



A performative approach to wool felting

Rhizomatic relations in visual arts making and art education

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To pursue a PhD project alongside a full-time job takes time, and it is at times a lonely pursuit. However, research is not done in isolation. Many people from different countries, with different roles, backgrounds, relationships, motivations, visions, and intentions have participated in this project, for shorter or longer periods.

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Summary

As the first combined dissertation in Fine Arts with the specialisation Arts in context submitted to the University of Agder, comprising artistic and scientific works, this research evolves between artistic and written acts. It is a performative exploration of a performative approach to the ancestral technique of wool felting. The dissertation includes six explorations: three public exhibitions, three articles, and a 7th element consisting of a series of ongoing ‘minor’ moments related to the topic of the thesis that I carry out in my everyday practices as an artist, teacher and researcher. Alongside with that, I provide a mantle that is a metatext of the dissertation. In dialogue with the works of Deleuze and Guattari (1980) and Barad (2007), I use concepts that denote a theoretical and philosophical position inspired by an ontology of immanence and agential realism. The pedagogical stance of this research acknowledges Atkinson’s (2015) ideas on the adventure of pedagogy that brings forward the notion of the ‘not-known’.

The rhizomatic network connecting the seven explorations is transmitted through four interconnected parts that I call ‘strata’, which is in accordance with my research design. A diffractive reading of the explorations suggests a performative pedagogy that actualises questions related to artistic, pedagogical, and research practices. It underlines the emerging knowledge creation *in situ* as not-isolated and not pre-existing entities and/or thoughts.

Moving between the de-stabilisation–re-stabilisation, de-forming–re-forming, and de-territorialisation–re-territorialisation of my practices brings a fruitful in-coherence. My doubts, interrogations, and experimentations might affect the reader, and provoke new thoughts. The mapping of my explorations can create resonance in readers, also in their own contexts – being similar or different. Maybe this could inspire more persons to explore further how one *could* teach, not only how one *should* teach.

This dissertation is dedicated to those that doubt and ask questions, but also to those that work with certainty, in artistic, pedagogical, and/or research contexts.

Norsk sammendrag

Som den første kombinerte avhandling ved Fakultet for kunsthøgskolen med spesialisering i Kunst i kontekst innlevert til Universitetet i Agder, bestående av kunstneriske og vitenskapelige arbeider, utvikler denne forskningen seg mellom kunstneriske og skriftlige handlinger. Det er en performativ utforskning av en performativ tilnærming til en eldgammel ull toving teknikk. Avhandlingen spenner over seks utforskninger: tre offentlige utstillinger, tre artikler, og et syvende element bestående av serier av pågående 'mindre' øyeblikk knyttet til oppgavens tema som jeg foretar meg i min hverdag som kunstner, lærer og forsker. Ved siden av dette har jeg en kappe som er en metatekst av avhandlingen. I dialog med verkene til Deleuze og Guattari (1980) og Barad (2007) bruker jeg begreper som betegner en teoretisk og filosofisk posisjon inspirert av en ontologi av immanens og agentisk realisme. Den pedagogiske holdningen til denne forskningen anerkjenner Atkinsons (2015) ideer om pedagogikkens eventyr som bringer frem forestillingen om det 'ikke-kjente'.

Det rhizomatiske nettverket som kobler de syv utforskningene overføres gjennom fire sammenfiltrede deler som jeg kaller strata, som er i samsvar med mitt forskningsdesign. En diffraktiv lesning av utforskningene antyder en performativ pedagogikk som aktualiserer spørsmål knyttet til kunstnerisk, pedagogisk og forskningsmessig praksis. Det understreker den kunnskapsskapingen som oppstår *in situ* som ikke isolerte og ikke forutbestemte enheter og/eller tanker.

Å bevege seg mellom de-stabilisering–re-stabilisering, de-formering–re-forming og de-territorialisering–re-territorialisering av mine praksiser gir en fruktbar in-koherens. Mine tvil, spørsmål og eksperimenteringer kan virke på leseren og vekker nye tanker. Kartleggingen av mine utforskninger kan skape resonans hos leserne, også i deres egne kontekster – enten disse er like eller annerledes. Kanskje kan dette inspirere flere personer til å utforske videre hvordan man kan undervise, ikke bare hvordan man bør undervise.

Denne avhandlingen er dedikert til de som tviler og stiller spørsmål, men også til de som jobber med visshet i kunstneriske pedagogiske og/eller forskningsmessige sammenhenger.



Photo: Per-Arne Ellefsen

Contents

Acknowledgements	v
Summary	vi
Norsk sammendrag	vii
Contents	ix
List of tables, figures (photos and drawing), and QR codes	xii
0 Prologue	1
0.1 Mapping strata	1
0.2 Rhizomatic relations and processes	1
0.3 Various matters, dates, spaces, and speeds	2
0.4 How to create a fruitful incoherence?	6
0.5 Research questions	9
0.6 Outline of the thesis	10
0.6.1 A combined thesis	10
0.6.2 Visualising the research design with four strata	11
0.6.3 An introduction to the content of the thesis and reading suggestions ..	15
0.6.4 In the middles of a rhizomatic mantle	18
1 The first eruptive stratum	21
1.1 Poetical opening	21
1.2 Conceptual doorways and getaways	25
1.2.1 Cutting together/apart, apparatus and missing acts	26
1.2.2 Agential realism and intra-action	29
1.2.3 Phenomenon and event	30
1.2.4 Re-turn	31
1.2.5 Diffraction	32
1.2.6 Material-discourse	33
1.2.7 Pecuniary ethical aspect	35
1.3 Segments	36
1.3.1 Writing and intensities	36
1.3.2 Segments from the past articulating the present	36
1.3.3 Segments of emerging questioning	37
1.3.4 Artistic research	39
1.3.5 Lateral segments from other researches and researchers in Norway ...	40
1.3.6 Lateral segments from artworks and artists	44
1.3.7 In the continuum of lateral segments	49

1.4	Potential zones of friction in the rhizomatic network.....	50
1.4.1	In a state of becoming.....	50
1.4.2	Ethical dimensions and response-ability.....	51
1.5.1	Irruptions, shifts, and transformations ...	53
1.5.2	An attempt to underline the lines of flight.....	54
2	Second conglomerate stratum.....	57
2.1	Theoretical approaches / framework.....	57
2.1.1	Exploring new terrains.....	57
2.1.2	Becoming and post qualitative enquiry.....	58
2.1.3	Reciprocal infiltration – reading Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad together	61
2.2	Methodological approaches / framework.....	64
2.2.1	Re-turning and artistic research.....	65
2.2.2	Performative – variation around the theme.....	67
2.2.3	Performative utterance and performance art.....	67
2.2.4	A new paradigm: performative research.....	68
2.3	Autoethnography for two.....	69
2.4	Data creation and agential cut.....	70
3	Third stratum of non-finite path: Insight from my explorations and conclusion	75
3.1	A diffractive reading of my exhibitions and articles.....	76
3.1.2	Performative perspective in visual art making.....	77
3.1.3	Performative perspective in art education.....	80
3.1.4	Performative perspective and minor gestures.....	84
3.1.5	Performative perspective in research.....	85
3.2.1	Concluding with my contribution.....	87
3.2.2	Concluding by imagining further possibilities / research.....	88
	List of references.....	90
4	Fourth stratum – My explorations during this PhD project.....	97
4.1	Exhibition 1.....	97
4.2	Exhibition 2.....	101
4.3	Exhibition 3.....	103
4.4	Article 1.....	107
4.5	Article 2.....	119
4.6	Article 3.....	137
4.7	The 7 th element.....	154

Appendix	156
----------------	-----

List of tables, figures (photos and drawing), and QR codes

List of figures

Figure 1	First drawing. Schematic model of my research design	12
Figure 2	Second drawing. Detail of three strata	12
Figure 3	Third drawing. Overview intra-actions between different strata	13
Figure 4	Intra-acting with wool	22
Figure 5	Raw sheep fleece	23
Figure 6	Intra-actions, fibres, feet, hands, water, time, scent	24
Figure 7	Camera using a glass ball as a device to turn upside down the room and the persons in it	31
Figure 8	Example of felted wool putted to dray in the sun after a workshop during the international ETEN conference	35
Figure 9	Slide from a Power Point I used in different conferences to share my questioning and curiosity	37
Figure 10	Slide from a Power Point I used in different conferences to share my questioning and curiosity	39
Figure 11	Visualisation of the mapping of Norwegian researchers	42
Figure 12	Photomontage of the four textile artists	45
Figure 13	Joseph Beuys, Two of the blackboards of <i>Four Blackboards</i>	47
Figure 14	Hicham Benohoud's <i>La salle de classe</i>	48
Figure 15	Reciprocal infiltration: Wool-Deleuze-Guattari-Barad	61
Figure 16	A visual synthesis of methods used in this research	65
Figure 17	Data palimpsest	72
Figure 18	Layered white, grey and black wool	97
Figure 19	Rolling wool	98
Figure 20	Fulling wool	99
Figure 21	Let go/throwing wool	99
Figure 22	Touching and touch by wool	100
Figure 23	Hybrid material assemblage walking out	101
Figure 24	Circulating bodies on active material	102
Figure 25	Result of wool felt work performance in Vietnam and raw wool	103
Figure 26	Wool felt work, <i>Ad infinitum</i>	104
Figure 27	Wool felt work, <i>Territoire – Espaces lisses et strié</i>	104
Figure 28	Raw wool from sheep	105
Figure 29	Hand washed and carded wool	106

Table

Table 1 Overview of the content of the thesis	17
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QR codes

QR 1	Recording of ‘Cutting though – an assemblage of other-less’	25
QR 2	Teaser of the exhibition Inhabiting/Living Practices: An emergent collaborative arts-based exhibition	16 and 100
QR 3	Teaser of the exhibition Meeting through iterative gestures of felting. Other contexts, other encounters	16 and 102

Appendix

Assemblage of pictures from the 7 th element	152
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0 Prologue

0.1 Mapping strata

This part of the thesis, the mantle, maps three art exhibitions and three articles generated during my ongoing enquiry. The different parts of the mantle are presented as strata—layers in motion. It consists of an assemblage of texts, still and moving images that reveal explorations related to my artistic work, my work as a teacher, and my work as a researcher. It encompasses thoughts that are not yet terminated and the phenomenon of wool felting that is not yet completely known. Nevertheless, events of different natures—such as doing, sensing, thinking, and writing—as described here, are entangled as they work on each other. Different times/moments, memory/reverberation, and space/territory create and compose this thesis. There are short poetical passages, links, and QR codes to listen to spoken words and see moving images. Images, drawings, or photos help me to think, do/make and write. One might not always find a chronological timeline, but intertwined traces of events and spaces created in-between moments of felting wool and writing words.

0.2 Rhizomatic relations and processes

Post-philosophers Gilles de Deleuze and Félix Guattari wrote an introduction to the rhizome in their book entitled *Mille plateaux* (1980). They describe the book as rhizomatic: ‘A book has no object or subject, it is made of variously formed matters, and of very different dates and speeds’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 9, author translation). For them, in a book, as well as with all things, there ‘are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata, territorialities: but also, lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification’ (pp. 9–10, author translation). ‘There is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made’ (p. 10). They continue: ‘Writing has nothing to do with signifying. It has to do with surveying, mapping, even realms that are yet to come’ (p. 11, author translation). It is like an adventure.

My research is rhizomatic. It brings together an assemblage of things of varied nature and, as mentioned above, with different starting points and intentions. I write this thesis in a state of becoming as I map and bring together some thoughts and some words. These thoughts and words are sometimes mine, sometimes those of others. Writing means to write with many other people, even

when one is writing alone. For St. Pierre, professor in critical studies in educational theory, ‘writing is the affirmative and experimental space-time of the unthought, the *to-come* I believe in’ (2014, p. 378). The absence of other persons, spaces, texts of written words, voices of spoken words, and enacted movements is present.

I interpret the rhizome as performative in the sense that it focuses on what a thing does, more than what a thing is when assuming one fixed or pre-given identity. The writing of this mantle is time-bound, embodied, and in motion, like the wool felting. One of the most challenging aspects in writing this research (as I undergo it) is to make it accessible to the reader with some measure of liveliness. I think about the liveliness of the lines of flight that Deleuze and Guattari (1980) described as movements engendered by moments of energy escaping a rigid or pre-given system through its cracks, or by an a-signifying rupture (p. 16) and reaching the limits of what exists. The movements of the lines of flight create open spaces to be filled out by new/other/displaced practices. The lines of flight are the irruptions, shifts, and transformations I undergo whilst exploring a performative approach to wool felting. This text does not necessarily represent something to be understood as it is, but rather as the becoming of an enquiry in motion. I invite the readers into my investigations and let them create displacements and transformations they relate to, that reach them and hopefully enrich their own experience with art making and teaching, by exploring realms that are yet to come.

0.3 Various matters, dates, spaces, and speeds

According to Deleuze and Guattari (1980) and the philosopher-physicist and new feminist materialist Karen Barad (2007), material matters. The materials that compose a text form that text. I call the four main parts of my mantle ‘strata’. These are made of layers in relation to the different realms I roam, whether they are artistic, educational, or scholarly spaces. Each stratum recalls the numerous and various layers of wool that are displayed in different spaces and at different times when co-creating felting events. Rhizomatic intensities, density, variations, extensions, and transformability are moments that I experience in both the processes of felting fibres and the writing of words. In this project, different modalities are used, in which materials help to create written language and vice versa. I seek to make this relationship between ‘text-making’ and ‘felting-making’ visible for myself and the reader. It is a material–discourse (Barad, 2007,

p. 235): a reciprocal relationship in which matter and meaning are not separate elements. Rather, it encompasses the acts of both making and thinking in a non-hierarchical repositioning of the material and the discursive.

The timeframe of this dissertation and my affiliation to the University of Agder spans five discontinuous years. The timeframe that led to the creation of this project goes further back and is disassociated from the university. The technique of felting precedes my exploration by several thousands of years. Some of the books I read were published before I was born. People I met during the writing process of the thesis are of different ages and live in different places in the world, including Norway, Morocco, Canada, Vietnam, and Spain. In an attempt to make the writing manageable and the reading intelligible, I often use the present tense. We shape each other in our intra-actions: a neologism that Barad (2007, p. 33) describes as ‘the mutual constitution of entangled agencies’. This means that we materialize each other, rather than being separate and independent entities. I engage with components within and beyond my professional spheres and become one of the co-components in the iterative encounters with other components. The materials and people that I encounter, engender relationships and thoughts of varying intensities. These go/move into different directions—some support each other and some destabilise each other.

All these components create a palimpsest in motion. Certain parts grow stronger at a certain time, while fading away at another time. I present them like four strata in motion with a rich sediment. Occasionally, these parts appear distinct from each other, until they melt into less heterogeneous layers. This is how I interpret Deleuze and Guattari’s (1980) concept of deterritorialization and reterritorialization: constant forth and back movements breaking down the solidified space–time of the formation of strata and the formation of new structures or strata. For Deleuze and Guattari, these can be cultural, social, or political structures. Thus, strata are temporary solidified structures that emerge and vanish in what they call a plane of immanence: something existing without standing as a representation of external theoretical, moral, or divine order.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome has no beginning and no end:

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these

lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitute an '*assemblage*'. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, pp. 3–4)

The ontological position of the rhizome invites us to create a terrain, not to copy it. This research is not a re-presentation of a pre-existing territory, but an attempt to experiment and create alternative approaches to artistic and artistic teaching practices. 'The tree articulates and hierarchizes tracings; tracings are like the leaves of a tree. The rhizome is altogether different, a map and not a tracing. Make a map, not a tracing' (p. 20). Deleuze and Guattari differentiate the rhizome from a tree, where a tree is understood as an independent entity that goes from its own roots to its leaves, with no further connections to its context or a broader environment. The rhizome is understood as a connection, or a multitude of connections, to its environment and other components, all of which have a different nature.

A rhizomatic understanding of the phenomenon of wool felting does not explain what wool or felting is, but gives explicit attention to multiplicities and connections. This allows a myriad of possible approaches, a potent site of discovery. The concept of the rhizome is then easy to connect to artistic and arts-based research. The artist conducting artistic research and/or arts-based research can carve her own personalised tools (Leavy, 2009) and approach to her study. Furthermore, wool felting can be comparable to a rhizomatic structure. Each fibre that composes parts of the felted textile is like a network of fibres connected to other fibres, to and from numerous directions. It does not have a centre, but a multitude of middles (multi-centred) that creates a larger pattern, which, in principle, could be infinite. It is not an arborescent logic or system with one root, a trunk, and branches leading to leaves. A tree has a hierarchic model, with one root system, and a linear structure—everything grows out from there and leads to the outer limits of the tree. The rhizome suggests movements, processes, in-betweenness, and connections—we are active in the world and the world activates us. We activate the wool as much as it activates us.

Rhizomatic relationships and their possibility for multiple connections inspire a range of educators and researchers in practice-based research methodology. Some name their method of living inquiry '*a/r/tography*'. A

research group at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) is called ‘Rhizomatic learning and CRafTography’. For a/r/tographers –

The name itself exemplifies these features by setting art and graphy, and the identities of artist, researcher, and teacher (a/r/t), in continuous relations. None of these features is privileged over another as they occur simultaneously in and through time and space. (Irwin et al., 2006, p. 70)

Even though one does not need to be a professional artist to perform a/r/tography, the name helps to define a methodological approach that artist educators have not named earlier: ‘A/r/tographical work entails living and inquiring in the in-between, of constantly questioning, and complicating that which has yet to be named’ (Irwin & Springgay, 2008, p. 119). The Norwegian CRafTography research group from NTNU describes their task as a project that explores practical research and learning methods and examines how the practitioner—by virtue of being a craftsman, researcher, and teacher—exercises knowledge and relates to various tools in his or her exercise of knowledge (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, n. d.). This appears to underline the quality of craftsmanship knowledge/practice in their work, not as a methodological tool, but as professional practice in research. Thus, one person has more than one identity.

Both Deleuze and Guattari as well as Barad propose rethinking the concept of identity. Deleuze and Guattari work with the idea of heterogeneous connections and ‘middles’: ‘Principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 7). With regard to middles they comment:

A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation, but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree imposes the verb ‘to be’, but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, ‘and ... and ... and ...’ (p. 25).

From this perspective, undergoing research, art work, and teaching are, and also must be, connected through their heterogeneity. This leads to the creation of a rhizomatic network, rather than positioning the identity of an artist, teacher, and researcher from their respective identities. Barad proposes an

agential realism that includes ‘human *and* non-human, material *and* discursive, and natural *and* cultural factors’. Furthermore, she proposes ‘a rethinking of fundamental concepts that support such binary thinking, including the notion of matter, discourse, causality, power identity, embodiment, objectivity, space, and time’ (Barad, 2007, p. 26). Barad also questions the notion of identity, by troubling the distinction of something ‘between’, and rather including the ‘other’ as non-dualistic. She uses ‘and’, which juxtaposes two or more things by relating them to each other (not as opposite to each other). I use 'and' as non-dualistic in the following free verses, make visual cuts to underline syllables and play with the sounds of the words:

Awareness of mat(t)er(r)ialities / matter – realities – materialities

Dialoguing between bodies and matter and, and, and

Bodies as matter

Bodies in motions

Motion as awareness

Realities and credibility

Evocative expressions

Affect and intensities

Attuned to emerging moments / spaces / matters

Transformative actions

Continuous dialogues

Different levels / plateaux / strata

Dialogues by/through/in gestures and actions

Combining silent and auditory impulses

0.4 How to create a fruitful incoherence?

The words, sentences, paragraphs, and the four strata of this text become increasingly entangled as I work on it. The entangled materials become more dense as I ‘dive’ into it. Fundamentally, felted wool is entanglements of fibres. Its borders are not limited, as in the edge of a woven textile. Fibres go in any/all directions. Felt does not necessarily have a back and front side, or a top or bottom. Felted wool is a smooth space, as Deleuze and Guattari describe it in *Mille plateaux* (1980, p. 594). This is how I describe the materials and movements in wool felting:

The material is dense and chaotic
The material moves and dances
The material swells other materials
Water enters wool
Wool encounters water
Slowly swelling
Slowly moving
Slowly merging
Materials infiltrate other materials

Felting wool demands more than one fibre, and more than one layer. The process of wool felting takes time: it is slow, as each fibre needs attention. The order of the fibres is not as regular as in a woven fabric. Fibres go into and come from different directions. Nevertheless, they need to be placed, or place themselves, to be able to hook to each other. They become dense and substantial matter. This apparently incoherent mass of wool, with high levels of plasticity, responsiveness, and strength simultaneously, creates a fruitful assemblage. In this research, as a rhizomatic network, I invest myself cognitively and sensorily with materiality and discourse. Some of the concepts I use come from the body of work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980), and Barad (2007).

These philosophical and theoretical frameworks situate this PhD within a landscape that can be described as one under the umbrella of poststructuralism and agential realism from new materialism. Other PhD fellows (Østern et al., 2021) with an artistic background write about a feeling of not always fitting into ‘established qualitative methods, often with positivist leftovers in academia’ (p. 3). This brings them to a ‘friction-led research’ in their ‘ongoing becoming-as-researchers’ when they experience the ‘need to break out of or extend the limits of the qualitative tradition’ (p. 4). The visualisation of my research design (under the outline of the thesis) with the eruptive stratum is not so dissimilar from what Østern et al. describe as ‘friction-led research’. I see frictions as aspects creating eruptions and lines of flight escaping striated structures.

In the first stage of writing this thesis, writing reminded me of weaving on a loom. Woven textile involves a regular repetition of perpendicular intersections by movements of threads crossing the chain whilst creating the weft. Any deviation from the perpendicular intersections would create a fault line, a

misplaced hole, an irregular moment/movement in the overall visual aspect. Regularly displayed marks/patterns and tones give a solid structure to woven textiles. If we take away one thread or change its colour, this will have a repercussion on the entire textile—an impact that is apparent on both small and large pieces of work. Writing this text could have been done in the same spirit of loom weaving. However, writing this research resembles an act/action similar to felting work. Weaving as well as felting are material-based activities that give significant sensory experiences, but in a different manner. The spaces between the thread of the chain and the warp are predetermined, regular, and equally distanced from each other. Similarly, the borders are likewise perpendicular and vertical. This forms a space that Deleuze and Guattari (1980, pp. 593–594) describe as striated. The principles of woven textiles are that they are constituted by two parallel elements—horizontal and vertical elements that cross perpendicularly. Mobile horizontal weaving yarn passes below and above horizontal threads which are fixed to the loom. Deleuze and Guattari (1980, p. 593) describe this kind of striated space as necessarily delimited, closed on at least one side. This kind of fabric can be woven to an infinite length, but its width cannot be infinite because of the limits of the loom. Thus –

a space of this kind seems necessarily to have a top and a bottom; even when the warp yarn and wool yarn are exactly the same in nature, number, and density, weaving reconstitutes a bottom by placing the knots on one side. Was it not these characteristics that enabled Plato to use the model of weaving as the paradigm for “royal science”, in other words, the art of governing people or operating the State apparatus? (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 475)

Felt is another kind of solid supple, ‘it is in principle infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; it has neither top nor bottom nor centre; it does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, pp. 475–476). This further emphasises the rhizomatic aspect of wool. Moreover, it is also a metaphor for my written material and the process of creating a fruitful incoherence.

Before addressing the research questions, I will say more about wool. Wool is a natural material from animals that have inhabited the world together with humans since ancient times. Sheep’s wool is the most commonly used fibre

of animal origin. There are traces of domestication of sheep in Palestine from 9000 BC (Bomsel, 2022). The sedentarization of humankind and cohabitation with sheep make it natural to develop a craft with materials close at hand. In textile making, wool has co-evolved with humans and has always been a substantial part of human life, in various ways. Not much is needed to felt wool; it is a low technology, both in terms of materials and energy. Wool is a malleable material that can be transformed in direct contact with the body and no intermediary tools are necessary. Since we do not need any tools, this allows a direct bodily and sensory relation to the wool. The contact with hands or feet provides an intuitive approach to the material entanglement. Since wool felting requires little technical equipment, this means that nearly anyone can perform the entire felting process, from raw material fibres to felted textile. This provides the opportunity to develop a complex and/or creative approach to the material, which is different from fragmented industrial productions, without a complete overview or understanding of the entire working process. Therefore, a performative approach to wool is an invitation to/from the material to a natural, intuitive, low-tech, and direct carnal encounter. There is an interaction between the surfaces of animal and human skins, and both are responsive.

0.5 Research questions

This project is about felt making, with wool as the main material. It is a process-oriented research project, in which materialities engage us in a sensorial experience through the ancestral technique of felting. It is also about engaging with written and spoken words, and enabling connections between physical matter and matter of discourse as not-separated elements. Inspired by contemporary performance art, my aim is to contribute with knowledge about, and through performative artistic practice and performative processes, in visual arts teacher training. This emphasises a broad understanding of visual arts as a school subject that encompasses other aspects than merely mechanical representations and technical/skills aspects.

I propose a performative approach to wool felting as an exploration and experimentation in visual arts within teacher education. To explore and propose broader or other forms of teaching also means to care about how I meet others. Teaching through exploration is about resisting, and sometimes even disturbing—what Dennis Atkinson (2015), professor in educational studies with an interest in art and learning, crudely calls ‘a dominant pedagogical attitude to a

known world held in place by controlled curriculums, assessment and inspection programmes, and a pervasive culture of audit, all of which presuppose or anticipate known (desired) pedagogic subjects and objects (teachers, learners, knowledge, skills)' (Atkinson, 2015, p. 44). To engage critically with a dominant pedagogical attitude practice also implies to doubt, interrogate, re-examine, explore, experiment, make, think, try, share, and continually be in motion.

The reading of a post-structuralist (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) and agential realism (Barad, 2007) corpus helps me to articulate my actions, thinking, and dissemination when working with two entangled questions. It is in dialogue with these authors' work that this research evolves between three exhibitions and three articles. The research questions are closely related to the aim and proposition stated above. From a broader perspective, one could formulate this aim as a wish to explore what artistic processes (understood as performative) can be realized in schools and what the school can do with artistic processes. Subsequently, I dwell on and discuss two research questions related to my artistic practice and teaching practice in the subject of visual arts. The research questions are formulated as following:

- 1) How can my artistic practice, inspired by performance art, be enacted to create intra-actions between co-components in wool felting?
- 2) What can emerge from a teaching practice using a performative approach to wool felting?

I imagine those two entangled questions as a breathing movement: A circular movement of 'inward' intention – becoming performative, and 'outward' extension – expanding within emerging encounters reconfiguring co-components (human and non-human) in wool felting that put us in a position of responsiveness to possibilities that can emerge.

0.6 Outline of the thesis

0.6.1 A combined thesis

The University of Agder (UiA) offers the opportunity to write a dissertation combining scientific papers and artistic works.¹ In positioning creative practice

¹ The artistic (practical/creative) part is not explicitly enshrined in UiA's executive document. The artistic part can or must be interpreted and developed according to each individual case, and it is different from project to project. The PhD candidate will provide precedence and references to

within research, UiA supports the argument that knowledge can be carried and expressed in diverse ways and is found in diverse cultural arenas. The creative research output as a means of dissemination goes beyond and expands the written text of a monography. This contributes to strengthening the artist-teacher-researcher position that others and I have walked between as nomads. This thesis is a performative exploration of a performative approach to wool felting. The mantle contains seven components: the documentation of three public exhibitions, three articles, and a 7th element that is an assemblage of images from ‘minor’ moments.

0.6.2 Visualising the research design with four strata

The three drawings (Figures 1, 2, and 3) visualising the research design are an attempt to display the rhizomatic relationships among the four strata, segments creating destratification, lines of flight, and the seven elements presented in the mantle. The first drawing (Figure 1) is a schematic model in which the four strata are captured as frozen moments. In the first drawing, black horizontal lines indicate a cut of the four strata: a temporary stabilized territory. The green lines represent segments that create connections (nodes) between moments of different natures: passageways and movements from one stratum to another, generated by or generating landslides and de-stratification. Those movements are moments of deterritorialization and reterritorialization when leaving a territory and creating or reaching other/new territories. Cracks and openings, indicated in red colour in the irruptive strata, are spaces of opportunities for the green segments to become blue lines of flight escaping a stratum. Segments, cracks, openings, and lines of flight subvert hierarchies and close systems. The top of the lines of flight, organic blue forms (like mushrooms), are the seven elements presented in the mantle.

further/future understanding of what a practical and/or artistic part may be in such a combined dissertation.

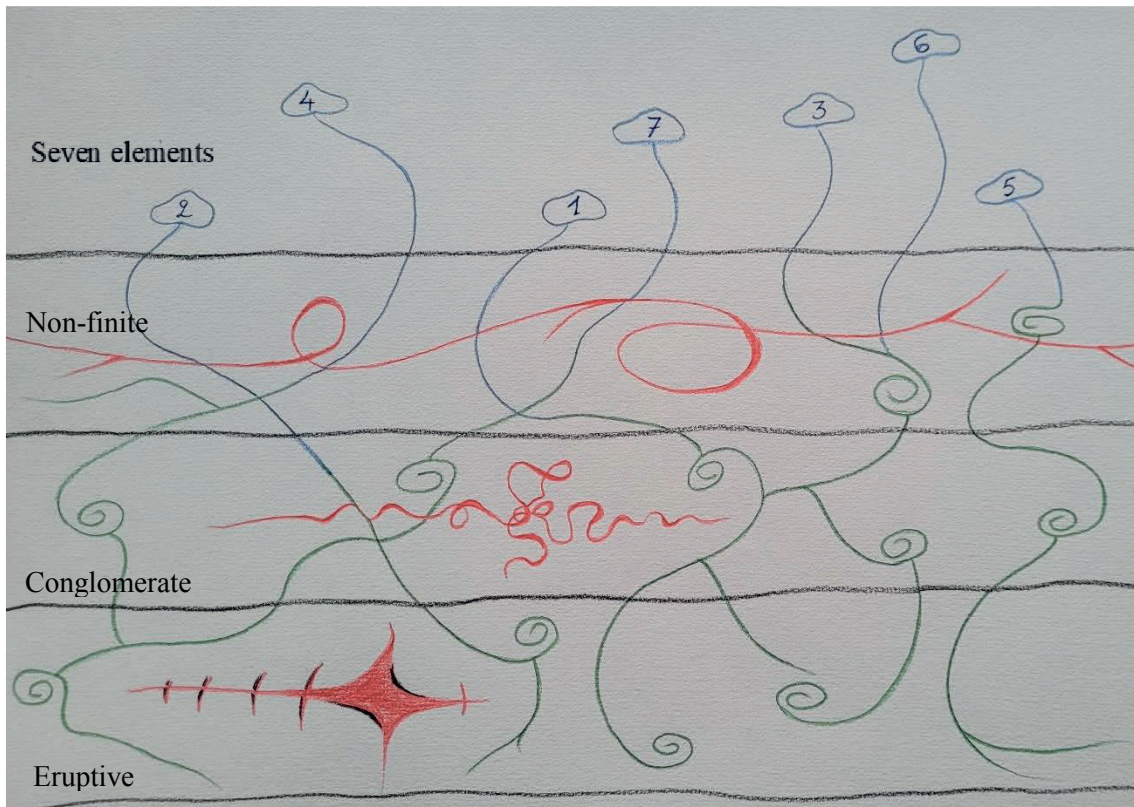


Figure 1 First drawing. Schematic model of my research design: Conception/conceptualisation of the four strata composing the mantle with an irruptive stratum, a conglomerate stratum, a stratum consisting of a non-finite path, and a stratum consisting of the seven elements presented in this dissertation.

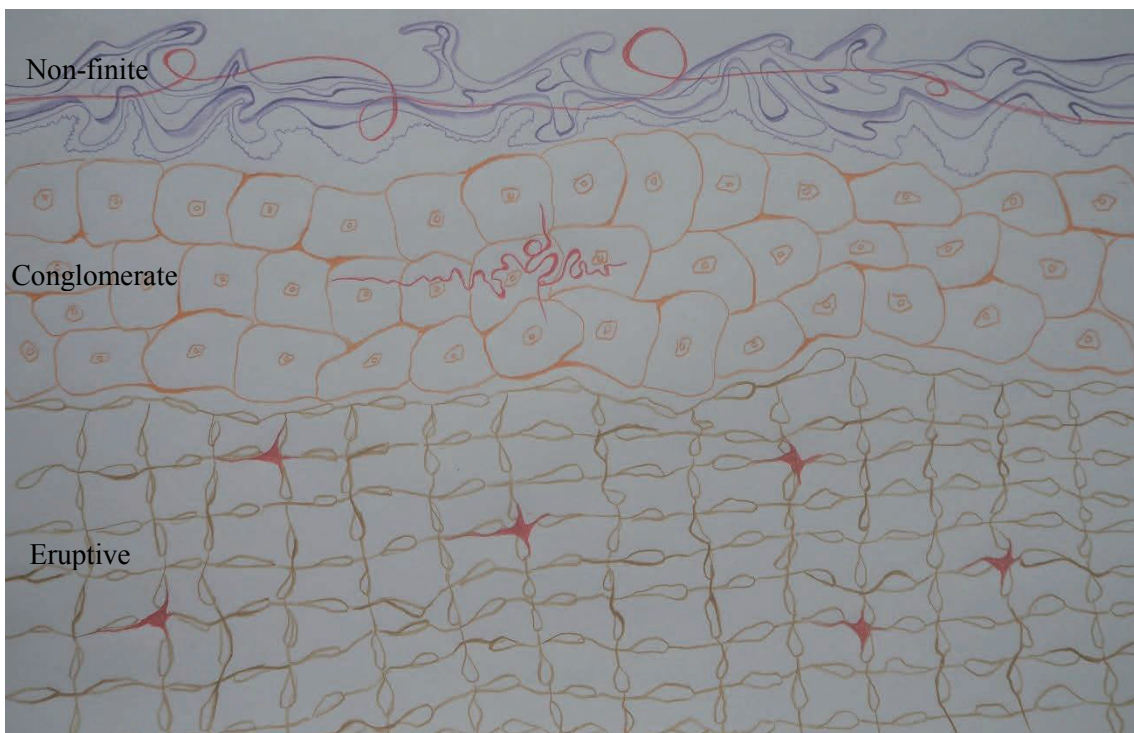


Figure 2 Second drawing. Detail of three strata (eruptive, conglomerate, and a non-finite path) showing different textures and organic structures on the surfaces of each stratum.

In the second drawing (Figure 2), I zoom into each stratum, as with a microscope, to show a more detailed and fragmented surface of strata 1, 2, and 3. This shows that the strata have different textures on their surfaces, but all have organic structures. The two first drawings do not transmit the dynamic and complexity of a rhizomatic network. In the third drawing (Figure 3), I attempt to capture what the two first drawings do not map. It is a more extended overview of intra-actions between the four strata. While the first two drawings (Figures 1 and 2) are sectional plans (schematic incisions) of the strata/territories placed above each other, the third drawing (Figure 3) is an overview of the connections between the four strata (seen from above). I attempt to capture flowing moments of different times, spaces, and the multiple dimensions of breathing movements. It is an attempt to visualize a superposition on a two-dimensional drawing to give a better impression of the intra-action of the four strata, rather than four layers placed on top of each other (as organised in the two first drawings).

