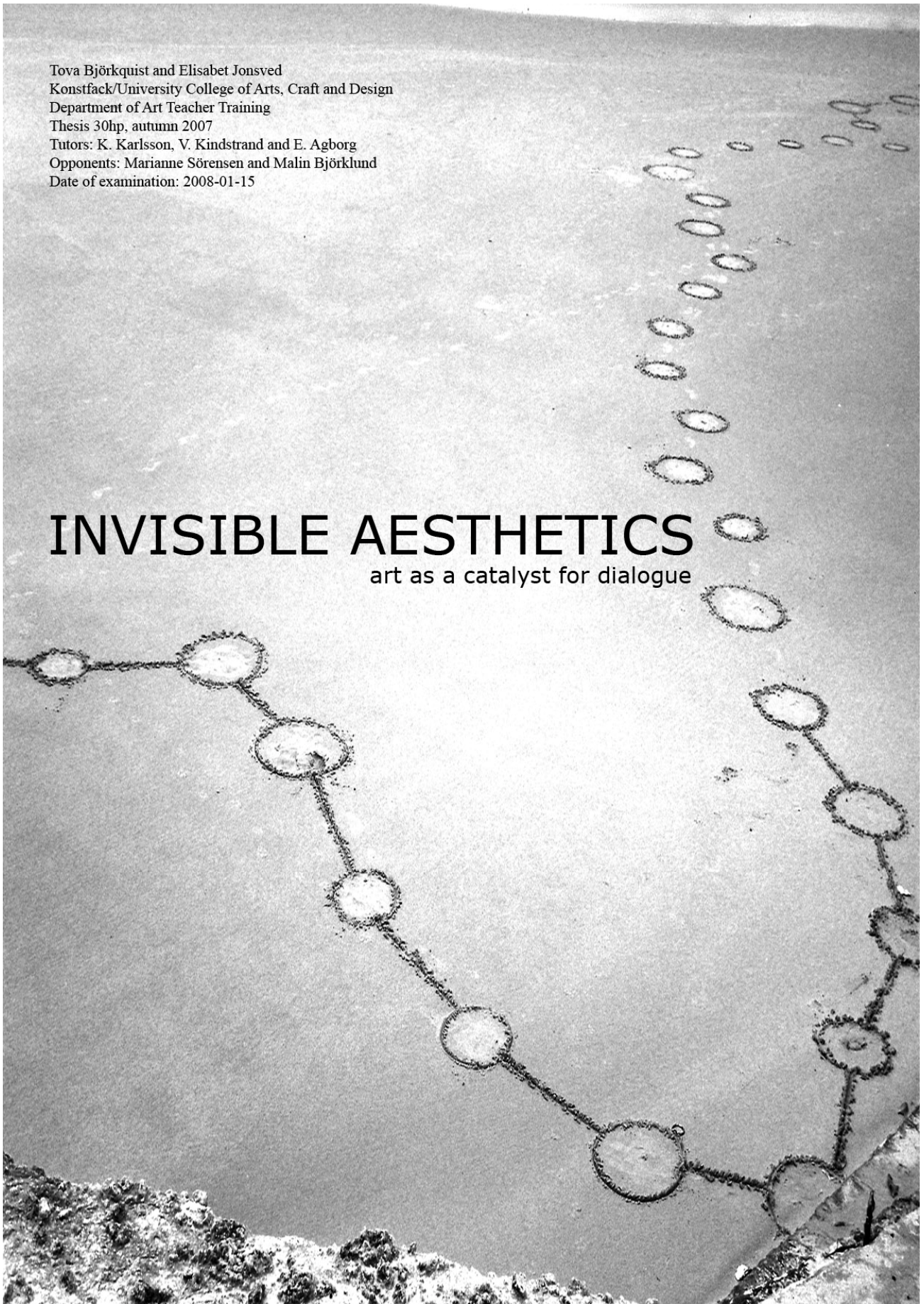


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INVISIBLE AESTHETICS

art as a catalyst for dialogue



Abstract

Through an exchange partnership between Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design and Wits University we had the opportunity to stay in Johannesburg from July to October 2007. We arrived in this city with a prior interest in questions relating to public space and the politics of access to these spaces. In a city which continues to be segregated and in many ways difficult to access, these questions felt even more relevant. Through artistic research and the theories of Michel Foucault and Rosalyn Deutsche we address the question: **How can art negotiate space in order to alter power relationships?**

Our research is based on artistic practices, namely our own experiments and interviews with the two members of the Trinity Session, Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter, in which we interrogate an aspect of one of their projects. We have analysed these artistic practices through three keywords: *public space*, *power relationships* and *embodied experience*. Deutsche stresses the notion of public space being based in and on conflict. Foucault describes power as something we always produce through our actions. Embodied experience can be seen as a kind of lasting knowledge in the span between unspoken experience and outspoken knowledge.

Some contemporary art projects have the capacity to offer people an embodied experience and through this, disturb the production of power because these mechanisms are working on the same level. Given Foucault's argument that power is not one big entity but rather a series of small practices, these disturbances can be seen as the embryo for something new. To put it simply: micro power can be fought by micro actions.

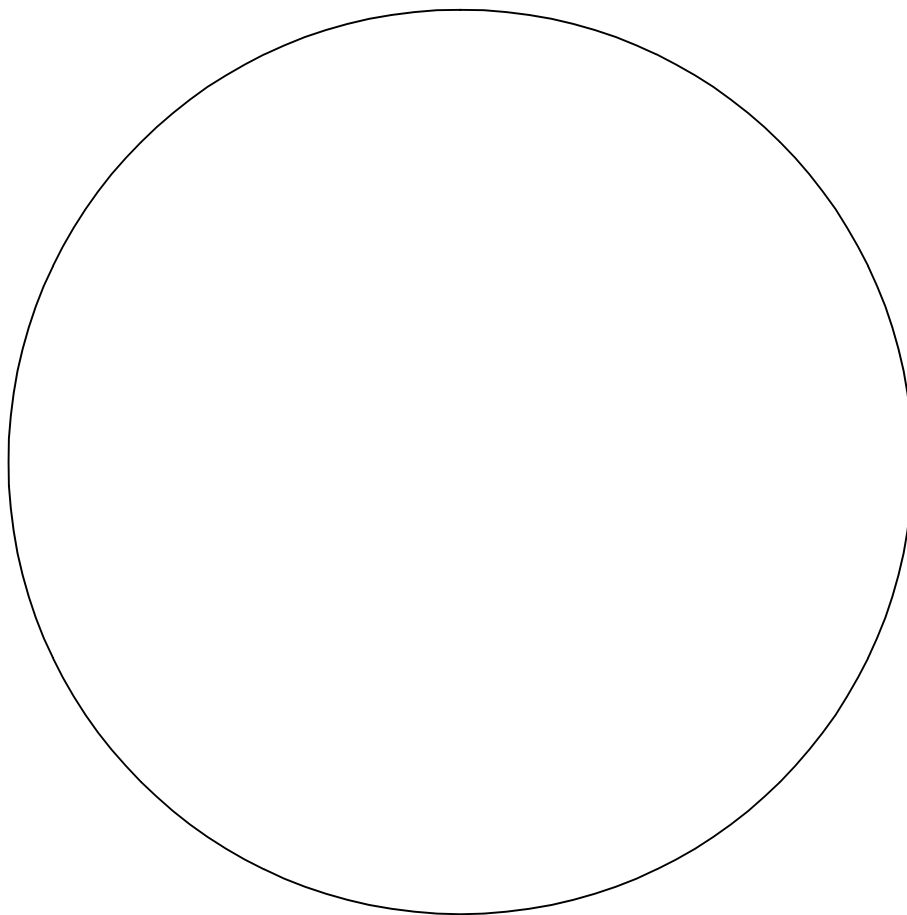
In the longer term we envisage these process-based art practices as having possibilities for the kind of work taking place in schools. We propose that this kind of contemporary art practice can make the art education of today more vivid. We also argue that the notion of embodied experience enriches pedagogical possibilities in school.

