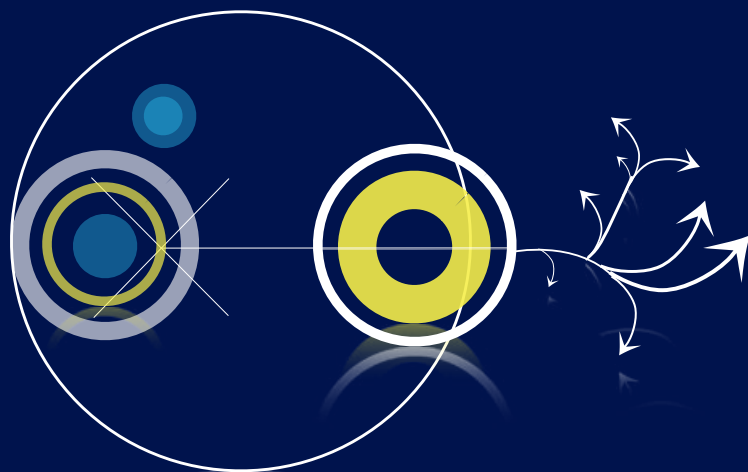Tatiana Chemi / Julie Borup Jensen / Lone Hersted

Behind the Scenes of Artistic Creativity

Processes of Learning, Creating and Organising

Tatiana Chemi / Julie Borup Jensen / Lone Hersted

Behind the Scenes of Artistic Creativity

Throughout the literature of creative learning, many assumptions and even stereotypes about the artists' creativity are nurtured, often according to myths going back to the Romanticism. The authors have been investigating and describing outstanding artists' creativity and learning/working processes, asking the question: *how do artists create, learn, and organise their work?* This book explores these questions by means of original empirical data (interviews with 22 artists) and theoretical research in the field of the arts and creativity from a learning perspective. Findings shed an original light on how artists learn and create, and how their creative learning and change processes come about, for instance when facilitating and leading creative processes.

The Authors
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The impossible is the possible, which takes more time.
Eugenio Barba

Contents

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About the authors

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Julie Borup Jensen, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor at Aalborg University. Her major interest is artistically mediated learning and aesthetic pedagogies in education. These interests derived from her background as a professional classical violinist, who in her thirties shifted to the profession of nursing, as well as from

her Ph.D. research on public sector innovation within educational settings. The combination of the artistic, the practical and the academic experiences led to a humanistic research perspective, approaching creative and innovative processes within education from a learning point of view. This research approach has been carried on in subsequent research projects on arts as a mediating factor in knowledge and identity building in educations such as nursing, social education and teacher education. She participates in several research teams and groups at Aalborg University: ARiEL (Arts in Education and Learning), FIU (Research in Education and Cultures of Learning), reCreate (Research Centre for Creative and Immersive Learning Environments) and LPT (Cross Disciplinary Learning, on action research, co-leader and coordinator 2010-2013). Her publications include a wide range of articles and book contributions in Danish and English, such as two books on public sector innovation, *Samarbejdsdrevet innovation i den offentlige sektor* and *Samarbejdsdrevet innovation i praksis* (DJØF-Forlaget 2011 and 2014) and one about action research. Articles and book contributions circle around creativity as part of learning, and innovation as a social exchange of knowledge and practices. Julie grew up in Denmark, but has lived for short periods in countries like Germany (1995-1996), France (2002), Singapore (2005-2006) and USA (2011). When not doing research, she enjoys leading the department choir and finds it stimulating to discuss the world with her teenage children.

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at KCC (England). Lone has contributed to several publications, among others: *Relationelle Perspektiver på Ledelse* (Hans Reitzels Forlag 2014). Another book entitled: *Relational Leading – Practices for Dialogically Based Collaboration, w*ritten together with prof. Kenneth J. Gergen (published in English at Taos Institute Publications and in Danish at Forlaget Mindspace 2013). She is furthermore co-author of the book, *Kreativ Procesledelse* (Dansk Psykologisk Forlag 2011). In 2007 she was co-author of *Gyldendals Teaterleksikon* (the Danish Encyclopaedia of Theatre, at Gyldendals Forlag). In 2002: Co-author of the anthology, *Teaterlandskaber: Nedslag i Robert Wilsons univers* (Forlaget Drama) and co-writer of the anthology *Come in Go out* about the artistic work of Robert Wilson (Informations Forlag 2002).

List of tables and figures

Recognised by whom? Insights on research considerations

by Tatiana Chemi and Julie Borup Jensen

In writing this book, our curiosity was directed toward the qualities of creative learning and generative processes in individual artists and ensembles. Even though we did not understand (and still do not understand) creativity as a phenomenon exclusive to the arts, we wanted to focus on the domain-specific form of creativity in the arts, because artists and artistic communities seem to cultivate and nurture creativity as one of the means and ends of learning, communicating, engaging in relationships and living their lives (on domain-specificity see Baer 2010). However, our studies on creativity showed that the need for more focused attention on the specific domain of artistic creativity was still strong and unaccomplished. Therefore we designed a research study that focused specifically on artistic creativity and that made use of the power of focused observation. Our purpose was to describe the phenomenon of creativity by means of artists' recollections, retrospective narratives, conceptualisations, ideas, processes and relationships.

Because creativity is a basic need of and a well-acknowledged expectation within artistic achievements, we intended to ask full-time professional artists (the so-called Pro-C level of creativity, the professionals) who had made an original contribution to the domain in which they operated, who were broadly recognised (the Big-C level of creativity) and who had proved a clear interest in meta-reflections and artistic conceptualisations (see chapter 1 for a description of the different levels of creativity). We wanted to find experts in the arts, someone who had tipped the point of expertise, the famous 10,000 hours or ten years of practice that make individuals able to challenge the very rules of their domain, some say (Feldman 1999, p. 173, Gardner 1993). But who should know and acknowledge the chosen artists? The general public or the experts in the field? And who are the experts in a field? How could we define our understanding of recognition within the arts and in which context should we place this definition? Was Odin Teatret known in the whole country of residence by both theatre experts and general public? Or was its international recognition reaching only participants in the field of experimental theatre? And what about young but internationally acclaimed authors such as Morten Ramsland? In either case, would a broad or narrow fame-span influence our sampling choices? Answers

to all of these questions seemed to be dependent on by whom, about whom and where they were formulated.

According to Csikszentmihalyi "what we call creativity always involves a change in a symbolic system, a change that in turn will affect the thoughts and feelings of the members of the culture" (1999, p. 316). We wanted to engage in a dialogue with these game-changers who had practiced artistic creativity and who had reflected upon it.

Moreover, we wanted to investigate several artistic sub-domains, looking at patterns and similarities across artistic modalities. In order to do so, we started looking around us at our networks and our knowledge about artists. We established contacts with the artists we knew, artists we had been collaborating with, but also artists whose biography and works were very well known to us or accessible in more intangible ways. We found ourselves proposing names of artists that we could connect to, physically, intellectually and emotionally. Artists who lived close-by geographically (sometimes, even neighbours) or artists who lived far away but with whom we shared our curiosity, artists that had touched us as cultural actors but also professionally, artists whose works had changed our understanding and perception of art as skilled connoisseurs or experts, artists who we respected and admired and whose works we often loved. Hence, participation in the research project was addressed to professional artists with whom we frequently had a long-term dialogue, either in person or through their works. More often, the established dialogue took the form of both personal and artistic acquaintance or knowledge. This led to the first limitation of the study: we were moving in a Western cultural tradition and within a geographical area. Without suggesting that the sampled artists shared common cultural values, we were definitely mapping a Western-based culture, with strong relationships to Scandinavia. Looking closely, though, we noticed that the majority of these artists did not define a mainstream Scandinavian or Western culture, but rather a global, transnational or multicultural perspective, whether living in a foreign country (Barba, Varley, Bosch, Jordan, Nisticò), keeping strong contacts across several cultures (Hustvedt, Kvium, Ramsland, Granhøj, Bosch), working with multicultural inspiration (Dehlholm, Barba, Varley, Exner, Fjord, Bosch, Valeur, Kleis and Rønsholdt) or in international environments (Koppel, Dehlholm, Granhøj, Barba, Exner, Olesen, Nord, Hustvedt and Bosch). What unites these artists is a cross-boundary dimension: they are often highly recognised nationally or internationally or both and they are recognised beyond the borders of a specific tradition or genre or beyond the popular/high culture dichotomy. They are cosmopolitans, known for having challenged traditions and generated new models that became novel traditions for other artists. Some of them are ground-breaking

in their domain and have been on the move physically as well as intellectually for themselves and for others, within and against traditions, always in dialogue with themselves, others and cultures. It follows that the cultural-geographical restriction is an element of our research design, but does not define or describe the artists' vivacious interests, international practices and wide public reception.

We were curious about the subject of artistic creativity and the ways it is expressed, developed and enacted by individuals and individuals-in-groups and we decided to ask the persons we consider experts in the field - professional artists who knew the hard work of being creative and leading creative processes. Our main focus of interest was on how processes of creation are related to learning and organising in the professional practice of artists.

By investigating the literature about creativity, we noticed that several contributions addressed and criticised assumptions and even stereotypes about creativity in general (Kaufman & Sternberg 2010, Sternberg 1999) and artists' creativity specifically (Locher 2010, Weisberg 1993, Weisberg 1999). Basic misunderstandings about artists' work-processes or artists' creative endeavour were addressed both in literature and in different educational contexts. Probably a legacy of the Romantic view of artists as chaotic lonely geniuses on the verge of psychic dysfunction, many of the common stereotypes regarding artistic creativity miss some fundamental points. The artists' rational choices about their ways in which they create, learn, organise and lead their creative processes; the perseverance in pursuing a set idea in spite of failures; their voluntary openness to what is emerging or surprising - these are only a few of the ways in which artists draw trajectories of growth that combine several paradigms. Rather than being all feelings and irrationality, as in the Romantic stereotype, artists seemed to us to apply *both* feelings *and* rational thinking, both openness and rules, both individual and dialogical processes. These early intuitions of ours, supported by mostly systemic views on creativity (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, Csikszentmihalyi 1999, Gardner 1993) and socio-cultural perspectives (Bruner 2009, Connery, John-Steiner & Marjanovic-Shane 2010, Moran & John-Steiner 2003, Vygotsky 1925/1971, Sawyer et al. 2003, 2007 and 2010), provided the background of our research interests. We wanted to investigate and describe in depth artists' working and learning processes, by taking a step back and addressing the question: *how do artists create, learn and organise their work?* Do they learn in a specific way? Are there certain environments, social settings and working procedures that stimulate creativity in and between individuals and facilitate the generation of ideas in groups? How do artists work and develop their ideas in relationships? Do artistic learning processes build on specific elements and common patterns? If so, how can they be conceptualised? Can the concepts be transferred into

principles applicable in other domains such as teaching and process facilitating and if so, how and why? We aimed to explore these questions by means of an empirical and theoretical contribution to the field of arts and creativity research from a learning perspective, including relational and leadership issues.

Coming from different but related fields, the collaborating authors each brought their individual knowledge to the project: Chemi from the field of cultural studies and aesthetic learning processes, Borup Jensen from music and learning, Hersted from theatre and organisational studies. All united by a shared curiosity about artistic creativity, the authors brought to the present book different but related perspectives and wove them together. Based on a conjoined study, our empirical content unfolds through three main themes: artistic composition, learning and organising. These themes give a direction to the three main parts of the book and in each part figures a main author. However, the final result is principally due to empirical studies designed and carried out together and to frequent conversations amongst the authors.

At this point it is important to clarify our understanding of learning, as unfolded throughout the book. Given the need of creativity studies with learning or developmental perspectives, especially with focus on artistic creativity, we made use of few but fundamental contributions with this multiple take on creativity and learning or development (Feldman 1999, Moran & John-Steiner 2003, Sawyer et al. 2003, Sawyer 2003, 2007 and 2010). Our socio-cultural perspective looks at learning as an enactive and socially constructed phenomenon that is constituted in the individual and takes place in contexts and within relationships. In the interviewed artists' case, learning may happen all the time and everywhere, to the advantage of creative endeavours. Therefore we have chosen to look at several learning environments: the formal (schooling, education), the informal (communities of practice, peers, role models, cultural exchanges), the organisational (workplace, leadership, organising) and the artistic domain-specific knowledge that encompasses all the above. When we mention learning, we think about this diversity and we aim at embracing its complexity. According to Sawyer (2003) we should rather define it development and not learning: in Part Two these definitional issues will be addressed and discussed thoroughly.

We have chosen to work with artists' creativity and learning, because we understand learning as a basically creative enterprise, supported by several learning theories that are going to be discussed in the following chapters. Furthermore, we define creativity in its etymological origin as the creation (Latin *creare*) of something new and appropriate (a more extensive definition is discussed in Chapter 1). In the case of artistic creativity this "something" would be the artistic

products (artworks), processes or environments that artists/creators are able to generate, change, implement or challenge.

Our specific interest was to investigate artists' and ensembles' ways of creating, learning and organising through their own expressions and narratives. The basic themes we were concerned with included:

- specific artistic creativity in a learning perspective
- the interplay between individual, group and community
- composition and artistic processes
- artistic leadership and the organising of creative work processes.

Research within the field of creativity and learning calls for qualitative methods of investigation (Denzin & Lincoln 2005). Methodologically, we have made use of the semi-structured interview as described by Kvale and Brinkmann (2008), as a framework for data collection. The interviews were recorded as audio files, transcribed verbatim, translated and afterwards validated or commented upon by the artists (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund 2008).

In the research interviews, we asked the sampled artists to tell us about a meaningful experience that had made a special impression on them in an artistic context; about how they learn best; how they understand creativity and define it; in which situations they experience being the most or the least creative and when they experienced being completely absorbed by their artistic work; about their collaboration with others and their sources of inspiration; about recognition and the meaning of it for creativity; about their ways of organising and leading their artistic work processes; about working rules, routines or habits that stimulate their creative process; about how decisions are taken in groups and with artistic leaders; about the external factors that they believed important for creativity to germinate; about special places that they find most inspiring. This is in line with a hermeneutic-phenomenological approach to both data-generation and data analysis. Our approach matches the research questions, where the aim is to investigate the concepts of learning and creativity as they appear to the artists.

The replies we received were vivid narratives from the artists' past, present and future visions. Probably the interviews tended to be positively biased, for the simple reason that we asked for memories on, influences about, definitions of what the interviewees are passionate about: their artistic work. Even though we mostly asked the artists to tell us the story of what works optimally for their creativity to unfold and flourish, we also asked them what is disturbing and what inhibits their creativity or communication in artistic communities. Although mentioned in a few places (distrust, lack of communication, frustrations), we have not systematically looked at highly dysfunctional sides of artistic creativity

or topics such as crisis management, conflicts, mental or physical diseases or the like (on the dark side of creativity in general see Cropley et al. 2010)

In light of the four Ps of creativity –person, product, process, place– (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010, pp. 24-25) we have collected narratives as follows:

- Person: artists as individuals in contexts and in relationships have been explored by means of retrospective qualitative interviews. We collected the artists' narratives about their experiences within the educational system, their first approaches to the arts, the development of their passions, their working processes and strategies of creating, their relationships to others (peers, colleagues, public) and their creative or learning environments (emotional, psychological and physical spaces) and finally their eventual pedagogical or leading role in artistic tasks.
- Product: artworks, (auto)biographies, written or video recorded reflections on creativity constitute the secondary qualitative data that enhance the large amount of primary data of the interviews. Document analysis gave significance to these secondary data and contributed to our understanding of the artists' products and processes. These have been pursued as a meaningful but minor supplement to the interviews. The reason for this minor role of artworks in our research was a necessary limitation to our study. The systematic and prolonged analysis of artistic texts is in itself an extensive research focus, worth addressing specifically.
- Process: creative processes in the arts have been looked at as relational, contextual, domain-specific phenomena through the artists' narratives.
- Place: places where creation, learning and organising occur have been investigated by means of both primary (interviews with artists) and secondary (artworks analysis, biographies) qualitative data, as a fundamental part of the act of artistic creation.

Our research method is selective in relation to our research interest and inclined to embrace the developmental (Feldman 1999, Sawyer et al. 2003) and systemic traditions of creativity studies (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010), together with the socio-cultural perspective (Connery, John-Steiner & Marjanovic-Shane 2010, Moran & John-Steiner 2003, Sawyer 2003, 2007, 2010 and Vygotsky 1971). The multi-theoretical research perspective is a consequence of the complex essence of creativity that makes it necessary to look at interacting and interrelated aspects, which mutually influence each other. Following Feldman (1999, p. 182) we acknowledge the lack of more studies that are multi-theoretical and multi-dimensional and we will attempt to contribute with multiple perspectives. We also consider creativity to be strictly related to

learning, hence our developmental angle that allows us to see how creativity develops over time and how individuals and environment mutually interact over time. Well aware of the limitations of both retrospective studies (lack of memory or selective memory) and self-reporting (misrepresentation of self), as for instance emphasised in Weisberg (1993, p. 46), we believe we have recorded, documented and interpreted a unique body of unprecedented data, which we expect to contribute to the field of creativity studies.

The reader of this book will hear the multiple voices of writers, visual artists, designers, architects, musicians, theatre actors and directors, digital artists, dancers, choreographers and film-makers. Genres include musical forms such as classical music, opera and jazz; visual arts like painting, drawing, sculpting, digital art and installation; performing arts such as laboratory theatre, experimental theatre, dance theatre, theatre anthropology, modern dance (and the roles of theatre directing, acting, dancing, choreographing); types of cinema such as motion pictures and documentaries; literary genres like poetry, novels, plays and scripts for computer games. We included design and architecture as art forms, even though these domains can be perceived as non-artistic due to their industrial or commercial applications. The reason we included them is that we look upon these cultural productions in their artistic and creative perspective, choosing designers and architects that interpreted their role as innovative in their domain. We attempted to cover several art forms, genres and traditions, but we have not managed to systematically broaden our attention to more underground artistic expressions. This happened for two reasons. The first one is that we looked for artists that have been professionals in their domain over a large amount of years and that, as a consequence of this long-term commitment, have been able to challenge –and sometimes change– the rules of their domain. Often, the main creators of underground arts are young less-acknowledged artists than the ones we sampled. The second reason is that underground artists, such as for instance street artists, graffiti or knitting artists, punk-rock musicians, can be difficult to approach, especially for those arts (still) labelled as illegal or on the verge of vandalism. We believe that these art forms deserve a specific and more extensive study than we could have covered in the present book.

Specifically, we were interested in finding similarities among the different creative, learning and organising patterns across modalities. Even though originally interested in also studying the dissimilarities among art forms, the scope of our research proved so broad that we were unable to include this aspect. While acknowledging the importance of studies into the different approaches to creativity, learning and organising in the specific art forms, we have chosen to focus on their common traits. In other words, in the present study we do not cover

systematically the differences in artistic modalities, styles, artistic traditions or genres and their impact on artistic creativity. The art-form-based differences are also emphasised in the interviews with the artists, for instance, writers Morten Ramsland and Siri Hustvedt point to how writing processes are different from painting processes, theatre director Kirsten Dehlholm puts music up against architecture and digital artists Klejs and Rønsholdt specify the differences between visual art and design. Even if in the present research we focus on the common traits among the arts, only occasionally referring to the differences, at the same time we wish to specify that research that also looks at the distinctions among the arts is greatly needed. This would deserve a long-term multidisciplinary research effort, which we look forward to undertaking in the future.

Similarly, just as we had a broad representation of several artistic modalities, we also tried to keep a gender balance in our selection of artists. Even though gender issues are not addressed in the present contribution, our attempt was to avoid the male-gender bias that many anthologies collecting artists' or creators' voices contain (Barron, Montuori & Barron 1997, Murray 1978). The reason for this is that we do not believe that gender decides whether an individual is or will be creative, but that if individuals are given the same opportunities and environments, they can contribute to the flourishing of creativity, regardless of gender differences (see also Lubart 2010, pp. 268-9).

The qualitative interviews with the artists have been captured by means of audio-files during face-to-face or technology aided interviews. Interviews were analysed, interpreted and contextualised within theories of aesthetics, creativity, learning and organisations. More information on the specific interviews is given in the chapter *Meeting the Artists*. Because the book relies heavily on the artists' narratives as captured from the interviews, the authors have made ample use of quotes from these conversations. All the quotes are attributed to the specific artists and simply referenced by the artist's surname. Whenever the reader finds a quote that is not referenced in our bibliography, it is an excerpt from the collected interviews.

In the processing of the interviewed artists' narratives, we have worked partly individually and partly together as a research and writing team. The research method has been to identify patterns in the narratives that appeared either broadly common across the interviews, or themes that seemed unique and specific to one artist in particular (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008). A hermeneutic approach has been used in the subsequent interpretation and analysis process. Specifically, we interpreted the interviews within theoretical frameworks corresponding to the three parts of the book: theories of creativity, learning theories and theories of leadership and management. Within these three frameworks, we

identified and condensed themes for each part of the book (Kvale & Brinkmann 2008, see also Mason 2002).

The book is written by three different researchers, each of whom has specific interests and perspectives on the topic of creativity and also different ways of communicating and emphasising findings and results. This means that the authors do not necessarily agree on every aspect and detail in the book, also that some parts of the book may present opposing or even contradictory perspectives. In this way, we aim to present to the reader a broad take on the complex topic of artistic creativity. We believe that the authors' collaboration, intermingling different perspectives and fields of expertise, has sharpened the writing and thinking around the topic of creativity, in a *fruitful asynchrony*, as Gardner would define it (1993).

We have chosen to write this book in English, in order to reach an international target group of scholars, educators, artists, leaders and consultants, who are working at the intersection of arts, organisational development and education. Our purpose is to contribute to the debate on creativity and learning, bringing the specific perspective of the arts, while also formulating concrete hypotheses, likely to be applied in educational and organisational contexts. Looking at how these artists learn and create and at how their creative learning and change processes come about, we can perhaps learn from their experiences. Might their ways of learning perhaps be transferred into a normative model for enhancing creativity and innovation in organisations and educational environments?

The book is organised in three parts, each with its respective focus and main author.

The first part, *Creativity and Art*, focuses on artistic creativity and composition, answering questions such as: which are the sources of inspiration when an artist creates? What does the artist's creative process look like and how does it unfold? What helps and inhibits artists' wish to create? How do artists compose, produce and perform? Which intentional strategies do they activate? How does the process of creation feel and how might it be conceptualised? Starting from an historical overview of theories of creativity, the reader will see how "recent" the concept of creativity is and which elements characterise our contemporary understanding of creativity, specifically artistic creativity. This part will discuss the sensitive and sensory process of giving shape, of balancing between tradition and originality, chaos and order, tension and relaxation and of intentionally persisting in the work of creating.

The second part, *Learning and Change*, has learning as its main focus. In this part, we will address issues about the relationship between creativity and learning from relevant theoretical perspectives within emerging, meaningful research

angles. We will examine how the artists experience learning in respect of artistic processes. How do they understand learning as linked to creativity and how is learning involved in artistic work that depends on inspiration, expression and originality in relation to traditional patterns and cultural practices within the fields of art? There will be specific focus on the artists' individual learning strategies in interplay with learning opportunities provided by social and cultural environments in educational as well as in informal artistic community contexts. On this background, we will outline transfer values from artistic cultures and practices for pedagogy and educational research and practice, in the hope of inspiring to the development of creative learning environments in educational settings. In order to heighten recognisability within the field of education, we draw, to a wide extent, on classical learning theories and pedagogy.

The third part, *Creativity in Relationships*, sheds light on creative work processes influenced by relationships, collaborative creative work and on how the artists organise and lead their creative working processes. This part of the book is written from a relational approach towards creativity, with special interest in the artists' dialogue with traditions, the influence from internalised others, as well as the activity going on between the artists in collaborative working projects. In this perspective, elements such as confidence, relational responsiveness, playfulness and communication will be specifically studied. In this part, closely related to the topic of organising creative work processes, we will look into relevant aspects such as creating frames for work and the creation of environments for the enhancement of creativity. With inspiration from the interviewed artists and artistic leaders, we will then trace aspects of leadership that seem to be conducive to the creation of environments and working cultures that can enhance and inspire individuals and groups to be creative.

Some themes will go through the whole book as a common thread, but they will be seen differently through the lenses of the various chapters. These themes include: communication, intertextuality, internalised others, exchange with other artists, meetings with "others" and the developmental aspects of the arts. Our *Epilogue* will sum up these recurring themes and the overall findings of our research.

Last but not least, we include biographical information on the interviewed artists and an overview of the interviews carried out, in our chapter *Meeting the Artists*.

It is our hope that this book will inspire a large target group representing the fields of education, pedagogy, leadership and organisational development by launching an open invitation to look behind the scenes of artistic creativity. Many of our findings confirm the results of other creativity studies adding

to them the artists' own words and our personal interpretations. According to Sternberg (2003, p. 128), ideas are not great because they last forever or are objectively or universally true, but because they inspire the development of other novel ideas. True to this creative mantra, our wish is to contribute meaningfully to the future development of creativity studies, by formulating new, appropriate hypotheses and presenting several broadening perspectives that may inspire future directions.

Part One: Creativity and Art
by Tatiana Chemi

Chapter 1: Artistic creativity: past, present and future

Etymology and definition(s)

In the present book we refer to creativity as the ability and process of producing something new or exceptional that is useful to someone in a specific environment. Our working definition draws from what consensually, in the field of creativity studies, researchers understand as creative (Feist 2010, p. 114). It goes without saying that behind this consensus we can find many different positions and a variety of nuances for the same definition. For instance, the novelty of a creative product can either be defined against the background of its differentiation from other standards or models (being exceptional or original), or its innovation (bringing something new or novel). At the same time, the usefulness of a creative product can be assessed on standards of goodness, appropriateness, adaptiveness, value, significance and relevance (Mayer 1999, p. 450). The semantic fields of novelty and appropriateness seem to depend upon each other in defining a creative enterprise and the lack of one of them implies conceptual consequences. Cropley and Cropley make clear this relationship by discerning "pseudo-creativity" and "quasi-creativity" (Cropley & Cropley 2010, p. 303) the former being the expression of novelty without usefulness, the latter being the generation of usefulness without novelty. In any case, several definitions of creativity give special attention to quality: high quality is a characteristic of a creative product or person or process or environment, whether at Nobel prize or everyday life level, whether it constitutes an incremental or a radical change (Kaufman & Sternberg 2010).

However, creativity cannot be defined without an awareness of cultural and historical conditions and values. Definitions of creativity vary across cultures and historical periods to such an extent that it would be impossible to ignore this diversity in any attempt to define it. We do not seek to provide a comprehensive review of all the theoretical approaches to creativity, which can be retrieved from other extensive contributions (Kaufman & Sternberg 2010, Sternberg 1999). Rather, the aim here is to introduce core issues that are central to our topic and that can help to nuance the concept of creativity. Moreover, specific attention will be given to examples or conceptualisations of artistic creativity. We understand artistic creativity as creativity unfolding in the domain of the arts, across artistic

forms, genres or degrees of involvement (professional, amateur, connoisseur). Artistic creativity draws from the etymological background of the word creativity and is here recognised as the capacity of creating, generating, composing or (re)interpreting an artistic product, event or performance. Artistic creativity, as the subject of our research, is looked at as the ability to construct narratives that are meaningful to others and developed by means of artistic media and skills.

The concept of creativity as known in Western cultures has not always been as we perceive it today. The word has been used differently and the concept has been through a long and dramatic transformation throughout the centuries.

The etymological source of the word creativity can be located in the Sanskrit root *kar-* to be found in the verb *kar-oti*, to do, to make, and the nouns *kar-tr*, creator, and *kri-ja*, action. The same semantic core is identified in the ancient Greek *kraino*, to create, to produce, to fulfil, and in the Latin *creare*, to create out of nothing, to generate, to produce or perform. Pianigiani (2013) connects this semantic descent to the naming of ancient gods, such as Cronus (Gr. *Kronos*), son of Uranus and Gaia (mother earth), who, in the Greek Olympus, was father of the gods' father, Zeus, or such as Ceres who in Latin mythology was the goddess of Harvest. Associated with the etymological meaning of the word is a sense of agency (doing, action) and of fulfilment in the practical generation, production or performance of "something". The god and goddess related to the root *kar-* are powerful and central to the gods' family: Cronus is the bridge between Chaos (his mother's father) and creation as order (Zeus is both *genitor* and ruler), Ceres is the life-giving mother, the very celebration of human survival through the earth's fertile cycles.

History of a concept

Albeit linked to ancient Western cultures and languages, the word "creativity" did not inspire any connotation of creation and practical making before Christian times. In English, the word *create* is traced back to Chaucer (1340?-1400), who used it in 1393 (Runco & Albert 2010, p. 6) but its use was not followed by any conceptual debate about creativity. All the ancient Western cultures shared a common disinterest in human creation, believed to be solely epiphenomenal in relation to the will and deeds of the gods. Creativity as we usually define it today did not exist as a concept in pre-Christian cultures, where artists and poets (and also scientists and philosophers) were seen simply as conduits of divine inspiration. Artists, whose artisan skills defined both their profession and social status, were not known by their birth-name, for the simple reason that no individual stood out in the expression of singular genius. Before Homer (supposedly

eighth century B.C.), poets used to compose collectively or in collective situations, such as performances at court or public competitions. The *aoidos* was a poet of rhythmical compositions performed to the musical background of a small string instrument called *cithara.* He (normally a "he") should not be mistaken for a singer - rather his compositions might have sounded like modern rap or the works of a medieval bard: lyrical text recited with a musical background. Poetry was improvised following set rules that served several purposes. Firstly, as these compositions were oral performances, one purpose must have been the mnemonic retention of content and indeed set formulas and rhetorical devices were repeated in a syntactic structure that facilitated comprehension and retrieval. Another purpose must have been the expression of the community's values and ideology, as these works were fully integrated into the culture of belonging: themes drawn from religious beliefs and consensual views on historical and mythological narratives. A third one was the amusement of the community, which in case of ancient Greece consisted of wealthy, free males. The activity of assembling and combining oral poems was neither individual nor original, as we understand originality today. Poetry-making was a collective enterprise, a sort of group handicraft carried out either by specialised artisans or by skilled autodidacts. Nobody stood out from the professional group. Only one situation constituted an exception: poetry competitions. There the rules of the game allowed only the performance of excellence and put poets up against each other, professionals against amateurs. The act of creation consisted of putting together existing thematic and rhetorical blocks (replication and incrementation) and of attuning to the field of poets and of the broader society. Murray (1981) points out the specific quality of these poets' creativity, which was perceived as a sort of divine (or devilish) inspiration.

Runco and Albert point to the tipping point of the conceptualisation of creativity that was to bring the early Western cultures closer to a contemporary understanding of it: "It is when the Greeks placed emphasis on an individual's *daimon* (guardian spirit) that the idea of genius became mundane and was progressively associated with an individual's abilities and appetites, both destructive and constructive" (Runco & Albert 2010). Before that, Greek poets defined their creation as a divine process - the individual poet was just a conduit through which the divinities expressed themselves. Names of poets before Homer are mostly unknown throughout antiquity because their works were ephemeral in their being oral, but also because the poets thought "signing" their works to be pointless, as they felt that the individual had little if no responsibility for them. The initial call to the Muses, which Homer retains in the Iliad "Sing, goddess, the wrath [anger] of Achilles Peleus' son" in 800 BC (Homer 1995, p. 1) was more than an habitual opening, it was an ideological statement: as a poet he was

simply the hand guided by the gods' will and he called for the gods to appear and trigger his creative process. Genius at that time was not the extraordinary individual's ability to create, but the "mystical powers of protection and good fortune" (Runco & Albert 2010, p. 5) to be almost ritually called for at the beginning of a poetic composition.

Interestingly, the first transmission to posterity of a poet's name in historical documents was probably due to a sort of branding operation initiated by a group of professional poets, tired of being challenged in competitions by less professional ones, the autodidacts (Tarditi 1973, p. 13). The latter, whose presence is still documented in Homer's *Odyssey* (Homer 1992, XXII) were proud to owe their skills solely to divine will, while the former considered themselves as professional artisans, whose technique derived from their hard-won learning and imitation of established masters. In this competition amongst artists we can read the early building up of a professional awareness that had consequences for the artists' conception of their creativity. One of the ancient poets' "corporations" claimed its descent from Homer, the blind poet who exceptionally and brilliantly had recorded myth and history from earlier oral traditions in written, rather than spoken, words. Homer is simply too perfect an image of a Greek genius to be true and indeed scholars have doubted of his historical truth since 1664 (Tarditi 1973, p. 18). Today the prevailing theory looks on Homer not as a real individual but as a myth, whose name indicates a family of poets that used to transmit its knowledge from generation to generation and participate in poetry competitions. The name, or better "surname", of Homer probably indicates this family, the Homeridaes, which used to meet up at the poetry competitions, indeed the Greek verb *omereo* means "to meet".

How is this story relevant to our understanding of creativity? Simply by acknowledging that ancient Greece did not construct the notion of creativity as we do today and by addressing the several myths around artistic creativity. Not only was creativity as novelty and disruption not valued in ancient Greece, it did not even exist in its conceptual heritage. The Greeks valued respect for traditions, apprenticeship to masters, repetition of rhetorical formulas and solutions, recognition of well known themes and musical harmony. Composition was collective and collectively shared, mostly anonymous and felt to be divinely driven. Myths around poets and acts of creation were instrumentally used to transmit knowledge by means of lyrical images.

