



**IMAG**

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# IMAG InSEA MAGAZINE N.º 9

InSEA ART Education VISUAL Journal IMAG intends to provide a visual platform, which, in line with the constitution of InSEA, will help foster international cooperation and understanding, and promote creative activity in art through sharing experiences, improving practices, and strengthening the position of art in all educational settings. IMAG is an international, online, Open Access and peer-reviewed e-publication for the identification, publication and dissemination of art education theories and practices through visual methods and media.

**Guest Editors: Tarja Karlsson Häikiö & Annika Hellman**

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# TRACES

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## TRACES

### Visual Arts Education in Sweden

#### Introduction

This special IMAG issue, Traces – Visual Arts Education in Sweden, is published by members of InSEA Sweden, and include 20 visual essays and articles. The aim of this publication is to map the field of Swedish visual arts education by describing, exemplifying and discussing some of the issues relevant in current visual arts education, also of interest to the international art educational field. The InSEA members who are contributing with their work are visual arts teachers in elementary and secondary school, art pedagogues in preschools and museums, doctoral students and researchers in universities, from the far north to the south of Sweden.

In this issue of IMAG the content and the current national visual knowledge field is divided into five themes: Environment & Sustainability, Educational projects, Art & Museums, Gender perspectives and Teacher Education. Through the themes, the reader meets different practices and theoretical perspectives on visual arts education. The visual essays and articles give examples of discusses educational contexts and situations involving children and pupils, as well as visual arts teacher students work, through a combination of drawings, paintings, photographs and texts.

With this contribution – with an aim to trace and depict the Swedish visual arts educational situation on an international map – we wish the reader a pleasant and informative reading.

March 2020

The editors,  
Tarja Karlsson Häikiö & Annika Hellman

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Presentation of themes and contributions



*Photograph from visual essay Dissolving views, Anna Ramberg*

Theme ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY

In the first essay, *Art-based Environmental Education and Ecological Literacy as a Foundation for Sustainable Thinking and Acting*, Margaretha Häggström present a study with an attempt to explain the phases of ecological literacy in relation to art-based environmental education based on a life-world phenomenological perspective. This visual essay give examples of how teachers and pupils experience and use the aesthetic values of plants and natural environments. The study is an action-research study that includes

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video-taped, participative observations and interviews, where art-based environmental education is used in order to achieve sustainable sensibility and plant awareness. The results of the study contribute with knowledge about ecological literacy development.

The unexpected, risk-taking and creative actions are core pedagogic concepts in a second-year module in a visual arts teacher BA course at a university in southern Sweden. In the article *From Non-site to Sustainable Design Challenged by Material Transformations and Oral Receptions*, Helena Malm present and discuss the work processes of three second-year visual arts teacher students. The students' processes are about sustainable site-specific design through visual and ethnographic methods which includes documentation and sketching processes in different materials. During the process, the students challenge each other through oral reception analysis, inspired by social constructivist semiotic analysis. This pedagogic design is based on interweaving theory and practice, and the idea that students should develop knowledge in, about, and through images.

### Theme SCHOOL PROJECTS

Oskar Lindvall's contribution is a visual essay called *Notes on lifting art - A creative school project*, that describes a collaborative project between a compulsory school in Sweden and two artists, focusing on strengthening the arts curriculum in secondary school. In the project pupils in school year 9 and the artists, with experience of working with collaborative site-specific street art projects, creates art works in the school environment. The project, that was financed with money from the Swedish Arts Council, was part of Creative school, a national investment in art in schools by the Swedish government. The art project is based on the curriculum for the subject visual arts for years 7-9, where the learning goals encompasses directives on meaning-making through art in society.

The authors of the article *Additional Adjustments in Visual Arts Education*, Lisa Öhman and Barbro Johansson, reports from an ongoing participatory project carried out in an upper secondary school in an Art program in visual arts. The two researchers and a



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visual arts teacher have jointly developed professional knowledge about additional adjustments in visual arts education. The overall aim for the project is to investigate how different additional adjustments can develop the didactic design in the classroom of visual arts. The documentation gathered in the study offers critical reflections on how the teacher can reorganise and provide new and different support structures for learning.

In the article *Performing Otherwise - The Classroom as a Nomadic, Material Space*, Paul Resch and Ulla Lind engages in what the production of differences can mean for pedagogy in knowledge-generation, meaning-making and educational creativity. The aim is to exemplify how open-ended ambiguousness can cross boundaries, propose newness, and unfold knowledge as something playful. An assignment involving an imaginative story used to introduce a Sloyd (Handicraft) classroom assignment for 10 year-olds. The authors argue that by engaging with classroom experience as nomadic, material and performative, we gain intriguing passages into learning where the unexpected, uncertain and ambiguous have the potential to un-fold learning activities in relation to everyday life.

