RELATE NORTH

COLLABORATIVE ART, DESIGN AND EDUCATION

Edited by
Timo Jokela & Glen Coutts

Relate North

Collaborative Art,
Design and Education

RELATE NORTH

COLLABORATIVE ART, DESIGN AND EDUCATION

Edited by Timo Jokela & Glen Coutts

InSea

2019

© 2019 Authors and the copyright holders of the images.

Layout & Design: Anna-Mari Nukarinen

InSEA Publications
Quinta da Cruz.
Estrada de São Salvador, 3510-784
Viseu, Portugal

www.insea.org

Printed by Erweko Oy, Oulu 2019

ISBN 978-989-54683-2-4 (Printed work)
ISBN 978-989-54683-0-0 (pdf)

Contents

Timo Jokela & Glen Coutts
Preface 6

Wenche Sørmo, Karin Stoll & Mette Gårdvik
Inspiration for Collaborative Artistic Expressions and Learning 14

Roxane Permar
Under the Radar: Education for Social Art Practice (in the British Isles) . 40

Annika Hellman
Aesthetic Learning Encounters at the Old Church of Jokmokk. 68

Melanie Sarantou, Sanna Sillgren & Laura Pokela
In her Lap: Embodied Learning Through Making 84

Korinna Korström-Magga
Community-Based Art Education and Reindeer Herder Families 108

Rosie Newman
Immerse: Connecting With Nature Using Technology. 128

Marie-Noëlle Legault & Dzhuliiana Semenova
Photography-Based Participatory Workshop:
The Case of Yekyundyu Village. 156

Vivian M. Ross-Smith & Jane V. Walker
islandness: Making Space in Newfoundland and Shetland 168

Contributor Details 182

Timo Jokela,
Glen Coutts
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

Preface

Pre

The book is the sixth in the *Relate North* series produced by Arctic Sustainable Arts and Design network (ASAD). The ASAD group was established in 2011 as a thematic network of the University of the Arctic. A key strategic aim of the ASAD network is to draw attention to the art and design practices, research and education being undertaken in the circumpolar North and the Arctic. The extent and quality of that work is remarkable, ranging from collaborative and participatory art education initiatives in indigenous villages to service design projects in remote places or urban artistic interventions in larger population centres across the North.

Published annually, the *Relate North* books have as an underlying philosophical standpoint, a focus on Northern and Arctic issues in the field of arts, design and visual culture. The series aims to advance understanding and seek to improve arts, design and visual culture education particularly amongst people living in Northern and Arctic areas. An additional aim is to introduce original ways of rethinking the status of contemporary arts, design, craft and new practices in art education. In addition to the Northern and Arctic context, the *Relate North* series also seeks to reach a wider audience for example, those with a research focus on art, design, sustainability and remote circumstances. Although principally concerned with research and knowledge exchange in art and design education, the contributors investigate issues and topics that may be of more general interest, for example, the socio-cultural and political dimensions of living in rural places and urban settings in remote and peripheral areas in other parts of the world.

Collaborative learning has a long tradition in several disciplines (Gerlach, 1994; Jenni & Mauriel, 2004; Leonard & Leonard, 2001; Smith & MacGregor). In this book, collaborative art, design and education should be understood as an umbrella term for a variety of approaches involving joint scientific, intellectual and artistic effort by artists, designers, researcher-educators and students. Collaboration refers to working in teams, jointly searching for new understanding, solutions and meanings, or aiming to create new art and design products. Collaborative learning is an educational approach to art and design teaching and learning that involves groups of learners working together to solve

a problem, complete a task, or create artistic products. According to Gerlach (1994), 'Collaborative learning is based on the idea that learning is a naturally social act in which the participants talk among themselves'.

Among artists, collaborative art is a dynamic form of contemporary arts practices. It can be referred to in many ways for example, participatory arts, socially engaged arts, community arts or arts in social and community contexts. Work that is made collaboratively with different groups often exists outside of the art gallery or classroom, frequently occurring outside the traditional art and cultural context or educational setting.

Working collaboratively with people who bring different skill sets and backgrounds to the table involves learning from their experience. Collaboration often involves interdisciplinary work for example, it may involve a visual artist working with dancer or a designer with a drama artist or anthropologist and indigenous craft maker together searching for silent cultural knowledge and skills. Artists interested in engaging with people to make exceptional art often engage with communities in the broadest sense of the word it can be for example, a neighbourhood organisation; reindeer herder families or asylum seekers

Collaborative art and design education, we argue, is particularly appropriate in the North and the Arctic where culture is closely bound to nature, and megatrends such as climate change have immediate impact on society and the environment. There is a cultural and linguistic diversity within the Arctic area due to indigenous populations and other local people inhabiting the area. Collaboration is needed to solve wicked problems[1], supporting sustainable development, encouraging cultural democracy, social justice or building eco social civilization. Rapidly changing northern and Arctic environments and socio-cultural circumstances place such issues at the forefront of ASAD network's aims and thinking.

This book brings together the work of researchers, scholars and artists from Canada, Finland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, Russia and USA whose professional activity focuses on art, design and education collaboration at different levels and the multifaceted concept of sustainability. In addition, the theme of collaborative and interdisciplinary working are common threads for all of the contributors.

The contributing authors' writing in the field of contemporary art and design practice and education helps advance our understanding of collaborative art and design education, particularly among people living in Northern and Arctic areas. All of the books in the *Relate North* series engage with the theoretical debates surrounding how sustainability themes can be collaboratively addressed by art and design education. The books will be of interest to a disparate research community which may include, for example, anthropologists, cultural geographers, sociologists, artists, designers, art educators and art-based researchers as well local people.

This particular book in the *Relate North* series consists of six chapters and two visual essays. The title Collaborative Art, Design and Education was also the theme of a symposium and exhibition that took place in Nord University, Nesna, northern Norway, in November 2018. As in all the books in the *Relate North* series the terms 'arts' and 'design' should be interpreted broadly to include, for example, crafts, indigenous making, media and product or service design. After the events in Nesna, chapters and visual essays were sought for this book, to focus on issues concerning collaborative art, design and education. After the call submissions were subjected to double blind peer review and the book you are now reading is the result of that process.

The opening chapter, highlights the signature theme of this publication, collaboration. The authors, from Nesna in Norway report on a study in which academics from different disciplines worked with primary school teachers and young children. The aim was to gain a. Sensitive understanding if. The indigenous Sami peoples understanding of the night sky. The pedagogical approach was practical, based on the notion of experiential learning or 'learning by doing'. Addressing key aspects of the school curriculum in both arts and crafts and the natural sciences, the project used arts-infused methods in collaboration with the school teachers and students. As the authors state 'we use artistic approaches with an emphasis on learning through making'.

In the second chapter, Permar discusses education for social art practice by examining four postgraduate level course that address social art practice located in institutions in Scotland, Ireland and England. Tracing the development of

education for social art practice through the 1960s and 70s when innovative courses slipped into the mainstream of higher education, for example and new ideas about community and socially focused programmes began to provide alternatives to the dominance of fine art education. Programmes including contextual art, community arts and critical fine art practice evolved and formed the genesis of the postgraduate studies that the author highlights in the chapter

Aesthetic learning encounters is the topic of the next chapter by Hellman from Mid Sweden University. Using the portfolio of a single student as an example, the author unpicks the ways that what is known in Sweden as 'aesthetic learning encounters' in the pedagogical process might be enhanced by collaborative, sensitive, open-ended and experimental approach in visual arts education. This approach, the author argues, 'helps students to access the power of being heard and trusting their own abilities to change and make changes as a collaborative process'.

Sarantou, Sillgren and Pokela, researchers based at the University of Lapland in Finland use collaborative research methodologies specifically, arts-based and autoethnographic approaches in their study. Taking craft and design practices and 'lapwork' as the focus of the research, as the authors argue 'the contribution of this chapter to knowledge is the sustainable role of lapwork in making practices in extreme environments such as the North and the Arctic. The role of laps in supporting embodied learning enables the reinterpretation of spaces that support thinking and learning while doing and making'.

In the penultimate chapter Korsström-Magga offers an insight into the world of the Sámi reindeer herder in norther Finland. Her community-based art education approach to the research using art-based action research and photography investigated how arts-based methods might 'provide the reindeer herders with an innovative way to share their life experiences with others from their own perspective'. In this 'insider' research the author sought to collaborate with indigenous people and promote decolonisation whilst giving voice though photography as participants documented their lived experience.

The final chapter Newman reports on a project that explored the potential of Virtual Reality (VR) immersive technology to make (or re-make) connections with nature. The author laments the apparent disconnect between the natural world

and humans that has emerged in the age of the Anthropocene in which 'human impact on nature has reached crisis point and threatens life on the planet'. Entitled 'Immerse', her research sought to improve the link between nature and humans through increased awareness of local and natural habitats using VR technology.

The final two contributions are 'visual essays'[2]. In each case the researchers foreground the visual in reporting and narrating their processes and work. In the first of the visual essays, Legault and Semenova report the results of a photography based participatory project that took place in Yekyundyu Village, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia. Focusing on questions of representation and identity a central aim of the study was to improve social interaction and support cultural identity in indigenous communities.

The second visual essay and closing contribution to the book entitled *islandness*, take as its subject a collaborative project founded by the artist-researchers Ross-Smith and Walker that connects experience of living in the Shetland Islands (Scotland) with Newfoundland (Canada). As the authors report 'Whether it be filleting cod on the wharf or makkin[3] under the fluorescent lights of a public hall – labour and community are intrinsically linked. *islandness* has become a transatlantic framework for discussing art, craft, and the northern community experience'.

As editors, we hope this book will be of use to undergraduate art education students, postgraduate students in the arts and policy makers concerned with northern issues relating to art and design education. The ASAD network has 28-member institutions across the circumpolar north and this publication will be used as core reading in undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate courses in many of those universities and colleges.

Editing a book is collaborative work in itself and as editors, we have been fortunate to have the support of a remarkable group of people, without whom the book would not have reached publication. We therefore want to express our sincere thanks to the authors, artists, researchers and designers that have made this book possible. Our thanks are also due to the many academic reviewers and Board of *InSEA publications*. A special debt of gratitude is due to our designer Anna-Mari Nukarinen her patient professionalism in response to our many questions was very much appreciated.

Visit the website for more information about ASAD or to download previous books in the *Relate North* series: www.asadnetwork.org

Timo Jokela and Glen Coutts
Rovaniemi, November 2019.

Endnotes

[1] The term "wicked problem" was first coined by Horst Rittel, design theorist and professor of design methodology at the Ulm School of Design, Germany. Typically, these problems involve a cultural or social problem that is difficult or impossible to solve. Many designers and activist believe that the best way to tackle such issues, not necessarily to solve them, is with a collaborative or interdisciplinary approach.

[2] Visual essays normally integrate image and text in a creative way to document, evaluate or reflect on art-based research, learning, activities or events or projects.

[3] 'Knitting' in Shetland dialect.

References

Gerlach, J. M. (1994). Is this collaboration? In K. Hamilton, & S. J. Hamilton (Eds.), *Collaborative Learning. Underlying processes and effective techniques* (pp. 5–14). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishing.

Jenni R.W. & Mauriel, J. (2004). Cooperation and collaboration: Reality or rhetoric. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 7*(2), 181–195. doi: 10.1080/1360312042000211446

Leonard, P.E. & Leonard, L. J. (2001). The collaborative prescription: Remedy or reverie? *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 4*(4). 383–399. doi: 10.1080/13603120110078016

Smith, B. L. & MacGregor, J. T. (1992). What is collaborative learning? In A. Goodsell, M. Maher, V. Tinto, B. L. Smith, & J. T. MacGregor (Eds.), *Collaborative Learning: A source for Higher Education.* USA: Pennsylvania State University.

Wenche Sørmo,
Karin Stoll,
Mette Gårdvik
Nord University, Nesna, Norway

Starry Sky – Sami Mythology:

Inspiration for Collaborative Artistic Expressions and Learning

1

Circling around the Northern Star we find 12 zodiac symbols from Greek mythology, however, the Sami star constellations symbolise a cosmic hunt for a reindeer involving several hunters and helpers. The Sami mythology is little known, but the story narrated is anchored in our arctic life and mindset.

In this chapter, we investigate how collaborative aesthetic making activities help primary school pupils and teachers in the Arctic region to gain a deeper understanding of the indigenous Northern Sami peoples' interpretation of the starry sky.

The main objective is to promote a practical-aesthetic "learning by doing" teaching method by way of a project promoting interest in and knowledge about the Sami. This interdisciplinary and location-based teaching project contains assignments connected to the goals from the curriculum of arts and crafts and from natural sciences. We focus on characters in the cosmic hunting scene and their position in relation to each other. In the project, we use artistic approaches with an emphasis on learning through making.

The empirical material in this multi case study includes our observations, focus group interviews of pupils and an individual open-ended questionnaire for teachers. The investigation was conducted one year after the teaching in order to measure knowledge retention. The case studies showed that the participants experienced a high level of understanding and learning retention through the creative, social and action based working methods. Furthermore, it could be argued that thinking by way of making can provide insight and understanding of mythological narratives and traditions of indigenous people while illustrating relationships between Arctic people and nature.

Introduction

The Sami constitute an original population, and an ethnic minority in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The land area that the Sami people traditionally inhabit is called Sápmi (see Figure 1). The term Sápmi is found in all Sami dialects and includes both the geographical area that constitutes the traditional Sami settlement area, the Sami population group, the Sami language and the

Sami (Sami Instituhta, 1990). As far back as there are written sources, we find that Sami have lived in the Nordic countries and on the Kola Peninsula.

Figure 1. *Sami areas in Sápmi. Great Norwegian encyclopedia. CC BY SA 3.0.*

The Sami's lifestyle in the Middle Ages was almost exclusively based on hunting and trapping. From the 17th century, domestic reindeer herding was important, especially in the north, and hold of large reindeer herds and a nomadic lifestyle became the main source of income. In the eastern woodlands, hunting was still the main industry and these Sami had few domestic reindeer and were more stationary.

The whole reindeer was used and has been a very valuable animal in the Sami culture as food and material resource. This is reflected in the Sami's stories and beliefs about the starry sky. The gathering of stars in constellations is basically random, and different cultures have different constellations. People are very good at finding patterns, and have, over the years, grouped stars that appear to be close together into constellations. In our part of the world, the constellations of Greek mythology are best known. In the Sami tradition, however, the starry sky depicts a cosmic hunting scene. Living in the dark winter and through their

life in close contact with nature, the Sami have gained a conscious relationship with the starry sky. During the hunting culture (until about 1600 - 18th century), the hunting tools of the Sami were hand and foot arches, arrows and spears (Sergejeva, 2011). We find not only the reindeer, moose, hunters and hunting tools among the stars in the sky, but also the tools to preserve and distribute blood, meat and leather (knives, scales and pots) (Saemiensijte, u.d.).

The "General part of the curriculum- values and principles for basic education" (Udir., 2017) it states "the Sami cultural heritage is part of the cultural heritage of Norway". Furthermore, it states that "through education, the pupils will gain insight into the history, culture, social life and rights of the Sami indigenous peoples. The pupils will learn about diversity and variety within Sami culture and society ". This is anchored in both the Objectives of the Education Act, Section 1–1, and Section 6–4 (Ministry of Education and Research, 1998).

Under the heading *Identity and Diversity* we find that:

The school will give the pupils historical and cultural insight and anchoring, and help ensure that each pupil can maintain and develop their identity in an inclusive and diverse community.

Our common cultural heritage has evolved throughout history and will be managed by living and future generations, and there are competence goals with this as a theme in subjects such as social sciences, science, arts and crafts and outdoor life in several classes. Through this connection, the mythology of the Sami starry sky is something that can be conveyed to the pupil rooted in competence goals from several different subjects.

Theoretical Background

The Sami Mythology of the Starry Sky

The Sami's main constellation is Sarvvis or Sarvva, a reindeer or a moose, depending on the region of Sápmi. The hindquarter consists of stars in the Coachman, the forefront of Perseus and the antlers consists of stars in Cassiopeia. In the winter darkness, and at night in the spring and late summer, one can study the cosmic

pursuit of the deer, where several hunters and helpers participate. The main hunter is Fávdna, symbolized by the star Arcturus, with the arch Fávdnadávgi, which is part of the constellation we know as The Big Dipper (see Figure 2). Other participants in this hunting scene are the three brothers Gállábártnit (the three stars that make up Orion's belt). They are the sons of Gállá (the star Sirius). In addition, we find two fast skiers Čuoigit or Čuoigaheaddjit, represented by the powerful stars Castor and Pollux. By studying the constellation's position in relation to each other in the sky throughout the day and throughout the year, they may have replaced the sun as a time meter in the dark. The star cluster Pleiades are also included, but in the North Sami mythology these stars represent an old woman (Boares Ahkku) with a small dog flock, which she lifts up in the hunt for the reindeer. The star constellation including the North Star Polaris, and therefore seems to stand still when the earth spins around its own axis. The stars are called Boahji or Boahjenavli (heavenly nail) in Sami mythology. One thought the North star was a nail that kept the whole sky up and the stars rotating around. If the hunter Fávdna shoots against Sarvvis and hits Boahji with his arrow, the sky will loosen and fall over the ground, and therefore the cosmic quest continues every night (Gaski, 2017). For the old Sami, however, time was without beginning and end. They saw an eternity symbol in the hunt and no prediction about the end of life. From millennia to millennia, the cosmic hunters try to kill Sarvvis, but the prey always escapes safely so that the journey continues. Time and life continue, the universe does not change and this is an assurance that life is eternal (Sergeyeva, 2011).

Print on Leather as Crafts in Norway

Leather print is part of the Norwegian cultural heritage, and we find traces all the way back to the Bronze Age (Simon Dahl, 2000). Pictures and symbols were cut into wooden printing blocks and then pressed onto the rails with alder sap. The printing technique itself is high pressure - where the colour lays on top of the surface that has not been processed. In the Sami culture, the Shaman drum has several religious symbols that are printed or painted (Rydving, 2010). According to Simon Dahl (2000) the pictures and symbols in folk art looked so peculiar and special that they form their very own world.

Connections between Artistic Expressions and Learning

The business of art is to reveal the relation between man and his circumambient universe at the living moment (Lawrence, 1925/1985). Land art and collaborative art are art forms that are often used in teaching. Mantere (1995, p. 1) says that art-based and environmental education is grounded on the belief that sensitivity through the environment can be developed by artistic activities. "Employers seek innovative people who are good at team working, adaptable, creative problem solvers who can work comfortably in an interdisciplinary manner" (Coutts, 2013, p. 22), and it is important that these qualities are promoted through education. In the aesthetic subjects, knowledge is acquired through senses, practical approach, testing and reflection. It is about action-based knowledge and traditions of knowledge. Aesthetic competence is a source of development on several levels, from personal growth, via influence on one's own environment to creative innovation in a larger social perspective. It is important to appreciate that aesthetic work processes can open to greater depth in subjects and across subjects (Gårdvik, 2010). Sawyer & DeZutter (2009, p. 83), claim that "When groups of individuals work together to generate a collective creative product, the interactions among group members often become a more substantial source of creativity than the inner mental process of any one participating individual".

Aesthetic learning processes as well as exploratory and creative work in authentic surroundings can enrich the students' learning outcomes by providing cognitive, social and physical experiences through the teaching (Østergaard, 2013; Jordet, 2010; Tal, 2012, van Boeckel, 2014). By using the site actively, one has an opportunity to facilitate deeper learning and development of cultural identity (Sørmo, Stoll & Kjelen, 2019). International studies of teaching outside the classroom describe that the outdoor space creates other frameworks for communication and interaction where the students can work with the teaching material, while also communicating and interacting with fellow students and teachers (Lave & Wenger, 1991; 2003; Fägerstam & Blom, 2013; Rickinson et. al., 2004; Waite, 2011). The concept of competence that the Norwegian School is to build on must both include "cognitive and practical skills, and social and emotional learning and development" (NOU, 2015: 8, p. 9) and contribute to

in-depth learning (Sawyer, 2014). In light of the concept of profound learning, the connection between body, emotion and thinking becomes particularly important since bodily activity and learning are closely linked in social and spatial realities (Merleu - Ponty, 1977; Anttila, 2013).

In-depth learning is about having the body on the team, getting the body to produce the emotions and feelings that motivate, inspire, demand and demand, in short to get the student to learn (Dahl & Østern, 2019, p. 51).

This is in line with Damasio (2000) who points out that bodily and concrete physiological processes are the cause of what is happening in the brain and that the emotions must be involved since the body is infused with affections.

The concept of aesthetic learning processes is cross-aesthetic, and according to Fredriksen (2013) aesthetic learning processes can take place in all contexts where senses and emotions are welcome in the learning situation. Read (1967), believed that expression in the arts provides a natural approach to academic subjects, and that no one can open up to the living earth without art experience.

To create something, there must be a "something that creates" and aesthetic learning processes are a form of expression activity whereby a person learns while he or she finds appropriate ways to express themselves (Fredriksen, 2013). Gulliksen (2017) p. 11, refers to Klafki (2001) and claims about "Making" .. that.

> *This is also a social act, providing the opportunity to create meaning alone and with others. Such rich experiences give us a vocabulary - not only lingual, but with multiple forms of representations, with a variety of functional concepts - that is used when we learn how to represent and make ourselves through these languages. We have a general education and the bigger task we have of "education," supporting young people's gradual development towards becoming responsible human beings.*

Research Question

How can collaborative aesthetic making activities help participants in the project understand and learn about indigenous peoples' mythology?

The Teaching Project

We have used and further developed an educational program that deal with the Sami starry sky (Nordnorsk vitensenter, u.d.) and Erlien (2007). This teaching program includes the story of the cosmic hunt. Participants become acquainted with the constellations of the actors in the cosmic pursuit and are allowed to make star gazers with these constellations. Participants also get to cut and learn how to use star wheels (see Figure 2) that they can use to locate different constellations in the sky.

Based on this teaching program, we included practical-aesthetic activities such as Drama and Land-Art with the construction of the actors in the cosmic hunting scene, as well as printing of constellations on reindeer skin.

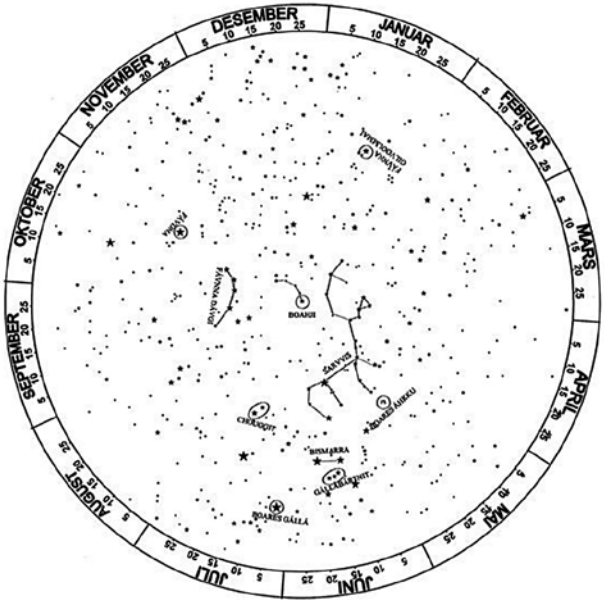


Figure 2. Star wheels with the constellations of Sami mythology.
Retrieved from North Norwegian science center, (Nordnorsk vitensenter (u.d.)).

The Research Project's Method

Selection and Context

The selection of the empirical material is described in Table 1. The chapter's authors completed the teaching program in March 2018, in a merged 3rd and 4th class consisting of a total of 12 pupils, in a rural school in Northern Norway. The focus group interview of 7 (of then 9 possible pupils) was conducted by the article authors in March 2019, since we wanted to examine what the pupils gained from the knowledge and experience of this teaching program after a year had passed.

We implemented a simplified version of the teaching program in connection with a gathering of teachers in the EU funded Inter-regional project Cultural Trails in the Landscape (CIL). Here, we looked at the Sami mythology of the starry sky as an immaterial cultural trail, coupled with place-based learning in authentic surroundings. In addition, we completed the teaching program for the Norwegian and Swedish teachers with preparatory work, an outdoor activity with Land Art and post-work with the printing of relevant star constellations on leather and textile, but omitted throwing with lasso and cooking on campfire. A Sami cultural place, the Samevistet in Vilhelmina Sweden, was the locality for the project (Vualtjereduodji, u.d.).

CASUS	PARTICIPANTS	METHOD
Case 1	12 pupils from 3rd and 4th grade	Focus group interview of 7 pupils one year after
Case 2	34 teachers participating in CIL	Open ended questionnaire (14 answers), one year after

Table 1. *Overview of the selection of participants in the teaching program and the chosen method for obtaining empirical data, one year after the participation.*

Methodology and Data Collection

In order to develop a practical perspective, a qualitative research approach was chosen that provides insight into the pupils' and teachers' reflections after participating in the teaching program. These qualitative case studies anchored in the constructivist paradigm are directed at how to explore, analyse and illuminate the pupils and teachers reflections using the following data collection methods: participatory observation by us, focus group interviews with pupils and questionnaires with open questions for teachers. Through case studies, the researcher gets close to practice. We have used an inductive approach inspired by grounded theory's social constructivist direction, emphasising the notions, experiences and experiences of the study and objects (Charmaz, 2006; Alverson & Sköldberg, 2008). The research strategy involves continuous, open coding of the data material with naming and categorisation of activities and phenomena. We used constant comparative analysis, and extraction of the data in ways that led to concepts, ideas and theories (axial and selective coding) as a consequence (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Notes written in conjunction with the coding of the transcribed interviews and answers given on the questionnaires helped us to identify central concepts/categories and gave us keys to theories and eventually understand how they are related. Through the process of reviewing empirics, the article authors have discussed overall categories against observations from the teaching.

Data Collection and Context

Case 1, Focus Group Interview

The pupils (7, of which 6 pupils from the then 3rd grade and 1 pupil from the 4th grade) were interviewed in a focus group one year after the completion of the project. Pupils' voices were recorded and transcribed verbatim. The focus group interview was approved by the principal and by NSD.no, and the pupils had the consent to participate in the interview from their parents.

A semi-structured interview guide (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015) was prepared with a duration of approx. 60 min. The guide was focused within 3 main areas; learning outcomes, experiences and benefits. During the interviews, follow up

questions were asked about the direction of the interviews. The reason why we found the focus group interview most appropriate was that they were young pupils who were confident in each other, and it was more natural that they talked to and exchanged experiences with each other and that it was easier to get pupils to talk when they were together than if only one pupil. We were interested in the pupils' common experiences and experiences with the teaching project. In the 5th grade, only one (out of 3 pupils) wanted to participate in the interview. Our role in the interview situation was as moderators and as facilitators in the discussion. This made it easier to bring out the participants' different viewpoints and bring out contradictions in opinions within the group using focus group interview, but also group consensus, according to Creswell (2013).

The pupils felt comfortable, were happy to see us and remembered our names and remembered well that we had visited the school a year ago. We started the focus group interview by asking the pupils to create a mind map where they could write or draw their taught about "Sami starry sky". This was to give pupils time to recall memories and knowledge from a year ago. There were some comments on what the different pupils remembered, so that it became a "common memory" that was portrayed in the thought maps. After the pupils had made their mind maps, we talked about the Sami starry sky project. They also show us the reindeer skin that they in collaboration made in the project and had taken care of in the classroom. The interview with the pupils took about 60 minutes.

The interview with one pupil from the highest class was also characterised by a relaxed atmosphere. The pupil was fond of talking and the conversations also dealt with other things that were not relevant to this study. The interview lasted about 30 minutes.

Case 2. Questionnaire

At an educational gathering organised by CIL in March, 2019, the teachers who participated in the CIL gathering in 2018 were asked to answer an anonymous questionnaire with several open questions. The questionnaire contained 18 questions, one of which was multiple-choice and the remainder were open. The multiple-choice question dealt with the relevance of the teaching program

in relation to their own teaching. The open questions dealt with the learning outcomes, experiences and usefulness of the project for their own teaching, as well as which elements were crucial to remembering the project. The responses were organised into a table (See Table 2) and coded with colours and comments, initial coding and axial coding for more superior categories (making, site, variety, social, play, activities and relevance).

Analysis

The focus group interviews were transcribed and read by each of the authors. The text was coded and compared and then categorised. The initial coding was closely linked to the raw data in that sentences or paragraphs were coded closely

RAW DATA	INITIAL CODES	FOCUSED CODES	AXIAL CODING
P1: *"Not just talk about it and stuff, to do it, like, a little differently."* P2: *"That we don't have to write about it, then we can be outside and do it."*	Not just talk Do it Don't have to write be outside Do it	Variety, more dividends Customised. Place-based. Active in relation to subjects-making	Bodily learning Thinking by Making Authentic setting
P3: *"Yes, we learn more because it was very exciting"*	learn more exciting	Relevant, interesting, engaging feelings	Depth Learning Affective
T1: *"I probably remember everything, I believe it is because we "did" with the body and what we did."*	Remember everything Do it with the body WHAT we did	Learning Active Engaging Relevance	Physical learning Depth Learning Authentic
T2: *"It was a great way to make it last by using it physically and actively."*	Remember better when you have used the knowledge physically Active	Learning Active	Physical learning Thinking by Making

Table 2. *Example of raw data from focus group interview with pupils (P) and from questionnaire with teachers (T) from the course CIL (Culture Trails in the Landscape), with our initial and focused codes from the analysis.*

to the pupils' own words. (See Table 2). Then, a selection was made based on the meaning (and frequency) of the initial codes, which were merged and modified into meaningful categories.

The terms were compared and classified into categories to reduce the number of units. In the classification, several concepts can be gathered in the same categories and here we used relevant information from observation and implementation of the teaching and interpreted the information from the context.

The result of the focused coding ended with the construction of categories that appear to be central to the meaning of the interviews in Case 1 and in the open answers in the questionnaire in Case 2.

FOCUSED CODES	CATEGORIES
Relevance *Innovative, engaging* *Creative/exploratory* *Experiences* *Playful* *Opinion creating* *Detailed memories* *Completeness* *Varied, customised*	Learning (physical learning) / In-depth learning
Atmosphere, the importance of the place, being outside, place-based, outdoor school, Samevistet, the environment feels real, close to reality and in context, relevant context, real-life outdoors, the place is important for the mood, important for the history.	Authentic setting
Collaboration, working in groups, creating a joint work, Land Art, be creative together.	Collaborative Art
Varied, practical activities, doing the theory, concretisation, doing close, dramatisation, recreating in natural materials, active	Thinking by Making
Feelings: *Fun, satisfaction, excitement, interest, inspiration, memorable, pleasurable, joy, fun*	Affective

Table 3. *Example of construction of categories based on focused codes.*

Results and Discussion

It is important to point out that the results of this survey account only for participants view.

