Reading out loud

artistic research project October 2017 - May 2022
UiT, Academy of Arts in collaboration with UiB, The Art Academy

artistic reflection by Juliane Zelwies
submitted on May 6th, 2022

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Works of art to be assessed

1. artistic research
Artist book, 12 x 18 cm, 124 pages, 2021

Publishing house: argobooks, Berlin
Each committee member will receive a copy of the publication.

The following works of art are on view at Kunsthall 3,14 in Bergen:

2. *Words of Mouth*
Four posters, each:
poster paper, 118,9 x 84,1 cm, 2018 - 2022

3. *OFF THE RECORD*
Video loop (11′ 23 min), 4K, colour, sound, 2019

4a. **Public readings** of an abbreviated version of *artistic research*
08.04.2022, 17.00 - 17:45, part 1/3
21.04.2022, 17.00 - 17:45, part 2/3
06.05.2022, 17.00 - 17:45, part 3/3

The assessment committee will have the chance to attend the last public reading at Kunsthall 3,14.

4b. Five lecterns with an abbreviated version of *artistic research*
During the exhibition time, the scripts on view show a version which has been used for the production of the video installation and which has been worked on further afterwards. Scenes and paragraphs, which were taken out on set or in hindsight during the video editing process, are crossed out.

During the public readings the readers will read another version of the script (which is shorter than the published book, yet much longer than the version used in the video installation).

5. *The Cloud* video loop (5′ 38 min), 4K, colour, 2021/22

6. *Reading out loud* two channel video installation, 54′ 30 min, 4K, colour, sound, 2021

Along with a copy of *artistic research* the assessment committee has received a project description and a floor plan of the gallery space to locate the individual works. The reflection text as well as a documentation of the exhibition including links to the video works are submitted in the form of a pdf.

About the reflection text.

In the process of finding a form to reflect about my artistic research project *Reading out loud* and the artistic works it resulted in, I identified that a series of artist talks would be the best and most consistent form for this project.

On this note, please read the following four chapters as transcripts of lectures I would have given if I would have been invited to present this project – or specific aspects of it – publicly. If possible, read them out loud (so that you hear your own voice).

While the first chapter (that is the first artist talk or lecture) serves as an introduction, it also explains my personal motivation as well as the main focus within the chosen subject matter in relation to my artistic practice.

In the second lecture I speak about what I call my artistic toolbox which comprises the work methods, work ethics, work principles and rules I used and which led me through this particular artistic research process. On the basis of concrete examples I provide an insight into how the chosen methods had an effect on the development of the artistic results in different stages of their production processes.

In the third lecture I focus on my work with and about people and the ethical dilemmas I encountered (as well as the choices I made in response to the dilemmas), in particular during the process of the writing of *artistic research*.

In the fourth and last lecture I examine critically whether my process has resulted in meaningful outcomes, that is in relation to the field I situate my artistic works in, the discourses I explored in relation to my research questions and the visual representations I chose to present the work in. For this evaluation I shall also take the feedback I received from others into consideration. At last I shall try to step out of the circle to view the project from a distance. This may allow for a discussion in what way the framework of artistic research has given guidance to the project's process and furthermore, why this project can only be developed as an artistic research project.

Transcript of a series of artist talks

Day 1, Auditorium

Good morning! Welcome everyone. I am excited to see so many new faces here today morning. Thank you all for coming.

My name is Juliane. Juliane Zelwies.

Hello. Hi! (Juliane nods towards a few people who enter from a side door and find a seat in the first rows.)

As you may have seen in the programme (Juliane holds up a leaflet), this is the first of four lectures which will take place each morning for the upcoming days. The main topic of this lecture series will be the genesis and development of my most recent artistic research project *Reading out loud*.

To give you a brief outline about the research project, let me read the first paragraph from the exhibition's press release to you:

There is a strong tradition in the Visual Arts of introspection, critique and performative behaviour. While hierarchies, dependencies and structures of the institutional apparatus (which are often represented as The Museum *or* The Gallery) *have been frequently critiqued and examined by visual artists as part of their practice, artists seldom turn their gaze on themselves as propagators and contributors of cultural traditions within the increasingly globalised art world.[1]*

I tried to draw attention to this blind spot by exploring and developing approaches to describe, analyse and understand the artist´s habitus (e.g. beliefs, codes and behaviour) that I or my colleagues express in professional and informal settings. I was particularly interested in examining situations in which artists seem to violate unwritten rules or conventions – and how we respond to such violations.

I started to work as an artistic research fellow at the Art Academy in Tromsø in October 2017 and I am concluding the project with the exhibition *Reading out loud* at Kunsthall 3,14.

Reading out loud is the title of the show, the name of the research project and the title of one of the artworks in

the exhibition. The project has taken its form as this:

(Juliane shows a photograph on the projection screen behind her and reads out parts of the captions while clicking further. She shows seven images in total.)

1. A book entitled *artistic research.*

2. A series of four posters, entitled *Words of Mouth.*

3. A video, which is screened as a continuous loop entitled *OFF THE RECORD*

4a. Three public readings, which were performed on April 8th, April 21st and May 6th, 2022 at 17:00 at Kunsthall 3,14 in Bergen.

4b. On all other days of the exhibition period, that is when no readings take place, the lecterns stand in the gallery space as shown, equipped with an abbreviated version of *artistic research.* This version is the same version which has been used for the production of the video installation at the other end of the gallery. Every word and scene, which I have taken out in the editing process later, has also been crossed out in the scripts on display and is therefore a literal transcription of the video installation.

5. A video, which is screened as a continuous loop entitled *The Cloud*

And finally, at the end of the gallery, one reaches
6. A two channel video installation entitled *Reading out loud.*

However, before I will go into detail, I would like to say a few words about my own background as some of it might explain why I decided to follow a certain path while someone else would have focused on other questions, discourses or theories and by doing so, would have taken a different path.

I am a visual artist, I have a background in Experimental Film and Video Art as well as Sculpture. I don´t understand myself as a performance artist, yet for nearly 20 years I have implemented details in my video installations which call for discreet performative gestures which have to be executed by the viewer. I include these gestures to activate the viewer's experience, and to make him or her

reflect on his or her own physical presence.

(Juliane shows an image of a person, who stands behind one of the fives lecterns in the exhibition venue at Kunsthall 3,14.)

For example, this person has stepped behind one of the lecterns to read the script on display. She must have felt the blinding spotlights we installed for the readings. And by being in the spotlight, she might have felt as if she was on stage, just like one of the readers who performed during the readings I organised. She might have straightened her back a little, and perhaps – I am speculating now, but that is what I hope to happen through the way the exhibition furniture and lighting is set up – that her inner voice changed from reading in private to reading out loud in public.

In a previous version of this exhibition, at Tromsø Kunstforening in 2021, I displayed the scripts on a big table with a few stools around, mimicking the idea of a theatre's green room where the actors would wait or get ready. As soon as one would sit at the table in TKF one would feel the spotlights which came directly from above, making any potential viewers blind for the surroundings as if they were on stage.

(Juliane shows an image on the projection screen, but then clicks back to the image she showed previously)

For the exhibition at Kunsthall 3,14 I decided to exchange the previous setup which was comprised of one big table for five individual lecterns, which are used by the readers during the public readings.

However, even though the lecterns are used during the readings, the interpretation for their presence might appear ambiguous at the times when no reading takes place. What I mean by this is that it is up to the viewer to interpret the lecterns and scripts on view as stage props of possible future (or past) collective readings or as a conceptual visual reference (i.e. a mirroring) of the collective reading as it is represented in the video installation *Reading out loud* at the other end of the exhibition space.

During the installation of this exhibition I remembered how impressed I was about the power of performative gestures which is implied in exhibition furniture when I saw *Der*

Bundestagstrainer[2] (literally *The German Parliament Coach*) by the Berlin based (theatre) collective Rimini Protokoll at the Hebbel am Ufer Theatre (HAU 2) in Berlin in November 2008.

Der Bundestagstrainer consisted of a single lectern in the centre of the exhibition space which the viewer had to step behind. Instructions on a sheet of paper suggested picking up a pair of headphones, which were positioned on the lectern and speak out loud what one would hear through the headphones into a microphone (which was also positioned on the lectern). Through the headphones one would listen to speeches as they were given by different members of the German parliament (Bundestag).

The piece left a strong impression on me as it made me physically understand both the performative nature of speaking publicly and at the same time highlighted the rhetoric the MPs used to argue for their individual political agendas.

As I could not find anything about the work at Rimini Protokoll's website, I contacted them to inquire about the title of the work. It turned out that they refer to it as *Der Bundestagstrainer*, however, treat it exactly the same way as I do treat the lecterns in my current exhibition *Reading out loud*. Rimini Protokoll does not see it as an individual work, but as a part or an extraction from their previous project *Deutschland 2* (from 2002).

While *Der Bundestagstrainer* asked the viewer to literally reenact speeches, I prefer to imply such gestures in a more discreet manner.

Another example of a discreet performative gesture implied in the exhibition at Kunsthall 3,14 is the semicircular bench here.

(Juliane shows an image of a person, who sits in front of the two channel video installation *Reading out loud*)

My hope is that everyone who decides to sit down on this bench and puts on the headphones would feel that he or she becomes part of an imaginary circle which comprises him- or herself as well as the readers projected onto the two screens. As the individuals projected are bigger than life-size, it should allow the viewer to immerse him- or herself.

However, while I included these elements in the exhibition design similarly to how I have worked in the past, during my research time on *Reading out loud* I specifically looked at another aspect of implied performance: I looked at performative behaviour of artists and other art professionals in professional and informal settings, and the possibilities to use embodiment[3] as a tool within the research process.

Generally, my video works, that is video installations and short films, have been concerned with people who would come together in groups (occasionally also people and their animals) because they were engaged in performing a specific practice together. I started each of these projects to understand the value of different practices, methods or rule-based scenarios, which have ranged from family therapy, rhetoric, theatre performance or competitions.

For these projects I asked experts to reenact their practice in a White cube or Black box or some other form of abstract space which I then filmed. This allowed me to analyse the results of my recordings in hindsight in the editing room. And by so doing, I would also be able to examine the social behaviour of these group encounters: The hierarchies, power games and performative aspects in people's behaviour which occur naturally — i.e. as soon as two individuals share a common space.

Another topic I have frequently looked at over many years – and which is the subject matter of *Reading out loud* – are the challenges visual artists face in their work environment.
I have worked in different roles in the visual arts, yet I have a longstanding personal discomfort to participate in social settings (such as exhibition openings, dinner parties at a gallery owner's house, studio visits with curators etc.) as I have experienced many seemingly dysfunctional or inexplicable social interactions with some of my peers and other art professionals.
By this I refer to disruptions or awkward moments which I believe are caused because unspoken rules or taboos are violated, or when tensions arise in socially complex situations. One example of the complexity in an artist's life is the often blurred or non-existent boundaries between private and public.[4]

My personal discomfort within my own work environment, however, has been so persistent that I felt the urge to

study and familiarise myself with the issues through conversations and interviews I initiated with other visual artists and who I knew were aware of and interested in the topics I raised.

As a first inquiry, in 2016, before I entered the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme, I conducted a substantial amount of interviews with artist friends of mine in New York City, Cambridge (MA), Stockholm and Berlin. I knew the artists I interviewed very well, however, some became very guarded as soon as the video camera or the sound recorder was turned on. What I mean by this is that they would not want to share certain stories with me, even though they had told me those stories beforehand. Even though I had told everyone that I would not show the video recordings without their consent, the presence of a recording device itself seemed to change their behaviour considerably. While this in itself is not surprising of course, I am wondering today whether it was also my role change (which I had not given much thought about until then) from being an artist friend to a visual artist interviewing another visual artist that made them behave differently. Furthermore, whether I, in my role as an artist, could not necessarily be trusted any longer as I, by recording their stories, could potentially damage their careers.

