



## “This is me”: Storytelling with students to reveal their mutual entanglements with the “kulturskole”

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This video article illuminates what stories can be told about *kulturskolen* – Municipal Music and Performing Arts Schools in Norway – when pupils are the storytellers. The method is based in collaborative, long-term, performative work with a group of students in a particular kulturskole. These students were asked to consider the question: “What does the phenomenon of the kulturskole do to us?”

The primary researcher (Hauen) met with the students once per week for five months and produced videos, recordings, and notes in response to this question. Afterwards, she edited and cut the data in order to analyze the process, drawing on the work of Karen Barad and post-qualitative thinking. This resulted in three important findings, according to the students: togetherness, self-expression, and “perfor-managing.” In the video article, the students tell stories about how they develop these three elements, in the kulturskole and in the world. They ask how the kulturskole phenomenon is relevant to their everyday lives and how it helps them “to find peace and the right way,” as one of them raps in the article. In order to provide additional insight into the methodology of entanglement between researcher and participants (the students and their teacher), a concluding discussion follows the main video.

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**Keywords:** arts education; music education; dance education; kulturskole; post-qualitative methods; participatory ethnography; entangled research; new materialism; rap

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## VIDEO ARTICLE

Available to view here: <https://doi.org/10.16995/jer.11511>.

Available for download here: <https://doi.org/10.16995/jer.11511.mp4>.

## VIDEO ARTICLE TRANSCRIPT

[Note: This is a transcript of a video article. Onscreen text appears left justified, while spoken words are indented. Individual elements from the transcript, such as metadata and reference lists, may appear more than once in the document, in order to be properly read and accessed by automated systems. The transcript can be used as a placeholder or reference when it is not possible to embed the actual video, which can be found by following the DOI.]

[00:10]

This video contains rapid, handheld camera movements. The sensitive viewer should be advised.

[Muhamed]: Oh, fytti rakkern!

[Muhamed]: Oh! Holy cow!

MALI HAUEN presents

[Muhamed]: Jammen... jeg er, som... jeg skjønner ikke hvorfor jeg er så.... hvorfor jeg er sånn...., etter, ... i det siste, jeg er bare så jævlig...

[Muhamed]: Yeah, but... I am, like, ... I don't understand why I am so. ... Why I am like that I'm just so..., after, ... lately, I am just f\*cking...

Directed by MALI HAUEN

[Neven]: Det er bare den dansen som «stalker» meg...

[Neven]: It was just... it was just that dance that were so ... ???

[Muhamed]: Ja, ikke sant? Og jeg er liksom så motivert nå. Jeg gikk liksom til dansetimen i dag, så var det bare sånn der «jeg er klar nå altså, jeg er så klar for dans». Og så bare blir det akkurat som jeg forventer. Det er helt sykt altså.

[Muhamed]: Yeah, right? And now you are so motivated. When I went out this my, I was just like.... I am ready now! I am so ready to dance! And then it turns out just as I expected... It's awesome.

Written and narrated by MALI HAUEN

Edited by ROBIN ROLFHAMRE

[Neven]: Det er bare noe med den dansen .... og dansegruppa ....

[Neven]: It's just something about.... that dance and the dance group...

Presenting

MUHAMED SESSAY

NEVEN MARCETIC

HEIN ØKSETER KNUDSEN

MORTEN STØHOLEN

GUNHILD NYAAS

MALI HAUEN

[Muhamed]: Jeg liker at vi, som ... jeg liker at vi liksom er «på»

[Neven]: Fordi det er som ...

[Muhamed]: And the dance,... yes! And, like, I like that we, like,... I like that we are, like, "on".

[Neven]: Because, it's like...

Composer

Supervising sound editor ROBIN ROLFHAMRE

[Muhamed]: Det gir, ... det gir et brorskap, .... Den "viben" vi har og det brorskapet

[Neven]: Vi er så, ... Vi gjør så dumme ting

[Muhamed]: Ja

[Neven]: Men, ... som vi gjør, ... men, det er GODE, dumme ting

[Muhamed]: Ja, ikke sant? "It's just something else"

[Muhamed]: It offers, it offers a brotherhood... That vibe we have and that brotherhood

[Neven]: We're so,... we do such stupid things...

[Muhamed]: Yes!

[Neven]: But which... we do... they are good, stupid things.

[Muhamed]: Isn't that right?

[Muhamed]: "It's just something else"

[01:15]

THIS IS ME

Investigating pupils' stories

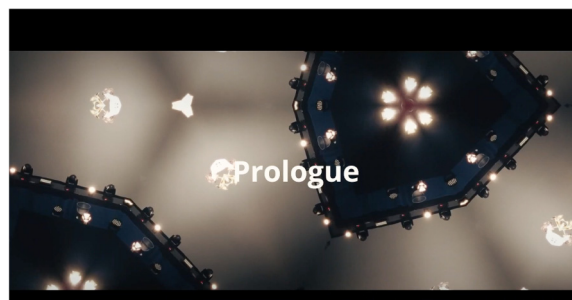
about the kulturskole

to unveil how they and the school

mutually affect each other



## Prologue



[Voice over]: The Norwegian Kulturskole—in English, Cultural School—is a municipal run extracurricular school on music and performing arts.

The Kulturskole is gaining more and more attention by scholars focusing on leadership roles, teachers and professionals, as well as organization and factors of inclusion/exclusion in a municipal context (see references marked\*).

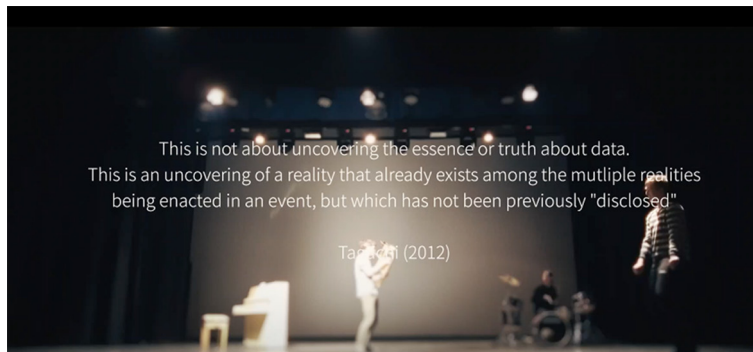
Research examining pupils' self-reported experiences, feelings and affects regarding their encounter with the Kulturskole, however, is widely underrepresented. In my work as a teacher, it has occurred to me that the pupils hold viewpoints that differ from my own and that they sometimes understand phenomena in ways that does not naturally occur to me. It is as if they uncover realities that are present yet hidden.