A CD is attached to this paper which includes documentation from our artistic research and from the final exhibition we installed at Konstfack. We didn't want to exhibit a representation of our work but rather attempted to produce an experience for people to demonstrate the notion of embodied experience. The form in which we had to work didn't allow us to initiate a happening. Therefore our exhibition became a necessary reconfiguration where we used similar strategies and artefacts to the ones we have described in the paper but we also encouraged people to participate by sending pictures to a cell phone exhibited in the gallery. In this way our exhibition was interactive at the same time as it showed strategies we have been working with in our exam thesis.

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to all those who gave us the possibility to complete this paper. We would like to give our special thanks to David Andrew, artist and senior lecturer in Fine Arts and Art Education at the Wits School of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, for all your help and encouragement.

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1. Introduction

1:1 Background

In February 2007 we completed a project in the streets of Stockholm. The theme for our investigation was: *the street as a channel for communication*. We were interested to know more about street art and graffiti. In addition to the theme for our research the project was also a way to develop methods to understand and investigate written theories through embodied experience. When we looked at the street as a channel for communication in terms other than to commute, lots of questions raised. What is public space? Who does it belong to? Who has access to this space? What does it mean to have access? These are questions closely connected to discourses about democracy and power relationships.

Through a scholarship from SIDA¹ we had the opportunity to stay thirteen weeks in Johannesburg from the middle of July to the beginning of October 2007. The questions that we already had started to think about became even more relevant in a city like Johannesburg. The system of apartheid imposed many forms of segregation, some of the most important being the controlling of space; rules about where people were allowed to stay and how they were allowed to move. Due to the affects of this former structure and the criminality that followed the post 1994 changes, people's mobility in the public space is limited, because of safety reasons but maybe because of particular mindsets. The city is still very segregated.

People we met, even before we left Sweden, warned us about Johannesburg. They told us to be careful and not walk in the streets. At a seminar we participated in before we left, arranged by SIDA, we learned how to release the safety belt if our car got hijacked and we thought we just had bought our flight ticket to death. When you don't know the city you can't question these kinds of warnings, but eventually you realize that with common sense you can manage to survive without hiding behind razor wire and locked car doors all the time. Still, we became aware of how we started to learn another way to negotiate space in Johannesburg other than in Stockholm.

¹ Swedish International Development cooperation Agency

One evening in the beginning of August we wanted to cross Mary Fitzgerald Square in Newtown, Johannesburg, but we couldn't. It wasn't that we physically couldn't, but the boundaries were in our minds. We saw the place we were going to, but the warnings we had listened to echoed in our minds and we got a taxi home instead. We recorded this sequence and it became the initiator for further investigations of the city. Through out our stay in South Africa (and later on in Mozambique) we experimented with artistic methods, trying to find new ways to negotiate space. Our experiments and results will play a big part in this paper. Δ^2

Some of the artists that we met in Johannesburg worked with issues of space and were using strategies that we were interested in and were close to how we had been working before. To continue with our field of research and combine it with a closer study of an art project, that we also had the opportunity to play a part in, became a natural start for the investigation of our exam paper.

1:2 Purpose

More artists have started to work outside the common art sphere. They no longer want to create art with a clear physical outcome. Issue-specific art or social interventions are terms that try to outline this field. When artists take on the role of catalyst for happenings and experiences, new possibilities arises. This is the kind of art we are interested in. We want to, through our own artistic research, and an art project made by the Trinity Session in Johannesburg, investigate how art can alter the power relationships that exist in the public space.

We are also interested in what contemporary art, such as relational art, interactive art and interventions in the public space, can give to schools in terms of pedagogy. This kind of art also opens up discussions about public space and democracy, which is something that has to be integrated in all subjects in school according to the national curriculum both in Sweden and South Africa.³

² See attached CD, the PowerPoint document

³ Lpo 94, Lpf 94, Stockholm, Utbildningsdepartementet, 1994, <http://www.skolverket.se>
National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (general) Visual Arts, Department of Education, South Africa, <http://www.education.gov.za/Curriculum/SUBSTATEMENTS/Visual%20Arts.pdf>, p.1

1:3 The question at issue

Through our own artistic experiments and Trinity Session's project *UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow* we will try to answer the question:

How can art negotiate space in order to alter power relationships?

To find an answer we will use three keywords as tools. These keywords, namely: *public space*, *power relationships* and *embodied experience*, will be defined and discussed further in this paper.

1:4 Methodology and delimitation

The research has two focal points. One is our own artistic research which is an ongoing process throughout the investigation. The other is the art project, *UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow* by the Trinity Session, which took place partly in Johannesburg in July 2007. To find answers to the question at issue, we have chosen to combine these two artistic practices with theories about public space and power relationships.

1:4:1 Artistic research

When strategies and methods for artistic research are still under development, we have taken part of the Swedish Research Council's Yearbook for 2007 of artistic practice-based research, in which they evaluate projects for research and development in the arts supported by the Research Council.⁴ When a given method of artistic research in one way must counteract its purpose, we allowed these projects to inspire us along ways where we can use artistic methods in order to achieve and explore a more complex answer to the given question.

The question at issue was formed when we started to understand Johannesburg through artistic strategies. Our artistic experiments are all comparatively different. Still, to utilize the opportunities and possibilities a place has to offer is something they all have in common. We did let questions that arose give inspiration to the paper and did allow for the visualization of the more theoretical problems through artistic experiments. We did analyse and investigate a place to see how we could use creativity in an interactive and relational way in order to make dialogues and relations happen. What we will present in this paper will be the artistic experiments that we find the most relevant to the question at issue.

⁴ Lind, Torbjörn (ed.) *Konstnärlig forskning under lupp: utvärdering, artiklar och projektrapporter/reportage*, Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet, 2007

1:4:2 Field study, UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow

UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow is an art project which says a lot about Johannesburg as a city. By finding strategies of deconstructing the city, trying to cross borders and experimenting with maps we found that Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter, the two members of the Trinity Session, worked in ways that we were familiar with. Their art project contributes to this paper as a field study, considering the fact that it took place partly in the city during the time of our exchange visit, and how we were able to participate in a particular part of the project.

1:4:3 Interview

We have also used an ethnographic method through a qualitative interview with the two artists Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter. Their voices feel like an important contribution to the discussion considering Johannesburg is their city of origin. They have worked as artists in the city for a long time and even though they might have differing or similar experiences to us, a comparison is interesting. The form and analyses of the interview are based on Jan Trost's *Kvalitativa intervjuer*.⁵ We have transcribed the interview to get an overview of the material and we have interpreted it with the chosen theories in mind. We read the interview with a focus based on the three keywords: *public space*, *power relationships* and *embodied experience*.

1:4:4 Working together

The interest in public space and public art is something we both have in common and it has also led to earlier collaborations. When we started the investigation in Johannesburg not being alone was presumed considering the fact that you couldn't walk in the streets on your own. Our collaboration formed the artistic research which designed the structure of this paper. We see the dialogue as a general theme which penetrates and shapes our whole paper. It's a dialogue between art and science, between our artistic experiments and the Trinity Session's project and the artistic practices are dialogues themselves. In the same spirit our collaboration is another dialogue. The projects we do together often seem to be about strategies to explore relationships between art and life. The art we do is based on relations, experiences and dialogues, which can also be seen in our collaboration.

