

## LUTSF Main Award 24/25 Report

**Gabrielle Moleta** – developing animal work with fellow expert and forming new collaboration with writer.

**Oslo, Norway** - June 9<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> 2024.

Locations - Sorialab, Bearpark Norway, Kristiania University College

**The aim of the week:** To work with and learn from Birgit Nordby focussing on our approaches to work in the animal as well as to collaborate with writer and dramaturg Nelly Winterhalder. This was in order to lay the foundations for making new physically led work.

The week began with a field trip day to Bearpark . <https://hogevarde.no/se-og-gjore/bear-park/?lang=en>  
The day was spent in observation of red foxes, the wolves, the lynx, the moose and reindeer but above all the bears. New for me were the red foxes and the moose. We were able to attend all the feeding sessions for the animals in order that we see them. The wolves for example have such a big terrain in the park that you could easily spend a day there and not catch sight of them were it not for these specific feeding times.

After the field trip, the rest of the week we spent in the studio, either at Kristiania University College or at SoriaLab, which is a great creative hub. It was inspiring to meet other artists developing projects there. [Sorialab | Tverrfaglig scenekunsthelleskap på Torshov](#)

Kristiania University College, where we spent the first couple of days is an institution Birgit is affiliated with and one that we will approach for advice and support in a pitch to co-author a paper about our approaches into the animal work.

### Highlights:

- The fact that we could visit the Bearpark at the start of the residency was gold dust. The animal informs all the work and is the starting place for discovering stories. Lots of our discussions on this first day guided us towards our shaping of the days to come.
- Another highlight was just how much time I was able to spend actually doing the practical work in the studio. For Birgit and I to put ourselves right back in the work when so much of our experience over 2 decades has been leading others into this approach was incredible for us. We took turns and leading one another in to the process. This was valuable research as it illuminated differences in our approaches to this. We intend to document discoveries from this in any written work we co-author.
- Linked to this was just how much ground we could cover in a week together. Birgit was hosting me in her home and we therefore had much time to discuss things beyond our full days in the rehearsal studios.
- Finally, to have Nelly Winterhalder with us over the SoriaLab days meant we could begin to pull out some story lines/ themes for the human/animal stories we what to tell. This eye to creation of story from the characters and situations we were investigating was a big part of the R&D. The fact that she was excited and stimulated by what she witnessed in the room, and saw lots of potential for theatre, bodes well for future collaboration.



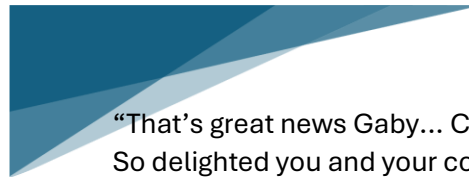
## How successful was our project:

- We have indeed discovered new common physical language between the three artists.
- We have seen just what a wealth of collective information and practical knowledge we hold, having taught and worked in its method in our different ways for over 2 decades.
- We recognise that alongside seeking out support to continue to collaborate, we see the necessity for this specific approach to working in animal to be written down in a document.
- In terms of the material – the actual stuff for the creating of stories, we have beginnings of stories that we would use as our starting point for the next stage of collaboration. This is going to feed in positively to future funding applications we make for development of this collaboration.

## Plans to share information about project:

Birgit shared with me all the original notes she had been given by Catherine during her apprenticeship, which was a year or two before mine. Although there is so much that is very familiar to me through the notes Catherine gave me, Birgit has others that I do not and seeing these exercises from Catherine in use by Birgit was an exciting discovery. It is one of the prompts that fuelled our discussions in the final days.

Over the summer we will prepare a several page pitch for a paper. The different institutions Birgit and I are affiliated with are a good place to start in support of this. She at Kristiania and me through RADA. When I let RADA know that I was an LUTSF recipient, the MA Theatre Lab course leader Ian Morgan was immediately on board with offers of support.



“That’s great news Gaby... Congratulations! So delighted you and your colleague can continue articulating the work for further generations of practitioners. Looking forward to supporting in any way we can. ... space, archiving, dissemination, mentoring, etc. would all be aspects I’m sure we could help with. Lab students have been lucky to benefit from your expertise in Imaginative Transformation over the years. Hopefully, as we develop PaR at RADA more possibilities will arise, and we can continue to explore project-based work together.”

Ian Morgan, **MA Theatre Lab Course Leader**

## Suggestions for future awardees

What certainly helped us was to be super organised and with the time you have in the country that may be foreign to you, get as much lined up and prepped as you can before you arrive. I got in at midnight on the 9<sup>th</sup> June and the next morning we were off on a field trip through absolutely typical bear/ moose/wolf/ fox terrain to see the animals and let them inform us as to what we would work in. For us, to be working together during a time of year when the animals were not dormant was key. Our time frame was very clear and that helped enormously to fix a time when this work together could happen in the midst of our busy lives.

**In conclusion** The big gift of the week with Birgit and Nelly was all the time we had together. In observation, in studio time, in the car to and fro from the Bear park, walking together to the studios, talks over dinner and into the night, (particularly so given we were together over some of the longest days of the year- Mid summer!). Going forward there will be much we can do remotely from our different countries until we can meet and work together again in person. To have had this time in the studio with our actual bodies in the same space is irreplaceable.