Already we can see the emergence of a few issues of great importance for creativity debates in the centuries to come: who is responsible for the act of creation, God or man? Is artistic creativity spontaneous, as in the case of autodidacts, or knowledge-based and driven, as in the case of hard-working professional poets?

Another question the ancient view on artistic creation raises is whether creativity can be associated with positive or negative values. As already quoted above from Runco and Albert (2010, p. 5) the concept of genius was strictly related to divine protection, or to a *daimon*. Originally, *daimon* was a guardian spirit, a supernatural power that could be as much vehicle of protection as of destruction. The latter meaning still survives in current words such as demon or demonic and shows the complex character of creative composition. This mysterious and multifaceted quality around artistic creativity kept growing in the pre-Christian cultures, to the point of becoming a synonym for madness: *furor poeticus* was defined as the state of being in a creative process (Murray 1981, p. 22). In both cases, whether the gods or poetic frenzy had inspired creation, creation had little to do with artistry alone. Inspiration has always been central to the conceptualisation of artistic creativity, to the point of being mythologised by Romanticism. However, inspiration is only one of the many attributes of creativity, together with the above-mentioned genius and craftsmanship. In the ancient Roman view of creative processes, genius is perceived as "an illustrious male's creative power" (Runco & Albert 2010, p. 5), which can be transmitted to posterity. Cicero (106-43 BC) incarnates this image as an intellectual and in his works he constructs a theory of composition, called by him *rhetorica*. In Cicero's many books on rhetoric, the art of composing an effective speech, composition is essentially a rational act that follows commonly agreed rules within a specific style. Nevertheless, his rhetoric envisages a humanistic approach that makes use of "cultural creativity" (Gianotti & Pennacini 1981, p. 52) and philosophy. With the purpose of acting for the common good –which for Cicero is to keep the *status quo*– and the aim of persuasion (the technique of manipulating the audience's consensus), the art of rhetorical composition must integrate creative elements in order to stimulate an emotional response, or commotion. If the final aim of rhetoric is persuasion, then content knowledge is not at all fundamental. What counts is not exact or scientific knowledge but the ability to describe, to present subject matter and to move the audience. The whole of Latin culture was subsequently to be influenced by Cicero's humanistic rhetoric and both literary practices and aesthetic or rhetoric theories would either follow a "technical" approach (strict adherence to the rules of composition: invention, disposition and memory) or a "cultural" approach (creative indulging in stylistic refinements). According to Cicero, creativity is due to the poet's natural talent (*natura*) and to a sort of divine breath as inspiration (*quasi divino quodam spiritu inflari*), as Gianotti and Pennacini (1981, p. 69) note. The first implication of this view is that art cannot be learned or taught. The inspired poet is so by nature, according to his (once again we basically have to do with a male gender defined

culture) outlining qualities. The second implication is that all kinds of human expression - rhetorical, poetic, dramaturgical, visual - must be both useful and agreeable. In contemporary terms, the useful/agreeable pair has been replaced by other concepts with a similar relationship, agreeability being substituted by novelty, originality or exceptional quality, and usefulness being nuanced by the notions of adaptability or appropriateness. The third implication is that reflections on artistic creativity focus on composition and issues related to the process of composition. Individual creativity is necessarily excluded, for the simple reason that artists were not seen as independent creators of original works, but as the spokesmen of the gods. This is confirmed by the fact that art history does not collect any early documentation on individual artists, who are mostly anonymous to us, but rather gathers information on collective works of art.

Runco and Albert maintain that "the earliest Western conception of creativity was the Biblical story of creation given in *Genesis*, from which followed the idea of the artisan doing God's work on earth" (Runco & Albert 2010, p. 5). Of course, in *Genesis* the metaphor of a single God creating the whole world from nothing is powerful and well attuned to the Western perception of creation, as opposed for instance to the Buddhist view of creation as generation out of something already existing, within an organic system of natural cycles. The male individual who creates *ex nihilo* was the perfect personification of the creator for cultures being constructed by the growing monotheistic religions. However, early Christian (and some later versions throughout the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries) understanding of artistic creation was still that of a mediation of God's voice and will. This approach lies behind a religious and moralistic interpretation of artistic processes and performances. By contrast, Habermas's interpretation of Aristotle (384/3-322 BC) as the theorist who challenged Plato's *mimesis* and shifted the artistic process from reproduction to creation might be seen as the first seed of a Western secular view of artistic creativity. According to Plato (c. 427-347 BC) art is nothing but imitation (*mimesis*) of ideal forms and artists waste their time imitating the imperfect forms of sensible reality. As a consequence, Plato did not value artistic creation and spoke of it disparagingly. The relationship between life and artistic creation was further reflected upon in Aristotle, whose opinion is radically different from Plato. He distinguishes simple imitation from complete fulfilment of the artistic creation (Carlson 1984, pp. 16-17). Even though Aristotle's artists are not completely free to generate originally, they behold a closer link to the material reality, which they portray "as it should be", according to criteria of needs and verisimilitude. So artistic creativity according to Aristotle allows individual invention and application of fantasy. Nature is constantly flowing and often unfinished; art can shape the unfinished and can anticipate its fulfilment.

Fantasy, though, must keep a close link to reality; art does not need to be true, but needs to be verisimilar, that is plausible. Aristotle and Plato single out one of the recurring issues in the artistic creativity dispute: the dialectic nature/nurture. Moreover, they contribute to the future debate with concepts still used today: *mimesis*, verisimilitude and *catharsis*.

The arts and creativity

The reader might have noticed by now that this short historical review of theories about artistic creativity and approaches to artistic creation has mainly taken as examples poetry or language-related expressions. This is due to the fact that ancient theories of the arts privilege those artistic forms, including Aristotle who refers more to playwriting than performance when reflecting on theatre. This does not mean that a rich production of artistic artefacts and performances did not exist in antiquity or in the Middle Ages. As the principal world museums bear witness, cultural and artistic artefacts punctuate the history of humanity. Not always, though, were these practices associated with theoretical reflections. Visual arts and architecture would begin to be valued during the Renaissance, when practices of individual artists and schools of art or ateliers began to be well known and historically documented. The performing arts of theatre and music would also achieve cultural appreciation during and after the Renaissance, even though their practices had been continuous and socially important during ancient and Christian times (an exception should be made for dance that must await the 19th century to find its full appreciation in aesthetic theories). Theoretical approaches to these art forms were to evolve from ideas of crafts pure and simple (implicit in the ancient Greek word for art - *tekne* as in technical, technique) to meaningful and necessary crafts.

The early Christian philosopher St. Augustine clearly attributed a purpose of religious dissemination to the making of art, despising any artistic form that did not celebrate the one and only true God and consequently failed to elevate the maker's spirit to heavenly heights (Carlson 1984, p. 29). Music had special status among the arts, perhaps because of the New Testament's metaphor of Christ as the "singer" of God's word, a preference that lives on in some Christian (especially Protestant) traditions of the Psalms. Late mediaeval churches often eagerly practiced forms of dramaturgical entertainment based on religious themes. St. Francis of Assisi used *tableaux vivants* (living pictures, a sort of silent, motionless enactment by real people) as a way to instruct poor and uneducated folk about the life of Christ, establishing a long-lasting tradition that survived up to our time in the custom of the Nativity crib.

Mediaeval interest in creativity was very limited, if we look at theoretical contributions. Originality and novelty were still little valued as qualities, especially in comparison with ideological values such as respect of tradition and imitation. This did not mean that artistic practices were not creative and provocative, for instance in the field of popular theatre or architecture. The traditional view on creativity was to characterise many Christian artists' or theorists' reflections throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For instance, Spanish painter Francisco Pacheco (1564-1644) wrote in his *The Art of Painting, its Antiquity and Greatness* that the aim of the painter is to be "a Christian craftsman" and therefore "could be said to entertain two purposes, one principal and another secondary or subsidiary" (Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2000, p. 31). The secondary, less important, purpose is "to ply his craft for gain or fame or some other reason […]. But this should be governed by the appropriate circumstances of person, place, time, and form". The principal one is "to attain unto a condition of blessedness through the study and the toil of his profession as undertaken in a state of grace", for a Christian "has been expressly created for holy things" (Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2000, p. 31). This declaration stands between the medieval understanding of art-making as a divine state of blessedness and the Renaissance view of men at the centre of the universe. Pacheco attributes a higher meaning to the art of painting, which should not only aim at transient rewards, although that possibility is contemplated. The fact that these ephemeral or material rewards are included, even as secondary aims, indicates that the writer is a professional painter who well knows that, besides immaterial rewards, material rewards can and should be part of the profession. Interestingly, Pacheco's distinction of appropriateness, person, place, time and form recalls modern taxonomies of creativity, such as the 4 Ps of creativity (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010, p. 24): person, press (place), process (time) and product (form). Finally, what this reflection owes to the spirit of Renaissance is the belief that divinity is within human beings. Even though Pacheco does not include *all* human beings and stresses the fact that he is addressing a Christian ontology, he seems to have fully absorbed the notion of man being in charge, being "expressly created for holy things" (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010, p. 24). Of course Pacheco's (and the Renaissance's) being in charge is still within the boundaries of God's will and moral behaviour. The artist should still exercise his creativity in the service of moral elevation and persuasion.

Taking a step backwards to Renaissance ontology, this is best represented by Leonardo's Vitruvian man: right at the centre of the universe, perfect anatomical proportion and a balance of strength and beauty. The Renaissance was a flourishing cultural period in Europe (truly a re-birth) and Christian ideology was accompanied by secular approaches to art and knowledge that were to

open the way for and make possible the growth of Enlightenment philosophy. Neither the Middle Ages nor the Renaissance were exclusively characterised by Christianity – they also gave rise to forms of art that were provocative, anarchistic, free-spirited and of extreme fantasy, especially in folklore or popular art (see Bakhtin 1968). Art forms and artistic practices could include and express a complexity that was unknown to the theories of art. As the Academies were founded and quickly spread across all Europe, leading to the forging of the modern scientific method and practices, conceptual contributions to creativity were modelled either towards the Christian or the academic-scientific argument. Although the latter initiated few long-lasting debates, a large quantity of artistic production, practices and artists were excluded from these reflections because of their link to popular culture. Runco and Albert (2010) sum up the academic debates that were to "become the bedrock of our present-day ideas about creativity: (a) genius was divorced from the supernatural; (b) genius, although exceptional, was a potential in every individual; (c) talent and genius were to be distinguished from one another; and (d) their potential and exercise depend on the political atmosphere at the time" (p. 9). As popular culture was left out of the aesthetic discussion, similarly Eastern philosophies remained unknown to the West until the great exhibitions of the nineteenth century. So, the debate about creativity and artistic creativity was biased by the fact that its spokesmen often shared an implicit taxonomy of the arts and of creative abilities. Academies were the cradle of scientific method and managed to systematise academic peer procedures that are still in force today. In science as well as in art, rules were the subject of reflections on art: set directions in the use of language, in the use of perspective and verisimilitude. The artist's creativity was supposed to adjust to these domain-agreed rules in order to be accepted. If the academic discourse was able to systematise creative works of science and arts, seen as "twin aspects of the same 'scientific' interest" (Goldwater & Treves 1976, p. 13) and give them a "professional" or specialised audience, it was also presenting artists, and creators in general, with the constriction of a new tradition, not in the name of God but in the name of Science. However, these tensions enriched the debate around creativity, by focusing on systematic distinctions: was creativity different from genius? What was the role of education? Was talent synonym of genius and originality?

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) formulated one of the sharpest contributions by insisting that creativity was a matter of imagination. "Time and education beget experience; experience begets memory; memory begets judgment and fancy; judgment begets the strength and structure, and fancy begets the ornaments of a poem" (Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2000, p. 211). In this quote taken from Hobbes' "Answer to Davenant's preface to *Gondibert*" is possible to read both

the classicist tradition (the mind is a *tabula rasa* to be "filled up" with the work of memory and experience) and the enlightened approach (if time and education can build up the creation of a poem, then it is a skill that can be learned). Nevertheless, Hobbes' view on creativity was dark and gloomy, affected by his political determinism. In *Leviathan*, published for the first time in 1651, he defines creativity as the ability of producing mental images, independently from stimulation of the senses:

> For after the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. And this is it the Latins call imagination, from the image made in seeing, and apply the same, though improperly, to all the other senses. But the Greeks call it fancy, which signifies appearance, and is as proper to one sense as to another. Imagination, therefore, is nothing but decaying sense; and is found in men and many other living creatures, as well sleeping as waking (Hobbes 1914).

The late eighteenth century epitomised a change: "in both England and France the artist begins to express himself in a less didactic, more individual way, becomes reluctant to attach his art and his aesthetic to any universally acceptable truth and beauty, because he wishes to give more personal expression to his feeling" (Goldwater & Treves 1976, p. 15). The Über-myth on creativity, creative genius and creative processes was born and raised in this cultural environment. The sad, troubled, often depressed and psychotic artist was subject to unhappy events and almost sought this unhappiness for the sake of artistic creation. The finest personification of this spirit is Goethe's Werther, in *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. The novel, first published in 1774, depicted its main character as a young man of great hopes and passion, with glorious dreams and love for his beloved. In a plot still largely used in Hollywood's romantic comedies the romance is broken even before its start: the object of passion was a woman who was already engaged and Werther suffered a broken heart. Goethe (1749-1832) lets the reader wander through the character's intimate world, as this epistolary novel consists of Werther's letters to his friend. The "I-form" of the narration makes Werther's passionate attitude towards the world even more touching. As readers we find ourselves in Werther's head and feel for him, for his unfortunate love and dead-end situation. We do not know if he is an artist, but we know that he feels very strongly about art, poetry, painting and the classics, Homer. He is hypersensitive to the point of madness and indeed his life situation explodes at the end. With an unhappy ending that would become typical of Romantic art and that unfortunately inspired many young men to do the same, Goethe let his character take his own life. The Werther stereotype influenced not only all of Romantic culture but also a broader common understanding of creativity, artistic creation and artists, which lasted almost unaltered to the twentieth and twenty-first century. Even

today, several practitioners, for instance in the educational sector, hold the belief that creativity is the act of a genius with special talents, that to be creative one must do something artistic, that creators and artist in particular are eccentric and often outcasts. Even though there is "a grain of truth" (Simonton 2010a, p. 219) in this deeply rooted belief, the idea of mad genius ignores the vast research into creativity of the last century, is hard to challenge and calls for more systematic research and dissemination of knowledge about creativity. However, the attention that Romanticism paid to inner feelings, emotional wisdom, artistic inspiration, extraordinary qualities of artists and creators, contributed to an increase in specific reflections on creativity and artistic composition. Unfortunately, Romanticism overruled the Renaissance's holistic unity of science and arts, substituting the schism between science and art. In this dualistic perspective, scientists became wise representatives of rationality, logic, and practical scientific thought. Artists were spontaneous, mad people, prey to their feelings and characterised by genius and extraordinary talent. The Apollonian as opposed to the Dionysian: Apollo, the God of light and sun, bearer of all harmonies, in symbolic opposition to Dionysus, the God of grapes, harvest and wine, depicted in orgies and irregular conduct. In the reflections of eighteenth-century artists on art, the concept of genius was valued as opposed to the praxis of the artisan, with the stylistic consequence that "both the formal treatise and the technical handbook disappear, except where they are directed exclusively to the student and the beginning amateur" (Goldwater & Treves 1976, p. 16). According to Goldwater and Treves (1976, pp. 16-19) who collected texts written by visual artists on art since the fourteenth century, the cultural environment of the eighteenth century brought two different approaches to reflections on art: on the one hand, the first examples of public arts-advocacy with Barry (1741-1806), Blake (1757-1827), Courbet (1819-1877) and Whistler (1834-1903) or the political use of art as by David (1748-1825), on the other hand, the later introspective tendencies of Impressionism, where writings on art were essentially of a private nature, such as letters or diaries. The introspective-private tendency was to experience a new development with the new century, when the reflective artist was not seen with mistrust, as Goethe had sanctioned "Artist, create, do not talk" (Goldwater & Treves 1976, p. 16), but generated a new wave of interest in theoretical reflections on art and its creative processes. The Avant-gardes throughout the whole nineteenth century played with theoretical concepts, to the point of founding the movement of Conceptual Art and stimulating a new reunion of the arts with science (Wilson 2010). Artists of all art forms made their lives, methods or processes public, publishing essays, autobiographies or articles, or finding new channels of dissemination in new media such as radio, later television and film. Strangely, the more

artists wrote or talked about their art, the less we heard about creativity. On the other hand, the science of creativity was being established against a background of specific needs and collection of specific knowledge. Runco and Albert (2010, pp. 11-16) identify in Adam Smith (1723-1790), Thomas Malthus (1766-1834), Charles Darwin (1809-1882), William James (1842-1910) and Francis Galton (1822-1911) the ancestors of this field: Smith because of his recognition of the fundamental need for a science of human behaviour, Malthus for his connecting human behaviour with socio-political actions, Darwin for his evolution theory and focus on the role of adaptation in the survival of species, James for foreseeing the concept of divergent thinking with his understanding "the rarity of ideational complexity" (Runco & Albert 2010, p. 13) and finally Galton for his longitudinal studies on hereditary genius. These theorists, not being artists, did not investigate the domain-specific area of artistic creativity exclusively. In contrast to them, artists or art connoisseurs who might have been interested in artistic creativity and working processes largely showed attitudes of reticence or "shyness" (Goldwater & Treves 1976, p. 7) when they openly reflected on their own working processes and creativity. Probably, this shyness is a legacy of Romanticism, due to the century's sharp contraposition of rationality and feelings. The shyness myth, which our work aims to invalidate, has prevented artists for centuries from looking at their creative processes or making their personal reflections public, thereby contributing to the broader creativity debate. Our conversations with artists show a completely different approach to self-reflection and communication of creative processes. And rising interest in creativity has enhanced scholarly and artistic reflections on the phenomenon. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, there was sustained hunger for knowledge on creativity. Experts in this field were answering to very specific needs, translating the turbulences of the beginning of the century and World War II into the necessity of knowing more about human beings, their behaviour and their potential. Socio-economic structures focused on the exploitation of human potential and its optimisation. This led to the boom of scientific studies on creativity and to a variety of methodological approaches, well summarised in Kozbelt, Beghetto and Runco (2010).

Creativity studies today

A review of creativity studies in the nineteenth and twentieth century revealed that this large corpus of contributions tended to cluster into just a few research questions (Becker 1995, p. 220):

1. What is creativity?
2. Who has creativity?

3. What are the characteristics of creative people?
4. Who should benefit from creativity?
5. Can creativity be increased through conscious effort?

The above questions are still guiding research on creativity today, as the present book corroborates, by translating these domain-general research questions into the domain-specificity of the arts and reinterpreting their formulation:

1. How can we understand artistic creativity and how do artists themselves define it?
2. Who practices artistic creativity and under which circumstances?
3. What are the creative characteristics of artists, artistic processes and works of art?
4. Can our educational systems and organisations in general benefit from research on artistic creativity?
5. Can artistic creativity be increased through conscious effort?

Milestones for contemporary understandings of creativity and creativity research have been the IQ measurements of Binet and colleagues looking at the relationships between "factor g" (the general factor of psychometrics) and intelligence, Torrance's insights into the apprehension of creativity in education and Guilford's conceptual distinction between divergent and convergent thinking. The latter's Presidential Address for the American Psychological Association marks for many researchers the starting point of the scientific approach to creativity research (Kaufman & Sternberg 2010, Plucker & Makel 2010, p. 50).

In spite of diverse methodologies and a large variety of approaches (economic, psychometric, evolutionary, systemic and so on), creativity studies tend to focus on either one or a combination of several of the following areas, also called the creativity Four (or Six) P's: person, process, product, place (or press), and the more recent P's, persuasion and potentials. Some of them can be intuitively comprehended, especially the first three, others might need explication. The six P's can be defined and applied to the domain-specificity of the arts as follows:

1. Person: the characteristics of the creative person, often assessed by psychometric measures. This is the area that receives most attention from researchers. In the domain of the arts, the characteristics of the artistic creator have often been studied in relationship to mental illness or genetic features.
2. Process: the characteristics and steps of the creative process. According to Guilford (1957), stages of the creative process may vary in definitions and number, but the dialectic divergent/convergent seems to be fundamental to processual theories. In the domain of the arts, researchers have often found

exemplary cases of creative processes (Weisberg 1993) but there are not many in-depth, domain-specific enquiries into artistic generative processes.

3. Product: the characteristics and qualities of the creative product. In the arts, this translates into the analysis of artworks and the instrumental use of artworks as cultural documents.

4. Place (or press from pressures): the characteristics of the environments that nurture creative persons. It indicates the psychological and physical environments that foster the flourishing of creative individuals, processes or products. Rather than a physical place, the concept of place/press designates mutual relationships and interactions between individuals or groups and milieu. Awareness of this aspect of creativity is quite recent and derives from the belief that "creativity tends to flourish when there are opportunities for exploration and independent work, and when originality is supported and valued" (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010, p. 25). When applied to the arts, this area of studies takes an unfortunate turn - it tends to interpret place as physical space, missing in this way the cutting-edge potential of the concept, which is its potentially large impact on development and learning. Fortunately, a more prolific approach is emerging in the educational field: the arts-integration approach to education (Deasy 2002, Fiske 1999, Rabkin & Redmond 2004) that assumes the possibility of designing an optimal learning environment through the arts and their contribution to creativity, learning and change.

5. Persuasion: this recent concept has been brought to researchers' attention by Simonton (1990). It focuses on the influences that a creative person can exert in a domain, in order to change the domain and the society's view on a domain. This perspective assumes that creativity is associated with change and has a social impact. Therefore, creative people must be persuasive in order to change a domain and be recognised as ground-breaking. Traditionally, this research area draws data from historiometric studies, where the field of the arts delivers a large number of exemplary cases. Because of the arts' frequent provocation of the *status quo*, we have many examples of persuasion: Impressionist painters had to fight hard in order to be accepted in their field and be recognised as domain-changers rather than as bad painters.

6. Potentials: added to the list of P's by Runco (2003) the area of creative potential endeavours to look at human potential, rather than at already exploited and fulfilled creative performance. This perspective has great potential (no pun intended) especially in developmental and educational areas. In the domain of the arts, one relevant line of enquiry might be the influence of artistic creativity in boosting individual potential or the examination of an artist's unfulfilled possibilities. More broadly, studies in this direction can lead to

investigation of the sociological identity of artists: when is someone to be defined as an "artist"? What is relevant to the definition of creativity, the finished product (artwork) or the artistic idea and potential for original creation?

Another central letter in the creativity alphabet is "c". If the P's of creativity offer a taxonomy of the creativity's *locus* (where is creativity and who is doing what, how and where?), the C's of creativity enquire about magnitude: how much creativity? This idea is actually implicit in Runco's definition of potential, as we can assume that potentials can be exploited or can remain unexploited. However, the C's of creativity also contribute to the *locus* perspective, by moving our attention from a definitional issue (what is creativity?) to a systemic view: where is creativity?

Csikszentmihalyi (1996), raising the above question, theorises a systemic perspective that closely relates person, process, product and places. With the purpose of approaching creativity not only as a psychological but also as a socio-cultural phenomenon, Csikszentmihalyi conceived the model below.

Figure 1. Where is creativity? Inspired by Csikszentmihalyi (1996).
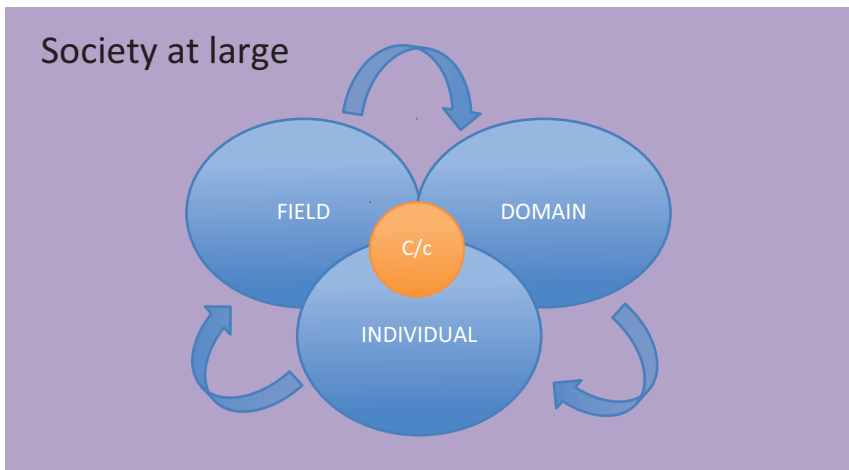
In this perspective, creativity occurs in the interaction between individuals, field (a group of individuals in a specific domain who are in charge of accepting or rejecting a creative feature) and domain (the values, explicit and implicit rules, shared practices, procedures and so on). Creativity can happen at individual level, in case of talented persons or geniuses, or more often as a dialogue between

individual and field (role models, critics, mentors, peers). In case of an extraordinarily creative individual able to create a ground-breaking product, the field's gatekeepers (exceptionally influential individuals within a field) might open up the doors of a domain, securing accessibility to domain transformation. According to Csikszentmihalyi's conceptualisation, any creative process is conceived and developed within a community: "creativity is not the product of single individuals, but of social systems making judgments about individuals' products" (1999, p. 314). Similar concepts are to be found in Lave and Wenger (Wenger 2009) who define the field a "community of practice", and Bourdieu who conceptualises "the field of cultural production" (Bourdieu 1993) as opposed to "the field of power". What Csikszentmihalyi's model does not emphasise enough is the circularity of the inclusion/exclusion dynamics concerning what is perceived as new and original or useful. Even though implicit in the model is the chronological dimension and the cultural complexity of the relationship to creativity through time, the recurring of the same patterns of acceptance and rejection are not fully unfolded. "Creativity occurs when a person makes a change in a domain, a change that will be transmitted through time" (Csikszentmihalyi 1999, p. 315) and the understanding of change or originality is highly variable, given specific sociocultural conditions. Or domains might grow ready to accept or embrace a given change (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2003, pp. 188-189). Artistic creativity never happens in a void and Csikszentmihalyi's three areas of interest - personal background (individual), culture (domain) and society (field) - are themselves included in and influenced by society at large. Moreover, the relationships in between are most likely to occur in chaotic, complex and reciprocal trajectories. For instance, an artistic product can be perceived as ground-breaking, on the verge of being provocative or offensive, in a specific period of time (Impressionist painting at its debut), until a gatekeeper (an art critic) or a group of gatekeepers (the organisers of the first Impressionist exhibition) finds it interesting and valuable. The provocative nature of Impressionism is today lost and the function of provocation has been variously re-invented within other painting styles. As theatre director Eugenio Barba pointed out in his interview for the present book: "You were hanged, you were burned 300 years ago if you said that you could fly or that human beings could fly, because it was an offence against the angels and God. The Inquisition came and told us that it was a Satanic way of thinking […], it took a little time". This time perspective and its circularity is visualised in the model above by means of arrows and overlapping of the areas of individual, field and domain. Moreover, the interactions between individuals and groups in cultural settings tend to be more dynamic than Csikszentmihalyi's conceptualisation explains. For instance, individuals can be part of one or more

fields and at the same time they are part of society at large, which also influences the dynamics within fields and domains. In this sense, gatekeepers can be both individuals within a domain-specific field but also the general public in a given socio-cultural context or a combination of those.

Although this conceptualisation was very much needed in our field and had been anticipated by other thinkers such as Stein (1953) and Vygotsky (Moran 2010a), it is clear that there is more to be said on the subject. How should the phenomenon of creativity be approached? Where should researchers look in order to find creativity? Is there any taxonomy that can describe the complexity of this phenomenon?

One more useful distinction in this direction is the one that Csikszentmihalyi makes between big C creativity and little c, meaning that not all individual expressions of creativity can win a Nobel prize, as the big Creators can, but much of the creativity experienced by individuals is in fact happening in everyday life settings. Kaufman and Beghetto in 2009 extended the two C's to a four C model, adding mini-c and Pro-c creativity. Finally, Simonton (2010b, pp. 174-175) suggested diversifying Big C, the eminent expression of human creativity, from **Boldface-C**, the level of creativity perception that extends to the non-expert fields. In our opinion, despite the extra C's, there is still room for improvement if taxonomy of the C's is to be comprehensive. We wish to suggest a "skilled c" level of creativity, which makes room for creativity from skilled amateurs or connoisseurs. This may prove relevant in differentiating professional creative practice from the spare-time, passionate but not identity-based one. Putting together the above frameworks and additions, the six C taxonomy can be recapitulated in a movement from what in literature is understood as the biggest or most influential (top) to the smaller or less influential (bottom):

1. **Boldface-C**: at this level, creators and creative products are well known beyond the limits of a domain-specific knowledge and field association. Examples could be Einstein and Pasteur, or in the arts Shakespeare and Mozart, creators that are familiar to a large number of people, across cultures and professional interests. Simonton (2010b, p. 175) proposes a "Google test" in order to locate **Boldface C**reators: how many hits does he/she get?

2. Big C: both **Boldface-C** and Big C individuals are extraordinary creators that are also recognised as such. Simonton defines them creative geniuses. They "become highly eminent because they have contributed at least one product that is widely viewed as a masterwork in an established domain of creative achievement" (Simonton 2010b, p. 175). The difference between **Boldface-C** and Big C individuals is the magnitude of their being known in

other domains than their own. Examples might be Russian actor and theatre director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) whose acting and directing method has transformed the way we think of acting performances in Western cultures. Perhaps his name is renowned in domains close to cultural production and theatre, but it might not be well known in other domains. This does not change the huge impact that his system has had and still has, for instance, in acting styles such as those of in De Niro, Pacino, Brando and many other Hollywood stars.

3. Pro-c: besides the extremely widely acknowledged **Boldface-C** creators and the widely recognised Big C individuals, there is a large group of creators who work professionally with creativity but neither are high-scorers in Google-hits nor are Nobel prize winners. These individuals, though, are "Pro's" in the domain of creativity. All professions that include the generation of novel product, processes or the design of novel environments that are valuable for someone, or that include the expression of creativity can be listed in this category. In addition to artists that are daily expected to deliver new and meaningful quality creations, other examples might be scientists or engineers or business and IT developers and so on.

4. Skilled c: the definition skilled c is an oxymoron combining the levels of little "c" and the concept of expertise ("skilled"). We propose it in order to include the up till now ignored field of skilled amateurs or connoisseurs. This group of individuals tends to cultivate a specific interest that is not necessarily relevant to their profession or main work tasks, but they do it in a way that cannot contain them in the category of leisure amateurs, within the little c creativity. This field, very flourishing within the arts, counts domain-specific connoisseurs with high skills and high sensitivity to the field of interest. In Denmark, the most popular case at this level is Queen Margrethe: her official job is to be Queen of Denmark, but her private passion for the visual arts and dedication to their practice make her a skilled amateur. From time to time, skilled c creators make their creations public, following the field's procedures and can rise to a professional level (see the many talent shows currently popular). Including this phenomenon with the others acknowledges the highly motivated and often autotelic involvement in the arts that occurs beyond a professional field. This is relevant in the arts because of the recurrent confinement of artistic experiences to leisure.

5. Little c: the concept of everyday creativity emancipates the creativity discourse from any myth or assumption that creativity is –exclusively– a matter of high achievements and public recognition. In this perspective, all individuals can be creative everywhere, in all situations and by all means. As liberating

as the thought of everyday creativity might be, the creative praxis in everyday life can also be misunderstood. For instance, in educational environments the easy assumption can be that "everything is creative" or that creativity is equal to a simple making of "things". Everyday creativity celebrates the human disposition towards originality, novelty and change in work and leisure activities. This level is less fixated with the generation of creative products than the previous three levels and includes processes in its assessment. Novelty in everyday life can arise from a new way of doing something, a new procedure or approach. In the arts, where the goal is always the production of a work of art, examples of little c are rare, except for situations in which artists are subjects of processual creativity (a new way of cleaning brushes or a new functional use of a musical instrument and so on) or in the case of arts integration into contexts other than the artistic one.

6. Mini-c: the level of mini-c creativity has been variously defined as more subjective and personal, internal, mental, emotional (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010). This is the less tangible level of creativity and the one that still needs operationalisation, according to Richards (2010). This personal creativity is self-referenced and is related to the individual's potential. At this level, creativity is more a handful of creative seeds rather than a fulfilled end-product or process. In educational environments these seeds are extremely valuable as the core to be developed in order to stimulate creativity in individuals. The arts can contribute to the development of mini-c levels of creativity by regulating emotions in aesthetic structures and the transformation of mini-c into more tangible, but still personal, levels of creativity.

We do not believe that the above taxonomy should be approached as value-laden, or better as a hierarchy of creativity, from the most to the least important. Rather, we suggest that the many c's of creativity are different aspects of the same phenomenon showing the complexity and variety of its forms. We also believe that, as the above taxonomy is not a hierarchic but a magnitude order, creativity can be practiced in different contexts with a variety of intensities and impacts on field, domain or society at large.

Studies on creativity are, at the time being, becoming more numerous, taxonomies of creativity become more precise and acquire sharpness, several professional environments express the wish of integrating creativity into their cultures: the future perspectives for creativity studies seem to be absolutely promising.