Clearly this sparked my interest to unwrap the complexities of the situation to better understand the connection between pupils' actions and activities. Their “doing” art, so to say, on the one hand and the Kulturskole as phenomena. In Lenz Taguchi's (2012) words, this is not about uncovering the essence or truth of the data. This is an uncovering of a reality that already exists among the multiple realities being enacted in an event but which has not been previously “disclosed”.

This is not about uncovering or truth about data.

This is an uncovering of a reality that already exists among the multiple realities being enacted in an event, but which has not been previously “disclosed”

Taguchi (2012)



[Voice over]: A better conception of such realities enriches the phenomena and can provide other perspectives in research, namely the pupils' perspectives, than what the current research literature already offers.

This was my point of departure for the present project where I headed out to interact with a group of pupils and their stories about the phenomenon Kulturskole.

Obviously, this invites to a far more complex and broadly reaching investigation than the present format can satisfy. What I will focus on here specifically is an attempt to shine a light on how the pupils not only act within the framework of the tuition they receive but how they engage with it, enacts and agentially make, or "do", Kulturskole. More precisely, I investigate how the pupils and the Kulturskole mutually constitute and affect each other seen from the youth's perspective, focusing on their own storytelling, both as finished products and as process. The group involved with this study include four pupils, their dance teacher and me, a PhD candidate. We worked together over a period of five months creating data together. Retrospectively, I have now re-turned to the material as a scholar to diffract particular moments. (The process, methodologically, presented in full in a separate article)

This process crystallized cutting together-apart three essential knots-of-knowing that assist us in pinpointing the pupils entanglement with knowledge production and learning: self-expressiveness, togetherness and perfor-managing.

Togetherness    Self-expressiveness    Perfor-managing

**Togetherness**

**Self-expressiveness**

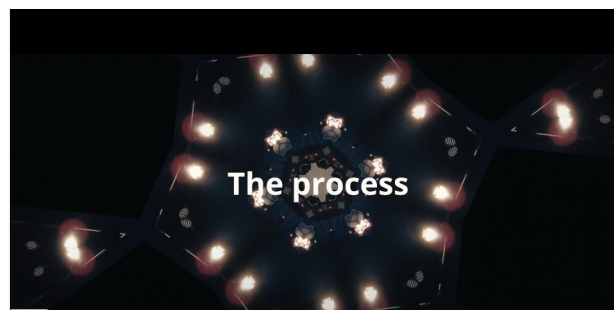
**Perfor-managing**

[Voice over]: While the accompanying study (Hauen & Klungland, 2023) focused more on the methodological, theoretical and literature-based aspects of making the material, the present study celebrates the pupils embodied performed material. By doing this, I hope to clear a path to further studies rooted in new-materialist perspectives within the realms of youth-centred Kulturskole-research.

Hopefully, this will invite to new understandings of the Kulturskole as an experience and its influence on young people's lives, which are perspectives and competence the field solely needs.

[06:10]

The process



[Muhamed]: ... for at, jeg husker at ... jeg husker at, jeg husker ikke akkurat, men..

[Morten interrupts]: Jeg tror det begynte med ... var det teater eller noe? [chatter continues indistinctly and fades out]

[Muhamed]: ... because, I remember that... I remember that, I don't recall exactly what, but

[Morten interrupts]: I think we had begun with these... was it theatre or something? [chatter continues indistinctly and fades out]

[Voice over]: From my preparatory studies, it seems that the literature focusing on the pupils' perspectives predominantly observe the pupils and interviewed them afterwards or, alternatively, the answer surveys and are later interviewed.


The aim, here, is to join the students and the dance teacher to create new understandings in an intra-active manner, which I understand in a Baradian way as all subjects perform agency and co-constituting the phenomena, rather than one looking at the other from the outside in search for a normative definition of the same event.

The participant group-dynamics was more based on us all creating the path together, where I could ask the youth and dance teacher to either perform or contribute ideas to different activities. What's more, some participants took initiatives that were

unexpected on my end, (such as Muhamed’s rap included later), while others were open in the sense that there was no defined plan for why a certain activity was initiated. They were merely done to see what happens and what they subsequently crystallized as complementary insights (for instance, Nevin and Mohammed’s casually recorded walks). The way in which I entered each situation without a predetermined question or agenda to answer, but rather as an equal situational actor and explorer, gave me a unique starting point for my later new materialist-inspired contextualization.

By including the pupils’ “not called for”-perspectives and let these perspectives intra-act in a diffractive scheme, the researcher’s position can be moved to disrupt the ideal of natural, representative and valid data. The researcher is never distanced, objective or neutral, but aware of her participatory and performing position in the phenomenon being researched.


How?



**How?**

[Voice over]: How to responsibly explore the phenomenon’s entanglements (with the world) and the differences they make is essential in this study. The pupils’ doings and how these doings entangle is of interest, so body language is emphasized.

Doings entangle



**Doings entangle**

[Voice over]: This is why I chose the video format for this present research presentation. Complementary to my methodological and theoretical exploration (published elsewhere), the video format allows for the youth to be present through their own embodied contributions and performances.

For me to invite the viewer to my—slightly poetic perhaps—internalization of what we all experienced together and what entanglements were identified the following months.

This is also why I chose to use my own phone camera to record my own entanglement with this scholarly work, using the same tool as the youth did and to join their discourse together.

[Voice over]: In what follows, I will invite you to my retrospective sense-making from all this, drawing on Barad's diffraction used as a tool for analyzing the data material created throughout intra-action.

Diffraction

## Diffraction

[Voice over]: Diffractive analysis is about exploring patterns of differences and examining how something takes shape over anything else. Juelskjær's (2019) approach to analytical work, building on Barad, has been essential in this process. Emphasizing cascades of questions, mapping the phenomenon, finding entanglements and then tracing these entanglements in respons-able ways is a short description of the procedure.

