Photo: Hayat Al-Sharif

Introduksjon

Kjære lesere!

Tema for årets utgave av tidsskriftet PlaySpace er dekolonisering. Temaet har vært gjenstand for stor debatt de siste årene, og vi spør oss: Hvordan kommer kolonisering til uttrykk i kunstfagene? Hvordan kan vi aktivt øke mangfoldet og tilgjengeligheten innen kunsten?

Bidragene i dette nummeret tar for seg temaet ut ifra ulike innfallsvinkler: Sally Blackwood presenterer en analyse av opera og operapraksis i Australia i dag når det gjelder bærekraft, levedyktighet og dekolonisering. Intervjuer med sentrale personer fra operafeltet i Australia viser at kolonisering er et evigvarende problem som er innebygd i det kulturelle rammeverket for repertoaropera og konvensjonelle operaproduksjoner og praksiser. Marija Griniuk tar for seg dekolonisering fra kuratorfeltet, hvor hun utforsker kuratering av urfolkskunst. De kuratoriske måtene diskuteres ut fra et tredelt perspektiv: dekolonisering av kuratorisk praksis, ikke-hierarki av narrativer og pluriversal kuratering, og gir et større perspektiv på hva kuratering av urfolkskunst og forskning kan være. Per Dahl diskuterer begrepet «In tune», som forstås som en henvisning til objektive kriterier, tatt som et ahistorisk faktum. Han bruker uttrykket «kolonisert kunst» om makthierarkiene som styrer utviklingen av kunstuttrykk, og trekker inn skalasystemer, folkemelodier, temperering og hvordan dette ble brukt av klassiske komponister i nye kunstneriske uttrykk og dermed etablerte maktstrukturer.

Héloïse Baldelli konfronterer det tradisjonelle konsertformatet i vokal kammermusikk, med sangeren stående ved klaveret. Basert på sitt doktorgradsprosjekt, undersøkes fremføringspraksisen til Saties mélodies for deretter å presentere andre framføringsmuligheter ved hjelp av nye kunstneriske metoder og teoretiske konsepter.

I tillegg til de ovennevnte fagfellevurderte artiklene, inneholder dette nummeret også fire essays og en petite. Per Dahls Give me five! i PerSpektiv omhandler hverken pentatonikk eller de mange femdelte hierarkier, men den tradisjonelle håndhilsningen. Deise Faria Nunes ser på mulige skritt mot helbredelse av koloniale sår i sitt essay, mens Iury Salustiano Trojaborg tar for seg de personlige og politiske årsakene bak mormorens migrasjonsreise. Randolph Oneil Naylor oppfordrer oss videre til å dekolonisere «lekeplassen» gjennom et dypdykk i den moderne filosofien om selvorganisering og ikke-lineære modeller, og fotokunstneren Hayat Al-Sharif gir oss et ektefølt innblikk i Yemens folk og historie gjennom sitt fotoessay.

Takk til redaksjonen, som i tillegg til undertegnede har bestått av Per Dahl, Petter Frost Fadnes, Mari Flønes, Halvor Hosar og Elina Borg Björnström. Jeg vil samtidig rette en stor takk til alle våre bidragsytere og fagfeller!

Lise K. Meling
Redaktør

Redaksjon

Lise K. Meling
Redaktør og ansvarlig utgiver, førsteamanuensis

Petter Frost Fadnes
Professor

Elina Borg Björnström
Journal manager, formgiver

Per Dahl
Professor emeritus

Halvor K. Hosar
Postdoktor

Mari Flønes
Stipendiat

PlaySpace (PS!)

Challenging modes of artistic research

PLAYspace (PS!) is a new international, online, Open Access and peer-reviewed journal dedicated to critical perspectives on artistic research. We wish to be inclusive, and stylistically non-discriminative, and here refer to artistic research in the widest sense.

This means that we encourage submissions from all forms of artistic- and practice-related research, such as new musicology, performance research, artistic practice, arts-based research, practice as research, performance research, practice-infused research, as well as other AR-offshoots, and interdisciplinary approaches.
PS! wants to challenge the normal modes of knowledge transfer within the field, dedicated to exploring experimental solutions to critical writing. PS! sees the development of language as an important prerequisite for knowledge transfer, and believe Artistic Research has great potential in developing its own syntax, adapted to its evolving needs. PS! therefore invites submissions based on both known and unknown forms of writing – from scientific papers to transcribed conversations and poetry – urging its writers to play with words, play with media, and play with research. The journal accepts submissions in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, or English. Particularly welcome are contributions from Ph.D.-students, post-doc and/or young researchers.

Dr Sally Victoria Blackwood (she/her)

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This qualitative research project analyses the sustainability, viability and evolution of opera in Australia — through the business and power structures, staging practices and educational models — with a view to systemic change and possible futures for opera in Australia.

ARTICLE ABSTRACT

This timely research presents an excerpt of my analysis of opera and operatic practice in Australia in today. The aim of the broader research is to interrogate the sustainability, viability and evolution of the Australian operatic field. Situated during the globally recognised Coronavirus pandemic era, this qualitative research project was conducted over the period 2018–2021. The fieldwork component of the research is an investigation conducted through long-form interviews with a selection of the central figures in the operatic field in Australia today. Bourdieusian Field Theory is employed as the primary framing device. The study also engages Grounded Theory in the data analysis and codification. This excerpt is from Chapter 8, Part III Stories We Tell: Making and Staging Opera in Australia. I examine how and why repertoire opera is being reframed, and who is taking the lead in this reframing, juxtaposed with the personal and societal cost of performing unexamined extant opera works and perpetuating the 'opera gaze'. The vision and division of the operatic field is deconstructed in an exploration of contemporary Australian opera and contemporary creative practices, fictional ritual spaces, and explorations of diversity, Aboriginal opera and decolonising the postcolonial operatic lens.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY 1

 This work was originally written on Gamilaraay Country [North West NSW, Australia] and I acknowledge the Gamilaraay/Gomeroi people for their care of Country — land which has never been ceded. This article was updated in 2023 on Gadigal Country [Sydney, Australia]. Interviews referenced took place across various First Nations Countries which are the fabric of present day Australia. First Nations Countries have been acknowledged throughout this article and are written before or after the Western colonial placename.

Alternative Forms and Approaches to Operatic Practice in Australia

'Opera' quite simply means 'work'. It is the plural of the Latin 'opus' and refers to both the action and the outcome of multiple works — the coming together of artforms or works as the result of collaborative work (or labour).

By Sally Blackwood

Jessica Aszodi in Liza Lim's Atlas of the Sky photo Photo: Bryony Jackson.

[M]ost of the big opera companies have a model that is in its essence calcified in the late nineteenth early twentieth century and is working on the production and reproduction of works from that era [...] we do not live in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and our audiences do not come from that period, our spaces do not come from that period, our marketing models, our box office revenues, our resonance in popular culture — none of these things are even vaguely similar [...] so there's an obvious mismatch. (Aszodi, interview with author, 11 September 2018)

'Opera' quite simply means 'work'. It is the plural of the Latin 'opus' and refers to both the action and the outcome of multiple works — the coming together of artforms or works as the result of collaborative work (or labour). According to musicologist Tim Carter, the elliptical usage of the term — 'one goes to the opera to see the opera perform an opera' — however absurd, goes some way to revealing the 'complex intermingling of space, agency, and outcome embedded within the term' (Carter, 2014, p. 4). The term 'opera', as a broad, generic, all-encompassing classification, has been used consistently since the nineteenth century. As it has travelled, it has operated as a standardised term to refer to operatic works across historical periods, and it has mapped the course of opera's evolution and movement to the present (Goehr, 2014). Opera's journey is one of continual adaptation, resulting in a plurality of styles interwoven with time and place.

Australian-born vocalist Jessica Aszodi has chosen to dedicate her opera career to the creation of new operatic work that resonates personally and professionally. She has deliberately chosen a path away from the standard repertoire opera to be in a space that values her vocal experimentation, to work with living composers who write for her voice, and to actively participate in the operatic subfield, which is testing the boundaries of what opera can be. Aszodi is part of a vast interconnected network of artists — creators and performers — who dedicate their

talents to the collaborative practice and ethical creation of new and reimagined extant operatic works that challenge the form of repertoire opera and connect to contemporary sociopolitical conversations on community, sustainability, wellbeing and diversity. These alternative approaches to opera reveal themselves in every step of the conceptual framing, creative practice, values and modes of delivery. This alternative view openly challenges the Spaces, Places and Forms2 of opera. It changes what the rehearsal room looks and feels like, who is in the room, how they are invited in, their presence, and the level of support given to creative practice, development and performance. It has the potential to change the power relations within and beyond the creative space, reclaim artistic agency and give voice to all those in the room.

The three parts of this article address the structures and colonising forces of opera and alternative work practices and decolonising means of reclaiming the operatic field and form. In the first section I deconstruct the operatic frame in reference to Lydia Goehr's 'work-concept'. I challenge the 'work-concept' with discussion on the embedded nature of labour of the contemporary opera creative; explore interviewee examples of their contemporary work practices; and provide a brief examination of Liza Lim's (2018) Atlas of the Sky. In the second section I examine the argument of Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO, Artistic Director of Short Black Opera — that '[o]pera is an Aboriginal construct' (interview with author, 30 October 2018) — to reveal the driving passion behind Cheetham's championing of opera in its ability to express contemporary Indigenous narratives through ancient connections to song, dance and storytelling. In the third section I explore the complex task of decolonising the dominant colonial voices in the artform and the Australian postcolonial gaze by re-examining the narratives, casting and representations of race, and questioning the preservation of the postcolonial position of alterity that is often arguably buried beneath the music.

Opera By Any Other Name: Deconstructing Opera

'Opera' [...] [is a performance practice which] might loosely be called some other kind of performance art or some other form of multimedia or multimodal practice, that might not wear the opera label. (Ricketson, interview with author, 6 June 2018)

I want to work with and to be responsive to the stimulus of my own time and that means that I need to apply the word 'opera' differently in my practice and in my outlook more generally. (Aszodi, interview with author, 11 September 2018)

Interviewees whose work is deeply entrenched in the 'small to medium'3 operatic strand of the 'restricted' subfield4 of subsidised opera described that the Places, Spaces and Forms of innovation, risk-taking and reinvention of the operatic artform are to be found in the 'small to medium' environment. Interestingly, those working in or with the 'major'5 opera companies made no attempt to voice the same argument for the production of repertoire opera; in general, they tended to agree that innovation and risk-taking were not their domain. In fact, the 'majors' all stated that experimentation and the possibility of failure was too great a financial — and to some extent reputational — risk to pursue.

Reflecting on the large operatic machine, composer Damien Ricketson notes that '[p]roducing new work, and especially more experimental new work, is something that the model cannot bear' (interview with author, 6 June 2018). Instead, the focus of the 'small to medium' opera sector and subfield of independent opera artists is a deconstructed operatic model (re)constructed by collaboratives of specific artform practitioners to best suit their style and approach. In this way, opera can become either an abstracted meeting of forms — a vast canvas for experimentation and innovation in the nexus of form and content — or a platform for telling diverse contemporary narratives. The malleable operatic frame expands and contracts to engage with content as its diverse artists manipulate Form,

Place and Space in their collaborative negotiation of what a specific work will be and what 'opera' could become. These operatic experiments take place in spaces outside the opera house and vary in form and scale from intimate chamber pieces to large epic-scale works incorporating cross-artform practitioners breaking the operatic moulds and expectations.

Examples of three vastly different Australian practitioners from diverse backgrounds working in the 'small to medium' operatic space are directors Kip Williams and Adena Jacobs, and composer Cat Hope. Williams, director of extant opera works, shares that '[o]pera affords me an opportunity to sit in a meditative abstract space, [a] non-literal space. A representative space. A space where an idea can unfurl and unravel and occupy the poetic' (interview with author, 30 August 2018). Williams' reimagined operatic works seek to enable a connection with, and discourse around, contemporary cultural and societal values, including gender politics and social justice. He expresses the personal artistic opportunity that presents itself in the occupation of the operatic space. For radical queer feminist director Adena Jacobs, whose work straddles both reimagining extant opera and the construction of new operatic work, it is a question not only of whether certain stories are being told in the operatic space, but also whether it is possible to 'rewire ourselves to experience things that are different to each one of us' (interview with author, 27 June 2018). Jacobs explores the idea of audience and creator together experiencing what she calls 'a total shift' in binary aesthetics — a questioning of the values of good versus bad art or a 'de-centring of what we perceive to be good opera, good art' (interview with author, 27 June 2018). This complete deconstruction of narrative content and form, staging aesthetics, and deep-rooted binary value judgements is arguably considered central to the work of the avant-garde contemporary multi-artform practitioner. Jacobs goes one step further, stating that in the mainstream space 'we struggle to tell stories that are truly ambiguous [...] to be in an unknown space or be truly uncertain or uncomfortable or disturbed [...] we're very afraid to really challenge ourselves [...] we seek out the same experiences again and again' (interview with author, 27 June 2018). This complex and nuanced argument goes to the heart of Jacobs' experimental creative practice and avant-garde performance work, which breaks the mould of storytelling and performance expectations.

Cat Hope, composer of new operatic work, comes to the artform with a background in experimental and exploratory sound, matched with technical innovation in animated graphic score notation developed with her collaborators, Decibel New Music Ensemble. 6 Hope describes opera as a vast field of possibilities:

"Opera in the contemporary era can be whatever we decide it is. Electronics, interactivity and community participation are all part of contemporary practice' (Blackwood, 2019).

Hope discusses the opportunities that opera presents:

[I]t is important that opera pick up on what the music of our day is and can be. It doesn't need to be bound by traditional stories, singing or composition styles. New operas should reflect the stories and styles of our time ... women and non-binary people are an important part of these stories and styles, which is why the inclusion of our ideas, stories, opinions and creative vision is so important to the operatic canon at this point of time. Our casting needs to reflect this too — who we are and want to be in a better world. (Blackwood, 2019, quoting Hope)

Each of these three contemporary opera creatives approaches the deconstruction of opera from different access points into the artform: music, text and dramatic storytelling. In each case, a deep respect and understanding of the operatic form grants the artists a solid platform for (re)creation and consideration of opera's contemporary associations and relevance. As each artist (de)constructs a single work, the resonance of their shifting of the operatic power structures within the work has the effect of progressively shifting the parameters of production and consumption of the whole of the operatic field in Australia.

In our interview, composer Liza Lim AM stated that '[o]pera is fictional ritual space where there can be some kind of transformation of being', and that it 'is an immersive experience operating on multiple sensory levels [...] which can take you into other states of being, other worlds of knowing' (interview with author, 4 September 2018). In Bourdieusian terms, opera has the powerful ability to penetrate each element of habitus (ways of being, knowing and doing); thus, it has the potential to cause hysteresis or momentary transformation in all agents within the greater societal field. Lim adds that opera is 'culturally coded', which enables resonance and depth of complexity, or a state of 'super saturation' (interview with author, 4 September 2018). Lim's (2018) Atlas of the Sky examines formations of shared transformation through community participation. Lim's work explores ritual gathering and employs opera as a framework for the collective experience. She states that '[r]ituals are technologies of self-knowledge [...] not just the individual but also communities [...] They have really strong social functions that go back [several] millennia' (Lim, interview with author, 4 September 2018). In our interview, we discussed the importance of liveness and sharing physical space between the performer and audience. Lim believes that the 'co-presence of all bodies' is 'crucial to the experience' — performer and witness in a 'momentary flash of transformation' (interview with author, 4 September 2018).

The differences in the nature of contemporary operatic practices and experimental operatic works are revealed in the language of the creators in both the description of

Deborah Cheetham's Pecan Summer photo Photo: Jorge de Araujo & Richard Jefferson

form and the examination of creative practice.

Concerning her own compositional practice, Lim discusses emergent components and notes that 'Atlas of the Sky works with qualities of energy to express visceral elements of social spaces' in a study of mob mentality (interview with author, 4 September 2018). Lim's work examines how group energies shift from 'stagnant to highly activated states', evidenced in the sound and movement of the work, engaging bodies and vocal vibration. Lim describes the multilayered approach to her personal compositional process: 'It's not just sonic materials or rhythms and melodies. It's trying to think of these larger phrasings of energet-

ic forces' (interview with author, 4 September 2018). She explains that an important part of her process is the time shared with fellow musicians; on the surface engaging in technique, and with even deeper importance placed on 'interpersonal exchange' or what Lim refers to as a coming together and an understanding of the 'energies embodied in that person's performance and their approach' (interview with author, 4 September 2018). Lim embeds personal intangible material into her compositional work. She explains the process as very specific and grounded in 'an embodied relation' far beyond a mere 'sonic profile'. In this way, Lim works simultaneously at the macro and micro levels during the compositional pro-

cess, allowing the malleable operatic frame to ingest the minute details or 'secret knowledge' of the performer and concurrently absorb macro-energetic forces. Lim describes her process as a 'collaborative subtle set of exchanges' between the composer and the performer, and notes that this collaboration continues within the performer through rehearsal and performance as they respond to the propositions in the score (interview with author, 4 September 2018).

Contemporary creative work practices challenge Lydia Goehr's late-eighteenth-century 'work-concept', which separates performance from the creation of the work, views the 'work' as a separate entity or unified whole, and sets up power relations

between the composer, performers and audiences (Goehr, 1992, p. 232).7 This challenge is brought about through the visual aesthetics of staged performance written into the score and interpreted by specific individual performers, and which I argue are embedded in the identity of the work. Therefore, artists who collaboratively contribute to the creation and the performance of the work cannot be removed from the work — not if the work is to remain the same work. In this way, not only are the performing artist, the director and often the designer intrinsic in the creation of the work, but their collaborative participation in the creation and performance of the work remains part of the 'work'. In a work such as The Howling Girls (Ricketson & Jacobs, 2018), director Adena Jacobs is a co-author of the work, and the vocalists are equally inseparable from it. I argue that a restaging without the key role co-created and performed by soprano Jane Sheldon or the six teenage girls would not be possible; rather, it would produce another version of the work, but not the 'work-concept' entity that Goehr describes.8 This is a critical difference in the contemporary creation of new opera. In a work such as Fly Away Peter (Gyger & Wilcox, 2015), the collaborative contributions of director Imara Savage and designer Elizabeth Gadsby are intrinsic elements of the 'work' itself — in equal measure to the music and libretto. In my 2018 interview with the work's composer, Elliott Gyger, he described the collaborative creation and the initial discussions with the director that shaped the libretto and, in turn, the music. Gyger notes that 'I can't just take the opera vehicle and put my content in, I actually have to reconsider the vehicle itself' (interview with author, 17 August 2018). As much as Gyger is the single music composer, this collaboration between music, words, visual staging and drama informed all elements of the work as it was taking shape. Gyger explained:

[T]he collaborative process, even though that's existed within theatre performance for a long time, for that to be becoming the new norm for opera is really interesting and exciting. You don't have to [...] submit [a

completed work] and hope that everyone likes it. There's this dialogue all the way through which is really interesting and fruitful for all parties coming together; and interestingly more likely what would have been done in the nineteenth century. (Gyger, interview with author, 17 August 2018)

I argue that this collaboration and co-creation is becoming more profound in the twenty-first century, and that the work of the director and designer in this instance is embedded in the 'work'. Further, although the work lives on as a musical score, the restaging by a new artistic team could be problematic because the work is recognisable as a performed entity and retains elements that were collaboratively produced by Savage and Gadsby. In both examples, the opera object is a performed artefact that is intrinsically tied to all artists who contributed to the 'work' performance creation, and that operates with a different set of power relations than those proposed by Goehr. New contemporary methods of creating opera challenge the very nature of opera creation and the 'sacred object' (Abbate & Parker, 2015) of the opera artefact embodied solely in the score. Evolving practice-led research challenges the ways in which spaces for creative practice are constructed, as well as the essential roles of all artists — performers, directors, designers, composers and librettists — in the making and performing of operatic works. The research challenges the ways in which the artefact is conserved and reproduced in the post-premiere performance season. This evolving practice confronts previously unquestioned work systems and hierarchies that dictate how new operatic works are made, performed and conserved, especially in mainstage 'repertory opera'9 companies whose work practices remain, for the most part, dominated by traditional approaches to new opera performance creation.

Interviewees working in this evolving contemporary area are well aware of these challenging and clashing work practices, as well as the difficulties of the two operatic strands operating in parallel. In our 2018 interview, mezzo

soprano Eve Klein acknowledged:

I've had criticisms of my own work with people who consider themselves as conservators of the operatic tradition, particularly the canonic repertoire10 [...] [who] see experimental contemporary work of the kind that I do, as a direct challenge to opera and will say that the work that I make is not opera, that opera is something else [other] than what I'm doing. (Klein, interview with author, 10 August 2018)

Vocalist Jessica Aszodi believes that the rate of change is occurring rapidly in her area of contemporary practice and that 'sometimes it's jarring to encounter people who live in that house because I remember that that house is still there and there are people who still live in it and the view has not changed; but the world has changed' (interview with author, 11 September 2018). Tamara Saulwick, Artistic Director of Chamber Made,11 asserts that the company's view of opera is that 'it's opera inasmuch as it's interdisciplinary work and we're bringing these languages together, we're bringing text and composition and performance and staging [...] if the word opera means interdisciplinary work that's what we're making [...] [and we're] redefining the spaces that it could occupy' (interview with author, 9 July 2018). Several female interviewees also voiced their passion for redefining the operatic frame and were clear that their interest and place in the operatic field was in the creation of new contemporary operatic work. This is a space where their voice is valued and their work respected, and the creative practice systems are based on their inclusion as artists contributing to the creative collaboration of a work.

'Opera is an Aboriginal Construct'

“A song is not merely a song. It can be a map to our identity, it can help us find the way home. A song is not merely song. (Dhungala Childrens Choir, Cheetham, 2019).

Deborah Cheetham Fraillon AO is the founding Artistic Director of Short Black Opera, an Indigenous12 opera company based in Melbourne [Naarm] and touring (pre-COVID-19) nationally. Cheetham, a soprano and composer, set up Short Black Opera in 2009 as a proactive response to the lack of Indigenous opera singers and Indigenous opera stories being told. Cheetham is from Australia's 'stolen generations'13 and grew up in a white aspirational working-class family; only later in life did Cheetham reconnect with her Aboriginal mother and identify as a proud Yorta Yorta14 woman. Throughout her early life, Cheetham's connection to music was supported by her first music teacher who, on discovering her passion and talent, exposed her to the Western music canon and finally opera, which Cheetham fell in love with. During her schooling and tertiary education — a Bachelor of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music [Gadigal Country] — Cheetham was an Aboriginal anomaly and lacked Indigenous role models or leaders to follow. However, opera offered Cheetham an alternative form of connection, expression and a stable place, and she recalls being inspired from an early age by performances by Dame Joan Sutherland. Since learning her Yorta Yorta ancestry, Cheetham has been able to align her love of repertoire opera and the connection to ancient Aboriginal storytelling — song, dance, performance and Country — and has become a strong force in the advocacy of Indigenous opera in Australia. Cheetham has an Aboriginal lens — a deeply embedded living perspective of Australia's past and present — that stems from her personal family history and experience being in the position of the colonised. This resilient Aboriginal lens, which is most often diametrically opposed to the white colonial gaze, provides critical insights into Australia's conscious and unconscious mythmaking of its colonial past, its continuing impact on national agendas and local communities through language employed and views perpetuated, and its influence on the present unreflective 'opera gaze'.15 Cheetham is driven by a strong passion to change opera into a more inclusive Aboriginal space; she views the meeting of

artforms in opera as a powerful place for change, and opera as an important vehicle for sharing Aboriginal narratives of resistance, survival and truth-telling.

I have given this particularly personal introduction to Cheetham's life because it has deep resonance with her operatic work and her passion for the artform, and it informs what drives her on a daily basis. As a reaction to her upbringing and her need to hear other Aboriginal voices and see other Aboriginal faces on the operatic stage, Cheetham created an opera company that offers training and career pathways for Indigenous artists, and that places Aboriginal storytelling at its core. In her 2019 Peggy Glanville-Hicks Address, Cheetham advocated passionately for the 'the power and necessity of music and the role it plays in shaping and sustaining communities. Music is my earliest memory. For me, it's my way of knowing the world and making sense of everything in it' (Cheetham, 2019). In our interview in 2018, Cheetham spoke directly about her life and work, taught me a great deal about my unconscious white gaze, and opened me up to the possibility of viewing the operatic world from a different perspective. Cheetham is frustrated by the lack of opportunities in opera for Aboriginal people, and advocates for Indigenous engagement at all levels of the operatic process, including training and development of artists; professional employment opportunities for singers and other musicians; engagement as producers and production staff; programmers and administration; and executive decision-making positions. Cheetham (2019) states, 'I realised that things would not change for the next generation of Indigenous singers unless I created a space in which they could safely develop their skills and express themselves onstage. A decade ago this led to the creation of Short Black Opera'. Short Black Opera is set up especially as a training and nurturing environment from which artists can learn and grow in order to work across all areas, roles and companies in the operatic field.

Cheetham is not the first Aboriginal opera singer, but she is by far in the

minority. There is a resilient legacy remaining from a small number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander opera singers who came before Cheetham, including stalwarts such as tenor Harold Blair AM (1923–1976), whose international performance and local Aboriginal activism led him to receive a Member of the Order of Australia in 1976 (Wyld, 2019), and whose alma mater, the Melba Opera Trust founded the Harold Blair Scholarship for Indigenous singers in 2012 (Melba Opera Trust, 2012);16 Georgia Lee (née Dulcie Rama Pitt, 1921–2010) an international crossover jazz–blues and opera performer (Henningham, 2012); and mezzo soprano Maroochy Barambah (born 1954), Songwoman, Law-woman and elder of the Turrbal people [Brisbane, Queensland], who has starred in opera, musical theatre and film (Kovocic & Lemon, 2006; Turrbal Association, 2020).17 The incredible journeys and careers of these three singers, and others, forged pathways that Cheetham is now building on in the present. Cheetham received several accolades in 2019, including the coveted Melbourne Prize for Music (Melbourne Prize Trust, 2019), and her visibility is important in achieving lasting changes for Indigenous opera artists and the artform. She is explicit in pointing out that 'the vital task of ensuring diversity and growth is often left to the small to medium sector' (Cheetham, 2019). This is a frustration that echoes across the operatic field beyond Aboriginal opera, as artists and company managers in one strand of the field feel the burden of responsibility for the whole sector. In 2023, Cheetham was appointed by The Sydney Conservatorium of Music [Gadigal Country] as the inaugural Elizabeth Todd Chair of Vocal Studies and Professor of Practice (Vocal Studies) further enabling her to be a role model of success for Indigenous artists and hopefully make further significant advances and provide further opportunities for Aboriginal musicians.