Observations Case 1

Figure 3. Printing exercises on textiles. Photograph: Mette Gårdvik, 2018.

Upon completion of the teaching program, the 3rd and 4th grades were merged and we spent a whole school day on the project. The pupils were eager, committed and outgoing. It was obvious that they liked this way of learning. The pupils had a lot of knowledge about the solar system and space from a previous project. They had not heard the story of Sarvvis before, but the pupils were engaged. Many of the outdoor activities (Land Art, lassoing and tasting reindeer meat prepared on an open fire) created engagement. During the pressing of the constellation Sarvvis on reindeer skin, pupils found it challenging to carve out star patterns in a carrot and they needed some help from the teachers (Figure 3). They were concerned that their stars were correctly placed on the leather. Therefore, they used the telescope, the star wheel and discussed with us and fellow pupils before putting the stamp on the skin. The skin ended up as a joint work that the pupils had in the classroom.

Observations Case 2

In the CIL project, 34 primary school teachers from a total of 25 schools participated from the Arctic Circle area in Norway and Sweden. The teaching program

Figure 4. *Pupils stamp constellations on reindeer skin. Photograph: Wenche Sørmo, 2018.*

Figure 5. *Different collaborative artistic expressions of Gálábartnit. Photo winter: Mette Gårdvik. Photographs: Jo Leander Paulsen, 2018.*

took place at Samevistet, a Sami village museum in Vilhelmina (Sweden). The teachers stated that this Sami mythology was little known. There was a great deal of activity and creativity in the groups when building the Land Art version of the cosmic quest (Figure 5). The printing of zodiac signs on textiles and leather triggered a lot of activity and the teachers were creative and used the telescopes they had made as well as a flashlight to project the star signs onto the skin so that the prints were placed properly (Figure 3, 4).

Analysis Results

The categories that emerged from the constant comparative analysis of Case 1 and 2 are: Learning with the body, Authentic setting, Collaborative art, Thinking by making and Affective learning (Table 3).

Learning with the Body

The analyses showed that both pupils and teachers were positive about learning while being physically active and doing practical activities related to the theory. Pupils emphasised the "play" - that they had the opportunity to dramatise the cosmic quest as important for remembering the stories. Many of the teachers claimed that they remembered everything, but focused especially on the importance of practicality and cooperation in remembering the theoretical.
Quote from Case 1:

> *I thought it was fun in a way to live almost like a Same that day, how they lived.*

Quote from Case 2:

> *Making the constellation outdoors was being the most active in relation to what one should learn. The most educational thing was to recreate what we had done on paper and leather.*

And on questions about what made them remember so much from the teaching program, they answered, among other things, that:

> *Made it outdoors and told myself what happened.*
> *The dramatization and that it was an exciting story.*
> *Because we got to work with the body, build and collaborate.*
> (Quotes from Case 2)

Merleau-Ponty (1977) and Antilla (2013) point out how important it is that the body is involved in a learning process and that learning is linked to both a social and spatial reality. This is in line with van Boeckel (2014). Antilla (2013) further elaborates that bodily learning not only refers to coarse motor learning with visible movements, but to the somatic movements that take place deep inside and between bodies. Dahl and Østern (2019) say that both thoughts, affections and emotions are activated in what a human being takes part in bodily learning processes. This is also shown in our results that it is easier to learn, remember and be moved by something you have done yourself by using your senses..

Authentic Set and Setting

Most participants emphasised that the fact that we were outdoors and did the activity was important to remember. In the implementation of the project in the schoolyard (Case 1), we were conscious of including elements such as bonfires in preparation of reindeer meat, reindeer skins and lassoing reindeer antlers in order to get the most authentic setting. The pupils could describe in detail how the various elements were placed in relation to each other a year later and talked about how well they liked the reindeer meat and about how cozy it was to sit on the reindeer skin. In Case 2, it was not necessary for us to deploy authentic elements since the activity with Land Art and printing on leather took place in the Sami cultural place, the Samivistet. Some of the teachers believed that the place and history were important to the mood and to the activity. A teacher expressed the desire to bring his own pupils to Samevistet in order to teach.

Other teachers felt that they could just as well have used their own schoolyard for this activity, since we are already in Lapland and have the constellations above us. Quotes from Case 2:

> *It strengthens knowledge even more, but the project also works in a schoolyard.*
> *Yes. This is close to the pupils' environment in everyday life. They play in Lapland.*

Giving pupils firsthand experience through their own experiences in meeting with the community helps to make the training more concrete and realistic and can increase the pupils' desire to learn (Jordet, 2010; Udir, 2017). Providing the pupils with good nature, culture and local environment experiences and letting them experience the interaction between nature and people before and after, can help the pupils to be happy in nature and culture in their own local environment and appreciate being outdoors.

The pupils in Case 1 on the outdoor activities:

> *And then we were out almost all day and it was pretty fun. We also got to know how far it is between the planets and more about the Sami.*

The Sami mythology of the starry sky is more closely linked to our way of life and our culture here north than the Greek mythology. The fact that pupils gain positive experiences with learning in and about their own local environment and about the Arctic starry sky can in the future contribute to developing identity to the local community and gaining a stronger affiliation with the home (Sørmo, Stoll & Kjelen, 2019).

Collaborative Art

Particularly the collaborative art activities that involved both Land Art with dramatisations and printing on a common skin called for creative collaboration. The participants in both cases greatly appreciated working together in groups

and emphasized the joy of being creative together and building a common Land Art with the Sami mythology as a backdrop.

Participants in Case 2 reported:

> *(We remember…) because we got to work with the body, build and collaborate and that cooperation in groups, (..was) a positive experience.*

The idea was that our students will come up with better ideas by working together – that knowledge is formed and built in social situations. Sawyer & DeZutter (2009) claim that when a group of people work in teams with a creative product, both the process and the product will appear to be more creative than what the individual would clearly do on their own. We interpret it so that the participants in our study experienced creating and mastering something together as particularly rewarding. In addition, it required participants to interact and help each other to master the materials and solve the tasks (Johnson, Johnson, Haugaløkken & Aakervik, 2006). In this way, Collaborative Art can be an opportunity to create meaning alone and with others (Klafki, 2001).

An interesting aspect was that the pupils had developed a strong ownership relationship with the reindeer skin they co-operatively made in the printing of the constellation Sarvvis (See Figure 4), and they were concerned with how to divide the skin between them when they started High School. They discussed whether they should cut it up or have it for a week at a time and let it go round, even if it shed. In this collaborative project, we as teachers did not decide the outcome. This allowed the pupils to invest in themselves and in their team members. This could have helped the participants to develop the strong ownership of the collaborative art work (Heyn, 2015).

Thinking by Making

The teachers emphasised the importance of doing (making) the constellations (projecting them down, building Land Art, dramatising and printing the constellations) to remember the teaching scheme. Asked if it had been just as easy to learn about the Sami starry sky only theoretically, a teacher in Case 2 replied:

No, it would have disappeared into oblivion, - I believe in physically active learning.

and another teacher replied:

No, I would have lost interest quickly.

This suggests that recreating and actively using the theory had crucial importance for learning. This is in line with Fredriksen (2013).

When we ask pupils to describe what they remember from this teaching program, what they did and what they made was emphasised. Through conversations about what they did, the knowledge of the Sami starry sky emerged a year after the teaching project.

Pupil quote Case 1:

At the Sami constellation (project) I have made a reindeer Sarvvis, reindeer meat, binoculars and star wheels.

To be able to build the Land Art and dramatise it, as well as to be able to print the constellation on skin, they had to use the knowledge they had acquired and the knowledge became clear to them as they worked.

Teacher quotes from Case 2, on questions about what they remembered best:

The dramatization of the story. Creating a star map.
The story of the hunt, but also the printing technique and the telescope.
Yes, we made telescopes and used natural materials to tell about the cosmic hunt.
That we were in groups and were to plot what was in the starry sky.

Affectivity and learning

Through the coding and categorization of the empirical evidence, it became clear that both pupils and teachers were left with positive experiences after participa-

tion in the project and that it has influenced their learning. Dahl & Østern (2019) emphasises deep involvement in learning processes. Our results indicate that the affective has been important to their learning and understanding.

Pupil quote Case 1:

And then you remember it so much when it's fun stuff and liked the things we've learned.

Teachers in Case 2 described their experiences with the project as *fun and inspiring, fun activity* and as *very positive* and *rewarding:*

Very good, got deeper knowledge and insight about the importance of the Sami starry sky.

When the participants in the project experience joy and good feelings, it will affect their body and brain. Emotions that motivate and inspire can make the pupil want to learn (Dahl & Østern, 2019; Damasio, 2000).

Relevance for Teachers' Own Teaching

The 14 teachers that answered the questionnaire thought that the teaching program had large (10 pers.) or to some extent (4 pers.) relevance for their own pupils, and everyone wanted to complete the project with their own pupils. However, only one of the teachers had completed the project with their own pupils one year after this teaching. Twelve of the teachers in the survey believed that they had learned enough about this topic to do it themselves with their own pupils.

Selected quotes from teachers:

One's own experiences lead to confidence in the teaching.

My experiences can make the teaching more interesting for the pupils.

The whole project has influenced my way of thinking! It is even more

important than I thought to work with the body!

Active learning is important.

The project was new for the teachers and they experienced it as another way of learning. This suggests that work on aesthetic learning processes and place-based learning is limited in schools today. Our results indicate that there is a large and untapped potential for in-depth learning using such methods. What surprises us most is that the teachers say that the program was relevant, new and interesting for their pupils, but they still haven't used it themselves in their own teaching. This suggests that schools lack culture and acceptance for this type of teaching, which is time consuming due to collaboration across disciplines and requires the use of the outdoor space. However, we have not included questions in the survey as to why they do not teach this way.

Conclusion

The main objective of the teaching project was to promote interest and knowledge about the Sami Mythology. We wanted to investigate how collaborative aesthetic making activities help participants to deeply understand and learn about the Sami peoples' mythology.

Participants remember the history and activities a year later, suggesting in-depth learning for both pupils and teachers.

Authenticity is important, but the place of instruction can be anywhere in the north. However, one should establish set and setting when it is not arranged, for example, in a schoolyard.

Participants emphasised that they remember it because it was an exciting story and that they learned while they did (built it outdoors, dramatised the hunt, etc.). Others highlighted the collaborative relationship and the opportunity to use the body to learn.

Practical-aesthetic learning forms give the teacher opportunities to weave a red thread between the subjects and create an authentic training situation

characterised by a wholeness, coherence and positive experiences for the pupils, but it requires planning and collaboration between the subject teachers.

The project proved to be important to increase knowledge and interest in Sami mythology about the starry sky. It is crucial to follow the curriculums intentions and teach this topic, otherwise we will lose this part of our common cultural history and thus part of our identity here in the north. It seems that a bigger effort and focus from the educational systems is necessary for projects like these to be implemented in teacher education and schools.

Translation Associated Professor Gary Hoffman

References

Anttila, E. (2013). Koko koulu tanssii! Kehollisen oppimisen mahdollisuuksia kouluyhteisössä [The whole school dances! The possibilities of physical learning in a school context]. *Acta Scenica 37*. Helsinki: Teatterikorkeakoulu.

van Boekel, J. (2014). *At the Heart of Art and Earth. An Exploration of Practices in Art-Based Environmental Education.* Helsinki: Aalto University.

Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S. (2015). *InterViews-Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing.* Los Angeles: SAGE.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing Grounded Theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Coutts, G. (2013). Applied Visual Arts: Learning for the real world? In T. Jokela, G. Coutts, M. Huhmarniermi, & E. Härkönen (Eds.), *Cool. Applied Visual Arts in the North* (pp. 22–31). Rovaniemi: University of Lapland.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches.* Los Angeles, LA: SAGE.

Dahl, T., & Østern, T. P. (2019). Dybde//læring med overflate og dybde [Depth // learning with surface and depth]. In T. P. Østern, T. Dahl, A. Strømme, J. A. Petersen, A.-L. Østern, & S. Selander (Eds.), *Dybde//læring-en flerfaglig, relasjonell og skapende tilnærming* [Depth // learning- a multidisciplinary, relational and creative approach]. (pp. 39–56). Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Damasio, A. R. (2000). *The feelings of what happens: Body, emotion and the making of consciousness.* London: Vintage.

Erlien, W. (2007). *Den samiske stjernehimmelen* [The Sami starry sky]. Retrieved May, 06, 2019 from https://www.naturfag.no/artikkel/vis.html?tid=815466

Fägerstam, E. & Blom, J. (2013). Learning biology and mathematics outdoors: effects and attitudes in a Swedish High-School Context. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning, 13*(1*),* 56–75. doi: 10.1080/14729679.2011.647432

Fredriksen, B. C. (2013). *Begripe med kroppen. Barns erfaringer som grunnlag for all læring* [Understand with the body. Children's experiences as a basis for all learning]. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

Gaski, H. (2017). *Samenes historie* [The history of the Sami]. In Store norske leksikon. Retrieved from https://snl.no/samenes_historie

Gulliksen, M. S. (2017). Making matters? Unpacking the role of practical aesthetic making activities in the general education through the theoretical lens of embodied learning. *Cogent Education, 01 January 2017, Vol.4*(1*),* p. 1–14. doi 10.1080/2331186X.2017.1415108

Gårdvik, M. (2010). Arbeid med kniv i rått tre-bruk av kniv som tradering av håndverks og kulturarv [Work with knife in raw wood-use of knife as a tradition of crafts and cultural heritage]. In T. M. Guldal, C. F. Dons, S. Sagberg, T. Solhaug, & R. Tromsdal (Eds.), *FoU i praksis, 2009* (pp. 67–79). Trondheim: Tapir Akademisk forlag.

Heyn, A. (2015). *4 Ways to Foster Authentic Collaboration in the Art Room*. Retrieved from https://theartofeducation.edu/2015/10/22/4-ways-to-foster-authentic-collaboration-in-the-art-room/

Johnson, D. W., Johnson, R. T., Haugaløkken, O. K., & Aakervik, A. O. (2006). *Samarbeid i skolen. Pedagogisk utviklingsarbeid-samspill mellom mennesker* [Collaboration at School Education Development Work-Interaction between people]. Namsos: Pedagogisk Psykologisk Forlag.

Jordet, A. N. (2010). *Klasserommet utenfor - tilpasset opplæring i et utvidet klasserom* [Classroom outside - customized training in an extended classroom]. Oslo: Cappelen Akademisk Forlag AS.

Klafki, W. (2001). *Dannelsesteori og didaktik* [Theory of education and didactics]. Århus: Klim.

Kunnskapsdepartementet [Ministery of Education and Research] (1998). Opplæringsloven [The law on education]. Retrieved from https://lovdata.no/dokument/NL/lov/1998-07-17-61

Lave, J. & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lawrence, D. H. (1985). *Morality and the novel. Study of Thomas Hardy and other essays.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1925*).*

Mantere, M.-H. (1995). Foreword. In M.-H. Mantere (Ed.), *Image of the Earth: Writings on art-based environmental education* (pp. 1–2). Helsinki: University of Art of Design.

Merleu - Ponty, M. (1977). Kroppens fenomenologi [The phenomenology of the body]. Uddevalla: Bokförlaget Daidalos AB.

Nordnorsk Vitensenter, (u.d.). Lag et stjernehjul [Make a star wheel]. Retrieved from https://nordnorsk.vitensenter.no/stjernehjul

NOU 2015:8. (2015). *Fremtidens skole — Fornyelse av fag og kompetanser* [School of the Future - Renewal of subjects and competences]. Retrieved from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nou-2015-8/id2417001/

Read, H. (1967). *Education through art.* London: Farber and Farber.

Rickinson, M., Dillon, J., Teamy, K., Morris, M., Choi, M.-Y., Sanders, D., & Benefield, P. (2004). *Review of research on Outdoor Learning.* London: National Foundation for Educational Research and Kings College London: Field Studies Council.

Rydving, H. (2010). Tracing sami traditions. In search of the indigenous religion among the western sami during the 17th and 18th centuries. *The Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, B135.* Oslo: Novus forlag.

Saemiensijte (u.d.). Retrieved from https://saemiensijte.no/aktiviteter/opplevelsesrommet-gaetie/*).*

Sàmi Institutha (1990). *Samene* [The Sami people]. En håndbok.

Savin-Baden, M., & Major, C., H. (2013). *Qualitative Research. The essential guide to theory and practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Sawyer. R. K. (2014). *The Cambridge handbook of the learning sciences.* 2nd Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sawyer, R. K., & DeZutter, S. (2009). Distributed creativity: how collective creations emerge from collaboration. *Psychology of Aesthetics Creativity and the Arts, 3*(2*),* 81–92. doi: 10.1037/a0013282

Simon Dahl, L. (2000). *Skinnfellboka* [The sheepskin book]. Stamsund: Orkana.

Sergejeva, J. (2011). *Nokre samiske stjernebilete: Eit jaktfolks forestellingar om stjernehimmelen* [Some Sami constellations: The hunting people's ideas about the starry sky]. Retrieved from https://www.mn.uio.no/astro/tjenester/publikum/almanakken/innhold/tema2001.html

Sørmo, W., Stoll, K., & Kjelen, H. (2019). Stedsbasert læring [Location based learning]. In Västerbotten museum och skribenterna (Eds.), *Kulturlandskapet som undervisningsarena* [The cultural landscape as the teaching arena]. (pp. 100–116). Umeå: Tryckeri City.

Tal, T. (2012). Out-of-school: Learning experiences, teaching and students' learning. In B. J. Fraser, K. Tobin, & C. J. McRobbie (Eds.), *Second International Handbook of Science Education* (pp. 1109–1122). Springer Netherlands: Springer International Handbooks of Education 24. doi: 10.1007/s11191-014-9725-7

Udir. (2017). *Overordnet del av læreplanverket* [The overall part of the curriculum]. Retrieved from https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/overordnet-del/

Vualtjereduodji (u.d.). Retrieved from http://www.vualtjereduodji.se/foereningsinformation/samevistet

Waite, S. (2011). Teaching and learning outside the class room: Personal values, alternative pedagogies and standards. *Education 3–13, 39*(1*),* 65–82. doi: 10.1080/03004270903206141

Østergaard, E. (2013). Naturfag og kunst: berøringer med verden [Science and art: touches with the world]. *Bedre Skole nr. 4,* 10–15. Retrieved from https://www.utdanningsnytt.no/files/2019/08/22/Bedre%20Skole%20%204%202013.pdf

Roxane Permar
Centre for Rural Creativity, University of the Highlands and Islands
Shetland College, Scotland

Under the Radar:

Education for Social Art Practice (in the British Isles)

2

> *"Social Practice is located in the overlap of art, society and politics. It has been described as art activism, critical art, socially engaged art, social practice art, activism, political art, participatory, dialogical or collaborative art."* (MA SPACE, 2018).

Education for social art practice in the UK can be traced back to the 1960s and 1970s when new ideas about art moved, almost unnoticed, into art education, inspiring the development of new courses based on values and principles which inform education for social art practice as it is conducted today. This chapter examines this legacy by discussing the forms of practice that evolved from the 1960s and 1970s, including contextual art, community arts and critical fine art practice.

The values and principles that underpin these new practices have never sat comfortably with the norms and assumptions about art and art education which prioritise the production of the art object over process. Process is fundamental to social art practice, defining the very essence of relational and dialogical experience. Social art practice thus requires different approaches to teaching that incorporate appropriate content and forms of evaluation to best prepare students to work with people in the social sphere.

Social art practice and its pedagogy are in fact radical practices that struggle to function effectively using the methods commonly practiced in fine art education. Four postgraduate programmes established by artists located geographically in the British Isles, in Ireland, London and Scotland, provide examples for ways that education for social art practice in higher education can resolve the fundamental tension between socially engaged art and studio art. The qualities that social art practice brings to art education will be used to consider the potential for this subject to function within the neoliberal institution without compromise to its fundamental values.

The four programmes that form case studies for this examination are: the MA Art and Politics, Goldsmiths University of London; the MA SPACE (Social Practice and the Creative Environment) based at Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology in Ireland and two programmes,

Figure 1. *The Human Limpet Project, a contemplative space for socially engaged artists, Helen Garbett, Lybster, Caithness, MA Art and Social Practice, University of the Highlands and Islands, 2019. Photograph: Susan Timmins.*

both called MA Art and Social Practice, based at Middlesex University and the University of the Highlands and Islands. They are chosen because the artists who designed and lead these programmes, John Reardon (Goldsmiths), Marilyn Lennon and Sean Taylor (Limerick), Loraine Leeson (Middlesex) and the author (University of the Highlands and Islands) came together in Sheffield in November 2018 on the occasion of the Social Art Summit, a major event organised by artists who founded the Social Art Network, Eelyn Lee and R. M. Sánchez-Camus. This discussion about education for social art practice will conclude with consideration of concerns raised in this forum and thoughts about the future prospects for the subject in the neoliberal university.

Figure 2. *Elsie Bryant and Isobel Reddington, Hornsey Town Hall, MA Art and Social Practice, Middlesex University, 2019. Photograph: Elsie Bryant and Isobel Reddington.*

Background

In order to better understand the educational context for social art practice today, it is necessary to rewind from the Social Art Summit in 2018 to look briefly at art education in the United Kingdom during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This background overview is not comprehensive, for due to constraints of space, it is impossible to write in detail about the profusion of activity that took place throughout this period and the new courses abounding today. Relatively few examples of practice are therefore included here, with apologies for omitting the many individuals, courses, projects and places where vibrant experiments in art education have taken place across the British Isles, and, indeed, continue to do so.

New approaches to art education that emerged during this period, in part influenced by The Coldstream Report (Department of Education and Science, 1970), were driven by artists and educators who embraced alternative art forms and questioned conventional teaching practices. They believed in the capacity of art to change the world, or at the very least, to make a difference. The artist Beverly Naidus describes her journey to become a socially engaged artist as a result of the climate of social change within which she was studying and developing her art practice in the 1970s. While she grew up in the United States, her experience nonetheless resonates with many artists of her generation in the UK who were born into this time of social and political turmoil.

> *So many of us were asking questions and confronting the status quo. I was eagerly caught up in that generational whirlwind, yet another cycle in the movement for social change. Somehow it seemed like the mass of us taking part in anti-war protests, feminist support groups, and civil rights actions, were part of a huge force, a tidal wave that would change society for the better. In the midst of this, I chose art, or perhaps it chose me, as a way to process my confusion and make sense of my fears about the world.* (Naidus, 2005, p. 163)

The idea that art can have social relevance inspired artists and community activists in the UK. Some artists began to work with people outside the studio in everyday situations. Artists and educators alike questioned where they were working, how they were working and with whom they were working. The opportunity to work with people outside the art studio crept into art education just as the critical interrogation of society and culture, political systems and institutions was introduced into the fine art curriculum. New language and approaches to practice emerged, contextual practice and the community arts movement developed alongside critical discourses around gender, race and class. All this activity helped shape the background against which pedagogical experimentation took place in art education, nurturing a climate in which the forerunners of education for social art practice today could flourish.

Context and Community

The period saw the emergence of contextual practice, where artists sought to establish working methods that embraced people and their places, taking art practice out of the studio into everyday life. In 1978 Paul Oliver founded the seminal course, Art and Social Context, at Dartington School of Arts in Devon, England. Led by Chris Crickmay, it is often considered the forerunner of all contextual art practice courses that emerged in British art schools (Harding, n.d.). David Harding, who was part of its first team of lecturers, and who later set up another influential course, Environmental Art at Glasgow School of Art

(Harding, 2019), identifies three factors that distinguished it from other courses of the time. Importantly, it was situated in a unique institution that aimed to bring arts to the widest possible audience and to involve a wide audience in making art. The college offered music, theatre, dance and art, thus nurturing interdisciplinary experience (Harding, n.d.).

Students brought their art practice out of the studio and into everyday life through a 'placement' — a new development in art education, inspired directly by the Artists Placement Group, founded in the 1960s and led by Barbara Stevini and John Latham (APG, n.d.). The practice of placing artists in a situation to which they would respond through making work emerged with this group and strived to bring artists into close proximity with people. With no set brief, work emerged from the situations that artists encountered. During placements students were required to investigate and react to what they experienced rather than "weigh in with a preformed idea" (Crickmay, 2003). The meaning in the work was intended to make sense to the people involved in that situation, making the context fundamental to the meaning and understanding of the work (Crickmay, 2003). The wide range of contexts with which students engaged on this course was impressive and excited great curiosity at the time, and included a public laundry, terrace house, fish shop, Water Board Offices, bus stops, shopping malls, orphanages, biological research centre, pub and many more (Crickmay, 2003).

Contextual practice continued to develop in art schools through the 1990s. By this time courses, such as Fine Art and Critical Practice, at St Martin's School of Art/Central St Martin's College of Art and Design, and Fine Art Critical Practice at Brighton University, had adopted the idea of the placement. In 1997 the Contextual Practices Network was set up at a symposium held at Exeter School of Art and Design, Plymouth University. It was a national network of art and design courses which shared a commitment to contextual practice. It met regularly for a number of years with the aim of disseminating information and discussing issues that arise out of contextual practice. The network offered support to artists spearheading educational initiatives who could sometimes feel isolated despite the growing recognition this kind of practice had gained in the mainstream. In 1999 the Network organised a conference, *Out of the Bubble: Approaches to Contextual*

Practice in Fine Art Education, at Central St Martin's College of Art and Design. The ethos of contextual practice to foreground dialogue and discourse motivated the Network to promote open dialogue about art education as a counter to the competitive spirit and focus on individualism prioritised in art schools. Network members enjoyed the sense of engagement in a shared vision that equally made space for and recognised difference (Callow, 2000).

The idea, as understood in contextual practice, that the placement would generate contact with people in a specific setting, and that this contact would shape the nature of their work and its meaning, remains relevant to social art practice as it has evolved in recent decades. However, it is important to note that in past decades there were distinct differences among artists who worked with people. Some artists were concerned to create social change and had a political agenda. Their work became linked to the community arts movement, which grew steadily and stridently through artists and communities working together (Morgan, 1995). The Association of Community Artists (ACA), formed in London by Bruce Birchall, Maggie Pinhorn and Martin Goodrich, was important to artists, providing a network for practitioners that Sally Morgan asserts was "never bettered" (Morgan, 1995). It was dogged by ideological splits, as members could not agree their positions, and it was eventually disbanded in 1980. With the dissolution of the association, and despite other organisations promoting community arts arising in its place, its dissolution marks the end of the community arts movement as an artist-led drive for change (Dickson, 2003).

The community arts movement occupied a precarious position in relation to the establishment art world, who could not reconcile its prioritisation of process and experience over quality of the art object (Morgan, 2003). Nonetheless the practice of community art did manage to enter higher education, although often outside the fine art curriculum and through pockets of individual lecturers, such as at the University of East London, Goldsmiths University of London and Staffordshire University. Criteria for "good practice" were put together by community artists and their funders, largely derived from those proposed by Graham Woodruff, of Telford Community Arts, on behalf of the National Association of Community Artists (Morgan, 2003). The criteria outlined by

Figure 3. *Refutree, birch saplings laid out after having been pulled up from the ground and placed in the bags for planting in their new home, Munlochy Merkinch Nature Reserve Inverness, Site of Special Scientific Interest, Rosie Newman with staff and students, Inverness College University of the Highlands and Islands, MA Art and Social Practice, 2019. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

the Yorkshire Arts Association, a regional arm of the British Arts Council, identified criteria which included good working process, collective making, support for the community to effect social change and consideration for the social, economic, political and cultural context of the place in which the work is being done (Morgan, 2003).

These criteria are echoed in current debates for social practice today where discussion continues about artists' working process, such as introducing 'rules of engagement' or 'codes of practice' as highlighted in conferences (Artworks Scotland, 2013; Moore College of Art, 2016; Social Art Summit, 2018). Characteristics of ethical practice are debated alongside the nature of participation and collaboration and have entered into the pedagogical framework. Within programmes for social art practice, artists devise exercises, workshops and symposia to facilitate better understanding and skills to work with people.

The idea or assumption that social art practice should bring about change is not uniformly recognised today as it was during the height of the community arts movement. As community arts have become normalised through the shift to participatory arts, moving from the margins into the mainstream, the need for social art practice to bring about change is not shared by all artists (Matarasso, 2019). In 1995, Malcolm Dickson fortuitously predicted that while the community arts movement had transformed markedly, the emergence of new models of practice, such as new

genre public art, a term coined by Suzanne Lacy in the United States, indicated there would be a long future for artists working with people (Dickson, 1995, p 15). While the term community art is not used commonly today in relation to contemporary art practice, working with people and involving people in the making and creation of art, across many art forms, is very prevalent.

Critical Practice

The rise of movements for women's and civil rights during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s ran parallel to the community arts movement and inspired the re-appraisal of society, art histories and practices in relation to class, gender and race. The articulation of these critical positions underpins contemporary social art practice and, equally, its education. The history of discourse in conceptual art, feminist art practice and socially engaged art practice is articulated through publications, exhibitions and conferences, demonstrating roots for social art practice

Figure 4. *Archiving the Practice, general view of the Lab facilitated by Sophie Hope at The Social Art Summit, Site Gallery, Sheffield, 2018. Photograph: Roxane Permar.*

are clearly linked to conceptual and feminist art histories (Hope, 2018). By the late 1990s it was evident that alternative practices, such as feminist art practice and theory, had generated positive influence in fuelling creative change in the worlds of both art and art education. Feminists had played a large part in the introduction of new subject matter and spaces for plurality of practices in art schools, and core feminist values contributed to improve teaching and learning environments and foster innovative practices such as those related to inclusive curricula and progressive course development (Permar, 2015).

These discourses entered the art school curricula in the 1980s with new courses for critical practice. The pioneering course, Fine Art and Critical Studies, ran for ten years at St Martin's School of Art/Central St Martin's College of Art and Design in London before it was reincarnated as the Critical Fine Art Practice option on a re-designed BA (Hons) Fine Art course. Simon Pugh and Roy Trollope co-founded the course based on the idea that a part-time, interdisciplinary art course was needed at the time. It was distinguished by the interaction of theory and practice and engagement with current issues, such as feminism and multiculturalism (Garrett, 2013). Subsequently the Critical Fine Art Practice teaching staff joined with Film and Video to form the 4D Pathway. In 2010 a new pathway was formed at Central St Martin's, XD, defined as "art practice across dimensions, practices, locations and situations" (UAL, 2019). This pathway emerged following the merger of Byam Shaw School of Art with Central St Martin's. It was decided that the teaching expertise of the staff from these colleges, who had been delivering off-site projects and individual practices to Fine Art degree students, and their related research activity, such as AIR Studio at Archway, would support the formation of a new pathway directed towards outward facing activity, social practice, situation and site.