⁵ Trost, Jan, *Kvalitativa intervjuer*, 3:e uppl., Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2005

1:5 Mapping the research field

Most of the books about relational art and social interventions in the public sphere have an American or British perspective. Suzanne Lacy's book *Mapping the terrain. New Genre Public Art*,⁶ was published in 1995. Other books in the same genre are Rosalyn Deutsche's *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, 1996, Malcolm Miles' *Art, space, and the city: public art and urban futures*, 1997, Nicolas Bourriaud's, *Relational Aesthetics*, 1998, Miwon Kwon's *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 2002. In Sweden an interest in the field is increasing. Most recently Catharina Gabrielsson finished her doctoral thesis 2007, *Att göra skillnad: det offentliga rummet som medium för konst, arkitektur och politiska föreställningar*. In 2006 Cecilia Andersson published her doctoral thesis: *Rådjur och raketer: gatukonst som estetisk produktion och kreativ praktik i det offentliga rummet*, where she looks at issues about public space and democracy and sees street art practice as an aesthetic learning process.

In the last ten years, ideas of alternative pedagogy such as multiliteracies, aesthetic learning processes and embodied experience has started to develop. The New London Group published an article about multiliteracies in 1996.⁷ In 2000 some of the members of this group developed their thesis in *Multiliteracies, Literacy and the Design of Social Futures*. Further ideas of alternative approaches in science is an increasing field of interest. Johan Asplund's book *Hur låter åskan?* published in 2003 and performative social science and artistic research are methods under development.

1:6 Disposition

We will start by explaining the theories in which we base our investigation. In the following section of the paper we will briefly present the artistic practices before we take a closer look at them with these theories in mind. In the next part of the paper we will discuss how we can read the analyses and what we can say through them. Finally we will connect our thoughts to education in schools and see if there are any possibilities in pedagogical terms. Attached together with this paper is a CD. Throughout the reading you will find this symbol: Δ which means that there is visual text combined with the written one. These are documentations from our artistic experiments – photographs and illustration that we see as a part of the dialogue developed between us during the process.

⁶ Lacy, Suzanne (red.), *Mapping The Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1995

⁷ The New London Group, "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures, Multiliteracy", *Harvard Educational Review*, spring 1996

2. Theory

In this paper we have two main theories which we will base our research on. One is Michel Foucault's ideas of power relationships and how knowledge is closely connected to power. The other one is Rosalyn Deutsche's theories about public space and how the idea of this term should be based on conflict.

2:1 Foucault and power relationship

Michel Foucault focuses on the history of prisons in his book *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.⁸ He describes how punishment has been developed from public executions during the 17th and 18th century to the prison system that we have today. Through this topic Foucault is discussing more than just the history of prisons. Just as in books that he wrote before and after this one, he is attacking science, institutions and what we are used to calling common sense. He argues that the history of bodies has been neglected. We know how bodies are affected biologically, for example through diseases, but we don't know how bodies have been adjusted and regulated through power relationships. The power he talks about is not an authoritarian power, built of consent and legitimacy but a power visualized through encircled fields of action, through definitions and through directions. This sort of power can be found in every situation and it expresses itself in ways other than for example, governmental power. It's about a power that only exists when it is performed. You can't see it as the privileges of an upper class but as an effect of the prominent position which this class occupies.⁹ This is a power which is action and not position.

When Foucault criticizes this power he is not doing it from above by pointing out a hierarchic structure, as we are used to. He is criticizing it from within, which means that we are both victims and perpetrators. We are the docile bodies which are adapting themselves to a pattern of motions which lay the foundation of a structure that we don't see and don't even think about. Discipline is the term that Foucault uses to describe how the order originates through the examination of the human body, and how the body further on is decomposed to be put together again. It's a political anatomy of the details.¹⁰ You can control the multiplicity by getting instruments that are able to give you an overview. The timetable is an example of such an instrument. It divides time up and puts it into a regular, recurrent course of events, something that becomes evident in, for example,

⁸ Foucault, Michel, *Övervakning och straff: fängelsets födelse*, Lund: Arkiv, 1975/2003

⁹ Ibid., p. xiif

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 141

schools and hospitals. When Foucault talks about how the body is related to time he pushes the limits even further when he describes a military march during the 18th century. These are the directions of an optimal march:

The length of the short step will be a foot, that of the ordinary step, the double step and the marching step will be two feet, the whole measured from one heel to the next; as for the duration, that of the small step and the ordinary step will last one second, during which two double steps would be performed; the duration of the marching step will be a little longer than one second. ¹¹

Foucault stresses how time penetrates the body and becomes one with the movements that are to be performed. This gives the power of meticulous control which is also able to penetrate the body.

This is how Foucault by detailed descriptions of situations as examples, slowly gives us a picture of the discipline that he has in mind. The march of the militaries and the bodies' movement in correlation to time is a good example of Foucault's discussion; instead of a power that is forced upon us to subdue, he rather describes a power that has already penetrated us and is active from within. The effect of that gives us a power that is reproducing itself through our actions, a structure of power that is built from inside.

This altered idea of power that Foucault gives us also means an altered idea of what truth and knowledge is. He states there is no knowledge that is not depending on power relationships, hence there is no power which is not depending on knowledge. The problem, as he puts it, is not how science is claiming to know the truth; the problem is how science in fact is producing truths.¹² A power relationship becomes evident if we take a visit to the doctor as an example. The doctor tries to establish a truth about his or her patient. Through the power of the institution that the doctor belongs to, and the knowledge that this one generally is considered to have in her or his possession, he or she is able to exercise particular power. Claims of power by professions become an extension of how branches of science try to take out a mining concession for domains to control. Hence the problem is also about the production of knowledge and the use of the same in general.

¹¹ Foucault, Michel, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1975/1979, p. 151

¹² Foucault (2003) p. xiif

How can we connect these thoughts to the art projects that we intend to examine in this paper?

These situations of micro power, as Foucault describes them, do not have the character of “everything or nothing”. This means if we want to fight this power we are able to do so without attacking the “whole power”. So resistance is always a possibility. In the Swedish translation of *Discipline and Punish* Sune Sunesson writes in the foreword of what it means if we accept that Foucault is right, even partially. Following on from this, Foucault’s book is not only a source of enlightenment, but should be recognized as educational material that allows the discovery of power everywhere. He asks the question: if we agree, don't we also have to take the consequences of this agreement through action?¹³ Following this, the next question to ask should be: in what way can we act then?

Through this brief account of how Foucault describes the successful entrenching of the power of discipline, we will get closer to the field of research that is ours in this context, namely art.

The success of the disciplinary power, Foucault states, is presumably connected to how it makes use of simple and modest mediums. He is separating three different tactics: the hierarchic overview, the normalized system of penalties and rewards and finally their united action in a specific process called the process of examination. What we will do now is to focus on the system of normalization to see what it is about and what kind of role art could play in this discourse that Foucault describes.

At the heart of all disciplinary systems functions a small penal mechanism. It enjoys a kind of judicial privilege with its own laws, its specific offences, its particular forms of judgement. The disciplines established an ‘infra-penalty’; they partitioned an area that the laws had left empty; they defined and repressed a mass of behaviour that the relative indifference of the great systems of punishment had allowed to escape.¹⁴

Once again the army figures as an example. Working hours, activity, behaviour, the way to utter oneself, the body and its sexuality; everything is regulated in different ways. This works with more or less subtle, fine drawn manners, or penalties if you want; loss of advantages, small humiliations, lighter flogging. The penalties could be defined as everything that makes the person in question aware of that he or she has done something wrong in any sense. Something that makes the person feel humiliated, embarrassed, met by cold or listlessness/indifference. The smallest constituent of behaviour can be made punishable.¹⁵ The constant working system of punishment is through its extension a system that normalizes.

¹³ Foucault (2003) p. xvi

¹⁴ Foucault (1979) p. 179

¹⁵ Foucault (2003) p. 179

The soul is the prison of the body. In his foreword Sunesson explains that it wasn't until the third time he read the book that he really understood what Foucault meant by this. It is not our body that is limiting us in life, it is the sense. We are making obstacles and rules in our minds and believe that this is how it must be, should be and are to be, when it's only structures of thinking. If we are able to open up for new thoughts we are able to embrace the ambiguousness which gives new opportunities. We can discover a world which is not static and objective but in constant motion.