In 2010, Short Black Opera premiered its first mainstage opera, Pecan Summer (Cheetham, 2010), which was composed by Cheetham and sung and played by a cast of Aboriginal musicians. This was

Australia's first Aboriginal opera; created and performed by Aboriginal artists, it was sung partially in Yorta Yorta language. 18 The opera was not the first or last created on Aboriginal themes or featuring Aboriginal characters, but the others have been created by non-Aboriginal artists. Some earlier operas include: Kaditcha or A Bush Legend (Douglas, 1938), a ballet section of which was later entitled Corroboree (1939); The Young Kabbarli (Sutherland & Macey, 1964), on the life of Daisy Bates (née Margaret Dwyer 1859–1951), a fieldwork researcher on Aboriginal culture and society; Voss (Meale & Malouf, 1986) a tale of a white man's struggle against himself and the harsh Australian environment, in which Aboriginal people were mute; Andrew and Julianne Schultz's Black River (Schultz & Schultz, 1988), co-production with Bangarra Dance Theatre19 featuring Aboriginal mezzo soprano Maroochy Barambah, which examined the personal impact of Aboriginal deaths in custody; and Beach Dreaming (Isaacs, 1993), a work written for and about the life of Maroochy Barambah.20 After Pecan Summer (Cheetham, 2010) came Daisy Bates at Ooldea (Boyd & Reece, 2012), The Rabbits (Miller-Heidke & Katz, 2015), Parrawang Lifts the Sky (Cheetham, 2021) and Koolbardi wer Wardong (Williams & Ghouse, 2021).21 However, Pecan Summer marked the starting point for the company and the beginning of a shift in Australia's relationship between opera and Aboriginal storytelling through an Aboriginal lens. In an interview at the time of the opera's creation, Cheetham (2009) stated that '[o]pera — if you think about it — is just storytelling through music, drama and dance and singing, and we've been doing that for thousands of years'. In its first 10 years, Pecan Summer toured to Melbourne [Naarm], Adelaide [Kaurna], Perth [Boorloo] and the Sydney Opera House [Gadigal], taking with it the entire 80+ entourage of musicians, creatives and technicians. Cheetham talks about her drive to create opera:

Pecan Summer was to help people access Indigenous culture in a really powerful way, in the most powerful way, through music […] We gave an 'on-Country'22 premiere for Pecan Summer and a lot of the local people from the Goulburn Valley, Shepparton, Mooroopna, Echuca and surrounding areas came to see Australia's first opera composed by an Aboriginal composer, and even though they'd lived in that area their whole life and those events had taken place around them they had no idea of the events of that opera — the walk-off from Cummeragunja Mission. Sometimes it doesn't matter how close you are to something if you've been taught to believe something else it's really hard to set aside those beliefs even when the truth is all around you. (Cheetham, interview with author, 30 October 2018)

At the time of our interview in 2018, Cheetham had just premiered her second large-scale work, Eumeralla, a War Requiem for Peace (Cheetham, 2018) in language on Gunditjmara Country at the Port Fairy Festival in Victoria. Cheetham's point of departure and way into telling this story of the Gunditjmara Aboriginal 'Resistance Wars' took inspiration from Benjamin Britten's War Requiem (Britten & Owen, 1962).23

According to Patrick Nolan, Artistic Director of Opera Queensland, Cheetham is 'a really important voice in terms of telling Indigenous stories in Australia through opera. We're not seeing much on the mainstage in that realm' (interview with author, 30 July 2018). This statement, coming from the leader of a state opera company, raises the question: Who is to program Aboriginal operatic work if those in power do not? It shines a light on the white lens and asks: If Aboriginal opera is not on the mainstage, then perhaps a shift in the gaze is needed — that is, a deeper connection to the contemporary conversation that is presently embracing Aboriginal performing artists in dance, theatre, film and television; a profound examination of the cultural responsibility of those in power, and a view to serious investment in Australia's Aboriginal and diverse stories and storytelling. Cheetham laments the lack of cultural understanding and support, saying of the state opera companies, and Opera Australia in particular, that 'they simply don't get what the authentic Aboriginal voice is. It's the point of view from an Aboriginal person. It's not the point of view of someone who is interested in Aboriginal culture. It's the Aboriginal voice that's missing from our flagship company' (interview with author, 30 October 2018).24 However, perhaps Cheetham's (2010) Pecan Summer and the development of Short Black Opera have already started to (re)claim the operatic frame and forge further pathways for future Aboriginal opera creatives and the telling of Aboriginal stories through opera. Perhaps it went some way to inspire Opera Australia to work with the Yarrabah community [Queensland; Gunggandji and Yidinji Country] on Yarrabah: The Musical (Roberts & Yarrabah Community, 2012). The next step could be to shift projects such as Yarrabah: The Musical from being considered 'outreach' onto the mainstream and for 'major' institutions to make space for the Aboriginal lens to guide and shape their annual programming, creative development, community engagement and artist investment. This would be a step towards genuine shared leadership with Indigenous opera creatives.

Aboriginal society possesses a deep synergy between embodied culture — knowledges, beliefs and values — and cultural artefacts. Transposing that concept onto opera and the opera artefact offers interesting results. It connects individual operatic works within the whole sphere of opera, within the space and time in which the artefact was created and first performed, as well as drawing the works into today to find lines of synergy in the present and into the future. The Aboriginal lens offers a new or different viewing of opera and places its 'sacred objects', or archives, into a contextualised place where stories are able to resonate through circular time, finding contemporary connection. Cheetham's unique position in the field gives her the ability to work across multiple cultural frames — Indigenous, Anglo-Australian and Western European opera — offering her many points of access and connection in the making and staging of the operatic form through music, narrative, language and performance.

[Decolonisation] starts with the idea of knowing that there are other ways to exist in the world that are outside of your own [...]

Sydney Chamber Opera's The Howling Girls. Photo: Zan Wimberely

Perhaps Cheetham's claim that '[o]pera is an Aboriginal construct' has a deeper meaning — namely, that in the meeting of song, dance and storytelling is the performance of culture and the ability to connect and share deeper stories and lessons of humanity.25 Cheetham (2019) explains: 'Music, dance, art, the spoken narrative, this is how humankind has traditionally made sense of its existence. It is our way of knowing. For Indigenous Australians this is how all knowledge was acquired and passed on'.26 For Cheetham (2019), opera is the ultimate conduit for performative educational sharing and the united experience of artist and audience in order to take people on a shared 'journey from not knowing to knowing and from knowing to understanding' — a way of making sense and giving meaning to the world. Cheetham (2019) describes her personal understanding of the world and her place within it, saying, '[t]he longest practice of knowing is through the arts'. In Bourdieusian terms, this Aboriginal habitus (ways of being, knowing and doing) is transcribed on the body of the performer to be shared with the audience. It is in this sharing, or connection, that a 'journey to knowing' through singing, performing, listening and experiencing can unfold and affect audiences' personal habitus, allowing a deeper questioning of the doxa (rules and assumptions) and nomos (values) of the field and possibly leading to new or multiple understandings of the world.

Here, the Bourdieusian concept of 'symbolic domination'27 can be flipped on its head using Cheetham's Aboriginal lens to shift the cultural reproduction of opera by manipulating or hijacking the white colonial social hierarchies of producing and consuming opera — otherwise maintained through symbolic violence28 — and repurposing the form to transmit Australian Indigenous narratives using the imported opera vehicle. The consumption may look the same, the faces of audiences may resemble those of the opera consumer, but the faces on the stages are new and ancient, and the Aboriginal bodies and voices of the performers carrying the stories are embedded with different

habitus and slowly shift or contest the nomos and doxa of the field. By reclaiming the operatic frame with an Aboriginal lens, stories of the stolen generations, the Resistance Wars, the joys and the deep connection to Country can be experienced through familiarity with the operatic form and openness to experiencing new content. I hope Bourdieu would agree that this is a clear articulation of the 'political in action' — that is, habitus on stage affecting the nomos and doxa of those experiencing the performance within the operatic field. In the making of the work the hysteresis would be even clearer due to the sharp contrast of culturally safe spaces holding the operatic form, with all of its economic, social and cultural capital, and with the operatic frame ingesting new and ancient 'foreign matter' from Aboriginal artists as they share their habitus and bend Western opera into a new form.

Decolonising Opera

[S]ong is embedded in this land [...] sometimes our opera companies are just singing a microtone out of tune. (Cheetham, interview with author, 30 October 2018)

The ambivalent relationship with the indigenous peoples is in the forefront of national debate, while the uneasy confrontation with the land itself pervades virtually all Australian artistic output. (Halliwell, 2004, p. 12)

Opera's enduring and wide-ranging popularity, rich traditions of artistic collaboration and exchange, diversity of styles, and ability to blur the lines between cultivated and vernacular forms of art make questions about the intersections between race, ethnicity, and identity within that genre both trenchant and valuable. (André et al., 2013, p. 1)29

Colonisation is arguably embedded in the historical 'whiteness' of the operatic artform and its presentation in Australia because opera's arrival in Australia at the time of colonisation remains inextricably linked with Australia's political and societal power structures and value systems concerning race, class and gender. Decolonisation is the potential undo-

ing of colonisation or the separation of the operatic artform from the entrenched colonial power structures.30 The arguments for decolonisation call for a new vision of opera through possible structural reforms of operatic business and creative practices, a deconstruction of power relations, and a shift in the opera gaze. It is an important and sizeable concern — arguably the key concern — and it cannot be done justice in a portion of this one article. Instead, my hope is that the core of this argument, as it was presented and revealed to me through the interconnecting threads of my interviews, will embed itself as a companion to the postcolonial understanding of the Australian cultural landscape and the operatic field itself. The narratives of race and belonging, like the vibrations of song, are deeply embedded in the Australian cultural makeup and the contested spaces of the created concept of national identity. It is a discordant strain, and the arts and culture suffer for this perpetual dissonance. As a postcolonial nation, Australia is not alone in looking to confront its past, heal the present and decolonise its narratives, systems of creation, and performance and cultural representation for the future.

[Decolonisation] starts with the idea of knowing that there are other ways to exist in the world that are outside of your own [...] It asks that organisations examine their policies, practices and values and the basis on which these are designed. (ArtsHub Australia, 2021, quoting Nahlous)

Who's being represented? What stories are we telling? Who have I got onstage? And if it's a bunch of white people, you've got a problem. (Smith, interview with author, 7 July 2018)

Decolonisation of opera is a complex task requiring deep self-reflection of the operatic field as well as close examination of individual 'problematic' repertoire and canonic operas. The work of confronting racism and cultural appropriation in operatic works involves interrogating the colonial white lens, the history and context of the creation of the work juxtaposed with the contemporary lens, and the present-day retelling or restaging

of the work. During my interview with writer Alison Croggon, we discussed the 'opera gaze' — that is, the postcolonial and white privileged lens, which is the current norm in Australia — and how it dictates what is created and presented across the mainstage performing arts. Croggon remarked: '[T]hose circles of marginalisation [...] that's absolutely reflected in what reality is represented [...] it's something I've been thinking about a lot as a white person, and it is something we all have to address' (interview with author, 17 August 2018).31 The fear of a loss of cultural domination plays out in the operatic field through the cultural reproduction of repertoire opera, and 'each such repetition is a re-inscription to a longstanding process of cultural imperialism' (Dunn, Gandhi, Burnley, & Forrest, 2003, p. 175). Multicultural race representation is of critical importance on the mainstage, and as theatre director Lee Lewis says, experiencing cross-racial casting as 'experimental' only intensifies its marginalisation (Lewis, 2007); that is, it highlights the 'otherness' of the experiment rather than normalising race within the narrative context. Referencing the Eclipse Report (Brown, 2001), Lewis (2007) notes that 'any real impulse towards diversity on mainstream stages has to be made from the top downwards, from boards to artistic directors and into company culture' (p. 52).32 I would argue that in 2023, although mainstage theatre may have made significant progress over the past 10 years, repertory opera continues to lag behind.33 It is isolating itself and becoming more and more detached from the multicultural contemporary Australian audiences it simply does not represent.34

<mark>In our 2018 interview, composer Paul Smith and I debated the 'problematic' nature of opera's portrayal and the representation of racial minorities, exoticism and cultural appropriation. Smith asked: 'Do I think that a white singer should play Madame Butterfly? No.</mark> I think that that's horrendous'. I challenged Smith, asking, 'Does a French singer have to play Mimi?' (the title role in La Bohème; Puccini et al., 1896). Smith responded, 'no, but those politics are different. The politics of Europe

are different to the politics of racial minorities. Anybody can play Mimi because white French is the default. That's not a category. Whereas Asian young girl is a category that not everybody can play, so it's highly problematic' (interview with author, 7 July 2018). Here, Smith reveals the larger complex arguments concerning the representation of minority groups or marginalised communities by those in the majority.35 Music scholar Naomi André believes that:

[T]his question needs more conversations, because we need to think very carefully about opera and the politics and sensitivity of who's representing whom [...] opera needs to have some sort of discussion and contextualisation. Because when there's a voice that can sing Otello, I want to hear it, regardless of the colour. I think we need to open up the pipeline for people of colour to sing these roles. (André, Toppin, Dailey, Madlala, & Zuma, 2020)36

<mark>Smith articulates the need for a shift from exclusion to inclusion of multiracial voices, bodies and faces on opera stages in the retelling of extant opera, believing that '[t]here's no way to get around the racist cultural appropriation in opera.</mark> And there's no way to talk about what the problems are that isn't "this is highly offensive"' (interview with author, 7 July 2018). Director Lindy Hume AM also believes that 'Madama Butterfly is almost impossible to program now because it's so politically disgusting. So racist. You can't. The days of being an opera programmer are limited unless you take a very particular perspective' (interview with author, 7 June 2018). Yet in the twenty-first century, Madama Butterfly (Puccini et al., 1904) is still one of the most performed operas in the world. Puccini's music possibly smooths over the underlying perpetuation of the destruction and infantilisation of the feminine, and the racist exotic nature of the Asian Other, allowing, and arguably unconsciously supporting and 'perpetuating the notion that operatic theatre is a place for nostalgic spectacle' (Pham, 2021), and reaffirming the postcolonial tropes of white male domination.37

Across the operatic field there is general recognition of the deep-rooted issues of racism and cultural appropriation. Interestingly, the discourse from the leaders of the major opera companies acknowledges these issues but simultaneously exhibits a reticence or powerlessness to act. Nolan acknowledges that:

The Magic Flute is a deeply problematic narrative [...] you've got this black character who is evil, and he's figured as such and all he wants to do is effectively rape the woman. You've got this female, the Queen of the Night, who is also figured as [a] deeply problematic almost bad character, and the good guy is the old white man and the young hero [...] How do you begin [to] unravel this? (Nolan, interview with author, 30 July 2018)

Stuart Maunder, Artistic Director of State Opera of South Australia (2018–2023),38 also concedes that 'the cultural appropriation card is a big issue and I wish that we could be truly colour-blind in our casting, but we can't' (interview with author, 5 September 2018). Maunder and Nolan's statements highlight the entrenched complications in the present-day presentation of works of the opera repertoire and the perception of insurmountable barriers for moving forward. They reflect a broader disquiet about the connection of opera in the contemporary context and conflicting personal emotions in tackling these 'problematic' issues. Some of the difficulty may stem from the fact that these operas are still extremely admired. Maunder stresses the importance of broadening the repertoire beyond the narrow vision of constant recycling, but admits that '[p]eople are going to come to [Madama] Butterfly to [La] Traviata [...] At OA [Opera Australia] if you had La Bohème one year, you knew that next year it was either going to be Butterfly or Tosca' (interview with author, 5 September 2018).39

There is no denying that eighteenth-, nineteenth- and twentieth-century opera remains popular, and that the 'top ten' operas of the repertoire, including Madama Butterfly (Puccini

" I don't think opera will ever go away

Cat Hope's Speechless. Photo: Frances Andrijich

et al., 1904) and The Magic Flute (Mozart & Schikaneder, 1791), continue to sell and remain the staple offerings of opera repertoire programming. This point was brought up by various interviewees and generated much debate as to why this is still the case in contemporary Australia. This arguably reveals much about Australian postcolonial society and the entrenched value systems concerning race, class and gender that are upheld as the cultural 'norm' and reproduced through the unreflective presentation of repertoire opera. There are many competing factors as to why repertoire opera maintains its appeal, including the primacy and potency of the music and the psychological pull of the human voice.

Opera soprano and vocal teacher Lisa Gasteen AO states:

I don't think opera will ever go away because people love the human voice. It's the original instrument and it's a beautiful one, and possibly the most complicated of all instruments [...] It's a sensual thing; it speaks to our hearts not our brains [...] It can trigger an immediate physical response. It can give you goosebumps, it can make you shiver, it can make you cry [...] That's why we love the human voice because it speaks to us on a much deeper level. (Gasteen, interview with author, 13 August 2018)

Further, there are questions of ex-

posure and access; that is, perhaps these operas sell because that is all that is on offer. While this may sound overly simplistic, underlying this is a complex system of nomos and doxa that resides in and emanates from the operatic field and dictates what is valued and how the operatic field operates in order to uphold this value. In business terms, the marketplace tendencies of supply and demand, matched with the cultural capital of knowledge, or at least recognition of the opera artefact, goes a long way to maintaining the status quo. However, the argument is far more sophisticated and does not follow a binary oppositional line because opera's continuing appeal is recognised as personal and multifac-

eted. Therefore, the larger view here concerns the machinations of the operatic field and is a comment on the relational intersections of power and the power structures rather than the many and varied reasons, personal passions and connections for individuals to the opera artform. My pluralistic definition of opera as gleaned from the research — as an artefact, a frame and an evaluative term — offers multiple pathways for the decolonisation of opera. In this way, in reference to Opera Dynamic modelling (explored in Part II of the full thesis), the power structures of the operatic field may be shifted towards decolonisation through various points of access.

In shifting the power dynamics, access to a diversity of voices and opera agents with a multiplicity of lenses, practices and opinions is vital.40 In Australia, Aboriginal voices and investment in Aboriginal leadership is key to the process of decolonisation and to encourage new understandings through the Aboriginal lens. One individual can have a huge impact, as Sydney [Gadigal] experienced with Sydney Festival Artistic Director Wesley Enoch AM (2017–2021), a proud Noonuccal Nuugi man whose tenure enabled Sydney to experience Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work as the core components of his 'Blak Out' programming.41 In 2020, Brisbane [Meanjin] Festival's incoming Artistic Director Louise Bezzina asked local Indigenous arts communities how they would like to work with the festival, and subsequently moved

from an Indigenous Advisory Board to create the 'Blak Curatorium', a First Nations programming team in charge of the vision and engagement of First Nations artists for the 2020 Festival. Applauded for its inclusivity and innovative collaboration with First Nations communities, the Blak Curatorium will remain an integral part of the structure and leadership of the festival into the future, demonstrating another way in which to challenge the status quo and strategically decolonise a performing arts space. A role such as Head of First Nations programming at Sydney Opera House, held by Rhoda Roberts AO (2012–2021), has changed the face of the iconic Sydney Opera House. The First Nations program is now embedded across all programming streams and tourism activities, adding to the richness and diversity of performance offerings and a fundamental historical and contemporary cultural understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across Australia, and offering specific insights into Bennelong Point [Tubowgule] on which the Sydney Opera House is situated.

CONCLUSION

Alternative forms and approaches to operatic practice in Australia takes in the areas of deconstruction of content, form, culture and business practices; Australian Aboriginal opera and the Aboriginal lens; and the decolonisation of the operatic field. Each of these areas provides a picture of the current field of

diverse opera and operatic practices in Australia, as well as their agents, approaches and values. Colonisation is a perpetual 'problematic' issue that is embedded in the cultural framework of repertoire opera and the conventional operatic practices of production and consumption. The dominant opera gaze controls access to the operatic field, blocks entry to the 'club' and refuses support to those who are deemed not to belong.42 In mainstage repertoire opera, this opera gaze is currently reflected on- and offstage. It is an entrenched unconscious bias of marginalisation, discrimination and cultural appropriation requiring decolonisation as a collaborative process of revealing and unravelling the exclusionary practices of the operatic field. Alongside the dominant colonising spaces of mainstage repertory opera is a network of opera practitioners who are reshaping and redefining the operatic frame with a diversity of practices to challenge what opera is and what it could become. They are creating spaces of collaboration, experimentation and ritual, and these spaces indirectly challenge the opera gaze and offer a multiplicity of ways and means of deconstruction and decolonisation.43

[I]f we forget that we are part of a living tradition and that we need to be in dialogue with contemporary culture, then we're in big trouble. Now is an interesting time because there is a lot of change taking place not just in Australia but on the world stage. (Aszodi, interview with author, 11 September 2018)

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Marija Griniuk

Decolonizing curatorial ways: Curating from Sámi perspective.

ARTICLE ABSTRACT

The paper explores multiple perspectives on curating indigenous art and builds upon the case project of the nongraduate program for Sámi curators and its part realized in autumn 2022 at the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok. The curatorial ways are discussed from a threefold perspective: decolonizing curatorial practice, nonhierarchy of narratives, and pluriversal curating. The findings outline the main tools applied, such as the involvement of Sámicurators and scholars, nonindigenous scholars working with Indigenous art, the use of the lecture, presentation, and experience formats, and language use. The value of the project was in the unfolding of a broad perspective of what curating Indigenous art and research can be.
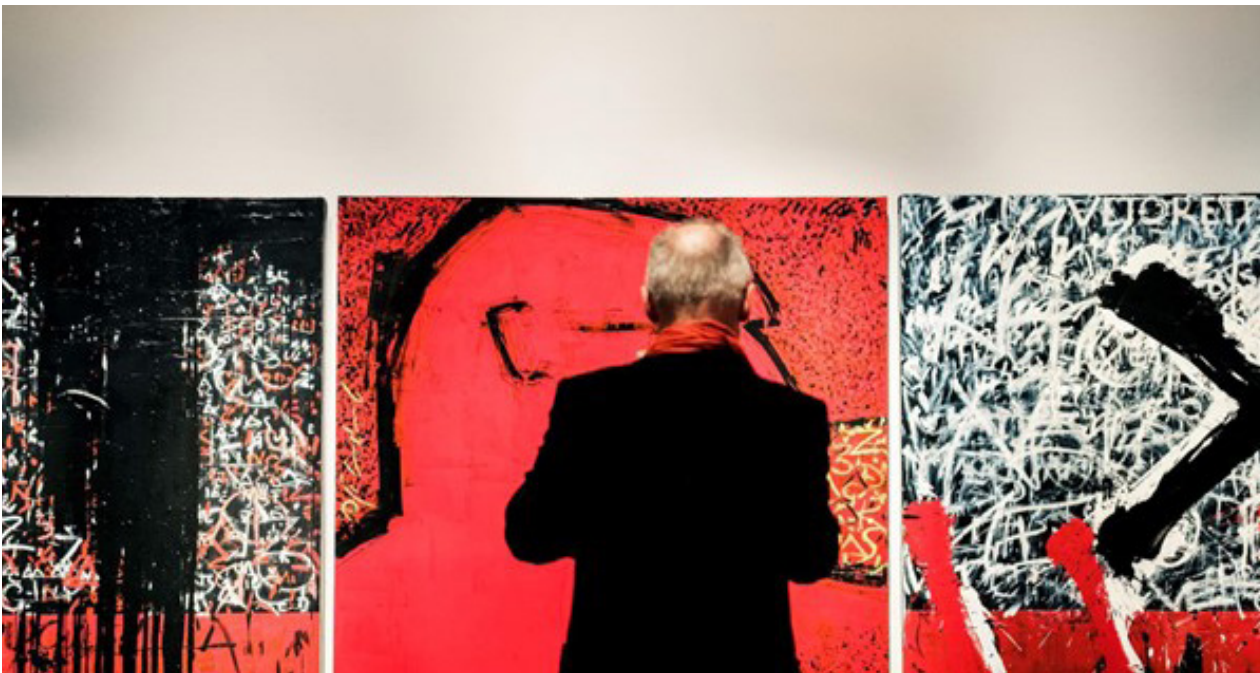
KEYWORDS

Play Space.

Decolonizing curatorial ways: Curating from Sámi perspective

How can cultural and knowledge exchange between non-Sámi and Indigenous Sámi curators be useful for the enhancement of curatorial practice tools? This paper analyses the case project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" from the perspective of the non-Sámi organizer of the project designing the educational program for the Sámi curators where the expectation lies within learning the Sámi ways of curatorial practice.

By Marija Griniuk

Ole Lislerud at the exhibition "The Sámi Pain–Language and Identity" at the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art, 2022.

Introduction

Curatorial practice can be defined as showing respect for artists and artworks, that is, the practice of dialogue and hospitality. In addition, curatorial practice may take many directions and perspectives. Within the present study, I address curatorial practice as the societal process of integration of the non-Sámi curators into Sámi cultural contexts and Sámi curators into more cross-national work. The research question I have explored is as follows: How can cultural and knowledge exchange between non-Sámi and Indigenous Sámi curators be useful for the enhancement of curatorial practice tools? This paper analyses the case project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" from the perspective of the non-Sámi organizer of the project designing the educational program for the Sámi curators, where the expectation lies within learning the Sámi ways of curatorial practice. Positioning one's own perspective on curatorial prac-

tice and redefining the strategies of work with indigenous art and artists was at the core for me as the project organizer.

