

**Aarhus School of Architecture // Design School Kolding // Royal Danish Academy**

## **The Art of Regenerative Design**

Friis, Silje Alberthe Kamille; Mølhave, Annegrete

*Publication date:*  
2021

*Document License:*  
Other

[Link to publication](#)

*Citation for pulished version (APA):*  
Friis, S. A. K., & Mølhave, A. (2021). *The Art of Regenerative Design: An Artful Inquiry*.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.



# The art of regenerative design

**Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave**  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



1

## An artistic development project

‘I was surprised how well I felt after we read our poems. I felt like hiding in a bush when you first said it, but felt great afterwards... it was probably my head, that felt I'd achieved something, yes, kind of unlocked something. It felt like a passage to something new. Something new was available to me...that I can also do this kind of stuff. Something very far away from the person I normally am...’ (Participant in the workshop)

### A catalogue and a way forward

In this artistic development project, we set out to discover how art-based interventions can contribute to regenerative and holistic design practice. It's a type of design that seeks to restore and build up resources through engaging all our senses and ways of knowing. With design students from the Royal Academy, and through a series of experiments, we immersed ourselves in artful inquiry and found a well of potential benefits for design in social contexts. Throughout this catalogue, participant statements bear witness to the many-sided and intriguing effects of applying art-based interventions as part of a design process. The interventions we explored and portray in this catalogue, include writing and drawing with the other hand, power animals in clay, stakeholder map in clay, silent-walk and medicine walk, poetry, and land art. We present them here, in the hope that you will feel inspired to try them out in your own practice or as a facilitator of regenerative design.

The first four chapters of this catalogue provide the theoretical starting point, the process layout we explored, some guidelines for taking others on an artful inquiry, and findings from our exploration. Then follows six chapters each presenting an art-based intervention in detail.

### Questions and intention

Our inquiry was led by questioning how our ways of creating can take place in accordance with nature and with an ethical approach to design. With this in heart and mind, we experimented with the art-based interventions to uncover how they can help people:

- feel part of something that is bigger than ourselves

- uncover the unknown aspects of a subject, the unseen knowledge, the things we don't know that we know
- develop original perspectives and insights about the themes investigated in a design process

### Approach

The interventions were investigated in a workshop with 3rd semester students from the Institute of Visual Communication at the Royal Danish Academy. They were in the initial phase of a project in partnership with the nephrology department at Rigshospitalet (a specialized hospital in Copenhagen) ‘...to design in collaboration with others, and for others, with a particular focus on ethics and sustainability’ (course program, fall 2020). During the workshop, the students were invited to investigate aspects of the project that they were particularly intrigued by. The week after the workshop we interviewed each student about their experienced with the individual interventions and the day as a whole, and the impact on their process. Their comments and reflections provided us the opportunity to further understand the art-based interventions in relation to regenerative change in a social context.

### Motivation for regenerative design

2020 saw a growing collective commitment towards restoring our natural resources: biological diversity, re-forestation, cleansing of the air, the oceans and water streams, all aimed at increasing the Earth's resilience which literally means ‘the property of quickly recovering the original shape or condition after being pulled, pressed, crushed etc.’ (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 1984). In this project, resilience points towards regenerating and re-creating that, which we have lost or forgotten, and finding new ways for our global human population to live in fruitful co-existence with nature.

Regenerative design seeks to create renewal through focusing on natural and universal cycles as the foundations of health for plants, animals, humans and our ecological systems (Lyle, 1996; Orr, 2004; Hofstra & Huisingh, 2014). With natural systems as our models, we work with nature, rather than against it. Regenerative approaches are most commonly known from the areas of agriculture design (Mollison, 1988), architecture (Cole, 2012), but increasingly also from design of social systems (e.g. Eco-coin,

2020). In this project we set out to investigate how regenerative values and approached can be applied in design for social contexts. Nature is to be understood, not only as the ecosystems that we are a part of and that surround us, but as inherent in human beings.

### A changing design practice

Historically, the field of design has been subject to a focus on human needs and desires and less concerned about the needs of nature (Fry, 2012). We have participated in the forming of a human ‘world in the world’, which has changed us, the humans, and our relationship to nature and other species, among other things, seeing ourselves as removed from the natural world. However, the designer's ability to change people's understanding and ways of acting in the world can be put to good use in restoring the planet's eco-systems – if we are able and willing to create a substantial shift in our own mindset and ways of working. We cannot stay the same, as well as ensuring a liveable future (Fry, 2012; Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013; Heller, 2018). Designers, and our practice, must and will change as part of a collective global transformation. A process that calls for weeding out in old habits and rehabilitation to new values, ways of thinking, knowing and acting.

### We would like to thank the following for their support and/or participation in this artistic development project:

Mathilde Aggebo, Ida Engholm, Tine Kjølsten, Martin Sønderlev Christensen, Johannes, Pernille, Kasper, Kresten, Mie, Sille, Josephine, Amalie, the forest, the sky, the sea, the earth and Hellebæk.

Text and photos by Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave.  
Layout by Annegrete Mølhave.

### References

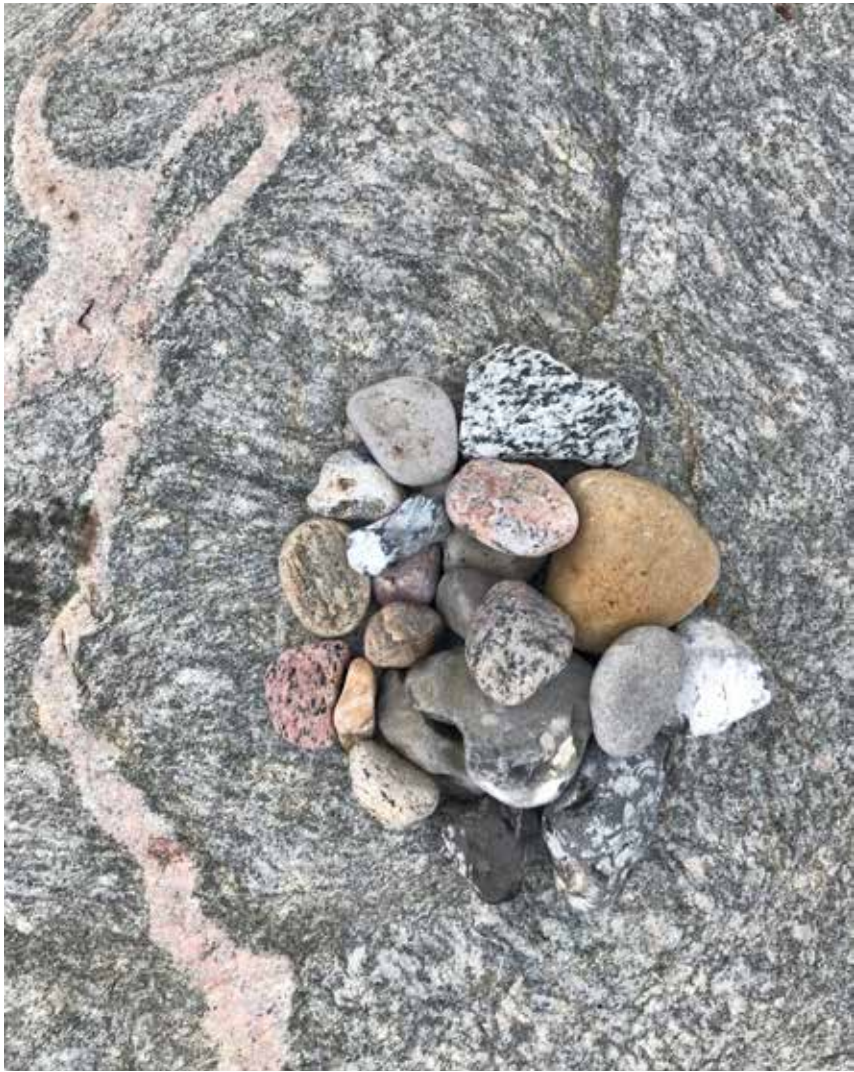
Cole, J. (2012), Regenerative design and development: current theory and practice, *Building Research & Information*, Volume 40, 2012 - Issue 1., pp. 1-6.  
ECO Coin, accessed 8 Maj, 2020, <http://ecocoin.com>.  
Fry, T. (2012). *Becoming Human by Design*. London, UK: Berg.  
Heller, Cheryl. (2018). *The Intergalactic Design Guide. Harnessing the Creative Potential of Social Design*. Washington, USA: Island Press.  
Lyle, J. (1996). *Regenerative design for sustainable development*, John Wiley & Sons, New York.  
Mollison, B (1988) *Permaculture: A Designers' Manual*, Tagari Publications, Australia.  
Orr, D. (2004), *The Nature of Design: Ecology, Culture, and Human Intention*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.  
Scharmer, O. and Kaufer, K. (2013) *Leading from the Emerging Future: From Ego-System to*





Da riber af mig, alle di  
frustrationer riber du  
hovedet på mig ~~og~~ din  
faste rytme som ændrer  
hele tiden. Jeg du lyder  
stærke når jeg under  
til dig. ~~Halten sammen~~  
~~deres~~, selv de små  
bølger ander verdens  
Påvirker indvirker på h  
bevægelser. Jeg føler mi  
tug med ryggen til dig  
har allerede fundet dine

~~mens du kaster~~  
~~dig mig for mine~~  
~~følelser.~~







# Artful inquiry

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



2

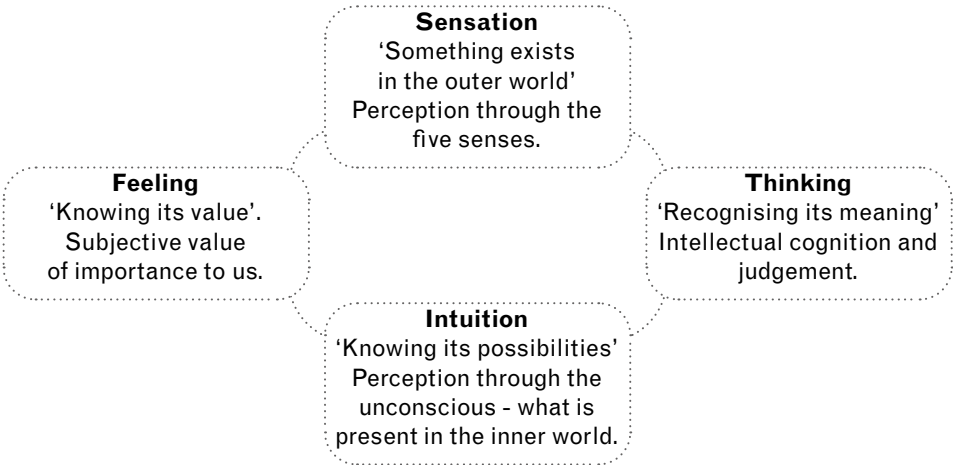


Figure 1: Four psychological functions. Adapted from Jung (1979).

In this way, an artful inquiry is an attempt to restore the human ability to see ourselves as part of the 'whole', and making it part and parcel of a creative process by reactivating these aspects of ourselves. It opens up for designing through all these functions, thereby gathering knowledge about the subject with our entire body, rather than just the thinking function, which is heavily prioritised in design thinking – as the name literally demonstrates. Instead, through opening to gaining a deeper sense of a subject, we open up to experiencing ourselves as part of the situation (Scharmer, 2013). With artful inquiry we seek to remember, re-connect to, and re-train this aspect of our own nature. For this purpose, we draw on a ready-available palette of art-based interventions.