Particularly rich in consequences might be the renewed attention to the roles of creativity in society and the role of society in creativity. At the time of writing, the mainstream discourse on the need for creativity is unfolding alongside three

major events: the global market that brings to the forefront former third world countries such as India and Africa, or countries previously at the borderline of great business, such as China and Brazil; the economic crisis hitting most of the Western world; the technological advancements at all levels of human existence. These socio-cultural challenges generate a relentless rhetoric hailing creativity as the ideal solution for everything. Europe and North America, among Western countries or countries under Western influence, have taken the creativity challenge seriously, perhaps because threatened by emerging socio-economical changes. One example might be the European Union's claim about creativity as one of the key competences for the future, which led to 2009 being "creativity year" and to the formulation of cross-national or national commitments to the integration of creativity in life-long-learning initiatives (European Union 2009). These countries have come to accept a shared consensus: we simply *need* creativity. This unilateral claim ignores creativity's complexity and is often uncritical, for instance ignoring the "dark side of creativity" (Cropley et al. 2010) or more generally that creativity *per se* is a neutral phenomenon. Seana Moran (2010b) suggests we ask what is the role of society in creativity and then what is the role of creativity in society. Theoretical frameworks, such as Csikszentmihalyi's individual-field-domain model, have partially addressed the former. Moran (2010b, p. 78) suggests that society interacts with creative enterprises mainly through the work and influence of three roles:

- Benefactors, who by providing or allocating resources are able to decide the life and death of creative enterprises
- Regulators, who evaluate the creative level and content according to regulations and standards or policies, and therefore can be "blind" when meeting extraordinary expressions of creativity
- Consumers, who often decide the success (or not) of a singular work of art or artist, or more in general of a creative product, process or person.

Through these profiles a given society can have a strong influence on what is considered socially accepted as creative.

But what are the purposes of creativity that are so attractive to the challenged Western countries? According to Moran (2010b, pp. 79-86), there might be two purposes, depending on differing perspectives. One could be improvement, the other, expression. The former is also emphasised in economic theories of creativity (Florida 2004, 2005, Florida & Tinagli 2006) and looks at creativity as uncritically positive, forgetting the deviant side of creativity (Cropley et al. 2010) or the challenging role of many creative initiatives, especially in the arts. Associating creativity exclusively with societal improvement might be a misunderstanding

about creativity's role in society: "people who believe that improvement is the role of creativity may have difficulty with the moral and responsibility aspects of creativity; creativity cannot be coincident with improvement, on the one hand, and yet concurrently moral-free" (Moran 2010b, p. 81). The second purpose, creativity as expression, draws from several arguments for engaging in creative activities, including emotional and cognitive well-being, the transformational or developmental, the egalitarian and educational, and so on. Moran (2010b) suggests that the real purpose of creativity in society might be both, or better "a confluence of both individual and societal forces" (p. 85).

We maintain that a fourth role could be added, a role that bears a large innovative potential: the creative maker. In the following chapters we will describe, analyse and suggest the role that *homo faber* can have in learning processes. We intend to do by addressing basic misunderstandings about the creative artists' work processes or the artists' creative endeavour that are perpetrated both in literature and in different professions, including in educational environments, having a special focus on the artists' creativity.

Chapter 2: Artists defining creativity

This chapter deals with the artists' own definitions of creativity. We asked them to define creativity in the ways they understand it in their own practice and according to their own values and experience. Their responses were various and express broad perspectives on creativity and its connection with the arts. Their diverse takes on creativity and their sundry approaches to the very task of defining creativity directed our attention to a couple of straightforwardly related implications: the artists' effort in defining creativity at all, and the conceptualisation of art as a form of language.

Meeting definitional challenges

When met with the challenge of defining creativity, our artists started by emphasising the effort involved in such an enterprise. Some of them even reacted strongly to the broadly open question "what is creativity for you?" For instance theatre director Kirsten Dehlholm tried to quickly liquidate the task with a matter-of-fact reply: "Creativity is creativity". Others laughed, raised their eyebrows or got perplexed at the impossibility of definition. Musicians from The Mira Quartet admitted that they never use this word and that they do not feel any connection to it, but still they can understand that looking at their work "from the outside" it can be defined as creative. Designer Rosan Bosch spoke of a sort of "unconscious creativity" because "it's not something you think of in your daily life". As a creative maker she is involved in the process of crafting and does not engage in asking conceptualising questions: "I don't have to ask that question" about "what creativity means for me". Kirsten Dehlholm protested that creativity is "such a misused word" and that she would never have chosen this word herself. Similarly, painter Michael Kvium told us that he, like perhaps all "active artists", looks on the word creativity with distrust: "it is clear that creativity is a much worn word. It's actually a terrible word because creativity is being used for everything or abused for everything, but to create, we should not say it. It's something that comes up all the time as a question - what is it that makes me be gripped by these things? What is it that makes me attracted to these things? What's going on in the process? And I have been extremely engaged in [finding out] all the time well, where is it, what's happening?"

He points out the fact that creativity has been used in all sorts of contexts and perhaps misused in contexts that have nothing to do with creativity, but at the same time he cannot resist formulating sharp questions for the field of creativity studies. This shift from rejection to engagement was common throughout our interviews, even though not in all of them. Doubtful at the beginning, some of the interviewed artists grasped the opportunity for definition, and when this happened, their responses covered a wide spectrum of semantic fields: creativity as drive or need, as dialogue, as organic and many-sided, as context-based and situated, as generative and inventive, as life experience. Before taking a closer look at their statements, we wish to mention an additional conceptual challenge that some artists remarked upon: the "label" of artist. Surprisingly enough opera singer Marco Nisticò prefers the label of performer and dismisses the creativity definition by saying that he never gave any thought to it. To his perplexity we must add the voices of the two architects interviewed: Johannes and Inger Exner.

> Johannes: Well I would indeed say that we do not address the issue "is it art what we've done?" No, we do not discuss this.
> Inger: No, because we do not use that word.
> Johannes: Yes, that's right, Inger, because we can and do talk about [whether] it is good or bad architecture.

Perhaps because their medium is architecture, the two reject the label of "art" for their work. However, they agree in stating their expert view on architecture: they might not be interested in the artist label, but they surely know how to employ their expert knowledge in their profession. These perplexities regarding the words "art" and "artist" give us a good opportunity to make a short digression on our conceptualisation of art and artist. Art forms, genres and tastes change through time and space. The matter of defining art is complex because linked to ever-changing historical and cultural contexts. Our very choice of including design and architecture shows the possibility of looking at the arts broadly. But what is the phenomenon we are looking at? Which operational definition can we formulate in order to investigate the elements or the creative character of this phenomenon? Before addressing these questions we wish to look at the concept of art and its distinction from creativity.

Art: word and value

The word art has a long history that confirms its complexity. Its modern use must be located in the Latin *ars*, meaning art, skill, craft. Most European languages borrow the Latin lexeme: English and French *art*; Italian, Spanish and Portuguese *arte*. Others adopt a semantically similar root, originally coming from

the Proto-Germanic *kunnana*, "to know how to", German, Danish, Dutch and Norwegian translate it as *kunst*, Swedish, *konst*. A peculiar difference in origin but not in meaning is represented by the Greek *τεχνη* ("tekne"), meaning, once again, skill or craft. The latter is most significantly the origin of the modern word *technique* and its derivatives, *technical*, *technology* and so on. Both in Germanic and Romance languages art is related to the semantic field of practical skills.

We can infer that, in our culture, art historically refers to what is made by human beings requiring skills, crafts and capabilities, and which is at the same time meaningful, meaning-generating and to be shared with others. Still today, in spite of the many challenges of avant-garde experiments of cross-contamination, such as the ready-made or happenings, art is in our linguistic perception something linked to the tradition of "handicraft", something made with the hands or whole body, which at the same time is meaningful and is to be shared in a given community. The application of skills, though, is only one side of a multifaceted phenomenon, constituted by the drive and purpose of a project and by the production of a meaningful product, which is at the same time material and metaphoric and is to be shared with someone else. The artistic process, as any other form of communication, is accomplished when a maker produces "something" (a work of art, a performance, an event, a display), which is purposely made for a receiver, to be perceived, understood and metabolised.

Art, however, should not be confused with creativity. First of all, it is still very much debated whether creativity is a domain-specific or domain-general phenomenon. Creativity studies do not agree whether creativity is specific to a given domain or not. Is the domain of the arts the only creative one? What about the domains of science, technology and engineering? As thoroughly discussed in Baer (2010, pp. 321-341) the domain-specific argument has its evidence and counter-evidence. Our approach is that creativity is domain-specific insofar as it always happens in a specific context, but it is not a unique trait of a specific professional domain. That is to say that we believe artists to be creative per practice –rather than per definition– and that creative individuals or environments can be found in domains other than artistic ones. To be creative per practice means that one's work consists routinely and systematically in experimentation and in finding new problems and/or solutions that are meaningful to others, as the arts do. Any artistic process or product or performance is an original interpretation of some sort, which is meaningful to someone or appropriate to a given situation. However, the functions of the arts are more complex and diverse than the mere creation of something new with value. In other words, the creativity function is not always primarily active in the arts. The arts serve, often simultaneously, different functions or combinations of functions: creation

of beauty, feeling of sociality, well-being, cognitive challenges, problem solving, provocation and rebellion, aesthetic pleasure and so on. These functions are even active in art practices within mass culture and technical reproduction, where the arts are consumer goods that can be reproduced mechanically or are mere divertissements. The culture of the masses and mass media that McLuhan has so acutely described (McLuhan 2003) is the cradle of the commodification of art, a social phenomenon that shifts the art hermeneutic into that of a reproduction model, in which art practices do not necessarily involve novelty, but rather the duplication of standards. This would be impossible for Dewey to whom artistic activities are always a creation or a re-creation or, in other words, an active human endeavour (Dewey 2005, p. 113).

In spite of these necessary distinctions between creativity and art, some of our artists point to a common connection. One of the members of The Mira Quartet makes it explicit: "to me, creativity is something you do not quite know where it goes… and you can also call it art". What she means by this "something" is not further developed, but between the lines we read the presence of a process and a capacity driving the process. Probably, the arts and creativity have in common a process that bears and accepts not-knowing, that has a fuzzy end and that "you" as creative individual do not fully comprehend. According to designer Rune Fjord creativity is a human capacity that almost defines human beings as such: "creativity for me is fundamental to being human. It's the question that you see in the baby that has just been born, […] who very quickly explores the world and asks questions in order to develop and understand. I think simply, it is in fact what makes us human. So fundamentally, I believe it is. And so it is not something that is reserved only for art, […] but creativity is something that makes us, as humanity and society, also evolve". Fjord could not have come closer to what evolutionary studies on the adaptive origins and social value of the arts are discovering, supported by neuroscience. Scientists who agree on the adaptive function of art find three main arguments for denying a purely hedonic role –or even the absolute lack of adaptive role– of the arts. The first argument derives from evolutionary biology and looks at the arts as markers of sexual fitness (Levitin 2006, p. 254). According to this theory, creativity is what helped our ancestors select the fittest individuals - the ones that could respond more flexibly and creatively to environmental challenges. "Improvisation and novelty in a combined music/dance performance would indicate the cognitive flexibility of the dancer, signaling his potential for cunning and strategizing while on the hunt" (Levitin 2006, p. 254). A second argument is the adaptive promotion of social connectivity. According to anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake, the arts are what helped us as hominids to survive in the wilderness by means of the ritual celebration of

one-heartedness and like-mindedness (Dissanayake 2000, 1995). Going back to the mother-infant intimacy bond, the rhythm and prosody of language, sounds and movements are what connected –socially and emotionally– human beings, with the result of strengthening the social bonds that were necessary for survival. The third argument draws on cognitive and neuroscientific studies and attributes to the arts the role of promotion of learning and cognitive development (Levitin 2006, p. 260). Participating in artistic experiences, even if to different degrees, stimulates the human brain and moulds the mind in growth paradigms (Brown & Parsons 2008, Hustvedt 2012b, Kindler 2003, Levitin 2006).

In spite of our belief that artists are not creative *per definition* we came, as already mentioned, to the conclusion that they are creative *per practice*. The systematic, professional artistic practice not only includes creative processes but also accepts and expects acts of creativity, acts of novelty and appropriateness. Professional practice comes with preparation, training and exercise; it comes with identity and self-awareness. Artists, for the fact of being involved in the practice of experimenting, finding problems and solutions, are constantly generating something creative –something new– or recreating something anew. The domain of the arts even contemplates the very re-definition of appropriateness and novelty. For instance, to what or to whom is an artistic act of rebellion or provocation appropriate when it is conceptualised as in Camus, as an "act of real creation" (Camus 2003, p. 626). What is the purpose of hip-hop music? Which appropriateness is Duchamp's *pissoir* an answer to? These questions contribute to widening a culture's epistemological prospects and have a value in themselves. They tend to be a redefinition of values and concepts.

What creativity is for artists

As far as the definition of creativity is concerned, artists have rarely dealt with it explicitly. Among the vast production of letters, diaries, logbooks, essays, interviews, quotes and so forth, containing artists' reflections, very little attention is given to creativity. As an example of both approaches –abundance of written self reflection and lack of reflection on creativity– see the massive volumes of *Art in Theory* (Harrison & Wood 1998, 2003, Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2000). Artists prefer talking about their own or other artists' creations or about more general issues of ideology, sociology and philosophy. When Barron and colleagues collected the words of *Creators on Creating*, selecting mostly artists with a few scientists, psychologists and philosophers, artists did not pay any specific attention to creativity as a subject of enquiry or conversation (Barron, Montuori & Barron 1997). More recently, Camille Colatosti (2012) has edited a collection of

interviews with contemporary artists on the broad subject of "being an artist". Surprisingly, the volume does not find any specific attention to creativity or the role of creativity in learning either.

When our artists are explicitly challenged with defining creativity they warn us about the many different definitions that creativity can have. As designer Rosan Bosch maintains, creativity is "a word that has many meanings". Theatre director Kirsten Dehlholm also cautions: "Creativity, I'm sure there are many, many ways to describe it. But no, I'd say… you sense it when you are creating". The tacit dimension of the artist's knowledge *about* creativity is here clear, you know all about it when you are in the process of creating and you know it through the senses. We also read a sort of embarrassment or shyness in approaching such a wide concept as creativity, which, as all fundamental concepts, holds many meanings. An even more nuanced description of creativity's complexity is to be found in Barba's interview:

> Creativity is not a concept; it is not a one-way definition. It can only be defined in relationship to the context. There is a moment or a situation where creativity consists in speaking very much [*laughs*], and there are situations where you keep silent and you feel an inventive tsunami, taking place within you or among the people involved in the process. There are situations where fantasy and improvisation are creative symptoms. But if you are a pilot or a surgeon, I don't think that this sort of creativity will be appreciated. I associate creativity with a particular individual characteristic: stubbornness and a personal need towards the obstacles and transform them into unexpected solutions. Creativity is the ability to operate in negative conditions –tiredness or lack of ideas, financial penury or insufficient knowledge– and not let yourself be suffocated by the adverse circumstances. I associate creativity to tenacity, to the capacity of the individual of not letting the "normal" way of thinking stop him from persisting and persisting.

Here, Barba introduces the notion of context-relatedness that we also find in Hustvedt, when she mentions artistic situatedness: "Art can be situated as a form of dialogue. It is always made for another, an imaginary other. It is a gift to someone else. The artist is never alone. Even if you are alone in a room composing, painting, building sculptures, or writing a book, you are haunted by the presences of others. You are *never* alone". Both artists emphasise the fact that creativity cannot be defined in a void, but needs a context in order to be correctly approached, just as opera singer Nisticò does, making it a question of dialogue and collaboration: "collaboration with other people […] is very important, you are never by yourself". As Barba mentions, the kind of creativity that can function for an artist in a given context is not necessarily the same kind of creativity that we wish or expect from other professions. Different domains embrace different approaches to creativity, for instance we do not expect the surgeon that is operating on us

to be experimenting in the context of a difficult operation. A consequence of Barba's context-relatedness is that creative tasks should be appropriate to a given context. Dealing with appropriateness or usefulness is what creativity studies find essential to the definition of creativity and which is strictly connected to the function of novelty: without either appropriateness or novelty the creativity formula is not complete. Cropley and Cropley (2010) look at the two conjoint requisites of creativity - novelty and usefulness - and suggest that if novelty and usefulness are to be found separately, other kinds of phenomena arise. Novelty without usefulness should be rather labelled "pseudo-creativity", and usefulness without creativity should rather be seen as a phenomenon of "quasi-creativity" (p. 303). The form of appropriateness that Hustvedt indicates is very specific - artistic creativity is situated in a dialogical context. Later on in the interview she brings up another relevant idea, the fact that creativity is not specific to a domain, for instance, to the artistic one, but can and should be found in other fields: "the sciences are a hugely creative field as well… if you aren't a creative scientist, I don't think you are going to get very far". As mentioned above, this is an active field of discussion within creativity studies and we believe that Hustvedt's statement is very pertinent to it. The fact that an artist herself does not fall in the temptation of labelling creativity as exclusive to the field of the arts, but rather admits the broad scope of creative practices across different domains, is significant of an inclusive view on creativity. According to Bosch "everybody is creative", the sentence "I am not that creative" is not an option for her, because it is not describing the natural human tendency towards creativity: "you cannot say that somebody is not creative, if you are not creative you will be in terrible trouble as a human being. I believe everybody will always be creative. […] It's kind of a part of our DNA of being [humans] or our genes, that's part of being human, being creative. It's our way of surviving, our way of being". Intuitively, Bosch hints at the adaptive role and almost ontological dimension of art: it is part of who we are as human beings. However, this statement can be problematic if not followed up by the context-relatedness discussed above: can creativity be detached from context and content? Or rather, as in socio-cultural perspectives, are individuals creative in contexts and with contents, within specific domains?

Going back to Barba's assertion above, we wish to underline his association of artistic creativity with a state of "stubbornness" and a "need". This is an often-recurring notion to be found in Ramsland, to whom creativity is impulse, energy, drive and non-verbal. Nisticò also mentions a need and Hustvedt an "urge". Hustvedt describes this as part of an organic and almost living process: "When I sit on a chair and look at the sky in the garden, my internal narrator, the inner speech that accompanies me in my daily life, will continue to comment, but

when I am actively gardening, when I pinch and weed and prune, the narrator ceases to speak. It may be my simple absorption in the living world of plants. I know that if there are cut flowers in a room, my eyes go directly to the blooms". Cognition seems here to be embodied and lives by organic processes that can both switch off and on the internal narrator. Life flows in and out and the writer is drawn towards living objects.

But what is this drive or compulsion urging the artists towards?

Creativity as compulsion to make art

Filmmaker Annette K. Olesen maintains that "creativity comes as a need to express… it's a need to express something. [Something] drives you to find a remedy and therefore you don't really reflect on that. […] So it's a need to express something, and then to find the tools you are attracted to and feel that you can master in one way or another or [feel that you] are curious about how to make this manifest in one way or another". Like most of the interviewed artists, she defines artistic creativity as the need for and ability to create. It is a drive towards problem solving ("to find a remedy") and artistic expression. As the etymological take on creativity suggests, creativity is about creation (creation out of nothing) or generation (creation out of something existing). For our artists this conception is part of their professional practice and personal identity. All of the interviewed artists connect creativity to something made, conceived or crafted.

Ramsland describes it as a sort of power that artistic skills can generate, a process that the artist can bring about by means of artistic and medium-specific skills:

> For me it's some sort of flow, a flow I enter. Yes, where I write and by writing enter a space where things come. Or I paint and by painting enter a space where things come without having to think too much. It's the creative process where the material comes. There's a ton of stuff outside of this, things you plan and things you think about over and over, but where the bulk of the text comes from, it's from another space, for me it's a space where things just happen without me steering them in different directions, but I stand back a little and so it happens.

As is clear from the statement above, creativity is immediately associated with the act of creation or composition or artistic interpretation. Hustvedt, too, describes a voluntary activity. In her case the dynamic movement is an exchange between inner and outer world:

> I think it is useful to think of creativity as an exchange between inside and outside. In some way, this sends us back to the old subject/object problem in philosophy. What is inside and what is outside of the self? Everything we see, read, and experience becomes

part of our inner worlds, and creativity taps into that internal reality, but you can't designate it as purely inside because it is also made of what is outside us.

The expression of the subject into the (artistic) object recalls Dewey's theory, where experiences are forced out by meeting (appropriate) obstacles and by shaping acts of creation. Hustvedt's view on the issue of subject/object of creation is also what makes her an exception among the interviewed artists, as the only one that has been previously engaged in the effort of systematically approaching the issues of creativity. In her essay "Three Emotional Stories: Reflections on Memory, the Imagination, Narrative, and the Self" (now in Hustvedt 2012b) Hustvedt takes a look at what philosophy, psychology and neurosciences say about the relationship among imagination, memory and creation, using her own writing processes as an example. In spite of her attention primarily to individual acts of creation, she understands creativity as relational and her dialogical take on the creative process assimilates her view to that of other artists, such as Nisticò quoted above and actress Julia Varley, to whom creativity is basically a matter of being able to listen: "For me [creativity] is listening. It's listening to what the work gives you, and so the capacity of reading the signs, which the process is giving you". As if the process of creation was a matter of discovery, she goes on to talk about composition in terms of concrete actions and gestures, which are the terms that she is most engaged with. This attitude seems to be widespread among our artists: there is a score, a text, a collaboration to understand and work on (Nisticò); there is a craft to enjoy (The Mira Quartet: "the process is extremely important if you're creative. It's like enjoying being at home in your workshop"); there is an invention ready to pop out (Jordan: "I think [creativity] it's the ability to invent"); there is a craft shaping a medium (Klejs: "creativity is to get some things through the hands and thus translate something, […] so you can sit with this material and you can immerse yourself in it and you can work into a substance… so [then] you suddenly see that something is taking shape through it, through craftsmanship"). In all these cases creativity is a matter of concrete, specific, context-based challenges that a specific medium or artistic project offers. Sometimes, more general challenges are mentioned as being elements of artistic creativity, although the overall focus is on the process of creation. According to visual artist Michael Kvium, for instance, creativity, together with virtuosity, is the prerequisite for the artistic process to emerge at all:

I would say that creativity and virtuosity are the only things that make for [the artistic process]; I would say that 90% of it is the ability for concentration, commitment to concentration because creativity arises… occurs from concentration. Nothing creative comes out of noise, so the basis is that, as far as possible, [you should] have direct contact with yourself and the material you are working with and, yes, you can say that there,

where things start to occur, where one will really even be reduced to tool, there it is in fact where the greatest concentration occurs.

The general approach he indicates is concentration, as a sort of mental disposition towards or capability for creation, which is –and should be– nurtured both as skills and as voluntary obligation to the process. A similar interpretation is communicated by dancer and choreographer Palle Granhøj, to whom creativity is the prerequisite for everything, meaning that it is the underlying drive for which artists create. In his interview, Granhøj tells us that his work is all about creation of artistic products. The creative processes involved, including generation of theories, conceptualisation of methods, administration and so on, are the means for achieving it. The situation in which he feels most creative is (almost tautologically) when he is actually creating something (artistic).

This process of making, which will be described in our chapter on composition, involves both the concrete making of artefacts and the equally concrete thinking artistically. From the artists' statements we ascertain that they understand creativity as a very definite way of thinking and acting within the creative process, an approach that is defined –in their words– by curiosity, by experimentation and enquiry, by problem solving, by pragmatism, by sensitivity to changes.

Curiosity is highlighted by Fjord, to whom creativity is "asking questions", which is coherent with what his former colleague, designer Rosan Bosch, says:

> Creativity for me is being able to cross the mainstream and connecting with the unexpected. […] It's like seeing a pattern and you think the illogical with the logical then combine different things and you think in different dimensions. I mean it's actually expanding your brain from being in a certain kind of pattern into a different, more open way of combining things, that's how I see creativity. […] But creativity is like putting some people in the woods without any help and you tell them to find their way home, then they will be creative on how to survive and how to find the way home.

Bosch and Fjord, perhaps due to a common background in design and avantgarde art and a previous collaboration lasting several years, share an understanding of artistic creativity as related to specific cognitive elements that they believe fundamental: the ability to formulate questions the latter, the ability of and disposition for experimenting by combining apparently unrelated elements (logical/non-logical) the former. The two themes are different but related. Questioning and combining are distinctive cognitive processes, one based on holding possibilities open and investigations, the other based on conceptual blending, analogies and associations. Both designers define the creative process as enquiry and have a special attention to practical issues. Fjord clearly states that a great deal of the creative process requires putting things "down on the ground and

getting things done". Activities that in his opinion are "not necessarily particularly creative" and "technical things and stuff" are part of the process, perhaps not necessarily intended or defined as creative but a fundamental part of it and likely to contain learning experiences for the makers.

Digital artist Signe Klejs and her partner in life and art, composer and musician Niels Rønsholdt, mention the same gestalt, connecting a state of mind with a method. Rather than thinking, she calls it a "rethinking" in the arts. This is the place where innovation occurs, for her. But at the same time, she mentions the craftsmanship of the process: "[creativity] is the way to get organised or build up something that motivates one to just take the other way or suddenly notice that here one can now make a turn". She defines creativity as a way to go about, which, in other words, is a method and procedure. For the two digital artists, creativity is a matter of idea development on one side and of craft on the other and, more importantly, of a thorough process of dialogue and decision-making. This process is absolutely essential, they maintain, if creativity is to be used in learning and innovation processes. Learning the hard work involved in craftsmanship allows a sort of creative energy to accumulate "before the idea can take off". During the creative journey one might find oneself "on shaky ground", as writer Valeur describes. This is accepted and expected in a creative process, as Dehlholm's example hints at: "let's say we have an idea, and we wish to realise it, and we don't have the money to realise it as we thought first, and then we figure out something else, which often then turns out to be better, not all the time, but sometimes. Then […] I can see myself as being creative, because I have to make a detour". Uncertainty seems not to be a full stop for the creative artist, who defines it as a call for a creative detour.

According to Barba creativity is a specific capability: "the ability of solving *simultaneously* the many aspects and different levels in a situation. In the moment you begin to be aware of this complexity, you sense strange energies, unknown peculiar thoughts, which lead you. A sort of inner radar begins to function". Whether this capability consists for him in solving problems or combining solutions is not clear. However, what stands out in his assertion is the concurrent action on several levels of the artistic task. He goes on to relate creativity to a special sort of ambition, a higher intention towards quality and the performance of it, where the enemy of creativity is mediocrity:

> What is the enemy of creativity? It's what we learn in school and in our family. We teach our children to be mediocre, to avoid excess. For parents, the worst thing is a child [who is] too lively, who reads too much, who doesn't speak too much, too shy. Or anything which is in excess and then we try to make him normal. Normality is what we wish for our child.

In this passionate tirade we read the rejection of conformism, but not the trendy type of non-conformism, rather the rebellion against compliance of thoughts and shallow ordinariness. Barba connects creativity to an educational approach that can kill creativity, in the name of standardised conformity to norms. In contrast to this, he mentions the creative environment where his own creativity flourishes and thrives, a place where he creates together with others, in a team. He says: "As an individual I don't feel very creative, while with my actors, and my collaborators from other specialisations in the theatre, I feel very, not creative, but I feel strong in this feeling of security". Alone, as an individual, he does not have the feeling of being creative, but together with colleagues he is able to get the feeling, if not of creativity, of trust in the process and in each other, which is fundamental for his own creation.

Creativity as artistic identity

One last point of attention must go to the artists' definition of creativity as a way of being or personal identity. Jordan believes that "creative people or people who work in the arts can be creative in almost every field. It's not really a subject matter, it's a way of living, it's a way of looking at the world, it's a way of seeing everything as transformative". In her interpretation, creativity is not something that happens exclusively within the arts ("not really a subject matter") but a wider approach to life in general. In spite of being contrary to what research shows (Baer 2010) and to our belief that creativity unfolds within contextual domains, her opinion is interesting insofar as it embraces an almost universal perspective. In the filmmaker's perception creativity is an all-embracing human capacity. Probably, this feeling describes the universal human curiosity towards creation, novelty and development, as biological perspectives on creativity partly confirm (Martindale 1999). A similar attitude, but with several more years of life-experience, is expressed by architects Inger and Johannes Exner. Partners in life and work over several decades, the two architects were both 86 when we interviewed them in their house in Aarhus, Denmark. Sitting in their living room, surrounded by their books, paintings and prototypes, they discussed with each other the meaning of creativity by looking back at their life-experiences. Their answers touch almost all the above and situate the concept of creativity in a sphere of intimacy and identity. This is what Johannes says:

> I say [creativity] it's my life experience. It is a long life. The creative phenomenon is found in virtually every human being. It is not certain that the individual knows it, but there are many people that unfold it. And I'm not saying that it's an artist's creativity, I

say the phenomenon of 'creativity'. I think it is a very important part of the human being or living [the fact of] being creative. Constantly [if you] have to cook, for example, or you must attend to your garden, your soil, ordinary things, [or if you need to] be careful that you are not running into the man in front, or whatever else it is, then that is all… I say it is to be creative, it is a natural phenomenon. And many people [will be] telling you that it's a bit special. If I say that it is [typical] of an artist to be creative, it is of course too. […] For us in the family, it is just a way of being. […] I think the fact that each human being… I say every human being has something creative in him or her. So the task… for me the task has been to open up some doors.

He starts by openly relating creativity to a personal dimension ("it's my life experience") and then extends it to a human universal: everyone is or can be creative, because everyday problems need solutions. In his perspective, creativity is basically problem solving at all kinds of levels, professional and everyday. Here the individual's life experiences are all characterised by a general creative attitude and by its application to everyday tasks. Everyday creativity is a well-recognised phenomenon in creativity studies (Richards 2010), which is covered by the concept of little c or low c creativity (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010). Matter-of-factly he also includes the arts in this understanding, even though artistic creativity is much more than problem solving, as these and the chapters to come describe.

The ineffable business

The artists' feeling of frustration when asked to define artistic creativity is one of the emerging findings in our research. In order to better understand the artists' definitional challenges we looked at what makes it demanding for them and how theories can help comprehend this phenomenon. We came to the conclusion that the practice of artistic creativity is often ineffable and inexplicable verbally, as it often deals with what hides between the lines (Eisner 2002, Goodman 1976, Perkins 1994) in a non-verbal way, or at least using a different means of expression, which is symbolic, bodily and sensory. We will propose the metaphor of art *as* language in a new key, intended as autonomous means of communication, alternative to the logical-verbal one.

The phenomenon of the arts, in spite of its tangible quality (it can be seen, heard, touched, smelled and so on), contains also an intangible element (meanings, emotions, understanding and so on) and an ineffable one, the latter being what is perceived and understood but struggles in being expressed through language.

Seen in a phenomenological approach, the materiality of the arts is inherent to artistic products and processes. Meanings are also inherent to the arts, either as intended meanings inherent to the artwork content, form and context, or as

the act of constructing meaning while in the presence of or appreciating a work of art. As phenomenologist, Merleau-Ponty argues that "everything has meaning" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, p. xxi) explaining in such a universal statement all aesthetic phenomena, or better all that is perceptible to the senses. The arts' aesthetic, though, adds to the broader phenomenological perspective two hermeneutics and ontologies: the symbolic and the intended. The former, the symbolic, adds to perception a structured narrative, allowing the extra-ordinary to emerge from the ordinary. The latter, the intended, is a fundamental dimension in the arts, where culturally-produced meaning-making implies what is intended to generate meaning in a structured form and by means of media in a given context. Human intention is fundamental in order to contextualise any artistic expression or composition as such. Artists do not generate artworks by chance, but through a voluntary, intentional, purposeful project. When Michael Kvium portrays his characters with grotesque traits and his landscapes with fine brushes of white on white background he does it based on a specific intention (painting a painting), with specific qualities (size of canvas, colours, shapes, materials) and within a specific context (cultural, social, logistical). Creative intentions, even more than symbolisation, can be tangible and utterable, but also difficult to grasp, intangible and ineffable.

What artists, audiences and critics can find challenging in the encounter with artwork can be its intrinsic element of ineffability. Contributions to aesthetics frequently remark on the difficulties of striving to express, describe and understand the object or essence of aesthetic experience, as Kennick (1961) sustains by looking at theories of art.

Embodied meaning

Embodied cognition helps us in understanding the complex dynamics above. By rejecting any sort of dualism (body/mind, feelings/cognition, perception/thinking), the embodied perspective on meaning-making sees the arts as exemplar (Johnson 2007). Embodied cognition studies share with pragmatism the belief that "thinking is doing, and that cognition is action" (Johnson 2007, p. 92). This is relevant to the arts insomuch as artistic experiences completely become a landscape for learning and development. The materiality implicit in the arts, the involvement of senses, bodies, perception, feelings and emotions –which in Kantian philosophy was relegated to the purely sensory appreciation of beauty– gains a status of holistic cognitive acknowledgement, because of its embodiment: "Thought can be transformative of our experience precisely because thought is embodied and interfused with feeling" (Johnson

2007, p. 92). As exemplar of embodied meaning, the arts are at the same time constant reflection on and monitoring of how humans experience meaning, meaning-making and life in general. Immanence of meanings in the arts makes artworks dense with apparent and hidden (or awaiting) meanings that can be experienced as utterable or ineffable in linguistic terms. The "embodied structures that make meaning possible" (Johnson 2007, p. 236) in the arts are not necessarily translatable in logical linguistic terms. This might explain the difficulties that our artists met when challenged with the task of defining creativity in their own terms.

