

Difficulty of Freedom / Freedom of Difficulty

M.E.E.H. SÍM house

Independent People curated by Jonatan Habib Engqvist,
Reykjavík Art Festival 2012

The participating artists – Magnús Sigurðarson, Erla S. Haraldsdóttir, Elin Wikström and Haraldur Jónsson, (M.E.E.H.) – sent simple instructions to each other via email. They began in early March and continued until May 2012 by sending one assignment to solve per week. The assignments were based up on their own system. This “system” was used as the grounds for all their assignments.

The idea behind the workshop came from Erla and was aimed at casting light on the emergence of new work by using unfamiliar methods. The project was collaborative and emphasized the idea of creating through restraints and restrictions by means of invented “systems”. The purpose was to make the participants develop an arsenal of tools in order to actively choose different creative approaches rather than passively wait for inspiration. By participating in this workshop an artist dedicates him/her self to the task of investigating the difficulty of freedom and the freedom of difficulty, and in the words of Raymond Queneau: “Become a rat who yourself builds the maze from which you set to escape”.

Examples of assignments:

“Become a HUMMUS specialist”, “Look for anything that resembles the capital letter I in your environment”, “Kraftwerk method undisclosed”, “Ask a friend to lend you 100.000 Kronur”, “Make research about cocaine in Miami”, “Search for the colour blue in your environment” etc.

The systems:

Our tasks were based on the individual and secret systems behind the tasks that each us previously had given to our collaborator. Erla’s “system” was some of the books by the writer Halldór Laxness; Magnús constructed his from the city of Berlin; Haraldur took the film *Blue Velvet* by David Lynch as his starting point and Elin based hers on her former projects.