### Art-based interventions and transcendence

Art-based interventions are methods that can be drawn upon to explore a given challenge or situation. They are unique, in that they bring original perspectives, innovative solutions, and added learning from the future that wants to emerge. 'This detour via the arts, sensing and identifying with a chosen object, person, material or artwork, may redirect our attention towards what is meaningful and what makes a difference.' (Darsø & Meltzer, 2020, p. 1). With nature as an active partner in art-based inquiry, we can access deeper aspects of knowledge of which we were previously unaware. We step into a state of 'unselfing' (Zhang et. al., 2014) and

## A regenerative mindset

...the ego only knows its own contents, not the unconscious and its contents'. (Jung, 1958)

### Artful inquiry for regenerative design

Regenerative design focuses on universal systems and co-existence, where every part has a place in the greater eco-system. A regenerative aim is to apply these values in development processes to help create solutions with the 'whole house' in mind<sup>1</sup> (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Artful inquiry offers a structured way for applying this in practice, by helping us to engage with the outer natural world as well as our inner human nature. The outer environment reflecting the inner life. But how do we shift our current mindset towards working with these inspirations in practice? And why art? What does art enables in us? Art offers us a mirror of nature – in the artistic object we see our own nature (Shakespeare in Campbell, 1990). Art is in accordance with nature and art is a harmony, parallel to nature (Cezanne in Campbell, 1990). The arts are also a way into our feelings and humanity (Eisner in Darsø, 2018). It can be a gateway to help us escape the limitations of our mental models, and thereby become aware of new perspectives and new solutions. In this way, art is a way to access our silent bodily knowledge: that, which we don't know we know (Darsø, 2018).

### Working with all functions of consciousness

Artful inquiry engages us through our four main psychological functions: intuition, thinking, sensation and feeling (Jung, 1979), (fig. 1). These are related to movement of energy in our psychic activity. Out of habit we often develop one to become our main orientation in the world. In the western world, the quick thinking mind takes up a prominent space, possibly fueled by the acceleration of processes in general. By bringing focus to the other functions, we start to re-orientate ourselves through all our ways of knowing. Jung believed that all four functions should contribute equally for a comprehensive understanding of our world. He describes them as four points of a compass, where shifting the cardinal points is 'merely a question of convention and intelligibility' (Jung, 1979, pars. 958f.).

experience direct contact with something that is greater than ourselves. This idea of being part of something bigger, or stepping into a heightened state, we recognise both from experiences in nature, but also from art and religion. We might experience a radiance or energy from an existing piece of artwork that inspires us, or maybe it happens through the artistic, creative process itself. Either way, it can lift us, or expand our awareness, from being centred on our self, to merge and co-exist with something that is greater and goes beyond ourselves (Rudd et. al. 2012) moving us from human-centered to an eco-centered understanding and practice (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013).

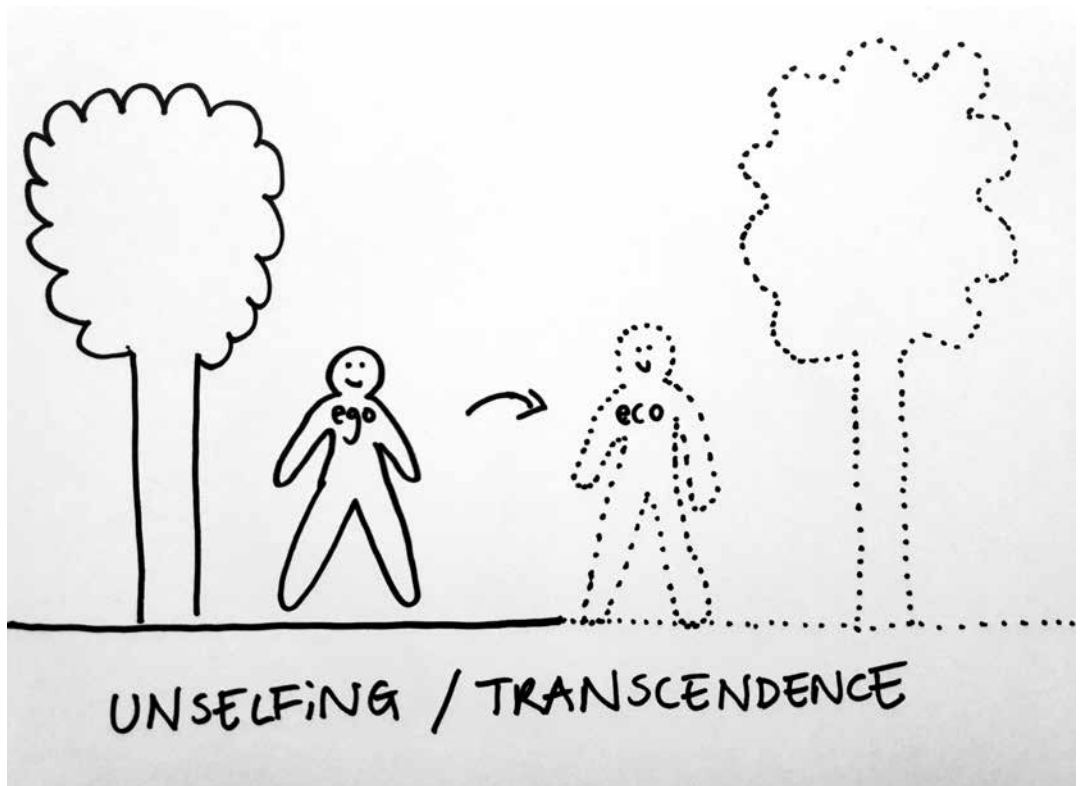
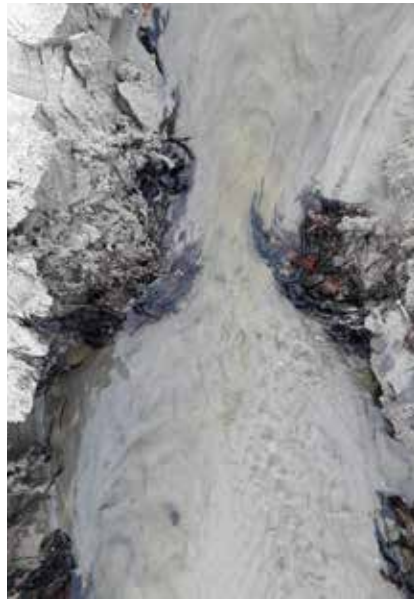
Artistic methods thereby become central for the designer to gain access to that in her which helps her to experience life in itself, to come alive and transcend, i.e. being able to access the reality that lies beyond, or breaks the limitations of our normal human experience and cognition (Campbell, 1990). This ability helps to foster original perspectives and wisdom on the emergent future that is being investigated in a design process. At the same time, the artistic methods provide practical means for integrating the new insights into the practical design process, thereby nourishing and supporting a pragmatic and resilient regenerative design culture.

### References

Campbell, J. (1990), *The Hero's Journey. Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*, Novato, CA, USA: New World Library.  
Darsø, L. og Meltzer C., 2020, Art-based Interventions as a series of methods to access Presencing, Chapter for *Theory U Book 2*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Oakland, CA, USA.  
Darsø, Lotte. (2018). Accessing the Space of Potentiality. Paper for the *9th Art of Management and Organization Conference*, University of Brighton, UK, Aug. 30 – Sept. 2, 2018.  
Jung, C (1979): *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung. 20 vols. Bollingen Series XX*, translated by R.F.C. Hull, ed. by H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, and Wm. McGuire. Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1953-1979.  
Rudd, M., Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J. Awe Expands People's Perception of Time and Enhances Well-Being, in *Psychological Science*. 2012, Vol. 23, Issue 10, Pages 1130-1136.  
Zhang, J. W., Piff, K., Iyer, R. Koleva, S., Keltner, D. (2014) An occasion for unselfing: Beautiful nature leads to prosociality, In *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Volume 37, 2014, Pages 61-72, ISSN 0272-4944.

1 This is inspired by the Greek origins of the word ecology, 'oiko', meaning home or household.









# Hosting artful inquiry

**Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave**  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



Royal  
Danish  
Academy

3

Architecture  
Design  
Conservation

## Create a space for sensing

‘When you are in accord with nature, nature will yield up its bounty...  
and every sacred place is where eternity shines through time.’  
(Campbell, 1979)

### Designing the process

Crafting and hosting art-based interventions present different challenges. Underpinned by a detailed log of our own process, we here offer some guidelines for how to develop and host artful inquiry. The essence is to see the process design as an artful inquiry in itself. Expect the forming of the process to be an iterative event. A good starting point is the needs of the participants, the objective of the process: where are you taking them? and what is the time frame? Then consider the interventions you wish to apply. Sketch the steps and reflect on how the interventions link together.

In our case, after making a first version of the process, we applied the Theory U model by Scharmer (fig. 2), as a way to ‘check’ the sequence and support the movement from thinking, to seeing, to feeling, to opening up and letting come.

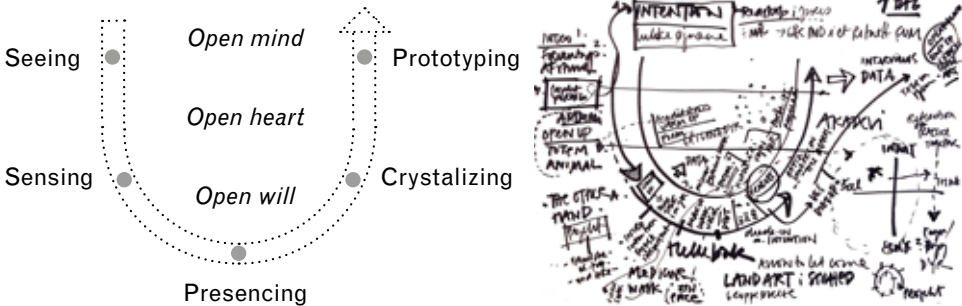


Figure. 2. Theory U process (Scharmer, 2007). Sketch from developing the workshop.

### Composing

When putting together the sequence of interventions, it's helpful to think in terms of movement between ‘pairs of opposites’ as it is a way to drive

the creative process forward and it helps participants generate, rather than use up, their energy (Friis, 2016; 2019). For instance, having ideation be followed by evaluation, modelling (hands) followed by reflection (mind), alternating between individual activities and activities in the team, being silent and speaking, being inside and outside etc. Interestingly, the participants pick up on this:

‘Rarely have I experienced being in a process with so many tasks in such a short time without getting completely tired in my head. It had to do with changing location, getting out and using different methods...  
Getting out of the city – stepping out at the station in the fall colors.  
So discovery-like’.

### Experiencing the process

Set aside time to experience the art-based interventions and the process yourself. It will help you with adjusting the details, for instance how to introduce a method, identifying helpful questions, setting the time frame for each intervention etc. Be aware, that even when experimenting, the interventions can't be faked. As a facilitator you induce an inner state in the participant that is conducive to a particular intervention. In other words, you vibrate with the appropriate energy thereby helping to bring a mindset alive.

