



IMAG

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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



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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 Stafeldt 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.

SCHOOL PROJECT

Notes on Lifting Art, a Creative School Project Focused on Strengthening the Arts Curriculum in Secondary School

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Abstract

The Swedish government has invested in funding for Creative schools (Sw. Skapande skola), where schools can apply for funding to be used for hiring professional artists as teachers in workshops involving the students. The visual essay provides insight in to the Swedish system for introducing art in schools. The project in the essay is made in secondary school and the article focuses on the lessons learned in the first year of a three-year-project called "Lifting art", in which two artists collaborate with 9th grade student in creating artworks for their own schoolyard. The project aims at making possible for students to explore and interact with their own surroundings in a concrete way. Notes on lifting art gives a humorous look at the process from the perspective of the resident art teacher, who is also responsible for the school's cultural programs. The result show how the students collaborated with the artists in making an artwork for the school yard.

Keywords: artists in schools, art project, art teaching, collaboration, secondary school, site-specific art, school yard



Image 1: No caption

If you were to visit Petrus Magni elementary school in in September last year, chances are you would already have forgotten it by now. The nondescript school complex, which includes four one storey buildings and an auditorium, has a vague hint of late sixties functionalism. Yellow bricks, concrete schoolyard.

If it was your lucky day, perhaps you took a detour through the auditorium, with its intricate and truly beautiful ceiling, designed by architect Magnus Ahlgren. A bold hidden gem inside a whisper of a building. However, you probably would have walked past the school entrance toward the centre of the schoolyard, marked by a flagpole and an empty base for a sculpture no longer present. Gottfrid Larsson's heavy piece, depicting a hard-working woman during harvest, has been moved to the city castle. Probably for the best since summer tourists rarely would stumble upon it otherwise. However, although not yet visible, the students attending this school have already gone to work, transforming their own schoolyard artistically.

The project for renewing and "artifying" the schoolyard of Petrus Magni School was made possible thanks to a state sponsored program inspired by the Norwegian program for promoting the arts in school, called *Skolesekken*. The Swedish version, Creative school (*Skapande skola*), let schools apply for funding to be used for hiring professional artists as teachers in workshops involving the students. Funds can be applied based on the number of pupils or to enable larger projects over a maximum of three years. "Lifting art" at Petrus Magni is an example of such a project. As the school's art teacher and head of the school culture group I have had the great privilege of managing its first year.



Image 2: Outside the school cafeteria



Image 3: Entering the schoolyard

Lifting art is a wordplay aiming at several number of “boosts”, including lifting math, lifting language and lifting IT, carried out by the National School Agency for Education (Skolverket) in the last years of turmoil in the Swedish school system caused by sinking results in PISA-studies¹. Without reducing those efforts, what Petrus Magni needed, in my humble opinion, was a boost of the outdoor environment. Local surveys showed that most students only use the schoolyard to get between classes. There is little incentive to be active and limited availability to hang out and relax during recess. The students described the area as being empty and dull. To remedy this, the school culture group contacted the Malmö-based artists Nils Petter Löfstedt and Erik Vestman. The two are well merited within a variety of art disciplines. They have also worked previously with children on collaborative site-specific art projects in Malmö.² Together we worked out a plan for involving ninth grade students in reshaping their own schoolyard, while also getting a deeper understanding of public art and the artistic process.

An application was sent to the Swedish Arts Council (Kulturrådet) in February 2017 and by April we were granted about 100 000 SEK, the equivalent of 10 000 euros. It was enough to hire Erik and Nils Petter for a month and cover the costs for the material. The finished works needs to be of good quality to endure the varying grades of weather-based misery that is collectively known as the Swedish winter. Early fall 2017 marked the official beginning of the project, kicking off with a three-day workshop with all ninth-grade students, each class getting a full day of work. Every morning began with an exploration of the outdoor environment together with the artists, equipped with paper, pens and cameras. The groups were encouraged to stay and carefully explore if they found a space they could potentially transform artistically.

