potential chance of being destroyed. The fear might also be that of the destruction of the individual's physical integrity and that the threat could be transformed into acts of direct physical violence. In a traumatic event, an individual can experience their borders collapsing. The "other" threatens their borders and the feeling of security disappears. In a traumatic experience, both the threats and the enactment of terror and violence create horror, intense fear and feelings of worthlessness.



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

The incident may be traumatic even if it does not involve a direct risk of death or violent injury, but a mere threat of violation of physical integrity. [8] Trauma produces a firstness experience that exceeds the individual's resources to deal with what has happened. The consequences of trauma, such as post traumatic stress disorder, often interfere with the trauma itself. Stress disorders may appear as flashbacks, distressing thoughts, and memories of trauma. [9] Trauma endangers the continuity of identity and the previously adopted narrative of the individual. As a result of the terrorist attack, the earlier feeling of safety and the personal boundaries, that were for me self-evident, got broken. The mental and physical integrity of my body and sovereign self got blurred. The cracking of the boundaries sometimes also happened at night in nightmares. On those nights, I relived the physical violence of my neighbor who was living on the same street. I re-experienced their promise to kill me and his aim to break my camera with which I was filming our street after the terrorist attack. Domestic violence is also classified as a traumatic event. Discussing a terrorist attack in a public forum as a trauma is, however, more acceptable, because it belongs to the sphere of public discourse, not to a private area.

For me, trauma and firstness experiences are the starting point for an identity work where the identity of the subject moves and shifts from the previous place. My Facebook update, the script for the video installation, the work process and the completed video installation are all a part of this identity work.



After the deconstruction of the trauma, an individual has the opportunity to start an identity building process in a new way, as a subject inside language and as a social subject for certain discourses. For me, deconstructing trauma does not mean explaining it. I did not try to find a reason for the Isis terrorist attack nor for my neighbor's promise to kill me. Instead, I will discuss in this text and in my video installation the relationship between trauma, identity and art.

#### DANIEL PSENNY'S VIDEO

Parisians were urged to stay indoors after the terrorist attacks on Friday night. The authorities feared that terrorists might be hiding inside apartments or on the rooftops. The silence of the isolated street differed from the previous soundscape of Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot dominated by passing cars and people having discussions while walking by. Driving or riding on the street wasn't allowed, not even the police or the criminal investigators did that. The street was an object of a criminal investigation.

A *Le Monde*, reporter Daniel Psenny, filmed the terrorist attack on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot with his mobile phone from a second floor window ten meters away from my home. I noticed Psenny's video among *Le Monde* news on the Saturday afternoon following the terrorist attack. [10] The feelings of injustice and speechlessness that Psenny's video produces are reactions to the attack in the Bataclan Theater and in our street. I link these emotions to the firstness and secondness categories



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

of Peirce's semiotics. An unpredictable event that occurs at a certain place and time produces diverse interpretations and stories. Secondness distances the witness of the event through certain activities and reactions. [11] My experiences of Psenenny's video are divided into two semiotic categories, because it is difficult to find words for the events that appear on the video, but, on the other hand, it is possible to make an interpretation of the terrorist attack using the video. A certain interpretation may have the capacity to produce an entire story.

In Psenenny's video one can see how a woman is dangling by her hands from the second floor windowsill on the outside of the Bataclan Theater. Two other people are hiding outside the windows of the back room of the theater. All three are in danger of falling. People flee to the street through the side door of the theater. In front of the same door, people are lying on the street, not moving. A young man stands in front of my studio's front door, looking up towards the windows of the opposite house. He has pulled a bleeding person away from the Bataclan Theater, who is now lying on the street. The man seems as if he's waiting for someone to come and help them. At the same time, another wounded person is being pulled into safety on the street behind my studio wall.

The victims of terror and violence and their close ones face almost regularly a feeling of injustice which is difficult to express and to make heard. Terror and violence pose a threat that everybody within their power has to take into account. Terror involves a certain mechanism that uses every exertion to pre-



vent the expressions of the experiences of injustice. Because of this, there is a danger that the experiences may remain trapped inside the firstness category, as emotions that relate directly to the incident. The experience of injustice moves the subjects' positions and identities from their former places to new positions. The emergence of new identities is often shaped and guided by experiences of marginalization, nullification, rejection and injustice. However, first of all, one should find phrases that may produce a coherent narrative associating the event(s) for these experiences with the surrounding reality that relates to the category of secondness.

