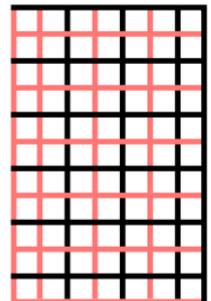
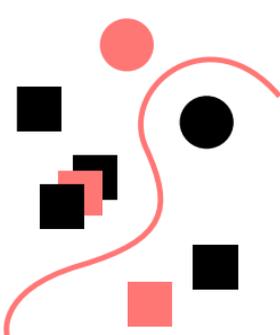
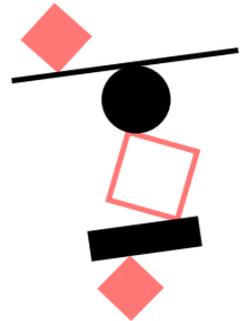
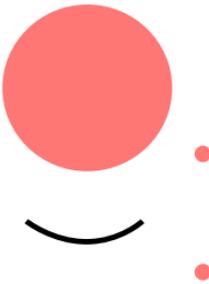
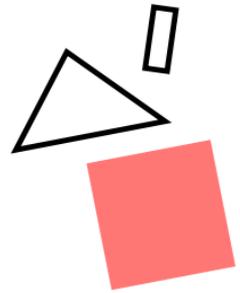


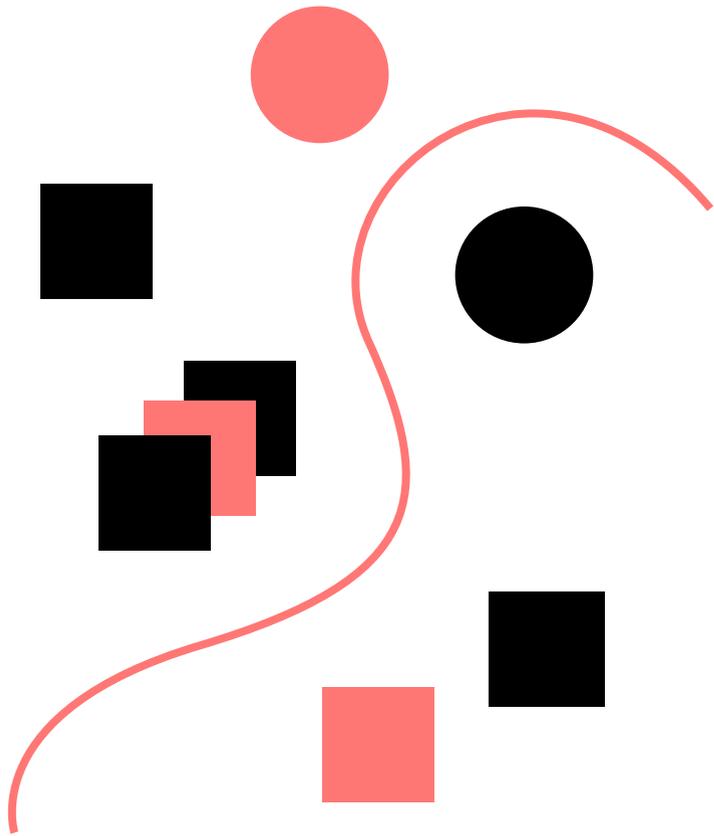
**Tenthaus
Toolkit
Artists
in Schools**



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**Tenthaus
Toolkit
Artists
in Schools**

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compass

Tenthaus Oslo is an artist-led exhibition space based in Oslo, which also enjoys a long-term working relationship with Hersleb Upper Secondary School. With this publication, we wish to build bridges between artists and schools in order to promote artistic practices working in dialogue with children and young people. How can professional artists from the field of visual arts best be used as a resource in schools? And how can processes that function well for all parties be achieved?

Working independently as an artist within a public institution such as a school is not easy. Perseverance is important, as well as finding the best communication channels, thinking long-term and being prepared to enter into dialogue. Naturally, schools have their routines, their timetables and their curriculum which all need to be respected. The question is how these should interact with independence, autonomy and freedom - all of which are methods characterising the work of contemporary artists? Having worked with art projects in Oslo schools for nearly a decade, we in Tenthaus dare to contend that this is both possible and desirable. We have experienced that a close, long-term relationship between artists, pupils and teachers creates reciprocal trust, where contemporary art becomes a place for questions, experimentation, development and fascination both for the artist's work and the pupil's learning.

Tenthaus Toolkit - Artists in Schools is a set of tools for schools as a location for the production of art. Through a number of texts and examples, we will define some tools which may be useful when a school wants to work with an artist or vice versa. Based on our own practice, we wish to use this publication to share some tools with artists, schools, politicians and other decision-makers who are involved in, or interested in these questions. The aim is to find good strategies for how a visual artist may participate in the Norwegian state school system.

BEING

Those who are bored, are sent straight home with a big bag of sweets and a film. If someone continues to be bored, s/he will be sent to the cinema with their friends.

BORED IS

NOT

PERMITTED

My Giant Handbag

Helen Eriksen

I carry it around with me all the time without really knowing how it got so big. It's bulging at the seams and quite heavy; sometimes I have to put it down just to give my shoulders a rest.

What's in it, my bag of tricks? Experience, education, life: it's a bag that I can't really hide. I never leave home without it! Sometimes it's annoying and gets in the way, but cumbersome as it is; everything is in it and I have to take it with me.

We've all got a bag like this; every profession has their own mixed bag of tricks. My giant bag says, "I'm a visual artist." But why is my bag designed differently than other professions and especially that of the teacher.

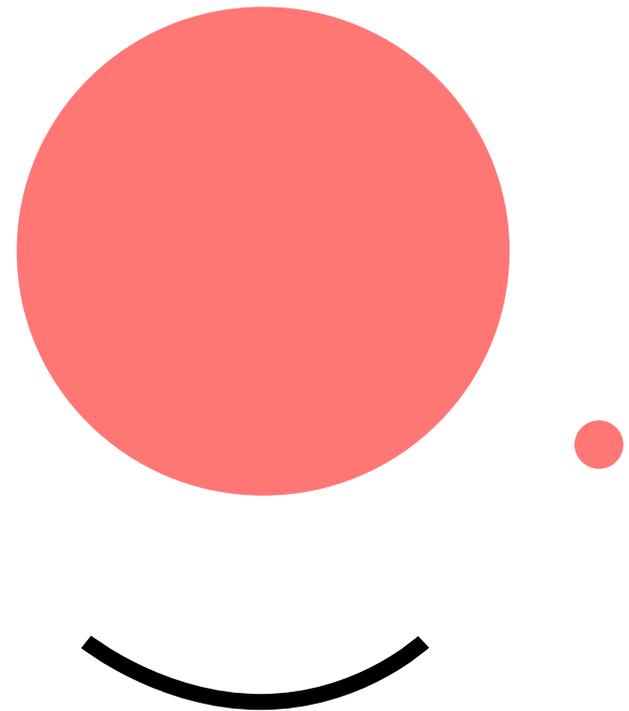
What does a visual art education give me that no other path of studies can give. Where the teacher is educated to learn methods of academic knowledge transfer, the artist is educated to understand and translate the world via visual signs and codes. Visual literacy is our domain – academic literacy is the teacher's. The transfer of knowledge in these two domains seem to be irreconcilably different. But is that really so? They are both ways to interpret a complicated world, a plural society with the tensions that entails.

What are we, three visual arts, doing working with a class of young adults in a school? This is our art project, another thing to add to our shoulder bags. We are using our skill sets to articulate a creative collaboration with and in the school as our playpen. The operative word is creative- we are not performing to a set curriculum, plan or agenda- we are producing within the ever transforming nature of our project mandate. Taking feedback from it, pushing it forward, breaking it down, tweeking, teasing and producing a "thing." Let's call the thing "art" for the sake of simplicity.

What do we do – We meet our young adults, and get to know them through talk and working together. What is special about this group of people? Teenagers learning to define themselves in Norwegian society. How is this process working and what education, experience and life are they bringing with them in their own bags?

How can we open their bags to allow them to articulate their own experience whilst experiencing a new visual world of codes and hidden signs? Our hope is that while they discover our visual culture they can express something of their own: we have much to learn whilst we share our ideas and skills, we can place hammers in hands and show them the nails, we can show them that a clean sheet of paper does not have to be filled with the right answer but the correct question.

We can show them a room to work that has no answers, a room where the question mark reigns – the discussion rather than the answer in a room where conflict and opposition is as important as understanding the idea of consensus. A room with many doors and the sign on the door is of our own making.



smile

**LET
EVERYONE
BE HAPPY**

If you're unhappy, you can
spend the day at home or
talk to an adult.

Application and Autonomy – The Reach and Span of Contemporary Art Didactics

Boel Christensen-Scheel,
Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences

Introduction

Aesthetics, as both a variety of practices and a field of research, has now begun a journey toward society and more applied thinking – that is, how can art, art thinking, and different forms of sensuousness interact with or interfere in societal contexts. That art concerns itself with societal challenges might seem obvious in current research politics oriented toward climate change and financial crises, but in fact, the applied aspect in art contains several areas of tension related to art discourse and history. Since antiquity, art has been related to non-use or use in religious and poetic situations. In addition, although part of power systems, games and rhetoric, art's function has often been tied to its non-functionality or its evasion from precisely concrete and trivial use. Its use has, roughly put, been related to its uselessness.

Meaningless work is potentially the most abstract, concrete, individual, foolish, indeterminate, exactly determined, varied, important art-action-experience one can undertake today. (De Maria, 1960, p. A central question thus becomes what this “useful uselessness” consists of, and further, if this uselessness could instead be considered useful or meaningful, and how. What we consider “applied” is thus part of the discussion, and what the value of the material and immaterial production is considered to be. With reference to the above cited artist Walter de Maria, it is in these tensions between the abstract and the concrete, the indeterminate and the exactly determined, that this research compilation places itself. This points us to the field of *contemporary art didactics*, where knowledge production and dispersion in and through art and aesthetics are promoted, and where the qualities of responding to societal needs and challenges are negotiated with the particular qualities of art. The field of didactics has

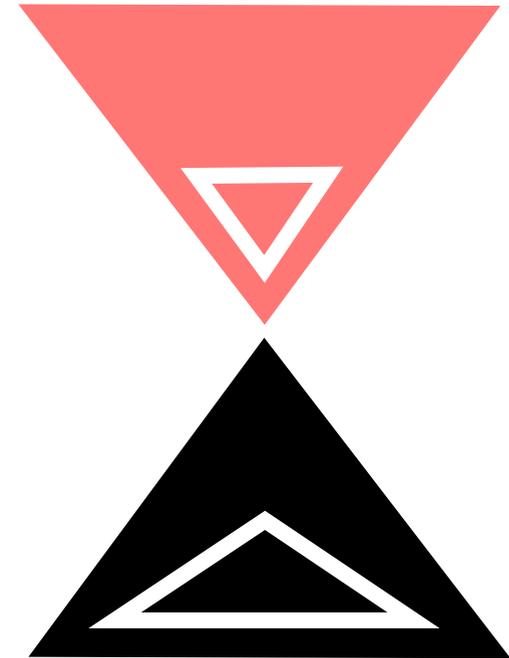
traditionally been tied to specific teaching methods, but can also be seen as a more general theory of learning. With the term “contemporary art didactics”, we want to propose a relational field of communication and interaction based on aesthetic activity and competence (Aure, 2006, pp.135, 148). In addition, we seek to emphasize the contemporary quality and engagement of this activity and competence. Contemporary art didactics, at the least, has a three-fold objective, directed toward art activity and competence, relational learning potential, and contemporary relevance – here, leaning on scholars who have sought to expand the notions of art education and art based research (Aure, 2011; Borgdorff, 2011; Rogoff, 2006). Note that we use the term “art based” and not “arts-based” to indicate the connection to contemporary art and art as a cross-disciplinary aesthetic field, rather than a genre-driven methodological expertise.

Critical Thinking and Applied Autonomy

Entering the twenty-first century with a foundation in critical thinking and the art discourse developing from the German philosopher Theodor Adorno’s aesthetic theory, one of art’s primary concerns is to present a commentary or an alternative perspective to society. This suggests a distance or an outside perspective in art, a position that gives art its so-called autonomous character.

The autonomy of works of art, which of course rarely ever predominated in an entirely pure form, and was always permeated by a constellation of effects, is tendentially eliminated by the culture industry, with or without the conscious will of those in control. (Adorno, 1972/2001, p.99)

Adorno did not claim this autonomy rigidly, thereby isolating or secluding art from societal impact, but considered a critical distance vital for art, precisely *to have*



time

an impact or an importance in society as it changes and develops.