The project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" (September–November, 2022) connected curatorial practices from the Indigenous perspective, but also from that of nonindigenous curators who were working with Indigenous artists from the edges of the world, hence moving them into the extended dialogue and knowledge

Sámi Dáiddaguovddáš / Samisk Senter for Samtidskunst / Sami Center for Contemporary Art

Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art

27.11.2022

Gunvor Guttorm
Melanie Sarantou

Image credit: Sherrie Jones

"Tool-kit: Curating indigenous art" prošeakta iskkada mánga perspektiivva mo kurateret dáiddalaš dutkan-prošeavttaid mat fátmmastit eamiálbmotdáiddáriid. Skábmámánu 27. b. ovdanbidjá "Tool-kit: Curating indige-nous art" prošeakta guoktealmmolaš logaldallama.

10.00—Logaldallan prof. Gunvor Guttorm bokte

14.00—Logaldallan prof. Melanie Sarantou bokte

The "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" project investi-gates multiple perspectives on curating artistic research projects that involve indigenous artists. On 27th Novem-ber 2022, "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" will present two public lectures.

10.00—Lecture by Prof. Gunvor Guttorm

14.00—Lecture by Prof. Melanie Sarantou

Prosjektet "Tool-kit: Curating indigenous art" undersøker flere perspektiver på å kuratere kunstneriske forsknings-prosjekter som involverer urfolkskunstnere. Den 27. no-vember presenterer prosjektet "Tool-kit: Curating indige-nous art" to offentlige foredrag.

10.00—Foredrag ved prof. Gunvor Guttorm

14.00—Foredrag ved prof. Melanie Sarantou

SÁMI DÁIDDAGUOVDDÁŠ
SAMISK SENTER FOR SAMTIDSKUNST
SAMI CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

NORDISK KULTURFOND

Above: From communication materials of the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art," curator talk with Zoe Black.

From communication materials of the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art," lecture by Dr. Melanie Sarantou and Dr. Gunvor Guttorm.

exchange. The project involved a group of Sámi curators: me, as the Lithuanian artist and curator and PI (Principal Investigator) of the current study; Indigenous curators from New Zealand; and curators and scholars working with Indigenous artists from Australia/Namibia and Sapmi. The project became an arena for various perspectives on curating Indigenous art to unfold. It took the format of workshops and lectures, along with open discussions facili-tated at the Sámi Center for Con-temporary Art in Karasjok, Norway, in 2022. Here, curatorial practice is seen as always a collective practice because it unfolds through the involvement of several individuals: curators and artists in dialogue aim-ing at the best possible represen-tation of an artwork. Undoing the hierarchies between the artists and curators contributes to decolonizing curatorial ways.

The current paper has aimed to

bring together many ways of curating Indigenous art into the discussion, in this way acknowledging in the same way the Western perspective of curating Indigenous Sámi art and the Indigenous Sámi perspective. The project aimed to unfold both perspectives on the horizon of curatorial and research projects. By knowing both the perspectives and tools applied, the group of curators could refine their own skills as curators. Therefore, the term decolonizing can be seen as overlapping with the term pluriverse: because decolonizing is seen as allowing for many perspectives to unfold into the discussion and awareness over the curatorial positions. In addition, because the pluriverse allows for many worlds to coexist, the decolonized curatorial ways are not closing or neglecting any viewpoints, but rather are allowing for the wide scenery of curatorial ways to unfold. Hence, decolonizing is opening the ways of seeing the curatorial work not as overtaking or designing the master narrative within the artworks, but as being aware that many narratives can take place at the same time, simultaneously.

Curatorial practice can navigate through the public discussion, but it always needs to take a dialogical perspective in avoiding miscommunication of the artworks. The present study outlines the main tools in each of these positions in moving toward the coherence of communication of indigenous art to various audiences. The findings can be interesting and useful for artists and curators working in various institutional contexts, specifically those working with indigenous art.

Literature review and terminology

The theoretical background of this study is based on three main pillars: curating, decolonizing curatorial practices, and pluriverse. Curating, as explained by Lepecki (2017) is the action of care towards art object and the experience of its encounter. Institutionalized artistic work contains the conventional cycle of creation, curation, display, perception, and valuation that dominates artistic production (Lepecki, 2017). This disruption is linked to colonial logic,

and certain objects and actions resist this economy. Lepecki (2017) emphasizes the need to decolonize curatorial imagination and challenge the current systems of objects and subjects that maintain colonialist logic. A different logic of existence is required that establishes new relationships between subjects, objects, and matters and challenges the imperial and colonial monohumanist premises. Decolonizing the curatorial approach means rethinking how the relationship is built between the viewer and the artwork and how the meeting point can address multicultural viewers. In a decolonized curatorial logic, the focus should be on things and vivências1 instead of objects (Lepecki, 2017).The story told in the exhibition space by interconnecting artwork is opening for multiplicity of interpretations, and things, instead of objects, move the viewer's imagination and creativity. The pluriverse—or pluriversal thinking—refers to the idea that there are multiple ways of understanding and engaging with the world and that these different ways can coexist and inform one another (Escobar, 2021). This approach recognizes that there is not one single "right" way to view the world and that different ways of understanding can be valuable and valid in their own right. Anyway there are as well several challenges with pluriversal thinking: one potential challenge of pluriversal thinking is that it can be difficult to reconcile the different ways of understanding and engaging with the world. For example, if we accept that there are multiple valid ways of viewing reality, it may be challenging to determine which approach to take when faced with a problem or when trying to make a decision. Another challenge is that pluriversal thinking may be read as nihilistic, since it appears to reject the idea of one single truth.

In recent years, Nordic universities have collaborated in research on contemporary Sámi art. (Aamold et al., 2017; Danbolt, 2018; Lien, 2020; Thisted, 2012) and ethno-aesthetics (Arke,

2012). The growth of interest has been noticeable (Jørgensen, 2017), especially along the Sámi Pavilion in Venice Biennale (2022). There is a

noticeable discussion on the Venice Biennale (2022) pavilion being curated not by Sámi curators and, hence, not from the Indigenous perspective. Thus, the two perspectives—the Indigenous Sámi and non indigenous Western—seem to conflict. This means that there is a need to address the framework of pluriverse, as defined by Escobar (2021)—the world where many worlds can co-exist, in this way Indigenous ways of curating and Western ways of curating, by unfolding the richness of the landscape.

Artists originating from Sapmi aesthetically approach the themes of the past, identity, and prohibition to use their own language and culture, traditions, and land of their ancestors, along with the oppression from colonizers, in the context of opening the visual discussion about colonialism (Jørgensen, 2017) and Othering (Jensen, 2011). In the artistic production, the keyword of decolonizing means opening a space where history can be discussed and where the historical image can be placed along with the contemporary one in a juxtaposition to tell one story. In this way, such artworks destabilise the hierarchy of master narrative and peripheral narrative, placing both narratives alongside each other. The theory of master and counter-narratives (Bamberg & Wipff, 2021) foregrounds the hierarchy and contest between the narratives. I suggest that the dichotomy between master and counter-narratives should be replaced by the individual, alternative, and countering narratives unfolding in parallel, which calls for awareness of the Sámi curatorial perspective, nonindigenous curatorial perspective, posthuman curatorial perspective, and all the other perspectives to unfold. Curators must be aware of their choices and perspectives within curatorial ways. In the present paper, I interconnect the theory of master and counter-narratives with decolonizing and pluriverse while suggesting that true decolonizing, as an acknowledgment of all the narratives, can come with a pluriversal take of all the worlds coexisting in parallel. This was the theoretical framework for building the educational content within the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" in

October–November 2022 (see Image 1 and Image 2) and for bringing in a group of Sámi curators, Sami scholars, Indigenous curators and nonindigenous scholars and curators working with indigenous artists together in one space of discourse.

In addition to formal lectures, Prof. Ole Lislerud shared his perspective as an international artist working with the theme of Sapmi in the exhibition "The SámiPain" at the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art.(see Image 4). Clearly seeing the parallels with Apartheid, which he witnessed while living in South Africa, he saw his creative work as a call for equality and decolonial thinking.

Furthermore, the curators experienced an art-walk in the cityscape of Karasjok. Through this event, the idea was to bring back live storytelling of the sculptures in the city's various public spaces. This explored the connectedness of the artworks to nature and the historical facts connected to the cityscape of Karasjok. As the weather conditions allowed, with the outdoor temperature being -10 Celsius, such a walk could only take one hour. The matter of experiencing the severe Arctic nature while seeing artworks and talking about history was at the core of this novel experience.

As presented above, the importance of the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" was to bring many perspectives together into the pluriversal space of discussion. Being non-Sami but Lithuanian, my perspective was of the nonindigenous artist and curator organizing and leading the project, and this impacted the project being oriented toward a pluriverse, not only the Sámi curatorial and research community.

Analysis

The project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" is analyzed from the threefold perspective, answering the following questions: How does such a project contribute to decolonizing curatorial methods? How can it contribute to the nonhierarchy of the project's narratives? How does the pluriversal approach to curating indigenous art unfold?

Decolonizing curatorial ways

In Nordic art academies and universities, teaching programs have broadly been built upon theories and cases representing artists from the Global North. In my studies, in many art academies in the period 2012–2020, including Jutland Art Academy, Malmö Art Academy, the Royal Academy of Arts in Copenhagen and Konstfack, only in the latter were indigenous narratives involved, in printmaking classes by the Sámi artist Tomas Colbengtson. In a sense, the nongraduate program in curating Sámi art from the Sámi perspective in 2022 fed into the part-time program project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" as a pre-study for getting an overview of what such a program, if included into the art academy curriculum, could be. Decolonizing curating first spotlighted the necessity of having multi-perspective knowledge while working with Indigenous art, moving the program to being the first step toward flipping the scenery around in the aim of having equality within the narratives, not domination of the Western narratives of curatorial history and contemporary ones. This would call for detachment from the knowledge we have and listening to the particular cases of work as presented by the invited scholars while finding space for learning, as well as for critique of the projects being discussed. In a way, this makes an environment of equality between the learners and presenters, and the space becomes a dynamic knowledge exchange arena. This idea reflects Rancière's (1991) argument for a more equality-based approach to education, where the teacher's role is to facilitate the student's learning and to spotlight that the student's own knowledge and experience are of value. Hence, in the process of decolonization, there was a clear environment of unlearning, accepting all the historical backgrounds as the past, and building on the fresh thoughts brought about by the presenting individuals. We cannot undo the history, but maybe we can speed up the processes in educational institutions by shaking up the backgrounds for artistic learning. In a way, what is done by the Sámi Pavilion (2022) in Venice

Biennale. Visitors started to look up the Arctic North and Sapmi when discussing contemporary art. The decolonization of curatorial ways was not aimed to close any avenues but to expand and understand that curating can happen also in the different perspective, allowing this perspective to take position alongside Western institutional ways. So decolonizing, in this sense, is the decolonizing of one's own mind and understanding the broadness of the curatorial field.

Nonhierarchy of the narratives

Similarly, when discussing these narratives, I refer back to my learning experience at various art academies. To draw the scenery of the nonhierarchy of the narratives, various individual stories of curating and research were included by those individual voices and by the experience of the participating curator group; hence, it was possible to draw the outlines of what can be seen as an ethical and coherent way of curating. For example, the poster, which was designed for the Ole Lislerud exhibition, was deeply discussed (see Image 5).

The poster contained racist expressions used throughout history connected to the Sámi people and people in South Africa. The poster was placed in various places in Karasjok to promote the exhibition, and because the Sámi Center for Contemporary Art is on the other side of the road from the Karasjok church, people going to the church could not avoid seeing the poster belonging to the exhibition. Those two target audiences were very different, and for people who did not have enough knowledge about contemporary art and this particular exhibition, the poster could be seen as offensive. Maybe this would invite those people into the exhibition and would contribute to the knowledge that contemporary art can be a tool to shape the dialogue and societal discourse. These two narratives have flowed in parallel, as communicated by one poster. This particular case of discussion about the many narratives promoted by one poster was an example of many truths coming into the same educational space, and

The images in the background were used for the exhibition poster.

each of these truths was of great value.

Despite the potential benefits of using controversial or provocative artwork as a means of promoting dialogue and societal discourse, there can also be risks involved. In the case of the poster containing racist expressions, it was placed in a location where it was likely to be seen by a diverse range of people, including those who may not have sufficient knowledge of contemporary art or the exhibition. For some, the poster may have been offensive or triggering, and it is not clear whether it would have been effective in promoting education or understanding in all cases. This raises the question of how to balance the need to promote diverse narratives and the ways of telling stories with the need to consider the potential impact on different audiences. Ultimately, it may be necessary to carefully consider the specific context and audience when deciding how to present and discuss controversial or provocative artwork.

This conversation highlights the complexity of decolonizing curatorial practices and the importance of considering the impact of different ways of understanding and engaging with the world.

Pluriversal takes on curating Indigenous art

Escobar (2020) noted that works within a pluriverse fit many worlds and truths into the same space. In the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art," the aim was to open the discussion on what perspectives in curating Indigenous art can be, rather than closing the discussion only on the Sámi perspective. The limitation of this is that we are still in the process of defining the Sámi ways of curating, but maybe, while putting together various perspectives, the definition can be made clearer as well. Instead of being a comparative study, it became one of unfolding the scenery, seeing the many paths possible to take and many potential actors to co-operate and work with.

By embracing pluriversal thinking, we can create a more inclusive and dynamic environment for understanding and engaging with Indigenous art. However, there is a potential risk of two or more different perspectives colliding or being opposed. This is particularly relevant in the space of spectatorship, where

diverse backgrounds and experiences converge, resulting in conflicting interpretations of the same artwork. Similarly, in educational settings, where multiple experiences converge, it is important to keep the discussion space open rather than closing it. This requires skilled moderation or facilitation by the moderator or facilitator. Pluriversal thinking needs to be carefully navigated in public spaces and requires thoughtful moderation or facilitation in pedagogical and communication contexts.

The process of decolonization in the art world is ongoing and complex, involving a range of approaches and perspectives. One aspect of this process is the incorporation of pluriversal thinking, or the idea that there are multiple, valid ways of understanding the world. This approach can help promote greater inclusivity and respect within the art world while also leading to more innovative and creative solutions to problems.

However, it is important to approach pluriversal thinking with an open and critical mindset, and to consider the potential costs and implications for our understanding of the nature of reality. Sámi art and culture can be interpreted as pluriversal due to the interdisciplinary nature of artistic practices: often, practitioners are involved in multiple disciplines such as visual art, literature, music, choreography, and more. Therefore, if a creative individual identifies as a visual artist, it does not exclude identification as a writer or choreographer, for example. Additionally, Sámi art is often manifested through the national identity and belonging of the creators, as well as their political standpoint. The complexity of these artworks needs to be effectively communicated to both local and multicultural audiences, encouraging a representative art world that better reflects the diversity of experiences and perspectives that exist within society. One can say that such a multidisciplinary approach contrasts the Nordic art education and art funding system, since the artistic work is often interpreted by institutions as discipline-based.

Play
Space.

Findings

The main findings of the project are listed in Table 1.

Decolonizing	Nonhierarchy of narratives	Pluriverse
Involvement of Sámi and non-Sámi curators and scholars working with Indigenous art	Language use and teaching in language, but also in English for outreach to local and global teachers, learners and audiences	Many narratives are equal in the same time, in the same space
Discussions toward equality of narratives	Active listening and involvement of all experiences and knowledge within the group	Openness for new narratives to arrive
Awareness over the necessity of change for educational programs in art academies and universities—more equality between the Western and Indigenous learning materials	The presenters are the teachers and learners; all the discussion takes a nonhierarchical shape within the group	Openness to the dialogue with the new actors and communities
Necessity of establishing curatorial programs, graduate and nongraduate. Centered around multiple perspectives on curating Indigenous art	Focus on ethical curating of Indigenous art, and ethical production of artistic content around Indigenous themes, be it from the Sámi or non-Sámi perspective	Western perspective on curating does not exclude Indigenous perspective on curating. Indigenous perspective on curating does not exclude the Western perspective on curating. The pluriverse is the world where many worlds coexist and are equal. Equal here is understood as having the same value. Perception of value builds on equality of value.

Table 1. Main findings of the study.

These findings are directed toward more openness and mutual understanding between the indigenous and nonindigenous communities; they promote greater visibility of the issues within Indigenous communities. The communicators of those issues and the aesthetic produc-

tions should be Indigenous artists and curators but also the curators and artists without indigenous backgrounds who have sufficient knowledge and interest in working with Indigenous communities and Indigenous themes. Ethics, accuracy, and care are the key issues in both cases.

Discussion

We can ask if this way was correct to go about the project or if Sámi curatorial ways should have been defined only within the Sámi artistic community. Can and should non-Sámi curators work with Sámi art, or myself, as a nonindigenous researcher working with the theme

of curating Indigenous art? Do non-Sámi artists have the right to work with Sámi themes? These questions are all directed at closing back on what was attempted to open by the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art." If Sámi curatorial ways are to be defined only within Sámi or only within the Indigenous community, we are coming back into one master narrative, now the Indigenous master narrative. As a curator and researcher, I am convinced that the better ways of understanding each other—non-othering and instead being together—is having many narratives in parallel, that is, having a pluriversal approach to art and curating. This would lead to the next question: if the program of Indigenous curating or curating Indigenous art would open at any university of art academy, much like the program of Indigenous Journalism at Sámi University of Applied Sciences, would such a program be taught only in Sámi and only for Sámi curators? This question is even more uneasy. During the "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art" program, all the groups communicated in the Sámi language. Part of the lectures were in English, and all the communication with me was in English. Is this the way to teach curating? Are these the languages to use? The Sámi community is a small one, and the necessity of using the Sámi language is at the core, but English is the language of outreach to many communities globally.

One potential solution to this issue could be to offer the program in both Sámi and English or to provide language support for those who may be more comfortable using one language over the other. This could involve offering translation services or providing materials in multiple languages. Another option could be to focus on developing curricula that are inclusive and relevant to a range of indigenous communities rather than targeting the program specifically to Sámi curators. By considering the needs and experiences of a diverse range of communities, the program could be more inclusive and relevant to a wider audience. Ultimately, the approach taken will depend on the specific goals and needs of the program, as well as the

resources and expertise available. It will be important to carefully consider these factors to create a program that is effective, inclusive, and respectful of the diverse communities it serves.

The importance of language in the process of decolonization and in the promotion of pluriversal thinking cannot be overstated. Language is a keyway in which we understand and communicate with the world, and the use of certain languages can have significant cultural and political implications. For Indigenous communities, the use of their own languages can be a way of reclaiming and valuing their cultural heritage and traditions while also being a means of resistance against assimilation and oppression. At the same time, the use of English and other global languages can provide a means of reaching a wider audience and fostering a greater understanding and exchange between different communities.

As such, it is important to consider the role of language in the process of decolonization and the promotion of pluriversal thinking. This may involve finding ways to incorporate and value Indigenous languages while also recognizing the importance of global languages in fostering greater understanding and exchange. By carefully considering the role of language in these processes, we can work toward creating a more inclusive and respectful art world that can better reflect the diversity of experiences and perspectives that exist within society. So the answer to many questions and thoughts leads to the triangle of decolonization, nonhierarchy of narratives and pluriverse, at least for now, for the project "Tool-kit: Curating Indigenous Art."

Conclusion

One of the goals of decolonizing curatorial methods is to promote greater equality and inclusivity within the art world. By acknowledging and valuing different perspectives and ways of understanding, we can create a more diverse and representative environment. This can be especially important for Indigenous

communities, whose art and ways of understanding the world may have been marginalized or overlooked in the past. By rethinking the system of value as the perception of value, we can work towards lessening and eventually erasing the barriers between what is currently considered mainstream and marginalized. This approach can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive society over time.

However, it is important to approach the process of decolonization with care and consideration. This can involve actively seeking out diverse voices and perspectives, as well as being open to criticism and self-reflection. It may also involve acknowledging and addressing the ways in which one's own background and experiences may have shaped one's understanding of the world. By approaching decolonization in this way, we can work toward creating a more inclusive and representative art world that can better reflect the diversity of experiences and perspectives that exist within society.

Curatorial practice as the practice of dialogue and hospitality needs awareness of many ways to curate and communicate the artworks to audiences. The present study has been based on the case of the nongraduate program for Sámi curators, in particular the part of the program designed over October–November 2022. The content of the study program focused on curating research from the Sámi perspective, but also from the perspective of nonindigenous curators and researchers working with Indigenous artists. The value of the projects was in acknowledging the necessity to decolonize the curatorial ways and unfold the curatorial practice in the threefold perspective: decolonization, nonhierarchy of narratives, and the pluriverse. The future aim of the project is to create knowledge that would define what is curating from the Sámi perspective and how such curating can benefit the artistic experiences of the various audiences, along with examining the accuracy of storytelling within the artworks of Indigenous artists.

One of the key challenges in the

process of decolonizing curatorial practices is the need to consider multiple perspectives and experiences. This can involve acknowledging and addressing the ways in which dominant narratives and practices may have marginalized or excluded certain communities while working to create a more inclusive and equitable environment. Pluriversal thinking, or the idea that there are multiple valid ways of understanding the world, can be an important aspect of this process because it allows for the consideration of multiple viewpoints and can foster greater understanding and respect between different communities.

In the case of the study program for Sámi curators, the focus on decolonization, the nonhierarchy of narratives, and pluriversal thinking was intended to create a more inclusive and representative environment for the discussion of curation and the art world more broadly. By considering these issues, the program aimed to create knowledge that could help define what curation looks like from a Sámi perspective and how it can enhance the artistic experiences of various audiences, as well as the authenticity of storytelling within

the artworks of Indigenous artists. By continuing to explore these ideas and work toward creating a more inclusive and representative art world, we can move toward a more equitable and understanding society.

One of the challenges of the program was finding ways to incorporate multiple perspectives and ways of understanding within a single space. This involved finding ways to balance the importance of the Sámi language and culture with the need for global outreach and understanding. It also involved acknowledging the diverse experiences and backgrounds of the participants while working to create an environment of mutual respect and dialogue.

Another challenge was the need to decolonize traditional ways of understanding and curating art. This process involved unlearning and letting go of preconceived notions while being open to new and diverse perspectives. It also involved acknowledging the ways in which our own backgrounds and experiences may have shaped our understanding of the world, hence being open to critique and self-reflection.

> **The importance of language in the process of decolonization and in the promotion of pluriversal thinking cannot be overstated**

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Per Dahl

IN TUNE or Colonized ART?
 Cultural colonization in a semiotic perspective

ARTICLE ABSTRACT

The expression 'in tune' is understood as a reference to some objective criteria. The criteria are taken as an ahistorical fact, eliminating the structures of social power that contribute to its conceptual meaning.
I use the expression 'colonized art' concerning the hierarchies of power that govern the development of art expressions and artefacts in different cultures. In a semantic triangle the arbitrary connection between sign/symbol and expression illustrates the difficulties of identifying ontological entities in symbolic discourses. Nevertheless, humans make connections though in a culturally bound intersubjective understanding. We can separate the sign from its expression and let the actual context be part of a logic founded in the existing culture. Therefore, interpretation is more and different from identification; it is the receiver's adaptation of the contextual identification to their horizon of understanding. Decolonization of art should be a search for the logics in the identification process. Only by adjusting rural folk-melodies into a notation based on a well-tempered scale system could classical composers use them in new artistic expressions/compositions and establish foreign control over target territories or peoples for the purpose of cultivation. The music had to be in tune to be art.

IN TUNE or Colonized ART?
– Cultural colonization in a semiotic perspective

By Per Dahl

When performing Western classical music, there is a common understanding of what it means to be in tune. The expression is also used allegorically in other contexts.

==Establishing friendship is more accessible when people find each other in tune with some essential topics. Successful politicians manage to present political reforms in tune with their society. You tune in your radio receiver/television to a frequency of the preferred station.==

Taken from the arts domain, the expression 'in tune' is understood as a reference to some objective criteria but also to have some symbolic, conceptual meaning. This combination of objective criteria and conceptual meaning blurs the relationship between communication and the artefacts, i.e., the combination of ontological and epistemological knowledge in developing literary expressions and concepts. In the narrative of in tune, the objective criteria are taken as an ahistorical fact, eliminating the structures of social power that contribute to its conceptual meaning. I will use the expression 'colonized art' concerning the hierarchies of power that govern the development of art expressions and artefacts in different cultures and, by that, draw some parallels to colonization, defined as a process of establishing foreign control over target territories or peoples for the purpose of cultivation, often by establishing colonies and possibly by settling them. In classical music, the development of different musical scale systems,1 styles,2 and narratives of music history3 parallels establishing colonies and determining the discourse of music communication.

In this paper, I will present an analysis of communication that can unveil the background and the diverse logics for establishing concepts like 'in tune' in the discourse of classical music. The three main concepts in this communication model are Intention, Identification, and Interpretation.

1 Modal and tonal scales and unique scales in folk music traditions.
2 Some musical styles are strongly connected to special segments of the social hierarchy like the operetta for the new rich upcoming bourgeois society.
3 The gender bias in the presentation of western music history, focusing on male composers and artists, a tendency that was dominant from the Romantic era and where today musicologists acquainted with feminist theory has just began rewriting the history.