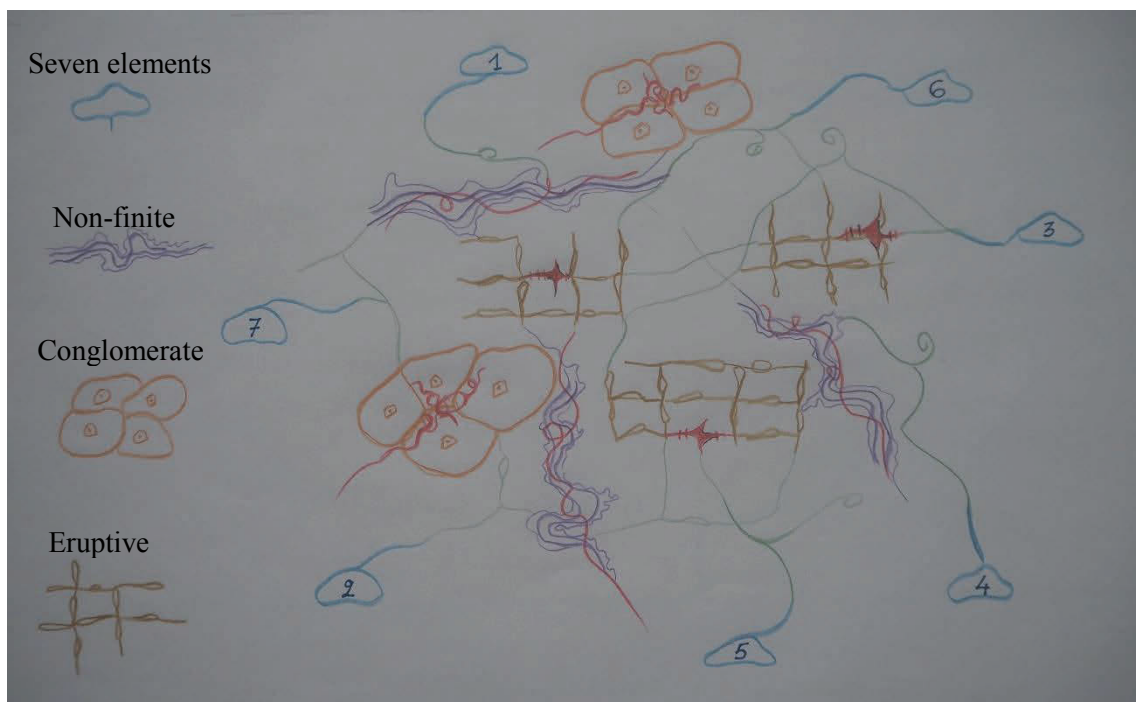


Figure 3 Third drawing. Overview of intra-actions between the different strata.

Inspired by the book *Mille plateaux* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980), I use strata as a metaphor for interconnected layers and landslides of a living system, extending their actions, much like in a rhizomatic system. The sliding movements of tectonic plates make the fault lines visible (black lines in Figure 1). I imagine the geological fault lines becoming intensities like in the Deleuzian

and Guattarian lines of flight (blue lines in Figure 1). As illustrated in the first schematic drawing (Figure 1), I attempt to make a distinction between the four strata while structuring my research design and writing this thesis. With the combination of the three drawings, I seek to reveal the stabilized moments as well as movements within and among the four strata. I name the four strata as follows: the first eruptive stratum (questioning), the second conglomerate stratum (theoretical and methodological framework), the third stratum as a non-finite path (insight from my explorations), and a fourth stratum comprising the seven elements (the explorations conducted during this PhD project). The mantle invites the reader into a rhizomatic research, a rhizomatic text, and a rhizomatic reading. To some extent, the writing process continues the unfolding aspect of this performative research, with multiple middles and wool felting with multiple layers. By layering upon the layers, the strata like layers of wool, the reader will slowly come closer inside the project.

The first **eruptive stratum** reveals unstable moments of wonder and questioning. These unstable moments need more space, as they cannot be contained in the *territorium* from where they emerge. Unstable moments of wonder and questions find openings or create cracks in a striated space, which I represent with a red opening behind parallel red lines, like a rigid pre-determined structure. The openings or cracks (rupturing those vertical red lines struggling to stay down) are a sign of the need for another territory where other ideas can emerge, other thoughts can be thought, and other practices can be practised. It is one of the starting points (or a rhizomatic middle) of this research project, when I began questioning my practices. The eruptive stratum in this mantle connects poetical openings to my encounter with wool, some of the philosophical concepts I am in dialogue with, segments of different natures and intensities, and states of becoming related to transitions leading to transformations.

The second **conglomerate stratum** is a generative and complex one. While the first stratum introduces some concepts, the second stratum presents a deeper theoretical framework and how this research relates to a philosophical landscape inhabited mainly by Deleuze and Guattari (1980) and Barad (2007). This includes my interpretation of their respective works, as well as a reciprocal infiltration and superposition of their works. Furthermore, the second stratum presents the methodological framework, including an introduction to the performative concept and data creation. The conglomerate stratum is represented in my drawings by organic and sinuous red lines. These suggest a cluster of

movements that go back and forth among artistic, pedagogical, and theoretical projects.

The third stratum, a **non-finite path** comprising the insights, creates another *territorium* made of yet another hidden chaos. I represent the non-finite path in my drawings with a long, curved red line with stems that extend the line by attuning to various environments. This is a stratum in which things are in motion, not necessarily as an endeavour to frame the chaos and provide a final answer. Rather, it invites one to conduct a close examination of what I do through the insights I create along the road when traversing different terrains. It is not a stable ground with settled thoughts, but a fertile terrain for further eruptions, questioning, and research.

The fourth stratum comprises **seven elements** generated during this doctoral research: three exhibitions, three articles, and the seventh element. These seven elements are simultaneously floating around and holding all the strata.

0.6.3 An introduction to the content of the thesis and reading suggestions

The content of the thesis is the documentation of three exhibitions, three articles, and an assemblage of pictures constituting the 7th element. The public exhibitions are presented in the fourth stratum with informations related to the titles, venues, dates, and short descriptive texts. The visual documentation of the exhibitions consists of photographs or stills from video recordings, and links and QR codes to teasers of the performance from the first two exhibitions. The documentations are not artistic works, but visual recordings² made to keep trace of what has been done. The three articles are presented in their entirety in the fourth stratum, with information related to the names of the journals, dates, titles of the articles and links to the journals where the articles were published.

As mentioned earlier and as the reader would have seen already, there are short poetical passages in this text. They appear with indentation, in grey colour and in italics. These passages are like different entrances and ways to convey the phenomenon of wool felting. They are often produced as reminiscences of meetings with wool. Occasionally, there are also citations from participants in

² The name of those who took photos and filmed events are indicated in the documentation.

wool felting events that show how others describe their wool felting experiences.³

I invite the reader to watch two videos (see QRs 2 and 3 and links below) as a first visual encounter with the teasers from two performances, showing a performative approach to the phenomenon of wool felting.



QR 2: https://youtu.be/6jy_527YSeY



QR 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpZIIpnMnnw>

The reader can choose to have a closer look at the documentation of the exhibitions and read the articles before reading the first stratum, which I wrote in the aftermath of the exhibitions and publication of the articles. The assemblage of pictures in the 7th seventh element gives an overview of my ongoing practices. By beginning with the first stratum, the meta-text will work as an extended abstract that introduces the entire research project. By starting with the fourth stratum, the reader will be introduced to and situated in different time–spaces, in which the explorations, art making, article writing, and daily practices took place. This means that the reader will literally (or performatively?) jump between, as well as back and forth between, the first and the fourth strata.

The overview of the content of the thesis presented in the table below will help the reader to determine whether this short introduction is sufficiently

³ The participants are student teachers from a Norwegian university, or artists and scholars participating in artistic events or conferences.

informative or suggestive to begin the reading with the first stratum, or whether the reader wishes to obtain a deeper reading of the exhibitions, the articles, and the 7th element before reading the extended abstract in the first stratum.

Table 1 Overview of the content of the thesis.

Date and venue/journal	Title of the work (exhibitions and articles)	Focus/topic/result
1 st exhibition Canada, 2019	Inhabiting/Living Practices: An emergent collaborative arts-based exhibition	First experience with a public exhibition using a performative approach to wool felting. Transition from object making to event creation in my artistic work.
2 nd exhibition Vietnam, 2019	Meeting through iterative gestures of felting: Other contexts, other encounters	Building further on a performative approach to wool felting, inviting other artists and the general public to co-making. Becoming more acquainted with re-turning wool felting, intra-action, and the repositioning of the human/artist.
3 rd exhibition Norway, 2020	<i>Fiber og komposisjoner. Samhandling og affekt i handlinger</i> (Fibres and compositions. Interaction and affect in actions)	The lockdown due to the pandemic brings my attention to the low-tech aspect of wool felting. I begin to work with raw wool that I receive from Norwegian sheep farmers (not processed wool bought in a factory).
1 st article <i>Simon Fraser University Educational Review</i> , 2019	Exploring art and craft in teacher education whilst going toward a performative approach: some reflections on re-turning and engaging diffractively with wool felting	Transition from performative drawing to a performative approach to wool felting with student teachers. I begin to read philosophical texts and ‘discover’ a philosophical landscape inhabited by Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad. This reading starts to shape

		the theoretical framework of the thesis.
2 nd article <i>European Journal of Philosophy in Arts Education</i> , 2019a	Exploring a performative approach to wool felting. An autoethnography for two	Experiencing a methodology inspired by autoethnography makes me aware of process ontology, and I become more interested in intra-action. I no longer show what I do, but invite others to co-make (wool felting) with me.
3 rd article <i>MARTTER: Journal of New Materialist Research</i> , 2019b	Affective togetherness in arts education: lingering on a performative approach to wool felting	A performative approach to wool felting in teacher education provides the students with a transformative experience with wool felting and a broader understanding of what the school subject of visual arts can become.
7 th element Made from my own produced archive of ongoing daily practices	Assemblage of images from my daily work and practices	This assemblage reveals what has been kept aside from the six main components/explorations presented in this thesis. The seventh element reveals that everyday practices are continuous commitment and enquiry in motion. This PhD project does not build on a couple of isolated case studies; rather, it is located in the ‘middles’ of a broader and long-lasting living enquiry.

0.6.4 In the middles of a rhizomatic mantle

This mantle is situated in several ‘middles’: in the middle of what I think, do, and write, in the middle of my intentions and the reader’s interpretation of this written text and images, in the middle of or between my hands composing layers of wool fibres and my hands composing a flux of words and succession of sentences, in the middle of what I have done before beginning this PhD project and what is yet to be done, moments that are still to come ...

When introducing the rhizome, Deleuze and Guattari refer to ‘Armand Farrachi's book on the Fourth Crusade, *La dislocation*, in which the sentences space themselves out and disperse, or else jostle together and coexist, and in which the letters, the typography begins to dance as the crusade grows more delirious’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 24). Each and every movement of my wool felting and writing become part of a rhizomatic network. Each wool fibre and every word becomes denser and thickens when they hook to each other. The working process of this research does not produce separated, parallel spaces between felting and writing, but coexisting spaces with more or less loosely and more or less intertwined connections between fibres and words. It is as if the materiality of wool and words become denser. New or more spaces are created for multiple interpretations. Would that become a dance of fibres and words growing delirious? My attempt to organise different parts of this research as strata is an attempt to mobilise sensory moments and make sense of some of them.



First stratum

1 The first eruptive stratum

The first eruptive stratum begins with a poetical opening, prose, and images. This stratum reveals a more intimate approach to wool fibres, as I embrace a performative approach to the material. This is followed by a short introduction to certain concepts—concepts I am in dialogue with, use, think, and do with, while questioning my practices as they become intra-active. I introduce these concepts here even if I did not have this vocabulary when beginning this doctoral project. These conceptual doorways and getaways help me to enable the reader to follow the rhizomatic pathways of this research. Then come the segments—spaces with intensities among numerous connections of a diverse nature. The segments, too, position this research in a rhizomatic middle. Thereafter, I recall potential zones of frictions and address response-able critics and ethics. I close the first stratum by tracing lines of flight emerging from irruptions, shifts, and transformations. All these eclectic moments and movements make the eruptive stratum. These are the red cracks/openings and the green segments previously presented in the drawings of the research design (Figure1).

1.1 Poetical opening

It is loose, airy, and hairy,

It is light, disperse, floaty,

It is strong

It is soft, malleable, compressible, fluid, supple

It is liquid, fluid, runny, wet, watery,

It is entangled, narrow, merging,

It is dense, numerous,

It is robust, heavy, substantial,

This is it. It is the phenomenon of wool felting.

Meeting wool fibres and words halfway?

A room of resonances.

Vigorous intensities.

Amplified gestures.

The making is sounding.

Soundings make spaces.

Flux of lines.

Engaging with matter(ialities).
Inviting resonances and vibrations.
Bodily engaged.
Sensorily aware.
More than the hand, more than the eye.
Intensities of rhizomatic networks.
Musicality of fibres in motion.
Disrupts the prevailing status.
Matter of wool and words are in motion.
It is a material-discourse.



Figure 4 Intra-acting with wool. Photo: Per-Arne Ellefsen.

I suggest that readers read the next paragraph out loud in order to ‘taste’ the words in their mouth, and ‘listen’ to them with their ears, as they ‘see’ them with their eyes.

Wool felting is an extra-ordinary source for creative work and has been a resource for humanity since ancestral times, centuries before our era. Still today, we use fibres from animals—wool, silk, fur, leather, feathers, fleece, or skin—as garments or ornaments. The experience of textile is one of the most common experiences for humans, from the moment we are born to the moment we leave this life. Civilisations in diverse time–spaces have and still continue to process materials from nature as social and cultural forms of expression within and outside groups of people. Wool fibres are particularly interesting, because—just like our hair—they come from the exterior surface of the skin. Cellular layers that envelop our human-animal bodies: At the same time they form a protective membrane and a channel between internal and external spaces. This skin of us, of the sheep, is a part of all our senses. It forms and contains our ears, our eyes, nose, tongue, and it is the very sensitive foundation of our sense of touch.



Figure 5 Raw sheep fleece.

I touch wool fibres. I carefully handle it as my own skin and its hairy extension. I display a large amount of wool on the floor, create friction in

it with my hands as a first step of joining the loose fibres. Slowly rubbing and gently rubbing, before rolling the entire mass of wool that is barely entwined. My hands and the wool are pressing against each other. Warm water presses itself in and out of the open shells of the fibres. Lanoline and other debris rise to the surface. I hear the rolling—the sound of water moving, and splashing is visually and auditorily perceptible. Liquid touches my skin and smells enter my skin— smoothly and intensely entering the tissues and organs of my body. Water with pine soap and the frictions under my hands and under my feet enable fluid movements and create a distinct sound. Sometimes light, sometimes loud. Colours appear more distinctively. We are active in the world. Touch, tactility, sounds, inhaled smells. The wool activates and is activated.

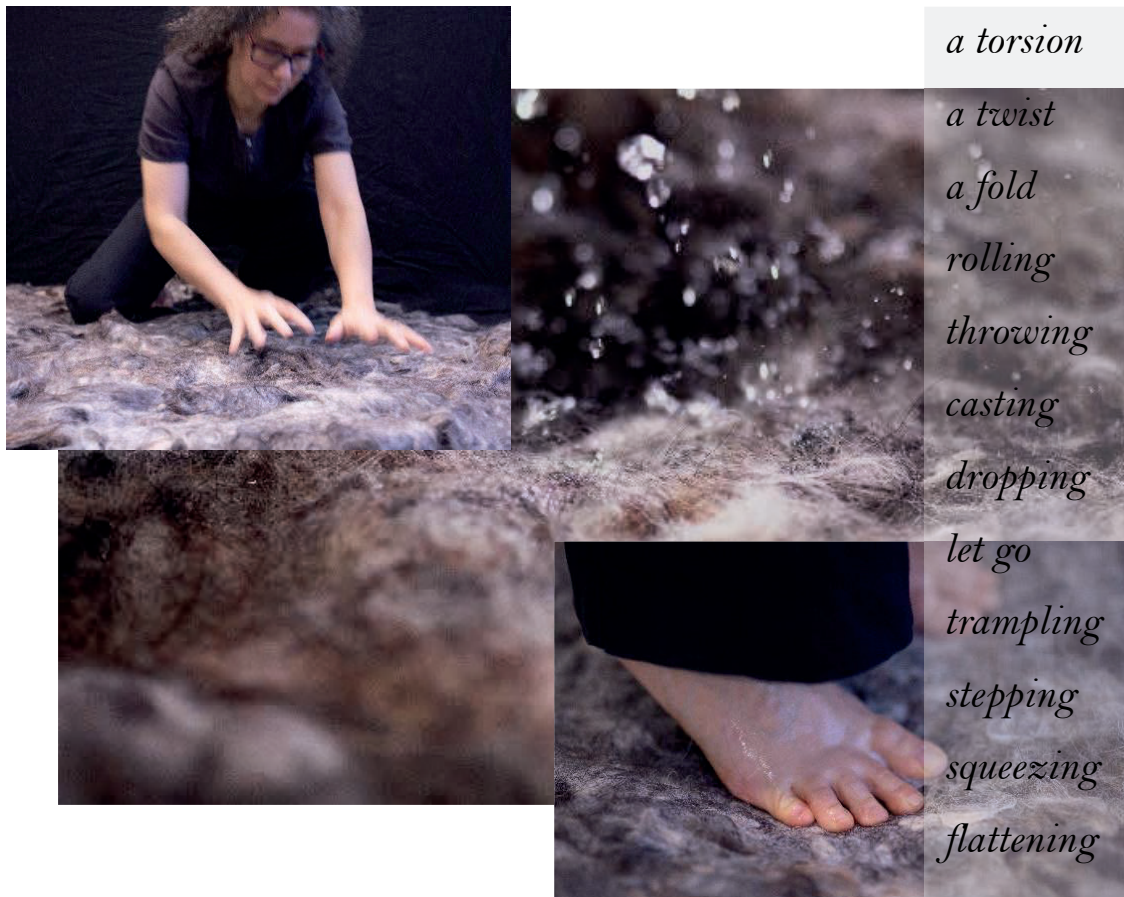


Figure 6 Intra-actions, fibres, feet, hands, water, time, scent ... Photo: Per-Arne Ellefsen.

QR 1 and the link below link to a video called ‘Cutting through an assemblage of other-less’. It is an assemblage of photographs of wool felting and a flow of

words I wrote and read aloud. It is an attempt at echoing images and sounds. It is yet another channel, with a video, to the phenomenon of wool felting.



QR 1: <https://youtu.be/6ETZtZKTUIA>

1.2 Conceptual doorways and getaways

This is how it should be done: lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 161)

There are certain concepts that are central to this research, as they contribute to articulating and activating a theoretical landscape and language. Doing research is also about finding and developing one's own language. For me, it is all about doing it physically with wool, to lodge myself in a concept and experiment with the opportunities it offers. I keep coming back to them, and they keep coming back to me. We respond to each other, as they emerge in my making (wool felting): with no prior fixed ontological identity, they emerge through our repetitive encounters and relationship. This touches on a fundamental position in several post-humanist and new materialist perspectives—that is, an opening for non-dichotomic suppositions that resist binary thinking, such as matter versus discourse or body versus thought. These articulations create movements that are similar to deterritorialization and possible lines of flight, as described in the quote above: experiments that offer opportunities to exit a territory by creating new ones when letting our thoughts fly in other directions than the routine stream. Here are a few concepts borrowed from Barad, and Deleuze and Guattari

that create such doorways and getaways. I present these concepts here to establish an initial approach to a way of thinking rather than presenting a theoretical framework. A more extensive introduction to the theoretical landscape is given in the second stratum, in the theoretical framework section.

1.2.1 Cutting together/apart, apparatus and missing acts

My entangled position as artist and artist-teacher in the world, which I am in motion with and of, resonates with the intertwining position in which matter (physical elements) and meaning (discourse) are mutually implicated, in an ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007). In this theoretical framework, the human is not seen as separated from the world, and the human does not hold a privileged position. Furthermore, according Barad (2007), the primary ontological unit is the phenomenon, not things, and all its constitutive co-components are in a continuous flux of becoming.

In summary, the primary ontological units are not ‘things’ but phenomena – dynamic topological reconfigurings/entanglements/relationalities/ (re)articulations of the world. And the primary semantic units are not ‘word’ but material-discursive practices through which (ontic and semantic) boundaries are constituted. This dynamism is agency. Agency is not an attribute but the ongoing reconfiguration of the world. The universe is agential intra-activity in its becoming. (Barad, 2007, p. 141)

This perspective disavows the human exclusivity of agency. I am not dis-located from the phenomenon I cut through (i.e., wool fibres encountering water). My discourse with wool felting is a material intervention and proposition. It is what Barad terms a ‘re-configuration’—where I re-position myself, materials, and other participants in this study. We are in a state of becoming as much as the wool fibres are in a state of becoming—together and in our intra-actions we re-constitute a material reality and reconfigure the world as not something that is *apart* from us but *a part* of us. The following quote from a written note from a student in teacher education about the relationship that occurred during a wool felting session is applicable: ‘Because the felting process is quite long, you somehow start building up a kind of “relationship” (I don’t find another word for

it) with your artwork – that makes you even more proud when you’ve finished your project’ (Jamouchi, 2020, p. 71).

I am / we are involved in and create reality and contribute to describing it, but not like something separated and independent from my/our actions or my/our description of reality. According to Barad, reality is not a fixed essence. She further explains how agential realism shifts from the ontologically real as a metaphysic of essence or the representational nature of nature, to an understanding that humans are part of the configuration or the ongoing reconfiguration of the world:

Reality is an ongoing dynamic of intra-activity. [...] It is the discursive practices by which we seek to describe phenomena do not refer to properties of abstract objects or observation-independent beings but rather actively reconfigure the world in its becoming, then what is being described by our epistemic practices is not nature itself but our intra-activity as part of nature. That is, realism is reformulated in terms of the goal of providing accurate descriptions of that reality of which we are a part and with which we intra-act, rather than some imagined and idealized human-dependent reality. (Barad, 2007, pp. 206–207)

Furthermore, apparatus is an important concept in relation to cutting together/apart. Apparatuses are not instruments or devices that can execute neutral probes, argues Barad (2007): ‘Rather, apparatuses are specific material reconfigurings of the world that do not merely emerge in time but iteratively reconfigure spacetime-mattering as part of the ongoing dynamism of becoming’ (p. 142). Referring to Bohr’s account of bodily boundaries, Barad refers to his twofold conception of the researcher/observer. Sometimes Bohr conceives the experimenter as an outside observer. In other circumstances, ‘the object and the agencies of observation are co-constituted through the enactment of a cut that depends on the specific embodiment of particular human concepts’ (p. 154).

When enacting an agential cut, I momentarily stabilize a phenomenon and focus on an organised event. This is the moment in which I choose to ‘extract’ from and explore the phenomenon of wool felting. Even when I cut apart the moment I study, I am still together/apart with the phenomenon. The iterative actions enacted as a part of the events of wool felting are stabilized with the intention to grasp what I can from what emerges in the agential intra-activity of

the phenomenon of wool felting. This implies leaving aside other co-components and other possible approaches that could engender another reading of the phenomenon. The moment which I select, and attempt to stabilize, raises a question regarding the agential cut:

The moments we observe and what we observe matter. Where we place a camera and when we record matter. These would have an impact on the foci, such as the space, actors, activities, objects, events, time, goals, emotions, rhythm, movements, actions and sounds. (Jamouchi, 2019b, p. 78).

Together with Water

Water choreographing the changes

Water integrating spaces in between

Water consecutively warm and cold

Water that opens and closes fibres

Water in its most fluid state

Water forming wool fibres

Water softening scaly edges

Water sneaking between the skin(s)

Wool Becoming Solid With Water

Water, watering, wet

The researcher becomes a part of the apparatus of observation and making/creating a phenomenon, thus what is observed is the result of a man-made cut (Barad, 2014). By making this cut, I proceed to a few inclusions and exclusions. Even if what is excluded from the observation is not explicitly included in the presentation of our work, the ‘unused’ fragments are still part of the inquiry. With this project, I also, inevitably, make a few inclusions and exclusions. Not all my practices and not every part of my practices are included in the dissertation. Sometimes I think about the excluded parts of the research as missing acts, but not ignored moments. I cannot ignore those moments. They count because what they produce with/in me counts. A few of these moments are included in the 7th element to give the reader a chance to see how this material also contributes to the in/separability of what I do and what thoughts it can produce.

1.2.2 Agential realism and intra-action

This approach of cutting together-apart denotes a lack of absolute boundaries. This is about how the (material and discursive) world re-creates itself and re-creates us simultaneously, as ‘each position in space is a multiplicity, a superposition/ entanglement of (seemingly) disparate parts’ (Barad, 2014, p. 176). In the framework of the philosopher-physicist Barad, agential realism and intra-action are central to exploring the idea of something materialising in a process of becoming in a given context and in connection to what happens in this context. Agency arises in intra-action and mutually constitutes the co-components of a phenomenon. Things are not independent of each other, but linked through relations and actions (Barad, 2007). Barad argues: ‘Agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency cannot be designated as an attribute of subjects or objects (as they do not pre-exist as such)’ (p. 214). Agential realism is not about a fixed, delimited, or immutable matter. Instead, agential realism emphasises agency in intra-action as what forms matter in an open-ended process. In my explorations of wool felting, I relate not only to the material wool as a thing that people possess and use when felting it; people are not simply doing something to the wool, but with the wool. The felting process materialises reciprocal forces: ‘I didn’t have to think too much about what I was doing, I just could use my hands and it developed kind of by itself’ (quote from a teacher student).

The co-components of the phenomenon of wool felting include space, time/duration, human and non-human, water, movements, soap, frictions, temperature, et cetera, as encompassed in the agential realism of an intra-action. That is a crucial difference from how I worked with wool and felting before adopting a performative approach. The phenomenon of wool felting also intra-acts with ancestral traditions in wool felting, art making, and pedagogical heritage in our schools.

Warp and unfold

Visible and inviable matter

Press delicately, smooth

Roll with vigour, strength

Throw intensively, powerful

Eyes, hands, wool, water, spaces, scents ...

We merge in superpositions
Making, matter and pedagogy
Made by wool

1.2.3 Phenomenon and event

Phenomena are continuous movements of intra-action, a continuum, continuously emerging (Barad, 2007). Therefore, matter, an atom, a person, an animal, or water is always in a state of becoming. What appears to us and what we can study are fragments of this evolution. Intra-action begins with phenomena rather than isolated objects. Following Barad's ontological perspective, the phenomenon of felting wool is the smallest unit of research. The co-components are both transient and in motion. An event is more limited in terms of time; it is not as extensive as a phenomenon. The felting sessions I organise are intentional events that I attempt to observe by intending an agential cut (Barad, 2007, pp. 175–176, 337). With an ontological understanding of being of the world, I do not separate myself from what I do and what is done to me. I am felting wool, and I am the research apparatus in an encounter with the wool. Agency, understood as 'the capacity, condition, or state of acting or exerting power'⁴ occurring during an event, is not necessarily only exerted by human beings. Intra-action between the co-components recognises agency as a force that is not an inherent property of a thing or a human alone (Barad, 2007, p. 235). Intra-action acknowledges the impossible absolute separation of things and recognises agency as something emerging from and exerted by each component of a phenomenon.

I cannot study the entire phenomenon of wool felting, but I can make cuts. I can organise wool felting events. It is a movement and a moment, (a state? a stratum? a stabilisation?). As a part of this event, I become porous. This porosity can let in certain aspects of the intra-action and ignore others. I enact an agential cut, as I become porous to certain parts of what happens. The cut is in correlation with what I find interesting, attractive, or favourable to what I want to examine more closely. The cut poses questions that interest me or awaken my curiosity. I wrote elsewhere: 'Symbolically, wool fibres encourage us to become porous to others and otherness. Felting wool is a sensory and aesthetical experience of the porosity of the material. When we pour water on wool fibres, they open up and

⁴ Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/agency>.

expand' (Cloutier et al., 2022, p. 267). Symbolically, we also open up and expand in our encounter with wool.

Sounds inhabit space and morph into materialities

Walking legs (des)order layers and layers of fibres

Time produces layers

Layers produces time

Porousness of the wool echoes our becoming and porosity

Metamorphosis of times and spaces

1.2.4 Re-turn

The concept of re-turn (with a hyphen) helps to articulate my relationship with wool felting in terms of how I have been felting wool earlier and how I now enter the phenomenon of wool felting. It emphasises the idea of non-settled or non-solved practices. My re-turn to wool felting brings to the front, in a more conscious and sensuous manner, how I create a new relationship with a craft tradition that I learned 20 years ago, during my stay as an exchange student in Norway. I learned to felt, partially by using a book and partially with an older lady who was interested in Norwegian craft traditions.

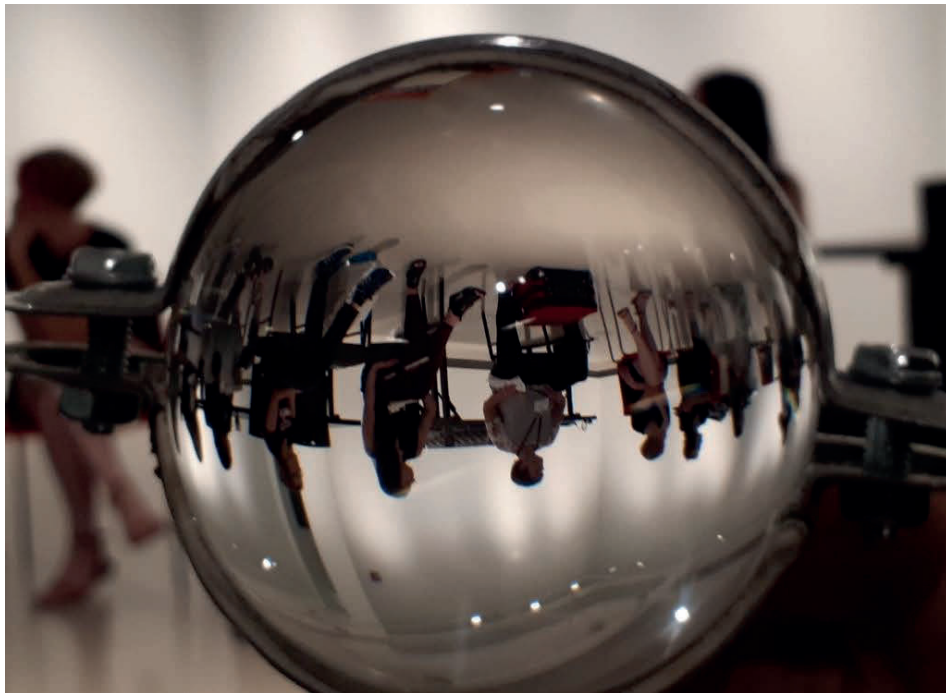


Figure 7 Camera using a glass ball as a device to turn upside down the room and the persons in it. Encounter of artists-researchers at the University of British Columbia, Canada. Photography by Rocío Lara-Osuna. 2019

Today, I approach wool felting differently. I am aware of the superpositions of layers of ancestral craft tradition, a contemporary form of expression inspired by performance art, knowledge inherited from my academic artistic background, and my approach to it when recognising the agency of different components of the wool felting process. According to Barad (2014), by re-turning one does not replicate something, like a reflection in a mirror, which does not engender something different or new. A re-turn engenders diffraction. In my first article (Jamouchi, 2019a), I narrate how my re-turn to wool felting gives me a diffractive reading of my artistic and pedagogical practices in an early phase of this research project. A significant outcome of my re-turn and diffractive reading of wool felting is the shift from regarding the final product as the most important part of my artistic practice to regarding the process of felting as an important aspect of my artistic practice. Furthermore, it also enables me to see the wool felting process as an event which arises from a broader phenomenon, including its diverse human and non-human co-components. These co-components are, for instance, time and space, as mentioned in the first article: ‘Away from a mindset promoting stabilization (of time) and standardization (of objects), my students and I find ourselves elsewhere. Space becomes more qualitative than metric’ (Jamouchi, 2019a, p. 75).

Furthermore, a few co-components of the phenomenon of felting are scent, humidity, surface, density, et cetera, in play in the (re)search of wool material and the felting process. Re-turning to wool felting opens up the possibility to see complexity and nuances that I did not seek to articulate earlier, but that I dare to see as I do now. Now, I am more attentive to bodily and tacit knowledge that is material and situation specific. This contributes to practising wool felting as a way of being in/of the world.

1.2.5 Diffraction

Diffraction is another key concept in Barad’s agential realism. Diffraction is something other than mirroring something in an attempt to resemble or represent sameness. I do not return to what has been done, but re-turn to the phenomenon of wool felting. Reading about wool felting through historical, technical, pedagogical, or artistic lenses might produce different patterns. Thus, a diffractive reading of the phenomenon of wool felting becomes an act of complementarity, in which different patterns or experiences overlap. Barad

writes about diffraction by using Bohr's complementarity theory in physics. She uses a figure that presents a diagram based on Bohr's drawings, namely one of his two-slits diffraction or interference experiments (Barad, 2007, p. 82). This experiment reveals that light consists of both particles and waves, depending on the apparatus used. Barad (2007) writes that the result of this experience 'involves a crucial rethinking of much of western epistemology and ontology' (p. 83), which she sees as illuminating 'the very nature of superpositions and their relationship to the so-called entanglement of states' (p. 83). Particles and waves are not inherent attributes in that case; they are not attributes of the phenomenon of light. 'The nature of the observed phenomenon changes with corresponding changes in the apparatus' (Barad, 2007, p. 106).

A diffractive reading is also used as a methodological reading. Barad presents a table with two columns that 'summarize some of the main differences entailed in shifting our thinking from questions of reflection to those of diffraction' (pp. 88–90). One of the features of a diffractive methodology is reading, for example, texts or theories, not against each other but through each other. 'I am not interested in reading, say, physics and poststructuralist theory against each other, positioning one in a static geometrical relation to the other, or setting one up as the other's unmovable and unyielding foil' (p. 92). Her concept of diffraction inspires my thinking and making, with wool felting producing differences rather than sameness. Therefore, using a diffractive methodology in reading texts through one another inspires me to diffractively analyse the articles I wrote during my PhD project.

*imperceptibles folds and curves
microscopic barbs on the surface of the fibres that hook together
felting bodies, in thinking, making, wondering and wandering
loosen, agitated, mixed, entangled and bound together
wool and words enfold as they come to me*

1.2.6 Material-discourse

In this project, I position the materials, both felting and text making, in a position of reciprocal relationality. The making in my artist-teacher-researcher practice is a project that informs/deforms/re-forms through a positive and creative critical approach, in that it has an impact on how I walk my artist-researcher and teacher-

researcher path. I have *roots* that go back to my earlier understanding of learned textile traditions. A material-discourse enables me to create future *routes* that consecutively destabilise and stabilise the becoming and crossing of the diverse pathways I walk. This relationship between materials and words, is what Barad calls ‘material-discourse’:

The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulate in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other. (Barad, 2003, p. 822)

This implies that, in addition to an intra-active relationship to materials, one does not assume that researchers exist as separated knowing individuals who construct knowledge about other people or other things. In a material-discursive framework, we assume that what is researched is not a subject of study that exists outside the relationship between the researcher and the researched. My experience of wool felting melds with my understanding of wool felting. Although I find myself in a philosophical landscape and in dialogue with philosophical concepts, I am not a philosopher, a post-structuralist, physician, scientist, or new materialist. I am interested in possible ways of engaging with a performative approach to words and wool. However, we—artist-teacher-researchers—still have to question and play with the use of words in writing a doctoral dissertation. Can a theoretical *disciplinary* language be(come) a theoretically (or abstractly) *disciplining* language? How can we write from the perspective of an academic discipline or a school subject without being caught up in its language? Undertaking a material-discourse becomes a dynamic enterprise that makes visible the singularity of an artistic process and research that do not exclude materiality.

Encounters between matter in-motions and enunciations

Space mattering

Lines of fibres, lines of sentences

Spaces in-between, exploring and re-creating

Assemblage of fibres and phrases

1.2.7 Pecuniary ethical aspect

The results of people's participation in this project are both this written dissertation and felted wool pieces made from our combined physical efforts (see article 3, in which I explain the wet wool felting technique, Jamouchi, 2020, p. 53). After a felting session, occasionally we share the wool fabric among the participants; this is mostly the case when the participants are student teachers. Occasionally, I compost the organic material, particularly when the fibres are still very loose at the end of a workshop. At other times, I take this by-product of a felting process home; this is mostly the case when I work in artistic and academic contexts (in an art gallery or during a conference).