The research by Elin Låby involves the phenomena of how child art intervene with different ideals of schooling and childhood in a historical Swedish context. Her article is called *Interventions of Time – Child Art Competitions in the 20th Century*. It starts with a discussion on the phenomena of child art competitions, where the images from the 1940's to late 1970's are analysed. In the end of the article, the author also discuss how children in the municipality in the city of Eskilstuna worked together with artists in an art project in 2017, creating a sculpture together.

Ulla Lind and Annika Hellman writes about young people's visual and verbal becomings through fabulations, in their article called *Visual Fabulations and a Thousand Becomings in Media and Art Education*. The empirical material draws upon two educational research studies from visual arts and media practices, conducted by the authors. They contribute with knowledge about the potentials of visual arts and media education to fabulate, speculate and thus generate future becomings, that might be realised. By analysing

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pupil's fabrications, the potentiality of visual arts and media education becomes visible; for example unleashing creativity through experimental and open ended learning processes.

Malena Wallin and Charlotta Gavelin present a study called *Teacher Students Meet Their Intended Target Group - Aesthetic Work on Tweenies as a Phenomenon*, with the purpose to investigate how visual representations of identity are created and perceived by future leisure-time center teachers. In the leisure-time center there are opportunities to focus on interdisciplinary, value-based work, not least through aesthetic and creative processes through use of storyline. Through using storyline as a method, the students dared to experiment with other inputs than the ones in traditional teaching. The storyline method helped the students to approach and deal with problems like how to take up difficult subjects in the teaching activities.

### Theme ART & MUSEUMS

In the visual essay *Children and young people meet the art at Moderna Museet*, Maria Taube, Ylva Hillström and Pernilla Stalfeldt writes about young people's encounters with art, and methods for children and young people to meet art. Moderna Museet was one of the first modern museums in Sweden to set up a workshop where children and young people could paint and draw inspired by what they saw at the museum. Since then, the pedagogical activity has developed further. Here three recent projects are presented, based on the museum's exhibitions on climate change, photography and guided art tours for parents with babies.

The visual essay *Project at Svandammsskolan Involving the Artist Marie-Louise Ekman* is written by Margareta Abenius Eriksson. The essay consists of images made by pupils in school years 3-6, as paraphrases on the expressive and colourful art by the Swedish artist Marie-Louise Ekman. In the autumn of 2017 the art project started from an exhibition with the artist at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Some of the pupils were acquainted with her art works, but for some of them the art by Ekman was intriguing. With inspiration from the painting *Lonely lady*, the pupils talked about what the artist – but

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also themselves – could long for. As a comment to the visit at the museum the pupils painted pictures of what one can long for, which were presented in a school gallery.

Bitte Fossbo writes about a school project with two high school classes in the visual essay *Learn from the Artist!* In the project, the students followed a guided tour at the art museum Moderna Muséet in Stockholm. The students participated in art talks and worked with the museum's collection of 20th century art. The visual essay describes how artistic expressions can be used for creating an understanding of what the world was like in the time when the artists were living. In this way the art talks also functioned as an example of visual arts educational activities outside of school, where the museum functions as a societal arena for knowledge acquisition.

In the article *Acts of Performance - as Research Method and Entangled Ethics*, Camilla Johansson Bäcklund explore how specific processes of art-based research can be described as method using concepts from posthuman theory. She explores boundaries between acting and performing that also grapples with wider ethical aspects produced from, and connected to, artistic practice. She discusses the act of performance in relation to the role of artist, but also as a way to approach the role of teacher through "research led-practice". This, claiming art to be useful within the usually text-dominated context of educational science, and as a comment to how teachers can approach roles, frameworks and learning spaces through Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical theory.

Author Anna Ramberg explore and present the course of events of children performing as guides at guided tours at an annual visual arts degree exhibition in Stockholm. In her visual essay *Dissolving Views - Re-Visualizing the Art Exhibition* the participants made paper fortune tellers to guide visitors through the exhibition. The aim of the essay is to show how both gallery exhibitions and guided tours can be re-visualized, thinking with children. Magic Lanterns, contemporary art, researchers and paper fortune tellers enabled dissolving views and creative ways of looking and learning. The study shows that art is not only about the artefacts; it is about the continuous making of the space, becoming together with the art

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and other visitors.

In this article, *Art Pedagogy – Contemporary Visual Art Studies*, the authors Anna Widén and Hans Örtengren describe a collaboration between a university and an art museum. The Contemporary Art Museum in Umeå in northern Sweden is one of Sweden's largest art galleries for contemporary art. The collaboration involves a course called Art Pedagogy, where an art-pedagogical project is planned, conducted and presented. Two projects collected in the spring of 2018 were selected for analysis. The result show that a win-win situation may occur when actors with different competences and resources participate in a project. For this to happen the schools and teachers need to have an interest in, and be prepared for a project, with an initial understanding.