Photo: Tord F. Paulsen

I will apply a perspective on this process, raising the questions like: What is colonized art? Can art be colonized? My preliminary answer is that it is in the process of identification of artefacts and cultural expressions that colonization is made. Therefore, any decolonization must start by analysing the background for the communicative identification mode.
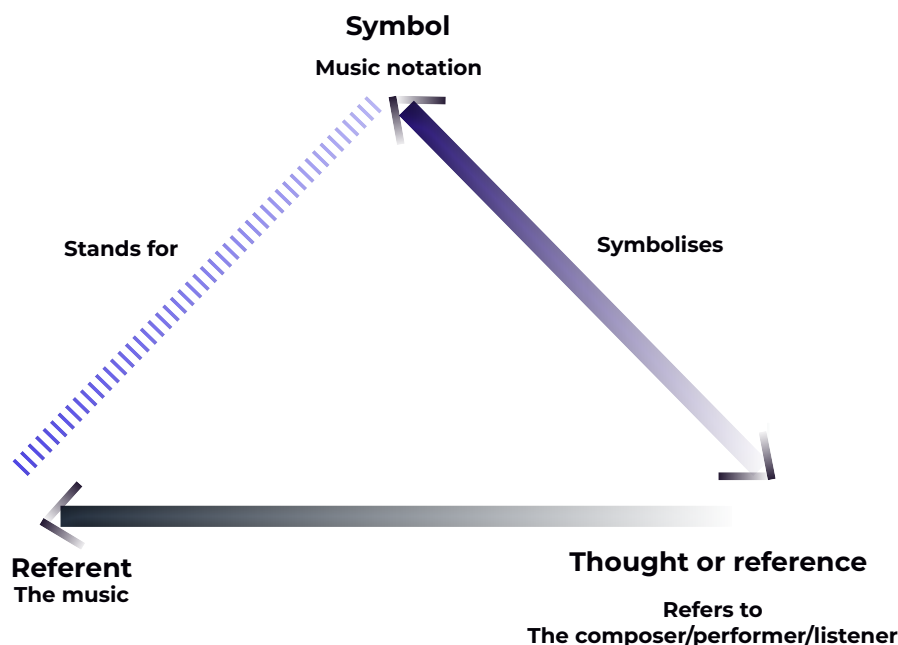
A multi-layered model of communication

The goal will be to search for possibilities and procedures to establish and develop meaning in interpreting artefacts and cultural expressions like classical music. My model can be seen as a tilted version of Charles Key Ogden's triangle (Ogden, 1974/1923)

As in Ogden's model, my triangle's essential element is the arbitrary connection between the symbol and referent. Even in classical music having the most developed notation system, the performance (the music) has a somewhat random reference to the music notation. However, the concept of a classical 'musical work' makes strong alliances between the music notation (the score) and the music (the sound). The concept is a cognitive structure that changes in the communicative chain from the composer via the performer to the listener. The composer's idea of the musical work, the performer's interpretation of the musical work, and the listener's experience of the musical work have different horizons of knowledge attributed to the concept. In addition, three objective references to the musical work can be detected: The composer's notation is much "thinner" (to use Stephen Davies' expression) than the idea. To develop an interpretation, the performer reading the notation needs to add his knowledge about notation conventions (with references outside the actual notation). However, a performance seldom matches the performer's idea of interpreting the musical work, so the listeners must add their understanding of the music to the sounding musical work establishing a musical experience. When the listener

Figure 1. Ogden's triangle tilted and adjusted to music.

Symbol
Music notation

Stands for

Symbolises

Referent
The music

Thought or reference

Refers to
The composer/performer/listener

(analyst) speaks about the incident, we have a third object of the musical work; the discourse of the musical work (Dahl, 2019).

This concept of a musical work has its historical background in developing the bourgeois society in the late eighteenth century (Goehr, 2007).4 As such, it is connected to modernity, the social and cultural developments arising with the Enlightenment and the new concept of art.5 In addition to the internal consequences of what became 'classical music', the musical work concept contributed to differentiating the musical practice into different genres (classical music versus folk music, entertainment music, jazz, pop, etc.).6 In that way, the concept of 'musical work' has contributed to a hierarchy of genres, with a canon of musical works having aesthetical expressions of universal and ahistorical values.7 Being institutionalized in music conservatories (from 1840ies) and in music analysis and musicology (from 1880ies), the concept of 'musical work' became a reference

to be used in the hierarchies of power that govern the development of art expressions and artefacts and by that there are some parallels to colonization (in the way I use 'colonization' in this article).

The arrows between Symbol and Thought or Reference indicate that humans create and interpret symbols. This double function underlines that to understand/identify a symbol, we must create it in our minds. The object or artefact might be physically out there in the world, but only when we accept it as a symbol, it becomes a symbol. The intersubjective dimension is crucial in establishing a symbol, and it must be a 'we' here, even though there might be different impressions and interpretations of the symbol. I will elaborate on the difference between identification and interpretation further down. It is essential to accept that understanding a symbol can be something other than a linguistic discourse; you can identify musical/artistic elements without naming them.

4 However, Davies, S. (2001). Musical works and performances: a philosophical exploration. Clarendon Press. finds that "the work concept as a recent invention does not provide the most plausible narrative for music's history. My own emphasis on the thinness or thickness of pieces better captures the differences between musical periods and styles while respecting the continuities that unify them." See also Bonds, M. E. (2006). Music as thought : listening to the symphony in the age of Beethoven. Princeton University Press.

5 Modernism, in contrast, is primarily an artistic phenomenon, a sharpening of modernity that sometimes in music challenge the understanding of the 'musical work' concept. See also Agawu, V. K. (2009). Music as discourse : semiotic adventures in romantic music. Oxford University Press. , Bonds, M. E. (2014). Absolute music: the history of an idea. Oxford University Press. ; Chua, D. K. L. (2017). Beethoven & freedom. Oxford University Press. , Clayton, M., Herbert, T., & Middleton, R. (2012). The cultural study of music : a critical introduction. Routledge. , Sterne, J. (2003). The Audible past : cultural origins of sound reproduction. Duke University Press.

In general, a misunderstanding is caused by the need for more understanding by the receiver. The consequence should be that communication is only fulfilled once the receiver has understood the message (Luhmann, 1995, p. 143).8 Usually, communication theories focus on the sender and the design of the message and medium to establish communication.9 However, a robust logical deduction from the reality of misunderstanding should make communication depend on the addressee. A skewed power balance between sender and receiver has often overshadowed this simple fact and facilitated a kind of colonialism that we can find in education, master classes, and art critique.

Niklas Luhmann's analysis of communication in social systems underlines that "The distinction between determinacy and indeterminacy is an internal variable of the communication system and not a quality of the external world."(Luhmann, 2000, p. 12). That makes the interpretation of artefacts and cultural expressions linked to our epistemological understanding of the world. Furthermore, he continues: "Perception is ready to scan a familiar world for information without requiring a special decision on our part to do so."(Luhmann, 2000, p. 14).10 This kind of directness is prominent in Stravinsky's and Ravel's plea for their music to be played (identifying the imperatives in the music notation), not interpreted (Long, 1973; Stravinsky, 1936/1990). However, Luhmann makes a critical distinction: "Works of art, by contrast, employ perceptions exclusively for the purpose of letting the observer participate in the communication of the invented forms."(Luhmann, 2000, p. 14).11 A work of art employs perceptions that make it different from entertainment, though not necessarily exclusively. In that perspective, entertainment supports existing attitudes in the receiver, while art challenges those attitudes. Nevertheless, a work of art can contain elements that are not exclusively invented to communicate artistic expression.

The situation is most apparent in the music. The concept of (classical)

Figure 2. Basic elements of a triadic communicative model
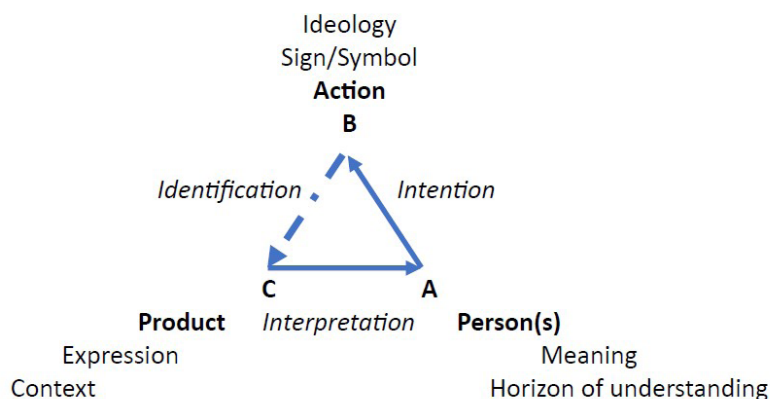
music, having a double ontological status as physical actions and cognitive phenomena, makes several modes of communication necessary in structuring our perception during a musical experience. In general, interpretation is more than identification; it is the receiver's adapting the contextual identification to their horizon of understanding. The consequence is, as Luhmann maintains, that when "art communicates by using perceptions contrary to their primary purpose," (Luhmann, 2000, p. 14) there is a need for the receiver to see possible contexts and the sign's potential for meaning in the situation. That kind of structuring of the impressions is not bound to the perceptions of the artwork but includes the receiver's horizon of understanding. In that process, we can discern the colonization of experiences as the identification of the perceptions is connected to the receiver's repertoire of possible contexts. These contexts are those social constructions and discourses that can be affiliated with the here-and-now situation and the dominating ideology (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Being aware of any colonized dimensions in the situation or ideology is therefore crucial in identifying the impressions and not only in interpreting the impressions.

The arbitrary connection between symbol and referent illustrates the difficulties of identifying ontological entities in symbolic discourses.

Nevertheless, humans do make connections, but it is not direct; it is a culturally bound understanding, an intersubjective understanding, where we can separate the sign from its expression and let the actual context be part of a logic founded in the existing culture. The essential elements of the multi-layered model of communication can be illustrated like this: (Figure 2.)
Here is an example: Arne, walking and waving his arms, suddenly recognizes Anne coming in the other direction and with whom he intends to handshake. Arne prepares the greeting ritual, and at some point, Anne will identify Arne's sign/action as part of a greeting ritual and prepare her right hand in position. They share a common understanding of these signs belonging to the same ideological concept of greeting ritual using the right hand for handshaking, which is a highly culturally conditioned interpretation. This shared understanding makes them in tune regarding the greeting situation. However, it is Anne's decision to respond to Arne's signs. She can identify the situation, but it is her interpretation of the consequences that makes her react. The situation illustrates the critical difference between identification and interpretation.12

I will illustrate different modes of communication by developing this triangular model and adding several

10 This is in line with System I in Kahneman, D. (2012). Thinking, fast and slow. Penguin Books.
11 This is a dimension not commented on by Kahneman.

layers of concepts in each position. By that, the model becomes more helpful in detecting the variety of elements in communication and liberated from the linguistic perspective in Ogden's model.

The first extension is related to classical music, where Skills, Performance, and Literacy are three concepts relevant in an artistic context. Skills are seen as part of a person's potential for action and, as such, only indirectly observable. Artists, Performers, and Listeners have different skills and might have skills on different levels. Musical skills are highly culture-specific and share essential characteristics with skills in other areas of human behaviour, such as games, science, and sports. Several theories on skills describe a hierarchy of five skill levels (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1991, pp. 229-250).13 They have in common an understanding of skills as a way of acting based on a combination of habitual gestures and cognitive responses.

In awareness of music, performance is a necessary condition. Only through performance can we make an ontological identification of music independent of style, genre, or culture. You might hear many different sounds that you do not identify as music in everyday life. The same sounds can be part of a musical work, but you need to identify the context as relevant for musical performance. The sounds of a ballet dancer's steps and jumps are usually not seen as part of the ballet's music. However, sometimes (like in Riverdance), those kinds of sounds are part of the artistic expression. In the identification process, classification will depend on the receiver's references to style, genre, and the logic of the culture. The connection between Skills and Performance is well-accepted among musicians and listeners. Anyone who has tried to make a musical performance knows that many different skills must be combined and mastered to perform in a musical context (music reading skills in classical music, control of the instrument-body relation, timing in coordination with other musicians, and so on).

To put literacy into the C-position

in this multi-layered model might be a surprise. However, especially in classical music, the listener's impression of a performance is highly influenced by our abilities in literacy.14 The aural impressions from the performance are in the listener's mind, combined with a context full of literary references like the name of the composer and or performer, the title of the work, the printed concert program, music critics, history of music and style, in vocal music an understanding of the text used in work. This knowledge can be activated ahead of or during the concert/performance. It is a mental grid adapting the impressions from the performance. It can also be linked to Gadamer's concept of pre-judgment as it is not the conscious act of an individual but belongs to her way of being (Gadamer, 1960). This mental grid is often taken as objective criteria that are ahistorical. As I will show, these criteria are not ahistorical and result from cultural processes. In my perspective, a mental grid can sometimes be seen as a colonized horizon in understanding artistic expressions.

All layers are relevant from a sender (composer/performer) and a receiver (listener). Having two references/persons with different characteristics in the same position in a model might be confusing. However, it is vital to have a model that is an alternative to linearity in stimulus-response theories found in the backyard of many communication theories. The layers Person-Skills-Meaning-Horizon of understanding point towards Subjectivity. Action, Performance, and Sign/Symbol are all observable to others, this dimension calls attention to Objectivity. I will keep Ideology in this dimension to illustrate its distance to the horizon of understanding (Subjectivity) and Context (Intersubjectivity). The whole dimension of Product – Literacy – Expression – Context – Intersubjectivity results from the arbitrariness of the connection between B and C in the triad. While point B represents the ontological entities, point C will be the first step in the epistemological dimension of our knowledge acquisition. We must organize the impressions of ontological entities

(from all layers of B) in our mind in a way that makes sense, i.e., adapt the impression to our mind/horizon of understanding (either by assimilation or accommodation of the impressions (Piaget, 1971). Connecting the observable action level to the ideological and philosophical dimensions makes possible an analysis of the power structures in colonialism.

Different angles of the corners can give the triangulation dynamic flexibility. A situation where the BC line is shortened (much overlap between Ideology and Context) can enhance understanding of the content of expression in the Sign/Symbol. Opposite an extended BC line, as when you meet sign/symbols where you as a receiver have no clue about their connection to any expressions, as i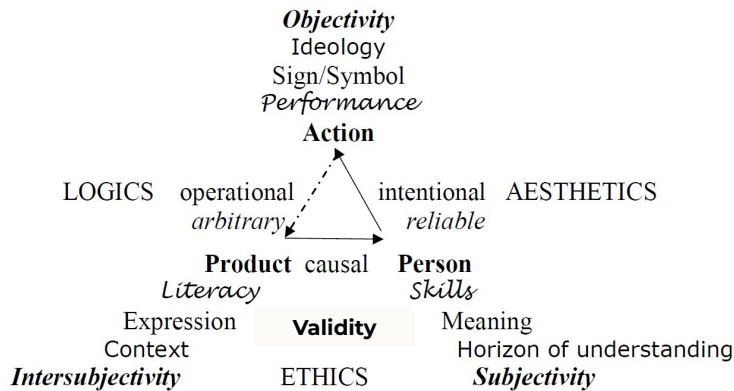n meeting music from a totally foreign culture. Shortening the AB line does not necessarily reduce the arbitrariness of BC. Composers performing their compositions (as Stravinsky did) are not always seen as the best interpretations, even if the composer says so (Stravinsky, 1972).15

As an outer circle in this model, I indicate three essential superior themes: Aesthetics, Logics, and Ethics.16 They might not be expressed in discussions on colonization, but they are often used to develop arguments on a lower, more concrete level. It is crucial, then, to remember in what relation they belong. An aesthetic layer/dimension is about the connection between a person's meaning and the use of sign/symbols in action (performance), not about the relation between the action and its product, and not at all about a product's relation to a person/listener (which is an ethical issue). Quite often, however, aesthetic statements are scaffolded by the logic: of the relation between the sign/symbol and its expression. That kind of utterance does not respect BC's arbitrariness and acts merging the Context and the Horizon of understanding.17 It is necessary to be conscious of all three superior themes to work in agreement with musical style and genre. Traditionally, the focus has been on aesthetics, which is of great consequence to the reliability and validity of performance. So strong

12 The example is taken from Dahl, P. (2008). Anvendt musikkestetikk: en innføring. Unipub.
13 The Dreyfus brothers use Novice – Advanced beginner – Competence – Proficiency – Expert, while Kokcharov has this pared hierarchy: Student/Know – Apprentice/Play – Specialist/Work – Expert/Solve – Craftsman/Invent. (http://www.slideshare.net/igorkokcharov/kokcharov-skillpyramid2015) (30.04.2023)

Figure 3. The multi-layered communication model

Objectivity
Ideology
Sign/Symbol
Performance
Action

LOGICS   operational   intentional   AESTHETICS
arbitrary   *reliable*

Product causal **Person**
Literacy   *Skills*
Expression   Validity   Meaning
Context   Horizon of understanding
Intersubjectivity   ETHICS   *Subjectivity*

has this emphasis been that the argumentation often includes the relation between the sign/symbol and the expression. Used on historical artefacts, this kind of discourse combined with a power hierarchy can move from being authoritative to becoming authoritarian. Nevertheless, that approach could be called (in philosophy) a category mistake as it mixes the modes of communication. The complete multi-layered model of communication will then be like this: (Figure 3).

==The point of departure in an aesthetic argument would be the idea of meaning in the actual piece of music.== Aesthetic views may support the intentionality of the interpretation. However, the performance must be operationalized within a chosen functional system between the sign/symbol and the expression. There might be some terminological resemblance between the actual logic and aesthetics. Still, that resemblance would be on the linguistic level and not necessarily relevant to the performer and the performed music. The difference between aesthetics and logics in our context contributes to making room for individual interpretations presented to an audience's intersubjective context. To foresee the logic dimension - the relation between the sign/

symbol and expression in the actual style/music - is essential in developing a personal interpretation. As the logic dimension can use different operational/functional systems, one must be aware of the multitude of operational links between sign/symbol and expression. A consequence of this argumentation is that music, like language, is an arbitrary system dependent on the intersubjective dimension of knowledge: communication is a fundamental element in music. Therefore, a definition of music without a reference to the human experience will reduce music to an object that can be studied as an ahistorical entity.

==The ethical dimension has been very prominent in the public debate on colonization/decolonization.18 In the inner circle of classical music lovers, the ethical issues concern only other music genres (like heavy metal, rock, and pop).== Nevertheless, the earthquake at The Rite's premiere also affected ethical issues. Usually, the audience could expect a ballet permitting a playful relationship to reasonable consensus or dissent questions. Moreover, at least after The Firebird and Petrushka, they were prepared to search for adequate observations. Their mental grid was attuned to this new Russian composer's world of

orchestral effects. However, the measure for adequacy is not consensus determined by a shared symbolic system. Still, as Luhmann writes: it "resides instead in the question of whether the viewer can follow the directives for adequate observation embedded in the work's own formal decisions."(Luhmann, 2000, p. 76). That the audience at the premiere could not follow the directives in the work's own formal decision seems well documented. Nevertheless, it took a few performances before the audience accepted the work. It indicates that the ethical dimension is not so tight to the Product and Person-connection, but at the other end of concepts: Context/Intersubjectivity and Horizon of understanding/Subjectivity. It also demonstrates that accepting artistic expressions is a social construction that develops, making a colonized mindset flexible.

'In tune' colonized

I will now present some examples where this communication model can contribute to understanding historical artefacts in the context of colonization. I said in the introduction that, at least in classical music, there is a common understanding of what it means to be in tune. However, this understanding is founded on a particular practice of classical mu-

14 In other genres, there are fewer linguistic references, but that does not reduce the relevance of literacy as a reference to any kind of written/printed (and today digitalized) material. (UNESCO, 2004)
15 See also Cook, N. (2003). Stravinsky conducts Stravinsky. In J. Cross (Ed.), The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky (pp. 176-191). Cambridge University Press. (Reprinted from 2005)
16 I use plurals to underline the many different perspectives possible in each dimension.

sic. There was a significant change in the 16th and 17th centuries from modality to a tonal scale system applying the tempered scale. This practice established a new reference when judging whether performances were in tune. As this understanding was connected to certain social groups, their institutions, and hierarchical thinking/ideology, we could call this a paradigmatic change that soon became the most robust understanding of 'in tune,' and this part of the society used a discourse in a way that colonized the concept.19 This change became evident when trained classical music scholars started collecting folk tunes at the end of the 19th century. The notation system, developed following the ideas from Das Wohltemperierte Klavier, could not indicate the tuning of folk melodies.

Nevertheless, music scholars like the Norwegian composer Catharinus Elling (1858-1942), educated in Germany, blamed the folk musicians for being unable to sing/play in tune (Vollsnes, 2000, pp. 303-304).20 The tonal system disciplined his hearing through his education and position in the (music) society. He compared his impression with the tonal scale system, and for him, that system was the objective truth about music scales. Only by adjusting the melodies into the notation system could these melodies be used in new artistic expressions/compositions. Then he could present these melodies in piano transcriptions and, by that, establish foreign control over target territories or peoples for the purpose of cultivation. That is an example where the identification logic is restricted to one system and preferred by a particular (powerful) group of music scholars and their ideological basis. This understanding of being 'in tune' became relatively common among listeners and amateur musicians. As such, we have what I in this article have called an example of the colonization of musical artefacts.

Another outcome of this understanding of 'in tune' became observable in the late 1970s. In France, composers started to develop harmonic clusters based on the upper part of the overtone series, especially those who did not fit the

tempered scale. First in electronic music, but soon adapted to orchestral music where the musicians had to find quartertones and other pitches between the ordinary half-tone scales. Even when they succeeded, the audience accused them of not playing in tune. Orchestra musicians are supposed to be able to play the notated music, and for most people /audiences, the notation system was in tune with the well-tempered scale system. The audience in classical music has had the tempered scale as the objective criteria for evaluating the pitches used in the performance for more than 300 years. As the accusation was against the performer, the ethical dimension became fundamental in their interpretation of the performance. This strong connection between

"In awareness of music, performance is a necessary condition

the actual context and the person's horizon of understanding can only be challenged from the opposite side in the multi-layered model, Ideology. It is necessary to release the concept 'in tune' from classical music's paradigmatic worldview to grasp the possibilities and relevance of other scale systems. Only then can quartertones and micro-tonality be identified as valuable music expressions and not reduced to being played out of tune.

In music, intentions are often the starting point in any creative process, either by the composer or the improvisator.21 I have pointed out that there is no tabula rasa from which the intentions can develop. There is always a horizon of understanding active in creative processes; therefore, some concepts are taken for granted (ahistorical). To be in tune is such a concept that has a history that has some parallel to colonization.

I will now elaborate on the examples in the introduction where the intentions behind the expression 'in tune' are essential. Deep personal relations are more than the sum of interpretations of the other

person's actions and products; it is a willingness to search for (positive) intentions beyond identifying signs and interpreting products. This aesthetical dimension connects the use of signs and symbols to an ideology that liberates communication from the boundary of language and other fixed sign systems governing the actual logic. It allows us to use the rest of our knowledge and experience, bodily and practical, in a heuristic structure where we do not need to know the reason for connecting different entities to a worldview. You can then describe your relationship as being 'in tune.' Only when the actual logic is suppressing one of the parts with a foreign cultural ideology, we have a structure of power that can resemble colonization.

The communication challenge in political propaganda is to present a political reform or issue in a way that the public grasp as something they really want. The politician's intentions matter less than the public's identification with the message. Suppose the politician manages to keep the focus on Ideology and use simple examples from context, avoiding ethical questions. There is an excellent chance of being 'in tune' with their political congregation in that case. In some instances, ethical questions are made the turning point, though (Vadén, 2005).22 Nevertheless, building a unified rhetoric creates a 'coherent communicativity'23 among you and your supporters. Related to the communication model, this identifies signs and symbols within a coherent logic. That is, by making the distance between Ideology and Context small, you reduce the variety of logics (different ways of expressing human experiences). However, there is a short way from being authoritative to becoming authoritarian.

Decolonization

In this article, I will define Decolonizing as the change in communication

17 I situation that Francis Bacon called Idols of the Cave in his Novum Organum. Bacon, F. e. a. (1990). Advancement of learning ; Novum Organum ; New Atlantis (2nd ed. ed.). Encyclopædia Britannica.

modes used to colonize the artefacts and cultural expressions. All three basic processes in the multi-layered model, intention, identification, and interpretation, can be approached from a decolonial perspective. I started this article by saying that classical music has a shared understanding of what it means to play 'in tune.' However, historical processes made it clear that this understanding was an understanding developed in a segment of society that had the power to change the cultural discourse. As the multi-layered model indicates, these basic processes can be linked to three overall concepts: Aesthetics, Logics and Ethics. In the debate on decolonized art, it is crucial to search for all modes of communication in colonizing artefacts and cultural expressions. The analysis must present a choice among logics that reduces the arbitrariness between the sign and its expression. That would be a way of securing a common identification of the sign. A sign, as an intended artistic expression, can only become a symbol when the receivers identify it as a symbol. The symbol might be an (ontological) artefact, an object in the world. Still, only when someone identifies it as a symbol does the artefact become a symbol of artistic expression.24 As such, this aligns with Niels Bohr's idea of objectivity as something that establishes a coherent communicativety. Bohr explains "that all experience, whether in science, philosophy or art, which may be helpful to mankind, must be capable of being communicated by human means of expression."(Bohr, 1987, p. 14), rather than arbitrary repeatability, non-subjectivity, or objectivity lacking a viewpoint. It is essential to remember that the connection between sign and expression cannot be an ahistorical/context-free relation. Bohr's important observation is that objectivity is a communicative phenomenon among humans and, therefore, always connected to Ideology and Context. A straight line from B to C would only reduce the world's descriptions to one paradigm. Then the Sign and its Expression or the Action and its Product would only be interpreted within the paradigm. We would then have a simple Stimulus-Response model with intentions and interpretations and no identifi-

cation of the logic in use. It would be what I earlier called an authoritarian process of knowledge development.

In On Decoloniality, Walter D. Mignolo (Mignolo, 2011, 2020) explore the hidden forces of the colonial matrix of power, its origination, transformation, and current presence while asking the crucial questions of decoloniality's how, what, why, with whom, and what for. Interweaving theory-praxis with local histories and perspectives of struggle, they illustrate the conceptual and analytic dynamism of decolonial ways of living and thinking and the creative force of resistance and re-existence. They encourage a delinking from the colonial matrix of power and its "universals" of Western modernity and global capitalism. In our case, that would be accepting the existence of several scale systems in the world of music and that there is no objective true scale system.25 A hundred years of sound recordings distributed by actors of global capitalism26 have contributed to the common understanding of 'in tune' among classical music lovers.