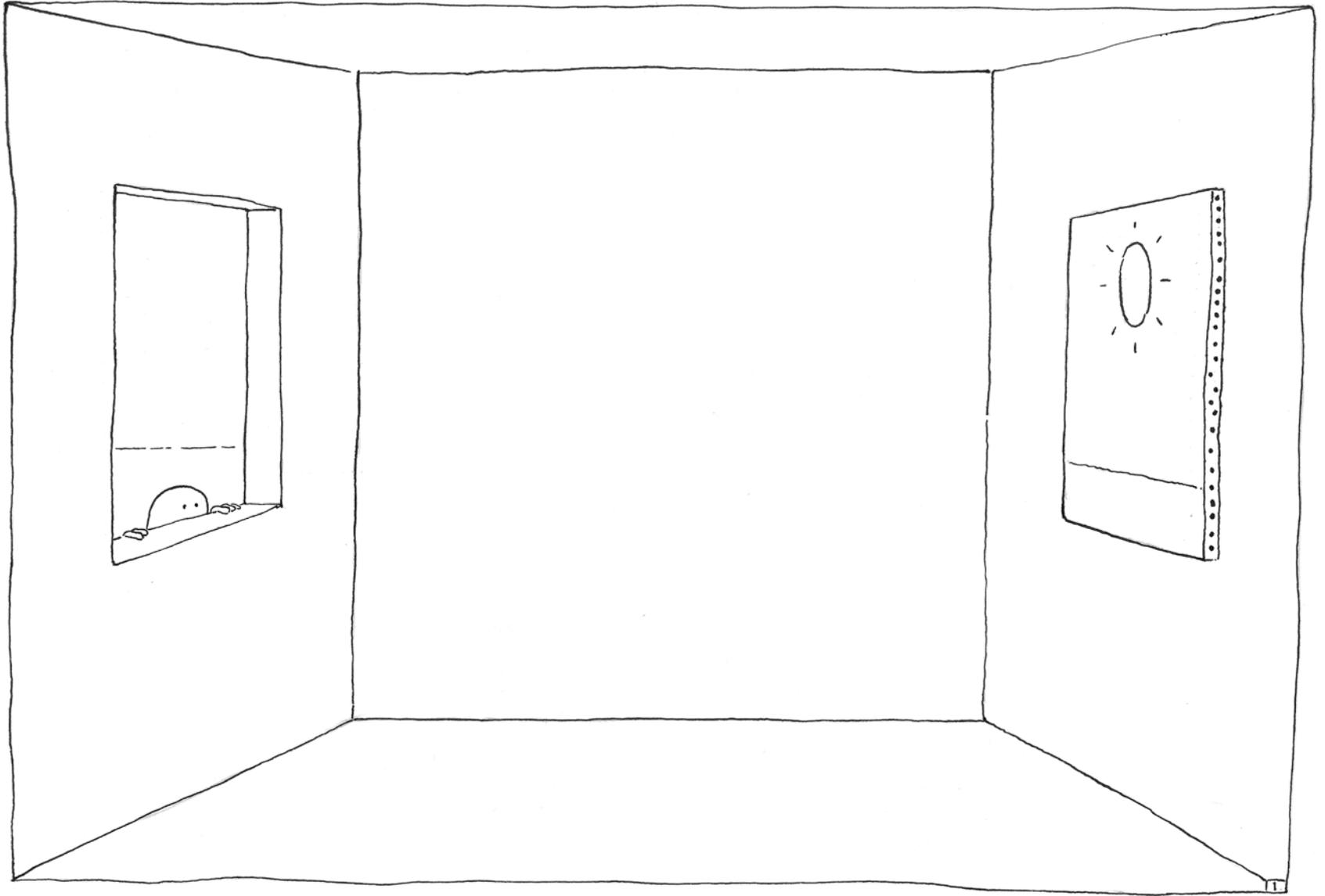
The double character of art – something that severs itself from empirical reality and thereby from society’s functional context – is directly apparent in the aesthetic phenomena, which are both aesthetic and *faits sociaux*... and, certainly, art always stands in need of this external perspective for protection from the fetishization of its autonomy. (Adorno, 1970/2004, p.328)

For Adorno, art is sensuous *reflection*, rather than *representation* – art lies in the picture that appears through an artistic process, not in the pictorial similarity to the depicted or to the world itself (Adorno, 1970/2004, p.110). Otherwise formulated, art’s potential resides in presenting a reflected or “doubled” version of experienced reality, thereby distancing itself from the immediacy of this thought reality and creating an important societal reflexivity. This is reminiscent of what theatre director and theoretical poet Antonin Artaud called the theatrical ability of “doubling” the non-theatrical, creating something that is perceived as more real or intense than reality itself (Artaud, 1936/1989, p.97). Bertolt Brecht, another crucial avant-garde director referred to by Adorno himself, also developed the reflexive potential of theatre through a distancing or “*Verfremdung*”, where art was not the same as life or society, but meant to create an awareness of it (Brecht, 1927/2000, p.215). Nonetheless, Brecht used this “epic” or confrontational strategy to support and develop ideology, thereby re-entering the direct political sphere that Adorno, in many ways, can be said to have avoided.

More than as a direct relationship between art and life or society, these theories can be thought to describe certain *qualities* or possibilities in art. The weight

put on art’s autonomy through the twentieth century could as much be traced to an interest in society and in reflexivity as a democratic function, rather than to a distance or disinterestedness, which this autonomy was later occasionally portrayed to be. Nonetheless, what the so-called autonomy of art consists of, or leads to and why, is not entirely clear. Is autonomy something that literally excludes or frees art from the regular system, leading to the notion that the rest of society is included in one coherent system? Or is art that “anti-structure”, which ultimately confirms and legitimizes the structure, thereby totally depending on it? This confirmational critique is also touched upon by Adorno, showing the paradox of the direct critique in itself, “Yet industry makes even this resistance an institution and changes it into coin. It cultivates art as a natural reserve for irrationalism, from which thought is to be excluded.” (Adorno, 1970/2004, p.426) Here, Adorno describes the problem of the utopic in avant-garde art, the sincere wish to act and address, but the representational distance nevertheless created in such a process (Bürger, 1984).

This has also become a central element in the critique of Adorno and the Frankfurter school of critical thought. In a more recent text, “The Mis-Adventures of Critical Thought” (2009), French philosopher, Jacques Rancière, elaborates on some of the problems concerning reflexive distancing in art, leading to demotivated exposure of flaws and crisis, and to a similar demotivated state of awareness of flaws and crisis in the spectator, but also in a demotivation regarding them. As important as critique is for the democratic structure, criticism, as a self-concerned, tale-biting story, has problematic sides (Christensen-Scheel, 2009, p.71). By reflecting on, but not taking a stand in relation to, part of the critical production creates no potentiality, no options. This demotivated



autonomy and utopic paradox is also part of what led art theorist and curator Nicolas Bourriaud to emphasize relationality and encounters in art, and to oppose a distancing of art from society (Bourriaud, 2001). Nonetheless, his intentions, one must think, and as one must think Adorno's was, is to create an *important* art, related to societal needs and challenges.

As the questions concerning art's relationship to society cannot be easily answered, one could say that the questions themselves are an important part of art and its research. Irit Rogoff, Professor in Visual Studies, lays out terms for (art) educational pedagogy in the text "Academy as Potentiality" (2006). She problematizes the many unformulated and misformulated conceptualizations of (*art*) *education* as both a problem solver and a battleground in the beginning of the twenty-first century – related to romantic ideas of inspiration on the one hand and to economic interests in effectiveness on the other. In contrast, Rogoff suggests altering the vocabulary of contemporary art education based on what one could call a contemporary art theoretical or philosophical basis; however, it is also directly connected to artistic production principles:

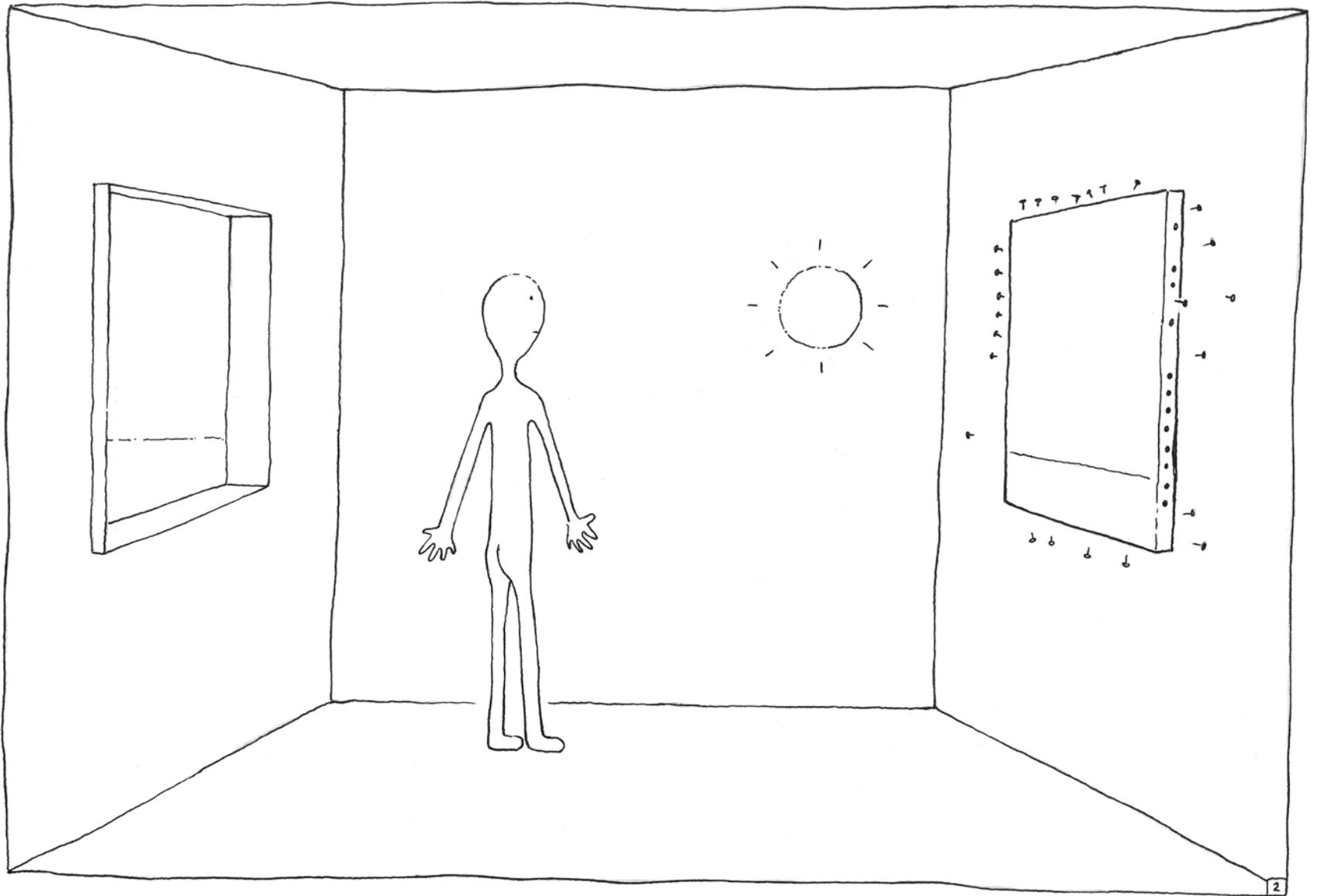
...a set of alternate emergent terms that operate in the name of this "not-yet-known-knowledge". Terms such as potentiality, actualisation, access and contemporaneity, which for me are the building blocks and navigational vectors for a current pedagogy, a pedagogy at peace with its partiality, a pedagogy not preoccupied with succeeding, but with trying. (Rogoff, 2006, p.15)

Rogoff also emphasizes that, "the questions we ask are far more important than the answers we might provide... they are our possibility to change the basis of our thought" (Rogoff, 2006:18). Reflection is spurred by

questions, and as obvious as it may seem, it is something that we often must remind ourselves of as we enter a production process. This "not-yet-known" attitude, which reluctantly seeks answers, also leads to a different perspective on critique. Here Rogoff proposes a shift from what she calls *criticism* (finding faults and exercising judgments according to a consensus of values) and *critique* (examination of underlying assumptions in order to reveal or replace a convincing logic), to *criticality* (operating from an uncertain ground of embeddedness) (Rogoff, 2006, p.17). Criticality would be to incorporate the relational and interrogative attitude in the discussion of quality in art, thus both continuing and expanding the lines of critical thought. Therefore, while not being defined as utopic or merely as a social situation, art can simultaneously be applied, relational, unsure, and critical. This foundation of negotiation does however implicate an insistence on the particular qualities of art and the particular potential of these qualities in an educational or didactic context.

Performative Potentiality

Although the tensions between applied and autonomous – and relational and critical, still exist in the arts, the amount of attention these tensions are given varies tremendously. In the practical-theoretical landscape in which we seek to make a sketch, these tensions can be overcome, or considered irrelevant, but they are not shoved under the carpet. To understand, critical thinking and critical discourse, as promoted by Adorno, have an important aesthetic as well as political function. Therefore, the critical aspects, along with the conceptual, could be seen as applied qualities that place the art discourse *in relation* to society rather than distancing itself from it.

