



THE MYSTERY OF ACORN FALLS

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE ACTION RESEARCH OF
'IN 100 YEARS'

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In House of Futures we believe that opening up to other realms of experience and means of expression, will create deeply rooted and original ways of knowing about directions to take towards a certain future. Employing new methods of action research is a way to explore what happens in the minds of the participants in the process – and creating a new kind of empiric material to present as part of the documentation of the project 'In 100 Years'.

On the third In100Y-seminar, we wanted to further solidify the combination of future studies techniques, performance strategies and action research methods. The following presents the fiction and thoughts behind the concept and inquiry of Acorn Falls.

THE CONCEPT OF ACORN FALLS

On the first day of the seminar the participants will wander and wonder at noon – at the waist of time – around and explore the landscape and mystery of Acorn Falls. Something is in the air! Some hidden knowledge, that can only be accessed by a crooked movement into something strangely familiar, referred to by some as 'Das unheimliche'.

Acorn Falls is a parallel universe brought out by a map

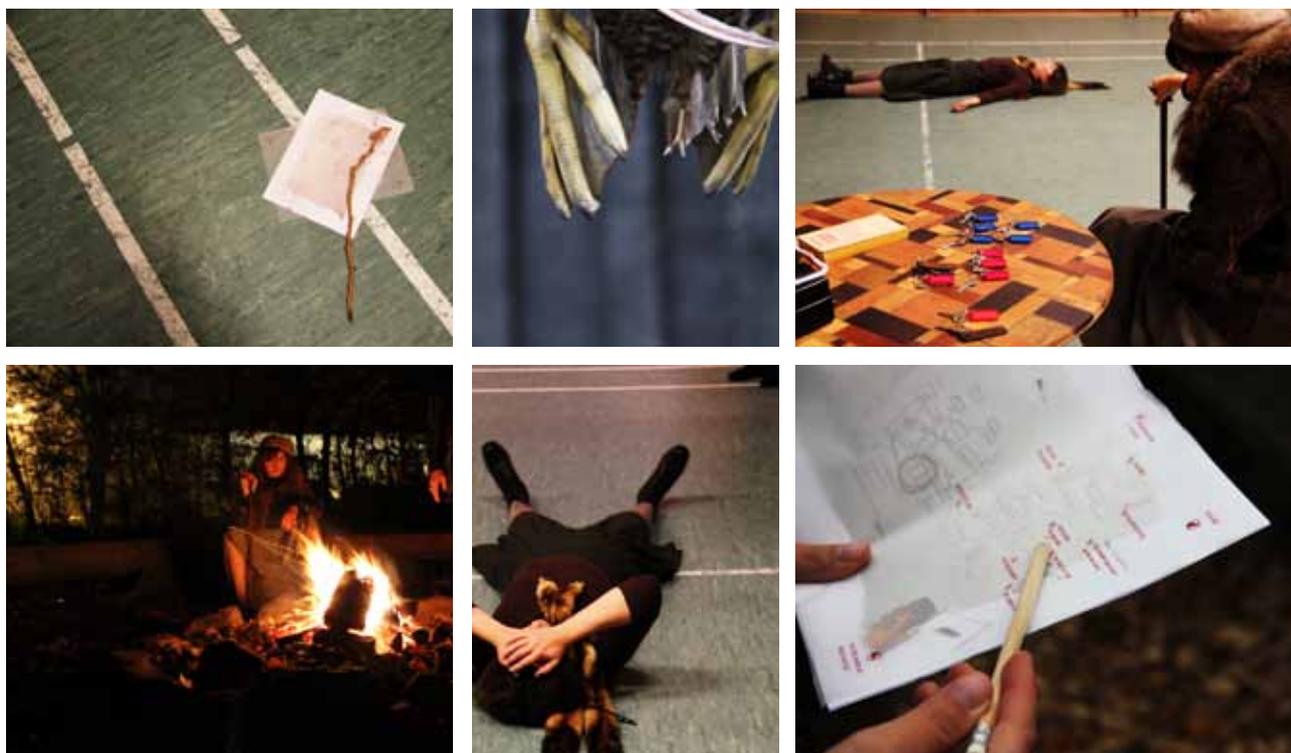
Future Mind Tours uses on different occasions, when we need to open up into the mystery of what caused the significance of a particular event. By different strange and complex techniques (that might be questioned, but promises no straight answers!), they create a setting in which they can explore what led one future to manifest and another to whither away. We posed the questions: "What is the final blow, that makes an acorn fall? And who picked up the acorn?" Exploring the mystery of Acorn Falls opens up the mystery of what brought the participants to this specific place in time.