The easy adoption of decolonizing discourse by educational advocacy and scholarship, evidenced by the increasing number of calls to "decolonize our schools," use "decolonizing methods," or "decolonize student thinking", might turn decolonization into a metaphor (Tuck, 2012). Focusing on the expression 'in tune' might be seen as a decolonization of a metaphor (or 'in tune' is more an allegory indicating a resemblance in the logic between sign and expression). However, I pointed to one social group's (Western classical musicians) powerful identification of the artefacts (melodies) as a colonization of music listening in the rest of the (Western) society. Using the multi-layered communication model, I wanted to analyse 'in tune' as a concept that colonized the reference to one scale system in music. Decolonization is possible by being aware of the multi-layered triangulation in knowledge and the hierarchies of power in all communication.

The exclusion of diverse knowledge systems is prominent in my examples from classical music society.

Higher education institutions today exclude many of the various knowledge systems in the world, including those of indigenous peoples and excluded racial groups and those based on gender, class, or sexuality. Budd L. Hall and Rajesh Tandon refer to such situations of the colonial matrix of power as 'epistemicide,' pointing to eliminating knowledge systems due to authoritarian communication (Budd & Rajesh, 2017). My model is primarily epistemological without excluding the matrix of power or any social groups. The main idea was to underline the necessity of analysing the process where communicative modes generated universals (the colonial matrix of the West) as a background for actions of decolonization.

The intention in the creative moment is usually unavailable, even if the creator explains the process, as this will be an ex post facto utterance.27 We have access to a network of ideas, statements, and artworks that can give some information about the artist's intentions. Still, the arguments will be based on our understanding of the aesthetics at the time of the creation of the artwork. The artist's use of signs and symbols is part of the artist's Ideology which we can describe. However, that discourse does not need to be coherent with the artist's intentions. Therefore, a decolonization based only on a critique of the artist's intentions will be too narrow and easy to contradict. The folk musician had no intention of singing out of tune, but the classical music scholar operationalized the melodies to the classical notation system, taking that as the proper melody. The scholar's intentions and aesthetic preferences made him accuse the musicians of being unable to sing in tune. The notated music became an artefact that could be used without directly referencing the sources, and a new understanding of the melody's character and its intentions and expressions could emerge. Decolonizing this kind of artefact must accept the plurality of scale systems in music practice in different cultures. That can be seen in many sectors of the music society, but to complete decolonization, it is also necessary to unveil the power structures in these cultures.

18 https://keynotespeakerscanada.ca/speaker/nikki-sanchez/
https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/24/us/confederate-statues-photos.html   (30.04.2023)
19 Examples are the development of music criticism as part of the Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolutions, the professionalisation of music education and the performances in conservatories and concert life.
20 Other Norwegian music scholars like Ole Mørk Sandvik (1875-1976) had a much more nuanced understanding of tonality and performing practice, making the context of the performance guiding the notation elements.

Then the most crucial process in our understanding of the world is identifying a sign belonging to a context. Identification can only happen when there is a coherence between the sign's ideological affiliation and the possibility of connecting the sign to a product (a way of organizing the impressions) in a familiar context. When the audience heard the spectral harmonies as not in tune, they did identify the sonic elements. Still, they needed to be prepared to accept either the ideological affiliation or to connect the sounds to a product (harmonies) in a familiar context. The audience needs to address both parts of human communication to start decolonizing their listening habits. As such, using micro-tonality in classical music decolonizes the Western tonal system. Two different strategies can be tried: Present the music theory about the natural overtones, making skewed harmonies not so unnatural and open for an adjustment of their music ideology. Or present sounding examples from other contexts (film, games, natural sound) where they already had accepted this kind of harmonies.

Conclusion

Decolonization is the undoing of colonialism. Originally colonialism was when imperial nations established and dominated foreign territories. The question of power is prominent in decolonization theories focusing mainly on independence movements in the colonies and the

collapse of global colonial empires. In the last decades, the meaning has been extended to include economic, cultural, and psychological aspects of the colonial experience. In this context, the decolonization of art is an exciting issue. The territories are no longer geographical but mental and involve our understanding of artistic expressions. Then the question of social identity, class, and cognitive hierarchies becomes part of the identification of (de-)colonialism. In that perspective, 'in tune' can be seen as a discourse representing a colonized art. As the multi-layered model unveils, a description of the different matrixes of power governing a society must be balanced with an understanding of the elements in the communicative modes creating artistic expressions.

What makes some artistic expressions more artistic? I have shown that applying a decolonization perspective as a critique of Western art culture is possible. By focusing on the epistemological and cognitive processes making art expressions something special, it becomes clear that to reduce the question of decolonization to ethics will be to exclude fundamental elements in our understanding of artistic expressions. My examples show that the balance of power exists in a battle between our impressions and experience, and those different communicative modes generate unique solutions for each person. Decolonization is today often applied in a discourse

of ethical standards to historical artefacts. The critique should not be restricted to the interpretation of the product or the intentions behind the aesthetics. The decolonization of art should be more of a search for the logics connecting the Ideology and the Context in the identification process. Especially artistic research should make the identification of artistic expression the primary target. For now, too much of the discourse in aesthetics (intentions) and ethics (interpretations) has generated knowledge and expressions in an ahistorical context.

An epistemological perspective makes the decolonization of art more focused on the communicative elements in the logics and ethics than on the aesthetics of the artefacts. The Western knowledge system in music that emerged in Europe during Renaissance and Enlightenment was deployed and used to legitimize Europe's colonial endeavour. It was believed that the knowledge produced by the Western system was superior to that produced by other methods. As they thought this system had a universal quality, it seemed objective and ahistorical without any bound to the actual context. The notation system and the preference for a well-tempered scale system were part of this colonialism. It changed notation and the instruments' production, making the piano the overall reference. **Music had to be in tune to be art.**

21 Wallas divides the creative process into five stages. Wallas, G. (1926). The art of thought. London. Lehmann, Sloboda and Woody add a trial-and-effort phase as part of the creative processes. Lehmann, A. C., Sloboda, J. A., & Woody, R. H. (2007). Psychology for musicians : understanding and acquiring the skills. Oxford University Press.   22 Like the protests against statues of generals who organised slavery, minstrel shows and other blackface entertainment. 23 In Vadén Hannula uses the term 'coherent commuinicativity' with reference to Bohr, N. (1987). The philosophical writings of Niels Bohr : 3 : Essays 1958-1962 on atomic physics and human knowledge (Vol. 3). Ox Bow Press. (Bohr, 1963/1987, p. 7) cited in Mignolo, W. D. (2011). The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options. Cambridge: Duke University Press. , Plotnitsky, A. (2002). The knowable and the unknowable : modern science, nonclassical thought, and the "two cultures". University of Michigan Press. (Plotnitsky, 2002, p. 23), but Bohr does not use that term in his essay. However, it sums up his ideas in a good way.Bohr : 3 : Essays 1958-1962 on atomic physics and human knowledge (Vol. 3). Ox Bow Press. (Bohr, 1963/1987, p. 7) cited in Mignolo, W. D. (2011). The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options. Cambridge: Duke University Press. , Plotnitsky, A. (2002). The knowable and the unknowable : modern science, nonclassical thought, and the "two cultures". University of Michigan Press. (Plotnitsky, 2002, p. 23), but Bohr does not use that term in his essay. However, it sums up his ideas in a good way.

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24 Like Picasso's Bull's Head (created in 1942 from the seat and handlebars of a bicycle)
25 Such acceptance has been well established among musicologists, but they have not succeeded in convincing the classical audience.
26 Typically, the gramophone companies prioritized financial, marketing, and technical competence rather than the artistic and cultural heritage.
27 Stravinsky on Octet referred inThe ComposerWorksWhite, E. W. (1979). Stravinsky : the composer and his works (2nd ed.). Faber and Faber. (White, 1979 pp.574-577). See alsoDahl, P. (2022). Modes of communication in Stravinsky's works : sign and expression. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group.

Photo: Tord F. Paulsen.

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HIP as a Creative Tool for Performance Design:

Investigating the Performance Practice of Satie's Mélodies to Challenge the Stereotypes of the Art Song Recital

ARTICLE ABSTRACT

In the 20th century, most artistic disciplines underwent a wave of experimentation and discussion, but classical music performance as an artistic practice remained relatively untouched. In the area of vocal chamber music, the traditional recital format with the singer standing by the piano is still the standard. In their doctoral research project, the author aims to challenge and explore alternatives to this traditional format. They start by investigating the original performance practice of Satie's mélodies to then design three different performances of French early 20th century art songs using various artistic methods and theoretic concepts. The first one is based on the approach known as historical informed performance (HIP). The author argues that Satie's mélodies, which are little known and seldom performed, are difficult to appreciate in a static recital. Investigating the original performance practice became a way to rediscover other aspects of the music beyond the dogmas of the score and find inspiration for creating alternative modes of presenting classical vocal chamber music. In this paper the author retraces the use of HIP as a creative tool for designing performances of art songs.

KEYWORDS

HIP as a Creative Tool for Performance Design:
Investigating the Performance Practice of Satie's Mélodies to Challenge the Stereotypes of the Art Song Recital

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HIP as a Creative Tool for Performance Design: Investigating the Performance Practice of Satie's Mélodies to Challenge the Stereotypes of the Art Song Recital

In the 20th century a wave of experimentation and discussion hit most artistic disciplines. As Dogantan-Dack (2015) points out, classical music has been slow to join in. Although composers have been experimenting with the musical language; classical music performance as an artistic practice has relatively stayed untouched. In the area of vocal chamber music, the traditional recital format with the singer standing by the piano and all the accompanying rituals is THE standard (Neher, 2011). It is what is expected by the public, taught in the educational institutions, and

reenforced by the "performing police (teachers, critics, bloggers) and . . . potential employers (agents, conductors, ensembles, venue managers, record and radio producers)" (Leech-Wilkinson, 2012, 3.3). According to Leech-Wilkinson, for example, the reasons why performers do not attempt non-traditional interpretation of classical musical works are largely economic and cultural. For starters, there is no real incentive in terms of career promotion for trying to offer a substantially different interpretation. Secondly, there is a very strong performance tradition which is supposed to ensure faithfulness to the composer's intentions. This claim is seductive and powerful as it appeals to our moral sense: after all performers of Western art music are usually dealing with the interpretation of someone else's creative work. It is also difficult to argue with since most often 'the source of the truth' (the composer) is not alive anymore. And the same considerations apply with regards to the format of the performance. But as Dogantan-Dack (2015) reminds us, artist-researchers have the opportunity, and with that I would add the responsibility too, of unmasking the "untruths" on which the system lies. And as it happens, our current performance practice of art songs does not preserve faithfully the performance tradition, as we are led to believe. For example, Loges and Tunbridge (2020) demonstrate that how we imagine a liederabend nowadays represents but an elitist and restricted view of this genre's

Concert in Ramsland stuen, Stavanger. 23 August 2022. Photo: E. Behrens.

multifaceted performance tradition. As Laura Tunbridge (p. 1) formulates eloquently: "In a generation in which the notion of period performance has become firmly established as a routine mode of interpretation, it is striking that many of our concert habits have little to do with known historical practices."

Restlessness against performing standards and the stereotype of 'the classical singer' is common among performers, as well as a desire to regain ownership over creative practices. Some singers take action by creating their own recording label (such as Marina Rebeka with Prima Classic), opera companies (Debi Wong with re:Naissance opera) and production companies (Sonya Yoncheva with SY11). In terms of performing styles, vocalists have been experimenting with genres and interdisciplinary practices. In the Norwegian panorama it is worth mentioning Tora Augestad (n.d.), working across cabaret and early music, Håkon Kornstad (2021), merging jazz saxophone and operatic singing, and dancer and singer Silje Aker Johnsen (2019), researching the physical interpretation of contemporary opera. Until now experimentation seems to have gone mostly in the direction of opera staging, cross-over genres, and new music.

Although less has happened in chamber music, we do find projects such as Art Sung, where narratives and visual art are used to present art songs in a dramatized version (Mucha, 2018). In Norway, the duo frankågunnar have dedicated themselves in the past few years to the reinterpretation of lieder, mainly those by Franz Schubert. They have both commissioned composers to rewrite some of the songs as well as create their own interpretation of the cycle Schwanegesang by stretching the musical material of each song in different directions (frankågunnar, n.d.). Bjarte Eike and the Barokksolistene have been experimenting for the last fifteen years with the use of theatre, improvisation and storytelling to create 'shows' featuring early music that often include vocalists (Eike, 2022). At the Norwegian Academy of Music,

Ingeborg Dalheim is conducting her research on Norwegian art songs as interpreted by Norwegian female singers at the turn of the century (Dalheim, 2021). In her project she challenges today's role of the score as the primary source of a musical work, by learning the repertoire, as well as the style and techniques, only by listening to historical recordings. My own research is situated in between Eike's and Dalheim's. I too research art songs from the early 20th century, although my focus is on Satie and other French modernist composers that belonged to the group Les nouveaux jeunes. But, although I carefully studied the historical recordings available, I did heavily rely on the scores to prepare the performance. Besides, my interest is not in the vocal aspects of the interpretation of this repertoire. Instead, as Bjarte Eike, I'm more curious about playing with the performance format and multimediality, bending the strict codes of the art song recital to find greater freedom of expression.

In my doctoral research project, I design three different performances of French early 20th century art songs using each time different artistic methods and theoretic concepts. The first one, concluded in August 2022, was based on the approach known as historical informed performance (HIP) and featured only music by Satie. The program (see Appendix A) included his last three cycles of mélodies as well as some of his cabaret songs. In this paper I retrace my experience of designing the performance and argue for a use of HIP as a creative tool to challenge the stereotypes of the art song recital.

Historical informed performance

In its early stages the goal of what is now known as HIP, was to achieve 'authenticity' in performing music from the past. By carefully studying primary and secondary sources (autograph scores, instrument treatises, composers' autobiographies etc.) performers and musicologists aimed to reconstruct how the music was truly played at the time it was composed (Lawson & Stowell, 1999). This view of HIP relates

to a modern concept of musical work and implies a hierarchic power relationship between composers and performers. Since the 19th century there has been a tendency to understand music as an independent object created by the composer, whose ideas would be faithfully portrayed in the score (Butt, 2015). Whereas the performer, whose function was to materialize the music for an audience unable to read scores, had to be in service of the composer's will (Cook, 2001) and at times even expected to actively suppress any form for individual interpretation (Elliott, 2006). This is particularly true in the case of the French musical scene in the early 20th century. Both singers such as Bathori (1998), Croiza (Bannerman, 1989), Bernac (1978) and composers such as Debussy (Bannerman, 1989), Ravel (Long, 1973) and Stravinsky (Dahl, 2022) were adamant about not allowing the performer's personality shine through and only sing what is written in the score. Stravinsky (1970) for example wrote: "The secret of perfection lies above all in his [the performer] consciousness of the law imposed upon him by the work he is performing" (p.132). It is clear he, like many of his colleagues, thought the relationship between composer and performer to be strongly hierarchical. However, one should resist the temptation of heedlessly applying these instructions from a contemporary perspective and remember instead to place them as well in their historical context. Thus, one would possibly understand them as an expression of the reaction against the excessive freedom and exaggerated sentimentality of Romanticism, and especially Italian opera (Elliott, 2006). Furthermore, listening to historical recordings from a contemporary standpoint, discrepancies are sometimes found between what the musicians advocated for and how they played (see for example Hubbel, 2019, for a comparison between the lectures and recordings of Reynaldo Hahn or Dahl, 2022, for an analysis of the discrepancies between Stravinsky's statements on execution and his practice as a musician).

In the last few decades, there has been much discussion about where music is to be found; whether in the

score, in the performance, or in the relationship between the two. Nicholas Cook (2001) advocates for the last hypothesis and suggests reading scores as scripts. This approach returns agency to the performer by transforming the score's role from that of a rigid master to a more flexible guideline. In that way, the power relationship between composer and performer shifts from a hierarchical one to a horizontal collaborative one. And it is within this view that my use of the HIP framework is situated.

Since its origins the HIP movement has been surrounded by a heated debate, focusing primarily on the claim for authenticity (see for example Kerman, 1985; Leech-Wilkinson, 1984; Taruskin, 1995). The paradox of how HIP is commonly used nowadays, and especially how it has informed music teaching in higher education, is that a movement born in reaction to performance standardization has brought a new form of canonization (Leech-Wilkinson, 2012). The canon doesn't rule only which compositions are worthy of being played but how they should be played too. The range of what is acceptable is quite limited and "creativity . . . , like freedom of speech, is welcomed so long as nobody is too upset" (Dogantan-Dack & Leech-Wilkinson, 2013). So, although we are not performing all kinds of music in the contemporary style anymore, we are expected to play it in the 'correct style' to be regarded as serious classical musicians. But this 'correct style' is once again an illusion, often an approximate and limited idea of the way music was performed at a specific time and place, arrived to us through an evolving and diversified performance tradition.

However, instead of focusing on the critiques brought against HIP, I find it most fruitful to look at its creative potential. For example, Goehr (1994, p. 284) calls it "a tool to look at performance tradition with new eyes", echoed by Butt (2001), who claims it "has opened up a wide range of possibilities for new ways of performing and hearing". Along the same lines, Rolfhamre (2022) advocates for a use of HIP as ongoing action and practice, rather than an aim in

itself. His arguments ultimately bring him to also suggest the possibility of an ethical agency of HIP: "it is the very historical artefact that, through contextualisation, makes other futures possible through active and conscious past-present relations" (p. 81). This is also my standpoint: my interest in studying the original performance practice (later referred as OPP) of Satie's vocal compositions is not with the aim to reproduce it as faithfully as possible, but instead to find in the 'old ways' of performing art songs inspiration to rejuvenate, or expand, the 'current ways'. And especially by paying more attention to the context.

In fact, nowadays the widespread current of thought views musical works as eternal abstract objects, existing outside of time and space (Kania, 2017). This perspective can lead to an idea of music as ahistorical: according to formalists the main characteristics of a composition are inherent to it and don't require contextualization to stay valid. However, Rivers & Weber (2011) point out how rhetorical texts exist within a specific context and propose a rhetorical ecology that "emphasizes the symbiotic nature of texts, including the way texts, events and feelings [emphasis added] influence or 'contaminate' one another" (p. 193). I would argue that the same applies to musical works, especially considering how in the modern understanding they share much with verbal texts (a well identifiable author, being preserved through a written document (Butt, 2015)). In the case of Satie, I find this concept particularly fitting: his mélodies might not always result convincing on their own, but they reveal to be incredibly interesting when placed within their rhetorical ecology. For example, how his whole musical career was permeated by feelings of rejection, craving for acceptance, ambiguity towards his work as a cabaret pianist (Myers, 1968; Whiting, 1999). And how his lifestyle revolved around creating the image of a serious composer: from his attentive choice of clothes to the publicity stunts he liked to pull off (Orledge, 2020). Thus, investigating the context, not only in which he lived and composed, but in which he presented his music as well, became

fundamental for me to imagine a performance of his songs.

Using HIP to design the performance

When describing the qualities of HIP, Butt (2001) identifies six common traits:
[1.] Use of instruments from the composer's own era; [2.] Use of performing techniques documented in the composer's era; [3.] Performance based on the implications of the original sources for a particular work; [4.] Fidelity to the composer's intentions for performance or to the type of performance a composer desired or achieved; [5.] An attempt to re-create the context of the original performance; and [6.] An attempt to re-create the musical experience of the original audience.

Because my approach to HIP is based on an understanding of music as a relationship between score and performance and as context bound, I have mostly worked with the three last traits 4-6. Furthermore, the first one doesn't apply to my case as singers cannot obviously change vocal cords. The second, using techniques from the composer's era, is not relevant to the scope of my project. Although it is useful knowing that the canons of beautiful singing are not unchanged, my research deals with the format and context of the performance rather than the qualities of the sound produced. The third trade, studying primary (scores, recordings...) and secondary (biographies, letters...) sources, was indeed a part of the process to prepare my interpretation of the repertoire. However, the results of this research are relevant to the current discussion only for their contribution in shedding some light on the OPP and will be therefore discussed in point four. The originality and individuality of Satie's performance practice lie instead within the composer himself and in the larger context; that is, the aspects related to traits 4-6. By the composer himself I mean his artistic interests, methods and beliefs, his collaborations, his influences, and the way he himself framed his work. And by the larger context I mean the environment in which his vocal works were performed at his

time: the socio-cultural status of his audience, the physical spaces, the format, and other elements of the OPP. I will now discuss how I used the last three traits in the design of the performance.

4) Fidelity to the composer's intentions for performance or to the type of performance a composer desired or achieved

On the matter of intentions Satie is a peculiar case. We have exhaustive knowledge on how other French composers of his time wanted their mélodies to be performed, both from direct sources and indirect ones (Bathori, 1998; Bernac, 1978; Garden & Biancolli, 1951). Regarding Satie however, I only found a few statements about his compositional ideas and language (Orledge, 1984), but nothing about performance style. In general, he seemed very occupied with simplicity and brevity (Mellers, 1942; Orledge, 1984). This is a recurrent element in his compositional style, almost his creative manifesto, and could be plausibly transferred to the performing style.

I have therefore chosen to look at Satie's purpose in composing. Clearly in this area of investigation it is not possible to find the truth, but merely offer probable and inevitably biased conjectures. As I am not a psychologist, I didn't attempt a study of his personality. Instead as a fellow musician I used my intuition, my practice and my empathy while studying the music and the relevant literature and came to the following conclusions. Despite his provocations and jokes (Potter, 2016), his actions throughout his life clearly showed a craving for appreciation as a 'serious composer'. How, conscious of his poor compositional technique, he enrolled at the Schola Cantorum as a 40-year-old published composer (Davis, 2007). How he so carefully branded himself and his appearance (Orledge, 2020) and turned his lacking technique into a style of simplicity. How ashamed he was of his work as a cabaret and music hall composer (Myers, 1968; Whiting, 1999). Therefore, I used his desire of recognition as a guide throughout my project and worked to present his lesser-known music in

such a way that the audience could appreciate it. To achieve that, I chose to adapt the elements of the OPP to the contemporary taste. This applied first and foremost to the purely musical element, specifically the fact that we performed the songs according to the current standard practice for this genre. It must be noted, however, that I did find inspiration in the recordings I analyzed (Satie, n.d., 1949a, 1949b, 1954b, 1954a, 1967, 1974, 2012) and incorporated in my own interpretation some of the stylistic elements that I found, such as for example greater emphasis on pronunciation, spoken sections or heavier use of chest voice. And the same applied to the other aspects of the performance: clothes, language, movements, food, attitude etc.

❝Dance was the perfect medium for me

The OPP served as inspiration and integrated my own performance in an updated version, filtered through contemporary taste and my personal sensibility. If my goal is to raise awareness and appreciation of this composer's less known vocal works, performing his music in a way that is historically authentic (as much as that can ever be realized) but difficult to relate for a contemporary audience would have been as absurd as only speaking French to the public because that's what Satie did.

Although I did not find any explicit instructions about the type of performance he wished for his mélodies, from the knowledge we do have of how they were presented during his lifetime the following characteristics emerge:

· Smaller venues, often not thought primarily as concert halls: art galleries/artists' ateliers, friends' homes, private salons, even a fashion store.

· Collaboration with other artists, often close friends, was very important. Not only the poets that wrote the lyrics, but also the painters that designed the programs (Picasso, Matisse) and were showing their art at the performances (Orledge, 1990).

· Intimate settings with close distance to the public and possibility to mingle. There is some information about how carefully he planned the musicians' positions for incidental music and the response he hoped for with his furniture music (Makomaska, 2019; Potter, 2015).

5) An attempt to re-create the context of the original performance; and 6) An attempt to re-create the musical experience of the original audience.

In the context of my project, trait number six was interpreted in its broader meaning: as a social and multisensory, rather than purely auditive, experience of a music performance. With this understanding, both traits are dealing with the setting of the event and as such I will discuss them together.

Butt's choice of the word "attempt" is particularly appropriate here, since in this area we can mostly rely on hypothesis and reconstruction. Essentially, I have used all the findings discussed before to understand how a performance of Satie's vocal music at his time could have been and then filled in the gaps with probable inferences. With this knowledge in mind, I have designed a performance inspired by the characteristic elements of the OPP but thought for the demographic that usually attends classical concerts in Norway nowadays; with a special attention on facilitating the reception of the music. I have focused on two aspects: to create a specific mood that I describe as homey, cozy and relaxed, and to give the audience the tools to connect to the musical material.

To realize the first aspect, I have made the following choices. All the venues were either private homes, or previously private homes turned into museums/event locations. I have chosen to arrange the space in a café setting with chairs surrounding small tables when possible, and to serve coffee and French inspired food.

I have used different tools to break the traditional distance between performers and the audience and to

Concert in Villa Tou, Tau. 22 May 2022. Photo: E. Behrens.

create intimacy. For example, the pianist and I were already in the room when the public arrived, greeting them, distributing programs, and serving coffee, as hosts in a private home would do. There was no spatial distance as there was no stage, and the audience was sitting very close to the performing space. There was also no clear time break for when the concert started, the pianist was already playing when the audience arrived. This was inspired by Satie's invention of furniture music, a music that is supposed to fill the space without taking attention (Potter, 2015). There was also no traditional entrance with bow and applause: instead, we just started introducing the concert and the performance developed organically from there. There were also no bows after each musical number, just an acknowledgement of the public's applause. And at the end we did not exit the stage but remained in the room available for conversation.

We also used various devices to signify that the mood of this performance was unformal and relaxed: our appearance was elegant **but simple, our way of addressing the audience friendly and colloquial, and we avoided too many facts and technical information to the vantage of anecdotes and colorful descriptions.** In general, we tried to keep our attitudes and body language as relaxed and open as possible. We also encouraged explicitly the audience to relax, feel free to react and ask questions. This last point was, as expected, less successful as it requires confidence from the public. Nonetheless it was our experience that compared to most recitals we have been involved in their attitude while listening to us was significantly less intense and serious.