Within the data material, I have looked for disturbances, or happenings, that made a difference either to me or within the group of pupils. I found particular interest in the video material produced by the pupils themselves, especially Mohammed's rap. Another artistic product that stood out to me, and which is brought forward here, is the performance initiated and created by the youth themselves as a response to me asking them: "What does the phenomenon Kulturskole do to you?"

During the five months we worked together, I recorded my own videos of the gatherings and collected reflection notes from all participants afterwards, including myself. Selected moments from these videos were ultimately curated by me with the support of Dr Robin Rolfhamre who assisted me in creating this video, are presented here and the text itself draws heavily on particular fragment of my reflection notes from the process. The diffractive process when, re-visiting the material for the analysis-part of this work, was mostly done during a stay I had in Iceland for three months. During that period, I also recorded videos on my daily walks on the embankment in which I did considerable analytic and conceptual work spoken out loud, in a similar way as Neven and Muhamed's walks and talks. To include my thought process here would both be confusing to the viewer and far too comprehensive for this format. I have therefore reduced the contents of my chats into the manuscript of this video



while including scenery from the original Icelandic videos. Working with pupils and research obviously has ethical considerations. The processes with the pupils were “constant negotiations of entangled relations, emphasizing ethical dimensions from the beginning to the end of the process” (Østern et al., 2021/2023). The consequence of such an ethico-onto-epistemological approach is that ethics are always present and negotiated through all steps of the work. This position calls upon us to be “respons-able”. I follow Jamouchi (2023) when she understands “respons-able” as the ethical will to engage in a productive discourse, also when we see, or risk to create, dissonance.

It is of interest to look at power-relations and what is included or excluded in the discourse. The youth were advised when I curated the selection used in this video, both to secure their consent, but also to allow their thoughts and experience of our shared, and not shared, situations infuse my work.

Entangled propositions and possibilities



[Voice over]: I looked for moments where the work took new directions or revealed new perspectives. I did agential cuts in the material which crystallized three pivotal phenomena: self-expressiveness, togetherness and perfor-managing. The latter which emphasizes the management part of a performance, relating to both performing and managing or mastering within the performance.

Following Juelskjær’s (2019) introduction to analytical work, an insight emerged that placed particular significance on how these agential cuts become phenomena or knots-of-knowing (Fjeldstad, 2023). This happens in this video showing how different agential cuts are entangled when they are cut together in new constellations. In what remains of this video, I will dedicate some thoughts to each of the three phenomena. The process is entanglements of material, analytical work, matter and respons-able understandings.

[15:40]

Self-expressiveness



[Voice over]: The already mentioned rap by Muhamed came about on his own initiative after we had been working together for two months. That video has become special to me as it started much of the thinking processes leading to this video. Through his lyrics he entangles his experiences and communications with his fellow participants during the last months of work.

Helene Illeris speak of “performative, experimenting communities”.

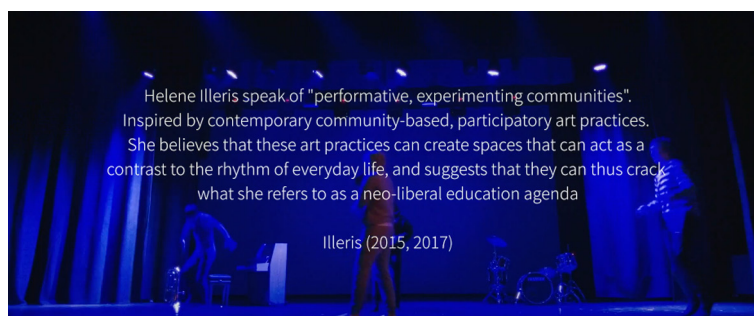
Inspired by contemporary community-based, participatory art practices.

She believes that these art practices can create spaces that can act as a

Contrast to the rhythm of everyday life, and suggests that they can thus crack

What she refers to as a neo-liberal education agenda

Illeris (2015, 2017)



[Muhamed, fades in]: Å Danse er ikke bare å bevege/ Kan brukes i mye, er med på å prege/ Noe som faktiske er veldig viktig/ Ikke bare kort, men også langsiktig/ Derfor er kulturskola så fantastisk/ At det senere i livet er så praktisk/ Som jeg sa mye å si/ Takk for nå, This is me

[Muhamed, fades in]: Dancing isn't just moving/ Can be used in a lot, helps to characterize/ Something that is actually very important/ Not only short, but also long-term/ Why kulturskole is so amazing/ That later in life it is so convenient/Like I said a lot to say/ Thanks for now, This is me



[Muhamed]: OK, det her er den ferdige rappen nå. Nå er jeg fornøyd med sånn som det er, sånn som lengden er,... Jeg hakke tenkt til å... jeg har ikke noe lyst til å skrive noe mer liksom, fordi jeg er fornøyd med sånn som det er nå. Så, dette er rappen om Kulturskolen, og alt jeg har på hjertet.

[Muhamed]: OK, now, this is the final rap. I'm pleased with it as is, and its length,... I won't... I don't want to write anything more, because I'm pleased with it as it is now. So, this is the rap about Kulturskolen, everything that's on my heart. Ey! Let's spit some bars.

[16:56]