1. Sweden's results have been falling for several years, but the study from 2015 showed a relative improvement in all tested areas. For more info in Swedish, see <https://www.skolverket.se/statistik-och-utvardering/internationella-studier/pisa>

2. See webpage for more info. <http://erikochnilspetter.se/>



Image 4: First day of the project, exploring the environment



Image 5: First day of the project, exploring the environment

The next step was planning and sketching drafts for an artistic expression in a part of the school yard of the students own choosing. The first three days resulted in 20 more or less thought through concepts with great variation in terms of size and ambition, from tiny stencil paintings to fountains and areas for hanging out with shelter from the rain. It was now up to Erik and Nils Petter to select which ideas could be possible to realise within the budget and time limits. You can see a selection of sketches on the next spread. The final selections reflected both the student's creativity and the artist's experience. For example, although compelling, the water fountain featuring a tractor, symbolizing Vadstena rural heritage, was assessed as too technically advanced. The large eagle holding the world, or the large ship called PM for Petrus Magni, would surely have eaten up the whole budget for lifting art. The idea of expanding the school cafeteria, with an outside area for chilling out, using umbrellas as a roof, however, was adopted almost exactly according to the sketch. Perhaps the most congenial idea came from a young male student, randomly scribbling on his paper. The phrase "It's my big day" became kind of an inside motto for the project. It was turned into a billboard and later put up as the very last piece mounted.



Image 6: First day of the project, brainstorming ideas



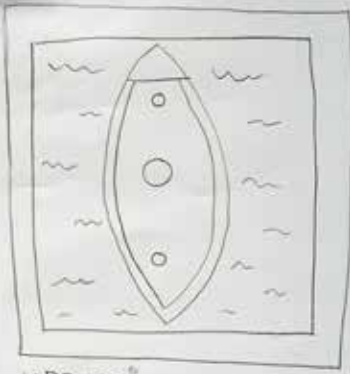
Image 7: First day of the project, creating sketches for the workshop



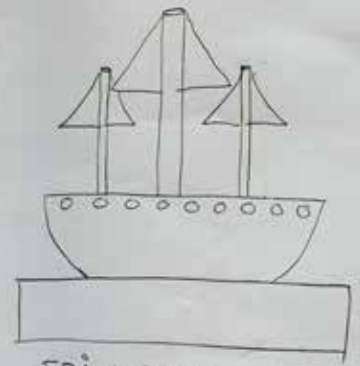
Image 8: First day of the project, creating sketches for the workshop

REGALSKEPPET PM

vatten ofontän?
 = 3 master osegel
 = båt i trä?