To work with ambiguousness, call into question, ask new questions, stretch what we are used to and take for granted, is a common field for artists. To break the habits that normalize and ask new questions is something that is often done in the name of art. Under the cloak of art it is easier to break habits and try something new. Maybe this mustn't be a privilege for artists only. Through relational art and social interventions people who normally don't work with art are involved. We will continue with a brief historical overview of this kind of interactive and relational art to put our own thoughts and projects in a context.

2:2 An historical overview of relational art and social interventions

To make it easier to understand the art discourse in which we are working we will now provide a short historical overview of public art through to what has been described as new genre public art.

During the 1960s, and the minimalist movement, many issues related to the essence of art were raised. This led to debates around how different kinds of art are categorized such as performances, land-art, process-based art, installation art, conceptual art, community art etc.¹⁶ It was during this time that the idea of a potential new outdoor exhibition space developed. As a strategy to revitalize the inner cities, art was seen as a way to reclaim and humanize the urban environment. Art that was previously only to be seen in museums, galleries and private collections was now shown in public plazas, parks and corporate headquarters.¹⁷ Traditional statues and memorials in the streets proclaimed the manufacture of a national and cultural identity and also existed as a form of public education.¹⁸ Instead of a classic sculpture or a monument, contemporary artists began to realise their

¹⁶ Gabrielsson, Catharina, *Att göra skillnad: det offentliga rummet som medium för konst, arkitektur och politiska föreställningar*, Stockholm: Arkitekturskolan, Kungliga Tekniska högskolan, 2007, p. 278

¹⁷ Lacy (1995) p. 21

¹⁸ Miles, Malcom, *Art, space, and the city: public art and urban futures*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.15

pieces outdoors. People who usually did not visit museums now had the opportunity to see contemporary art in public places even though the art was still more an expression of the artist's personal manner than a mode of expression of the contemporary society. But at this time public art was still widely understood as a sculpture in a park, or a relief on a wall.

Other artists went further. Instead of just putting museum objects outdoors, they began to take advantage of these new possibilities. They started to see the work of art as one language and the site itself as another language. "Site-specific" was a new term that described art that communicated directly with the space where it was exhibited.¹⁹ But still there were no differences to a museum when it came to inviting the audience to participate or engage with the artwork.

One of the most discussed pieces of site-specific work is *Tilted Arc*, made by Richard Serra in the early 1980s. A wall-like steel sculpture in the Federal Plaza in New York, it forced people to make a detour when they wanted to cross the area. In contrast to the idea of public art as something that should contribute to a harmonious city environment Serra's work was disturbing. He wanted to show that public spaces aren't accessible for everyone, contrary to what we generally think. The audience were not only spectators but directly involved with the issues that Serra wanted to point out. Due to strong protests from people who only saw *Tilted Arc* as an annoying obstacle, the art piece was removed 10 years later and at the same time ruined when its interaction with the place disappeared. Serra's piece can be seen as a starting point when it comes to public art that deals directly with issues about public space and related problems.²⁰ Δ

Later on, during the late 1980s, the commercialization and privatization of public space became an important question for a lot of artists. They started to work in public spaces with a new kind of focus inspired by social activism. Since the 1960s people within movements like women's rights, the black power and national liberation movements all over the world had been working with issues, and sometimes similar strategies, as these artists. They were seen as political activists but now this field started to break new ground as it engaged with the art sphere.²¹ Suzanne Lacy describes it as social interventions, based on conceptions of communication, collaboration, relationships and

¹⁹ Kwon, Miwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: The MIT Press, 2002, p.75

²⁰ Ibid., p. 72ff

²¹ Lacy (1995) p. 26f

political intentions, as a new kind of public art, radically separated from what we are used to thinking of as public art. She invented the term *new genre public art* in the early 1990s. Lacy claims that new genre public art breaks new ground by shifting the emphasis from artist to audience, from product to process, from product to reception. She meant that a new kind of sensibility was developed where audience, social strategy and effectiveness were in focus, something that was unique for visual art, as it was known at that time.²²

“The new genre public artist often acts as a catalyst for other people’s creativity, political imagination being perhaps as valued as drawing skill.”²³ A typical strategy of this kind of site-specific art is to start from a physical place and analyse the power structures before an art object is made. New genre public art often starts with a discourse and from that the artists act or interact in strategic places.²⁴

With this a new arena for artists now open, more artists started to work outside the common art sphere and created art without a clear physical outcome. It became possible to work in a more integrated way with other disciplines or to work directly with an audience where the relationship with the audience could be seen as the art itself. The idea of the artist as an outsider who must create for her or his own well being is no longer relevant in these situations. As such, some artists attempted to move away from what was seen as an isolated art scene and together with other people, resolve to make a difference in society.²⁵

Nicolas Bourriaud writes in *Relational Aesthetics* about how to see the aesthetic in relations. He sees this as natural development, in a society where we tend to have less and less contact with other human beings that we don’t know. But more importantly contemporary art becomes a political project when it makes the relational into an issue.²⁶ He describes relational art as ”A set of practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space.”²⁷

²² Kwon (2002) p. 100ff

²³ Miles (1997) p. 8ff

²⁴ Gabrielsson (2007) p. 287ff

²⁵ Malmquist, Karin and Olof-Ors, Matilda (ed.) *Samtidskonst för lärare och andra intresserade*, Stockholm: Lärarförbundets förlag, 2005, p. 73

²⁶ Bourriaud, Nicolas, *Relational Aesthetics*, Les presses du réel, 1998/2002, p. 17

²⁷ Ibid., p. 113

With this kind of art that lack a physical outcome, the problem of value emerges - you can no longer value art with the same criteria when an object is no longer the outcome.²⁸ This is what Grant H. Kester discusses in *Conversation pieces: Community and communication in modern Art*. He claims that there are “/.../lack of resources in modern art theory for engaging with projects that are organized around a collaborative, rather than specular, relationship with the viewer.”²⁹

In this section of the paper we have been written about public art and new genre public art. Before we present our artistic practices we want to look closer at the term *public* and consider different ideas concerning public space and what it looks like.

2:3 Deutsche and public space

In *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*³⁰ Rosalyn Deutsche has combined theories about urban design and art, to discuss the term public space. She uses feminist and post-modern theories. We have chosen to focus on how she defines space and public space. These definitions will then be used in the following section of the paper.

Deutsche uses the term space, not as a physical place, but as a discursive sphere which we create. Space can be a city, a park or an exhibition but it can also be a work of art, a discussion or an identity. The term public space is mostly used as the physical places you have access to without paying anything, places outdoors like streets, plazas and parks. It is connected to democracy and the right of speech and manifestations. Deutsche sees it in another way. She opens up the possibility that the idea of the “public” not only has to be connected to the access of a physical place, it is something that every space has the opportunity to become. A place isn’t public because you can walk there; it becomes public when a conflict arises. She argues that we should see the notion of public space as something that is produced and maintained through conflicts. The production of conflict is the prerequisite for the existence and growth of public space.

We interpret her use of the term conflict, as a disturbance, a crack in the everyday life, which becomes political in the way that it throws light on and questions power relationships.