### Including nature

Think about how you can include the outdoors and nature in the art-based interventions. Nature as in actual nature – a park, a forest, beach, back yard – and in the form of natural materials, for instance clay, paper, wood, or found materials such as stones, branches, leaves etc. In our case, we decided on one of the facilitators' home which is situated between an old forest and the beach. The venue became an organizing principle for laying out the workshop, for instance, including walks to and from locations as active elements. It also framed the workshop as an expedition, where the participants leave the big city behind and step into nature to seek new ways of inspiration.

### A trustful learning space

Art-based interventions help participants leave their habitual and well-known territory. At times, they may feel vulnerable and uncertain. In our case, most participants felt that their personal limits were pushed during

the day, but to a bearable extent. It reminded us of the significance of establishing trust in the group (which we could have done more explicitly). We recommend that you include trust-building activities like the Codex, a method for participants to generate a shared set of guidelines at the outset, for instance ‘what's said in the room stays in the room’.

### Trusting the process

‘Letting go’ is part of the facilitator's process. If too invested in the participants' process and outcome, they likely feel invaded. Several participants later expressed, how an open mindset helped them to absorb through the senses, be open to surprises, and letting go of the need to analyze everything. Also, insights may not arrive right away. One participant experiences a delay from making the power animal to realizing why it turned as it did – concluding that she needs to trust the process; that answers come in their own time. In some ways, the learning is between the participant and the greater whole. Being respectful of what comes to others and asking open questions really help this learning unfold. We have often shared a ‘wow!’ during this inquiry as we accepted being out of control and things played out in ways, we couldn't have imagined.

### Setting the expectations

Yield from not overselling the inquiry and approach, as the interventions require for everyone to let go of a particular outcome. Keep the vocabulary light and talk of ‘experiment’, ‘trying out’, ‘see what happens’ etc. In our case, we felt that words like ‘spiritual’ and ‘religious’ could seem oppressive and thus hamper the process. We then enjoyed each time an interview brought up expressions of transcendence and unselfing as a natural and personal experience. The main point is to facilitate rich conditions for seeing, sensing and experiencing the situation by refraining from putting too much pressure on yourself and the participants.

### References

Friis, S.A.K. (2016). The 6C Model. *The International Journal of Design in Society*, Volume 10, Issue 3, 13–30.  
Friis, S.A.K. (2019). The Contribution of Vertical Design Disciplines to Design Thinking. Paper presented at *the Cumulus Conference*, Rovaniemi 05/2019, 303–315 .



**The workshop**

**The invitation**  
Leaving the city behind. Going on an expedition. Stepping out into the forest.

**Arriving**  
Listening to a facilitator, introduction, light theory and today's program

**Seeing and sensing**  
Setting an intention. Writing and drawing with 'The other hand' to explore intention with the day. Sharing in the group around the table.

**Sensing and seeing**  
Making a power animal in clay. Sharing in the group: what came forth? Making a stakeholder map in clay. Presenting, reflecting and sharing in smaller groups.

**Letting go**  
Walking in pairs to lunch in the forest, talking and thinking about what has come up. Lunch. Relaxing.

**Letting go and letting come**  
Silent walk to the beach. Refocusing on what has come up and a question.

**Returning home**  
Walking to the train and travelling back with a new experience and perspectives.

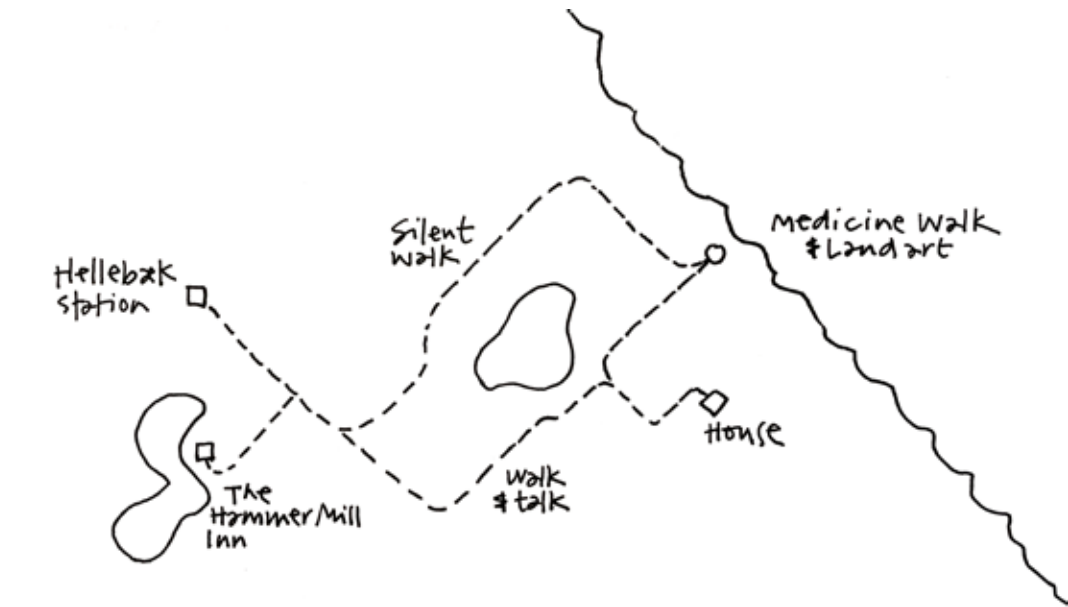
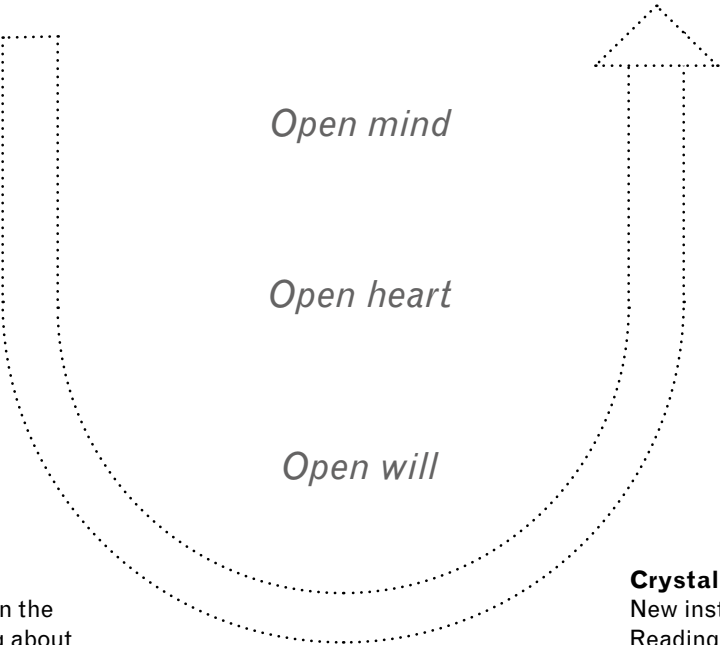
**Letting go**  
Checking-out

**Letting go**  
Walking back. Going inside. Recollecting and reflecting on the day by making a shared map.

**Prototyping**  
Landart. Meta-perspective, seeing and sensing with the hands.

**Crystallizing**  
New instructions. Making a poem. Reading the poem aloud twice.

**Letting go and letting come**  
Instructions on the beach. Medicine walk with the question. Making notes



'...That was what was exciting! [having your personal boundaries expanded and feeling safe]. It was a transgressing experience, but we all felt we had been safe in it. It created a community but also a creativity that made you dare to throw yourself into writing something completely different, and be a poet, or be an artist, building something, on the beach. It provided a fearlessness in relation to the two extremes you are moving towards.' (participant).





# Coming home to something new

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



Royal Danish Academy

4

Architecture  
Design  
Conservation

## An old new way

‘It goes to the root of it and wakes up something in me. To come back to some of the things that are important for me as a person and a designer. It was a direct reminder of which things are important... to think more deeply about it.’ (Participant in the workshop)

### Regenerative design in a social context

What happens when applying art-based interventions in the service of regenerative design? While it is relatively easy to measure biological processes like improving soil quality, it remains more abstract to determine regeneration within a social design context. What is regenerated, when designing for e. g. dialysis patients? While questions outnumber answers in this artful development project, the following overview of our findings indicates that art-based interventions are a promising path to regenerative design in practice.

### Connecting to timelessness

Several participants remark how ‘the day went at lightning speed’, and they ‘lost track of time’. One of the participants says that, normally she uses time pressure to switch off the brain to make herself do something. In the workshop, however, she experienced that time was ‘elongated’, taking off pressure and allowing her to be open; a healthier approach, she feels. This indicates that the participants were immersed in the experience by feeling a sense of timelessness or ‘extended now’ (Vohs & Schmeichel, 2003) which activates the motivation to learn and may stimulate new understandings (Rudd, M. et. al. 2012).

### Reconnecting with self and others

The participants speak with one voice when mentioning the thrill of opening up through the senses as a way into a project. It’s childlike, fun, and turns normal ways of thinking and doing upside-down:  
‘The clay was incredibly useful. It was an introspective and very different way of approaching a project.’  
They find it joyful to discover, that looking inward is a gateway to deeper reflections about the traditional approach in their design practice:

‘There was an “aha! You can also do it this way!” We talked a lot about the square analytical approach we normally use in game design, and how games usually are about feelings and creating feelings in the gamer, and how disjointed it is. That there aren’t more of this holistic, emotion-based and let go of the ego – I really liked that.’  
Interestingly, applying the senses to this degree, as a way of gaining access to ‘what we don’t know that we know’, also provided the participants with an enhanced sense of empathy for the patients they were designing for. Says two of the participants:  
‘...it has become much more concrete after the workshop. We’ve been much better at putting ourselves in their feelings, how they feel different and how it is to feel different’  
and:  
‘The time on the beach... you see and think in new ways. So instead of it being very practical, “a dialysis room looks like this and this”, we got into something feelings-based, and somehow ... I experienced my own feelings about it, in a way that made me feel closer to the experience of being ill’.

### Connecting to meaning inside

The process connects the participants to insights that they find deeply meaningful to the project and to themselves. For instance, a participant becomes aware of how her vanity and perfectionism is a hindrance to being creative. Another participant feels grateful and part of a greater whole:  
‘It really adds more meaning to what you are working with. Instead of thinking about one’s own preferences, to also remove yourself from the process and consider what you actually add to the world. Not because you think it’s cool. Can you create something that also gives something back to people? After all, we’ve got so much in our lives.’

### Reconnecting with nature

Being in nature is a major source of inspiration. One student talks of rediscovering nature: When ‘out there’, everything makes sense at a new level, it’s rewarding and he is happy to be reminded of this. Another student experiences a new way of working with nature and receiving learning through nature:

‘When I’ve gone for walks in connection with my creative work, it’s usually when I’m frustrated, like, “OK, I just need to go out and walk this off!’. But to use nature as a way of being inspired, and a way of just going out and trusting – that now I’ve got this question, and it will be answered, if not now, then later. I was really inspired by that.’  
As such, including the natural environment as a partner in the process helps to uncover meaning:

‘On the medicine walk, I really noticed that there is something bigger. Normally I get stressed if there are too many things in my head. Here it was like, I listened to the waves, walked around and collected pebbles, because I needed that. It was as if there was an energy where I was with myself in a different way... it was meditative and I was surprised that I thought about the question without really thinking about it. It was an indirect access to the answer. I was surprised it worked.’