### Theme GENDER PERSPECTIVES

An image says more than a thousand words, but what does these words mean? Katarina Jansson Hydén gives examples of how art works can be analysed in upper secondary school, with and without a norm-critical perspective. Her essay *See more queer! to enable a broader perspective on existence through a norm-critical analytical thinking*, concerns notions pre-conceiving knowledge and the need of developing understanding through norm-critical image analysis in relation to a social gender context. Through examples with young people, the author discusses how image analysis is colored by normative pre-conceptions, often perceived and staged by gestures or choice of clothing, as well as glances of positioning, gender and spatiality.

The article *Perspectives on Equality and Assessment: Boys' Responses in Visual Arts Education* is written by Lova Palmér, and is centered around conditions for creating equivalence in assessment in the school subject visual arts. The study is informed by a socio-cultural perspective on learning, and the material presented is based on tasks in Palmér's own visual arts classroom from the study year 2017-2018 in the school years 7-9 in compulsory school. One of the main directives in the curriculum in Sweden is that school should be imbued with equivalence. According to previous studies, the

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subject visual arts has a strong female connotation, and according to national evaluations in Sweden girls have better average grades than boys in the subject. The aim of the study was to test and improve teaching practice, pupils' activities and assignments, and to improve the professional skills of the teacher.

### Theme TEACHER EDUCATION

In the visual essay *What happens to image teacher students who work with conceptual contemporary art methods and processes?*, Ewa Berg describes the use of conceptual, contemporary art methods in visual arts teacher education. She shows how visual arts teacher students' critical thinking and active agencies has been developed and empowered by working with contemporary conceptual artistic methods. Equally important is the presenting of students' art work in public spaces. The author further argues that since art-teacher-student inevitably will re-enact their experiences to pupils in secondary school, and thus are able to also carry over processes of empowerment to these pupils, it is of a vital importance to provide well thought-through learning process in higher education.

In the visual essay *Sketching and Drawing as Part of the Learning Process - Showing Ideas and Presenting Projects*, Anneli Martin describes sketching as a part of the learning process in different kinds of teaching contexts with university students at three different faculties and programs in higher education. In the essay, case studies are presented from design courses, teacher education and engineering courses at three universities. Pen and paper, as well as charcoal and coloured crayons, were introduced to the students as analogue tools for sketching and presenting ideas. The essay is a summary of a five-year long study where results are presented of the similarity and difference on use of sketching and drawing as means for thinking and expression in different kind of studies.

Maria Stam discusses the possibility of using artistic role models as a way of understanding Modernism in visual arts teaching in her visual essay *Modernism - Historical Perspectives in Visual Arts Teacher Education*. The author shows examples from several students' duplications and paraphrases of art work from famous

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artists. The visual essay is a narrative description of how modernistic art works can be used as tools in visual arts teacher education to create understanding of how artistic trends affects the society and the ways of seeing in society, creating an insight of art historic, artistic and educational knowledge through the students' art work and pedagogical reflection.

In the article *A/r/tography in Visual Arts Teacher Training Program Examination*, Annika Hellman and Tarja Karlsson Häikiö discusses degree projects in visual arts teacher education. Through the concept a/r/tography the authors aim to reflect and discuss the positions as artist, researcher and teacher, that are interlaced in the future position as, and becoming a visual arts teacher. One student's visual and textual degree project is selected to investigate the exams from artistic, research-based and teaching practice perspectives. The authors highlight and discuss the benefits and limitations of merging these three positions, and what implications these processes might have for visual arts education in general.



**ENVIRONMENT**

**&**

**SUSTAINABILITY**

# From Non-site to Sustainable Design Challenged by Material Transformations and Oral Receptions

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## Abstract

This visual paper discusses students different processes in a project about sustainable site-specific design, carried out with students in a second-year module in a visual arts teacher BA course at a University in southern Sweden. As a basis a selection from presentations, reception-calls and interviews are used. The purpose of the project was to problematize different ways of organizing teaching in Art as a school subject but also using visual arts methods to organize cross-discipline education. During the project the students was invited to consider the concepts of their work from documentation, abstraction, transforming, synthesising and reception-calls to a sustainable site-specific design proposal. What does the possibilities mean and what are the limits for the process, working with different tasks and materials? Maybe some students will be inspired to take risks and be curious of the unexpected together with pupils and colleagues in their future.

Keywords: art-based education, cross-discipline education, risk-taking, site-specific design, visual arts education, teacher education



Impacts in a visual process, from a non-site to a sustainable design proposal (Figure 1 a-h).

Figure 1 a-h: Illustration of the process from non-site to sustainable design proposal, collected from photo-documentation of a student.