The interviewed artists were asked to freely define creativity and to describe artistic creation in their own words. In doing so, they encountered the struggle of explicating the ineffable, even when they already were sensitive to matters of conceptualising creative processes, as in the case of Siri Hustvedt who is author of an essay on creativity and has given scholarly attention to problems of artistic composition (Hustvedt 2012a, 2010), or as in the case of Odin Teatret, whose members use meta-reflections on artistic processes as the source and content for staged work-demonstrations (Carreri 2007, Nagel Rasmussen 2006, Varley 2011). Most of the sampled artists were specifically chosen because of their interpretive efforts in the arts, so we were not surprised to discover that they were capable of very elaborate interpretations and conceptualisations. Most of them enhance their artistic activity with dissemination - interviews for documentaries or press, lectures, workshops - therefore they are used to the undertaking of explaining to others what lies behind their creative processes. What was surprising was that even artists that had not shared their meta-reflections so explicitly before, or that were not invited to this project because their self reflections were known to us, ended up by showing a confident interpretive attitude. These individuals have reflected upon their profession, their own contribution to their profession or a given tradition; they have spent some time in the observation of themselves in the act of creating and trying to understand these processes. They have attempted to communicate the qualities and elements of artistic creation to others, becoming even more aware of them. However, in replying to our questions about their understanding and definitions of artistic creativity and creation, the artists acknowledged the distress of this effort. As Ramsland puts it:

> [Creativity is] partly unexplainable … it's difficult defining it or being able to find the precise words to describe it because it's intuitive, intuitive things. I mean, you could say my writing method is very intuitive and a bit anarchistic, at the start anyway and I sit down and get started and just write and somehow or other, it happens. […] It's difficult to define those things because it's not especially a conscious thing.

Still, they accepted the challenge, confronting the fact that it is "hard to communicate" (Jordan) what artistic creativity and creation is: "that area cannot be communicated in any language, you don't have the language to communicate that phase, that's how I feel" (Jordan). Several artists from different artistic disciplines describe this task as difficult. Visual artist Julie Nord maintains that this "is a damn difficult question" (meaning perhaps that it is a question that is terribly difficult to answer). Musicians argue that "it's difficult to say" (The Mira Quartet) and that artistic creativity and creation "does not allow itself to be deciphered. Not with simple words. […] It doesn't permit analysis" (Anders Koppel). Architect Johannes Exner maintains that his wife and co-creator over many years, Inger Exner, experiences a hard time defining artistic creativity because she possesses it within herself: "this is the reason that it's difficult for her: she has it in herself". In this tension between labelling as difficult, and therefore partly rejecting the conceptual task, and striving anyway to express it, there are many implications. One might be the basic tension behind what Susanne Langer defines as "the half-baked, yet significant studio talk of artists" (Langer 1953, p. 9). Looking at the quality and depth of rhetorical choices when answering the explicit request to conceptualise artistic creativity and creation, not all the interviewed artists demonstrate a fully thought-through opinion. What we read between the lines is uncertainty, attempts to be precise or the rejection of any linguistic precision. This attempt and the content of the artists' "studio talk", whether intended to be fully developed or not, constitute phenomena that are fundamental for understanding how artists think about their artistic creation. The dialectic between attempt and rejection is part of the ontology and practice of artistic creativity. Artistic practice does not come without self-reflection, self-analysis and self-awareness, as if artists were constantly monitoring their own work while practicing it or even while trying to innovate their very practice. Collections of artists' accounts, letters or diaries corroborate this (Goldwater & Treves 1976, Harrison, Wood & Gaiger 2000, Harrison & Wood 1998, 2003). The challenge these accounts speak of is often methodological (how to express or communicate the ineffable of the senses, body and feelings in a logical-verbal way?) but also ontological and epistemological. As Johnson explains, "because we cannot capture qualitative experience in propositions with subject-predicate structure, we tend to downplay the importance of qualities as part of meaning" (Johnson 2007, p. 70). Until quite recently, philosophical attention to qualia has not been given enough consideration. Qualia, the felt qualities of experiences "cannot be reduced to conceptual structures or to functional states of an organism" (Johnson 2007, p. 70), therefore they imply a paradigm shift towards embodied perspectives and definitional distinctions.

Propositional and presentational

Susanne Langer distinguishes propositional and presentational language. This can be helpful in addressing the fact that propositional language, the verbal means of expression that makes use of everyday language, might be insufficient in order to convey artistic experiences. As theatre director Eugenio Barba puts it, "if you were able to say this in words, then it would be a sort of poetry". He points out the fact that artists, in this case actors, engage in a wholly different thinking strategy, one that is experiential and bodily:

> We are facing a completely different way of thinking through sounds, through proxemics, distance, through rhythm, through dialogue, through physical reactions. […] The actor is like an angel who has three languages, he has the words, the verbal, but he has also the sound, the music, the sonority, the vocal, and then he has the somatic, or the extraordinary gamut, the range, which goes from immobility to almost the flight moment-you jump, so how to coordinate […] these three languages?

Langer too maintains that there is more to experience that propositional language cannot reach, and that the language of art, presentational language, stretches its epistemological reach by means of metaphor (1953).

This concept is not new and has been exploited before by Dewey, who makes a fundamental distinction between two kinds of cognition: "thinking directly in terms of colors, tones, images, is a different operation technically from thinking in words. But only superstition will hold that, because the meaning of paintings and symphonies cannot be translated into words, or that of poetry into prose, therefore thought is monopolized by the latter. If all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, the arts of painting and music would not exist" (2005, p. 77). Dewey introduces here concepts that can lead us to the understanding of the arts as language: cognition can be embodied and aesthetic, and language can be expressed by artistic means, as an alternative to verbal expression.

As Feinstein maintains, Langer's classes of symbolisation, presentational versus propositional language, conceptualise the end products of the transformative process: "The symbol-making function is the capability to decide that one thing shall stand for another, a decision which presupposes a transformation" (1982, p. 45). This interpretation of Langer's categories is central to our theme of creativity and learning. The shifting of meanings or images into one another, which the symbolisation process implies, is the result of active choices. Poets not only craft the symbol out of knowledge, technique and experience - for instance a rose can symbolise love in Western poetry - but their artistic abilities are activated voluntarily as a part of an artistic project in a context and within

relationships. For both artist and audience the dialogue with the symbol implies a cognitive transformation, for instance from the tangible object of the rose, mediated through propositional language (a rose is a rose), to the abstract concept of love, expressed in presentational language (a rose is symbol for love). Once the semantic transformation has taken the shape of an artwork, a virtual reality is established. Its qualities "cannot be rendered discursively because it concerns experiences that are not *formally* amendable to the discursive projection" (Langer 1953, p. 241).

Gestalt psychology explains the struggle to express the artistically inexplicable as the misunderstood separation between perception and thinking. Arnheim (1997) moves this discussion towards the qualities of artistic experiences and how the artwork simultaneously engages both senses and cognition. Artistic experiences on the one hand bring knowledge and understanding. On the other, they engage a different dimension, autonomous and specific, the aesthetic dimension, which can be confusing if met with logical-verbal tools. A different kind of communication is established within the arts, therefore artistic experiences are often non-utterable: "the elusive quality of [artistic] experiences is hard to capture with our language, which commonly describes objects by their tangible, material dimensions" (Arnheim 1997, p. 108). Like Barba, dancer and choreographer Palle Granhøj maintains that what counts for him is the "doing", the artistic language he is proficient in, and then others "should interpret it". However, he also reports a strong need for artists to verbalise their work, which is even stronger in the case of collaborating artists. To Signe Klejs and Niels Rønsholdt, for instance, dialogue is fundamental, but always supplemented by showing each other prototypes of their ideas or solutions. Granhøj seems to have found a specific solution to the challenge of verbalisation. He tells us about his encounter with Odin Teatret's work demonstrations and how Barba's approach to verbal explanations inspired him to try the same: "[Barba] gave me great courage in doing the work demonstrations because he applied it well in his symposium, where he used my method and he had three or four others of his own [group] and so he created a superstructure for it… that was brilliant, I felt comfortable in having to explain what I was doing, because I did not know yet what it was… I can only say what I do, and then others can interpret it […] I'm doing it only to make the product". Granhøj's feeling of confidence in engaging in verbal explanations is due, in our opinion, to the communication form of work demonstrations, where actors present their reflections or meta-reflections on stage in a performed form and make use of both presentational and propositional symbolic forms. These work demonstrations embrace artistic symbolisation under its own terms, without constricting it to a propositional dimension.

When artists struggle with definitions and interpretations they can find themselves in the middle of a linguistic dilemma: on the one side, verbal language and on the other side their own artistic "language", which is their "mother tongue". Gestalt approaches to the arts believe that the latter is a language that is autonomous and does not necessarily have the function of mirroring something else. According to Arnheim, images –but we can also take sounds and movements as examples– are not simple analogies, mechanical replicas or faithful reports of the world, but rather self-directed systems. Perceiving the arts and thinking within the arts is not a mere completion by realistic criteria, just as decoding the artistic experience is not simply a pre-established fill-in-the-blanks, but a complex completion of what is apparent and what is missing by means of perception, cognition and imagination. Arnheim's interpretation of the languages of art emphasises its embodied cognition and autonomy: "perceptual and pictorial shapes are not only translations of thought products but the very flesh and blood of thinking itself" (Arnheim 1997, p. 134).

In our dialogues with the artists this is very clear: artistic creation is articulated as independent, self-sufficient language. Filmmaker Annette K. Olesen says: "when I sit in a cutting room there may be an insane difference whether you cut [or not], which can sound completely insane if you cut four seconds before or four seconds after, so timing, rhythm, breath, also as a musician [is important] and it's almost like building sentences: where is the comma, where is the sentence, where is the dash?" But also musicians from The Mira Quartet use language as a metaphor for their artistic communication: "It is actually a bit like talking, with the bow. It may well be the case that people suddenly want to talk like this [she demonstrates by changing her voice so that it sounds like a duck quacking] so one strokes differently than if talking quietly […] thus, it can be the same way one nuances a speech or a conversation". Music is to them means of communication with the outside but also an internal jargon through which artists in a group communicate with each other. In this latter case, musicians make sure that a different level of communication is established, the non-verbal, by means of which "one does not need to agree on everything".

According to Gardner art is an act of communication "of subjective knowledge" (1994, p. 30), which is intentional, deliberate, purposeful and in-context. This act is often based on experimentation and communicative try-outs, "an attempt to communicate" (1994, p. 30), and has an effect on someone else. The aesthetic object "tends to be nontranslatable [sic]. […] A work of art is not readily rendered in another symbol system" (Gardner 1994, p. 31), therefore the translation into other languages (for instance the non-verbal ones) might be experienced as effortful and not really getting to the point.

While accounting for the hard work that artists encounter when they attempt a propositional explication of their artistic creation, we met the concept of art as language, recurring both in theoretical contributions and in the conversations with our artists. In the following section, we are going to extend our considerations about it and propose our interpretive modelling.

Art *as* language in a new key

Investigation into the notion of art as language has often returned different results, being either supported or challenged. One of the first to explicitly relate art to language was art historian Ernst Gombrich, who understood the "language of art" as an independent and complex trial-and-error cognitive effort (Gombrich 1959). In his view, artists activate culturally-inherited "schemata" in order to replicate their observations by means of the artistic medium. Commentators seem to disagree on the interpretation of Gombrich's theory of art. On the one hand, Aldrich (1965) maintains that Gombrich's position has been misunderstood as a propositional philosophy of art. On the other, Mothersill reproaches Gombrich for looking at art as a propositional communication form, no different from ordinary language (in Aldrich 1965). According to Aldrich, Gombrich finds fundamental similarities between the language of art and the language of words and concepts, "not in propositional or statemental combination, therefore neither true or false" and at the same time perceives artistic language as not descriptive –like ordinary language– but expressive (Aldrich 1965, p. 573). Even though Gombrich had introduced the concept of art as language, his theory seemed to propose that art-making is basically the effort of matching the artist's making to concrete observations. This far too schematic interpretation of the artist's work found an alternative view in Arnheim, but also paved the way for other scholars to think about art *as* language. As mentioned, Arnheim maintains that artistic thinking is not just a mechanical fill-in-the-blanks between reality and artwork, but a creative imaginative thinking, which unfolds by means of cognition, perception and experiences in a given context. In this way, he partly moves away from Gombrich's "schemata" and seems to come close to Langer. Susanne Langer provides us with the hermeneutic distinction propositional/presentational language, but also with a more articulated look at art *as* language. "Music, like language, is an articulate form", she says (Langer 1953, p. 31), but unlike language, music –and we maintain the arts as such– is not word-independent, it has not an unequivocal reference to meanings, it has no vocabulary and its content can only loosely be called "meaning". In other words, art can be understood as a form of language based on its articulation, that is the internal structure of artistic

composition that "is given to our perception" (Langer 1953, p. 31). On the other side, art can "only loosely and inexactly [be] called a language, so its symbolic function is only loosely called meaning" (Langer 1953, p. 31). Being articulate but non-discursive, art forms participate in the language function and at the same time depart from it. Moreover, what is specific in the arts is their sensory and emotional form (intended as content and form). Music, but in general art, "is 'significant form', and its significance is that of a symbol, a highly articulated sensuous object, which by virtue of its dynamic structure can express the forms of vital experience which language is peculiarly unfit to convey. Feeling, life, motion and emotion constitute its import" (Langer 1953, p. 32). The quality of Langer's "Significant Form" (1953, p. 33) hints at what embodied cognition theories address: a unifying mind/body and an anti-representationalist approach (external world and body represent inner mental entities), later to be developed in Lakoff and Johnson (Johnson 1999).

A scholar who looks at art as a language is American philosopher Nelson Goodman according to whom "pictures are no more immune than the rest of the world to the formative force of language even though they themselves, as symbols, also exert such a force upon the world, including language. Talking does not make the world or even pictures, but talking and pictures participate in making each other and the world as we know them" (Goodman 1976, pp. 88-89). Even though he holds language and artistic symbols or images separated, as two autonomous entities and even though he acknowledges the "force" of language in "forming" our world, what he concludes is that both entities contribute to our meaning-making and knowledge of the world. This very strong premise on the formative force of the arts might have influenced Howard Gardner, to whom the arts are (often) a symbol system with referents and syntax (1994). Following Cassirer and Langer, he argues that humans have the capacity to employ symbolic forms and that "human knowledge is inseparable from the ability to make abstractions" (Gardner 1994, p. 14). Moreover he defines artistic communication as "*Every art form* [that] *involves communication on the part of one person (or subject) to another by means of a symbolic object that the first subject has created, and that the second is able in some way to understand, react to, or appreciate*" (Gardner 1994, p. 30 emphasis in text).

The composite metaphor of art as language is a recurring reference throughout the artists' interviews. Jazz musician Anders Koppel mentions the artist's focus on "learning the language [of music]" and visual artist Michael Kvium bewails the fact that learning the language of art is an almost forgotten activity in our culture: "it must almost be learned and we have perhaps forgotten in our culture that perceiving art too is language all together, so one must learn to receive

and also learn to be open". He points out the fact that even art reception has to be learned and contributes to the language of art and furthermore associates the artistic language with an emotional and cognitive openness to art reception, which also can be learned. One element of surprise in our research was the presence of several artistic "languages", besides the main one that artists master. If the artistic modality that defines their professional identity is compared to their artistic mother tongue, most of the interviewed artists master also a second language, a minor artistic or aesthetic interest. Almost as if talking a main language and a dialect at the same time, their artistic communication seems to thrive through and by means of this linguistic dialectic. When Ramsland identifies himself as a writer, he makes writing his mother tongue and painting, which he nurtures at high levels of mastery –so much so, that he even considered a career as a visual artist during his youth– as his second language or dialect. In the same way, visual artist Michael Kvium nurtures music, filmmaker Annette K. Olesen poetic language and photography, actress Julia Varley essay writing and editing, theatre director Eugenio Barba writing, writer Siri Hustvedt enjoys visual art critique and appreciation. Some of the interviewed artists, such as Valeur and Jordan cultivate several artistic mother tongues, being professionally involved in multi-arts projects and artistic expressions (Valeur music and writing, Jordan film and visual art). Several artistic languages live side-by-side and even though artistic identity generates from one expertise –the artistic mother tongue– it can coexist with other creative expressions. Common to both seem to be the "learnability" and a sense of excellence with which the artists meet the artistic challenges. Kvium even attempts a bridge between his two languages, explaining that the challenges of music inspire his painting in profound ways. Both media seem to be engaged in a common striving towards artistic expression in a Dewian perspective - the impulse towards expression channels itself into the struggle with (and against) the medium. Music, for Kvium, is the less known craft that still challenges the artist into the artistic dialogue.

The metaphor of art as language, even though so recurrent in the artists' understandings of their own creative practice and of artistic experiences in general, can bring with it several epistemological issues. Johnson, for instance, is critical about equating music to language, because music is impoverished by it, but also language: the metaphor "will end up excluding most of the nonverbal meaning of music. […] If you are a believer in music as immanent meaning, you will probably find the vocabulary and basic assumptions of contemporary philosophy of language (especially the *music as language* metaphor) to be inadequate to describe the full range of ways that music is vitally meaningful to most people" (Johnson 2007, p. 236). Johnson, who is admittedly not a fan of this metaphor,

maintains that an impoverished view of linguistic meaning might affect the richness and cognitive complexity of the arts, leading towards a commonsensical view. He prefers to focus on an enriched art appreciation that includes the immanent complexity of the phenomenon: the arts as embodied thinking and action and background for the development of abstractions.

Both positions, for and against the metaphor of language, are corroborated in neuroscience. Levitin (2006) has delved deep into music through studies of the brain and mind and finds similarity between the fundamental principles that regulate the learning of natural languages and the learning of music. These processes seem to derive from an innate capacity to understand language in the first case or music in the second. As in music understanding, language is then learned by means of cultural and environmental influences on the brain/mind by means of cultural priorities on what is most important and most used. These connections will flourish, while the less relevant and less used will be forgotten or atrophied. As for language, "the appreciation we have for music is intimately related to our ability to learn the underlying structure of the music we like-the equivalent to grammar in spoken or signed languages-and to make predictions about what will come next" (Levitin 2006, p. 111). In other words, music (or the arts) can be understood as a language if we are aware of the differences and ontological implications of this metaphor, and also of the weaknesses and strengths of the two. For instance, music appears to be less able to activate specific thoughts than language, but better in arousing feelings and emotions (Levitin 2006, p. 267). This last point is central to our theme of creativity and learning on the basis of what neurosciences discover and embodied cognition studies conceptualise: the fact that individuals learn on the basis of emotions and that body and senses are central to cognition and meaning-making (Damasio 1994, Johnson 2007). We propose that the artists' self-understanding of their artistic modalities as language and the non-dualistic theories we have presented might be integrated.

Everyday language is both propositional and also symbolic. Just think of metaphors such as "a glass of water", which is not a glass made of water, but a glass with water inside. However, its use can also be aesthetic, in the sense that it can convey poetic meanings (in Langer's terms presentational use of language). In this case a rose is not the flower but probably a metaphor for love. These linguistic means are embodied and sensory and convey several functions: communication, planning, thought and understanding. As a different language, the arts can contribute to linguistic functions and meaning-making with more differentiated, immanent and material tools. This "language", if it can be defined as language metaphorically speaking, builds upon a constant dialogue with a

sensory medium and is intrinsically, immanently meaningful. In artistic languages symbols are materialised and mediated by a common third: artworks, artefacts, events, performances. Moreover, the bodily and sensory dimensions of language are fully exploited in the arts. We discern between the artists' "everyday language", mostly used for communication, their "artistic mother tongue", which makes the artists' professional identity and main expressive means, and their "artistic second language", which is the artistic modality that they are active in, besides their main modality. Our hypothesis is that these languages contribute together, fully intertwined with each other, to artistic creativity and to the expression of artistic practices. The artists' interviews show that their creativity unfolds by means of linguistic interactions of both everyday, logical-verbal nature and of visual, musical, proxemic, dramaturgical, symbolic nature. Especially for the art forms implying coordination of tasks (performing or collaborating artists), peer feedback (see for instance the interviewed writers) or language arts, the use of natural language is as common as the use of artistic means of communication, enquiry, action-taking and meaning-making. In using both languages, with different degrees of mastery, artists ensure the progress of the artistic project and unlock meanings that are normally hidden to our everyday cognition.

Art as creative ex-pression

With Johnson, we believe that the problem in defining art as language or not "lies not so much in the idea of music [or art in general] as language, but rather in overly narrow and restricted views of linguistic meaning as involving literal concepts and objective reference that is alleged to be completely independent of the nature of our bodies" (Johnson 2007, p. 260). Art is meaningful in ways that written and spoken languages cannot be, because it adds to everyday communication a wider, more systematic and purposeful practice of embodied expression of meanings and emotions.

According to Dewey, art, because it is expressive, is language (Dewey 2005). Dividing his considerations on expression between the act of expression and the expressive object, Dewey explains expression as a consequence of experience. Almost in the same terms in which our artists discursively construct the concept of creativity or creation, Dewey explains the rise of experiences as originating from a need -"a hunger and demand" (Dewey 2005, p. 61)- of the interacting features of an individual organism and its environment. From this need, a movement outward and forward (impulsion) generates multiple impulses that are specialised and particular, and that incites experiences.

Figure 2. Dewey's concept of experience.
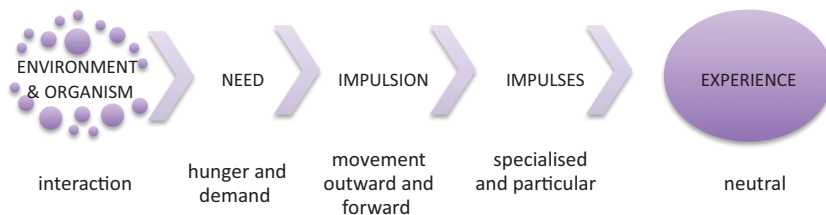
When they occur, experiences are neutrally charged and are not necessarily transformed into expressions. In order for this to happen, Dewey argues that some preconditions must be present: obstacles to be faced and changes to be achieved. When experience meets obstacles and resistance, individuals have two possibilities. The first one is interpreting obstacles as hindrances that are going to impede all kind of actions and that will allow the insurgence of hostility and irritation. The second one consists in looking at obstacles as "favouring agencies" (Dewey 2005, p. 61). In this case, the individual becomes aware of impulsions and of the intent implicit in them, filling one's agency with purpose and meaning. Changes may occur in the transformation of what is old into something new, or better, in Dewian terms, a "re-creation". Playing with the word's double meaning of regeneration and leisure, Dewey attributes to the act of re-creation the fundamental role of expressiveness. A double change applies to both new impulses and old or "stored" ones:

> Yet what is evoked is […] transformation of energy into thoughtful action, through assimilation of meanings from the background of past experiences. The junction of the new and old is not a mere composition of forces, but is a re-creation in which the present impulse gets form and solidity while the old, the "stored," material is literally revived, given new life and soul through having to meet a new situation (Dewey 2005, p. 63).

Even though he does not say it explicitly, Dewey regards expression as an intentional act. He does not mention the word "intentionality" that phenomenologists would later be so keen on using with different nuances (Hustvedt 2012a, p. 341), but describes a "conscious" and "on purpose" activity (Dewey 2005, p. 65). What is more, indispensable preconditions for expression to happen are all voluntary changes: expression only occurs if individuals feel an urge from within arising from interactions with the environment, only if individuals allow a movement outward of the inner impulses, only if there is an observer who engages in a dialogue with the expressed.

Figure 3. Dewey's concept of artistic expression.
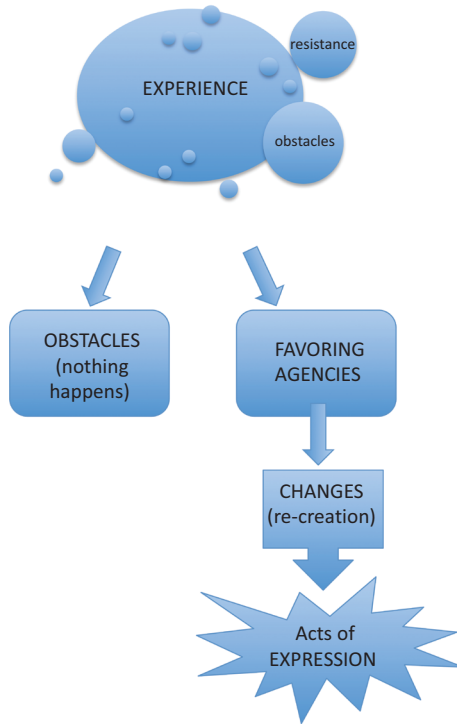
More specifically for the arts, expression through artistic forms demands the necessary presence of a medium, of emotions and of a purpose. Medium is what gives shape and form to the indistinct acts of expressions or impulses. The mere act of discharge is not per se an artistic expression: "only where material is employed as media is there an expression of art" (Dewey 2005, p. 66). The medium gives form to emotions that are inherent to the act of artistic creation. According to Dewey, "unless there is com-pression nothing is ex-pressed" (Dewey 2005, p. 69), therefore the act of creation always implies an emotional effort, an "excitement" or an "inner agitation" (Dewey 2005, p. 64) that the individual negotiates with the environment, either at the source of the experiential process or at the end of the expressive process. What the interviewed artists report as a drive, a need, a necessity, Dewey interprets as the artistic expression of a negotiated demand. The reason for the reported difficulties in defining artistic creativity can be attributed, in Dewey's terms, to a different way of

thinking that does not merge with the ordinary way of thinking. Artists think in terms of artistic medium. Art is the language they favour and that they have worked –often over many years– to develop and refine. Thinking and communicating artistic processes in logical-verbal terms does not necessarily work for them. According to Dewey, "desires, impulsions and images […] proceed from the subconscious" (Dewey 2005, p. 68), which might be the reason for what some artists describe as not fully conscious: the sources of creative processes "issue from a self not consciously known" (ibid.). Whether these processes are conscious or not is still very much debated. According to Weisberg (1993) the unconsciousness of the creative processes should be reconsidered and separated from the myth of genius that closely relates to it. Dewey agrees with the rejection of the myth of divine inspiration and attributes the myth to the ungraspable element of the expressive process. A third position, beyond rejection or acceptance of the unconscious, seems to be that of Hustvedt: "art requires an artist, and that artist is, or was, a living, breathing human being with an embodied self that functions both consciously and unconsciously within a larger world of meanings" (Hustvedt 2012a, pp. 340-341). Here, both dimensions are acknowledged as part of the artistic creation. According to Niels Rønsholdt "there is nothing magical in the creative process", but perhaps, in some cases, something that escapes full consciousness and logical formulation. A similar view is echoed in Kvium:

> I'm pretty convinced that Beethoven would not actually be able to formulate his creative process, and I know for sure that even if you sat down as a researcher, a musicologist and found out his entire system from top to toe, Beethoven would probably be amazed by [it], that even if you get sufficiently deep below Beethoven's way of working, so would music theory never ever be able to create a Beethoven work and in between the two outer points we actually get in a strange way a picture of some of what is called creativity and it is one that is not a rational process.

Kvium calls Beethoven into the debate on creativity, maintaining that neither the great musician nor a musicologist would approach the depth of creation verbally or logically. Finally, theories and conceptualisations do not serve the creative enterprise by creating artistic geniuses, but they might hint at what artistic creativity is, in the dialectic between the unutterable and attempts at explications.

One of the consequences of the conceptualisation of the arts as language is that this language can be learned and therefore taught. As Gardner (1994) has observed "the mastery of any symbolic system takes years" (p. 45). The symbolic system of the arts is no exception, as some of the artists interviewed for the present study confirm. How this releases creativity and creative artistic composition will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Artistic process and composition

In order to address the fundamental curiosity that moves the present book, this chapter will bear in mind the following questions: How do artists create? How do the artists themselves narrate the story of their artistic processes? How do they prepare to step into the creative process? Which are the compositional strategies they make use of? The focus of the present chapter will be on artistic creation or composition, where composition is to be understood as finding or shaping form by means of a medium.

Artistic composition is defined differently by the interviewed artists: "diarrhea with discipline" (Hustvedt), "thinking with body", "body intelligence", "nonverbal communication", "working with the process" (Varley), "sustained hard work" (Kvium), "vomit […] that one cannot control" (Anders Koppel), "dynamic and relational" (Klejs), a compulsive need ("it's about waiting, as a lion waits for the weak gazelle to attack, it's a question of life or death, one must wait for that hunger to emerge and be there at the point of no return", Rønsholdt).

In the field of creativity studies, artists and artworks have often been investigated as examples of the purposeful creation of novelty (Kaufman & Baer 2005, Connery, John-Steiner & Marjanovic-Shane 2010, Feist 1999, Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi 1976, Locher 2010, Moran & John-Steiner 2003, Weisberg 1993). Artistic creativity, though, has rarely been given privileged or exclusive consideration, almost as if it were not describable or definable unless in comparison with other kinds of creativity, such as scientific or technological creativity. An advantage of these studies is their wide comparative scope able to embrace the complexity and variety of creative phenomena. Examples of these contributions are Csikszentmihalyi's and Gardner's studies on creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, Gardner 1993), which set out to describe creative traits across a multiplicity of domains and contexts. However, few essential studies have focused specifically on artists as creative professionals and the arts. Weisberg's case studies in artistic creativity are ground-breaking for approaching artistic creativity as a describable phenomenon that can be interpreted by means of analysis of works of art and artists' compositional processes (Weisberg 1993). Weisberg's work is also fundamental because it has the purpose of looking at creativity beyond the myth of creativity. Often due

to the artists themselves, who are keen on building grandiose narratives about their persona and their work, this myth survives still today, instrumentally used by the arts and culture industry for the purposes of profit.

The Romantic idea that creativity comes by itself as a gift of talent and genius is challenged by some artists, who cite issues such as craftsmanship, apprenticeship, slow learning and development. As we have seen in the previous chapter, most of the interviewed artists define artistic creativity as the process of making art in a given context, by means of craftsmanship, emotional and cognitive skills. Actress Julia Varley clearly states that the artistic process of creation "is hard work" and writer Morten Ramsland openly protests against the Romantic idea of creation: "Well really the most important thing is time. It requires time and space. I believe that the idea that you wait and creativity will come is a bit of a Romantic notion and that a lot of people go around dreaming they are creative somehow only they don't have the time or the space. Really to be creative requires that you invest time and space in it". This significant statement introduces some of the points we are about to discuss: artistic creativity is a matter of meaningful *voluntary* effort of expression and explicit *commitment* to the process of creation. Two of the interviewed writers told us that since they were very young they had a tendency towards writing, but where Ramsland's fascination for the written word risked being dangerously frustrated during his first school years, Hustvedt experienced a positive flourishing of her artistic preferences and felt that writing came easily to her development ("it came easy to me"). In both cases, writing became a profession only as a consequence of the deliberate decision of embracing "the full catastrophe" (Kabat-Zinn 1990) of artistic creation. Significantly, Sternberg (2003) emphasises the fact that creativity, as linked to development and learning, is to a large extent a matter of decision: "the decision to be creative, the decision of how to be creative, and implementation of these decisions" (p. 91). The artists' narratives suggest that, even in the case of very early preferences for a medium, a large part of creation is due to hard work and life-choices. These choices direct the artists' attention to the progressive building of cognitive, manual, sensory, in some cases relational skills as the outcome of a deliberate resolution.

In this perspective, issues of biological or genetic background become of secondary importance. Visual artist Michael Kvium tells us that he has always been interested in the visual dimensions of things, but he defines creativity as being 90% concentration, not genetic disposition. This might be also due to artistic pride and self-image, of someone working hard for his success, someone who is making his own career. What is meaningful here is the artist's awareness of this paradigm shift and the emphasis on the artist's own emotional, psychological and technical skills. This might have direct consequences for the way we look

at creativity as learning and the way we look at artists as inspiration for creative processes. If creativity is not only a matter of biological talent or ability (or of genius), then we should look closely at the elements of this will, the motivation to take the decision to be creative and finally the life-conditions that enhance or support this decision. We suggest that artistic creativity is to be found at the intersection of handicraft, concentration, hard work, continuous practice on the one hand and processes, building of metaphors and extra-ordinary perspectives on the other. In other words, artistic creativity might be a matter of *awe* (the pun is here intended): *A*bility, *W*ill, *E*nvironment. Both the acronym (A-W-E) and the word *awe*, intended as amazement, surprise, wonder, well express one of our main findings in the present study.

In the present chapter we will look at these topics by directing our attention to the living narratives of the interviewed artists. These retrospective narratives shed a light on a variety of processes of artistic creation. We have divided these stories in temporal stages that look thematically at what happens before, during and after the artistic interaction with a given medium. We will start by looking at how artists prepare for this meeting. How do they establish a dialogue with materiality and medium?

Before the storm: preparing for creation over a lifetime

While collecting the artists' answers about how they prepare for the creative process of composition, we grew aware of a necessary distinction about what unfolds throughout a lifetime and what happens right before the creative task. These two dimensions involve two different time ranges, the lifelong one, focused on identity-building and skills/knowledge acquisition, and the one, often more limited in time, when the artists generate their artworks. Even though different, these dimensions would appear to be strictly related. It became apparent that our interviews went beyond the understanding of creativity as merely processes initiated at the moment of a tangible, definite creation. According to the interviewed artists, creation in their domain starts way back in an existential dimension and grows throughout the years of artistic practice, until it explodes into deliberate acts of creation. The retrospective nature of our interviews made it possible for the artists to look back at the very beginning of their interest for the arts. The stories they told us were vibrant with sensory details and meaningfulness. One example out of many might be Hustvedt's moving recall of the very moment and place that inspired a life-changing spark of awareness about writing:

> When I was 13 years old, I spent a summer in Iceland with my family. About a year ear-
> lier, I had discovered that books, which were once too difficult for me to read – books

with small print and extensive vocabularies – had suddenly become available to me. I had always been a passionate reader of books, especially novels, and that summer I read and read and read and, because the sun did not really set, but rather, in the wee hours of morning, the sky took on an eerie pallor, I had trouble sleeping for the first time in my life. I would stay up and read. One night I was reading *David Copperfield*, a great book that moved me deeply, and I put it down and went to the window, and I looked out at Reykjavik, illumined by this strange light, and I thought to myself, 'If this is what reading is, if this is what a novel can do to a person, then I want to do it, too'. A transitional moment. That view from the window will always be associated for me with my decision to become a writer.

