

# ANFANGSSZENE

Karolin Meunier

HD video, 7:45 min., 2015

ACTRESS Ceci Chuh  
CAMERA Sebastian Bodirsky, Janine Jembere  
AUDIO RECORDING Manja Ebert  
SOUND MASTERING Jochen Jezussek

*Opening Scene* is part of a series of works in which I explore how access to individual experience is accomplished through cultural techniques, e.g. in interviews or confessional speech. The protagonist is young actress Ceci Chuh. I developed the interview during several sessions and used simple strategies such as repeating the same story twice and employing the artificial studio set-up to help her slip into character. In the last scene we practice an acting exercise together that entails quickly echoing the sentence of the other but changing the pronoun—a technique invented by Sanford Meisner intended to make the participants forget they are acting and appear more natural. Through the editing of the film the spoken text follows another rhythm, taking the space before and behind the camera into account when portraying a person or developing a character.

*Openingszène* is onderdeel van een serie werken waarin ik onderzoek hoe toegang tot individuele ervaring wordt bewerkstelligd middels culturele technieken, bijvoorbeeld in interviews of bekende nissen. De hoofdrolspeler is een jonge actrice, Ceci Chuh. Ik werkte het interview uit in verscheidene sessies en gebruikte simpele strategieën, zoals het herhalen van hetzelfde verhaal en het benutten van de kunstmatige opzet van de studio, om haar te helpen een personage aan te nemen. In de laatste scène doen we samen een acteeroefening waarbij we snel elkaars zin herhalen maar daarbij het voornaamwoord veranderen—een techniek die is uitgevonden door Sanford Meisner met de bedoeling om de deelnemers te laten vergeten dat ze aan het acteren zijn en zo natuurlijker over te komen. Door de manier waarop de film gemonteerd is volgt de gesproken tekst een ander ritme en wordt de ruimte voor en achter de camera betrokken bij het uitbeelden en ontwikkelen van een personage.



You talked me into it.



You talked yourself into it.



—Could you now tie back your hair? That's also something one has to do at castings.

Yes, but just for the photos, or if they want to see it.

—Did you learn a special technique for this?

Yes.

—And can you describe it?

Well, we had to write a story at home first, which fits the script. If it's a sad script, we have to write a sad story about something that happened in the past. Or a made-up story that is also sad. Or a story about someone you're not over yet. Before a casting, for example, I would tell you something sad and then of course something happens in me. And then I go in, and of course I'm already in the emotion. Later on we were given a text and we were told to go outside and practice speaking it on our own. And then we had to come in and read the text to our partner, using the feeling that we had built up outside. So, going back inside and reading it out loud.

—And did it work?

Yes.

And then, for example, when I want to convince a person, or get this person's attention, she said, I should imagine pulling this person towards me and to always play with this feeling.

Yes, maybe. Yes... I don't know.

Apparently I talk like this!

But I still have to... I have to intensify this feeling of... I really don't know yet, how I should do it right. Because it would be like this: during the opening scene everything is dark behind me and I look directly into the camera and speak into the camera: "I had the wrong gender, the wrong background, the wrong age, and then..."

I mean, kissing someone, that's ok. Seducing... I've never seduced anyone in a film. I have done a kissing scene. I've even done a sex scene. I didn't want to do it at first, but I really liked the director and she really wanted me to do it. And then I thought, whatever, shut your eyes and get it over with, you can do it. It only takes a few minutes, then it's over. It was so embarrassing.

—But this is not all of the text that you've learned?

Well, I think so, almost. Perhaps not everything, I don't know which parts, but I think so...

But I can't remember I said this.

When I improvise...

What was it called again?

Which sentence?

The text, ok.

You're laughing.  
You're laughing.  
You're laughing.  
You're laughing.  
You're laughing.  
You're laughing.  
You're not laughing anymore.  
You're not laughing anymore.  
You're not laughing anymore.  
There's nothing to laugh about.  
There's nothing to laugh about.  
You've made a mistake.  
Now you've made a mistake.  
You've made a mistake.  
You've made a mistake.  
You've made a mistake.  
Yes, you've made a mistake.  
Yes, you've made a mistake.  
Yes, you've made a mistake.  
You're pondering.  
You're pondering.  
You're pondering.  
You're pondering.  
You're pondering.  
You're asking.  
You're asking.  
You're asking.  
You're asking me.  
I am concentrating.  
You're misspeaking.  
You're misspeaking.  
You're misspeaking.  
I look at you.  
I look at you.  
You're insecure.  
You're insecure.  
You're also confused.  
You are confused.

You're thinking.  
You're thinking.  
You're thinking.  
You're thinking about the words.  
You're still thinking about the words.  
You are not thinking at all anymore?  
You are not thinking at all anymore?  
I don't believe you.  
No, I don't believe you.  
I do not want this role.  
I do not want this role  
I don't want to say this sentence.  
You talked me into it.  
You talked yourself into it?  
You talked yourself into it.  
You talked yourself into it.  
You imagined something.

Well, I could also try another version now.