<p>Kulturskolen brings me a lot of joy  The brotherhood together as in a nest  Neven, Morten, Hein, and Moa  Keep an eye on us, and don't lose faith  Here I find peace and the right way  When we're together, time passes in a hurry  What if this had never happened?  Can't bear to think, it makes me afraid.  Someday we might have to get apart.  But everything we have can always  be remembered.  But enough about that let's talk good  We dance so well, it's in the blood.  Then maybe you'll call me ego.  But the way here is like building Lego.  As a group, we are the best  Don't doubt us we're next</p>	<p>Kulturskole gir meg masse glede  Brorskapet sammen som i et rede  Neven, Morten, Hein og Moa  Følg med på oss, og ikke mist troa  Her finner jeg ro og den rette vei  Når vi er sammen, går tiden i en fei  Tenk om dette aldri hadde skjedd  Orker ikke tenke, det gjør meg redd  En dag må vi kanskje skilles  Men alt vi har, kan alltid minnes    Men nok om det la oss snakke gode  Vi danser så bra at det er i blodet  Da vil du kanskje kalle meg ego  Men veien hit er som å bygge Lego  Som en gruppe er vi de beste  Ikke tvil på oss vi er de neste</p>
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<p>I was 13.  When I was really 14  When I found out I'm 15  Then I turned 16.  Now I'm 17.  Time flies so fast  Why is it so, not everything is done  If the journey is complete, what's going on?  Just take it easy it comes more  Everything I have on my mind,  it's worth telling you.  I'll tell you what actually counts.  Dancing isn't just moving  Can be used in a lot, helps to characterize  Something that is actually very important  Not only short, but also long-term  Why kulturskole is so amazing  That later in life it is so convenient  Like I said a lot to say  Thanks for now, This is me</p>	<p>Jeg var 13  Når jeg egentlig var 14  Når jeg fant ut jeg er 15  Så ble jeg 16  Nå er jeg 17  Tiden flyr så innmari fort  Hvorfor er det slik, ikke alt er gjort  Er reisen ferdig, hva er det skjer?  Bare ta det med ro det kommer mer  Alt jeg har på hjertet  er det verdt at jeg forteller  Skal si dere det som faktisk teller  Å Danse er ikke bare å bevege  Kan brukes i mye, er med på å prege  Noe som faktiske er veldig viktig  Ikke bare kort, men også langsiktig  Derfor er kulturskola så fantastisk  At det senere i livet er så praktisk  Som jeg sa mye å si  Takk for nå, This is me</p>
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[Muhamed]: Ho, ho, let's go, that's actually fun... Det der er jeg fornøyd med altså.  
Det der var bra!

[Muhamed]: Ho, ho, let's go, that's actually fun... I'm happy with that... That was good!

[Voice over]: Mohammed plays with words and creates meaning through rhyming schemes. It is not only the words that talks to the listener, but all of his bodily expressions when he raps into the phone as he films. In the text, I recognize entanglements to conversations they have had during our sessions, and the language corresponds to how Mohammed and Neven talk in their video. The rap and how it is performed by Muhamed presented an answer that corresponds with who they are and what they want to express. It is a creative answer entangled with a youth language that corresponds to the pupils. The entanglements of rap, word, phone, beat, room, and body language become their own self-expressiveness. The words in the rap hold power in its content, but the way Muhamed performs it with his whole body is also powerful and challenges the power of words.

[19:19]

Togetherness

## Togetherness

[Voice over]: Neven and Muhamed talk about the importance of brotherhood during the dance classes. I relate brotherhood to Valberg's (2017) "togetherness", where relations and being with is translated into intra-acting when humans and other-than-humans entangles through bonds. These bonds make a difference to Muhamed and Neven. The bonds grow out of participating in collective activities organized by the Kulturskole. When dancing, they move and connect between the collective and the personal experience. When the pupils present what they call their "signature dance", they give us an example of these entangled movements between individual, collective and mirror-room. Dancing in front of the mirror both as individuals and as a group in the mirror and in the room. They move their attention between them as individuals and a group in the room and in the mirror. The mirror is the powerful part of the group dynamic. Movements grow and fade away again, holding power in the moment and then letting go into new moments explored by the whole group.

Perfor-managing

## Perfor-managing

[Voice over]: Neven dances a solo performance. When he dances, the rest of the pupils focus on him and follow his moves, they are connected as a group, though he is the soloist. Neven articulates his experience of the situation during his walk with Muhamed and describes how it feels to perform a solo. They talk about self-experienced happenings and what these happenings did to them. They talk emotionally about affects and pride, but also uncertainty about their abilities and skills performing such tasks.

[Muhamed]: Jeg ser at du "wiber". Jeg ser, fordi, ja fordi, AAAAAAAH "That's my boy"! Yeah!

[Neven]: Det er en sånn sen (?) dans, fordi den er, sånn, mye mer intrikat

[Muhamed]: Det er sant...

[Neven]: Det er mye mer sånn: OK, hva gjør de? OK, de gjør DET nå...

[Muhamed]: mmmm

[Muhamed]: I see that you turn. I see, because, I just, AAAAAAH “That’s my boy”!  
Yeah!

[Neven]: It’s such a slow (?) dance, because it’s, like, much more intricate

[Muhamed]: That’s true...

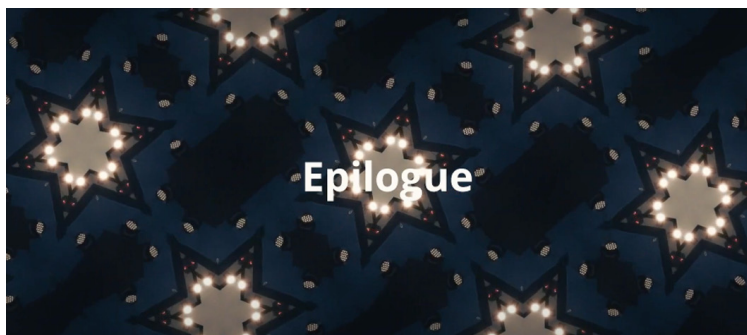
[Neven]: ...(?) OK, what are they doing now? OK, they are doing that now...

[Muhamed]: mmmm

[Voice over]: Muhamed’s words after having performed and recorded the rap when he, with a big smile, declares that he is satisfied with his own performance, and Neven, showing a dance-move in the walking conversation, caught just as a glimpse, are entangled, embodied examples of the importance of self-development or mastering a task and what it does to them. It is connected to performing and mastering this performance, and I try to grasp the content of what they express in the word “performing”. The solo and choreography holds power entangled to Neven, but also to the whole group. The rap’s wording and rhyming, holds power through the performance.

[22:34]

Epilogue



“Agency is “doing” or “being” in its intra-activity...