This experience made me conclude that it might be helpful to have the backing of an institution or public funding to conduct such a project.

When I received a full time position as an artistic researcher as part of the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme at the Art Academy in Tromsø approximately a year later people appeared significantly more open when I spoke about my research project. Perhaps it was me who felt more self-assured by then and therefore pitched the project in a more convincing way, but mostly I interpret the openness of artists and other art professionals to participate in my research as a result of my status change from being a visual artist with an interest in a specific subject matter to having become a legitimised artistic researcher. Interestingly, when I brought up this topic in a public conversation I had on April 21st, 2022 at Kunsthall 3,14, other former artistic research fellows who attended the talk agreed and verified my experience with examples from their projects. They also experienced situations in which they were confronted with the idea that researchers are understood as trustworthy while artists are potentially

exploitative.

One of my first research trips as an artistic researcher brought me to Los Angeles – that was in March 2018 – and through my network I could interview 13 individuals about their lives as either visual artists or in their roles as professionals working in the art world (e.g. as curators, museum directors and gallery owners). I was particularly curious to learn about issues they all dealt with in their everyday life and which they referred to as specific to the field of visual arts.

The first year of my research period was confusing insofar as I tried to work on two entirely different sets of research questions at the same time.

While I tried to find patterns or similarities in what my interviewees told me one-on-one as I was curious to see whether the visual artists I met aimed to be part of an avant-garde, and if so, what that avant-garde would look like, the research question I had formulated at the time was directed towards myself:

How can I study the increasingly globalised art world(s) from the point of view of an artist and, most importantly, through artistic methods? What methods, tools and media would I use to describe my own culture?

Furthermore, I was especially interested in understanding seemingly performative behaviour and the role it plays in the professional life of a visual artist.

(Juliane takes a sip of water and clears her throat)

During the time of my research fellowship I have been repeatedly confronted by other research fellows and supervisors in the seminars of the programme with the idea that my research must imply a critique, e.g. about people´s behaviour or existing structures, and that my project is obviously situated within the realm of Institutional Critique.[5]

While I agree that there is an affinity to Institutional Critique, it has throughout the process never been my intention to produce a critique in the sense the term is used traditionally (by art historians and theorists). Nor does it seem productive to me to criticise anyone for their behaviour.

Furthermore, the assumption that one automatically produces a critique by engaging with a specific subject matter or that one will have a critical view on the subject matter seemed oversimplifying and dogmatic.

If anything, I was interested in merging my two interests (i.e. studying the art world(s) and social behaviour) and in so doing, find modes to observe and to describe my own work environment. Ideally, my research would constitute a series of (self-)portraits, and whether these portraits might become beautiful, ugly, funny, sad or grim I did not want to define beforehand.

The production of a series of (self-)portraits, however, alludes to the existence of a mirroring surface. If I have been holding up a mirror to see myself as well as my surroundings, it indicates that others also have been mirrored.

Being seen and being noticed might satisfy the narcissistic soul which artists are often accused of having. In order to play further on the cliché of the narcissistic artist, I have deliberately inserted myself – as a character, through my voice or my body, through a description of my memories – in all artworks which are part of the project *Reading out loud*. At the same time I have also inserted myself to deflect attention away from others since I wished to shield them.

Having been mirrored implies that one has been seen of course, but it also implies that one might have been watched unknowingly. Such a realisation might in principle create a feeling of discomfort – or might be taken as an offensive or a violent act in itself.

As for all mirror images, it depends on where the light comes from and how one is positioned in relation to the mirror. For some, an image might be perceived as honest while someone else might think it is too honest. Others might see distortions, or reflections which might be seen as humorous – or perhaps frightening.

In my view, I portrayed visual artists as human beings, who are as imperfect, insecure and limited as everyone else.

At last I decided to write this artistic reflection text as a series of lectures to extend the idea of one consistent omnipresent artistic voice which permeates through all the

layers of this project. Furthermore, because this format allows me to speak about my research in a very direct way, that is with my own voice. The footnotes at the end of each lecture will allow the reader to get a deepened understanding of the project in its complexity and context.

By allowing all layers to permeate one another, *Reading out loud* has literally become a Hall of mirrors, in which I have been holding up a mirror to myself, and (in the figurative sense) also to those who have been standing next to me.

Coming back to the initial question of „…but you are aiming for a critique, aren't you?" I see now - in hindsight - that I was looking at the project (for most of the time) from the point of view of the maker, not being able to project how my works might eventually be perceived by an audience, and not being able to communicate clearly what I was aiming for. While I tried to see the world from the point of view of other artists during the research period, it was my aim for the exhibition to lay open this process through my works.

I know from the feedback I received after the first reading on April 21, 2022 that at least one person (a young artist) felt very self-conscious after she had attended the reading and watched the works in the exhibition. She told me that my works have made her reflect on how she looked at other people in the audience and how she became aware of herself. This realisation made her feel as if she has become part of my exhibition, and that this had been my intention.

If my works have made this artist reflect upon herself and how she and the art scene she is part of operates, I could not ask for more. Her words indicate that I managed to speak about something that is bigger than myself, and that it is possible for others to connect with my work. In my understanding, her experience describes what an artistic work can do. It can (among other things) evoke emotions and thoughts, or create experiences.

Thank you all for listening today. I hope to see you tomorrow morning again.

Footnotes

1

I use the term *Contemporary Art World* and its abbreviation *Art World* as described by Sarah Thornton (Thornton, 2009). Thornton draws on Howard S. Becker (Becker, 1982).

2

Der Bundestagstrainer was part of the project *Deutschland 2*
https://www.rimini-protokoll.de/website/en/project/deutschland-2-theater

3

The term embodiment is used by many different disciplines. For this project I focused mainly on the process of embodiment as it is used and understood in actor ́s training in the attempt to unite body and mind in the performer to generate a presence on stage (meeting with the actor Don Mabley-Allen on March 12, 2019 in Berlin).

4

The most famous example is probably Andy Warhol with his factory, however, I personally know many artists who spend their free time mostly with other artists, curators and art critics and who are married to artists, curators and art critics or have formed work relationships with their partners. Some artists rarely socialise outside their closed circle.

5

Dadaism and the introduction of Marcel Duchamp's readymades in the 1920s are considered fundamental for the emergence of institutional critique in the 1960s. Artists like Marcel Broodthaers, Michael Asher and Dan Graham, who merged art criticism with artistic practice and thereby went beyond the common practice of their time, have been credited for their early explorations of examining the relationship between artwork, artist and museum (Groys, 2008; Holmes, 2009). Since then, the examination of the artist's role, production conditions and consumption of art have been part and parcel of institutional critique. Works by John Knight, Martha Rosler, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Carsten Höller, Christian Jankowski, Andrea Zittel and the radical performances of Andrea Fraser come to mind.

While these artists expose power plays, economies and hierarchies formed between artist and curator, collector or museum through performances, interventions and objects, some younger contemporary artists prefer to tackle these questions through film and video. Jonas Lund (Sweden) demonstrates in his animation film *Videokonstnären och pengarna* the economic difficulties he is confronted with every day, and the American filmmaker Amie Siegel traces the circuits of ownership through the example of world-renowned minimalist furniture in her cinematic film *Provenance*. Siegel repeats and completes the commodity chain of design and art objects by selling a copy of *Provenance* at an auction amongst the furniture.

Transcript of a series of artist talks

Day 2, Auditorium

Good morning!

(Juliane smiles broadly at everyone, then takes a sip from her coffee mug)

Did some of you have the chance to visit the exhibition at Kunsthall 3,14 yesterday afternoon?

(Some of the members in the audience nod)

Yes? Great, that's good to know!

Today I am going to speak about what I refer to as my artistic toolbox. My artistic toolbox comprises the work methods, work ethics, work principles and rules I used in *Reading out loud* and which led me through this particular artistic research process.

In addition, I will provide an insight into the production process for the video *OFF THE RECORD,* and, if there is still time, also into *artistic research.*

(Juliane holds up the book *artistic research*)

Yet, before I do so, I would like to come back to one of the points I made in the lecture yesterday as it is related to one of my guiding principles in my artistic practice.

I mentioned yesterday that my personal discomfort was one of the reasons why I started to work on this project.

In my undergraduate studies I was introduced to the work and theories of the German-American psychoanalyst Ruth Cohn, and in particular to her Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) model.[1] I am not going into detail about the educational model and its aims now, however, I adopted one of the postulates she formulated as part of her TCI theory, and which she used to identify imbalances within groups. I adopted the postulate both as one of my ethical standpoints and as a working principle. It says:

Disturbances (and passionate involvements) take precedence.

If possible, I make use of this postulate when I teach, however, it has also turned out to be useful outside the

educational context and has been a productive indicator to detect moments which I identified as relevant for this research project. What I refer to are the socially awkward moments which cause frustration, confusion, strong emotions or otherwise show that something is not in balance for at least one individual. Furthermore, I decided that this individual could be both me and someone else.

So, whenever I have witnessed a moment of social imbalance, that is when someone was clearly confused or upset or when a tension was noticeable, my attention would be drawn, and I would wish to examine it more closely.

Another working principle and ethical standpoint I have taken on is the well-known political slogan that

the personal (or: private) is political.

As you probably all know, the slogan was used by feminists and students in the 1960s and 1970s to emphasise that private experiences (i.e. first and foremost the experiences of women at home) are connected with larger social and political structures.

However, it has also been proven to be a productive maxim for other contexts insofar as many so-called private problems are caused by underlying structural or systemic problems. Such problems can only be identified, discussed (and worked on) if they are acknowledged as such.
For example, I was surprised to learn that many of the artists I interviewed in 2018 in Los Angeles told me that they had moved to LA because they could not afford housing in other places (e.g. New York City and London) any longer. After being told this argument a few times, I would find it dubious to argue that their experiences are caused by solely private issues.[2]

Another effect of having this maxim in mind was that I felt suddenly freed from the idea of having to follow the unwritten rules (which I was aware and wearied by) of my own culture as an artist. What I mean is that I, in my role as an artistic researcher, suddenly seemed exempt from the conventions and could therefore ask about taboo issues without appearing rude or embarrassing anyone. However, I often started the interviews by describing my own experiences and addressing questions related to my own experiences, hoping that one of them might trigger a thought or story in the individuals I interviewed.

(Juliane looks at her audience, takes a sip of water, and clears her throat)

To give you an example: In an artist's life there are many occasions in which others think one does well, e.g. because one has been invited to be part of an exhibition in a well-respected art institution, yet one doesn't know how to pay the rent the next month. Such financial challenges are, if at all, only shared with very close friends.
Yet, some of the artists I interviewed opened up and discussed how the injustices of the art industry impacted their lives. One person – let me call him or her M. for now – described it as the "fucking money tree" to me. In his story, M. was invited to exhibit in a well known-museum, and realised at some point that literally everyone got paid except the artists, which even had to cover the production costs for their works themselves. M. described how difficult it was not to feel cynical about this situation, especially when people would congratulate M. for his or her work.

(Juliane shows an excerpt of her video *OFF THE RECORD*).

Here. I took everything except the last sentence about the money tree scene out. But the last sentence of this scene is this quote: *„Sometimes I just say it to my friends: But I didn't get paid."*

Alright, let me come back to my artistic practice in general. In short, I understand my practice as idea-driven and at the same time process based. What I mean by this is that I often formulate an idea (or concept) which defines the framework of the individual project, yet I allow the project to grow, change and develop based on research questions I have and which change because of new knowledge which I obtain during the process.

In this research project I used a recurring set of work methods or approaches (which sometimes also became solutions to my research questions), which I developed inductively and which I can summarise as follows:

(Juliane shows a new slide on the projection behind her and reads the following text out loud).

1. Circling as a way to process and as a way of processing.
2. A hall of mirrors which mirrors, reflects, and distorts.
3. Change as a chance to give agency and to keep vital.
4. The presence of one omnipresent artistic voice.