## Introduction

This article paper discusses students' different processes in a project about sustainable site-specific design, carried out with students in a second-year module, in a visual arts teacher BA course at a university in southern Sweden. A site-specific design means that the design proposal is based on a specific location. This site-specific design is a project where the students choose a forgotten place with no purpose, a "non-site". Here with the purpose of giving a forgotten place, "non-site", a new feature. The task with the chosen "non-site" is examined through visual ethnographic inspired documentations and a concept with sketching processes in different materials. The last step, the end result in this site-specific design project, is a model of a design proposal with aspects from science, social or economic sustainability, as through digital imaging is reproduced on the non-site.

The purpose of the project was to problematize different ways of organizing teaching in visual arts as a school subject, but also to use visual arts methods to organize cross-discipline education. During the project the students were invited to consider the concepts of their work from documentation, abstraction, transforming, synthesizing and reception-calls to a sustainable site-specific design proposal. Some of the questions that were posed to the students were: What does possibilities mean in teacher education? What are the limits for the educational process, working with different tasks and materials? The purpose of the project was that the students would be inspired to take risks and be curious of the unexpected as a part of working with visual arts, together with pupils

and colleagues in their future. In the article results are presented examples of students' work with site-specific art within teacher education together with the higher art educator's reflections. As a basis – to exemplify the teaching – a selection from presentations, reception-calls and interviews are used.

## A design project including risk-taking as a pedagogic concept

The unexpected, risk-taking, creative action and challenging reception analysis are core pedagogic concepts in a second-year module at the described visual arts teacher BA course. In this visual paper, I will discuss the pedagogic design, as well as show the results of the work in the course by showing the learning process of three second-year visual arts teacher students. In this course the second-year module students make an individual three-dimensional model-sketch, inspired by work with visual ethnographic documentation. The aim is to achieve an idea to sustainable design in the last step of the design-project, challenged by a transformation process in different materials and techniques. During the process, students challenge each other by recurring oral reception analysis of each other's works, with a social constructivist approach and semiotic analysis, inspired of Stuart Hall in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (2003).

The pedagogic design of this project is based on the interweaving of theory and practice, in accordance to the Swedish *National Curriculum Läroplan för förskoleklassen, grundskolan och*

*fritidshemmet* (Lgr11). The idea is that the students should develop knowledge in, about, and through images, through problematizing the design of teaching inspired by Lois Hetland's *Studio thinking 2: The real benefits of visual arts education* (2013) and by Gert Biesta in *The beautiful risk of education* (2014).

This visual paper is mainly based on visual selections of three students' design processes, collected from their digital presentations of their entire work, but also reception-calls and interviews. In the pictures the students show their ideas and design processes during the work with three different materials. They also weave in aspects from science, the social and economic fields, creating a site-specific sustainable design in the last step. The entire work is documented with photographs and through reflections in a personal process diary, serving as a base for their final digital presentation.

The starting point is a self-selected place, a non-site, an in-between space of seemingly no importance. The students are supposed to perform a visual ethnographic documentation and collecting material before and during an individual multi-step sketching-process in different three-dimensional materials. The creation of ideas changed during their sketching-processes, influenced by forms, contents, materials and techniques. The expressions in each material are based on each material's conditions and limits. The shifts of material and instructions had a purpose to challenge the idea processes by the students, as Pirjo Birjenstam discusses in *Creative Action on the Birth of Ideas* (2000).

The assignment's first four steps, starts with teacher-led tasks, followed-up with student-led oral reception meetings, where the students are analysing the results and processes from each step: a) ethnographically-inspired collection of material in the "non-site"; b) abstraction in the carton; c) transformation of the work in carton to clay; and, d) synthesis of selected parts of the entire process in metal wire. The fifth part is about going back to the non-place to do various sketches with purpose to generate ideas from all parts of their process, now with the task to work out a sustainable site-specific design proposal combined with studying literature and choosing the appropriate material for the purpose. The recurring reception calls are thus used as a didactic tool, with the purpose of seeing their work through the eyes of others, starting

with denotative description and then followed-up with discussions on a connotative level to inspire, support and challenge each other.

### Three students different "non-sites"

In this case a "non-site" is a kind of site on the margin, a place that is partially abandoned or left-over. The pictures below represent three quite different places, chosen by the students. The picture of Non-site 1 (Figure 2) is a roundabout, mostly used by bikes. It is a place where the student played as a child, and still often passes without taking any attention. The picture of Non-site 2 (Figure 3) shows a big empty area at the first look. The act looking for a "non-site" led the student here. The third picture shows Non-site 3 (Figure 4), a non-place among the houses right where the student lives. It was interesting to see the differences between the student's processes. The first student chose a place from her childhood, and knew directly which place she should choose. The second student found the non-site place through searching for a non-place, and the third student challenged himself to find it in the neighbourhood where he lives. The processes are collected from the three student's documentations and illustrates by photographs below.