The other tools we employed to attempt to recreate the original context and audience's experience were narratives and visual aspects. We used narratives to paint a picture for the audience: I wanted them to be able to imagine the spaces, the personalities and the culture that surrounded those performances. And I wanted them to learn a little about Satie's complex personality and artistic endeavors. His mélodies are very peculiar and it takes time

and effort to appreciate them: they are so incredibly short, condensed in their simplicity and lack catchy melodies. My hypothesis was that a key in connecting to them is to understand a bit about the composer and the occasions they were written for.

Visual aspects were used not only in terms of the choice of clothes, but also in the form of props and dance/movement to illustrate the essence of the songs without having to translate them. I chose to avoid printed translations as I find them distracting, forcing the public to alternate reading and looking at the performance. Most of these songs are also impossible to translate effectively as they rely heavily on word puns and cultural references. Instead, I explained very shortly the theme of each song and translated a few key words. The audience did get a printed program though, consisting of a map with the venues, the names of the people mentioned and the titles of the songs. The props and the dancing elements were inspired by the cabaret tradition, which played an extremely important part in Satie's life and artistic development.

Afternoon Tea
by Ingeborg Anzjøn
at Fira, Sandnes.
Photo: E. Behrens,
2022.

The multimedia aspect was also central in Satie's production, as he worked with artists from numerous disciplines (Orledge, 2020), was a prolific writer (Potter, 2016) and even collaborated with Man Ray on his first readymade (Orledge, 1995). As such, I wanted to include it in the performance. Partly this was accomplished through the choice of venues, three of which hosted art exhibitions, but I also wanted it to be an active part of my practice.

Dance was the perfect medium for me, as I trained as a dancer previously to studying music, and a key element of the cabaret and music-hall tradition. Working with his popular songs had also the additional function of allowing me to better understand his serious music. Because this type of work had such a big influence on the development of his musical language (Perloff, 1993; Potter, 2016; Whiting, 1999), it was important for me to experience performing it to gain a deeper insight into his mélodies.

Documenting the performance

The focus of this artistic research project was on the performer's experience rather than on that of the audience. Borrowing terms from social sciences one could say that I was the test subject and the public, although a fundamental component of the experiment, was not. From our observation the audience's demographic seemed to match that of most classical singing concerts we perform or have performed in the past and that allowed us to make some relevant comparisons. My goal however was to investigate how my version of an art song recital would affect my own experience of success in performing. Consequently, I focused on my perspective as a singer and my subjective experience of the audience's reactions while singing. Namely, I was interested in the audience mainly in their function as co-creators of the performance and part of the context that I am exploring. With their general mood and continuous feedback, also known

as "feedback loop", they affect the performers and contribute to shaping the performance (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). This perspective led me in the choice of the tools I used to document the experiment.

Registering the experience of a live performance in a satisfying manner and preserving it for later analysis was a complicated task. To build as comprehensive a picture as possible I decided to employ a multitude of methods and media. First, each performance was video recorded: five of them with a fixed camera and no post-editing. The audience was mostly out of the frame, although it is possible to hear their reactions such as laughter. This served as a sort of objective and impersonal documentation of the action happening on stage. However much of the 'live' element of the performance was lost and as such videorecording with a fixed angle proved to be a poor medium. Nonetheless it still resulted in some interesting discoveries: for example, some reactions from the audience that I had not noticed or elements of the performance that looked or sounded quite different from how I had experienced them. One of the performances was documented by a videographer who used three cameras. The different angles and close-ups give a better impression of the details and facial expressions happening during the performance, although still from an external rather than participatory point of view.

Secondly all performances (except for one, due to sickness) were also documented through photos. Here the selection of the photographer was given much thought: the choice fell on someone who is also a performing musician and sound engineer. He is experienced in taking pictures of singers in live performances and is particularly skilled at capturing their expressions at crucial points in the music. His photos represent simultaneously the point of view of a colleague, a member of the audience and a visual artist. He also documented the venues as well as other elements that could convey the atmosphere of the events, with a special focus on the differences between the performances. Al-

though the photos do a better job at portraying these aspects than the videos, they still don't capture the elements of shared experience and energy flow happening in live performances.

To save at least traces of the performers' experience we used video diaries. The pianist and I did each a short self-video-interview after every performance to recollect our own impressions as well as reactions and comments from the audience. The questions (see Appendix B) were the same for the both of us and were loosely based on a study by Radbourne et al. (2009) which investigates audience experience as a possible factor in assessing the quality of a performance. In my own project I consider instead the performers' experience as an indicator of the performance's success. However, I found that two of the criteria that the study identified as valued by the audience, authenticity and collective engagement, are also crucial to my own satisfaction and feeling of success as a performer. This is perhaps not so surprising when we consider that the study also shows how collective engagement is valued by the audience not only in terms of interaction between members of the audience but also between them and the performers (Radbourne et al., 2009). Suggesting that part of the appeal of a live performance is its characteristic of being a shared communicative experience amongst all present. Therefore, I was able to use these parameters in my study and the questions focused primarily on issues of authenticity, in this specific case "existential authenticity" defined as "a special state of Being in which one is true to oneself" (Wang, 1999, p.358, as cited in Radbourne et al., 2009). Along with matters of collective engagement; not only amongst members of the audience, but between the performers too as well as between them and the audience.

I decided not to use questionnaires to investigate the audience's experience as it would have activated their rational thinking and placed them in a critical role, which was not the point of the experiment as mentioned before. However, I considered the spontaneous comments they chose to share with us unprompted to be a part of the interaction that is a distinctive quality of live performance. Consequently, I not only recorded them in the video diaries, but I also saved all comments received on social media afterwards. These different documents, alongside my memory of the experience, constitute the material on which the following reflection is based.

Analyzing the performance

==Using the HIP framework as a tool led me to design a performance that was quite different from the stereotypical art song recital. There was no extreme change, as the goal of the experiment was not necessarily to create something radically different but to critically examine the different elements of the recital in light of the OPP.== This process led me to make subtle variations that although challenged the traditional format didn't go as far as to break the communicational agreement, as Rolfhamre (2022) describes the alignment between musicians' performative choices and public's expectations. The performance was advertised as a concert of classical vocal chamber music and was still clearly recognizable as such. The positive reactions and comments we received are taken as a sign that the audience did accept the validity of the performance. That was partly possible because we kept the musical element untouched and partly because the new elements I introduced, although not typical of a recital, would still result familiar to a contemporary audience: most would have encountered them in other performance genres such as opera, music hall, musical theatre, opera cafés and other. These elements though did contribute significantly to a shift in the atmosphere compared to what I have experienced when performing vocal chamber music in a more traditional way. The audience often allowed themselves to express their appreciation beyond the customary clapping, towards more vocal and spontaneous reactions: from laughter and lively facial expressions all the way to comments and cheering.

==The differences can roughly be grouped in three areas of intervention.== The main one was how I used the performing space: looking at it with the eyes of a stage director and a choreographer led me to utilizing it in its totality, instead of just singing in a fixed position. This, as well as using props and gestures/movements, communicated the mood of the songs without much need for explaining the texts. This aspect seems to have struck a chord with the audience, as it has been one of the most recurring comments from them. They appreciated the variation and liveliness it brought to a classical concert.

Although the mélodies were performed in a more traditional static way, relying mostly on a few gestures or steps, the cabaret songs were freer: from full dancing to something in between a choreography and a staged scene. Either way movement provided a non-textual visual aid for the audience in encountering unfamiliar and somewhat difficult musical material. It has been shown (Madison & Schiölde, 2017, Van Den Bosch et al., 2013) that nowadays audiences are more inclined to listen to and appreciate familiar music, be it a known tune or music composed with simple harmonies, singable melodies and repetitions. Satie's mélodies have little of that and even his cabaret songs, although I chose the most singable ones, rely heavily on the understanding of the texts to be fully appreciated. The movements, alongside the context and anecdotes I provided before each piece, gave the audience a way into the music. Dancing had also the additional effect of helping me perform. Singing while standing still by the piano has never felt comfortable to me. In the past, every time I had the chance to perform roles that allowed for dancing, I was able to achieve greater freedom and expressivity. Therefore, experimenting with how to include this aspect in the vocal chamber music repertoire is an important aspect of my research. From the recordings of the performances I have analyzed, as well as from how I perceived it, the dancing allowed me to achieve a different expressive quality with my voice. The other difference was chal-

Tapestry by Frida Hansen, reproduction.
Photo: E. Behrens, 2022.

Concert in a private home, Randaberg. 22 August 2022.

Concert in Ramslandstuen, Stavanger. 23 August 2022.
Photo both left and right: E. Behrens.

lenging the rituals of the classical concert: welcoming the audience in person in a homey space and serving food instantly broke the religious silence usually observed. That in turn made the public more inclined to react with laughter and other vocal expressions. Another indicator of this correlation was that the one performance which was in a less cozy room, where I did not personally greet the public, and where only coffee but no food was served, provoked fewer reactions. Almost no laughing, and an impassive facial expression of the audience made it in turn harder for me to perform. In this case the feedback-loop mentioned earlier had a negative effect on me and on the performance. Especially when tackling comical repertoire and in intimate settings, I find the audience's role in feeding back energy into the performance with their reactions to be very important. While being met with silence and a wall of blank faces is extremely draining for me. From my video diary: "My impression was the audience was colder than in the other concerts. They were not showing anything in their facial expression. The audience was very hard to read. Collective engagement between the members of the audience was very poor. Between performers and audience also I didn't feel there was much engagement. That can be because of the venue. It was a colder environment; it wasn't as warm and cozy as the other three venues." (H. Baldelli, personal communication, July 4, 2022, 1:14). From the pianist's video diary: "The audience reaction today felt differently . . . the room it was… it was a nice place, but it didn't feel as cozy and inviting as some of the other places and yeah today there seemed to be more of a traditional distance." (F. Wildschütz, personal communication, June 26, 2022, 4:18).

The third difference was blurring the line between my role as a host and as a performer. Greeting the public and addressing them directly, as well as the intimate size of the venues, created a physical closeness between us. Alternating being 'myself' in the narrative sections and impersonating a character in the singing sections, gave them a

chance to know me a little bit as a person. Overall, being able to step out of the 'role' as a classical singer made it easier for me to stay relaxed and open while singing, which allowed for a freer and more generous communication of the musical material to the audience. Authenticity in this case was understood as a (real or perceived) quality of the performer rather than faithfulness to the primary sources. In the context of HIP, authenticity is traditionally connected with facts: finding out as much as possible about the original performances and, putting aside the performer's personal style, attempting to reproduce them as faithfully as possible. In my own use of HIP, I studied the sources to get as good an idea as possible of the intention behind the compositions and the mood of the performances. And these are the qualities I tried to stay authentic to: simple songs about banal subjects, written to amuse, tease and surprise, to be performed at social events amongst friends or for small audiences. This process in turn allowed me to be authentic to myself as a performer. Away with the romantic myth of the beautiful singer in gorgeous clothes and jewelry, drifting on and off a faraway stage without a spoken word. Just my simple self, in normal clothes and imperfect Norwegian speaking, sharing the music that I love and a piece of myself with the audience. In conclusion, using the HIP framework as a tool rather than a goal transformed a performance of art songs from static to dynamic, from solemn to relaxed, from religiously quiet to slightly noisy, from formal to cozy. And this allowed energy to flow freely between the performers, between them and the audience and between the musical work and the performers. Being able to use the performing space, from as little as taking a few steps away from the piano to a full waltz gave me the necessary freedom to experience the music through my whole body. Encouraging the audience to be more extrovert in their reactions gave me additional energy and inspiration to perform. Overall, taking the time to reflect on the different elements of the performance and make deliberate choices according to what would fit me and the specif-

ic repertoire, instead of reproducing a generic format, allowed me to have a better experience performing.

Results

Approaching HIP as an ongoing action and practice had two outcomes: firstly, to unmask the untruths lying in widely accepted stereotypes (Dogantan-Dack, 2015) and secondly, as an inspiration for alternative models (Rolfhamre, 2022), to reimagine the future of the performance of art songs.

My project is a small contribution towards challenging the expectations and norms of the art song recital, but it has been a fundamental step to question my own assumptions on what it means to perform that repertoire. Starting the doctoral program as a voice student freshly graduated from conservatory I had very strong opinions on the matter, shaped by years of traditional training and being exposed to mainstream classical concerts. The research process forced me to critically examine every choice and the reasons behind them. One of the aspects that I found more interesting and productive is the issue of movement while singing art songs: why is it mostly restricted to a few, often stereotypical, gestures? Many reasons, such as technical limitations or not distracting from the musical work, are possible. However, researchers such as Johnsen (2019) have already demonstrated how dancing and classical singing can happen simultaneously. Embracing the invitation to use HIP as a tool, has also allowed me to reclaim my active role in the creation of a performed musical work. It is incredibly empowering to regain ownership of the performative choices instead of having to adapt one's own artistic identity to fit some standardized model. A model that seems to be reproduced and enforced heedlessly in a sort of vicious circle: audiences are mostly exposed to one version, which is what they come to expect. Thus, it is what the people with decision power keep delivering to them; perhaps in fear of losing public and financial return, or for a very human form of inertia. Consequently, young performers are en-

Conclusion

In conclusion, using HIP as a creative tool obliged me first off to challenge my own assumptions about the correct way of performing art songs. Secondly, shifting the focus of the historical investigation mainly to the context and format of the OPP provided inspiration to imagine possible alternatives to the standard recital. This different performance format created in turn a more relaxed atmosphere that was conductive to a higher degree of the performer's satisfaction and feeling of success. It would be interesting to develop the study further to include the audience's experience and explore if there is a correlation between their satisfaction and the performer's. Overall, the choice of using HIP as an active practice rather than a goal proved successful in the framework of this project. More research is needed though to investigate further and challenge the stereotypes of classical vocal music performance on a broader scale, in order to move the field towards a more diverse and inclusive future.

As well as working to promote a greater variety of musical styles and composers included in concert programming, it would be desirable in my opinion to also strive for greater diversity in terms of artistic identities and performative choices. There is more than one way to sing classical music and to be a classical singer and my hope is that young performers would not only be allowed but even encouraged to experiment and develop their own identity freely. Many ways to achieve that are possible, and in my project I showed how HIP could be one of them. When applied actively to the phenomenon of music in its entirety (both as score AND performance), HIP allows the performer to experience firsthand how the performance practice of art songs have a much more diverse tradition then what we usually assume. We could even say that HIP has the potential to free our notion of the art song performance from the strict codes imposed by the 'performance police'.

Concert in Fira, Sandnes. 19 June 2022. Photo: E. Behrens.

couraged by Leech-Wilkinson's "performing police" (2012) to conform to that stereotype with the promise of success. Finally, educational institutions continue to propose the same model to their students. And so, the system keeps feeding itself.

In encountering this system performers are faced with a choice: to follow the rules and stay within the strict codes of the art song recital or break them and imagine new possible formats. The first choice might (or not) bring them recognition, a position and maybe success. The second might on the other hand afford them the dreaded label

or not being a "serious" musician. But if we wish for a future where classical music allows more freedom and diversity and stays relevant to a larger portion of society, the system must adapt and evolve. After all, challenging the tradition and experimenting is how western art music has progressed through the centuries. I daresay that we wouldn't have had some of the great composers and performers that shaped the course of musical history, as well as our current idea of style and taste, if they all had kept making music the way they were supposed to. And Satie is a great example of one such composer.

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Appendix A

En spasertur rundt Montmartre med Erik Satie – concert program

La Diva de l'empire (1904)
Lyrics by Dominique Bonnaud and Numa Blès

Sylvie (1886)
Poem by J.P. Contamine de Latour

Quatre petites melodies (1920)
Élégie: poem by Alphonse de Lamartine

Danseuse: poem by Jean Cocteau
Chanson à boire: anonymous 18th century

Adieu: poem by Raymond Radiguet
Tendrement (1902)

Lyrics by Vincent Hyspa
Trois melodies (1916)

La statue de bronze: poem by Léon-Paul Fargue

Daphénéo: poem by M. God
Le chapelier: poem by René Chalupt after Lewis Carroll

Je te veux (1897)
Lyrics by Henry Pacory

Ludions (1923): poems by Léon-Paul Fargue
Air du rat
Spleen
La grenouille américaine
Air du poète
Chanson du chat

Allons-y chochotte (1905)
Lyrics by D. Durante

Appendix B
Interview script

To be videorecorded the same day of the performance. Length 5/10 min. It is not necessary to look straight into the camera.

·   What is your overall feeling of the performance? How did you feel throughout the performance (in control, anxious, relaxed, enjoying it, overwhelmed, surprised…)? How did you feel after the performance was finished? (satisfied, disappointed…)

·   How was the performance in comparison to the rehearsals? (it went more or less as planned, it was completely different from how we rehearsed/planned it, it went better than expected…)? Did you have some sudden new insights? What?

·   What is your impression of the audience response (they were attentive, they were distracted, they enjoyed it, they seemed confused…)? Did you notice any reaction in particular (laughing, gasping, yawning, talking…)? Or any spontaneous comment/question after the performance?

·   Was there anything that happened during this performance that you are planning on incorporating in the future performances? (something that needs to be changed, added, scrapped…)
·   How did the performance score (none, poor, satisfying, good, very good) on these parameters:

1.   Authenticity (of the performers as perceived by the performers, as perceived by the audience)
2.   Collective engagement (between performers, between members of the audience, between performers and audience)

·   Anything else you would like to add?

Designing Emergent and Self-Organized Play Space

By Randolph Oneil Naylor

RandyNaylor-Kristin Gabrielsen - ArtNode

Randy Naylors design for the out door "play space " arena at Stavanger Forum.

The call to the de-colonize in the play space can only be achieved through a deep dive into the contemporary philosophy of Self-Organization and Non-Linear models promoted by the 21st century philosophers Manual De Landa and Michel Serres. Together they represent ecological models for Real sustainability and Real participation of inclusion and diversity.

I understand de-colonize as purging the dualistic and linear top down model of fixed rules, predesigned space and false participation of players. Real play creates its own rules in the process of playing. This

Phase-Space is open ended, form generated and nonlinear. It does not Colonize or Extract Resources. It is a Stigmergy of tactile energy and creativity that flows and complements its environment.

In this paper I will present a project for a "play space" where I was asked to present a design for Stavanger Forum. This project is a good example of a self-organized and Template Algorithm design that triggers and attracts the Multiplicity design needed for a de-colonization.

Stavanger Forum rejected the design

after several presentations to the board of directors, the leadership committee and the administration. The DNA of Stavanger Forum is ONS. This is a linear and top down business model. They pursue uniformity and old forms of nonrenewable energy. Woke culture is filtered out despite their claims toward diversity. Exponential and hybrid renewable energy platforms will soon replace their extractive colonized business model. Play is where autonomy, emergence and distributed functioning replaces control, preprogramming (digital algorithms) and centralization rule. De-Colonized play

> ## " **De-Colonization is a complexity where the multiplicity of parts exceeds the whole.**

replaces Hierarchy, excellence and dominance, all of them linear limits and exclusive models.

My design for the out door "play space " arena at Stavanger Forum is base on a Rhizome and Acupuncture Algorithm. The Rhizomes are the tree root seats where the public become the designers by moving and creating the space by planting the Roots on the template. The template is organized according to the Star pattern one finds over head. The self-organization of the Root chairs on a Acupuncture plane in relationship to the cosmos creates the Stigmergy for de-colonization of the play(phase) space. The Real participation is represented by the motto, " a good designer creates a design that makes you a good designer.) (Mitchel Resnick) The playing field becomes a series of Loose Parts where the Root chairs can be augmented by any Objects (OOO Parts) placed in the acupuncture Star field pattern. (tables, umbrellas, tents, ball games. etc) Stavanger Forum would become a true Market and Play Space promoting Integration, Inclusion and Connectivity by the players. The players work between the Roots and the Stars Constellation which trigger the Assemblages. A Magnetic (Magic) Field. This is Art!
(Link in sources)

The Theory of Loose Parts (Assemblages) was developed by Simon Nicholson in 1972 . " In any environment , both the degree of inventive-

ness, creativity and then possibility of discovery, are directly proportional to the number and kind of variables in it."

De-colonize represents a opportunity to deconstruct the dualistic idea of modernism where we learned that the Whole is made up of the sum of its Parts. De-Colonization is a complexity where the multiplicity of parts exceeds the whole.

The score of Colonization is based on the idea of Anthropocentric framing," One Size Fits All." (Timothy Morton). My design represents the domain of self-organization where stratifications exist not only in the world of geology, but also in the virtual, organic and human worlds. Where the "abstract machine of stratification (DeLanda) is the result of the coming together and interlocking of heterogeneous elements. Self-Organization is the sustainable practice where we navigate through cross-fertilization, complexity, heterogeneity and make a decolonized Node.

The narrative for the 21st century is Action &Invention (Serres), replacing extraction and colonization. Process design replaces hypothesis and concepts. Inclusion is an environmental Node.

Tool Kit for De-Colonization

Stigmergy: Is a mechanism of indirect coordination through the

environment, between agents or actions. Stigmergy is a form of self-organization. It produces complex, seemingly intelligent structures, without need for any planning, control, or even direct communication between the agents.

Phase Space Quasi Casual distribution that structures a space of possibilities. Wasp to Orchid connectivity.

Emergent: Is an essential component of swarm intelligence and self-organization. Swarm Intelligence points to a new form of thinking, which may help us in our current
crisis, our becoming Insect, river star." Insect societies are organized in a way that departs from anthropocentric models." (Bonabeau)

Assemblage: Assemblages supply the framework where the voices come together to form a chorus that does not harmonize its different components, but rather interlocks them while respecting their heterogeneity. (Manual DeLanda)

Self-Organization. Is a sustainable concept where we navigate through cross-fertilization, complexity and multiplicity. SO shows itself in participation between many stakeholders. What is in-between two objects is their ability to create flow and emerge into a new relationship, new communication nodes.

Part 2

De-Colonize triggers Participation

What follows is a series of Public Participation projects that I have created to establish a bottom-up Art practice and means to de-colonize linear top-down hierarchal models that dominate our culture.

Randy Naylor and Pia Myrvold. Parc de la Vilette, Paris, France 1992. A 500 meter textile installation to create the conditions for "Event Architecture"

Parc de la Vilette 1992, Paris, France.

> **"The score of Colonization is based on the idea of Anthropocentric framing," One Size Fits All."**
> (Timothy Morton)

Fretex Re-Design. Public Fashion Statement .

ArtNode, Randy Naylors design for the out door "play space " arena at Stavanger Forum.

How many Ways to Spell "OMSTILLING".
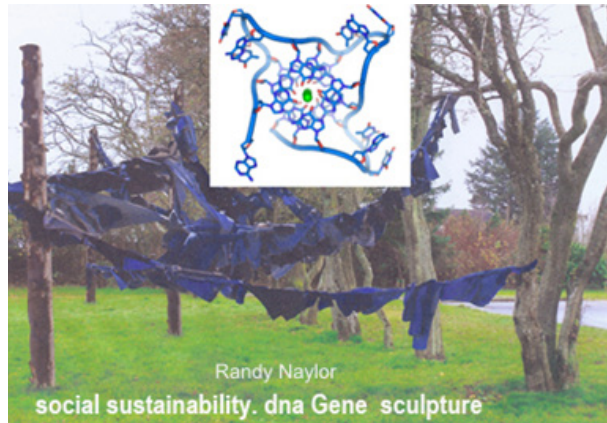
Social sustainibility, sculpture.

PEAK Oil/ KAEP (knowledge applied energy plan) Bergeland VG Skole Stavanger.

Skap 10 Mandal 100% Public Art Participation Design.

NetWork Sculpture: Self-Org- Mapping-Stigmergy Art.

Installation. Outside of Stavanger church.

Public Mapping. 180 meter long sculpture mapping, Mandal.

Deise Faria Nunes

Remembering to Heal: The Boat, spiral time and other decolonial unearthings

ESSAY ABSTRACT

This essay builds on the author's spectatorship of the monumental performance installation, O Barco/The Boat, by Grada Kilomba, during its opening in Lisbon on September 3, 2021.

Drawing inspiration from that work, the essay explores the concepts of spiral time and oraliture, as presented in Leda Maria Martins' scholarship within performance studies, culminating in the introduction of the notion of decolonial unearthings. The text further presents how the idea was coined in the context of the author's practice, research, and archive.

The development of decolonial unearthings as a conceptual tool is supported in the study of European colonial history, especially the transatlantic traffic of enslaved people and Afro-diaspora Orisha mythology. Unearthing and remembering are thus regarded as steps toward the healing of colonial wounds.

INTRODUCTION

This short essay intends to dive into the work of multimedia artist Grada Kilomba, namely her monumental performance installation O Barco/The Boat (2021), which opened on September 3, 2021. Through traveling in my memories of that event, the following writings connect that artwork with its multiple narrative layers, visual, kinesthetic, and aural elements, to the notions of spiral time and oralitures, coined by the scholar Leda Maria Martins.