5. Humour as a method
6. Appropriation: mix and match as you like.[3]
7. Collecting source material

Alright. What do I mean by all of this?

As part of my artistic practice I often circle around a subject matter until I am able to identify what I want to explore in particular. In *Reading out loud*, I started with the desire to explore what I called the „manners and mannerisms in the art world", and while I contemplated how I could speak about hierarchies, power structures, elitism and status games, I had difficulties
a) To settle on a specific target group (even though I realised very soon that it would be too much to include all professions that play a role in the art world)
b) To determine how I could speak about other people as I was – as I mentioned yesterday – not interested in exposing anyone, but was interested in unraveling the underlying emotions of individuals (who are part of systems, structures or institutional settings).

(Juliane shows a photograph of her poster series *Words of Mouth*)

For example, the poster series *Words of Mouth*, which I started the project with, shows that at the time I had not yet settled on a specific target group. While three posters quote visual artists, the 2nd poster, which says that *Gallerists are truffle pigs*, is a quote by a former art dealer.

By the end of 2018 – that is approximately a year after I had started – I had eventually come to the conclusion that I should focus on (visual) artists. And in particular on artists who pursue a consistent artistic practice, yet who do not play a significant role on the art market.

Only then did I realise that it was important to me that the group of artists I was interested in most consisted of artists who lived a life that was very similar to mine. Or put differently: That the artists I looked at would be understood as established within their local art scenes, yet they would often continue to struggle financially and would continue to live precariously, knowing that this struggle would most likely never end. I realised that this was the profile of the majority of artists in my network.

(Juliane clicks to a still of her video *OFF THE RECORD*)

For those of you who haven't seen it yet: *OFF THE RECORD* is
the attempt of mine to embody gestures and statements made
by artists I interviewed.

As a consequence, given my decision to focus on artists
only, I deliberately disregarded all footage which I had
produced about other art professionals (i.e. non-artists)
during the editing process of *OFF THE RECORD*.

However, even though I disregarded some of the video
footage to make OFF THE RECORD more consistent once I had
come to the conclusion at the time, for the poster series I
decided to keep my own learning process visible and not
edit it in hindsight.

(Juliane clicks back to the photograph of her poster series *Words of Mouth*)

So that is why I kept the poster with the truffle pigs as
part of the series, even though it could be critiqued as
inconsistent. But, since it was part of my set of questions
in my first year I personally think of it as a document of
the time and the thought process I was engaged in at the
time.
Furthermore, if the posters are shown outside of the
context of this entire research project, it might be seen
as a self-contained series.

To come back to where I started: Both, the act of
persistent circling to narrow something down, and circling
as a way to process have been highly uncomfortable at
times, as it means to not know, sometimes for long periods.
I have over the years accepted that discomfort is something
I seem to seek out both as an indicator, but also as part
of my practice, yet, I hope that I will at some point find
more pleasant ways to pursue my own practice.

(Juliane chuckles, clicks back to the slide with the text and reads out loud:)

A hall of mirrors which mirrors, reflects, and distorts.

I don´t think I can add anything to what I already spoke
about yesterday. Except for possibly this:

While the act of circling describes a revolving movement, a
hall of mirrors suggests that there is no clear direction,
but reflections, i.e. copies and repetitions of the same

image, topic, or subject matter which might be reflected further, deflected and or visible at the same time.

This process becomes in particular visible in how I treat the text I wrote:

While the written and published version *artistic research* represents 27 different characters, the same text is spoken by 13 characters in the video installation *Reading out loud* (i.e. some characters have been merged) and in the version, which I used for the public readings at Kunsthall 3,14, it is 5 artists who read 8 characters (i.e. characters have been merged even further).

And this process is in fact also interwoven with the next point, which I called

Change as a chance to give agency and to keep vital.

The idea to be able to change the amount of characters each time the text is publicly presented is based on the insight that this text has been fictionalised and furthermore, that what is said in the text is not dependent on a specific cast of characters. While the location — that is Utøya – can not be changed as the text would then lose a significant part of its interpretation, I learnt through this process that there is no need for the text to have a final form, but that it can exist in different versions, which, again, also references the idea of a hall of mirrors, in which for example an mirror image might become the point of interest.

However, this insight includes the point that I don't see myself as an author who wants to control how the text I wrote is read. Rather, I am interested in the role of an experimental and learning artist who observes with great curiosity what happens if the same text is adjusted each time to the setting in which it is presented.

For the readings at Kunsthall 3,14, for example, I offered the readers the chance to change the wording if they had trouble pronouncing my text. When one of the readers requested to change the text so that it would match her own biography and therefore would feel more natural to her, I happily agreed to the changes she suggested to enable her to identify with a specific character in the text.

Also I noticed that it keeps the text vital as it makes it

impossible to get fixated on a specific version. I experienced great joy in this process as it forced me to let go of my memories and allows the text to grow independently:

The first version, that is the text which was based on my memories and which has been published as *artistic research*, has been literally overwritten by my memories of the group I worked with in Tromsø to produce the video installation; and my memories of the Tromsø group has yet again been overwritten by the group I worked with in Bergen.

The text has – until now – been produced in three formats:
1. A published book, which can be read in private or by a large cast of characters: *artistic research*
2. A reading which has been produced for the video camera: *Reading out loud*
3. A life reading for a small cast of characters in three parts.

Long story short: My memory, which seemed to be crystal clear to me originally, has first been corrected by some of my peers in various feedback sessions, but has also become less important to me in this process of merging, changing, editing and bending. There is almost no memory anymore I can go back to.

As a result of this process, the text has freed itself, and acts now as a template with a set of different characters as proxies or placeholders. I often thought of Bert Brecht, his alienation effect[4] to educate the audience and how he reduced his characters to: A teacher, a maid, a worker etc. to clarify that it is not about anyone in particular, but about individuals in their roles as participants of the world, political system or structure they are part of.
In *artistic research* one could – if such didacticism was wanted – speak about a supervisor, a research fellow, and a project leader or: a textile artist, a video artist, a composer etc.

(Someone in the audience drops a glass bottle which bursts. Someone else shrieks. Water runs down to the front row. The person who dropped the bottle swears in a low voice. Juliane observes the situation with great curiosity).

Glad it wasn't me this time. Shall we take this as a sign to have a break?

(The person who dropped the bottle: *I apologise, but I think it's okay. I can take care of*

the mess later.)

Are you sure?

(The person who dropped the bottle nods: *Yes, no worries!*)

Alright.

So, in the process of trying to understand how I can speak about my peers without practicing an othering, I understood that I, or my voice, has to be present, possibly even the dominant voice to both shield and deflect from my peers.

Also, to be able to present others in an empathic way, I had to take on the role of the fool, who demeans herself slightly (or lowers her status) to create a visible contrast to her peers – and by doing so, makes sure that they can be represented as imperfect without being looked down on.

While I usually challenge myself within my projects and demand from myself to learn, however, I realised very soon that this research project meant for me that I had to go further, I literally had to step out of my comfort zone.

I will speak about this in detail later, but I know now that I certainly never want to be in front of the camera again, even though I still believe that it was necessary – and the only way – to produce *OFF THE RECORD*. While being forced to perform in front of the camera was one of the most excruciating situations of my life I can remember, yet it is still the only way I can think of to play out and show the power games I was referring to. It had to be through embodiment. And I literally had no choice, I had to be the fool!

This is a classic strategy used for example by standup comedians to be able to speak about difficult themes publicly.

And while this act of self-exposure, contrasted by the professionalism of the performer Bastian Trost on the one hand and my inability to perform on the other hand is experienced as humorous by many – I also know how subjective humour is.

I know that some people detect and share my humor (by commenting on it) while others do not share it and must

experience my works in a very different way.

But, humour has always played a significant role in my
practice. I find it useful as a tool as it makes it
possible to gain a distance and simultaneously stay in
touch (i.e. by not becoming cynical) about the subject
matter or questions I explore.

OK, where are we? Oh yes.

(Juliane reads out loud)

Appropriation: mix and match as you like.

For this project, I have taken the liberty of mixing,
matching and appropriating genres, formats and methods as I
liked.

For example, I have written a script even though I am not a
script writer; I have appropriated theatre methods even
though I am not an actor; I have designed posters even
though I am not a graphic designer; I have conducted
interviews even though I am neither working in journalism
or as a social scientist; I have appropriated guiding
principles from the psychological and the political context
– even though I am neither a psychologist nor politically
active.

In fact, I have used methods and explored whether they
could potentially be appropriated and used in and for other
projects in the future.

In particular, I used embodiment
a) To analyse interviews and
b) To gain empathy for the individuals I interviewed.

Additionally, I have used the possibilities of script
writing to change roles and perspective as an approach to
gain empathy for and allow a development of the characters
in my script.

(The door in the back of the room slams shut. Juliane looks up and takes a sip of water)

For my last point for this morning I would like to mention
that all works which are part of *Reading out loud* are based
on source material I collected myself.

The poster series *Words of mouth* is based on what I

collected in informal settings. What I mean is that I collected these words whenever I came across them – I might hear them as someone would state them publicly, or because I eavesdropped, or remembered something someone told me once.

And while the text I speak in OFF THE RECORD are transcriptions of interviews I conducted, *artistic research* is solely based on my memories, and so are all works which derive from this text.

The video footage for *The Cloud* has been filmed on an evening at the campsite across from Utøya island in the summer of 2020 when I went back there together with a filmmaker friend of mine from Berlin to visit the surroundings a year after I had been there for the first time.

I assume that everyone here is aware of the island of Utøya? In case someone isn't: Utøya is one of the sites where a terrorist attack took place in 2011, and many people, in particular teenagers, where murdered.

Even though *The Cloud* has been treated heavily in video postproduction – its movement is animated, and through colour grading I turned an unobtrusive cloud into a heavy rain cloud – in contrast to the other works its source is still clearly identifiable. Thus, it is the only direct reference to the existence of an outside (non man-made) world. What I mean is that all other works could simply be a fabrication of my mind whereas the cloud is real, and therefore has – at least in my understanding – an indexical quality. However, at Kunsthall 3,14, *The Cloud* acts also like an architectural passage way from one part of the exhibition space to the other*,* and in general as a metaphor for the conflict that is portrayed both in the script displayed on the lecterns and the video installation *Reading out loud*.

(Juliane finishes her glass of water.)

As I mentioned earlier, I would like to speak about the production process of *OFF THE RECORD* as well. But before I do so, would you mind if we have a short break now?

(People in the audience shake their heads)

Great. Let's meet here in 10 minutes again.

(approximately 10 minutes later)

Hi again.

So, before the break I described some of the approaches and tools I consistently used throughout the project. Yet, these approaches touch only on one part of the artistic process whereas other parts concern the production itself, and in the end, artistic decisions have to be made for the public presentation of a work. The last two parts are – at least for my works – often tailored for the individual work and therefore rather work specific.

As I won't have time to go through each work in depth, I decided to take *OFF THE RECORD* as an example to literally walk you through the development of *OFF THE RECORD* from beginning to end, to show you how rule-based I work and to demonstrate also how the production of one work led me to other questions, which, in consequence, were partially incorporated in the next work.

As I mentioned earlier, *OFF THE RECORD* has in and of itself become a study in embodiment as I discovered embodiment as a tool to analyse gestures. It turned out to be a surprisingly productive tool to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of the words as well as the emotional state of my interviewees.

Empathy turned out to be a very powerful method for the analysis, speculation and interpretation of words and gestures as it allowed for a change of perspective. What I mean by this is that I had finally found an approach which allowed me to analyse someoneʹs possible emotions without having to deal with my own emotions in response (such as sympathy, anger or the wish to help). I could let the person be who he or she is, while able to gain a certain understanding of the person — as if I would have walked around in his or her shoes for a few of hours.