### An artful way forward

The art-based, artful inquiry process appears to be as much about what is regenerated on the inside of the designer as on the outside. One intervention at a time, making use of the four ways of knowing, the designer connects to diversity on the inside, to aspects of her – or himself – which were forgotten or suppressed, possibly in the day-to-day rush that has become the hallmark of our culture. Thus stepping outside the ordinary ways, small moments of transformation occur, expanding the sense of self from self-interest to ‘unselfing’, and a dawning awareness of the bigger systems that humans are part of. In this way, artful inquiry may offer a regenerative path for designers to approach the change called for by Fry, Heller and others - and thereby contribute to ensuring a liveable future.

### References

Vohs, K. D., & Schmeichel, B. J. (2003). Self-Regulation and the Extended Now: Controlling the Self Alters the Subjective Experience of Time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, 217-230.



**Participants' shared reflections**  
In relation to theory U (Scharmer, 2007)

**Welcome**  
Settle in, introduction to the day and the venue. Program, theory, get to know each others' projects and thoughts – what is important to you?

**The other hand**  
Let go of control and perfectionism. Break the habit. Impatience and frustration. Less analytical, more feeling.

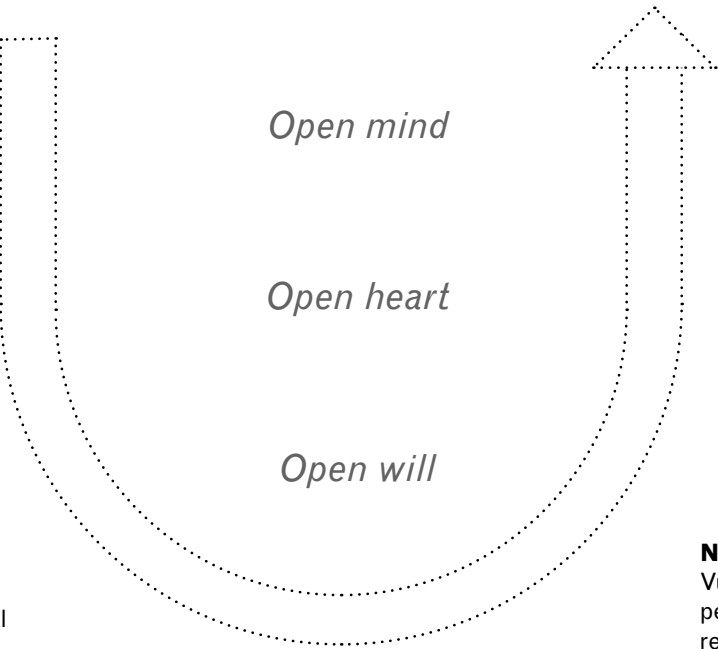
**Power animal in clay**  
Let go of control. Senses in play. Something personal and intuitive – let go of vanity. Grounded – use the body – nature.

**Stakeholder map in clay**  
New perspective on the topic. Abstract thinking about something logical. Who is in play? Sub-conscious in the shaping of it. Concrete relation to the project. Food for thought. reflections on the stakeholders and their needs. Emotional insight. Put yourself in their place. How the needs of different stakeholders may conflict. Focus.

**Lunch**  
New energy

**Silent walk and think about a question**  
Nice with quietness and reflection – personal – senses in play.

**Medicine walk**  
Senses. Personal, nature, trust in the activity, openness, no pressure, feelings, freedom, individual feeling/ experience.



**Land art**  
Fun and different way of visualising. Brought out the feelings. Make own feelings and thoughts concrete. New source of inspiration. Abstract excercise. Nice to visualise the poem. Expanding boundaries. Relatable poems.

**Notes/poem/read aloud**  
Vulnerability, breaking boundaries, personal, good not to know about reading it aloud. Relate actively to the present moment. Unexpected format.

**Hunger**

'It was something, I have been hungry for, for a very long time and I think it was like that for everyone. That's why we were so quick to reply that we wanted to be part of this. And when we left, we were high on the experience. Because, in many ways, it's probably the way we all want to work. Using the hands and examining the artistic way of working with giving form through a text, a lump of clay or on a beach, has given us a better sense of designing and the substance that goes into the design...

...So, I really think that for me, it's something that was cool to get a small taste of, and yes, I'm so hungry for more. And how we can work with this project that we're working on now, the national hospital, at the school, in a completely different, intuitive way from what we have been asked to do and did on the last course, which was very text-heavy.' (Participant)

**Playfulness**

'I spend most of my time in front of the computer. It's these two 2D screens that do exactly what I do, I have a mouse and can control it all, I know how the programs work and there aren't really any variables. It's not like when you mix two colors by hand and see what is happening... on the computer, you have total ownership...

...Knowing that this is what I do 90% of the time, I think we all probably want to go back to the way we started, and that was to shape some clay and mix colors and paint or work with the 3-dimensional and often work with something that has to do with nature. This is often where we start, building something or constructing something, or taking leaves home from the forest and doing something about it, as a child...

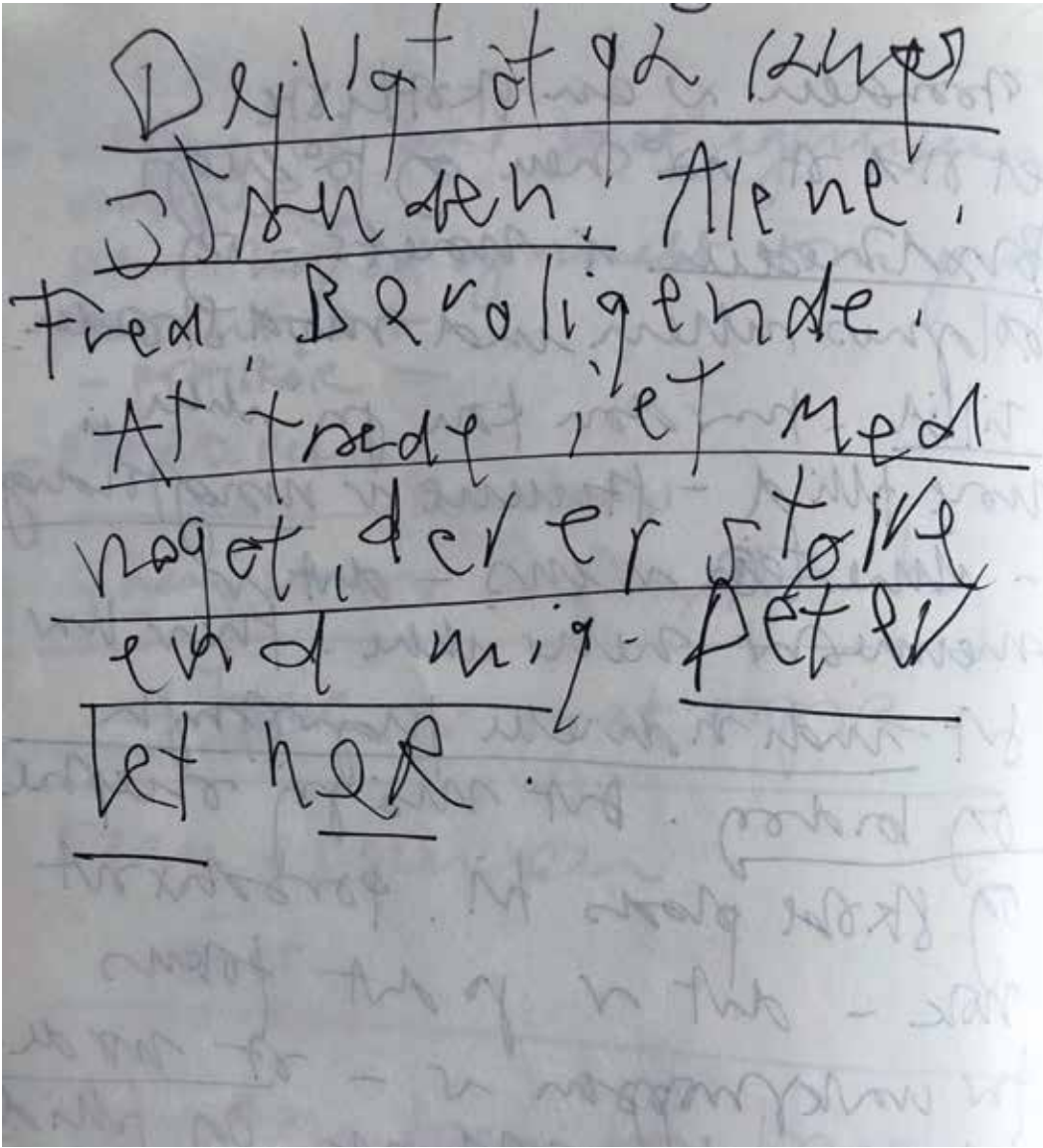
...So, I think there was something very childish about it. And I think that's something we all need, when we sit here and are very grown up with our computers and think about what the industry is, and you get a job and have to make a logo...

... What is it about being childish? It certainly provides you with something, like when you are in a free fall and no longer able to feel that you are falling ... And all of a sudden you are just where you are. It is the playful and the exploratory, and the questions that may come. What's going on? It was really there at that workshop. It was clearly about throwing something analytical away and surrendering to the playful.' (Participant)

**Giving in**

'I can sometimes be, not frightened, but thoughtful when some of the exercises are meant to get you out of your box and you have to give in to it because, "what's the purpose with this?!" So, it can be hard to give in. And there I just think that, when I think back on it now, how wildly good an experience it was.' (Participant)





# The other hand

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



5

## The other hand

‘The other hand’ is a way of exploring two different perspectives of a situation by drawing or writing, first with your dominant hand, second with your non-dominant hand.

### Origin

Journaling is a common creative writing method for documenting, analysing and reflecting on issues and concerns. Writing with ‘The other hand’ expands the creative element, and is based on the work of art therapist and researcher Cappachione (2001).

Current brain theory tells us that handedness relates to discrete parts of the brain. For instance, for the majority of right-handed people and for two-thirds of the left-handed people, the right hand is controlled by the left hemisphere of the brain, and the left hand is controlled by the right hemisphere. A bit simplified, the left hemisphere is characterized by logical thinking, recognition of words, letters and numbers, linearity and structure. The right hemisphere is characterized by holistic perception, imagination, intuitive, emotional and non-verbal thinking.

Depending on the hand that we write and draw with, we get access to different parts of the brain. Using our dominant hand (whether left or right) mainly activates one part of the brain. When we engage our non-dominant hand, it activates both hemispheres and is a way to confuse the brain and its habitual patterns. It causes the brain to shift from focusing on effectiveness for everyday activities to opening up to unexplored sides of ourselves. When we train in using both sides, we create new neural pathways, and the more of the brain we use, the more receptive it becomes to listening to our feelings, intuition and new ideas. ‘The other hand’ offers a very simple way to tap into the potential of the often under-used right hemisphere to explore different perspectives.

### Example from the workshop

We include ‘The other hand’ at the beginning of the workshop to help participants explore their agendas and intentions for the day. This helps them form the personal direction of their individual artful inquiry. At the same time, they get in touch with the idea that they contain more than one perspective and can access internal knowledge by making something, in this case a piece of creative writing. In our experience, it’s helpful to start by writing with the dominant hand first, to pay respect to the primary ways of seeing and understanding. Then, to stay with this for a while before moving the pen to the other, non-dominant hand. We ask the group to write and draw their intention with their dominant hand for at least 5 minutes and then switch the pen to the non-dominant hand for up to 10 minutes. We also encourage the group to use ‘the other hand’ later in the day, after the medicine walk on the beach.