Brighton University also developed a fine art critical practice programme, and currently runs both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes that can prepare students for a social art practice. Their Fine Art Critical Practice course evolved from a lineage of experimentation. In 1971 a group of fine art students and lecturers set up a separate studio space at Brighton College of Art to work with "alternative media" e.g. film and photography. "The studio became known

as Experimental Studies, then Alternative Practice, and subsequently Critical Practice" (Salaman and Breakwell, 2019).

Process is Radical

The radicalism of social art practice is rooted in the idea of art as process, the relational, and the dialogical. Consequently, this practice runs wholly counter to the understanding of art as object as practiced and conventionally taught in art schools, situating social art practice in opposition to studio art practice. Sally Morgan analyses this tension in depth in her article 'Beautiful impurity: British contextualism as processual postmodern practice' (Morgan, S., 2003).

In education for social art practice this opposition causes issues that clash with conventional teaching and learning methods, curriculum content and forms of evaluation. Teaching and learning for socially engaged art needs to account for collaborative methods of working rather than the model of the individual artist alone in the studio. Different skillsets are required for these two very different models of practice, ranging from critical reflection to listening. Contextual and theoretical content also differs, as the social art practitioner

Figure 5. *Listen, Teresa Normile, MA SPACE, Limerick School of Art and Design. Photograph: MA SPACE, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology.*

requires knowledge of the history of this practice, its theories and debates. The standard final assessment criteria for objects as displayed in the Degree Show, are woefully inadequate and inappropriate for social art processes and outcomes.

In 1999 at the conference *Out of the Bubble*, Jane Trowell, from Platform, an organisation using activism, education, research and art founded in 1985 to achieve environmental and social justice (Platform, 2019), asked delegates to imagine a radical model, a Fantasy Art School where a curriculum for socially engaged practice would cater to students who care about social justice and environmental impact. She called for teaching about place, rather than site, echoing concurrent ideas emerging around place and identity that have since been adopted in education for social art practice and identified as key characteristics of dialogical projects (Kelley, 1996; Kester, 2015; Kwon, 2002, Marriott and Trowell, 2000). She highlighted the need for students to learn skills for working with people, e.g., listening, collaboration, critical analysis and evaluation, all of which are recognised in education today for social art practice.

Figure 6. *Jenny Dunn with Columbia Road Tenants and Residents association, MA Art and Social Practice, Middlesex University, 2018. Photograph: Jenny Dunn.*

Today's educational climate is much changed from the 1970s, 1980s and even the 1990s, when experimental education projects, such as the Art in Social Context and Critical Fine Art Practice courses were conceived and implemented. Neoliberalism has had a profound impact on the art world and its institutions, including art schools and university fine art departments. Alana Jelinek persuasively analyses this impact on art, illuminating the tensions between art and its contemporary context and the impact on education (Jelinek, 2013). Financial constraints are more severe, and universities are immersed in commercialisation where the student is the customer, often paying large tuition fees. Departments are under pressure to generate income. Institutional structures in higher education have changed dramatically, such as the conversion of art schools and art departments in polytechnics into universities, modularisation and processes of professionalisation. Requirements to gain ethical approval and conduct detailed risk assessments add constraints to artists and educators who might remain inclined to experiment. Digital and virtual technologies have also impacted on art practice and education, offering a double-edged sword to educational practices, on the one hand a new territory for experimentation and expanding opportunity and, on the other, fuel for new forms of commercialisation by creating an infinite customer base.

Many voices from the art and education worlds have questioned the negative impact of such changes, particularly on education for the creative arts (Beck and Cornford, 2012; Jelinek, 2013; Jones, 1976; Thompson, 2005). It is pertinent to ask whether it is even possible to teach from an alternative or radical position in the face of modularisation and outcomes orientated learning. Resistance to change in the universities has been strong in art schools since the 1970s when the award of the Honours Degree was introduced (Jones, 1975). In the 1990s resistance to the introduction of modularisation emerged, because it is counter intuitive to creative process, and, more recently to the use of virtual technologies to teach art where materiality is paramount.

Just as critiques of the neoliberal university proliferate, many academics are debating strategies to enable critical pedagogies and radical practices for creative subjects. The Association of Art History has initiated sessions during

its annual conferences to explore critical pedagogies in education for art history, art practice and design, including feminist perspectives. (Meskimmon and Robinson, 2019). At a *Late Night* event at the Victoria and Albert Museum, *Artschooled*, participants debated what it means to teach a radical arts practice in today's universities (V&A, 2019). In the early years of the British art school, during the 1960s and 1970s, they were perceived as places nurturing unbounded creativity and hotbeds of experimentation, cultivating future stars of popular British culture (Beck & Cornford, 2012; Frith & Horne, 1984; Tickner, 2008). Panelists in a discussion at *Artschooled* debated whether it is possible to teach radical practice in the current climate of ever increasing fees, funding cuts, and results-driven education. Martin O'Brien and Dominic Johnson, from Live Art at Queen Mary University of London, and members of the Live Art Development Agency asked if there is still space to break rules and challenge the status quo (V&A, 2019). Perhaps the ability to experiment freely, imagine and practice the seemingly impossible are no longer possible (Reisz, 2019).

Education for Social Art Practice in the 21st Century

Education for social art practice today defines ways and spaces where we can still be radical, whether it takes place outside institutions or within them. Lecturers and students continue to believe they can make a difference as they adapt responsively to their particular communities and situations. Practices are based on the rich legacy of experimental, activist or critical approaches drawn from the earlier decades of contextual practice, the community arts movement and critical fine art practice to serve as models from which we can learn, which we can adapt, re-imagine or reject.

It is arguable that the practices involving people in earlier decades have moved from the margins into the mainstream, a "normalisation process" as described and cogently analysed by François Matarasso in his new book, *A Restless Practice* (Matarasso, 2019). This shift threatens to dilute or compromise the ability to critically position social art practice. Can the core qualities of social art practice, including criticality, responsiveness and openness, that have served

to keep its place within art education, likewise serve to strengthen its resistance to neoliberal challenges and empower education for social art practice to maintain its integrity within higher education institutions? As social and political conditions have changed, the way we challenge and oppose the establishment mainstream has also changed. Today our radical positions play out differently, sitting under the radar, acting quietly, yet persistently.

Figure 7. *A Sip and Beyond, Pavithra Kannan, project for MA SPACE, Limerick School of Art and Design. Photograph: Pavithra Kannan.*

Closer examination of the MA programmes represented at the Social Art Summit in 2018 reveals ways in which they do challenge conventional forms of teaching, learning, curriculum design and assessment, taking up the gauntlet laid down in earlier decades. Much as Pablo Helguera advocates, these programmes aspire to help students learn how to use art in the social realm (Helguera, 2011). New content is drawn from different fields of practice, and includes skills for collaboration, theoretical propositions in the area of social practice and use of new technologies. Students learn appropriate research and communication skills to

equip them for the roles they will play within communities, situations and public spaces, and ultimately, acquire a deep level of authentic experience and situated learning through the delivery and documentation of their projects. Creative skills are grounded in critical understanding and theory, actively encouraging students to engage in reflection, review and self-appraisal. Students consider ethical and logistical responsibilities involved in social practice as they interrogate conventional forms of documentation to represent their projects in order to resonate with the multi-layered experience of all involved.

The MA programmes that were represented in the panel about socially engaged art at the Social Art Summit in 2018 use approaches to teaching and learning that clearly distinguish their pedagogy from conventional art education. Their practices which successfully step outside those of conventional art education offer models for educating artists who can work with more meaning, relevance and resilience in their diverse range of communities. The programmes, outlined below, each bring distinct approaches to course content, assessment and relation to the world. The four programs are:

- Art and Politics, Goldsmiths University of London;
- SPACE (Social Practice and the Creative Environment), Limerick College of Art and Design;
- Art and Social Practice, Middlesex University;
- Art and Social Practice, University of the Highlands and Islands.

The MA Art and Politics at Goldsmiths presents the most radical solution to the dilemma presented by the tensions between traditional art school education and that for artists concerned to work in relation to contemporary society. Established in 2008, significantly, the programme is not located in the art department but in the Department of Politics and International Relations. This situation liberates both teaching and art practice from constraints intrinsic to the high art paradigm embedded in Modernism and promoted still within art schools and fine art departments. It sidesteps the need for conventional teaching practices to prepare students for navigating the art market and exhibiting in the

white cube. A completely different approach to understanding art within the contemporary world thus offers students the possibility to re-frame, re-think and re-work their understanding of art in relation to society and imagine new approaches to making.

Interdisciplinarity features in all programmes, with students not only arriving from different disciplines but drawing on a wide range of fields for curriculum content. The MA Art and Politics is especially well positioned to offer a diverse range of topics, from global to single issues taught by specialists and enabling interaction with non-art students. The MA SPACE programme also encourages diverse disciplines, inviting students to "create work that addresses topics such as Space and Place, Food Politics, Gender Politics, Ecology, Climate Change, environmental politics, Science and Art, Civil Rights, Globalisation and Economics, Health, Trans-Global Movement, Labour, Land Politics and more," (MA SPACE, 2018). Uniquely students attend a series of guest lectures that challenges and provokes their ideas about the world by bringing a range of experts from civil society to the programme to discuss their expertise and research concerns in a wide range of fields. The University of the Highlands and Islands is equally committed to interdisciplinarity but has approached it differently. Students are required to study anthropological theory and practice drawn from notions of communities of practice in order to support their practice both theoretically and practically. Additionally, students can, if so desired, elect from a selection of optional models offered by history and islands studies programmes.

The art and social practice programmes all recognise that a range of skills is required to work with people which have not commonly been addressed in art schools. Lecturers draw on their own practices to identify needs and often look to non-art disciplines for methods to teach specific skills such as conflict management and to foster dialogue, empathy and new ways of working. One particular exercise, the listening exercise, conducted at Middlesex University, helps cultivate one of the most essential skills, that of listening, that is required to work on social art projects, whether collaboratively or through participation. The programme lecturers, Loraine Leeson and Alberto Duman, are quick to point out that listening is not just hearing what others say, but also developing

understanding of another person's needs, desires and vision (Leeson & Duman, 2018). Their exercise in active listening encourages students to think through the practice of listening in small groups in order to experience listening, being listened to, and to observe the process (Leeson & Duman, 2018).

Assessment of social art projects is particularly problematic, especially when conducted using conventional art school criteria and methods, such as the final degree show. The emphasis placed on this exhibition is inappropriate to process-based work and has long plagued lecturers who deliver contextual, collaborative and social art practices. It caters to the view of art as object rather than process and does not necessarily support the often "unvisualisable qualities" characteristic of relational or dialogical projects (Kester, 2015). The MA SPACE programme has adopted a particularly interesting approach to assessment which recognises the need for social art projects to develop relationships, build trust and partnerships. Project failure is possible. Students' project is regarded as a beginning and need not be completed on the programme, making it a work in progress. It is evaluated on the basis of a *viva voce*, focussing on critical

Figure 8. *Art and Social Practice student visit to Margate, Middlesex University, 2017. Photograph: Loraine Leeson.*

reflection and documentation. This method recognises that social art projects do not culminate with object/s, although of course artefacts can be produced during a project. The programmes in London and Scotland employ different ways to represent work for assessment, also recognising that a final exhibition is not necessarily the best way to represent social art practice. Students at the University of the Highlands and Islands are invited to make a digital publication, e.g., film, web site, digital book, an idea borrowed from one originally proposed for the MA Art and Social Practice at Middlesex University. Students on the MA Art and Politics At Goldsmiths University of London can opt to write a dissertation or undertake a project.

These programmes share the common view that creative practice should extend beyond the institution and encourage students to build on their own interests, networks and communities, echoing, but not replicating, the practice of student placements from the 1970s and the 1980s. Students develop their social practice through their particular concerns and communities. They initiate or further develop proposals for work within a community or collaborative context, developing the skills and knowledge required to create collaborative and participatory work in the wider social environment.

Each of these programmes works in relation to their particular situations, thus at Middlesex University students regularly participate in visits to meet outside artists and organisations, drawing on the diverse community in the London area. This programme builds on the significant history in the UK of community-based and socially engaged art initiatives and the university's historical roots in the progressive Hornsey College of Art, which encouraged engagement and participation with communities and institutions to positively impact the world around them (Tickner, 2008). While the MA programme at Middlesex is relatively new, the university has offered undergraduate students the opportunity to study socially engaged art practice since the mid 2000s through the Fine Art pathway, Art Practice in the Community. For the first time, in the academic session 2018–19, students can elect to receive a BA Fine Art Social Practice as an 'exit degree'.

The artist Jen Delos Reyas has proposed a somewhat surprising idea, suggesting that it is impossible to teach socially engaged art, such as on university

Figure 9. *Our Weaving, South Uist, Islands with Views, Mary Carol Souness, MA Art and Social Practice, University of the Highlands and Islands, 2019 . Photograph: Islands with Views, Mary Carol Souness.*

campuses, outlining a rather convincing series of reasons why we shouldn't attempt to do so (Delos Reyas, 2018). She suggests students should remain in their own locations rather than uprooting to study at the physical site of the art institution. As implausible as it may seem, this idea is not very far removed from some of the teaching practices for social art employed in Scotland and Ireland. The MA SPACE in Limerick uses both their city and national and international student worksites. The University of the Highlands and Islands bases its teaching philosophy entirely on this premise. The entire programme is delivered virtually, so students develop their projects within their locale and join live seminars, tutorials and virtual student spaces from anywhere in the world.

The programme builds on the successful pilot research project undertaken in 2013–14 at Shetland College University of the Highlands and Islands. 'Networked Learning for Participatory Practices', was one of six Artworks Scotland pilot research projects in the Scottish Further and Higher Education sector. It tested the feasibility of virtual tools to teach participatory practices in the visual arts. Findings indicated that it is possible and can be effective. The condition of

virtuality in the UHI programme creates particular challenges for teaching and learning methods for this field, but equally has driven innovation. Conversation and live interaction are fundamental to the programme, and while students may arrive with doubts they are usually pleasantly surprised by the way they can build relationships and develop a strong sense of belonging using virtual tools to interact. Virtual study is challenging, often requiring students to think through their early doubts or issues in the absence of the chance encounter with a lecturer or peer in corridors and canteens. However, students benefit from increased confidence, resilience and new technology skills. Virtual learning is different, although not necessarily better or worse than learning in the physical world.

Virtual tools have indeed transformed the way lecturers and students work, creating a diverse community that uses virtuality to advantage, reducing barriers to education and providing opportunities for those who are geographically remote or cannot leave home, perhaps due to childcare responsibilities, mobility issues or chronic illness. The University of the Highlands and Islands was in

Figure 10. *MA Students from Middlesex University in attendance at the Virtual Symposium, Making A Difference: Social Art Practice and Higher Education, organised by the Centre for Rural Creativity, Shetland College University of the Highlands and Islands, 2019. Photograph: Loraine Leeson.*

fact founded on the premise that new technologies would enable the populations of the sparsely populated and remote areas of the region to pursue higher education never before possible without traveling far from home communities. The virtual environment facilitates innovative learning experiences alongside greater connectivity among social art practitioners locally and globally. Virtual study allows universities located in remote geographical regions to extend their range of specialisms, attract new students, develop collaborative networks and increase opportunities while establishing innovative approaches to education and creative community engagement.

What Next?

It is striking, and heartening, that similar principles and values underpin these programmes, promoting non-hierarchical, open and inclusive education environments generated through teamwork and student-centred learning, facilitating a sense of shared ownership and responsibility for teaching and learning. As noted at the Social Art Summit, lecturers are passionate about their subject and their approaches to teaching are refreshing, incorporating networking, partnerships and collaboration (Leeson and Permar, 2018). Interdisciplinarity, diversity and plurality of practice characterise curriculum content. Students gain self-reliance, appropriate professionalism and the ability to take initiative to navigate complex projects in the public domain. They acquire informed insight into the significance, value and context of collaborative and participatory art practice in relation to community, special interest groups and individuals.

The programmes are student centred and evolve in response to students' needs in order to create relevant learning experiences. Lecturers encourage students to experiment and take risks, just as they are accustomed to do in their own practices. The programmes retain flexibility, enabling new approaches, content and structures to evolve in response to changes in society, global and local issues, shifts in contemporary art practices and education. These open, inclusive and responsive ways of working mean that these programmes not only test, push and challenge institutional frameworks and practices, but they also

have a resilience that enables them to adapt and maintain a sustained presence in the institutions, albeit at times in marginalised positions.

Finally, in returning to the concerns artists, students and lecturers raised at the Social Art Summit in 2018 during the session about education for social art practice in higher education, there are clearly shared concerns and hints of uneasiness. Questions ranged from the value of inclusion in formal programmes for higher education, to uncertainty about whether we can sustain the teaching of social art practice in the institution, without compromise to its fundamental principles and values (Leeson and Permar, 2018). Unsurprisingly there is not general consensus about the position of social art practice within the institution. Should we dismantle the institution and create something new, or work from within to effect change, prod, poke and irritate?

While there is absolutely no desire to advocate neoliberal values, we might ask if it is possible to identify attributes in these programmes which overlap with some of the notional aspirations of the neoliberal university, and thus enable the subject to sustain its position in the institutions without compromise. Practices such as student centred learning contribute to improving "customer satisfaction" where the institution regards students as customers. Can ways that social artists and lecturers innovate, re-imagining the teaching and learning landscape, be framed to complement institutional strategies while maintaining the integrity of our principles? Issues which form part of university strategies focus on local context, public engagement and internationalisation, values which lie at the heart of social art practice. Recruitment is generally strong in these programmes, a factor which sits favourably in the neoliberal university where high numbers mean more income.

It is essential that institutions from departmental level to senior management work with programmes for social art practice in order to meet the challenges this field, and its critical pedagogies, require, embracing the fluidity and responsiveness of its ways of working. The programmes themselves need to remain relevant and fresh while maintaining student numbers, and thus draw on its fundamental qualities, incorporating the abilities to be flexible, to listen and be resilient. Institutions must recognise the value of social practice, a challenge

even in art schools today where this field remains misunderstood and dismissed. Social art practice is good for academia through its flexibility of practice, social relevance and ability to ask challenging questions.

The potential to create interdisciplinary collaborations and foster exchanges across cultures, generations and communities beyond the institution offers benefit to all levels of education and society. The Social Practice Lab, led by artist Pedro Lasch at Duke University, offers hope for all of us by making a positive feature of this potential, recognising that social practice benefits not only academia but society more broadly through its capacity to create agency that will help build a more intelligent, creative, and just society (Social Practice Lab, n.d.).

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to the Programme Leaders, Loraine Leeson, Marilyn Lennon, John Reardon and Sean Taylor for unselfishly sharing information about their programmes. The views and any unintentional misrepresentations of their programmes are entirely my own.

References

APG: Artist Placement Group. (n.d.). *Overview*. Retrieved from http://www2.tate.org.uk/artistplacementgroup/overview.htm

Artworks Scotland. (n.d.). *Art and social practice module.* Shetland College. Retrieved from https://www.creativescotland.com/what-we-do/major-projects/creative-learning-and-young-people/artworks-scotland/pilot-projects/shetland-college

Beck, J., & Cornford, M. (2012). The art school in ruins. *Journal of Visual Culture, 11*(1*),* 58–83. doi: 10.1177/1470412911430467

Calow, J. (2000). New territories for art education. In J. Carson, & S. Silver (Eds.), *Out of the bubble: Approaches to contextual practice within fine art education* (pp. 106–112). London: London Institute

Crickmay, C. (2003). 'Art and Social Context', its background, inception and development, *Journal of Visual Art Practice, 2* (3*),* 119–133, doi: 10.1386/jvap.2.3.119/0

Delos Reyas, J. (2018). Why socially engaged art can't be taught. In G. Sholette, & C. Bass (Eds.), *Art as social action: An introduction to the principles and practices of teaching social practice art* (pp. 201–206). New York, NY: Allworth Press.

Dickson, M. (1995). Introduction. In M. Dickson, (Ed.), *Art with people* (pp. 8–15). Sunderland: AN Publications.

Frith, S., & Horne, H. (1984). *Welcome to Bohemia!*. Warwick Working Papers in Sociology, June. 1–19. University of Warwick.

Garrett L. (2017, January 9). *An-Artist, Unlearning. An Event by Louise Garrett* (14 May, 21 May and 2 Jul 2013*).* Retrieved from http://davidrobertsartfoundation.com/live/an-artist-unlearning-inarchive/

Harding, D. (n.d.). *Dartington College of Arts 1978 – 85 and Lecture Tours of Australia and the USA*. Retrieved from https://www.davidharding.net/?page_id=297

Harding, D. (2019, March 15). *Environmental art at Glasgow School of Art.* Retrieved from https://www.davidharding.net/?p=385

Helguera, P. (2011). *Education for socially engaged art: A Materials and Techniques Handbook.* New York: Jorge Pinto Books.

Hope, S. (2018). *Finding my people: Engaged practice symposium at Birkbeck.* Retrieved from http://blogs.bbk.ac.uk/events/2018/10/09/finding-my-people-engaged-practice-symposium-at-birkbeck/

Jelinek, A. (2012). *This is not art. Activism and other not-art.* London: I.B. Tauris.

Jones, P. L. (1975). Art students and their troubles. *Leonardo, 8*(1*).* (originally published in The Listener 90: 265).

Kester, G. (2014). Art and Answerability in Jay Koh's Work. Foreword. In J. Koh *Art-led participatory processes: Dialogue and subjectivity within performances in the everyday.* (pp. 1–6*). Helsinki: Academy of Fine Arts, University of the Arts Helsinki.*

Kwon, M. (2002). *One Place After Another: Site-specific art and locational identity.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Kelley, G. (1995). Common Work. In S. Lacy (Ed.), *Mapping the terrain: New genre public art* (pp. 139–158). Seattle, Washington: Bay Press.

Leeson, L. & Duman, A. (2018). Fine Art Social Practice at Middlesex University. In G. Sholette, & C. Bass (Eds.), *Art as social action: An introduction to the principles and practices of teaching social practice art* (pp. 223–228). New York, NY: Allworth Press.

Leeson, L., & Permar, R. (2018, November 1). Lab: 'Social Art Practice in Higher Education'. Loraine Leeson & Roxane Permar. Retrieved from https://www.socialartsummit.com/thursday-1st/2018/11/1/lab-social-art-practice-in-higher-education-loraine-leeson-amp-roxane-permar

MA Art & Politics. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.gold.ac.uk/pg/ma-art-politics/?gclid=CjwKCAjw2cTmBRAVEiwA8YMgzUDic8jlFoWRhLfSlz9oyVMV86xH4Llwa-0khL6HHpWJJ6ZKws-T92RoCLY0QAvD_BwE

MA Space. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.lit.ie/Courses/MASPACE/default.aspx

Marriott, J., & Trowell, J. (2000). Words which we can hear: Educating for social and ecological art practice. In J. Carson, & S. Silver (Eds.), *Out of the bubble: Approaches to contextual practice within fine art education* (pp. 76–82). London: London Institute.

Matarasso, F. (2019). *A restless art: How participation won, and why it matters.* London: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, UK Branch.

Meskimmon, M., & Robinson, H. (n.d.). *Critical pedagogies in the neoliberal university: Expanding the feminist field in the 21st-century art school.* Retrieved from https://forarthistory.org.uk/our-work/conference/2019-annual-conference/critical-pedagogies-in-the-neoliberal-university-expanding-the-feminist-field-in-the-21st-century-art-school/

Middlesex University. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.mdx.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/art-and-social-practice

Moore College of Art. (n.d.). *In/Out: Ethics, attention and intention in socially-engaged art.* Retrieved from https://mooreedu.ticketleap.com/inoutphilly/details

Morgan, S. J. (2003). Beautiful impurity: British contextualism as processual postmodern practice, *Journal of Visual Art Practice, 2*(3*),* 135–144. doi: 10.1386/jvap.2.3.135/0

Morgan, S. J. (1995). Looking Back Over 25 Years. In M. Dickson (Ed.), *Art with people* (pp. 16–27). Sunderland: AN Publications.

Naidus, B. (2005). Arts for change: Teaching outside the frame. In M, Miles (Ed.), *New practices, new pedagogies: A reader* (pp. 163–176). London: Routledge.

Department of Education and Science, National Advisory Council on Art Education. (1970). *The Structure of Art and Design Education in the Further Education Sector.* (Report of a Joint Committee of the National Advisory Council on Art Education and the National Council for Diplomas in Art and Design). London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Permar, R. (2015) Fragile Territories. In M. Walsh, & M. Throp (Eds.), *Twenty years of Make Magazine: Back to the future of women's art* (pp. 169–182). London: Tauris.

Pugh, S. (2008, May 28). *Obituary: Roy Trollope.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2008/may/29/otherlives.obituaries

Reisz, M. (2019, April 30). *Can artists still push the limits of performance in universities?* Retrieved from https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/can-artists-still-push-limits-performance-universities

Saloman, N., & Breakwell, S. (2019, April 6). *Excavating contemporary art education: Tracing the history of Fine Art Critical Practice at Brighton*. Retrieved from https://blogs.brighton.ac.uk/facp/2019/04/05/tracing-the-history-of-facp/

Social Practice Lab. (n.d.). *About Us*. Retrieved from https://www.socialpracticelab.org/about-us/

Thompson, J. (2005). Art education: From Coldstream to QAA. *Critical Quarterly, 47*(1–2*),* 215–225. doi: 10.1111/j.0011-1562.2005.00641.x

Tickner, L. (2008). *Hornsey 1968: The art school revolution.* London: Frances Lincoln.

University of the Arts London. (2019, April 03). *BA (Hons) Fine Art.* Retrieved from https://www.arts.ac.uk/subjects/fine-art/undergraduate/ba-hons-fine-art-csm

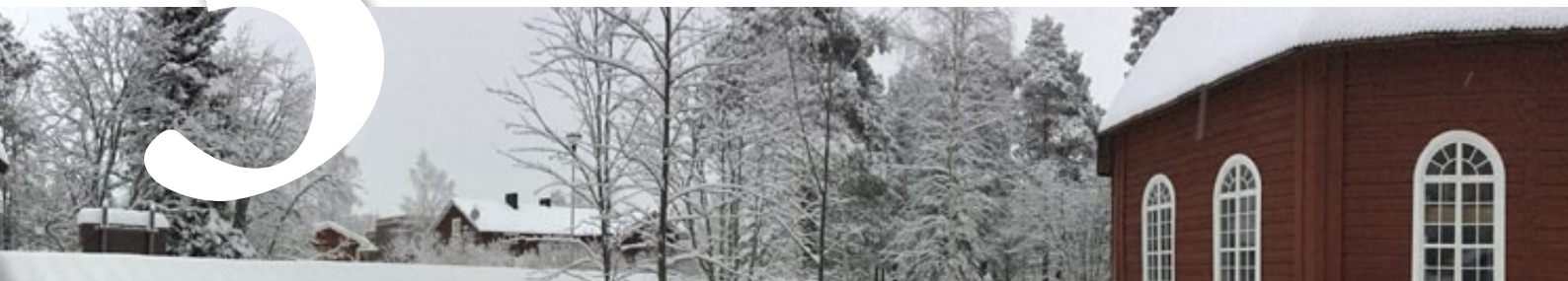
University of the Highlands and Islands. (n.d.). *Art and Social Practice.* Retrieved from https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/courses/ma-art-and-social-practice/

Victoria and Albert Museum. *Friday Late: Art Schooled.* (2019, April 25). Retrieved from https://www.vam.ac.uk/event/5WBLL0EP/friday-late-april-2019

Annika Hellman
Mid Sweden University, Sundsvall, Sweden

Aesthetic Learning Encounters at the Old Church of Jokmokk

3



Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to add to the body of knowledge about what aesthetic learning encounters might be and become by investigating local events of learning in a Swedish higher education visual art course. By making visible how aesthetic learning encounters unfold in an educational practice, the aim is to improve understandings of what learning in open-ended and experimental processes might mean for a learner and for visual art education. The research material consists of one student's portfolio from a visual art course in a teacher training programe. To create a sustainable and ethical visual art education, it seems necessary to collaborate with the students on their learning processes, and being sensitive to the student's expectations. At the same time, what Deleuze calls the collectively *shared image of thought* (1968/2014) regarding what visual art learning should be and look like needs to be challenged. Doing so allows student subjectivity to expand beyond the academic fields of knowledge, which in turn helps students to access the power of being heard and trusting their own abilities to change and make changes as a collaborative process.

In Sweden, aesthetic learning processes have been established as both an academic field and a subject within teacher training programes; they appear in school contexts at all levels in the educational system (Anderson, 2014; Björck, 2014; Burman, 2014; Hellman, 2014). Aesthetic learning processes are characterized by a process similar to the entangled root system of rhizome plants, such as crab grass, where one plant can send off root threads that creates new plants (nodes/thoughts) in unexpected places.[1] Thinking about learning as a rhizome affirms the complexity of learning, and makes pedagogical simplification visible as an after construction (Hellman, 2014). Lind defines aesthetic learning processes as part of rhizomatic (network) becoming. It is about:

> *twisting and turning the creative learning process from new discursive positions, in order to reach trustful and responsible access to the production of meaning and desires in an aesthetic visual knowledge production. It is a process that is open for unpredictable connections,*

> *unexpected leaps, conclusions and testing, instead of a process that is locked into producing that which is expected.* (Lind, 2010/2013, p. 358)

Thus, an aesthetic learning process includes specific ways of knowing that involve the crisscrossing and constant adding of different intersections of knowledge, which in turn creates unexpected and merged constructions of actualisations that represent the materialisation of ideas: in this case, visual creations of art, culture and communication. The qualities of aesthetic learning processes have to do with both the unexpected linking of objects, thoughts and areas of knowledge, as well as the disentanglement of what we already know. Based on the research about aesthetic learning processes presented here, I suggest that aesthetic learning is fruitful both as a concept and an educational practice in resisting neoliberal discourse and to unleash creative potential through learning encounters (Hellman & Lind, 2017). Learning encounters here refer to human and non-human assemblages that connect, transform and expand. Assemblages may be thought of as complex arrangements and connections involving bodies, objects and expressions that come together and temporally create new ways of functioning (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987/2004). In everyday language, one could say that assemblages involve relations and collaborations not only to humans, but also regarding non-human objects and materiality.