Furthermore, I exercise a new concept, called decolonial unearthings, forged in the core of my performance practice through the reencounter with my professional archive and my work with the research project Estuaries: Decolonial, Feminist, Afro Diaspora Perspectives on Performance, developed at the Faculty of Fine Arts at The University of Agder, Norway, from 2019 to 2023.
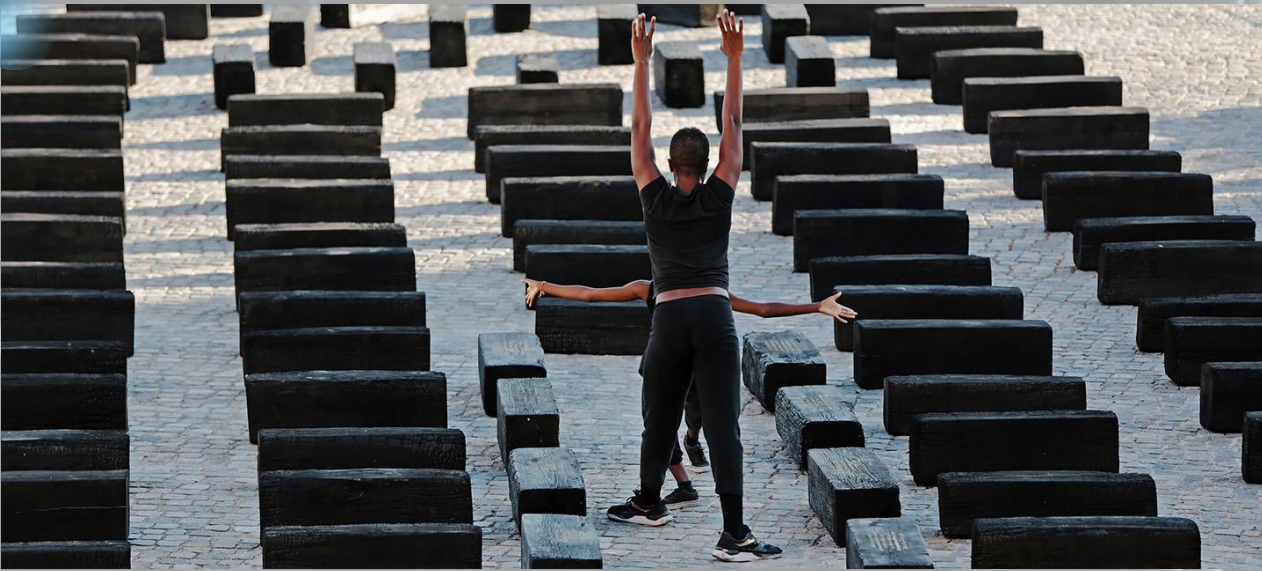
Grada Kilomba Performance, Boca, 2021. Photo: Bruno Simao.

Remembering to Heal: The Boat, spiral time and other decolonial unearthings

By Deise Faria Nunes

Belém, Lisbon area. It is the end of a hot, late summer afternoon. By the northern bank of the Tagus, in the area around the estuary where it meets the Atlantic, an intriguing installation has attracted what looks like more than two hundred people, who gather around it in the area between the MAAT, the Museum of Architecture, Art, and Technology, and the Electricity Museum. In this building, the coal used to produce electricity for the city was stored in the past. The place is known as Coal Square, Praça do Carvão.

**An Ancestral Ceremony
by the Tagus**

There is a contrast, or perhaps a tension in the area's atmosphere, something hard to define. The promenade by that river bank is usually popular among tourists, especially at that location, close to emblematic landmarks such as the Belém Tower and the Monument to the Discoveries, two places directly connecting to Portugal's colonial history.

The latter was built as a homage to Prince Henry the Navigator, the mastermind behind the so-called Portuguese maritime expansion (Bandeira 2008/2001). One of the most visited places around Lisbon, it carries signs of the history of the relationship between colonialism and the over four-decade-long totalitarian regime symbolized by the figure of the dictator António de Oliveira Salazar (1889 – 1970).

Kilomba describes the surrounding monuments as phallic, patriarchal, and feeding a childish narrative about colonialism (Kilomba 2021). However, the people around Coal Square in that luminous late afternoon are not there to see those landmarks. They are spectators awaiting the start of the opening show of O Barco/The Boat, an interdisciplinary, monumental installation and performance created by Grada Kilomba for the BOCA Biennial.
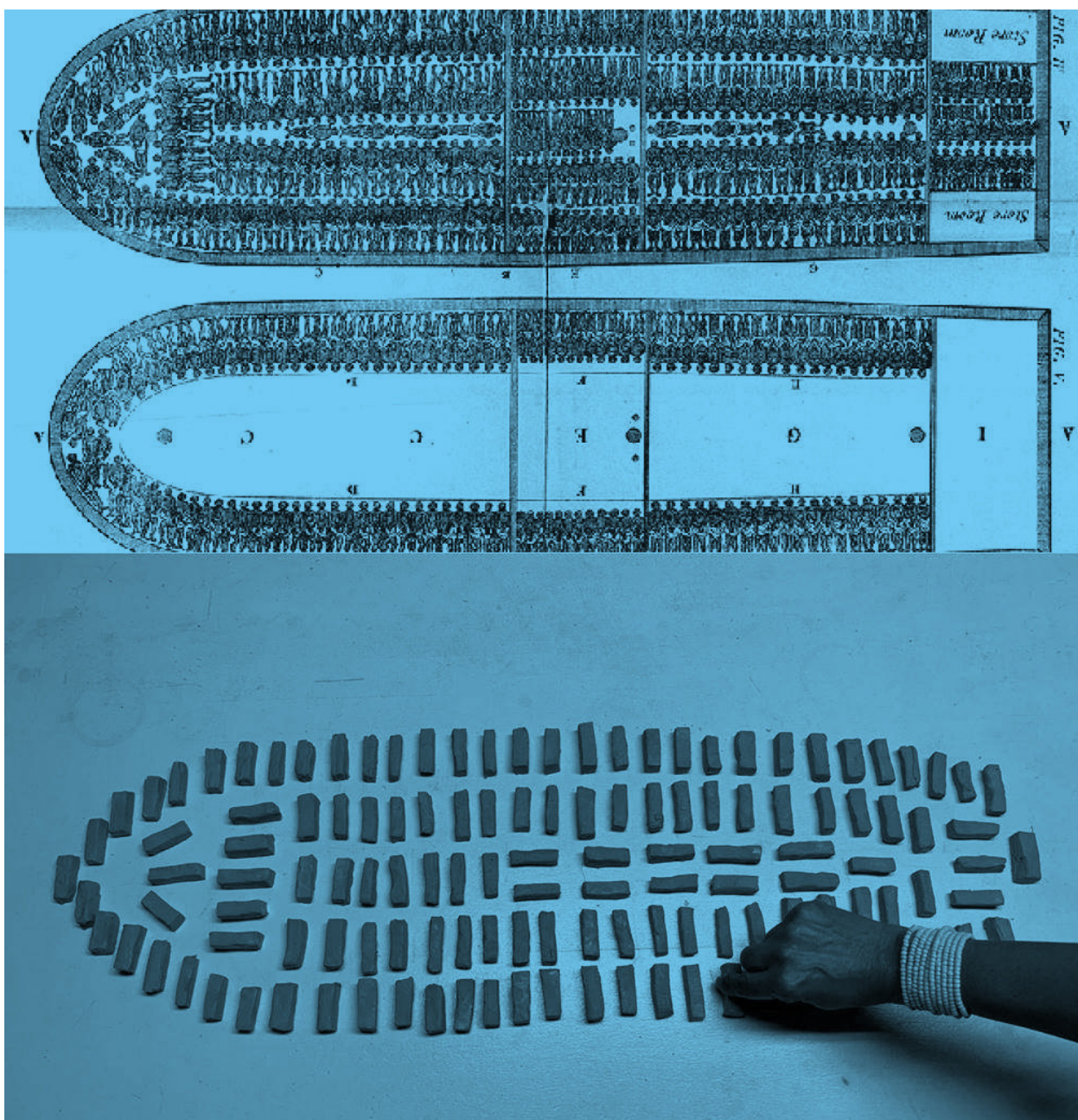
The abovementioned installation comprises one hundred and forty pieces of burnt wood spread over thirty-two meters along the square. The black, rectangular cuboid blocks are carefully placed, intentionally reproducing the form of the bottom of a ship. The blocks seem solid and heavy as if each of them contained the weight of a history that Kilomba wants to expose. They are the agents of the tension or contrast present in the space and can be seen as the objects of a time shift. Artifacts of the spiral time. I will come back to this concept later. However, some of the blocks have words engraved in gold. Words from a poem of eighteen verses in several languages: Yoruba, Kimbundu, Creole, Setswana, Portuguese, English, and Arabic.

Kilomba describes the surrounding monuments as phallic, patriarchal, and feeding a childish narrative about colonialism (Kilomba 2021).

The poem reads:

O Barco / The Boat

One boat one cargo hold

One cargo hold one load

One load one story

One story one piece

One piece one life

One life one body

One body one person

One person one being

One being one soul

One soul one memory

One memory one oblivion

One oblivion one wound

One wound one death

One death one sorrow

One sorrow one revolution

One revolution one equality

One equality one affection

One affection Humanity

 (Kilomba 2021)

Grada Kilomba Performance, Boca, 2021. Photo: Bruno Simao.

For Kilomba, crafting the installation was a beautiful, personal process, full of symbolism:

It is almost a performative process of making holes on the ground, burning the wood, putting the wood in water, on fire, in the air, fire, water, in the sea, in the air. It is a whole performance to transport it, to draw, to engrave the poem into the wood, to paint the poem in gold with syringes. (Kilomba 2021)

The installation is a complete entity, a rich expression in its own right, full of meanings and aesthetic layers, as the artist describes. That becomes more evident as a smaller version displaying only the wooden blocks engraved with the poem, titled 18 verses, was created in 2022 and curated as a separate work for exhibitions in London (Goodman 2023) and New York (Pace 2023).

Nonetheless, The Boat has another fundamental dimension: A performance created by Kilomba alongside a choir of sixteen singers, two dancers, and four percussionists.

Their presences are dramaturgically established in the space by the amplified, rhythmically marked sound of their breathing for long minutes. Carried through the physical structure by music and the mantra-text for about one hour, their bodies perform a rite that can be interpreted in many ways.

The poem, the installation, and the performance were created to reflect on the transatlantic traffic of enslaved people and the genocide of Africans in Abya Yala, exposing our colonial wound. In The Boat, several layers of meaning intertwine: the moving black bodies, the voices of the choir, and the poem sung in a call-and-response that becomes more and more immersive as the performers enter deeper into the installation. The researcher Cristina Roldão sees the event as a funeral ceremony (Kilomba 2021). If we let the imagination expand on that idea, it would be possible to think of the black-dressed performers as African ancestral beings who emerged from the Tagus to visit and tell us their stories. Their moving, hum-

ming, reciting presences can reveal a deep sense of reparation, echoing voices from ships, plantations, and shacks.

An Event of the Spiral Time

The Boat carries elements that inscribe it in a series of recent art projects with the Afro-diasporic Atlantic as a site of memory and potential cultural reparation (MASP 2018). Applying Afro-Brazilian Orisha1 mythologies as a lens to approach performance and the arts (Faria Nunes 2011), the entire multilayered work suggests a dialogue with sacred entities of the crossroads, earth, water, and fire. For example, we can contemplate Eshu, the propitiator energy related to the transmutation of matter, to portals, streets, and roads, especially their points of intersection, which are physical and existential crossroads where choices of paths are made. The location of the performance is itself part of a crossroad and a portal, from which the Atlantic is seen as a path into multiple geography-events, geography-deeds, and geography-af-

Grada Kilomba Performance, Boca, 2021. Photo: Bruno Simao.

fects: violence, greed, destruction, resistance, appropriations, syncretism, worship, re-birth, and fight for reparations.

The space around the installation is reminiscent of a dock to which a ghost boat has returned to tell European colonial history from a different perspective. At one point, the performers seem to have risen from the burnt wood pieces, and the voices gain several dimensions. The performance can be experienced as a collective healing ritual that breaks the walls of the boat wreck, revealing the past, present, and future.

Through ritual, that impactful event by the Tagus expresses the abovementioned idea of spiral time, a concept coined by Leda Maria Martins in Performances do Tempo Espiralar2(2021). In her book, Martins develops the concept that she also calls chonosophies in spirals. Chronosophia and chronosophy are neologisms created by J.T. Fraser by juxtaposing the Greek words chronos, which means "time," and sophia, "knowledge." Fraser described chronosophia as a more or less inherent sense of what time is, as he defines chronosophy as "the interdisciplinary and normative study of time sui generis." (Fraser 1981). As a concept in the field of performance studies, spiral time rests upon Afro-diasporic spirituality and ancestor worship.

For Martins, our access to ancestry and the performances connected to it are characterized by a recurrent time (Martins 2021). One example of this notion is the fact that in the ritual of the xirê in Brazilian Candomblé Ketu, the devotees dance in a circle that moves anti-clockwise, in a movement back in time, to invoke the divinized African ancestors, the Orishas (Faria Nunes 2011). In this context, time is always moving back and forth, returning to mythological narratives that are continuously re-danced and reenacted, in what Richard Schechner called "twice behaved behavior" (Schechner and Turner 1985).

Martins deepens:

The idea that time, in certain cultures, is a place of inscription of a knowledge that is written in gesture, movement, choreography, on the surface of the skin, as well as in the rhythms and timbres of vocality; knowledge that is framed by a certain cosmoperception and philosophy. (...) the design of a time that curves back and forth, simultaneously, always in the process of prospecting and retrospection, memory and becoming[.] Spiraling is what, in my understanding, best illustrates this perception, conception and experience. (Martins 2021)

For the scholar, the visible is inseparable from the invisible. Thus, the time of the ancestors cannot be separated from our time or from the future time of our descendants, as all of them are inhabited by a vital force that secures the continuity of life. In The Boat, such power is amplified, dilated, and elaborated in a healing process I call decolonial unearthing.

Decolonial Unearthings (By Means of Performance)

To investigate decolonial unearthings, I consider it fundamental to understand oraliture, another idea presented by Leda Maria Martins in Performances of the Spiral Time.

Oraliture can be defined as a performance studies concept that seeks to blur the hierarchical dichotomy between writing and orality (Martins 2021). Through the understanding of different expressions of performance as oraliture, it is possible to study their elements as components of an indivisible texture composed of bodily movement, spoken, recited, sung, or prayed words, as well as the ritualization of various materials and objects.

Decolonial unearthings are conceptual approaches coined in the context of my doctoral research project Estuaries: Decolonial, Feminist, Afro-Diaspora Perspectives on Performance. It refers to using the Afro-diaspora or other post-colonial diaspora archives in oraliture events or processes that dig out specific moments or parts of history long hidden by colonial narratives. Decolonial unearthings carry an inherent paradox: they appear and are deeply needed in the violent contexts of

coloniality – the cultural, linguistic, and symbolic aspects of colonialism - and cannot be separated from it. They are nevertheless instruments of collective healing for diasporic communities.

The concept appeared during a personal process in which I revisited my entire artistic archive and reencountered my first solo performance, Valongo (Direction: Jan Ferslev, 2010). The piece, created during my studies and residencies at the Odin Teatret in Holstebro, Denmark, in 2009 and 2010, was deeply inspired by my fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro in 2008. There, I visited the site of a mass grave for enslaved people, known as the Valongo Cemetery, in the central area of Rio, part of which was unearthed during renovation work in the home of Merced and Petruccio Guimarães dos Anjos. The discovery made in 1996 was the object of many negotiations between the owners of the house and the cultural heritage authorities (IPN NA). That was the first event of a sizeable archeological finding revealed in 2011 that comprises the Valongo and the Imperatriz wharves, active as a transatlantic harbors and slave markets from 1811 to 1831. The piers are today sites recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage (UNESCO 2023 (2017)).

While I stand at Coal Square and watch The Boat unfold, I look back at the painful process of creating Valongo and my experience of that fieldwork. I sense the emotional labor of unearthing and the energy patterns from the old African Ancestral entities, the Pretos Velhos, whose mythology is very much informed by symbols of slavery and a myriad of ways in which the Black population resisted it.

Decolonial unearthings are saturated with a clear intention of healing or reparation, something I attempted to carry out in my performance back in 2010, when in the final part, I buried a small fabric doll – made by my then eight years old daughter – in a slot of earth created on the floor onstage, formed as the map of Africa.

As oralitures, decolonial unearthings are events that happen by means

From the O Barco, The boat, documentary, 2021.

of performances of the spiral time, phenomena that can initially be described as or similar to performing and live arts, ritual traditions and community manifestations, play, games, or social events and that seem to carry in themselves concrete aspects of different time experiences and multilayered forms of knowledge. They may be based on collective or individual lived experiences, heritages, memories, legacies, or archives; they can be (auto-)biographical or (auto-)ethnographic.

Conclusion

In this short essay, I intended to launch my first reflection on the concept of decolonial unearthings and how it appeared in my practice, research, and archive experiences. To better understand and investigates some of the limits of the idea, I elaborated on my spectatorship of the monumental performance installation O Barco/The Boat, by Grada Kilomba, on the opening day, in early September 2021.

❝ **I sense the emotional labor of unearthing and the energy patterns from the old African Ancestral entities, the Pretos Velhos, whose mythology is very much informed by symbols of slavery and a myriad of ways in which the Black population resisted it.**

In the summer of 2022, in the convergence of a series of life events that led me to revisit my entire professional archive, I discovered a conceptual tool that allowed me to go back to art experiences such as that of The Boat and understand their multiple dimensions, seen through energy patterns based in the study of Afro-diaspora mythology and the concepts of spiral time and oraliture, informed by Leda Maria Martins' work.

I hope that the decolonial perspectives delineated in these writings may contribute to understanding experiences where the African diaspora's historical colonial wounds are re-visited, scrutinized, re-told, and re-signified by their own political subjects.

We unearth and remember to heal.

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The reading of this material should be accompanied by viewing the following video footage:

Interview with Voinha, September 15th, 2018, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Excerpt 1: I needed to change my life. https://youtu.be/CxxYF34Zn4I.

Excerpt 2: I am the owner of myself. https://youtu.be/I9ae-WdgIbk-.

Excerpt 3: Sewing indeed changed my life. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzAoYrKbS8U

ESSAY ABSTRACT

In this essay I analyze how the artefacts of questioning and listening became resourceful in the procedure of excavating the personal and political reasons behind the migration journey my maternal grandmother Voinha embarked on in 1945 from Ananindeua and Belém to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Voinha, who turned 100 years old on April 08th, 2021 and passed away on March 06th, 2022, influenced my own migration journey, which started sixteen years ago when I left Rio de Janeiro for Doha, Qatar and later moved on to the Northern European cities of Munich, Frankfurt am Main, Copenhagen, Berlin, and Malmö. Coupling questioning with listening allowed an oppressed woman to speak for herself, fostering in this way dramaturgies that brought awareness to feminist empowerment as a means to tackle the colonial and patriarchal ways in which the Brazilian national identity is constructed.

The writing style is mainly anecdotal and based on conversations I had with Voinha on different occasions. The recordings of our last in-person encounter on September 15th, 2018, became the foundation for the performance Feliz Aniversário,1 created primarily as an opportunity for Voinha to tell the story of her migration journey. Excerpts

of this audio and video footage will be further analyzed alongside this essay.

The methodology adopted is autoethnography with the intention of offering nuanced, complex, and specific knowledge about particular lives, experiences, and relationships (Adams, Jones, Ellis 2014). Within autoethnographical methodological tools, I focus on reflexivity with the aim of troubling the relationship between researchers 'selves' and 'others' and offering a re-examination of the paradigm modernity/coloniality as simultaneously shaped through specific articulations of race, gender, and sexuality (Lugones 2007). The final intention is to analyze how turning back to my ancestors' and my own experiences, identities, and their socio-political implications; how analyzing them according to gender and queer theories and from a decolonial perspective, can potentialize my current practice focused on autobiographical performance.

One last important point to be acknowledged is my role as an artist-researcher examining the complex ethical and creative processes of working with intimate family memories, observing the growing necessity of developing dramaturgies of care and resistance (Malzacher 2008).

KEYWORDS

Autobiographical performance; Autoethnography; Questioning, Listening; Migration, Feminism.

Questioning and Listening: An Attempt to Investigate Voinha's Migration Journey

By: Iury Salustiano Trojaborg

Still from interview with Voinha; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; September 15th, 2018

Cultural identity belongs to the future as much as to the past. But, like everything which is historical, it undergoes constant transformation. Far from being grounded in a mere recovery of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (Hall 1994)

In my artistic practice I concentrate on ways of producing meaningful, accessible, and evocative research grounded in personal experience, research that would sensitize readers and viewers to forms of representation that deepen our capacity to empathize with people who are different from us (Ellis, Bochner 2000).

The central question of my scholarship is: How can performance art be used as a tool to reconfigure power relations, creating in this way more just and equitable living conditions based on the rule of law, justice, equality, and non-discrimination?

My artistic practice is an attempt to question an allegedly social and ==cultural objective point of view that hides a very specific position, namely that of a white heterosexual Western male.== This supposedly impartial system enacts a gaze claimed to be immaterial while materializing what it embraces, especially the conditions of certain bodies and if/ how they matter (Butler 1993); their meanings and their capacity of

producing knowledge. Such a gaze claims to have the capacity to see, but is itself unseen, to represent while escaping representation (Haraway 1988). Turning to questioning and listening, I attempt to destabilize such supposedly neutral orders (Siegmund 2006), and to create a performative setting that offers more presence than representation, more process than result, more manifestation than signification, more energetics than information (Lehmann 2006).

The objective of my research is to explore the process of construction of cultural identities in a performative setting according to the intersection and juxtaposition of axes such as gender, sexuality, class, race, and ableism. The practice into autobiographical performance I have been developing is based on reflexivity as a tool to explicitly acknowledge the relation of art and science (and production of knowledge) to power, skillfully and artfully recreating the details of lived experiences and one's space or implication in control, contradiction, and privilege (Calafell 2013). This practice has led me to a broader understanding of the concepts of intersectionality (Crenshaw 1989) and assemblage (Puar 2011) as differentiated but not oppositional. I perceive the performative as a fruitful arena to experiment, not what assemblages are, but what assemblages do (Puar 2011), following the critique on intersectionality, by foregrounding its spatial and temporal essentializations (Grosz 1994).

From Personal to Political

I start my analysis by drawing from the concept of performative (or performatory) utterances, where it is appropriate that the participants involved in the situation where such speech acts are uttered should have the intention to execute them (Austin 1962). While listening to the sentences articulated by my grandmother during our encounter, I recognized a paradigm shift concerning the basic reason for her migration from Ananindeua and Belém to Rio de Janeiro amidst WWII. Within this shift, I witnessed my grandmother constructing a narrative that placed

herself at the centre of her story, interpreting her actions as not dependent on any external masculine intervention. The strength and courage that it took for my grandmother to cope with the hardships of chauvinism from an early age have always been widely proclaimed among members of my family. This is the story I heard from them: Voinha´s father died in a horse accident when she was only three years old. Her mother soon re-married and Voinha, the youngest of five siblings from the first marriage, ended up living with a severe, macho-type stepfather who could not deal with a strong-willed stepdaughter, who refused to subjugate herself to his authority as the head of the family. Her stepfather then forced her into an arranged marriage when she was fourteen years old. Her husband, another macho-type, believed a wife should strictly obey her husband. Not only that, but according to Voinha's recollections, he had alcohol and aggression issues and tried to beat her on several occasions. Despite loathing the man, she was forced to have sexual intercourse with him on a regular basis, which generated three daughters and one son during four years of marriage. Finding no other way out of an abusive relationship, Voinha (with the support of her mother) secretly embarked on a steamship in 1945, and sailed to Rio de Janeiro during WWII, leaving behind her husband, four children, and the world as she'd known it. Within such discourses, I recognize an entanglement of individual and collective desires and their cooptation by arrangements of power (Deleuze, Guattari 2000) within the way Brazil organized its socio-political structures in the early years following its transitional period of independence from the Kingdom of Portugal into a monarchical political system and finally into a Federal Republic.

Following the premises imposed by the European colonial project, the construction of Brazil as a colony and its subsequent development into a nation-state was based on exploitation and discharge: the initial (failed) attempt to enslave native peoples gave way to the Atlantic slave trade era, where over

four hundred years Brazil imported more enslaved African individuals than any other Western country (an estimated total of five million). The use of this human resource following an inhumane perspective, extracting all possible energy from a body, extenuating it and finally discharging it, is ingrained in the Brazilian structural concept of labour. Once the enslavement of African individuals was officially abolished, Brazilian elites required cheap workmanship to reassure the continuation of the colonial project. Important to mention is that there were no reparations provided for the newly emancipated slaves (on the contrary, those who received governmental economic reparations were the slave owners). This provoked a mass exodus of freed slaves and peasants from the north and northeast to the rapidly changing and industrializing southeast region of the country from the end of the 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century and onwards, extending exploitation and subjugation by abusive working conditions to a national level. My maternal grandmother was only one among many individuals who got caught up in this abusive pattern, a pattern very much characterized by the usual contradictions that the history of the formation of Brazil as a country is embedded in. Around the time that Voinha migrated to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil was living the Vargas Era, specifically the Estado Novo period (or Third Brazilian Republic) where, in order to perpetuate his power, President Getúlio Vargas imposed a new, quasi-totalitarian Constitution in a coup d'état, ruling the country in such fashion from 1937 to 1945. Aside from being a dictator, Vargas was an economic nationalist and populist, who favored industrial development and liberal reforms. The nineteen years that Vargas remained in office as president (1930-1945 and 1951-1954) are marked by an attempt to build a national identity through the establishment of the National Press Council, created for the intention of perfect coordination with the government in the control of the news and of political and doctrinal material (Bourne 1974). Important to mention is that militarization of the poor migrant male workforce

> **Patriarchy is not simply a psychic, but also a social and economic structure**

Listening to Voinha, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, December 09th, 2016.
Photo: Ulrik Trojaborg

played a decisive role in the emergence of a militarized middle-class that culminated in another coup d'état, this time by the Brazilian Armed Forces with the support of the United States government in 1964, immersing Brazil in a violent regime of military dictatorship for twenty-one years and postponing the issue of the then so-called Citizen Constitution. This document that emerged only in 1988 became representative of the re-democratization period that started in 1985 and still strives to exist to this day. Patriarchy is not simply a psychic, but also a social and economic structure. Our society therefore can best be understood once it is recognized that it is organized both in capitalist and in patriarchal ways (Hartmann 1979).

