

FrameWork 12/14:1

Darren O'Donnell on Althea Thauberger
with Emma, Isabella, and Neve



Darren: Welcome everybody. I have been asked to bring some younger people in to have a discussion about what they thought of Althea Thauberger's experimental documentary film, *Preuzmimo Benčić*. Let's get some of your first impressions:

Isabella: I loved their outfits.

Neve: Yes, I loved their outfits. I liked the skirts and the dresses and the designs on them.

Emma: Oh yeah. I like the one with polka-dot ruffles.

N: I like that one too. I like her ruffles.

D: So any other thoughts about the video, can you describe what happened in it?

E: Alright. Well, at the beginning, the workers wanted to revive the factory but the mayors wanted to do something else with it... [They came] and said they wanted to do *this*, they said they didn't want to *that*.

D: How about you? Can you describe what you saw in that?

N: They sang quite a beautiful song.

D: Were you able to read what they were singing about?

N: I think, school?

E: I think it was about working.

D: Can you describe the video – what did you see?

I: An old rusty building.

D: What did you think of the building? Did it look like a fun place to be?

I: Kind of.

D: Neve, what do you think? Was it a fun place?

N: Kind of a dirty place to be and a fun place.

D: Would you like to go there? If you had all of your friends there, would you like to run around that place?

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N: Yeah.

E: I wouldn't want to.

D: What did you think the young people's relationship was to that place? Why were they there?

I: I think they were there because it was there great-great-grandparents who worked there.

N: That was World War II.

D: Yeah, it closed at World War II. That's right. So why were they there now?

E: Because they wanted to bring it back. Revive it. That's what they were saying: revive, to tell people the history.

D: Do you have a feeling of why they were there? There is no right answer.

N: Maybe their parents put them there to make them work and feel like a grown-up person.

D: So there are two things going on: there are the young people there to make a movie and sometimes they talk about that but then they are there to pretend to be characters. Right?

I: Yeah, basically: to be adults, to pretend to be working there and stuff.

D: Most of the time, were they adults or children?

I, E: Adults.

D: Is it important to make that difference if they are adults or children?

N: No.

E: Children wouldn't really work in the factory unless it was child labour.

D: Right. So we are assuming they are acting. We know they are acting. Is that what you are saying?

I: Yes.

D: What did you think of their performances?

E, I, N: Good.

E: I really liked them, and I understood most of them except for the one they were talking about and then she did a spin, her legs kicked. I didn't really get the point of that.

D: What do you think the difference is between playing an adult and playing a kid?

E: You are more mature.

N: Getting older and bigger and taller.

D: Does what you do change – your behaviour?

N: Yeah!

E: You are more responsible.

N: And serious?

I: You don't have to be serious.

D: So what is the difference between the adults and the kids really?

E: The adults have to take responsibility and take care of the kids if they have them. And they have to make the right choices. If they have kids, they have to make the right choices because they don't want the kids to grow up to be like them if they are making bad choices.

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D: There were two groups in the film, what are the two groups?

E: Mayors and workers.

D: What is a worker?

E: A person who works.

I: A person who makes money.

N: A person who works in a building.

I: Not everyone works in a building!

N: They can work inside or outside or in a home or in a house.

E: Their work usually does a singular job. Usually multiple people kind of...

I: No, not always. [*overtop of Emma*]

D: So, they are not alone, there is an organization?

E: Well, no not really. Sometimes, like, if you are a teacher, there are other teachers. And if you are a mayor, there are other mayors. So there isn't just one mayor who works.

D: So what's the difference between a worker and a mayor?

E: A worker is smaller. Well it is different, because the mayor has to...there is provincial and municipal – all control different levels of work. Basically, the different levels of government take care of different jobs.

D: You are correct in that. What's the difference between a worker and mayor, Neve?

I: Does the mayor get money?

E: Yeah.

D: Yeah, they all get money. They all get paid. Yeah, the mayor gets paid.

I: Owww, I just got a spark.

D: What does a mayor do?

I: Sits in an office and types on a computer.

E: They take care of the city. Like, I think each mayor has a city right?

D: Yeah, that's right.

E: So every mayor has a city that they have to take care of, that they have to keep running.

I: Some mayors aren't good at that.

N: Mayors have bigger responsibilities than workers.

D: Ok, that's interesting. Can you tell me more about that? What do you mean by that?