Then, the question of ethics can be related to the labour provided by the participants, a workforce that I believe is as essential as the oral or written feedback that participants share with me to empower this project. An unsolved question that comes to my mind is how I should treat those products, the physical result of a felting event. They are at the same time a by-product of the research and objects that hold other qualities due to their aesthetic visual value. If desired, those objects could be used as decorative objects. They can indeed be exhibited, used as fabric material in fashion design, or used as carpets or blankets. I can understand that somebody sees commercial value in these items (apart from their value in creating ideas). Even if none of the participants have raised these pecuniary questions, this brings into play monetary and ethical questions. However, I would deplore the idea that somebody sees only, or mostly, a monetary value in these products.



Figure 8 Example of felted wool drying in the sun after a workshop at the ETEN international conference in Spain. Photo: Edita Musneckiene.2019.

1.3 Segments

The segments of this research are movements between moments of different nature bringing intensities and connections from the past, the imagined future, emerging questions, colleagues, and artists. This creates a rhizomatic network, a map that is open and connectable in all its dimensions.

1.3.1 Writing and intensities

The act of writing/using words and concepts under moments consecrated during writing activates agency. Thus, a transformative relationship is created between written words and the writer. In this text, I occasionally use words for their definition in the dictionary; occasionally for what they evoke in/to me or the feelings and thoughts they provoke in me; occasionally, I use words for their sounds and rhythms; and occasionally I use words for their closeness to my imagination and images they invoke, as images are important components of this mantle. Then, like my artistic practice, writing becomes performative. Writing, like wool felting, can have multiple entryways to connections of different natures. Segments come from the side, from the past, or from the future. Certain segments have more or less intense connections to the present moment. As such, the rhizome conveys segments from the past, the present, encounters in other contexts, teaching experiences, researchers, pedagogues, artworks, and artists. All these aspects contribute to little sparks of questioning that engendered the two research questions of this doctoral project.

1.3.2 Segments from the past articulating the present

For more than two decades, a recurrent thematic in my artworks has been people's everyday lives and their relationships with others and space—spaces scaling from the private sphere to the neighbourhood, urban experiences, and the wider geopolitical scale. However, I worked mostly behind the closed doors of my studio producing art works that would eventually be exposed in exhibition spaces. Since the late nineties, I have repeatedly explored textile materials through different techniques and modes of expression. Many of my previous works are large-scale immersive installations and soft sculptures. I work with various materials, including metal, stone, wood, paper, and digital technology. However, textile is the material and medium that I use most frequently—in weaving, knitting, embroidering, sewing clothes or objects, and wool felting.

In 2005, I began teaching the subject of visual arts to student teachers. I started to *show* them pictures of my artwork in the classroom. Thus, I used re-presentations of my artwork; I did not invite them into my world and work process as an artist. Pictures, as a re-presentation of my completed artistic production, are not what I *do* as an artist. Retrospectively, I see that my earlier work as a teacher in the visual arts was disconnected from my artistic practice. The artist and teacher I am, simultaneously, excluded each other. This exclusionary duality is something that intrigued me, and I became curious about other possible ways of doing, conveying, and researching my different artistic activities. This led me to actively *use* my artistic practice with the students.

The transitions, transformation, and merging of my artistic and pedagogical practices present a wayfaring that goes along with moments of wonder and doubts. These include questions that hold vitality in my practices. It is such moments of searching and experimenting that I attempt to communicate with this dissertation.

1.3.3 Segments of emerging questioning

I questioned how and when I (re-)present artistic works to my students. I began questioning how I facilitated the meeting among the students, specific artworks and working processes, and the world of arts in general. I shared those questions with colleagues during several conferences. How do I (re-)present artistic work to our students? Here is an extract of my questioning:

Are there some *seductive aspects* in showing pictures and ‘explaining’ what the art works are about? Is it more *pleasant* or *safe* to be seated and let the teacher do the teaching, instead of involving oneself physically and emotionally in a creative way?

The different relations that emerge (immanent) re-configure the world and our relations (intra-action). Can art making and aesthetic *experience* be seen as *intra-acting* processes, a continuous and evolving *sapcetimemattering*?

Figure 9 Slide from a PowerPoint presentation I used in different conferences to share my questioning and curiosity.

Questions regarding how I work as an artist and how I can bring my art making into teacher training became insistent in my mind. I brought those questions to colleges in Norway and abroad. Conferences and seminars were a few of the arenas where I exposed these questions. My concern as an artist-teacher comes from my interest in how one *could* teach and is not limited to the idea of how one *should* teach. As a teacher, one can attempt to fit into general rules that might be external to local and immediate contexts. This is a concern I share with colleagues in France and Finland. This is what my colleagues Luc Dall'Armellina in Paris, Kerttuli Saajoranta in Oulu, and I discuss in our collaboration:

When one teaches the arts, either to visual arts teachers or to primary school teachers, the question inevitably arises as to how to conduct and accompany this double movement of bringing the experience of art to life and creating the conditions for its sharing. This question does not seem to be resolved by what is called didactics, which separates each thing, each time, each space, in search of a rationality that seems to always miss the subject and its singularity. (Dall'Armellina, Jamouchi, & Saajoranta, 2022, p. 12)

Leaning on an immanent ontology (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980), one does not attempt to suit an external/universal/ideologic/divine framework to contain and constrain what we do into external frameworks, but examines the context within which we are and allows it to become itself and not a representation of other positions or values. Thus, the ancestral craft of wool felting becomes a performative act, engaging us⁵ in processes that enable exploration and experimentation. This is a performative approach that enables us to be consciously and sensually present, to become acquainted with the world and ourselves in a direct and intimate manner.

⁵ I do not use 'us' or 'we' to refer to a community (as a social construction, or socially engaged art). Here 'us' includes students and I. In my third article (p. 69), I explain how I use 'we' in a teaching context. Note that I sometimes I use 'we' to include all the co-components of the phenomenon of wool felting, those being both human and non-human.

1.3.4 Artistic research

Artistic research leads me to arts-based research. Some regard the two terms as similar or as having blurred boundaries. However, artistic research is often used in the context of fine arts faculties, and arts-based research is often used in education faculties (Marin-Vidal, 2017, pp. 38–39). I explore the intimate relationship between various entangled co-components which create the phenomenon of wool felting in artistic and educational contexts. The entangled matters in the wool felting phenomenon are, among others, intra-action between bodies, materials, non-humans, water, wool, space, and time. Evolving and becoming aware of the entangled positions of the artist-teacher in the world, which I am (a part) of, I opt for an intertwining position where matter (physical elements) and meaning (discourse) are mutually implicated, in an ethico-onto-epistemology (Barad, 2007). This marked the beginning of a transition. I did not begin with a problem as such, *per se*, but with an interest—as drama teacher and researcher Brad Haseman writes about (Haseman, 2006, p. 100) —when questioning my own work as an artist and arts teacher. It was curiosity that grounded my practices.

I wanted to
Understand
Because
I was curious

Figure 10 Slide from a PowerPoint presentation I used in different conferences to share my questioning and curiosity.

1.3.5 Lateral segments from other researches and researchers in Norway

This research is not situated in isolation. As mentioned in my third article (Jamouchi, 2020, p. 61), a few Norwegian doctoral theses written by Ninni Sandvik (2013), Bente Ulla (2015), Ann Sofi Larsen (2015), Camilla E. Andersen (2015), and Ann Merete Otterstad (2018) relate to how pedagogical work in early childhood education (ECE) can be approached as more explorative than normative. Even if the work of these academics is related to the subject of pedagogy, their approach to teaching practices contains moments that are close to my approach to art making and teaching. One of these features is related to the working process and time.

... when working in a processual way instead of rushing toward any predefined goal. This implies working from within, letting the process take its time, opening up to energies within each sequence and allowing them to determine the tempo and pace.

Consequently, we need *more* time, *more* dwelling, *more* pauses and even *more* affective investigations in order to encourage experimental creation of thought instead of any predefined learning outcome, as such thought creation is a time-consuming activity (Berg & Seeber, 2018). (Larsen, Ulla, Sandvik, 2020, p. 10)

Over the past decade, researchers in early childhood studies have invited us to move toward post-human and material studies, as a reaction to children-/human-centred, logocentric and development theoretical perspectives based on humanistic thinking. Sandvik expresses a few apprehensions regarding political positions and deplores ‘times where the governmental desire to control and tame educational research practices seems overwhelming and paralyzing’ (Sandvik, 2013).

Even if such explorative approaches and theoretical views are implemented in the subject of pedagogy in ECE, the contributions of such approaches in visual arts education in the field of teacher education in Norway remain modest. Fortunately, we can now hear that other voices from the subject of visual arts are growing stronger. Several works show the desire to interrogate and expand our understanding of what art can be in teacher education. Inspired by contemporary art, certain authors are themselves artists and, with a desire for

change in art education, they contribute with their respective perspectives. They focus on materials, collectively or socially engaged practices, and the body and embodied learning, and are inspired by new theoretical approaches such as posthuman, performative, new-materialism, or postcolonialism. These approaches allow shifts and displacements towards educational practices that resist what Atkinson (2015) calls a ‘dominant pedagogical attitude’. These other approaches view art as something that can contribute to disturbing subjectivation as well as the ordinary and linear order of pedagogy, providing an invitation to collective working processes, and emphasising the importance of the body and the integration of the idea of the other. A few of these researchers are mentioned in the first two articles.

Helene Illeris (2012) debates the artistic education and aesthetic learning processes that she considers as remaining bound to a limited number of symbolic forms, while experiences with a range of other cultural products are excluded. She calls for aesthetic learning processes that leave passive empathy for actively created relationships as a part of the learning process, by supplementing the visual art education with a performative level at which the learners’ strategic choices of relational forms are considered an active part of the learning process. When she proposes performance as another manner of challenging subjectification in the educational context, she also proposes examining the field of art—from the 1970s onwards, numerous artistic works can be understood through the viewer’s empathy, interpretation, and critique; this is particularly true for works within contemporary community-based participatory practices. She refers to Bourriaud (2002) and emphasises that many artists have, since the 1970s, worked within a relational aesthetic in which the principal role of the artwork is not to be of showing but has a stage relation. Illeris proposes the idea of a performative experimental community, which conveys the idea that one of the most interesting aspects of artwork is not only related to making something with materials or the site-specific aspect of an art project; rather, she looks at how an artistic process is set to open up for spontaneous and active participation. This contributes to creating spaces for joint practices. Hence, Illeris’ approach to pedagogy in the subject of visual arts includes performative and experimental aspects.

Furthermore, inspired by Rancière’s concept of dissensus and informed by the characteristics of contemporary arts that offer resistance, Lisbet Skregelid (2021) develops a pedagogy that enables transformations when pupils encounter

art that can be experienced as controversial and conflict-filled. This can be considered as a strategy of interrupting and disturbing, as she includes the work of Biesta (2017), which calls for education that deals with existential matters, thereby implying education that is possibly confronting and difficult (Skregelid, 2021, p. 699).

Building on the research of both Illeris and Skregelid, Monica Klungland (2021) further combines Biesta and Barad in a micro-ethnographic fieldwork, with pupils playing with yarn during an arts and craft session in the woods. She argues in favour of material-collective practices as a pedagogical approach for a world-centred arts and crafts education. Departing from micro-ethnographic fieldwork, using action cameras with seventh-grade pupils in a Norwegian school, and inspired by Karen Bard's agential realism, she concludes that material-collective practices as a pedagogical approach are characterized by the facts that: 1) the teacher's professional knowledge and teaching are of great importance; 2) creative work takes place within materials and space, and time and movement are highlighted as tools; 3) the creative process has unforeseen and unplanned aspects, which must be emphasised; and 4) the original and personal are not linked to the characteristics of an object, but to the traces set in creative practice.

Below is a map that situates this lateral segment visually, including some Norwegian researchers and their thematic fields of interest.

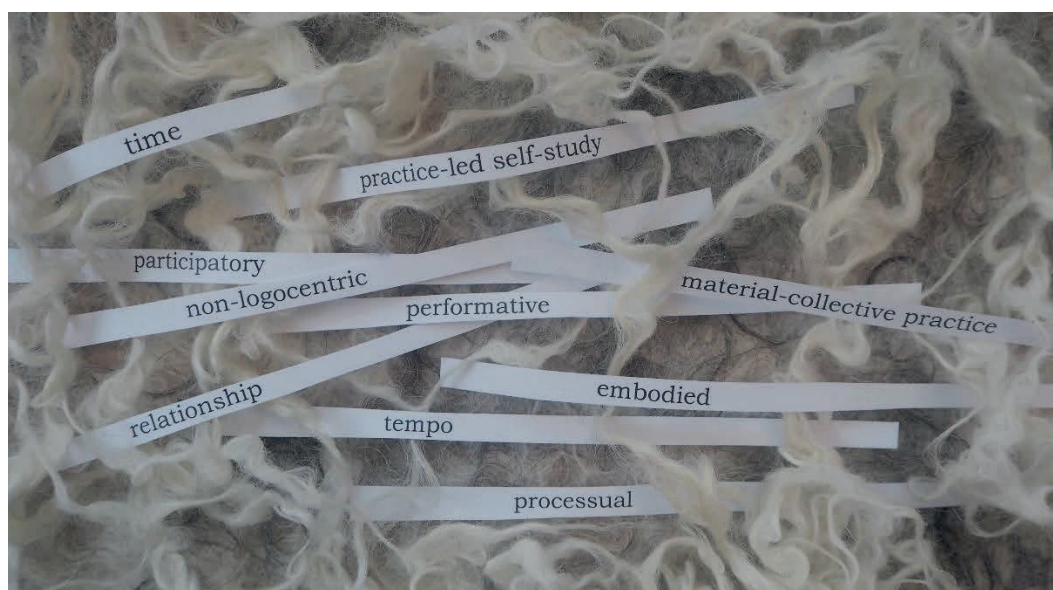


Figure 11 Mapping some of the thematic fields of interest of Norwegian researchers, namely time, embodied, practice-led self-study, participatory, material-collective practice, performative, non-logocentric, processual, relationship, tempo.

Certain artist teachers use their artistic practice in their own research in the pedagogical setting. For example, Camilla Groth (2015) uses her practice and knowledge of ceramic craft to study embodied cognition and embodied knowledge when involving subjective experience and emotion. She argues that a more intimate and creative approach to research can reveal unique insights through practice-led self-study.

Tone Pernille Østern works as a dancer and teacher of dance, drama, and theatre. She emphasises the performative and embodied aspects in teacher education. Østern writes, ‘She works both artistically and educationally, because these two aspects are closely intertwined in creative processes in dance art’ (Østern, 2014, p. 206). Her understanding of Haseman’s manifesto for performative research (2006) emphasises that ‘the research focus shifts from what a research phenomenon “is” to what it “does”’ (Østern et al., 2021, p. 6). She further emphasises that a performative paradigm produces knowledge in a flow of becoming entangled with the world (Østern et al., 2021, p. 7).

Helen Eriksen (2020), together with Gry Ulrichsen and Zahra Bayati, investigates postcolonial art education by positioning herself as a visual artist in what she calls a realm of whiteness when she realises how one of her artistic choices excluded the voice of others. This introduces the idea of learning about each other and the world around us during the working process, and thinking of art pedagogy as a relationship rather than merely exhibited objects.

A common denominator in the above-mentioned approaches to art in teacher education is that they deploy strategies of resistance to a dominant pedagogical attitude. One of the concerns in my work, as in theirs, is to not only focus on what the student can accomplish in terms of technical skills. My concerns and questioning lead me to explore what a teaching session can achieve in terms of a broader understanding of what art can mean when artistic and educational encounters are considered as possible moments of transformation. Then the transformative potential of art is connected to the idea of becoming:

Art, then, might be understood as the name for a function: a magical, an aesthetic, function of transformation. Art is less involved in making sense of the world and more involved in exploring the possibilities of being, of becoming, in the world. Less involved in knowledge and more involved in experience, in pushing forward the boundaries of what can be experienced. Finally, less involved in shielding us from death, but indeed

precisely involved in actualizing the possibilities of life. (O’Sullivan 2001, p. 130)

Without aiming to be provocative, such approaches can disturb. Insights from my enquiry reveal that a rupture within a pedagogy that focuses mainly on things (physical objects produced to be assessed) is not common in a school system, particularly, in a school system connected to ‘a pedagogy of the known and its normative inheritance’ and prescriptible learning (Atkinson, 2021, p. 2). Atkinson advocates for the notion of speculative pedagogies that are not controlled on the grounds of pre-established templates of knowledge, values, and pedagogical expectations that lead to already specified endpoints (2021, p. 2). In my second article (Jamouchi, 2019b, p. 65), I write about challenging the usual mode of teaching and how the students express that they are not used to involving themselves or each other bodily or even to actively use the surroundings/space in the learning process.

1.3.6 Lateral segments from artworks and artists

From the art world, I connect and relate to artists who use wool felting or textile by according importance to the working process. Some of these artists are Cecilia Vicuña (Chile), Claudy Jongstra (the Netherlands), Georgina Spry (England), and Marjolein Dallinga (the Netherlands and Canada). Apart from the working process itself, what catches my attention about these four artists, is their intimated relationship with materials, human and animal bodies, and time/memory. Each of them, in their own way, echoes the intensities I find in my own meeting with wool felting. Certain aspects of their work not only focus on a ‘simple’ execution of products, but connect with indigenous, nature, time, tactility, or sickness and human vulnerability. Below, I briefly present their work and what interests me about their respective working processes.

Cecilia Vicuña’s (b.1948) work is rooted in the themes of language/poetry, memory, indigeneity, installation, and performance/actions. She sees wool as the origin of textile, and uses wool in performances that connect the native people from the Andes to time and territory in a non-linear construction of time. Vicuña introduces her work in the following manner: ‘My work dwells in

the not yet, the future potential of the unformed, where sound, weaving, and language interact to create new meanings.’⁶



Figure 12 Photomontage of the four artists, from left to right: Vicuña, Jongstra, Spry, and Dallinga⁷.

Relationing

I am moved by the desire to explore reciprocal dynamic processes

Vanishing

Be its ephemeral apparition and fading away

Bodying

Be its creative process in shape changing and bodily involved acts

Sensoring

Be its haptic intensities or soundscapes

Claudy Jongstra’s (b. 1963) use of natural materials and handicraft is essential in her approach to the working process. She works with local sourcing from her own farm. She writes:

⁶ Source: <http://www.ceciliavicuna.com/introduction>.

⁷ The titles of the four works from left to right, and the sources of the pictures:

We Are All Indigenous: Listening Our Ancient Thought. Performance.

Source: <https://terremoto.mx/en/revista/we-are-all-indigenous-listening-in-on-our-ancient-thought/>.

When botanics are distilled into pigment, raw materials reveal their inner vitality in vibrant colour.

Source: <https://claudyjongstra.com/process/making/234>.

Ruminations (no date). Felted wool and embroidery.

Source: <https://www.anewfeltpresence.com/ruminations>.

Grey matter (no date). Sculpture.

Source: <https://www.bloomfelt.com/sculptures/>.

People used to be able to feel the quality of wool between their fingers and understand its material properties through sensory experience. The textured knowledge - tacit knowledge - present in each fleece from our flock of 250 rare indigenous Drenthe Heath sheep also revitalizes an ancient connection with tactile sensibilities”.⁸

In July 2021, I had the opportunity to meet Georgina Spry virtually during a conference organised by the International Society for Education Through Art. Her research project relates to wool felting and pockets, which she relates to her personal journey through breast cancer; this project is a part of her doctoral thesis. Spy's work *Ruminations* evokes cell division and restoration. In one of her works, we can see openings and stitches, like an act of care and repair, in her healing journey. The natural material of wool is intimately related to the fragility of a (female) body. I understand her work as a way of living, a way to survive. I understand her use of wool as a reflection of human vulnerability.

I also met Marjolein Dallinga during one of her workshops in Norway in 2017. Her approach to sheep's wool as sensory and bodily engagement with the material is an integrated part of the act of wool felting. She pays great attention to touch in the 'aliveness' of animal material, which makes us approach it as something close to our human skin. Many of her soft sculptures remind me of organic or animal-human creatures.

With this little detour of presenting the works of the above-mentioned artists, I invite the reader to approach and enter my artistic world in dialogue with them. My re-turn and diffractive reading of wool felting gives me an understanding of the work of others that emphasises my own approach to wool felting. This affinity reveals that we are not alone in our ambiguities and questioning. Maybe, to a certain extent, it reveals the almost impossible nature of fully expressing ourselves. I sometimes feel that I can only see small glimpses of what I do and, thus, can make visible to others only small glimpses of what I do. This fragment of dialogues with other artistes works on me in a similar manner as literature can do. It diffractively reflects what I have done and seen before.

Joseph Beuys (Germany) and Hicham Benohoud (Morocco) are two other artists that I have in mind, for different reasons. I present these two teacher-artists

⁸ Source: <https://claudyjongstra.com/blog/sourcing/233>

in order to shed light on their creative processes in dialogue with others, including students and pupils.

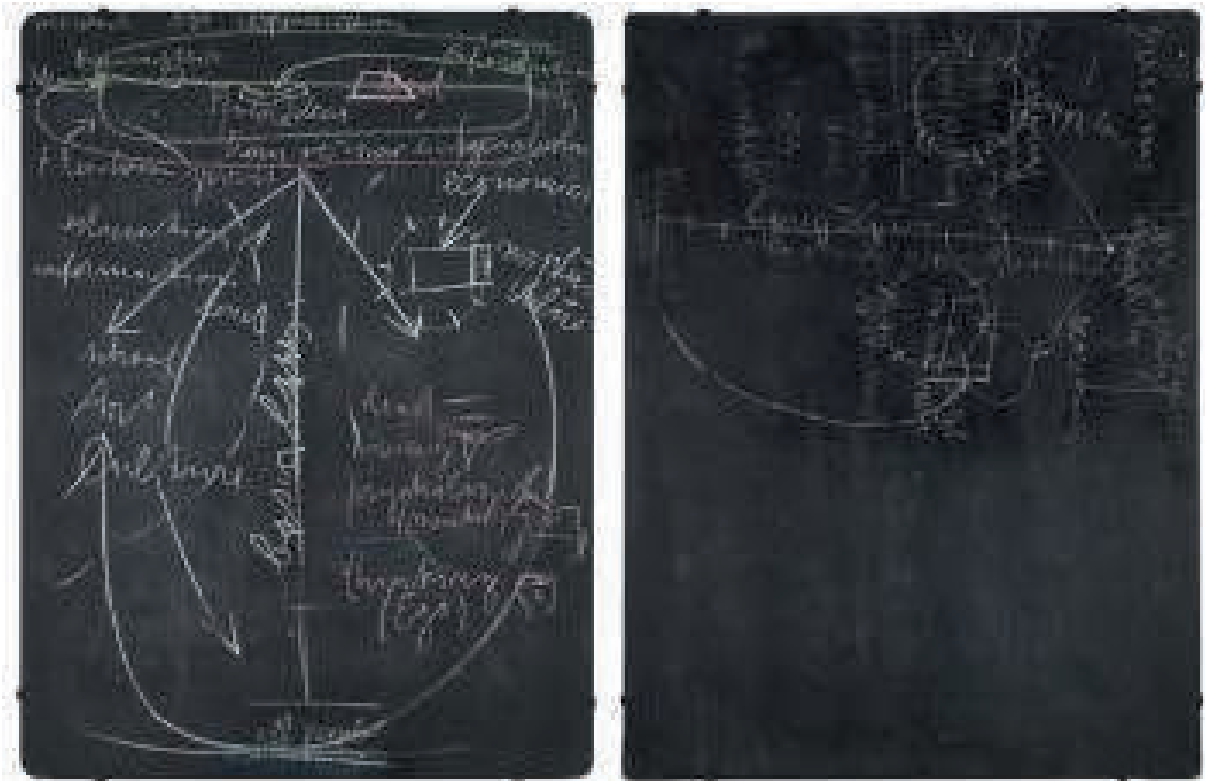


Figure 13 Joseph Beuys, Two of the blackboards of *Four Blackboards* (1972). Chalk on blackboards.
Source: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/beuys-four-blackboards-t03594>.

The work of Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) is intriguing. I do not know if wool and fat really saved his life, or if it is a myth. However, even if material felt is present in his work, the reason I mention him is his decision to open his art classes to people other than the students of the Art Academy of Dusseldorf. Beuys's work is also known for its extended definition of art that encompasses a pedagogical practice as social sculpture. When he claims that teaching is his greatest work of art, he reveals his belief that teaching does not play a secondary role in his work. Following that logic, there is no categorical separation between art, teaching, and everyday life. He believes that every aspect of life could be approached creatively and that everyone has the potential to be an artist. In particular, I would like to mention his actions (lectures) and his 'production' of

blackboards. Somehow, I see those boards as a by-product of his work. Today, some of them (*Four Blackboards*⁹) are part of the Tate Collection.

I remember talking about the result of my felting works with my supervisors, Helene Illeris and Ann Karin Jortveit. I then lingered on a few ideas regarding the materialization of thoughts resulting in objects co-made with others. I could see the visually aesthetic qualities in the feted objects that we create together in a classroom, during a conference, during an art exhibition, or during an artist residence programme—moments of creation that involve students, scholars, colleagues, and the public at large. Somehow, I regard the felted product as a by-product. Something that remains, leftovers, after our co-making, thinking, talking, and exchanging bodily, verbal, and non-verbal experiences.



Figure 14 Hicham Benohoud's *La salle de classe* (1994–2002/2014). Photography.

Source: <https://www.museoreinasofia.es/en/collection/artwork/salle-clase-classroom-2>.

For Hicham Benohoud (b.1986), ‘doing’ art with pupils, not only teaching it, appears to be an act liberating him from boredom and a narrow use of the

⁹ In 1972, Beuys gave a six-and-a-half-hour lecture at the Tate Gallery, London. During this lecture, he made three blackboards with words and drawings. Another blackboard was used the following day at the Whitechapel Gallery, London, and the four were brought together as a group in the Tate Collection (*Four Blackboards*, 1972). Source: <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/features/joseph-beuys-learning-resource>.

curriculum. By taking pictures of different *mise en scène* (staging) in the classroom, he explores his own and pupils' experiences of spaces and objects.

The artistic research of these two artists is not unique, but not too many current research-based arts practices have a formulated pedagogical intention (Lebech, 2019, p. 44). I remember pictures I saw many years ago taken by this Moroccan artist who photographed his pupils in odd situations—black-and-white pictures of young people whose bodies were staged in a space arranged with different materials. I found a couple of postcards with his pictures in my cabinet. I saw the name of the artist on the postcards and searched for him on the internet. Hicham Benohoud, an art teacher for 11-to-15-year-old pupils in a school in Marrakech, uses photography in the classroom as another means to practise and teach art. In an interview with *The Guardian*, he said:

If I was bored, the students were, too. I had to follow the curriculum in class, and it was so repetitive, so pointless, that anything out of the ordinary was exciting for them. As soon as I took my camera out, their faces would light up. 'What's he going to get us to do now?' I could feel their gaze on me: we had a real understanding. (Dale Berning Sawa, 2018)

With his camera, his ideas, and creative practice interrupting the monotony of a classroom, Benohoud endeavours to explore teaching sessions differently.

These lateral segments from various artists and artworks provide a glimpse of my artistic interests; I intend for them to indicate how I interpret and relate to other artistic practices.

1.3.7 In the continuum of lateral segments

My approach is a continuum to these lateral segments from other research, researchers, artistic processes, artists, and pedagogical practices mentioned above. I am curious and question a regime of practices that could be addressed to explore a broad understanding of what art education can become. This unveils a few possible entanglements that arise from my rhizomatic practices. The entanglements and disentanglements of my three practices create segments that occasionally challenge my working habits. However, often this helps me in understanding, creating enjoyment, and engaging in my encounters with a diverse range of audiences in diverse arenas where artistic/creative events occur.

The rhizomatic connections among my practices, materials, and theoretical approaches activate a critical and transformative approach in my artistic and arts-based research. Such rhizomatic connections also bring a critical gaze to a particular art teaching practice, when education is organised as mass production or devalue relational factors in classic Western education, as I mention in article 3 (Jamouchi, 2020, p. 51). My curiosity triggers a desire to go deeper, understand more, and question what I do in my encounters with others, how I do it, and what consequences this can have (including ethical consequences).

1.4 Potential zones of friction in the rhizomatic network

1.4.1 In a state of becoming

The projects I conducted and present in this doctoral dissertation are site- and/or audience-specific and include aspects of intra-action with materials and the people present. We transform the familiar classroom hierarchy, as we/I engage with wool felting. We meet others and otherness, and cohabit in a feeling of togetherness in intra-action with wool as one of the materials. The configuration of the classroom, with students sitting on chairs behind desks, using small-scale formats and mostly just their hands, shifts to a space in which we stand and work with our entire bodies and engage spatially in a rhythmic encounter. In article 1, I describe space and temporality as intra-action in the felting process and how groups of students and the working process ‘create time-space-action through iteration, following the bodies and wool in motion’ (Jamouchi, 2019a, p. 74).

Atkinson (2015, p. 43) argues that there are two pedagogical approaches. One is preordained ‘pedagogised’ subjects that will meet the needs of economic competition, which is held in place by controlled curriculums, assessment, and inspection programmes. The other is one which he describes as the ‘not-know’ and ‘subjects-yet-to-come’ (Atkinson, 2015, p. 44). Thus, zones of friction can and will appear in divergent understandings of the discussion of knowledge production, learning processes, and learning outcomes. For example, I recall a meeting with four colleagues (visual arts teachers) discussing our respective understandings of what drawing means and our ontological assumptions thereof. On the one hand, some of us had a view of drawing as a product that should be assessed based on formal aesthetic conventions, as a heritage from academism. On the other hand, some of us had a view of drawing including a process-oriented event that holds relational and dialogical aspects as characterised by contemporary artistic practices. Zones of friction emerged among different views

that, on the one hand, opposed assessment that is understood as based on the teacher analysing drawings as a product and, on the other hand, assessment understood as based on the students' reflection on their drawings as transformative and collaborative processes.

Drawing as a finished product that provides a picture of something is what Atkinson calls 'a dominant pedagogical attitude' (Atkinson, 2015, p. 44). He borrows Barad's concept of intra-action to resist what Deleuze calls an 'image of thought'. Inspired by Barad and Deleuze, Atkinson argues that we 'do not exist as fixed or permanent entities separated from their surroundings but as ongoing relations of becoming in a world that is also always becoming' (Atkinson 2015, p. 44). He explains further that the term 'image of taught', borrowed from Deleuze, is like 'an apparatus that establishes a territorialisation that constrains thinking but also, paradoxically, prevents thinking. It leads to the production of norms and normalising procedures and processes of recognition and representation that "think for us" (p. 49). When I seek to unveil what can emerge from a teaching practice that adopts a performative approach to wool felting, it is through dialogue and experimentation with the students and fibres, rather than merely the execution of the felted object. That helps to reveal what is yet to come. This can be challenging when a teacher or student wishes to fit into the frame of a given curriculum, or to fit into what Atkinson calls 'prescribed learning'.

1.4.2 Ethical dimensions and response-ability

As Barad explains, critique is more than putting someone or something down. Critique can be an affirmative impulse, using 'a method of diffractive reading insights through one another, building new insights, and attentively and carefully reading for differences that matter in their fine details, together with the recognition that there intrinsic to this analysis is an ethics that is not predicated on externality but rather entanglement', and 'inventive provocations' that move the notion of critique to 'other kinds of engagement that we might practise' (Barad in Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012, p. 50). For me, this implies an engagement in exploring other ways of practising art and artistic education and, as Barad puts it, 'in the sense of being suggestive, creative' (p. 50). A drawback of critique is that '[c]ritique is all too often not a deconstructive practice, that is, a practice of reading for the constitutive exclusions of those ideas we cannot do without, but a destructive practice meant to dismiss, to turn aside, to put someone

or something down—another scholar, another feminist, a discipline, an approach, et cetera’ (p. 49). For Barad, this is a practice of negativity and is about subtraction, distancing, and othering. However, a ‘response-able’ response departs from this as an interest to understand better and deeper. I understand ‘response-able’ as the ethical will to engage in a productive discourse, also when we see, or risk to create, dissonance.

My approach is not irreverent with regard to what has been done and is still practised today. I learn about many ways of working with traditional skills teaching practices. This helps me to understand the long history of teacher education. My aim is to look closer at possibilities, how we can do things differently, to expand the field. The ways others think about and practise teacher education help me to question and reposition a few of my own assumptions. I am ethically response-able towards my students and our educational system. I am aware of the silent imperative as a result of my given/taken position as an artist-teacher and the given/taken positions of the students in a university classroom. Even though I have not (yet) experienced critical questioning or negative feedback about our performative sessions, I/we know that students are expected to participate (at a certain level) in teaching situations and their content. I bear my response-ability by suggesting other/new lenses to read and understand what teaching could be(come). Response-ability has a dimension of ability. Occasionally, I deem the understanding and teaching practice of the subject of visual arts that Atkinson (2015) calls a dominant pedagogical attitude as too ‘narrow’. What abilities do I have, or do I need, to take into account a critical approach to a dominant pedagogical attitude? What abilities do I have, or do I need, to be able to respond to it? Bozalek and Zembylas observe elements of responsible pedagogies as ‘made possible through the practices of attentiveness, curiosity, responsibility, and being rendered capable, which are referred to in the new feminist materialist scholarship of Barad, Haraway, and Despret’ (2017, pp. 66–67).

Attentiveness in my work is a two-way process, being attuned to my surroundings and how I, in turn, become together with others and ‘otherness’. My concern is connected to the curiosity of what can happen in my encounters, in this case, encounters during a wool felting event. Responsibility and being rendered capable, Bozalek and Zembylas (2017, pp. 68–69) write, are ‘ongoing and also never solely located inside disembodied subjects’, and ‘particularly with regard to pedagogical encounters in higher education’. They elaborate further on

how this process involves ‘cultivating ethical (how to flourish together in a complex world of living together and dying), ontological (being and becoming, making-with), and epistemological (knowing-with, enlarging each other’s thinking) response-abilities’.

My concern, related to co-making with wool fibre material, is close to a desire to evolve (wherever encounters take me) that is not only related to an ethic of duty but also a genuine interest and curiosity in what kind of world we can create together. This concern holds an element of positive critique as a practice, exploring how art education is practised today and gaining an understanding of it to evolve in my work.

A project like this, involving others and myself in a co-making of wool felting and the production of thoughts, requires more from me and others. My ethical responsibility when asking people to participate in a collective wool felting session and sharing their ideas and impressions, requires a worthy response from me when I take this further and disseminate what we do together. When exploring new terrains when experimenting with wool felting, I am grateful to them for their involvement in this project. This research would not have been possible without their participation.

1.5.1 Irruptions, shifts, and transformations ...

... when using a performative approach to the ancestral craft of felting wool.

Exploring a performative approach to wool material, in the context of research into visual arts education, makes and marks a shift on several levels. My transition and transformation from artist to teacher in the subject of visual arts and then to artist-teacher is one mark of this shift, where the practices of visual artist and teacher in visual arts are entangled. Thinking with Deleuze and Guattari, as well and with Barad, I articulate their works to produce (not reproduce) movements in my practices that are grounded in art making and artistic teaching. The concept of lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) and response-able critique (Barad, in an interview with Dolphijn & van der Tuin, 2012) bring me to the point of non-return and generative production that reinvigorates a performative and process-based approach to teacher training. I can no longer ignore the artist in me when I am teaching art. As an artist-teacher, I teach through the arts, and not only about the visual arts. Agential forces produced by the intra-action between co-components of the phenomenon of wool felting are themselves the artistic and pedagogical materials. By doing so, this

performative approach to wool felting creates connections from what were earlier mutually exclusive (artistic and pedagogical) positions—in other words, this approach creates movements out of static positions.