But, before I knew this, I conducted interviews with an art dealer, a museum curator, a museum director and visual artists in Los Angeles. The questions I had prepared for these sessions, which usually lasted 60 – 90 minutes, covered the following topics:

(Juliane shows a projection of her computer screen with a list of the following points:)

- biographical information

- financial situation

- motivation and interest to work in his / her job

- social situation which is unique to the art world.

- rituals and behaviour in both formal and informal settings.

- definition of success + potential key factors.

In the beginning of each interview[5] I would ask everyone for **biographical information** such as their education, age, gender, definition of occupation in the art world. Also, I would inquire about their **financial situation.** Additionally I would ask to give reasons for the interviewees (continued) **motivation and interest to work in their jobs,** which included positive and negative aspects of their occupation. Also I would ask for a **description of a social situation** which the interviewees experienced and considered **unique to the art world** and a description of rituals and behaviour the interviewees perform publicly as part of their work performance in both formal and informal settings. Lastly, I would ask for their **definition of success** in their field and **potential key factors for it to happen.**

(Juliane stops reading out loud, and speaks freely again)

And even though almost everyone had given me their permission that I could show the footage when we had finished the interviews, I had reservations in doing so myself. Especially after I had viewed the interviews a few weeks later, it seemed to me that the most interesting parts about these interviews would be an exposure and comparison of the different personalities in connection to their careers. Not only did it seem ethically problematic to me to make use of their personalities for the sake of my research, but it also confused me as it seemed too simple (and wrong) to state that for example success is mainly linked to someone's personality. As the artists' personalities showed themselves in body language, gestures and wording, I tried to find a way to keep the affective (or: emotional?) content, but make the individual artists anonymous and abstract their personal stories to something

more generic.

In preparation of the next step I wrote down the following points as an agenda for an exercise with the video material.

(Juliane shows again a projection of her computer screen from which she reads out loud:)

1. **Ethically:** protect the interviewed artists by making them anonymous.
2.A**bstract:** make the interviewed artists anonymous to abstract the content of what is said by specific individuals to what is said (no matter by whom).
3. **Artist persona as a proxy:** replace the chosen individuals with yourself, i.e. use your artist persona as a place-holder.
4. **Empathy:** Will I feel empathy if I enact or embody the individuals from my interviews?

(Juliane stops reading out loud, and speaks freely again)

From the interviews I then selected parts which seemed particularly foreign to me insofar as I would never have spoken about these issues in such a manner. I transcribed these parts, studied the artists' gestures and body language, and realised very soon that I needed someone experienced (and more extrovert than myself) to work with, someone who could coach and mirror me.

As I knew how kindly, yet in a very smart manner, the postdramatic British-German performance collective Gob Squad includes members from the audience in their performances, I believed that someone from the collective could probably challenge me (who has never performed in front of the camera) without making me feel exposed. A friend of mine connected me with Bastian Trost from Gob Squad, who was open to my request for a possible collaboration or coaching session in front of the video camera.

Gob Squad, who often use popular culture to explore the complexities of everyday life, have developed their own set of rules for their performances over the years. Their main rules could be comprised as: to have *rules* and to include risk as well as work with reality and rhythm. Another rule they frequently employ is constantly changing roles, which means that even during their performances one performer would take on the position of the outside viewer to give

feedback to the others afterwards. This person would then most likely be one of the performers on stage the next day while someone else would take in the role of the outside viewer.

Consequently, Bastian asked me to define rules and methods which we would use as a basis to work with. We defined the following guidelines for the two of us:

First of all, **the bossy bottom principle.** Bossy bottom is a term used among gay men to describe a person, who is recipient during anal intercourse (i.e. in the bottom position), yet the dominant of the two partners. As I asked Bastian for his help (i.e. be the recipient of his work experience) but would pay him for working with me, he pointed out the triangularity of our relation (i.e. I hire him to give me directions / I asked him to challenge me) and suggested to include these power dynamics as a superordinate working principle.

And secondly, **reality:** We are both part of this filming, which means that our own biographies are as important as those I would like to study during the exercise.

In addition, I completed the list with the following two guidelines for myself:

a) To risk something or be vulnerable during the filming also meant to accept the possibility of failure (and of course a path into unknown territory).
b) To not be afraid to take on a new and unknown point of view (by being in front of the camera instead of behind).

(Juliane steps away from the speaker's desk and walks up and down the stage. Finally, she stops in front of a table, which sits at the stage, to lean on it, facing the audience).

Bastian and I met, tested and practiced another time until we were convinced that we were heading in an interesting direction. As Bastian didn't have much time on the weekend when the filming was supposed to take place, I worked the first day alone with my team, which consisted of Till Beckmann (camera), Isabell Spengler (sound) and Veronika (Ruschka) Steininger (as my personal assistant). I know all three very well and have worked with Till and Isabell in different contexts beforehand. We used the day to set up the space, tried costumes, sound and light conditions and I rehearsed the gestures and transcribed texts in front of the camera, often consulting the original videos as a reference. On the 2nd day we were joined by Bastian Trost

and Noam Gorbat (as a 2nd camera operator), who, as luck would have it, just worked on the documentation of one of Gob Squad's performances.

I am describing all this in detail as I tried to create working conditions I would feel comfortable with (i.e. make myself getting used to the idea to be in front of the camera and feel comfortable in the space) and make sure that my team would also be informed and well prepared and would be able to work well with each other, especially since I was not going to be able to direct anyone during the filming.

On the day of the filming I was extremely nervous and could hardly execute what I had rehearsed and practised beforehand. The presence of both Bastian and the two video cameras made me very self-conscious. Furthermore, it was painful for me to see how easily Bastian switched between performing (whomever he wanted) and not performing, while I could not perform anyone but myself. And, as part of our agreement, Bastian gave me a hard time: While I desperately tried to embody someone else, Bastian would constantly ask me to also incorporate my own biography, which complicated and aggravated the tension I felt already.

However, what surprised me most was how much I indeed learnt about my interview partners by analysing their gestures in combination with their words through embodiment. Gestures I was unable to read in a meaningful way beforehand became suddenly clear (or at least I found interpretations, which would make sense to me). For example, the fist one of the artists would make whenever he spoke about his friends lost its connotation for a challenge (which I saw at first) and changed into that of a weight, which he seemed to apply to friendship. Another artist would always bend over and hold her belly when she spoke about her financial situation, which became only noticeable to me once I analysed her words in connection to her movements.

The editing process was then driven by trying to work out a dramaturgy, which would show a shift of power dynamics between Bastian and I. The idea of presenting the work as a loop seemed corollary to the attempt to visualise such a shift. What I mean by this is that a loop points to the idea of a circular, and thus never-ending (power) play between the two.

(Juliane gets up from the table and walks back to the speaker's desk to pull out a new

slide, which she, however, doesn't share with the audience).

When I reflected on the video loop only a few weeks after I finished, I noted down the following:

(Juliane looks at her computer screen and then speaks freely)

I had demonstrated to myself yet again that I am able to analyse and deconstruct narratives and social situations. I didn't think about this before the filming took place, but I saw afterwards that I had followed an old pattern of mine.As a result I felt that I should challenge myself on this point artistically and asked:

1. What form would my work take if I would not take things apart any longer, but go beyond the analysis in order to create something constructive instead?

2. At this point I also thought that I would continue working with the interview format as a work method throughout the remaining research period. I indeed continued with that format for a while, but eventually abandoned it as too didactic or posed.

3. The idea of working with myself as a place-holder made a lot of sense to me and I was (and still am) interested to find out its potential for future works.

4. The exercise with Bastian had put the emotional (or the affect) center stage. What started out as an examination of common clichés about artists, revealed itself to me as something that might be universal or core to the human condition.

5. Before we started the exercise, I thought that the need to risk something and to be vulnerable as an artist was an outdated concept. Instead I realised how much power there is if one feels that something is at stake.

(Juliane takes a sip of water, then clears her throat)

As I pointed out earlier, after I finished the video *OFF THE RECORD*, I wanted to challenge myself regarding my artistic practice as I did not simply want to revert to an approach that I was familiar with, which seemed to consist of the dissection and analysis of select social situations in front of the video camera.

At a seminar in early 2019 I was discussing in a meeting

with Karmenlara Ely Seidman what other possibilities there might be to explore my research topic differently. Karmenlara suggested to look into fiction.

The idea stayed with me. Fiction would allow me to leave behind what seemed to hinder me in terms of working with the documentary approach I had developed over the years: Until then I was bound to what I could create and capture in front of the camera, whereas fiction would enable me to go further and allow speculation and (if I felt the need for it) crafting my own interpretation.

I must apologise to you. It is not fair to keep you in this conference room for such a long time when there is such beautiful weather outside.

Thank you all for coming today. I hope you'll enjoy the afternoon!

Footnotes

1
website of the Ruth Cohn Institute for TCI
https://www.ruth-cohn-institute.org/home.html

2
When I recently spoke with an artist friend of mine about the affordable housing market in LA in comparison to other places in the USA, he started laughing and said: *Where did you get this from?* When I said that I had heard this from artists I interviewed in LA in 2018, he responded with: *Yeah, that was still the case in 2018. It's not affordable anymore. Things have changed rapidly.*

3
I refer to the term appropriation as it is used in the Visual Arts, e.g. in the sense of an intentional adopting, borrowing, recycling or sampling of preexisting images, objects, and ideas.

4
The playwright Bertold Brecht called such techniques the distancing effect (also alienation and estrangement effect) in his epic theatre practice. In his view, it prevents the audience from losing themselves in a narrative and shall allow conscious critical observation (e.g. by addressing the audience, barring them from feeling empathy, interrupting the narrative, drawing attention to the filmmaking or theatrical process).

5
The full set of interview questions (LA, March / April 2018):

1. Could you please introduce yourself to me, and if it makes it easier, you could for example answer the following questions:

Since when are you doing what you are doing? Since when do you live in LA, and where did you live beforehand?

Or speak a bit about one of these points:

Your education, your age, your gender, your "job" in the art world.

2. Can you make a living with your job in the art world? If not, how much is missing per year - and how do you finance yourself instead?

3. What in particular do you like about your work in the visual arts and what is it you don't like – or what is it you are critical of?

4. What are the things you like about your job, what are the things that drive you? Is this why you continue doing what you do?

5. Do you remember a situation / exchange / interaction / incident etc. (or many?), in which you felt that this is probably unique to the world you live in, i.e. that this is something that is unique in the art world?

6. If you would have to describe your work performance to a total stranger (an outsider or an alien): How would you describe your behaviour?

Or put differently: Can you describe your interaction with others, the rituals there are? Are there situations in which you feel that you perform something rather than being yourself? Conflicts you have? Manners and mannerisms? Or when you feel that you have to justify yourself (if so, to whom)?

To break it down: Can you describe an interaction you had with someone? I think most of the interactions we have happen at specific places. I am thinking for example of an interaction you had with someone at an exhibition opening? In a museum? In a commercial art gallery? In your studio? In someone else's studio? Via email? Over a drink in a bar? At a dinner party?

7. What do you think are the key factors for being successful in the art world (in the job you are doing)?

Transcript of a series of artist talks

Day 3, Auditorium

(Juliane stands around in the front of the room and nods to everyone who enters.)

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Hello. Hi. Good morning. Nice to see you again.
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(People are taking their seats. Someone closes the door. It becomes quiet. Juliane steps behind the speaker's desk.)

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Good morning!
I hope you had the chance to enjoy the nice weather
yesterday afternoon. I will give my best to be more concise
today and try to finish on time.

What I am going to focus on today is to speak about how I
work with people and about people.
This artistic research project has been an eye-opener to me
in regards to the differences that exist between the ethics
and moral boundaries that I, in my work as an artist, use
and stand for, and the research ethics guidelines which the
University in Bergen complies with and which are therefore
also the current ethics guidelines for artistic research
projects.[1]
When I tried to apply these research ethics guidelines to
my artistic practice, I suddenly faced a number of ethical
dilemmas.