Questioning and Listening

==The reflection I propose on questioning and listening is generally informed by a lifetime of observing my grandmother's attitude of questioning structures of power; and specifically illuminated by what she told me last time I encountered her alive.== Crucial to mention is that during this encounter she had just been admitted to an assisted living facility as her mental health had rapidly deteriorated. Having lived her entire life as an independent woman, being under

the care of others was something that my grandmother was neither used to, nor willing to easily accept. During this encounter, I incorporated an ethic of care in my methodological interviewing practice. Following the theorization on attentiveness (Tronto 1998), I cared about my grandmother's well-being by actively listening to her stories and being receptive to her needs throughout the time we spent together.

Every time I had questioned my family members about the reason that prompted my maternal grandmother to leave Ananindeua and Belém, I received as an answer a long and romanticized story that placed not the feminine, but instead the masculine in the centre: Voinha migrated to Rio de Janeiro in 1945 to follow "the love of her life", Armando, my future grandfather, whom a couple of years earlier had been allocated a new position in the army general headquarters in Rio de Janeiro, back then the capital city of Brazil. Despite the enormous struggles undertaken by that feminine body to break free from the structural gendered violence within the society she inhabited, I could still perceive that the actions taken by my grandmother against patriarchal structures could only go so far. The feminine was still surviving according to a violent structure

that did not allow a woman to exist individually, without the masculine presence, away from the Catholic institution of marriage that hovers like an ever-present ghost over Latin American nations. The subsequent marriage with my grandfather in Rio de Janeiro did not prevent Voinha from continuing to suffer a type of violence that became normalized within such context and, therefore, difficult to make the perpetrators accountable. After the second marriage and giving birth to nine children, my grandmother was abandoned by her second husband with no alimony. She then put into practice the sewing skills she had gained from her mother and became an industrial seamstress in order to financially sustain herself and her children. She executed this professional activity during the rest of her life, well into her nineties, and never married again. In Latin America as a whole, feminist and women's movements made alliances with broad-based popular movements and human rights movements, organizing across class to fight the authoritarian regimes, and making use of a conceptual link between authoritarianism and patriarchy in pushing for their demands. Feminists in Brazil joined forces with other social movements in fighting for re-democratization of the country, thus carving out a space to join with the opposition forces, gain access

> **"Listening to Voinha's recollections meant not only listening to her words, but also to the moments of silence, tones and fluctuations of voice**

to political arenas, and lodge their demands (Sardenberg Costa 2017). What I witnessed during this interview with Voinha was a woman who, despite suffering from Alzheimer's and dementia, was still able to construct a new persona who allowed the production of a never-before heard narrative that allocated the masculine a peripheral position. She embodied and performed a cyborg goddess-like persona right before my eyes: The former (cyborg) hails the future in a teleological technological determinism—culture—that seems not only overdetermined, but also exceptionalizes our current technologies. The latter (goddess)—nature—is embedded in the racialized matriarchal mythos of feminist reclamation narratives (Puar 2011). Living in a body intersected and understated by issues of class, gender, sexuality and race, my grandmother developed an ability of reorganization and re-arrangement in a way that she, before, when in a state of complete physical and mental health, had never voiced. When faced with questions concerning her migration path, she made use of the scarce memory and language available, turning speech itself into a bodily act. We do things with language, produce effects with language, and we do things to language, but language is also the thing that we do. Language is the name for our doing: both 'what' we do (the name for the action that we characteristically perform) and that which we effect, the act and its consequences (Butler 1997).

==Although Voinha was 97 years old, she still recalled being called a bossy lady by her own mother during her childhood in Ananindeua.== During the interview, she

regained and performed her bossiness by not hesitating to make bold statements regarding her decision to migrate: "I went to Rio de Janeiro to look for a job (...). I wanted to get out of that place (Ananindeua and Belém) because I couldn't find a job there. I couldn't find anything. I needed to change my life." While attentively listening to Voinha I realized that she repeated certain phrases as an attempt to affirm the new positionality she was taking regarding her own story. "I came by myself" or "I didn't meet anyone" emerged as an empowered counterpart to the previously masculinized version of her migration journey. A point to be observed here is that the concept of performativity cannot not be limited to performance: a singular performing act. Performativity is a much wider notion that comprises the idea of iteration, which means repeating a process with the aim of approaching a determined goal. A performative act could only work as an essential tool against a number of dated social/cultural standards and usual models of political identity, if it is based on the process of repetition and resignification: every time one repeats such an act, something new emerges from it (Butler 1997). Listening to Voinha's recollections meant not only listening to her words, but also to the moments of silence, tones and fluctuations of voice, patterns of emphasis, facial expressions and gestures, resounding images, movements, and bodily stances (Pollock 2006). To be able to mindfully listen to her, I brought along memorabilia that would somehow guide her fragile memory back into her past experiences. Her original sewing machine played a vital role as she made it clear by stat-

ing that "sewing indeed changed my life". The things of the world are not simply neutral objects which stand before us for our contemplation. Each one of them symbolizes or recalls a particular way of behaving, provoking in us reactions which are either favorable or unfavorable. This is why people's tastes, character, and the attitude they adopt towards the world and to particular things can be deciphered from the objects with which they choose to surround themselves, their preferences for certain colors or the places where they like to go for walks (Merleau-Ponty 2004).

The interaction between Voinha and her sewing machine became increasingly intense and meaningful during the interview. At first, she did not recognize it as her own, and kept repeating the question "Is this my machine?" As she did not seem convinced by my affirmation, I encouraged her to use her tactile senses to check that indeed it was hers. The old alliance of love and companionship between the two immediately unfolded and she then recollected the long and lonely hours spent sewing to survive. The machine, an extension of her physical body, allowed her to become the breadwinner of a family composed of one woman, her then eleven children and no masculine presence. "I got stuck with this machine. It was like that." Such painful recollections finally blurted out of my grandmother when she, while holding the machine tight, directly addressed it in a loud tone of voice: "You are my husband!" This was not the only human attribute she placed on the object: "This was the second sewing machine I got. The first one was manual. I liked this one much

more. Of course I did! The old one with the manual pedal was really hard on my body. No electric motor, nothing. So, when the electric came around, ah, she became my queen!" The presence of the sewing machine allowed Voinha to foresee a possible future aligned with the independent life she had always led: "And if I could possess it (the machine) again, I would love it. I would even get rid of my normal life and start sewing professionally again (laughs)." By bearing witness to different pasts, one is not a passive observer but is able to turn from interrogating the past to initiating new dialogues about that past and thus bringing into being new histories and from those new histories, new presents and new futures. (Gurminder 2014).

Conclusion

My practice as an artist-researcher focuses on acknowledging individual ways of looking at the world and the societies one inhabits. The production of dialogical interactions based on questioning and listening intends to value multiple perspectives on decolonial artistic practices. This essay is an attempt to question the way stories are told, by whom and from which perspectives. It is an attempt to evince how much their consumption can either perpetuate structures of power or potentialize the emergence of multi-faceted dramaturgies.

While questioning my grandmother about her migration journey and the necessity to re-create herself in order to survive, I could identify similarities between the struggles I went through while migrating from Rio de Janeiro. A natural bond emerged, and this togetherness became an experience of questioning patriarchy. Together, two generations of a family shared experiences of empowerment and resistance. With the recent death of Voinha, the possibility of using language to question and listen to her re-telling and re-creating her own story, was suspended. Our communication, though, transcends the materiality of our bodies. Our conversation therefore continues.

The reading of this material should be accompanied by viewing the following video footage:

Interview with Voinha, September 15th, 2018, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Excerpt 1: I needed to change my life. https://youtu.be/CxxYF34Zn4I.

Excerpt 2: I am the owner of myself. https://youtu.be/I9ae-WdgIbk-.

Excerpt 3: Sewing indeed changed my life. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzAoYrKbS8U

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2. The Proclamation of the Republic was a military coup d'état that established the First Brazilian Republic on November 15th, 1889.
3. Brazil was so named by the Portuguese Crown after a tree: Brazilwood or Paubrasilia, a tree that grew in abundance in the region and was used to dye textiles in Europe, boosting the Portuguese economy while exploiting a natural resource. The choice of name asserts a clear description of the relationship between Portugal and Brazil: the colonizer and

the colonized, this land and its peoples became a product to be exploited and discharged.
4. https://www.slavevoyages.org/assessment/estimates Accessed on June 11th, 2023.
5. Brazil was the last country in the Western world to abolish the enslavement of human beings. By the time slavery was abolished, on May 13th, 1888, an estimated 5.8 million enslaved people had been transported from the African continent to Brazil.

6. Both my maternal and paternal grandfathers (as well as my father) were from the army and marine corps.

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10. The French philosopher Merleau-Ponty uses the term world of perception to underline the significance of having certain objects surrounding oneself and how much this choice communicates the image of the world constructed by every human being. He also clarifies that the visual world forms itself through one's gaze, which means that to look at something is a process based on certain criteria, on a series of selections that every person makes. These selections cannot be comprehended only as a one-way process because they also work the other way around: the way a person chooses to look at the world is also a response to the way the world (and, more specifically in this case, the objects) will look back at this person. The way the world presents itself to someone is a consequence of the way they decide to look at it. There is no fixed reality, every person decides which reality one wants or can see. What I see is a result of innumerable conscious, subconscious, and unconscious choices. And what I see is definitely not what the other sees.

Play Space.

Yemen through the lens of Hayat Al-Sharif

By Hayat Al-Sharif

Hayat Al-Sharif is the award winning and internationally recognized photographer who since the beginning of 2023 is welcomed by Stavanger as the city's ICORN resident for the next two years.

"Photography in Yemen is an art full of dangers" says Hayat Al-Sharif. Photo: Redhwan Alsharif.

> The photographer is an artist. I present my art through my pictures and they carry many stories behind each picture

When I started my photography journey, I travelled through seven governorates to document Yemeni heritage, handcraft and art. I initialized my work with aid from an artisans organization based in Washington DC. After the war started, I have been working with humanitarian projects to illustrate stories of the suffering of Yemeni women and children.

My art is to tell stories. I documented a project for the "Prince Claus" called "The Impossible Fire" in which

I have taken pictures that express the struggle and nescessities of the fire in order to cook. To make bread in such difficult conditions as in the war-torn Yemen is about a struggle. The lack of domestic gas prompts many women to go on a search for firewood, cartons, their childrens school books and plastic boxes to set a fire. They have to make bread - which in a war country is the only meal during the day. Documenting this captures moments of real suffering such as the ones experienced by the women and children of Yemen.

Through this photographic art, I send a message to the outside world in order to assist on stopping this war that has been going on for almost nine years. But photography

in Yemen is an art full of dangers. The country has a very high illiteracy rate, and the people are linked to customs and traditions that prohibit women from working.

Women are not allowed to speak or write on social or political issues. The society is aggressively fighting women's work. Writing in Yemen is considered a crime by the authorities. The government use force against writers, you are not allowed to write, take pictures or speak.

Yemen violates the freedom of the press and journalists are killed, imprisoned and tortured. In Yemen if you wish to live, you have to have no voice!

Hanan, 23 years old and Nada 24 years old, both from the capital Sana'a. They wear flowers to send a message to the world that we are peaceful country and we want to live in peace in our peaceful Yemen. The photo was taken in 2020. *All photos in this article by Hayat Al-Sharif.*

Al Taweelah District is located in Al Mahwit Governorate, a Yemeni governorate located northwest of the capital, Sana'a. Most of the residents live in high mountainous areas that depend on firewood from the mountains. Women suffer from difficulty in obtaining firewood and water because of the large and dangerous mountains. Photo was taken on January 2nd, 2022.

YEMEN

Yemen is an Arab country located in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. The current population is 31,684,042. Yemen used to be known as Arabia Felix, which in latin refers to happy or fortunate Arabia. It used to be the most fertile out of all the lands in the region, which stabilized the population and country for a long time. Capital is Sana'a, one of the world's oldest cities.

When the war started

In March 2015 the war on Yemen began with explosions everywhere. The sky and earth in Sanaa became a piece of hell.

The infrastruture collapsed and the electricity was cut off. Everything changed. Our situation in Yemen turned into great fear. Oil, gas, flour and all the necessities of life disappeared. Light went and darkness came. Nine years until today, every Yemeni has been living their worst nightmare. The conflict has had an impact on health, education, communications, the Internet and and transportation. Suddenly everyday life was reversed to ancient times. The conflict in Yemen has greatly affected the lives of women and children. Women lost all their rights and got busy searching for firewood, plastic cans and cartons in order to light a fire to make bread for their children. These children were also deprived of their rights and at a young age forced to work looking for firewood and fetching water from long distance areas.

All conflicting parties, from North to South, including the Houthis (allies of Iran), the government (allies of Saudi Arabia), Southern separation groups supported by the UAE, the Islah party, the former regime and other groups are fighting journalists. We are traumatized by the war, but also psychologically from being prevented to work. We are put in front of two options. The first is to be arrested or killed if we go out with a camera. The second option is to remain unemployed and that you and your family die of starvation.

Zahraa Ahmed is 49 years old. She climbs trees in the dangerous mountains and cuts trees with an ax to light a fire and make bread for her children. This photo shows the life of Yemeni women in rural areas, doing hard and exhausting work all day long. Yemeni women are victims of ignorance, war, siege and high prices. Marginalization of Yemeni women and depriving them of their right to education, work, political participation and decision-making must be placed in the priorities of the international community to stand with and advocate for women. The photo was taken in October 2021.

Nagham Abduallah is 10 years old She lives is in Houd Al Hanash, Al Mahwit Governorate. Her mission is to collect the fodder left over from the fields and then carry the tune of this fodder for long distances. She walks with it between the agricultural terraces until she reaches the house to dry it under the sun to feed the livestock and cows in the winter.

The children of Yemen participate in the troubles of daily life. The situation in Yemen forces them to abandon their rights to education and play. They only do the role of adults and live the struggle of a difficult life. The humanitarian situation in war and siege has put children in a closed circle surrounded by a dark future for future generations. The photo was taken in October 2021.

Sharif is eight years old, he holds a flower of peace in his hand to express his fear of the airstrikes targeting Yemen. The photo was taken in October 2020.

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Sharif wants to send a message to stop targeting children by airstrikes while they are sleeping in their homes

Fatima, 10 years old, from Al Mahwit Governorate. She is, despite her young age, strong. Fatima collects wood from the big mountains and ties the wood to make it easier to carry on her shoulder and walk long distances. After five hours, Fatima got this amount of wood to make dinner with her mother. January 2nd, 2022

Fatima and her daughter Nada use firewood as well as books and some papers to light the fire to make food for their family. "During the war, we learned how to be patient, how to resist diseases, hunger and how to fight for survival. It is true that the difficulties are many, but we will not give up, we Yemeni women can symbolize power, motherhood and courage", Fatima said. The photo was taken in 2019.

Give me five!
PerSpektiv - Per's Pective, en petit til PS!
Av: Per Dahl

Første kjente: Her håndhilser Babylons konge, Marduk-Zakir-Shumi I på Shalamaneser III etter at sistnevnte drepte førstnevntes bror. Etter førstnevntes ønske. Dette skjeddefor snart 2900 år siden. Relieffet står utstilt på det irakiske nasjonalmuseet. Foto: Osama Shukir Muhammed Amin/Wikimedia

Denne petiten skal ikke handle om pentatonikk eller de mange femdelte hierarkier i teorier om ferdigheter og behov. Den skal handle om den tradisjonelle håndhilsningen. Det å føre den høyre hånden frem mot den du ville hilse på, hadde etablert seg som det vanligste hilsningsritualet i den vestlige verden. Så sterk var den kulturelle kodeksen at bare fysiske hindringer var godtatt som grunnlag for å avvike fra høyrehåndsregelen. Barn ble oppdratt til å bruke høyrehånden, gripe om den møtende med et fast håndtrykk (som ofte ble tatt som mål på personlighetens styrke), og gjerne kombinert med et høflig nikk, eller neiing for jenter. Denne tradisjonen ble videreført ikke bare til neste generasjon, men inngikk som del av den kulturelle kolonialisering blant de vestlige kolonimaktene. I så måte vil en kort historisk gjennomgang vise at dagens hilsningsritualer inngår i en dekolonisert kontekst.

Mang en uenighet har blitt til enighet med et avsluttende håndtrykk, og mang en avtale er blitt beseglet gjennom et håndtrykk.

Men det var med den tredje amerikanske presidenten Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) at håndhilsningen ble hverdagsliggjort. Han ønsket gjennom å håndhilse på velgerne, å knytte statsembetet tettere opp til folket og distansere seg fra tradisjonene i det britiske kongehuset. Supplert med oppblomstringen av kvekersamfunnene ble håndhilsningen utbredt og tatt som tegn på at du kom med fredelige hensikter (åpen hånd uten våpen). Håndhilsningen fikk etter hvert godt fotfeste i Europa, særlig i Nord-Europa, og var lenge det dominerende hilsningsritualet.

Nye trender kom til å utfordre håndhilsningen på slutten av 1900-tallet. En ting var den alminnelige bevisstheten om andre kulturers hilsningsritualer gjennom medienes informasjons-globalisering. Men det vokste også frem stadig nye alternative hilsningsritualer i vesten, særlig blant ungdom og på sportsarenaer. Håndhilsningen ble ansett som gammeldags og til dels kolonialistisk; nå var ønske å ha et hilsningsritual som kunne underbygge en

annen identitet enn hva den hvite manns håndtrykk representerte. Et av de mest dominerende ble 'give me five'-hilsenen; en åpen hånd mot en åpen hånd, et ønske om en grensesprengende frihet mer enn et varsel om fredelige hensikter. Blant disse brukerne finner vi også ofte bruken av 'wow' som et uttrykk for et grenseoverskridende inntrykk. Noe av maktspillet i ritualet er beholdt ved at styrken i klaskingen av håndflatene indikerer et styrkeforhold som tidligere styrken i håndtrykket representerte. Gesten kan spores tilbake til det afroamerikanske hilsningsritualet 'low five' fra 1920-tallet hvor den ene holder frem sin åpne hånd i lav posisjon og den andre klasker sin åpne hånd ned. En ny variant blir delvis tidfestet til 1980-tallet i amerikansk sport hvor spillerne to en 'high five', dvs. slo åpne hender sammen over hodet på hverandre. Uttrykk som 'give me five', 'slap/slip me five', ble gjerne uttalt for å signalisere den nye gesten. Etter hvert ble dette tatt opp særlig i ungdoms- og barnekulturen i resten av Vesten.

Med koronaepidemien kom dødsstøtet til håndhilsningen ut fra ritualets smittepotensial. Alternative forsøk med albuer og fotberøringer ble utprøvd uten at de har overlevd opphevelsen av restriksjonene etter pandemien. I dag er det mangfold av hilsningsritualer som praktiseres og hvor de ulike generasjonene har sine preferanser. Koloniene har for det meste fått sin selvstendighet og tatt opp sine hilsningsritualer. Ulike samfunnsgrupper søker å tydeliggjøre sin identitet gjennom egne hilsningsritualer. Dette er særlig tydelig i de mange ungdomsserier i tv og på sportsarenaer. I fremveksten av flerkulturelle samfunn opplever vi nå en dekolonialisert hilsningsverden.

Dr Sally Blackwood is an exceptional opera director specialising in the creation of new work. Sally's artistic practice is a synthesis of music, storytelling and visual spectacle which sits at the nexus of artforms in the creation of new hybrid operatic work. Sally is a recognised Australian arts leader connecting and supporting individuals and organisations, forging innovation, and enriching communities through artistic engagement. Sally is a leading advocate for gender equity, diversity and belonging. She believes that the arts, education and the creative industries play a vital role in the evolution and sustainability of our cultural ecology. Sally advocates for role of the arts to tell our contemporary stories, facilitate discussion on current issues, provide a platform for social cohesion, wellbeing, community enrichment, cultural change and economic sustainability. Sally is a Directing graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA); Bachelor of Arts (Hons) University of New South Wales; and PhD Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney (2022).

Dr. Marija Griniuk holds a DA (Doctor of Arts) from The University of Lapland in Finland. She is the director at Sami Center for Contemporary Art in Karasjok, Norway. She is a Lithuanian artist and has a background in visual arts, performance art, and performance pedagogy. In her performance art she is focused on the themes of postmemory, post-colonial memory in Lithuanian context. In her curatorial work she is interested in the theme of pluriversal curating of artworks containing politically loaded themes by the artists from Indigenous and Baltic communities. Her perspective on curating Indigenous art is of a non-indigenous artist and curator working with Indigenous art.

Professor Emeritus Dr. Philos. Per Dahl (b. 1952) studied at the University of Trondheim, Norway (musicology, philosophy, and psychology), was flutist in the professional Military Band in Trondheim (1975-77) and has been working in Stavanger since 1979 (Music Conservatoire, now Faculty of Performing Arts). He has been consultant to The Norwegian Institute of Recorded Sound, Stavanger since the opening in 1985. After finishing his dissertation at the University of Stavanger in 2006 (Title: Jeg elsker Dig! Lytterens argument. Grammofoninnspillinger av Edvard Griegs opus 5 nr.3) he has written five books: Anvendt musikkestetikk. (2008) and Verkanalysen som fortolkningsarena (2011), and Music and Knowledge. A Performer's Perspective (2017) available as open access and in Norwegian Utøverkunnskap (2019), and Modes of Communication in Stravinsky's Works. Sign and Expression (Routledge 2022). He has written book chapters on music aesthetics and several articles on Stravinsky and given numerous public lectures on music listening/appreciation. per.dahl@uis.no
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Héloïse Baldelli is a French-Italian lyric soprano. She has a master's degree in classical singing from the University of Stavanger under the guidance of international soprano Elizabeth Norberg-Schulz and a specialization in opera from the University of Tor Vergata, Rome. She has interpreted roles such as Contessa in "Le Nozze di Figaro", Juliet in "The Little Sweep", Euridice in "L'Orfeo" and Cavaliere Armidoro in "La Cecchina". Alongside classical repertoire including 20th cent. chamber music, romantic opera and operetta, her interest lies in cabaret and comic songs. She performs regularly as a soloist and in various chamber music ensembles in Norway and abroad. Héloïse is currently a PhD candidate in artistic research at the University of Stavanger, Faculty of Performing Arts. Her project focuses on the historical performance practice of modernist French art songs as well as exploring different formats to present this repertoire to a contemporary audience. Prior to singing, Héloïse trained as a dancer at the Istituto Superiore di Danza in Italy.

Born in Brazil, **Deise Faria Nunes** is an artist-researcher with a particular interest in performance, rituals, and audiovisual. She is currently a PhD candidate in the program Art in Context at the University of Agder, Norway. Nunes also holds a certification in documentary filmmaking from Kino-Doc, Portugal. Based in the Nordics since 1999, Nunes has worked for almost 20 years as a performance artist, dramaturge, producer, writer, and teacher. During this time, she collaborated, among others, with Nordic Black Theatre, Odin Teatret, Office for Contemporary Art Norway, Oslobiennalen, and Black Box Teater Oslo. Nunes co-authors the historical anthology New Daughters of Africa (2019), and is the editor of the coming anthology series Afro-Nordic Perspectives on Performance I: Territories, Geographies, Localities (2024). In 2020 and 2021, Nunes led the National Theatre Committee at the Arts Council Norway. From 2018-2020 she worked as a performing arts expert for the Nordic Culture Fund. Since 2017, Nunes has focused on the research, production, and dissemination of Black women's activities in the arts.

Hayat Al-Sharif is a Yemeni photojournalist who holds a BA in English Language, participated in leadership trainings in the USA and Morocco. Al-Sharif has been working as a freelance for over ten years. Focusing on the everyday lives of Yemeni women and children during the war. Her work has been recognized internationally by Stavanger municipality's cultural prize, The Prince Claus-Fund and The Sheikh Saoud Al Thani Project Awards. Her photography featured in international exhibitions, newspapers, and magazines including The Tasweer Photo Festival Qatar, Eyes On Main Street Wilson Outdoor Photo Festival, 'Invisible Connections' exhibition organised by UNESCO and was display in the Netherlands and THE QUIK +THE BRAVE. Other publications on the Swiss magazine Global,UK-based Progressio Magazine, ARTE TV, Donia Watan, SWR, SAGE Journals. She undertaken assignments for UNDP, WFP and USAID. In 2023, Hayat and her family received ICORN residency in Stavanger: ICORN, Aftenbladet Newspaper and Utroop Newspaper.

Iury Salustiano Trojaborg is an artist-researcher and doctoral candidate at Malmö Theatre Academy and Agenda 2030 Graduate School at Lund University. Her artistic research project On Ancestrality and Regeneration: Performing Deco-

lonial Journeys aims to investigate ways of using performance art as a regenerative and socio-political tool to provoke change in the understanding of the lives of immigrants who, like she, willingly travelled the old colonial routes back to the European countries that colonised them. It aims to explore the process of construction of cultural identities in a performative setting according to the intersection of gender, class and race, promoting in this way an active dialogue with the area where this research will take place: Malmö, Sweden; Rio de Janeiro, Belém and Manaus, Brazil and Copenhagen, Denmark. A central problem that Iury's research project investigates is: How effective is it to tackle the concept of sustainability within the European performing arts context, without also dealing with the historical colonial past most European nations bear?

Randy Oneil Naylor is an American-Norwegian interdisciplinary artist. He has exhibited in Statens Kunstutstilling and Vestlandsutstilling and has won first prize in the Amsterdam Video Theater festival, First prize in the Nordic Textile Triennial, Artist of the year Oslo, and Graffils Visuelt 2000 Silver prize. He very early in 1982 introduced an interdisciplinary approach to Norwegian Art, along with Environmental Mapping, Public Participation and Digital Graphics (1992). This interdisciplinary art practice resulted in the grand opening installation in Park de la Villette, Paris (1992), a 500 meter public intervention "sculpture", selected by the architect Bernard Tschumi. He further developed Social Mapping and Participation with the Skap 10 Project in Mandal Norway(2010). His sculpture "genetics" won the Trans European Halls sculpture of the month at Tou Scene Stavanger Norway. Randy is also an avid improvised musician leading the Panda Breeding Diary composed from musicians from the Stavanger Symphonic. Orchestra. This is a multi-media group featuring digital films, dance and poetry.