1.5.2 An attempt to underline the lines of flight

Stop! You're making me tired! Experiment, don't signify and interpret!
Find your own places, territorialities, deterritorializations, regime, lines of flight! Semiotize yourself instead of rooting around in your prefab childhood and Western semiology. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 173)

A performative approach to wool felting involves re-turning wool felting: not doing the same, but doing and using the known (technique of felting) in a not-yet-known manner (felting wool anew). The performative dimension is about giving attention to agential realism (Barad, 2007) when working with people and materials. It may also include being attentive to and examining various intra-actions of bodies, skin, different materials, times, and places through playful and experimental processes. Such movements (shifts or transformations occurring during this exploration) are insights that can be described in a schematic manner, and thus hold a character of categorisation. I ask the reader to read the following paragraph as an attempt to emphasise the lines of flight and response-able critique, not as a destructive practice but as a close reading of what Atkinson calls ‘a dominant pedagogical attitude’ (2015), in an attempt to contribute to broadening the approach to the subject of visual arts, by avoiding identical reproduction (not displaying the same). Here are some movements towards such transformations. They are lines of flight that create deterritorialization and reterritorialization:

- From** only visual aesthetic values/qualities of abstract or figurative forms
to including a performative approach to and with materials.
- From** a technical approach to wool and hanging the result on the walls of a gallery
to a more sensory attentiveness and ephemeral experience of an event conducted *in situ* with a wide-ranging public, scholars or students.
- From** the position of external and neutral researcher

- to** an entangled apparatus of/in the phenomenon of felting wool.
- From** understanding water as an external element (as one of the ‘ingredients’ for felting wool)
to seeing water as an integrated co-component as fibres open and entangle in the transformative intra-action.
- From** following a given technique or method to manufacturing something
to play with altered iteration with objects/materials/ideas at hand, as a bricoleur.
- From** rehearsal
to unique events and unique in(ter)ventions.
- From** teacher position in the subject of visual arts and giving up my multiple practices
to an artist-teacher-researcher position.
- From** experience
to experimentation.
- From** planning a teaching session with defined (and finite?) procedures for students
to attuning the phenomenon of wool felting to the participants.
- From** the re-presentation of artwork in the classroom
to the co-making of an artistic event (not only the manufacturing/making of a physical artwork).
- From** the neutral and dislocated interpretation of students’ and my actions
to be-coming a component of the intra-actions.
- From** classroom settings and their metrical understanding
to a *laboratorium*/workshop of relational time-space making.



Second stratum

2 Second conglomerate stratum

Practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world. (Barad, 2007, p. 185)

The ethical, theoretical, and methodological approaches are intimately linked and interdependent in this research, just like the entangled relationships among my different materials, wool and words, when intra-acting. However, in this stratum, I write about the theoretical and methodological frameworks in two separate sections, with the intention to make clear (or at least visible) my choices and working processes. I have previously introduced a few key concepts from Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad to invite the reader into certain notions that I unfolded and was in dialogue with. These concepts brought me to a philosophical landscape on which I elaborate more precisely (or broadly?) here. In this stratum, I also write about the concept of performative and about the methodological transition that has occurred—from data collection to data creation.

2.1 Theoretical approaches / framework

2.1.1 Exploring new terrains

Exploring new terrains is wayfaring on a terra incognita. Compare with Deleuze and Guattari (1980): they write *arpenfer* in French. They make a distinction between tracing and mapping. Tracing involves coming back to the known, the same. Mapping has a multiple entryway—it is open, connectable in all its dimensions, and susceptible to constant modification: 'The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged competence' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 20). This distinction between mapping and tracing resonates with Barad's ideas and practice of re-turning and diffraction, when she explains that re-turning (with a hyphen) is not about reflecting or going back to the same or the past that was. Using Haraway's words, she explains, 'A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the *effects* of difference appear' (Barad, 2014, p. 172).

I undertake an approach into/within/on performative wool felting with a framework that can create another understanding of my artistic research and teaching practice, which can reveal what I might not have seen earlier. More than a description or representation, this is an act of creation. According to Deleuze

and Guattari's (1980) ontology of immanence, we create our understanding of the world rather than discovering and describing what is out there. According to Barad (2007), we do not reproduce difference, but map the effect of this difference. Intra-action reconfigures the world, and it is also about the transformations we undergo. This is why I chose these scholars—because as an artist and researcher I create the material of my research and map what it does to me and to those that are involved in 'my' performative approach to wool felting.

It is worth mentioning that Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad do not suggest a specific methodological approach, but rather provoke thinking and action. It seems that they are not interested in providing the reader with a specific research method. Rather, they invite the readers to explore their own practices and contexts with their own 'tools of understanding', which implies producing our own new thoughts and not replicating previous ideas and thoughts. I do not know whether I can pinpoint the exact moments when I began to think new thoughts or when the idea of re-turning was present and activated. Have I ever thought a completely new thought? Such a question is difficult to answer. Nevertheless, new ideas emerged and lines of flight that create deterritorialization and reterritorialization became visible in the mapping of my re-turn. The diffractive reading of my making in teacher education, as presented schematically at the end of the first stratum, is my attempt to emphasise the lines of flight and to map where the effects of differences appear when re-turning to wool felting. The schematic representation shows gliding transitions and not necessarily oppositions.

2.1.2 Becoming and post qualitative enquiry

I have introduced the concepts I borrow from Deleuze and Guattari (1980), as well as Barad (2007), and how I use them as doorways and getaways in my dialogical approach to theory. I do not necessarily apply these concepts in order to capture and definitely stabilise the new terrains I explore. Rather, I use them for the transformative understanding of my practices they produce in me. Or, as Barad puts it, I use them to stabilise a moment to be able to grasp just some aspects of it (see article 3, where I write about how I use their work ontologically, not necessarily methodologically or analytically):

Reading Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Karen Barad was incredible, fantastic, different from what I had read earlier and amazingly close to

what I do. Sometimes, I approach their work instinctively more than cognitively. Which generates a powerful engagement, engaging more than my cognitive understanding, including my thinking under the complementary acts of doing felting, researching, and writing. I probably do not understand everything, or I do understand it in my own way and make it work for my work. (Jamouchi, 2020, p. 56)

In other words, my reading of their work is occasionally comparable to how I would read poetry. It is a fruitful language that takes me elsewhere, but without starting to go towards a pre-established destination. It triggers my curiosity and provides me with the possibility to think with others. It deforms and reforms my thoughts, by shaping other making and thinking processes. It brings no fixed answers, but brings more nuances in my movements, an understanding of my making, and a feeling and position of non-stagnation.

Furthermore, my reading of Deleuze and Guattari enables connections between their work and Barad's agential realism. Actions and acts in my practice as artist-teacher are modes of thought in the act. This is well described by the concept of the rhizome, a flat ontology with fluxes of intensities and becoming. The non-definitively settled idea of a phenomenon, as agential forces constitute it, also provides me with a remarkable possibility to be in dialogue with theory. Rather than applying theories by first learning them and then applying them, I find resonance in this conceptual landscape. I find space for my work and something/somebody I can work with. To move towards a performative alternative is to change focus from questions of correspondence between description and reality, to matters of practice, doing, or actions (Barad, 2007, p. 28).

The philosophers Deleuze and Guattari, with their ontology of immanence and the manner in which they resist the idea of a fixed identity and privilege the idea of multiplicity and plurality, have also inspired Professor of Critical Studies Elizabeth A. St. Pierre: 'Deleuze and Guattari (1980/1987) refused the verb, *to be*, which establishes identity, stability, and closure (this is that) and preferred the conjunction, *and*, which indicates ongoing relation, becoming (this and this and this and ...)' (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 4). St. Pierre proposes a flat ontology and suggests that 'one begins post qualitative inquiry with a concrete encounter with the real, not with a research question' (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 12) that disrupts the

doxa of common sense and good sense. My research design has evolved as a post qualitative enquiry. St. Pierre concludes with the following:

Each instance of post qualitative inquiry is different from the next, that is, it is created anew each time; (e) there is no post qualitative methodology, hence, no research methods or research practices to apply; (f) the best preparation for post qualitative inquiry is reading theory and philosophy; (g) from reading some philosophical concepts that don't represent reality but reorient thought; and, finally, (h) the post qualitative inquirer proceeds with an affirmative trust that 'something may come out, though one is not yet completely sure what'. (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 14)

The intra-action, 'an enactment, not something that someone or something has' (Barad, 2007, p. 235) between my making and thinking reveal the material-discourse (Barad, 2007) of the rhizomatic (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980) network of materials of different natures that produce varied intensities in the diverse projects that constitute this doctoral thesis. Each step taken in exploring new terrains appears to condense an increasing number of ideas, questions, and possible interpretations, and revitalize the awareness or knowledge¹⁰ of what I am doing. The more I evolve in my actions and examinations, the more the process of wool felting holds a similar transformation of (physical) material when the fibres come closer and entangle into a dense and robust fabric. The dilatation of the fibres, the room created between them, the opening and closing forms, the creation of new patterns, and the transformation of the material during its materialisation—or the process-oriented approach to wool felting—is (symbolically and physically experienced) similar to how my reading of Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad release thoughts or those of my thoughts that are not yet fully activated. Materials, both wool fibres and words, penetrate each other. It becomes a reciprocal infiltration between or within written theories and enacted practices. It extends my in-tensions (what I intend to do when meeting materials) and intensifies my ex-tensions (what happens in intra-action with materials),

¹⁰ Translated to French, knowledge is *connaissance*. I remember discussing this word with my French colleague Luc Dall'Armellina, a writer, designer of digital devices, and lecturer at CYU Cergy Paris Université, in France. Co-naissance (with a hyphen) means literally co-birth. I liked the idea that it is together with others or other things that we are born, again. It relates to my understanding of what I do to be co-born together and during the felting and reading processes, while involving different senses.

creating resonances with vivid and visceral memory of wool fibres entangling with the sensations of words, that evoke yet other vibrations.

2.1.3 Reciprocal infiltration – reading Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad together

This second conglomerate stratum becomes dense. It is a superposition of rhizomatic connections of segments of a different nature, introduced in the first eruptive stratum. Now, I concentrate on my reciprocal infiltrated reading of Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad.

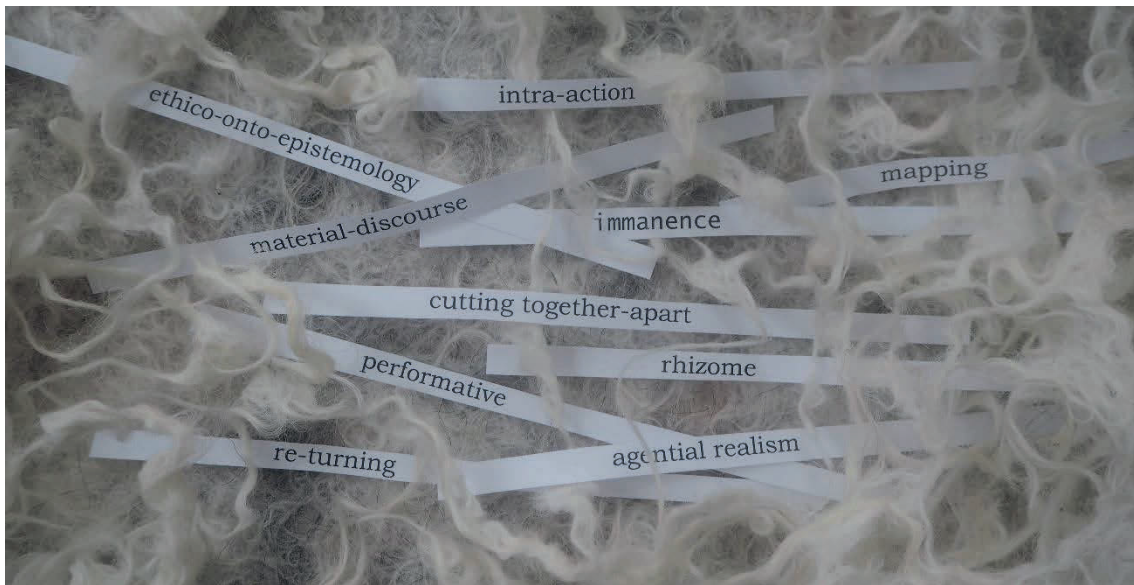


Figure 15 Reciprocal infiltration: Wool-Deleuze-Guattari-Barad. Agential realism, performative, mapping, re-turning, rhizome, intra-action, cutting together-apart, ethico-onto-epistemology, immanence, material-discourse.

A key moment for me when approaching Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad, apart or together, is to enter their concepts in a playful and imaginative manner. What is the most ‘resourceful’ for me is to let their words, concepts, books, and the ideas they produce work on me, as they create other sorts of thoughts—thoughts emerging in intra-action with my thinking in actioning. I mainly use their concepts of rhizome and agential realism, as well as concepts closely related to these two concepts. As the time comes, I read Deleuze, Guattari, *and* Barad together. A sense of connectedness appears, not a position of opposition. A mutual infiltration appears, and I do not approach them as distinctive or separated and excluding each other.

Comparably to a rhizomatic network, I understand Barad’s material-discourse as something evolving in the middle of material components (the doing and thinking), and becoming agential and productive in their intra-actions.

Deleuze and Guattari write that a rhizome comprises connections of changing intensities and things of different natures. This is close to my interpretation of Barad's agential realism—distributing forces of a phenomenon that re-configure co-components as they intra-act. Furthermore, Fox and Alldred state that the work of Deleuze and Guattari has been the starting point for numerous new materialist theories and concepts, as they regard human bodies and all other material as relational, with no ontological status until drawn into assemblage, and with the capacity of things and ideas to affect or be affected (Fox & Alldred, 2019, p. 6). Affect can do something that can be so dramatic that it achieves a line of flight: 'Assemblages develop in unpredictable ways around actions and events as affects "flow" between different materialities in ways Deleuze and Guattari liken [...] to an underground rhizome: branching and multiplying, breaking and re-connecting' (Fox & Alldred, 2019, p. 6).

These three invite us not to think about material as being inert and not to understand activities as happening only in human bodies and minds. For Deleuze and Guattari, a rhizome connects things of different natures and produces different intensities. The human is one of the connections, and the connections stem from what is happening in a given context. Deleuze and Guattari write about affect and alliances, rather than affiliation, and this can develop into unexpected relationships. Then, would it be possible to say that a rhizome, as a creative movement of moments, and agential realism, as a reconfiguration of the world, share certain common interfaces? The rhizome has no archetypal plan or master plan. Agential realism does not refer to entities with a (de)finite identity, but proposes the phenomenon as the smallest ontological unit. Rhizomes, as well as phenomena, are not structured hierarchically, they are not static, they are in motion, and they are both singular and dependent. As I undergo this research project, I see similarities between a performative approach to wool felting and rhizomatic structures and co-components of a phenomenon. I become aware of the intensities and agency of felting with wool as a component among other components. We do not only do something to wool fibres – we intra-act in our encounters. In this respect, I connect a performative approach to wool felting to a rhizomatic framework and agential realism. A performative approach to wool felting explores actions that are created *in situ*, more than reproduced actions.

Hein (2016) claims that a reading of Deleuze and Barad is incommensurable because he thinks that their ontologies are fundamentally different. He claims that Deleuze's ontology is a philosophy of immanence and

difference, whereas Barad's is a philosophy of transcendence and identity. The reading of Deleuze and Barad done by Murriss and Bozalek (2019) is from a stance which differs from that of Hein. They propose to put the work of Barad in conversation with the work of Deleuze. Murriss and Bozalek's intentions are to: 1) propose that Barad's philosophy is not one of transcendence and identity, but similar to Deleuze's immanence and difference; 2) leave aside the notion of critique that sees thing in opposition, but rather undertake a diffractive reading, which they argue is in line with the relational ontology of both Barad and Deleuze; and 3) as a response-able reading, this is a form of becoming-with readers, authors, and texts, rather than seeing them as separated, distanced, or in opposition to each other (Murriss & Bozalek, 2019). This is one example of a diffractive reading of Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad, thereby revealing how a rhizomatic framework and reconfiguration through intra-action are not incommensurable. My point here is not to examine or evaluate the positions of these three authors. What comes to me when I read them is that we probably place our own understanding and beliefs in both our personal and professional experiences and practices. That is what Leggo (2008), the poet and professor in English language, suggests to view as an ecology of personal and professional experiences.

Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad were born at different times,¹¹ and come from different countries and cultures, fields of work, and professions. The first two are from France, and they experienced the students protests of May '68, which had an influence on their work. Deleuze was a philosopher and professor in philosophy. Guattari was a psychoanalyst, political philosopher, semiotician, and social activist. They worked collaboratively, apart from having their respective careers. Karen Bard is an American feminist theorist, and her research includes quantum physics. Barad currently works as a professor of feminist studies, philosophy and history of consciousness at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Even if I am in dialogue with their work, this does not dominate my project. However, I have been attentive to the connections that arise and appear when reading their work, rather than reading their respective works as isolated entities. Poststructuralist strategies emphasise the uncertainty of knowledge and dominant discourse ideas. It is an approach that critiques rigid structures. My understanding of Deleuze and Guattari is that their critique is not directed toward

¹¹ Deleuze (1925–1995), Guattari (1930–1992), and Barad (1956).

earlier philosophers. It seems that their aim is to have a different understanding of what philosophy can be, as a means to comprehend certain aspects of our lives, as we probably would not be able to grasp the reality of the entire world in its state of continuous becoming. Similarly, new materialism and Baradian agential realism are a questioning and reconfiguring of what appears to be an accepted understanding of the world. Both have an attitude that is open and exploratory and that does not necessarily have a clear right, true, or wrong answer. This desire to explore something through a positive critique is what inspires my research. As mentioned earlier, Atkinson is inspired by the idea of intra-action from Barad while resisting what Deleuze calls ‘an image of thought’. His reading of Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad is advantageous if one wishes to conduct a responsible and diffractive reading of their works. This intertwines with Atkinson’s ideas on the adventure of pedagogy that introduces the notion of the not-known (Atkinson, 2015).

2.2 Methodological approaches / framework

Philosophy begins in wonder. And, at the end, when philosophic thought has done its best, the wonder remains. (Whitehead, n.d.)

The entangled and rhizomatic wool felting phenomenon generates room for interpretation and creation. I do not follow a single enclosed/self-contained method to study wool felting. This resonates with St. Pierre work’s, where she emphasises the non-methodological position of Deleuze: ‘Deleuzian image of thought calls for experimentation and creation instead of method. For Deleuze, “method in general is a means by which we avoid going to a particular place, or by which we maintain the option of escaping from it”’ (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 8). St. Pierre introduced the phrase ‘post qualitative inquiry’, and describes it as something that is in constant evolution: ‘*Post qualitative inquiry never is*. It has no substance, no essence, no existence, no presence, no stability, no structure’ (St. Pierre, 2019, p. 9). She encourages the researcher to forsake pre-given research methods and recommends instead to read philosophy and find concepts that reorient thinking (St. Pierre, 2019).

Concepts can help to avoid the stagnation of thoughts and/or identical re-production. This is in line with my interpretation of Barthes’ description of the concept of ‘method’ in two different ways in his lectures at the Collège de

France¹² in Paris in 1977: On the one hand, he describes a method as a premeditated decision, a way to avoid going to a particular place. It is an approach towards a goal, it is a protocol of operations in order to get a result—that is, explain or describe exhaustively. It implies the idea of a straight path, which aims to go straight to the goal. To follow a method, in its strict sense, is to risk to fetters the goal, and by doing so to risk to avoid going to other unexpected places. When following a method, a person abdicates what s/he does not know about her-/him-self, her/his complexity and force. On the other hand, Barthes describes the concept of method as related to culture and inspired by Nietzsche and the violence endured by the thought. A method, related to culture, is a dispersion, a dispatching, a kind of eccentric path. It consists of tottering between snatches/limits of knowledge.

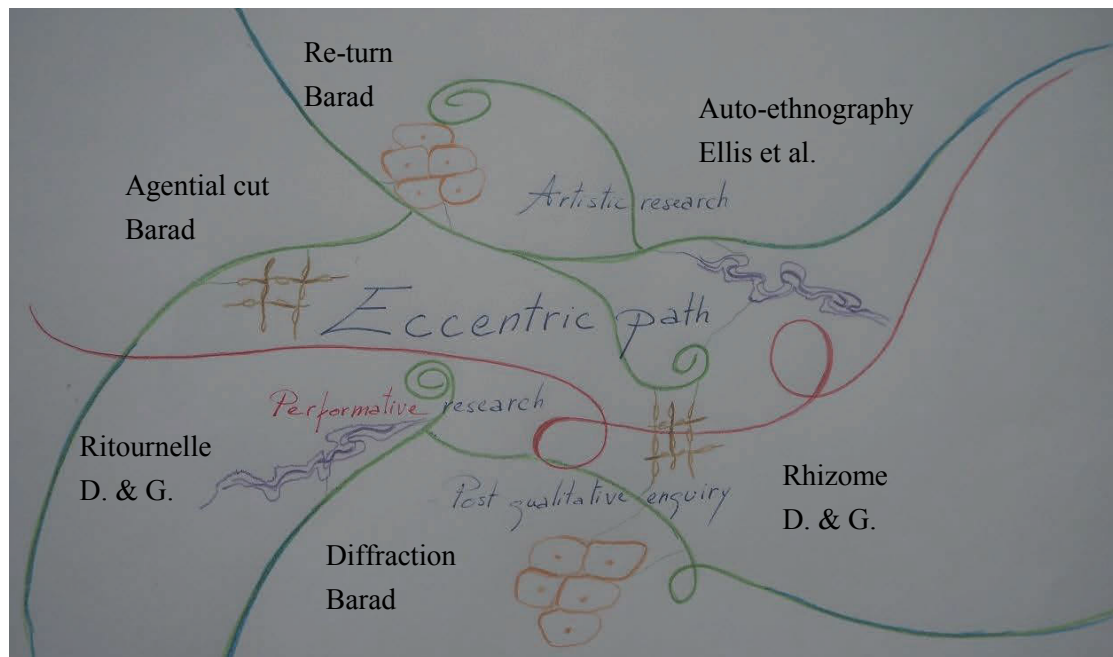


Figure 16 A visual synthesis of the methods used in this research.

2.2.1 Re-turning and artistic research

One of my working methods in artistic research is intuition, which is informed by my senses and years of corporal experiences that my body remembers. The

¹² The Collège de France, in Paris, is a prestigious institution established in 1530 and whose purpose is both being a research centre and a teaching space. It is neither a university nor a high school; it is also different from public research centres and does not award any degree either; admission to lectures is free and open to all students without any preliminary registration. Retrieved May 2021 from <http://rhuthmos.eu/spip.php?article1346>.

choice of a material or technique is not predetermined; it goes together with the ideas I work with. This demands a great level of craft knowledge and experience. My ongoing arts-based research is conducted through singular and repetitive, but not identical, events. It is a 'ritournelle' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 381), as described in my first article when iterative actions, rhythms, and sounds seemed to lead the working process of students (Jamouchi, 2019a, p. 74). There is no specific aim to reach or achieve a particular result, but with an intention to create an event, sharpening our senses to recognise and capture experiences of wool felting unburdened by pre-defined expectations. It provides us with attention to what happens, as it liberates us, at least for a moment, from thinking of finite solutions or stable systems of working and thinking. I look for new/other meaning and insights in what we/I do.

In an early version of my PhD project description from April 2018, I wrote: 'I wish to engage with knowledge production that not only focuses on static and "neutral" technical knowledge (cf. *techne* by Aristotle), but closer to agency and experience (cf. *phronesis* by Aristotle)'. Ever since, I allow myself to read books written by philosophers or about philosophy and let their content work on me and then use the content actively in my practices, both in the making and writing of my practices, even if I am not a philosopher. In my attempt to invite students to undergo an active, participatory approach to explorative and creative processes, I develop and adopt a more performative approach to the subject of visual arts. Developing and adopting a research design is what artistic and arts-based research does. For me, artistic research is simultaneously a known and unknown terrain. Artistic research is a desire to explore – it is a powerful experience when it liberates and materializes certain thoughts. It involves a large range of methods, materials, and techniques; its subject matter is not reduced to one single topic. Artistic research can explore a large range of topics. The research and its methods develop organically (see Figure 14). My arts-based research cannot be done from a position of being aside, watching, and/or evaluating students' work. I need to be in the flow.

This participatory performative approach to wool felting can be defined as 'a process that uses the expressive qualities of form to convey meaning' (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. xii). It becomes a process of evolving creatively, in the sense that it is not building and aiming towards an expected finality, but plural possibilities. It is the result of intuition, accidents, or the forces of external chaos present in a ritournelle (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 382). It is not mechanical in

the sense that it repeats or searches or accumulates the same, even when we use known materials. It begins with the creative forces of curiosity, a thought that needs to be thought materially and bodily, to hold life and vigour.

*I am a movement following other movements
Fibres open, dilate, find a suitable place to become
Water flows crafting wool felting
Moving sinuously and meticulously
I become a part of all this
There is nothing in all this that is also me
I become porous
Porosity flows in time-space*

2.2.2 Performative – variation around the theme

Performative utterance, performance art, performative research, and a performative approach to wool are concepts that are almost homophones and this can be confusing. They belong to distinct but overlapping and entangled contexts and disciplines in a broad theoretical and artistic landscape. This can be confusing too. In this section, I discuss performative utterance and contemporary visual art, and I close by writing about performative research.

2.2.3 Performative utterance and performance art

The origin of the term ‘performative utterance’ can be traced back to Austin’s lecture notes in his posthumous book entitled *How to Do Things with Words* (1962). For Austin, performative utterances are not only statements that can be verifiable; this means that they are either true or false. Performative utterances are not constative and they do not describe or report anything at all. But the uttering of the sentence is the doing of an action, which is not merely ‘saying’ something. It indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action (Austin, 1962, pp. 5–6). This implicates an idea of transformation: an utterance that alters what was before it is said, and produces reality. We move from the idea of what words are said to what words do.

Performance in contemporary visual art brings forth another aesthetic that is time- and site-based. Historically, visual art is about the creation of objects that can mostly be exhibited, explained, transported, and can be sold and owned by a

buyer. One significant distinction between performance art and visual art is that a performance creates an event, and it is less (or not at all) concerned with object making. During a performance, the artist and the public jointly create an experience. The concept of an autopoietic feedback loop, as introduced by Fischer-Lichte (2008), refers to the relationship between performers and audience at the very moment in which the performance is performed. She argues that performance art, unlike dramatic representation in traditional theatre performances, is transformative. The experience of the lived moment is created by the people present. The spectator is no longer a passive watcher; the spectator becomes an active participant of an aesthetic experience.

2.2.4 A new paradigm: performative research

Haseman (2006) presented a manifesto for performative research as a pivotal moment in the development of research. He argues that performative research is an emerging paradigm (p. 102): ‘There has been a radical push to not only place practice within the research process, but to lead research through practice’ (p. 100). The starting point of a practice-led research is not a problem but an enthusiasm of practice. The researcher, says Haseman, ‘construct[s] experimental starting points from which practice follows’, and the researcher tends to ‘dive in, to commence to see what emerges’ (p. 100). My research begins with a sense of curiosity and questioning. When I introduced performative drawing in the classroom, a student commented: ‘We became a part of the paper’ (Jamouchi, 2017, p. 3). Materials, working processes, and students’ feedback contributed to my further engagement with re-turning and diving into my practices.

‘Relying primarily on performative approaches to relational action and on post phenomenological and Deleuzian philosophy, non-representational work puts a premium on the corporeal rituals and entanglement embedded in embodied action rather than talk or cognitive attitudes’, writes Vannini (2015, p. 4). Non-representational theory is concerned with material, but ‘objects are not mere props for performance but parts and parcel of hybrid assemblage endowed with personhood and relational agency’ (Vannini, 2015, p. 5). Thrift proposes to ‘engage in a battle against methodological fetishism’ and to ‘realise energies that might be thought to resemble play’ (Thrift, 2008, as cited in Vannini, 2015, p. 5). This recalls agential realism concerned with the agency of co-components of a phenomenon (Barad, 2007). Furthermore, this recalls Barthes’ interpretation of a method (1977) as an eccentric path, unlike a method resulting from a

premeditated decision that fetishes the goal to the exclusion of explorative and creative forces. This research enquires into the wool felting phenomenon by organising events in which time, space, participants, and materials can reveal new potentialities for collective ‘being, doing, and thinking’ (Anderson & Harrison, 2010, p. 19, as cited in Vannini, 2015, p. 7). Performative wool felting takes into account our doings, and embodies actions and the ability of the body to co-evolve with things, not in parallel of what happens. This is what Barad (2007) calls agency, which is not attributed to someone or something but emerges in their encounter. Through the entanglements of matter, agency also refers to ‘an ongoing reconfiguration of both the real and the possible’ (Barad, 2007, p. 235). This can be described as a phenomenon, as the primary semantic units are not words ‘but material-discursive practices through which (ontic and semantic) boundaries are constituted’ (Barad, 2007, p. 141). This is a worldly re-configuration that puts words, humans, and objects into play without privileging any one of them. Encounters, actions, and contexts such as time and space create transformations, or what Barad calls a ‘reconfiguration of the world’. A performative approach to wool felting emphasises intra-activity and acknowledges agency as emerging from encounters. Thus, artistic research becomes processual, finding (new) methodological approaches with/in the world; in other words, it is a performative process—an intra-action between the co-components of the phenomenon, including the doing/researching and used tools.

2.3 Autoethnography for two

In article 2, ‘Exploring a performative approach to felting wool: An autoethnography for two?’, I write about how I imagine a research design that was designed to unveil what I might not see when I am deeply engaged in the process of wool felting. This attempted research design makes me come out of my lonely working process by exposing myself in front of others. Adapting and adopting a method as an autoethnography for two is putting myself in front of the eyes, appraisal, and judgment of others. I expose myself, divulge my acts, enable the gaze of others to enter what has been, for many years, a withdrawal into my working/making process. During the initial phase of this research project, I experimented with an autoethnography for two by inviting peers to observe me as I felted wool, and asking them to share their impressions and reflections. However, I do not position myself as an object of study in front of an external observer that explains and categorises my doing for their own research. An

autoethnography for two is an invitation to peers to share their own experience of an event of wool felting by writing it down. The observers are four teachers working in teacher education at three different universities in Norway. Two of them teach pedagogy and two of them teach visual arts. An autoethnography for two, through the feedbacks of these colleagues, brings to the surface a process ontology—subtle changes in the materials, rhythms, repetitions and synchronisation. An autoethnography for two brings to the surface the entangled relationship between wool fibres, water, fragrance, space, gestures, skin, sounds, my moving body, different parts of the body—as expressed by colleagues watching me, not co-making with me. Hence, an autoethnography for two brings to the surface the distanced experience of wool felting, which I undergo while my colleagues watch me, rather than co-making (together with me and the materials). This methodological approach intensifies my wish to invite others into the core of the experimentation with wool felting, that goes beyond the experience of watching me felting. Later, I invited others—students, colleagues, scholars, and members of the public—to partake actively in this project. This enabled me to reshape my methodological approach and framework.

2.4 Data creation and agential cut

After visiting an autoethnography for two, by inviting colleagues to watch me felting and express what I might not see during the wool felting process, I now invite the others to undergo and co-make the felting process together with me. With no transition or a debriefing, the participants are invited to write about their experience in the continuum of our felting process. Written feedback is not an assessment or a cognitive interpretation, or even a post-observation of the self or a reflection of/on what we have done. I approach such feedback as data creation, and then I enact an agential cut in/from/to our doing. Data creation grows organically, goes in different directions, has different intensities. It is of a different nature, and it is like a rhizome. Such data creation are the materialisation of felted wool and words—the materialities of co-components and materialities of spoken and written words. They are spaces of flow and connections, in between/in the middle (as a rhizomatic middle), between reflecting in action and reflecting on action, however, it is not a critical evaluation of the action we are engaging in.

In article 2, I write about situated knowledge and a *savoir-faire*. I mention reflection in action and on action when I collect the feedback from students. I

think about the written feedback as a continuum of our doing. Actions, thinking, and writing are like contagious moments lodged in the materialities of words.

Data, from Latin, means ‘given’ (in French: *les données*). The idea is that data are given, as neutral, to the researcher. This is different from the ontological stands of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Barad, for whom the world is in a continuous state of becoming. We do not have a fixed identity. The materials in this investigation are not data that are given to me. My relationship to the feedback from the participants is not a neutral one. I am an apparatus creating data from an archive in motion. I regard my data as an archive holding a magma of information. I could now call this ‘matters of a phenomenon’, referring to Barad, or a rhizomatic network, referring to Deleuze and Guattari. The things that I come across, collect, and create are of different natures and their *agencement* is non-hierarchical. I have elsewhere (Jamouchi, 2017) described that I see my material as an archive in motion, a magma of information on a non-stable ground. Like a volcano, the archive can suddenly undergo an eruption that reconfigures what I have collected. The archive lives its own life, sometimes hiding its content, sometimes whispering some other possible interpretations, and sometimes making more visible certain other parts of its content. It is a continuously emerging process of explorations and new experimentations—memories to come and the past can be changed.

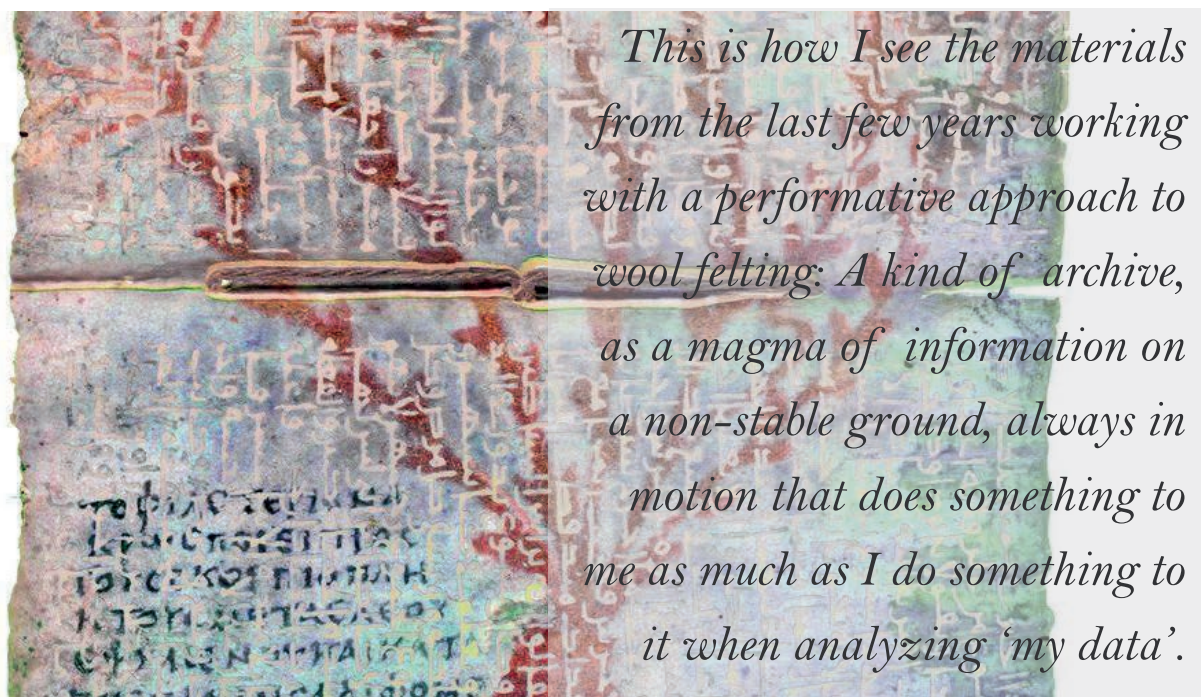


Figure 17 Data palimpsest. Illustrated with a superposition of my text about data and a palimpsest manuscript with Greek medical text beneath the oldest Arabic translation of the Gospels (picture source: <https://brewminate.com/palimpsest-manuscript-revealing-more-about-ancient-east-west-connections/>).



Third stratum

3 Third stratum of non-finite path: Insight from my explorations and conclusion

Cambridge Dictionary defines ‘finding’ as: ‘a piece of information that is discovered during an official examination of a problem, situation, or object’, and insight as: ‘(the ability to have) a clear deep, and sometimes sudden understanding of a complicated problem or situation’ (Cambridge University Press).