This insight led to the question of whether well
established artistic practices, such as the use of one's
own memory (which might include memories about other
people) as source material to create fiction can
consequently not be part of publicly funded artistic
research projects. And if this is the case, whether one of
my works – that is my book artistic research – should
therefore not be part of this artistic research project.
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(Juliane holds up the book *artistic research*, then clicks on her computer and shows a slide. It says:*)*

working with people

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In the following hour I shall discuss the ethical dilemmas
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I encountered in detail and the choices I made in response
to these dilemmas.

Since ethical guidelines for artistic research are
currently in formation at the Art Academy in Bergen, that
is that there is a workgroup which is in the process of
developing guidelines for artistic research projects
conducted at KMD – a national workgroup on artistic
research ethics has also just started –, some of the
challenges and obstacles I am currently facing have already
been identified and discussed by the work group as their
documentation shows.

(Juliane opens a browser and clicks on a link[2]. Then Juliane opens the pop up menu and
opens a pdf which is named as follows[3])

Anne Helen Mydland, Vice Dean KMD:
Research Ethics Seminar 3 - status and potential measures

(Juliane scrolls to page 8 and begins to read out loud. The text is displayed on the screen
behind her.)

So far we have located some challenges or obstacles specific for artistic research:

- The current guidelines for research ethics are made for academic research
and is not sufficient for AR practice. There are many challenges within artistic
research that do not match; vocabulary, and not covering the field

- Background from the professional art scenes does not provide staff with knowledge about
research ethics (Roles, knowledge, context)

- As institutional (artistic) researchers one may fear that artistic freedom and
artistic ethos do not correspond with the research ethics framework.

- The research result – to be identified as a piece of art or a piece of research – what are the
differences? (archiving, accessibility, data, publishing formats, rights clearance)

(Juliane stops reading and speaks without consulting her notes)

As you see on the screen, I have marked bullet point 1 and
3 in bold as I think that they may apply to my case – in
any case:

I hope that my project will be understood as an instructive
example and contribute to the current discussion.

(Juliane drinks some water)

For now, I would like to briefly speak about how I have worked with people who appear in my projects in the past. As I mentioned before, I have a background in Experimental Film and Video Art, and since 2004 almost all my video projects involve people in front of the video camera. I have worked with professional and amateur actors, with individuals who are experts in the subjects I explored, with friends and with people I hardly knew.

In my film sets I always define what will be in front and what will be behind the camera. What I mean by this is that individuals would be assured to never be filmed or otherwise be recorded as soon as they decided to leave the space as defined as in front of the camera. Furthermore, everyone is asked to sign a contract, which gives me the rights and sole authorship for the video recordings. However, if it turns out to be of interest, the edited videos can always be viewed by my participants before they are publicly presented. While some of these rules and norms have been taught to me by filmmakers and artists who used to produce their own films, but would also work for the TV industry and who lectured in the early 2000s at the UdK in Berlin, people like Lili Grothe, Elfi Mikesch or Dagmar Jäger, while other rules – such as the right to view before it is going to be publicly screened – grew organically out of my practice: When I was still a student one of my participants asked to view the edit before it was shown to our fellow students and I just kept this as a possibility, even when my productions became bigger and my participants more professional.

However, there have been moments when I felt the need to double check despite the written agreement. For example, in one of my previous projects a person was – out of the blue – overwhelmed by her emotions and started to cry in front of the camera. As it also felt like a significant moment in the project, I did not intervene and let the situation unfold. What do I mean by this? I left the camera to continue rolling.

Six or eight months later, when I started editing the footage and realised that this scene still seemed to be of great significance for the project, I reached out to her again as I felt obliged to ask her once again whether I can include this particular scene in my video installation.

(Juliane drinks from her water glass and sees someone in the front row raising her

hand).

Do you have a question?
Member in the audience:
Thanks, yes. I was curious to hear how she responded?

(Juliane nods)

Yes, of course. She still had no issue with me using the
footage. She is a video artist herself and saw the value of
using this scene in the installation herself. Even though
her breakdown was not caused by the situation in front of
the camera, she recognised how it would be read as such –
and how this reinterpretation was interesting for the
dramaturgy of the project.

Member in the audience: Thanks.

Of course.

Please, feel free to interrupt me whenever I don't make any
sense to you or if you have a question, okay?

(Juliane clicks and shows the next slide)

working with people means group dynamics

Another important aspect in my projects has been that I –
whenever I am in the process of forming a group – that I
try to mix individuals I know with individuals I don't
know. Such mixing has proven to be of great value insofar
as the trust of those who know me often transmits naturally
to people I am not too familiar with yet.

(Juliane clicks and shows the next slide. It says:)

the value of working with people who can relate to one's project

Another important factor is, as I described at length
yesterday, that it is of importance that the camera crew
consists of people I can rely on.

Due to the ongoing pandemic I could not present *artistic
research* as planned as a public reading for a solo
exhibition at Tromsø Kunstforening in March 2021. So I
decided to produce a reading for the video camera instead.
While it was surprisingly easy to find enough people in my
Tromsø network who were interested to take on a role as a

reader, it was rather difficult to put together a camera crew who would understand my work, and who would be interested in realising the project in line with my ideas. Even though I am in hindsight (almost) content with the footage we produced, I value my network in Berlin – which has grown organically over years and consists of artist friends who assist in my projects as much as I assist in theirs.

What I most appreciate on these small film sets among my friends is the willingness to work together as a unit with different departments (e.g. camera and light, sound, directing, assistance) with the idea in mind to fully support the particular filmmaker to achieve the best with very modest means. Since Tromsø doesn't have a film school and I couldn't fly anyone in who would for example teach at the film school in Kabelvåg, I was forced to work with a camera person who is otherwise only working for the tourist industry, making money by filming snowboarders on North Norwegian mountain tops. The culture clash between our interests and our understanding of what is needed to make this project possible could not have been greater.

The importance of a functioning network also became apparent to me when I was looking for readers for the public readings at Kunsthall 3,14 in Bergen.

It seemed impossible to find people who would be suited and interested in the project at first, however, once I had invited a former colleague of mine from Tromsø the casting became significantly easier as I realised that I should not search for actors, but rather in our mutual network of artist friends.

(Juliane shakes her head and chuckles a little)

I know, it sounds banal, but such realisations are – in my understanding – part and parcel of any artistic process. Yet, one seldom admits the nature of such decisions afterwards.

In fact, only the difficulty to find actors in Bergen made me understand that *artistic research* – which is a text about artists – should ideally be read out loud by a group of (visual) artists as they – most likely – understand the nature of the text and might be able to relate to it directly.

(Juliane clicks on her computer and shows the next slide. It says:)

working with people means exchange and the discovery of other views

While former projects of mine have often been based on the participants' improvised words, in *artistic research* the freedom I offer to the readers has been rather limited in comparison.
However, as I explained yesterday, they could change some of the words if needed, and we also changed passages so that they could identify with the characters they were asked to read.

Interestingly, one of the readers described it as liberating to see that I allowed such freedom to them and to the text, whereas I felt it was necessary for us to be in exchange with one another, and that only by giving agency to the readers would they take on responsibility for their roles and by doing so give me the space I need to be able to reflect upon the experiment that we are still working on, that is to test how much the text can be changed without losing its comprehension and quality.

While in all my projects until October 2017 both my position and also the hierarchies in relation to the people I involve in my projects - or work about - has been very clear and outspoken, almost none of these long practiced work concepts could be applied to the work I did during my time as a research fellow.

And, as far as I can see it in hindsight, the reason for this has been my own presence or rather my changed position in relation to the topic. As I described yesterday: While my position as an artistic researcher turned out to be a door-opener in some instances, my artistic decision to involve myself in all layers of the project hindered me from looking at the project from outside - or to have the distance needed to make level-headed decisions that were not impacted by any unemotional response. Usually I create the distance I need to find the project's final form by waiting - sometimes I wait for 6-8 months before I start editing -, however, in this research project I couldn't let things take such time. I had to work much faster than I am used to, to meet the deadlines which were determined by the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme and a clear statement of my home institution that we research fellows were expected to finish within the funded research period.

Alright, let's get down to the nitty-gritty.

The way I collected source material both for the poster
series *Words of Mouth* and for *artistic research* has been
new to me.

The poster series is based on statements that I heard in
public, that is in formal settings such as at a seminar, in
an interview or in art school. I heard them because they
were stated in my presence – except for one. This
particular statement was eavesdropped by a colleague of
mine and reported to me after. As this statement was spoken
to the gallery owner whom we both worked for, none of us
could have been the recipient of this statement. Is it
ethical to blurt out what someone else has heard?

I would say: no.

Is it ethical to attribute a quote to someone if one hasn't
been the collector of the quote?

Most likely: no.

Does it make a difference if we look at what the quote
says, and whether it would embarrass or otherwise expose
the person? At last, does it matter what status the person
has?

I think it does.

In this case, the quote was the one of the yellow poster:

(Juliane clicks on her computer and shows a picture with four posters. She points with
her cursor at the yellow poster and reads out loud:)

I am so glad that I am now old and famous enough that I
don't have to be late to my own openings anymore.

Albert Oehlen still belongs to the top selling European
artists of the Contemporary Art Market, and he is known for
his great sense of humour including his witty comments on
the art world[4]. Thus, it seemed to be reasonable to me to
attribute the quote to him and furthermore, since he is a
person of public interest, to not ask for his consent.

However, since I didn't want to claim something I didn't
hear myself, my solution to my self-made ethical dilemma

was to insert the word „reportedly" in the text underneath the quote, and by doing so, revealing or pointing out that I can't prove whether this statement is true - or not. When I sent an image of this particular poster to the eavesdropper, he did not comment on the fact that he had delivered the quote to me. Perhaps he didn't remember, perhaps he thought that I might have overheard the conversation myself as we were both present - though in different parts of the same gallery - when the comment was made.
However, he liked the poster so much that he showed it to an art collector who also collects Oehlen's works. While the eavesdropper tried to convince me that my poster should become a limited edition which I could sell to the most important collectors of Oehlen, he also tried to convince the collector to buy the poster.
I thought about the idea for a while, especially in regard to Amie Siegel's film „Provenance"[5], and then decided that the poster should simply be - as originally planned - an open edition. My decision was based on two reasons. On the one hand I did not want to produce promotional items for art collectors (even though I find the idea pretty funny), but mostly because I wanted to have the poster easily accessible to the public with a life of its own. Throughout the past three years I have exhibited it a few times and have often offered it as a take-away to the audience. As a result, friends would unexpectedly send me a picture of my poster when they came across it in the living room of a friend of a friend or in the entrance hall of a studio building.

As I wanted the posters to be understood as a series, consistency in form and content or some sort of reflection or mirroring of one in the other was worthwhile. That is why I used the word reportedly also on other two other posters.

(Juliane points to the posters in pink and grey)

For the fourth poster, the blue one, on which I quote myself, I used „recalled" instead of „reportedly".

Oh, and in case you haven't noticed already: The posters relate in their colouring to the CMYK colour model.

(Juliane points with her cursor from left to right:)

Cyan. Magenta. Yellow. And Key.

The reference to the CMYK colour model is probably revealing my background as a video artist of a certain generation more than anything else.[6] Yet, the reference to the printing process gave the series a framing that of course every graphic designer will see immediately while other people may recognise a familiarity, even if they won´t be able to pinpoint the reference immediately. I made a similarly discreet reference to video aspect ratios in the format I chose for the projection screens of the video installation *Reading out loud*. The right screen is built with a width-to-height ratio or aspect ratio of 16:9 while the left screen is built in 4:3.

Anyway – let me get back to the ethical dilemmas.

The other ethical dilemma which I confronted and which I could not satisfactorily resolve for everyone whom I asked to give feedback to me as part of my process is rooted in the genesis of the script *artistic research*.
As I mentioned earlier, in my understanding, the dilemma I encountered is an excellent example, perhaps even a paradigm, for a situation where research ethics clash with the reality of a particular artistic practice.