Figure 2: Non-site 1, A roundabout



Figure 3: Non-site 2, A big desolated area



Figure 4: Non-site 3, A building in stone



## Documentation

The students collected different materials, as three-dimensional materials (stones, plant parts etc.), and they documented their processes with photographs, by doing sketches, frottages to catch textures, took colour samples from the environment and made notes about mood, timing, sound and their own reflections. First, we follow the processes of the student who worked with Non-site 1, and then we follow the impacts from the two students who worked with Non-site 2 and Non-site 3.

## Abstraction in cardboard

The material carton was selected because it is a material with qualities useful for elaborating simple forms that can help the students to take a step from the concrete reality to abstraction of form. The abstraction is based on collected material and the students worked with abstraction of shapes, patterns, rhythms, movements, colours etc. from their non-sites.

### Non-site 1

In the photos (Figure 6 a-c), which represents the process in cardboard, with the square shape from the branches in the pictures below (Figure 5 a-c) as starting point.



Figure 5 a-c: Non-site 1, collected material: photo, sketches and notes



Figure 6 a-c: Non-site 1. Process with abstraction in cardboard.

## Reception-calls

Student-led reception-calls were held in groups of 5-6 persons after the first five steps of the sketching-process. This model, where each student's work was discussed one work at time, the discussion starting on a denotative and connotative level, where the students mainly were listening to the others reflections. The works were inspired by social semiotic theory, which was well-known for the students. Following these formative group responses, the next step was an introduction of a new task and new material, presented by me as visual arts teacher educator.

### Non-site 1

The student group discussed the forms and structure of the cardboard but also the form of the rectangle. They first notified the work from a denotative level and then they talked about what could be made visible through this act. They also discussed the meaning of the material and what the choice of material does for the process and the expression of the sculpture.

## Transformation in clay

The work begins after the reception of the abstraction process in cardboard and introduction of the material clay. The abstraction should be transformed to clay, also a compact material, but in opposite to carton it is smooth with a plasticity useful for modelling of both simple forms and details, depending on which clay the student

chooses as well as the grain of chamotte. The students had the options to choose to use white or red burning-clay.

Some of the questions that challenged the students in this phase of the work were: What happens when you change material? What is the resistance and which are the opportunities? What does the choice of material mean to the communication of the result?

### Non-site 1

In Figure 6 a-c the materiality and structure from cardboard is used and processed in clay. I chose materials for the task because of their conditions. Cardboard has qualities supporting simple forms and thereby suitable for abstraction. For the transformation from cardboard I chose to offer clay to the students, which in opposite to the material cardboard is easy to form in all sorts of shapes, with the purpose to challenge the students in their sketching processes in three-dimensional materials.

In Figure 7 a-d we can see how the round shapes from the last picture in Figure 6 a-c takes over during the process. The student also switches from using white to using brown clay. During the reception-call the students focused on the two sorts of clay and noted what the differences in composure made with the expression.

The denotative part also pointed on the pattern on the outside of the tree sculptures, and also the circular forms like the annual rings of the tree. The connotations went from a female gender in the white-burning clay to Mother Nature in the tree sculpture in brown clay. This showed to be quite in line with the student's own thoughts.



Figure 7 a-d: Non-site 1. Process with transformation in clay.

### Synthesis

The third part of the project was to create a synthesis of the whole work, through sketches, images, in metal thread and so forth. This started after the transformation in clay and continued with an introduction of the material metal wire. This material was new for many of the students and was supposed make the students to think in new directions. The metal wire has totally other properties than clay. The clay is compact and smooth, while the metal wire challenges through giving resistance and through its qualities for three-dimensional line sketching and to create open, transparent forms. It gives resistance while it is tough to bend, and different techniques and tools were needed. This can be seen as a fusion of processes and productions so far.

### Non-site 1

The student has returned to the square shape from the branches (Figure 5 a-c) and the abstraction in cardboard (Figure 6 a-c). We can see the synthesis of those square shapes and the round forms in clay (Figure 7 a-d). In the work the red-brown wire in copper dominate, but is combined with a thinner thread in steal.

In the reception-calls the students compared their works with the earlier sculptures and recognized a lot of forms and patterns, as the annual rings and the diagonal rectangle. But they also talked about the playfulness in the wiry shapes in metal wires in relation to the degree of abstraction.