UPPIFRÅN

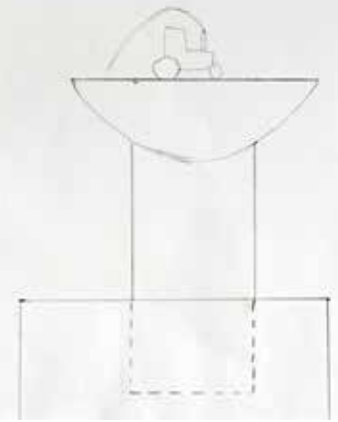


FRÅN SIDAN

Elsa, Filippa, Nora 9B

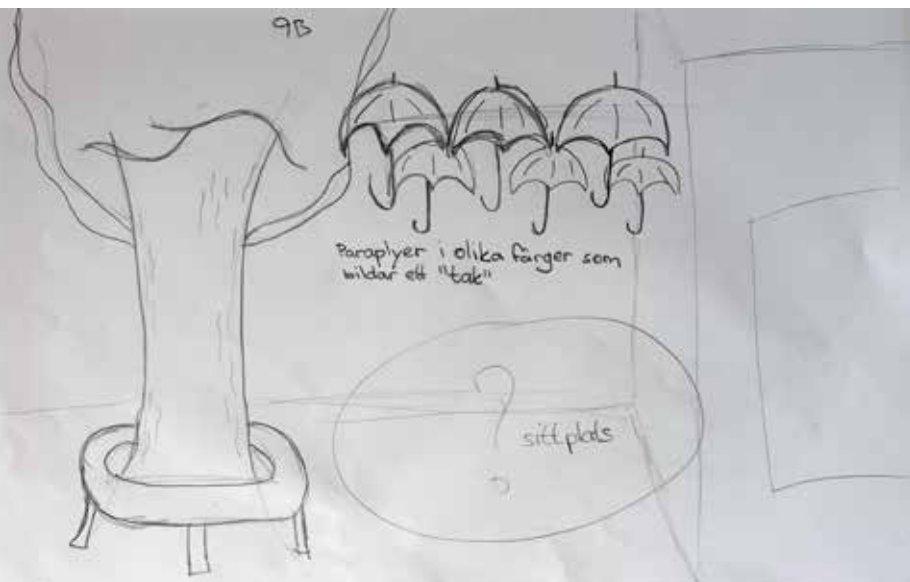
Philipp, Philip S, 23 år Fontän 9C

- Vattenpump
- sementbalja
- trakter i mitten
- vattensprutar ur avgeskrivet
- balle cirkelformad diameter 80cm angeler.
- djup 20cm angeler
- fot 50cm övermarken 70cm undermarken
- Diameter fot 40cm



Kassan Jalil
 Jonathan Larsson 9A

9B



Paraplyer i olika färger som bildar ett "tak"

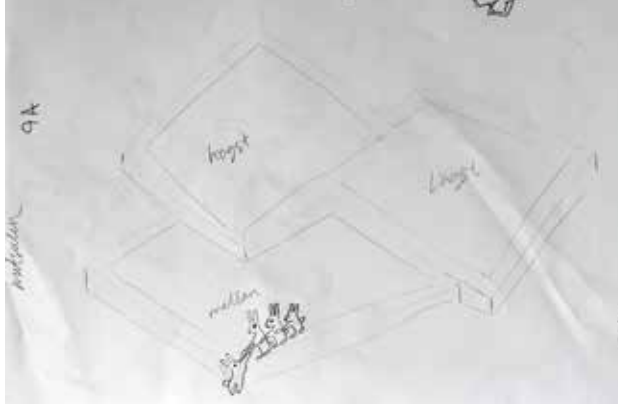
sittplats

En bänk runt trädet

Zuzanna, Madicken
 Emma ö 9B

IT'S MY BIG
 DAY

Alva L Alva B Ellen Ingrid 1



Images 9-14: Sketches

All in all, five projects were chosen. The aforementioned rabbits, the hangout outside the cafeteria (also expanding on a nearby wall with a silhouette of a girl flying away with an umbrella) and the texted billboard has been mentioned. Another silhouette-based work was set aside for later since it is to be placed at the school gym which requires further approvals. Among the chosen was also the idea of creating a wooden pencil as a symbol for education. Basic construction on the bigger pieces were made in Malmö after which they were transported to the school in Vadstena in November. During a week of hard work, final touches were laid, as well as a part of artworks created from scratch with students working in shifts. Despite some disappointment expressed by a few students about their idea not being chosen, everyone chipped in and contributed to the completion of the selected ideas. The crown piece was the huge wooden pencil that was placed on the aforementioned empty base. The second week of work followed in early spring 2018 finishing the final works and holding an inauguration complete with speeches, ribbon cutting and of course eating cake to celebrate the event.