I watch the video filmed by Psenny again and again. As I watch the video, I once again experience the firstness of Peirce's semi-otic division - an instant sense of shock. Only after closing the video can I break away from the realm of repetitive thoughts that raise the same questions time after time; "If I had been at home, when would I have opened my front door? Would the man who was asking for help in front of my door have come into my studio and my home? Would someone have brought dead or dying people to my home?". Since the first viewing, the video has become part of my trauma of the Isis terrorist attack. The open questions relate to disbelief and astonishment. The bloody traces were the only evidence left of the victims after the terrorist attack in Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. Questions are also reactions to the tragedy documented in Psennys's video. These questions help me to have distance from the terrorist attack and that's why I incorporate them to the secondness cat-



egory. Interpretations and stories of the events are the identity work of communities and individuals - in this way, the verbalization of experiences are part of the secondness category. At the end of November, graffiti gradually appeared on the walls of the houses of the Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot, and visitors left photographs and memoirs on our street. A temporary community of the street began to produce micronarratives on the terrorism in the theater and on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot.

(FIGURE 5.)

I suspect one of the wounded people in Psenny's video to be the 29-year-old architect, Quentin Mourier, whose memorial paste-up was glued onto my studio's outer wall on December 13. [12] At the beginning of December, the face of a young woman was stencilled in blue on the same wall. People visiting our street constantly made new interpretations of the terrorist attack. Some of these interpretations were left as new graffiti on our street walls. After the isolation ended on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot, curious visitors came to the street with infographics that had been published in French journals of the events of the terrorist attack on the Bataclan Theater. Some of these visual narratives were based on Psenny's video, as the events it showed were transformed from the infographics into facts about the terrorist attack, thus becoming part of the secondness category.

Daniel Psenny was injured by a bullet that hit his left hand while he was trying to save a man who had escaped from the theater and collapsed on the street. Psenny was evacuated to



an apartment situated in the backyard of my home building. A doctor gave him first aid there. The owners of the apartment told me later that I would have been evacuated to the same apartment if I had been at home that night. I never met Pseny. The owners of the apartment offered me asylum after the terrorist attack in the same apartment due to my neighbor who had threatened to kill me.

#### NARRATIVE

It was three o'clock in the afternoon after the terrorist attack when I decided to go outside my home. After having passed the barricade and police at the end of our street, I first wondered about the large number of people in the neighborhood - I thought that the market was open. At Rue de Crusol I noticed that there were several broadcast vans, camera crews and tv-journalists on Boulevard Voltaire reporting on the events of the previous night and their consequences. All the cameras were targeted towards the Bataclan Theater. At Boulevard Voltaire, I understood that enormous media attention was directed at the terrorist attacks in Paris, the Bataclan Theater and Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. There were broadcast vans and camera groups on Rue Oberkampf and Boulevard Richard Lenoir as well. People were wandering around the isolated area looking for a gap between the trees and the bushes, so that they could glimpse the Bataclan Theater. (FIGURE 6.)

I went back home to the isolated area after the police had checked my identity and rent certificate at the barricade. As I



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

approached the Bataclan Theater, the voices of the city faded away. In front of the theater, on the empty Boulevard Voltaire, I passed only a few police officers and two civilians. At Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot, I did not notice the bullet holes in the walls of the houses - only the blood-stained street and the bloody footprints of the people who had escaped from the theater.

William Kentridge presents in his book *Six Drawing Lessons* a distinction between a working artist and an artist viewing and observing an unfinished or completed work [13]. The observing artist has the role of a critic, while the working artist is focused on bringing the work forward by being present in the studio with the current problems. [14] An analysis is related to both roles, but it is emphasized in different ways. These roles seem to have a link to both the secondness and thirdness categories - not just to the facts, but also the interpretation. The observing artist emphasizes the relationship between the future work and the related discourses, while the working artist aims to keep the working situation as open as possible for changes that are also fueled by various types of insecurities. It is important for Kentridge that the artist's "dialogue-ous" monologue should be as open as possible to various reorientations and uncertainties. [15]

My aim was to create a narrative about the terrorist attack and about our isolated street behind the barricades, although my relationship to the street was at that moment rather bound to the bewilderment of firstness than to the facts of the second-



ness category. On the same afternoon, I continued to document the bloody marks on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot until the police came and interrupted my filming. Our street was a crime scene, and we were not aloud to film or photograph it.

On Sunday, two days after the terrorist attacks, I focused on filming people who were circling around the border of the isolated area and the equipment of the production companies, the news reporters and the camera crews. I realized that I wouldn't be able to film on my home street as long as the criminal investigation continued. I took the role of Kentridge's observing artist, and I decided to film the people wandering around the isolated area and the news media reporters instead of Passage Saint Pierre Amelot. They formed a kind of a counter image of my home street where it was prohibited to photograph and film. In the aftermath of the terrorist attack, I found that I had started to develop a story about my home street, linking individual feelings, observations and incidents to be part of a broader narrative that aligned with Peirce's secondness category.

I connect this secondness category process and the role of the observing artist, to the meetings with the residents of Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. The dialogue of the video installation is based on the street residents' stories of domestic violence and on the experiences of isolation of Paris after the terrorist attack. [16] The dialogue also includes my own observations of the ten-day blockade and the aftermath of it. I wrote down my neighbors' stories on the street right after the terrorist attack. I listened to their experiences of the terrorist attack, the vio-



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

lence, and living inside the isolated area. I gradually figured out how the time after the attack had escalated violence in the private spaces of the street. The traumas and shocks that the terrorist attack had caused prevented some of the interviewees from seeing all the traces of the attack on our street, which also included me.