²⁸ Gabrielsson, p. 278ff

²⁹ Kester, Grant H., *Conversation pieces: Community and communication in modern Art* Berkely: University of California Press, 2004, p. 11

³⁰ Deutsche, Rosalyn, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England, MIT Press, 1996

According to Deutsche, public space is often used as a harmonious image that conceals and justifies exclusion. From both the political left and right there is an idea of public space as a harmonious homogenous space, which renders people associated with conflicts and problems unwelcome. Examples of this are: closed parks at night and shopping malls, which are able to exclude people, from the homeless to skateboarders. It's an idea of how exclusions make public space free from conflict and provocation. Deutsche's opinion is the opposite: "I contend that conflict, far from the ruin of democratic public space, is the condition of its existence".³¹

You can't determine exactly how to use a public space, to make it stay public, because it is important to remember that the nature of the public is a question that always has to be asked and never has a fixed answer. Public can shift according to time and culture. This is what Deutsche means when she explains public as an ongoing discourse, a conflict that is the core of public space and democracy itself. Plenty of areas in the city today were designed when there was a different understanding of democracy. This may be one of the reasons why it sometimes can be difficult to see how it's possible to make a democratic public space, where democracy is taken as something without symbolic form and is based on conflicts and uncertainty.³²

If we use the theories about public space for public art as well, it doesn't need to be an object in a specific place, or something that is created for a certain audience. Public art now becomes a tool that can be used to construct the public by arousing an interest and involvement in the political discussion.³³ Public art, as public space, connotes openness, access and participation, which makes the discourse about public art also a question of democracy. But as we write above, if you tend to see public space as a harmonious unity, "democratic" pieces of public art are often not disturbing. They don't become obstacles in people's daily routes like *Tilted Arc*. Instead they remain as monuments and statues, integrated in the milieu as benches and playgrounds.

The problems of public space are about power relationships and how power is produced. Hence it is closely connected to Foucault's ideas of power in discursive fields.

³¹ Deutsche (1996) p. xiii

³² Gabrielsson, Catharina, *Att göra skillnad: det offentliga rummet som medium för konst, arkitektur och politiska föreställningar*, English summary, Web edition: <http://www.diva-portal.org/kth/abstract.xsql?dbid=4271>

³³ Deutsche, Rosalyn, lecture "The Question of Public Space" at Tisch School of the Arts, Department of Photography, 1998, http://www.thephotohistoryinstitute.org/journals/1998/rosalyn_deutsche.html

2:4 Multiliteracy and embodied experience

Cope and Kalantzis write in the foreword to *Multiliteracies, Literacy and the Design of Social Futures*:

Our view of the human mind, society and learning is based on the assumption that the human mind is embodied, situated and social. That is, human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural and material contexts.³⁴

The authors argue that the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world calls for broader approaches than what traditional language-based literacy offers. Teaching and learning should be more about multiple modes. Even though writing and speaking is very important, visual, spatial, performative and sonic modes shouldn't be forgotten. We live our lives multimodally and switch modes all the time and following Cope and Kalantzis this is also how education should operate. An embodied experience is about doing things and getting involved, not just listening or getting information transferred. The probability of actually remembering and understanding something are greater compared to a disembodied experience.

In this paper we will use the term embodied experience. We see it as a kind of knowledge which is in the span between wordless experience and more outspoken knowledge. It's about being able to experience something and then take a step back to reflect on it.

³⁴ Cope, Bill and Kalantzis, Mary (eds) *Multiliteracies: literacy learning and the design of social futures*, London ; Routledge, 2000, p. 30

3. Investigation

3:1 Presentation of the artistic practices

3:1:1 Artistic research

In the text below a description of our artistic experiments will follow. We will present it chronologically with a main focus on the three projects that we have found the most relevant. It starts in Johannesburg, continuing with a holiday in Mozambique and ends back in Sweden.

Here we take the opportunity to refer the reader back to the introductory section of the essay and how our artistic investigation about Johannesburg and space started after recording the situation at Mary Fitzgerald's square, where we "couldn't" walk 200 meters across an empty square.

After that incident we started to become more aware of how we negotiated the space around us. We analysed it as artists by taking a step back to see what we could do with the situation that occurred. To begin with we mapped our everyday lives by taking photographs. We wanted to see what would happen when we were able to visualize our routines. One of the things that we realized was that we wanted to extend our living space. We wanted to get out of the closed spaces in which we felt we were spending our time. Δ

Johannesburg: envelopes in the streets

As a strategy to overcome the invisible obstacle of getting out on the streets we gave ourselves a task. We put up envelopes addressed *to you...* in the streets of Johannesburg. Inside there was a card with the text: *Tell me a place in Johannesburg that I should visit and what I should do there, send an sms to:* (a contact number to us). The envelopes were marked with different numbers and we photographed them all to be able to track the answers we received.

We wanted to get an experience of the streets in the city and through this task we added a relational dimension to it. We used the thrilling feeling of treasures and secrets; the excitement of finding something unexpected only addressed *to you...* We gave people the possibility of experiencing something new by finding these envelopes and we also gave them the opportunity to contact us. Every time the phone rang or said beep, the heart took an extra beat, like being in love. It was like having a secret friend. We got some answers and always replied to say thanks. What we learned

most of all was that we could walk around in the city, even if it wasn't in the most dangerous parts. We didn't have to be scared, just aware. We felt that we were not only spectators of the street life of Johannesburg; we appropriated the streets and became participants. Δ

Maputo: can we move one place to another?

On our first day in Maputo, Mozambique, we strolled along Avenida Ho Chi Min, passed Avenida Karl Marx and just between this street and Avenida Vladimir Lenin we found Avenida Olof Palme which stretched out all the way to Avenida Mao Tse Tung. *How did the Swedish prime minister get here?*, we asked ourselves, *and how can we use his presencet?* We started to think about the possibilities of connecting this street in Maputo with the eponymous street in Stockholm. Were there any more similarities than just the name? Our thoughts resulted in a walk where we recorded the sound of the street and experienced Avenida Olof Palme through our ears. Back in Stockholm we walked along Olof Palmes gata, listening to the sound of the “same” street in Maputo. It was a discreet project with a potential that we one day would like to develop. Δ

Tofu: beach life

The beach in Tofu, Mozambique, where we were during sixteen days of studying and holiday, was inviting. It was inviting to just lie there sunbathing and maybe go for a swim but in low tide the big untouched space of sand also invited us in a different way. We didn't know what our intentions were - we just felt that the big open space and the soft material had opportunities we should try to use somehow. We started to experiment randomly with large prints in the sand. Some days later we followed up the ideas that emerged through this action. We asked the local people we met at the beach if we could trace the outlines of their shadow in the sand and we also invited them to draw our own shadows. With simple methods we transformed the beach into a meeting place where we created something together on the same terms. The prints became something more than just the funny shapes that the sun at its zenith produced - something that might be hard to put in words. Δ

Stockholm: back in Sweden

We continued our experiments when we got back to Sweden. We didn't want to do a comparison between the countries but couldn't help to try both the way of mapping our everyday life through photographs and continue with the envelope project in Stockholm. This time the envelope action gave more answers, which made us experience things we otherwise wouldn't have done. Δ

3:1:2 UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow

The question of public space and accessibility is relevant for every city, but as we have mentioned earlier, the issues of public space become even more urgent in a city like Johannesburg. As foreigners we experienced how the accessibility, or the "lack of accessibility", to city areas penetrated our everyday life. Eventually we understood that this wasn't only our experience as students from Sweden: it's more or less the reality for everyone in the city. Johannesburg is such a diverse city; not staying in your own neighbourhood means becoming a foreigner.

Hobbs' and Neustetter's art project *UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow* started with a situation where they were treated as tourists in their own home town.

Our project was inspired by being confronted by a foreign African national who told us not to go into Hillbrow because he thought we were foreigners in our own country. We then asked some people to draw us maps because we were going to their country and we were gonna use the maps to say hello to people they had lost contact with.³⁵

This is how Stephen Hobbs describes the project which started in May 2006. Hobbs means that anyone who understands the contextual issues and the discourse understands the power of that interaction. It's the potential of the project that excites people.

Neustetter and Hobbs explain how the city has changed radically over the last twenty years since the apartheid era. Hillbrow is one of the areas in Johannesburg which has the worst reputation. After the first democratic elections in 1994, the area changed radically. From being an area where wealthy people lived Hillbrow deteriorated as it was taken over by people like drug lords, criminals, prostitutes and refugees.