The importance of aesthetic subjects was stressed in the Swedish school curricula reform of 1999, and creative activities [*skapande verksamhet*] were defined to be driven by students' own questions and goals (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 1999, p. 63). The authors of the reform stated that answers are not given in aesthetic learning processes; teachers need to not only support students but also challenge their preconceptions through examples such as cultural experiences and artistic language.

In the teacher training reform of 2011, however, the space for aesthetic subjects was heavily reduced; aesthetic learning processes and aesthetic forms of expressions were removed from the core of teacher education (Lindgren & Ericsson, 2013; Regeringens proposition, 2009/10:89). Previous research that used Reggio Emilia Pedagogy to examine aesthetic learning processes in Sweden notes

that these methods clash with a school culture based on assignments (Ericsson & Lindgren, 2010; Hansson-Stenhammar, 2015; Karlsson Häikiö, 2007).

These curriculum changes can be understood as a sign of rising neoliberal managerialism, which strives to produce end-product driven education in a global context (Atkinson, 2016; Davies, 2009; Hellman & Lind, 2017). Predetermined pathways for learning often means finding the correct answer to a question or a problem, then stopping the learning process to give the correct answer (Hellman & Lind, 2019). This is a problem in visual arts education and for creativity in general, especially now when spaces for open-ended learning processes have been reduced or even removed entirely from curricula. Aesthetic learning processes cannot be regulated by a rational pedagogical discourse according to goal-means-results.

The purpose of this chapter is to add to the body of knowledge about what aesthetic learning encounters are and could become, by investigating local learning events in a higher education visual arts course. By making visible how aesthetic learning encounters unfold in educational practice, I intend to improve understandings of what learning in open-ended and experimental processes can mean for learners and for visual arts education. Moreover, I investigate and discuss the implications of aesthetic learning processes in an ethically sustainable education.

These aims are addressed through the following research questions:

- How do aesthetic learning encounters unfold in the visual arts classroom?
- How do students experience and reflect on their encounters with aesthetic learning processes?
- What are the implications for aesthetic learning on political, ethical and sustainable levels?

To answer these questions, I first establish the study's theoretical framework. Second, I explain the methods used and the context surrounding the investigation. I then present my results and analysis based on one empirical example: a visual arts portfolio submitted by a student named Doris in the Leisure Time Teacher Training Program in Sweden. I was both teacher to Doris and researcher

for the present study. Doris's experience contributes to a meaningful discussion about aesthetic learning encounters and how they can lead to a sustainable and ethical future for visual arts educators, students and researchers, as presented at the end of this paper.

Theoretical Framework

Image of Thought: A Posthuman Ontology

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze (1968/2014) introduces the concept of 'image of thought'. This concept refers to dogma that crushes real thought under an image of thought. Here, thoughts are assimilated and naturalised to make us think that we think, when in fact we are only reproducing an image of thought. Deleuze uses the idea to demonstrate how the concept of thinking is taken for granted in philosophy and questions whether we think at all. According to Deleuze, we are born into a conformative tradition of thinking, manifested through examples such as common sense and cultural conventions. 'Thinking' involves the process of recognition and subjective connections to previous thoughts, which restricts us to 'thinking' only that which is already known. Real thinking, for Deleuze, is to think without an image (of thought), which means to think of what we do not recognise. Thought is therefore a process of becoming 'other' within the self, or to differ from oneself; this multiplicity and the divisions within oneself provoke thought (Deleuze, 1968/2014). In their later work, Deleuze and Guattari (1991/1994) introduce the concept of 'the new image of thought', which suggests that real thinking is not about the lack of an image but to think with a new image of thought that is non-representational. The new image of thought precedes or exceeds all conceptual orders and is driven by forces, relations and becomings; it is the ground for all thinking and concepts. In this way, thinking can become a truly creative act, freed from conventions and common sense (Hein, 2017). In an educational context, the image of thought can be the assimilating, habitual and procedural frameworks of institutional learning that normalises the way we think.

Methods and Context

Mapping Aesthetic Learning Processes

Using cartography to explore events in a visual arts classroom entails studying the milieu as social, material, affective and intensive, as well as investigating how people navigate and move in trajectories or itineraries to fulfil their needs, desires, driving forces and curiosities while eluding social constraints (Lenz Taguchi, 2012). The milieu and trajectories are closely intertwined: 'the trajectory merges not only with the subjectivity of those who travel through a milieu, but also with the milieu itself, insofar as it is reflected in those who travel through it' (Deleuze, 1997, p. 61). In this research, cartographic tracing and mapping of the aesthetic learning process includes local events of learning through art's event of becoming. This is a 'becoming' process for humans as visual arts teachers as well as the becoming or production of the milieu; here, the milieu refers to the visual arts classroom and locations investigated in the learning process. The methods of analysis draw from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987/2004) theories for intervening (in this case by researching) and inventing. In the present context, this implies discussing what the potential or future implications of the study might be (Jackson & Mazzei, 2013). It is equally important to highlight the ethical responsibility of the researcher, since the production of knowledge contributes to the future of the milieu for humans and non-humans alike (Lenz Taguchi, 2012).

The Researched Milieu

Because of the curricula changes of 2011, students of the Leisure Time Teacher Training Program must choose between visual arts or physical education as their qualification to teach in elementary school. Those who chose visual arts cited either interest or experience in the subject; some expressed concerns that they did not know anything about visual art-making when entering the course. In this chapter I focus on the portfolio of a student enrolled in the visual arts course in the autumn semester of 2018. In addition to serving as the researcher for this study, I was also the teacher of the visual arts course; as such, I documented the

course both as a teacher and a researcher via text and photographs. The class included 20 students and consisted partly of distance studies; this meant that I only met the students five times in one semester, each time over a three-day period. It was the first time that I taught this course, and I sensed that both the students and I had an open and explorative approach; following hunches and being sensitive to classroom relations. The course took form in a collaborative ongoing process where the students and I reflected and discussed the course as it unfolded. All students in the course signed consent forms that permitted me to access their portfolios for research.

During the course, the students received an assignment called 'Aesthetic Learning Processes'. This project, which ran through the whole semester, consisted of a series of missions. I devised the missions in an ongoing process as the course developed, discussing and negotiating with the students as I did so. In the first mission, I asked them to choose a place that had personal meaning and investigate it visually. I encouraged them to approach the place as an archaeologist or a detective at a crime scene. The students made visual and textual notes and collected materials and objects from their respective locations. They researched the places physically and materially on-site, then investigated the location's history online and through interviews with people of their choosing. Their explorations involved the question, 'who do I become at this place?'. To explore this, the students used visual arts techniques such as sketching, painting and drawing (tools included graphite, charcoal, crayons, aquarelle, ink, video and photography). I asked the students to design a display using materials and objects found at their locations, and the displays were photographed. Finally, the students created antitype images of their locations, analysing and locating discourses (ways and orders of seeing) connected to their selected places, and attempted to challenge dominant ways of seeing by visual means. Each student's visual work was presented in a portfolio along with their reflections. One student, Doris, chose to investigate the old church of Jokmokk in the town where she grew up.

Example: A Learning Encounter with the Old Church of Jokmokk

The old church of Jokmokk is called *Lappkyrkan* in everyday speech. The word 'Lapp' [Lapplander] refers to the indigenous people of Sweden, who are now called 'Samer' [Sami]. Doris wrote that the church was originally built in 1753, but it burned down in 1972 and was then rebuilt. As Doris lived in Jokmokk most of her life, she was well acquainted with the church. She remembered rumours from her childhood that the church area was haunted by the inhabitants of coffins stored in the wall surrounding the building [bogårdsmur], and she never dared to pass by the church after dark. The ground outside the church froze in winter, so the coffins were stored in the wall until spring when the frost would give way and graves could be dug. Doris described the wall as made of robust timber with room for new coffins.

Figures 1 and 2. *Visual documentation through 180-degree photographs outside and inside the old Jokmokk church. Photographs: Doris, 2018.*

Figure 3. *The wall around the church [bogårdsmur] with space for storing coffins. Photograph: Doris, 2018.*

In her portfolio, Doris wrote:

> *All of my three children are baptised here, and there are often concerts and musical events here. My memories of the church are of peace and joyfulness, not about grief. I wondered why there are no funerals in this church. When I went to the parish house to interview some persons there, they told me that the church is too small to bring a coffin inside. I was given the key to the church for the day; it is with great respect that I unlock and step inside. The sun is shining through the old window glass, and it makes one experience serenity, I feel all the stress draining off me. It feels exciting to be alone and to have the*

opportunity to investigate the church and the things in there more closely … The hymn books I found were in Swedish, South-Sami and North-Sami language … The furnishing and decoration are influenced by the Sami culture, the antependium [a textile to decorate the altar] has an embroidery of tin thread with Sami patterns …

Figure 4. *Display with artefacts and a drawing of tin embroidery from the church. Photograph: Doris, 2018.*

Even though the church was very familiar to Doris, she experienced a new connection to it and learned something more, a deeper understanding of the place. Her learning process was created through the event in which personal experiences met with visual investigation. As teacher, I could not predict or control this learning process; further, I had no personal knowledge of the Jokmokk church or its history. Each time a student presented his or her visual

investigation of a place, everyone in the class learned something new. The assignment led to a multiplicity of relational learning, knowing and knowledge sharing about places that had previously been unknown to us.

At the end of the course, Doris investigated practices of looking at the church (and churches in general). For her last assignment, she created a series of photomontages that challenged normal ways of looking at churches, for an example how churches are depicted on postcards. In one image, she took a photo of the church's exterior and added the emblem of the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club to the sign outside the building. She also staged an event through a series of photographs where the church became a crime scene; she even borrowed and put up yellow-and-black striped tape from the police to stage the scene. Doris showed these photographs to her colleagues at the local leisure time centre. One of her colleagues was disturbed by the images, and another warned Doris that she might get into trouble if the images became public. They told her that she was disrespectful towards the church and the homestead of Jokmokk. Doris became upset and worried, she contacted me and asked if she had done wrong, and if she should delete the photomontages and redo the assignment. We had a conversation about the many examples of art and media's power to affect or provoke people. This led to a very valuable discussion in class about ethics and the potential of visual art to challenge images of thought and habitual ways of seeing. When I contacted Doris about using her portfolio example in this study, she stated that she did not want the provocative photo montages to be published. However, she wrote that she felt very happy and proud of her work with the Jokmokk church.

Doris's explorative visual investigation resulted in unexpected connections between objects, different areas of knowledge and the actualisation or materialisation of personal knowledge, affect, thoughts and learning. When the course was evaluated, some students expressed that they first found the assignment of aesthetic learning processes difficult to interpret, but in the end, it was the most important experience for many of the students. The potentials, or the force of visual art, culture and communication has to do with disrupting procedural, normative learning in institutional contexts. This force enables new ways

of seeing and understanding, which seems highly valuable in an educational context that is mainly governed by prescribed learning. Although the students worked individually with the assignment, it was a relational and collaborative learning encounter that involved humans, places, affects, buildings, digital technologies, memories, thought and visual art materials. These relational encounters between humans and non-human objects generated dynamics with unpredictable learning processes that intensified the virtual power of becoming. Based on course literature and her own learning experiences, Doris wrote the following about the specific qualities of aesthetic learning and how, in her perceptions, it can matter to a learner:

> *An aesthetic learning process does not aim at a specific goal with an expected result, it is about the student's choices that creates different directions in the process. It is a process of investigating where students are trying things out and the result is determined by what the student consider important. An aesthetic learning process … it is about developing participation so that they [the students] can have the possibility to express themselves freely and combine different forms of expressions.*

Doris demonstrates 'becoming' in at least three ways. First, she is becoming an artist through her investigations at the Jokmokk church, working with different visual art materials and figuring out how to create and express her new experience and knowledge in a visual way. Second, Doris is becoming a researcher through merging with the explorative process much like an ethnographer, allowing her encounters with materials, persons and objects to create the continuation of the process. She investigates systematically without knowing what the results might be. Third, Doris is in the process of becoming a teacher, which is visible in her written portfolio reflections where she discusses her own learning process in relation to imagining her future as a visual arts teacher at an elementary school.

Discussion

If the curriculum changes of 2011 are any indication, aesthetic learning processes are undesirable politically. Therefore, it is an important task to bring forward the benefits but also addressing the risks of aesthetic learning processes. Rhizomatic learning processes are unpredictable, thus challenging the neoliberal ideal of education and learning. A neoliberal ideal in educational settings rely on images of thought and, in doing so, reproduce the already known and assimilate students' learning processes (Atkinson, 2016). In the culture of organising learning through assignments that follow prescribed stages of learning instead of learning processes based on curiosity, current educational settings run the risk of creating streams of assimilation that standardise students' becoming and learning processes.

It should be noted that pedagogical learning encounters can also become too much of a risk for some students. Therefore, it is necessary to think and act ethically as a teacher by taking responsibility for the process and demonstrating relational sensitivity. This research example of working with images that challenge norms shows not only the possibilities of how aesthetic learning encounters might unfold, but also the limits, restrictions and taboos of visual experimentation even within an educational and 'secure' context. In the example of Doris, she was exposed and vulnerable to the critique of her co-workers at the leisure time centre, since they were provoked by her images. As a result, aesthetic learning processes are not only challenging and unpredictable in positive ways, they might also put the student in different kinds of trouble. The unpredictability of aesthetic learning processes also might include students getting involved in difficult dilemmas and experiencing undesired conflicts or confusion. The students experienced very different learning processes and insecurities about the assignment. As a teacher, I tried to consider the ethics of the assignment with its missions, keeping in mind the possibility of students feeling at loss or experiencing meaninglessness instead of an aesthetic learning encounter. The learning encounters presented demonstrates how vital it is for teachers to be sensitive to students' different experiences and to be available should they need guidance. To create a sustainable and ethical visual art education, one has to negotiate and be sensitive to student needs for recognition while at the same

time challenge the collectively shared image of thought regarding what visual art learning should be and look like. Doing so allows student subjectivity to expand beyond the academic fields of knowledge, which in turn helps students to access the power of being heard and seen and to trust their own and collective abilities to change and make changes. In doing so, they might surpass the image of thought in a responsible, and ethical mode of learning.

In short, visual arts education should not be located at either extreme: it should not be all about reproducing traditions of depicting or expressionism, but neither should it romanticise ideas of radically overthrowing existing traditions and common conceptions of visual art education. In this research, I question a radical approach to visual art education since it might not be ethical or feel unsafe for the students. Similarly, it would not be a sustainable way of thinking about power; charging students with the task of creating a meaningful learning process by themselves is neither a democratic nor responsible approach, if the students feel they have been abandoned or put out at risk. This seems true even if the assignment is an act against the habitual or prescribed learning currently dominating education. One cannot bring ethics and sustainability to a situation by simply reversing existing orders and hierarchies. Instead, this research stress the importance of democratically negotiating the more radical ideas about visual art education with the normative image of thought about what visual art education should be, in a collaborative learning process. For a student, it might be necessary to risk a leap of thought so that norms can be detected and challenged; for this to happen, the classroom environment must be relational, responsible and trustful. It is the function of the teacher to create assignments that can stimulate unpredictable learning processes and creativity, and a necessary ground for this is to build and maintain relationships of trust. This is a delicate and complex ecology that involves collaboration, subject-specific learning, modes of expressing knowledge, student comprehension of learning, different states of affect and intensities, and who and what may connect to the learning assemblage. Once these learning encounters pick up speed, the learning will be partly uncontrollable; which is why the interweaving and negotiation of aesthetics, learning and ethics is of crucial importance.

Endnote

[1] Rhizome is an example of an assemblage, a concept used by Deleuze and Guattari, described in the introduction of their book A thousand plateaus (1987/2004).

References

Andersson, M. (2014). *Narrative possibilities: multimodal narratives and aesthetic learning processes* (Doctoral thesis, Luleå University of Technology, Luleå, Sweden). Retrieved from https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:998888/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Atkinson, D. (2016). Without criteria: art and learning and the adventure of pedagogy. *International Journal of Art & Design Education, 36*(2), 141–152. doi: 10.1111/jade.12089

Björck, C. (2014). *'Klicka där!' En studie om bildundervisning med hjälp av datorer* ['Click there!' A study about visual art education with computers] (Doctoral thesis, Stockholm University, Stockholm, Sweden). Retrieved from http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:706466/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Burman, A. (Ed.). (2014). *Konst och lärande: essäer om estetiska lärprocesser* [Art and learning: essays on aesthetic learning processes]. Huddinge: Södertörns högskola.

Davies, B. (2009). Deleuze and the arts of teaching and research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 22*(5), 625–630. doi: 10.1080/09518390903143650

Deleuze, G. (1968/2014). *Difference and repetition.* London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Deleuze, G. (1997). *Essays critical and clinical.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987/2004). *A thousand plateaus: capitalism and schizophrenia*. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1991/1994). *What is philosophy?* London: Verso.

Ericsson, C., & Lindgren, M. (2010). *Musikklassrummet i blickfånget: vardagskultur, identitet, styrning och kunskapsbildning* [Focusing on the music classroom: everyday culture, governance and knowledge making]. Halmstad: Sektionen för lärarutbildning, Högskolan i Halmstad. Retrieved from https://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:375589/FULLTEXT01.pdf

Hansson Stenhammar, M. (2015). *En avestetiserad skol- och lärandekultur: en studie om lärprocessers estetiska dimensioner* [A de-aestheticised school and learning culture: a study on the aesthetic dimensions of learning processes]. Gothenburg: Göteborg University.

Hein, S. (2017). Deleuze's new image of thought: challenging the dogmatic image of thought in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(9), 656–665. doi: 10.1177/1077800417725354

Hellman, A. (2014). *Intermezzon i medieundervisningen: gymnasieelevers visuella röster och subjektspositioneringar* [Intermezzo in media education: upper secondary pupils' visual voices and subject positions]. Gothenburg: Art Monitor.

Hellman, A., & Lind, U. (2017). Picking up speed: Re-thinking visual art education as assemblages. *Studies in Art Education, 58*(3), 206–221. doi: 10.1080/00393541.2017.1331091

Hellman, A. & Lind, U. (2019). Gendered Interventions: Changes in Visual Art Education in Sweden: Discourses, Practices and Materiality. *Synnyt/Origins,* August, 2019.

Jackson, A., & Mazzei, L. (2013). Plugging one text into another: thinking with theory in qualitative research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 19*(4), 261–271. doi: 10.1177/1077800412471510

Karlsson Häikiö, T. (2007). *Barns estetiska läroprocesser: Atelierista i förskola och skola* [Children's aesthetic learning processes: atelierista in preschool and school]. Gothenburg: Göteborg University.

Lenz Taguchi, H. (2012). A diffractive and Deleuzian approach to analysing interview data. *Feminist Theory, 13*(3), 265–281.

Lind, U. (2010/2013). *Blickens ordning: bildspråk och estetiska lärprocesser som kulturform och kunskapsform* [The order of seeing: visual languages and aesthetic learning processes as forms of culture and knowledge]. Stockholm: Stockholm University.

Lindgren, M., & Ericsson, C. (2013). Diskursiva legitimeringar av estetisk verksamhet i lärarutbildningen [Discursive legitimacy for aesthetic activities in the teacher training programe]. *Educare, 1*, 7–40.

Lindstrand, F., & Selander, S. (Eds.). (2009*). Estetiska lärprocesser: upplevelser, praktiker och kunskapsformer* [Aesthetic learning processes: experiences, practices and ways of knowing]. Lund: Studentlitteratur.

Proposition. 2009/10:89. *Bäst i klassen: en ny lärarutbildning* [Best in class: a new teacher training education]. Retrieved from https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/proposition/2010/02/prop.-20091089/

Statens offentliga utredningar. (1999). *Att lära och leda: en lärarutbildning för samverkan och utveckling* [To learn and to lead: a teacher training program for collaboration and development]. Retrieved from https://www.regeringen.se/rattsliga-dokument/statens-offentliga-utredningar/1999/05/sou-199963/

Melanie Sarantou,
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

Sanna Sillgren
Designer, Veikkola, Finland

Laura Pokela
Designer, Helsinki, Finland

In her Lap:
Embodied Learning Through Making

4

"Art is valued for its truthfulness and educational efficacy."
(Bishop, 2006, p. 183)

The significance of laps, specifically women's laps, as bodily spheres in which making, learning and other informal activities take place remains predominantly unrecognised. The relationship between making, bodily spaces, places and laps is explored herein through self-portrayals of the three authors, or artist-researchers, each of whom provide personal anecdotes, observations and reflections on their experiences with lapwork. The chapter employs the methodological strategy of arts-based research (ABR), supported by a collaborative autoethnographic (CAE) approach. Research methods used include group discussions, observations, probes and self-documentation through note taking and photography. The contribution of this chapter to knowledge is the sustainable role of lapwork in making practices in extreme environments such as the North and the Arctic. The role of laps in supporting embodied learning enables the reinterpretation of spaces that support thinking and learning while doing and making.

This chapter will render audible and visible the making practices, art and research of the three authors. These artist-researchers have been working collaboratively over many years and on several projects globally; two are art and design practitioners from Finland, more specifically from Veikkola and Helsinki, while the third lives and works in both Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland and the West Coast of South Australia. The chapter seeks to understand how craft and design practices that are executed in built environments within the extreme natural environments of the North and Arctic areas sustain practitioners, their identity processes and the transferral of skills. These built environments, including homes and work studios, are simultaneously limiting and enabling places.

Making is the "correspondence between maker and material", says Ingold (2013, p. xi). According to Luckman (2015), making is a result of agency, of both individuals and groups, in the physical world through their "capacity to work with and upon materials" (p. 82). Since 2005, with the broad acknowledgment

of a new "making renaissance" that started with the launch of Etsy.com (p. 1), making is again closely associated with satisfying human needs and desiring a "good life" rather than purely with profit (p. 83–84). Making at home is considered "family friendly" work that offers choice, flexibility and the possibility of looking after children while at home (p. 89–90).

Working in one's lap, also referred to as lapwork (Johnson & Wilson, 2005), is not a new phenomenon. Lapwork is an intimate and social practice that has been observed globally in the artefact-making contexts of many communities (Sarantou, 2017). Laps, and the capacity and role of the human body in expressive language (Sennet, 2008), support practices such as craft making that assist women in particular in identifying their place in this world (Johnson & Wilson, 2005). Skin, as a surface, is associated with external and internal fabric that is integral to feminine identities (Farber, 2006). The bodily surface and space of laps are similarly integral to femininity. Laps can sustain identities such as mother, craftswoman, maker and teacher. This chapter thus pursues the following research question: "How can lapwork contribute to sustainable knowledge transfer and learning?"

The previously established and trusted relationships amongst the artist-researcher group, which resulted from multiple shared working and research experiences, influenced the selection of the specific research approaches, ABR and CAE. Simultaneously collaborative and autoethnographic, yet not antithetical, CAE is a qualitative research method (Chang, Ngunjiri, & Hernandez, 2016) based on a subjective approach that draws on insider knowledge and personal experience (Ellis & Adams, 2014). Lapadat (2017) describes the CAE approach as multi-vocal, as several researchers collaborate in sharing and reflecting upon personal experiences and stories, followed by interpretation of the data. Thus, CAE enables a shift from personal to group agency as the roles of researcher and the researched are vested in one person, who thus holds the potential to be personally engaged (Lapadat, 2017; Liamputtong & Rumbold, 2008).

The authors' selected methodology is integral to, and perhaps a result of their artmaking and ongoing conversations across vast distances. The following reflections and personal anecdotes of the authors Sillgren and Pokela on their

motivations for participating in the research and exploring the research question illustrate the engaging nature of both the ABR and CAE approaches. The authors explain:

> *I have changed the way I am doing my art due to my life changes, moving from a studio to my home, from a table to my lap. The change has been partially a spontaneous response to the fact that I became a mother. Downsizing my studio space for making art has given me more freedom in expression, and much to my surprise, I discovered that currently I have more time and variety in my creative processes. I am happy that my child can be central to the process, learning skills and knowledge.* (Sillgren, 2019)

> *For me, lapwork has become a way of being. It is an important means of evoking thought processes, generating ideas and creating space for silence and tranquillity in the everyday. The outcomes of my work, its idea, shape, colours and finishing, are a result of my reflections during lapwork. I am interested in exploring how my improvisatory approach and studying of colour and technique lead the process. I find the physicality of lapwork calming. At times it has a meditative function. Especially in the dark, cold seasons, it strengthens my mental resilience and, as a side effect, fulfils the need to do something physical. These traits, the informal settings, my tools and accessible technology create fertile, sustainable circumstances for learning that motivate me to study and research in my individual way.* (Pokela, 2019)

Due to the collective and reflexive approach of CAE, it is non-exploitative and accessible, thus enabling the researched to be more at ease with the research process (Lapadat, 2017; Liamputtong & Rumbold, 2008). In other words, CAE retains a focus on self-interrogation, but it is a pragmatic and iterative approach to enquiry due to its joint elements of data collection and analysis (Chang et al., 2016). When considering the specific nature of this research approach to inves-

tigate lapwork, the artist-researchers were able to balance sensitive issues such as vulnerability and trustworthiness due to the interdependencies in the research with teamwork, which offers a distinct opportunity for CAE. The purpose of this chapter is to emphasise the role of bodily spheres in knowledge transfer, craft and design practices and care that is extended towards the self, others and making. The chapter will embark on a deeper exploration of the methodology, presentation of each participant's encounter with laps and making processes, as well as their personal stories. The final discussion will offer reflections on the roles of laps in making and learning processes.

Theoretical Considerations

This section of the chapter discusses themes including the relationship between surfaces and place, with a specific reference to Northern and Arctic places, learning and skills transfer, embodied practices and arts. Homes and household textiles exemplify the familiarity of the relationship between textiles and architecture, surfaces and place. The relationship between places and laps, as both spaces and surfaces, is discussed in this chapter. In connecting places, spaces and surfaces, Schatzki and Natter (1996) also refer to the surface of the body as "the slate upon which is inscribed the marks of culture, human coexistence, and social toil...the flesh that is symbolically and meaningfully punctured, incised, decorated, clothed, done up, disguised, stylized" (p. 5). This ancient familiarity is further supported by the crafting of textiles and other artefacts in places, including homes and work studios, where making often comes about in bodily spheres such as women's laps. The interrelationship of surface and place has been foregrounded (Carlin, 2017), while the role of women's laps as complex spaces for learning in which craft and cultural activities are practiced has been illustrated (Sarantou, 2017).

The North, including Finland and Arctic Lapland, are specifically referenced in this discussion of the relationship between place, surface and space. Grayling (2002) argues that "civilisation-producing leisure" used to be an organic part of work (p. 174). He explains:

> *In the season of plenty – which, paradoxically, was winter, when the grain and the salted pork were safely stored – darkness and hard frosts kept people indoors, making things, including songs, stories, carvings and textiles. From this change of occupation which the flux of seasons enforced was born painting, theatre and music. From it also came science, in reflection on experience gathered during the working parts of the year.* (p. 174–175)

Learning in this chapter is broadly understood as the acquisition of skills or knowledge through experience, iteration, study or being taught. Sennet (2008) notes that skills development "depends on how repetition is organised" and that skills are expanded and developed through the open relationships "between problem solving and problem finding" (p. 38). Grayling (2002) understands liberal education as going beyond learning about doing an occupation well following schooling but instead extending to a continuation of learning throughout life, especially gaining an appreciation of the arts to supplement scientific and practical subjects. He defines learning as the ability to "think, and question, and know how to find answers" when needed (p. 158). The contributing role of practices that are underpinned by the arts in the improvement of the "means and ends of education" has been examined and established by Eisner (2002, p. 4). Grayling (2002) continues to argue that an appreciation for the arts and ongoing education enable reflexivity, which means living more knowledgeably and having consideration and tolerance for the interests and needs of others (p. 158–159).

The exploration of the sustainability of craft and design practices in Northern and Arctic places will focus on women's laps as embodied surfaces and spaces. The chapter considers the role of perhaps more private home and bodily spaces, as well as embodied practices and learning. Importantly, Schatski and Natter (1996) consider the person as the "home of distinction between the self and body", which they understand as a lived body (Chapman, 1998). Embodiment can be defined as "physical states that arise during interaction with the world and that arise from introspection" (Effron, Niedenthal, Gil, & Droit-

Volet, 2006, p. 2). On a personal level, one's own embodied experiences usually refer to the particularities and specificities of lived experiences (Chapman, 1998). Dialectical relationships between external appearances of embodiment, thus bodies as surfaces that reflect social values and morality, have been foregrounded (Longhurst, 1997; Ansell, 2009), whilst embodiment also refers to more private and emotional experiences (Ansell, 2009). Dialectical relationships between bodies and societies are also established as Ansell (2009) notes: "Society works on bodies while, in turn, bodies work on society." The body is therefore socially shaped through diverse techniques and practices, often referring to the ways families, organisations and societies function (Chapman, 1998). These practices include art and craft making, learning and other embodied practices, including cognitive functions.

Perspectives on embodied learning should not preference the body over the mind. Reflective practices may facilitate learning by drawing on a combination of embodied experience, our conceptual frameworks and levels of consciousness (Jordi, 2010). Embodied thinking and learning (Patel, 2008), which acknowledges and considers the critical role of bodies in work, balances more abstract notions of learning (Stolz, 2015). Embodied forms of personal experience also underpin processes of educational work and research (Chapman, 1998). As the divides between formal and informal education become more blurred, Jokela and Coutts (2015) call for more research into the "place and practice of socially engaged arts" (p. 9). Socially Engaged Arts (SEA) refers to the creative outcomes of our creative and participatory social fabric (Bishop, 2005). SEA is by definition multidisciplinary, lending a central space to social interaction as it depends on actual, and not imagined, social action (Helguera, 2011). With the call of Jokela and Coutts in mind, this chapter explores SEA and participatory practices that generate creative energies that re-humanize the world in the face of fragmentation by suppressive instrumentalities (Bishop, 2005), such as pressures on nuclear families and learning models, in ways that will enable future generations to cope with an ever-changing world.

Methodology

The CAE process, guided by the pragmatic approach of Chang and colleagues (2016), started with two group discussions and sharing sessions in Veikkola, Finland. In these sessions, the phenomenon or lapwork was discussed, methodology was selected, the research question was formulated and possible research papers were planned. This was followed by a physical exploration and examination, or probing, of lapwork by the three artist-researchers in their usual places of work. Research methods included group discussions, observations, probes and self-documentation through note taking and photography. ABR has the potential to address subtle nuances such as diversity, politics of gender and identity, and power and justice that are often overlooked by other approaches (Leavy, 2015). These nuances often emerge when participants have the opportunity to express their reflections, personal narratives and lived experiences through art-making processes.