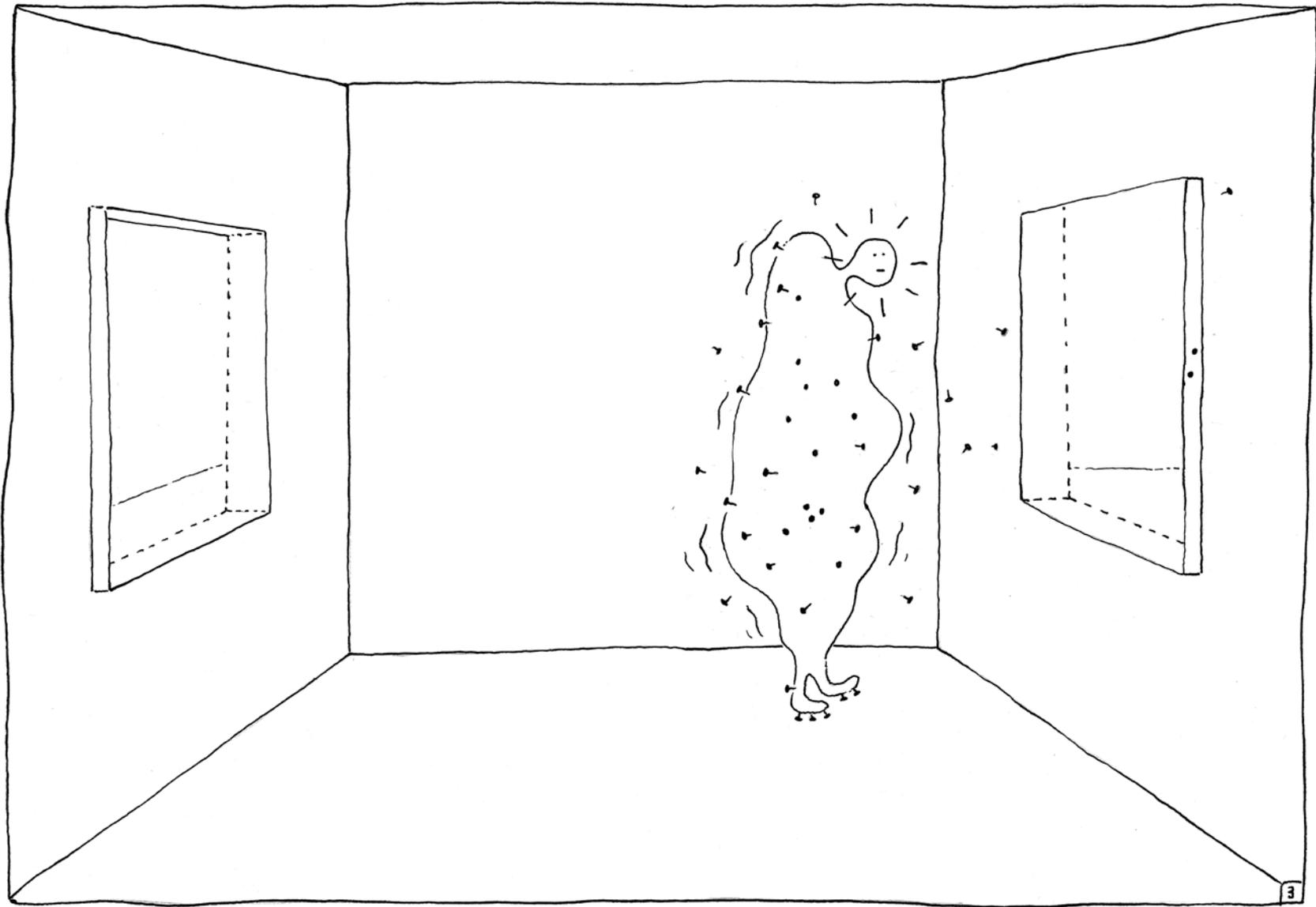


Nonetheless, art discourse is not driven by one perspective only, at each moment in time, several different “art logics” and discourses can be identified: As parts of contemporary art through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have become increasingly immaterial or have had a specific social or educational engagement, the field of performance theory has likewise become increasingly important. As a central field of research in theatre studies, as well as in aesthetics, performance theory and theories on performativity have become a way to describe the dimension of *time* in different phenomena. Performance studies was established as a specific field of research and study in New York in the 1970s, by theatre theorist, Richard Schechner, and anthropologist, Victor Turner. The point of departure was the interpretation of theatre as a social and anthropological event, and the other way around, the understanding of non-art events, such as social and religious rituals, as containing aesthetically decipherable elements. For example, rites of passage can be read according to a dramaturgical development and simple situations of risk in everyday life can be understood as a creation of personal suspense. Further, the concept of a certain development within a given time span, based on the relationship between ‘structure’ and ‘anti-structure’, was central to their theorization (Turner, 1987, p.34). This also marked a shift in the weight from product to process, and from a particular aesthetic frame within visual arts or theatre, to the possible *movement of frames* between art, politics, religion, family, etc. (Schechner, 1988/2003, p.99, 2004). This also meant that social and anthropological perspectives could be used to understand art, and theatre theory could be used to analyze a religious ritual or a court process. The performative element in these different cases was then tied to the creation of a certain consciousness,

an awareness of the behavior and its different contexts *as frames*. The theatrical action as performance is always new, as an actual action, but as a rehearsed action, it is also repeated. However, Schechner and Turner maintain that this is valid for all human actions, they all relate to established structure and previous behavior, as well as periods of anti-structure to develop, possibly change and/or confirm the structure.

What makes the behavior performative is a particular awareness of this behavior as it is executed, a condition of double consciousness of the actions, or as Schechner calls it, as *restored behavior* (Schechner, 1987, p.7, 1988/2003, p.163). This particular double awareness in art is reminiscent of the previous discussion of Adorno, Artaud, and Brecht. Although their conceptions are each different, and perhaps indicate different choices or conclusions, the aims of their research appears to reach for a similar intellectual quality in the aesthetic and sensuous processes. I would say that the performative seeks to grasp the raising of this art-specific reflection or consciousness, which allows sensuous and social material in general to be evaluated as part of integrative structures. This is also what can be seen to give art a particular potential for “*criticality*”, using Irit Rogoff’s term (2006, p.16).

Schechner suggests five qualities of something he calls “actuals”, recalling Rogoff’s ambition of actualization. Although this does not directly overlap with performance, it can perhaps be understood as a further concretization of performance qualities: 1) *process*, something happens here and now, 2) *consequential, irremediable, and irrevocable* acts, exchanges, or situations, 3) *contest*, something is at stake for the performers and often for the spectators, 4) *initiation*, a change in status for participants, and 5) space is used *concretely* and *organically* (Schechner, 1988/2003, p.46). All of these



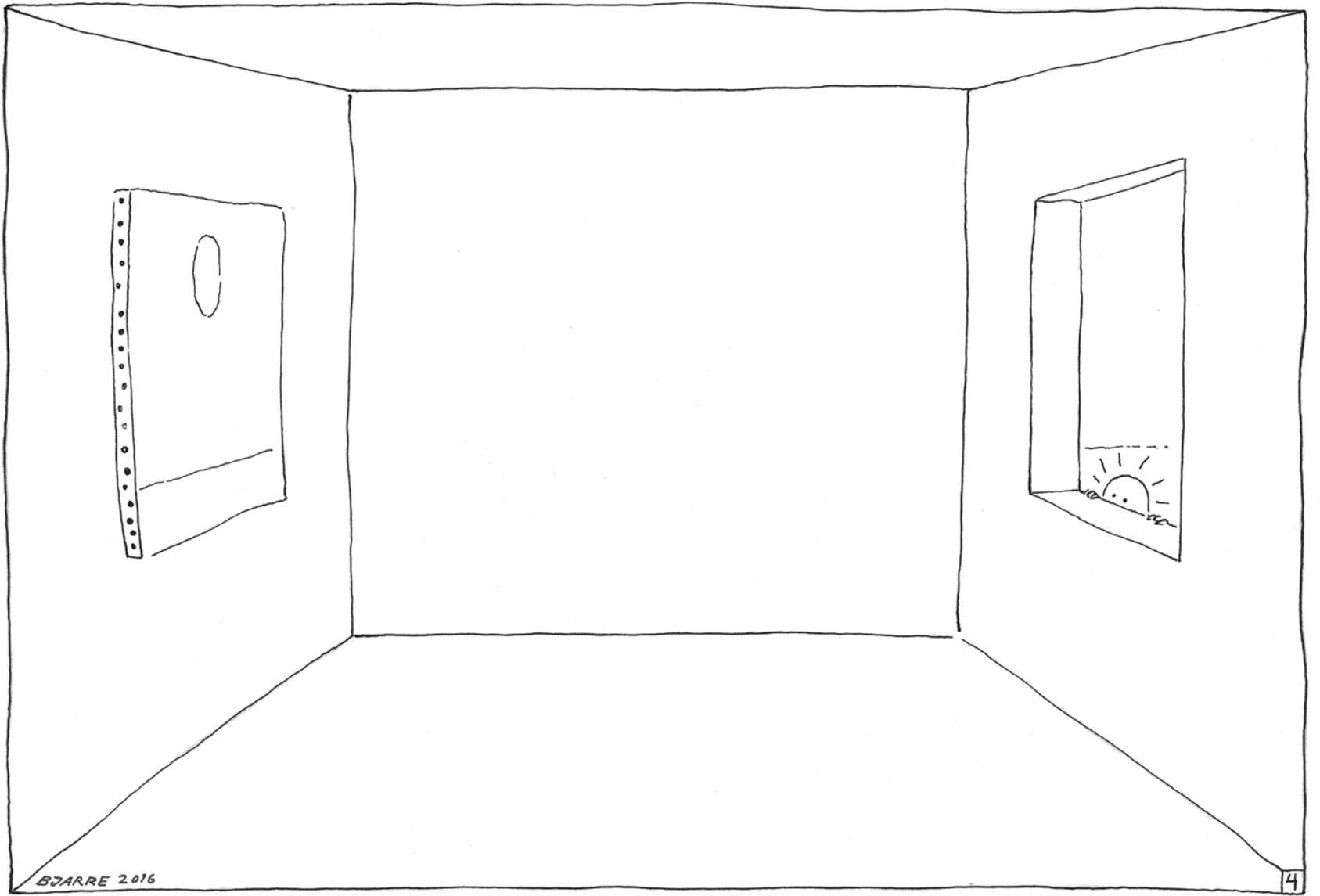
qualities indicate aspects of a process *in time* – there is an evolvment, a change, and a consequence – of the action or event in question. This relates to a crucial point made in post-structuralist theory, by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, for example, that all structures are evolving and moving, and the perspectives change from person-to-person, country-to-country, place-to-place, time-to-time, etc. The performance or event itself thus constitutes a specific constellation in time and space, though interchangeable and replaceable – but most importantly perhaps, it indicates the situational and actual character of a specific phenomenon or performance (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004). Quite simplified, this means that each situation is different and constitutes a performative potential to be acknowledged in communication and didactics – this, of course, without denying the existence of larger structures and institutionalized knowledge.

Today, the performance focus is prominent in both the visual arts and in theatre, and is connected to the development of new and more complex art forms, using a variety of modes and modalities in a duration of time. In addition to the time dimension and situational perspective, an inclusion of cultural perspectives and a new weight on body and sensuousness, follows this performative development. Performance is thus not only an experimental art form; it is a theoretical apparatus apt to describe both more personal and more cultural sides of an (art) event. Here, the reopening of the field of aesthetics, as a theory of the senses, also non-artled, non-made sensuous experiences, can also constitute the material of theoretical reflections (Böhme, 2001). As we, in this context, relate to a live material, such as a contemporary cultural production – the professional training of material development and sensuous (land)scaping,

awareness of non-verbal communication, critical reflection, and self-assessment, is vital. These perspectives will also be reflected in this issue's articles; the situational and contextual competence that the performance theory has emphasized, both in the arts and elsewhere in society, lays as a theoretical and practical framework for contemporary art didactics, in theatre, design, and the visual arts.

Aesthetic Professions and Professionalism

Based on this applied and relational, but also autonomous character, can these qualities of art and art education be tied to the exertion of different aesthetic professions and further, to an *aesthetic professionalism*? This is, in some ways, a rhetorical question, because the professions already exist – of painter, art teacher, dramaturg, performance artist, sound technician, and composer – but these “roles” or professions have been tied to a particular division of media and tasks within the art world. As the character and value of art has been questioned and debated throughout the twentieth century, so have the roles and functions of art producers. Specifically, as the projects, works, and paintings have changed their qualities, the definitions tied to them have changed equally. This means that one has sought to define art and particular art projects starting from criteria other than medium and content, and instead addressing striking social, political, and/or subject oriented qualities. However, the *titulations* of the professionals in the art world have changed less than the practices themselves, perhaps because the roles and functions largely still exist, but likely also because of political and organizational factors. Having established different organizations, rights, and rules for composers and sound technicians, the professions in themselves can be seen as just as much a



BJARRE 2016

labor as a political necessity. In large theatre institutions, there still are quite clearly defined roles and tasks. However, contemporary directors and companies within the institutions, for example, Societas Raffaello Sanzio/Romeo Castellucci and Anders Paulin, also challenge these preconceptions by omitting text, including sculpture, or making music (Christensen-Scheel, Lindgren, & Pettersen, 2013). Not everyone can operate a soundboard, but a trained performance artist can create and operate the sound for a performance with his or her computer. Not everyone can write a play, but a choreographer can create a poetic text, both verbally and non-verbally.

In visual art institutions, the roles have somewhat changed, there has, for example, been an accentuation of the role of the curator, but the curator can as much be an artist or a philosopher as an art historian. Although the term “curator” has come to mean an organizer or project leader, an artistic director, in some places, it is also an educator and conservator (O’Neill, 2010, 2012). Furthermore, “art education”, as mediation, communication, guiding, and text production, has different accentuations and executions in different institutions. In addition, as tasks can still be separated, perhaps not so with the educational background needed to execute them. This is not to say that art is lacking in professionalism, or that the specificity of an education is unnecessary, but perhaps, as Irit Rogoff led us, the qualities or abilities tied to these professions should be updated in accordance with our contemporary ambitions and formulated accordingly. As criticality and questioning remain important parts of contemporary art production, these aspects also constitute productional and processual principles that can be seen as part of an ‘art based knowledge’. However, when Janneke Wesseling, professor in art theory, discusses the particular qualities of artistic research or art based research,

she notes the initial difference between the scientific and the artistic attitude, “The work of art is not the end product of the artist’s thinking...it is an intermediate stage, a temporary halting of a never-ending thought process.” Whether the thought process in relation to a work of art is really never-ending, is not to be addressed here, but Wesseling’s point about an art work *creating* questions, rather than answering them, is a continuous problematic issue, as it is combined with science and applied perspectives. Wesseling sets up this dilemma or differing goals as a real problem: How can something that is directed toward creating *uncertainty* create *knowledge*? She notes that even as similar research practices, the aims of achieving knowledge (in science) and reflection through uncertainty (in art) are perhaps not compatible (Wesseling, 201, p.12). Sometimes it is and perhaps should not be compatible; other times, art is a natural and necessary part of research environments; for example, in relation to visual training, color competence, or media knowledge. Therefore, it cannot be a question of whether there *is* an art based knowledge. The question is whether our aims in research are compatible, if it is possible to keep an autonomous art based attitude when engaging with other systems, other logics, and other dynamics.