Considering the fact that the majority of the poor people in South Africa are black, many areas of Johannesburg are, as Hobbs explains it, formally or informally owned by black people at the street level and as white males (Hobbs and Neustetter) they are a part of an older privileged order.

Neustetter explains:

You don't just come through the city and see people like you every day. You actually see people that's not like you, that's what South Africa is, you experience that, and how do you deal with that? How do you communicate in that kind of stress?³⁶

³⁵ Interview with Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter, the two members of *The Trinity Session*. Johannesburg, South Africa, (2007-10-02)

³⁶ Ibid.

Hobbs answers the question: by breaking down the barriers. He says that if you want to work in the city as an artist you have to learn a new language, which means finding strategies to be able to connect to each other. You have to overcome boundaries of communication or identity.

Their strategy in this case started by meeting immigrants from Senegal on the border to Hillbrow. Inspired by the peculiar feeling of being treated as tourists in their home town, Hobbs and Neustetter went back to Hillbrow, interviewed a group of Senegalese immigrants and let them draw maps of their home town, Dakar, from their memories of their home city. They travelled to Dakar and tried, through the maps, to find relatives and friends of the immigrants in Hillbrow.

The project has been exhibited in different ways in different contexts. When they had a show in the gallery of University of Johannesburg they chose to include a walk along with the exhibition. This was during the time we stayed in the city and, together with about twenty people, we had the opportunity to participate in this walk. The walk to Hillbrow and back was a simple act in one way, but considering the context in which it was done it was a special occasion and an unusual act.

3:2 Analyses

3:2:1 Space

To be able to disturb power relationships requires a field, a discourse to work within. This is where the term space becomes relevant. We have chosen to remove the word public from in front of space in this chapter. Whether a space is public or not is something we will discuss later on in this paper. We will first describe the places and continue with how we worked with them as spaces, which is the discourse around the place.

Tofu is a small village by the sea, Lonely Planet describes it as; “you are planning to go there for a few days but end up staying there for weeks”, because of the quietness and relaxed atmosphere. The beach, kilometres of empty sand dunes, is a place everyone has access to. The beach as a space, in our minds, is a place for relaxing and holiday. For people who live by the beach the discourse is different, the beach is a part of their daily life and also a resource. The beach and the sea are mostly a place for fishing and since the arrival of tourists it is also a chance to earn some extra money.

Avenida Olof Palme is a quiet street in the middle of Maputo, the buildings around were primarily apartments. This experiment started by seeing the name of the street. We didn't know anything about the place but the street sign told us that Olof Palme had left a mark here somehow, a mark that might be more than just the letters on the sign. Even though we didn't know much about the discourse we could tell that this space had an obvious connection to a space in Stockholm. Some kind of discourse connected this street in Maputo with Olof Palmes gata in our hometown.

The streets of Johannesburg were different depending on where you were in the city. In the rich areas the streets were mostly made for driving a car. There were pavements and zebra crossings, but the green lights for pedestrians were seldom green long enough to cross the street and you could hardly find any shops along the way. In poorer areas, like the inner city and Hillbrow, it was different. Here so-called hawkers (salesmen in the streets) occupied the pavements and sold things to people passing by. The entrance of the shops faced the streets, and the streets were more accessible to the people passing by.

As Deutsche claims, space is created out of a discourse. Which means that it is possible to create a space by the way we are talking about it, or change the space by the way we negotiate it. As a different approach to our encounter with the Avenida Olof Palme we entered the streets of Johannesburg from a discursive perspective, with the stories we had been told for more than a month in Johannesburg, as luggage. This made our experience of the streets, putting up envelopes, more nervous than going into the "famous bad place" which people sometimes call Hillbrow, because we had only been in Johannesburg for three days when we participated in the walk. By this time we had heard the warnings, but we didn't know the discourse, and because we are used to walking in Sweden, it didn't feel that special. The words became warnings in our heads but out of context. They didn't become anything felt in our minds and bodies.

One example of how to create space is how people not living in Hillbrow talk about the area. The stories that are told are often based on hearsay, from people who don't know the area from inside - they might not even have been there. As such the discourse of the Hillbrow space is largely created from outside. Hobbs explains:

Because the “stories” that are told is that stuff will be stolen, you will be mugged or something like that. Those are stories. It doesn't mean that it is the daily truth, even if many bad things happen there in ongoing bases. /.../you don't go there naively, you don't go there thinking: Ah I'm just gonna walk into Hillbrow and everyone should accept me because this is a democracy, it is not how it works. The intervention, the strategy needs to be thought about, both in terms of the project, which is about overcoming boundaries of communication or identity etc. And about familiarizing yourself with places that have changed so dramatically that the type of intervention will allow you to come into that place in an unhostile way, in a friendly way.³⁷

So even if a place is physically accessible, it doesn't mean you feel free to go there. The discourse of access can be and has been discussed a lot in terms of gender, class, and ethnicity and in South Africa also in terms of race because of the remains of apartheid. Of twenty participants on the walk, about fifteen were white. This made our appearance in Hillbrow and our unfamiliarity with the neighbourhood even more evident, considering the fact that almost everybody in Hillbrow is black. A visual disturbance appeared along with us and the segregation became even more unavoidable when we tried to break the barriers. Still, inspite of all the stories that are told about Hillbrow we experienced a friendly but surprised approach and the only hostility we felt was from a dog.

3:2:2 Power relationships

As strangers in a city with a bad reputation the act of walking out in the streets of Johannesburg became a special experience in itself. By adding a task to it our senses became even more aware and attentive. We became totally focused on how we walked, where we were looking, what happened around us and so on. We tried to act in a self-confident and purposeful way. When our motions had to break the prevalent customs we tried to make them as discrete as possible:

One person walks in front of the other: with small, discrete movements the tape is removed to attach the envelope on the chosen place. She sees a lamppost and makes a smooth motion, close to her body, and sticks the envelope on the chosen place, preferably without limiting the speed of the walk considerably. The other person is closing in from behind with a distance of about 10 meters. For the documentation of where in the city the envelope is put up she switches the camera on already in her bag and takes a snapshot from her hip, before the motive gets to close. This should also be made without making the speed of her step slow down.

When taking a step back to reflect we see this project as an example of Foucault's idea of the pattern of motions which lay the foundation of a power structure. By not only getting out in the streets but also giving ourselves a task we were able to experience the unwritten rules of behaviour that you have to learn in the streets of Johannesburg, in an overly explicit way.

³⁷ Interview with Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter, (2007-10-02)

Every day on the beach of Mozambique children wanted to sell us bread, bracelets, bags, shells etc. We had the same dialogue every day: - *I give you a good price*, - *No, thanks*, - *A very good price*, - *No, I've already bought one yesterday!* Our different positions made us meet in this way as salesman and buyer or local and tourist, poor and rich, but according to Foucault we should first of all look at the action; selling and buying (or not selling and not buying). When we invited these people to draw shadows in the sand together with us we engaged in an action together which made us all change positions. Now we were playing together and suddenly we belonged to a totally different discourse than the meeting between a salesman and a buyer. The doctor and her or his patient belong to a discourse with a certain power relationship, so do the salesman and his customer. Still, there always exists a possibility to change discourses and meet each other in a new way. We laughed together and took it in turns to draw each other's shadows. We don't know what has happened since we left, but the day we drew inspired other people to do the same and the activities on the beach were no longer just swimming and football - there were also a lot of drawings that were erased by the tide.

In contrast to the situation at Mary Fitzgerald Square when psychological barriers prevented us from crossing the square that night, the psychological barriers which prevent people from walking into Hillbrow were broken the day Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter had their show at University of Johannesburg and we continued with the walk to Hillbrow. A simple act made us appear in the streets of Hillbrow and that act meant more than just the physical dimensions of appearance and exhaustion:

Our walk was more than just a physical workout (which it definitely turned out to be after six hours on our feet). It was also much more than just a tourist sightseeing tour. The journey was a dialogue - literally with each other, but also with the people and flavours and colours that make up Hillbrow. It was a dialogue that seemed to shape between our feet and the ground we were walking on, working its way upwards as we continued on our journey.³⁸

This is how a journalist who participated on the walk expressed her experience. The walk made it possible for us to have that dialogue which shaped our experience. The dialogue, or maybe *dialogues* in plural were the small actions which reshaped our positions in the discursive field which is Hillbrow.