Cultural probing involves the use of a set of stimulating tools and materials that may possibly offer a strategy for experimental design (Gaver, Dunne, & Pacenti, 1999). The strength of the cultural probing method is that the outcomes are specific to the purpose, people and environment of the research context (p. 29). The artist-researchers were responsible for selecting their own "probing kits" (Hemmings, Crabtree, Rodden, Clarke, & Rouncefield, 2002), which consisted of the tools for making and documenting their testing and examination of lapwork, such as smartphones, thread, beads, needles and crochet hooks (see the Portrayals section). This phase was followed by group sharing sessions that consisted of reflections, note taking and photo documentation via a smartphone application (*WhatsApp*). The artists continued unstructured discussions for one year whilst working on a series of art exhibitions that enabled proactive reflection on their lapwork, preliminary meaning making, group meaning making and theme searches. Finally, the emerging themes identified from analysis, narrative interpretation and ongoing reflection were processed through group writing (p. 25).

The benefits of CAE lie in the sharing of power between the researchers and the researched, the efficiency of the pragmatic and iterative process, and its mutual enrichment through deeper learning of self and other (p. 21). Further,

the benefits of the selected approach to the current research are, following the outline of Chang and colleagues (2016), as follows: (a) renders the researcher/artist-makers visible; (b) offers a critically dialogic approach to reasoned questioning and answering; (c) is experience specific to the researchers; and (d) offers reflexivity in analysis (p. 21–25). Evidence of these benefits will become explicit in the Portrayal section of this chapter.

The challenges faced by the artist-researchers during the research process involved the division of tasks and responsibilities that had to be conducted individually and collaboratively despite the logistical impacts of working remotely from one another. At times, the group was widely separated, dispersed over continents and divided by vast distances. As a result, they had to rely on virtual correspondence and technological applications to maintain connections, continue discussions, share insights, analyse results and co-author the chapter. These are, however, also some of the ethical considerations that may be integral to the selected research approach.

Portrayals

This section introduces three portrayals of the authors, or artist-researchers, followed by personal anecdotes about their observations and reflections on their lapwork. Due to the selected data generation approach and effort to follow ethical practices, the portrayals are written in first person with the aim not to reduce and translate the data but to uphold sensitivity and authenticity and share ownership and copyright (Leavy, 2015). This approach also upholds the meaningful relationships that existed between the artist-researchers before and during this research process investigating laps as flexible and expandable surfaces that extend beyond bodily boundaries to accomplish necessary tasks in private spaces, whether for making, child rearing or learning.

Reflections from Veikkola

Sillgren's higher education history is in jewellery making. For more than a decade, she professionally produced jewellery in a large shared studio in Helsinki.

Figure 1. *Sillgren's lapwork titled "Koko, Keiko and Laika", 2019. Photographs: Sanna Sillgren, 2019.*

After having a daughter, she stayed at home for two years but felt the urge to continue to express her creativity. This led to taking up crocheting and making traditional quilts using granny squares. This suited her lifestyle as she could leave her work immediately when her child needed her attention. It didn't take much time before she started experimenting with crocheting techniques, starting with small items through which she wanted to experiment with processing of images derived from photos, memories and topics of personal importance. She wanted to explore making stories using crocheting techniques and materials such as metals and glass, combining hard and soft materials.

The artefacts she currently makes are wearable art and not jewellery. She uses tools such as crocheting hooks, scissors, her computer and photo editing software; her working space extends into a small drawer with wheels in her living room. After her parental leave, Sillgren discontinued her business and started to search for job opportunities. For the past five years, she has worked in the Finnish education system as a teacher.

I usually do my art at home in our living room. If I want to take it with me, I just need a bag to carry everything – usually the design printed on A4 paper, yarn, crochet hook and other materials such as metal rings or glass beads. My main profession is teaching, and I do my art when I have free time – weekends, holidays and evenings. Sometimes I do fifteen minutes at a time, because I don't have the luxury to do artwork eight hours a day, but I don't miss that luxury anymore. I love the freedom and easiness of dropping the work when necessary. At the same time, I love my full-time job teaching children. I do my artwork like people do their handicrafts at home, like knitting woollen socks during their free time. I relate to all sorts of yarn crafts that I learned from my mother and at school at an early age.

Not being economically dependent on the artwork has given me a sort of freedom of expression. I don't have to do the art, but I can, and I have a passion for it. Because of my history and the skills and techniques I learned from design, I use high quality and durable materials. I tend to do labour-intensive work. Some of my bags have up to 14,000 beads, each separately crocheted. For one year I worked on a collection of three bags. Because the work takes a long time, the theme of the work is important to tackle and complete in my lap.

My lap is a surface into which I can easily fit my work. Often, I need to put down my work if my child needs me or if I have other tasks waiting. I don't have to go anywhere to do my art, like driving to the studio for half an hour and back. My lap is where I am, and I can do my art when I have time. I don't need a large collection of expensive tools. The strength of my work is the creativeness, not the quantity of machinery or having a fancy studio in which to make it. At this point of my life, my lap is my perfect studio.

In Finland, we have four distinct seasons. I tend to do my art from autumn to spring. I am most effective during winter when we are forced to be inside. This has always been the way of women or people working in Finland. When I am doing my artwork, I start to plan summer activities, which include gardening, home improvements and building. During the summer, I am mostly outdoors, which I love as much as winter activities. When summer is turning to autumn, I start to concentrate more on my artwork.

I do many experiments before I choose a technique for a certain work. For each collection, I make many samples before starting the final bags. Image processing, making the templates, choosing material, and choosing the right crocheting technique takes at least a third of the processing time. Sometimes when making samples I have to go back to my drawing board and start again. From a picture or theme, I do a test template and then mimic the photo by crocheting in my lap. At that stage My main goal is not to achieve a good design. Therefore, my design decisions are not made next to my computer with image processing, but rather it comes together in my lap.

When my child asks me "What I should do?", I do not have an answer. She has a room full of toys. My students have a repertoire of learning tools. For a child to be bored is the key to innovation, a gateway for imagination. I am always happy when there is a child asking "What should I do?" or when a colleague is in distress, because I know that is when imagination can take over. When my child is overloaded with YouTube and sees me crocheting, finding my peace in simple lapwork, she also wants to try. The end result can be a dance, a bag or an installation. For me, crocheting is slow enough and my lap is big enough. It's a place where I can find my creativity and tranquillity. My child wants to find the same serenity and that is why she sometimes exchanges a mobile phone for doing crocheting with me.

Reflections from Helsinki

Pokela has a master of art degree in applied arts and works as a freelancer creating content for children's culture and as a design educator in an art school. Recently, she has worked on personal art and creating setups for plays and props for workshops. Her lapwork consists of material and technical trials, crafting pieces with yarns and textiles. Sometimes she makes functional pieces for home or mends her household textiles in creative ways. For her artwork, she now uses mostly recycled woollen yarns, sometimes cotton and linen. Her tools are crocheting hooks, sewing needles, scissors, sketchbooks and a smartphone.

> *I started with lapwork, doing needlework and knits, three years ago. It suits my current life situation, where I need flexible ways to do creative work. Surprisingly, it brought additional dimensions to my work. My main material used to be ceramics, but that demands a commitment to longer work periods and access to equipment. When I work*

Figure 2. *Pokela's lapwork titled "Knitting and knot experiments - processing idea and part of textile sculpture", 2019. Photographs: Laura Pokela, 2019.*

with yarns and textiles, I am not place-bound and only need simple tools. This gives me freedom to engage in spontaneous work, for a limited time, without preparations. I have a studio, but lapwork I do at home. My daily schedule is filled with facilitating workshops, teaching and planning work. These contents in addition to family life determine the hours and space that I use for works that require hand labour. I adjust my practices to suit this life phase, bringing home labour-intensive pieces for lapwork. I can spend time with family and the space needed is minimal, just a few yarn boxes and a place to sit.

Usually I work by the window in our living room, observing our nature in our courtyard. I like to work in the evenings when life calms down, often alone at night, sometimes earlier in the company of my children, while they are doing their own things. When they get interested, we discuss ideas, techniques and colours. Sometimes they want to learn and follow my example next to me. At times they get jealous of my work when they need my full attention or lap space. I find it valuable for them to see the creative process, perseverance and concentration.

The lap as a surface is practical, personal and intimate. Crafting on the body is a tactile experience, I feel the weight and texture of the material. I am sensitive to tactile features of things and choose materials that feel comfortable. The tactility of lap as a surface supports my focus. Repetitive work on a labour-intensive piece leads to a flow-state of making and builds tactile learning. I tend to forget ergonomics, and many hours of work leaves physical marks and makes me aware of my trajectories. Overworking creates discomfort, tensions and even abrasions. The lap changes from a comfortable space to a physical inconvenience, despite the good outcomes of work.

My lapwork is seasonal and situation bound. My focus changes between the dark and light periods of our four seasons. As daylight

decreases, we spend more time indoors and darkness creates an introverted ambiance. Lapwork supports my coping and I focus on realizing plans and finishing work, engaging in profound thought processes. The light months bring an extrovert twist to the everyday. We spend more time outdoors, in nature and in social activities, and at ascetic facilities in summerhouses. Lapwork is carried along, although I only do them occasionally in the lightest months.

Lapwork leads to thoughts of generational ties and cultural perceptions of materials and skills. My technical skills with yarnwork are not fine-tuned, but I see a continuation with the lapwork of my mother and grandmothers. They mostly made functional necessities, but our ways of working are quite similar and homebound. Even though they were technically skilled, their hours of labour, care and maintenance of lapworked textiles have affected me more than the technical side has.

I learned textile crafts in primary school but only found interest in them some years ago. Due to negative experiences in craft classes and perceptions from design studies, I saw lapwork as restricted by orthodox practice and tradition. My relation and interest changed during the last two decades. I started to see crafts from new perspectives, because they generally became more popular and due to my previous work with Namibian artisans. I saw my colleagues use old techniques in novel ways. At the same time, the internet filled with educational materials in formats suiting my way of learning through watching and making. I started to do needlework and knitting in my own way.

For studying a new technique, I use audio visual resources through my smartphone. For technical trials or studying theory, technology offers countless channels of data within reach anywhere. In the same work flow, I can do the practical work reflecting on the data. When the work evolves, I leave my smartphone and concentrate on making.

My art is a combination of focused expression and coincidence. To learn, I experiment with materials and techniques in an easy-going way, trying new means of expression. Interesting outcomes arise through trials, improvisation, investment of time, patience and trust in the process. My studies in needle- and knitwork are in an early stage. Lapwork is a comprehensive activity that enables me to process questions and finalize ideas in the making through learning in a bodily and tactile way.

Reflections from Rovaniemi (and Ceduna)

Sarantou's educational background spans postgraduate studies in fashion design, visual arts and business. Lapwork has always been part of her fashion design practices, despite working with machines, including cutting and fitting equipment. Her work rather rotated among her lap, machines and equipment. She understands her lapwork to extend and migrate between equipment and processes, therefore seeing equipment, for example her sewing machine, as an extension of her lap. Her lapwork processes include sewing, needle felting, embroidery,

Figure 3. *Sarantou's lapwork titled "Whom wore this?", 2019. Photographs: Melanie Sarantou, 2019.*

beading and writing. The usual equipment she relies on during lapwork includes needles, scissors, notebooks, pencils, lap trays, containers, a laptop, mobile phone and high-density felting pillow. She uses beads, threads, carded wool and textiles to create her current work.

Currently, Sarantou works as a researcher, moving between Rovaniemi in Finnish Lapland and Ceduna in South Australia. Her awareness of the role of her lap during extensive travelling with often limited space has intensified in the past few years. Having to rely on getting work done and tasks accomplished, including fulfilling her creative urges, predominantly in the confined space of her lap inspired this participatory research.

> *I work in weird and restricted places, such as cars, airplane seats and outside in campgrounds but also at home. I have two homes, one in the Arctic in Rovaniemi and one in the west coast of South Australia. I move between contrasting places all the time. That is why I understand my lap as a crucial part of my work, as it is a space in which I dwell a lot. Much time is spent here. Whether I make, write, edit, supervise or read, I seem to be constantly busy in my lap. My lapwork is therefore diverse. This space is important for all my processes. It is intimate and private. Here I can explore and experiment. But I also need breaks from it as it gets too intense at times being in this lap space all the time. I need to remember to relax outside of this space as well. My lap is not limited though, as it often extends to other surfaces, such as my lap tray or felting pillow.*
>
> *Living in the Arctic at times is quite different. Not being used to the dramatic changes in season, which happen so rapidly, I notice changes easily as it is quite strange and foreign to me. Since my childhood and adult life were spent in Namibia, I did not grow up with these extreme seasonal changes and rhythms that daylight can have in Rovaniemi. It is mind blowing, and I am many times struck by the extremity and beauty of the seasons in the Arctic. I tend to do lapwork in the Arctic*

all the time. In the dark, I kind of lose track of time, as I also do in the very light and long evenings of the warmer months. I just never seem to find my personal rhythm as I did in Namibia and do in Australia, so lapwork is ideal for the sleepless nights. I write a lot in the North, and if I stayed here for long times, I would be creating a lot. Somehow the urge to create always overwhelms me when I am here. But I create much of my art in Australia, in and outside of my lap, depending on the project that I am focusing on. There I have outdoor spaces to felt and be in the garden.

My lapwork carries me away. I reflect, ask questions and ponder life. In my lap, I do both my professional work and experiments. My lap is a unique space in which I feel I can explore, test, mess and create to find solutions to the broken links I have in my working processes, like how to continue to embroider a delicate section on a garment if I have materials that I have never used before or that present me with a new challenge. I have the courage to improvise in my lap as I do not have to explain or justify anything. If it does not work, I can go back and forth and find my way of doing it. Of course, a lot of my previous experiences, my knowledge and my body's way of knowing how to do something is how I learn, the redoing, repeating and correcting. My lap would have been a great space to share learning and transfer knowledge to a child.

Discussion and Conclusion

The significance and symbolisms of lapwork remain largely unexplored, thus offering opportunities for ongoing research beyond this chapter. Symbolic connotations of lapwork may be specific to places and cultures, yet these ancient practices have been observed widely in many contexts around the globe (Sarantou, 2017). Illustrated here is the role of laps as flexible and expandable surfaces that extend beyond bodily boundaries to accomplish needed tasks

in private spaces, whether it is for making, child rearing or learning. Sillgren confirmed that for her, crocheting is slow enough and her lap big enough. In these bodily spaces, the role of tools and technological instruments, including scissors and smartphones (Luckman, 2015), are paramount to maintaining the optimal functionality and dynamics of lapwork. Laps are flexible spaces due to changes in bodily positioning, offering solutions to resource limitations. The portrayals of the artist-researchers offer various examples of the flexibility of lapwork, especially in the face of family or work commitments.

Laps are vibrant spaces in which cultural and creative practices are executed, often through self-motivation in the North and Arctic, offering respite from long, cold winter conditions but also from the endless summer nights in the Arctic or when seasonal changes set in. The significance of lapwork may be amplified in geographical locations with extreme climate such as the Arctic when practitioners are homebound, seeking respite from the elements to make, either from necessity or to fight boredom. These traditions have been passed down over centuries, ensuring enjoyable and creative activities in homey spaces, through families who live in extreme climatic conditions. Hence, the boundaries between professional and non-professional work are often blurred. Laps may be considered informal spaces, yet they often host professional processes.

As makers, artists, professionals, educators and parents, the three authors consciously aim to transfer a positive mindset and attitude towards manual work. In making themselves (through active becoming) and their crafts, learning through trial and error, they are motivated to learn in sustainable and holistic ways. In their personal experiences of learn-by-doing, listening and observing in both formal and informal settings, they carry out similar practices within their professional and family life, transferring habits, knowledge and values to their students and their own children. Their motivation for learning and their sense of comfort with their lapwork triggers the interest of their children towards materials, techniques and the actual making, as well as the storytelling that usually go along with making practices. The authors practice lapwork as a solitary or shared activity, enabling observation and tactile experiences for their children, especially while being more homebound during the extreme fall and winter seasons.

Figure 4. *Laps, both those of adults and children, offer fertile and instant spaces for learning new skills, often through mimicry. Photograph: Sanna Sillgren, 2019.*

Lapwork as part of the everyday and without obligations makes it an approachable practice, enabling a laid-back ambience that supports learning in a sustainable way. With their children exploring their own relationships to lapwork, a startling difference emerges in contrast to the authors' grandparents, who were often forced to do lapwork as part of gender-normed household chores. The children currently have the freedom to observe their mothers (authors) and their mothers' practices, finding personal ways of expression or continuing specific traditions. The makers' (authors) approaches, interactions and place-bound circumstances provoke changing responses amongst their offspring. Often, trials are made by the children, using different techniques and mimicry, which is one of the important cognitive processes at play during social interactions (Effron et al., 2006). The authors and their children are exposed to lapwork that relates to their homeland culture, different cultural backgrounds and generational relationships. Knowledge transfer between the authors and their children is enabled through their professional and personal ties, supported by social media and shared moments of

collaborative parenting. Thus, lapwork might be considered socially engaged art in the way that the authors have been collaborating and in the way that it is a political statement about collaborative mothering and learning with children.

The role of reflection and learning through lapwork has been foregrounded in this chapter. Lapwork not only supports embodied learning through the work of hands (Sennet, 2008) – "hands-on thinking" (Jokela & Coutts, 2015, p. 9) – but it provides space for thinking while doing and making. The narratives of the artist-researchers further express the significance of laps in learning as spaces of reflection and decision making, places where creativity and tranquillity are often transferred to children, inspiring them to experiment and improvise to learn new skills. Sillgren reminisces:

> *My nine-year-old daughter started to do crocheting after seeing me doing it. When she was small, she used thick woollen yarn and looping with her fingers. As she grew up, she wanted to try using a big hook with yarn. Nowadays, she wants to use a small hook with thin cotton yarn like me. She could not really answer why she wants to do crocheting. She said, "The hands do because the hands do, while making a long chain." I asked what she would crochet if she were really good with the technique. She said, "I would like to make a caparison for a horse. It would be black. In the middle would be a picture of a horse made with golden yarn. The yarn would be thin but strong and I would use a small hook."*

Laps are fertile spaces for learning due to the free, unrestricted and, as Pokela mentions, 'easy-going way' makers engage with materials and tools in their laps. Makers are often more willing to experiment, improvise, make mistakes and redo processes to find best solutions and new means of expression. With craft and improvisatory practices steeped in tradition, laps are the private spaces in which makers, both young and old, explore to find new ways of doing that are based on knowledge and learning from previous making experiences and from motor-sensory memory. Laps are significant spaces for embodied learning

and intergenerational knowledge transfer, which should not be overlooked due to the informal and private connotations of lapwork. Although an informal learning environment, the flexibility and privacy offered by laps as spaces facilitate knowledge and skills transfer.

References

Ansell, N. (2009). Embodied learning: Responding to AIDS in Lesotho's education sector. *Children's Geographies, 7*(1*),* 21–36. doi: 10.1080/14733280802630981

Bishop, C. (2006). The social turn: Collaboration and its discontents. *Artforum, 44*(6*),* 178–186.

Carlin, P. (2017). *On surface and place: Between architecture, textiles and photography.* London: Routledge.

Chang, H., Ngunjiri, F., & Hernandez, K. A. C. (2016). *Collaborative autoethnography.* London: Routledge.

Chapman, V. L. (1998). Adult education and the body: Changing performances of teaching and learning. Adult Education Research Conference. Retreived from: http://newprairiepress.org/aerc/1998/papers/17.

Eisner, E. W. (2002). What can education learn from the arts about the practice of education? *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision, 18*(1*),* 4–16.

Effron, D. A., Niedenthal, P. M., Gil, S., & Droit-Volet, S. (2006). *Embodied temporal perception of emotion. Emotion, 6*(1*)*, 1–9. doi: 10.1037/1528-3542.6.1.1

Ellis, C., & Adams, T. E. (2014). The purposes, practices, and principles of autoethnographic research. *The Oxford handbook of qualitative research*, 254–276.

Farber, L. (2006). Skin aesthetics. *Theory, Culture & Society, 23*(2–3), 247–250. doi: 10.1177/026327640602300252

Gaver, B., Dunne, T., & Pacenti, E. (1999). Design: Cultural probes. *Interactions, 6*(1*),* 21–29.

Grayling, A. C. (2002). *The meaning of things: Applying philosophy to life*. London: Phoenix.

Helguera, P. (2011). *Socially engaged art.* New York, NY: Jorge Pinto Books.

Hemmings, T., Crabtree, A., Rodden, T., Clarke, K., & Rouncefield, M. (2002, June). Probing the probes. In *Proc. PDC 2002*, 42–50. doi: 10.1007/s00779-006-0075-6

Ingold, T. (2013). *Making: Anthropology, archaeology, art and architecture.* London: Routledge.

Johnson, J. S., & Wilson, L. E. (2005). "It says you really care": Motivational factors of contemporary female handcrafters. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 23*(2*),* 115–130. doi: 10.1177/0887302X0502300205

Jokela, T., & Coutts, G. (2015). *Relate North: Art, heritage & identity.* Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.

Jordi, R. (2010). Reframing the concept of reflection: Consciousness, experiential learning, and reflective learning practices. *Adult Education Quarterly, 61*(2), 181–197. doi: 10.1177/0741713610380439

Lapadat, J. C. (2017). Ethics in autoethnography and collaborative autoethnography. *Qualitative Inquiry, 23*(8), 589–603. doi: 10.1177/1077800417704462

Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice.* New York: Guilford Publications.

Longhurst, R. (1997). (Dis)embodied geographies. *Progress in Human Geography, 21*, 486–501. doi: 10.1191/030913297668704177

Luckman, S. (2015). *Craft and the creative economy.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Patel, K. (2008). *Thinkers in the kitchen: Embodied thinking and learning in practice.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.

Sarantou M. A. (2017). Laps as complex and intimate spaces. In J. C. Ashton (Ed.), *Museums and Feminism,* (Vol. 1, pp. 126–153). Museums Etc.: Edinburgh and Cambridge.

Schatzki, T. R., & Natter, W. (Eds.). (1996). *The social and political body.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Sennet, R. (2008). *The craftsman.* New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Stolz, S. A. (2015). Embodied learning. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 47*(5), 474–487. doi: 10.1080/00131857.2013.879694

Korinna Korström-Magga
University of Lapland, Rovaniemi, Finland

Community-Based Art Education and Reindeer Herder Families

5

In this chapter, I reflect on the potential of art education research for peripheral communities in Northern Finland. I have been collaborating with five reindeer herder families from Northern Lapland in Finland, in the area of Inari, through community-based art education (Hiltunen, 2009) and art-based action research (Jokela, 2019) since 2016. Our shared aim of the research is to explore how community-based art education can provide the reindeer herders with an innovative way to share their life experiences with others from their own perspective. How creative activities might be developed to support the aim was also an important part of the research.

Inadequate knowledge and expectations of reindeer herding and the Sámi culture affect other people's prejudgments of how the reindeer herders live and the kind of people they are (Valkonen, 2009). Also, Lehtola describes how reindeer herding and the Sámi culture are often thought of in terms of romantic prejudices, false notions or ignorance. Reindeer herding is one of the Sámi people's main livelihoods, and it has a history of nomadic living. Today, reindeer herding is a mix of inherited knowledge about the wilderness and modern equipment and vehicles (Figure 1), where the reindeer still determine the activities of all the family members throughout the year (Lehtola, 2015).

Figure 1. *Crossing freshly frozen waters may be dangerous. The herder needs to know nature well. Photograph: Magreeta Sara, 2016.*

I have lived in the North for over 25 years, and I am familiar with the work of the reindeer herders and the Sámi culture. I have assisted my husband with different tasks with the reindeer, and we have raised our children in the way of my husband's culture – the Sámi culture. During these years, I have observed how

the reindeer herders are categorised by people not acquainted with the livelihood for example the media or the authorities, the tourists and even the non-Sámi locals. The idea of describing the real daily life of the reindeer herders feels important to me and the five reindeer herder families that joined the project.

This project aims to produce information about the daily life of the reindeer herders, with emphasis on decolonisation. Our main activity was based on the method of *photovoice* (Wang & Burris, 1996). The participants took snapshots documenting their daily life for one year (2016–2017). The photography was initially meant to support the research interviews and inspire us to produce artworks that would reflect the families' thoughts about themselves. The snapshots, however, resulted in a touring pedagogical exhibition, sharing knowledge from a decolonisation perspective and renewing people's notion of this Northern livelihood.

Collaboration with indigenous people, to emphasise decolonisation, requires a sensitive and ethical approach for the research to be successful. In this article, I will focus on how to foster a sensitive, listening and reflective position for the role of the artist/educator/researcher. I will discuss how to create the dialogical platform of community-based art education.

The Concept of Reindeer Herding in Northern Lapland

Reindeer husbandry usually brings up the notion that the Sámi people are ancient and nomadic – living in the wilderness. The contemporary livelihood is, however, filled with modern lifestyle. Today, reindeer herding is practised in many places in the world, and each country has its laws and restrictions for the herders (Pennanen & Näkkäläjärvi, 2000).

Lehtola (2015) discussed reindeer husbandry in his research on the development of the Sámi representations and described the roots of the herders. The Northern inhabitants tamed the Finnish forest reindeer for decoy and transportation long before the actual monitoring of reindeer began. The monitoring of reindeer developed during the 15th century in the old Sámi siida system, which can be described as a large village area where several families lived for seasonal

hunting and fishing accommodations. The North was filled with these Sámi siidas, and, until the 18th century, the areas were approved by the Scandinavian government. The nomad form of herding developed beside the stationary siidas in the 16th century. The nomad families lived with a great herd and travelled with it from one pasture to another. They wandered long distances with the reindeer from the inner land siida in wintertime to the northern coast siida in summertime (Lehtola, 2015). Nomadic living with the herds came to an end when the reindeer herders were forbidden to cross the national borders with their herds. The border between Norway and Finland was blocked in 1852 and the border between Sweden and Finland in 1889. This had significant consequences for all Sámi siida communities and the Sámi culture. The people gradually adopted the dominant community structure. Due to the change in the way of living and new habitats, the people lost their traditions, language and cultural identity (Roto, Kulonen, Seurujärvi-Kari, & Pulkkinen, 2005; Sámidiggi, 2019).

After the borders were blocked, the siida system in the North was, over time, re-organised. Lapland is today divided into wide fenced areas called reindeer municipalities – where the reindeer are wandering freely but are collected by the herders for slaughter, parturition and calf marking. Each municipality has its systems of monitoring the herds, depending on the terrain and the pastures. In Sweden and Norway, the reindeer herds are still freely monitored in connection with the Sámi villages. In both countries the reindeer herds are also moved between summer and winter pastures and the old siida system has remained as a sort of cultural basis of livelihood. Lehtola (2015) stated that even though the nomadic herding represented only an intensive and short period of the reindeer herders' history, it has labelled the image of the livelihood and is associated with the narratives of the culture that several people expect to hear.

Revealing the fact that the reindeer families share the same modern reality as the rest of the world may be eye-opening. At the same time, the reindeer herders' family life is strongly connected to the wilderness where they use their extensive inherited knowledge about their working environment.

The contemporary form of reindeer herding has an important role in maintaining the Sámi culture and traditions. In Finland, reindeer herding is not

restricted only to the Sámi people as it is in Norway and Sweden. But in practice, almost all herders in the northern parts of Lapland are Sámis. The Sámis live in the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Murmansk Oblast, Russia. The Northern Sámi language is the most common, but altogether, there are still nine different spoken Sámi languages. In Finland, you can find three of them; the Northern Sámi, the Inari Sámi and the Skolt Sámi languages. The languages divide the Sámis into different tribes with their own cultures, local history, stories and ways of living (Lehtola, 2015; Pennanen & Näkkäläjärvi, 2000). The participants of my research speak Northern Sámi and Inari Sámi. All Sámis also speak the language of the respective country they live in.

Lehtola (2015) described the politics of assimilation in the North, starting with the forced conversion to Christianity at the beginning of the 16th century to the conscious prevention of using the Sámi languages outside the homes in the 19th and 20th century, which almost destroyed the Sámi cultural identity. During these periods, there was resistance from the Sámis side but only a few violent confrontations. The Sámi reindeer herders and their families living in the periphery have managed to maintain their traditions and culture better than families living in the village centres or outside of Lapland. The strong communality and bonds in the reindeer herder families help to retain the culture. Today the revitalisation of the sámi culture-identity is active. Sámi school classes and language nests have been established in the northern municipalities to revitalise the languages. The work continues by seeking justice for the culture, to secure and preserve the *duodji* (the Sámi traditional handicraft), preventing the Sámi costumes to be worn improperly by ignorant non-sámi people, saving the old stories and knowledge that would otherwise have disappeared when the elders pass away. These revitalisation actions have had a positive impact on Sámi culture. The decolonisation actions, led by Sámi people, has reborn the spirit and the hope in a minority community (Lehtola, 2015).

The decolonisation of indigenous people is a process that aims to reveal and dismantle different forms of colonial powers and change the power structure from the main society and replace them with the indigenous customs (Smith, 1999; Valkonen, 2009). One distinct colonial power in Western history has been

the research on the indigenous people of Sámi. The Sámis, like many other indigenous people, have been measured, documented, photographed and examined by western researchers and documentarians. Often when the word research is mentioned, the people in the North will step backwards and refuse to participate.

The decolonisation approach is crucial for my research project. The optimal collaboration with the community would result in ethical and reliable data and give confidence to both the research group and the researcher. This research path is difficult to find and each moment requires sensitive reflection. As Smith (1999) pointed out, the challenge is always one's position as a researcher; even if you are in some way an insider, as a researcher, you will always be seen as an outsider.

As a researcher I am in an insider's position. The benefit of knowing the research terrain has been most helpful. According to Smyth & Holian (2008) it is easier for an insider to operate with the people participating in the research because the flow of social interaction in the community is not disrupted. But the danger in being insider lies in the possibility of losing objectivity, falling for personal biases and exposing sensitive information due to being too familiar with the circumstances of the community.

In order to maintain objectivity and avoid bias, I shared all the research material with the participants before publishing. The participants also had the right to deny the use of their photos in public. My research topic which focused on art education and the creative processes, not exploring the participants' personal lives, gives me as a researcher an exceptional place in the community. The participants reported that they wanted me to be in charge when dealing with art issues such as organizing the exhibition.