### Experience from the workshop

The exercise led to new insights around the table and to a reflection on how the exercise itself reinforced the breaking of habitual patterns.

For one of the participants it brought a sense of playfulness:

‘With the writing we all became children. And it looked like something children had made. It was really fun to see. I felt like, now i’m learning something, i’m learning to write. It was great!’

Says another participant:

‘...we are used to always draw concepts on paper, in relation to games, like always writing with the right hand. Maybe there are some phrases or thought patterns we are used to and comfortable with, and just like writing with the left hand, you break with some of these patterns...So, it’s a great break with the self-censoring and usual habits.’

Alas, to our surprise, not only did the method open up for new, internal perspectives, it also served to transport some of the participants from their ordinary ways into novel ways of thinking, a reinforcement of leaving one’s normal hood behind and opening the doors to new ways of seeing and being.

### Recipe for The other hand\*

Gather the materials: a pen and unlined paper. Include colored pens and crayons if you like.

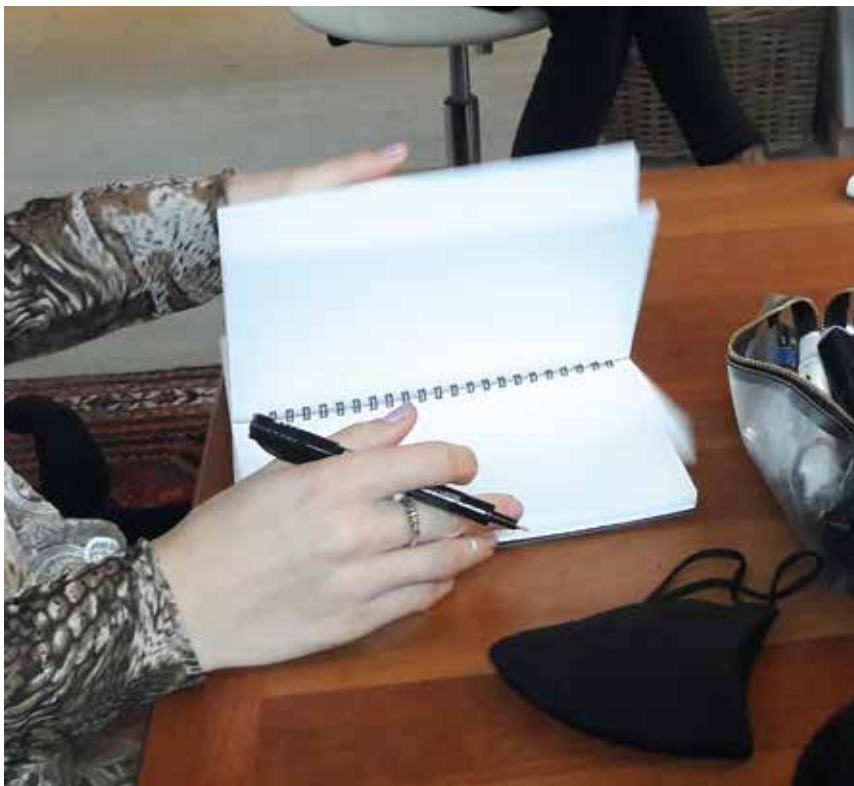
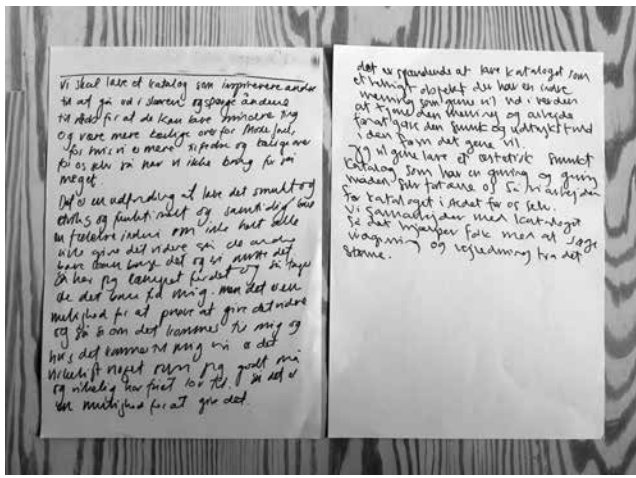
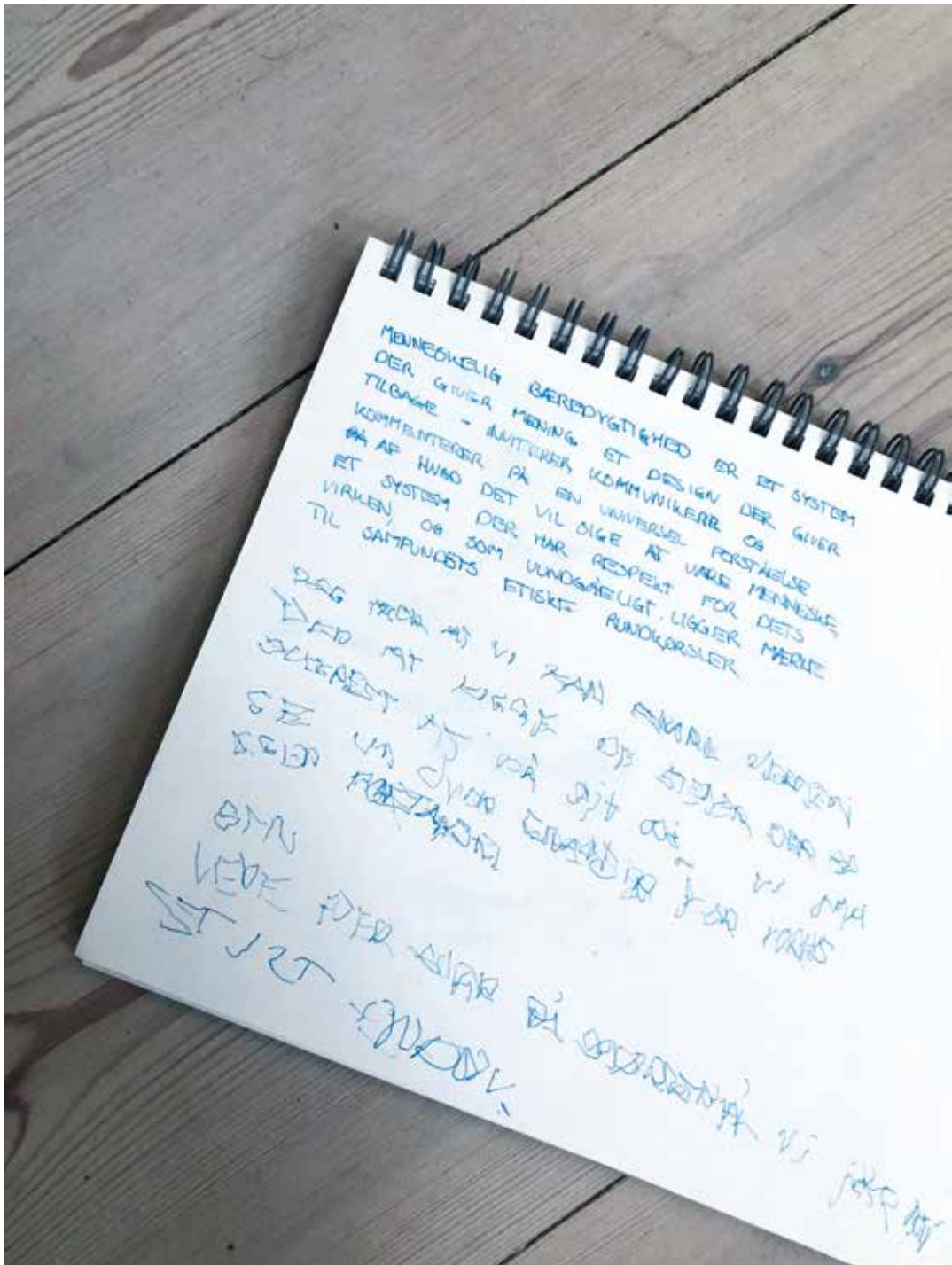
1. Find or create a private place free from noise, distractions, and outer demands. Make enough time to do the exercise without hurry or pressure.
2. Remind yourself: You do not need to share your work with anyone, it is confidential.
3. Think about what you would like to explore from two perspectives. It might be a question or an idea. It can be an experience, an event, an intention, something that just happened or is about to begin.
4. Start out by investigating with your dominant hand, either by writing or drawing on a piece of paper. Spend at least 4-5 minutes or until the hand runs dry.
5. Shift the pen to the other hand and start to write or draw on another piece of paper. Spend at least 4-5 minutes or until the hand runs dry.
6. Sit back and look at the two perspectives. Reflect on what they each bring in relation to what you set out to explore.
7. If something comes forth, add it in writing or by drawing.

\*This recipe is based on Cappachione (2001) and Friis (2015).

### References

Cappachione, L., (2001). *The Power of your Other Hand. A Course in Channeling the Inner Wisdom of the Right Brain*, New Page Books, Franklin Lakes, NJ  
Friis, S. A. K., (2015). *The Co-Creation Cards*, U-Press, Copenhagen





FORDI MAN FORHOLDER SIG TIL Mennesket  
- BEHOV, MÅNEDER, INTERESSER osv. Hvem er mennesket? Her kommer det etiske i spil, for mere eks. Slike mennesker er der både mennesket og systemet at forholde sig til som designer, og her spiller etik og respekt en essentiel rolle i processen! Vi arbejder med beredtyghed i en social kontekst, med fokus på at skabe værdi for andre - styrke det sociale og menneskelige.

Jeg tror på at design kan være livs ændringer for alle, men det er en overbetragtning.

større rummelighed og her en betragtning for at, der står i vidu. De har power - tror i den forbindelse på afprøvelsen her.