³⁸ Lambrecht, Bette, "Kuns as verkenning as kuns" *The Beeld*, 19th of July 2007

3:2:3 Embodied experiences

The first time we passed the gates from the campus without a car we were quite nervous, before the thrilling feeling transformed into pure excitement. It was like when you play one of these games where someone is chasing you as soon as you leave the safe zone. According to everything we had heard about the streets of Johannesburg someone might sooner or later be after us. We tried to notice everything that happened around us. Every motion was conscious; how we tried to look secure, what people around us did, how many steps behind someone was, when and how we picked up the camera. In the beginning we were aware of every movement, but after a few situations out in the street our bodies started to acclimatize and we felt how they almost analysed the area by themselves. We became more relaxed, we could talk about other things and at the same time unconsciously notice what was happening around us. The more experiences of the street we got the more we could rely on our own intuition. We started to learn the language of the streets. People can give you advice but some knowledge is hard or even impossible to learn unless through your own experiences.

We just didn't want to receive; we wanted to give experiences as well. For us it was exciting just to be in this new city with everything that it brought with it. In contrast to us, other people walk these streets everyday. What do you remember from your own way to work or school during the years gone by? To walk the same way every day makes you forget, but what if something one day isn't the same? If something changes, like finding an envelope addressed *to you...*, you might remember that day. The experiences received by the people who found the envelopes are the other side of the story, the side that only they can tell and we can guess.

When we walked the streets we realized how you interpret the surroundings mostly by sight - you watch out for cars, and look where to step. Recording the sounds of Avenida Olof Palme made us interpret the area by sound. The quiet street created attentiveness when we tried to sharpen our hearing senses. Some children were playing in a backyard, some men were drinking beer behind a fence, and someone was laying a table inside a house. We became aware of activities that were out of sight. It was an intimate experience, which was all the time accompanied by the sound of our own steps. Back in Stockholm we walked along Olof Palmes gata with the sound of the street in Maputo in our ears. It felt close and distant at the same time and the dimensions stretched when Tova coughed at the same time as she was coughing in the recorded sound and when a car in Stockholm directly answered a car hooting in Maputo.

The beach in Tofu was about a few things, like swimming, diving, surfing, sun-bathing and selling and sometimes people playing football. One day the beach in Tofu was about drawing shadows in the sand. It was an action that above all was about meetings. Some people didn't want to join us but other people understood the idea immediately and started to pose for us. The expression of hesitation in a boy's face before he decides to join or the happiness when someone else takes a step back to see his shadow temporarily fixed in the sand, these are moments that linger in our minds. Probably all of us were surprised by the amusement we felt through the simple act of drawing the outlines of our shadows. It wasn't our technical skills that made the situation special, because we didn't need any, it was the unexpected in the happening that separated this day from other days, and which made us meet in a new way. We had decorated the beach together and after this event we shared the same experience and memory. The art had been a catalyst for the dialogue, which made us connect to each other in a new way.

Hobbs and Neustetter describe their roles as artists in Trinity Session as something similar to the ambassadorial, which is based on getting experiences and new perspectives.

.../places in Africa are interesting to go to, they even exist in our town. Our job is to show you how to experience them. And that's kind of ambassadorial, that's like you got a mission, right? You are a missionary: come with us, convert you to God, it will be great. That's an agenda, we want to share that. To say we have had these cool experiences in these places, we know that you are scared, come with us, we'll show you how to handle it, it'll be fun. And if it is, it will change your perception of the place.³⁹

They started the project *UrbaNet: Hillbrow/Dakar/Hillbrow* from their own experiences of a place, and continued in a playful but serious way when they thought of what to do with their ideas. Hobbs and Neustetter travelled to Dakar and tried, through maps, to find friends and relatives of the immigrants in Hillbrow. By physically doing this action they received a kind of knowledge that they wouldn't have been able to reach in any other way, as Hobbs explains:

You enter a new cultural dimension, all of a sudden. By the time we came back from Senegal we now understood how important that place is, in the city of Joburg, for Senegalese who are living away from home. This is a place where they can come and connect with their religious identity, their popular culture/.../⁴⁰

Through their trip to Senegal Neustetter and Hobbs received a greater understanding of why the area in Hillbrow is so important for the Senegalese immigrants. But how do you pass that embodied experience on to an audience?

³⁹ Interview with Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter, (2007-10-02)

⁴⁰ Ibid.

The project has been exhibited in different ways in different contexts. When they had a show in the University of Johannesburg gallery they chose to include a walk along with the exhibition, to try to give the audience the experience of what the project was about, not just in a visual way. Because of the impossibility of physically walking to Dakar, the walk was more of a symbolic walk to Dakar, to the Senegalese population in Hillbrow. By walking through the city we were able to see the differences between parts of Johannesburg. When we stood at the top of Constitution Hill, literally on the boundary of Hillbrow, you could see how the physical appearance of the city changed. This part of the city has deteriorated due to long periods of neglect, both by the city officials and by people who own property there. We went into Hillbrow and had lunch at a Senegalese restaurant where we had the opportunity to meet people in the neighbourhood.

.../by doing a walk we thought you get a better understanding of the exhibition because the exhibition is made of visual art language, installation, drawings, maps and photography about a place and experiences told in different forms. If you are going to have the experience you don't need to go back to Dakar exhibition at the University of Joburg and understand exactly what each work is about, but you now have a sense because you participated in a social exchange and that is a way of making the interpretation of art a better process for people who don't know the context or whatever because you got straight into the problem.⁴¹

Hobbs is saying that telling the same things in different languages gives more possibilities to understand what it is about, you understand it in a more complex way. After the walk Hobbs expressed a similar feeling to our own when we had drawn shadows in the sand in Tofu. Here he explains the feeling after the walk:

I'm speaking for myself, I think it's the same for Marcus, when we were walking back; the feeling...! Of having done it. The physical feeling of walking, because it was a bloody long walk. Just the physical experience was good but as you feel more tired you also feel more inspired, you realized what an incredible action that was and that we didn't know what we would feel until we did it and that was incredible because like with Ali and the other guys that were with us .../ They were raving, we all were: fuck! This is the best thing! South Africa is so cool and brilliant, we are all one! That's the euphoria of the moment. We didn't expect that.⁴²

You can try to describe it in words and you can read about it but only the real experience can tell what it is really about.

⁴¹ Interview with Stephen Hobbs and Marcus Neustetter, (2007-10-02)

⁴² Ibid.

4. Conclusions

4:1 Results and interpretation

4:1:1 Positive conflicts

Just because a plaza is nice and tidy and there are designed benches to sit on doesn't mean that everything is fine. Conflicts are often present even if they are reduced to silence. That state of status quo is often understood as harmony. Deutsche emphasizes the conflict as a presumption for a space to become public. If the conflicts are there, the importance must be to throw light on them. A conflict is mostly seen as something negative, but it can be seen as something positive considering how it shows a world in constant motion and possibilities for a democratic development. This is closely connected to the power relationships that Foucault is describing. The purpose of this paper is to answer the question: How can art negotiate space in order to alter power relationships? We will look more closely at the possibilities the notion of conflict has, to give us an answer to the given question.

4:1:2 Conflicts made by artistic strategies

The art projects that are presented in this paper, are examples of how art can create a conflict. Not a conflict in negative terms but more as a crack in the idea of the everyday life, a disturbance. An envelope addressed *to you...* in the street corner, shadows drawn on the beach of Mozambique, white faces appearing in the streets of Hillbrow, all of these are examples of cracks in the everyday life. With artistic strategies we added something to the ordinary life, something that makes it possible for an experience to linger in our minds. The outcome when we talk about this kind of art is not objects: the outcome is this lasting feeling, this embodied experience.