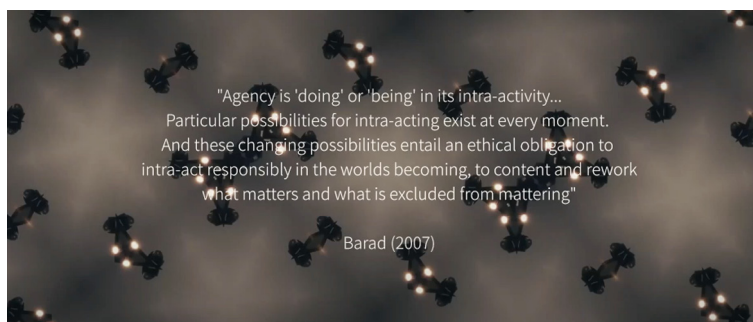
Particular possibilities for intra-acting exist at every moment.

And these changing possibilities entail an ethical obligation to

Intra-act responsibly in the worlds becoming, to connect and rework

What matters and what is excluded from mattering”

Barad (2007)



[Voice over]: The attempt of this work was to explore how pupils engage with the Kulturskole and act and agentially make or entangle with it. More precisely, I wanted to investigate how the pupils and the Kulturskole mutually constitute and affect each other, seen from the youths' perspective, focusing on their own storytelling, both as finished products and as process.

The three phenomena are entangled findings. This entanglement calls for responsibility amongst the pupils. In the different steps of the process, making the performance, they acted respectfully toward each other's skills, artistic understandings, suggestions and opinions. Collectively, they listened to each other, bringing up embodied memories from dance and instrumental experiences in the Kulturskole. Then they negotiated orally while trying out bodily what to include and what to exclude in the performance. The collectivity is fostering each pupil's individual building of ethical guidelines, skills and mastering competencies.

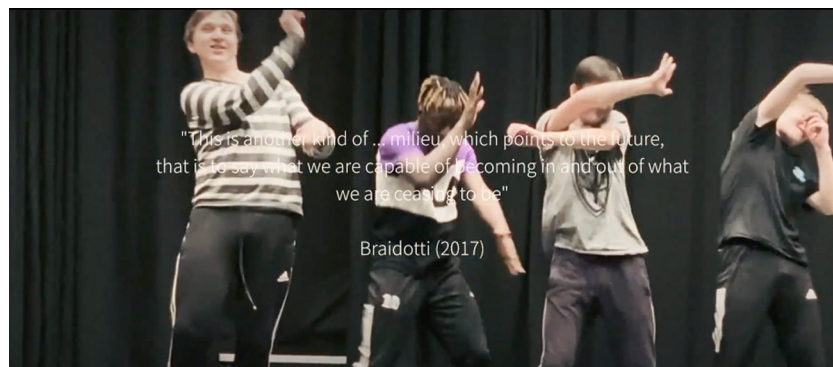
The Kulturskole as an important place for personal development. Muhamed describes, in the rap, that the Kulturskole "characterize and this is actually important". In the walk and talk, Muhamed and Neven talk about "good, stupid things" and that these things influence the lessons and dance group. When the pupils, as a group, dance in front of the mirror and move between an individual and a collective attention, the dance lesson and the pupil mutually constitute and affect each other. In conversations, Neven explained "good, stupid things" to be when they, as a group of boys, in the whole class, start a movement and suddenly the whole group is following their moves, just as we see them following each other in the mirror.

The performative and embodied approach opened for the knowledge that the Kulturskole is a place where the pupils build character and where they explore good stupid things. These are personal skills, important when pupils grow with the world. Working with these four pupils has been an affirmative experience, characterized by development and becoming throughout the process. The method came to be during the work, the pupils' engagements, among themselves and with the dance teacher, me, the room and over time. In the end, a final performance—"This is me"—was conceived.

Apparently, all of us participating in the project are now different and have become something else, both alone and together throughout the work. Other realities and possibilities emerged. Both the pupils and I were surprised by this because it was something we had not foreseen when we started our journey. What we experienced was that the world, indeed, is becoming when interacting within it.

“This is another kind of...milieu which points to the future, that is to say what we are capable of becoming in and out of what we are ceasing to be”

Braidotti (2017)



[Muhamed]: Jeg føler at det er en eller annen musikk som spiller. Jeg vet ikke hvilken .... All musikk passer ... uansett hva du setter på

[Gunhild]: Ja, dem gjør det.

[Mali]: Ja, gjør det det?

[Muhamed]: Ja.

[Muhamed]: hver ny sang vi setter på, så gjør vi dette... [Mali]: Yes.

[Gunhild]: Jeg tror bare det er den der valse-låta for dere dette...

[Muhamed]: Ja!

[Muhamed]: I feel that there is some sort of music playing. I don't know why.... All music fits...

[Mali]: Oh, does it?

[Muhamed]: Yes.

[Muhamed]: Every song we... (?)... afterwards... we will do this [Mali]: Yes.

[Gunhild]: I only think the waltz-song...

[Muhamed]: Yes!



[Voice over]: The three phenomena, pupils, the teacher, researcher, mirrors and black box room are entangled. These entanglements further affect the pupils' being of the world. The group of pupils experience togetherness and to master and develop skills when working bodily with and through art. These are tools that are needed when young pupils are interacting with the world and they are important tools for an affirmative and ethical thought process where the world becomes when we intra-act. The embodied and praxis-led work disclosed that the Kulturskole, for this group, is a place where they find a collective where they develop self-expressiveness and creativity. Through the community in art and dance lessons, they develop their own personal skills and [are] managing, on their own level, within the group. In this individual work within the group, they also experience responsibility and develop ethical thinking when experimenting with memories, then deciding what to include and exclude, and, in the end, how to express it in the performance. The physical embodied work with art can “create spaces that can act as a contrast to the rhythm of everyday life and that they can thus crack what Illeris refers to as a neoliberal education agenda” (Kunghland, 2021). The three phenomena influence the teacher and the Kulturskole as well as the pupils, mutually.

When listening to the pupils' stories told in the performance and the phenomena, art is a place where the students are the room for an even broader influence leading to changes in the Kulturskole? Changes that include collective art and artistic expressions and are less occupied within measuring individual skills and outcomes, the latter can be evolved if the first is emphasized.