WHAT'S IN THE AIR?

Tapping into this knowledge needs strange and complex methods. It is a matter of becoming aware of what you already know, but which might seem so obvious or so long forgotten, that you would never think to put it into words or share it in a conversation. Something that is locked in the dark corners of your own memory, in your family history, in some unsuspected occurrence that led to a land slide of a carrier, in the outskirts of society, in a story, at the root of civilization, in a dream or simply... in an acorn.

STRIKING POINTS

Future Mind Tours planted ten striking points in the area that will hit the different notes of consciousness (i.e. the conscious, the unconscious, the collective conscious, poetic mythological consciousness). The striking points were to be found in different sites of Acorn Falls, marked in the transparent map the participants got at the Threshold. Some striking points either involved a small performance created by either an agent of Future Mind Tours, a small poetic



installation, an assignment or something that must be read etc. Some striking points caused an interaction between a performer and a participant or between the Reisende. Others were there as mere inspiration. At some selected striking points, empirical material were created and derived from the journey of the Reisende.

THE METHODS

The participants or Reisende did not necessarily come to see or encounter all of the striking points, and there was not a specific chronologically order they should follow. The method of the striking points is to open up the curiosity of the place. As the special travel agency, Future Mind Tours, we wish to strengthen their senses and their awareness of the outer and especially inner landscapes. In this case the most important feeling to evoke was a sense of mystery, and if the work of Future Mind Tours seems strange and complex, it is because it is strange and complex. Our hope it that the Reisende will allow the strangeness to sink in and dive into new modes of knowledge productions regarding the future.

On each of the different journeys of Future Mind Tours (the four In100Y-seminars) we make sure to create settings in which the Reisende can transform their experience into something to be shared in conversations of the Future Studies process of 'In 100 Years – Starting Now'.

We employ methods like qualitative interviews from the toolbox of the social sciences, but the inquiry of Future Mind Tours discoveries will always need to introduce new elements and techniques – and it's presentation and analysis will vary a great deal from traditional social research. Some kinds of experiences are not easily translated into words. Their communication require the imagery of metaphors and

bodily gestures. And much of the inner experience will stay in the inner landscapes of the Reisende. Many scholars debate the mere possibility of documenting what actually happens during an interactive performance. The event happens in-between the mind of the participator and her encounter with the performance.

However, we insist on making a lot of experience and reflections of the Reisende available to us. In Future Mind Tours we believe them to be highly valuable in new kinds of alchemical hermeneutics; a mode of knowledge production in which the imagery of dreams and mythology are intertwined in the theoretical reflections and interpretations in an analysis or debate (read 'Acorn Falls Discovery' on p. 8). At some striking points we ask Die Reisende to give us small poetic donations representing their experience. At other - or in-between striking points - we recorded small dialogues and interactions with the inhabitants of Acorn Falls. Much of the material is used in the bricolage of photo and video-material presented after each In100Y-seminar.

After each seminar we also contact former and ask them to participate in longer a qualitative interview, specifically designed to help the interviewed go back in time and tell the story of their journey in Acorn Falls. The interviews provides us with so-called thick phenomenological descriptions of the experience of the seminar, which we use to get at sense of what it was like to be a Reisende, in order for us to improving our skills as a büro reisende. We also use the materials from the interviews, to re-write the stories of the Reisende in order to present them as small true fictional travel-stories for people who have not had the pleasure of immersing into mysteries like Acorn Falls (read A Reisende's experience of Acorn Falls on p. 10).