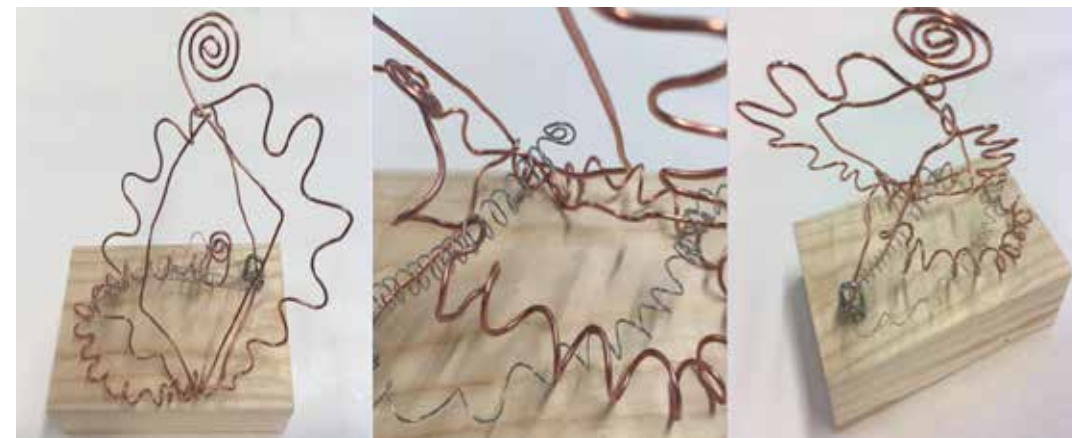


Figure 8 a-c: Non-site 1. Process with transformation in clay.



## Sustainable site-specific design proposal

The sketches and ideas from all parts of the process works out to a sustainable site-specific design proposal with some aspects on natural resources, social and economic aspects, where documentations, sketching's, receptions and reflections from the process-diary, materials and techniques can be used in the process with the design proposal.

### Non-site 1

This student's sustainable proposal, an organised place for children in the same roundabout with tree where she played as a child, has social aspects. The brown colours, square and round forms is visible in this three-dimensional construction, mostly in cardboard (Figure 9 a-d). The student tells that all the steps together led to the final product, but the process through the different steps was more important than the result.



Figure 9 a-d: Non-site 1. Sustainable site-specific design proposal.

This student said after the project that the reception-calls were important for her by receiving the others look at her work, both through their describing of it in a denotative level, and discussing their connotative interpretations. The reception-calls did not give her new concrete ideas, but made her see her work in new ways and encouraged her to continue challenging herself. She estimated both giving responses to others and receiving feedback under the reception-calls.

## Non-Site 2, a big desolated area

### From documentation to abstraction

This study focuses mainly on ethnographic documentation but also on the possibilities and limitations of different materials as challenge. In this work we meet, through the project of the student, a big desolated area in a place called *Lerbäcksro*. The documentation took place at several sessions and includes a lot of visual representations as photos, sketches, frottage, but also sounds and notes. Despite the first sight of a big empty place the student's ethnographically inspired studies with a very nuanced material made us who attended at her presentation to really experience the place (Figure 10 a-b, 11 a-b, 12 a-b).



Figure 10 a: Photo-documentations with the notes "Shadows in the dusk" and "Rustling in the dark".

Figure 10 b: Sketches from the non-place with the notes "A forgotten place in the block of the sugar mill", "Slow dropping feathers and flapping birds in the old leaves", "Well-known woolly tails jumping in the brushwood" and "Traces from a tractor has damaged and striated the ground"

"Shadows in the dusk"

"Rustling in the dark"

"A forgotten place in the block of the sugar mill"

"Slow dropping feathers and flapping birds in the old leaves"  
"Wellknown woolly tails jumping in the brushwood"

"Traces from a tractor has damaged and astriated the ground"



Figure 11 a-b: Photo-documentations of water-ponds and temperature.

**Waterponds**

**Temperature**

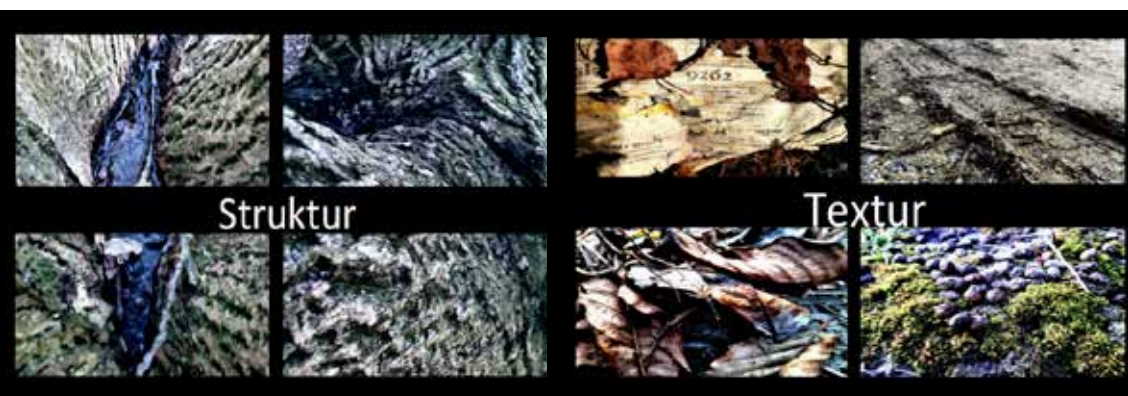


Figure 12 a-b: Photo-documentations of structure and texture.