She defines this moment "transitional" and emphasises the fact that a firm decision followed the experience. These transformative and often existential experiences allow the emergence of a need that is felt as so compelling that it becomes an irresistible drive to take action. Needs or drives, when mentioned in the interviews, are reported to be very specific and leading to concrete actions towards professional turns in the artists' lives. Often this change involves at the same time an existential adjustment to the novel perception of oneself *as an artist* and concrete actions, such as opera singer Marco Nisticò starting to learn and perform professionally and technically after years of denial, but also Ramsland who found out that, in spite of bad school experiences, he wanted to start literature studies at the university.

Transformational life experiences often start with a loss or a need, which has been labelled differently within learning theories: a disjuncture (Jarvis 2009, p. 22), a disorientation (Mezirow 2009, p. 94), an "emotionally felt difficulty, an uncertain situation" (Elkjaer 2009, pp. 79-80). Likewise creativity studies that are sensitive to learning and development issues, point out the "dissatisfaction" that ignites transformational experiences (Feldman 1999, p. 173). This is clearly described by Varley and Barba, actress and director at Odin Teatret. Varley's introduction to Odin Teatret's tradition and community was traumatic at several levels: she suddenly felt no longer useful to the group she had left, to a cultural context, to a political ideology; moving from Italy to Denmark she lost her language, moving from a role of centrality in her theatre group back home to a marginal role in the new group, she moved from security to instability (Varley 2011). Analogously, her theatre director over almost forty years describes his journey from Southern Italy to Norway as a "cultural shock" that obliged him to find a social identity, which he eventually found in theatrical experimentation. If Varley's journey consisted in finding her place in the group, Barba's challenge was to find his place in a culture (Barba 2010). Nisticò speaks of a rediscovery (of opera, in his case) and Julie Nord of finding something personal to say,

where Inger Exner describes the compulsiveness involved in these experiences: "I couldn't help it". They all mention a need growing over the years, especially when individuals do not feel appreciated or encouraged to learn or express themselves, a need that suddenly –and sometimes unexpectedly– explodes in occasion of a transformative experience. When such a transformative experience occurs in the artist's life, it might be triggered by various encounters, such as a work of art that offers a unique connection or someone (peers, colleagues, friends) or cultural artefacts (tradition, artwork, group structure). The transformative events appear to be crystallised in the artist's memory, to the point of being described vividly with very precise details, feelings, bodily perceptions, as we saw in Hustvedt's example above. From Ramsland's narrative we are able to determine the specific elements that make this life experience a transformative milestone:

> I suddenly discovered that literature could be about *me*, that it concerned *me* and my world and my emotional life in a completely different way. I think it was that moment – maybe it was the punk attitude in Strunge's poems that spoke to something inside me in some way, which made its presence so strong. And after that poetry collection I started to write poems, almost overnight as it were and it's been like that ever since. So you could say that was something that happened at exactly the right time in my life. It completely changed my idea of literature and I can trace back my interest in literature to before then with books that I read, maybe novels that were more adult –a bit above my age– and I was interested in all sorts of different kinds of books, but it was that book that touched me in a way that made me want to write for myself.

He summarises a few fundamental elements that we have consistently found in most of the other descriptions of transformative experiences. These elements are partly corroborated in learning theories that conceptualise transformative learning experiences, as we will see in Part Two. In Ramsland we find three stages and seven qualities of the experience:

1. Background interest that is frustrated by some sort of disjuncture
2. Transformative experience, which:
   a. is sudden
   b. is personal and meaningful
   c. is new
   d. is not completely conscious or explicable
   e. pushes to action
   f. feels as if it is happening at "the right time"
   g. encourages persistence
3. Background interest flourishes (connection with self and profession)

The three steps are described as successive stages in time, while the characteristics of the transformative experience are qualities of the occurring life events and their individual perception. These descriptions are coherent with the concept of transformative learning (Illeris 2009, Mezirow 2000, 2009) and seem to be related to the artists' learning journeys through trajectories that build identity, embrace serendipitous encounters and transform life events by means of will. These experiences constitute a turning point that sets the course of the individual's development, a "critical moment" that strongly affects a "sudden attachment to a domain, along with the motivation and sense of purpose that comes from knowing what one wants to do in life" (Feldman 1999, p. 172). In other words, a deep, life-changing, learning experience.

The lifelong creative project

It seems to us that the artists' preparation for artistic creation does not start with the concrete time-limited task, but starts with the making of one's own individuality, positioning oneself in a field or culture, continuous dialogue with field and domain, acquaintance with skills, values and directions within a profession. The very first level of preparation for the creative act starts with individual development throughout the artist's whole life, connected to learning and identity, and defined in a given culture. This is hardly a consequence of genius, but rather a voluntary response to life conditions or events. As described in the interviews, artists might happen to experience a transformative event, felt as a transition into a new stage of life - something new happens suddenly and unexpectedly. This apparently serendipitous occurrence is, on closer observation, a deliberate search for experiences, for an undefined "something", a being drawn by a sense of wonder, a more general curiosity or a sense of loss and frustration. In this sense, Varley's interpretation of the creative process as learning may indicate an urge to learn as a background pre-requisite for artistic creation. Creation, as much as learning and development, according to some learning theories emerges from a sort of disjuncture that separates the artists/learners from what they desire (Illeris 2009, Sawyer et al. 2003).

This longing seems to derive, in the case of Ramsland, from a frustration and in other interviews is described variously: many express it as an urge, a drive, a driving force, a need, but some also define it as greed, an ambition, or as losing something. This drive that is frustrated or contained because of life conditions ends up by emerging seemingly out-of-the-blue. Either due to a Freudian unsatisfied wish or a Piagetian incremental emergence or a Vygotskyan interaction with the external world (Sawyer et al. 2003), the process of confrontation

with this urge brings the individual to a transformation. When a transformation occurs the urge becomes even stronger, but this time the process gains in awareness and intentionality, building up towards the emergence of the artistic pre-requisites for creation. At the stage where transformations open up to learning and identity building, the artist finally decides to, so to speak, learn the craft and spend (more) time in experimenting with the medium and in engaging in dialogue with peers. The artists intentionally decide to embrace artistic creation and its frustrations and joys, decide to challenge themselves with specific media and processes, decide to engage in creative processes steadily and as a part of their profession.

Sometimes this urge is explicitly understood as a drive toward ex-pression, a "forging instinct" as Hustvedt defines and explains: "There is an urge. Creative people have an urge, a need to tap into the inner world and push it outside". A concept Annette K. Olesen echoes when she describes "a need to express myself in a form, [and to] define to myself the framework for the stories I wanted out [of myself]". Others mention the need for the discovery of a personal style, genre or voice and the subsequent shift of medium (Ramsland and Hustvedt from poetry to prose, Nord from video/painting to drawing, Nisticò giving in to his family's expectations, Valeur from punk music experimentation to writing professionally).

Strictly related to the drive towards expression is the need to find a personal unique artistic style mentioned by Nord and architect Johannes Exner. The latter portrays his own drives towards the architectural profession and composition, mentioning his almost ecstatic meeting with the beauty of the medieval churches and his subsequent wish to find the elements of this fascination in other life or work experiences:

> [What] have been most inspiring for me have been the medieval churches, and why do they inspire me? Because they are not tied to a particular style, it is neither Gaudí or Corbusier or Henning Larsen, they are not constrained, they are free, but they represent many different, you could say, periods. I could learn about the big picture of the architecture just by looking at the church, and then I could, and I can still today, walk around and see all the bricks that are from 1440. I'm talking about a narrative value, it tells a story. […] But the medieval churches, why do they live on? Yes, it is brick, and partly they have been allowed to renew themselves. If there was something that did not work, you would tear it down, then build anew. […] The church is particularly inspiring because you expect that in the church you meet something that you do not normally find elsewhere in other houses and other places, and you can talk about something divine, or spiritual. As my father said, every church must include the ineffable. And it is in a way the ineffable, that is what you do not understand, and that is the divine, there is something very exciting about it. And Inger and I have always agreed on this and we have

worked very, very hard on it, and it's something with substance and light, texture and fabric and light, and there I sit at home in the church as a child, looking at matter and light, [something that] we have worked a lot with in our churches. And I would almost say these are some of the things that Inger and I have personally worked very much on together and loved tremendously.

Exner tells us of a passion, but also of an inner struggle that he had to give in to. Later on in his career, he believed he was drawn to collaborate with the great Danish architects of the time, such as Arne Jacobsen (1902-1971), but life opportunities turned his work towards his original source of inspiration and amazement: the building and restoring of churches. When our artists submit to the irresistible drive toward art creation and decide to make art professionally, we can see immediate consequences in the way they make sense of their own identity (*I am* an artist) and in the way they choose to structure their compositional working processes. Some of the interviewed artists describe a move towards more structured processes of creation, which they start calling "work" (Hustvedt, Varley, Granhøj). The stability of the professional creative processes abandons the chaotic, ruthless, or almost obsessive-compulsive processes of earlier experimentations. When individuals choose the profession of art-making they start to value, as more productive, creative processes that provide them with structures and reproducibility. The interest and passion of these individuals can risk negatively influencing their state of health, to the detriment of a good standard of artistic production. A professional artist depends on the reproducibility of compositional processes and cannot leave the occurrence of the creative spark to mere chance. The creative spark is only a very limited element of the whole compositional process. Therefore, writer Ramsland goes from the youthful obsession for writing constantly, day and night, to more structured working habits that better harmonise with a personal life with family and other interests, and with growing public success that amplifies requests outside of writing activities (conferences, speeches, book presentations):

I have a very, very clear division between those things [family and work]. Well sometimes it's a bit too much and too little, a bit too clear some years and a bit too relaxed other years. I try to loosen up a little and tell myself that I can work in the evening; I don't have to cut my life up into chunks that way. I've done that for many years - very, very clear (divisions) and I feel like I should loosen up and be less rigid again. It's a little bit like, I wrote my first books and I studied at university and the borders were indistinct, I wrote at any time I could get to, in a way that I couldn't really control. I couldn't sleep at night and it didn't go so well. [...] I sat and I wrote all night, stuff like that. And so I finished university and I was very much "now I must... I am a writer and now [I must] also split my work. Now I have to get on with it and write from eight in the morning". And that's what I did, I sat there and it was amazingly productive one way or the

other, and I've done a lot of that ever since, it was 2000, so that's 12 years I've worked that way. Ah, I can feel it, sometimes I think I should loosen up a little again, I mean the work I'm doing right now.

Following this stage of gained awareness, the interviewed artists describe a search for a more or less stable structure that works for them in their context and according to their preferences or the challenges of their medium. The structures and procedures that they adopt are multiple and diverse, but they all become the backbone of their artistic creativity.

Inspiration

What interests us in relation to artistic composition is *that* artists start adopting structures and procedures as a consequence of a transformative experience, which opens up to a transition from interest, loss or frustration to conscious life choice. This is a lifelong process and describes the artists' trajectory towards their creations. As for the retrospective exercise of looking back at the very origins of their interest in the arts, it allowed the artists to talk about their creative processes in a broader perspective. Creativity studies that have so far focused on the creative process seem to lack this lifelong perspective (Kozbelt, Beghetto & Runco 2010, p. 24), which is present in other –mostly psychological– studies on creative individuals (Csikszentmihalyi 1996, Gardner 1993). What we believe worth emphasising is that any artistic process might spring from continuous hard work and a tenacious commitment to it. As Weisberg has corroborated (1993), artistic creation is neither generated by lonely geniuses, nor is the outcome of a single stroke of luck. The stroke of genius, the sudden *eureka* or a-ha experiences, are nothing that individuals can induce by taking a shower, riding on a bus or getting a good sleep, as Ochse's "bed, bus, bath" theory might be misinterpreted (Weisberg 1993, p. 49). Ideas –or learning about ideas– do not emerge by merely listening to Mozart, as the Mozart effect was mistakenly thought to prove (Waterhouse 2006a, Waterhouse 2006b, Rauscher & Hinton 2006). On the contrary, artistic creativity is a long-term project, nurtured over time by means of dialogue, experimentation, curiosity, skills and an overall acknowledgment of hardship. Perseverance in challenging and being challenged by the medium is fundamental to the artistic project, but this does not start when the artists meet the blank canvas or the empty stage. The journey starts from early experiences with the arts or related inspirational events and develops by means of choices, skills and support(ers), or in other words *a*bilities, *w*ill and *e*nvironment (*awe*). If *eureka* experiences occur, it is because of a lifelong preparation and the determination to succeed. In this perspective, we can better understand the emergence

of the Romantic myth of the tragic artist and the common (and nonsensical) idea that artists *must* be desperate in order to create. Well aware that some cultural movements have strongly corroborated these myths (e.g. Romanticism, dandyism, existentialism, some forms of punk rock), we can easily understand how the artists' systematic acceptance of hardship –as a necessary element of or stage in the creative process– can be misunderstood as such a myth. The *poète maudit*, the artist victim of mental sufferings or the artist's unconventional behaviour are stereotypes that have constructed the very idea of artist in some cultures over given historical periods. In reality, the moment of insight for artists is a guided awareness on a specific artistic task facilitated by the broader, long-term, often serendipitous accumulation of inspirational materials. Sawyer, quoting Ernst Kris, proposes that creative individuals might be able to activate observational skills together with preconscious experiences, ending up with what we define as "insights" (Sawyer 2003, p. 42). The intentionality that creative individuals engage in these processes guarantees the possibility of repeating and even managing the processes of insights at command. The ability to repeat successful heuristics is key to the profession of creative individuals, who cannot afford the luxury of just waiting for insights to happen by themselves. Rather, they make them happen by means of a lifelong project (the building of artistic identity and the enlarging of the inspirational reservoir) and "some degree of conscious ego control" (Sawyer 2003, p. 42), using them in the service of their work.

Early inspiration sources might not necessarily be within the art form that is to become a lifelong project and a profession. Here, we must mention Barba's fascination for religious rituals and Jordan's involvement in nativity displays. By coincidence both related to religious practices, these activities fascinated both artists, not for their spiritual content, but rather for their performativity and/or their sensory quality. As Barba recalls: "Theatre, which is the craft with which I earn my living now, was not present in my past, in my childhood, in my youth, as an inspiring artistic source or experience". He grew up in a small village in Southern Italy (Gallipoli) where he saw religious processions and ceremonies, which in his recollection were very theatrical and performative. These Catholic rituals comprised "songs, incense and perfumes, and processions in the –one could call it– 'mise en scène', which really is extraordinary. All the Resurrection, Christ, Easter, was a huge performance which began on the Friday and ended with the Resurrection" (Barba). Similarly filmmaker Mary Jordan tells us that her experiential approach to the arts originated from a non-artistic activity: "when I was a child my grandfather used to build these extraordinary villages almost like very glorified doll houses under the Christmas tree, which took him six months to build, and they had water going down [the display] and trains and

people and lights, and it was really quite unbelievable. So I started to help him do that when I was a very young child, everything from making curtains to sewing little pants on little people or building the train with pieces of stick. So I would say that was my very early [artistic experience], like actually watching something come to full fruition".

Early inspiration sources that can be triggers of transformative experiences might consist in meeting with a significant other who opens the doors to a new world (Varley, Ramsland). Or they can be mediated through artefacts (a book to read, stilts to walk with, a Nativity display) or a more intangible feeling of admiration as for Palle Granhøj, who was fascinated by an "artistic viewpoint" and a provocateur attitude, similar to Varley's recognition of Indian classical dancer Shanta Rao, "who had learned two forms of classical dance, which is something not permitted, so she was an example of somebody going against the rules. So for me she was somebody that I accepted".

Sometimes an artist can overlook the magnitude of influence that life experiences can have had, for instance Annette K. Olesen tells us that she comes from a non-artistic family, but then she reveals that her father used to take photos and she was allowed into the darkroom quite early in her teenage years. In processing photos and growing sensitive to visual renderings, she must have acquired very specific technical and visual skills that she transferred to her own work on the screen, when she later became a film director.

Compared to non-artists that also might get inspired by diverse encounters and experiences in their lives, artists do nothing different. Except for one fundamental detail: they use actively the often accidental or serendipitous inspiration they get from their life experiences and turn it into a life-project or into a circumscribed and focused artistic project. They choose to be like sponges, absorbing all the inspirational materials they can get, and then they do something with them. To be an artist for Michael Valeur is "to be like a sponge, which just absorbs time, sucks art for itself, sucks all this to itself and transforms it and gives it an expression that communicates". Inspiration accumulated throughout a lifetime is just a trampoline towards what is essential for the artist: active creation in a given medium. Jazz musician Benjamin Koppel, for instance, expresses this active endeavour as two-fold: "you gather your [cultural] baggage up, but you also try all the time to use what you've learned". Artistic creation is prepared through the progressive collection of much loved artistic materials or life experiences (later in the interview Koppel calls it "storage" of inspiration) and then the continuous ("all the time") application of this cultural baggage. Moreover, as a distinctive trait, the artists seem to cultivate a very developed disposition towards the detection of probable inspirational sources. Several artists told us that they

could mention many different experiences as their personal sources of inspiration. In our opinion, this is the result of a combination of individual character traits, preferences or dispositions, serendipitous life conditions and a deep-felt sustained choice. An artist prepares for his or her career as a professional creator by means of hard work, which is not only the technical *labor* on (or towards) the work of art, but also the psycho-emotional work on oneself (for instance: "I had to rebuild myself completely", Varley). What the interviewed artists report is consistent with what other contemporary artists narrate or, in the case of Russian actor and theatre director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938), conceptualise as a normative strategy. Stanislavski, in his first book translated from Russian to English, *An Actor Prepares* (2013), makes of the above-described preparation for the act of creation a so-called "system". He describes how actors prepare for their task and prescribes how they should do it consistently. This preparation involves both a lifelong perspective, when the actor builds up a sensitivity to experiences and collects memories and a perspective more restricted in time and space– the practical start-up of a definite artistic project by means of mind-body alignment techniques. Describing in detail the system and its huge impact on contemporary acting would lead us too far from our core interest, however we wish to mention that Stanislavski too looks at the actor's preparation for the creative task as a lifelong journey that builds up to the more restricted task creativity.

Preparing for the creation of artworks

Over a limited time span, artists prepare for their job, whose purpose is to produce artworks. Roughly divided into the successive stages of preparation, action and performance, the artistic process of composition consists of a fervent dialogue with the medium. French mathematician Henri Poincaré described his creative processes as consisting of the stages of preparation, incubation, eureka and verification (Weisberg, 1993). Partly, this is also what the artists interviewed for our study describe, except for an essential difference: rather than being successive stages happening in a fixed order, our impression is that these are simultaneous elements of the creative process. With no exception, these stages recur during the unfolding of the artistic creation. Even the preparation phase, which by definition should –and mostly does– come before ("pre") the action, happens repeatedly with fresh starts or changes of direction. Moreover, some of the strategies our artists use in order to, so to speak, warm up to the creative process are ongoing activities difficult to limit to a restricted time-span. For instance, one way of preparing for the artistic work can be existential or motivational. Like the above-described transformative life experiences, needs and drives are

the pre-requisites behind artistic compositions. Often these drives contain existential and individually meaningful elements that "switch on" the process, as in Ramsland: "so I get the urge to write, to express myself creatively". Or they can be psycho-emotional needs that artists build up and nourish, as Varley's frustration (the being left outside the group) that turns into a learning journey (building of a new role and identity). In both cases, the ways in which artists approach their work are characterised by intentionally stepping into the unknown and being aware of it. Annette K. Olesen tells us about a will, a desire and a feeling of concentration and happiness that builds up towards the meeting with the medium. In other words, neither the will to creation nor the encounter with the unknown happen by themselves, but are rather nourished strategically *in order to* create artistically.

Besides these intangible components, artists mention, of course, the technical preparation for the task. Their attention goes both to the technical knowledge of the medium or material and to the forging of skills. Regarding the preparation of materials Inger Exner says that in architecture the "understanding of materials […] means a lot to beauty" and painter Michael Kvium tells how he starts his work by preparing his brushes, an activity that he had for a short time outsourced to a collaborator, but that he had to reintegrate into his working process. The way he cleans the brushes, the tactile feeling of it, perhaps the ritual dimension of the activity too, seem to be a necessary step towards composition and not just a tiresome task.

The cleaning of brushes is also a skill that painters learn as part of their craft and preparation by focusing on skills is mentioned by Mary Jordan, to whom "art is a skill, endless practice and experiential trial and error". Preparation for the compositional task requires previous learning and training of skills and the long-term building of knowledge. Nord, Varley and The Mira Quartet describe it as a form of artistic research, where experimentation and exploration (Hustvedt) help in collecting knowledge of a given problem. Fjord agrees on the above elements and adds the necessity of "free space", which will contribute to problem solving.

To find a solution in the arts means to be allowed to think, and to take one's time in order to achieve a high ambition, but most of all preparation is fundamental as Fjord tells us: "you have prepared your background well, so you do not have to think about it anymore, or what kind of a problem you are addressing. I think it is important to create such a space so now we don't need to address any other things. We need to get rid of everything that is a problem, [it] is important to allow yourself to think all the way around it". In order to achieve creative problem solving, the artists prepare technically, mentally and emotionally. The reason

for this, according to Fjord, is to experience the freedom of creation, once you have your background work done you do not need to worry about it and you can concentrate on the experimentation.

But in which ways do artists prepare for artistic creation? In the following pages we will discuss the role of intentional exposure to a variety of experiences, the internalisation of models and artworks and the elimination of inappropriate disturbances as essential elements of the preparation for creation.

Intentional exposure to experiences

The main elements that seem to characterise artistic creation are a deep-felt long-term commitment to creation and the intentional exposure to inspiring, meaningful, often serendipitous and diverse experiences. Artists create the very conditions for creation by seeking environments, artefacts, events, persons, situations that will bring them inspiration (most of them mention this term) or fascination (Varley). From these exposures a sort of attraction (Varley) might emerge, together with the need and compulsion to express. Of course, the first step in order to get this inspiration is to look around. As Kvium maintains: "we always have to find inspiration. It can hardly come from anywhere other than reality, absolute reality. So there may be some [artists] who are inspired by nature, a flower, a thought of another artist, but all is in fact taken from the reality we have been placed in right now. You cannot find inspiration in nothing. Inspiration is associated with the life we live and what it brings of issues and joy and surprises or grief. This is also a part of reality or joy or despair. It is well what most artists [hold as] the seeds of inspiration". A process of being attentive to the given reality that, according to Kvium, feeds into the creation or, in his words, the rewriting of reality into visible things: "an artistic process is actually what rewrites some invisible things, so that they become visible again, [in order] to paraphrase". Intentionality and diversity seem to be the main traits of inspiring environments and experiences. Variety of exposures has been discussed in Simonton, where the link with developmental processes is also clear: "it appears that creative development depends on exposure to diversity" (Simonton 1984, p. 145).

Once artists have placed themselves within inspiring environments and experiences, it is hard for them not to be inspired, as expressed by Michael Valeur:

> it's hard to go in and look at a picture and then unfold it and get affected by it, and then not to want to convert it into words. This is the way authors behave, when they look at pictures. So I'm never the type to ever go and read what is behind a picture according to the artist, I do not bother. I do it eventually when [the picture] has spoken to me. But I always feel like verbalising it, […] it's a real professional handicap!

In order to cultivate voluntary exposure to inspiring experiences, artists choose and develop a perceptive and cognitive openness to their surroundings. It is not so much *what* inspires them that makes the difference in their artistic creativity but *how* they place themselves in environments, situations and relationships. As inspirational sources they mention artworks (most of them) or cultural artefacts (Jordan's nativity display, Barba's rituals, Johannes Exner's churches and light, Inger Exner's drawings from advertisements, cities according to Valeur og Nord), but also nature, journeys or travels, life in general (Ramsland mentions his life, childhood, other people's narratives, family stories and history; Jordan, death; Bosch, Klejs and Rønsholdt mention even the banal things in life and children), collaborations and relationships with colleagues. Sometimes sources of inspiration are more intangible, such as ideas, travels in a metaphorical sense as the being out of one's comfort zone, the unexpected or empty spaces.

What stands out as an inspirational source is, of course, art and artists. The encounter with the arts is, again, characterised by a specific *modus* of openness and attentiveness. Absorbing artistic experiences are sought, exploited and processed but not necessarily within the art form that the artist works with. As Valeur's quote above attests, or Hustvedt's passion for visual art ("I like to try to produce those visual images in my book"), or the artists' engagement in other arts forms than their own, the arts are a huge reservoir of inspiration and they cross-feed each other across domains. Art appreciation and art-making are both perceived as activities involving thought, emotions and imaginative perspectives on one's work. Writer Siri Hustvedt describes her active engagement in the appreciation of visual arts: "I love to stand in front of a painting, sculpture, or installation and think about what is happening between me and that work of art. I have written regularly about art. It is a great pleasure, and I have no intention of stopping now". This is echoed in visual artist Michael Kvium, who spoke of an active making and appreciation of music with the questions it raises: "What is coherence in music? What happens if I press the keys down on a piano and what happens if you do this and that?"

The concept of active engagement in the arts, whether the nature of the activity is making or appreciation, is discussed in Gardner (Gardner 1994a, p. xii), where he proposes the definition of "participation in the artistic process". Focusing on the developmental outputs that this participation can harvest, Gardner suggests a broader look at participation in the arts. The arts create expectations and then resolve or violate them, and by doing so they stimulate complex intellectual responses that integrate both affection and cognition. The consequence is that previous dichotomies, such as divergent/convergent thinking (Guilford

1957) do not explain either kind of art participation alone, neither the making nor the appreciation. Both processes of thinking and approaching the arts are necessary. Artists attaining inspiration from the arts or other artists do so by means of a systematic and deliberate openness and with a clear –but not necessarily conscious– strategy: to extract as much inspiration as possible to store in their inspirational reservoir.

Stealing: dialogue or fight with models

Inspiration comes often from colleagues or from a different, more distant dialogue with other artists. Artists seem to supply inspiration to their reservoir by engaging in a dialogue with living or distant artists.

This dialogue with other artists can be both inspirational and scary. Dehlholm well expresses the anxiety that can arise from making explicit one's own artistic models saying that she often hesitates to talk about her admiration for Robert Wilson, because people might think that she copied him. She fears that audiences or critics might blame her for copying her model, so she has grown more cautious in mentioning this source of inspiration. After all, her inspiration is not limited to one single model but has many sources: "my inspirations have been Tadeusz Kantor, Robert Wilson, James Turrell, Romeo Castellucci, David Lynch, Matthew Barney and many others appearing and disappearing again". Dehlholm is not alone in this approach to inspiration; other sources have shown this emotional component in the build up to artistic creativity.

On the use or abuse of inspirational models, an oft-quoted source is a citation allegedly by Picasso and quoted by Apple entrepreneur Steve Jobs: "Picasso had a saying -'good artists copy, great artists steal'-and we have always been shameless about stealing ideas" (Isaacson 2011, p. 98). The quote has a catchy quality that appealed instantly to the virtual and social media, where it multiplied with different versions, where artists alternately copy, imitate or borrow rather than steal. Street artist Banksy significantly stole the quote in one of his works: an engraved tombstone where the citation is followed by the name of Picasso, which is crossed over and substituted by the name of Banksy. American writer and sketcher Austin Kleon has further developed on the stealing metaphor in his volume *Steal Like an Artist: 10 Things Nobody Told You About Being Creative* (2012) where he maintains that originality is not possible. Evidence is drawn from his personal experience as an artist, from other artists' quotes and even from the Bible, where the nothing-new-under-the-sun quote (Ecclesiastes 1:9) seems to be very apt. Similar views are to be found in Weisberg, where originality as the work of genius is drastically reformulated: "even the most radical

artistic works are related to what came before; earlier works, by the artist in question or by other artists, influence the structure and content of later works" (Weisberg 1993, p. 250).

Stealing or borrowing, the dialogue with models is, in our interviews, described in some cases as a fight and a struggle. To what extent this conflictual interpretation is due to gender is difficult to say, but the fact remains that the two artists who express themselves in these terms are two men, Ramsland and Barba. Very differently, women express and can express themselves in terms of dialogue. According to Siri Hustvedt: "Harold Bloom, the American critic wrote a book called *The Anxiety of Influence*… He frames the relation between younger and older writers in purely Oedipal terms. The younger writer wants to 'kill the father', who has influenced him the most. It's all about fathers and sons. The history of literature has often been understood in this way, as an agonistic, masculine competition. I happen to think there are also literary mothers and aunts and grandmothers, and that it is possible to think about influence in a far less combative way. […] No doubt there are male writers who have had to overcome literary fathers, but not all writing is about killing the father". Barba especially has often recurred to metaphors of killing or burning down (Barba 2010), but, as Hustvedt suggests, the encounter with models can be seen in a milder light, so the models can be less threatening than the father-like figure and rather be artistic "mothers and aunts and grandmothers" that hold the artist's hands while she takes her first steps.

The fight and dialogue metaphors are images of different intensities or qualities in the processes of internalisation. Artists actively internalise the work of artists they admire and through this process they find their own voice, their own artistic style. This implies looking at internalisation as an active construction, which is compatible with novelty and is not merely replication. Artists, as creative individuals in general, do not simply internalise, but "they often transform and appropriate, even as they are gathering new knowledge" (Sawyer 2003, p. 47). In the arts, internalisation is necessarily followed by externalisation, as Vygotsky would have argued (Moran & John-Steiner 2003, p. 63). Externalisation is the tangible embodiment of symbols into cultural artefacts, which in the arts is aimed at the composition of novel artworks.

These psychological and cultural processes –internalisation/externalisation– are the background for the artists' very personal take on artistic creation, for which they define art as a catalyst (Nord), as something very personal that is mirroring part of the artist's self (Ramsland "I recognised something of me and I saw something of me described, and set in a form"), something to do with love (Dehlholm), so much that it becomes difficult to separate art from life (Bosch on

non-separation art-life). The latter becomes extreme when artists work together with their life partners. They inspire each other or collaborate (Exners, Rønsholdt-Klejs) or they seek each other's professional judgment (Hustvedt with her husband, writer Paul Auster). In this way, relationships can boost and support the creative process. Sometimes, though, it is necessary to take a step back and get rid of disturbances.

Sweeping up the creative space

The author of the present chapter still remembers her astonishment in looking at one of the greatest innovators in contemporary theatre taking a broom and humbly sweeping up the terrace where his open-air workshop was going to be held. It was 1998 and Eugenio Barba was about to give his lecture at the University of Eurasian Theatre. After many years and in the course of the present study it occurred to her that this act, both ritual and practical, was driven by the artist's need to clear his creative space of unproductive disturbances. In the same way, painter Michael Kvium tells us that he needs to clean and prepare his brushes, even though it might seem a trivial activity and even though he tried to outsource it to his assistant. Barba's broom and Kvium's brushes are the symbolic passage to the studio and the practical removal of trivial distractions. The creative space needs to be prepared. Emptiness can be inspiring.

Besides a life filled with stimulating experiences, some artists (Varley, Jordan, Kvium, Dehlholm) mention the opposite of a crowd of experiences or perceptions as source of inspiration - the empty space. Conceptualised in 1968 by theatre director Peter Brook (1968), the empty space has in the performing arts a very specific translation to the emptying of the performing space and of the performer's mind. Both physical and psychological dimensions are emptied, in order to let (preconscious) images, ideas, memories emerge. An almost meditative condition –or pre-condition– of letting go is required. In modern and contemporary theatre, artists seem to do this mentally, by means of Eastern meditation techniques (Turner 1982), while physically they might be working in a literally empty room. Remarks on an empty space or psychological emptying of the mind are to be found in writer Hustvedt, who talks about relaxation and avoiding tensions, but also in painter Kvium, who talks about a void, which is the "start-up or ignition of a creative process". He feels inspired by a sort of physical "force", perceptible at cerebral level and where the "brain obviously works in a very different way". In the encounter with the arts he feels both affected by the magic and by the void, which for him are two sides of the same phenomenon: "the magic room and it's actually pretty much empty".

No matter where artists find and get their inspiration, either in the magic of many experiences or the void of the empty room, what we find significant is their awareness about their favourite inspirational strategies and about their preparation of the artistic process. They are aware of what is stimulating them but also about what is annoying or disturbing for their creativity to unfold. As a preparation for the act of creation, the interviewed artists exploit both directions: they can locate the circumstances that do not work for them and they actively eliminate disturbances *before* digging into the creative work. This implies a keen self-awareness of what their preferred creative strategies are and knowledge about oneself, perhaps as a consequence of self-observation or intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner 1994b). They know when and how they work best and actively create the optimal conditions for their creativity to unfold. As a prelude to their compositional strategy, they work towards eliminating disturbances over the long term.