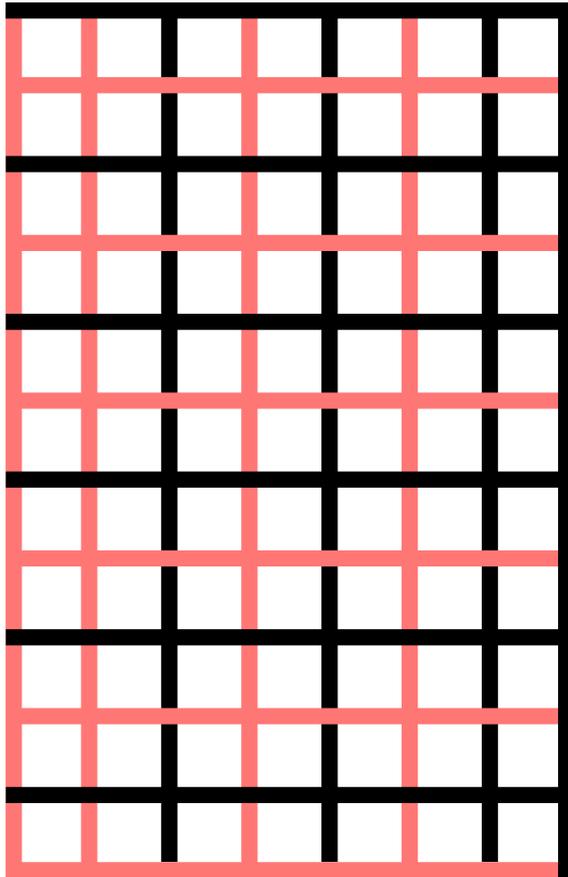
It is the belief here, in an applied discourse for contemporary art, that such an engagement is possible. Projects such as *Inside out. New images and imaginations of the body* (2010–2014), led by Professor Merete Lie at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim, shows this use of artistic and cultural competence in the reading of medical imagery (<http://inside-outimaging.wordpress.com/about/>). Specifically, images collected by medical instruments require a competence of interpretation, and then can also be open for different interpretations, which actualize the visual competence.

Alternatively, the medical diagnostic imagery in itself can become symbols or visual representations, used by the medical researchers to promote projects or institutes, thereby also linking the diagnostic image to power and economy. Nonetheless, in this context, the art based knowledge is also considered to be something particular. Whether art is necessarily a part of the regular societal production or whether art can never be considered as regular societal production, we can, I think, localize certain qualities based on discussions in the twentieth century art discourse. These qualities can be seen in relation to general production principles, and relate to what both the artist, Walter De Maria, and the theoretician, Irit Rogoff, touch upon: If we say that the outcome of art is uncertain, creating questions rather than answers, how can we relate to its qualities? How can we explain to the non-art world the benefits and potentials of non-structure and uncertainty? Because it is still necessary to describe and formulate these qualities and dynamics, to counter the evasiveness of the “emotionally indescribable” and the narrowness of goal oriented systematizations, scholars such as Rogoff, in the field of art didactics, emphasize the importance of a qualified and specific language in art education (Rogoff, 2006, p.14).

Here, I will point out four qualities that could be seen as vital to production in contemporary art, and that can further constitute art based productional principles, principles or aspects that could be included in project organization. Therefore, instead of polarizing into either critical distance or social immersion, autonomy in art today can first be about *independence from preplanned structures*. Specifically, the structure might be there, there also might be an institutional context and a curator acting as a sort of leader: However, there is, at least in theory, always an option either to divert from or to counter the

structure that one is in. This means the possibility to act purposefully and respond suitably to a given situation, instead of having to follow a particular structure or way of acting. This could be called a *situational maneuvering*, or as physicist and slow philosopher, David Peat, has named a similar quality, a *creative suspense*. Peat uses the example of emergency teams, who are trained to always evaluate before they act, so they do not do more harm than has already been done. By this, he means an attitude of anticipation and reflection when encountering a problem or an emergency – a sensitivity to the “dynamics of the surrounding environment” in order to meet the situation in a reflected way (Peat, 2008, p.141).

The second quality is *non-profit*, or not having to “pay off”. This might seem trivial, but it really leaves room to consider the precise elements that ought to be considered and to choose something unobvious, innovative, or ethical. This is not the same as saying that art does not pay off, instead, it is saying something about not necessarily having “paying-off” as a production principle. Since this might leave room for other qualitative decisions, the chances are that it will eventually constitute a resource. It is not meant here that money is dangerous or dirty, rather that money, as a guiding principle, as rigid institutionalization or systematization, could leave out qualitative and specified reflection and adaption. Third, *the production of something unknown* (or not-yet-known) relates to this innovative quality and non-structured quality – apart from art, most production processes have a specific thesis or intention of what to produce and how. If one arranged for a productive situation instead or did not seek to decide the outcome, it primarily resembles a research process. One could thus say that experimental art includes a research perspective in its production process. Finally, a *generative quality* in contemporary



timetable

art must be emphasized. This is the quality of producing something that in its turn produces something else. This partially follows from producing something unknown, but has a further function – it means to set up situations that create other situations. In a non-art event context, for example, in the planning of a conference or the opening of an office building, it would normally be a point to control the event, that is, to assure that nothing unexpected happens or that one is prepared for the unexpected. Of course, it is vital to any context to assure that a stage is fixed, that people are safe, and that they are paid for their work. However, to be able and allowed to make choices that create something in themselves, can also be a resource in non-art contexts.

An example of some of these ‘art specific qualities’ can be found in the mixing of different Thai and Norwegian cultures at an event that was part of the art project *Sørfinnset school / the nord land* (Christensen-Scheel, 2009). The event was a party to celebrate the finishing of the main structure of a Thai house near Kjellingvann in the north of Norway. The strategy of the artists leading the project, Geir Tore Holm and Søsja Jørgensen, was to address a local public to create local engagement in the project. Therefore, when they announced the celebration, they did so only in the local newspapers, not in the typical art press. On the day of the party, there were different Norwegian art professionals from different parts of the country, as well as a group of Thai artists who had drawn and helped to build the structure of the house. Suddenly, several Thai women who lived in the area arrived with their North-Norwegian husbands. Having read that there was a Thai event in the area, they came for the event, without having any other connections or particular interest in art. The result was that these Thai women, living next to each other without knowing each other,

became acquainted within the art project, establishing connections that could have social value and importance, but that had not been envisioned by the artists. The meeting brought together Thai and Norwegian art cultures, which was planned, but the event also arranged for the meeting of cultures perhaps more alien to each other, art and non-art cultures. The meeting also brought up discussions within the art project about Thai-Norwegian marriages – in some debates accused of being arranged or exploitative. However, these men and women meeting face-to-face nuanced ideological discussions, creating actual experiences and other possibilities, also to continue outside the art frame.

To sum up – this event could thus be said to have generated new events, and it did so in my opinion because it could allow itself to defer from general planning strategies and maneuver on the basis of more art specific criteria, such as not having to follow pre-planned structures, possible non-profit, production of something unknown, and generative situations. The project, for example, in not having to reach a specific target group, used this possibility to target outside its art audience. This had unknown consequences, but when these consequences appeared, they were welcomed and evaluated, rather than suppressed. In addition, without specifically fixing the frame as “art”, their project frame allowed for an art and culture exchange with Thailand. Such strategies are not apt in all fields and for all occasions, and as mentioned, health and ethics must be considered. However, as it will be claimed in this context, art based strategies can undoubtedly be of value and importance in further societal fields of production and social reflection.

Based on a contemporary oriented art didactic, we seek to address, respond to, and sometimes dispute, so-

cietal matters by applying autonomous aesthetics. These qualities are part of creating something that completes, comments, criticizes, and possibly corrects the patterns and structures that we build around us. As sociologist, Niklas Luhmann, pointed out, self-critique or self-improvement is a natural part of advanced or mature systems (1995, p.471). Therefore, one could argue, it is also in the interest of the societal machinery that we leave something outside of it, if we can call it outside at all, since it stands in a functional relation to this machinery. Nonetheless, to see art as an important and potential *societal function*, is in the interest of both art and society.

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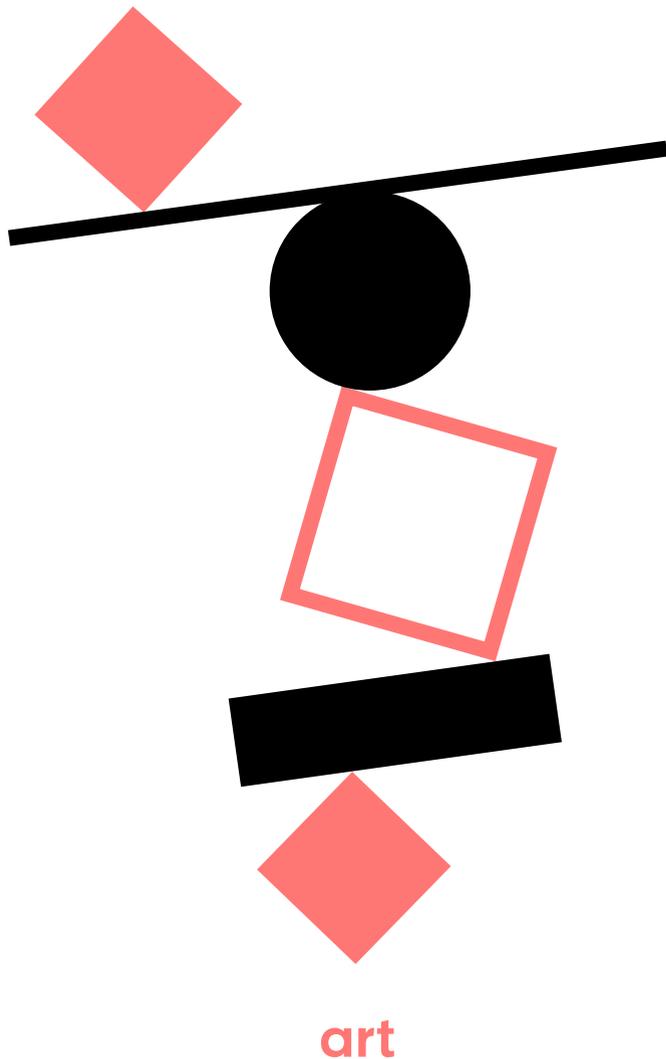
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**BEING
ALONE
AND** If you get caught,
you'd better have
a good excuse!
**UNHAPPY
IS NOT
PERMITTED**

This article was previously published in InFormation.

**IF YOUR
TELEPHONE RINGS
DURING A LESSON,
YOU HAVE TO
ANSWER IT**

It would be rude not to!



Examples of Art being Integral to Schools

At Tenthous we would like to take this opportunity to demonstrate how professional artists can be used as a resource in schools. Through specific examples, we wish to inspire schools and artists to participate with their respective experience. We do not have all the answers about how to attain processes that function for all concerned, but a lot can be achieved through dialogue and responsiveness. Here are four good examples which in different ways demonstrate how an art project can function as part of the school day. In 2016, **Gabo Camnitzer**, the American artist, completed an artistic research project at The Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm. His 'Meaning Machine' explored a participative artistic practice with three to eight-year-olds. The artist has given prominence to the perspective of the participants, without determining the direction they will take. The process is the result and the core of the project is the reaction of the children to the frameworks given to them by the artist. The primary target group for this work is the children and the secondary is we who are viewing the material. Here we see how the artist allows the moment to direct the process at a micro-level, where the details and reactions are central. **Mariken Kramer**, an Oslo-based artist, started working with Tenthous in 2012. Her intention was to create a video piece where pupils participated. 'Patterns of Inclusion' evolved through a number of workshops with two classes. One of the initiatives was an introduction to the Norwegian playground song 'Slå på Ring'. In this game, questions concerning social structures are addressed in a simple manner, especially those regarding being a participant or an outsider. The pupils were given practical tasks where they could test their relationships with an individual or a group, and the project concluded with two classes participating in the filming of the video piece, which later aired at Tenthous and at the National Annual

Autumn Exhibition 2013 where it won the FineArt Award. The work was purchased by Koro and is now on permanent display at Bodø Police Station in North Norway.

In 2015, Tenthaus completed the art project 'Looping the Existing' at Hersleb School together with the visual artist **Anni Onsager**. The whole school was invited to participate in this project. A total of 150 pupils took part in a large collective work which was later performed in the school playground during an official school event. The project consisted of everyone using wire to knit one piece at the same time. The material in itself gave resistance, and the participants had to use both considerable muscular effort and sensitivity during the process. When everyone is knitting the same garment, no one can work too fast or too slowly. If someone lags behind, there will be no final result. The whole is dependent on the individual and the conversations around the project were an important part of the final piece.

Alexandre Decoupigny is a musician and artist, active in Berlin. For nearly ten years, the artist has worked with different schools to create projects focusing on sound. On the whole, he has been commissioned by the schools involved, where the school has been the major financing partner in the project. In Marzahn, a suburb of Berlin with various social challenges, he has created *Audio Walks* with pupils at one particular school during three different projects. The pupils can determine the content of a public tour, open to everyone, where sound and performance are the main expressions. Alexandre looks at the school projects as part of his own artistic practice, where he uses his expertise as a musician and artist in a different manner to when he is working purely with music. Alexandre Decoupigny demonstrates through his projects how schools over time can focus on art by commissioning active, professional artists.

Ebba Moi

Gabo Camnitzer

Meaning Machine (2015)

Meaning Machine is an ongoing project Gabo Camnitzer initiated in 2015. In the project he is trying to politically and theoretically situate the role of artistic, poetic and philosophical thought processes of children during early childhood, with the purpose of better understanding them as part of the wider context of art as a mode of knowledge production. To this end he has been conducting research workshops *with* children between 3 and 8-years-old, focusing on engaging them in metacognition using artistic, phenomenological, and emancipatory strategies.





Proposition: “Mutable Objects”

In advance of meeting with the children, I collect a group of ambiguous found objects whose function I cannot identify. I start the proposition by holding up a donut shaped object, telling the children that I found this object and I have no idea what it is. The children offer up various explanations of what the object is: “a necklace”, “a tutu.” They seem to know what it is, even if there isn’t much agreement between them.

We then move to a table where a white sheet is draped over a series of forms. We pull back the sheet to reveal a large number of similarly ambiguous objects. The children immediately set about handling the objects and identifying them. After a discussion of a few minutes, the children are asked to start placing the objects around in the room. The children are more interested in seeing how the objects interact with each other, and instead start making assemblages and constellations with the objects.





Proposition: "The Weird Button"

"Here we have a weird button. When one pushes it something happens in the universe, but we don't know what. Can you tell us what happens when you push the button? This exercise was done in two variations. First we do a round in which each child pushes a small green button describing what they are triggering.



Second, we do a round with a "giant button", a circle about 40cm in diameter drawn on a piece of white cardboard. The children interact with the large circle as if it demands great force to push it down. They begin jumping on it.