4:1:3 Micro power fought by micro actions

Hobbs and Neustetter received knowledge about immigrants in Hillbrow when they went to Dakar. The participants, as well as people in the streets, received an experience when we walked together to Hillbrow. When we put up envelopes in Johannesburg we had an experience, and those who found them as well, and the same goes for the drawing of shadows on the beach in Tofu. It's easy to see these actions as something that doesn't make much difference, something to smile at, which now only exists in some people's memories. Memories which will soon fade away. Is there nothing lasting if the only outcome is an embodied experience? We want to stress how these actions are

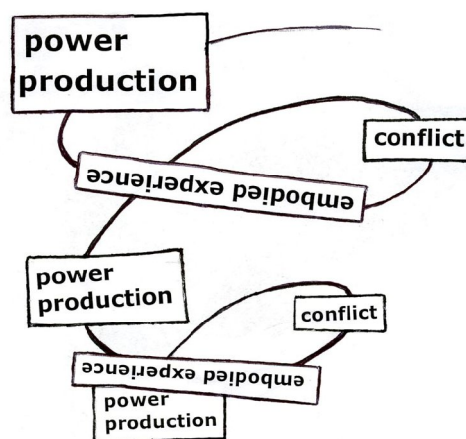
important. Even if it is small actions with only some people involved the point is that we acted. The experience will linger as a positively loaded entity in the minds of the people who were involved. Foucault talks about micro power which means that resistance always is a possibility because you can fight this power without attacking the whole power. Hence our “micro actions” can fight this micro power.

4:1:4 Power, knowledge and embodied experience

With three key words as tools we have analysed our own artistic experiments and an art project in Johannesburg. When we worked with the analyses we realised how the terms are very similar. Foucault describes a power which comes from within. It's an unspoken power which we are producing all the time through our actions. The embodied experience is produced through our actions and becomes a kind of knowledge which also comes from within. There are similarities and we would like to suggest that, if they are not the same, they are at least mechanisms that are working at the same level. Foucault emphasizes the connection between power and knowledge. We would like to state that embodied experience could be transcribed as embodied knowledge instead.

4:1:5 The spiral

Once more we ask our question: how can art negotiate space in order to alter power relationships? A conflict introduced by artistic strategies, like the ones we've been describing, disturbs the power relationships. A conflict makes us experience a situation in a more attentive way. This is what we describe as an embodied experience. The embodied experience is, as we suggested earlier in this paper, working at the same level as the power-creating mechanisms. This means that the embodied experience has possibilities for an alteration of the power that we always produce. It is a utopian notion of how art can create conflicts, which reminds us of a world in motion and at the same time creates the public space which Deutsche speaks about. We see it as a spiral:



4:2 Art can negotiate space in order to alter power relationships

- what's next?

A question we could ask now is: which strategies does art use to negotiate the space? We can talk about strategies in general as seeing possibilities instead of obstacles, to expose patterns and create patterns, to deconstruct and reconstruct, to have a free mind, a candid way of thinking and work in a playful way without presumptions. To give a more detailed formula of how to create artistic strategies is more difficult. A gallery of examples of how other people have been working can generate ideas of how to work in the same spirit.

When we worked with our artistic experiments we always started to ask: Where are we now? What do we see? What can we do? We didn't think of where we would or should end up, we just started. When we got an idea we had to try it, otherwise we couldn't know what would happen. A blank paper is more daunting than inspiring and it's easier to continue and develop something when you have something concrete to start with.

During these months of work, we have combined our theoretical studies with our artistic experiments, of which only a few are included in this paper. Sometimes people have smiled and told us that we play more than work. We *have* played a lot but that doesn't mean that we haven't been working at the same time. We have treated most serious matters in a playful way, or if you want; we have treated most playful matters in a serious way. There is an idea of learning that exists in many people's minds, that to study and learn something must be at least a bit boring. It might be just the opposite way; when you play and have fun you learn the most.

5. Why is this important for educators?

One of the purposes of this paper is to connect our research with educational matters. We suggest that this kind of contemporary art can make the art education of today more vivid and also how the notion of embodied experience is something that can enrich pedagogical possibilities in school.

5:1 Art education of today

In the art education of today, contemporary art tends to be neglected in preference for the importance of acquiring a knowledge of the history of art. We are living in the present and it is important to also be aware of what is happening in the art world today. Contemporary art may inspire learners to imagine differently and work with current topics.

To see each other as resources, share experiences and collaborate with an experimental and playful approach are qualities present in many contemporary artist's ways of working. These are qualities which a school could take advantage of to a greater extent than they do today. School is a place where a lot of different children and adolescents must get along together. All these meetings mean that there are a lot of possibilities. If we dare to work more with new genre public art, dialogical art or relational art, in school it might be possible to more openly discuss conflicts and power relationships. Relational art can be a way of questioning fixed identities and stereotypical images through a process of exchange and dialogue, to overcome boundaries.

School is a discursive field, a space, according to Foucault and Deutscher. To analyse the discourses in which the students are spending most of their time might be a perfect opportunity to work with public art and also to get the students to participate more within the institution. The school has ample opportunities to become a vivid public space. We think that one of the most important aspects of learning about democracy must be to give learners the consciousness of being able to influence their world.

5:2 Increasing cultural and linguistic diversity

The relevant legacy of modernist art from this perspective is to be found, not in its concern with the formal conditions of the object, but rather in the ways in which aesthetic experience can challenge conventional perceptions and systems of knowledge.⁴³

As we have mentioned before the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity in the world calls for broader approaches than the traditional language-based literacy offers. To work with embodied experiences is about engaging across the senses. Cope and Kalantzis argues that teaching and learning should be more about multiple modes. To work with modes like the sonic, the performative, the visual and the spatial modes, is important for a more complex understanding of the reality we are living in. It is also a question of democracy. Reading and writing is not necessarily the strongest form of expression available to all people. There are other possibilities of expressing thoughts or proving your knowledge. Many contemporary artists are skilful when it comes to switching modes. Depending on the platform they are working from, they can choose or combine the modes they think are appropriate for their purposes. Is it possible that schools could work in the same way and learn from strategies employed by artists? We need a less one-sided perspective of what knowledge is and art might help us with that.

We are not suggesting that everyone should start working with contemporary art. What we mean is that artistic methods, belong not only to the field of art. Today it's easy to find information through different media. What education in schools could focus on is how to give the learner a creative mind which can be used no matter what they want to do in the future. The biggest problem is, just as for art critics in this art genre, the question of how to value these kinds of practices where no physical outcome is obtained. School is a system where everything must be possible to assess and value, which affects the whole practice. In our artistic actions we think its clear how knowledge is achieved through experience. We must dare to defend knowledge that is not only expressed clearly in words or valued in terms of a physical outcome.

⁴³ Kester (2004) p.3

6. Reflections and further questions

It is not just in school where everything needs to be assessed. It is pretty much how it works everywhere. To play or work with things without a clear physical outcome, preferably in the shape of money, is something that doesn't seem to be valued today. This paper is an attempt to show how these things matters.

Meanwhile as we have been writing new questions have arisen. The challenge of evaluating these embodied actions deserves closer attention. We can't use the same strategies to interpret and analyse these kinds of works, but maybe this is one way to do it. Another similar question is how to mediate, transform or represent relational art, without the focus shifting from the relation to the representation. In this moment when we are planning for the exhibition connected to this paper this is something that becomes very evident. Δ

As much as this paper has been about finding an answer to the question at issue, it has at the same time been an attempt to work with artistic research and integrate art and science. To visualize and understand theories through art, and vice-versa, has apart from some difficult moments been a real pleasure.

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