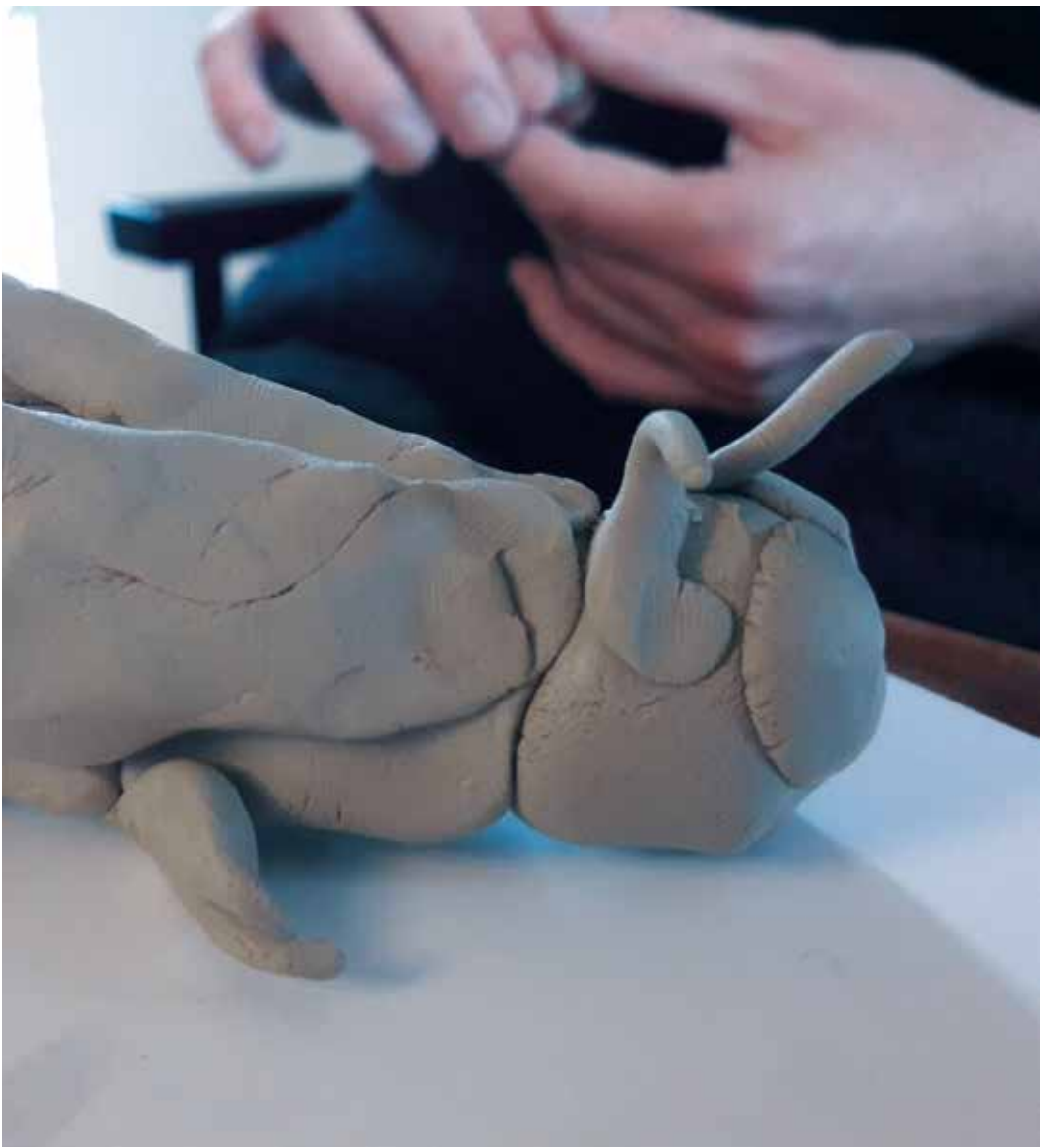
Åbne et nyt samarbejde. Jeg har et nyt tempo. Måske det ikke bare er tid der er også frygt - det er det, der er en betragtning. Til det til at gøre det til et arbejde og det bliver det til et arbejde.

Sig: især ikke til mig.

I dag har laktet travlt. Hverke forudsætninger kommer vi ind.

Min intention er at styrke de forskellige modstande og gøre det til et arbejde.





# Power animal in clay

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



Royal  
Danish  
Academy

6

Architecture  
Design  
Conservation

## Power animal in clay

Power animal in clay lets your hands surprise you whilst making an aide for the journey you are about to embark on.

### Origin

Throughout world history, different cultures have had many similar ways of relating to something greater than ourselves. A recurring practice is to be in contact with a power animal, also called a spirit animal, totem animal or flge (Hst, 2014; Horwitz & Waldebck, 2020). It's an animal, or being, that offers a personal relation to the bigger picture, and may help your inquiry. There are many ways of finding a power animal for yourself or your project. Inspired by Dars & Meltzer (2020) we used clay to form the animals. In our case, this also served to connect us to nature through our hands.

Clay is one of the oldest arts and craft materials. Think of how pottery is often part of unearthed archaeological artefacts. A lump of clay in your hand may be fresh out of the bag, but the material itself can be 3 billion years old. The particles may have emerged from Earth's core and travelled through the wind, rivers, oceans, and settled in the ground, before appearing as our artistic material. With this well-travelled material, we compose something entirely new. Clay is used in art-therapy because the flexible nature and tactility of clay induces reflection and creativity. The tactile contact stimulates several neurological functions: sensual, kinaesthetic, cognitive and symbolic, and allows for inner images to meet and take shape through the physical material (Sholt & Gavron, 2006). In this way, the clay helps us to access tacit bodily knowledge, while we open up to let a power animal appear in our hands.

### Example from the workshop

We include the 'Power animal in clay' exercise at the beginning of the workshop as a warm-up to working with clay and open the mind to finding inspiration from a new source. To the participant it may appear as a practical activity, but really it serves as a subtle way to open the intuitive functions and move towards a state of receptivity. Before the exercise,

each person summarises the main questions uncovered in 'The other hand' writing and find a theme they would like help with. We then ask them to shape a power animal to assist with the issue, introducing constraints, such as 'close your eyes' and work 'in silence'. Once the little figures are shaped, we ask each person to share what power the animal brings into their project and listen to their statements without commenting. This helps everyone to stay in the open sensuous space by not reinforcing other points of view, thus paying respect.

### Experiences from the workshop

Several participants mentioned in the interviews how this activity helped them discover a new starting point for creating, aided by the silence and closed eyes, e.g:

'It was anxious, as a designer, to have the sense of sight cut off, but also liberating. It helped to step back a little and shape with my hands, and distance myself a bit from the outcome, because i couldn't see it, so it reduced the personal pressure. It was very liberating to create from that place.'

For another, this brought a personal experience of deeper contact:

'It was filled with tradition to make a figure that follows you and understands you on a holistic level...there was definitely something about the ownership versus friendship with this animal, which made the experience, well, almost religious. It was very personal to close my eyes and give it shape, it created an extremely strong connection...'

The animals later brought insights about their team work:

'Since then, I've been thinking about how the bees communicate with each other. They dance. And I think it's really funny and a great connection to how we communicate in our team and here at the Academy.'

and:

'Some of the positive, symbolic things I've been thinking about, in terms of the the frog, I've included in the continued groupwork, how to collaborate with others, be ready for transformation and able to transit from one thing to another in a project.'

For one it brought reflection on his relationship to nature:

'I've been thinking about the whale since the workshop and how it came up when I was on the beach...some insights that came, that wasn't directly about the topic, but which I'd have never come up with by trying to think my way to the answer. It was about sensing the water and what it does to me and what my relation to water is...'

Our initial intention and hope was that the power animals would bring intuitive knowledge to the participants. We were surprised by how much this short activity enabled the participants to open up to a sensory creative space and, almost by magic, gain insights that were intriguing, thrilling, and personally meaningful.

### Recipe for power animal in clay\*

- Gather the clay and set a clear intention: what do you need help with in your project/situation?
1. Think about the nature of the material and the power animal you wish to encounter.
  2. Get to know the clay, knead it in your hands.
  3. Close your eyes and be in silence for 5 minutes.
  4. Let a power animal – or other being – take shape through your hands. Let the hands tell the story.
  5. Feel the animal's being, characteristics, properties. Let it take shape through the clay.
  6. Once finished, or when time is up, step back and reflect: 'what power does your animal bring into your project?'
  7. If more people are doing the power animal, do not comment on the answers. This keeps the exercise light hearted and helps people stay in the sensory state.

\*This recipe is inspired by Dars (2020)

### References

Dars, L. og Meltzer C., 2020, Art-based Interventions as a series of methods to access Presencing, Chapter for *Theory U Book 2*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Oakland, CA, USA  
Horwitz, J. & Waldebck, Z. (2020), '*Earth our home*' online course, Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies/sbacka Centre for Shamanic Healing  
Hst, A. (2014), *Jorden synger*, Mntergrden  
Sholt, Michal & Gavron, Tami. (2006). Therapeutic Qualities of Clay-work in ArtTherapy and Psychotherapy: A Review. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association*. 23.









# Stakeholdermap in clay

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



7

## Stakeholder map in clay

The Stakeholder map in clay is to make a physical representation of the people and other elements involved in the situation to connect with different perspectives from within yourself.

### Origin

A stakeholder map generally means to visualize and get an overview of the people involved in, or affected by, a design project and how they relate to each other, for example, the users, partners, experts, collaborators, producers, but also non-human elements like a building, a machine, a deer, a flower – the wider eco-system around a subject. In this case, the two-dimensional representation is replaced with sculptures to enhance the possibility of participants empathizing with the stakeholders by modelling them in their hands. Stakeholder map in clay is inspired by Darsø's work with body sculptures (Darsø, 2011, p.120).

The method helps to slow down our thinking, as it takes us into our hands and body when kneading and shaping the clay. We start to listen from a different place, feeling and intuiting while making shapes with the hands, opening up to what it is that we are forming. With this opening we may start to expand our boundaries and feel empathy. In the words of Scharmer, (2007, p. 2): 'Only an open heart gives us the empathy to connect directly with another person from within... we forget about our own agenda and begin to see how the world appears through someone else's eyes'.

### Example from the workshop

We include the stakeholder map in clay to help participants step into the shoes of the patients, doctors, nurses, next of kin etc. and hang out with them. Hopefully they become aware of, and feel, things they haven't noticed before. The making of the map is followed by reflection and questions to help direct the participants' attention into the experience, perspectives and world of the others – and how that in turn changes their own perception and understanding.

### Experiences from the workshop

Working with clay was a popular choice and the participants found the nature of the material particularly helpful, enabling the 'going into' whilst shaping. Says one participant:

'Having something soft in my hands meant that I did not think so hard and concretely about them [the stakeholders], but that I could be softer in my thought process... being allowed to sit and play with it in a soft way made me have more openness to put myself into their situation and I thought more about the emotions in it.'

As an example of this, one of the participants modelled a girl elevated on an island in the middle of the map with doctors, nurses, parents, siblings and friends in a circle around her, looking up at her from a distance. The configuration disclosed the girl's loneliness, providing a sensation of what it is like to stick out for everyone to see. For another, the stakeholder map helped turn around her focus on how to help the patients:

'When I came, I felt pity for the patients... What changed was that I stopped seeing them as weak individuals who are not feeling well, and that one can contribute to the things that are good for them... take the good things and inflate them and make them bigger and even better'.

For another participant the stakeholder map brought reflection on the contrast to data-driven research:

'... before the workshop, I was very analytical... we used a lot of statistics and facts about what are the symptoms that patients get and tried to think 'is this how they feel'?... but with such exercises with clay, I think you can place stakeholders in relation to each other... It increased my ability to think empathetically about this whole topic.'

We were excited to see how 'going on the inside to recognize the other' through clay is an inspiring way of producing knowledge and complementary to e.g. desktop research and anthropological field studies.

### Recipe for stakeholder map in clay

Think about the stakeholders in the situation you are working with, who are they? For instance collaborators, partners, users, shareholders or things, places, non-human animals, buildings, the planet etc.

