

Scenography and Visual Storytelling within the project: A Personal and Collaborative Journey

The process, for me, was both deeply personal and intellectually engaging. On one hand, we aimed to develop a methodology that would genuinely facilitate the scriptwriter's creative freedom without imposing predictable or paternalistic outcomes. On the other, we were conscious of our positions as outsiders - me, coming from Sweden, with the security and stability that entails, and Erika returning to a much more challenging and unforgiving reality.

On a personal level, I found myself outside my comfort zone, not only geographically, but emotionally and socially. This experience pushed me to confront my own privileges and the inherent imbalances in our engagement. While we were there to facilitate, collaborate, and create something meaningful, we would return to our stable lives, whereas Erika's difficult reality remained largely unchanged. The contrast between our temporary immersion in the project and the permanence of her challenges underscored the complexity of the situation, making our moments of collaboration both powerful and humbling.

The methodology sought, at its best, to minimize these hierarchies by encouraging shared vulnerability - living together, participating in activities beyond the formal project framework (like going to church), and immersing ourselves fully. These experiences created genuine connections, blurring the lines between the project and everyday life. For two weeks, we constructed our own realm, one that allowed for dialogue, experimentation, and mutual understanding.

However, this process was not without its difficulties. There is, of course, a challenge in the idea of established professionals briefly immersing themselves in such environments. Can this short-lived vulnerability truly challenge our practices back home, or does it simply highlight the gap between our lives and theirs? Can we claim artistic integrity when we know that our engagement is inherently temporary?

While we embraced the creative freedom within this project, the broader world remains profoundly inequitable. It was this tension, between temporary engagement and lasting realities, that added depth to the project. Living and sharing space with Erika and the others moved the project beyond abstraction, embedding it in something deeply human.

As we explored creating a script, scenography, and theatrical production, we were also grappling with the limitations of art in bridging these vastly different worlds. Ultimately, the project remained true to its essence, resisting imposed outcomes. In many ways, I believe we achieved what we set out to do. However, it's essential to remain critically reflective about the limitations of such engagements. Professionally, the experience opened my eyes to the intersection of art, ethics, and lived experience. Personally, it pushed me to confront uncomfortable truths about my position in the world.

Above all, I am left with gratitude for the moments we shared and the space we built together, however temporary it may have been. Yet, I remain aware of the contrast between our brief involvement and the lasting struggles of those we collaborated with. This duality - of connection and disconnection, of immersion and distance - forms, I believe, the most profound legacy of this project.

In the group, I was the only one not speaking Spanish, and this language barrier, at times, made me feel like a burden. It was an uncomfortable experience but also a revealing one. These moments deepened my understanding of vulnerability and isolation - emotions that are often hidden but, in this context, became crucial to my artistic process.

Interestingly, this feeling of being somewhat on the periphery drove me to focus even more intensely on the scenography and find a method to work with the scriptwriters on it. Although I wasn't originally meant to create the scenography on-site, I had been invited to contribute primarily to the creation of the script, which would, in turn, inform my work on a deeper level. I felt a strong urge to contribute meaningfully in the moment, particularly in an area where I felt confident - visual storytelling. This became a way of bridging the gap and facilitating communication that transcended language barriers. The scenography evolved into a powerful medium for connection, one that I felt resonated deeply with the entire group.

I was impressed by how well the group connected with the visual language; I found that it became a powerful tool for collaboration. This reinforced the idea that visual storytelling can transcend linguistic barriers and facilitate immediate, emotional connections. This experience strengthened my belief in the power of scenography - not just as an artistic tool, but as a means of fostering shared understanding, and I would be interested in developing this further.

This also carried a sense of responsibility. As the scenography took shape, I realized how meaningful it was to the scriptwriters. It became clear that I was, in a way, carrying their stories through my work. This realization heightened my sense of accountability - what I was creating wasn't just abstract; it had real significance for them and would influence how their stories were told.

This realization deepened my understanding of scenography's role in collaborative projects like this. It became a way to ground the work, giving form to abstract ideas and creating a space where everyone felt involved.

Through this process, I've come to appreciate the importance of expressing emotions in creative contexts. Watching how openly and clearly the scriptwriters articulated their feelings was inspiring, and it highlighted the deep impact that such honesty can have on both artistic and collaborative work. The project not only fostered growth and connection for everyone involved but also left a lasting impression on me, both personally and professionally.

As a conclusion, I would say that Oscar's methodology worked because it not only facilitated a profoundly honest and generative process during our time together but also created a lasting sense of responsibility for the future of this project. As I reflect on the complexity of the work and the discussions within our team, it is increasingly clear that the project is not complete; it is evolving, still unfolding. The commitment I feel toward seeing it through to its fullest potential is a direct result of the method employed.

One of the core elements of our discussions within the team has been the importance of not allowing this project to become a finite, one-off experience. The stories we encountered, the lives we touched, and the lives that touched us — these narratives cannot and should not be relegated to the past. They are living, ongoing realities. In this sense, the project will and must continue to develop in ways that create real and lasting benefits for the scriptwriters involved.

For me, this is not a sidenote or an afterthought — it is a central aspect of my engagement. I am deeply invested in the future of this project. This ongoing feeling of responsibility to the project is, of course, a testament to the methodology itself.

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