In both variations a narrative of events begins to unfold. Some of the events tie to one another while others completely break the sequence. After several rounds, the children decide to fill in the large button with drawings of the sequence of events that had been triggered.

Ebba: The world has turned yellow.

Anna: Everything is yellow!

Oscar: My hands are yellow.

Alma: Wow! Even the light is yellow!



Proposition: "Invisible Lines"

This exercise starts with me saying: "I am under the impression that in this room there are a lot of lines that I can't see. Can you help me to find the invisible lines in this room?"

In normal lighting I hand out lengths of UV yarn and ask the children to tape the yarn to mark where in the room they sense that there are invisible lines. Examples of the children's lines include: connections between material elements (the corner of the room to the corner of a table), as well as patterns of movement (tracing the route in which a child walks across the room). After the children have set up all the yarn, we turn off the normal lighting and switch on a UV light. The lines thus become the most visible thing in the room, glowing in the dark.

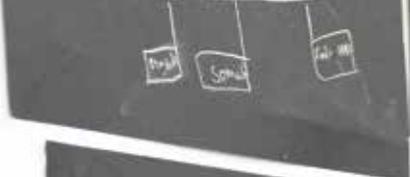
Mariken Kramer

Patterns of Inclusion (2013)

In Spring 2012, Mariken Kramer was invited to Tenthaus Oslo to complete the *Patterns of Inclusion* project. Pupils at Sofienberg Upper Secondary School participated in workshops throughout the Autumn which concluded with the filming of the children's Norwegian playground song, *Slå på ring*.

Slå på ring can in many ways be seen as a depiction of how the individual as a social creature, is constantly endeavouring to be part of the ring, together with the community as a whole. Through *Patterns of Inclusion*, a video installation consisting of two films, Mariken Kramer wishes to visualise that a community is often defined by the exclusion of someone. Thus the complexity of the feeling of community is demonstrated; it may contain security, a sense of belonging and love as well as accommodating exclusion and abuse.









Anni Onsager

Looping the Existing (2015)

This work was created by some 150 pupils at Hersleb Upper Secondary School in an art project developed by Anni Onsager in participation with Tenthaus Oslo.

As a group, they knitted each other's stitches and created The Red Crystal - an interpretation of a protective symbol, which can be used throughout the world as a symbol with no religious affiliations unlike the symbols of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent.

Norway was the first country to give credence to this symbol in 2005. Nevertheless, it is still not widely known nor is it used in many countries. The inspiration for the project and its main goal is to protect thought, the individual and the world through cooperation and participation.







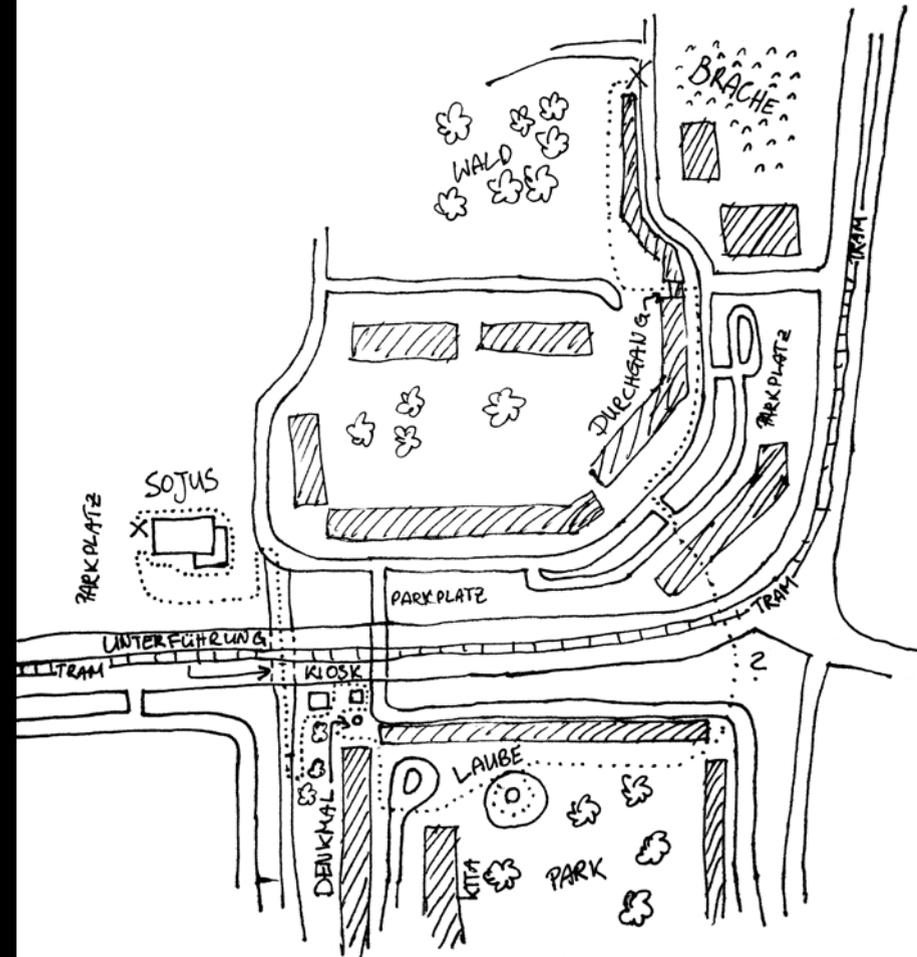
Alexandre Decoupigny

Reality remixed - Allee der Visionauten, 2012

mixed media by Alexandre Decoupigny & Emily C. Völker

Allee der Visionauten (Avenue of the Visionauts) is a site specific, temporary interdisciplinary art project in public space merging sound, live music, street art, performance, installation, animation and video into a single piece. It was presented as a real time audiowalk and led the audiences around segments of the large avenue, "Allee der Kosmonauten" (Avenue of the Cosmonauts) in Berlin-Marzahn.

The participants, students from the Wilhelm Von Siemens High School, had the artproject integrated into their curriculum, and together with the Visionautik Akademie they developed alternative Visions of the Future for different parts of their neighbourhood. For one night the Avenue of Cosmonauts turned into the Allee of the Visionauts presenting their visions to a participating public.









Participating or Visiting Artists in Schools – Do they matter?

Gry O. Ulrichsen

The purpose of this article is to contribute the knowledge that we have acquired about how art-didactic practices in schools can be understood and developed. The artist-driven initiative of Tenthous Oslo's co-operation with Hersleb Upper Secondary School, specifically the lower secondary school department for minority-language pupils, is examined in this context as an alternative to more traditional forms of art and liaison meetings in schools. This article demonstrates how didactic conditions meet structural challenges in open spaces where artistic practice and pedagogic processes are integrated. In a cross-curricular learning perspective, experience from this cooperation can also promote transference values to a more general school context.

Functional structures in which to meet

In the meeting with the various forms of contemporary art, the pupils have an opportunity to appear and express themselves as humans. I think art can develop an understanding of the individual's position in society, and what is exciting is that it can be achieved through looking and trying in practice.

These are the words of one of the artists at *Tenthous Oslo* and they are an indication of how aesthetic learning processes can contribute to learning being experienced as something meaningful in a school environment.¹ In the anthology *Art Pedagogy and the Conveyance of Knowledge*, Bjørn Rasmussen, however, highlights how the meeting between art and pedagogy in many contexts is characterized by contrasts. The cleft between pedagogy and art is, according to the author, symptomatic of how the subjects are organized (Rasmussen, 2013). The sectors are characterized by strong institutional direction

and conflicting interests which prevent approaches allowing for art-didactic practice and pedagogy to get closer in fruitful ways. In one respect, this concerns how the knowledge created through aesthetic processes is defined and the significance attributed to it in the different sectors.

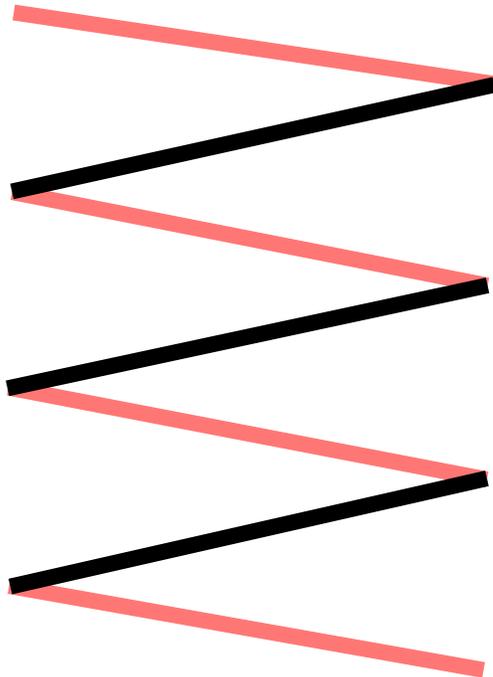
In general, the average pupil attending a Norwegian school crosses paths with art and artists in three different contexts. 1) they have a double art lesson every Friday afternoon with teachers who often have little training in the subject beyond that they themselves acquired in lower secondary school²; 2) they have a couple of school trips to an art exhibition in a local museum where they may have the opportunity to participate in a workshop activity after a guided tour by an intermediary³ or 3) they meet professional artists through Den Kulturelle Skolesekken (The Cultural Rucksack) where the projects are generally experience-based and influence by a monological presentation⁴. In the two latter points, the focus is often more on learning *about* art than *through* and in art.

With this somewhat simplified situation description as a backdrop, my question is whether the framework Tenthaus Oslo has created together with Hersleb Upper Secondary School, maintains a continuity which enables pupils to process and personalize the experience and knowledge they acquire in the art meetings. The Finnish artist, researcher and pedagogue, Hannah Kaihovirta-Rosvik, employs the concept *participating artists* to refer to artists which do not only introduce their own art production or exhibitions but also actively become involved in the pedagogical context in which they operate (Kaihovirta-Rosvik, 2009, p 56). The extent to which artists are participative or visiting has a great significance for the

development and learning potential in the art meetings. For example, through *Skup* in the Oslo Cultural Rucksack, where the school in itself is the most important impetus in the art meetings, or through *Mestringsprogrammet* at the Cultural School in Levanger and Seanse's *Kunstnerprogram*, there is currently research being carried out on a variety of ways in which the meeting between schools and the field of art⁵ can be structured. Common to all these approaches to art-didactic practices in the context of schools is that they are based on long-term and reciprocally binding processes between participants from a pedagogical arena and from the field of art; that there is a focus on the learning individual through a solid basis in the curriculum and that professional artists are involved. Ole Marius Hylland, Ola K. Berge and Venke Aure (2012) demonstrate in their research how the same factors contribute to raising quality at art meetings in schools and increasing the benefits to the pupils. In this context, the cooperation between Tenthaus Oslo and Hersleb Upper Secondary School represents an alternative model as flexible and productive frameworks are being developed.

Didactic Conditions within Tenthaus Oslo

In the lower secondary school department for minority-speaking young people at Hersleb Upper Secondary School, a fixed group of pupils (aged 16-20) and their teachers have participated in productions and workshops for four years where they have been exposed to contemporary art in a variety of ways through the artist-driven initiative that is Tenthaus Oslo. In *Different Rivers*, one of the art meetings that the Tenthaus artists themselves have completed, they created a three-metre relief together with pupils and teachers, which now hangs in the school. One of the artists describes this:



dialogue

We identified what might have been missing in our earlier projects and decided to do something practical with the pupils, something we could work with over a longer period of time and that could hang as a final product at the school. It started with us posing a number of questions. One of the answers mentioned the Euphrates and the Tigris. This, together with the fact that the River Akerselva flows close to the school created a starting point. We explored the area with the pupils and we collected various objects that were subsequently cast in plaster. The pupils also provided objects that were added to the final piece. The fact that the final product became a relief developed during the process, where the pupils could make decisions within the framework we gave them.

Through the development and implementation of such projects as *Different Rivers*, we at Tenthau Oslo witness a reflexive practice which is well integrated in the pedagogical arena and which includes feedback from the school (pupils, teachers). Didactic components such as time, space and exchange of ideas are emphasized as defining elements in the systematic cooperation between the fields: the long term perspective, the fact that a studio is located at the school for longer periods of time, as well as a permanently linked public viewing space and an exchange between the artist and the teacher. The trust and proximity between the parties that arises during these didactic conditions seems to both pave the way for process-oriented educational processes with expressive goals whilst balancing this with an artistic and pedagogical foundation (Ulrichsen, 2014).

Testing Thought through Practical Interaction

When art practice is carried out within a pedagogical context, the question has to be what constitutes the learning, how it arises and in which conditions. How do the didactic components of time, space and exchange which constitute Tenthaus Oslo's practices, achieve significance for the pupil's learning through the art meetings? In *Patterns of Inclusion*⁶, another art meeting in Tenthaus Oslo, the pupils participated in filming where the children's playground game 'Slå på ring', visualised how a community is often defined by the idea that some people are excluded. The film production was also the starting point for two workshops where simple tasks homed in on such terms as belonging, exclusion, friendship, loyalty and fear. Through collage, timelines and mind maps the pupils reflected on: Who am I in the community? How have I arrived at where I am now? The pupils experienced the piece of art through workshop exercises, together with participating in the film production and seeing the finished work of art at The National Annual Autumn Exhibition. According to Anna Lena Østern (2013), creating opinions in an aesthetic learning process may be characterized by something changing and a new perspective opening. This occurs as a meeting with art both as a form of reception, and as a production of symbolic expression. One of the teachers, Halvor Frøymyr, who has been part of the project and worked with the pupils over four years, describes how many of the pupils battle with both motivation and a feeling of lack of accomplishment when they work in the traditional classroom environment. In the art meetings, something happens with the communication between the pupils: "Amazingly easily and unimpeded, they find ways in which they can make themselves understood. This creativity with language seems to be conditional on the pupils working together, whilst doing something practically creative."