**Structure**

**Texture**



Figure 13 a-b: Photo-documentations of "bubbles rhythm" and the students working process with "abstracted bubbles".

**"Bubbles rytim"**

**"Abstracted bubbles"**

The bubbles rhythm, found in the ice, became important in the whole work with start in the abstraction in cardboard. The student was testing and re-testing the resistance in the material and in this way challenged her to new limits.

The reception-calls of her work were mostly about form and the contradictory process of doing them in the material cardboard. The student also brought some photos from the non-site and sketches with written words as "bubbles rhythm" (Figure 13 a-b). This led the discussions in a more definite direction. During the denotative part of the analysis, the other students discussed such as the round forms of frozen bubbles. In a later conversation this student confirms that the reception-calls were important because they gave her courage to continue despite her uncertainty if she was on the right way. She reflected over the reception-calls' different meanings for the students in the group. She mentioned that they had contributed to new ideas for some students who had been stuck. She was always very supportive and active in both the denotative and connotative parts about other students' work with purpose to help them finding it meaningful to continue with the project.

### **Transformation, synthesis and Sustainable site-specific design proposal**

The forms from the cardboard transforms in clay. The plasticity of the clay together with the feeling under the forming act resulted in a more soft and round expression. In the synthesis the contours of the work in clay became sketches in metal wires (Figure 14 a-b). The sustainable result was a meeting-place, modelled in clay with focus on social aspects (Figure 15).





Figure 14 a: Clay



Figure 15: Non-site 2. Sustainable result



Figure 14 b: Metal-wire

### Non-Site 3, a building in stone

#### A selection of documentation

This is a small place in between the villas in the residential area where the student lives. This student made sketches, frottage and notes, but the presentation also shows collected artefacts as earth, plants and so forth, even used to paint colours on paper. The challenge in this case was for the student to find a non-site in the neighbourhood. The search resulted in him choosing a small and old forgotten building in stone.



Figure 16 a-g: Visual ethnographic documentations.

After this phase a small square with checked mesh took the whole attention. It is visible in the first picture in Figure 16 a-g. The square is partly covered with withered leaves and framed by grey stones.



Figure 17 a-c: Process with abstraction.

### Abstraction of a small square

Here we can follow the process through the work in cardboard. The student struggled with not being too detailed and imaging with the work of abstraction. At last, the student chose to paint it (Figure 17 a-c).

### Documentation of processes in clay and metal-wire

In the next steps, the handicraft and the concrete process working with the different tasks and material shows in a lot of photo-documentations. This student had good knowledge of working in clay since before (Figure 18 a-g).

Under the reception-calls of the abstraction in cardboard and the transformation in clay was the model of the reception-calls were these strictly followed. Forms, structure, patterns and colours were the focus. Then followed the connotative discussions with all interpretations. The student found it interesting to hear about the calls about the unusual structure on the abstract cube in cardboard, the nature-inspired colours, and the fact that it had room inside possible to look into, but with a form was locked. The sculpture in clay led the calls about the oval form, and the rectangle formed pieces placed in different directions. The other students said it looked like an upside down turned bowl and one mentioned a hedgehog.



Figure 18 a-g: Process in transformation from cardboard to clay.

The synthesis in metal wire combines the dense pattern from above in a heart with a square form.

Here the reception-calls focused on the pattern and the colour of the heart. The students compared the dense pattern of the clay, the cube in cardboard, which led back to the first pictures of the building of grey rectangle-formed stones and a small square recessed in a cubist hole in the wall. The student was used to work in design-processes and it was impossible to clear out the meaning this reception-calls had for the processes in this case.

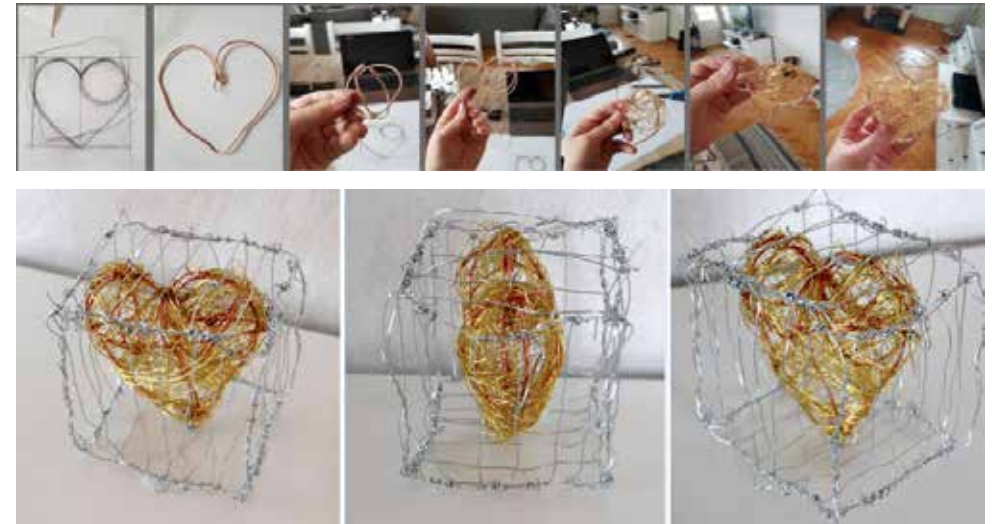


Figure 19 a-j: Synthesis in metal wire.