Art as a Research Strategy

I have worked for a long time in the field of art education with several projects using a place-specific and culturally sensitive pedagogical approach. As an art educator, my emphasis has always been to create actions that enhance and support local identities and cultures and to produce art made by the community rather than interpret their situation by my art. Using the method of art-based action

research in my cooperation with the reindeer herders' families was a natural choice as my aim had been to improve community-art education as a research method. The feature of the research is a typical participatory action research (PAR) following Whyte (1991). In the PAR model, the subjects of the study participate with the researcher throughout the research process. The actions of community-art education specify the method to be art-based action research (ABAR).

Art(s)-based research (ABR) has many definitions. Art itself can be researched or the research can be conducted artistically or be presented by Art. Leavy (2015) described art-based research practices as a long list of tools used by researchers across different disciplines. The form of art practices varies from needlework to film where the research results can be expressed by the art of the artist or then the art practices can be used as a means to collect data. The different approaches have resulted in multiple terms under the umbrella of ABR, which "for a newcomer on the field may cause confusion" (Leavy, 2015, p. 5) The value of art-based research has been recognised long ago, especially in the field of social sciences. Art and art practices might express meanings that are ineffable in plain conversations and gives a broader spectrum of data. In its representational phases, it may also provide an important public service that otherwise would be unavailable (Barone & Eisner, 2012).

The creative way of making arts-based research has become rather popular in the recent years. At the same time there has been some discussion and criticism of using art as a research method in the social sciences. The postmodern understanding of what art is has no absolute definition, there are also countless ways of making objects that are called art. Siegesmund (2014) calls for artistic practices that meet criteria because through them it is possible to make judgements of quality. According to Siegesmund, art has enjoyed unquestioned position within academia for the last half century; anything that is done in the name of art is research yet there are artistic practices and aesthetic relationships that are undoubtedly not research. Jagodzinski & Wallin (2013) stress that art is neither research nor knowledge rather an event or an encounter.

Art education has used the art-based research strategy to develop more functional and practical working methods. The strategy progresses the research

in the cycles of action research and uses art as a catalyst for the development of work (Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018). The ABR-term used for this method is art-based action research (ABAR). The Department of Art Education at the University of Lapland has been developing the ABAR method since 1995. The department has carried out multiple community and environmental art education projects in northern rural villages, offering their art education students work experience in addition to research topics for their degrees. Art education and community art have been used as methods for empowerment and well-being (Hiltunen, 2009; Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

The ABAR method has been used to convey multicultural understanding and empower cultural identity in small communities that are endangered. Contemporary art has been used for activism for progress or change. The northern cooperation partners of the University have usually been schools or tourist businesses (Hiltunen, 2009; Jokela, 2019; Jokela & Hiltunen, 2014; Jokela, Huhmarniemi, Haataja, & Issakainen, 2018). The organised art workshops have often culminated in a larger event or exhibition that has involved relatives and friends and brought a positive feeling of togetherness to the community. These research projects have aimed to develop operational art education methods to support stakeholders and local communities to become more sustainable (Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2018).

As a part of ABAR, I have used in this research, the *photovoice* method developed by Wang and Burris (1996). It is a participatory action research method in which the participants use cameras to document their own lives. According to Gubrium and Harper (2013), this method gives a social possibility of raising awareness of identity and culture in a community. The photos may facilitate communication with policymakers and authorities who are often inaccessible to the members of the group.

The photovoice methodology is also known as a decolonisation action and seeks to give the word and the power of decision to the participants (Kessi, 2018). The Sámi reindeer herder families examined their daily lives by taking snapshots. They had the right to choose the subjects of the shoot and the also which final photographs that are shown in public.

Art and Reindeer Herders

The research with the families and the photography started in June 2016. I presented the idea of photography, and asked the participants to capture moments of their daily life that might change or widen other people's notion of how they live. We wanted to take photos for at least one year to capture the most possible encompassing view of the daily life of the families. I encouraged the families to take plenty of pictures and of all kind of situations. I advised them that moments during the breakfast and putting the children off to school were equally important as the harsh moments taking place at the reindeer separation fence. Photography was a practical way to collect the data as almost everyone had cell phones and there are several moments in the reindeer herder's work where a picture may serve as a helpful and clearer explanation of an unknown situation. My preliminary plan was to use the snapshots as an inspiration for the second act, to create a pedagogical art exhibition together with the families. (Figure 2) I wanted to examine if the creative actions together with the exhibition would better generate the true nature of the reindeer herders' way of life, and also scrutinize how art education

The plan of the first cycle of the art-based action research 2016-2017					
Snapshots →	Discussions →	Creative work →	Art Exhibition →	Workshops in Exhibitions →	Discussions →
The families are documenting their daily lives by photography	Open interviews and discussion with the families, getting ideas and inspiration for making art	Making artwork with the families. Also photos possible to use for the exhibition	First exhibition. Planning the show and building the exhibition together with the families	Plan the workshop with the families. Implementation by the art-educator / researcher or together with family-members	The outcome of the exhibition. Decide together about changes and modifications for the next exhibition

Figure 2. A linear table of the preliminary action plan.

can empower and help a community to share their own perspective on their story that is usually told by people outside the community.

The collaboration with the families and the dealing with different kind of agencies in addition to our daily matters took time and I had to make changes in my schedules and project plans. I was applying for our first show in the Sámi Siida museum, which is a national museum of the Sámi in Inari for spring 2018, but suddenly Siida offered us the early autumn in 2017. My plans for making art together with the families after the year of photo shooting changed as our schedule became narrow. An extra challenge for me was that I had to take into account the hectic work periods for the reindeer herders. I could not disturb them with scheduled timetables for art workshops because their priority is always their work with the reindeer and their time schedules and leisure are most unpredictable. Engaging the families to make art felt suddenly difficult and intruding. During the winter period, I made some attempts to arrange art workshops with a couple of the families. With one family. I built snow and ice sculptures that framed their photos in their yard (Figure 3).

Figure 3. *The family enjoyed building ice sculptures despite the freezing temperature (–30°C). The sculptures served their tourism business, which is a common additional source of income for reindeer herders. Photographs: Korinna Korsström-Magga, 2016.*

To another family, I showed how to transfer printed photos on textiles, bones and skin by rubbing. To a youngster, I taught how to photoshop their photos to combine layers of landscape and visions. The art activities were regarded by the families as interesting but it was, however, hard to find time for them. In their busy daily lives, it turned out to be an additional obligation. When I started to talk about the coming exhibition and the planning of our artworks they mostly smiled shyly and convinced me that they could help me to hang the exhibition as long as I prepared the artwork. One man told me frankly that he would take the photos, but would not attend any art workshops. Another family said that they were too busy to make art. They did not reckon themselves as artists and they were actually not very interested in making artwork. A couple of interested participants were cautious about presenting their ideas for the exhibition, as they thought their efforts were not professional enough. A common opinion was that exhibition hall and museums are only meant for fine arts of professional artists and it is a part of the urban world far in the South. On the other hand, I wanted to use my skills as an art teacher to entice the community to create tangible artworks that could address the audience to learn about the reindeer herders in a new and different way. Was my ambitious plan only an unrealistic dream? And what purpose would the artworks serve in the end?

I realised that my previous experiences of community art had been among school pupils and art enthusiasts that were easy to involve in art actions. Working with the families that had various interests was different. How could I find a way for art education to connect the reindeer herders with an audience? Kantonen (2005) reflected, in her research on Mexican and Sámi communities, on how challenging it is to find a balanced dialogue and relationship between the community, the researcher-artist-educator and the audience. Depending on the community and its needs, the community-art practices can resemble – for example, activism, social work, ethnography or education. Kantonen found an imbalance in seeking for participating and collaborative research practices with her research communities when she was concurrent the one who determined the project and led the practices. Even if her art workshops served as the centre for the research project and the communities knew her well, she saw a conflict

in that she and her colleague represented and served the institutional western art world. She claimed that finding the balance of collaboration with the stakeholders, the community, the researcher, the research institution and the audience, in community-art research is hard and the researcher needs to be constantly alert and ready to redefine the research process (Kantonen, 2005, pp. 38–40).

It is often taken for granted that people like doing art. The word art has different connotations for people. To understand the northern adult people's lukewarm and cautious feelings about art, which I refer to in this particular project as European art, we need to look back at the cultural background of the rural areas in northern Lapland. Lapland is still a sparsely inhabited area where people often live long distances from authorities, schools and basic services. The nearest cultural amusement, such as theatre, contemporary art museums and galleries are in Rovaniemi, at a distance of at least 350 kilometres. Exhibited art is not easy to reach, it does not belong to their daily life and is not an essential part of child fostering. The adults in Lapland are raised by their parents and grandparents that rebuilt the country after the war when most of Lapland was destroyed in 1945. Life was extremely harsh, poor and demanding and it was seen as a sin or at least unacceptable to use your time for anything but useful things. The lack of paper, pencils, literature and the late arrival of media to the homes delayed the entrance of the urban, European art that is today a usual sight in the environment in the urban cities. Fine art is still, in many ordinary northerners' opinion, something unfamiliar. Their years are filled with more important things waiting to be done, prepared or repaired. Nevertheless they enjoy beauty, as we all, and find great aesthetic pleasure in the nature, which could be recognized of the photos of the participants. In the rural areas in the North are the narratives, the music and the handicrafts recognized as art.

The *duodji* (Figure 4) is a very important part of the Sámi reindeer herder's cultural identity. The knowledge of making the dresses, tools and equipment are taught by the parents to the children and each family in different areas have their styles that can be recognised from their models and decorations. The artefacts show proof of a distinct sense of aesthetics and skill.

Figure 4. "Duodji" is a complex of skills embracing wood, leather, silver, bone and needlework, for example, and the material is often of reindeer. Photographs: Jouni Lukkari, 2016, Magreeta Sara, 2016 and Marjinga Sara, 2016.

The duodji is both maintaining old traditions of patterns and models as well as developing along with the modern time. Sámi artists, such as Outi Pieski (see emmamuseum.fi), Per Isak Juuso and Gunvor Guttorm (see samidaiddaguovddas.no), have also used duodji in their contemporary art. Duodji as contemporary artwork is though rare and belongs to the "Art"-world. In the daily Sámi culture has duodji its specific value and place.

Visual Working

The family's task to photograph their daily lives seemed anyhow fun and fluent. The photographing was perhaps not recognised as making art. To take snapshots with cell phones is simply seen as a normal contemporary way of communication. To explore and discuss the multiple photos of the families took hours. Talking over the different tasks in a reindeer herders' family's daily life was easy

and we shared the interest in the findings in the pictures. We also admired the photos and found many of them aesthetically pleasing.

Figure 5. The snapshots performed in the Siida museum in 2017. The photos presented at items of the reindeer herders daily life formed one installation per family. Photographs: Korinna Korsström-Magga 2017.

In the end we did not make tangible artwork for the exhibition with the families in workshops as I had planned. The exhibition at the Siida museum turned out to be a collection of the snapshots that the families took during the year. The families provided hundreds of photos for the exhibition. I was most happy to notice how important they considered it to be to show moments of their private lives to an unknown audience. Almost every family selected the photos for the exhibition primarily themselves. I advised them not to leave out snapshots with poor quality as they often captured moments of haste or harsh conditions. The collection of snapshots shown in the exhibition is the rarest and delicate insider's view of a special livelihood and culture. The photos described the actual work and culture of the livelihood and also moments of leisure and casual living,

pointing out the ordinary life that we globally share. We called the exhibition *Boazoeallin* (Reindeer Life). I suggested to the families that we would build the exhibition environment of items from their surroundings to strengthen the ambiance of their world. I wanted to avoid the severe atmosphere of a traditional exhibition that also felt for me as a distant world combined with the vivid reality of the reindeer herders. The families thought it was a terrific idea that the photos would be presented in a 'cosier' and more familiar manner and it suited their cause better than the sombre traditional way of presenting pictures on a white wall (Figure 5). Each family presented an entity of their daily life in a world built of grey wooden fences, reindeer skins, sledges and a traditional Sámi hut. A lot of friends and relatives came to the opening and the atmosphere was warm and festive.

Potentials and Challenges in Community-Based Art Education

It is quite easy for a person working and communicating with art and visual means to forget that a lot of people are not familiar at all with different forms and tools of contemporary art. Simply mentioning art making may lock the door of interest to join a project. The families were enticed to join the project because they saw the purpose of showing the actual reality of the reindeer herder's work as important. The creative part of the project and how to reveal their documents, they preferred to hand over to me as I was the artist and also the organiser of the project. I realised that enticing adult people to join art making, asking them to give their time and throw themselves into unknown waters was much more challenging than supervising school children or art enthusiasts in workshops. I almost fell into a professional trap; instead of listening to the needs of the research group, I was more concerned about fulfilling my ambitions of producing tangible artwork with them. I had not thoroughly reflected on how the reindeer herder's community would benefit from creating tangible artwork in case they would not see it as useful, but as a waste of time. In the worst scenario, art education could turn out to be perceived as a colonial action.

Hiltunen described the challenges of collaboration in community-based art education and she pointed out the necessity of understanding each community as an individual case. Reflexivity is the most important part of the projects, beginning from the moments of planning, brainstorming, engaging people until the end of the project when evaluation of the activities was done. It is always relevant to reflect on 'what kind of and whose progress is being supported, and whom does it affect?' (Hiltunen, 2009).

After the exhibition at the Siida museum, I was eager to analyse the first cycle of the action research. So far, I had realised that the most meaningful moments for the research were during the open interviews over the photos that resulted in an exhibition. The exhibition was a result of the creative work of the families under the direction of the researcher. The intention of the snapshots was not to make art, but during the open interviews I understood that the families enjoyed the task and their spontaneous photographing turned into a creative flow. The families' installations did imply that the community had worked using visual and creative forms, to share their daily lives from their perspectives. I had provided the families with the means to convey a personal view of their reality and the photos were taken with the attitude that best described their lives visually. Taking photos let the families examine their lives from an external view, giving them the chance to understand their values in a changing, modern society.

According to Huhmarniemi (2015), community art is not bound to a specific art form, the term describes the attitude and the starting point for the creative activity, where the artist often stays in the background and the creative work or the artwork is done by the community. Also, Hiltunen (2009) described a visionary platform, where community-based art education can be seen as a performative dialogue, where each action, for example, meetings and discussions in all the collaboration with the community has a meaning for the research. Each decision, what you choose to do and what you leave out is a performance that involves the community in a mutual process aiming for a visual presentation.

The period of the photography was an intense time of collaboration with the families. After the exhibition in Siida, I presented the exhibition and the research project in different conferences of art education. Subsequently, the

interaction and the meetings with the families became occasional. The exhibition, embraced by the western world, seemed to drift away from the families. I felt concerned that the project was going to fade away without leaving traces in the lives of the families. I realized we had to plan the second cycle of the action research and bear in mind the aim of the reindeer herder families project; how to inform about their daily life.

According to Huhmarniemi (2015), community art occasionally has been criticised for being shallow. There have been short-time community-art projects that have mainly served the artist's intentions and left the community confused and neglected. This problem has been recognised by artists and researchers and today community art strives to put in place a cultural and ethical action that has a long-term benefit for the community.

The project with the reindeer herder families is still ongoing. I have realised the importance of the photos to the families and I see the photovoice action as an essential and part of community art in this research. We are now, along with the families, gathering the photos for a publication. The families will compose the topics of the chapters and select themselves their photos for the publication. When the photos are shared with explanations the information will open up for a wider audience. The book will stand as a specific result of the photography and of course, also serve the continuing touring exhibition. The discussions and the planning of the book have already begun.

Conclusion

Working as an art educator in the field with periphery northern communities and with indigenous people requires wide knowledge about the circumstances of the Arctic cultures. During the process, I learned the importance of being sensitive and responsive to the research group. The members of the families that participated in this project were individuals with different backgrounds and experiences about contemporary art expression. They do not represent a group of people with a special interest in art and their main aim in this project was plainly to inform and produce information about themselves to the rest of the world. Art and crea-

tive expression, as it is recognised by the western norms, is an unfamiliar form of developing knowledge for most of the participants in this project.

Over time, I realised that instead of applying my terms of expression on the members of the project I had to seek for the strengths and abilities in the research group itself. The process has helped me to recognise new and different values of my profession and reflect critically over my intentions and working methods. A well-planned workshop may turn out meaningless and soon be forgotten by the participants, but spontaneous creative actions, that rises from their own interests in the field is meaningful for the participants and may continue without direction of the art educator-researcher.

I have learned a sensitive, listening and reflective position of supervision, where the creative space has a larger meaning than the actual final product or artwork. In this research, collaborating with indigenous people and aiming for decolonisation it seems to be a better starting point for the research project.

References

Barone, T., & Eisner, E. W. (2012). *Arts based research.* Los Angeles: SAGE.

Gubrium, A., & Harper, K. (2013). *Participatory visual and digital methods.* Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press.

Guttorm, G. (2013). Exhibition. Available from http://samidaiddaguovddas.no/en/divd-na-atnit-avdnasiid/ Retrieved 22.9.2019

Hiltunen, M. (2009). *Yhteisöllinen taidekasvatus. Performatiivisesti pohjoisen sosiokulttuurisissa ympäristöissä* [Community-based Art Education: Through performativity in northern sociocultural environments] (Doctoral Dissertation*).* Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis (A160). Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.

Huhmarniemi, M. (2016). *Marjamatkoilla ja kotipalkisilla. Keskustelua Lapin ympäristökonflikteista nykytaiteen keinoin* [Artists in the landscape of berry wars and reindeer husbandry: Contemporary art as a forum for environmental politics]. (Doctoral Dissertation*).* Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis (324). Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.

Jagodzinski, J., & Wallin J. (2013). *Arts-Based Research. A Critique and a Proposal.* Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Jokela, T. (2009). Kollaborative, projektorienterte Studien in der Kunstpädagogenausbildung [Collaborative, project-oriented exercises in art education]. In C. P. Buchkühle, J. Kettel, & M. Urlaß (Eds.), *Horizonte. Internationale kunstpädagogik* (pp. 137–150). Oberhausen: Athena.

Jokela, T. (2019). Arts-based action research in the North. In G. Noblit (Ed.), *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education.* New York: Oxford University. doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.ORE_EDU-00522.R1

Jokela, T., & Hiltunen, M. (2014). Pohjoiset kylät ja koulupihat taidekasvatuksen paikkoina [The Northern villages and schoolyards as places for art education]. In E. Hyry-Beihammer, M. Hiltunen, & E. Estola (Eds.), *Paikka ja kasvatus* (pp. 78–106). Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.

Jokela T. & Huhmarniemi M. (2018). Art-based action research in the development work of arts and art education. In G. Coutts, E. Härkönen, M. Huhmarniemi, & T. Jokela (Eds.), *The lure of Lapland: A handbook of Arctic art and design* (pp. 9–25). Rovaniemi: Lapland University Press.

Jokela, T., Huhmarniemi, M., Haataja, C. T., & Issakainen, T. (2018). *Ympäristötaidetta Lapin matkailuun* [Lapland tourism and environmental art]. Rovaniemi: Lapland University.

Juuso, P. I. (2015). Exhibition. Available from http://samidaiddaguovddas.no/en/per-isak-juuso/ Retrieved 22.9.2019

Kantonen, L. (2005). *Teltta. Kohtaamisia nuorten taidetyöpajoissa* [The Tent: Youth encounters in workshops] (Doctoral Dissertation). Taideteollisen Korkeakoulun Julkaisu (A 54). Helsinki: Like.

Kessi, S. (2018). Photovoice as a narrative tool for decolonization: Black women and LGBT student experiences. *South African Journal of Higher Education, 32*(3): 101–117.

Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Lehtola, V. (2015). *Saamelaiset: Historia, yhteiskunta, taide* [The Sámi: History, society, art] (2nd ed.). Inari: Puntsi.

Pennanen, J., & Näkkäläjärvi, K. (2000). *Siiddastallan: Siidoista kyliin. luontosidonnainen saamelaiskulttuuri ja sen muuttuminen* [Siiddastallan: From the siidas to the villages. The nature bound Sámi culture in transformation]. Oulu: Pohjoinen.

Pieski, O. (2018). Exhibition. Available from https://emmamuseum.fi/sv/utstallningar/outi-pieski-cuolmmadit/ retrieved 22.9.2019

Roto, J., Kulonen, U., Seurujärvi-Kari, I., & Pulkkinen, R. (2005). *The Saami: A cultural encyclopaedia.* Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura.

Siegesmund, R. (2014). On the need for arts-based research: a response to Pariser (pp.103–118). Conference Proceedings, 2nd Conference on Arts-based and Artistic Research, Spain.

Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples.* London: Zed Books.

Smyth, A., & Holian, R. (2008). Credibility Issues in Research from within Organisations. In P. Sikes, & A. Potts (Eds.), *Researching education from the inside* (pp. 33–47). New York: Taylor & Francis.

Valkonen, S. (2009). *Poliittinen saamelaisuus* [Political Sáminess]. Tampere: Vastapaino.

Wang, C., & Burris, M. A. (1997). Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment. *Health Education & Behavior, 24*(3), 369–387.

Whyte, W. F., & Whyte, W. F. (1991). *Participatory action research.* Newbury Park: SAGE Publications.

Rosie Newman
Inverness College, The University of the Highlands and Islands, Scotland

Immerse:
Connecting with Nature Using Technology

6

Figure 1. *The Highlands, Scotland. Photograph: Rosie Newman, 2018.*

Introduction

In the age of the Anthropocene, human impact on nature has reached crisis point and threatens life on the planet. "Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely". This recent report by *Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services* (ISPPBES, 2019, para. 1), highlights biodiversity loss as one of the major causes of the ecological crisis of this age and arguably this is underpinned by the disconnection between people and nature. A solution towards slowing down the crisis and securing a sustainable future could be to improve the link between nature and humans through increasing knowledge and awareness of local and natural habitats.

In the past people appreciated and were inextricably linked with nature through physical sensations, as they foraged, hunted and built their shelters from the environment around them. In comparison, today many people appear to have lost contact with their natural surroundings and subsequently no longer have a desire to protect and look after it. One of the reasons for this disconnect may be due to the widespread popularity and preoccupation with technology and screens, which keeps people inside and separate from nature. Virtual Reality (VR) immersive gaming technology, has captivated the attention of many people in these ways.

As an artist and educator, I was interested in looking into new ways to make work that had meaningful outcomes socially and environmentally and with influence to attract wider audiences, including those who may be disconnected with nature. VR technology attracted my attention due to its widespread appeal and for its multisensory and creative capabilities.

This essay discusses the need for transformative thought around the subject of nature and the need for a study of how art can be used to do this. It also demonstrates a way in which VR entertainment and gaming technology could be used to encourage people to learn about and appreciate their local environment. The technique created attempted to take people back to a time when nature was more wild and involved participants in immersive activities such as foraging for sounds, colours, habitats and species. The sensory and experiential components were captured and shared within a VR environment, to enable others to experience and appreciate a restorative and poetic connection with nature and by doing so, a greater awareness of the human condition in relation to nature in current times.

Wolves, Bears and Walnuts

In October of 2016, I travelled from Scotland to spend a month as artist in residence at Art Point Gumno (2018), International Centre for Art and Sustainable Development located in the upper Demir Hisar Mountains in the rural village of Sloestica, North Macedonia. Having been privileged to spend time exploring

and meeting local people, my initial intention was to make a series of paintings illustrating the rural practices, local traditions and characters of the village.

At night I slept in a studio that was guarded by a dog who was attached to my door by a chain. She would spend the whole night barking (and keeping me awake) to keep the wolves at bay. This was a far cry from the tame Scottish village I was from, but I quickly settled in and felt at home. I put this feeling of connectedness with the place down to the sight and smell of the deciduous forest that spread over the hills, as far as the eye could see and beyond the mountain range. These forests seemed enchanted and caught my imagination, evoking a sense of the familiar as I dreamed of an ancient, natural world unaffected by modern, human activity. The smell of burning oak and the proximity of wild animals and edible plants felt extremely comforting to me. I thought perhaps it was like a 'genetic memory' (Treffert, 2015), awakened by this environment, as I thought about how Britain would have had a similar habitat prior to the age of intensive farming, industrialisation and urbanisation.

I accompanied my hosts and their wolf-guarding dogs on a foraging expedition into the woods, in search of edible mushrooms, forest fruits, firewood and walnuts (see Figure 2). Engulfed by the forest, I almost immediately lost my bearings and was totally reliant on my 'tribe' as they whistled and called to each other through the vegetation, keeping constant aural contact. I was a little afraid as I was told that the forest had a healthy population of wolves, bears and wild boar. Being a dreamy type of person, I was prone to becoming captivated by the pink sky and enchantment of the forest; but still, I didn't want to be left alone. To my delight, the slight unease heightened my senses so that I became acutely aware of every movement around me, noticing the shapes and shadows made by my companions, the sounds of the snapping twigs underfoot and the smells of the forest. An atavistic instinct had arisen which was not unpleasant though slightly unnerving. It felt like I had rediscovered something sacred about being human, a sense of connection combined with the vulnerability of not being in control. These multi-sensory perceptions made me ultra-aware of being immersed in the landscape and left a profound impression on me.

Figure 2. *Submersed in the Wild Woods, North Macedonia. September 27, 2016. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

Back home I thought about the ability to reconnect with nature and how it may be there in others as well. It was interesting to contemplate how I could translate the immersive experience I had perceived in a meaningful way through my art practice. Furthermore, I wondered if by prompting this re-engagement, it could stimulate a change in perspective and promote fresh dialogues around the subject of conservation.

What is the Status of Humanity's Link with Nature and How Does This Impact on Them and the Natural World?

Separateness from nature has become critical. The southern end of Britain is impacted by such extensive industrial and urban activity that it is hard to find

anywhere that humans have not affected. There is a 'gold rush' heading north, set to conquer open spaces that our consumerist culture tends to see as 'waste land'. In his recent book Feral, George Monbiot discusses how society's mindset is behind the times, still treating the natural world as detached, considering 'wild' as separate from civilisation, viewed as idyllic, good for tourism, sport or wellbeing and increasingly confined to national parks and game reserves (Monbiot, 2014).

The young Swedish activist Greta Thunberg has declared we are in a climate crisis, which is one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss in the recent IPBES report (ISPPBES, n.d.). She believes that we need to take heed of the warnings that scientists have been declaring and act hastily and collaboratively to renegotiate our relationship with nature (Carrington & Walker, 2019). Other media reports echo similar warnings … "The biomass of wild mammals has fallen by eighty two percent, natural ecosystems have lost about half their area and a million species are at risk of extinction, all largely as a result of human actions" (Watts, 2019,para 3). As modern societies are developing at an alarming rate, drifting apart from nature and largely ignoring the warnings, I reflect on Gerald Manley Hopkins poem and how he notes the impact of such loss:

What would the world be, once bereft
Of wet and of wildness? Let them be left,
O let them be left, wilderness and wet;
Long live the weeds, and the wilderness yet.
(Hopkins 2013, p. 20)

How Might Art Practice and 'the Encounter' Cause a Shift in Perspective and Provoke Change?

In this section I will discuss how art practice and 'the encounter' can change paradigms and cause cultural change. I will also introduce examples of ways that artists have created progressive experiences and art works that stimulate dialogue and thinking towards change and how these relate to shifting attitudes towards the environment.

Firstly, to discuss 'the encounter' as a method of change, I turn to Simon O'Sullivan's book *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari* (2006), where he likens the role of art in society to that of philosophy, and quoting Deleuze, "something in the word that forces us to think". (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 1). Discussing the importance of the encounter with art as a provocation to change he suggests that through an art encounter a person can experience a rupture that can cause a change in their perspective and force a new way of interacting in the world.

The philosopher and sociologist Herbert Marcuse reinforced these ideas for me, when he calls for the language of art to be 'capable of transmitting a rupture' in his lecture, *Art as Revolutionary Weapon*, (Marcuse, 1970). Marcuse claims art to have the power to "activate a cultural revolution" as he suggests that art can change consciousness and inspire cultural change. (Marcuse,1970).

Joseph Beuys is a good example of an artist who explored this cultural change through the transformative qualities of art. In their book 'What is Art?: Conversations with Joseph Beuys', Volker Harlan describes Social Sculpture as, "how we mould and shape the world in which we live." (Beuys and Harlan, 2007, p. 9) With the help of volunteers, Beuys created an ecological intervention by planting 7000 oak trees throughout the city of Kassel, Germany. Merging education, art and environmental issues in his work, he provoked people's attention to the significance of nature in the city. This demonstrates that he recognized the value of art in society, as it can be both empowering and transformative.

There are several ways that contemporary artists have caused a change in the thinking of their audiences. Like Beuys, artist Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg also uses her practice to provoke a change in environmental thought. She takes audiences back to a time when an extinct flower still existed by offering its smell to them, using modern technology and in collaboration with biotech scientists. Ginsberg endeavours to bring 'back the ghost' in her *Search for the Sublime* exhibition (Ginsberg, 2019). Through her immersive smell installation, she managed to capture a feeling of loss for the flower, not through a replica but by resurrection of its lost fragrance, as a dream like memory. The encounter

with the scent was a powerful tool, encouraging contemplation about habitat loss, which aimed to provoke a change in thinking in her audience (Ginsberg, 2019). Her work reminds me of the writings of Ingrid M Parker *Remembering in Our Amnesia, Seeing in Our Blindness*, when she says that "Sometimes it is possible to use our imagination, together with our knowledge, to take action that leads to the conservation and restoration of species and their ecosystems, to in effect, bring back the ghost". (Parker, 2017, p. 164).

These artists and thinkers informed and inspired me, leading me to look more closely into ways and techniques that my art practice could capture the encounter in a way that I had experienced in the North Macedonian mountains.

Why I Chose to use VR

After the trip to North Macedonia I was given some time to reflect on the artist residency and share it with staff and students through the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and its Research and Scholarship Award (2018). Keen to try to translate my experience I decided to approach new territory in my art practice by investigating the possibilities that VR gaming technology could offer to do this. *Oculus rift* gaming technology processes a person's relationship with the world in different ways to that of a flat, square screen (Bible, T. 2016); the participant feels immersed and part of it, sensing space around them. Due to its ability to stimulate several senses, it had the potential to test people's viewpoints and perspective.

After a series of initial research expeditions involving recorded interviews and dialogues with local ecologists, scientists and technologists, I put together an idea to work collaboratively with a local VR Games Designer and participants from UHI, with the intention of seeing if I could use VR and Acoustic Technology to create an immersive experience to explore the local natural environment. The outcome would be an immersive interactive VR art installation to display at the University's staff conference in 2018.