The third stratum focuses on the insights of complex *becomings*, constituted of multiple layers, rather than findings as a piece of information that *is*. Thus, here, findings are understood as understandings generated in/during/within the making-thinking, or what Barad (2007) calls material-discourse, an intimately entwined or entanglement of matter (of things) and meaning (of words). I wished to explore as an explorer to obtain insights on what I did not know at the beginning of this research. This means that my wonder around a performative approach to wool felting might remain and engender further questioning. This wonder is represented by the long sinuous red line in the drawings of the third strata in my research design (Figures 1 and 2).

My preliminary response, and response-ability, as artist-teacher-researcher are my explorations through three artistic projects and three scientific articles. The insights originate from thoughts that become possible in a given moment (cutting together apart?) and in the impossibility to grasp totally and completely a phenomenon, or, when thinking with Deleuze and Guattari (1980), a rhizomatic logic that dismantles dualistic positions and embraces intensities rising from multiple and non-identical relationships.

Fibres becoming intensities

They play each other defiantly

Fibres becoming movement

They play each other entanglements

Fibres becoming event

They play me as an artist, teacher and researcher

Fibres’ connections and diffractions

Inevitably, this research is not terminated or comprehensive. It is a provisional disclosure of a performative approach to wool felting in the context of this PhD research. I bring back Barad's concept of diffraction here—'Diffraction is a matter of differential entanglement' (Barad, 2007, p. 381)—and use it as a creative reading of my explorations (doing and writing wool felting) through each other. Then, I see what patterns of thoughts emerge.

In addition to those six explorations, three artistic projects and three articles, a 7th element is included at the end of the dissertation. The 7th element reveals moments of explorations and experimentations from my everyday practice, that matter differently for this dissertation. These are not given a more substantial space in the mantle, like the six explorations. However, each of those moments and movements are significant in the creative chaos of my interrogative-discursive wayfaring. Still running.

Scent tangled with air
Soft sounds her and there
Barely noticeable dynamic
Fluid fabric
Fabrics fluidity
Sensory poetic
Of robust link/ability

3.1 A diffractive reading of my exhibitions and articles

Re-turning to my explorations reveals, inevitability, successive iterations occurring in the middle of my practices, in the middle of materials, and in a process of becoming. The artistic works evolve organically with/in relationships to materials and the public. Relationships become more intimate, relational, and intra-act with writing. The first article identifies a shift in my teaching from performative drawing to a performative approach to wool felting in teacher education. It reveals questioning and encounters with philosophical and theoretical texts, which turn out to be a fruitful territory to explore with. The second article deals with how I seek to unveil what happens during a performative approach to wool felting and contribute to finding a research design and possible methodological approaches. The third article introduces the voices of teacher students who participated in a performative approach to wool felting in

the school subject of visual arts. Taken together, my explorations are evolutive—not necessarily in serial, mechanical, and chronological manner—but evolve rhizomatically as an adventurous growth.

The three articles engage with artistic processes, pedagogical possibilities, and research. The diffractive reading of these works articulates potentials and critical moments as introduced in my research questions regarding artistic and teaching practices. A diffractive reading must entail attention: ‘It is about taking what you find inventive and trying to work carefully with the details of patterns of thinking (in their very materiality) that might take you somewhere interesting that you never would have predicted’ (Barad in an interview with Juelskjær and Schwennesen, 2012, p. 13). In the following account, I attempt a diffractive reading, which is not a comparison of my works, but their superposition. In an effort to clearly convey the insights of my explorations, I organise them in the following manner. I begin with performative perspective in visual art making, then move to art education, and finally in research.

3.1.2 Performative perspective in visual art making

Twenty years ago, I learned to have control over the process of wool felting. I experienced a sense of mastery. I knew very well how to do things to get the product I wanted. Maybe it is precisely this feeling of mastery that created certain blind spots in me. Re-turning wool felting brought vitality and other ways to open up more ideas and working processes. Thinking with the *ritournelle* of Deleuze and Guattari (1980, pp. 382–383), I let the chaos come in. I open a partially known territory of wool felting to the external chaos that enables meeting with the unfamiliar and creating other constellations.

The first performance at the exhibition *Inhabiting/Living Practices* in Vancouver engaged me in a new relationship with the wool fibres, other artists, and the public by involving us intra-actively in our encounters with human and non-human components. I experienced porosity, tuning, and intra-action with the materiality of both people and wool in a different manner. This is something I had not (nor sought to) experienced earlier when working behind the closed doors of my atelier. In an article about that performance I express how the performative power of that encounter transforms ‘I’ to ‘WE’ (Coulter, et al., 2022). For the second performance in Ho Chi Min City, I became more aware of how a performative approach to wool felting engenders new constellations of co-

components that no longer orbit around myself as an artist and my own, and presumably owned, working process.

The first two performances dislodged me from a well-known working process—control over the material and the wool felting technique. In addition, other intensities arose. The potentialities in these encounters with others and otherness are interesting for the artistic working process and in teacher education. Furthermore, these performative encounters with wool felting encouraged me to encounter scholars in conferences through the materiality of wool and through intra-action with the attendees. What actually happens with the materials and the participants goes beyond a verbal language. We no longer talk about a performative approach; we perform and undergo it.

I remember the feedback during a conference in Spain when an attendee told me about her experience of our wool felting: ‘It was like if we were creating a nation. Not like a national or political country. But a place that became ours.’ Another feedback from the same conference was: ‘I’m taken by how spontaneously, as we were walking on the felt (the feet stamping, the voice singing of each of us) became a single body in motion ... losing any sense of individuality. Also, I felt as a kid, loose and at the same time absorbed into how the string of water poured the different colours of the felt.’ Intensities that arise here outline what can be categorised as a rhizomatic movement that connect both people and spatial and temporal moments that can change at any time during the course of the event and create a space that becomes ours. Apart from the intensities creating spatial connections, we can see a rhizome of temporality. Involuntary, or provoked, memories and images from the past came flooding back to the participants. We see the affect of a present moment that brings back memories from childhood. A rhizomatic network with spatial and temporal intensities emerged as we enacted a performative approach to wool felting. Our making produced relationships with each other as well as time and space.

The third exhibition was presented in Halden during the lockdown due to the pandemic. It was not possible to have a gathering of more than the twenty persons who came to the opening. The opening looked more like a vernissage of an exhibition than the intra-acting encounter we had in the two previous performative approaches to materialities. However, the prohibition of meeting people in 2020 brought other opportunities. The wool and I developed a more intimate relationship, as I began using raw wool from sheep from my fellow musician artist, researcher, and farmer, Mali Hauen. The absent animal becomes

more present. Raw wool fibres bring more of nature into a confined space and bring a more holistic understanding of the wool felting process. Moreover, the use of raw wool fibres emphasises the low-tech aspect of the working process. I underlined these aspects during the opening of the third exhibition.

The lockdown and confinement also brought two other ways of working with wool felting, as I could not meet other people. Meetings with people during earlier projects and their feedback became stronger in my mind. Thinking about our co-making, I made a couple of felted works as responses to our previous encounters. The first work relates to the idea of an ephemeral nation, as expressed during the conference in Spain. The second one relates to the idea of being people in the middle of a larger territory and history, which I interpreted as a sense of infinity or reaching out. Both responsive works were exhibited in Halden, with the titles *Territoire – Espace lisse et strié* and *Ad infinitum*. A poster with participants' feedback and photographs informed visitors about the relationship between previous collective events and those two works made by me, along with the wool while thinking of them.

The other aspect that the lockdown and confinement brought is how working with raw wool emphasises animal and human connections. The similarity between wool fibre from sheep and hair from humans grew stronger. A few years ago, due to hair loss, I began collecting my own hair. Looking at my hair and wool, I understand now that I might use it differently than what I first thought. A future project with hair could emphasise the animal-human connection and the processual/durational aspects of a performative approach to materials.

In a subsequent performance I presented during Performance Art Camp in Finse¹³ (Norway, August 2022), I experienced again how a performative approach to materials involves us in the transformation of wool fibres and ourselves. Feedback from a couple of artists participating at Performance Art Camp in Finse reveal exactly that. The first one was: 'I started to remember myself as a kid, playing with water and how I lived without worries as a kid.' The second one was 'Your performance reminded me of how humans have been living their life. We are actually close to nature, but we have forgotten. Wool and felting have been so important for protecting our bodies and to survive.

¹³ Finse is a mountain village area on the shore of a lake. The village is located at an altitude of 1222 meters above the sea level in Vestaland, in the country of Norway.

Especially in an area like this, so cold and inhospitable.’ This puts us in the middle of life, history, nature, and the world.

*I am a descendant of human and animal encounters
sedentarization*

*I am a linkage in a craft tradition
crafting and actualising knowledge*

layering layer of wool fibres

layering playful encounters

spaces in-between, openings, a sense of depth

Contemporary performance artists, such as Marina Abramović, Anne Terese De Keersmaecker and Bouchra Ouizguen, have inspired me in my performative approach to textiles. Lately, I re-discovered non-religious *halaqa* through the venues of the Performing Tangier festival and conferences in Morocco in 2019 and 2021. This annual conference is organised by Professor Khalid Amine, a professor in performance studies, and the founding president of the International Research Centre for Performance Studies. These conferences discuss interweaving performance culture from different parts of the world, one of them being *halaqa*. *Halaqa* is a traditional and contemporary spatial-temporal street performance within theatre in the Arab world. Apart from contemporary performance art in the Western context, one can find inspiration in the Moroccan performance heritage. This opens an avenue for further research in which I could connect my work with performative wool felting with both *halaqa* and Moroccan textile craft.

3.1.3 Performative perspective in art education

I don't care about revolution. I believe in resistance through subcultures. –
Samantha Menchaca (n. d.)

I remember how uneasy I felt the first time I invited teacher students to partake in performative approaches to the school subject of visual arts—first to performative drawings and subsequently to a performative approach to wool felting. I could not know how the students would react to my invitation to take off their shoes and socks to join me barefooted into an open-ended event with no predicted or predictable result. Neither I nor the students could know what experience we

would have through a direct, tactile contact with the material, not sitting on a chair, not working with small-scale projects on a table, and using mostly their hands and eyes to copy an image.¹⁴ I incorporate (I like this word because it suggests the idea of embodiment) a performative approach to the subject by integrating craft knowledge, processual intra-actions, as well as non-human components and materiality as a valuable part of the subject.

As stated in the prologue, my interpretation of the curriculum and teaching practice is driven by how we *could* teach, in addition to the concern of how we *should* practise teacher education. This raises the question of assessment and evaluation in a dominant pedagogical practice (Atkinson, 2015) when a product is seen as the finality of what a student can learn, and is regarded as the best or the only way to exanimate a student. A performative approach to wool felting proposes recognising the working process as something that can produce knowledge about what the subject of visual art can be in teacher education. In such a case, the physical object we make is almost a by-product rather than an answer to a given task following merely the written words of the curriculum. Valuating and evaluating a working process is not new in contemporary art, but this might create friction in a teaching practice that places students' skills, resulting in a physical object, in the centre of what a student can achieve in the subject of visual arts in teacher education. A performative approach to wool felting brings co-making, affect, and material intra-action as an extension to words into the curriculum that defines what the subject of visual arts should be. The co-making event can shape an understanding of the subject of visual arts beyond the words describing it in the curriculum or assignment texts. We can then move forward and into a performative understanding of the school subject.

I shared my understanding and use of the Norwegian word *samhandling* (meaning doing together) in a research and development meeting with colleagues from different fields. I described how I emphasise *samhandling* in my teaching when I want to draw attention to how making something together is a different way to become acquainted with other people as well as the materials and the working process we undergo. Here is an extract from an e-mail that a colleague in the field of drama sent a few days after the meeting:

¹⁴ An example of the exercises that the students receive in the subject of visual arts is to choose a painting by Edvard Much or a motif from Norse mythology and reproduce the image by using wool felting technique.

I realized that the word *samhandling* is a powerful word, meaning more than interaction and definitely something else than collaboration (*samarbeid*). The prefix *sam-* is the core, and then the question is what we do together. We neither have a good translation of *samhandling* in German, or it would be a word construct.

Thank you for your article, I really enjoyed reading it. You make an interesting point that the outcome of the craft work is rather a by-product than an aim and of course that has big implications for how we understand teaching, curriculum, teacher student interactions etc. (personal communication, September 2022)

My curiosity and excitement for new/other approaches to what a teaching practice can be(come) takes me further. A strong will not to limit my profession to functionary tasks following the curriculum (as management documents) takes over. Will I become a dis-functioning functionary?

I am not only interested in felting objects.

Yet, I love doing so too.

I want to be in the felting process.

I think that the participants can feel exactly that.

Our togetherness, including materialities,

is bigger than the sum of all of us.

Across the world we have handled, pulled, combed, washed, twisted, walked on, soaked, beaten, shaped, pressed, folded, unfolded, thrown, dried, rolled, and more, wool for thousands of years. The material is still appealing. When returning to wool felting, I simultaneously engage identically and differently with an ancestral working process. As a new teacher in teacher training in the subject of visual arts in 2005, I remember my excitement about teaching Norwegian students to felt wool. At that time, I believed that Norway was the land of felting. I wondered what new knowledge about wool felting I could provide to the students. In my mind, wool felting was a well-known tradition and involved skills transmitted from generation to generation in northern countries. However, only a few students knew how to felt wool. Some of the students who had done it had merely a vague memory from pre-school or primary school activities with

wool felting. Most of the time, they could not clearly recall what they did. They mostly recalled sensations of touch, scent, fibres, water, and manual handling. However, during more than a decade of teaching, I have seen that wool felting is not commonly known. The majority of the students that have felted wool have done it by knitting first and then putting the material in the washing machine to shrink it. By doing so, the very process of felting the material is located elsewhere and the transformative process is not visible or tangible for us. It is the washing machine that transforms the knitted object by shrinking it and compacting the fibres to obtain gloves, or slippers. The students were pleased with the idea of being introduced to the technique of wool felting. They promptly think about objects as gloves, slippers, seat pads, hats, scarves, or similar objects with a well-defined function.

When approaching wool felting through the lens of agential realism, I recognise the co-constitutive components of the phenomenon of wool felting as non-fixed and as re-configuring the felting event as it is enacted. A performative approach to wool felting becomes an endeavour to underline the open-ended aspect of art teaching. An agential realism framework resists confinement in what we already know in educational practices. It enables the manifestation of the not-yet-known (Atkinson, 2015), mapping (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980), intra-action (Barad, 2007), and post qualitative inquiry (St. Pierre, 2019) that can be unfolded through a performative approach to the subject of visual arts. Following such a framework, my approach to knowledge is not about finding and re-presenting knowledge that is out there. Wool felting is productive. Rather than focusing on the students as (the main) social elements, agential realism decentralizes the human subject, but I still use students' oral or written feedback. These feedbacks are written without transition between the making of felt and the making of writing words. They are parts of the students and my data creation. This data creation is our contribution to the discourse on art education that raises questions related to ethical and political concerns. I wish not to be a government employee, limiting my work to functionary tasks and following readymade programmes. Teachers can choose to practise teaching by reproducing the same or opt for it as a creative practice. Atkinson (2015), who refers to Barad's notion of intra-action in 'pedagogical strategies when working with the not-known in contrast to pedagogies grounded in the known', questions pedagogical practice,

‘particularly those pedagogic strategies that assume essentialist positions towards learners and knowledge’ (Atkinson, 2015, p. 45). He continues:

As characterised above, such positions are common to educational institutions such as schools, colleges and universities where curriculum content is often carved into packages of knowledge to be acquired by learners who in turn are conceived in terms of rational beings who possess varying degrees of capacity for knowledge acquisition. (p. 45)

The potential of craft practice in artistic teaching blurs a dualistic position between art and craft. Feedbacks from the participants reveal a renewed appreciation of the material and technique and an extended material engagement, rather than using them as a means to a re-production end. Moving away from a re-production of the known, re-production is listed on two levels; it means to: 1) abandon the idea of using reproductions of artworks such as pictures in a PowerPoint presentation, and 2) copy an image, such as known artworks or symbols, and reproduce it by copying it as accurately as possible.

Being response-able in my practice includes not approaching and following the school curriculum uncritically. My response-ability lies in being a thinking and functioning functionary. This means to come with propositions and contributions that can broaden the understanding of teaching, allow other ways of thinking, and create teaching practices such as artistic performative practices.

3.1.4 Performative perspective and minor gestures

Erin Manning, a Canadian cultural theorist, political philosopher, and artist, expresses minor gestures as a political act. My colleagues and PhD fellows at the University of Agder – Klungland, Eriksen, Hauen, and I – use our doctoral works to foster and/or articulate what can be done in encounters between artists and children and youth. ‘In this gesture of encounter, no one is trying to convince anyone: thought is thinking collectively at its limit’ (Manning, 2016, p. x preface). We voice our beliefs and intentions for other possible artistic and pedagogical approaches. This body of work is not only a theoretical approach, but a practice in schools, in art schools, and other artistic arenas. By interrogating, changing, and envisioning alternative meetings and understanding of arts production and dissemination within the field, we might reach the public sphere, which is the political space. Our voices might be in dissonance with other

voices. Our practices might challenge or resist other practices in art and craft education. However, we believe that our approaches bring relevant ideas. It is among others and peers that we can contribute to interrogating what we do and foster exchange and create a deeper understanding of what we do.

A minor gesture that activates the collectivity at the heart of thought effects change. It affects not only what the text can become: it alters to the core what thinking can do. It gives value to the processual uncertainty of thought as yet unformed, and gives that thought the space to develop collectively. (Manning, 2016, preface)

My approach to and practise of the subject of visual arts in teacher education might be provocative for some. However, my approach is not irreverent for what has been done and is still practised today. I am learning about many ways of working with traditional teaching practices. This helps me to understand the long history of craft and teacher education. My aim is to closely examine how we can expand our field and thoughts.

3.1.5 Performative perspective in research

My methodological approaches emerge as time goes, and as experiences with experimentation come. First, I used what I tentatively called an autoethnography for two. This methodological approach emphasises the position of a non-participative observer that my colleagues occupied. They were watching me, intensely involved in what they saw, but still not being themselves intimately and corporally a part of the wool fibres and felt making. This first approach contributed to a move towards post-qualitative methodology. A lot of the feedback from the participants to performative wool felting revealed an experience that encompasses more than visual modalities. They mention all senses, including auditive and tactile senses, as well as relational actions. The experience of wool felting builds on bodily and rhythmic actions as well as on non-verbal narratives. When readjusting my research design, I acknowledge the role of my body as an apparatus. When using my body as a research instrument, not only understood as a neutral and mechanical part of an instrument of measurement, I turn myself into an apparatus (Barad, 2007, p. 146). As an apparatus I become a part of the phenomenon. We cannot know the world as it is; what we can know is the intra-actions we are in as we explore a phenomenon. A

performative approach implies knowing with more than the watching eye and more than 'I' as a single unit or a detached subject. When using the body as a research instrument and becoming together with the phenomenon of wool felting, we make and un-make boundaries through our senses, as we are flowing with what is happening: 'Knowing is not a bounded or closed practice but an ongoing performance of the world' (Barad, 2007, 149).

Arts-based research, coupled with a poststructuralist approach, emphasise that data or truth/reality is not something to be found out there, but something that emerges from the phenomenon that occurs and is dependant on the agential cut the researcher makes. The researcher, as an apparatus, creates what is produced during the enquiry. Metaphorically, the changes and entanglements of wool fibres go hand in hand with changes and entanglements participants undergo as this transformation/shift occurs for both animal fibres and human bodies. A performative approach to wool felting recognizes and emphasises the co-components of co-making as entangled with/in the world and always in a process of be-coming. My body in contact with the materials and the act of touching – me touching the wool and the wool touching me – is what creates the becoming of wool felting and the touching becomes a part of knowledge creation. Becoming together, through touch, is the transformation of the wool. Implicitly, the touch creates data transformation. It is data creation.

Embodied encounters create an intimate relationship among the hands, feet, and the wool fibres. The felting work is done in its most archaic form. No tools are used, no intermediate mediums are utilized. The correspondence between the human and non-human materials is entangled: intimacy and affect. I tune myself to the materials. I sensitively record the changes and demands of the wool. We respond to each other's movements. I recall different moments of intra-action. I recall fragrance. I recall skin. I recall spaces. I recall, I recall, I recall ... I recall not only moments of wool felting; I recall other encounters, with students, artistes, scholars, a larger public.

The skin of our hands and feet symbolize closeness, and in this project, they also enable intimate moments and points of contact in working, co-making, and creating. Our skin is literally the envelope of our physical body. It is the carnal channel between the inner and outer worlds. It forms our silhouette, our boundaries; however, skin is not hermetical, skin is porous. Our hands and feet are tools reduced to archaic and efficient forms of working, feeling, and understanding of materials and their transformations. In (non-industrial) wool

felt there is no need for intermediaries. Skin as a field of attention has great potential. The immersion in the material world is unreserved. Small nuances, almost imperceptible changes and movements are strongly present at the fingertips and toes. It is the acknowledgement of the researcher as a participative apparatus in the knowledge creation.

3.2.1 Concluding with my contribution

This material-discursive doctoral thesis proposes one possible way of conducting a combined scientific and artistic research study that is a new form of dissertation at the University of Agder. This is not a research study that reflects on a distant case, but it dwells on continuous practices and a repetitive approach like a refrain. It engages with the researcher's sensibilities and 'sense-abilities' with wool felting in various contexts and with knowledge production as entangled. 'Knowing is not a matter of reflecting at a distance; rather it is an active and specific practice of engagement' (Barad, 2007, p. 453). This entanglement of material and discursive matters repositions materials and humans, as 'posthumanist materialist account of performativity challenges the positioning of materiality as either a given or a mere effect of human agency' (Barad, 2003, p. 827). This challenges the idea of dependency in the relationship between teachers, students, and materials. It introduces an organic relationship to a performative pedagogy that evolves as a rhizomatic network, which deals with teaching as a phenomenon that includes co-components evolving from and in the same ecology.

Using a reciprocal infiltration of readings of Deleuze, Guattari, and Barad, the theoretical framework emphasises rhizomatic and intra-active relationships and approaches to materialities. In dialogue with an ontology of immanence and agential realism, this research reveals a practice of co-making, rather than understanding art as a finished product. A performative approach brings a new way of questioning, inquiring, and thinking about how one can teach visual arts. This involves ontological, practical, and theoretical perspectives. Wool felting as a material and action in its iterative intra-action with the participants is not a thing but a 'doing'. A performative approach to wool felting figures out forms of agency that emerge and merge from diverse materialities.

A diffractive reading (one through the other) of my entangled practices and feedbacks from the participants reveal a feeling of affective togetherness with humans, non-humans, as well as with materials' agency and intra-actions.

Preserving diversity, affective togetherness bridges boundaries without collapsing into a single synchronised and similar thoughts and thinking. A performative approach to wool felting focuses on how materials connect us to each other during our co-making, more than a description of what materials are.

This research contributes to seeing art making, teaching, and research practices as entangled and mutually enriching each other, as they question and reshape each other. This shows how material discourse transforms habitual gestures and thoughts in art making and teaching. A performative approach contests and escapes ‘the unexamined habits of mind that grant language and other forms of representation more power in determining our ontologies that they deserve’ (Barad, 2003, p. 802). Furthermore, a performative approach explores new terrains and thought creation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980).

This project, beyond revealing my thoughts, seeks to provoke thoughts in others. We are all ‘sense-able’, and we all need dialogues to refine our ‘sense-awareness’. Being in dialogue with others can help us realise and sharpen our thoughts and see when we are executors and when we are inventors. It is in dialogue with diverse materialities that we can revisit and recalibrate our practices, also in relation to realising the ambitions of politicians or authorities.

A performative approach to wool felting could be called ‘performative pedagogy’. This proposition, its name and practice, has no absolute boundaries or properties. It is characterised by its exploratory and experimental possibilities. However, a performative pedagogy can be recognised by the following traits:

- An entangled pedagogy with co-components evolving in the same ecology;
- An iterative intra-action that is about co-making;
- A revelation of togetherness preserving diversity; and
- A combination of moving and movable practices and thought creation.

3.2.2 Concluding by imagining further possibilities / research

A performative approach to materials other than wool and the felt technique would be interesting to investigate. How can we work performatively with materials that possess other qualities than those of wool? Other than wool, which is malleable, robust, directly transformable with the human body, and has a noteworthy low-tech aspect?

Western performance art has been one of my inspirations. It would be interesting to conduct a closer examination of a performative approach to visual

arts using a non-Western theatre tradition such as *halaqa*, particularly with regard to the use of space and its dynamic and ephemeral characteristics.

This research is not based on a case study, but on my iterative encounters with wool felting and a long-term commitment to this material and technique. The research design as a rhizomatic work, including minor gestures that create major matter in my every-day and entangled practices, could be explored further.

I have been working with craft as a prolongation of a textile tradition and as a creative form of expression. It would be interesting to approach this aspect based on the work of the Moroccan feminist, author, and sociologist Fatema Mernissi (2008). I think of handicraft as a liberating power for female textile makers.

Wool as a raw material and connection to and between human and animal components of the phenomenon, as well as the reconfigured relationship between human and animal fibres, have left a strong impression on me. This alters a previous ongoing project on the concept of time and growing old, which leave traces on an aging body, visible as human hair turns white. The concept of time, fundamentally, relates to changes, becoming, in-motion, alterity, and transformation, as much as revolution, *ritournelle*, and more. This changes the idea of using hair turning white as a re-presentation of aging. What potential would a performative approach have in contributing to working with the idea of aging?

A possible future project could be to enquire into when teachers execute the curricula as management documents and when teachers explore the curricula—when teachers offer solutions and when they offer exploration in a teaching process with the students. This could, for example, be seen in relation to the teachers' educational/ academic background, geographical contexts, and own visions and views on students. When are we, to put it crudely, civil servants in our work as government employees, and when are we engaged in a moving practice?

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Fourth stratum

4 Fourth stratum – My explorations during this PhD project

The fourth stratum is composed by the six explorations during this PhD project. These explorations are represented like blue mushrooms in the drawings of my research design (figures 1 and 3). Here are the documentations of my three public exhibitions. The photos and videos are not an explanation of the exhibitions, nor are they works of art. The teasers, as moving images, are a form of documentation that transmit livelier the felting events than still images convey. This is followed by the three published articles that are presented in full. The 7th element consists of a short text, followed by an assemblage of pictures and some short videos from my everyday practices in the appendix.

4.1 Exhibition 1

”Inhabiting / Living Practice”.

Presented at Hatch Gallery, in Vancouver.

Canada, July 2019



Figure 18 Layered white, grey and black wool reminding on the letter ‘I’ from Latin alphabet, and ‘Aleph’ from Arabic alphabet. Photo: Alicia Arias-Camison Coella.

The first exhibition was presented in June 2019 at the World Congress of the International Society for Education through Art (InSEA) at The University of British Columbia in Vancouver. We were 18 artist doctoral candidates from around the world at the Hatch Gallery of the University. Lap-Xuan Do-Nguyen and I had a joint performance for the congress attendees during the opening of that exhibition. Our performance combined sound and movements in a repetitive

and dialogical manner. I experienced the voicing of "I" and the felting process as a tautophony and a gestural ritournelle bringing our actions (including the participation of the public) into multidirectional intensities. The participants' bodies and actions, the water and its fluidity, the wool fibres and their transformability, the fragrance of pine tree soap, the duration, the flux of movements, the space, the voices, echoes, the silences, and the rhythms and re-iterations of frictions between our feet and the wool crated the phenomenon of wool felting. It was a first experience with a public exhibition using a performative approach to wool felting. This marked the transition from object making to event creation in my artistic work.



Figure 19 Rolling wool. Photo: Alicia Arias-Camison Coella



Figure 20 Fulling wool. Photo:Alicia Arias-Camison Coella

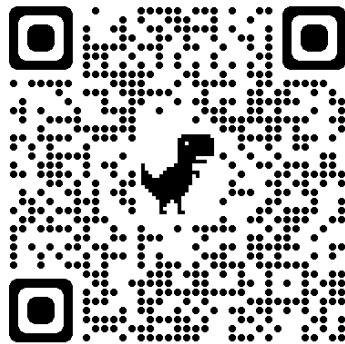


Figure 21 Let go/throwing wool. Photo: Alicia Arias-Camison Coella



Figure 22 Touching and touch by wool. Photo: Alicia Arias-Camison Coella

You scan the QR 2 or use the link to the teaser of the performance



QR 2: https://youtu.be/6jy_527YSeY

4.2 Exhibition 2

“Meeting through iterative gestures of felting. Other contexts, other encounters”

Presented at A. Farm, in Ho Chi Minh City.

Vietnam, December 2019.



Figure 23 Hybrid material assemblage walking out. Still from video: Ta Minh Duc

I was in Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) in December 2019, to participate in an international gathering of artists working with performances. This was hosted by MOT+++ , an independent, artist-run collective. I invite the public, artistes and other persons, to join me in a process of wool felting. We share different moments and movements. Displacement from indoors to outdoors space. We carry outside and place a large piece of wool fibres in layers. We pour warm, soapy water on the wool. We engage with fulling the wool fibres. We roll, toss and suspend the large amount of felted wool to dry at the end the working process. We share moments of co-making.

Here are the feedbacks from some of the participants:

“When you carried the large piece of wool from the studio to the courtyard, it was like a football flag. Your performance is actually a lot about materiality. People connect through the material”.

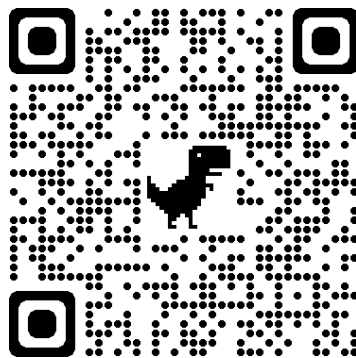
“When people walked on the wool, they were following each other and a rhythm. Doing the same. It was almost like a group of sheep”.

“This working process reminds me on a kind of ancient ritual. It is also very close to nature”.



Figure 24 Circulating bodies on active material. Still from video: Ta Minh Duc

You can scan the QR3 or use the link to the teaser of the performance



QR 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpZlIpnMnnw>

4.3 Exhibition 3

“Tekstiler. Fiber og komposisjoner. Samhandling og affekt i handlinger”.
Presented at, Halden kunstforening, Rød Herregård Østfoldmuseene, in Halden.
Norway, November 2020.



Figure 25 Result of wool felt work performance in Vietnam (background) and raw wool (on the floor). Photo: Tore Trollbu

Out of 13 art works hanging on the walls Halden art society, five of them were works made together with other people in Canada, Vietnam, Spain, The Nederland and Norway. Two of the exhibited works were works that I made as a response to the meeting with people that joined me in earlier performances. The title of those two works are *Ad infinitum* and *Territoire – Espaces lisses et strié*.

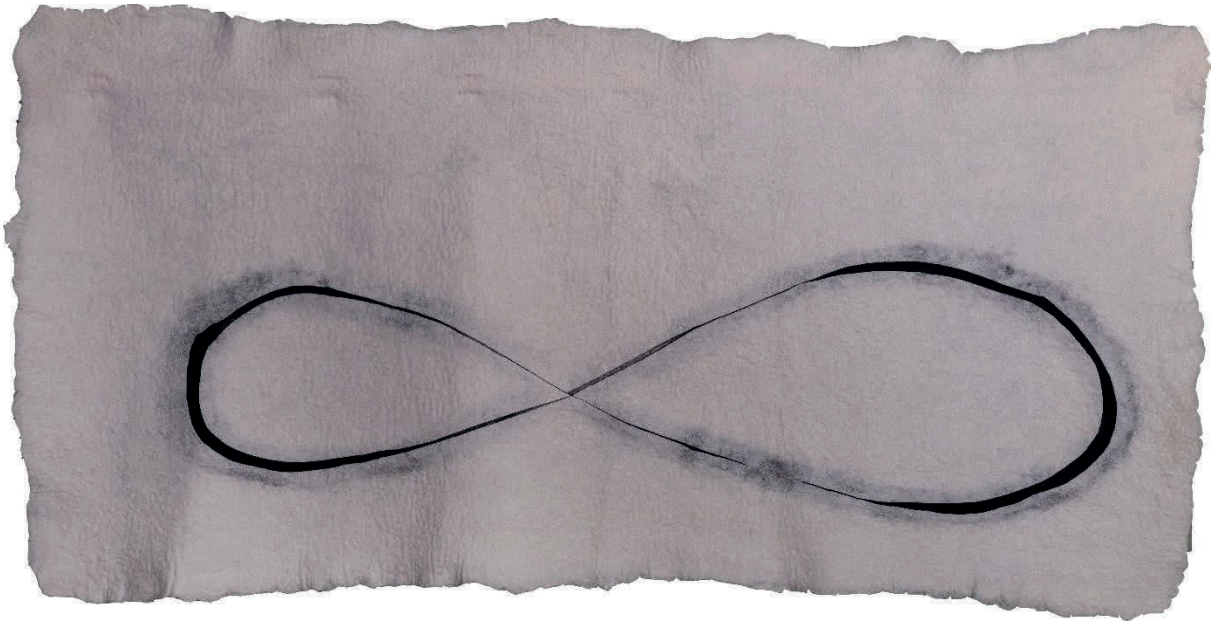


Figure 26 Wool felt work *Ad infinitum*. Size: 125 X 255 cm. Photo: Samira Jamouchi

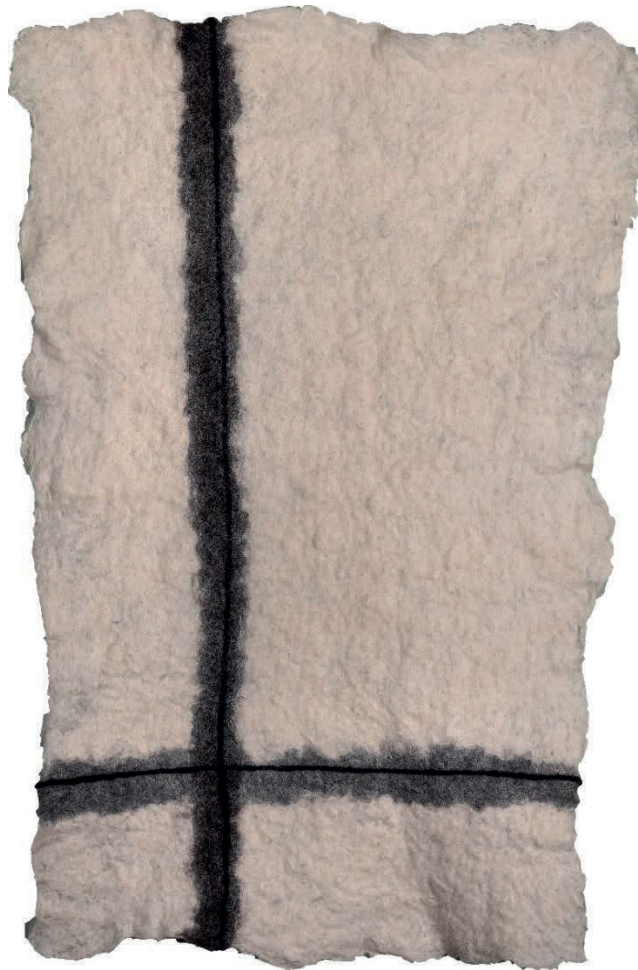


Figure 27 Wool felt work *Territoire – Espaces lisses et strié*. Size: 97 X 60 cm. Photo: Samira Jamouchi

Extract from the interview by Ellen Midtfjeld (KanDuSi), 21st October 2020 ¹⁵

Why have you chosen to work with felting?

- I am not sure if it was me who chose the wool, or if the wool chose me. Lately I wanted to have more performative approach to felting, I wanted to invite people into the process with me.

She invited the audience to feel along with her. The public contribute to fulling, rolling and tossing the wool. Together they make a piece of work.

- Then one gets a completely different understanding of a craft technique, says Samira, and a different closeness to the wool. We engage in interaction, we create something together. I prefer the word interaction to collaboration. Interaction is about doing something together, collaboration can be done across continents. Here, it is the wool that brings us together, we get to know each other through the processing of this fine natural material.