[29:38]

**This is me**

Directed by MALI HAUEN

Written by MALI HAUEN

**Appearing**

Muhamed Sessay

Neven Marcetic

Hein Økseter Knudsen

Morten Støholen

Gunhild Nyås

Mali Hauen

**Advisory board**

Tony Valberg

Robin Rolfhamre

Anne Berit Emstad

Smartphone camera and audio

Muhamed Sessay

Gunhild Nyaas

Mali Hauen

Editor VFX and colorist ROBIN ROLFHAMRE

Voice over recordist ERIK WAAGAN

Supervising sound editor ROBIN ROLFHAMRE

Original score and score mixing ROBIN ROLFHAMRE

### **Additional music**

“This is me”

From “The Greatest Showman” P.T. Barnum

Music by BENJ PASEC and JUSTIN PAUL

Atlantic Records

“Star Wars Main Theme”

Music by JOHN WILLIAMS

Bantha Music/BMI

“Woop Baby”

Music by Lethrette

Wulf Record

“Bergrosa”

Norwegian folk tune

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a solidskillsy. production 2023

[30:42]

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[31:32]

**“This is me”: Storytelling with students to reveal their mutual entanglements with the “kulturskole”**

**ABSTRACT**

This video article illuminates what stories can be told about *kulturskolen* — Municipal Music and Performing Arts Schools in Norway — when pupils are the storytellers. The method is based in collaborative, long-term, performative work with a group of students in a particular kulturskole. These students were asked to consider the question: “What does the phenomenon of the kulturskole do to us?”

The primary researcher (Hauen) met with the students once per week for five months and produced videos, recordings, and notes in response to this question. Afterwards, she edited and cut the data in order to analyze the process, drawing on the work of Karen Barad and post-qualitative thinking. This resulted in three important findings, according to the students: togetherness, self-expression, and “perfor-managing.” In the video article, the students tell stories about how they develop these three elements, in the kulturskole and in the world. They ask how the kulturskole phenomenon is relevant to their everyday lives and how it helps them “to find peace and the right way,” as one of them raps in the article. In order to provide additional insight into the methodology of entanglement between researcher and participants (the students and their teacher), a concluding discussion follows the main video.

**KEYWORDS**

arts education, music education, dance education, kulturskole, post-qualitative methods, participatory ethnography, entangled research, new materialism, rap

[32:35]

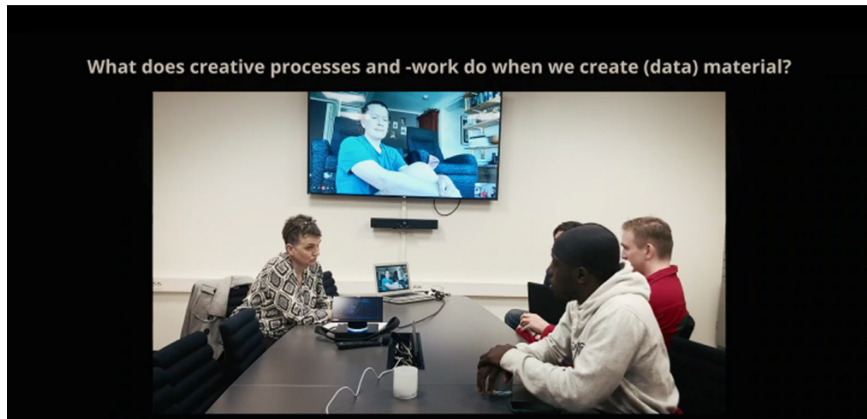
**Excerpts from the final project meeting, with the participants\*  
Reflecting on the research process, involvement and outcome**

\*One student could not attend the session

Excerpts from the final project meeting, with the participants\*  
reflecting on the research process, involvement and outcome

\* One student could not attend the session

## What does creative processes and -work do when we create (data) material?



[Mali:] Dere har gjort ting sammen. Har dere klart å uttrykke ting på en annen måte via kunstuttrykk enn dere har klart via språk?

[Neven:] Språket har sine grenser.

[Hein & Muhamed:] Ja.

[Neven:] Det er ikke alltid man finner ord på ting, men man kan skape alt annet. Ordene...du må velge dem, ....du må prøve å dra dem fram, mens med den kulturen vi har skapt så kan vi bare gjøre det. Med ord kan det ofte komme ut feil, men med dans er det det skal være.

[Muhamed:] Men for eksempel ved dans kan man tolke det ulikt og alt kan være rett.

[Hein:] Både, ja, både ...må du si noe, så må ....da må du si det riktig på akkurat den måten. Mens i dans skal du beskrive noe annet, du kan beskrive noe større på en måte. Da er det..da kan du ikke ta feil på ... Uansett hva du gjør så kan du på en måte ikke ta feil når du skal prøve å beskrive deg selv i dansen.

[Muhamed:] Det er liksom ikke noe riktig og galt

[Mali:] Jeg har valgt å ikke stille meg på yttersida, jeg har valgt å være med dere. At det er et fellesskap på en måte. Men hva...hvordan ser dere på min deltagelse da? Hva har jeg gjort med prosessen? Dere har vært inne på det litt, men...?

[Hein:] Ja, vi gjorde greier, men det at du var med på det. I min opplevelse, så hadde det at du var med på det var kanskje at det ble enda mer... kall det fjas da på en måte. At vi klarte å være ... at vi turte å stå enda mer i det å være oss selv i situasjonen. Jeg tror at alle tre opplevde dette som en litt sånn, da vi gikk inn i det, som en litt sånn alvorlig og kanskje kjedelig greie.

[Muhamed:] Jeg forventet ikke at det skulle være sånn, det var ikke det bildet jeg hadde på en måte.

[Hein:] Jeg tror at det at du valgte å gå inn i posisjonen var sånn derre:...»Nå folkens, nå bare går dere inn og gjør akkurat som dere vil og så svarer dere på spørsmålene på den mest individuelle måten», det tror jeg gjorde at vi turte mer da, å stå i det, enn hvis vi hadde prøvd mer selvstendig...eller vi var jo et selvstendig opplegg, men om du hadde stått utenfor tror jeg ikke vi hadde turt å...

[Mali:] You have done things together. Have you been able to express yourselves in a different way through art than you have been able to through language?

[Neven:] Language has its limits.

[Hein & Muhamed:] Yes.

[Neven:] You cannot always find the right word for stuff, but you can create everything else. Words...you have to choose them... you have to pull them out but with the culture we have created, we can just do it. With words, it can often come out wrong, but, with dance, it is what it should be.