Kentridge has pondered how the collective memories of people and communities are limited - their function is to help them survive in everyday life. Diverse representations raise traumas in the collective and individual consciousness [17]. Severe traumas affecting the community can be part of everyday life, especially when a particular place repeatedly resembles a certain trauma. Our street was such a place.

Criminal investigators came in their white outfits and head lamps in front of my street-side windows on Monday night after the terrorist attack. Their job was connected to the secondness category; to associate individual traces to the events of Psenny's video, to the crime of the terrorist's offense and to the dead - to the entirety of the terror. I stared at the criminal investigators from the darkness of my bedroom through the venetian blinds. Finding traces of the crime was easy for them. Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot had bloody traces for a hundred meters all over the street, on the pavement, in the doorways. The houses had bullet holes in them and broken windows. On Tuesday, four days after the terrorist attack, the blood was washed off. Thereafter, only the videos by Psenny and the residents of the street, police investigations and eyewitness reports told the story of





the street that was smeared with blood. My observations of the street changed after it was cleaned. Now on I followed the police that were guarding the isolated area and the few cars that occasionally passed by my home.

The isolated area got gradually smaller but my home and the front door remained inside it for the entire ten-day criminal investigation. In the final phase, the street barricade and the police guarding it were just outside my front door. Their job was to guard the criminal investigation and the security of those visiting the street. On the ninth night of isolation, I filmed a police car that was parked right in front of my bedroom windows through my venetian blinds. In the morning I understood that it's task was to guarantee the safety of a visit by the French President and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Hollande and Cameron passed by my street windows on Monday morning on November 23rd. In my video installation the police car in front of my window and the police officers represent the threat posed to the French state and the fear of a disintegrating identity. It also represents the injustice that had been isolated and had become almost invisible to the outside world. At that time the remains of the terrorists' crime was just material for the criminal investigation. (FIGURE 7.)

Our street was opened to the public ten days after the terrorist attack by Isis. The visitors on the street stared and pointed at the bullet holes and traces on the walls of the buildings. I did not notice them before that. The criminal investigators had surrounded some of the bullet holes with white and coloured





chalk, giving them numbers as well. I saw the numbers 19, 32, 38 and 39 on the walls. The holes in the walls of Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot refer to the terrorist attack, the dead, the news reports, the images and those discourses that were produced by the irreversible event on November 13. (FIGURE 8.)

Only after the opening of the street and after the criminal investigation, the temporary community that gathered on the street was able to express in more precise utterances the terror and horror of street. The community started a work that was linked to the secondness category, to verbalize and collect individual stories about the terrorist attack. The traces of terror, obituaries, photographs of the dead, graffiti and stories became part of the discourse woven around the unfairness of the horrors at the Bataclan Theater and Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. From December, the City of Paris collected the material that was left around the Bataclan Theater for an archive of the terrorist attack. [18]

#### SHIFTING THE NARRATIVE

When I visited Helsinki in October 2015 I noticed that the former headquarters of the Pohjola insurance company was empty. [19] I began to consider the possibility of filming a new video work that would be based on the Renaissance book, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), there in the following summer. The Isis terrorist attacks in Paris changed my plans. One month after the terrorist attacks, I realized that my story on the aftermath of the terror should be filmed in another place and space, and



not in Paris. Filming the video work on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot could have put some of the locals who had gotten involved with the narrative at stake, including me.

I placed my dialogue of the video installation and my own monologue at another time, place and location; in Helsinki's Munkkivuori. In summer 2016, the former Pohjola headquarters was still empty. Only a caretaker and a serviceman worked in the building. I had been researching the 92,000 square meters of the building since the beginning of June. I followed the light that came into the building and I looked for suitable locations for different scenes, which together would recreate a building for my video installation. The new building that emerges in my work is a place of domestic violence and terror. It contains the script that I wrote about the Isis terrorist attack and its consequences temporarily.

My video installation that talks about the Bataclan Theater terrorist attack is based on three different types of material: 1. On documentary material that I filmed around the Bataclan Theater and in Passage Saint Pierre Amelot after the November 2015 terrorist attacks. 2. On scenes that I filmed together with two actors in Helsinki at the former headquarters of the Pohjola insurance company. 3. On material that I filmed in the same building and in a downtown flat in Helsinki. In the scenes I recall events linked to the terrorist attack, my observations and the consequences of the attacks in our home street.

From July through August, I filmed together with Monna Kamu and Henri Tuominen the dialogue on terror and domes-



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

tic violence. During the filming process, the story of my script gradually transformed into a dialogue between the two actors and my own monologue. The actors in my video installation play the mother and son of a fictional family from Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. Their dialogue concentrates on events in the street and at home. (FIGURE 9.)