How does the felting process take place?

Samira picks up a bag that is outside the door. It is filled with wool.

- Look here, she says and puts the wool out onto the floor. You can feel it! This is wool coming straight from the sheep.

- I work with the nature and its elements, says Samira. I use rain water to wash the wool by hanging the wool outside and let the rain wash out the muck. The wool is then let to dry in the sun. After the wool has dried in the sun, I card it.



Figure 28 Raw wool from sheep. Photo: Ellen Midtfjeld

¹⁵ Source: [Samira Jamouchi stiller ut på Galleri Rød – kanDusi](#) (In Norwegian)



Figure 29 Hand washed and carded wool. Photo: Ellen Midtjeld

- Wool fibres are natural materials, just like our hair. The shells in the fibres open in contact with warm water, and close in cold water. Wool becomes tangled when we agitated it. Then we step barefoot on the wool. The fibres infiltrate each other and become tangled.

- I think it is important to be close to nature in this way. It is important because we live in a world that we are destroying. But the world is also us, each of the individual human being. When we meet natural materials, we also meet ourselves. When I am in close contact with the wool felt, I am also close to myself, in that I understand a work of art, I understand the material. It gives me an understanding of who I am, in my encounter with the world around me.

What inspires you?

– Duration. Not the time or the moment, but the duration. Duration is different from time. Time is linear, it is minutes, hours and days that pass. I think of connections that occur, which are multi-directional – as opposed to time which is constantly moving forward in a straight line.

- It was probably the wool that chose me. The wool has all these qualities, those qualities attracted me. The wool did something to me, before I did something to it.

4.4 Article 1

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Link: <https://journals.lib.sfu.ca/index.php/sfuer/article/view/612/535>

EXPLORING ART AND CRAFT IN TEACHER EDUCATION WHILST GOING TOWARD A PERFORMATIVE APPROACH: SOME REFLECTIONS ON RE-TURNING AND ENGAGING DIFFRACTIVELY WITH FELTING WOOL

SAMIRA JAMOUCHI

Oslo Metropolitan University

Abstract

Since 1997, I have returned to and revisited textile materials through different types of approaches. As an artist, I have been working with soft sculptures and immersive installations. As an artist-teacher, I sought to (re-)introduced wool felting tradition to teacher students in Norway. As a researcher, I re-turn (Barad, 2014) my approach to wool felting and engage diffractively (ibid.) within teacher education.

I am now still exploiting a performative approach to the subject of arts and craft within teacher education. This approach is conjointly inspired by contemporary visual art form of expressions and by Barad's performative ontology.

In this text I attempt to convey my working processes as I relate how I started to engage with a performative approach to drawing in the field of arts and craft in teacher education, and how I now aim to enact further a performative approach to wool felting. This approach is inspired by post-humanism perspectives. Consequently, traditional binaries or dichotomies one can find in assumptions related to the humanities, as subject-object and theory-practice (Van der Tuin & Dolphijn, 2010), are here deterritorialized to be simultaneously and differently reterritorialized (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980). My approach goes thus beyond the theory-practice division to hold an intra-active pedagogy (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) and an ethico-onto-epistemological framework (Barad, 2007). This implies a set of mind considering an intimated relationship between making, being and knowing: all those aspects are present under a creative process, not isolated and nor independent of the process. Adopting a performative approach with my students, I do not necessarily privilege a linear approach and I do not necessarily privilege human agency above non-human entities. Following an ethico-onto-epistemological framework means here to merge the phenomenon of felting (beings) and its written study and analysis (ways of knowing).

Keywords: arts and craft, teacher education, performance, performative teaching, wool, felting

Re-turning the act of making and engaging diffractively with a making process

To re-turn, according to Barad (2014), is different from going back to something. For Barad re-turning is to put things up-side-down and intra-act with materials or entities anew/diffractively. Re-turning as such is not “returning as in reflecting on or going back to a past that was, but re-turning as in turning it over and over again – iteratively intra acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-matterings), new diffraction patterns” (Barad, 2017, p. 168). Re-turning things over and over again is an attempt to reach a richer approach and acknowledge other entanglements, other possible ways to intra-act, and other optics. Re-turning wool fibres, in my case, means to not simply go back, repeat or replicate the traditional felting technique I learned for 20 years ago. By re-turning wool fibres I wish to practice felting and convey diffractively the practice/making of felting to my students.

The concept of diffraction, beyond reflection, is also borrowed from Karen Barad (Barad, 2014), to distinguish it from the idea of reflection, by having a more explicit understanding of what is more than just a displacement. Diffraction is dissimilar to reflection when one look at the sameness of a phenomenon displaced in time or space, as for example reflected on a mirror. Barad proposes an understanding of diffraction as to be(come) aware of and responsive to the differences and what those differences can do.

In this project, diffraction as more than just a displacement, means to alter earlier relationship between the wool fibres and my making. That is a new, becoming *in situ*, relationship between the materials and the making that take place. I address diffraction when I work with felting wool as I see the affect is produced when we value the process itself, relegating the final product (the terminated felted object) to a less predominant position. Concretely that means that when my students and I undergo a performative approach to wool fibres, we are not necessarily only interested in the finale/finished object. But we give attention to what wool can do with us, as the affect and effect it produces, the way we intra-act, and how different relationships arise within the groups of students.

These last years, I have worked with a performative approach to art and crafts subject: I look at the values that lie in the process (not just the finished product), such as aesthetic experiences, non-verbal communication, social relations, and material transformations. My initial step toward a performative approach to the subject of arts and craft within teacher education was made through collaborative drawing sessions, first by using a method I called “visual dialogue” (Jamouchi, 2017) as a way to unveil student’s personal experiences of the city. And a few years later by using performance drawing, as a way to involve the students bodily and emotionally in the act of drawing (Jamouchi, 2018). In both cases I consider artistic and didactic approaches as an essential and joint parts of my practice as an artist-teacher.



Table 1. A performative drawing session with my students at the Oslo Metropolitan University in 2018.

Written feedback I collected earlier, from students with whom I undertake performative drawing, underline the evocative and emotional experience we had during a drawing session. Some students expressed those experiences as the following: “I became a part of the paper”, and “Silence and movements became art. Combining dance and colours” (Jamouchi, 2017). Those statements reveal the intra-action experienced during the phenomenon of drawing. It seems like the materials - both paper and bodies - became an entangled entity. And the making became the leading event. It was not only the human hands that created the drawing.

Bodily engaged with the task, we performed drawing on a large space in the classroom, we evolved collaboratively on wide-ranging craft paper displayed on the floor and the wall, and we explored this two-dimensional form of expression through non-verbal communication. The students hardly mention the final product (the finished drawing itself) in their feedback. But they emphasized the drawing process as a prevalent moment. A moment under which they could explore the material, become aware the relations that occur between both material, students, musicality, temporality, and moments of flow.

Re-turning drawing processes, drawing anew and diffractively was a rewarding way to reposition the working process and give it the more valuable status it deserved. I believe that a performative approach to wool felting can help to look deeper into the complex relationships we can have with malleable materials, with ourselves and each other. I do not believe so only because we can work on a large-scale project, using our whole body, and evolving freely in a larger space. I believe so also because the plasticity of wool fibres holds natural material that allows metamorphosis and entanglement.

Repositioning the felting process as experience and experiment

Stimulated by my earlier experiences of visual dialogue through drawings to unveil personal urban experiences, and performative drawing with teacher students when

emphasising the drawing process, I wish now to approach the arts and craft subject through felting wool fibres, looking for how to allow fruitful experience and experimenting. From a post-humanistic and new materialistic perspective, I am interested to look further at the metamorphosis, entanglement and intra-action that occur between the materials and the students.

Art as experience (Dewey, 1934/2005) and experimentation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1993, p. 371, cited in Parr, 2010) seem to be given less attention than teaching methods focusing on foreseen outcomes or products. In September 2017, the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training published a first proposal for school subjects¹⁶. In the subject of arts and craft, this first draft seems to largely concentrate on predefined approaches through established techniques and methods. The teacher team from the university of Kristiansand in Agder (South Norway) responded critically to the proposal by calling for a new curriculum that meets what they regard as relevant for a contemporary arts and crafts subject. They mentioned sensory form of experiences, they emphasis approaches that are closer contemporary art strategies as meaning making, questioning and wondering, participation, as well as dissent and interaction¹⁷. This critical response is in line with my views of an artist-teacher position and my wish to not only teach about materials or techniques, but allow aesthetical experiences.

Experience is a central and crucial moment in the art and crafts subject at school (Dewey, 1934/2005). And experimenting 'Without goal or end' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1993, p. 371, as cited in Parr, 2010) is essential to a creative process and aesthetical experience. It is indeed during the making of something, the process of becoming that we can make experiences and experiments. It is under the working process that we can explore, discover, make sense, as well as seize and capture different aspects of materials. It is also during a working process that we can relate to both the materials and other participants. As well as we can experience intra-action and relational aesthetic.

Engaging diffractively with wool involves to constantly re-explore the possibilities that this malleable material offers. In addition to the strictly technical aspects of felting, it is a unique sensory approach that takes place. I want to explore and convey some of the sensory aspects experienced during the process of felted wool. Sensory aspects as for instance the changing texture of the fibres, tactility going from soft to harder structures, alternation between wet and dry fibres, and the change of temperature we experience with our hands. Embodiment and imaginative approaches are intimately connected to the felting wool process. It is those forms of tactile, visceral and first-hand experiences I wish to invite my arts and craft students to become a part of. I deem those unique moments of sensory experiences as great potential to undergo experience and experimentation.

Felting wool and intra-action with different entities

Engaging diffractively with felting wool, as I recently started to do with my students, involves intra-action with different materials and other than ourselves. When we engage together with a felting process we bring a togetherness that involve our material bodies and the materiality of the wool. A togetherness that engender also

¹⁶ See this link for the core elements in art and crafts: <https://hoering.udir.no/Hoering/v2/151?notatId=227>

¹⁷ Author translation of the abstract send by the teaching team from the university of Kristiansand to the Norwegian national conference organized by *Nasjonalt senter for kunst og kultur i opplæring* in January 2019. The teacher team was composed by Helene Illeris, Monica Klungland, Lisbet Skregelid, Anna Svingen-Austestad.

immanent trajectories, experiences and experiments, memories, gestures, and identities while approaching and investing ourselves in a transformative intra-action.

The plurality of the students and materials do not merge. The plurality is rather more explicit and its complexity expand in the classroom. It is, as Barad express it, a generative process. A moment of becoming as “an iterative (re)configuring of patterns of differentiating-entangling” (Barad, 2014, p. 168). When voices and sounds, combined with ideas and acts, (be)come through a variety of different agencies, those intra-actions entangle with each other and participate equally to the becoming moment of making in a shared “spacetimematterings” (Barad, 2014, p. 168).

The picture in figure 2 shows the students using the weight of their bodies and their feet working collectively to step on, pack and flatten a large piece of wool on the floor covered with bubble plastic to felt a large mass of natural fibres under their bodies. The space is intimately shared and gestures made of combined rhythms, repetitions, and different cadences create a qualitative space and moments of duration and *ritournelle* which emanate from their working process.



Figure 2. A performative approach to wool felting with my students at the Oslo Metropolitan University in 2018.

“The world is not populated with things that are more or less the same or different from one another. Relations do not follow relata, but the other way around. Matter is neither fixed and given nor the mere end result of different processes. Matter is produced and productive, generated and generative. Matter is agentive, not a fixed essence or property of things” (Barad, 2007, p. 136-137). This approach to relations and things, as Barad states it in that quote, underlines the performative approach to wool we experienced together. Our session with this felting process is a performative act. (I shall come back to performativity in the next section).



Figure 3. A performative approach to wool felting with my students at the Oslo Metropolitan University in 2018.

The picture in figure 3 shows repetitive and non-identical movements of twisting, turning and throwing large pieces of wool on the air and on the table. Those movements made by the students are not anticipated and not foreseen movements, thus they result in non-identical recurring movements. The movements in this felting process create waves of rhythms between the different student groups. The groups work simultaneously individually and conjointly. This is because the groups work individually since each group focuses on its own process, by creating they own time-space-actions through iteration, following the bodies and wool in motion within the group. At the same time the overall aspect in the classroom (visually and auditory) gives the impression of an ensemble bringing together similar actions in the workshop. Movements and sounds that create the felting process contribute to create a time space rooted in the making (felting process).

Spatially and temporality are also intra-acting in this felting process. The notion of space can be considered as something more than its metric definition. Space can be identified through our behaviour and daily creative processes, like tactics and strategies (de Certeau, 1990). Space can be defined as a topological entity related to aesthetic and our body (Trageton, 1995), or as poetical and oneiric (Perec, 2000; Bachelard, 1957), or identified from the concept of duration (Bachelard, 1957, and Bergson, as cited in Van der Tuin & Dolphin, 2010).

Space can also be seen through its temporality. Lefebvre (2004) used rhythmanalysis related to repetitions, frequency, and the human body own rhythms as a reference of unity and in relation to everyday life and urban space. With Kevin Lynch (1976), time and place has been looked at from a human sense of time, a biological rhythm that differs from an objective/external calculation of time. With the concept of duration, instead of linearly or scientific time inspired by Bergson, one can focus on metamorphosis or transformation.

“What endures, what is fundamentally immersed in time is not what remains unchanging or the same over time, a Platonic essence, but what diverges and transforms itself with the passage of time (Grosz, 2005, p. 110, as cited in Van der Tuin & Dolphin, 2010, p. 164). The wool fibre undergoes a metamorphosis, but it simultaneously remains the same entity. Going from a loose fibre it becomes a part of a smooth, felted material.

Away from a mindset promoting stabilization (of time) and standardization (of objects), my students and I find ourselves elsewhere. Space becomes more qualitative than metric. Working away from a table, leaving small scale projects for larger formats, and not sitting on a chair but standing freely in the room enable us to freely use our whole body, enable us to use large movements. This also enables improvisation and cooperation not only based on our fictive idea, but generated by the actual making during a creative process.

The intra-action between all those entities, as space, time, bodies, wool, water, floor, table, air, soap, etc., shaped the performative process and our experience of it.

Performance related to visual art and performative ontology

A performative approach to arts and craft can bring powerful experiences into the classroom. As I am now starting to work toward a performative approach to the subject of arts and craft by using wool fibres, I see that performance and performative approaches can be related to both visual contemporary art-working processes and Karen Barad’s ontological framework.

Performance, in art history, has evolved from happenings, interventions, simulacra, action art and relational art (Ferrier, 1990). Hence, within visual arts, forms and categories of performances are constantly evolving. My intention here is not to give a definitive definition of what a performance is in the context of visual arts. My purpose is to recognize features that can be fruitful to articulate the way I work with performativity in teacher education. To that aim, I find the discussion of performance/performativity relevant. Inspired by performance in contemporary visual art I have been questioning a dominant way of teaching the subject of arts and craft in our universities. A teaching practice mainly focusing on technical and methodological instructions and artefacts production. This seems to be, still today, the “regular way to teach”. I have myself been practicing teaching like that for years. I have previously been working as a pedagogue teaching about art education, rather than an artist-teacher training students through the arts. Today I see that creative and critical inquiry during experimentations, process-oriented training and relational aesthetical experiences are fundamental aspects in the subject of arts and craft. Without those aspects, we risk failing our mandate as arts and craft teachers.

The works of the visual artist Marina Abramović using her body and other materials as a medium is clearly inviting the public into intra-action. Her work changes the traditional position of (passive) viewer to (intervening) actor. Especially her performance “Lips of Thomas” (1975) created an intimate and unpredictable relationship between the artist and the spectators. The object of the performance was not a physical item nor the production of an artifact. The object of performance art is the ongoing action itself. Her performance differs from a theatrical representation. The event that occurs is not a dramatic representation as one can find in traditional theater performances. The

artist is not playing a role as an actress would. Marina Abramović's performances are ones of the works within visual art that mark a fundamental shift in our understanding of a piece of artwork independent from the artist. This transformation from a traditional work of art into an event is named "the performative turn" by Fischer-Lichte (2008, p. 23).

The classical formality established by having the exhibited object on a specific place of the gallery and standing spectators in front of it has vanished. The close contemplation of the other, the artist, involves consciousness about oneself, our own being. An alternative approach to the traditions and standards of the visual or performing arts that stresses the "the present, live moment" (Fischer-Lichte, 2008) and that challenges a classical interpretation focusing on the artefact and its visual components is what is relevant here.

The works of Marina Abramović enrich my understanding of what a performance can be within a contemporary art context and have an impact on how I can engage with a performative approach to my work in school setting context. I use the word performative, not performance, to distinguish between how I understand a performance related to the art world, from my didactical use of it related to the subject of arts and craft in school settings. My aim is to first and foremost deal with the event or phenomenon of felting as the main element of a teaching session.

From another perspective, performative research has been stated to be a "new" paradigm in scientific research, succeeding to the established quantitative and qualitative research methodologies. Haseman (2006) and Bolt (2016) identify it as a new paradigm, mainly related to the field of artistic research. They both call attention to the characteristics of performative research that distinguish it from earlier way of conducting research projects. Performativity, with its iterability and differentiation as Bolt (2016) puts it, is a possible way to explore and investigate a felting process ongoing a transformation, when the wool intra-act together with our hands.

By introducing performative research, which Haseman (2006) and Bolt (2016) identify as new research paradigm, they do more than adding or formulating a new working method after the well-known quantitative and qualitative research methods. Performative research has a more profound *raison d'être*; -it deals with fundamental beliefs about the nature and value of research that practice-led researchers have struggled to formulate within the binary of quantitative and qualitative research (Haseman, 2006, p. 1). Haseman stipulates that his contribution is confined to performative researchers who carry out practice-led research, which is "intrinsically experimental and comes to the fore when the researcher creates new artistic forms of performance and exhibition" (Haseman, 2006, p. 3). In my work, the idea of performance does not take place in an art gallery, but in the classroom with my students. My research is located (in time, space, and the making) everywhere I meet my students when we perform wool felting diffractively.

Haseman writes also that the practice-led researcher starts with "an enthusiasm of practice" (Haseman, 2006). That means that the research is not driven from a problem or an issue. In my case, it is an enthusiasm for the artistic practice and a concern for the teaching practice of arts and craft that drives my curiosity and will to engage with this performative approach to arts and craft. Note that the word concern in my case do not mean to find a normative solution to a problem, but a desire to question and reflect on the

possibilities that reside in a performative approach to the subject of arts and craft in our universities. In other words, the issue here is related to my concern and care for the students I meet every day and with whom I endeavour to explore what the art world can be about in school settings. Concretely, I wish to look for an alternative way to teach in the subject of arts and craft by choosing an explorative performative approach to wool felting, rather than a traditional felting procedure guiding us safely on how to obtain a felted object. It is less a performance than an iterative intra-action with diffraction. After years of different felting experiences, I now want to re-turn wool fibers as a known material to differently reiterate the encounter between us. I envisage this encounter close to a performative act (not a representational performance) in line with what Haseman and Bolt introduced as a new paradigm. This re-encounter with wool is not a repetition or mimesis of what I can do or what I know about wool, but a search for intra-action and creative play with it.

As in dance, like for example salsa involving two partners, the relationship between the partners emerges during the dance. Following each other's intentions and movements and "operating according to repetition *with* difference" (Bolt, 2016, p.139) other intentions and movements will appear. That idea of repetition with difference is comparable to the concept of intra-action introduced by Karen Barad (2007).

Barads' idea of intra-action produces an echo to my work. Her posthumanist performative framework that proposes an ontology in which entities are not taken as given, but as constituted through material entanglements contesting classical dualist view in scientific research (as object/subject, material/discourse, nature/culture). Her concept of intra-action describes the phenomenon as a relationship that emerges between entities from within their relationship (not prior or outside it). This acknowledges agency I have seen in the classroom when the students work with performative drawing and express this experience as "I became a part of the paper" they were drawing on.

For Barad (2007)

"Discursive practices and material phenomena do not stand in relationship of externality to each other; rather, *the material and the discursive are mutually implicated in the dynamic of intra-activity*. The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither is reducible to the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other. Neither is articulated in the absence of the other; matter and meaning are mutually articulated" (Barad, 2007, p. 152).

Barad proposes "a *posthumanist performative* approach [...]. The move toward performative alternatives to representationalism shifts the focus from questions of correspondence between descriptions and reality (e.g. do they mirror nature or culture?) to matters of practices, doings, and actions" (Barad, 2007, p. 135). This movement from representationalism to agential realism involves the idea of no pre-existing phenomenon in the world we are a part of. For my study this means that the phenomenon of felting is a process involving wool fibers and our hands equally in what happens during that process. When I use the word equally here, I refer to Barad's position of posthumanism when she intend to: "... not calibrate to the human; on the contrary, it is about taking issue

with human exceptionalism while being accountable for the role we play in differential constitution and differential position of the human among other creatures (both living and nonliving)” (Barad, 2007, p. 136). We, equally human and non-human entities, are reciprocally constituted and intimately entangled in the world of which we are a part. Barad sees phenomena as material-discursive practices, this implies the idea that material as well as discourse are constructed, as we are embedded in it.

My engagement with Barad’s (2007) work is grounded in my interest of diffracting and enacting non-representational knowledge of making practices. Her posthumanist, performative conceptualisation of knowledge production and practice suggests taking material and body simultaneously into account, as she acknowledges a relationship between the material and the discursive with no Manichean dichotomy between them. Matter is considered as agentic and dynamic, not as subordinated actions established by human hands. Similarly, in my teaching, I wish to encounter wool with our hands and allow experimentation rather than reproduction.

A performative approach to the subject of arts and craft? Still asking questions

The following suggestion for teaching program in arts and crafts is published on the website of the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training: “With this task pupils will become familiar with wool as material. They should felt seat pad in an ice box using water, soap and colorful wool. They can sew large stiches around the edge of the seat pad surface when it has dried. Pupils will learn where we get wool from and how it can be used”.¹⁸ As mentioned previously, the new proposal published by the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training in the subject of arts and craft seems to largely concentrate on predefined approaches through established techniques and methods. As for instance in the way it is mentioned here when the pupils are simply expected to (re-) produce felted seat pads.

By exploring a performative approach to the subject of arts and craft when felting wool fibers, I mean to relegate in the background the recipe-like teaching practices that mainly use a technique to achieve the finale product. A performative approach to arts and craft materials should deal with the imaginative and creative forces a person can reach when intra-acting with transformable materials. When a student immerses herself/himself in the material this allows her/him to perceive, explore, feel and comprehend a creative process.

A performative approach to the subject of arts and craft puts the event as the focal moment. That central element can be understood as the intra-action between the (teacher’s and student’s) hands and the materials. Performativity is also a central element in the work of Karen Barad. For Barad “A performance...is just such an intra-action among internally related components” (Bryan, 2016, p. 14). And “In the case of an ontological performance, the being *is* the result of this performance or intra-action” (Bard, 2016, p. 20). A performative approach includes experiences and experiments of different possible ways of transformations, in terms of textures, sounds, temperatures, movements, duration,

¹⁸ This suggestion for teaching program is proposed for 1st and 2nd grade in primary school. Retrieved (in Norwegian) January 2019 from <https://www.udir.no/laring-og-trivsel/lareplanverket/fag/kunst-og-handverk/>

rhythms, odors, and so on, as those elements are parts of a working/creative process. The intra-action invites the students to a togetherness allowing relationships immanent within/from the performance. It is then the performance as an event, beyond the teacher only, which invites students to an experience of what the subject of arts and craft can be.

Drawing from a couple of teaching sessions with my students engaging with a performative approach to felting wool, as shown above in figures 2 and 3, I see that the essential quality of an experience does not reside in the repetition of the same, it is rather contextual and therefore unique. It is characterized by its ability to be experienced in different surroundings, and yet it is intimately related to the space, moments and people that found themselves there.

Some of the questions that have brought me further in my practice are: How can artist-teachers in arts and craft invest the space of the classroom differently? How could I invite students to experience felting, not only apply a felting technique? How could I invite students to immerse themselves in *feeling* wool fibres, more than only *felting* wool fibres?

Repetitions of an arts and crafts teaching session and displacement from a classroom to another are actually a feature of our daily meeting with our students. Questions that might bring our teaching practice further are: How can we allow for the students to meet again, and again a material diffractively? How can we “enter the phenomenon” in the classroom by bringing the essential quality of an experience?

Those are the questions I address in my teaching. Those questions might also be relevant for others working within educational contexts in the subject of arts and crafts.

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4.5 Article 2

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Exploring a Performative Approach to Felting Wool

An Autoethnography for Two?

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Abstract

This text treats the author's imagined research design based on her artistic research and pedagogical views. She tentatively call this arts based approach an autoethnography for two. The starting point of this approach is her critical view on a certain confine pedagogy in teacher education and a desire to walk away from being the object of a research project. She aspires for a teacher education in the arts subject that recognizes and values the working process as a significant part of creative processes, also within school contexts. Furthermore, she wants to join the multiple identities that compose the identity of many actors in school settings, which comprise the artist, the teacher and the researcher.

The ambition of this text is to articulate a plausible research design that can inspire others in their quest when embarking with arts based research in their artistic work and/or educational work. Her research in this text relates to her re-turning to the ancestral technique of hand felting wool. She questions and approaches this traditional technique by adopting a performative approach to the making. This approach suggests that making sense (as knowledge production) is intimately connected to the making (of felting wool in this case). By inviting peers in an autoethnography for two, to share impressions and reflections, this research design can elicit diffractively, a working process.

Keywords: Visual arts, teacher education, arts based research design, performative processes

Preamble

I shall now return to the ancestral technique of hand felting a couple of decades after I first learned to felt wool. Fabric is often the result of woven threads. However, felted fabric is the result of non-woven, entangled materials, such as wool fibres.

The felting process involves physical vigour, gestures that are robust and gentle at the same time, as well as demanding closeness to the material. The metamorphosis of the wool fibres through the changing texture, their touch, the humid alternating with the dry and the variable temperature of warm and cold water are some of the tactile aspects sensed during wool felting. Beyond the purely technical aspect of felting, however, a unique sensory experience takes place. The becoming of the fibres under the manipulation of the material is, for me, a moment of promise—an unknown becoming of the material in my hands. This moment nourishes my imagination.

During the felting process, one can experience what Deleuze and Guattari (1980) define as a smooth space. They refer to felted fabric to express how a smooth space can be envisaged. They see felt as anti-fabric—there is no interweaving, only an entanglement of the fibres achieved by threading (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 594). They describe felted fabric as a set of entanglements that is by no means homogeneous: it is infinite, open and unlimited in all directions. The event, or haecceity as Deleuze and Guattari (1980) express it, characterises a smooth space. Exploring a performative approach to felting wool can lead to articulating moments of making during the felting process rather than focusing on the final product made of felted wool.

The process of felting wool as a performative approach to material is the event I aim to explore. I am interested in the qualities of ‘affect, more than properties’ and in ‘haptic perception, rather than an optic one’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980, p. 598) that the felting process can unfold. Working towards this aim, I imagine a research design that I tentatively name an autoethnography for two as a possible way to articulate my own felting process by inviting colleagues to see me felt and to give me their feedback on the event. In a longer time perspective, I wish to see how this performative approach, which is closer to an artist’s practice, can enrich teacher practice in school settings. My methodological approach is rooted in my previous artistic research and unfolds in the realm of artistic-based research in the academic world (Leavy, 2009). The two concepts, artistic research and arts-based research (ABR), are often considered similar. Even if their difference is blurred, however, artistic research is used more frequently in the context of fine art faculties when researching artistic topics, whereas ABR is used more frequently by education faculties when researching educational problems (Marin-Viadel, 2017). My theoretical approach is inspired by new materialism, especially in relation to Barad’s (2007; 2014) concepts of re-turning, intra-action and agency.

Introduction

As an artist, I have knitted and felted wool to create large-format sculptures and immersive installations. As an arts and crafts teacher since 2005, I have trained teacher students in different textile techniques, including hand-felted wool.

Today, I have become more aware of and interested in the profound significance of the making/felting process and the material awareness one can experience when working with this highly transformable material. I desire to articulate a performative approach to the process of felting wool, considering the intra-action, experimentation and haptic sensory aspects as significant for the creative process in the subject of arts and crafts.

Standard measurements and regulated outcomes in schools might reduce a creative approach to the subject of arts and crafts. The risk would be to disenchant the very core of the subject: imagining alternative approaches during a working process (the making). The risk to minimise an independent and imaginative approach would also diminish students’ self-understanding and the understanding of the possibilities that a material can offer. My aspiration to change a certain art pedagogy that is close to a manufacturing way of making is stimulated by the desire to let students experience the unexpected. As a first step²⁰, during the writing of this text, I imagine a research design to articulate those experiences as an artist during the process of felting.

The first part of this text unfolds some of my seminal ideas about a performative approach to the subject of arts and crafts. Inspired by conversations with my fellow artists and scholars, I try to position my research, echoing my desire to see if a performative approach to the subject of arts and crafts can enable a shared creative experience.

²⁰ In a longer time perspective, I aim to include in the subject of arts and crafts the pleasure of making, experiencing and continuously gaining insight into oneself, others and the world as not only a rewarding experience but also an important source of knowledge. When it comes to the educational context, these aspects are crucial for teacher students to become acquainted with so that they can fully understand the subject of arts and crafts.

The second part of this paper relates to my earlier experiences with performative drawing sessions conducted with teacher students in Norwegian universities. These experiences and the students' feedback revealed the importance of the making process, as well as the students' unexpected aesthetic experience of the sensory aspects. As a continuum of these earlier experiences with performative drawing, I now wish to explore a performative approach to wool and felting. By doing so, I shall relegate the recipe-like approach in (re)producing a product/object in the background and rather focus on the pleasure of making during the felting process itself.

The third part is about the situated knowledge that can unfold in a studio and how it can be elicited by the practitioner himself/herself. By using ABR, we can both be closer to the phenomenon we are studying and the reflections made by the practitioner, how one is making the work and at the same time reflecting in and on the work. This poses the question on the researcher being an apparatus and the nature of the collected data.

In the fourth part, I share what I imagine to be a possible and plausible research design. Inspired by performance art, new materialism assumptions and ethnography, I propose a research design I call an autoethnography for two. In this part, I reveal to myself and to readers an imagined research design as an inspiration, rather than give a systematic methodology to follow.

In the fifth part, I question the limitations and possibilities of an autoethnography for two. Likewise, I connect it to pedagogical documentation and its possibility to help us see how the felting process can be thought of and, later on, how it can be taught.

I conclude with a short summary inviting readers to approach this text as a motivation to imagine other research designs related to their own context.

1. Narration: My germinal ideas put in motion

In 2018, I came across different research groups and discussed with colleagues about their ABR within the art education and teacher training context in Norway. The ideas conveyed during our meetings highlighted the interest and question I had in mind for a long time: Can a performative approach to the arts and crafts subject (in this case, using wool and felting) enable shared creative experiences? By experiences, I mean those that enable the exploration of alternative possibilities rather than the repetitive production of foreseen felted products. Experience and experimentation are linked to open-ended processes and are inseparable from the idea of discovery. Allowing one to get to know the material and its agencies without necessarily knowing what the outcome would be is crucial to getting to know the material. Experience and experiment in artistic research approaches are not the same as the production of an object. Østern (2017) describes the field of research with art as something complex and diverse, as well as including both exploration and experimentation. Hence, allowing for experimentation might be a relevant way to take heed of unforeseen outcomes.

Inspired by conversations with fellow artists and other scholars, I recall the following ideas: inhabiting a theory, eliciting ideas, embodied/non-verbal, attentiveness, issue as a concern or care not necessarily as a problem, producing meaning, relational aesthetics, ethnography and autoethnography, and trust in emotions and imagination. Without discussing the meaning of these ideas, I can say that these words and concepts considerably resonate with me. They reveal and disclose an attitude, or a state of mind, that indicates the epistemological and/or ontological perspective of the researcher. If one believes that reality is multifaceted and that the truth is, in a sense, individually constructed and constantly evolving, then these words and concepts become important—

they resonate. Leaving aside the problematic aspects of these beliefs, such resonance is an essential precondition for getting to know something.

The important moments one can address are truth as an event and data as *kreatā*, considering that data are fiction, that is, data are not something we find but something we make. ‘Data’, from the Latin word ‘datum’, meaning ‘something given’ or ‘the act of giving’, facilitates different understandings of this word. Ellis et al. (2011) examine reliability, generalisability and validity in the work of autoethnographers. ‘Autoethnographers also recognize how what we understand and refer to as “truth” changes as the genre of writing representing experience changes’ (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 7). They write further, ‘For autoethnographers, validity means that a work seeks verisimilitude; it evokes in readers a feeling that the experience described is lifelike, believable, and possible, a feeling that what has been represented could be true’ (Ellis et al., 2011, p. 7).

The question of making and experience in this research is clearly related to the researcher’s understanding of a phenomenon and his/her own way of expressing the experience of a phenomenon. One can also think about how the researcher tailors the research design to study the phenomenon or case and the need to be attentive to the phenomenon with one’s whole body in order to understand the situation better and more adequately.

I shall come back to the idea of how we create data (Barad, 2007) and how we make sense by using embodied research (Groth, 2015) in the fourth part of the text.

I have seen moments of entanglement which occurred in some of my teaching sessions when I invited teacher students to perform drawing together with me during my arts and crafts classes. These earlier performative drawing sessions constituted my first steps toward an aesthetic experience considering the working process as an essential part of the subject of arts and crafts (Jamouchi, 2017). In the following section, I relate to performative drawing as a decisive phase that initiated my wish to undertake the project I write about in this text: exploring a performative approach to felting wool.

2. Performative drawing as a first step towards aesthetic experiences

Basing on my earlier experience of performative drawing with teacher students, I now aim to explore the possibilities of performative approaches inherent in the process of felting wool fibres. By looking at the agency and intra-action that can occur in the felting process, I shall acknowledge the primordial role of experience and experimenting in teacher education. In my study with wool, I will take on a general perspective known under the labels post-humanism and new materialism, and I am particularly interested in the intra-action and agency (Barad, 2007) that can occur between the material and the practitioner. By examining closely the process of felting, I wish to see how being of the world (Lenz Taguchi, 2010) can connect human beings intimately with the materials they work with and the situations they experience. First, however, let us take a step back to earlier performative drawing, which was my first step towards an aesthetic experience together with my teacher students.

The written feedback I collected earlier from students with whom I undertook performative drawing underlines the evocative and emotional experience they had during the drawing session (Jamouchi, 2017). The method for data collection was empirical and qualitative (Creswell, 2013; Halvorsen, 1996; Repstad, 1993). The data gathering of

written feedback from the students just after the drawing session was meant to capture the phenomenological approach of the aesthetic process: ‘a study of [the] lived experiences of persons’ (Creswell, 2013, p. 77). I emphasised the perspective of the French philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945) related to the body subject and the subject’s awareness of experience.

Bodily engaged with the task, we performed drawing on a large space in the classroom, we evolved collaboratively by drawing on wide-ranging Kraft paper displayed on the floor and the wall, and we explored this two-dimensional form of expression through non-verbal communication. In the previous study (performative drawing), most of the written feedback focused on the aspects of flow, musicality, the bodily experience connected with the drawing process, the room and the material (Jamouchi, 2017). After this performative approach to drawing, the students expressed this experience like an unexpected use of the body and the room, as well as a practice that values the process of drawing. The drawing process indeed often competes with the seductive, aesthetic aspect of the final product, which is habitually seen as the main part of the drawing practice.

This awareness about the working process, the unexpected richness of the material and the explorative approach to paper were rather new for the teacher students. This is despite paper being one of the most common materials we can find in a classroom and one of the most traditional materials used in the subject of arts and crafts in schools.



Drawing as an activity spans a social range from individuals acting alone to collaboration. Performative drawing draws from performance art, which is interdisciplinary, involving the combination of two or more forms of artistic expression. Performance art relates to conceptual art, which emphasises ideas over the formal or visual components. The action is the main component of a performance, and the relation between the public and the performer is the object of this artistic expression.

Image 1: The performative drawing session with teacher students, 2017.