In this particular case the conflict which has emerged is based on two different interpretations on how a shared experience should be treated.

But let me quickly summarise the situation from my point of view for you:

(Juliane picks up the book *artistic research* and reads out loud the text on the back side of the book):

In 2019, a group of artists gather for an artistic research symposium on the island of Utøya, one of the sites of the 2011 terrorist attacks, the biggest collective trauma in recent Norwegian history.

(Juliane stops reading and speaks without looking at the book any further).

At the end of the week one of the artistic research fellows creates confusion among the group by accusing the group of being racist. On inquiry, the research fellow explains that the accusation had been a performative gesture, and that the fellow wanted to try something new.

(Juliane pauses and clears her throat)

This is what I remember. I also remember that he or she
refused any further discussion, and by doing so, leaving
the group feeling very ambivalent.

By the way, whether my memory is right, is not of
importance here.

What is of importance at this point is that I took this
experience home and that I could not let go of it. In fact,
I became obsessed and could not – in regards to my research
project – think about anything else.

And, as you know from my talk yesterday, one of my working
principles is the postulate which I borrow from Ruth Cohn's
TCI model:

(Juliane shows the slide from yesterday and reads out loud:)

Disturbances (and passionate involvements) take precedence.

I was so passionately involved in my memory of the event
that I eventually, approximately half a year later, decided
to take my involvement seriously and work about it
artistically.

As my memories seemed continuously and surprisingly vivid,
I decided to retell the week as I remembered it in the form
of a script. And, as I was keen to visit my own memory from
the point of view of another person or an observing camera,
I wrote it as if I was following myself through the week.
It was all in all a pretty exciting and also surprisingly
satisfying process for me. I have read a lot of film
scripts in the past five years due to a small side job as a
reviewer for one of the public film funding agencies in
Germany, and of course I have analysed many films due to my
studies in Experimental film, however, I had never written
a (film) script myself.[7]

The writing process itself turned out to be therapeutic, as
I had finally found a productive way to work on and
overcome the frustrating experience of not knowing what had
caused my colleague to do her or his performance. By having
it all written down, I had finally visualized my memories
and could suddenly organise, edit and play with them as I
would otherwise edit video footage in my timeline. I
realised that I had eventually won my autonomy,

independence – or agency – back, which eventually (in later drafts) allowed me to go further and also start speculating on what might have happened, that is, to write a fictional story.
After I had finished the first draft of the script (and pseudonymised everyone) I felt also that I had created a piece which would allow me to reach out to the group again to possibly pick up on where we had parted about a year prior. Furthermore, similar to when I ask the participants who take a role in my video works whether they want to view the final cut, I also felt obliged to get in touch with everyone as I was aware that people might recognise features of themselves or other group members in my writing.

This is the template of the email I sent out to everyone in July 2020:

(Juliane shows a new slide and reads the text out lout)

Subject line: invitation to a slightly different studio visit

Dear ….(name),

I hope you are well - wherever you are - and that the pandemic is not jeopardising your life too much.

……(something personal)……

On another note, I am wondering whether I can invite you to a studio visit. It would differ slightly from a normal studio visit, as I would like you to read a script I have written and which has become part of my research project. As it is an account of my experience of our time on Utøya, it might be of interest to you as well.

I imagine the procedure like this: If you are interested, I would send you the script (90 pages, which reads very easily) and we'll meet on zoom / jitsi / skype after you read it, ideally directly after you finished reading, when your impression is still fresh. Also, it would be great if you would allow me to record our conversation so that I can quote you correctly in my reflection text (in case I would like to).

I look forward to hearing from you.

My best wishes,
Juliane

The feedback I received was truly enlightening as it showed how much my memory had fooled me, what I had forgotten entirely or understood differently than some of the others. Also, it opened up a number of individual conversations in general. With some members of the group I stayed in touch since then and developed a friendship, others asked me for favours in return – in short: My hope to connect with the group through the text had proven to be true, at least mostly.

As I had written in my email, I understood the script as an account of my experience, and I expected everyone else in their turn to have their own versions and stories.

I was curious to learn from everyone – if they were willing to share their experiences with me.

In my conversations about the script I would usually also ask whether something should be changed in someone's opinion. While one person took this as a direct invitation to discuss the development of the characters in the script with me, another person wanted to discuss what form my text should take in order to become an artwork. In one instance someone requested a change in a dialogue in connection to a particular character, and I accepted the request and took take care of it.

However, among the group members were two voices, who didn't appreciate the script they read or even that I had reached out with an invitation for feedback.

While one of them felt that I was trying to coerce everyone into giving me feedback and furthermore felt that I had misunderstood and misrepresented the character he or she understood as carrying features or himself or herself, the other person thought that this text should have never been written and should by no means be published.

(Juliane opens a new slide, which lists the following points:)

- breach of a tacit agreement
- exposing people without their consent
- Utøya should not be treated as a site
- possible re-traumatisation of people

The reasons which were brought forward from the 2nd person´s

point of view, were that

– we had agreed tacitly that our symposium has been a private learning environment. By writing about the symposium I would break the agreement and expose everyone to an outside audience. No one had given consent to this.

– secondly Utøya should not be treated as a site, but as an open wound which needs to heal. My text would show that I do treat Utøya as a site and that I had opened up again what had just started to heal.

– and thirdly, my text might re-traumatise people who have been on Utøya during the attack or were otherwise connected to the attack.

(Juliane drinks from her glass of water.)

Just to be very clear: I sympathise strongly with these criticisms and feel truly sorry that I caused anger and pain. By no means had I intended to hurt anyone nor do I want to excuse myself for my actions.

All I can say in hindsight is that I was extremely naive. At the time I could not imagine how strongly some people might feel towards the text and how much power they would attribute to it. Also, I did only understood later that I put people into a position I had – and still have – no experience with myself and that this experience might be unwanted or uncomfortable. Without realising or meaning to do it, I had put myself in a superior position.

One of the dissenting individuals — let me call him or her F for now – was eventually open to enter into a dialogue via email with me. We resolved the situation with F concluding that while F may not like the character F identified as carrying features of himself or herself, but that the character is not a representation of himself or herself, but fiction.

However, I would like to come back to my initial point, that is the clash of research ethics guidelines in relation to a particular artistic practice:

While the 2nd dissenting voice understood my text as the result of undercover or non-approved research about other people which per se cannot be part of any artistic research project, my understanding of the situation is different.

At no time did I plan to work about the symposium while we
were there. I started to write half a year later as an
attempt to come to terms with a personal experience which
seemed to be linked to my research interests, yet the
precise connection had not occurred to me at the time. The
source material I used in order to write the script were my
memories - I had no other references. And, as I mentioned
already, as soon as I had written the text, I reached out
to everyone to initiate conversations.

In my understanding and in the discussions I had in
preparation of this reflection text with supervisors and
other experts at KMD about these ethical concerns, it was
agreed that I - as an artistic research fellow - have the
right to work with my own experiences and memories.[8]

Yet, in my so-called *sluttseminar* in February 2022 I was
asked to explain why I deliberately went ahead and
published the script even though I knew that in the end one
person remained in disagreement with me.[9]

For this, I would like to go back to the arguments which
were brought forward:

(Juliane looks at the slide behind her and reads out loud:

- breach of a tacit agreement
- exposing people without their consent

In the person's understanding (let me call him or her H.
for now) we were part of a learning environment which had
been treated as a place in which everyone could explore and
experiment without having to fear being exposed publicly
afterwards.

In order to make clear that I must have known about our
tacit agreement H. reminded me of a group discussion we had
on Utøya in which the group had decided unanimously to not
post any images on social media since to H. Utøya seemed to
be too sensitive to be presented on social media by us
(i.e. the group) who were not part of the labour movement
or otherwise connected to Utøya.

I sympathise with H.'s first two arguments here. I often
tell the students I am teaching that they don´t have to be
afraid of exposing themselves - for example in group
critiques - as we (as their peers) are their testing ground

before they may go public with their work. And that we, as
their first audience, are there to provide feedback so that
they can reflect upon the feedback they will receive to
draw their own conclusions.
The assumption and expectation however, that a collective
agreement of not posting images on social media extends to
also not speaking about one's own experiences afterwards is
a concept I do not agree with. In fact, the idea of being
sworn to secrecy about one's own experience collides with
my guiding principle that *the personal is political.*

As for the argument of exposing people: From readings about
the work of auto-ethnographers I learnt that anonymisation
in small communities is generally (almost) impossible.[10] As
the artistic research community in Scandinavia is indeed
small, I understand that my text might have created some
worry and fear that an outsider could discover someone in
the book.

However, I would like to stress again that I have
pseudonymised everyone early on, and that all characters
have been fictionalised. *Artistic research* is not to be
treated as documentation or evidence. It is a highly
subjective text which was based on my memories and an
editing process which followed the rules of dramaturgy, and
which has – as I described yesterday – since then undergone
further and quite radical changes.

The other two arguments H. brought forward, were that Utøya
should not be treated as a site but rather an open wound
and that my text might re-traumatise people.

I have spoken with many Norwegians about the idea that
Utøya should not be treated as a site as it was not clear
what was meant by it. None of the people I asked could
understand what was meant by that either. Only a few days
ago I came across the expression *site (of crime)* in a
dictionary. That is when it dawned on me that H. might have
felt that I describe Utøya as a scene of a crime, and not,
as desired by H., as a wound which needs to heal.

Last week I spoke with someone who had read *artistic
research* only recently. She told me that her partner, who
had read it as well, had said that Utøya was hardly present
in my text. She, on the other hand, thought that my book
was only about Utøya. This comment made (again) clear for
me that it is impossible for the artist to know how one's
own work is going to be interpreted. It is unforeseeable

what an individual projects onto the work.

And at last: trauma is highly subjective, too. It is impossible to make sure that no-one is ever re-traumatised by someone's artwork. As far as I know a trauma can be triggered by basically anything, such as the sight of a candle, a particular noise or smell, the vision of running water or something else.

When I went back to Tyrifjorden a year after the symposium as I felt the urge to see the island Utøya once again from the shore, I experienced how the teenagers from the AUF, who were staying on Utøya in 2020, did not think about Utøya the way we – who were a generation older – reflected upon it when we stayed there. They played football, jumped into the water and filled the bay with loud music at night. One afternoon a boy, maybe 11 years old, who played in the water at the campsite where I stayed, observed me filming the island from the shore. He asked me why I was filming the island, and when I said that the island has a long history in Norway, he responded: "Oh yes, that is where something bad happened once, right? But that is a very long time ago, right?"

In relation to his age it was of course a long time ago. For us, who remember the attacks still very clearly, the healing takes much longer. And I wonder whether my text might have opened up H.'s wound again, a year after it had just started to heal – as our stay on the island had left a strong impression on him or her as well.

However, what I personally take from this conflict is the idea that H. implied that his or her memory is different than mine and that it is not always nice to be confronted with the view of someone else.

There are as many versions of our story as there were people on the island at the time.

I will end here for today.

Oh, I see that there is a question in the audience?

Yes, please.

Member of the audience:
So what has been the outcome of this conflict? I didn't quite understand the position of the University in this. Is it allowed or not to use one's own memories in artistic

research?

That is indeed a good question. According to the research guidelines of the University which are written for other disciplines – that is the Humanities – a researcher who is doing research with other people has to get their consent for doing so. This also means that the person who agrees to participate in someone's research can withdraw their participation at any given time.

There are no research ethics guidelines for artistic research yet, but there is a working group at the art academy which is in the process of discussing what these guidelines should look like and how cases like mine could be assessed.

This makes us come back to where I started today morning:

If my behaviour is understood to be unethical, it would mean that many common artistic practices would have to be excluded from artistic research. It would be a very clear statement.