1. Bring out the clay and a board for placing the map on, a piece of paper, and a pen for your notes.
2. Stay silent and turn your attention inwards.
3. Start to model the stakeholders one by one. Think about what characterizes them. At times, you might want to close your eyes.
4. Remember to include a figure of yourself in the stakeholder map. New stakeholders might come to mind. It's okay. Shape them too.
5. Once you have the stakeholders, place them on the board in a constellation that reflects how you see them in the situation. If possible, place the stakeholder map so that you can walk around it, and place yourself to see from each figure's view point.
6. One by one, focus on each stakeholder. Try to feel what it is like to be in his/her/it's shoes. What do they think, feel, see? What do they need? What do they dream of? Write down experiences, thoughts, images and stories that come to you.
7. Step back: What have you discovered about the situation? What are the resources of each of the stakeholders? How might that play into the situation?
8. If you are doing this exercise with someone else, they might provide their perspectives now.
9. Reconfigure: Do you want to add stakeholders to the map and/or place the stakeholders in a new constellation?
10. Sum up in notes and illustrations what you've discovered about the situation – new insights, questions, ideas and things to do.

### References

Darsø, L. (2011). *Innovationspædagogik. Kunsten at fremelske innovationskompetencer*. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.










# Silent walk and medicine walk

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



Royal Danish Academy

Architecture  
Design  
Conservation

8

## Silent walk and medicine walk

Silent walk is turning the attention inward by walking in silence, individually or as a group. A medicine walk is a silent, aimless wander, in conversation with nature to seek its advice.

### Origin

The medicine walk is a common ritual across indigenous cultures, e.g. a prayer walk, zen walk, medicine walk or a walkabout. The essence is to carry a clear question on a silent wander, be without an aim, immerse yourself in the surroundings, and be present with, and listen to, whatever catches your focus (Høst, 2014; Horwitz & Waldebäck, 2020; Dossey et. al., 2016). Part of the ‘medicine’ resides in the particular way of interacting with nature - with a clear intention of listening. Being in nature in a meditative way softens the attention and restores the nerve system towards its default state (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). This opens a state of receptiveness.

### Example from the workshop

We include the silent walk as a group exercise just after lunch to create introspection whilst still being in the group. While walking, each person has the opportunity to mull over the morning’s work, re-focus and arrive at a clear question to be explored on the medicine walk. The questions range from personal, ‘what gives meaning and substance for me?’ or ‘what can I do when I lack motivation in a project?’ to asking for project-related insights in the work with dialysis patients: ‘how can I connect people through their differences instead of their similarities? It is normal to spend part of the walk on ‘switching off’ the thinking mind to immerse oneself in the experience. After the walk, participants are encouraged to take notes and to write and draw with ‘the other hand’.

### Experience from the workshop

Being with others in silence was a new experience to the participants: ‘This aspect of buzzing in silence on a walk was really, really interesting. To suddenly be in a situation that was unfamiliar to all of us, but somehow it felt like playing ping pong with one self...’

Says another participant:  
‘It really gave a lot. It reduces the impressions from the outside, so you can talk a little bit to yourself, in some strange way... it’s very meditative, you get in touch with completely different feelings and thoughts. It’s often when it’s silent that the things that really matter appear...’

The medicine walk seemed to help the participants experience a type of transcendence from their everyday thinking mind. One participant explained the shift in consciousness that happened during the walk, e.g:  
‘It was challenging to just switch off all the other stuff. It reminded me of mindfulness, so i tried to accept the thoughts that were there...when the shift happened, I felt that I had more energy to listen to the waves. My senses were enhanced.’

Says another participants,  
‘I was affected emotionally when walking on the beach. I was quite touched... I thought the sea was fierce, it made a lot of noise and I felt that it was roaring at me, I felt it was a cry for help from the patients, and I was standing there, very privileged, and could just decide not to go there, so I wouldn’t get wet, I was on safe ground. It was both a privilege and the power you have, by being on the outside of it [the hospital]. But also powerlessness, like “what the hell can I do?” and the movements you make in the water, you can’t predict those movements, because they disappear into other movements. That’s the “what the hell can i do?” thing.’

It was touching to witness the depth and trust the participants carried, first in the questions shaped, later in the engagement with nature as an active partner, and then in the insights received from the personal dialogue with nature.

- Recipe for silent walk**  
Re-cap where you are in the process by summarising the journey and activities so far. Decide on a route and/or duration of your walk. Set your timer if so inclined.
1. Walk in silence, consider the insights and questions you’ve explored: what is the essential issue for you right now? There may be other thoughts coming in. That’s ok, just walk along.
  2. Remind yourself of the purpose of the walk: to arrive at one or two clear questions to explore further.

3. Just walk and stay in silence until you reach your destination or your timer goes off.
4. Write down notes and your question.

**Recipe for Medicine walk\***  
Formulate one clear question that you would like to explore. Keep it simple and relating to yourself or your group, e.g. ‘how can I introduce/work with/help...?’ This ensures your personal relation to the insights you receive, i.e. they are doable for you. You might use ‘The other hand’ or ‘Silent walk’ to help you form the question.

- We recommend going for at least 20 minutes on a Medicine walk. Use a timer, or analogue watch, if needed.
1. Ground yourself, for example, take time to feel your feet on the ground and take some deep breaths.
  2. Find something to serve as a threshold, e.g. two stones or a stick lying on the ground. This marks a ‘gate’ to your walk and sends a subtle signal to start immersing yourself.
  3. Remind yourself of the intention with the walk: to listen to the surroundings and absorb whatever comes to you. Walk slowly and allow yourself to be flooded with impressions.
  4. Listen with your entire body and let any images or insights come to you
  5. Don’t worry about how to remember it all. You’ll remember the important things.
  6. If possible, return through your threshold and say ‘thank you’ – to practice gratefulness.
  7. Write notes or draw everything you saw, heard, felt, sensed, smelled – use both hands.

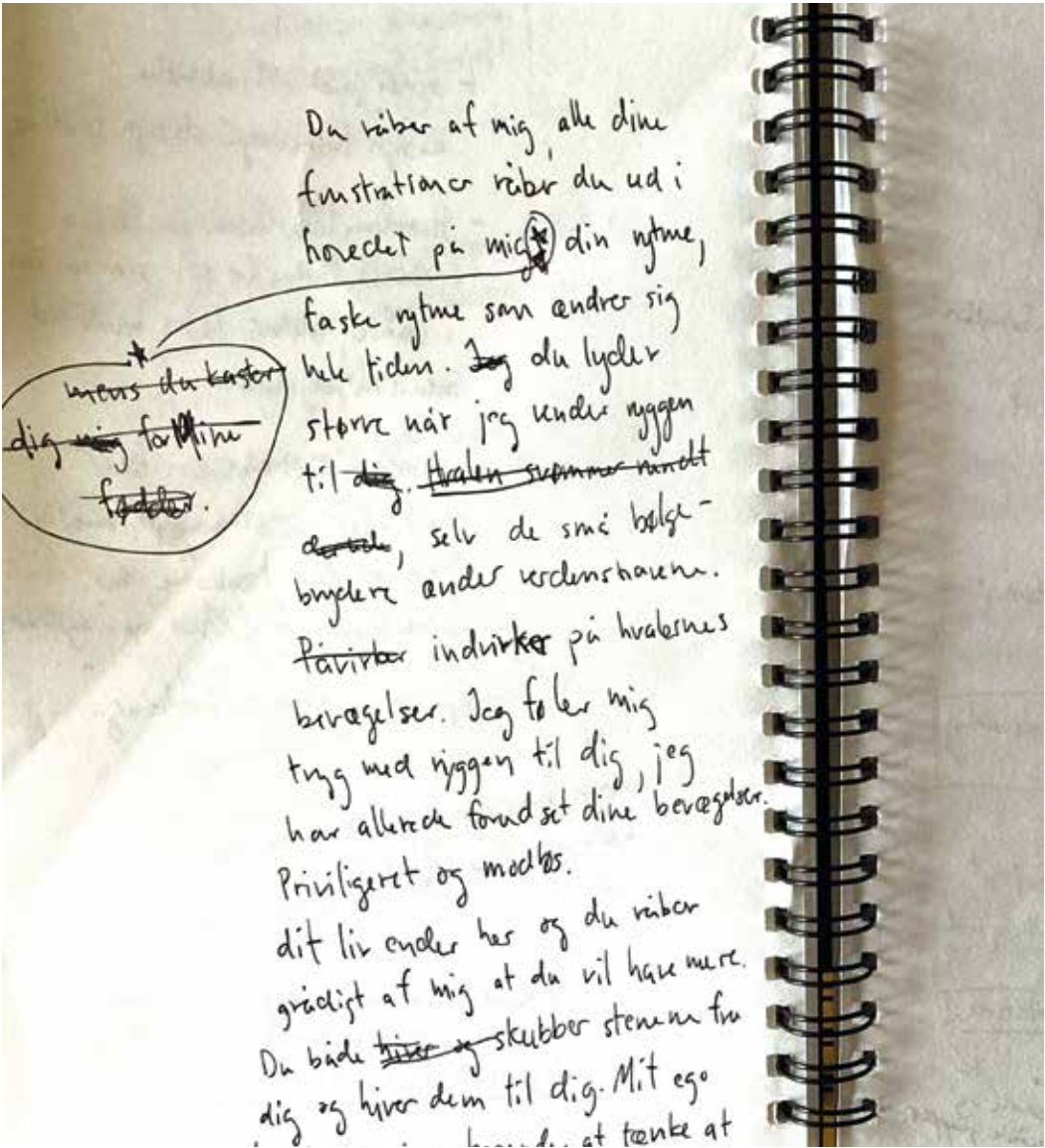
\*This recipe is inspired by Høst (2014) and Horwitz and Waldebäck (2020)

**References**  
Dossey, B. M. & Keegan, L., (2015), *Holistic Nursing -7th Revised edition edition*, Sydbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett Publishers.  
Horwitz, J. & Waldebäck, Z. (2020), ‘*Earth our home*’ online course, Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies/Åsbacka Centre for Shamanic Healing.  
Høst, A. (2014), *Jorden synger*, Møntergården.  
Kaplan, R. & Kaplan, S. (1989), *The Experience of Nature: A Psychological Perspective*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-34139-6.









# Poetry

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



9

## Poetry

Writing a poem, aided by a series of constraints, helps to bypass rational mind and distil abstract ideas, learning, and feelings to crystallize new insights and learning.

### Origin

Poetry is one of our original ways of self-expression and has roots in the songs of indigenous people. Creating poems is currently applied in many fields, for instance in cognitive behavioural therapies to help identify habitual thoughts and emotions (Villines, 2020) and in ‘poetic enquiry’ where poetry is used to support exploration of personal experiences (Vincent, 2018). As an art-based intervention, writing poems is a means to inspire creative thinking through the focus on imagery, metaphors and feelings and help uncover, sense, and express the things we didn’t know that we know or feel about a complex situation (Fox, 1997). The focus is not on rhyme and rhythm. Instead, the poem is a method for weaving together insights and distilling the essence of what was experienced. In this way, writing a poem can be applied at any time in a creative process.

### Example from the workshop

We include poetry following the medicine walk, and base it on the participants’ notes from the walk. This sequences of methods are introduced gradually to help bypass rational mind and an inner critic that might think writing a poem is out of reach. In this case, the poem comes as a surprise element. When poetry becomes a regular activity the surprise element changes to a sense of wonder about the ‘hidden’, or unknown, words we each carry inside. Poetry is a powerful way of revealing these words and crystallise our fragmented thoughts and feelings into a coherent picture. Inspired by Horwitz & Waldebäck (2020) we invite the participants to read out their poem aloud. This helps to embody their feelings, intuition and learning through verbal expression.