### A sustainable design proposal with aspects on natural resources

The form of a heart from sketching's under the documentation phase of the building from above, which returned in a concrete way in the synthesis in metal-wire, and became the form of the end result (Figure 19 a-j). Also, the rooms in the building, in front of the square in the documentation found in different ways from cardboard, clay and metal-wire, to the end result. Furthermore, the natural colours from plants in the non - site, were used in the cardboard sculpture and nature resources and plants is what this design proposal is about.

This work has a focus on science-based sustainability, where people were offered a large greenhouse with a good climate for



locally produced crops. The student's purpose was definitely to influence people, by the fact that a greenhouse situated in the immediate area reminds and increases motivation for growing locally produced vegetables (Figures 20 and 21 a-b).



Figure 20: Sketch with the notes "Greenhouse", "Marginal increase in local produce/increase motivation to take care of nature", "Many people see it", "Local production is better".



Figure 21 a-b: Non-site 3. Sustainable site-specific design proposal.

## Discussion

In this project, we strived to give the students insights into the role of the uncertain in artistic processes, and challenge them by the unexpected to experience the potential of uncertainty for visual processes. This project is working with one part at a time not supposed to know the next step, in opposite to the students' earlier experiences of convergent teaching traditions. In the beginning, questions based on uncertainty for assignments and expectations were asked and examples from former students' exploratory image work were requested. Already after the first part the questions ended and it seemed that they let go and entered in the visual processes. In the design of the teaching the recurring reception-calls contributed to structural support. Even though the reception-calls were not mandatory, all students participated every time.

In this visual paper presenting impacts from some students' quite different processes based on their presentations, reception-calls and interviews, shows that prior knowledge in image-theory practising reception-calls, materials and techniques turned out to be important. Before this project the students had tested different models leading and participating in reception-calls, inspired by Semiotic Image Analysis from *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (2003) by Stuart Hall. These calls are based on what you have the ability to see at a denotative level and how you interpret it together with others on a connotative level. The students had in earlier course used a model inspired by semiotic analysis where one student at time shows their "picture" and the other students first makes a detailed denotative description of the picture and what they find special interesting according to for example forms, patterns and colours. After that they continued with a connotative call, a discussion of the "picture" where the student who had made it just listened and noticed the call. In the end the student who had made the picture tells what her/he found special interesting with the call and if it showed on some new perspective in. According to the students the reception-calls were important experiences and without them they felt something was missing in their visual processes and results.

The project had a quite structured form with a time-schedule for all elements, as introductions of tasks, materials, reception-calls and the digital and analogue closing presentation of the individual visual processes, transformed into a sustainable site-specific design proposal. Nevertheless, the project turned out to contain a variety of choices that were dependent on the individual. Some of the students had a clear focus on the final assessment, while others had a focus on how far one can stretch the conditions of a material. They wanted to challenge themselves working with ethnographically inspired documentation, trying the meaning of the possibilities of the materials and their limitations, with an aim to change the function of a non-site. In one case the aim was also to influence people to take care of nature and buy locally produced vegetables. All the students' works, represented in this paper, are succeeded well with the aim

of their projects – but in different ways. They were inspired by different elements during the project and found different ways to challenge themselves. Some students in the course talked about an insecure feeling of not knowing exactly what was expected from them, as they were used to know the expectations. Most students said that they appreciated the project, but the reception-calls were necessary to give courage to continue, meet new challenges and use ideas from others.

In many schools that I have visited as an art educator, they have had a lack of interdisciplinary work in the school-subject visual arts in the use of visual methods. One purpose of the described project work was to problematize different ways of organizing divergent teaching, inspired by visual arts methods including organisation of classrooms in and outside the school, as discussed by Lois Hetland in *Studio thinking 2 The real benefits of visual arts education*. This project led the students to discuss possibilities to initiate interdisciplinary work with teachers in for instance science and social subjects. The main purpose was that the students, through their own experiences of uncertainty and the unexpected, should develop the potential of these aspects in visual processes and inspire them to take risks, as Biesta discusses in: *The beautiful risk of education*. Hopefully, the students will become risk-taking and curious, and use the unexpected as a method together with pupils and colleagues in their future.

Photos: Niclas Gustavsson, Emma Tonning och Linda Värmenhed.

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