

Guro Kristin Gjosdal, *A/R/Tography in Theory and Practice in Higher Education* –
Stockholm University of the Arts:

A/R/Tographic ripples in the water in the development of the theatre production *Blindsone*

How can my positions as an artist, researcher, and teacher continue to be activated and motivate in the theatre production *Blindsone* through spring 2024?

This is a report summarising what I have learned regarding the A, the R, and the T from my peers' supervision in spring of 2024. The feedback is linked to some of the course literature. I experience that the various positions are intertwined, and this is reflected in my assignments, supervision, and writing with theory.

In the spring of 2024, I continue to work A/R/Tographic (Irwin, 2013; LeBlanc & Irwin, 2019) with the theatre production *Blindsone* (*Blind Spot*). A/R/Tography is a hybrid research method that makes it possible to research practice in education through artistic practice, preferably in combination with more traditional research methods, such as interviews. The method provides renderings, reverberations, metaphors, metonymy, living inquiry, and contiguity (Irwin & Springgay, 2008), among other concepts, to put my own educational activity in *Blindsone* in an A/R/Tographic perspective and enables me to guide in A/R/Tographic processes.

Blindsone is an intercultural Devised Theatre-production for The Cultural Schoolbag (TCS) by The Centre for Norwegian Language and Literature and the county of Møre & Romsdal, in collaboration with The National Centre for Norwegian Nynorsk in Education, Volda University College, and the performing artists Mine Nilay Yalcin, Samir Mahad, and Jahanger Ali. The production is based on the award-winning novel *Eit anna blikk* (*A Different Look*) by Erlend Skjetne, with hip-hop as a central part of the production. The work is in progress with start-up in June 2022 and completion for touring in September 2024. On 7 June, the theatre production will be performed during [*Festspela*](#) arranged by The Centre for Norwegian Language and Literature, followed by a peer discussion about Norwegian Nynorsk as a stage language, led by me as an A/R/Tographer.

My role in the production of *Blindsone* is to serve as a (R) research (A) dramaturg, and (T) pedagogue, responsible for Norwegian Nynorsk as a scenic language, where the language is also viewed as a materiality and a phenomenon (Gjøsdaal, 2023). I get to use both the skills as an artist, a researcher/developer, and a teacher in the production development and in pre- and post-work. I am also responsible for developing teaching resources, which are part of the production, an area I have significant experience in from both current and previous work.

The production uses the potential of contemporary Norwegian Nynorsk drama/literature and Devised Theatre (Stene, 2015) as methods in the development of a scenic production in TCS, targeting upper secondary education. The production has purposes within the Norwegian language, aesthetic learning processes, and intercultural pedagogy.

My fellow student-supervisors recognise that I am and have been in an A/R/Tographic process and concrete project for about two years. They summarise that I describe an idea and an experienced reality through an artistic development process that is now in its final phase. I am encouraged to draw upon literature, fellow students and colleagues, partners, and my own insight as I complete this work, and to have patience and confidence in it. I intend to follow this advice. I find that the process of production and my tasks achieve its goals without major challenges.

One potential challenge, however, is the inter-institutional complexity and communication in the project. The work requires time, maturation, a distinct perspective, and structure. The supervision requires me to continue to develop and be attentive professional until the completion of the production and in the follow-up work. What kind of [ripples in the water](#) or reverberation does the production result in? That's a question I am aware of and will research further for scientific publication after completion of production. Regarding the structuring of the A/R/Tographic work and data, I have been advised to consult Balzi (2023) and Østern (2017) who offer artistic research and development projects structures that I can be inspired by. I feel confident that the production is in safe hands in a strong team. What might my role mean in this? I am reassured that my roles as artist, researcher, and teacher provide knowledge, structure, energy, and the ability to complete the production.

We also talk about how the development of the project is interdisciplinary. This is also marked by my work as an artist, researcher, and teacher. What characterises interdisciplinary research is that the researcher, based on an overlapping theme, seeks insights through an agenda where a certain degree of integration takes place towards a goal with a possible

transformative potential (Sæther, 2022, p. 80). I apply this in my role as an A/R/Tographer in the production of *Blindsone*.

Allowing myself presence, movement, creativity, and sustainability are central concepts I have become more aware of during the process (c. w. Østern, 2017). Critical thinking, ethics, and academical knowledge within the disciplines must also be emphasised.

Like Balzi (2023, p. 9), I have faced challenges as an A/R/Tographer when my art-based research has encountered “unexpected spaces for pitfalls and learning”. One such challenge has been if the professionalism in the collaboration has not been fully present in all stages, and that the intention of the Devised method (Stene, 2015) is determination, co-creation, and unity. Not only in theory, but in practice, inter-institutional and as a freelancer. Balzi reminds me that ethical considerations constantly change and relate to each other. This can be experienced as hidden learning (Balzi, 2023 p. 9) and as part of practicing the craft of A/R/Tography. Østern et al. (2021) say that research is a dynamic flow that is becoming provoked by a series of tangled events. This is recognisable in my own process and what I also read out of Balzi’s text (2023, p. 2): in the creation of art “we explore, discover, invent, and reinvent; we often make plans en route, finding plan ‘B’ as we engage in the creative process”, and in Irwin et al. (2006) about the rhizomatic relations of A/R/Tography. Through reflection and dialogue (Dysthe, 2001), I have analysed what happens in the process and how I can best be activated and motivated as an A/R/Tographer in the theatre production *Blindsone* through spring 2024.

References

Balzi, L. (2023). Intersections in the research territory. *IMAG:: issue14 Mapping*, 4–9.

Dysthe, O. (red.) (2001). *Dialog, samspel og læring*. Abstrakt forlag.

Gjøsdaal, G. K. (2023). Kvifor nynorsk i Den kulturelle skulesekken? *Periskop.no*. Obtained from <https://periskop.no/kvifor-nynorsk-i-den-kulturelle-skulesekken/>

Irwin, R. L. (2013). Becoming A/R/Tography. *Studies in Art Education*, 54(3), 198–215. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00393541.2013.11518894>

- Irwin, R. L. & Springgay, S. (2008). A/r/tography as Practice-Based Research. In Stephanie Springgay, Rita L. Irwin, Carl Leggo & Peter Gouzouasis (Eds.), *Being with A/r/tography* (pp. xiii-xxvii). Rotterdam.
- Irwin, R. L., Beer, R., Springgay, S., Grauer, K., Xiong, G., & Bickel, B. (2006). The Rhizomatic Relations of A/r/tography. *Studies in Art Education*, 48(1), 70–88.
- LeBlanc, N., & Irwin, R. (2019). A/R/Tography. In G. Noblit (Ed.). *Oxford Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods in Education* (21 s.). Oxford University Press.
- Stene, Ø. (2015). *Skuespillerkunsten*. Universitetsforlaget, 297–325.
- Sæther, K.-W. (2022). Når forskningskulturer møtes: Noen prinsipielle avklaringer av interdisiplinær forskning. In H. V. Kleive, J. G. Lillebø, & K.-W. Sæther (Eds.), *Møter og mangfold: Religion og kultur i historie, samtid og skole*, 61–82.
- Østern, T.P. (2017). Å forske med kunsten som metodologisk praksis med aesthesis som mandat. *Journal for Research in Arts and Sports Education, Special Issue: «Å forske med kunsten»*, 1(5), 7–27. <http://dx.doi.org/10.23865/jased.v1.982>
- Østern, T. P., Jusslin, S., Nødtvedt Knudsen, K., Maapalo, P., & Bjørkøy, I. (2021). A performative paradigm for post-qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Research: QR*, 2–18. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941211027444>