What is disturbing is variously indicated as: family, children, practical duties/chores, giving interviews, lectures, replies to emails, administration. These disturbances are to be interrupted before the creative process starts, because the artistic process is structured and perceived as a connected and organic flow. Siri Hustvedt points at anxiety, tensions and worries as barriers to the emerging of her creativity: "Anxiety, tension, worries. Neuroses are the enemy of creativity. The myth that psychoanalysis robs a person of her creativity is nonsense. If you are under stress it is difficult to work. Misery does not feed creativity".

Strategies to avoid disturbances can be focusing on one task (Nord), relaxation (Hustvedt), "shutting it off" and flow (Jordan).

Regarding administrative tasks, the interviewed artists have different opinions: most of them think that minimising administration is a stratagem that allows for artistic creativity to unfold. Too many and too heavy administrative tasks are mentioned as killing the creative flow. However, a couple of artists contradicted this general agreement, by maintaining that they tend to approach even administration tasks with a creative mind-set (Granhøj, Jordan).

Getting to work: engaging the idea-reservoir

Among non-artists or laypersons that do not work with creativity professionally, creativity is frequently associated to the relatively simple task of getting ideas. According to Weisberg (1993) the need for training creative techniques has generated a whole "creativity training industry" (p. 58). With the promise of yielding more creative workers and therefore more creative products and therefore more revenue, industries have been attentive to the developments in the

field of creativity studies. Contributions in this direction focus often on creative problem solving techniques (see Weisberg, 1993) and on the stage of ideas generation. As an example, we can mention brainstorming (Osborn 1953), the six thinking hats (de Bono 1985) and the vast quantity of creativity consultancy offers on the market. The main issue for private or public companies seems to be to get help with idea generating tasks.

Among the interviewed artists, however, this does not really seem an issue. We found no mention of the layperson's struggle in getting ideas. Idea generation is what least worries and occupies the professional artists we have interviewed. One explanation of this could be that, because they intentionally expose themselves to a large number of diverse inspirational sources, they might construct a sort of reservoir of ideas and inspirations, which they tap into when they need it. This idea is supported in creativity studies that look at creativity as the emergence of insight from subconscious or internalised dynamics (Sawyer 2003, p. 21). Sawyer cites Simonton's cognitive model as an example of internalisation of mental elements that are stored in the brain and released appropriately into combinations of "chance configurations" (Sawyer 2003, p. 21).

Artists might be collecting ideas and inspiration for their idea-reservoirs, not because of biological, divine or genius-related reasons, but because of a long-term and voluntary commitment to the task of artistic creation. In the interviewed artists' narratives, idea generation does not have a prominent place at all. Ideas are there - the artists "just" have to listen to them. In order to do so, they provide themselves with the best conditions for listening to the ideas that are apparently already "there". They provide silence and quiet in order to listen. This silence might be merely metaphorical, in the sense of a place free of disturbances, as in reality ideas might emerge while listening to music or within noisy environments.

Where the ideas are to be found is expressed differently by artists, often depending on the art form they practice: listening to ideas in your head (Hustvedt's "talking head"), seeing or listening in your head (Nord), singing in your head (Nisticò), in the body (Varley), in the process of making (Granhøj, Barba). According to our data, this almost "natural" abundance of ideas starts with early life experiences that have been meaningful, inspiring, encouraging and diverse. These experiences, as the years progressed, turned into a steady mind-set or disposition toward the search for inspirational experiences, individuals, environments or artefacts: a consistent and sustained over-stimulation of senses, aesthetic perception, intelligences and knowledge. We agree with Weisberg (1993) that creativity has nothing to do with genius and that genius is a myth. The accumulation of ideas and inspiration that our artists report is not necessarily due

to extraordinary individual traits nor to divine inspiration, but to a voluntary exposure to inspirational and often serendipitous experiences. Ideas are something one *has* and that does not need to occupy too much place in the compositional process. The artists' effort is rather focused on *shaping* their ideas; what artists strive to find is form and solutions or new problems and experiments. Architect Inger Exner even thinks of herself as someone who is not good at getting ideas ("I do not think I'm so specially good at getting ideas"), but then she tells of an irresistible drive to drawing that shifts the compositional focus on observation and crafts: "all the time I have a deep longing to sit and paint and draw, and if I can get to it when I sit in a meeting and sit and stare at different people, I have an awful great desire to draw them, including you".

Fjord relates ideas generation and inspiration to relational and dialogical experiences. He also points to reflection and the possibility of keeping the artistic creation on hold, allowing for quiet and reflection: "for me it is very much a matter of dialogue, but when the ideas come as if falling from the sky, as often we talk about divine inspiration, this happens on the basis of perception and discussion, and therefore it may well be that you have to give room to quiet sometimes, for example. I think it's just an element that we have an insane need of as human beings, both as creative people, but also in general: in the process you need time for reflection, and so it may well be in between, then it must go really fast, and there must be many discussions". He mentions the feeling of ideas as if they fall from the sky and as if they were divine, but associates the idea generation process to the artistic compositional routine of making, reflecting, discussing and making again. Several other artists mention the feeling of wonder when ideas pop up, "where the hell did that come from?" (Olesen), but they attribute the emergence of ideas to compositional craft: concentration or intensity of concentration, experimentation, memory, flow or group flow.

The artists' narratives provide us with insights into how they work on ideas. How an artist thinks in the making depends on several variables, for instance on the art form or artistic tradition they have chosen, on the possibilities and limitation of their medium, on their own expectations (Hennessey 2010) or needs, on socio-cultural standards or expectations. In spite of this variety, it is possible to look for similarities through the artists' narratives. Our main finding in this field is that, rather than a dualistic process excluding opposing methods, artistic creativity includes both terms of opposition. Creativity studies describe creative processes as contrasting cognitive choices: convergent/divergent thinking (Guilford), vertical/lateral thinking (de Bono), judicial/creative (Osborn), non-remote/remote (Rednick), logic/intuitive (Adams), conscious/unconscious (Freud), reproductive/productive (Gestalt), logical/analogical (Weisberg, 1993),

mind/hand (Kimbell & Stables 2007). These theories imply the succession in stages of the above opposing terms or their mutual exclusion, for instance divergent thinking introduces many different solutions to a problem and tends to characterise introductory stages of the creative problem solving, where convergent thinking tends to close up possibilities and occurs as a closing stage. But as Gardner has suggested "the skilled artist need conform neither to the convergent not to the divergent model", as the convergent/divergent models "barely suggest the complexity of behavior involved in 'Knowledge of a medium'" (Gardner 1994a, p. 14). Becoming good at the job of artistic creativity is a complex activity and, as several interviewed artists maintain, is fundamental to artistic performance.

Virtuosity

According to Rønsholdt the idea development stage is quite short, compared to the rest of the compositional process. All artists emphasise often and insistently that artistic creativity unfolds in connection to the composition of artworks by means of skills, craft, techniques and attention to quality. Virtuosity is, according to Kvium, about a cognitive, identity-related and epistemological state that occurs when artists do not think about technical issues anymore: "virtuosity occurs at that point where we no longer think grip, nor think notes, nor think keystrokes or bow-strokes, one thinks [cognition] music, one *is* [identity] music and understands [epistemology] music at a higher level". Musicians Anders and Benjamin Koppel maintain that persistence is what separates professionals from amateurs. Where artists feel that they are never finished learning, amateurs tend to rely on the stroke of luck, "but can they do it again?" They mention the character Gerard Depardieu plays in the film *Green Card*, where the French actor pretends to be a professional musician and throws himself in an improvised seemingly successful performance. Virtuosity is, according to Benjamin Koppel, the continuous improving as a musician and the collection of expertise, "the more opportunities one has, the more facets and the deeper one can reach". Even though this can be understood as the quest for perfection, Valeur specifies that as an artist one will never achieve the perfection one strives for: "much is being written on the frustration that you cannot make it perfect. And that's because you've done something that cannot be done, one chooses, one wants to describe something in life that does not have a name, one will describe it. But to describe it, one has to use the language, so one wants to make it non-verbal with the language and you know that you cannot win the battle". This striving for quality and mastery and the perseverance implied by it (Dehlholm: "I don't

stop until I am convinced about the result") is related to the internal values of the artistic domain, as Valeur and Nord seem to specify. A former punk musician, Valeur emphasises that "punk aesthetics […] should not be confused with amateur writings", meaning that the punk shabbiness is not unreflected carelessness but rather a different aesthetic choice than the domain of non-punk art culture. Similarly, as illustrator and visual artist who prefers the grotesque, Julie Nord believes that art "doesn't need to be perfect, […] it doesn't need to be nice" in order to be creative or effective. Perfection of the final artistic product or virtuosity in the process of making do not answer to cultural conformity and perfection itself is a concept that can be negotiated within a domain.

What is well-done in the arts can be independent of accepted canons and field-agreed criteria, as one of the functions of artistic creativity is to challenge the established rules within a field and re-invent new rules. Breaking or bending the rules is not only accepted as part of artistic creativity but also expected and nurtured. According to Dewey "every great initiator in art breaks down some barrier that had previously been supposed to be inherent" (2005, p. 235). This might often mean finding new ways of conceiving expertise, perfection or virtuosity. As the oft-quoted Impressionist example shows, the very concept of what is accepted as quality and virtuosity changes through time and cultures. Back in 1874, year of the first Impressionist exhibition, the first Impressionist paintings, which looked like the unfinished work of a poorly skilled artist, raised a scandal. Nowadays, Impressionism is a classical expression that is imitated and reproduced.

The difficulty of mastery is that it "is an implicit or unconscious ability, such as riding a bike" (Hustvedt) and words can fail whoever is attempting to describe it. The trap of mastery could be related to creative performance, no matter if tacit or explicit, aware or unaware, conscious or unconscious for artists. Whether expertise enhances creativity or not is still debated. If mastery becomes mindless repetition of rules or of symbolic representations, mastery can be an obstacle to renewal and creativity (Langer 2005). Nevertheless, in system theories, proficiency in a domain is mostly seen as necessary to the creative challenging of rules within a domain and field (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2003). Kahneman (2011) relates the development of valid intuitions to expertise: even though this is not always true, "valid intuitions develop when experts have learned to recognize familiar elements in a new situation and to act in a manner that is appropriate to it" (p. 12). Without mentioning creativity explicitly, Kahneman talks about a response that is new and appropriate, which are the elements that define creativity. Heuristics, the ability of "finding", grows with the accumulation of expertise, making creativity possible.

In dialogue with the medium

> I have a canvas or a drawing in front of me, so it's actually where I will be reduced to a listener. Just recently I saw a film of myself standing and painting and I must say that I'd never seen it before. I have no idea why it is I'm standing there and what I'm doing. I know what I think, but I never see what the hand does and I do not know where it comes from, actually. Because it becomes completely abstract to me when I stand and look: how the hell do I know that I must put this stroke right there? I do not actually think of it, I actually think of the full picture and I'm standing and thinking much further ahead in the process. It means that the hand is really just an extension of some considerations to what this picture would like to have, because it's not the hand that would like to assign the picture something, it's actually the picture that asks me to do some things (Kvium).

The blank canvas, the empty stage, the unfilled page, the silent instrument: emptiness is only apparently the point of departure for all the artistic processes. The environment where artistic creation unfolds and takes shape is filled with materials (the idea/inspiration reservoir) and with travel mates (colleagues, peers, masters, role models). As painter Michael Kvium describes above, the dialogue he engages with his medium starts with an exercise of attention. He listens to what the painting tells him. With this poetic metaphor he describes his artistic creation as the pursuit of observant attentiveness. The lack of cognitive awareness ("I have no idea why it is I'm standing there and what I'm doing") seems to be replaced by a different kind of intelligence: if the mind doesn't know what is happening, the hand does very well. Logical awareness is suspended to the advantage of intuition (thinking the whole picture and the whole process) and bodily perception and knowledge. Further on in the interview Kvium develops the idea of accepting uncertainty as a part of the creative process: "I think most people have a vague idea of where they would like to go and I think most would typically like to go where we cannot actually put it in words". The place where the artist is unable to express verbally is apparently where the artist creates. According to Kvium, characteristics of this place are a dialogue with the unknown ("we actually get rid of the vast majority of the things we know in advance"), emptiness and openness to possibilities ("you will really have created a vacuum, where you have a chance to put things both in and out in a new way"), visibility of the emerging or of novelty ("really make visible some things and highlight emerging issues and new opportunities and some new interpretations"), curiosity and doubt, humility and patience ("to sit down and wait and wait"). Curiosity and doubt are what feed the very intention of creation, which –for Kvium and others– can only happen in an empty space. Because the space is empty the artist can make visible new questions, possibilities, interpretations, perspectives. What

happens in this void is that the artist is enabled to listen to the work of art's own intelligence pointing out the questions to address, to what is not working and to what is not understandable. The artist engages in a dialogue with the work of art by activating both tangible and intangible skills. The tangible artist's craft is only one of the strategies to enter the creative space and it is continuously balanced and supported by the more intangible practice of patience and perseverance. Observation and perception are the central activities that seem to start Kvium's creative process. What drives the initial observations and initiates the making of art is the formulation of questions: "If there aren't some questions in it and some things that do not work and […] some details that are incomprehensible, why is it that this picture does not work?" If Kvium does not submit to the artwork and is not open to the new questions it inspires, then he does not have the feeling of exploring something new and what's the point of "just illustrating what we fully know beforehand"?

Other artists describe the process of creation in the terms Kvium does, Jordan for instance maintains that artworks make themselves and throw themselves away, while the artist is to be seen as a "receptor". Apparently confirming the myth of a higher force inspiring the artist, Jordan's receptor and Kvium's listening to the artwork do not imply divine inspiration, as in classical and Romantic cultures, but are steadily grounded in the engagement of body, of the senses and of perceptive-analytical skills. According to Arnheim (1997), both perceptions and mental imagery are the products "of a selectively discerning mind" (p. 105), that is to say when the artists silently engage in a dialogue of the senses with the artwork, what they are doing is not passively getting information from the outside, but rather they are actively thinking, decoding, making sense of a creative problem. Digital artist Signe Klejs reports that at Design School she had been taught to find, define and solve artistic problems. She describes the process as an ongoing exploration of the problem itself. According to her, the creation of design starts at first by "defining a problem and exploring it, why is it there? Who has it and how? And in what way?" then the process goes on through the analysis of the problem and then finally by starting generating solutions.

Even though in these processes there is nothing divine, this doesn't mean that the artistic creation is just a matter of mechanical application of skills and procedures. Rather, artistic creativity balances between holding windows open to surprises and the rigour of keeping the process under control. Writer Michael Valeur describes the tension between giving up and holding on by using the metaphor of riding: "where the text takes over and where you just make sure you stay in the saddle, so that it continues to be sound in its form. But that feeling that you are embarking on something you think you want to write, and then

suddenly you get into a small corner, which explodes for you". He portrays the initial interest for initiating the tense dialogue with the medium as a seduction that the artist learns to manage with experience built up during the years.

In this way the process of artistic creation is about voluntarily embracing chaos and working "more or less blindfolded" (Valeur). Humility recurs in Valeur's interview as a courageous act related to art-making: "it's something about daring to be… daring to be stupid". Jazz musician Anders. Koppel defines it as the "unpredictable" and Benjamin Koppel, the "unexpected", "strange". They both point to distraction as a potentially positive element in the creative process, as it encompasses what is not decided beforehand. Designer Bosch says that part of creativity is doing the unexpected and others mention improvisation (The Mira Quartet, B. and A. Koppel) or improvisational techniques (Hustvedt and Ramsland on automatic writing) as part of their artistic creation.

Film director Annette K. Olesen, too, describes the process of artistic creation as navigation through not-knowing and emerging strategies: "one cannot repeat oneself, one has to like that there is something stimulating, a creative incentive from moving constantly". But the not-knowing builds on broad roots of knowing that is technical, aesthetic, cultural and so on. Knowledge from a domain and models from a field must be accumulated at first and then challenged, in order to find one's own voice. When the artist has found his voice models help in navigating the chaos, and the skilled artist is able to lead models where they belong in the process or in the artwork ("I try to start tearing those models down or put them in the process where I think they belong", Valeur).

Throughout the interviews, we read an *intentional* openness to serendipity, to the voluntary surprising oneself, to accidentality. Professional artists are dependent on the steadfastness of the process, they must rely on the fact of finding "it" when "it" is required. As Ramsland straightforwardly puts it: "it doesn't come by itself"! So, finding something by chance, deciding what to use and translate it to one's field of artistic interest is the creative environment that artists strive to build for themselves. This heuristic connotation is well specified in the following excerpt from Valeur:

> So [my students] throw some ideas up, but then I teach them to categorise the ideas in unexpected ways. And this means that they start to process the ideas they get differently than they used to. And the collisions that happen, I try to guide them further on by stretching them out at the extreme. And it creates often those unexpected ideas […] it means that you make some small very intense tension fields, but you also constantly try to grab what others have thought and then make an external event about it. […] Surprisingly something happens that they did not expect, something that suddenly fits together, where they say: God, I had not thought of it when I wrote. So I let them discover chance

and use chance and work forward along a track, so it is again something to move into the unknown. [They] discover how an idea can be formed in several ways […] and we begin to cut to see if there are some of them that can be combined, there are some of those who move in, there are some ideas that can move together, how do they look when they move together?

Valeur appears to adopt an explicit heuristic both in his artistic and in his educational work, letting gut feelings, intuition, chance and discovery lead the process. Heuristic "is a simple procedure that helps find adequate, though often imperfect, answers to difficult questions" (Kahneman 2011, p. 98) and here seems to be instrumentally guided towards artistic creation. We will presently look at how heuristics can be a part of the art of making art, but not before having made a slight digression into one of the fundamental strategies that artists use in compositional tasks: following or making up rules.

Rules

In order to work with chaos and unpredictability, some artists rely on rules and limitations. There are two kinds of artistically fulfilling limitations: the ones that are implicit in the medium and the ones that artists voluntarily generate in their compositional process. The dialogue with the medium is to be seen itself as a challenge against restraints: the plastic material that will not mould, the dancers' bodies that do not bend, the actors' voices that do not stretch, the sound that will not harmonise, the right word that cannot be found are all examples of how artists struggle with limitations all the time. This struggle or dialogue is essential to artistic creativity and to any compositional process. This is expressed throughout the artists' interviews and across art forms.

Even though formulated differently, the recurrent concept is that artists find their creative freedom in constrictions. This defies the idea that creativity unfolds in complete freedom and unstructured frames. Most artists sound very passionate, on the verge of feeling provoked, when they describe their approach to freedom, perhaps because they meet or have to relate to the common stereotype of the messy artist, free of obligations and living in chaos. Embracing chaos and uncertainty is not equal to working in chaos. Being open to what is emerging in the creative process and being ready and able to include new findings in the work of art does not mean that artists work without structures or are disorganised. Rather, in order to embrace chaos and in order to improvise, artists need extremely clear structures and confrontations against obstacles. Dancer and choreographer Palle Granhøj is pretty explicit about it: "it is the limitation that activates my creativity, always… and for freedom

I don't give a damn". Architects Inger and Johannes Exner define architecture as a work that "is subject to space, we take this into account". Inger specifies that the architectural creation is grounded in choices conditioned by many aspects, such as the materials used, colours, light, but also more pragmatic factors, such as economy and function: "You have to have all these things to concentrate on a solution. But then an architect's job consists of many, many things. There is something called economy and there is something called function and sizes, what should it be used for? For the outside must also look good and be in balance". The artists' very choice of art form, medium and material contributes to delimiting the range of options, of possible actions, of likely solutions.

As for the process of making, it is also fraught with all sorts of limitations, as painter Michel Kvium lucidly describes:

> But there are always limitations! We are struggling with them all the time because there are constantly some things you'd like to do and that you cannot. There are always some things you want to achieve that you cannot reach far enough into. It is also the driving force because it goes on and goes on and nothing succeeds sometimes. The limit is one's own life, one's intelligence, one's own energy. You encounter limitations all the time: the size of your workshop is a limitation, the choice of colour is a limitation, the choice of brushes, in my case, the possibilities of the hand, the possibilities of thoughts. Otherwise we would suddenly hit into a divine state if we were without restrictions. We are defined by constraints both as humans, but also as artists and most likely it is the reason we can recognise each other.

According to Kvium, the struggle against limitation is nothing unique for the artists' world, but rather a human universal that distinguishes human beings in general. Artists take up the human being's universal struggle between unlimited ideas and material limitations. They make it tangible through materials (colours, sounds, movements, shapes) and media (words, digital signs, music, spaces).

When rules and limitations are not evidently inherent in the process, some artists make their own rules. Actress Julia Varley tells us that she has been engaging in this kind of challenge since she was very young: "I was in the 5th grade, I was 10 and I remember the teacher congratulating me for a *tema*, an essay in which *I had decided* that I would make very short sentences. And that was strange because what we tried to learn was to make long complicated sentences, but I liked the short ones, and so I decided I was going to do an essay with very short sentences, and then the teacher congratulated me and said it was very well written. So probably this also marked me in a way of writing afterwards". We maintain that this experience, for sure followed by others of the same kind, did indeed mark Varley's artistic expression, but not only her written expression (she

is a writer as well), also her acting that she started professionally in her twenties. She tells us that she creates "difficulties on purpose".

Theatre director Kirsten Dehlhom builds limitations in the form of "obstructions and surprises" or "spatial restrictions" and gives restrictions to her actors. She maintains that "freedom is a very difficult matter to cope with. Tell people: do what you like to do and they don't know what to do. At least it will never turn into an artwork". Rules seem to be a strategic tool especially used in order to lead collective processes, something that artistic leaders "give" to other members of the ensemble –as in the case of Barba, Varley, Granhøj and Dehlholm– but also in order to teach the crafts of artistic composition. As an example of the former, Dehlholm tells us: "I give rules to follow. We need obstacles to make us think in new ways. We are tied to habits and traditions and we need to be forced out of the well-known frames. Collaborations are very important for the development of the work. I let people work for some time before I interfere. But at the end I will be the one to keep it all together. I don't believe in democratic art". She gives rules, but she also wants to be surprised by her actors, so she suspends her interferences at the beginning of the process. Also Granhøj searches for rules, finds them and uses them instrumentally in his artistic composition: "I build up rules, [my dancers] have to learn the rules that I've learned in 20 years. […] I've found a lot of rules… it's about rules and the principle says: rules, rules, rules, rules, and finding more rules, and when [dancers] have been taught up in it, […] find some new rules. The task for me is to find new rules." When rules become "old" or too well known or integrated in the compositional process, they must be replaced by new ones. As an example of how artists use limitations as an educational strategy, we can quote what architect Johannes Exner narrates about his teaching experience at the School of Architecture, and how he framed the limitation issue to his students:

> I have found that problems [are positive]: "congratulations on that, I hope they are really big!" Why? Yes, because if you can solve them, then you're brilliant, you may well be if no one else can solve them. Yes, all problems. I think it's great to be able to turn those things and say, yes, it is a choice, you know it's pretty hard, it's a very big problem that is there, and then you say, it's a challenge. So you could say that your mood can be up and down, but if you turn it in this way, it becomes fun.

In both cases, rules and limitations are tools to engage in artistic dialogues with other members of the field. Granhøj has made of limitations an explicit compositional tool. He distinguishes three kinds of functions for rules: 1) conduct regulation, 2) inspiration for composition and artistic method, 3) working structure. Some rules are made in order to build trust among dancers, for instance. If they

have to dance fully naked in front of each other or improvise without constrictions, some conduct regulation rules must be agreed upon and respected. These are also part of the way the dance ensemble organises its work routines and how dancers accept the choreographer's leading style. But mostly, rules can be sources of inspiration for artistic composition for individuals and groups. Granhøj has developed a whole artistic method based on rules, which he defines "obstruction". Inspired by Nancy Spanier's improvisation technique with actors, Granhøj decided to apply obstructions to the dance process. The technique of obstruction consists in a free improvisation of movements that is "blocked" by an obstructor. Dancers are distributed the roles of improviser or of obstructor with the respective tasks of moving and impeding movements. While improvisers make and repeat their movements, obstructors can freeze one part of their bodies by just touching them. When an improviser's body part is frozen he or she must repeat the same dance improvisation by not moving the frozen part. The role of obstructors is utterly sensitive, as they must build challenges in the colleagues' improvisation without completely killing the action. The obstructors' role is to allow the continuous flow of actions and movements and at the same time to challenge new, unexpected solutions to emerge.

This brings us to the topic of different qualities of rules, disturbances, challenges and limitations. As we reported above, artists prepare for the act of creation by, among other things, eliminating disturbances. This implies a self-reflective awareness on one's own preferences and working styles, but also a sense of agency in the systematic elimination of disturbances. At the same time, artists formulate the positive role of disturbances. However, what they are saying is not that disturbances *per se* are inspirational or valuable in the compositional process. Looking closely, the disturbances that artists feel as positive for their creativity are of a special kind. The intrinsic resistance of the medium feels positive, because the artists themselves have explicitly chosen the medium and the very activity of engaging in a dialogue with the given medium. This choice is targeted to the expression of the artist's idea, therefore is highly meaningful: breaking the code of the medium, experimenting its possibilities, stimulating the unexpected in order to get fresh ideas are activities that are only possible through confrontation with some sort of opposition. Moreover, the resistance exerted by the medium might procrastinate the moment of solution, making possible a delay in finding a solution and the emergence of unexpected directions. Among the other definitions of "resistance", the Merriam-Webster (2014b) proposes "an opposing or retarding force". If we consider the retarding function as a window that opens on a variety of –often unexpected– possibilities and that challenges the obvious solutions, this hindering acquires relevant implications

for artistic creativity. In this way, artists might be able to avoid the first obvious solution and wait for a less obvious, more original answer. The struggle with the medium and its rules, together with the made-up rules and resistances, ensures that artists do not misinterpret their first insights or hunches as the best solutions for their artistic problem, but they persevere in seeking possibilities.

Finally, we wish to highlight the role of meaningfulness in the perception of rules as inappropriate disturbances or stimulating challenges. When artists clean out their artistic space from disturbances, they eliminate what is intuitively and often trivially unimportant to them: Barba wiping away the dirt and leaves from the workshop terrace is an example of this. Granhøj embracing the annoyance of a colleague dancer obstructing his movements, instead, is an example of how a disturbance can be perceived as meaningful and positive for creative work. Even though creativity can be unpredictable and even dry leaves on the floor might suggest new directions to the artist, artists approaching a given creative task do it by having a flair for which direction to take, or better, by intuitively starting the process where the experimentation is more fruitful and suitable.

The art of making art

Creativity studies tend to break the creative process into consecutive stages (for a review of these positions see Sawyer 2003). Our impression, though, is that the processes of artistic creation are better described by synchronicity rather than sequentiality. As Julia Varley puts it "these periods are not defined into A B C, they are very fluid, running in to each other".

According to Sawyer (2003, p. 43) the idea of the creative processes as being simultaneous and overlapping is already present in Guilford and in Siegler.

Our theory is that artistic creativity unfolds through models that include different approaches at the same time and even combines ways of thinking that previously have been seen as opposite. Artistic creative processes seem to be a sort of DNA-like helix-shaped process proceeding with the dynamic of overlapping waves, where different strings are closely intertwined and pulled with different intensities during the successive stages of the compositional process. These strings, as the ones in a musical instrument, are interwoven throughout the whole compositional process but single strings might dominate at different stages of the process if necessary or appropriate. Different steps in the process are taken simultaneously and might recur in several moments of the process. However, a certain degree of diachrony or progression through time is to be found in artistic creativity too at the macro level of life-spans. Ramsland, for instance, describes a circular movement through creation, which starts with

imitation of masters, continues with artistic experiments qualified by mistakes that feed into more experiments, until the artist finds his own way and is able to engage in a new dialogue (or boxing or fight) with masters. The process is refined by the intentional achievement of craft and skills ("refining craft") from a specific artistic domain. Artistic creation demands a slow sedimentation over time both at the micro level of artwork composition and at macro level of life-spans.

Valeur mentions different stages as a sort of bridge between his knowledge about and his artistic ambition for the required task. He reports that he starts his compositions by collecting previous knowledge on the topic: "what do I know?" Secondly, his artistic attempt goes to linking task requirements to his artistic ambition. The tension creates learning, through which "something bigger" can emerge, together with unsolved materials and the feeling –or effect– of seduction.

Figure 4. The process of artistic composition inspired by Michael Valeur.
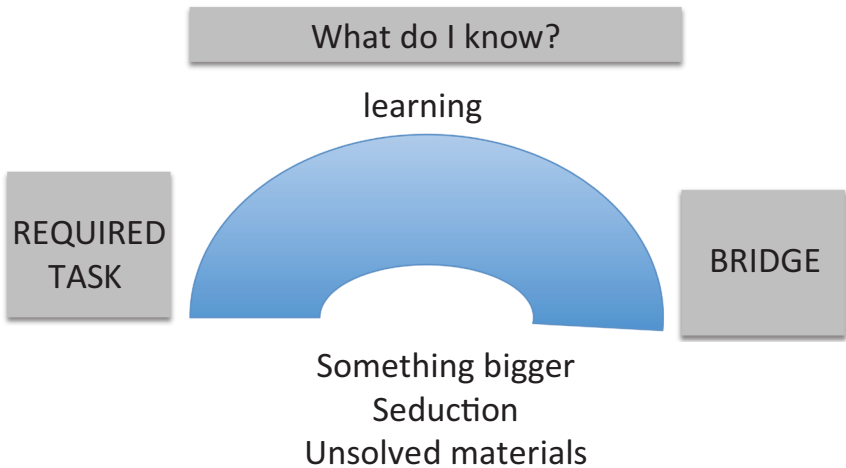
One frequent interpretation of these processes is like being part of association and gut feelings. Hustvedt describes art-making as a wave of high cerebral and low level gut feeling. Several artists tell us explicitly that they rely on instinct and gut feeling, or that they work very much with intuition. At the same time, they stress their use of analytical skills or self-criticism. Fjord interprets this stage as the looking back at the product and making sure that reflection is integrated in

the process: "sometimes you have to take a look back at what has been done and make room for reflection and for the time it takes". Reflection allows for the analysis of works of art and the discerning of compositional choices. Artists take decisions on what to keep and what to throw away in order to finish the work of art.

Analytical skills, though, are only one side of the reflective stage of composition – aesthetic judgment is the other side (Hustvedt). When Barba mentions "what is good for the work" and his actress, Julia Varley submits to her "trust in the director's view", they relate to something very concrete to them: domain rules. In the case of Odin Teatret, these are rules that partly the group has inherited from contemporary avant-garde theatres (Grotowski, Mikhail Chekhov, Mejerhold, Stanislavski) and partly have been made up by the group itself. The group members relate to an aesthetic knowledge that allows for quick decisions that seem to come from the work of art itself. In reality, the embodied and often tacit acquisition of domain rules permits recognition of the best choices to make. The very sensitive aesthetic knowledge, together with heuristic methods, lets Varley "recognise an action" and formulate the right artistic solutions. The internal logic of a work of art, learned during years of artistic practice and possibly through formal education, opens up to an "artistic channel" (Rønsholdt and Klejs) that almost organically helps in taking the right decisions in the process of making. Both Rønsholdt and Jordan mention an almost Darwinist approach to artistic creativity: ideas struggle with each other but only the strongest (the most flexible) and better ones survive the process of creation. Designer Fjord speaks of "criteria" that help him to navigate through resistance (medium, own ambition, economy, lack of time, perfection) and the final product must be meaningful, appealing, funny, seducing, weird. Intuition is what drives artistic choices together with (domain) criteria.

This artistic knowledge guides a series of compositional strategies, such as changing direction if a strategy does not work. For Ramsland, Klejs and Rønsholdt this is embodied in an existential strategy: it means changing the course of their own lives and not only trying something new artistically ("do something new in your life", Ramsland). Bosch echoes this concept by adding: "sometimes you need new people, because to trigger your own process you need to try different ways to work". One of the recurrent stages artists indicate is the one of switching off, sitting down and looking, doing something else, perhaps engaging in an alternative activity (Hustvedt with gardening, Jordan with cooking), or an alternative artistic language, or finding relaxation or meditating.

Several artists, regardless of their art form, describe the compositional process as montage (Barba, Granhøj, Varley, Nord, Rønsholdt) or editing (Ramsland). This implies the cutting into smaller pieces of parts of the process and finding

new, diverse combinations, but also the fact that the process is constantly self-adjusting itself and regenerating. Artistic creativity does not only imply finding new, appropriate ways of fashioning artistic products, but also, at the same time, finding new methods and re-defining approaches, a sort of methodological creativity that follows the product.

In order to do so, generation and destruction are the vital forces to guide the process in the direction of composition. Intuition, analytical skills and aesthetic judgment provide the tools. What is thrown away often "stays in energy" (Varley, but similar concepts are to be found in Barba, Granhøj and Kvium), invisible to the unskilled eye/ear, but contributing to what Eisner would define the "opacity" of artworks (1991, p. 31). Works of art put together several levels of meanings and meaningfulness and hide the process behind this opacity. Goodman (1976) conceptualises the arts' *repleteness* that is the richness of elements to decode and abundance of stimuli at all levels of cognition: intellectual, emotional, bodily. The way artists achieve this is by connecting layers of meanings and meaningful forms in a structured narrative or dramaturgy. The "leftovers" of the process of artistic creation live on in the artwork's final version, as much as the elements that are being kept.