The fragments of my script are tied together by the terrorist attack on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot and the Bataclan Theater, the two actors, my own character, and the space that we shared together and the gradually emerging story. We walked back and forth inside the empty office building the same way I walked in Paris between my home and the surrounding city - from isolation through barricades to freedom and back to the police guarded area.

When I was filming the monologue about my experiences and observations after the terrorist attack, I understood that I was at the same time both a researching and a performing artist. I was moving between Peirce's two semiotic categories of secondness and thirdness; while constructing the story and my character and then analyzing the relationship between my scenes and my future video installation. I studied and developed my character in the video installation from the beginning of July to the end of October. I repeated and analyzed my monologue scenes again and again until I reached a satisfying result. My idea of suitable motion, camera angle and light developed gradually during the shooting process.

William Kentridge's work is based on continuous repetition,





back and forth walking in the studio, and the gradual collection of fragments of the work to be part of a whole. [20] I started to experiment with a similar method in my shoots. As I continued to repeat and film the same scene or a fragment of a scene, I often ended up with 30 individual takes, partly because of the analytical role I took after every shot. I also usually filmed the same scene from three different angles and that resulted quite often in nearly 20 new takes.

For Kentridge, the starting point for filming is the film itself and the desire to make it. Meaning, content, and form take shape only during the work process. [21] I did not use a detailed script filming my video installation, instead of that I continued to film in a space that I had found in the previous day. I was constantly looking for new spaces and lighting situations that would guarantee a continuity for my work. Sometimes I gave up the continuity to emphasize the transitions and breaks that would appear in the future work.

Shooting my video installation was characterized of constant walking, filming, recording, editing the script, learning the dialogue and monologue, and sometimes rewriting everything in the next day. Continuous repetition changed the original starting point of the action and modified at the same time the real life events to be part of the distanced narrative. Conscious reiteration of the same scenes also produced a difference between the actors' characters and my own character. I ended up filming myself often in the backlight, reducing my character to a kind of shadow-like narrator.





## COMMUNITY TERRORS

The shadow-like characters of Kentridge's video installations and films were originally linked with the problem of the simultaneous, double performance, of the actors and the dolls they were guiding. The visual appearance of the performers first seemed to create an impression of an unintentional error until the *Woyzeck* on the Highveld team, led by Kentridge, recognized that the appearance of the actors could be an advantage. Actors became another meaningful way of presenting the character. The puppet and the animating puppeteer produce a double performance, two slightly different interpretations of the same gesture, action and motion. [22]

Me as a narrator and Henri Tuominen as the son are not completely independent characters. There are not always clear differences between them in the story of the video installation. My character and the son bring up parallel fragments of the events that I have experienced in *Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot*. My narrator's voice doubles sometimes in the character of the son. However, the son's story does not refer to my experience alone. The son's role in the video installation is a kind of meeting place where the experiences of different people blend and merge into to each other.

## MUTENESS OF TERROR

Thirdness is associated with a form of thinking that emphasizes the organization of the analytical world and the surrounding chaos to a relevant whole. [23] Our street's chaos, blood, and walls full of bullet holes, were gradually organized into



pictures, texts, graffiti and piles of flowers that all represented the dead and the sorrow. Various world leaders expressed their compassion. The heads of states visited the Bataclan Theater in connection with the Paris Climate Summit and left their wreaths in front of the Theater. At the beginning of December I was passing by the Bataclan Theater on my way home when the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was leaving the site together with the Mayor of Paris, Anna Hidalgo. After ten days of isolation our street transformed from a crime scene into a graveyard, a monument and a tourist attraction, into a site to take selfies. Parisians, friends and relatives of the victims of the terrorist attack, and those who visited Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot marked the street with candles, flowers, photos and representations of the dead. Candles were also lit up in places where the victims of the terrorist attack had died. One of those places was the outer wall of my studio. The texts and graffiti appearing on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot and in front of the Theater were trying to analyze and organize the commonly experienced injustice. The city of Paris began to systematically document this apparent-seeming chaos in December. There was an aim to organize the individual stories, memorials and photographs to form a logical and systematic whole that would fulfill the criteria of Peirce's thirdness. (FIGURE 10.)

Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot is now known for the Isis terrorist attack. On the street the violence and terror do not relate just to the public space and to the semi-public theater, they go much deeper into the social and anti-social structures of the commu-



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

nity. A certain terrorist discourse was formed on the street after the terrorist attack. This discourse involved both the murders by Isis and the pressure, isolation and intimidation that arose out of domestic violence inside the apartments.