The Common Ground and Habitat

According to folklore, the last wolf in Britain was killed in Scotland in 1680 (Weymouth, 2014) and the bear became extinct long before that, but the north of Scotland and the Highlands are still considered to hold the greatest and last bastion of wild land in UK (Scottish Natural Heritage, 2019). Inverness is one of the fastest growing cities in Europe; it sits within a semi-rural setting, with increasing pressure for development and economic growth, common and wild land is disappearing like the wolf did. With this perspective in mind, I felt motivated to attempt to reinstate a connection to the local and in some ways 'bring back the ghost' re-presenting it in a dream-like and sacred way.

As well as trying to re-create the connectivity to nature that I had felt so intensely in the North Macedonian forest, another important factor for me was to make the artwork relatable and meaningful to those who worked and studied at the college. In her book *Wild: An Elemental Journey*, Jay Griffiths talks about the importance of a common land, as it binds communities together. She links the destruction of these shared spaces with that of spiritual poverty "when people lost their common rights to land, they also lost their rites, their common-wild-time" (Griffiths, 2006, p. 74). The common land for this community was the university campus site in Inverness where most people studied or worked. I planned to take those students and staff who volunteered to participate, on an immersive journey back in time, to look more deeply at the local native, historical habitats and species. Prior the campus being built, the land was meadow and farmland, but by using ecological surveys and with help from research department at UHI, I was able to create a list of the wild plants and animals that used to inhabit the area before this time.

Methodology of Creating the VR Habitat

The methodology is in 3 stages

1 Field work

1.2 Visual foraging

1.3. Audio foraging

2. Compiling and composing the information

3. The Final Output: Testing the VR Interactive Installation in Work and Staff Rooms and Presenting it at the UHI Conference

1. Field Work

The VR installation was created by using the gathered audio and visual data from wild, natural habitats and turning them into digital formats. Data collection activities, which I called foraging workshops, would enable the participants to gain a greater knowledge and insight into the local environment. Participants went on outdoor quests to find colours and sounds that could be matched to the lists of natural materials needed and based on past habitats and species that existed at the former campus site. This was also a learning experience as participants learned to identify and differentiate different species by sight and sound. To experience nature was an important part of the process, as Robert MacFarlane says, "Anyone who has spent time in wild landscapes will have experienced in some form this deepening of time" (MacFarlane, 2017, p,41). The mindful processes had additional well-being benefits for participants who were encouraged to pay attention to the finer details of nature. These experiential activities related back to the foraging experiences I had beheld in North Macedonia.

1.2 Visual Foraging

The visual foraging was inspired by Patrick Syme's book of *Werner's Nomenclature*, a colour dictionary of annotated water colour swatches first published in 1814, that Charles Darwin used to interpret natural objects he encountered on his Voyage of the Beagle (Syme, 2017). Participants were asked to create painted colour swatches that matched the indigenous, biodiversity of the past campus site. (see Figures 3, 4 & 5).

Figure 3. *Participant 1 painting a watercolour of wildflowers. Kinlochewe, Scotland. March 2018. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

Figure 4. *Participant 2 painting a watercolour of wildflowers. Kinlochewe, Scotland. March 2018. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

Figure 5. *Participants sketchbook, watercolour swatches from nature. March 2018. Photograph: Rosie Newman..*

1.3 Audio Foraging

Audio foraging played a vital role in mapping out the VR environment and translating information from the field to the participants through headphones. It is interesting how Casper Henderson thinks about how sound uses vibrations in the ears and reacts with matter to help people to locate themselves in a space, and how these acoustic interactions link the body with the environment, helping a person to feel grounded in the place they are here now. (Henderson, 2017). Sound encompasses people's spatial awareness and Leah Barclay, who works with augmenting technologies with soundscapes, introduces her article by reminding

us how "sound has a profound ability to make us feel present and connected to our surrounding environment" (Barclay, 2017, pp. 2–18).

The audios were important components in the process, they were collected using mobile phones, hand-held recorders and a bat detector. Taken from a wide range of areas and sources, they varied from a back garden where a snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) called out, to the sound of a thunder storm in a beech wood and bats recorded using digital bat detectors in an abandoned building. The main point in all of these recordings was to capture natural sounds that were free from 'impurities' by anthropogenic or background noise and so encourage deep listening and mindful encounters that heightened senses to nature.

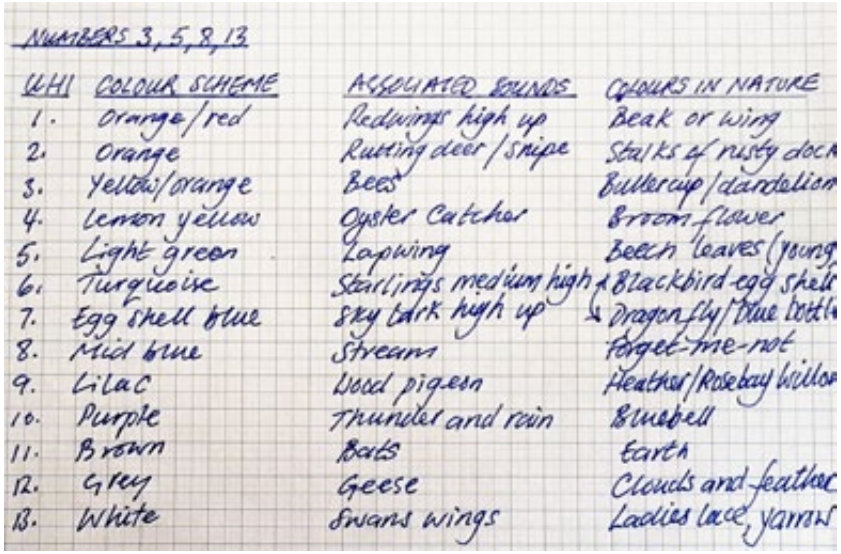
Figure 6. *Participant collecting wild bird recordings using his mobile phone and headphones. Cairngorms, Scotland. March 2018. Photograph: Izzy Thomson.*

Figure 7. *The author collecting the sounds of oyster catchers by experimenting with binaural recordings using H1 Zoom sound recorder, microphones and a dummy head, Isle of Uist, Scotland. February 2018. Photograph: Ben Leyshon.*

2. Compiling and Composing the Information

The final part of the project was to collate all of the materials collected into the gaming platform. At this stage I began to work in collaboration with Darroch McNaught the founder of *DeuXality* Games in Inverness (ARVR GAMES, 2019). We built the VR platform using HTC Vive kit (HTC, 2019). Thirteen swatches were chosen, selected for their complimentary colour values (see Figure 8) and to reflect the magic numbers of the Fibonacci code, used for their harmonic qualities in architecture and association with nature (Lamb, 2008, p. 2).

The colour swatches were then computerized into domed spheres (see Figure 9 and 10). The aim was to reconstruct a new world based on the sensory, divine and diverse beauty of nature, a place to see it in a different way and perhaps wonder about humanity's positions in it. The technology allowed us to



NUMBERS 3, 5, 8, 13

WHI	COLOUR SCHEME	ASSOCIATED SOUNDS	COLOURS IN NATURE
1.	Orange/red	Redwings high up	Beak or wing
2.	Orange	Rutting deer / Snipe	Stalks of rusty dock
3.	Yellow/orange	Bees	Buttercup / dandelion
4.	Lemon yellow	Oyster Catcher	Broom flower
5.	Light green	Lapwing	Beech leaves (young
6.	Turquoise	Starlings medium high	Blackbird egg shell
7.	Egg shell blue	Sky lark high up	Dragon fly / Blue bottle
8.	Mid blue	Stream	Forget-me-not
9.	Lilac	Wood pigeon	Heather / Rosebay willow
10.	Purple	Thunder and rain	Bluebell
11.	Brown	Bats	Earth
12.	Grey	Geese	Clouds and feather
13.	White	Swans wings	Ladies lace, yarrow

Figure 8. *Initial handwritten plans of 13 colours and their associated sounds and materials. 2018. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

change the scale and luminosity of the swatches which was not normally achievable with water colour. I remembered peering into the eternal yellow of an Anish Kapoor sculpture Yellow (1999) at the Royal Academy of Arts captivated by how it surrounded my peripheral vision and spellbound by colour. Equally inspiring was the infinite power of the work of artist Wolfgang Liab, who dusts the floor with yellow pollen to create spiritual contemplation of our natural world in *Pollen from Hazelnut* (Laib, 2013). It was exciting to experiment with scale, to attempt to drench the viewer in colour and see if VR technology could achieve a 'dying of the mind' by tapping into these ethereal qualities.

The next stage was to add the sound recordings to the individual colour domes which was done instinctually, associating noises with colours until all the colours had a sound. These audios could be activated by the headset wearer,

Figure 9. *Computer screen showing the VR platform being built with audios and colour domes inserted and taking shape. Inverness. 20018. Screen shot: Rosie Newman.*

who would only hear them when they peered into them, surrounding themselves in a colour. We tested it out in Darroch's kitchen. When I put the headset on, I was transported to the 'other world' which could also be viewed by Darroch on the computer screen. I stood in the middle of twelve silent coloured circles that bobbed in space, the thirteenth dome was high above my head and let out a distant cry of a skylark (*Alauda arvensis*). I could see a wide-open pink sky beyond them, which stretched to eternity. It was quite lovely, and I was free to walk around the virtual landscape (Darroch warning me when I may bump into the kitchen table). I had begun my research by experimenting with 3D binaural sound, a method of recording using two microphones, with the intent to give the listener the immersive sensation of real-life sound. But VR already had 3D sound built in, so we were able to make the call of the lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) circle the space, so it felt like it was flying around the head set wearer. When I went close to a colour, I could submerge myself into it and hear the unique audio that we had put in there. Each sound and colour seemed perfectly matched, and it felt like a wonderful place to be and I wondered what others would make of it. I wanted to test this multi-sensory virtual environment out on others and see if it could be used as a tool to turn people's attention back to nature.

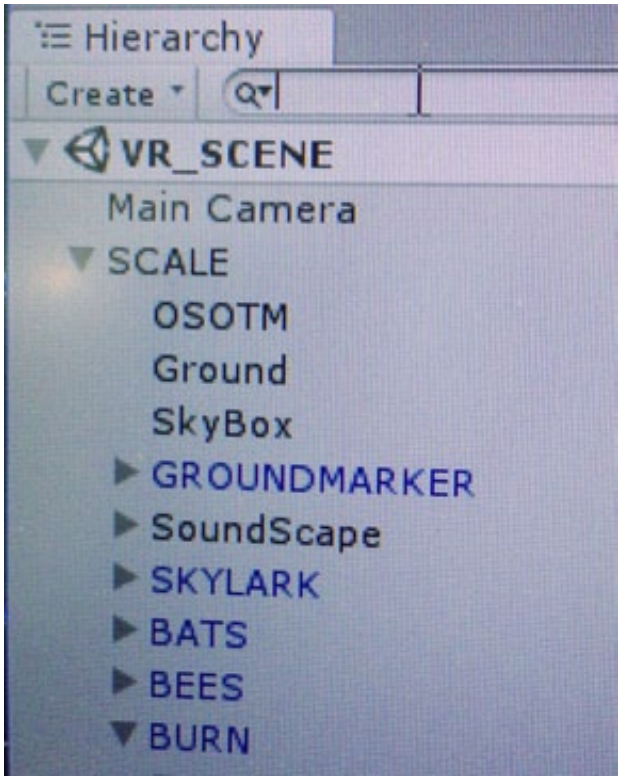


Figure 10. *Detail of the computerised lists of collected sounds. Inverness 2018. Screen shot: Rosie Newman.*

3. The final Output: Testing the VR Interactive Installation in Work and Staff Rooms and Presenting it at the UHI Conference

The final output was the creation of the sensory installation that was initially tested on staff and student volunteers in classrooms and workrooms before demonstrating it with a wider audience and at the university staff conference UHI, 2018. (see Figures 11, 12 & 13 below).

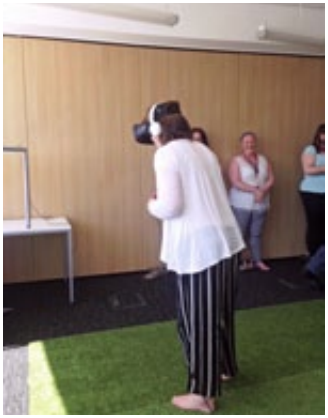


Figure 11. *Staff trying out the VR installation at the staff conference. UHI, Inverness 2018. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

Figure 12. *The author guiding a member of staff trying out the VR installation in a classroom. UHI, Inverness, 2018. Screen shot: Charlie Wilson.*

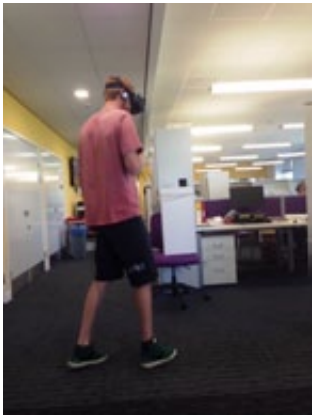


Figure 13. *Student trying out the VR in the research hub. UHI, Inverness, 2018. Photograph: Rosie Newman.*

The test areas were cleared of furniture and one person at a time wore the goggles and experienced the encoutners inside it. During the testing stages, some participants voluntarily helped the next ones learn how to use and enjoy it, acting as guides, holding the wires for them and watching what they could see on the computer screen. They chatted to each other during the sessions, discussing aspects of the project and their encounters with nature and I felt that I was observing what Lave and Wenger (1991) describes as 'Situated learning and

legitimate peripheral participation' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Where people gradually join in and help each other to learn new things by sharing what they have just experienced.

A broad spectrum of students, staff and others experienced the VR environment in the test stages. Reactions were collected through oral interviews, recordings and feedback forms. Results showed that there were no specific characteristics to a particular group or gender regarding their responses, which comprised of a wide variety of reactions.

As well as postive reactions there were a few contrary reactions at the test stage; one lady said it made her feel uncomfortable and dizzy and a colleague articualted that the reason she didn't like it was that she "couldn't see her feet". To address the last reaction, I realised that the VR world lacked something. The VR headset challenges people in different ways and despite being a sensory

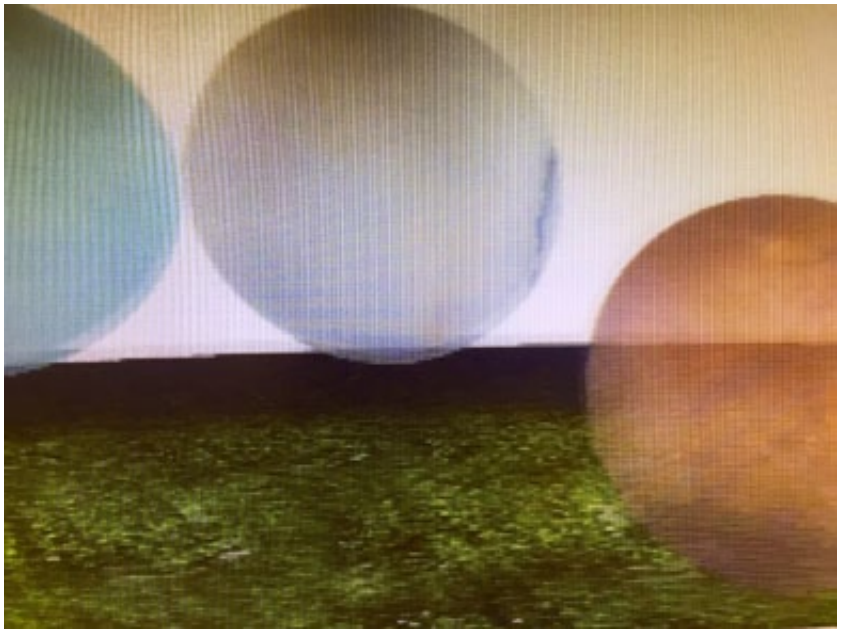


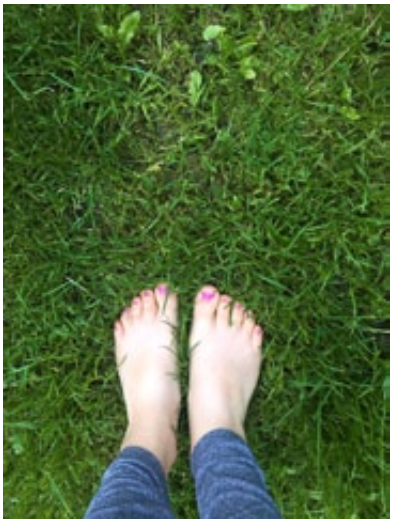
Figure 14. *Detail the domes inside the VR June 2018. Screen shot: Rosie Newman.*

experience, the contradiction was that there was a lack of a sense of the floor.

After thinking about the floor, I was taken back to a memory of being in India and the ritual of leaving one's shoes outside when entering a sacred place such as a temple, removing the shoes indicating that the ground about to be walked upon was holy.

Barbara Bickel explores ritual in her essay *Unveiling a Sacred Aesthetic: A/r/tography as Ritual* and discusses the importance of it in art practice, as she writes, "ritual has remained a vital element encouraging a mutual relational aesthetic within art making, inquiry, teaching and learning within the plurality of community" (Bickel, 2008, p. 81). She goes on to add that "the mutual and sacred aspects of ritual require compassionate awareness of the other as divine and calls for a caring responsibility within acts of co-creation" (Bickel, 2008, p. 81). Bringing some of these elements into the artwork appealed to me as I was looking into connecting people more deeply with nature and attempting to solve some of the negative aspects of using VR. I decided that what was missing was the sense of touch and smell of nature and that being bare footed could improve the experience and make a person feel literally grounded, humbled and human.

In my own artistic practice, I had used moss in sculpture and installations as a sensory material to provoke the memory of outside. Linking this together I cut and laid down grass turf and asked the headset wearer to enter the VR installation barefooted (see Figure 15). The grass provided the heightened sensory experience of touch and smell and a connection with the ground with intention of reminding the viewer of the connection to the earth. Being barefooted aided physical balance and helped to counteract dizziness but it also added an extra dimension as by removing the shoes it ritualised the act of entering the VR as it does with a sacred space. When inside the VR the headset wearer experienced a cathedral like height, dotted with large coloured transparent domes, resembling stained-glass windows and were able to walk softly around feeling the grass beneath their feet.



'The dancer has his ear in his toes' Friedrich Nietzche (1956, p. 224).

Figure 15. *Barefoot on the grass. Inverness, Scotland. June 2018. Photograph: Izzy Thomson.*

Results, Discussion and Analysis

I compile the results of this experiment here. They are in two sections, firstly the constraints of VR and secondly the positive effects of using VR for purposes outlined. The findings are based on feedback, observation and dialogues.

The Constraints of VR

Due to its sensory and dream like quality, VR can have a lasting effect on the mind and should be used with caution, especially if used with a wide range of people. A negative aspect to using VR is that in some people it can initiate unpleasant feelings such as anxiety and dizziness, so instead of connecting

people with nature, it could repel them. In the Radio 4 program *The Art of Immersion*, artist Adham Faramawy found it difficult to get past the initial unsettling immersive nature of VR whilst exploring its role in art practice. Immersive technology holds a novelty value which means it can be misused or overused and can also be addictive. Addiction Researcher, Cosette Rae warns in her on-line article *Virtual Reality: How addictive is it?* that VR can have multiple negative effects on people's mental health including causing addiction. She claims that there is "a growing concern about an understudied technology which may alter brain chemistry in ways not yet fully understood" (Rae, 2016, p. 1). If VR can change our sense of where we are and possibly who we are, it potentially could be dangerous to some people.

One way I addressed these issues was to make sure that the VR installation was not in a solitary environment and that there was support and guidance at hand. In comparison to VR technology being used by gamers, who are often alone in a room, it was important for my piece that the final output was shared in a supportive, communal environment. I also offered other learning alternatives such as foraging in nature.

Lastly, to address my scepticism about the negative aspects of VR, I also encouraged connectivity to the real world by letting people take off their shoes to help them find their own presence within it.

The Positive Results of VR

In her chapter entitled *Mold, Becoming an Indoor Species*, Ture Tammi reveals how humans have become sensually disconnected to nature as they spend so much more time indoors and how this coincides with the physical impact it is having on health (Tammi, 2019, p. 19). The counterintuitive way that VR was used in this project, as an indoor pursuit turned literally inside-out, created possibilities to explore outside and so gain the health and wellbeing benefits associated with this. As the aim of the project was to sensually connect the participant to nature, I would consider it a positive outcome that many who took part recorded that they felt physically and mentally better afterwards. "I feel so relaxed after doing that" said a foraging participant, "It's amazing how I

hadn't noticed that bird song before." (Student, 2018). This was somewhat due to the physical effects that some had felt after perusing the outside activities, as well as the mindful exercises of collecting the data.

In a recent podcast, Michael McCarthy discusses his book, The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy (McCarthy, 2015) with Krista Tippett (Tippett, 2018) who begins the interview by reciting his words, "The sudden passionate happiness which the natural world can occasionally trigger in us, may well be the most serious business of all." Some of these important feelings of happiness were remembered through the VR installation too, as evidence shown that rather than taking people away from nature, this particular use of technology could help to bring them closer. After removing the goggles, many people revealed that they were reminded of the good feelings of being immersed in nature and wished to return to it with increased curiosity about the sounds and colours they had just experienced.

Another interesting dynamic recorded was how many of the participants linked the sounds to a personal memory of nature and to a place. One member of staff spoke of how the sound of the redwings (*Turdus iliacus*) reminded them of watching the gathering birds at dusk on the telegraph poles behind their house; and another recalled how the sound of the skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) "took me right back to lying on the grass as a kid, trying to see if I could spot it high up in the summer sky" (UHI, 2018).

In review of Tacita Dean's exhibition *Landscape* (Dean & Lea, 2018), Sarah Lea writes, "on an individual level, landscape is biographical: 'place' is to landscape as 'identity' is to portraiture. We inhabit this sensory, dynamic medium without bodies and minds: when we experience, or remember landscapes, touch, smell and sound are as important as sight". (Dean & Lea, 2018, p. 1.) Deans work expresses the emotional and ethereal connection to nature that humans can have through sensory, memory connection, "We also bring to bear pictures, poems and films of landscapes which form and layer our immediate perceptions". And she goes on to add that, "Landscapes are temporally complex; they work on us with the potent forces of familiarity and strangeness, reality and imagination" (Dean & Lea, 2018, p.1)

Connecting people to the common place they live, study or work seemed to encourage a sense of belonging and brought back lived memories. As Sara Ahmed notes, "the locality intrudes into the senses: it defines what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers. The lived experience of being-at-home involves enveloping of subjects in a space which is not simply outside them: being-at-home suggests that the subject and space leak into each other, inhabit each other." (Ahmed, 2000, p.89). As entertainment technology is usually used as a means of escapism in society, this method of re-introducing a sense of 'home' was a positive difference in the way VR is usually used.

The VR installation was quite dreamlike, yet it was rooted in reality and linking the imagined with the familiar can have lasting emotional affects by presenting a different perspective about our relationship with nature. Through the study of phenomenology, Gustav Bachelard (2014) investigates in his book *The Poetics of Space* how the immensity of the outer world corresponds to the depths of the inner world and that by revisiting fond places through imagination, people can find a way to fall back in-love with the world. In Mark Danielewski's forward, he writes about how Bachelard claims that art and poetry can change lives and that through art people "re-enter the dwelling of the soul and intensify the transformation of being" (Bachelard, G. 2014).

Keeping art and education connected with people and place was essential to the project. I agree with Tara Haikio and Kafsa T Eriksson who introduce their book by announcing that "Art-based education is more than just artistic skills: it is key to learning on the deepest level, to becoming someone, to living a life, to understanding a dynamic world and to acting in that world" (Haikio and Eriksson, 2018, p. 7). Feedback shown that using VR in accordance with outdoor learning and art, was mainly a productive way to implement discussions about the natural environment, showing that rather than being a distraction from nature, VR could facilitate a mindful engagement with it. Positive feedback ranged from curious and inspired by the project to that of a strengthened affiliation, affection and connection to nature.

Conclusion

In the milieu of the Anthropocene, humans' impact on the natural world has reached crisis point and there is a recognisable need to change people's perspectives in order to slow down and address the crisis. As research shows, getting people back in touch with the nature, is one way to do this.

In this study I have explored how immersive technologies such as VR, usually associated with distracting people away from nature, can be used as a tool to entice people to reconnect with it.

I have discussed ways in which technology has the potential to be part of the wider solution and how it can offer encounters that can aid a shift in people's perspectives about nature, increasing their interest and knowledge and strengthening their affiliation with it. Through these encounters people may be encouraged to make the small and large changes that are needed to slow down the ecological crisis, by protecting biodiversity, reducing their carbon footprint, making sustainable lifestyle choices and informing government policy by voting.

From my active research and observations, I have opened my mind to the potential virtues of emerging technology when used in conjunction with art and educational projects. However, I think that they are at their most inspiring when they directly link participants back into the sensational and sacred experience of the 'real' world of nature.

References

Ahmed, S. (2000). *Strange encounters: Embodied others in Post-Coloniality.* New York, Oxon: Routledge.

ARVR GAMES. (2019). Retrieved from http://www.games.deuxality.com/DeuXality_Games/

Art Point Gumno. (2018). *Centre for art and sustainability.* Retrieved from http://artpoint-gumno.org.mk

Bachelard, G. (2014). *The poetics of space.* New York: Penguin Classics.

Barclay, L. (2017). *Soundscape* Volume 16. Sounds Emergent: Diverse Ecology Part 2. Available from https://www.wfae.net/uploads/5/9/8/4/59849633/sscapevol16_2017.pdf

Beuys, J., & Harlan, V. (2007). *What is Art? Conversations with Joseph Beuys. Edited Essays.* West Hoathly: Clairview Books.

Bible, T. (2016). *Oculus.com.* Retrieved from https://www.oculus.com/story-studio/blog/binaural-audio-for-narrative-vr/?locale=en_GB

Bickel, B. (2008). Unveiling a sacred aesthetic: A/r/tography as Ritual. In S. Springgay, R. Irwin, C. Leggo, & P. Gouzouasis (Eds.), *Being with A/r/tography* (pp. 81–94). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

Carrington, D. & Walker, P. (2019, April 23). Greta Thunberg condemns the UK's climate stance on speech to MPs. *The Guardian.* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/apr/23/vacant-seat-for-may-as-party-leaders-meet-greta-thunberg

Dean, T., & Lea, S. (2018). *Landscape [*Exhibition Pamphlet]. The Gabrielle Jungels-Winkler Galleries, The Royal Academy of Arts, London: England

Faramawy, A. (2018). *The art of immersion* [BBC Radio 4 program]. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09zv3m0

Ginsberg, A. G. (2019, 18 February). *Resurrecting the sublime.* Centre Pompidou in Paris. Retrieved from https://www.resurrectingthesublime.com/

Griffiths J. (2006). *Wild: An elemental journey.* St. Ives: Penguin Books.

Häikiö Karlsson T., & Eriksson, K. G. (2018). *Art-based education: An ethics and olitics of relation.* Gothenburg. HDK – Academy of Design and Crafts, University of Gothenburg.

Harlan, V. (2004). *What is Art? Joseph Beuys Edited Essays.* West Hoathly: Clairview Books.

Henderson C. (23 Oct 2017). *Start the week.* Interview with Andrew Marr [Television program]. Retrieved from: https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006r9xr

Hopkins, G. M. (2013). *The Best Poems of Gerard Manly Hopkins.* Amazon Independent Publishing Platform.

HTC corporation (2019). Retrieved from https://www.vive.com/uk/product/vive-pro-full-kit/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIwY6Uw6zW4wIVgbTtCh3FxgZIEAAYASAAEgJCyvD_BwE

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), (2019). *Nature's Dangerous Decline "Unprecedented"; Species Extinction Rates 'Accelerating'* [Media release]. Retrieved from https://www.ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment.

Kapoor, A. (1999). *Yellow* [Fibreglass and pigment. 600 x 600 x 300 cm]. The Lisson Gallery, London. Installed at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2009.

Laib, W. (2013). *Pollen from hazelnut* [Pollen installation, 18 x 21 feet]. Exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2013.

Lamb, R. (2008). *How are Fibonacci numbers expressed in nature?* Retrieved from https://science.howstuffworks.com/math-concepts/fibonacci-nature.htm

Lave, J., & Wenger, E. (1991). *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Macfarlane, R. (2017). *Mountains of the mind: A history of a fascination.* London: Granta Publications.

Marcuse, H. (1970). (2016, October 1) *Art as revolutionary weapon* [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9livubNajl4>:7:52/48:46).

McCarthy, M. (2018). Nature, joy and human becoming. Interview with Krista Tippett. Retrieved from https://onbeing.org/programs/nature-joy-and-human-becoming-may2018/

McCarthy, M. (2015). *The Moth Snowstorm: Nature and Joy.* London: John Murray.

Monbiot, G. (2014). *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life.* London: Penguin Books.

Nietzsche, F. (1956). *Thus Spake Zarathustra.* New York: Viking Press.

O'Sullivan, S. (2006). *Deleuze and Guattari Art Encounters: Thought Beyond Representation.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Parker, I. (2017). Remembering in our amnesia, seeing in our blindness. In A. Tsing, A H. Swanson, E. Gan, & N. Bubandt (Eds.), *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (pp. 155–168). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rae, C. (2016). *Virtual Reality: How addictive is it?* Retrieved from reSRART https://www.netaddictionrecovery.com/virtual-reality-how-addictive-is-it/

Scottish Natural Heritage. (2019). *Landscape policy: Wild land.* Retrieved from https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/landscape/landscape-policy-and-guidance/landscape-policy-wild-land

Syme, P. (2017). *Werner's Nomenclature of Colours: Adapted to Zoology, Botany, Chemistry, Mineralogy, Anatomy and the Arts.* London: Natural History Museum.

University of the Highlands and Islands (2018). Retrieved from https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/

Tammi, T. (2019). Mold: Breathing well at the wastelands? Climate change in schools and the daily lives of Arctic children. In P. Rautio, & E. Stenvall (Eds.), *Social, Material and Political Constructs of Arctic Childhoods* (pp. 17–34). New York: Springer.