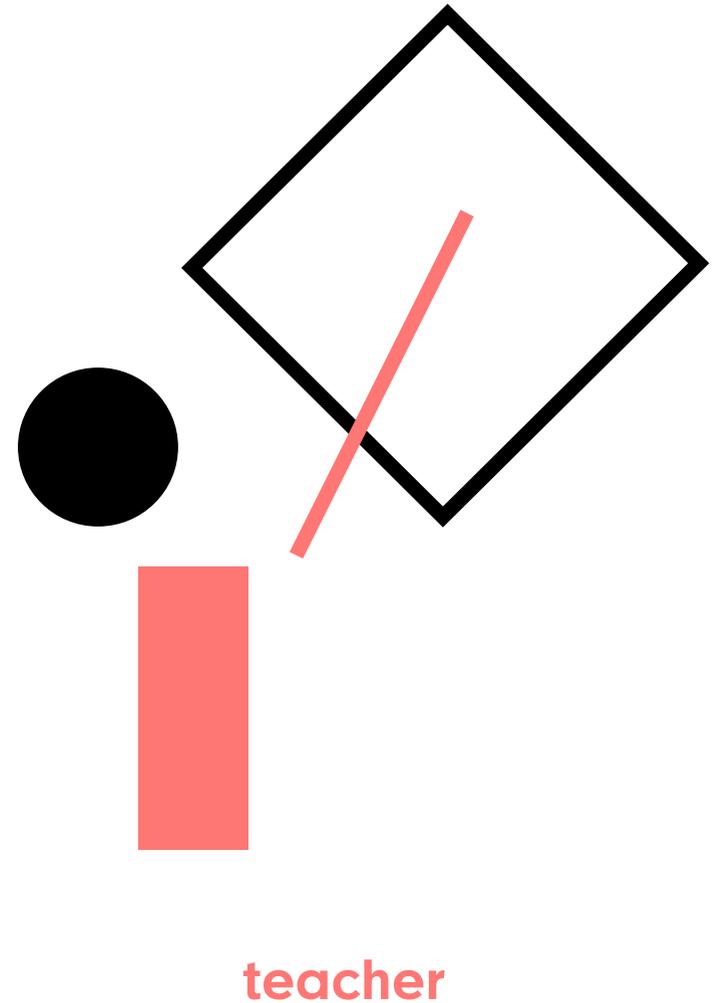
In addition to developing a vocabulary and knowledge of Norwegian, a transformative artistic learning process can contribute to a structural change where the student starts to think in new ways. Through practical teamwork and dialogue in the *Patterns of Inclusion* art meetings, opportunities arose for the pupils to develop an abstract and metaphorical way of thinking. Through an interpretive process, they view themselves and the idea of the piece of art in a larger context. (Ulrichsen, 2014) The artists describe how new pupils that enter the group ask: "What is this?" The pupils who have participated for a while use their artistic experiences as the starting point for interpretation and ask instead: "What does this mean for me?" The pupils have the opportunity to articulate, process and negotiate ambivalence and conflicting experience. By utilizing their own lived experience, they become active participants in creating opinion. This knowledge is thus anchored in the everyday life of the pupils and the art meetings become a place where pupils can construct and make themselves visible both to themselves and others, a personal and cultural identity which is both flexible and in flux (Ulrichsen, 2014).

The art meetings can also contribute to the teacher increasing his or her knowledge of the pupil's learning requirements. Differing cultural backgrounds between teacher and pupil can make it challenging for the teacher to grasp a pupil's pre-knowledge and thus complicate the establishment of learning processes in a framework which is meaningful to the pupil. The art didactic practice in Tenthaus Oslo reveals engagement which gives knowledge to the teacher about how training in other subject areas can be based on the pupil's interests and lifeworld (ibid.).

Østern (2013) does not only write about how transformative artistic learning processes can influence the pupils' relationship with themselves, the group or the teacher, but equally importantly is the effect the art meetings can have on the pupils' relationship with society. In the art meetings with Tenthaus Oslo, the pupils have access to a public arena for opinion creation and exchange through their participation in such public arenas as The National Annual Autumn Exhibition. Their teacher, Frømyr, describes how the pupils were initially sceptical, but that over time, they "jumped in, breaking barriers and thus achieving a feeling of accomplishment." It is natural to question whether these experiences will lead to the pupils being more daring in other strange and unfamiliar contexts. A possible consequence of the pupils' experience by participating in the art didactic practice may be that they will also participate in other public arenas, and that they thus widen their opportunities to play a part in influencing their surroundings (Ulrichsen, 2014).

The Significance of the Relations

Achieving benefit from aesthetic experience requires training (Samuelsen, 2013, p 37). The developments the teacher and artists describe over time indicate that the pupils at Hersleb have had this training. They have taken part in an adaptation process and thus achieved a familiarity with the learning through the art meetings. A possible condition for this development may be the security that has been achieved in the relationships between the artist, pupil and teacher over the course of the four years that they have been working together. In this article, I have highlighted the didactic components which enable the building and strengthening of pupil-artist-teacher relations. Not only the pupil, but also the



teacher

artist and teacher will gain an increased result from the learning processes being anchored in binding and reciprocal relations (Si-dorkin & Bingham, 2004; Spurkeland, 2011). The artists in Tenthaus Oslo appear as catalysts for processes that promote a variety of forms of communication and participation. Stable relations built over time are considered a prerequisite for the participants taking part in unpredictable, risky and explorative art meetings together (Ulrichsen, 2014). The cultural sociologist Petter Dyndahl (2011) highlights how frameworks and didactic choices influence the opportunities to deconstruct, or confirm stereotypes and negative attitudes in the teaching of art. He also describes art didactics as cultural didactics. Dyndahl's point is that there is no neutral art didactic – the structures, organisation and models reflect and reproduce art opinions, ideology and value judgements. The arts constitute aesthetic arenas for construction and the practice of cultural identity and power. Different didactic conditions can, according to Dyndahl, thus form significant differences with regard to which interpretation becomes the dominating power factor and which interpretation is marginalized. Tenthaus Oslo's art didactic practice indicates how ambivalent and problematic aspects of culture and identity can be incorporated in a dynamic way. In order to achieve this, it seems to be important that the majority of the art meetings in Tenthaus Oslo introduce the pupils to artists that reflect the pupils' different intercultural backgrounds⁷.

The cooperation between Tenthaus Oslo and Hersleb Upper Secondary School indicates how art didactic practices can add patterns of experience-based in-depth learning and research of cultural ambivalence

to the work of opinion creation. However, achieving a transformation requires more than sporadic art meetings and experiences isolated from the everyday life of school on the whole. In Tenthaus Oslo, it seems that it is the stable relations that give the meetings between artistic practice and pedagogical processes, a meaning beyond being an 'exciting break' from the core academic subjects.

Tenthaus Oslo's practice gives arguments for creating more attention around the relations between artist and teacher when artists venture into the pedagogical arena. Kaihovirta-Rosvik (2009) points out the need for the different professions which are to work together, having knowledge of and insight into each other's fields of expertise, and that they are given the opportunity to reflect on their field in a cross-curricular context. An increased prioritisation of time for teacher and artist to exchange views, seems to have had overriding significance in the work to create a stimulating learning environment for the pupils, when Tenthaus Oslo and Hersleb School worked together.

Extrapolation

Is it possible to extrapolate from the specific context in which Tenthaus Oslo works to a more general educational context? Firstly, Tenthaus Oslo moves the art didactic practice to the school arena, to the pupils' home territory, whilst the classroom is also expanded to encompass other learning arenas in the community. Secondly, cooperation is based on long-term and reciprocal binding processes between the areas of education and art. Thus unique opportunities arise to develop this cross-curricular potential. Through

strengthening the relations and the professional exchange between teacher and artist, a reflexive, integrated and viable art didactic model arises with ownership founded in both sectors (Ulrichsen, 2014). The cooperation between Tenthous Oslo and Hersleb Upper Secondary School seems to indicate a route into pedagogical practices which builds on:

- exploratory learning in organically developing teaching with expressive goals
 - relational foundation which invites all participants to enter into risky, unpredictable meetings together
 - learning process and art production with links to the local community
 - aesthetic experience to stimulate empathy and engagement
 - collective processes above individual production to promote the development of social skills
 - expressions and participation in the public space.
- By developing the cross-curricular potential, an aesthetic approach to learning can be achieved to a greater degree. In this way, art meetings will appear as an important part of learning.

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Endnotes

1 The article is based on my M.A. dissertation of 2014: Artists participating in a pedagogical arena. A dialogue-based study exploring how relational aspects comprise the framework for art didactic practices

2 Statistics indicate that 30-50% of art and craft teachers are not professionally trained (Allern, 2011).

3 Research indicates a general lack of structure, systematic organization and integrated work between art institutions and schools (Aure, Illeris, & Ørtegren, 2009; Falk & Dierking, 2011; Samuelsen, 2013)

4 Research regarding The Cultural Rucksack indicates that experience is placed to a limited extent in the general school day or is assessed as knowledge production (Bamford, 2012; Breivik & Christophersen, 2013; Kalsnes, 2011)

5 In Skup, the school is the most important impetus from idea to planning, completion, documentation and evaluation. Together with the advisors from Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, the school finds which artists they will be working with. <<http://www.dks.osloskolen.no/pub/oslo/main/?cid=7629&aid=7628>>
In Mestringsprogrammet, the work concentrates on art as a tool in preventative medicine in kindergartens and schools <<http://www.levanger.kommune.no/Global/dokumenter/>

[mestringsprogrammet.pdf](#)>

In Seanse, the work concentrates on developing an artist-teacher practice through art programmes where professional artists work with and through art in schools or other public institutions <<http://seanse.no/teaching-artist/>>

6 The art meeting was led by the visual artist Mariken Kramer <<http://www.tenthaus.no/om-prosjektet/mariken-kramer---patterns-of-inclusion/>> and <<http://www.tenthaus.no/works-hops/patterns-of-inclusion/>>

7 One of the premises for creating well-functioning intercultural pedagogy is that the intercultural composition is reflected at all levels (Lahdenperä, 2004).

This article is also published in Bedre Skole no. 3/2016 https://www.utdanningsforbundet.no/upload/Tidsskrifter/Bedre%20skole/BS_3_2016/

**EMPLOYEES MUST
PASS AN INITIATION
TEST BEFORE
BEING ALLOWED
TO WORK
IN SCHOOLS**

Everyone has to go through a pupil-created initiation maze before they can work in schools.

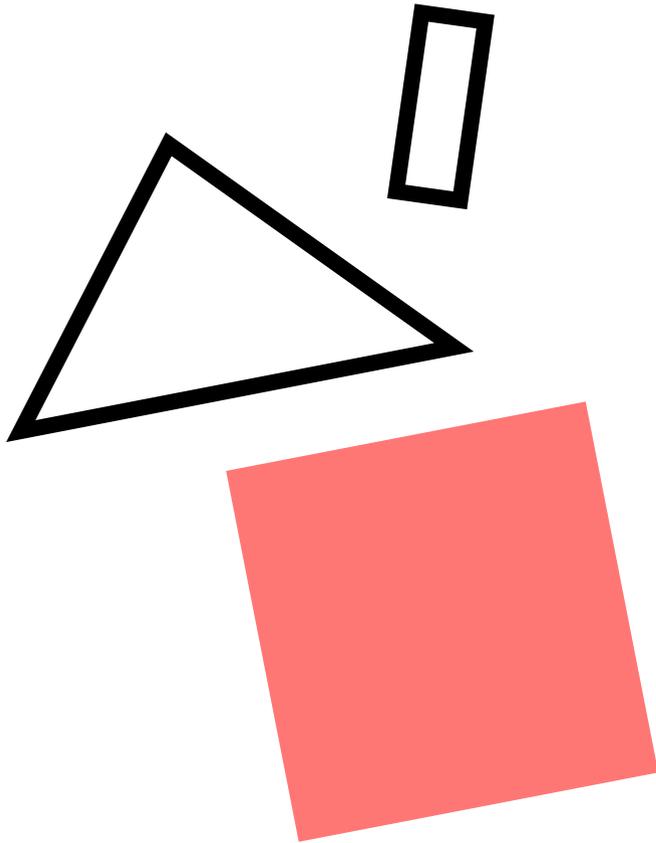
The pupils decide who can get in and who can't.

Art as a Tool to meet the School's Goals in the Cultural Rucksack: Arguments for expanded artistic practice in schools

Vibeke Frost Andersen

Art as a subject is totally different in its method of acquiring knowledge and development to the norm in Norwegian schools. Practice and experimentation are central, together with the pupil's own artistic motivation. In the development of the *artistic* in art education, the pupil has to bring meaning to the art through their own research, and not vice versa. It is the process which steers the result and not vice versa. Such understanding of art requires time and space. The pupil must be allowed to *remain* in practice, in in-depth exploration and in continuity with a specialised practitioner. The qualities being sought by including art in schools – innovation, adjustment, creativity – cannot be developed without art as an autonomous subject being taken seriously and thus being given space to be enough in itself. Action without external goals, research for the sake of research – it is precisely this that paves the way for what has been previously alien, and which occasionally gives rise to new inventions and realisations. These are attributes inherent to art because its definition is not complete, attributes which are cultivated through practicing art and not solely being exposed to it.

The Cultural Rucksack (DKS), which since 2001 has been part of the government's cultural commitment for schools together with Cultural Schools and Review of Culture for Youth, has a clear mandate: Pupils in Norwegian schools shall, independent of their location, interact with professional art expressions and practitioners in the categories of visual art, theatrical art, music, film, literature and cultural heritage at a high academic level. The focus of this practice is *the experience*, as part of the development of the general cultural competence and as an event which has the potential to expand the horizons of experience and recognition, and a development of the pupils' expertise as an audience.¹ The fact that the art shown in The Cultural Rucksack should be professional



house

and of a high academic quality as well as the content contributing to realising the goals of the school is occasionally discussed as a dilemma.² However, it is possible to view this as an expression of the twofold foundation of this scheme within both the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education. DKS is meant to be a *cooperation* between the two sectors, right down to the individual council level. Exploiting the content of DKS to achieve the school's goals, is thus initially not a challenge to art or artists, but to the pedagogues: All art inherently has the potential to support the goals of the school as they are expressed in the general section of the school curriculum. Furthermore, some art is relevant for specific goals in the individual subjects. Profiling this is a question of pedagogy and didactics – not art – and this is the school's area of expertise.