Violence always relates to the question of injustice. I do not propose any clear solution for solving and reversing injustice [24]. I disagree with the idea of mutual understanding and turn instead to a continuous, fruitful disagreement. Aiming and enforcing a consensus may ultimately lead to terror. Disagreement, the critical examination of dominant, hegemonic, verbal and pictorial discourses is a key factor in marginalizing terrorism and totalitarianism [25]. For Lyotard, the acceptance of the diversity of discourses and the use of language inside discourses is a precondition for the concept of justice, where there is no room for consensus or totalitarianism. *This obviously requires a restraining of terror, in which the uniformity of language games is both supposed and intended to be implemented.* [26]

Terror is revealed in Lyotard's thinking as an activity that rejects the social sphere and open interaction, it denies the community's diversity and respect for other ways of thinking and for diverse values. Terror tries to subordinate and force us into an ostensible consensus. It does not engage in struggles inside discourses, but relies on fear and violence. [27] Terror does not seek to challenge the other attitudes and ways of thinking inside a social debate.

Lyotard's concept of Différend relates to the feeling of injustice, which is difficult or impossible to describe with words and



phrases. Double unfairness occurs when there is no way to prove the experienced and occurred to be unjust. Différend is a momentary state when the one who faces a feeling related to firstness experience and muteness can not find the appropriate phrases to talk about the experience. Différend involves a challenge to overcome and deconstruct the experience of injustice. When a différend is unravelled, a verbal expression has been found for a particular experience or an event. [28] However, this does not mean that unfairness would have been abolished, it has only been able to be expressed it in a literal or verbal form. The verbalized story of the experienced injustice is meaningful for the continuity and redefinition of an identity. The stories in the secondness category express the attitudes and ways of thinking that support the encounters in the discourses of injustice.

Isis and its terrorists did not try to challenge and question the Parisians' ideas of freedom, justice and equality within a discourse or a language. Instead of that they positioned themselves outside of the discourse by using violence and terror as their tools to produce horror. Massive inequality and violence do not always weaken the idea of common identity, rather they can produce experiences of cohesion and strengthen the imagined community. Nations, such as France, are precisely these imaginary communities, in which all members can never actually encounter one another. [29] Survival of violence and survival stories can give rise to new communality. The position of one's identity in the imagined community and in the micro-so-



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

cial community moves, and changes as a result of experiences and as a result of emotions and stories that relate to them.

I acknowledge in my work the difference between the terror in the Bataclan Theater and inside the apartments in our street. Isis aimed for maximized publicity with the Paris terrorist attack and to create a paralyzing impact in Paris and in Europe. On the other hand, domestic violence is usually isolated inside the home. The Islamists did not know their victims, but in the violence linked to private spaces, the victim(s) and the violent practitioners often know each other. The victims of domestic violence are generally faceless in public media, unlike the victims of the terrorist attacks in Paris. I claim that these two different types of violence are related to a situation in which the idea of freedom of expression and the right to disagreement is replaced by the intimidation of violence and its use. The power of organised forces are often associated with violence, which can be deadly as well. My video work represents the multi-level terror in our street. Not only does the work highlight the experiences and traces linked with the ten-day isolation of the street, but also references the time before and after the street barricades. The stories I have recorded in Passage Saint Pierre Amelot emphasize confidence in a dialogue where disagreement is accepted. At the same time, there is a priority to connect to the surrounding social community and to its discussions that stress the freedom of expression. Such a debate was also the discourse on violence and terror in our street.

Thirdness manifests itself in my upcoming work in organizing



the unfairness of Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot to a coherent audiovisual narrative, a dialogue between stories and images. In my work, I connect the individual observations of the Isis terrorist attack, the stories of the interviewed, the experiences of horror and injustice, as a whole. The Isis terrorist attack in Paris forms the background of the story. The way in which my video installation analyzes the story and the fabric of perception is not self-evidently translated into a research text. Instead, the work produces a series of interpretations and stories that reflect on the analysis presented by the video installation. My video installation does not invite viewers just to watch, listen, and walk in the space that the work opens up, but the work itself is open to diverse interpretations and analysis that form together a new discourse that is placed inside the thirdness

category.

Several candles burned until the end of the year next to the outer wall of my studio. On Christmas Eve I lit one of the candles that didn't burn anymore. At the end of February, a text appeared next to the side door of the Bataclan Theater: *We went out here on the 13th ... my darling and I ... today we love each other more than ever...* Above the text was a bullet hole for which the criminal investigators had given the number 32. The graffiti and memoirs on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot built an anti-terrorist discourse. Candles and flowers referenced the dead, and also of the places where the victims of the terrorist attack finally died. Remembering, leaving objects, candles and flowers on the street, and visits to the Bataclan Theater became acts and



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

gestures that were part of the discourse of the terrorist attacks in Paris.

### BOUNDARY

In May 2016, artist Anna Estarriola performed *Ventriloquized* at the Kiasma Theater. At the beginning of her performance, the actor introduced herself as an artist and the dummy on her lap as her work. I understood that Anna Estarriola had two different characters in her performance; Estarriola as the performer and the doll that looked like her. According to Estarriola, the relationship between the doll and the performer is based on the idea that the artist and the artist's work tend to become similar to some extent. This is done either in the process of personal identification, in which the identification to something happens through the work of an artist, or through the viewer's tendency to see similarities between the artist and the artist's work. (FIGURE 11.)

