

Sari Kivinen. CHANGING ROLES?, 2009

Sari Kivinen (b. 1981 AU)

Rauma City Library 29.4. – 29.5.5 2009



Role plays at Malmi school



Since arriving in Rauma as artist in residence at the beginning of March 2009 Sari Kivinen has been conducting art and performance workshops at Malmi special school. Following an initial introductory visit to the school Kivinen produced a story that was catered around discussions she had with the children and teachers. Observing that pictures are constantly used in the school as an effective means of communication and learning tool the story was illustrated in a way that the children could easily grasp its content.

The workshops were then conducted in weeklong blocks, working with small groups of 3–5 students at a time. Workshops began with the presentation of the story, which initiated discussion with the students and teachers about the different role types including: three children, a teacher, three animals (a bear, a kangaroo, and a duck), a king, queen and prince, a witch and an angel. These roles were chosen as easily identifiable roles for the students. Also a focus was to explore mechanics of dual roles – for example the children in the story changing into the animals, Kivinen's interest being to focus on how the students would adapt to changing roles during a performance.

In the workshops the students first made objects, costumes and props to be used for the performance workshops that occurred at a later stage. During this time each student made a mask and/ or a crown, as much as possible students would direct the process by choosing the shape, and decoration of the objects. Costume making sessions were also directed as much as possible by the students, specifically a group of older students who designed various costumes for the different roles.

In the last part of the workshops students explored the roles physically through exercises to familiarise themselves with how each role moves, sounds and behaves, each group then performed different parts of the story utilising the costumes and props that had been previously made. Throughout the entirety of the project the individual abilities of each student was the focus within the process and experience of enacting different roles types. Kivinen encouraged students to try out different roles as a process of experiencing a different point of view and an alternate way to move and speak.

Sari Kivinen (b. Brisbane, Queensland 1981) works in Sydney, Australia. Kivinen is a performance artist working with video, photography and installation with a thematic interest in exploring the function of role-play in social and domestic settings. She has completed a Bachelor of Fine arts (Honours) in 2004 and a Graduate Certificate of Expressive Therapies in 2006, both at the University of Western Sydney. Kivinen has performed and exhibited widely in Australia and abroad participating in projects such as 10:10 (Singapore 2003) and Designfesta: Through a Strangers eyes (Tokyo 2005) her recent solo exhibitions include The Role-System (MOP projects Sydney) and Roles to Make or Break (Don't Look gallery Sydney).