### Experience from the workshop

Having to read the poems aloud in the group was a surprise and an intense experience for the participants:

‘I felt it [devotion], when we had to read the poem out loud. I thought it was transgressive and just when you said it, I thought, “quick! make up something different on the spot, and read that instead of what you just wrote”, because it felt too personal. But when the others read their poem it felt very sincere, almost a touching experience...It felt good, but also a loss of control. But that also confirmed to me that you feel relieved and supported by people around you, and then the loss of control doesn’t matter.’

### One participant experiences trust in something greater:

‘When things are spiritual, it’s often things you can’t see, but you can feel they are there. Like, when we were on the beach...for me, trust is also to believe in somethings that isn’t there. And it felt a lot like there was something that had my back. It was a belief that “it’ll be ok and there is a meaning in what we are doing”. I think I’ve always had that, but of course I got reminded about it during the workshop...  
...and it makes me a better designer when I’ve got that with me...when I’ve got the trust and belief that someone’s got my back. Then I dare do more things, dare take more chances and trust that what I do is good enough. And this means that I automatically get much better, because I can develop myself in this way, instead of sitting in my little hole and only make two different things, you know, it means that you dare to throw yourself into other things, because of course it’ll be all right.’

### And another experienced it as a new creative sphere to step into:

‘there was this newly emerged universe I could use in other contexts, instead of just writing for the sake of writing, that people also write about feelings... it felt extremely free, a bit like having a compass where you can go in all directions. Where you can step back a bit and are allowed to explore in all directions. It was a very free universe where you could point left and right and see through this fog.’

Poetry took the participants out of their comfort zone. It was inspiring to see how questions posed 40 minutes earlier were being explored, transformed, expressed and now touching everyone in the group. As such, poetry seems to be a remarkable way of crystalizing and embodying newfound personal meaning and perspectives.

### Recipe for poetry\*

Gather the notes you wish to write the poem from.

1. Give yourself time and silence to go through the notes. Underline or highlight the strongest points in the notes.
2. Transfer these points to a new page and start gathering them as sentences. Don’t worry about rhyming or rhythm.
3. Give yourself some breathing space and ‘let the poem come to you, a bit like laying a puzzle. Suddenly it starts to appear.
4. Once the poem is there, find a spot and a position where you want to read out the poem aloud. If in a group, you can place yourselves in a circle – or experiment with positions.
5. Read the poem twice. The first time is to overcome a barrier, the second to listen to yourself. The second one is usually beautiful. If in a group, keep silent after each reading, keep the space without feedback. Simply thank each person for sharing. This helps the poems and the experience to sink in.
6. Big applause when everyone has shared.

\*This recipe is based on Horwitz and Waldebäck (2020)

### References

Fox, J. (1997), *Poetic Medicine: The Healing Art of Poem-Making*. New York: TarcherPerigee  
Horwitz, J. & Waldebäck, Z. (2020) ‘Earth our home’ online course, Scandinavian Center for Shamanic Studies/Åsbacka Centre for Shamanic Healing  
Villines, Z. (2020) *What is poetry therapy?*,  
<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/poetry-therapy>, accessed 24.02.2021  
Vincent, A. (2018). Is There a Definition? Ruminating on Poetic Inquiry, Strawberries and the Continued Growth of the Field. *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal*, 3(2), 48–76.

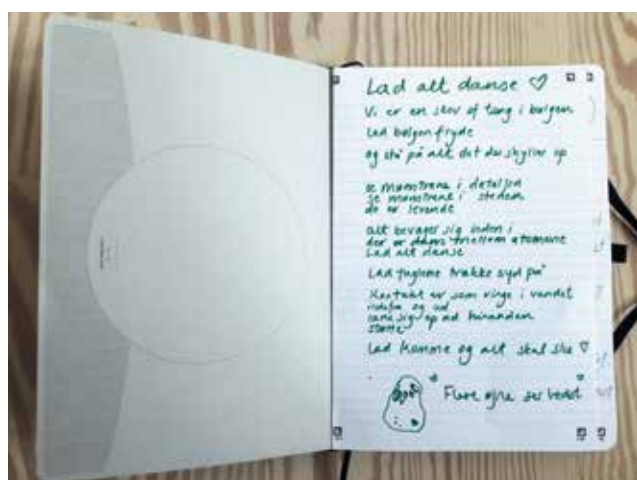
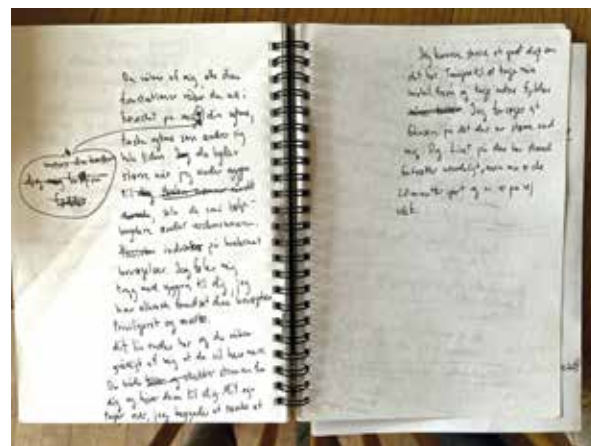


MÅ, MEN DERIMOD GIVER DE MIG  
TRYKHED OG SLAPPEL MÅ PÅ FOR FØLELSER  
AF DET ENKELTE OG RØDTE I DET PRIVATE.  
→ DET PRIVATE KAN GODT SE I DET  
ÅBNE, PÅ HUS OMGIVELSENE TILVÆR  
DET!

### DYGT - ØVELSE PÅ STRANDEN

DET PRIVATE I DET ÅBNE  
SLAPPEL MÅ PÅ  
DET GEMME MÅ  
DET RØDTE TRYKT  
DET PRIVATE I DET ÅBNE  
HUS OMGIVELSENE TILVÆR  
DET ENKELTE OG RØDTE.  
DET PRIVATE, DET OFFENTLIGE.

Stranden er en fantastisk  
et sted at gå hen og se på  
Bredheden i naturen - og  
bølgerne mellem sig mod stranden.  
Til sidst - hvordan kan jeg ikke  
være færdig - strømmen i naturen  
- ikke længere er mig - det er  
mennesket selv ikke. Der kan  
det menneskelige menneske  
og bølger. Det må jeg sige  
og bølger plads til. For det er  
ikke - det er på det fokus  
for mennesket er - at man  
trækker sig tilbage. Og til sidst  
har jeg gennemgået at man  
på strand - på at de er en  
mennesket, at de er en  
mig, i naturen selv, der  
er en mennesket.







# Land art

Silje Alberthe Kamille Friis & Annegrete Mølhave  
Artistic development project (KUV)  
Royal Danish Academy 2020



10

## Land art

Land Art is to translate abstract ideas into concrete form by making a composition with elements found in nature.

### Origin

Land art, or Earth art, is inspired by indigenous ceremonial arts and craft, working directly in the landscape with the natural materials in the given place. In the 1960s it grew as an art movement inspired by the ecological movement and focused on investigating natural sites and alternatives to commercial art practice (UMFA, 2021; Cichock & Rohn, 2012). Land art can be created anywhere and any place outside. It is an aesthetic meeting and dialogue with nature to express feelings, intuitions, sensations and ideas.

As an art-based intervention, land art helps to manifest abstract ideas in something tangible and with an intention – to work on nature’s premise. It can be used with generous time to experience the elements of the particular place, the patterns in nature etc., and let these aspects help to form the ideas, as you create the ‘art piece’. By creating with nature’s materials, subtly you start to connect your ideas directly to the larger eco-system. Another version is when you are out for a walk and get an idea: pause, and do a small, impulsive, piece of art right there on the spot. This helps to move the idea a step forward from thinking to experience and embodiment.

### Example from the workshop

We include land art as a way of transforming the poem into a tangible prototype – made on the beach with the materials at hand. We call it ‘rapid-land art’ inspired by rapid-prototyping. The creations can be as simple as the rings in the water when a pebble is thrown in, positioned twigs or stacked stones. Our aim is to help participants explore their poem and what is moving in them, in an open-ended way, inspired by the space, patterns and materials at hand. It provides a playful free space after the emotional intensity of the poem, and energizes the group when going round to each piece to ‘show and tell’.

### Experiences from the workshop

The participants agree that the land art exercise provided a welcome relief after the poem, providing a space for exploration. In the words of one participant:

‘It was so intuitive and open to be allowed to do exactly what I wanted. It became less about what I was building and more about how it felt to build it. I made the stack, and it didn’t matter if anything was still standing at the end, and if nothing was standing at the end, maybe that was ok as well, and still symbolised what I had made before. There was a big freedom to explore boundaries and how I wanted to interpret the poem.’

‘Land art’ also brought up new challenges in moving between the abstract and the concrete in a creative process:

‘It was challenging with the abstract, and how to make sense of it using whatever was available on the spot, like with the sculpture. It’s a new way of working with a topic, which is challenging in itself, but also opened to a lot of new things. And you could draw parallels to some of the fact-based things... the challenging thing was probably to get it to make sense from the abstract to the concrete.’

Yet, for some, these reflections provided new knowledge about the relationship to the patients:

‘Through the exercises we did, it was a more abstract way of seeing, in our case a hospital and patients with very concrete needs. With such a trip to the beach, where you have to do some land art, write a poem, and find the answer in nature, and work abstractly with something concrete it works really well together, because you see and think in a different way. So instead of it being practical, that, “this is what a dialysis room looks like”, it became something personal and, in some ways, I connected much more to the project, also personally.’

Another found a direct relation between working with nature – in general – and the effect it may have on the design outcome:

‘It works really well together, to find a way into anchoring something, that the ideas come from universal things, things which all human beings can relate to and understand, and that it is very centred around nature. Then I think, that many of the solutions are inspired by nature and makes it more tangible, less fabricated.’

Our hope was, that the land art would help give shape to the original perspectives uncovered in the process, as well as engaging all the senses

in the act of crafting rapid-land art. We were then positively surprised by learning how, in addition to this, the general reflections on abstract-concrete could directly inform a creative process.

### Recipe for Land art

Take a moment to think about the ideas that you wish to encompass in the land art. Keep these in mind as you go ahead.

1. Go for a small wander and pick the things and materials that you are drawn to.
2. Listen to the space and the materials you choose: what are they saying or showing in relation to your idea?
3. Find a space that feels right for creating your art work. Tune into the space and your intention with the piece.
4. Let your hands feel each piece of material and let the art work reveal itself as you create it. The process is as important as the outcome.
5. Step back and look at the piece. Reflect on what it brings in relation to what you set out to explore.
6. If in a group, walk around and let each person share their ideas. Invite the group to give feedback.
7. Round off, by writing or drawing what was discovered, in your notebook, and possibly photograph the piece.

### References

Cichock, S. & Rohn, M. (2012), *A Report on the Value of Land Art and Biophilic Design to Draw Students into the St. Olaf College Natural Lands and Enhance an Environmental Ethos on Campus*, <https://wp.stolaf.edu/art/files/2013/10/Rohn-StOlafLandArtReport.pdf>  
UMFA (2021) *what is land art?*, <https://umfa.utah.edu/land-art/about>, accessed 24.02.2021