At the beginning of her *Ventriloquized* performance there seems to be a clear division of roles, Anna Estarriola as the artist, and the doll as the work of art. Estarriola does not introduce herself as an individual at the beginning of the performance, but as an artist, whom the real life artist Anna Estarriola makes use of in her performance. In this performance, the artist is a role that the actor Estarriola interprets. The puppet as a work of art and Estarriola as an actor together produce a second work of art, a performance. The clear borders between the doll and the artist blur during the performance. The aim of the doll is to create



an impression of likeness. In the performance, the characters of the actress and the dummy sometimes seem to almost blend into one another. The partial disappearance of the border between the doll and the actor and the re-formation during the performance is the artist's conscious choice. The border between the artwork and the actor, the doll and the artist, becomes dim and unclear, which may produce an interesting and fertile space to reflect on the performance. [30]

After a conversation with Estarriola I started to wonder about the border between the directing artist and the performing artist. I pondered whether the directing artist observes the performer during the performance as an outsider, or is the directing artist involved in the performance. I continued the discussion about "the border" with Estarriola on the 20th of October, two months after the first meeting. Estarriola said she was present both as a director and a performer in the performance [31] Estarriola's performance's meaning is to rethink the different roles and identities of an individual and their fluid borders. (FIGURE 12.)

I have seen the traces of the terrorist attack from my home windows at Passage Saint Pierre Amelot and heard my neighbors' stories, but my video installation's story is distanced from factual reality. The video installation gradually becomes another story with the help of the narration and being played by the actors and my own character. I listen and I look at this story partly as an outsider. I use my own experience as source material in the video installation, as well as the performance of my



## COMMUNITY TERRORS

personal character and my directing of the work. I place my observations and experiences in Passage Saint Pierre Amelot of the time after the terrorist attack and the fragments of the stories I collected from my neighbors in my video installation. As the author, I distance myself from the real life person, scriptwriter, artist and director, from all my different roles. The author is an artist who arranges the final structure, content and form of the work. In this process, the analytical artist has the role of a critic.

The work, and the story I have edited of the terrorist attack, construct a boundary between me and the outside world. Although the video installation partly references my own experiences and the stories I heard, it excludes everything outside it that I don't want and can't tell. I probably won't produce in addition to this research text any other supplementary public story, which would open up the actors' dialogue and monologue. The video installation and this article contain everything that I want to tell at this moment about Isis's terrorist attack and Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot. This article and my work together construct a boundary between my private world and the story I present in the field of art. On the other side of the border is the story produced with the representations for the viewer, and on the other side, my private story of the terrorist attack and of the related events to myself and my trauma therapist. The viewer of a work can enter the boundary of the two "worlds", but she/he cannot go beyond it. Only me and the therapist can cross the border if we wish to do so. In the discussions



between the therapist and I, another boundary was created, one between the trauma and the non-traumatic state. Through therapy discussions, I tried to close my traumatic experiences in my “personal archive” and at the same time to get rid of the symptoms of trauma.

It is not possible to compare the process of making the video installation or the viewing situation to therapy. The work itself and the process are multilayered, they bring up both the traces of terror and the consequences. The work is an analysis. Although the script of the work and the experiences I talked about in the trauma therapy have a lot in common, they are not exactly the same story. The significance of the script and the material I filmed in Paris cannot be reduced to a therapy. The story I have written and the video clips I have filmed in Paris and in Helsinki are, above all, material for an analysis of the terrorist attack and its consequences. The analysis takes place in the overall form of the video installation. My analysis, however, does not use words and phrases unilaterally but also images, sounds and space. (FIGURE 13.)

The process and the work rebuilds my personal boundary's integrity that produces my new post-terror identity. However, the latter task is not the most significant level of the work, and I do not believe that the viewers would emphasize this level as the primary meaning of the work. It is possible that the level that reconstructs my identity can only be my individual experience of the video installation.

The starting point for the video installation is remembering,



forgetting, and distancing oneself. Only when I remember what I saw, what happened and in what order, I can forget. At the same time, I distance myself from the places, traces and events that surrounded me from November 13th to the end of February. Even though I try to forget the terrorist attack of Isis in Paris and the violence of the Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot, I do not seek complete forgetting, because it is impossible. Forgetting means to me the transformation of the seen and experienced into another form, a second story, other places and spaces, into a video installation. (FIGURE 14.)

In my work, what I forgot is not meaningful for the viewers, but what they see and hear. The work offers the possibility for the viewer to undertake the task of analytical work. Viewers gather the fragments of the work, a story that links to the secondness category, and can possibly reject the analysis which relates to the thirdness category, or they could just simply leave the site. Reality and the video installation share the same work that is done when separate and unconnected fragments are assembled or there is an attempt to compile a complete, continuous and seemingly unified story. I understand the work of reconstructing a story to be identity work and an analysis, including when one compiles other's stories. The viewer's interpretation and experience of my work may be related to the idea of identity as a process. A viewer can understand my work as a documentary, that is realized from a certain place and position of the Isis terrorist attack in Paris and of its consequences as well.