In other words, the school is free to use art and cultural expression in DKS for their own goal both before and after the visit. Nevertheless, I can count on one hand the classes who during the course of my seven years in DKS, have arrived prepared for a viewing, despite information material about the productions being sent to schools well before the visit. Normally, neither pupils nor teachers have the least idea of what they are attending when they arrive. For those productions in which I have participated, the producer has provided material to thoroughly present the content, ideas and method of communication. In addition, the relevance to the school's general goals is also described. There is no reason why the teacher, based on this material, should not focus on further concurrences between the curriculum and the production with specific relevance to the year group and subject being taught. In fact, this would be highly desirable.

However, this is a skill schools do not possess, that is, being able to include the experience of art as the

experience basis of creation – or even making use of art as a tool in specific pedagogical work.³ In the average staffroom, less than one percent are trained in the arts.⁴ Instead of putting in place measures to address this in schools, through its reforms, the Ministry of Education has gradually reduced the number of art and technology lessons in schools from about 20% of the total in 2002 to 12.5%⁵ today in order to allow more time to be devoted to basic subjects such as mathematics, Norwegian and English. Furthermore, the same ministry has carried out a reform of teacher training linked to the LK06 Reform to strengthen these subjects where one of the consequences is that art and technology have not been an obligatory part of the vocational training since 2003.⁶

During the same period, DKS has been established and continually strengthened, most recently when forming The Cultural Tank from DKS and Concerts Norway, thus creating the new government area of commitment. It may seem as if the responsibility for arts training in schools is about to be moved to the cultural sector. This progression is apparent in the schools' expectations of DKS,⁷ and in productions which are on tour. There is a tendency to those that are making the content of DKS being attentive to the pedagogical goals of the school, perhaps more than the specifically artistic goals.⁸

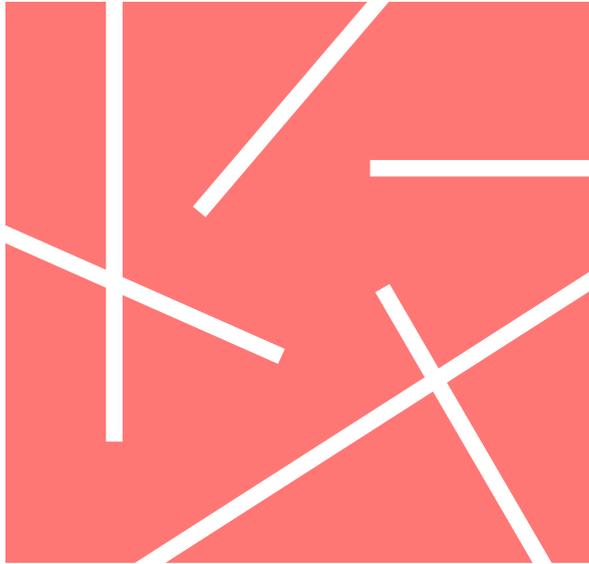
I do not adhere to those who believe that a pedagogical basis for artistic expression for children and young people is a problem in itself. Art produced with this in mind naturally has completely different characteristics than art created in independent conditions, in the same way that books written for children use a different language to those written for adults. This does not mean that it is necessarily less professional or of poorer quality. Really good art for children is indeed able to talk to children in a language that they understand, whilst also

containing further layers of meaning relevant for artistic questions and for an adult audience. The English artist, Nils Norman's work in the exhibition "Game of Life III: The Julius Variations" at Kristiansand Art Gallery this summer is an example. Norman's installation *The Gro Dahle Children's Picture Book Library and Play Library* is a play tower for children using so-called 'building playgrounds' as a model. Simen Joachim Helsvig writes the following about the work in *Kunstkritikk*:

*"A building playground is an urban area where children can play freely and construct their own environment without the intervention of adults. The playgrounds are constantly changing, since flexibility and the recycling of materials is part of the thought process. For Norman, the presentation of this anti-pedagogical 'pocket of disorder', as he describes it, paradoxically has a clear pedagogical function: Norman emphasizes these areas, where the environments are built collectively and without an overall plan, as 'genuinely contrary development strategies', and as alternative models for city development and communal organisation."*⁹

Nor do I believe that a possible instrumentalisation of art through DKS needs to be a major point for art in itself. Art is used for goals other than the artistic all the time, without it affecting the veracity of art as a discipline. This is primarily a problem for schools. Not all artists have pedagogical abilities. Furthermore, the synergies that would be desirable by including art and culture in teaching cannot possibly be created solely by the touring company that visits 4-5 times a year.¹⁰

Any discipline will be concerned about how their subject is conveyed in school; as a basic level, but also as a means to which the subject can be brought into the future. There is reason to ask what the consequences might be for the future of art in society, if the instrumental



scissors

area is the only area of art met by pupils in Norwegian schools: Over time art skills in schools will be completely dismantled. Not only because of reduced resources, but also because of the deprioritisation carried out by the schools themselves:

Instead of attempting to maintain a defined subject with the resources which do exist, only 7% of those appointed to teach art in schools have the professional expertise to do so.¹¹ After the introduction of national tests, there has been a tendency in schools that resources are removed from some areas of the school to supplement the teaching of mathematics, reading and English.¹² When there is no qualified teacher to defend the subject and affect prioritisations, it is probably easier to take these resources from art than subjects such as social sciences. Another normal practice is to concentrate the time quota allocated to art and crafts throughout the school years into the lower years, in order to free time for other activities as pupils rise through the school.¹³ What remains is a school which supports and reproduces negative attitudes to art as expressed by the wider community: Art is not very important, and to the extent that it has any use, it is as an instrument to achieve something else.

I believe that DKS is a fantastic scheme! Most Norwegian pupils live far from the major art and cultural institutions, and this scheme ensures that they are offered a source of culture that would otherwise not be available. Pupils are able to experience professional productions and actors, and they see that there are other types of reality than where they normally reside. But this is not enough on its own. Art in schools must be more than experience and general creation, and more than a practical alternative for those who are not academically gifted. If art is constantly viewed as a tool to achieve something else, a pre-defined goal, something significant is lost

when interacting with it: Curiosity; a desire to investigate; a belief in one's own judgements and an ability to come to conclusions. And if, in addition, there is a desire to cultivate these skills in the pupils using art, pupils must be given the opportunity to create independently within the field of art alone. It is the artistic practice and not the experience of art, which embodies the potential to be able to change and form an approach to the other subjects in schools.

1 Kulturdepartementet (2007). *Kulturell skulesekk for framtida*. St.meld. nr. 8 (2007-2008). <https://www.regjeringen.no/no/no/dokumenter/Stmeld-no-8-2007-2008-/id492761/>

2 Rikskonsertene (2015). *Den kulturelle skolesekken. Nasjonal satsing på kunst og kultur til alle elever*. Prinsipp for ordninga, pkt. 3 og 4. <http://www.denkulturelleskolesekken.no/om-skolesekken/>

3 This is an opinion also expressed by teachers, according to the report "Kunst- og kulturoppføring i Norge". Bamford, A. (2012). *Arts and Cultural Education in Norway*. Summarised in Norwegian by Kirst Saxi, Nasjonalt senter for kunst og kultur i opplæringen. <http://kunstkultursenteret.no/sites/k/kunstkultursenteret.no/files/cf01b8a9a6e21a613af60e695bdb25f1.pdf>

4 Lien, M. (2016, 10. -16.6.). Allmennlæreren er død, kampen fortsetter. *Morgenbladet*, s.4.

5 Østrem, V. H. (2012, 16.4.) –I Norge er kultur koselig, men ikke særlig viktig. *Aftenposten*. http://www.aftenposten.no/kultur/I-Norge-er-kultur-koselig_-men-ikke-sarlig-viktig-158831b.html

6 Bamford, A. (2012), *op. cit.*

7 Breivik, J. K. & Christophersen, C. (Red) (2013). *Den kulturelle skolesekken*. Oslo/ Bergen: Kulturrådet/ Fagbokforlaget.

8 Kulturrådet. *Visjoner* - Terje Lyngstad. <http://www.kulturradet.no/kunstloftet/vis-artikkel/-/kl-artikkel-2011-visjoner-terje-lyngstad>

9 Helsvig, S. J. (2016, 27.6.). Min barnlige kompetanse. *Kunstkritikk*. <http://www.kunstkritikk.no/kritikk/min-barnlige-kompetanse/>

10 Research indicates that pupils that learn about art and culture achieve better grades in all subjects. This has also been accepted by schools. See such publications as Bamford, A (2006). *The Wow Factor: Global research compendium on the impact of arts in education*. Waxmann, München; eller Ebrup, N.(2012, 25.9.). Art makes grammar easy to learn. <http://forskning.no/kunst-og-litteratur-skole-og-utdanning/2012/09/kunst-gjor-det-lett-laere-grammatikk>

11 Lien, M. (2016), *op. cit.*

12 Marsdal, M. (2013). Er du lønnsom, lille venn? Om hvordan resultatmålstyring omprogrammerer skolens moral. Hansen, T. & Hansen, L. B. (Red.), *Frihetens skygge. Samtidskunsten og det pedagogiske paradoks* (s. 59 - 79). Oslo: Henie Onstad Kunstsenter/ Orfeus Publishing AS.

13 *Ibid.*

YOU SHOULD NOT BE AT SCHOOL DURING HOLIDAYS

If you are found within school grounds during holidays, you will be excluded for a whole week.

Why is Art important?

Pål Brekke Indregard

This summer, my wife and I took five children aged six to seventeen, to watch the open-air performance of Peer Gynt at the Gålå Festival. Less optimistic people than us would have probably thought that this was a case of casting pearls before swine. However, the trip was an out-and-out success: All the children were enthralled throughout the nearly four-hour long performance, and afterwards they agree that it was the best play they had ever seen (even if some of them were a little disappointed that Satan didn't put in an appearance at the end).

How was the 150-year-old play relevant to these 21st-century children? And how is this relevant to the discussion about the teaching of art in schools? I will come back to that later. But first I would like to explore what happens when art and school meet.

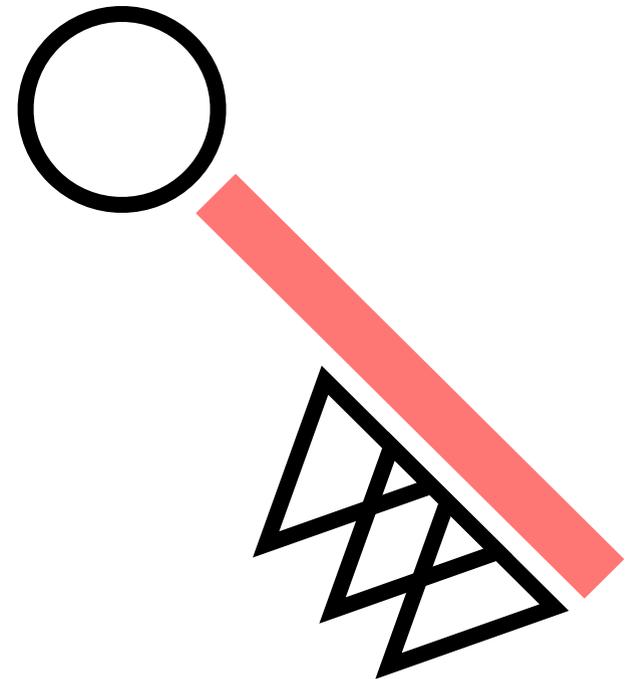
Despair is highly visible in the articles of Vibeke Frost Andersen and Gry Ulrichsen. The deconstruction of art in schools is an indisputable fact, and according to Frost Andersen, is due to two main reasons. One is that since 2003, teacher training has systematically deprioritised the practical and aesthetic subjects, and in this way slowly rid schools of artistic skills.

The other reason is the political educational reforms which have recently nearly halved the amount of practical and aesthetic lessons on the Norwegian school timetable.

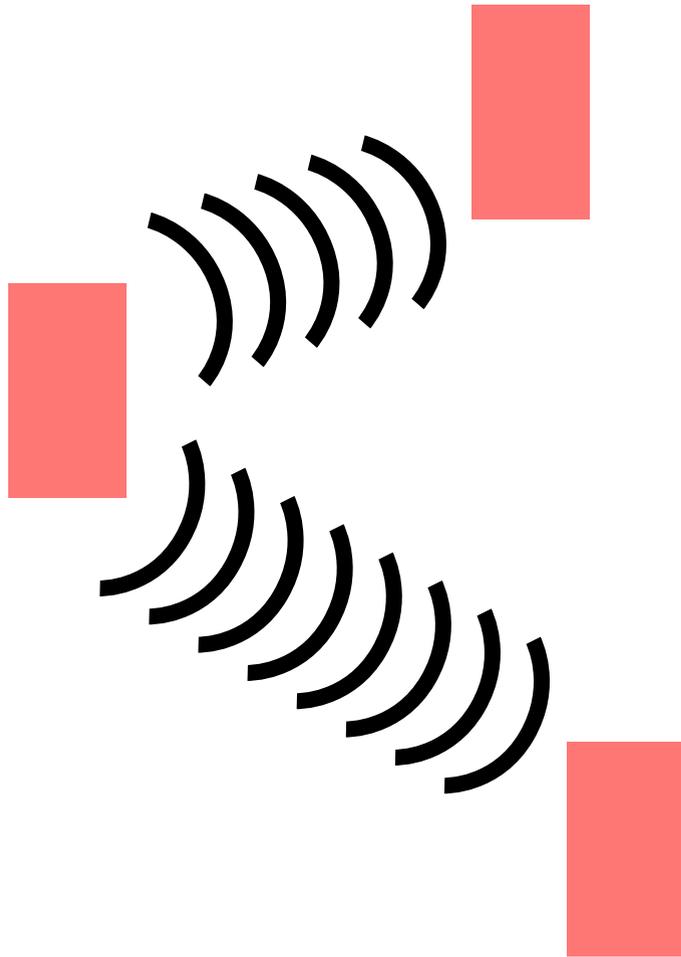
Imagine if a subject such as science, mathematics or Norwegian had been subject to the same unjust treatment. The headlines would have roared 'Crisis in our Schools', heads would have rolled, radical measures would have been put in place with immediate effect. So why don't alarm bells ring when 'only' art is involved? Frost Andersen goes on to tell us of her experience as an

implementer of The Cultural Rucksack (DKS). The production team within DKS (producers, tour arrangers, artists etc.) are to ensure that the productions are of a high artistic quality, and pave the way for schools to be able to embed DKS in their curricula. Through information about the productions and guidelines as to how schools can prepare the pupils for the visit, the teachers can use the experience of art as a resource in their teaching. It is easy to find the relevance of the arts to the general part of the curriculum, but there is also an abundance of examples of DKS productions that are very relevant to the subject-specific syllabuses. The problem is that the reception arrangements at the schools are not working. Frost Andersen believes that the reason is founded in the lack of artistic expertise in schools. In an average staffroom, fewer than one percent are trained in teaching the arts, resulting in a lack of those willing to champion the cause of the arts within schools. Naturally, the Ministry of Education could solve this by formalising the schools' obligations with regard to DKS, but for the time being, they have been loath to do so. As a result, it is a case of whether the local heads of education regard the arts warmly or not. Certain head teachers prioritise the arts as a natural part of the school day. However, the majority do not.