[Muhamed:] But, with dance, for instance, you can interpret things differently and everything can be just right.

[Hein:] ...yes, both...if you have to say something...then you have to be correct and accurate, but, with dance, you describe something else, describe something bigger in a way. Then... you can't be wrong... no matter what you do, you can't be wrong when you attempt at describing yourself through dance.

[Muhamed:] There's, like, no right or wrong

[Mali:] I have chosen not to detach myself. I have chosen to be with you. To make it a community in a way. But, what...how do you regard my participation? How have I affected the process? You were mentioning it briefly, but...?

[Hein:] Yes, we did stuff, but your participation... To my experience, your participation perhaps made it even more... call it "playing around" in a way. That we managed to be... that we dared to be ourselves to a greater extent in the situation. I think all three of us [present] experienced it as, when we approached it, as a sort of serious and boring thing.

[Muhamed:] I didn't expect it to be, like It didn't correspond to the image I had, in a way.

[Hein:] I think that when you chose that position. it was like:...”Common people, just go in and do whatever you want and then answer the questions in the most individual way”. I think it made us dare to do more, to be in it, then if we had tried more individual... or, we ere an individual constellation, but if you had been more on the outside, I don't think we would have dared to...

**What role did you perceive yourselves to have during the creation process?  
Where there differences between our roles? Gunhild and I versus you, for instance?**



[Hein:] Jeg opplevde jo at dere prøvde mest mulig å legge dere unna selve den skapelsesprosessen, og at dere prøvde å dytte mest mulig over på oss.

[Neven:] Jeg føler at vi var en bowlingball og at dere var de veggene på siden av banen som gjør at ikke vi flyr ut i... utenfor...

[Mali:] Å ja!

[Hein:] Jeg er uenig, jeg opplevde det nesten motsatt. At det var vi som prøvde å ha det på en kurs men at dere, og da kanskje spesielt du Mali, prøvde å si at «nei nei, ikke gjør det, ta det ut og la det gå litt sånn akkurat...» Du prøvde på en måte å dra oss ut i alt mulig rart på en måte, mens det var vi som var mest sånn.... vil ikke kalle det «kjedelig», men litt sånn mere rett frem da.

[Muhamed:] Jeg tror egentlig jeg er enig i det Hein sa i starten, det at jeg tror ikke det er noe... jeg føler mer at sånn som vi har jobbet og det vi har drevet med så er det liksom ikke noe sånn tydelig roller. Vi har egentlig bare gjort det, vi har jobbet sammen og gjort masse kreativt, gjort masse forskjellig. Det er liksom ikke en person som gjør det og en annen som gjør det. Det er bare...

[Neven:] Et brorskap.

[Muhamed:] Der er det vettu!

[Neven:] Det kan du ta i slutten av videoen!

[Hein:] I perceived it as if you tried to, as much as possible, stay away from the process of creation, and that you tried leave it to us.

[Neven:] I feel that we were a bowling ball and you were the walls on the side of the field preventing us from falling out of... outside...

[Mali:] Oh!



[Hein:] I disagree, I felt it almost in the opposite way. We sort of tried to keep it on a steady course, while you, perhaps Mali especially, tried to say: “No, no. Don’t do that. Embrace it, let it become, like...” You tried to, sort of, get us into all sorts of weird, in a way, while we were the most, like... I wouldn’t call it “boring”, but more straight forward.

[Muhamed:] I think I agree with what Hein said in the beginning. I don’t think it’s something... I feel more that, our work and what we have done, there hasn’t been any clear, like, roles. We have just done it, we have worked together and done lots of creative, done lots of different stuff. It hasn’t been like, one person does this and another that, It’s just...

[Neven:] A brotherhood.

[Muhamed:] There it is, you know!

[Neven:] You can include that at the end of the video!

**It was a hard and inexhaustible assignment (a becoming task)?**



[Gunhild]: Ja, rett og slett vanskelig. Jeg må jo si at det var kjempevanskelig. En kjempevanskelig oppgave, fordi man både skal være den som forsker, men at man også skal være den som blir forska på samtidig. Kanskje liksom besvarelsen på «Hva gjør kulturskolen med en eller hva gjør sånt kreativt arbeid med en?» må nesten besvares mange ganger for du får bare et utsnitt hver gang og så... Dere gutter har deres versjon av det og kan gi et uttrykk for det og et svar og så spør dere noen andre og de kan gi et annet svar.

[Muhamed:] Og så kommer det jo mer og mer ting ut etter som man opplever mer og mer, jo mer tid som går på en måte. Som du sa: det er jo flere svar, og det kommer nye svar hele tiden også tror jeg.

[Hein:] Jeg har jo gravd ganske dypt i meg selv i det siste....er det et par år vi har holdt på nå...

[Mali]: Er du komfortabel med det?

[Hein:] Ja, det er jeg... absolutt... Det er ikke det at jeg er ukomfortabel. ... men, ting kan være komfortabelt men fortsatt vanskelig.

[Gunhild]: Yes, it was simply difficult. I have to say that it was really difficult. A really difficult assignment, because... because, you should both be the scholar and at the same time the study object. Perhaps the response to “What does the “Kulturskole” do to you and what does creative work do to a person” has to be answered repeatedly because you only get an excerpt each time and... You boys have your own version of it and can express it and answer it, and then you ask other and they can provide another response.

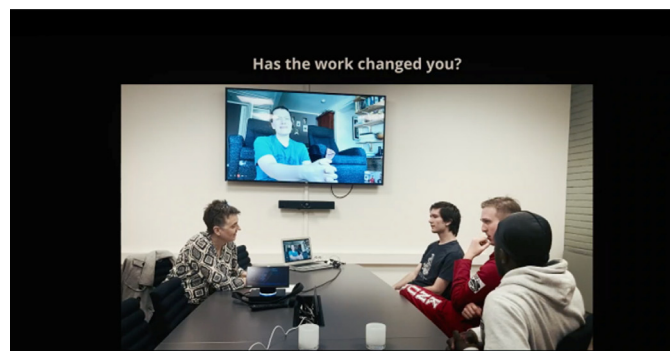
[Muhamed:] And then more and more things add up as you experience more and more as time passes, in a way. As you said: there are multiple answers, and there will be new ones all the time, I think.