The process of artistic creation is about making choices that are at the same time rational, strategic but also heuristic and intuitive. Rønsholdt describes this process as a continuous changing of direction and reconnecting of elements that are destroyed or building up: "not because one throws something out, it's also about building up of course, [it means] that one takes things a step in another direction or replants them".

One of the leading strategies that artists mention is the *kill your darlings* stratagem (Valeur). Being mercilessly able to sacrifice the beautiful ideas that one has generated, fostered, modified is a skill that artists learn, together with the artistic mind-set that prioritises the internal reasons of the work of art. This means that not only skills are needed (knowledge about the possibilities of the medium, practical skills in the making, aesthetic judgment and so on) but also a certain openness to criticism and self-criticism. Granhøj and Valeur challenge, though, this creative rule-of-thumb and tell us that they use the opposite approach sometimes: *don't kill your darlings*. It consists in the deferring of the "killing", or better in the creative "rule" to keep what is apparently of no use, in the hope of finding secret gifts or unexpected inspiration. Granhøj tells us about the occasion when he first tried this technique and admits his own surprise at the results of it, but also to what extent this experiment was challenging for him. When he first introduced it to his dancers, one of them decided to sing and keep this "darling" that did not fit into the dance performance. The choreographer hated it: "I hated

it because it didn't interest me at all, until it hit me that it was completely amazing to hear the dancer standing and singing, it was the first time, and it was many years ago, and I was even getting limited by the rules. I made the rules and so I had to take the consequences afterwards. Søren proved to be an excellent singer" (Granhøj). As a consequence, singing dancers were more accepted in the Granhøj ensemble and a performance was named after the new rule, *Don't Kill Your Darlings* (1999). Valeur describes the same approach, but in softer tones. He tries to be nice to the ideas he gets and nourishes them lovingly and respectfully: "be a little nice to them, see if they cannot be used in a different way, I think I treat ideas with really great respect".

When the interviewed artists have to take creative choices about their compositional process, they rely on their practical and analytical skills, their knowledge of and about the field and domain they work within, but also, last but certainly not least, on the feedback that chosen individuals will give them. Ramsland and Hustvedt involve their life partners, Ramsland also his friends and editor, Nisticò feels the "need of external ear", Rønsholdt and Klejs have developed their own routines to work collaboratively across art forms, architects Exner and theatre performers from Odin Teatret are accustomed to collaborative processes and reciprocal feedback. Regardless of art forms, artists engage in a dialogue with someone and ask for feedback. What we wish to point out here is the fact that artists embrace even the emotional uncertainty of the feedback process, in order to contribute to the artwork's optimal composition. Inger Exner describes feedback as an emotional challenge of being criticised and accepting criticism, but also as a learning opportunity that can go to terrible waste: "there are other places where people get a task and they have to deliver it, and then they get it back, and then they say 'Approved' without getting to know what is good and bad about the task, one doesn't learn much from it if the teacher has not bothered to answer it".

The artists keep a fixed eye on the final outcome of their process and on the best ways of achieving the results that fit their purpose. This is about channelling creative energy (Ramsland), about enquiry and discovery, but also about feelings and relationships. In the following chapter we will learn more about the emotional and intellectual sides of art-making and how artists feel and think about the reception of their art.

Chapter 4: Artistic emotions and ways of thinking

The present chapter looks at the emotional, cognitive and relational elements of artistic creation. We will focus on the motivational aspects of artistic creation together with the artists' conceptualisation of emotions in the processes of creation. How can we break down the artistic creative process into essential elements? How can we break down these processes at abstract level? While the previous chapter had its focus on preparation for artistic creation and the establishment of a relationship with the work of art, the present chapter will look at how the artists leave the creation room. Which emotions and thoughts are reported retrospectively? How do artists relate to their recipients while they compose? How does artistic creation feel and sound in the artists' narratives?

When the work is done

Beyond the metaphor of dialogue, the interviewed artists actively practice their creativity in relational and dialogical forms. This means, concretely, that artists create *while* talking to someone or having their recipient in mind during the process. Siri Hustvedt talks about a continuous dialogue among artists that can unfold in already existing frameworks or at a more imaginative level. The artistic role models that inspire artists, in Hustvedt's case the books or paintings that have been meaningful to her, contribute to establishing an ongoing conversation with a given tradition, with a domain, with a group of peers. However, artists need a wall to play against and this can be a real recipient, someone that gives feedback and can be trusted. Hustvedt mentions her husband, fellow-writer Paul Auster, who happens to be her ideal recipient and active help in her process of writing. The ideal reader is a basic concept of literary criticism (DeMaria 1978), and is foreshadowed in Barba's archetypes of audiences, which will be discussed further on. What is imperative to emphasise here is the artists' awareness of the artistic field as a dialogic partner and their active choices in the process of artistic composition. Barba, for instance, is very attentive to establishing collaborations with other artists and partnering with scholars in the field of theatre and performance, in order "to take into consideration how the environment in which you work looks at your profession".

During the slow and careful sedimentation required by artistic creativity, recipients are present in several forms. Artists express it differently: from the indistinct "someone" (Nisticò, Nord) to more elaborated description, when artists tell us that they talk to an audience (The Mira Quartet, Benjamin Koppel: "there is no music without audience") that gives the work of art more meaning (Valeur). Olesen says that "in reality it's the audience we want to tell stories to", while other artists in other situations might want to engage in a conversation with themselves or with society at large. The most important point is that the process of creation needs both the presence of recipients and their absence. We find clear signs of an ambivalent relationship to recipients - on the one hand, artists need their presence, but on the other, they need to establish what we could call an induced absence. The interviewed artists include recipients in their artistic project, no matter how wide or narrow the audience involvement, as Barba's "most refined artistic experiment for only 20 spectators" confirms. At the same time, they must suspend their awareness of composing for a recipient if they want to be free of critical judgment. Ramsland writes and Nord draws *as if* recipients where not there. This means that, while composing, artists try to suspend issues of reception or recognition as much as possible. Benjamin Koppel says that jazz musicians focus on their instrument and what comes out of it. They carefully listen to their instrument and not only to "what one imagines the final result should be". They concentrate on what is here and now - the dialogue with the medium and with an ideal recipient. Attention to the final product, to its actual reception and even issues of public recognition are put on stand-by. Hustvedt tries not to walk the "slippery slope of recognition" and Anders Koppel mentions the anxiety that recognition can give to a performer: "the same applies to rehearsals. If you only see yourself at Carnegie Hall next week, playing there […] then everything goes completely into spasms". In her study on writers, Perry finds that they are able to manipulate the presence of the reader in the creative process, inviting real or fictive readers into their creative flow when the timing is appropriate (2005, p. 34).

One more issue is raised by some artists (Ramsland, Hustvedt, Varley): the fact that sharing works of art with others can be a sensitive matter if this happens too early in the process of making. Kvium defines it a sort of shyness or modesty in throwing oneself into such a task where one actually is exposed as an individual, because artists put something of themselves in the work and this can be "a very fragile construction". Works of art should not be shared too early, they are fragile (Ramsland) and their makers are "sensitive about their own work" (Hustvedt). Therefore, they not only carefully choose *who* is going to give them feedback amongst their most trusted peers, but also they choose the *timing* for this to happen in the most giving way. Kvium describes the paradox implicit in dialogues

with critiques, either inner criticism, or fictive or even real critics and arguments on what is dangerous during the creative process: vanity and too much appreciation. If artists choose to get criticism from someone who is too much like themselves or too positively affected by the work of art, then they will miss out on the necessary resistance, in order to challenge solutions and achieve learning.

> Vanity is not healthy in the creative process. In the creative process one must actually demean oneself, so one has to be as neutral as possible and one needs to have as few appreciative voices entering the creative process as possible. Because otherwise there is great danger that in some way [the process] is disturbed. And I'm quite sure that you have to take a whole lot with you into the workshop, fictional characters, but if you choose a lot of fictional characters that in some way are related to yourself, then you get nothing out of it. So you have to actually have some critics in. You have to have some artists, for example, in my case, creating a work that is at least as powerful, but can be quite different, because they are the ones who can formulate questions asking you to justify your [choices]. So you have to defend a thesis. Then you should really also defend each work, and above all to yourself. Does this work well enough? Does it create enough room for me? Is it interesting even for me now that I am finished? Do I want to look at this?

If the answers to these questions are too easy or the investigation is resolved too easily, then Kvium maintains that there is no point in bringing the artwork out of the workshop. It will not be challenging enough, either for the artist himself or for the audience, be they general public or peers within the arts. The latter, in his opinion, can be distant artists, even dead ones, with whom one engages in a qualitative conversation about the artwork. The voices of these models must be invited into the artist's workshop in order to qualify and challenge the act of creation and bend it towards unexpected directions. The act of creation is often described as a movement from the inside to the outside (Hustvedt) or introvert/extrovert (Nord, Ramsland). The fact that this can be therapeutic or cathartic (Hustvedt) does not exclude attention to the audience's experience (The Mira Quartet, Ramsland) and the overall function of the artistic product. This leads us to the topic of the artworks' impact on the "outside" and the purpose of art, as perceived by the artists.

According to Ramsland the purpose of art is "to confront", "to bring forward". For Kvium it is the getting rid of feelings and the "re-writing" of new societal rules, new cultural values or even a new understanding of art itself. Valeur conceptualises it as a fight, a striving for perfection, or as a seduction ("the audience must be seduced") and Dehlholm as the hope of stimulating the audience's curiosity. Some artists, finally, perceive the arts as a commitment to "something bigger than oneself" (Valeur). Designer Rosan Bosch clearly states: "I want to use my creative abilities to actually create a more engaging, motivating world". She is not

alone in this almost political sense of agency. Her former collaborator, designer Rune Fjord, underlines the alternative values that artistic creativity brings about: "to make room for the creative process, I think it just creates a richer world […]. In the end it is not all about economic growth. So when faced with the last day of my life, then it's some other things that count". With a similar rhetoric, writer Michael Valeur expressly labels his purpose as almost political: "I make almost political literature, sometimes in between where I want to go out and change the world". All the above topics contribute in sketching the stage of artistic creation that concludes the act of making and deals with the artworks' life outside the workshop or studio, as the artists perceive it. One fundamental element of this stage is the artist's understanding of the artworks outreach from the workshop or studio to their recipients. The artwork's establishment of emotional and intellectual relationships with recipients brings up the broader topic of emotions within artistic processes. We will now look at the emotional and cognitive implications of artistic composition. What emotional journey is implied in the act of artistic creation? How do artists navigate through thoughts and feelings?

Emotions in the making

The relationship between art and emotions is often taken for granted in line with the Romantic view of artists as mad geniuses, prey to irrational feelings and on the verge of mental illness. True to this stereotype, in his essay *What is Art?* first published in 1896 (Tolstoy 2005), Tolstoy portrays the Romantic author as an unfortunate but brilliant artist who is able to express his feelings, so that readers may share the same feelings. Tolstoy's one-to-one relationship builds a direct and uncritical correspondence between the artist's and the audience's emotions, clearly a legacy of Romanticism. Tolstoy's perspective has been superseded by modern and post-modern art theories, which emphasise diversity and complexity in art. Dewey (2005) and Langer (1953), for example, define artistic processes as a symbolic act that mediates not only emotions, as in Tolstoy, but also opinions, values, ideas, ideals, archetypes etc. According to Gardner, Langer's "characterization of the artist as an expert in the realm of feeling" can be "inadequate, for it neglects both the attainment of requisite skills and the insistent influence of the sociological context" (Gardner 1994a, p. 15). Artistic composition is not necessarily based on personal emotions but can derive from culture-based emotional values, which the artist interprets. This hermeneutical stand is voiced in Julia Varley's definition of artistic creation:

> It's not talking about yourself because you are looking at yourself or examining yourself, you are just telling things that have happened and which interest others. So I think this

also has helped me as an actress - be concrete. It's like you have… you have to relate something and it's not actually expressing yourself, but it's like you have to act, to put together a sequence to show it, and *that* will express, not you.

"Feeling life has been regarded universally as a crucial component of the artistic process" (Gardner 1994a, p. 70) and emotions permeate the whole artistic experience, as compositional materials, as part of artistic creation –the making– or as appreciation of artworks. In different ways the artists feel a variety of emotions while they struggle to shape their vision of a particular material, using a specific medium. Aesthetics, since its first systematic steps, has intertwined emotions and art (Baumgarten) or seen art as education of emotion (Hegel). Alternatively, the arts have been interpreted as dealing not with senses but feelings (Zahavi) or as both (Merleau Ponty), as communication of emotions (Dewey) or as transformation of emotions (Vygotsky).

Damasio (1994) distinguishes emotions and feelings but sees them as two sides of the same neurological process. If emotions are "the collection of changes in body state connected to particular mental images", feelings are "the process of continuous monitoring, that experience of what your body is doing while thoughts about specific contents roll by" (p. 145). Damasio's taxonomy distinguishes three different emotional inputs: feelings can spring from universal emotions (such as joy, anger, fear); feelings can arise from more nuanced and experience-based emotions (e.g. ecstasy, euphoria), feelings can be neutral in case of background feelings, "the feeling of life itself, the sense of being" (Damasio 1994, p. 150). In addition, emotions can be primary or secondary. Primary emotions are defined as above, whereas secondary emotions are the emotional reactions to other feelings, which are often caused by the beliefs we have about experiencing certain emotions. Secondary emotions are culturally determined; for example, a person may feel ashamed as a result of being anxious or sad or scared, depending on personal and cultural beliefs. In this regard, some emotions are interpreted as positive or negative, depending on the culture of provenance.

The artist's take on emotions, as related to the process of creating, contributes further levels of reflection on the overall nature and definition of feelings and emotions. In the interviews, one of the recurrent references to feelings is to perseverance (The Mira Quartet) that is, holding on even in bad times (Ramsland) and consists of the fact that "one goes on and on and on" (Rønsholdt). Positive feelings are mentioned in relationship to creative work, but also more generally as an attribution of being an artist. The creative or inspirational space as source of well-being is mentioned by Inger and Johannes Exner, Dehlholm and Valeur; humour by Klejs and Rønsholdt; gratitude by Klejs; playfulness by Valeur, Klejs and Rønsholdt (and others indirectly). Recurrently, artists mention the pleasure,

enjoyment (Ramsland, Varley) and happiness of art-making (Jordan), love of art (Dehlholm) and its processes (Olesen: "I love it"), pleasure achieved from art experiences (Hustvedt, Nord, Dehlholm, Jordan). These references can be generic but also specific explanations about pleasurable experiences, for instance the members of The Mira Quartet enjoy playing together a given genre of music. They emphasise the collective dialogue (also found in Valeur when he meets "others that you click with") and also the preference for a specific kind of music. As motivational theories confirm (Amabile 1996a), being able to work with what one likes makes the tasks at hand meaningful in a deeply existential way, so much so that hardship is easily overcome and undisturbed concentration is achievable. About artistic creation Jordan says:

> It's motivating, it's inspiring, it's growth, human growth and potential. And that is exactly what I said, that they take this element of art out of schools, they are taking a part of human growth and a part of the brain and the ability to manoeuvre in that space, which is basically like manoeuvring in life, quite frankly. You have a problem […], it's you and this thing and it's a very powerful […] self-help element.

She significantly links the emotional side of artistic creativity to human development and growth as developmental theories do (Sawyer et al. 2003), but also to an almost therapeutic purpose (self-help). The achievement of artistic mastery can be associated with positive experiences and identity building: "the more positively people experience creative activities, the more creativity becomes a part of their personalities", creativity transforms the creator as well as the artwork, "creativity creates the self as well as external artefacts" (Moran & John-Steiner 2003, p. 78).

Positive emotions

Positive emotions about artistic creation might emerge from the "pleasure and the pride of welding well", as Barba maintains, emphasising craftsmanship over cognitive processes. Or they can derive from intangible elements, such as curiosity (the individual's cognition) or heuristics (working methods and routines). In either case the artist's attitude is one of experimentation and openness, and the recurring feeling is love of the creative process (as also reported in Perry 2005, p. 27).

According to Annette K. Olesen, artistic creativity is related to curiosity, openness to surprises and serendipitous findings, but also the intentional seeking of situations that can excite curiosity and surprise. To her, artistic creativity

> is connected somehow with constantly moving, that is because I am a curious person, I think that this is in my DNA, so I like to be surprised. There are some people who do not like to be surprised, if they have a work task in front of them. They see it as disruptive

to be surprised or that one even does something different. I can also of course [be disturbed] if the surprise is merely destructive, if I experience it as destructive, but overall, most times I think that surprise is constructive because it challenges me and also it keeps the material alive. The first film I made, *Small Accidents*, [was based on a] project Fuchs and I developed together with the actors, on the assumption or from a decision that we did not actually know what the story should be about at all. [There was an] extreme openness to what is surprising, what is possible and toward the actors [who were] as much in the dark as us of course, [and openness to the actors'] take on some directions. So in many ways you can say *Small Accidents* was an endless chain of surprises. But I also learned that it is not something you need to be afraid of, it can facilitate great creativity, since you force… you are forced into some directions where you just wouldn't have imagined that you would go.

Olesen starts by addressing the individual character traits that, according to her, portray her personal feeling of openness towards artistic projects. These positively perceived feelings of curiosity and surprise might turn to rather negative experiences, if felt as disruptive in the course of the artistic making. Olesen does not go on to specify where the difference lies, but later on her quote touches implicitly the element of meaningfulness. The project with her colleague seems to be informed by mutual trust and agreement with collaborating actors. The endless chain of surprises, even though it was forcing or obliging the process, is remembered positively as a creative experience.

Positive emotions, in this and other cases, originate from artistic knowledge - knowledge of genre or medium (The Mira Quartet), or general knowledge on being human (Kvium, "a part of what we call art is very wide, a description of human emotions that are very difficult to touch verbally"), or knowledge of each other, especially in the performing arts (The Mira Quartet).

Going back to the matter of intentionality, what arises from our interviews –unsurprisingly– is that artists deliberately build conditions that are optimal to them in order to meet positively the experience of art-making or art appreciation. Benjamin Koppel considers enjoyment of the process of music composition or performance as the necessary condition for art to emerge: "one must learn to love it while one does it. For instance, if you do not like to write a musical score, so you shouldn't be a composer. If you only fix your gaze on the moment when it becomes great, when I stand with the finished work, and it is about to be played… if you only focus on that, then you do not [love the process], you should love it and also [love] to practice". He maintains that one must learn to love the process, even in its routines ("also to practice"), so we infer that this enjoyment can be learned or taught. Similarly, Signe Klejs suggests that joy in art-making can be "found". She lists the creative strategies that she uses and says: "it's probably very much humour […] it's also about finding a desire and a joy in

it". Probably suggesting the same intentional search for what is pleasurable in art-making is the following quote from Michael Kvium, where he, on the one hand makes the distinction between artistic activities that the individual is –almost naturally– drawn to and the ones that are pleasurable but do not meet the artist's skills or main interest, such as music for him. On the other hand, he hypothesises a transfer of cognitive skills from drawing, which he is interested in and good at, to music training that needs the same kind of deep concentration and commitment to experiment.

> I would be extremely bad at sitting down and learning musical notation and playing from musical notation, something that other people [can do]. I can listen to music, I am active but I also have a burning desire to sit down and try to find out what is the connection in music? What happens if I press this and these keys down on a piano? And what happens if you do this and that? And you could say I have some advantages: that I love from the start the fact of being able to just sit down in peace and draw.

Kvium seems to imply a universal cognitive and psychological skill, perseverance in concentration, which might be the emotional key to artistic creation in general. However, he also expresses doubts on the artists' capability of relating seriously to the matter of emotions and art: "It may well be that there are some artists who are trying to reduce it, really maybe to get rid of all that emotional side, but actually now there's none of us that knows where feelings are, they are most likely in the brain as everything else, but we'll have to accept that we are not fully in control of ourselves or our process". He goes on to say that artists should accept this not-knowing, well aware of the fact that the artist's knowing is a matter of intuition (sensation) and the artist's choices are not made according to general criteria of goodness or rightness, but on "what works" here and now for this specific work of art. With this pragmatic and partly heuristic view on artistic creation, he also claims the right to hold the issue of emotions open to artistic investigation, not in the sense of the expression of emotions, but rather in a more questioning and wondering attitude. He claims that no one, not even artists, knows anything about emotions, but the arts can investigate them with openness.

One interesting remark on positive emotions in artistic creation concerns what the artists say about their receivers. Valeur, for instance, finds the ultimate purpose for his work when it finally meets its receiver: "I have had the pleasure of writing for them there, so I know well the pleasure and it is big and good, but I feel nothing is done until it has met… has got hold of the reader". This stage of the creative process is full of pleasure no matter how large the audience is: "an audience who really enjoys what I'm doing, so it can also be a small audience, it can just be anyone struck by my work". What the artist perceives as enjoyable

here is the acknowledgment of the audience's satisfaction. In a slightly different setting, Johannes Exner mentions how exhilarating it can be to witness the arousal of interest in other people. Now in his eighties, the architect has often taught his craft to university students and found out that there are many topics that can interest people, but a very special moment is when "they discover what is insanely interesting. That was an incredible happiness. Then you can go anytime in the most adverse weather and find something that's damn interesting". How interest is relevant to creativity will be unfolded later on, not before having cast a glance at a specific artistic emotion generated during flow experiences.

Artists in flow

Recurrent descriptions of the feelings involved in artistic creation point to a positively felt state of deep concentration and calm. In psychology this state is defined as *flow* and has been studied over about forty years by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. Since he published his ground-breaking volume *Beyond Boredom and Anxiety* in 1975, Csikszentmihalyi has interviewed a wide variety of professionals trying to understand the source of their creativity. What he repeatedly found was the occurrence of a deep motivation, described in terms of focused concentration on a given task. Especially interested in matters of artistic creativity, topic with which he began his career (Getzels & Csikszentmihalyi 1976, Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson 1990), Csikszentmihalyi has described the state of flow and conceptualised it in a system theory. The term has gained quickly not only academic recognition but also a widespread acceptance in several fields, especially education. The metaphor of "being in flow" can intuitively be understood and related to. Flow is the state of profound concentration on a meaningful and challenging task, followed by a deep sense of enjoyment and fatigue. Individuals report total immersion into the present moment and the cutting out of any sort of disturbances or other issues to allow exclusive concentration on the task in hand (Csikszentmihalyi 2000, Csikszentmihalyi 1990). Everything else seems to be forgotten, even the sense of time is altered. The passing of time is disregarded, as are physiological needs such as hunger, thirst or tiredness. A laser sharp attention to the task makes the work feel easier and the individual feels in absolute control. The goals of the task are or become clear, feedback is immediate and perceptible.

Our artists define this state as flow (Ramsland, Granhøj, Fjord) or as the release of endorphins (Granhøj) or as a Zen-like learning experience (Jordan, "you are in do-mode, it's very Zen - that's how I would describe it. It's a calm level of meditation and very powerful and empowering and when in that moment I feel like I learn the most"). It has also been described as a radar function

that is more similar to mindfulness (Barba, "a radar begins to function, a radar which perceives the least signs, symptoms, reactions around you"). Some artists describe a state that is more a relational version of flow, a group flow (The Mira Quartet), which is perceived as "riding on the same horse" (Olesen). They mention flow when they describe their creative processes and they strictly correlate it to creativity: "in reality one experiences flow, when one is in a creative process" (Fjord). The psycho-emotional charge of flow makes it at the same time a very fulfilling and joyful but also an incredibly exhausting experience. As The Mira Quartet members mention, they feel completely absorbed and do not take any breaks. Emotionally fulfilling, focused and deeply concentrated work is not sustainable over long periods, even though individuals can be differently capable of withstanding a long performance or period of concentration. Writer Morten Ramsland recurrently defines his creative process in terms of flow experiences. He explains that automatic writing, the specific compositional technique he uses, is instrumental to his getting started, overcoming the possible anxiety of the white page or the blank canvas. This process seems to activate unconscious sources of inspiration, giving the artworks a spontaneous character. Ramsland describes the sudden transition from random words to structured ideas and the sustained suspension of criticism that this stage of writing needs. Looking back at the process, the writer is almost surprised by the results. Ramsland and Fjord describe the surprise of going back to the artwork after a process of "letting go" or suspension of critical thoughts. The wonder in the presence of a finished work of art or of the tangible emerging of artistic structures and materials is due to the fact that the act of artistic creation might be unconscious, partly unconscious or instrumentally unconscious. Several other artists mention the feeling of awe when ideas pop up, for instance Olesen describes the artistic process as an "incredible wonder", but most of them, like Rønsholdt, point to the fact that is no magic: "good ideas can survive anything, and I do not think there is anything magical in the way of the creative process". However, all are aware of the fact that the magical or divine interpretation is nothing but a cultural construction expressing lack of understanding about the source of the creative process: "where the hell did that come from? That is why Bach wrote *Soli Deo Gloria*. […] I have a different approach to things, but he probably felt the same wonder - where the hell?… it must have come from God. This is not the way I see it, I want to stress again, but it's really strange" (Olesen). Rønsholdt adds that "the idea does not just fall from the sky, it comes down at the moment when you are concentrating on something actually", in other words artists might have the feeling that something magic or divine is happening to them when they create, but creative materials do not fall from the sky effortlessly, they must be worked out by means of deep concentration.

Valeur reiterates similar concepts and underlines further dimensions: hard work over time, active experimentation and enjoyment. He proposes a pragmatic and secular view of artistic creativity, where the artist creates "not because one has a secret fire, but because you have done nothing else for so many years, so it's something you just feel, so it is about experimenting and trying a lot of things. I think that's fun". What is even more relevant to our interest in artistic creativity is the clear statement of purposiveness in the Ramsland interview. Ramsland makes clear that flow experiences in writing tasks do not just happen by themselves, the artist must chase after them, nourish them, create the right conditions for these experiences to happen. One more important detail is that flow experiences are not sought after for their own sake, but because in this state artistic creativity unfolds. Needless to say, in the case of artistic creation, flow experiences or states are instrumental to the main purpose of artistic processes: the creation of artworks. Because of its bodily and psycho-emotional effects (high level of dopamine, effortless concentration, enjoyment) flow might be thought to be a state that artists would wish to experience as often as possible and as long as possible, regardless of its effects on the creative process. But actually, the strong and recurrent feeling of flow seems rather to be, in the arts, a focused experience.

Ramsland's body is greatly affected by flow, but not necessarily in order to just feel good. The body feels "soft", "warm" or fast ("like speed") and it's both relaxed ("letting go of some physical control") and tense ("I scurry about and make gestures"). Ramsland describes bodily changes (e-motions) while he is writing and experiencing a positive state of self-forgetfulness: the body is soft, warm, tense and the artist is compelled to dance and shout aloud. The writer *induces* this state by letting go of control and by automatic writing, but when the feeling occurs he tries to control it in order to create. Flow has a specific purpose within artistic processes of creation: triggering, facilitating, guiding the *flow* of creation.

Negative emotions

In spite of the assumption that no emotion is in itself "positive" we can nevertheless examine whether emotions in art experiences are mostly positively charged. We might even make the point that emotions in the arts *are* always positive, on the strength of their effect on the perceiver and the maker. But let us start by addressing subjectively perceived negative emotions in art experiences.

When looking at the paintings of Danish artist Michael Kvium, the observer is unlikely to feel positively uplifted, but rather disgusted at the monsters and guts or debris portrayed. In the play *Waiting for Godot* audiences can experience a

feeling of discomfort or anxiety when nothing happens twice, especially towards the end of the second act, when the characters repeat the same routines in a growing sense of seeming desperation and helplessness. They talk, they eat, they blame each other, they sleep, they fall down and they are waiting, but nothing decisive happens and they continue to wait. The point is that Godot never shows up (Chemi 2013). In Pina Bauch's modern dance audience can perceive the seemingly discordant movements as a blatant provocation. Readers of Joyce's Ulysses since its publication in 1922 have responded with rejection or outright anger at a work that breaks with all the standard conventions of the novel as a genre. Certain types of modernist music that challenge classic tonality and harmony can inspire a literal *fuga*, an "escape", rather than positive emotions. Art is not by definition positive at all, neither for the perceiver nor for the maker. Effects of artworks on recipients are described in several studies on artwork reception but our interviews indicate that art-making as a human activity is fraught with frustrations and conflicting emotions. To Kvium, for instance, the acknowledgment of human despair is what separates art from dogmas and credos:

> curiosity first and foremost - you must be willing to venture into places that do not necessarily make life easier. Art doesn't do that. Those who are trying to make art into something that makes us better people or something like that - that's something you can get in church, you cannot get it from art. Art might equally well make us much worse and much more unhappy, or at least make us aware that we are much more unhappy than we thought and make us aware that we are blinder than we thought, making us aware that we are very limited. And I think all artists are working against their own limitations all the time, trying to figure out how do I exceed my limit? How can I fool this restriction?

This gives rise to the question: in what sense can the concept of positive emotions be used in the world of art and art perception? In which sense can we argue that art incites positive emotions without denying art's brutal realism, as described by Kvium? The point is fundamental for the argument of a possible transfer of learning from the arts to education or organisations. If optimal learning is conveyed through dynamics of positive emotions, regulation of feelings and positive functions of negative emotions (Charyton et al. 2009), then it is worth exploring the nature of negative emotions in artistic experiences as narrated by the artists themselves.

In our interviews, artists more often mention positive than negative experiences. The reason for this is basically because our interviews are biased towards positive narratives: asking artists about their very first memory of their meeting with the arts, soliciting narratives on their main passion (their art and artistic process) and on their main motivational drives, how they learn and develop,

will inevitably bring forth positive feelings. Asking someone who is passionate about a given activity to talk about this activity is a request that is destined to be positively biased. However, the interviewed artists give us a hint of what they feel disturbs their creativity and their work in general. The most frequently mentioned negative emotion is the fatigue that follows periods of deep concentration on artistic tasks (Ramsland). After having been in flow, artists feel exhausted, tired, emptied (Ramsland, Rønsholdt, Olesen). The artistic process can be so emotionally and cognitively charged that "sometimes you need to shut it off", as Jordan says. She continues by describing the shutting off of creativity process as a recharging of energies, regeneration: "Sometimes you can just do nothing but create, create, create, and then all of a sudden the brain is fried because you just can't see anymore. I think this idea of invention and seeing things differently and transforming them also [is] like if you do too many mathematical problems which also results in… visions that are shut down".

The necessary role of pauses is, in our opinion, a fundamental part of artistic discovery, as they enable finding what is not decided beforehand. Olesen describes her artistic creation as "a mixture of going on and quitting", while Valeur, if he has been in the process of creation too long, needs to step out of it and find a "place where everything is not so specific". Distractions as possibly positive elements in the creative process are conceptualised in Fjord like a battery to be charged as in the model below. Designer Rune Fjord conceptualises creation as a warehouse of inspirational images, impressions, dialogues and a balance between wilderness and quiet moments. This complex reservoir is to be charged by a sort of battery made of time, individual will and dialogue. By means of flow experiences, defined by Fjord as what feels easy, as a self-referring force that influences creative fluency, the artist achieves artistic creation and dialogue.

Figure 5. The warehouse-battery model, inspired by Fjord.
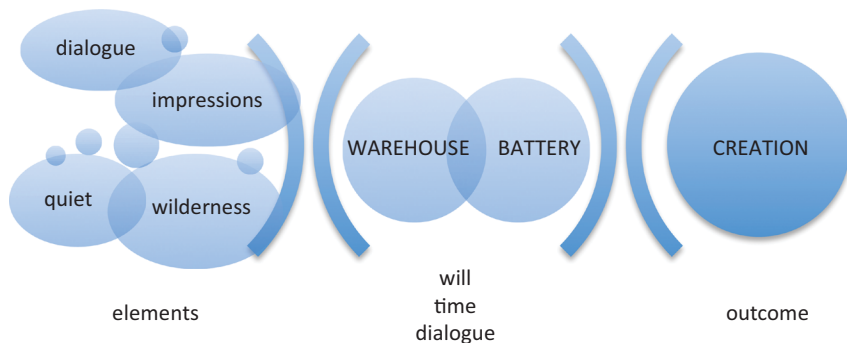
The description of artists' feelings about artistic creation is a complex –often contradictory– navigation both for our artists and for us as researchers. Though Ramsland emphasises that the feeling of exhaustion occurs *after* and not during flow experiences, this contributes to nuance the emotional component of artistic creativity. For instance, movie director Annette K. Olesen discerns different sides of emotional negativity in art-making. On the one hand, her work can be "extremely tedious at times", on the other, the high level of uninterrupted commitment to her job can be exhausting, especially if judged by non-artists:

> I have friends who do not make movies, nor are even close to artistic industries and professions, and sometimes it's very difficult for them to even partly understand my working hours, or to understand that I can be […] very busy when I'm up to something, and I do so because it is not just a profession, it's me, it's an investment to me. This is sometimes very exhausting.

Their extreme commitment to their job and developed sense of passion turn some specific kinds of challenges into negative resistance that artists try to diminish, address or eliminate. This might take the form of administration tasks for some (Fjord, Nord), for others it might be the lack of economic support ("missing funding", Granhøj) or lack of recognition (Hustvedt) or lack of a trusting and trustful community of collaborating artists (Dehlholm). Even more interesting, some artists label as negative some specific components of their creative effort. What musicians from The Mira Quartet call "listening technically" or the issues that bad artistic leadership can bring forth are far from being positive challenges that stimulate their creativity, but barriers to the unfolding of artistic creativity. Palle Granhøj, too, mentions that it can be "terribly frustrating" being in the creative room, dealing with obstructions of any sort, even if obstructions are the chosen method of work. Similarly, Olesen admits that it can be extremely castrating for the creative process if one is due to collaborate with someone who always says "no". Artistic processes can be very delicate and tantalising (Valeur).