When it started in 2001, the thinking behind DKS was that it would involve the arts sector and schools working together. In addition to an annual budget of over NOK 200 million in funding, several hundred FTEs have been spent on developing DKS. At a rough estimate, DKS costs about half a billion Norwegian kroner annually. So why is the Ministry of Education so blasé with regard to these resources? Why aren't alarm bells ringing? In Gry Ulrichsen's article, we read about Tenthaus Oslo and other artist-led initiatives that are trying to fill the



key



communication

artistic vacuum in schools with new ways in which artists and schools can work together. She describes an artistic-pedagogical practice which, according to the teachers that participated in the projects, offers a 'mastering arena' for the many pupils who are battling with a lack of motivation and sense of achievement in their meeting with traditional classroom teaching. The art meetings contribute to the teachers becoming aware of the shortcomings of the pupils' with regard to learning by offering them a practical arena where they can blossom. This work strengthens the relationship between teacher and artist and is fruitful in the form of increased learning in other arenas in the school and life as a whole. This ties in well with the growing portfolio of research from artistic, as well as pedagogical circles, which indicates that artistic work promotes reflection and creativity, and provides the pupils with tools with which they can interpret the world; outcomes that will strengthen learning in all areas of life. Ulrichsen points out that isolated art meetings on their own are not enough to facilitate change in the pupils and their in-depth learning, and that time, space and the exchange of knowledge are important conditions for a fruitful working relationship between the pedagogical and artistic sectors.

The challenge for initiatives such as Tenthaus Oslo is that they are very vulnerable. As long as they are financed by project funding and not anchored in national guidelines, with the Ministry of Education playing a duty-bound role, no matter what, they will always only be a drop in the ocean of education policy. Nevertheless, they clearly indicate that it is possible to find new working relationships where art and schools meet, and as such, they are an important contribution to the national debate on the position of the arts in schools.

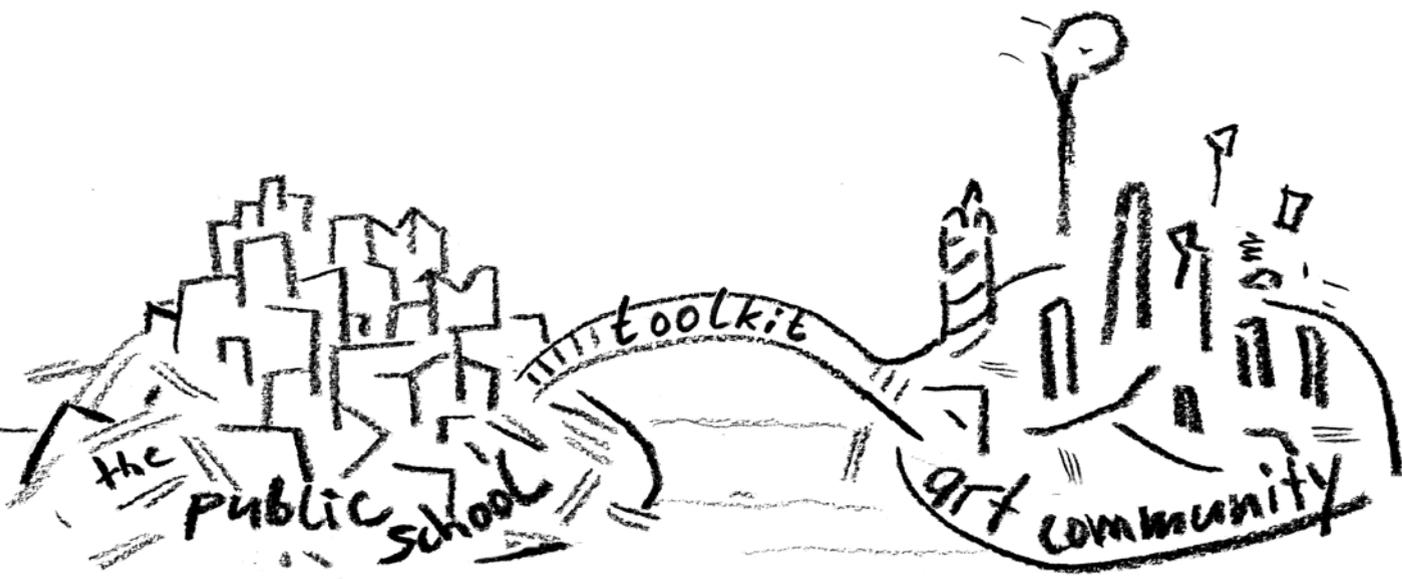
But why has the massive deprioritisation of the arts in schools been allowed to take place without more protest? Why haven't alarm bells been sounded a long time ago? It is possible that part of the explanation lies with Boel Christensen Scheel's article. Can some of the reasons lie in the inherent nature of art? She explains that art traditionally has been linked to its non-functionality or its 'useful uselessness'. An important part of the nature of art is to ask questions rather than to produce answers, and the uncertain and unpredictable results are the conditions for artistic work. The challenge for the art sector is to develop the vocabulary for a contemporary/future-looking art didactic which is tangible for those outside of the sphere of the arts. If this is unsuccessful, there is a danger that the practical-aesthetical subjects will be sacrificed on the altar of measurable goals.

In order for the arts in school to survive, it is my opinion that there are two decisive factors. One is that the debate is raised to a national level so that the marginalisation of the arts can no longer operate behind closed doors. We have to mobilise a public outcry. However, before this takes place, the second factor must be put in place. The arts sector has to be able to explain why it is important.

Back to Peer Gynt: How did we transform restless children into an attentive audience? Before the trip, we read the synopsis of the play twice with the children, and this created a base for several conversations about Peer and his life. When we read about The Green-Clad Woman who suddenly appeared with Peer's child, the six-year-old exclaimed: Did they do sex? Will we see that?! When we were in Gålå and it came to the scene in The Hall of the Mountain King where Peer is ridden by The Green-Clad one in an erotic ecstasy, my six-year-old elbowed me in the side and showed a thumbs up. Peer Gynt had become relevant to her.

PUPILS ARE GIVEN THEIR OWN PC

The school is responsible and you can order new software and upgrades at the school office.





Ebba Moi trained at Trondheim Academy of Fine Art. She has come to attention through her process-oriented works with a social profile where people participate in projects concerning intervention and interaction. Moi has also worked with art in public spaces, and operates as a consultant for art in public spaces. She is responsible for the artistic decoration at Frydenberg School in Oslo, and has also had exhibition at the Norwegian Sculpture Biennial (2015), Akershus Art Centre (2014), Tenthau Oslo (2014), Kristiansand Art Centre (2012). Moi runs Tenthau together with Eriksen and Schröder.



Helen Eriksen is a visual artist and pedagogue. She was born in Liverpool, UK, where she spent her early years. After taking her BA in Scandinavian Languages and Literature at UEA, Norwich, she went on to study visual arts at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. As a doctoral candidate at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, she researched the changing role of the artist in the public space. Eriksen considers art to be an activity which allows her to adopt a number of different roles in the process of artistic production. Her artistic role in the public space has resulted in an art practice which constantly includes other participants in the artistic process. Recently, she has worked with the sculptor Germain Ngoma. She is also an artistic consultant on several public art projects, and runs Tenthau together with Moi and Schröder.



Stefan Schröder was born and spent his early years in Dresden. He trained at Dresden Academy of Fine Arts and at The Academy of Art and Design in Breda, southern Netherlands. He has lived and worked in Norway since 2001. In recent years, his artistic production has encompassed a variety of public assignments in Norway and Germany, as well as a series of analogue photographs (Contributor, 2004-present day). These photographs depict his personal experiences in different workplaces in the construction industry and in art institutions. Schröder runs Tenthau together with Moi and Eriksen.

Mechu Rapela has a Masters in Art History from the University of Oslo. She has also worked as a writer and art assistant. Her fields of interest are artistic working processes and art theory. Rapela is a project coordinator for Tenthau.



Foto: Fernanda Rocha

Edith Victoria Ahlsen is a trained teacher specialising in art and design, and she has also studied art history. She has worked in schools for many years, focussing on how art is experienced. In recent years, she has also worked extensively with teaching Norwegian to adult immigrants. Ahlsen edits Tenthau Toolkit.



Foto: Jacqueline Dubois

Boel Christensen-Scheel has a PhD in contemporary art and performance theory and is Associate Professor in Aesthetics and Art Didactics at Oslo and Akershus University College. Head of the research group, Art in Society, she is especially interested in interaction and activation in and through art. Christensen-Scheel has published several texts on relational art and ecology, as well as translating Nicolas Bourriaud's 'Relational Aesthetics' and her most recent publication in 2015 was an article on the position of the viewer in art, published in the anthology *Estetikk og samfunn* (Aesthetics and Society), published by Fagbokforlaget.



Gry O. Ulrichsen works as an art didactician, a visual artist and a researcher. She trained at Trondheim Academy of Fine Art, as well as training in practical pedagogy, and has a Masters in Art Didactics from PLU, NTNU. Her activities as an artist are primarily participative and relational oriented. She currently works in cross-curricular R & D projects where aesthetic processes are explored as an important part of learning within health, pedagogy and the teaching of history linked to the Norwegian Resource Centre for Arts and Health, Seanse (Volda University College) and the Falstad Centre respectively.



Foto: Henry Puchert



Vibeke Frost Andersen is a visual artist with a wealth of experience conveying art in The Cultural Rucksack. Frost Andersen also has practical pedagogical training, and has worked with art in schools for over a decade. She has taught at all levels from primary to upper secondary school, as well as working professionally and administratively with art in higher education. Frost Andersen has developed and set up new teaching strategies for art several times, and has worked with quality control in teaching at an undergraduate level in a joint project with an English university. Artistically, Frost Andersen concentrates on landscape, technology and participation in the local context. She has had a design business in the south of Norway for many years, and has taken part in art projects and exhibitions locally, nationally and internationally.

Foto: Vidar Kamfløt



Pål Brekke Indregard has worked as a script writer and pianist, and is a qualified pre-school teacher, specialising in philosophical conversations with children. He has worked with developing new ways in which to convey/work with art in school, both through the British foundation, Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) and The Cultural Rucksack as well as being an advisor for artists who want to develop dissemination and working methods to create productive meetings between children and art.



Mariken Kramer lives and works in Oslo and trained at the Trondheim Academy of Fine Art. She has taken part in a number of exhibitions as well as video and film festivals both at home and abroad. Kramer's work is mainly based on her interest in the underlying mechanisms in human interaction and the individual's vulnerability in relation to the community. Recently, in her projects she has considered the problems around time and memories as well as exploring the field between identity, representation, staging and story-telling.

Anni Onsager Her inspiration comes from human interaction and our relationship with nature. She works with a variety of materials, often with a surrealist expression inspired by her Masters from the University of Sussex - West Dean College (2013) where she studied sculpture. After training in art a little later in life, she has had work purchased by Bærum Council and Grimstad Councils and was awarded the culture prize for Bærum Council in 2012.



Bjørn Bjarre trained at the Norwegian National Academy of Fine Arts in 1994 and lives in Oslo. His work encompasses drawing, sculpture, installations, artist books, texts and cartoons, and subjects such as dreams, childhood, language, technology, memory and materialism. He used to be editor of UKS-Forum for Samtidskunst (Young Artists' Forum for Contemporary Art) and has exhibited extensively. His works have been purchased by the National Art Museum and a number of other collections. For more information, please go to www.bjarre.org.



Alexandre Decoupigny is a composer, musician, sound artist and educator. His artistic practice includes audiowalks, installations and performances in public spaces. Working within the field of social practice the projects are participatory and often interdisciplinary. Furthermore, Alexandre is interested in expanding the knowledge on the politics of gender, sound and environments. Alexandre has been commissioned and presented in galleries and museums in Germany and abroad, including NGBK Berlin, Artwells Canada, Apartments projects Istanbul, the German Ministry for Environment and FACT, UK to mention but a few. He is currently commissioned to work on a large-scale project turning a whole school into an instrument in collaboration with the Bauhaus Archive Berlin. Alexandre lives and works in Berlin.



Foto: Merete Røstved

Gabo Camnitzer is an artist and teacher based in Gothenburg and New York. Whether working individually or in collaboration, Camnitzer's practice targets the rigidity of established orders of logic and highlights the meaning-making potential of open-ended art forms and pedagogies. Camnitzer has exhibited spaces such as: Gertrude Contemporary Art Center, Melbourne, Australia, Exit Art, New York, USA, Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm, Sweden, El Basilisco, Buenos Aires, Argentina, and Kunstsaele, Berlin, Germany, among others. He currently sits on the editorial board of the Swedish art magazine, Paletten.



Foto: Mads Avramovic

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Bjørn Bjarre Art & Life

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NORSK
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KUNST  ØFTET

Tenthaus Oslo
Maridalsveien 3
0178 Oslo
team@tenthaus.no
www.tenthaus.no