N: Workers have little responsibilities and mayors have big responsibilities because they work for the whole city.

I: No, there are plumbers who have to plumb toilets or sinks. They have big responsibilities.

E: But the mayor makes sure they do that.

N: Yeah, so it's kind of a bigger responsibility.

I: Yeah, whatever.

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E: Not exactly. The mayor is taking the responsibility for telling the workers and the workers are taking the responsibilities of actually doing the job properly.

I: Is this recording us?

D: Yes, I believe it is recording us.

D: So, who do you think has a more interesting job, a mayor or a worker?

E: Depending on the job. If you are a teacher, it would probably be more interesting than being a mayor.

D: What about the mayors and workers in the video?

E: I think in the movie, I would want to be a worker.

I: I want to be a worker because I don't want to be yelled at.

E: Well actually, the mayors and the workers both have equal rights against the property because it's on the mayors' property but the workers were there before them and so they did work there. They worked for the dude who owned the place and they still work there if they choose to. They still have that authority.

D: Who do you think who owns the building?

E: The workers. But then also the government because it is on their property. So they both kind of own it.

D: Who gave the mayor his job? It's kind of a trick question.

E: The people: the workers because they elected them.

...

D: Do you remember the scene when they were having the big fight, where they were trying to make a decision about what to do with the building?

E: "Yes. No you can't. Yes. No you can't"

D: No, more towards the end when there is a whole crowd of kids facing the people who are kind of sitting in a bunch of chairs, the mayors. Do you think that is good way to make a decision?

E, N: Nope.

D: Why not?

E: There are some parts where they are yelling and some parts that they aren't. And if they weren't yelling at all that this could be a good way since the mayors can't just send a note saying: "We want this." because they are actually talking to each other and interacting.

D: Can I ask you guys, how do you make decisions at home? [Actually,] let's start with school first. What does the teacher do when all the kids want to do something different?

N: Yeah, so we kind of do a vote.

D: Ok so you vote. What about if don't want to do what the teacher wants to do?

E: Usually you do what the teacher wants you to do.

D: So there is no discussion?

E: We'll usually do what the teacher does because s/he has more p-power. P-p-p-power.

I: In gym we have to decide what type of games we want to do but usually we do what the teacher wants because she already has the lesson planned.

D: How is that decision made? Is it democracy again: the majority votes?

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E: Yeah.

I: Mostly we play dodgeball.

...

D: [Imagine you have a business...] the economy has had a problem, suddenly there are not many people coming to your store. And you can only afford to hire five people [instead of ten], so what do you do? There is not enough business coming in/

N: I try and get different designs. Hang up posters...

I: But you wouldn't be able to pay the people who work there!

D: So you are going to have a sale and you are going to do more advertising? You still aren't making enough money, what do you do?

I: I just don't pay the workers.

D: Why would they stay there and work for nothing?

E: If I could only afford to pay five people, I would fire the five that wouldn't do as much work or aren't as important as the other five people. I would fire them because they don't actually make an effort to do anything.

D: Ok, so you have two employees. One is really organized but not good with the public. One is disorganized but very good with the public. Who do you fire? You have to layoff somebody.

I: Organized but bad with people.

D: Organized but bad with people?

E: Disorganized but good with people.

D: Why?

E: Because I would do the organizing.

N: That's what I would pick to.

D: So you would take on more work?

N: Yeah, I would fire the people.

I: Then the people who didn't like her, um, they wouldn't come to the store. Then they would go to Neve's! That would be bad.

N: I would put it to a vote.

D: So you'd keep the organized person that nobody likes?

I: No, I'd keep the person who is disorganized.

D: But people like?

I: Yeah.

D: Ok, ok. Then you would take on more responsibility yourself?

N: That's exactly what I would pick, the disorganized person that people like.

D: Hang on, why would you pick that one?

N: Um because I would do the organization, she or he would get the people to like the store and be helpful to choose stuff.

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D: Let me put this roadblock in the way, what if you don't have any time to do the organizing?

N: That is mine Isabella!

I: You have good luck. [*pulling up the tabs on Neve's juice-box*]

D: You didn't win?

N: I got good luck, I won.

I: No you didn't win, you got good luck!

E: Can you open mine? [*handing her juice-box to Isabella*]

I: I got green.

This is an edited transcription of a discussion that took place on December 6, 2014.