Treffert, D. (2015, January 28). *Genetic memory: How we know things we never learned* [Blog post].Retrieved from https://blogs.scientificamerican.com/guest-blog/genetic-memory-how-we-know-things-we-never-learned/?redirect=1

Watts, J. (2019, May 6). Human society under urgent threat from loss of Earth's natural life. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2019/may/06/human-society-under-urgent-threat-loss-earth-natural-life-un-report

Weymouth, A. (2014, July 6). Was this the last wild wolf of Britain? *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/science/animal-magic/2014/jul/21/last-wolf\

Marie-Noëlle Legault
University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada

Dzhuliiana Semenova
North-Eastern Federal University, Yakutsk, Sakha (Yakutia) Republic, Russia

Photography-Based Participatory Workshop:

The Case of Yekyundyu Village

7

Introduction

This visual essay shows the results of a photography-based participatory workshop "Play with photography", held in July of 2018 in Yekyundyu Village, Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia. Photography was used to critically reflect on questions of representation and to see one's place in a wider context. As a creative process, it opened possibilities to make sudden connections and to create meanings. Built with a sensitive attitude towards the interacting person, society and culture, this project testifies the possibility and perspective of photography-based participatory method to improve social interaction and support ethnic, cultural and self-identification in indigenous communities. This project was implemented by two exchange students from the University of Lapland, Finland: Dzhuliiana Semenova (philosophy of photography and cultural studies) and Marie-Noëlle Legault (socio-cultural studies), respectively from the North-Eastern Federal University, Russia and University of Quebec in Montreal (UQÀM), Canada.

Figure 1. *Photograph made under the theme Play. The team recreated scenes from popular movies within a local context.*

Photography-Based Participatory Method

Photography is a visible image of history; its strength lies in the ability of the viewer to carefully consider the moment that immediately would be washed away by the flow of time. With time, different fields adopted this medium, increasing the reflection made around it. These events significantly contributed to the understanding of photography from new positions: as a sign system or 'Photographic Message' (Barthes, 1977) as a social practice (Bourdieu, 1990), as one of the areas of communication (Flusser, 2000), as an invaluable tool for understanding human behaviour and culture (Collier & Collier, 1986).

The second half of the 1970s was a tipping time for the history of photography as it started to accumulate manifestations of profound changes, later forming the evolution of the medium. In the theoretical field of visual research, photography began to be seen not only as an illustrative component and a two-dimensional imprint of the real world, but as its subjective interpretation – the process that creates a new specific reality based on the physical world. At this time, documentary took on an additional dimension and, synthesizing document (reality) and expression (fiction), underlined the dualistic nature of the medium.

In the 1990s, according to André Rouillé, the Other and dialogue became central to the photographic process (Rouillé, 2014, p. 257), it began to be considered in close connection not only with cognitive recognition of the world, but also in correlation with the affective attitude to the world, which Elena Petrovskaya refers to as "collective affectivity" (Petrovskaya, 2003, p. 17). Photography makes semantic adjustments to contemporary art, to understanding of its systems, relations and functions. As it is perceived today, photography offers a pluralism of interpretations, blurs boundaries between documentary and artistic, expands towards cultural practices of the new order with a focus on social interaction. Such examples are often visible in socially-engaged practices of contemporary art that refer to the idea of "relational aesthetics" of Nicolas Bourriaud: critically interpreting modern society with its enhanced culture of consumption, the researcher of modern culture reveals the mechanisms and values of the form of relations (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 39). Experience and communication stand at the

core of these relations. In this regard, it is necessary to expand research participatory approaches. Based on the analysis of rapidly changing visual culture and the concept of relational art, photography-based participatory method reflects on the specificity of post-documentary photography through creation of visual narratives. The researcher becomes a facilitator, who is responsible for organizing a dialogue in a community. The main functions of the photography-based participatory method are:

1. To reflect on one's own worldview
2. To support ethnic and cultural identity
3. To actualize processes of social construction
4. To democratize artistic practices
5. To improve social and interpersonal communication skills

On the one hand, photography can be used for critical understanding of the issues of representation and definition of one's own place in a broader context. On the other hand, as an artistic process, it opens up possibilities for infinite imagination, encourages sudden connections and creates meanings and closer understanding of the metaphysical questions. The project addressed below used a photography-based participatory method.

Description of the Workshop

The workshop was conceived for youth inclined to learn about photography, regardless the level of their knowledge of the medium. The objectives of the workshop were as follows:

1. To learn about photography in the context of contemporary art, where it originates, who makes it, why it is made and how it is made.
2. To experiment with different genres, methods and techniques in order to reflect on one's unique visual language.

3. To get acquainted with archival, historical, artistic photography-based projects made in home place.
4. To introduce the practice of looking at photographs and seeing how art itself can represent people and their stories.

Figure 2. *Group picture from participants and facilitators of the workshop "Play with photography".*

The workshop took place in Yekyundyu, a village of 350 inhabitants in Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), Russia. After an interview with the contact person of the village, the project team decided to conduct the workshop after the Sakha national celebration, Ysyakh, and before the beginning of harvesting season. The workshop was held in the format of a 'art laboratory' from 5 to 14 of July in two time intervals: 10:00–12:00 and 14:00–18:00. 12 people aged between 12 to 28 years old participated everyday with 10 more coming occasionally.

Figure 3. Photograph from the final project on Yekyundyu animals.

Figure 4. Photographs made on the theme Archive and Memory.

Figure 5. Photographs made on the theme Place. Participants made a group project on people of Yekyundyu inspired by the series "Tundra Kids" from Ikuru Kuwajima.

Figure 6. *Photographs made on the theme Play. The team created a contrast between contemporary and traditional Sakha culture.*

During the workshop seven themes were discussed: light, shift from document to expression, archive and memory, place, identity, play, and visual narrative. For a comprehensive study of photography, the structure of the workshop was built around theory and practice. In the morning, each theme was addressed theoretically through philosophy, history, discourse of photography around projects from professional photographers. In the afternoon, participants were

Figure 7. *Participants in action with facilitator Dzhuliiana Semenova (on the right).*

invited to practise photography around the selected theme individually or collectively. Afterwards, these practical works were shown to the group and discussed with all participants. In the beginning, participants needed a facilitator's assistance for their creative process. As they were getting used to the medium, they quickly started to be autonomous with their project ideas and their realization.

The Course of the Workshop

Figure 8. Photographs from the final project on Sakha words and expressions.

Before starting the workshop, participants were familiarized with the consent form regarding ethics and the use of images. Consent for underage participants was requested from legal representatives. Such measures brought a focus on the posture of the photographer and their responsibility.

The participants mainly worked in small groups for their different projects. They got to collaborate in an unusual way and this helped them to create new links between each other. They also got to work with their environment using a different eye, the one from the camera, which gave them a fresh perspective on their surroundings and they could share it with the group. Throughout the days, participants went around Yekyundyu, creating multiple concepts around it, giving it a new breath. They also interacted with villagers and deepened their knowledge about the people of the community in a sensitive way.

Results

In the end, all participants of the workshop worked on their individual or collective final projects, in which the question of identity was approached from various angles. For example, one participate made the portrait of Yekyundyu

Figure 9. *Photographs from the final project on Yekyundyu houses inspired by the typologies of Bernd and Hilla Becher.*

houses inspired by the typologies of Bernd and Hilla Becher. Furthermore, one team selected Sakha words and expressions and transmuted them into images; they played with the duality of meanings these idioms can bring and gave it their own twist through merging of imagery and textual. The participants presented their projects in an open exhibition followed by a discussion with the community of Yekyundyu. The responses were highly positive, highlighting that such a project could be used to activate the community and invigorate connections.

Based on the results of post-project interviews some elements of the workshop were identified as beneficial:

1. Learning how to work with digital cameras.
2. Increasing theoretical and practical knowledge about photography.
3. Improving social communication skills by interacting with people in a different context - as photographers and artists.
4. Getting new knowledge about the familiar environment.
5. Choosing their own point of interest in a particular project without limitation.

6. Combining individual and collective work in practical part of the workshop.
7. Presenting the final works and getting feedback from participants, facilitators and the community.

Post-project interviews also point out that the workshop was useful and somewhat "eye opening" for the community. On one side, the participants realized that they can express themselves through the medium of photography and got to explore their culture and surroundings with a new approach. Moreover, they got to connect with each other in a different way. Collaboration between the teams was noticed during the process, thus the final presentation was rewarding for the whole group. The participants were proud to share their results with the community and to get feedback. On the other side, the community got to see the youth of the village in action, creating something together with a talent they were not expecting.

Conclusion

The results of the project revealed the relevance of the proposed photography-based participatory method in the context of socially-engaged cultural practices.

Figure 10. *Photographs made under the theme Document to Expression.*

The study of photography is of great importance in understanding our culture, in which there are layers of dialogues and interactions with many cultures. It becomes increasingly important to recognize the existence of many truths and to be able to understand other points of view. In this context, photography plays a binding role, since the way of perception of photography is inseparable from the perceiving subject – as Elena Petrovskaya states, "in the flow of photographs, we recognize ourselves".

*All photographs presented in the visual essay were made by participants during the workshop "Play with photography", July 2018.

Acknowledgment

Authors of the article would like to thank: Ayillana Filippova, Michil Ivanov, Dimitri Vinokurov, Rozalia Sivtseva, Timur Gabyshev, Avelia Petrova, Maria Petrova, Varvara Ivanova, David Semenov, Tatyana Poskachina, Maksim Kuzmin, Dolguyana Kim, Sardaana Ivanova, Rozalia Mokhnachevskaya, Aelita Poskachina, Oleg Baldanov. They would also like to thank people without whom the project would have been hard to implement: Yekyundyu community members, Matrena Grigorievna Sivtseva (Director of the House of culture, Yekyundyu), and from the University of Lapland: Timo Jokela, Ismo Tiainen, Annamari Manninen, Hanna-Riina Vuontisjärvi, among others.

References

Barthes, R. (1977). *Image, music, text.* New York, NY: Hill and Wang.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *Photography: A Middle-brow Art.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Bourriaud, N. (2002). *Relational Aesthetics.* Dijon: Les presses du réel.

Collier, J. Jr., & Collier, M. (1986). *Visual Anthropology: Photography as a research method.* Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press.

Flusser, V. (2000). *For the philosophy of photography.* London: Reaktion Books Ltd.

Petrovskaya, E. (2003). *Anti-Photography.* Moscow: Tri kvadrata.

Porozov, Y. (2011). *Visual as the dominant of modern culture. Political linguistics.* Ural State Pedagogical University Press. Retrieved from https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/vizualnoe-kak-dominanta-sovremennoy-kultury

Rouillé, A. (2014). *Photography: between document and contemporary art*. Saint-Petersburg: Cloudberry.

Vivian M. Ross-Smith
Artist, Shetland, Scotland

Jane V. Walker
Artist, Newfoundland, Canada

islandness:

Making Space in Newfoundland and Shetland

8

islandness is an ongoing collaborative art practice that we founded as a means to connect experiences of living in Shetland and Newfoundland. We facilitate spaces within our island communities that focus on gathering, making, and sharing in a non-hierarchical format. In this visual essay, using images from programming in Shetland and Newfoundland, we contemplate the melding of social leisure and labour as an important aspect of community in island contexts. Whether it be filleting cod on the wharf or makkin[1] under the fluorescent lights of a public hall - labour and community are intrinsically linked. *islandness* has become a transatlantic framework for discussing art, craft, and the northern community experience.

Figure 1. *Jane Walker. "Sweet Bay, 27 August 2017" 35mm film scan, 2017.*

Boundaries of a physical island have been expanded by accessibility to the internet. The art world has long required artists to be working from cities--determined

Figure 2. *Jane Walker. "Lerwick, 11 July 2016" 35mm film scan, 2016.*

as art centres--that attribute value to their practice. On a global digital platform, place of practice is becoming less linked to recognition and reach while opening indefinite opportunities for individuals to connect in the face of distance. Our first interaction was entirely by chance, a throw away 'like' on Instagram, a catalyst that lead to a message, resulting in a face-to-face meeting, of which was born a genuine relationship and collaboration. Our own work continues to be shared through both digital and physical space, connecting our experiences of *islandness*, community, and artmaking across the North Atlantic.

Shared values in practice solidified our connection and interest to collaborate. Showing our home islands as places of creative significance and highlighting their respective wealth of place-based skill was integral to our independent practices and laid a strong foundation for the *islandness* framework. Despite that, our desire to work together was equally formed by our shared frustrations of working from places frequently perceived as being "on the edge" or peripheral.

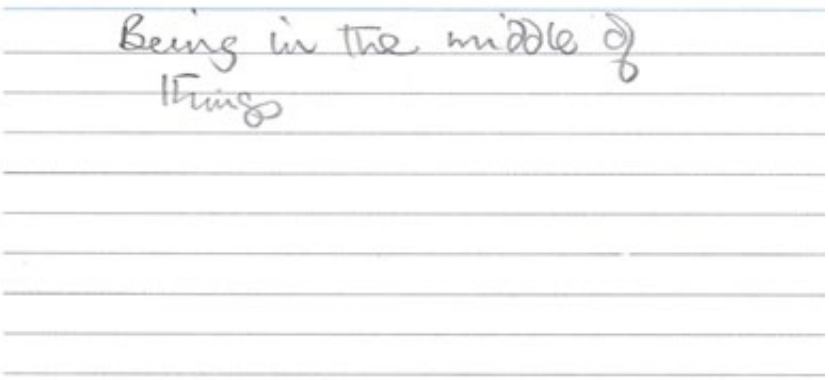


Figure 3. *"What does being an islander mean to you?" index card collected during islandness programming (2).*

Our practices in Newfoundland and Shetland fight to be considered contemporary in contrast to seemingly automatically-relevant urban practices. With limited professional supports in rural or non-urban places, artists rely more heavily on themselves to build their access to opportunities through online networks, travel, or by developing supports in their communities.

When imagining what our collaboration would look like, we knew that it had to be multi-dimensional project, a communal gesture not unlike the experience of *islandness*. We were reliant on individuals generously sharing their time, knowledge and experiences with us. We built our programming based on familiar gathering formats, adding additional context through shared material and cultural practices. During the Newfoundland instalment (August - October 2017), we focused on sharing Vivian's skills and knowledge from Shetland such as her fish skin preserving techniques, while in Shetland (September - November 2018) we put more emphasis on Jane's skills and knowledge from Newfoundland,

mainly rug hooking. The gathering spaces we selected for our programming were considered based on comfort and accessibility - community spaces like Susie's Cafe in Birchy Cove, Newfoundland; The Boating Club in Lerwick, Shetland; and the Fair Isle Community Hall, Shetland. Setting is a provider and denier of access. Our joint practice is grounded in the spaces we choose to practice within and the community life that is brought to the table as a result. Semper makes reference to how the procedural nature of weaving brings added sociability and communal communication through its practice (as cited in Lehmann, 2018, p. 59). The social aspect of the *islandness* framework is held at equal or higher regard to any material art or craft production within the project. *islandness* presents a reason to gather, highlighting what we have already - in community and visual culture, framing everyday island life and creative practice in a visual art context. It is an acknowledgement that the island communities that we come from and chose to remain are intrinsically part of our work.

We closed the Newfoundland installment of the project with an exhibition of works and documentation at Eastern Edge Gallery in St. John's. The day before

Figure 4. *Jane Walker. "Usnea", 2017. Lichen rug-hooked on mesh. 32 x 34 cm.*

Figure 5. *Vivian Ross-Smith. "Quilt", 2017. Preserved fish skin. 14 x 14 cm.*

the opening reception we hosted a workshop in the space in collaboration with Fishing For Success, a non-profit social enterprise based in Petty Harbour, NL who are "dedicated to living, sharing, and celebrating the traditional fishing knowledge and culture that sustained generations of Newfoundlanders and Labradorians" (Island Rooms of Petty Harbour: Fishing For Success, 2013). Throughout the evening, we shared skills - stitching with fish skin, rug hooking with found and natural materials, and learning how to knit nets and tie knots. Matthew Hollett speaks to the event in his article, *On Islandness* in ART NORTH Magazine (2019), he writes:

> *...materials such as burlap, linen and lichen are easily discarded, so plentiful they are almost valueless. Fish skin, too, is considered a "waste product". Walker and Ross-Smith embrace these materials, as well as techniques associated with repetitive household labour; sewing, quilting, and rug-hooking. The artists take these historically under-*

valued materials and experiences, these "negative" spaces, and remap them. Their work draws lines through these spaces because they are places worth being in. (p. 21)

Figure 6. *Amber-Lynn Thorne. Digital photograph from Fish Skin Preserving workshop at Keels, Newfoundland. 2017.*

The collaboration and participants activated the project within the greater context of sharing island practices, whereas the setting of an empty White Cube space obstructs important community activity that is essential to our place-specific work. The process of making and sharing during our events has been far more important than any end result. As Marco Marcon writes in his essay, *Looking for Art in all the Wrong Places* (2019):

Figure 7. *Vivian Ross-Smith. "Plastic Needle I", 2017. Handcast Bronze. 29.5cm x 3cm. "Wooden Needle", 2017. 2017, Handcast Copper. 45.5cm x 6cm. "Plastic Needle II", 2017. Handcast Bronze, 24cm x 3.5cm*

...the motivation to seek a new home for contemporary art in a rural and community context is closely linked to the realisation that in too many cases contemporary art institutions have abandoned any commitment to questioning the role of art in society. (p. 202)

We decided that for our Shetland installment of the project, it was not important to have an exhibition per se, but rather to share our work in the context of shared meals, workshops, and other gatherings - both planned and by-chance.

Opposed to the protective nature of independent visual art practice, *islandness* takes a more open-source style in its programming. We encourage participants to build upon their experiences towards a wider body of knowledge emerging from the project. This progression is naturally occurring already with other creatives translating the key themes into their own responses. Throughout the *islandness* programming to date, we have asked participants to respond to a simple question, "What does being an islander mean to you?" with participants writing their answers anonymously on index cards. Barnsley-born, Shetland-residing singer-songwriter Adam Guest took the responses gathered and responded with a piece of music titled *Solitude and Grace* (2018), during which he sings,

Weaving in and out, pull tightly, tight around
Down into the deep, memory surrounds you now
Deep here in your darkness for it's you that sets the stage
And you show me mercy, unfold just what I crave

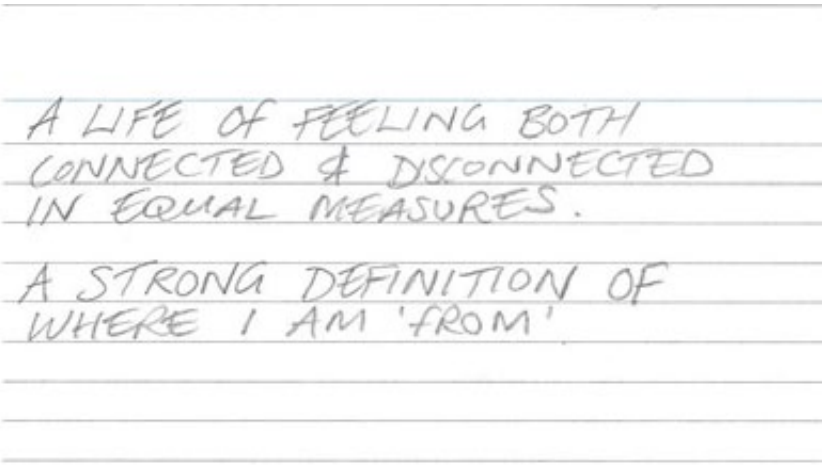


Figure 8. *"What does being an islander mean to you?" index card collected during islandness programming (2).*

Figure 9. *Vivian Ross-Smith. "Haaf", 2019. Haddock skins, silver leaf, Shetland wool & wooden frame. 28 x 40 cm.*

Figure 10. *Vivian Ross-Smith and Jane Walker. "DEVOTION", 2017. Rug-hooked wool on burlap, preserved fish skin and embroidery. 130 x 40 cm*

Building a collaborative body of place-based knowledge is a natural mode of working in small community. *islandness* reconsiders the role of "the artist" as the single original author, towards a framework of distributed authorship. While we both have independent art practices, we are merely facilitators and contributors in this project. Marcon (2019) writes that "[a]rtworks are relevant to communities because they emerge from a dialogical exchange that reflects the specificity of the situation in which they were collaboratively conceived", and not necessarily through any desire by the community participants to become professional artists (p.199). During the 2017 Bonavista Biennale, Ross-Smith led a process-based workshop, *Fish Skin as Art & Craft*, showing participants how to preserve and stitch with fish skin. The workshop shared the Keels Hall with artist Pam

Hall's Knowledge Exchange, a space for contributing local knowledge in the community of Keels. Informed by such spaces, Hall's *Towards an Encyclopedia of Local Knowledge* (2017) and the associated body of work operates within a similar structure of highlighting the everyday as an important and valuable way of knowing, acknowledging that while not all contributors are artists, all contributions are valid and equally part of the discourse.

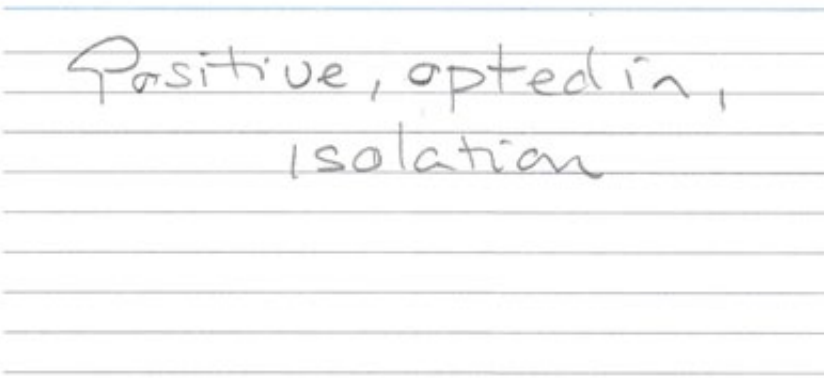


Figure 11. *"What does being an islander mean to you?" index card collected during islandness programming (3)*

The *islandness* framework may never be set in stone. As with all art practices, it is a living thing, its focus will change and adapt as our collaboration does. The aim will also shift depending on where the project is taking place. From our very first conversation we knew it had to start with our homes, Shetland and Newfoundland. Now that the initial instalments are complete, we are turning to the future of the project: more places, more communities, more artists. *islandness* is a space for bridging people and communities. It acknowledges the quieter spaces and moments, often overlooked in polished art environments. We look

to celebrate the space between fine art and craft, the meeting point where the community feels at ease, and the gesture of sharing a skill and making it relatable. In its essence, *islandness* is about pulling together northern island spaces and celebrating them through making, sharing, and gathering.

I believe that people who are removed from the centre of a society are always able to see it more clearly [..]. it's always difficult to see anything from the centre, much more easy to see it from the outside. (Gould, 1969)

Figure 12. *Jane Walker. Walls, Shetland. 35mm film scan. 2018.*

Figure 13. *Jane Walker. Cape Bonavista, Newfoundland. 35mm film scan. 2018.*

Endnote

[1] 'Knitting' in Shetland dialect.

References

Guest, A. (2018). *Solitude and Grace song lyrics.* Retrieved from personal correspondence 17 May 2019.

Gould, G. (1969). *The Latecomers, from The Solitude Trilogy.* Canadian Broadcast Corporation.

Hall, P. (2017). *Towards an encyclopedia of local knowledge: excerpts from Chapters I and II.* St. Johns, NL: Breakwater Books.

Hollett, M. (Spring 2019). On Islandness. *ART NORTH Magazine, Issue 1*, p. 21.

Island Rooms of Petty Harbour. (2013). Retrieved from www.islandrooms.org

Lehmann, U. (2018). Making is knowing. In T. Harrod (Ed.), *Craft, Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art* (p. 59). Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Marcon, M. (2019). Looking for art in all the wrong places. In Myvillages (Ed.), *The Rural, Whitechapel: Documents of Contemporary Art* (pp. 199–202). Cambridge; MA: The MIT Press.

Contributor Details

Glen Coutts is Professor of applied visual arts education and a Docent at the University of Lapland. A practising artist, he writes regularly about issues in art education. In 2019 he was elected President of the International Society for Education through Art and is past Principal Editor of the International Journal of Education through Art (2010–16). He was awarded the United States Society for education through Art Ziegfeld Award for outstanding international Leadership in art education.

glen.coutts@ulapland.fi
ORCID: 0000-0001-8541-4701

Mette Gårdvik, Associate Professor of Arts and Handicrafts. Faculty of Education and Arts, Nord University. Background: Arts and Design Education. Research: The outdoor classroom and conservation of handicraft skills.

mette.gardvik@nord.no

Annika Hellman is senior lecturer and a teacher of visual arts for the Department of Education, Mid Sweden University, Sweden. She is a board member of the Swedish International Society for Education through Art since year 2012. Current research interests include visual art and media education, visual culture, gender and posthumanist perspectives.

annika.hellman@miun.se
ORCID: 0000-0003-3827-3971

Timo Jokela is Professor of Art Education of the Faculty of Art and Design, University of Lapland. He is leader of Thematic Network on Arctic Sustainable Art and Design, University of Arctic. Jokela works actively as an environmental artist and community artist, often using natural materials and the cultural heritage of the North and the Arctic as a starting point for his works. He has been responsible for several international and regional art-based research projects in the field of art education, visual art and design.

timo.jokela@ulapland.fi

Korinna Korsström-Magga has a long experience as an art teacher, creating working spaces for communities in their own environments in the rural areas of Northern Lapland in Finland. Her special interest; working with communities, using community art, has fed her desire for seeking equality and respect between people with different backgrounds, livelihoods and cultures. Her on-going dissertation seeks to find the Sámi reindeer herders in Northern Lapland a way to inform about their daily life by using means of community art.

Korinna.KM@gmail.com

Rosie Newman is an Artist and a Lecturer at Inverness College, University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) in Scotland. She has a BA Hons Degree in Fine Art from Camberwell School of Art, London and a Teaching Qualification in Further Education, Stirling University, Scotland. She is currently studying for a Master's Degree in Art & Social Practice at Shetland College UHI.

rosi@rosienewman.co.uk
www.rosienewman.co.uk

Marie-Noëlle Legault is interested in culture as a universal language connecting individuals beyond preconceived social beliefs and barriers. She is currently completing a bachelor degree at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQÀM) in cultural action, a field where sociology, communication and culture are intertwined. She had the opportunity to deepen her background in community art in a nordic context during a one year exchange at the University of Lapland, Finland.

legault.marie_noelle@courrier.uqam.ca

Roxane Permar is Reader in Fine Art at the University of the Highlands and Islands, Research Fellow and Programme Leader for the MA Art and Social Practice in the Centre for Rural Creativity, Shetland College UHI. She works collaboratively, using socially engaged practice to facilitate exchange across cultures and political boundaries, often between Shetland and northern and Arctic regions and most recently in two projects, Cold War Unst and Home & Belonging. Her exploration of the relationship between virtuality and socially engaged art is on-going through the integration of pedagogical, artistic and academic discourses.

Roxane.Permar@uhi.ac.uk
ORCID: 0000-0002-2143-4663
www.coldwarprojects.com
www.roxanepermar.com

Laura Pokela holds a Master of Arts degree in Applied Arts (2008) and a Bachelor of Arts degree (2004) in ceramics and glass design from the University of Art and Design Helsinki. She works independently in children's culture and design- and craft education sectors. Pokela creates educational content, facilitates workshops and multi-material design groups for children. She has a community-driven and improvisatory approach focused on dialogue, sustainability and learn-by-doing. Her recent artwork addresses tactile memories and inner landscapes.

pokelan.laura@gmail.com

Vivian Ross-Smith is a visual artist from Shetland currently studying a Masters of Fine Art Practice at Glasgow School of Art. She co-founded and ran Visual Artist Unit (2013-18) and lectures in Fine Art for University of Highlands and Islands. Ross-Smith's practice merges Fine Art and Craft by combining painting, textiles and sculpture to communicate craft, skill, isolation, commitment to place and community.

vivianmrosssmith@gmail.com
vivianrosssmith.com

Melanie Sarantou holds a PhD (Visual Arts) from the University of South Australia. She currently works as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Lapland, Finland, focusing on how arts and narrative practices impact marginalised communities in various global settings. Her arts practices currently involves the use of embroidery, sewing and felting techniques to explore her relationships with the women in her life who continue to form her most treasured experiences and connections to place.

melanie.sarantou@ulapland.fi
ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2209-3191

Dzhuliiana Semenova studied philosophy of photography in Fotodepartament Institute and obtained with honors her master degree in visual culture from the North-Eastern Federal University in 2019. Currently she is a methodist in the Scientific and Educational Department at the National Art Museum of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), where she curates several projects, merging participatory methods and contemporary art practices in order to collectively reflect about collective identity, cultural memory, history and mythology.

froouv@gmail.com

Sanna Sillgren holds a Master of Art degree at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki. Her research included design workshops in craft design Namibia between 2002 and 2006. She worked as a freelance jewellery designer, artist and entrepreneur since 2004. Sillgren works as a special education and art teacher for a Finnish elementary school since 2016. Her artwork varies from installations to wearable art, reflecting on topics related to human interactions and dialogues with nature.

sannikat@hotmail.com

Karin Stoll, Associate Professor of Natural Science. Faculty of Education and Arts, Nord University. Background: Zoology, education officer at a Natural History Museum. Research: Education for Sustainable Development in Teacher Education.

karin.stoll@nord.no

Wenche Sørmo, Associate Professor (Dr. Sci.) Natural Science. Faculty of Education and Arts, Nord University. Background: Comparative physiology. Research: Education for Sustainable Development in Teacher Education.

wenche.sormo@nord.no

Jane Walker is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher from Newfoundland, Canada. She is a visual arts editor for Riddle Fence, and the co-founder and director of a new artspace in Port Union, Union House Arts. Her visual art practice and research is grounded in sustainable art practice in rural contexts, craft-based research methodologies, place-specificity, and making as a tool for sharing. She works and lives in Bonavista, Newfoundland.

jane@janewalker.ca
janewalker.ca

LAPIN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF LAPLAND

ASAD

InSea

UArctic

The *Relate North* series is dedicated to the exploration and sharing of contemporary practices in arts-based research and academic knowledge exchange in the fields of art, design and education. Each book in the series consists of peer-reviewed chapters and visual essays. The *Relate North* series will be of interest to academic researchers, artists, designers, art educators and practice-based researchers. The mission of this particular book is to examine the potential of collaborative practices in art, design and education. This book brings together the work of leading researchers, scholars artists and designers.

Contributors focus on the general topic of collaborative art, design and education, from the perspective of those living, researching and practising art and art education in Northern and Arctic countries. The editors believe that northern, Arctic and Circumpolar countries are under-represented in the academic, design and art education literature, despite the wealth of innovative research and practice taking place in those areas. The *Relate North* series and this book in particular, offers a channel for those engaged in collaborative art, design and education to raise awareness and share experience and findings amongst those committed to these disciplines in northern countries, the Arctic and beyond.

ISBN 978-989-54683-2-4
www.insea.org

ISBN 978-989-54683-0-0
9 789895 468300