Almost all fiction is – to some degree – based on a writer's memory, which has been fictionalised. There are so many examples: Goethe fictionalised a man he knew for „The Sorrows of Young Werther", then think of the satires by the British writer Evelyn Waugh. I guess in Norway it is Karl Ove Knausgård and Vigdis Hjorth who are most well known for the problems they faced after their work was published. Perhaps some of you followed the discussion about Kristen Roupenian's short story „Cat Person" which was published in 2017 in *The New Yorker*? The same goes for film. An example that comes to my mind is in fact the other way around, but touches upon the same issues: I was surprised to read that Jasmila Žbanić' film *Quo Vadis, Aida?*, which is a dramatisation of the events of the Srebrenica massacre, is not based on a true story. But then, when I spoke to a friend who knows the film director, I learnt that the first script had been based on someone's story – until the person whose story Žbanić wanted to tell changed his mind and didn't want her to tell his story anymore – which meant that they had to rewrite the entire script.

Furthermore, if one looks into the Visual Arts, there is also a long tradition of artists exposing their own life to the audience, and by doing so, exploring the borderland between reality and fiction. And this borderland includes

also other people. The most prominent artworks I can think of are for example Tracey Emin's tent „Everyone I ever slept with", or Sophie Calle, who is making art about the life of others without them knowing it. Or Ulf Lundin, who films people in an office building who are unaware of his actions. And what about photographers like Nan Goldin, for example „The Ballad of Sexual Dependency" or Richard Billingham's „Ray's a Laugh" series about his parents?

Don't get me wrong – I know that Nan Goldin takes pictures out of her slide shows if people don't want their image to be part of it any longer. And I think she should do so, it is respectful and ethical. But what does she do when such a thing happens with her photo books? I mean, if they are already printed and people change their mind then? I wonder.

All I am saying is that there are many examples throughout history where such issues cannot be resolved easily – and that is possibly also why some people think of researchers as good and of visual artists as exploitative.

I personally think it is impossible to generalise and that one has to look at the individual case. Has Juliane behaved unethically? H. says yes. I personally still don't know how I could have avoided the conflict without censoring myself so much that the work would have become nonsensical. But is that what is wanted by the artistic research community? That some limited set of practices can be part of the realm of artistic research whereas other practices are excluded?

I personally don't want artistic research limiting the artist or rather: go against the idea of artistic freedom.

However, my artistic response and attempt at a compromise to the requests by H. are that I am testing out how far I can go with the script, that is for example how many characters I can merge into one before it becomes nonsensical. But could I have also taken Utøya out as also requested by H.? I don't think so. It would take away my interpretation of why our colleague acted out this particular topic in his performance.

And that is where I personally draw the line. If, what I learnt through my writing process – that is my artistic research process – could not be publicly communicated anymore because one other person who has a different view, I would be at a loss with the idea of artistic research.

I understand, it's complicated, as this is also where someone else might say: But you must take out Utøya, otherwise one can potentially trace it back (which is true). Yes, one might be able to trace my story back to a group of artistic research fellows who were on the island of Utøya in 2019. But again: The story I wrote has been fictionalised.

I understand now that it has been very uncomfortable for some to realise that they have been turned into a sort of material – something I didn't think through initially. As I said, the readings at Kunsthall 3,14 are my current test cases in which I am trying to find out how much I can trim down the intricacies between the different characters without losing too much, yet making individuals less and less recognisable – as this text is, as I mentioned yesterday, not about the individual characters, but about how artists interact with one another in formal and informal settings.

Have I repeated myself a lot? Sorry for that. But yes, to come back to your question: I don't know.

member in the audience: Thank you.

Thank you all for coming today. It is a great pleasure to have such a patient audience.

Many thanks!

Footnotes

1
https://www.forskningsetikk.no/retningslinjer/hum-sam/forskningsetiske-retningslinjer-for-samfunnsvitenskap-og-humaniora/

2
 https://www.uib.no/en/kmd/141400/research-ethics#presentations-and-material-from-internal-seminars-2020-21-with-kmd-research-committee-and-phd-committee

3
Research Ethics Seminar 3 - status and potential measures
https://ekstern.filer.uib.no/kmd/W3-publisering/R%C3%A5d og utvalg/FFU/Reserch ethics seminar 3 15.1.21_Mydland.pdf

4
For example, one can see Albert Oehlen's humour coming through in an exhibition he curated most recently for the MASI Museum in Lugano:
„Big paintings by me with small paintings by others"
https://www.itsliquid.com/albertoehlen-masilugano.html

5
In her cinematic film *Provenance* the American filmmaker Amie Siegel traces the circuits of ownership through the example of world-renowned minimalist furniture. Siegel repeats and completes the commodity chain of design and art objects by selling a copy of *Provenance* at an auction amongst the furniture.

6
video artists have traditionally explored the possibilities and limitations of the medium video in and through their works, well-known examples are e.g. Nam Jun Paik's TV Buddha (1974) or Nancy Holt & Richard Serra's TV performance *Boomerang* (1974).

[7] for example, I would remember seemingly banal situations literally like this: Image 1 (long shot) : Juliane walks over the grounds. Cut. Image 2 (mid shot): Juliane enters the common house. The door closes behind her. Cut. Image 3 (medium close up): Juliane pours herself a coffee in the kitchen. Cut. Image 4 (long shot): Connor passes by and runs up the staircase. Cut. Image 5 (mid shot): Juliane takes her coffee and follows Connor up the staircase. Cut. (and so on).

8
see memo by my supervisors Alison Gerber and Pedro in the appendices

9

The request to „lay it all open" put me in a double bind between being fair to individuals I got to know over the last few years and the duty I have in regards to the current research ethics guidelines the University in Bergen asks artistic PhD students to comply with. To speak frankly: I cannot reveal everything that would need to be revealed to explain my decision about why I continued working on and finally published *artistic research*. For doing so, I would have to break my word. I therefore decided to opt for a compromise, and focus solely on the ethical dilemmas I was confronted with and which I believe to be relevant for the discussion about my project, and furthermore for a broader discussion about ethical guidelines for artistic research.

10

While I seldom develop an interest in the research done by ethnographers, I have a long-standing interest in the reflections and diaries written by ethnographers and social anthropologists about their fieldwork. I find those writings especially interesting when they describe the difficulties they face as individuals in their profession, and in particular when they are confronted with the difficulties to comply with the ethics guidelines of their discipline.

A discussion I engaged in with great interest is the ethical dilemmas auto-ethnographers face in their research, which, as Carolyn Ellis put it in *„Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives"* is that „When we write about ourselves, we also write about others", a remark I can strongly identify with – even though I am neither an ethnographer nor have I done any ethnographic field work.

Ellis describes how she has spent so much time in the communities she studied that they would over time forget that she was there as a researcher who came to do research about their community. She describes further that these communities were so small that it was impossible to not make people recognise each other (despite anonymisation and other attempts to cover-up) in her writings in the end, and that she often felt such a disconnect between the friendships she had developed during the years and her writing, that she herself was reluctant to take her research back to the communities she studied.

I found Ellis comments quite remarkable, and an interesting revelation insofar as it showed that some of the issues I am confronted with are not unique to my situation (e.g. small research community in a country with a very small population which makes anonymisation among those in the know extremely difficult), but a seemingly common problem in certain types of social research. Also I was surprised to hear that she published her books before she even considered taking her writings back to the communities. Furthermore, how it seemed all but possible to avoid some of the issues (e.g. the attempt to camouflage people) she had in encountered in future projects.

Transcript of a series of artist talks

Day 4, Auditorium

People slowly enter the auditorium and take their seats. Juliane eventually comes in, looking frazzled.

```
Good morning. Nice to see you all again.

Apparently there was a power outage today morning, and even
though this has been fixed again - as you see, we have
light - it seems to have busted the projector. The
technician is trying to find another projector which could
be used temporarily.

I apologise for this, but I suggest that we'll have a
coffee break when he comes to set up the projector.
```