Image 15: Part of an installation outside of the school cafeteria



Image 16: Second week of work, finishing and mounting the first artworks



Image 17: Second week of work, finishing and mounting the first artworks



Image 18: Second week of work, finishing and mounting the first artworks



Image 20: Second week of work, mounting the first artworks



Image 19: Second week of work, finishing and mounting the first artworks



Image 21: Two of the many rabbits that inhabit the schoolyard



Image 22: A giant pen greets students as they arrive to school

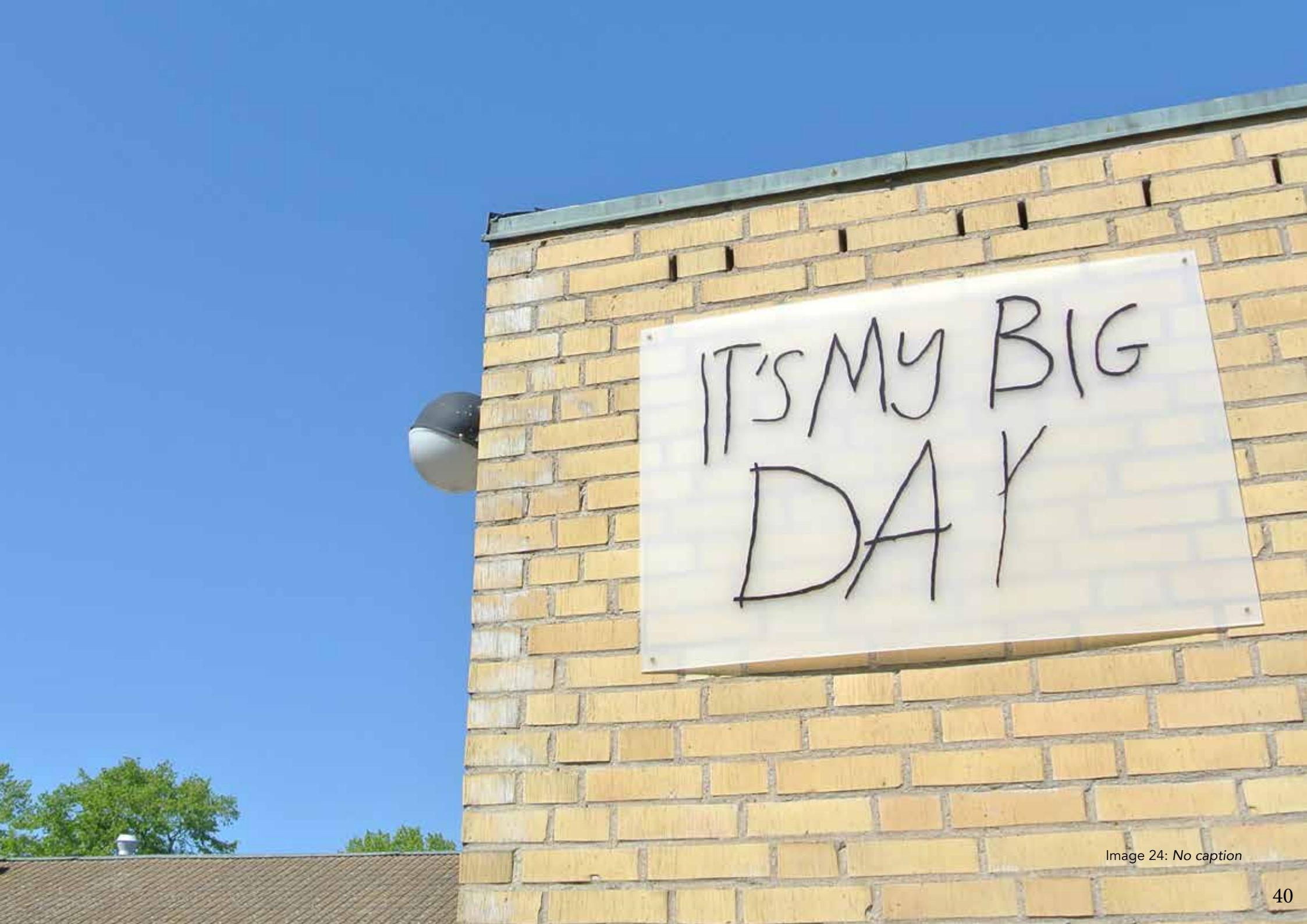
The whole process was documented, with good help from pupils that for different reasons had a hard time participating in the practical work on the art pieces. The inauguration finished off with the premiere showing of a short film, naturally titled "It's my big day", portraying the first of hopefully three years of lifting art at Petrus Magni School filmed and edited by Erik and Nils Petter with the help of students during the workshops. The movie serves as a good complement for successful exposure in the media, itself vital to gaining support from the community, from parents to politicians.

Of course, there are also things that can be improved as the project continues. Some students felt that the result became rather minor compared to their vision of a completely transformed outdoor environment. There has also been a bit of damage due to vandalism since a lot of people move through the area at weekends. Fitting such an ambitious project in the tightly scheduled school curriculum is definitely a challenge. However, the overall experience has been fantastic. To see the commitment of the students making their own mark in the school environment should in my opinion be every art teacher's dream. Hopefully,

the students carry this experience with them. That would be the real success, truly lifting art in society.



Image 23: It seems as one pupil has had enough of studying



IT'S MY BIG
DAY

Image 24: No caption

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