In my own experience, the acted scenes encroach upon and





mix with the actual events and observations of Passage Saint Pierre Amelot. Re-telling modifies and transforms the first fragments I wrote of the terrorist attacks in Paris in November and what I remember about the events. The actual Parisian characters, places, spaces and rooms merge in the script, filming, and video installation into Finnish actors, the Helsinki quarter and the former headquarters of the insurance company. When I write this article or edit the video installation and rethink on its structure, I am in touch with the same primary firstness category that I experienced in the aftermath of the terrorist attack at

Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot.

As I read my story and look at the material I've portrayed, I reflected on my own experience of the terrorist attack and trauma. I may be repeatedly crossing the boundary that I want to close off from myself, the border between the trauma and the non-traumatic state. In my primary reality, keeping up the boundary is not a rational decision, the border can break suddenly, though the break is not inevitable. An external factor, a story favorable to violence and terror, may question the previously held border and one may momentarily re-experience the

trauma again.

When I research the traces of the terrorist attack that I filmed on Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot, I alternate between the three categories of Peirce's semiotic theory. When firstness experiences of terrorist attacks are linked to the secondness' facts and to the events in the surrounding world and ultimately to thirdness, to the meaningful and complex analysis, a single ob-





ervation of terror and its horror is transformed into a rational world of meanings. Secondness and thirdness are more easily accessible to rational thinking than the individual observations that are included in the firstness experience. When they emerge, they represent just themselves, without a clear explanation, interpretation, and analysis of the perceived. [32] None of these categories of Peirce's semiotic theory are above one or another in my video installation, but they work in parallel with each other. Observations and perceptions of the world are not always logical at first, in the beginning they appear rather emotionally, as immediate feelings. Making meaning and to analyze the surrounding world is, however, indispensable to the identity of the subject, its continuity, and its re-formation after an unprecedented event and crisis.

On November 13, 2016, the Helsingin Sanomat reported about Paris after the Isis terrorist attack in the main spread of their international news section. Sting had performed at the reopened Bataclan Theater the previous night. Pekka Mykkänen interviewed me on the same day in Paris for the newspaper. I stated in the *Life and Sorrow Continues in Paris* reportage: *Many are afraid, will they attack there again today.*



Pekka Niskanen is a researcher and an artist who focuses on identity politics and the questions of interaction between architectural spaces, culturally constructed places and subjects' identities. In his doctoral thesis *Art in the Construction of Identity Politics* Niskanen ponders how representations, presentations and actions produce and shape our identities. According to Niskanen, identities are always produced in some space from a certain place and from various subject positions.



- [1] Salo, Merja 2000. *Imageaware, kuvajournalismi mediafuusiossa*. Helsinki: Taideteollinen korkeakoulu.
- [2] Goriée, Linda L. 2009. A sketch of Peirce's Firstness and its significance to art. *Sign Systems Studies* 37(1/2), 205–269.
- [3] Salo 2000, 12–14.
- [4] Goriée 2009, 211.
- [5] Niskanen, Pekka 2015. *Facebook update 14.11.2015 at 10 am*. “I just came back home, next to the Bataclan Theater. I was at a concert at La Gaité lyrique last night when we were commanded away from the windows on the first floor. The staff at the concert hall said briefly that there was a shootout in Paris and nobody could go out. I couldn't go home that night because our street was closed. That night I slept at the concert hall. In the morning, a couple of blocks away from home, I saw the first bloody clothes and shoes. There is still blood in front of my front door. During the night, wounded were rescued from the concert hall and brought to our residence, they were treated in my neighbor's apartment. The concert was just twenty meters from our house. Today it's hard to leave home, because some find it dangerous, and on the other hand, policemen who guard the other end of the street, would have to escort me to my front door after I had proven my identity. I also have to prove that I live here. It's hard to understand what happened ... “
- [6] The Calvary Girls Boulevard.
- [7] Briere, John & Scott, Catherine 2008. *Principles of Trauma Therapy: A Guide to Symptoms, Evaluation, and Treatment*. New York: Sage Publications, 4.
- [8] Briere & Scott 2008, 3–4.
- [9] Briere & Scott 2008.
- [10] Pseny, Daniel 2015. 13 Novembre, peu avant 22h, Passage Saint-Pierre Amelot, 11<sup>ème</sup> arrondissement de Paris. *Le Monde*. <http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/video/2015/11/14/im->



ages-de-la-fusillade-au-bataclan\_4809661\_4809495.html (Retrieved September 15th, 2016).

[11] Salo 2000, 12–14.