I organise a performative drawing session by transforming the classroom; I display a large-scale thick brown Kraft paper on the wall and floor. This metamorphosis of space is immediately noticed by the students, triggering their curiosity.

Performative drawing is a playful way to communicate with others through bodily movements, improvisation and cooperation whilst evolving in a shared space and creating two-dimensional forms (Jamouchi, 2017).

The students' written feedback mentioned moments of flow, mutual inspiration, an almost meditative experience, the autonomous transformability of shapes, entanglement with the material and a sense of musicality, as well as pleasant silence. Some students expressed this as follows in their written feedback: 'I became a part of the paper', and 'Silence and movements became art. Combining dance and colours' (Jamouchi, 2017, p. 9). The drawing process and not only the product became essential in the students' understanding of what an arts and crafts session could be.

However, after 14 years of working as a teacher trainer in the subject of arts and crafts, I can see that being creative or explorative for students who are not used to applying their creativity and imagination can sometimes be challenging. It seems like in the school system, what some of the students have gone through is inspired by behaviouristic educational settings. Some students are afraid to make an independent decision based on their own appraisal. Nevertheless, most of the students quickly expressed their desire to experiment further with what we are doing in the university's studio and to try similar performative approaches with the pupils in their respective schools.

Taylor (2016) uses 'edu-craft intervention as a matter of knowing-in-doing', which is inspired by the idea that 'environments and bodies are intra-actively constituted'; she adds that 'These edu-crafting activities sometimes produce profound discomfort and sometimes generate desires for greater risk' (p. 21). Taylor's way of teaching contests usual modes of knowing, learning and writing. When we challenge the usual mode of teaching by allowing students to take part in creative and imaginative processes, we also welcome transformative processes. This kind of transformative process does not only change the material, the shape or the colour; it also transforms the person during the working process.

Hohr (2015) describes an experience as a transformative process in interaction between an organism and the outside world, leading to new insights and feelings. He also reminds us that the general task of education is not to teach children to become artists but to open their experiences for the aesthetic dimension so that they can develop, differentiate and criticise their experiences. At the same time, Hohr (2015) argues that children's aesthetic challenges concern the mastery of everyday life and not just artistic exploration.

Experiencing a piece of art, as Greene (2011) describes it, when releasing our imagination is similar to the creative process I wish to elicit. As an experience when undergoing different possibilities, a creative process demands us to dare to imagine non-preconceived possibilities involving the use of space, materials and our body not only to solve a problem but also to gain 'new resonance that aesthetic experiences do and ought to break with the banal, the routine, the mechanical' (Greene, 2011, p. 5).

With my upcoming study with wool, I would like to see how the making process (in my artistic practice) can be brought to the surface when trying to take a glimpse of the felting process. The focus here is on the process of felting rather than the finished product. In other words, I wish to bring forth my artist-teacher role in order to help me in my arts and crafts pedagogue role. Hopefully, this will inspire others to broaden the narrow

definition of an arts and crafts teacher when it is understood as one who leads learners through some techniques and evaluates the outcome, which is a foreseen product.

As mentioned earlier, I learned to felt wool about 20 years ago during my short stay as an art student in Norway. Later, as a visual artist, I used wool fibres and felting to create monumental installations and sculptures. As a teacher in the subject of arts and crafts, I have been teaching this method to Norwegian teacher students since 2005.

Now, as a researcher, I wish to see if and how my artist–teacher role can bring a more creative approach to felting wool in the classroom beyond being a technical procedure to achieve a given goal or a foreseen product. The purpose of this arts-based exploration (in a longer time perspective after this study) is to contribute to an extended understanding of what an arts and crafts teaching session can be, inviting students to interact with the materials in a playful and explorative way. By doing so, we shall undergo a shared creative process that is close to artistry and that one can recognise in contemporary visual art, especially within performance art, a form of expression that creates situated meaning in action. It is indeed the action itself that is the piece of art in a performance and not necessarily a physical object (Ferrier, 1990; Fischer-Lichte, 2008).

Fischer-Lichte (2008) mentions the performance ‘Lips of Thomas’ (1975) by Abramović as one of the works within visual art that marks a fundamental shift in our experience and understanding of a piece of artwork independent from the artist. This transformation from a traditional work of art into an event is called the performative turn (Fischer-Lichte, 2008). In her book *The Transformative Power of Performance*, Fischer-Lichte (2008) describes performance art as an alternative approach to the traditions and standards of the visual or performing arts that stresses the present, lived moment and that challenges the classical interpretation focusing on the artefact and its visual components. In a context such as this, the spectator is not a passive watcher anymore; the spectator becomes an active participant of an aesthetic experience.

The notion of an aesthetic experience, as defined above, draws attention to different moments. In the educational context, Lenz Taguchi (2010) sees students as being of the world, not detached from it, and consequently as entangled and in intra- action (Barad, 2007) with it. Hohn (2015) and Greene (2011) stress the broad aspect of an aesthetic experience—an inner activity that is both creative and critical, as well as contributing to the mastery of everyday life. From the context of the visual art world (Fischer-Lichte, 2008), an aesthetic experience demands active involvement; it is the transformation we undergo when experiencing a piece of art (also understood as an event), which is the core element of such an experience.

In this first part of my study²¹ with wool, I will focus on my own practice and praxis (in action) when working with wool and felting. Drawing on an autoethnographic approach, I will investigate the intra-action and agency (Barad, 2007) emerging from a deeper awareness of an embodied approach to the material. In addition to reflections on my artistic work, I plan to invite two arts and crafts teachers in the studio and ask them to write their impressions when watching me working. These impressions may include sensitive cognition, affect and effect, as well as the visual, auditory and olfactory senses²².

These impressions may or may not mirror my own reflections. In any case, the gas and impressions of others on my making process would inevitably engender a dialogue

²¹ This first part of the study is mainly related to how I work with wool and felting. This part is the first phase of a large project connected with the subject of arts and crafts in school.

²² The feedback of other arts and crafts teachers has not yet been collected. That part of the study (data collection) is therefore not presented here. What I introduce here is an imagined research design.

between our different, nuanced or similar impressions. By inviting peers to watch my working process, I am not giving up my positions when I am involved in both the making and the reflecting. I regard my peers as individuals who can help elicit moments of *savoir-faire* from another perspective, in addition to mine, in the very moment of the work in process and in progress.

3. Situated knowledge: A *savoir-faire in situ* to be unfolded

The attempt to acknowledge moments of a *savoir-faire in situ* needs to emerge from those moments of making, always in a state of becoming. This approach should be associated with my lived experience of felting. As an echo to the making process, it cannot be built on theoretical discourses disconnected from what happened in my studio.

It has not been common for craft practitioners to undertake research on their own work, especially when involving subjective experiences and emotions (Groth, 2015). Gray (1996) claims that ‘... traditional ‘research’ (largely theoretical/critical) has been carried out into Art & Design, on artists & designers, for Art & Design primarily by non-artists & designers! We have usually been content to practice and allow others to critique that practice’ (p. 8). Barone and Eisner (2006) express dislocation of theory when ‘theory tends to be fashioned from within a preselected framework, one that is identified with a particular research subcommunity’ (p. 97) Barthes (1977) makes a distinction between two ways of understanding a method: on the one hand, a method can be understood as a routine following some protocols of operation that fetishes the goal of the research. On the other hand, a method can be understood as a violent force, breaking routines or conventions to allow the researcher to take a different or unknown path and leading him/her into a place of discovery and creativity.

The researcher, designer and philosopher mentioned in the paragraph above (Barone & Eisner, 2006; Gray, 1996) unveil the distance that a research practice can generate when observing a dichotomy between the object and the subject of the study. They also sustain the idea that a more intimated and creative approach to research can reveal unique insights through a practice-led self-study research approach (Groth, 2015) and can lead us to unexpected discoveries (Barthes, 1997). Situated knowledge and integrated reflection are therefore necessary to my study.

The French expression *savoir-faire* expresses the complex kind of knowledge that artists process in their praxis. This noun phrase means the ability to successfully make what we undertake and to solve practical problems; it means competency and experience in the exercise of an artistic or intellectual activity (Le Petit Robert, 1990). Harrap’s dictionary (1982) translates *savoir-faire* as follows: ‘ability, know-how’. This denotes the knowledge and reflection that are intrinsic in the making of our profession.

Embodied knowledge in action is what I experience in praxis, and it is also the way I learn about and through my artistic praxis, rather than reading texts about arts. Knowing in action or informal knowledge is also called tacit knowledge, a concept introduced by the Hungarian philosopher–chemist Michael Polani (1966) in his book *The Tacit Dimension*. This kind of knowledge can also be related to the form of knowledge that Aristotle called *phronesis*—a kind of knowledge connected with the wisdom we acquire during years of practical experiences. Schön (1991) provides us with an understanding of knowledge connected with reflection in action—reflecting on the action in the very moment it is taking place. He describes reflection on action as a reflection

made after the action or event. This is a part of the reflexive practice, a fluctuating and fruitful pattern of reflection that looks ‘not at [the] thing but [at] the doing’ (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 63).

As pointed out above, the performative drawing sessions I undertook with teacher students generated reflective notes written by the students. Using a qualitative reading of the feedback gave attention to what the students motioned as important, not on what I deemed to be important aspects of this drawing session. By doing so, I did not use my own voice in that previous study (Jamouchi, 2017). I just sought to understand how a performative approach could make sense for students and to enrich what an arts and crafts session could mean for them. That previous study with drawing shows, amongst other things, that the students were not used to a performative approach to the subject of arts and crafts, that they enjoyed working collectively on a large scale by freely using their body in the space and that they experienced a flow close to the meditative state (Jamouchi, 2017).

Now, I wish to look at my own understanding of the performative approach to felted wool fibres. ABR is a suitable approach, as it may ‘also take the form of non-linguistic arts, including the plastic and performing arts’ (Barone & Eisner, 2006, p.95). With a research design drawing from ABR, I want to actively think of and discuss the metamorphosis of wool fibres and the capacity for personal and collective transformation. From a new materialistic perspective, this transformation can be understood as the intra-action between entities emerging during their entanglement. Barad’s idea (2014) of intra-action echoes that of the current project. Her post-humanist performative framework that proposes an ontology in which entities are not taken as given but as constituted through material entanglement contests the classical dualist view in scientific research (object/subject, material/discourse, nature/culture). Her concept of intra-action, describing a phenomenon as a relationship that emerges between two entities from within a relationship (not prior or outside it), is relevant for my study. This view can help unfold and articulate what happens when my hands and wool entangle during the felting process.

4. The imagined research design: Autoethnography with two observers?

This part of the text is a reflection on an imagined research design in the search for a possible and plausible way to articulate and bring my work forward. This part of the text is not an account of a method as a recipe to follow on who to study with regard to the experience of a performative approach to wool fibres and felting.

Making research is not a neutral affair. Questioning data as something we make, not as a neutral entity to be found out there, is close to Barad’s view (2007) when she underlines the awareness we should have about the researcher as an apparatus that shapes and determines a phenomenon. For Barad (2007), nothing is inherently separated. All elements of the world are entangled, and all elements are entities (human, as well as non-human) that intra-act in a way that make them dependent on one another. Following this reasoning, a researcher would per se use himself/herself as an apparatus, and he/she would be entangled within/with/in the phenomenon he/she studies. Using myself to explore my own work, I am aware of the role I play as a non-neutral apparatus, as well as my entanglement within the phenomenon of felting wool.

From a new materialism perspective, ‘Materials have agency, they change ideas in certain ways, and they “diffract” human agency in unexpected ways’ (Hickey-Moody,

2018, p. 2). Intra-action is related to the inseparability not only between the practitioner and the material but also between the phenomenon investigated and the researcher.

Autoethnography is comparable to Barad's ontology, as it seeks to correct the erroneous position that art and science are at odds with each other. 'Autoethnography, as a method, attempts to disrupt the binary of science and art. Auto-ethnographers believe that research can be rigorous, theoretical, and analytical and emotional, therapeutic, and inclusive of personal and social phenomena' (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 8). For auto-ethnographers, the most important question is 'Who reads our work, how are they affected by it, and how does it keep a conversation going?' (Ellis et al., 2010, p. 8).

Groth's work (2015) on making sense through making by using the embodied research method clearly reveals the uniqueness of subjectivity and how this strengthens research when having a practice-led approach. Even if Groth's work emphasises the embodied approach during making, I see the bodily aspect in relation to material when the body and the material enter the dynamic of intra-action. Both have agency and are inseparable from each other during making. 'This theoretical approach rests on the assumption that nothing is inherently separate from anything else, but rather, separations are temporarily enacted so one can examine something long enough to gain knowledge about it' (Hickey-Moody, 2018, p. 2).

Stake's (2018) statement that an issue is not necessarily connected with a problem²³ resonates with me and relates to my work. In my study, the making relates to the artist-researcher, and the issue relates to my concern and care for the students I meet every day and with whom I endeavour to explore what the world of art can be about in the school setting. This concern is connected with the attention I give to an alternative way of teaching the subject of arts and crafts and my choice of an explorative performative approach to wool felting, in contrast to the traditional felting procedure I learned two decades ago in which I was guided safely towards obtaining a felted product.

Groth's (2015) subjective approach to making and my interpretation of Stake's (2018) idea of issue as a concern are statements that shape the idea of a journey of exploring felting as an intertwined experience that can benefit students.

There is a difference between the how of teaching and it's what (Andrews, 2018). As teachers, we constantly work, using written or other visual forms of notes, about and on the content (the what) of our teaching. The way we enact a curriculum (the how of our teaching) seems to be less the subject of our written or visual notes about our teaching practice. In a comparable way, within early childhood education, Lavina and Lawson (2018) invite us to examine 'the self and teaching that influence practice' (p. 3). 'In this way, teachers are provided means to critique potentially romanticised images of working in early childhood contexts' (Lavina & Lawson, 2018, p. 5).

Examining ourselves might reveal (even the non-conscious) meanings we put in our teaching practice.

Andrews' (2018) work on artistry in teaching focuses on how the teacher enacts the curriculum in the classroom and less on what the teacher conveys to the students. However, as the content and the enactment of the subject matter are interconnected, the teacher needs to have a certain level of understanding of the subject matter in order to see how he/she uses his/her body as a tool for communicating ideas and concepts (Andrews, 2018). The researcher will then need to understand both the how and the what of the working process. In my study, the understanding of the subject matter (wool as the material and felting as the technique) is intimately connected with the making and its enactment (the felting process).

²³ Personal virtual conversation, April 10, 2018.

I regard an autoethnographic research design as a *conditio sine qua non* (indispensable) to be able to undertake my research. The constantly shifting impressions and associations I have during the process resemble, in Skjerdingsstad's (2018) words, what 'might first seem ungraspable, fluid and volatile' (p. 512). It relates to a desire or urge to share an experience with others. To be able to investigate our own artistic processes and their sensorial/aesthetic meaning, we need to inhabit that process ourselves and reflect on what it does to us.

Groth (2015) concludes in her article that sensory experiences and emotions influence a practitioner's decision making and problem solving during the craft of making something. She also points out that many academic research practices exclude important factors in craft practices. The reason for this negligence is as follows: 'An objective view from a non-practitioner would not have been able to access this information, as the objective researcher would not possess the tacit and embodied knowledge of the situation' (Groth, 2015, p. 150). Furthermore, she argues that a practice-led self-study research approach allows practitioners to couple their own subjective experiences with a serious attempt to describe and explicate the experiential knowledge they process (Groth, 2015, pp. 150–151).

These general points made by Groth are substantial. In my study, however, I am thinking of inviting other arts and crafts teachers to participate in the reflection on the action. I am planning to hold a session in a studio when I felt wool. I will film myself and have a colleague watch the process and write down his/her impressions. My goal is to obtain my peers' feedback on the ongoing process. This two-pronged observer approach could perhaps serve as a kind of method triangulation. Method triangulation refers to the use of multiple and different data sources in qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). Other observers might capture moments that I am not completely aware of because of the intense involvement of my mind and body in the process of felting wool. The impressions of my colleagues would enrich and deepen my own understanding of the process.

The added observer in autoethnographic practice-led research can be related to the concept of empathy in qualitative research. According to Bresler (2006), this allows for empathic connections and an empathic understanding. Empathic connections 'provide a space for others to articulate experiences, to create "arcs of narratives" in the process of reflecting on meaning' (Bresler, 2006, p. 25). Empathic understanding 'involve[s] resonance, an embodied state of mind that is cognitive and at the same time, affective and corporeal' (Bresler, 2006, p. 25). It is those articulated connections between the observer and the ongoing felting process that I wish to collect. This connection to my work (experienced and expressed textually by the invited observer) will hopefully expand my own understanding of the felting process by making me aware of others' perceived meanings. The responses, which are based on the experience of my hands transforming wool fibres, demand involvement and attention. Armstrong (as cited in Bresler, 2006) identifies five aspects of the process of perceptual contemplation of an art work. Although he refers to a finished art work, such aspects can be connected with the artistic creative process, especially the aspects of lingering caress and mutual absorption:

When we linger, 'Nothing gets achieved, nothing gets finished – on the contrary, satisfaction is taken in spinning out our engagement with the object. [...] mutual absorption refers to the transformative character of deep engagement'.

Armstrong writes further,

When we keep our attention fixed upon an object which attracts us, two things tend to happen: we get absorbed in the object and the object gets absorbed into us (Armstrong as cited in Bresler, 2006, 26).

Drawing from Armstrong's aspects of the process of perceptual contemplation of an art work, Bresler (2006) proposes a new one based on performance. Although she relates performance to a musical performance, there is a clear connection between how she describes how 'performances unify performers and listeners in a shared experience' (Bresler, 2006, p. 27) and performance as practiced in contemporary visual art when the action itself is the piece of work. Bresler's understanding of a performance is close to Vist's appraisal of relational aesthetics. Inspired by Bourriaud, Vist (2018) views art works as a social interstice that is also relevant in the relationship within educational research, in which each participating body means something in the constitution of the artwork.

5. What am I actually imagining?

The title of this section sounds somehow paradoxical in the sense that I bring together the actual (fact) and the imagined (nonfactual) as the focus of the project. What I imagine is perhaps what I envisioned but without programming it out of my previous knowledge and experiences and not being dictated by them. Imagining non-facts is what has allowed people to develop ideas and be creative. In my case, it goes for artistic, pedagogical and research work. Improvisation is what puts us in motion. It has to do with what we have done before, but it is dealt with in a different way. Improvising can be seen as a way to embrace differences, to immerse oneself in positive differences (Melaas, 2012). It is an attempt to experience displacement, re-commencement, trans-position, dis-location and re-turning. When Barad (2014) uses the word 're-turning', it does not mean reflecting on or going back to a past that was. She means 'turning it over and over again – iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime mattering), new diffraction patterns' (Barad, 2014, p. 168).

When I now go back to felting, a method I learned 20 years ago, it is not to do again what I did in the 1990s. My intention or my imagined fact is to intra-act differently with the material and the experience of felting. Would that be to produce kreaata? As I mentioned, the truth is an event in which we invent data rather than find it as something neutral to be discovered. Would I be able to intra-act with the material by acknowledging its agency and at the same time being able to respond to its ability to metamorphosise when meeting my hands in movements? Would this idea of an autoethnography for two slow me down in my will to inhabit the felting process and see what it does to me? How can I inhabit an experience and let go when somebody is watching me? I even think about being filmed on a video camera so that I can see what I did during the felting process. Would a camera intimidate me?

When Armstrong (as cited in Bresler, 2006) mentions involvement and attention, as well as the mutual absorption between a material and a person, I then question the core of my imagined research design, which is to involve another person in witnessing this process, as well as having a video camera film the felting process. The idea is to use somebody else as a device (in a post-humanistic sense) in order to study a phenomenon. Would this device disturb and interfere with the intra-action? What would I gain from an autoethnography for two? I expect to gain feedback from peers that can challenge or expand my own understanding of the felting experience. However, do I risk truncating my own experience of a performative approach to wool fibres? This is a risk that I look forward to taking.

Imagining an autoethnography for two can be related to collaborative autoethnography and pedagogical documentation. In both cases, we observe, study, reflect and present a fraction of a phenomenon. This can relate to the term agential cut used by Barad (2014, p. 1). What could/should be selected as foci in an autoethnographic observation or a pedagogical documentation is a question that both the auto-ethnologist and the teacher need to ask. The moments we observe and what we observe matter. Where we place a camera and when we record matter. These would have an impact on the foci, such as the space, actors, activities, objects, events, time, goals, emotions, rhythm, movements, actions and sounds.

Barad (2014) views the agential cut as a man-made cut (as the researcher is, in Barad's view, an apparatus of observation entangled in the world). As an apparatus that is unable to grasp the whole phenomenon, the researcher will proceed to some inclusion and exclusion. The cuts might be a result of our culture and habits of thought that can make some moments visible and others not visible. Then, the agential cut also accounts for the moments we do not include in our observation; therefore, the moments we do not study and are held away from knowledge production and a fortiori are not included in the presentation of our research.

Chang (2013) states that autoethnography is a highly personal and social process, as autoethnographers use their personal experiences as the primary material to contribute to the understanding of human experience. She also states that auto-ethnographers find their material where the fieldwork happens and that they enter their field with a unique familiarity with how and where they may locate relevant data; however, the first step of the research is to identify a research topic and method.

For my study, I chose not to do autoethnography on myself. I decided to have a participatory study with peers that can 'create [a] reciprocal relationship as equal and gain something meaningful from each other in the process' (Chang, 2013, p. 110). This would diminish the concern with the privileged perspective of the auto-researcher-participant. By having a collaborative autoethnography, one engages with multiple perspectives and needs to consider one more layer of intersubjectivity (Chang, 2013). Chang distinguishes between full collaboration and partial collaboration. In my case, it will be a partial collaboration. I will work together with other teachers during the data collection phase, but the analysis will be my task. The outcome and dissemination of the study will also be my responsibility. However, this does not exclude other forms of communication and meaning exchange after our meeting during the feeling process in the studio. As I will be in the phase of meaning-making of the collected data, inviting peers to express their view on the material might be relevant. This material will be a part of the outcome of this project. Moreover, the outcome can have several forms. 'The end product of autoethnography takes different forms: research reports, poetry, performative scripts, songs, films, performing art (Chang, 2013, p. 118). Addressing the outcome of this project now is premature, but it would probably be a visual product, combining still and moving images, as well as spoken and written words.

Another aspect of autoethnography as a pedagogy of freedom is provided by Denzin (2003). He believes that autoethnography will 'contribute to a conception of education and democracy as [a] pedagogy of freedom' (Denzin, 2003, p. 262). When the subject of arts and crafts undergoes disenchantment caused by the absence of imagining working processes that allow experimentation, we should look closer at our practice; we should look for approaches that would help dissociate from a manufacturing way of making and allow the practitioner/researcher to experience the unexpected. Following Denzin's ideas, it is from the school site that we can make changes to empower the quality of teacher education.

Lenz Taguchi's (2010) work on intra-active pedagogy and pedagogical documentation, as the title of her book suggests, goes beyond the theory/practice-divide in education. For her, the quality of pedagogical documentation 'puts in motion [the] process of learning and new becoming' (Lenz Taguchi, 2010, p. 67). She recognises what Barad calls the agential cut as a temporary constructed distinction. Lenz Taguchi (2010) also states that a piece of documentation, the result of a constructed cut, makes it possible for us to identify a material of the practice that we can talk about and study. Åberg and Lenz Taguchi (2010) likewise see pedagogical work from a democratic perspective. For them, the voice of the other, students or children, needs to be heard in order to respect different points of views and ideas. Through a pedagogical documentation, this approach is not static; it is continually in motion. It makes our practice as teachers more visible and enables the idea of working concretely with it and adapting to the different realities we encounter in schools.

Other teacher-researchers in Norway work with pedagogical documentation from a postmodern thinking. Kolle, Larsen and Ulla (2010) introduce pedagogical documentation as an inspiration to transformative practices in the field of education. Based on a Deleuzian approach to knowledge, their assumption is to look at not only what things are but also how they work and their potential becoming (Kolle, Larsen, & Ulla, 2010, p. 71). This means that pedagogical documentation should help us be creative in our teaching practices and not just deal with replicating activities. Because if teachers, they state, follow specific ready-made programs for educationally organised activities, this will mean that teachers become functionaries who follow recipes (Kolle, Larsen, & Ulla, 2010). In the school context, one should ask how teaching could work and not only how it works. Still inspired by Deleuze, Kolle, Larsen and Ulla (2010) praise experimentation to broaden the idea of didactic and nomadic thinking (Kolle, Larsen, & Ulla, 2010).

My understanding of autoethnographic and pedagogic documentation makes me think that my own understanding of making—coupled with the comments and feedback of some of my colleagues—and the documentation of the working process that praises meaning making, experimentation and critical thinking would help me examine how the felting process can be thought of and, later on, how it can be taught and still be understood differently. As I encounter different situations, schools, colleagues and, above all, different students, who may give non-expected itineraries to my work.

6. Summary

The pleasure of making has always been a part of my creative process. My awareness about it grew stronger when I took on the role of an artist-teacher in the subject of arts and crafts. When I gave more room to my artistic practice in the classroom by inviting my students to perform drawing together with me, we could co-create another understanding of what the subject of arts and crafts could generate in the school setting as, for instance, moments of entanglement with the material, when movements and even silence become art/aesthetic experiences. This means that the object of art has become the event (making) itself.

Drawing on my earlier experience with performative drawing within the subject of arts and crafts, I intend to unfold a performative approach to other materials and techniques. My general assumption is that a performative approach to felting wool can involve more than cognitive knowledge. It allows an approach that is comparable to

performance art. It can emphasise the process rather than the final object, focusing on the sensory aspects of an experience.

By considering the subject of arts and crafts as an artistic–creative event, I approach this creative event from a Baradian use of re-turning, intra-action and agency. Inspired by autoethnography and pedagogical documentation, I imagine a research design that could elicit my own working process by inviting peers to add their impressions to my reflection in and on the making.

This text presents a short account of the methodological and theoretical background that forms the framework of my project and my intention to reflect on a creative approach to the process of felting wool. Working towards this aim, I propose an imagined research design inspired by ABR, including agency and intra-action seen from a new materialist perspective. I think that the imagined research design presented here, called an autoethnography for two, can be an interesting one to try out.

This imagined research design still needs to be enacted. Nevertheless, I hope that this text manages to relay some suggestions to readers as an inspiration to undertake research on their own creative working process.

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4.6 Article 3

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Affective togetherness in arts education: Lingering on a performative approach to wool felting.

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Abstract

This article explores moments relating to affect and togetherness as expressed by three groups of teacher training students who participated in different performative wool felting sessions during 2018 and 2019 at two Norwegian universities. A performative approach to the subject of visual arts in teacher education is characterised by fostering intra-actions among the participants engaging bodily with each other, space, time and materials, in an open-ended, creative way. The students express feeling of togetherness stimulated by intra-actions in such relational processes during performative approaches to wool felting. The leading question throughout this enquiry is what kind of togetherness the participants express. This is seen in dialogue with the work of Brian Massumi about affect. I borrow concepts from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, along with theoretical insights from Karen Barad, to share those experiences with the reader.

Keywords

Art education; felting wool; affect; togetherness; performance and performative forms of expression

Introducing my liminal positions

This article is rooted in my arts-based research within educational settings. Besides being a visual artist, I have taught art to teacher training students in Norwegian universities since 2005. My artistic and didactical practices have also shaped my research practice and this creates a fruitful synergy. Those positions create liminal spaces as described in *a/r/tography*: an arts-based research methodology with a form of inquiry that is “an embodied query into interstitial spaces between art making, researching and teaching” (La Jevic and Springgay, 2008, 67). I shall come back to *a/r/tography* in another section.

Nourished by my artistic vigour, questioning my art teacher practice, and carried by my curiosity as a researcher, I consider performative approaches to visual arts in teacher education. By forming / making / performing felting, I roam the territories of visual arts and of art education as spaces for reflections in actions to evolve within an intimate dialogue between my three parallel on-going practices, together with my students.

As a pedagogue in the subject of visual arts, I look for a pedagogy that resists individualism and predetermined outcomes as products to be considered “The right” learning outcomes. I look for a pedagogy of collaboration rather than competition. When we organise education as mass production, there is the danger that we “become the McDonald’s of the 21st century education” (Biesta 2018), which presents two risks: the potential disappearance of art from art education and the potential disappearance of education from art education (*ibid.*). Art education in Norway tends to stay in a traditional groove, with “little understanding, or weight, on the personal, social, and relational factors as important in artistic activity” (Østern and Rønningen 2019). In my view, we should value the artistic/creative process as much as we value the art product. For Østern and Rønningen (2019), this devaluing of relational factors “has, unfortunately, foothold in the classical Western arts education”. Ideal art education practices are not about sole focus on the process at the expense of the product. The idea is to foster a broadened understanding of the subject of art in teacher education in order to avoid disenchanting the very core of the subject; that is, to allow imagining of alternative approaches and the possibility to experience the unexpected (Jamouchi, 2019). I do not claim that there is one best way to teach visual art; I value multiple approaches to the subject in order to enrich students’ experiences.

This text is an entangled part of my artistic and pedagogical study. How do I engage in a writing process when the idea, the phenomenon, the moment, and the act of my doing is bodily in its essence and the moment of the act is defined by its fluidity? This text cannot be a written re-presentation of my practices. It reveals liminal spaces, in which my identities infiltrate and fertilize each other, as well as they evoke and provoke each other. Writing this text by being in motion is similar to motion and transformation I undergo as an artist and educator: becoming in relational positions in the world. It is an ongoing questioning and search about how to write and convey an act that is essentially artistic/creative in a pedagogical context, or, in other words, an aesthetical learning process. Whilst writing this text, some of the concepts and words do not settle in a constant state of being. Some of them bring me to other

concepts that seem to express more precisely what I experience and what I think while felting wool. On the other hand, some of them, as soon as I wrote them down, fade away the fluidity of the felting process.

The questioning and search of words and concepts that can help to convey my research go beyond the use of relevant vocabularies and correct syntax. It demands clarity concerning ontological and epistemological positions. I do not follow grand narratives that order and explain, as in a positivist interpretive framework in which “A single reality exists beyond ourselves, ‘out there’” (Creswell, 2013).

More than making some reverences, by using references, I need those references to work for me. It should work in a way that I gain from it, which I can relate to almost bodily or even approach it viscerally and instinctively. It has to concern me in a manner that is more than an indication of what or how I should do what I do. It should be more than a method with established procedures to follow. It has to resonate with my three practices (artist, teacher, and researcher).

I borrow concepts from the vocabulary of Karen Barad and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. These include concepts like *rhizome*, *phenomena*, *intra-action*, *re-turning* and *material-discursive*. These are concepts that transmit more faithfully moments of my teaching, creating, and researching. I find a fruitful synergy in connecting artistic research and art pedagogy with Barad’s agential realism and the rhizomatic thinking of Deleuze and Guattari. Their work is indeed closer to a way of thinking and questioning, rather than explaining and establishing fixed models. It allows a research design in motion that resists following pre-given methods and protocols. This study benefits from a material-discursive approach that proposes the entanglement of matter and meaning, which suits my liminal positions. Drawing from Barad's agential realism, this assumes a particular position on scholarly practice. She draws our attention to how we frame, conduct, and communicate research. I shall come back to those concepts and some of Barad's work in another section.

A performative approach as I enact in this project is a re-turn, a ritournelle, a displacement of the dissimilar as the enactment brings other perspectives. They are many rhizomatic lines in this text, conveying my liminal positions in the realms I roam, concepts as philosophical doorways, and reminiscences as my poetical reverberations, students’ reflections notes, material-discursive reflections of felting phenomenon, and spaces in-between those lines. Spaces that are open for the reader’s imagination and interpretation. I hope that those rhizomatic lines and spaces in-between makes sensory sense or even creative non-sense for the reader. My wish to make common this study, by communicating this way, is that it might affect the reader.

Wet felting wool technique, contextualization and context

Wet wool felting technique

Felt is a non-woven fabric made primarily out of animal fibres. Wet felting is the oldest technique for turning animal hair, usually wool, into felt. The wool is washed, carded, and pulled to loosen the fibres, which are then arranged and overlaid. Water and soap are applied to open up the fibres. Then – by means of steps including manual compression, rubbing, squeezing, palming, and rolling – the loosened fibres are

densely entangled and bound together into a coherent and stable flat form. Wet felting involves a great deal of physical manipulation and lends itself to group participation. In the classroom, I start with an approach to wool felting by demonstrating qualities of felting technique. I let the students become acquainted with the material and the technique before working, large-scale, co-making²⁴ project.

Contextualisation of a performative approach

I contextualise the performative approach to wool felting by positioning what we do in some broader contexts. Those contexts can be a combination of two or more of the following approaches. I lecture on the 20th century development of installation and performance art. I bring the students outdoors and organize land art lesson, giving students an overview of an art form with large-scale workspace and wide horizons. In that outdoor setting, we also would abandon normal classroom relations and spatial grids and hierarchies. I introduce the theme of the relationship between the body and an artwork by telling about my own experiences when working with large-scale and/or immersive art projects. Such contextualisations give students a more robust understanding and awareness of a performative approach to art. I show a video of women working on tweed textile making singing a *waulking* (working) song, traditionally sung in the last phases of cloth making, to help to hold the rhythmic movement involved in passing on and rolling the fabric.

Context: participants and feedbacks

Both what the participants and I have done together, as well as the reflection notes they give me, inspire this text. Those reflection notes are feedback the students write just after a felting session. I use those written feedbacks as my empirical and referential material. Participants were three groups of students. Group A had 15 students, group B had 10 students, and group C had 9 students. Groups A and B were students living in Norway, and group C were international students in the country only for a study semester. In total, 34 students from two Norwegian universities participated in these three sessions between 2018 and 2019, and 28 of them sent me their reflection notes (the written feedback was not mandatory).

The felting sessions last for about 2 to 3 hours. My request for feedback is always in relation to what we have done together, but the way I formulate my request varies according to the situation we are in. I give them my e-mail address and invite them to write promptly some words or sentences (reflection notes) about what we have just done together.

I asked the group A: What are your reflections on the sensory experiences and the relational perspectives? I asked the group B: What aesthetic experiences have you gone through? How would you convey this to pupils or a public? I asked the groups C: What is your experience of wool felting? What did you think, feel, or notice?

²⁴ I use co-making instead of collaborating. To collaborate do not necessarily include the idea of doing physically something together. It is in the making that we become acquainted with others differently, when handling with the materials and each other's gestures and movements.

Some of the experiences that are often mentioned from those performative events with felting wool have caught my attention. Especially experiences that indicate moments of affect and togetherness. I did not necessarily use those exact words in my request to the participants. Many participants do not explicitly use those words either. However, a sense of affective togetherness is expressed in a more or less subtle manner in the written feedbacks. The feeling of togetherness as expressed by the students can be seen from three perspectives: 1) a sense of belonging connected to a group and the process itself, 2) awareness of oneself among others, and 3) intra-action beyond interaction. Those perspectives reveal features that differentiate the notion of togetherness. However, those perspectives are not separated categories; they are fluid and occurred simultaneously in time and space in the context of our felting sessions.

By using Barad's agential realism and the rhizomatic thinking of Deleuze and Guattari, I aim to unveil notions of affect and togetherness. By using this theoretical framework, I position this study in the post-human analytical landscape. This implies that "a rational detached closure of what it means to be human, with the emphasis on human consciousness, rationality, objectivity, and detachment from the material world inherited from the Enlightenment, is destabilised" (Maapalo and Østern, 2018, p. 4). Some of the richest bodies of theory emerging from this rupture of Enlightenment stabilities have come from Barad, Deleuze, and Guattari, whose principal concepts that I employ in my analysis I will turn to now.

Looking for a fruitful language

Reading Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, and Karen Barad was incredible, fantastic, different from what I had read earlier and amazingly close to what I do. Sometimes, I approach their work instinctively more than cognitively. Which generates a powerful engagement, engaging more than my cognitive understanding, including my thinking under the complementary acts of doing felting, researching, and writing. I probably do not understand everything, or I do understand it my way and make it work for my work. In this section, I present the key concepts of theirs, how I understand them, and how I use them in my work. I start with liminal positions of an *a/r/tographer* as an overall frame.