[Hein:] I have dug pretty deep into myself lately... have we done this or a few years now?...

[Mali]: Are you comfortable with it?

[Hein:] Yes, I am... absolutely... It is not that I am uncomfortable. ... but, things can be comfortable, yet difficult.

### Has the work changed you?



[Neven:] Når vi starta så startet det, kall det en prosess, i meg. Jeg måtte bare, jeg begynte bare å tenke på hva alt gjør med meg egentlig. Og hvordan det er at jeg er blitt sånn jeg er i dag og hva jeg synes om det. Og det har gledet, jeg bare tenker mye på hvem jeg er og hvordan jeg er og hva det medfører ut mot andre da, og jeg sier det har gjort meg litt bedre da til å leve, ja, det er mye fint jeg har fått ut av det. Det er mange grunner til at det begynte å skje akkurat når det skjedde, men dette er utvilsomt med-danna. Vi sto og snakket om hva disse greiene vi har delt og disse erfaringene har gjort med meg. Det er «basically» å grave i barndommen da og si hva er det her, som har gjort deg til den du er i dag? Så det er ganske sånn ... det har gjort noe med meg, det kan jeg trygt si.

[Muhamed:] Jeg tror jeg ... jeg har blitt litt mer bevisst det, bevisst på hva det gjør med meg liksom. Siden det er noe som alltid har vært med meg, liksom hva

kulturskola har gjort med meg, men når vi begynte med denne prosessen her så har jeg tenkt litt mer over det da rett og slett. Jeg har bare reflektert mer da, over det brorskapet som sagt. Og nå, egentlig helt fram til nå, så har det gjort at jeg tenker over hva det har gjort med meg og alle de positive tingene jeg har fått med meg. Og liksom ikke bare gjennom kulturskola men alt annet også. Det startet liksom en prosess som har utviklet seg opp i helt andre ting også.

[Hein:] Nei altså det er jo ganske vanskelig å svare på et sånt spørsmål fordi det har vært en relativt egentlig liten del av livet vårt de siste to årene, i et liv hvor det har skjedd veldig mye annet som har påvirket oss. Men jeg tror at alt det vi har gjort, alt det vi har reflektert over alt vi har sagt og alt vi har vist har vært ting som har vært iboende i oss hele tiden egentlig. Kanskje det ikke egentlig har gjort så mye direkte med personligheten vår ... egentlig ... fordi det har vært iboende i oss hele tiden.

[Neven:] Vi har ikke vært så veldig bevisst på det bare.

[Hein:] Ja.

[Gunhild]: I det dere skulle begynne å besvare det spørsmålet der så vart det nesten slik at dere kjørte enda hardere på det dere allerede var liksom. Dere var jo allerede en utrolig fin guttegjeng i den klassa og så fikk dere snakke om brorskap og begynte å gå litt inn i dere selv og så dansa vi «This is me» , og... og så ble dere enda sterkere på å....

[Muhamed:]: sukker høyt, smiler og lener seg tilbake ved tanken.

[Neven:] When we began, it started, let's call it a process in me. I had to, I just started thinking of what all this does to me. And, how I have become what I am today and what I think of it. And it has been joyfull. I just think a lot on who I am and how I am, and what effect it has on others and, I say, it has made me better at living. I have gained a lot from it. There's many reasons for it to have happened just when it happened, but this is indeniably co-created. We stood and chatted about what all that we have shared and what these experiences have done to me. It's basically to dig into your childhood, then, and to ask what, here, have made you into what you are today? So, it's pretty much like... It has affected me somehow, that's for sure.

[Muhamed:] I think that I ... I have become more conscious, more conscious of what it does to me, in a way, since it has always been part of me, like, what the "kultuskole" has affected me, but when we began this process, here, i have thought more about it, simply. I have reflected more on the brotherhood, as said. And now, really to this day, it has made me contemplate what it has done to me and all the positive stuff that I have gained. Not only through the "kulturskole", but everything else too. It has initiated a process that has developed into other things as well.

[Hein:] Well, it is difficult to answer such a question because... it has been a relatively small part of our lives for the past two years, in a life where much else has happened which has affected us. But I think that all we have done, all on which we have reflected, said and shown, have resided in us all the time, really. Maybe it hasn't really affected our personality directly... really ... because it has always been part of us.

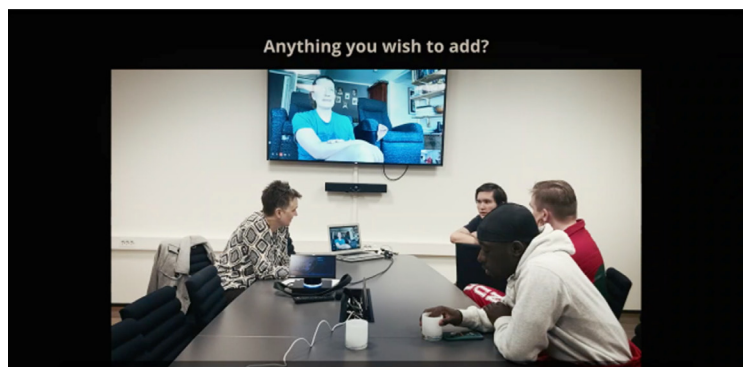
[Neven:] We just haven't been conscious about it.

[Hein:] Yeah.

[Gunhild]: When you began responding to that question, it was like you were yourselves even more intensely. You were already an incredibly nice bunch of boys in that class and you began talking about brotherhood and immerse in yourself and then we danced «This is me» , and... and then you became even better at...

[Muhamed:]: sighs loudly, smiles and leans back at the thought.

**Anything you wish to add?**



[Neven:] Vi kan være en viktig del i noens forhold til dans videre, til å drive med kultur.

[Neven:] We can be an important part of someones relation to dance onwards, to do culture.

**Brotherhood...**

**Brotherhood...**

[Muhamed:] Man kan ha mye å si for noen og lite og si for noen, men man vet ikke for hvem rett og slett så...

[Muhamed:] You can mean a lot to someone and little to another, but you simply don't know who...

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