(Juliane grabs the programme and flips through to the last page, then puts it back down again)

```
Alright.

Today I am going to reflect on the project as a whole. I
shall go back to where I started, what I learnt through
insights and findings and whether I could contribute
something to the field through my work. In short, whether
the result of my process has led to a meaningful outcome -
for myself or others.

To evaluate whether my works have been understood or
meaningful for others I will take some of the feedback I
received into consideration.

At last I shall try to discuss in what way the framework of
artistic research has given guidance to the project's
process and furthermore, why this project could only be
developed as an artistic research project.

However, as it has probably been for everyone in this room:
The pandemic hindered me quite dramatically to proceed as
planned. Important research trips and exhibitions were
canceled or postponed, I didn't visit any exhibitions or go
to any film festivals for two years. Thus, I didn't have
much exchange - neither with my peers nor an audience,
neither about my own nor their work.
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So please, if you have something you would like to comment on, critique or add, please feel free to participate in the discussion today. I would appreciate this a lot.

(Juliane steps behind the speaker's lectern)

This is an excerpt from a text I wrote last year for a presentation:

(Juliane reads from her notes)

The artist, writer and cartoonist Pablo Helguera claims in his book *Art Scenes: The social scripts of the art world* (Helguera, 2012) that "art makes us perform" and points out that "the social environment constructed around art leads to a particular kind of conduct among those exposed to it." Later, he elaborates as follows: "artists make art that creates an art world that makes all of us who belong to that world perform. And, as we perform, we contribute to the construction of an art scene."

Helguera's comment and stance towards the art world was an important working hypothesis throughout my project. While he mainly focuses on the market driven art world, which he as a resident of New York City is exposed to on a daily basis, I explored his ideas under the premise of being mostly in northern Europe, and within Europe in places which are less exposed to the art market. Yet, I have seen the same attitudes he describes among the artists in Europe – who might compete about publicly funded exhibitions, artist grants or teaching positions instead.

Since I was focusing on how and when artists perform for each other in private as well as public settings, I often looked at situations in which I asked myself:

Are we playing right now – or not? And if we play, which game is it that we are playing? Among these games, status often seems to be a driving force, and how individuals can achieve, enhance and maintain status within their community.

Another aspect was to identify and explore the moments when an individual artist bumps against the boundaries of his or her own (art world) culture.

For example, in LA I had interviewed an artist who had literally lost his entire community, that is his peers, his collectors and his gallery, through an artwork he did. It's

quite an unbelievable story: his work was dismissed by his collectors and his art dealer as he had broken a law to produce it. His peers in turn thought highly of the work, but expelled him from the community as he had the audacity — that is how his peers saw it — to exhibit representations of the work in his gallery and by doing so, making it available to his collectors, who — through their involvement in the investment market- caused the problem the artist discussed in his work.

I learnt that the boundaries are often defined through implicit ethics determined by the different local scenes. And since local communities are crucial for most artists in their everyday life, a conflict with one's own community can have a significant impact on an artist's career.

In addition to the writings and cartoons by Pablo Helguera I have also continuously studied the art world cartoons by the German-American artist Olav Westphalen, and was furthermore pleased to get to know the comic series *Wendy* by the Canadian artist Walter Scott. I invited all three artists to exhibit their cartoons and excerpts of their comics together with some of my posters at the artist run, non-profit space SCOTTY - which I am an active member of - in Berlin.

If I had a projector, I would show you the images now…

In any case, since Berlin was on the brink of having to endure another lockdown during the exhibition time, it was important to produce an exhibition which could also be seen through the storefront window from outside. I opened the exhibition with an online panel discussion with all three artists in their respective homes in NY, Toronto and Stockholm, and an artist friend of mine from LA, Carl Baratta, who helped me to moderate the session. Apart from my being pleased to be able to introduce these three like-minded artists to each other, it felt meaningful as we had a surprisingly large online audience which stayed until the very end.[1]

(The door opens and the technician comes in with a video projector.)

Oh great, you found one!

Technician: Yes, indeed. Would you like me to set it up now or later? It will take 10 minutes.

Yes, that would be nice if you could do it now. I think we

are all ready for a coffee break by now anyhow.

Technician: Okay.

Thank you very much.

(Juliane turns to the audience again)

Let's have a coffee in the foyer outside to get some fresh air. We'll meet here in 15 minutes again.

(15 minutes later.)

Hello again.

While we chatted outside I realised that I would like to come back yet again to something that I had of course already mentioned earlier – I hope that you have by now become used to my way of speaking, and how I circle and spiral myself through the world, the project and the organisation of these four lectures…

Core to my research was of course to find ways to explore the questions I had through my artistic practice, and by doing so, utilising the tools I already had in my artistic toolbox as a video artist and add new tools and methods, which I — as you know - borrowed from other fields.

I explored script writing as a method to process and shape a personal experience and added it as a new technique to my personal toolbox.[2]
And, connected to this, I discovered that a change of perspective (either through embodiment as part of a theatre practice or through a writing practice) is a way to gain empathy and thus a productive and powerful method for a deeper understanding of the emotional state of an individual.

Furthermore, the possibility to zoom in on details while at the same time being able to narrate the context (i.e. in my case a multilayered story through script writing) has been an entirely new way of thinking and working.

And, as I already described yesterday, I have continuously collected anecdotes, quotes and stories connected to the local art scenes I am part of or which I have been visiting as an artistic researcher. Some of these anecdotes have become posters, while others have been publicly presented as (lecture) performances or as performed texts, that is in

dialogue with a 2nd person.[3]

(Juliane looks up and speaks without consulting her notes)

The use of lecture performance as a method to perform text on stage has been new to me, and the involvement of another person as a 2nd voice on stage has furthermore added another dimension to this method. Until then my stage-fright would have prevented me from being in front of a large audience, but the presence of a co-performer helped me to handle it.

However, by being on stage as (lecture or text) performer, I could suddenly elaborate on my topics in a more formal and precise way. Intonation, timing and rhythm would suddenly become important, and, by having another person next to me, the performed text would benefit from his presence and the difference of our voices.

In hindsight I see how these performed texts (for two voices) also sparked my interest in presenting the text *artistic research* as a public reading to an audience.

You see, I could continue with the list of things I learnt during the research time, it is quite incredible to look back and see how much I was able to expand my practice, however, when I try to define what I have added to my field, that is the Visual arts with a particularly soft spot for moving images, I believe that I have drawn attention to a blind spot.

As I said in my first lecture a few days ago: hierarchies, dependencies and structures of the institutional apparatus, which are often represented as *The Museum* or *The Gallery*, have been frequently critiqued and examined by visual artists as part of their practice.

However, to my knowledge artists only very seldom turn their gaze on themselves as propagators and contributors of cultural traditions within the increasingly globalised art world.

Spontaneously I can only think of two other visual artists, whose works I truly respect and who have specifically examined the artist as part of his or her (art world) culture:

There is of course the American artist Andrea Fraser who performed the artist Martin "Kippenberger's drunken, impromptu dinner speech"[4] in German as *Kunst muss hängen*

(*Art Must Hang*) in 2001 at Galerie Nagel in Cologne.[5] Unfortunately I have until today not seen the video recording which exists of her performance, but from her writings I understand that while she was interested to explore how Kippenberger could perform his position as an artist and embody it at the very same time (Fraser, Artforum, 02/2003), she also wanted to expose his misogynistic, homophobic, and xenophobic behaviour.

Like Andrea Fraser I also used embodiment to explore the psyche of other artists, my intention, however, was to understand the emotions of the artists words through embodiment, and by doing so, developing empathy for their behaviour. Having said this, Fraser and I might (to some degree) share a similar interest and starting point, yet the outcome of our performative works is rather different.

The other rather exceptional position about the topic is occupied by the Norwegian artist Ane Hjort Guttu, who examines moral conceptions of art and questions the social responsibility of artists in Norway, e.g. in her narrative film *Time passes*.[6]

As for my book *artistic research*, the public readings of other versions of the text as well as the two-channel video installation *Reading out loud*: Again my starting point was to understand and develop empathy for the behaviour of other artists, and in particular to understand the reasoning and state of mind which led my colleague to perform his particular performance on Utøya.

As it seemed necessary to also examine and describe the context in which the performance took place, yet I had no interest in describing the island of Utøya visually, I had to figure out a way in which I could reduce the visual content to a minimum and by doing so, allowing the imaginary space to grow.

What I mean by that is that even though the content video artists and filmmakers such as Romuald Karmakar[7] or Mario Pfeifer[8] explore in their works is not exactly in line with mine, I do see a strong connection to a certain genre in video art, in which particularly difficult, often political questions and topics are explored in the most unsensational way possible. These works are often categorised as hybrids, such as between performance and documentary, performed or staged documentary, documentary and reenactment, mockumentary, docu-fiction or video art with a documentary approach.[9]

For example, I am thinking of *9 Scripts for a Nation at War*[10] by Katya Sander, David Thorne, Ashley Hunt, Sharon Hayes, Andrea Geyer who staged the speaking of scripts by actors and non-actors, "*some re-speaking their own words, others learning the words of others*". Their ten-channel video work is based on tribunals, interview recordings, news reports etc. to illuminate questions and conditions about the invasion of Iraq by U.S. military forces in 2003.

Or Romuald Karmakar, who tries to understand the reasoning and internal logic of a radical Islamist thinker and preacher by reconstructing two lectures, which were given in Hamburg's Al Quds mosque in January 2000. The work is called *Hamburg Lectures*. At last the film *The dreamed ones* by Ruth Beckermann[11], which lives of the tension that is created between the voices of two young people who indulge in the emotive content of their texts, as they are shown as working actors in a recording studio.

By associating my work with a genre that doesn't have a name (yet), but is commonly described as a hybrid or in-between, I hope to even add further works to that very field and by doing so, possibly expanding it even further.

Artistic research in its three forms, that is the book, the public readings and the reading for the video camera, that is the video-installation *Reading out loud*, doesn't allow one medium to dominate. Instead, it allows all three forms to exist side by side, with its differences, pros and cons.

Such an open and explorative process is seldom possible for visual artists outside of the context of artistic research — simply because of the missing resources. Furthermore, artists are seldom encouraged to dig deeper or in another way once a work has started to taken shape.

That is why I think that *Reading out loud* could have only been developed as part of the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme, and I wholeheartedly thank for the support I received from both my home institution in Tromsø as well as the Art Academy in Bergen who took me on as an external candidate.

Furthermore, I hope to have added an instructive example to the discussion about ethical guidelines for artistic research.

I thank you all for your attention.

Are there any questions?

(Some people raise their hands. A person who is part of the conference team gets up)

Conference team member: Thank you so much, Juliane. Thank you for letting us participate in your journey. It was exciting to be with you, especially when it became a bit rocky and you did not shy away from it.

People applaud.

Conference team member: I am extremely sorry, but due to the power outage today morning we now have to use this room for the next lecture. The technician deinstalled the projector from the other big conference room.

Oh. Okay. When does it start?

Conference team member: Ehm, well, that's the issue. It should have started already.

Oh. I see.

Conference team member: I am extremely sorry, but I would like to ask you to leave now so that we can briefly air the room for the next lecture.

Sure, of course. So if there are any questions, please join me in the foyer, I will be out there.

Thank you all for coming!

People applaud again and start to pack their things.

Conference team member to Juliane: I am so extremely sorry.

It's fine. No worries.

Conference team member to Juliane: It's not what we wanted, but the other rooms are too small unfortunately.

I know. It's fine. See you later!

Conference team member to Juliane: Thank you.

Footnotes

1
artist talk with Pablo Helguera, Walter Scott and Olav Westphalen
moderated by Juliane Zelwies and Carl Baratta 27.03.2021, 7 pm

https://vimeo.com/536503900/c7c161a9bb

2
When I tried to find out who might potentially be interested in publishing my text *artistic research*, which I at the time still considered to possibly be read as a film script, I realised how little regard there is for film scripts to be published as independent artworks in Germany.

The screenwriter Meike Hauck confirmed to me that while in North America and in the UK film scripts are accepted both as work documents and literary texts, which are easily accessible through bookstores or various databases on the internet, in German speaking countries such a tradition does not (yet) exist. One reason for this might be that in Germany film scripts are commonly understood as work documents, and not as independent artworks (and are therefore not worthy of being published).

3
2017 at Cinema Arsenal in Berlin with Bastian Sanders
2018 at ARF together with Thorolf Thuestad
2019 at Gløtt festival at the Art Academy in Tromsø
2019 @ SAAR on Utøya with Andreas Borregaard

Transcripts of the performance lectures with Thorolf Thuestad and at Gløtt festival are part of the appendix; the first one has not been translated from German into English, but can be made available on request. The fourth transcript is part of the book *artistic research*, page 98 – 103.

4
https://www.artforum.com/print/200506/andrea-fraser-8993

5
https://nagel-draxler.de/exhibition/kunst-muss-hangen/

6
http://anehjortguttu.net/Time-Passes-2015

7
www.romuald-karmakar.de/film/hamburger-lektionen

8
https://www.mariopfeifer.org/

9
film programme curated by Birgit Kohler at Kino Arsenal Berlin, 2011: *Performing Documentary*

10
www.9scripts.info

11
https://www.ruthbeckermann.com/home.php?il=115&l=eng

4. References

Becker, Howard. Art Worlds, University of California Press, Berkely, 1982

Brecht, Bertolt. 1961 "On Chinese Acting", translated by Eric Bentley. The Tulane Drama Review, 6 (1): 130–136.

Ellis, Carolyn. Telling Secrets, Revealing Lives, 2007

Fraser, Andrea. Performance Anxiety, Artforum, New York, 2003.

Geertz, Clifford. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture, Basic books, New York, 1973.

Helguera, Pablo. Art Scenes: The social scripts of the art world, Jorge Pinto Books, New York, 2012.

Pachirat, Timothy. Among Wolves. Ethnography and the Immersive Study of Power, Routledge, New York, 2018

Thornton, Sarah. Seven Days in the Art World, Granta, London, 2009

5. Acknowledgements

Production of artistic results

OFF THE RECORD
2019
video loop
4K video, colour, stereo sound, 11:23 min

performed together with: Bastian Trost
cinematography: Till Beckmann
2nd camera: Noam Gorbat
sound recording: Isabell Spengler
production assistance: Veronika Steininger
soundmix: Jochen Jezussek
colour grading: Till Beckmann

artistic research
artist book, 12 x 18 cm, 124 pages, 2021

graphic design: Delia Keller
publishing house: argobooks, Berlin

Reading out loud
2021
two channel video installation
4K video, colour, stereo sound, 54:30 min

script read by: Ruth Alexander Aitken, Neil Bennun, Ekaterina Bespalova, Bernt Bjørn, Trine Hild Blixrud, Tanya Busse, Andrea Conradsen, Lena Gudd, Kristina Junttila Valkoinen, Emil Rodrigo Jørgensen, Vsevolod Kovalevskij, John Sigurd Kristensen, Per Martinsen, Rurik Sjösten, Trond Peter Stamsøe, Eva Svaneblom.

camera: Anna Näumann, Håvard Nordgård
production assistance: Michael Thorne
sound recording: Nathanaël Gustin
lighting: Rob South
soundmix: Jochen Jezussek
colour grading: Till Beckmann

The Cloud
2021
one channel video installation
4K video, colour, 5:37 min (loop)

camera: Juliane Henrich
colour grading: Till Beckmann

Public readings of an abbreviated version of *artistic research*
08.04.2022, 17.00 - 17:45, part 1/3
21.04.2022, 17.00 - 17:45, part 2/3
06.05.2022, 17.00 - 17:45, part 3/3

script read by: Steinar Brovold Hauge, Anna-Caroline Kristensen, Kobie Nel, Arne Skaug Olsen, Caroline Stampone