The concept of *a/r/tography* relates to the living inquiry I deal with in my intertwined positions as artist, teacher, and researcher. *A/r/tography* reminds me of the entanglement described in Barad's material-discursive ontology and recalls Deleuze and Guattari's concept of rhizome.

A/r/tography is a "living inquiry" in which "visual, written, and performative processes are enacted as a living practice of art making, researching and teaching" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902). The concept of *a/r/tography* expresses my intertwined positions when I try to be in the experience of felting wool rather than re-presenting it: "living inquiry is an embodied encounter constituted through visual and textual understanding and experience rather than mere visual and textual representation" (Springgay et al., 2005, p. 902).

Irwin et al. refer, in their article "The Rhizomatic Relations of *A/r/tography*" (Irwin et al., 2006), to the rhizomatic interstitial spaces in between thinking and materiality (Irwin et al., 2006, p.71). Further, they encourage us to engage with our work "as a rhizome by moving in and out, and around the work, making connections in a personal way" (Irwin

et al., 2006, p. 72). I have been moving around my work with felting wool and re-turn (Barad, 2014) it. By doing so I propose a performative approach that emphasises the process. This includes giving attention to what happens with all the components of the phenomenon of felting, not only the visual aesthetical elements of the finale physical product.

The non-fixity of parts in mutual relation is the central idea of Barad's concept of intra-action (Barad, 2014). She describes a phenomenon as a relationship that emerges among entities from within their relationships. An event takes place, Barad argues in laying out her ontological picture of agential realism, within relationship, not prior to or outside it:

“the primary ontological unit is not independent objects with inherent boundaries and properties but rather *phenomena*. [...] phenomena do not merely mark the epistemological inseparability of observer and observed, or the result of measurement; rather, *phenomena are ontological inseparability/entanglement of intra-acting “agencies”*. (Barad, 2007, p. 139; emphasis in original)

In my project, I approach the felting process as a phenomenon. I endeavour to unveil the intra-action between the components: human and non-human in a post-humanistic perspective. Barad's concept of intra-action describes the relationships occurring under a phenomenon that emerges from within the components. Further, intra-action relates also to the inseparability between the phenomenon investigated and the investigator. Barad describes the researcher as someone that interferes and disturbs the intra-action of a phenomenon. She refers to the researcher as an apparatus as s/he is entangled in the phenomenon (Barad, 2014).

I understand agency as the mutual constitution of entangled components. The components do not hold agency as individual entity with separately determined properties. In this study, I look at what happens from / within the components in intra-action. When I now adopt an ontological assumption that approaches and understands reality as multiple, and dependent, among other components, on the approach of the researcher, I also re-turn and position my working with felting differently.

Karen Barad (2014) uses the term re-turn with a hyphen to distinguish it from the verb return. Re-turning is not about going back to the same or doing again what we have done before. For her, re-turning means to approach a known material or phenomenon from another angle as when: “turning it over and over again – iteratively intra-acting, re-diffracting, diffracting anew, in the making of new temporalities (spacetime-mattering), new diffraction patterns” (Barad, 2014, p.168). In my work, it means to re-turn the well-known wool felting material and technique. I question traditional teaching practices in art education, I re-turn wool felting to look closer at the value of the process of felting when intra-acting with material, students, space and time.

In 2015, I invited teacher training students to play-felt large amount of wool with me on the floor, in the classroom. By doing so, we found ourselves elsewhere than in the position of focusing on the production (close to the idea manufacturing) of a given set of pre-defined products that can (more) easily meet what is expected to be learning outcomes as described by the Norwegian curriculum (cf. Østern and Rønningen, 2019). Detached from “formal aesthetic art didactics”, as analysed by Venke Aure (2013), a performative approach to the subject of arts led to various approaches (Aure, 2013, p. 14) which are not based on regulated and regulating thinking. We evolve in the flux of our making and within intra-active relations of the event/phenomenon.

In writing this text, I borrow another central concept from Barad, which is material-discursive. She emphasizes the entangled inseparability of discourse and materiality:

“The relationship between the material and the discursive is one of mutual entailment. Neither is articulated/articulable in the absence of the other; matter

and meaning are mutually articulated. Neither discursive practices nor material phenomena are ontologically or epistemologically prior. Neither can be explained in terms of the other. Neither has privileged status in determining the other". (Barad, 2003, p. 822)

The entanglement of matter and meaning focuses and gives attention to the ongoing, dynamic, and relational enactment of a phenomenon. This is how I communicate the analytical reading of my materials/components towards the end of the article.

Deleuze and Guattari (1980) introduce the concept of rhizome with a nod to its botanical referent: a multidirectional rootlet system. They elevated the term to ontological status and use it to denote a system composed by non-hierarchical and non-representational points. One characteristic of the rhizome is connected to the principles of multiplicity and agencement, in terms of its being "a growth of dimensions in a multiplicity which necessarily changes in nature as it increases its connections" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 15). This is something I understand as putting me/we, when felting wool, in a constantly phase of becoming. A multiplicity of points of different nature composing the rhizome "are not composed by units, but by dimensions, or rather moving directions" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p.31). This multiplicity of dimensions are, in a performative approach to felting wool, intensities of acts, movements, changes, displacements, encounters, etc., whilst transforming animals' fibres, human bodies, and other non-human components involved in a rhizomatic structure.

Deleuze and Guattari underscore that "In contrast to a structure which is defined by a set of points and positions, (...) the rhizome is made of lines" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 31). Those lines are "segmentary lineage, stratification as its dimensions, as well as lines of flight or deterritorialisation as the maximum dimension after which the multiplicity undergoes metamorphosis as changing in nature" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 31-32). When the rhizome "operates by variation, expansion, conquest, capture, side shoot" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 31), it reveals a language that recalls the work in motion of a felting process and its multiple offshoots and ramifications.

I have been felting wool for years; still I need, each time, to re-enter a new the phenomenon of felting. As "A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*" (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 31), I do not find myself in the beginning of a procedure or at its end. I rather position my work as an ongoing process of an artistic intention over time. This idea of *intermezzo* reveals that I do not wish to come back or mirror previous felting acts. I am evolving/becoming in the middle of a practice of research into material and immaterial components.

Deleuze and Guattari introduce the *ritournelle* by starting with three aspects: as a point that we attempt to fix in a space/territory, as a circle that organises a limited space that holds the forces of chaos outside, and as an opening in the circle allowing us to reach out to the chaos and allowing the chaos in (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 382).

When felting wool I re-create a previously known territory each time I start a felting process. Deleuze and Guattari write also about territorialisation and deterritorialisation. More than being a territory limited by static boundaries, deterritorialisation is a movement operated by lines of flights (Deleuze et Guattari, 1980, p. 634). As I understand it, lines of flights are movements by which we leave a space/territory to enter another one that changes us fundamentally, as we reach the point of non-retour.

I interpret the *ritournelle* as an act of coming back to something known, but with a shift or rupture from a previous act. When I felt wool, I compose with known and unknown components. I compose with material components and the ideas of fluidity and exchangeability.

Re-turning wool felting toward a performative approach to art education

In 2010, I started to invite teacher training students to play-draw with me in the classroom. Using our whole bodies on large-scale craft paper displayed on the floor and the walls, allowing cooperation through non-verbal communication, we focused in the making rather than the result of a foreseen product. A few years later, I started to document and reflect on this approach to drawing, inspired by contemporary performances within visual arts. The transformative power of performance (Fisher-Lichte, 2008) was also transforming our teaching session (Jamouchi, 2017). I wanted to see if the deterritorialization (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980) of traditional teaching sessions could disclose a creative detour. Together with my students, I wanted to extend the borders of traditional arts teaching practices.

Fischer-Lichte (2008) claims that the transformative power of performance lies on different parts of the work. The present, live moment transforming the spectator into an actor is one of them. Another one is that a performance eludes the scope of traditional aesthetic theories. Moreover, performance challenges the classical interpretation of art object focusing on its visual components (Fischer-Lichte, 2008).

In the subject of arts, one can study and describe materials as amorphous or inert entities, as if materials are passive until we do something to them. However, we can also approach materials from a more dialogical perspective, being in intra-action (Barad, 2007) with them. Some materials are extremely malleable and offer unforeseen moments that can lead the students to creative de-(con)struction, shifting, and non-identical repetitions, as an echo to the concepts of the *ritournelle* given by Deleuze and Guattari (1980).

Beside a traditional approach to arts in Nordic teacher education, we see more voices that embrace approaches that go under the umbrella definition of post-human and new materialism. Some Norwegian doctoral theses written by Ninni Sandvik (2013), Bente Ulla (2015), Ann Sofi Larsen (2015), Camilla E. Andersen (2015), and Ann Merete Otterstad (2018), relate to pedagogical work in Early Childhood Education. Contributions with such approaches specifically within visual arts subject in teacher education are still modest.

I re-turn wool felting; I approach it from the angle of a performative act, a creative event. It means to enact the phenomenon of felting wool through “co-making” and meeting each participants’ differences, similitudes, and singularities. The pedagogical aspect resides in the relational and other potential experiences among the artist-teacher and the students. The performative approach to wool felting neutralizes technical and recipe-like (teacher) formation to accomplish other forms of transformation. A performative approach to wool in the classroom is explorative, non-representational, participative, dialogic, and relational, as well as a space for opposition and resistance. When using concepts of Karen Barad, one could add intra-action and material-discursive. This kind of approach with teacher training students unveils some aspects of affective togetherness.

Affective togetherness

Achieving a common experience is not synonymous with experiencing the same. This is common for both a learning context and an artistic experience. Students or a public sharing the same experience do not necessarily go through the same transition. The threshold, as “The magnitude or intensity that must be exceeded for a certain reaction, phenomenon, result, or condition to occur or be manifested”²⁵, during an aesthetic learning process can give different ways of experiencing a shared experience. The collectiveness of a situation affects us differently. A transformation puts us, and people watching around us, in a different position of togetherness, without necessarily merging us in the same way of being/doing/thinking. For Massumi,

“When you affect something, you are opening yourself up to being affected in turn, and in a slightly different way than you might have been the moment before. You have made a transition, however slight. You have stepped over a threshold. Affect *is* this passing of a threshold, seen from the point of view of the change in capacity” (Massumi, 2015, p. 110-111).

In this respect, togetherness does not bring uniformity. “There is no sameness of affect. There is affective difference in the same event— a collective individuation” (Massumi, 2015, p. 103). Affect is related to the idea of togetherness because it cannot emerge in a vacuum. We cannot be affected when cut apart from others or our surroundings. In a learning context in art education for example, students, teachers, materials, space and time are present components. Each component plays a role. Affects “are basically ways of connecting, to others and other situations, of affecting and being affected” (Massumi, 2015, p. 110). The idea of affect and togetherness is thus symbiotic. For Massumi, affects put us in processes of participation larger than ourselves: “With intensified affect comes a stronger sense of embeddedness in a larger field of life – a heightened sense of belonging, with other people and other places” (Massumi, 2015, p. 110).

The classroom during a performative approach to the subject of visual arts puts us in a larger field in which moments of affective togetherness unfold. An aesthetic learning process is a process that broadens our understanding of the self and the other. To do so we are giving and receiving and we are in the state of being in tune.

The idea of a transformative path, or threshold as mentioned above, is present in the classroom when we relate to ourselves(s), others, things, objects, and surroundings under a transformative path. This attentive presence to human, non-human, and the surrounding seems to bring a sense of togetherness.

In my project, the idea of togetherness is inspired by contemporary performance art. However, the performative turn we have seen in the art world since the 60’s is not equally noticeable in art teacher education (Aure, 2013). A performative approach to art education might resist generating predetermined outcomes, traditional knowledge production, and individual working process (that are different from mutually and collectively engaged artistic processes). Simultaneously, a performative approach to art education can engender unforeseen results, experimental research, and collective working processes. For Aure (2013) a relational and performative oriented art didactic has its potential in

²⁵ Source of that definition: <https://www.lexico.com/definition/threshold> Retrieved on January 2020

allowing a more flexible and dynamic approach to the working process (Aure, 2013 p. 15).

Illeris (2012) analyses the Scandinavian concept of aesthetic learning processes for the 21st century by bringing our attention to how they “remain bound to a limited number of symbolic forms, i.e. those related to the arts, while experiences with a range of other cultural products are excluded” (Illeris, 2012, p. 12). She proposes a relational aesthetic-inspired approach to actively create relation, not a passive empathy (Illeris, 2012, p. 16). Her concern and hope for a broader aesthetic learning process includes a performative approach in the future.

The reading of Massumi, Illeris, and Aure *shape* and *sharpen* a plural approach to the notion of affect and togetherness. When we do not only look for manufacturing a product as the outcome of aesthetic learning, we might be more aware of ourselves and possibly find a way to intra-act / mediate ourselves in/within the world, as we are a part of the world.

As the reader has now noticed, this text is not dealing with potential learning outcomes related to students' craft skills or ability to realize formalistic aesthetic products. I approach the aesthetic learning process by looking at the potential experience of affect and togetherness, as expressed by teacher training students over the two past years. Before bringing the voice of the students through their reflection notes, I shall introduce our felting sessions by rendering them through my narrations.

Reverberations from performative felting sessions

In the following section, I retrospectively narrate some felting sessions carried out together with teacher training students. Those narrations differ from accurate description or re-presentation. I invite the reader to see those narrations as a rhizomatic reverberation of what we did, as I engage with my senses and memory. Those narratives are closer to a poetical language involving myself bodily and sensorily by using my memory to engage with a written language. Language is yet another material, or a component from a Baradian perspective. This entanglement, including wool felting and written words, is a living enquiry that encompasses my identities connected to my three practices as artist, teacher, and researcher.

Creating and finding our space

We are students and an artist-teacher in the workshop of a Norwegian university. We display a large amount of wool on the floor. The floor is ours. Our whole body integrates the space. We start with gentle frictions between our hands and the numerous layers of wool on the floor. We use pine tree soap and warm water to let the wool fibres open up. The colour, the texture, and thickness of the material change. The odours of the pine soap and the wool in the air become intense. The atmosphere in the room changes. We all experience and share material and immaterial components around us and in us. We start to step on the wool as we find a space to navigate between each participant, between the wool and the surroundings. We are creating and finding a smooth space, a territory.

Discovering ourselves and other in other ways

The sounds of our steps resonate. The rhythms of our movements takes us from place to place. There is no visible path or given method to follow. The ongoing rhizomatic structure regulates the next steps, undulations, and gestures. The bodies of the others make us aware our own body. As the fibres of the wool entangle, we intertwine our gestures. The space is smooth. We navigate as nomads. We undergo a wayfaring that sets the landscape in motion, inviting and inventing our next move. A ritournelle that does not repeat itself identically. Re-discovering all the components of the event, included ourselves. We roll, throw, and pass on the massive, felted piece of wool. We do, in other ways, what may have been done before, for centuries, elsewhere.

Intra-action between wool and other components

Wool, soapy warm water, bubble plastic, air, spaces between bodies, bodies in motion, iterative movements during a duration.

Repetitive approaches, displacements, shifting places and qualities. Movements that bring the moments. Movements that transfer the moments. The intra-action does something. To be / make / become present. Agency of entangled components. A phenomenon. Moving whilst being moved. Affect? Improvising and understanding wool, water, spaces, and bodies. Process.

Touch and skin permeate natural materials, duration and tempo.

Be(coming) aware our own body, others' bodies, everybody. Heaviness and weightless, presence of diverse components. Intensity, augmentation, attenuation: moments do something to the event and its components. Ability to affect?

Composing with space, spaces in between, with movements, slow, rapid, repetitive, and unexpected. It makes me vibrate. Affective affinities. Exceeds threshold.

Establishing another dialectical mode with written words

The transformations of the fibres are remarkable. We notice the changes of the wool and the changes of our relations during the event. Intra-acting with each other. We barely use words as we, sensory, make sense of the moment. Meaning making in / through / within / during the making. A ritual we did not know before being (with/in) it.

The musicality is present, coming from the sounds made by all the present components. In some case, we amplify the musicality when we, intentionally, make sounds with our bodies. Sometimes we hum. Once, we had some music on.

The piece of wool is left to rest. We now enter another mode of expression. We transmit the experience of the event with the materiality of written words.

Material-discursive with/in components of felting phenomenon

Teacher training students connect often what we do to their future profession as teacher. Even if the didactical aspect is clearly included in their feedback, their personal experiences of the event is substantial. The feedbacks are sometimes few words, sometimes shorter or longer sentences, and sometimes a longer text.

After reading Barad's concept material-discursive, one can see how I entangle the doing and the thinking. I am *of* this experience / phenomenon; I not only look back to what we did and describe it in words here. It is through the materiality of the components during the felting entangled with the materiality of the written students' feedback that the material-discursive practice become the analytical reading of the materials.

Affected by the event – a sense of belonging

I asked group A to send me an e-mail reflecting sensory experiences and relational perspectives. Those are my regular students²⁶. This question came as a continuum to one of our lessons and discussions concerning conceptual art and installation. The feedbacks are sometimes single words, sometimes shorter or longer sentences, and sometimes a longer text. What matters in this material-discourse is a sense of togetherness, which enact slightly differently in each felting session. Group A reveal a sense of belonging to the felting process itself, students in group B became aware of themselves among others, and group C experiences intra-action beyond interaction.

I asked group A to send me an e-mail reflecting on sensory experiences and relational perspectives. Those are my regular students³. This question came as a continuum to one of our lessons and discussions concerning conceptual art and installation.

Malin²⁷ wrote this: “Vestibular: the body gets moving, balancing on the wool with others. Kinaesthetic: muscle and joint sense: the interaction with the body's movements”. The awareness of her own body involves immediate experience of and meeting with the world. It is sensory perception and emotion as one. Malin writes further: “Collaboration, communication, flexibility in solving the task together, laughter and joy, togetherness, we participate in a process together where no one is a leader and everyone can contribute”. The awareness of her own body and herself is also connected to the awareness of herself among others. The non-verbal communication going on leads the group; it seems like nobody takes the role of a leader. Nevertheless, the bodies in action lead and create the event. The intra-action among the wool, one's own body, and the others' bodies create the event. The event affects the participants as the event is leading the movements and actions, leading to a feeling of togetherness. A material-discursive event going on in the classroom emphasises the entangled inseparability of materiality and discourse. The performative approach to wool felting brings us into a territory where language is not opposed to material and oral discourse is not synonymous to language.

Christian writes his feedback this way: “Concerning the relational you come close to each other, as we did today: when you exchange the same piece of material it really become a common project”. The sense of belonging is not only related to the different participants, but also to the material going from hands to hands among the members of the group. Marika wrote this about the relational perspective: “We got even more together when we worked with it. The relationship was strengthened and it brought unity”.

²⁶ This means that I am their art teacher through the semester.

²⁷ All the students' names have been changed.

Those feedbacks reveal that the students were in tune with the different entities of the event, composed by the transformability of the material, the bodies working with it, the flux of the exchanges among the participants as well as the process leading the event. The students are open to what affects them and in turn affect the process of felting and feeling of togetherness.

For Ingvild, it was “Nice to just DO²⁸ and see what happens – you can sing, dance and relate a lot (if you go for it) with each other in the process itself”. Intra-action in this group was visible in the making and audible when the students started spontaneously to clap in cadence on the wool, producing rhymes and different sounds. Musicality and drum-inspired approach to felting with feet and hands accompanied a rhythmic bodily approach, combining gestures and self-made sounds with different beats. The process comes at its highest level of intra-action: differences of the components are not separated or opposed to each other but entangled in a space-time made out of making, as Ingvild wrote: “Just DO and see what happens”.

For Tilde, this session was “Something we made together. The expression is something we shared and the process was in focus”. It seems as if the process had its own autonomy and brought the students further. Othilie wrote: “Of sensory experiences I forgot about time. There was also a lot of imitation in the room and we inspired each other. Across the room”.

Bodies in motion and in intra-action with rhythms created by movements and sounds produced during the process generated an event where different components of the phenomenon intra-acted. Tempo, duration, flux, repetition and imitation overlap, occur, fade, become active again, speed themselves and ran across the room. The material and immaterial entities of the event are palpable in the room. This assemblage of diverse intensities is in motion, the materials are diverse in their forms and substance, and perform in a non-hierarchical intra-action.

I asked the group B those questions: What aesthetic experiences have you gone through? How would you like to convey this to pupils or a broader public? This question is related to the fact that this group of students have a slightly different profile from those following ordinary master degree education to become teachers. Those students follow one year of study in the visual arts as their only subject. After that year of arts study, they can choose to become teachers or artists or to work in an art institution with a broader public. I contextualised the felting session by starting with an introduction to performance art followed by Waulking song on a video showing women working on tweed textile making.

Andreas, a student in this group, wrote a long text about his experience. Some parts of his feedback were: “In such group work one works differently than when working alone. One has to discuss, people have slightly different perceptions of what is the right procedure. Learning to work in teams and accepting differences, and getting to know one another are

²⁸ The student wrote the verb «DO» in majuscule in her feedback.

important aspects in this way of learning”. The feeling of togetherness is not the same as a feeling of sameness. Even if everybody participates in the same performative event, their individual experiences all differ.

Andreas wrote further: “This creates a unique and new situation. We stepped on the wool and we supported each other. Inspired by a video from the hand craft tradition in Wales, we played rhythmic music²⁹ and followed its rhythm. We sensed in a completely new way. Walking on bubble wrap and walking on our soapy wool while hearing music was something completely new for everyone. There had been some uncertainty at first, but we quickly went on with the task, became familiar with the task, the others and ourselves. We support each other and use our sense of balance. We are physical.” The sensory and bodily aspect is decisive here in the meeting with and becoming more familiar with both the others, a rhythmic dynamic, the wool, the task, and oneself.

Andreas wrote this too: “The process created something more than just a simple felting product. I think that the intention here has to be that in addition to learn felting and make a product, something more will happen. Experiences for the individual and for the group. Maybe in a greater extent than with a regular group exercise. Perhaps this approach may give a different result. Maybe it can be used with students who have difficulties, or with adults from different cultures. You become a little ‘naked’ and harmless when you do this task, not only yourself, but also the others. Perhaps the participants are left with experiences that go a little further and deeper than just solving a given traditional task”.

Andreas does not use the personal pronoun “I” when he writes about his experience, but he uses “we” to answer my request about his aesthetic experience. As a colleague of mine pointed out, I also use the pronoun “we” when I write about the felting processes I undergo with the students. Affect and togetherness, for Andreas and probably for most of the participants, is in the making, the sharing, the vulnerability, in the differences, and being physical and sensory. By sharing the same space in becoming coordinate (not necessarily pre-organised) in our movements, we created a territory that became ours. We find ourselves in a field larger than oneself. Intra-acting with space, time, other components and ourselves, we experienced a shared world. We expose our bodies differently during the event. The process had an agency that brought us in a deeper understanding of the task (more than an object production) allowing for a more intimate relationality to the participating components.

Linea comments on the fact of working barefoot as follows: “Walking around with others gave rather a feeling of intimacy, since feet are actually a very private thing”. Kamilla goes on by writing: “I can imagine that using such a working technique is fun when working with children. That is because you use your body in a different way than usually in art subject. Using your feet to shape something is a different and fun physical experience”.

²⁹ They played this music on one of the students’ mobile phone.

Students used their feet to press, pack, entangle, and felt a large wool piece displayed on the floor. Rhythm, repetitions, different cadences create moments of entangled bodies and materials. Engaging in other ways with material and other participants, the students re-positioned themselves. They take positions that they did not experience previously. Other kinds of subject formation (the self among others) are allowed and the dynamic of becoming together among others redefines their relationship to material and immaterial entities. The relationship to the process is also noticeable in the room. Each of us become the co-creator, the students together with the artist-teacher. The creative process is completed through every single body and everybody's participation. A ritournelle that comprises a plurality of approaches, new ways of working, discoveries, and inventions.

Martinas' feedback was "This was a social and creative process where the work had to be carried out by a group of collaborators. This is a task I would give to students from all grades. Because, no matter how old one is, this would fit in well with using the body in a creative process rather than using only the hands and working collaboratively in a group where several brains are in one and same creative process". The students were not only collaborating, they were also co-making. They become acquainted to each other not only by talking and planning, but also by actively doing in the making process.

Elisa wrote: "Different processes are repeated. Social, dance, seaman's shanty³⁰. Barefoot, a lot of energy going on". As for Marit: "You learn a lot from this task and we got to work in a completely different way than we thought. One learns to cooperate". For Road: "To felt wool together was actually a weird process; it was something I did not know would work until we started with it". The novelty or strangeness of this performative approach re-positioned the participants. We did not have a description of the task of how to use our bodies nor how the process should be accomplished. The material invited us to meet its qualities and the process brought us together as we felted the wool.

Group C is an international group of students following an art subject course during their international exchange program in fall semester 2019. I asked the group C to send me an e-mail about those questions: What is your experience of wool felting? What did you think, feel, or notice?

Denis wrote: "The material seems so fragile but during the working process I've experienced again how strong and flexible the wool can be. What I also appreciate is the 'surprise effect' during the felting process! You never know exactly what the outcome might look like! Because the felting process is quite long you somehow start building up a kind of 'relationship' (I don't find another word for it) with your artwork – that makes you even more proud when you've finished your project". Here again we see intra-action and how the process seems to have an autonomous course with its own agency. This is why the process can surprise us. Affect is strong here: the student gets affected and actually opens herself for what the material can bring as non-expected moments. Denis

³⁰ A type of work song that was commonly sung to accompany labour on board large sailing vessels.

does not mention building a relationship with other students. She rather points out how time is a component that contributes to building a relationship with the material.

Veronique has a similar feedback about the autonomous course of the process: “I didn’t have to think too much about what I was doing, I just could use my hands and it developed kind of by itself”. Caroline concludes: “As a teacher I will keep in mind that for wool felting pupils do not need an introduction because they have to pay attention to how the wool behaves and it shapes”. The felting process reveals agency when intra-acting with/in us. An introduction to wool felting is not enough to understand all the qualities and possibilities wool felting has. It is the process, through performing wool felting, that one gets a broader understanding of it. Exactly that kind of understanding of wool felting and all the moments emerging during the process are difficult to enact in a traditional approach based in a formal aesthetic art didactic (Aure, 2013).

Summing up and departing again

In a pedagogical context, performative art sessions rich in intra-active processes, unburdened by formalistic imperatives and preconceptions, offer unexpectedly rich insights to students in immediately accessible forms. These can inspire both artistic practice and enrich tomorrow's art pedagogy in schools.

I endeavour, with a post-humanistic perspective, to unveil the intra-action among the components – human and non-human. Philosophical concepts from Deleuze and Guattari, Barad, and Massumi – such as rhizome, ritournelle, phenomenon, intra-action, material-discursive, affect – have been explored here as extraordinarily apt in limning the mutually implicated and dependence among us, materials, space, and time in these sessions.

As mentioned in the introduction, they are many rhizomatic lines in this text, with spaces in-between the lines. Those rhizomatic lines invite the reader to imagine and interpret a performative approach the visual arts in teacher education in her/his own way.

Each felting project/session is a repetitive act with infinite variations. Lingering on a performative approach to wool felting in arts teacher training education give the opportunity to unveil some aspects of affective togetherness. Bringing visual arts in teacher education to the surface as rhizomatic lines and material-discourse can transform our understanding of what it can be. It is now up to us – me, the reader, and teacher training students – to think about how we want to understand and practice this knowledge in the future.

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4.7 The 7th element

The 7th element is an assemblage of pictures that traces minor moments of major matter. This assemblage reveals my everyday practices, present but kept aside while writing this thesis. Even if this assemblage of pictures traces moments of minor moments (because they are not included in the main core of the thesis), they are moments of major matter: A body of work that matters differently. Maybe they are moments of doing, thinking and disseminating that affect me in a more subtle way? ‘The minor gesture, allied to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s concept of the minor, is the gestural force that opens experience to its potential variation. It does this from within the experience itself, activating a shift in tone, a difference in quality’ (Manning, 2016, p. 1). Minor gestures have the advantage of being difficult to be cached and defined by norms (Manning, 2016).

I believe in the power of daily acts and resistance through subcultures. The 7th element shows works when using different aspects of the performative: performance art, performance, lectures and performative approaches to materials. The images are visual citations, in line with written citations. Filming and photography as a medium are more than documentation. It can be a way to explore and experience anew what we do. They create, and let us see, possible relationships, variations, and differentiation between different ways of working with the performative. They can interrupt a set of ideas during the time working with this PhD dissertation. In that way I can suspend a series of thoughts and bifurcate to reach other thoughts. This brings fluidity and transmutable processes. This can also reveal (un)noticed ‘invention’ of interventions through everyday making of practice-driven acts.

My everyday practices and encounters go repeatedly, but not identically. The work, our co-making, unfolds and unveils multi-directionally matters, spreads diverse intensities, creates dissonance and/or resonance. A poetical chaos that brings to the surface, for whoever wants to see and acknowledge it, questions of presentation, re-presentation, and knowledge creation. Those moments are not always directly connected to the main body of this dissertation. One could almost say that they are illicit, because they do not hold a ponderous or explicit contribution to the ‘main research’. However, their input, from the side lines, are series of events and spaces of discovery. They are accountable because what they produce in with/in me counts. Or, if we use Barad’s them, they matter for what I do.

Evolving between a strong wish to bring and create transformations (allowing different understandings of what we do, think, and expect) and curiosity of unstable systems (of thinking, doing, teaching, making, and writing), I expose myself to/with others more than exposing (exhibiting or showing reproductions of) accomplished artistic works (as terminated visual objects). Thinking through and working with developing different approaches to my practices, I sometimes work with a performance, sometimes I have a performative lecture, or undergo a performative approach to materials. It is not always easy to see/make a sharp distinction between those three working forms and forms of expression. I name them here without classifying them:

- 1) public art performance in Norway;
- 2) public performance talk with Samira and Lap-Xuan in Vietnam;
- 3) pedagogical performance lecture in Hasselt (Belgium);
- 4) pedagogical performance lecture in Norway;
- 5) performative approach to drawing in teacher education, Norway;
- 6) performative approach to wool in teacher education, Norway;
- 7) performative approach to non-pedagogical material in teacher education;
- 8) performance lecture with scholars under an international conference, Spain;
- 9) a performative presentation of our research collective Stich Sisters, together with Monica Klungland and Helen Eriksen, Norway;
- 10) virtual performance at the online InSEA conference, Spain;
- 11) Wool felting as an intimate encounter – frictions, water, and soap;
- 12) Wool felting as an intimate dance – throwing and wetting;
- 13) Performance lecture by the collective Stich Sisters (together with Monica Klungland, Helen Eriksen, and Mali Hauen), at the symposium ‘Art and urgency’, University of Agder;
- 14 Performative approach and play with wool with pupils in 2nd grade, primary school, Viken, Norway; and
- 15 Performance Camp Finse, Norway, Between river and sky.

The assemblage of pictures is in the appendix.

Appendix



1) Performans "RebelrebEL", 2015 at Kunst- og designhall, Oslo (Norway)

Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/user45015624>



2) Performance talk “While I am thinking about you... and what you are doing”, 2019 at MoT+++.
Vietnam. Link to video: <https://youtu.be/t9dSxIV4D-Q>



3) Pedagogical performance lecture “J’ai perdu mon mouchoire”, 2016 at KH Leuven/Leuven University College, in Hasselt (Belgium)

Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/user45015624>



4) Pedagogical performance lecture “Le jeu de la marelle”, 2016, in a Norwegian University.
Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/user45015624>



5) performative approach to drawing in teacher education, 2017-18, in a Norwegian University..
Link to video: <https://vimeo.com/user45015624>



6) performative approach to wool in teacher education with international students, 2018. in a Norwegian University.



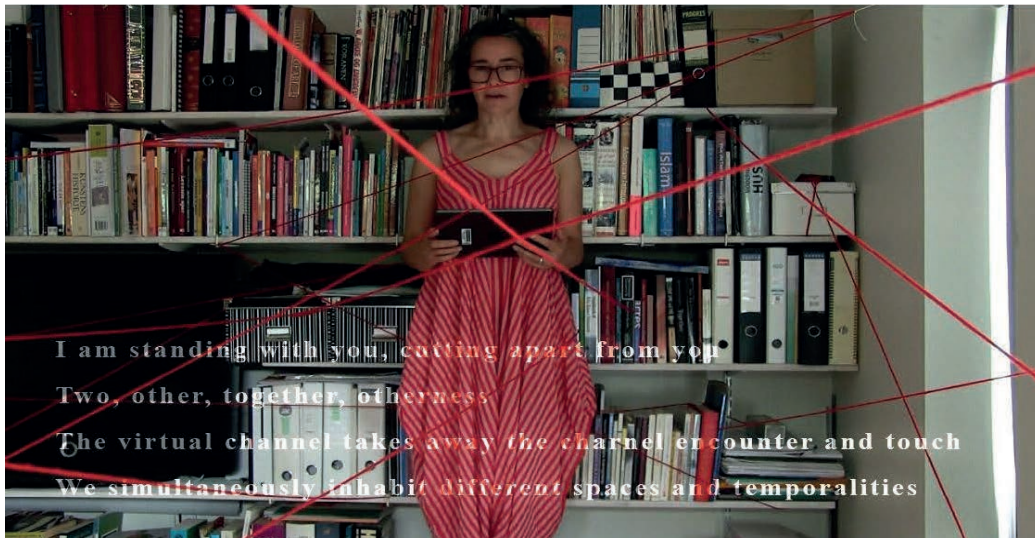
7) performative approach to non-pedagogical material in teacher education “I dag har jeg bursdag”, 2019. in a Norwegian University.



8) performance lecture with scholars under an international conference European Teacher Education Network, 2019 at the Universitat de Vic - Universitat Central de Catalunya, Vic (Spain)



9) Presentations of our joint research work with the collective Stich Sister (together with Monica Klungland and Helen Eriksen), Library in Kristiansand (picture above) and University of Agder (bottom picture).



10) InSEA Baeza, 2021 (Online). *Photos of performance scenes from Samira's home in Norway, live-view through GoogleMeet. Layered with extracted text from Samira's reading*



10) InSEA Baeza, 2021 (Online). *Photo of performance scene from Lap-Xuan's home in Vietnam, live-view through GoogleMeet. Layered with extracted text from Lap-Xuan's reading.*



10) InSEA Baeza, 2021 (Online). *Conceptual image created with 3 layers: Snapshot of the virtual meeting room and performance materials of Samira and Lap-Xuan.*



11 Wool feting – and intimated encounter, frictions, water and soap. Still image from video. 2019.



12 Wool felting – and intimated dance, throwing and wetting. Photographs from a photo shoot. 2022.



13) Performance lecture “Time of material through wool” by the collective Stich Sisters: Monica Klungland, Helen Eriksen and Mali Hauen and the at symposium ‘Art and urgency’, University of Agder. 2022.



14 A performative approach with wool with pupils in 2nd grade, primary school, Viken, Norway. 2022.



15 Performance Camp Finse, Norway. Between river and sky. 2022.

Photo credits

- 1 Alexis Para and Samira Jamouchi
- 2 Duc Ta Minh
- 3 Samira Jamouchi
- 4 Samira Jamouchi
- 5 Samira Jamouchi
- 6 Samira Jamouchi
- 7 Trine Sofie Dybvikstrand
- 8 Luc Dall'Armellina and Edwin Schot
- 9 Samira Jamouchi and Lisbet Skregelid
- 10 Samira Jamouchi and Lap-Xuan Lap-Xuan Do-Nguyen
- 11 Shahab
- 12 Per-Arne Ellefsen
- 13 Samira Jamouchi (still from video)
- 14 Lilja Sighvatsdottir
- 15 Bjarte Bjørkum and Samira Jamouchi

Image quality varies from situation to situation. They do not necessarily hold high aesthetic qualities. This reveals that certain situations are more or less informal events. Some other situations are more or less organized photo or video recording sessions, with more or less professional photographs. Some of these images still come from the video, when I place the camera in the room.