[12] Aizicovici, Francine 2015. Quentin Mourier, 29 ans. *Le Monde*. [http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/visuel/2015/12/05/quentin-mourier-29-ans-enmemoire\\_4825095\\_4809495.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/visuel/2015/12/05/quentin-mourier-29-ans-enmemoire_4825095_4809495.html) (Retrieved October 21st, 2016).

[13] Kentridge, William 2014. *Six Drawing Lessons*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 20, 124, 180.

[14] Kentridge 2014, 20–22.

[15] Kentridge 2014, 22.

[16] I've confirmed with all of the interviewees the possibility of using parts of their stories in my work. No one's identity or personal information will be revealed. I combine fragments of stories to protect the identity of my local community. The details in my script are rewritten so as not to disclose any personal information. My interviewees have been allowed to approve of the script in advance. If necessary I will consult a lawyer who specializes in dealing with and solving local violent situations.

[17] Kentridge, William 2014, *Fortuna*. Edit. Lilian Tone. London: Thames & Hudson, 293

[18] Soullier, Lucie 2015: Attentats du 13 novembre: le mémorial du Bataclan aux Archives de Paris. *Le Monde*. [http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/article/2015/12/14/le-memorial-du-bataclan-aux-archives-de-paris\\_4831270\\_4809495.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/attaques-a-paris/article/2015/12/14/le-memorial-du-bataclan-aux-archives-de-paris_4831270_4809495.html) (Retrieved November 13th, 2016).

[19] Pohjola's headquarters were completed in Helsinki Munkkivuori in 1969. Alvar Aalto and Viljo Revell had both won the award for the architecture competition. Although the planning assignment was given to Revell. After his death the plan was completed by architect Heikki Castren. (Lyytinen, Eino 1991. *Pohjola companies a hundred*

years, Helsinki: Pohjola companies.) The 92,000 square meters of the building were left empty in 2015. The basement floor and the first and second floors have plenty of lighting facilities through skylights. In some of its rooms there have been insurance companies' registers and electronic databases. The basement floor has rooms related to the control of the internal ventilation and heating system. The building is dominated by endless empty lobbies, corridors, offices and storage facilities. The original use of the pool, saunas, kitchens, toilets, auditoriums, reception halls and shooting range has remained the same. Rooms and facilities have been emptied of furniture and the previous use of all rooms can not be deduced. These spaces could be categorized as mostly empty office spaces.

[20] Kentrige, William 2012, *The Refusal of Time*. Paris: Barral cop., 190, IV.

[21] Kentrige, William 2014B, How We Make Sense of the World, *Louisiana Channel*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G1lwOmxo-J6U> (Retrieved November 2nd, 2015).

[22] Cameron, Dan & Christov-Bakargiev, Carolyn & Coetzee, J.M. 1999, *William Kentrige*. Lontoo: Phaidon, 17–19.

[23] Salo 2000, 15.

[24] Pulkkinen, Tuija 1998. *Postmoderni politiikan filosofia*. Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 38. See also Niskanen, Pekka 2014. *Taide identiteettien politiikan rakentajana*. Helsinki: Taideyliopiston Kuvataideakatemia, 123.

[25] Best, Steven & Kellner, Douglas 1991. *Postmodern Theory. Critical Interrogations*. Houndmills & London: Macmillan Education, 163. See also Niskanen 2014, 123.

[26] Lyotard, Jean-François 1979. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Transl. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, foreword Fredric Jameson. Manchester University Press, 66. See also Niskanen 2014, 123-124.

[27] Lyotard 1979, 46.

[28] Lyotard, Jean-François 2007. *The Different: Phrases in Dispute*. English translation Georges Van Den Abbeele. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 5, 10-13. See also Niskanen 2014, 61.

[29] Anderson, Benedict 2007. *Kuivitellut yhteisöt. Nationalismin alkuperän ja leviämisen tarkastelua*. Transl. Joel Kuortti. Tampere: Vastapaino, 39–41.

[30] Discussion and recording with Anna Estarriola on August 19th, 2016.

[31] Discussion with Anna Estarriola on October 20th, 2016.

[32] Gorrée 2009, 208.

THIS ARTICLE WAS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED UNDER THE NAME OF *RAJA – 19, 32, 38 JA 39. ISISIN TEKEMÄSTÄ TERRORI-ISKUSTA JA VÄKIVALLASTA KERTOVAN VIDEOINSTALLAATION KESKENERÄISYYDESTÄ* IN THE PEER REVIEWED ONLINE JOURNAL *TAHITI* (1/2017).

TRANSLATION

PEKKA NISKANEN, MELISSA RYKE, EMMA HELLE

GRAPHIC DESIGN

PEKKA NISKANEN

PHOTOGRAPHS

PHOTOS 2 - 10 AND 12 - 14 PEKKA NISKANEN, PHOTO 11 ANTTI AHONEN

WITH THANKS TO

MARIA HIRVI-IJÄS

ANNA ESTARRIOLA

KIASMA LIBRARY