One interesting contribution to this theme comes from actress Julia Varley, who mentions a couple of deeply meaningful experiences that challenged her professional and human development. When she was in high school she witnessed a man screaming vulgarities at a group of girls who were demonstrating for their political ideals. The feelings of unjustness in this situation made her do something very concrete: she chose to step into the politically engaged group and demonstrate together with them. With the same emotional pattern, she turned the feeling of being of no use when she first joined Odin Teatret into a drive for learning and development. We understand these episodes as confrontations

with difficult learning experiences and turning negative emotions into positive development and learning.

Bridging positive and negative

According to Gombrich (1959, p. 47) apparently negative emotions aroused in encounters with the arts, when shock and adjustment undermine the individual's ontology, can be beneficial to learning and growth, if they lead to e.g. catharsis (Aristotle) or psychological development (Freud). According to Eco, both Freud and Aristotle hint at the fact that artistic experiences carry an implicit learning effect: "the metaphor is not only a means of delight but also, and above all, a tool of cognition" (Eco 1984, p. 100). Eco's semiotic approach, which he links to biological processes by stating that "making shortcuts within the process of semiosis is a neurological fact" (Eco 1984, p. 129), is consistent with Gombrich's psychology of art and most cognitivism. Gombrich defines thoughtful thinking (Perkins 1994) within the arts as "riddles" to be cognitively understood by means of registration of differences (Gombrich 1959). In a similar approach Perkins (1994) identifies several cognitive outputs of arts experiences (wide-spectrum cognition, dispositional atmosphere, multi-connectedness) and aligns them with bodily-sensory perceptions (sensory anchoring, instant access) and motivational elements (personal engagement). In other words, Perkins maintains that when we look at art we activate different kinds of cognition, e.g. "visual processing, analytical thinking, posing questions, testing hypothesis, verbal reasoning" (1994, p. 5), build up dispositions to deep thinking, and encourage connection-making with personal and intimate issues and social, extrovert, universal themes. By doing so, art experiences also involve a motivational level: works of art *are made* to draw and hold attention, no matter if positive (e.g. sympathy) or negative (e.g. anger). The arts "invite and welcome sustained involvement" (Perkins 1994, p. 83). The work of art is always there, as an anchor, a witness to one's reflection, no matter if it is the original or a photographic reproduction or a vivid memory, in the case of performing arts. The senses are activated and sharpened by the object observed, "you can [always] check something with a glance, point with a finger" (Perkins 1994, p. 83) even in the performing arts, where memory works as imprint. Being present at artworks as observer or maker, in the above perspectives, is always a positive act, rich in development and learning, no matter whether the experience or product has a positive or negative charge.

Some of the interviewed artists describe the bridging of the positive/negative poles and substantiate it differently. Valeur, for instance, bypasses the very duality of positive and negative, stating that what is relevant in the artistic

creative process is the depth of thinking and involvement, which can paradoxically contain both positivity and negativity:

> For me it has never been important whether it was positive thinking or negative thinking, for me it has been more important if it was deep thinking or shallow thinking. And good art gets sharp by its depth and depth contains the same amount of light and darkness, or, it contains the same amount of tearing things down as of building things up. So if you cannot… if you do not master both, then it's just not good enough.

A similar approach can be found in Barba, where artistic composition is portrayed as an emotionally hard but rewarding struggle. The theatre director extends the emotional dilemma in the arts to the –emotionally paradoxical– enjoyment of the process of struggling:

> [it feels good] not when I solve but when I am struggling. This situation is connected with a feeling also of anguish and despair. I repeat to myself that I will not manage it this time. You're driving through a landscape which is grey and never ends, and suddenly you see the sand, a tiny piece of blue sky, and a beach reveals itself to your eyes and you become aware that that you are leaving behind the grey season, the oppressing feeling that there was no way out. I start discovering my orientation and this orientation is not something, which I knew when I started, it is a surprise, an amazement, almost a chock.

This quote almost seems to contradict what other artists maintain about the effort of concentrated attention, which feels enjoyable and easy while flow experiences are going on, fatigue and exhaustion coming after. What Barba says here is that he enjoys the challenge *per se* while the process is progressing. The very struggle is full of expectation, as the metaphor of the grey clouds relates. Palle Granhøj also mentions challenges, but in his artistic processes obstructions are balanced by practices in safe environments. If the dancer is doing his materials and routines all day long "it is very safe to come down [to the studio] for the dancer, for they know that this is how it is done". This optimal balance between the feeling of challenge and of safety recalls the flow balance. Moreover, enjoyment *per se* indicates an *autotelic* pleasure, which in the arts is a fundamental prerequisite for the very choice of initiating a creative project. It follows that this enjoyment has actually a *telos*, an instrumental end or purpose: the making of art. As jazz musicians Anders and Benjamin Koppel say in their interview, if artists don't enjoy the process in itself, they cannot create and hold on to the challenges of the creative process.

Fredrickson and Branigan have explored the concept of positivity and define emotion as follows: "Emotions are short-lived experiences that produce coordinated changes in people's thoughts, actions, and physiological responses" (Fredrickson & Branigan 2005, pp. 313-332). They believe that positive emotions

are able to expand the individual's attention, cognition and action: "[emotions] broaden the scopes of attention, cognition, and action, widening the array of percepts, thoughts, and actions presently in mind" (2005, p. 315). Positive emotions appear to be active agents in extending individual cognitive strengths and building emotional resilience or robustness. Their studies show that positive emotions are able to expand individual learning potential and develop optimal knowledge. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory is based on the belief that positive affect can influence learning by generating ideas that are: unusual, flexible and inclusive, creative, open to information, effective. However, these studies do not specifically consider emotions arising from experiences with the arts, but are more generally concerned with psychological states.

The intellectual dimension of art experience and enjoyment is also emphasised in Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1990), where the cognitive effort in the decoding stage is interpreted as a complex problem solving approach that intellectually can be very satisfying. The intense involvement of attention that individuals engage in response to a visual or auditive stimulus in the arts occurs for no other reason than to sustain the interaction with the artwork. The experiential consequence of such a deep and autotelic involvement is "intense enjoyment characterised by feelings of personal wholeness, a sense of discovery, and a sense of human connectedness" (Csikszentmihalyi & Robinson 1990, p. 178). What in this perspective is valued as satisfactory is the resulting solution to a challenging problem, which emerges from a cognitive process with a purpose in itself (autotelic). In other words, individuals engage in artistic activities because the experience is rewarding in itself, because of the cognitive challenge that is being addressed. The generated emotions are intense and positive (joy, wholeness, curiosity) and meaningful to the individual (personal, human), and they relate to fellow human beings (connectedness) and the world in a deep desire to explore (discovery). Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson see this positive synergy as valuable in relation to learning and education because it is able to arouse learning-enhancing emotions, such as commitment, curiosity, desire to learn and ease of learning.

Throughout our interviews we found several references to the connection of problem solving to positive emotional states. Problems are mentioned as something to be sought out, something to be enjoyed and something to be solved. Problem finding suggests the heuristic nature of artistic creativity and problem solving the implicit cognitive effort involved in understanding artistic problems. The affective side, already mentioned in Barba above, introduces a whole new field of attention to the relationship between emotions and creativity. The satisfaction of turning a problem or crisis into something good is voiced in Johannes

Exner's description of the creative process: "you have a very big problem, and then you say, this is a challenge. So you could say that your mood swings up and down, but if you control it, it becomes fun. And we have been… we've had many crises [in our architectural firm], so I do not know, we have also had cases where we have pulled out because we couldn't deal with [it], and so you could say it was also a shame, but oh well…" This architect in his eighties is a model of optimism and resilience. During our interview he described ironically how his old-age ailments gave him the opportunity to observe how physical settings can affect health and how hospitals and medical firms do not have any idea of which spaces patients feel as comfortable or uplifting. His strong resilient character also permeates the story of his recovery and he describes his morning walk routine as being still a discovery every day. In his case, we believe that a strong component of his persistence and curiosity is due to his character traits. However we do not believe that personality or biological traits alone can drive creative individuals to flourish or artists to fully exploit their artistic creativity. Culture, environment and relationships are fundamental in the artist's growth and fuel the core element of an artist's persistence: motivation.

Motivation, resilience and persistence

Common to creativity studies is a particular attention to the motivational side of any creative endeavour (Hennessey 2010). Creative individuals and groups tend to hold on to a problem through all sorts of challenges and in spite of all sorts of adversities. Artists, specifically, have proven throughout history their ability to master the skills of persistence. As Nakamura and Csikszentmihalyi (2003) discuss in their empirical study on creative individuals –including artists– who have had long-term engagement with creative tasks, persistence is one of the key characteristics of creativity in later life. Probably due to the arts' inherent heuristic function, professional artists are called to be or become exceptionally resistant to constraints. In order to navigate through uncertainty, artists need to have or develop perseverance and determination. A further hypothesis might be that the social role of the arts in challenging the establishment is the reason why artists are recurrently left at the margins of society. Values of cultural renewal or ideological provocation are implicit within the arts as one of their functions, together with aesthetic uplifting, appreciation of beauty, divertissement, ideological statement, transmission of knowledge or values, cognitive effort and so forth. Art genres can hold this function to a higher or lesser degree, depending on the socio-cultural context and historical period. For instance classical ballet is not, in our contemporary Western society, means of radical renewal in society.

However, both incremental and radical changes continuously occur within the genre and practice of ballet. Conservative or totalitarian societies generally react strongly against this role or function of the arts, with the consequence that in these socio-cultural conditions artists acquire a marginal role. Struggling for their own existence and right to exist has always been the artists' life-condition, together with the creative task of struggling with a medium or material. As Julia Varley says: "you have to be patient and work hard, and that is not something which is obvious, because a lot of people think that acting is just, yes, being inspired by something".

Creating something new with value is often an undertaking that comes with the ability of persuading others of the appropriateness of the creative solution (Runco 2010, Simonton 1995). Standing up to societal pressure to persuasion and the open heuristic method makes artistic creativity a hard nut to crack, and artists exceptionally disposed to persist against adversities. Hustvedt mentions almost matter-of-factly the acceptance of hardship as a part of the artist's identity: "[…] Hardship can be good. None of us can avoid it, after all. Resilience can come out of hardship, and that resilience also plays a role in becoming an artist". With Weisberg (1993) we believe that the artists' resilience in creative tasks is nothing but an ordinary process, common to and shared by all individuals. However, unlike Weisberg, we wish to propose that artists are trained to continually learn and employ these dispositions and these skills in order to create artistically. Perseverance, in the artists' case, is a matter of endless training and preparation for hardship, being justified by the very nature of artistic work: the dialogue (or for some, the fight) with a resistant matter, medium and conveyance of meaning through those means, together with the task of constant persuasion. But what motivates artists in their solid determination? What are the elements of this artistic resilience?

The topic of motivation is vast and complex, especially in its association to creativity and our intention is not to be exhaustive concerning this subject. It is relevant to mention, though, the motivational side of positively felt experiences in the arts in relationship with the artists' narratives. Much is still to be explored regarding the motivational side of artistic creativity. Fundamental contributions are from Amabile (1996) Deci (1975) Deci and Ryan (1985) and indirectly Csikszentmihalyi (2000, 1996). It is still much debated whether intrinsic (inherently interesting tasks) or extrinsic (task engagement in order to achieve external goals) motivation drives creative individuals and creative processes. The latest findings in this field, mostly collected by means of controlled psychological experiments, identify the close interrelation between intrinsic and extrinsic motivational drives and emphasise the prominence of contextual conditions. In

her first account on motivation and creativity Amabile (1983) advocated the intrinsic argument: "Intrinsic motivation is conducive to creativity, but extrinsic motivation is detrimental. It appears that when people are primarily motivated to do some creative activity by their own interest in and enjoyment of that activity, they may be more creative than they are when primarily motivated by some goal imposed on them by others" (p. 15). Subsequently, she revised this sharp dualism in the light of new evidence (1996a) and proposed a more contextual and relational approach. Her most recent work, like the work of Deci and Ryan (1985), seems to suggest that, regardless whether a task or activity is intrinsically or extrinsically motivated, creative outputs can be achieved. What seem to make a difference to motivation are traits related to the individual subjects, the nature of the task at hand and the environment in which individuals interact.

The nature of task (Amabile 1996a, p. 133) in our case is specifically artistic. The interviewed artists were sampled among professionals with often lengthy experience in their given art form. The nature of their everyday activities is artistic. This means that they dedicate themselves to the making of art, activity at the same time challenging and rewarding. The interviewed artists describe these tasks as enjoyable in themselves, which is consistent with motivation theories that indicate enjoyable activities as being the most motivating (Amabile 1996a, p. 149). Pleasantness of the artistic task is defined in Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson as autotelic, as it has an end in itself (1990). Rather, we propose that artists, even though their art-making has a specific goal (exhibition, performance, recording, publishing), *suspend* their attention to this goal or output, in order to fully concentrate on art-making *as if* it were autotelic. Even in artistic experimentations or improvisational performances the task holds a specific goal, such as finding new ways or solutions, but the goal disappears in the joy of the making. For instance in jazz improvisation the goal is a musical communication by means of a fine balance between solos and orchestra pieces, but as Anders and Benjamin Koppel recurrently say in their interview, what they feel is the fun of it. They maintain that musicians cannot keep on being musicians if they do not perceive their tasks as pleasurable. Emotionally, the nature of the artistic task seems to be characterised by passion and its dysfunctional twin, obsession. In our artists, though, these emotions, rather than jeopardising the creative effort, canalise the individual's attention and creative skills by means of the interplay of emotions and rationality. Differently from the stereotype of the artist as slave of his or her passions, or the stage-divided understanding of creative processes, where creativity and intuition (divergent thinking) are separated from rational or critical decisions (convergent thinking), we suggest that both intuition and rationality work together,

often simultaneously in artistic processes. As Ramsland says of his writing process, very little is left to inaccuracy and neglect - complexity is embraced and thoughtfully framed in creative routines and working processes, improvisation is unleashed and looked at critically, chaos is doled out in the right proportions and at the right time. The writer's openness to the new, his flow experience, even his giving away of control are carefully structured in productive routines, where both unconscious elements (as he describes them) and skills from the writer's craft manufacture an artistic product. According to motivation theories, being so focused on his task, the writer might find motivating any experience that is salient to his task. Meaningfulness of the task at hand, or as Deci (1975) defines it, the "salience" of the task is what might motivate or enhance motivation in individuals. Similarly instrumental might be the appropriateness of experiences to the task at hand: for instance Deci (1975) mentions the fact that feedback giving information on one's competence has positive effects on creativity and performance, which is consistent with Amabile 1996a.

Even though we did not solicit answers on motivation or motivational drives, in our interviews, the theme of drive or struggle to create kept on popping up. Moreover, flow experiences, which are generated by deep motivation and spawn even more task engagement, are recurrent and often mentioned when artists describe their creative processes. One more trait that is related to motivation and its subjective perception is resilience. As Julia Varley says, creativity to her is the "ability of turning a weakness into a strength", which she has done both as a child in school and in her profession as an actress with her voice. English-born Varley attended in 5th grade an Italian school with all the challenges that this brings to a child of foreign mother tongue. Being unable to formulate long sentences, she once delivered an essay made of short sentences, which was met by the teacher's praise to her surprise: "[it] was strange because what we tried to learn was to make long complicated sentences, but I liked the short ones, and so I decided I was going to do an essay with very short sentences, and then the teacher congratulated me and said it was very well written. So probably this also marked me in a way of writing afterwards". The actress consistently adopted this attitude of turning weaknesses into strengths in her career, for example when she decided to develop her voice differently from that of the other Odin Teatret actresses. Rather than striving to educate her voice as strong and powerful, like colleagues Else Marie Laukvik, Iben Nagel Rasmussen and Roberta Carreri, Varley decided, after many frustrating attempts to violate her vocal nature, to turn her soft, light voice into her own characteristic sound (Varley 2011). In her adult career, as in her schooldays, Varley responds to adversities by looking at them not as constraints but as possibilities. She does that by getting along with the life conditions

she meets and by keeping on trying, thus engaging in an undefeated dialogue with herself and with the process:

> Each creative process is different so you can never rely on what you did the time before. The only thing you can rely on is that you trust that at some point it will start working. So in all of your desperation and tears and aargh… inside you, you know that at some point it will come out. But it's like you can never know how to make a creative process, you know that you can do it, but every time you have to learn how to do it all over again.

The continuous process of learning is in this description overflowing with feelings: feelings of frustration, of being overwhelmed, but also feelings of trust and hope. Implicit we discern the actress' skills and experience reassuring her about the perceived chaos of the creative process. Varley knows that each creative process is unique and she knows, because she has experienced it, that by keeping on trying at a certain point solutions will pop up. Moreover, she knows that creative processes are diverse and imply a methodological openness on how to do them or how to learn them. She *knows* all that even when she *feels* discouraged. Trusting the creative process might be one of the basic elements of the artist's resilience. Resilience is defined differently, but here we intend it broadly as "the ability to bounce back or overcome adversity" (McCubbin 2001, p. 3).

Another reference to this positive dynamic is to be found in Kvium:

> So creativity is hugely driven by curiosity, it must be. Curiosity and doubt, because doubt is there too. What one has just made: why? When it just went so well, why can't I do it anymore? Why do I not like it? […] It could also just be your bad mood that prevents you from receiving. It may be that the image has taken the upper hand, you cannot keep up, then you must spend more time on it to benchmark yourself again. It could also be that your brain has taken the upper hand and has interpreted what the image would like, so it actually has closed itself. Then it becomes of no interest to me, and most likely also unattractive to others. So it must contain something and then there may be many little things that maybe other people do not pay close attention to, but for me it is very important that [the work of art] comes through on the process. And the artwork had better stay in the workshop until I see it both on a very bad day and a very good day.

Rooted in the quest for knowledge, the process of artistic creativity meets the emotional and cognitive challenges of doubt, uncertainty and insecurity. What creative artists do in order to focus on their process is, according to Kvium, to build the conditions for preserving a clear mind and sharp artistic judgment despite external negative conditioning. This might imply that one of the artists' strategies for creativity is their conscious acquisition of resilient psycho-emotional (e.g. trust in the process), cognitive (e.g. learning how to do it) and methodological (e.g. applying critical skills) strategies. No artist seems to suggest that these strategies are biological or innate. One interesting hypothesis in this

direction is Barba's observation on the gender differences of resilient behaviour in his group:

> Sometimes I found interesting only five minutes and I use it with what I have already done before. Maybe it was not interesting, and I say, no, it doesn't function. Then we try again and again. It is curious that the Odin the people who have been more able to endure this way of working –or challenging one's persistence– is mostly women. This fact has made me ask myself: why men, after a certain period are satisfied with that they do? Why they have a tendency to discuss or simply accept the working routine, while actresses continue to use their energies to find alternative ways to let their need be integrated in the collective process?

At the Odin Teatret, a group that in 2014 is celebrating its 50th jubilee, endurance has always been explicitly valued and practiced (Nagel Rasmussen 2006, Barba 2010). Here Barba suggests that gender differences might explain his actors' and actresses' perseverance. Even acknowledging the lack of specific studies on the relationship between resilience and creativity in the arts, still we believe that Barba's gender distinction does not necessarily imply a biological justification. Rather, in his quote we read the collective sharing of the same healthy dissatisfaction, "we try again and again", in order to produce artistically satisfactory outputs. The drive that Barba recognises is interest. Others point to curiosity (Hustvedt, Kvium) as a trigger of motivation, others again mention extrinsically motivating rewards for hard work, such as good food, treats, hedonistic pleasures (Klejs and Rønsholdt) and underline that individuals can throw themselves into hard work only for short periods. All the drives that are mentioned in the interviews are consistent with more general findings on creative individuals and processes. For instance, Collins and Amabile (1999) summarise what creativity theories indicate as motivational to creative activities: passion, love, tenacity, absorption, persistence. Regarding motivational drives we too are able to present narratives consistent with previous studies. Anecdotal and empirical studies, in this case, identify psychological needs like self-actualisation, autotelic enjoyment, self-understanding, emotional and cognitive regulation (control over one's task) as inputs to motivation, which are what the artists interviewed in the present study indicate as triggering creative composition.

One last point about artists' resilience when involved in creative tasks can be taken indirectly from psychoanalyst Peter Wolson (1995). In his psychoanalytical practice, he treated several patients with artistic backgrounds and formulated an interesting theory regarding the psycho-emotional traits of artistic creativity. He calls it adaptive grandiosity, which is:

> the artist's exhilarating conviction of potential for greatness, the extremely high value that is placed on the uniqueness of feelings, perceptions, sensations, memories,

thoughts, and experiences, and on the importance of publicly exhibiting the content of the inner world through the creative medium. This type of grandiosity involves the artist's total confidence and powerful belief in personal capacity to perform creative work. It includes the conviction that the work will be an extremely valuable contribution to humanity, deserving of public adulation and possible self-immortality. It is an ego state that can be conscious or unconscious. This clearly differs from normal healthy self-confidence in which an individual believes in the value of perceptions and in the capacity for successful achievement, but lacks the pervasive grandiose qualities described above. Adaptive grandiosity provides the motivational fuel to confront the blank canvas, which psychologically represents the void or nonbeing (pp. 577-578).

With a clear psychodynamic background, this theory hints at Freud's interpretation of creative expressions as sublimation of excess psychological energy into socially acceptable activities (Collins & Amabile 1999, p. 297). We suggest that artists may engage in adaptive grandiose states of mind in order to *instrumentally* achieve artistic goals. As the adaptive dimension suggests, Wolson himself conceives adaptive grandiosity as an adjustment to the requirements of the artistic profession. We wish to emphasise the intentionality that may occur in the process, where artists purposely switch on and off the trigger to and from adaptive grandiosity, because this might help them meet the high demands implicit in the process of artistic composition: the encounter with medium and material, negotiations with peers and colleagues, and persuasion of a field.

Art-making as discovery and research

The interviewed artists seem to perceive the process of composition as research and not just as a formal exercise. Discovery in the process, exploration (Ramsland), research or basic research (Ramsland, Olesen, Dehlholm), discovery as pleasure (Hustvedt), artistic research (Granhøj) are recurrently mentioned in the interviews. Granhøj's starting point in his compositional method is a theme that he is studying and that he wants to investigate. In the same way, Dehlholm explains her method as phenomenological research: "all that I do is made as investigations of the world, of the many phenomena in the world. It has with perception to do and with social, political, psychological and cultural phenomena. All is intertwined. And it all depends on the context". Without saying it explicitly, Valeur, too, conceives art-making as a sort of research, a learning project that starts by asking himself "what do I know?"

Asking and formulating questions are fundamental steps of any research process (Denzin & Lincoln 2005) and might be mistaken for normal procedures of good scholarly work. Artistic research, though, is characterised by the central role of heuristics and by a multitude of investigative directions (see Vickery &

King 2012). Designer Rosan Bosch starts creating by asking questions about the artistic task at hand, but also more philosophical questions about the artist's need for the task and methodological questions at the same time: "The first thing you do is to dig and research and figure out what you need to figure out. A way to do so – find out what's bothering you! Are there moments when you feel the need to change, but somehow you are not able to do it by yourself? What kind of change is needed here?" A great deal of the attention paid by these enquiries is to methodology and the application of knowledge to a given task.

However the questioning can also be not so much about giving answers as finding questions to ask (Olesen). The quote below summarises what several artists report: the fact that artistic creativity is neither a matter of genius and divine inspiration nor a mechanical application of artistic skills to the ex-pression of higher meanings. In Varley's words artistic creativity is an active dialogue with the medium and with colleagues, within an explorative process of discovery:

> With *Andersen's dream* [the process of discovery was] on jazz songs, on a veiled woman, and with a puppet. One day I put the veil on the puppet, and I sang a song, and there suddenly the work told me something. So it's not because I was trying to be creative and to create something, but I worked and then the work started talking. So it is my capacity for listening to what it's saying, to then develop it, and fix it, remember it, change it. So creativity has to do with putting together things that already exist, not creating like God. I mean he used clay, so something existed already. So it's not creating the clay, but the clay is there, what can you do with that? How can you model and change it and give it a form? And for me, something that I have learned from the beginning is to try to understand where what I am doing is taking me. So again it's an attitude which is very different from 'I want to express', 'I want to create', but it's more 'I am there to understand, to read, to listen to what is created, so that I can work more on it'. […] I don't have this feeling that I create for me. And this is also a discussion that I have often with Jill [Greenhalgh] as a director, because Jill has a very strong need to *say something*. When I work as a director I try to understand what the actor needs to say, so also as a director of course my experience, or what I have been through, my vision, my way of thinking, completely gives a direction to what the performance will be, but what I am trying to do is listen to what is coming from the actors. That is where my antennae are pointed, and also when I work by myself that is where my attention is.

Julia Varley comes from a theatrical practice that makes use of artistic means as research tools and which is defined "theatre laboratory" (Schino 2009). This tradition, interpreted at Odin Teatret as the anthropological study of artistic universals and cross-cultural conversations, implies the search for understanding. Understanding of the world, of cultures, but also comprehension of the learning journey undertaken while art-making is taking place ("try to understand where what I am doing is taking me"). Group composition in a theatre laboratory, by

definition, is aimed at researching artistically and experimenting, as Barba points out in his interview. It allows a thorough preparation of the artistic performance, which is extended in time and often given in a physical and mental space that is different from the usual. This preparation is often followed by an "explosion of things", of productions, artefacts, ideas, more or less finished products or projects in progress (prototypes).

Artistic research adjusts working method to the given task as it goes. It depends on what one is doing or is expected to do, as jazz musician Ander Koppel says, and as Kirsten Dehlholm confirms: "of course it is way different, whatever project it is". According to designer Fjord, methodological approaches have a strong influence on result and are context-related, "it depends on the situation" (Bosch). Artists' "cognitive pluralism" (Moran & John-Steiner 2003, p. 75) in approaching creative enquiry seems to be a common trait, but also, being pluralist, is what differentiates artistic traditions. It is indeed clear that the anthropological and laboratorial dimension of Odin Teatret is unique for the tradition the ensemble have generated and may not be applicable to any other artist's compositional process. Taking into account cultural and historical differences, together with personal preferences, we can hypothesise an overall similarity between artistic discovery and research methods. Scientific and artistic methodologies have been successfully compared before (e.g. Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2003, Feist 1999, Weisberg 1993), showing structural resemblances between the two fields' procedures. Both domains are characterised by creative "propulsion" (Sternberg 2003, p. 100) and a variety of searching directions or trajectories. Sternberg (2003) offers the most systematic attempt to describe and visualise how creators (not specifically artists) think in their processes and how creativity comes about. His taxonomy was preceded by, for instance, Gardner's claim that artistic creativity was more than just divergent and convergent dualism. In Guildford's convergent thinking many thoughts lead toward one solution, while in divergent thinking one starting thought leads to the generation of many solutions. According to Gardner (1994a), these are only a few of the working processes that artists engage in. For instance, a recurrent model of composition is based on the artist's persistence with one thought, leading to one well-considered operation, or a *modus operandi* might be a combination of all the above. Sternberg stretches Gardner's and Guildford's categories to eight modes of propulsion, eight different ways in which creators propel ideas and visions into creative products. These processes are: replication, redefinition, forward incrementation, advance forward incrementation, redirection, reconstruction/redirection, reinitiation and integration (Sternberg 2003, pp. 102-103). Some of them are intuitively straightforward, such as the redefinition of a domain or the redirection of a task

or the reinitiation of a process or the integration of different processes. Others are strictly related to a system view of creativity. For instance, by forward incrementation Sternberg intends contributions that "attempt to move the field forward in the direction it already is going", differently from advance forward incrementation, which moves the field "beyond where others are ready for it to go" (2003, p. 102).

With their categories, Sternberg and Gardner show the complexity and variety of the practices of creative processes, in spite of a common drive (or propulsion), motivation to create and negotiation with a field and culture. Other recent contributions, specifically oriented towards understanding artists' and designers' creativity, propose a more embodied cognition (Kimbell & Stables 2007, Hetland et al. 2007, 2013). Kimbell and Stables (2007) propose the interaction of mind and hand as the framework that can explain the design process. Shifting between imaging and modelling inside the head and confronting reality outside the head, designers build a progression towards more creative thinking and appropriate solutions to the task. According to Lois Hetland (personal communication with the author, 25th July 2013), this model, although helpful, should not have such an orderly shift between the two poles, because in artistic creativity, time and energy are not always equally divided between mind and hand, as the models below show.

Figure 6. On the left Kimbell and Stables' model (2007), on the right Hetland's modification.

Hetland and colleagues have a slightly different take on artistic creativity. They have systematically studied the cognitive styles artists adopt when they create, teach and learn in the studio (Hetland et al. 2007, 2013). They have identified four studio structures of learning (the demonstration-lecture, students-at-work, critique and exhibition) and eight studio habits of mind: develop craft, engage and persist, understand art worlds, envision, stretch and explore, reflect, express and observe (2007, pp. 5-6). By means of the above studio structures, artists pass on artistic creativity to younger artists, engaging them in the eight studio habits of mind. The studio habits of mind are the non-hierarchical elements of artistic thinking, the structures that, combined and intertwined, guide artistic processes. Even though other structures could still be added to the list, such as the relational-social dimension or the bodily or motivational engagement, the approach is interesting and deserves further studies in this direction. What we notice in both frameworks is the coherence with Sawyer's approach which we share: the understanding of creative processes not as successive stages clearly and orderly occurring through time but as overlapping and interconnected waves (2003, p. 43) flowing in complex, serendipitous patterns.

Part Two: Learning and Change
by Julie Borup Jensen

Chapter 5: Creativity and elements of learning and change

Creativity, learning and the arts

In the previous part of the book, creativity as a phenomenon within the interviews and as a theoretical concept has been unfolded and elaborated. This part of the book will expand upon empirical and theoretical relations between artistic processes, creativity and learning. The learning perspective is developed with a focus on ways in which learning can be understood in relation to creativity and in relation to artistic work processes.

This means that we will not offer an exhaustive review of learning theories. Instead, we will concentrate on theories relevant to our investigation of creativity and to the empirical findings in the interviews. This will allow us over the next four chapters to present and elaborate special understandings of learning that the artists, through their narratives, remarks and observations, describe as part of their creative processes. Subsequently, the combination of learning and creativity concepts will suggest elements of interest to educational learning settings, which will be the subject of chapter 8. The selected theories are classical in the sense that they are widely known in educational research and educational pedagogy, which is expected to raise both recognisability and relevance for the field of education and pedagogy.

The role of the artists' interviews will differ slightly in the next four chapters. In chapter 5, fundamental and classical theories of learning will be presented as an overview. In this presentation, the interviews will have an illustrative function in order to exemplify theoretical points or to specify theoretical understandings of relations between creativity and learning. In the chapters 6, 7 and 8, the interviews will play a fundamental, analytical role in understanding the concept of learning and its relationship to artistic processes and creativity. In these three chapters, the empirical expressions and statements are interpreted in light of learning theory and perspectives as a key to developing new understandings of existing theoretical learning concepts.

Part Two is central to the present book, providing it with a bridge between the concepts and phenomena of the artists' creative acts (Part One) and the organisational and relational aspects of developing and supporting creativity in groups (Part Three).

Why associate the concepts of learning and creativity?

The association between the concepts of learning and creativity arises from the interviews. They point to a relatively clear pattern: the interviewed artists appear to understand the creative process in relation to their artistic work as *intertwined or interwoven with* learning. They use expressions like "mega learning process" (Fjord), "verbalising a hunch" (Nord), "investigations of the world" (Dehlholm), "learning new things all the time and using them" (B. Koppel), "learning by doing" (A. Koppel), "learning by writing" (Ramsland), "learning by receiving and expressing" (Kvium). This is in fact a quite surprising finding, because even though we had a pre-understanding that, to some extent, learning and creativity were connected, we still expected that the artists would experience and express themselves about learning as something separate and different from the creative processes. However, what emerged was that when the artists talked in ways that presented learning as interwoven with creativity, they did it out of specific understandings and experiences of learning and not just learning in general. In order to shed light on these specific understandings of learning, we begin with an outline of ideas on learning from John Dewey, Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. This will serve as a starting point for focusing on specific perspectives on learning that allow us to understand how and why learning and creativity can be experienced as interwoven. The understandings and workings of learning that are reflected in the artists' interviews will serve as indications and examples of the ways in which it might be relevant to understand creative processes in fields other than art, such as education. This means that when asking these artists, learning is experienced as more than acquisition of information or skills, learning is seen as a process of developing knowledge or new perspectives and as a process of creating new perspectives on phenomena in the world.

Experience, action and learning within the arts

Already at the beginning of the 1900s, John Dewey identified creativity as closely correlated to learning and learning processes. It is important to note that his interest was not to focus on creativity as a learning *outcome*, rather he saw the creative element as an integral part of children's and adults' learning processes. In order to understand the role of creativity in Dewey's learning perspective, it should be emphasised that Dewey assumed that problem identification and the striving for a solution to the problem constitute human learning. According to Dewey, a learning problem occurs, when individuals experience an incongruity between what they previously experienced and what they experience in the present situation. In this case, the problem solving activity is related to the individual's critical

judgement and effort to understand the problem and the phenomena that constitute the problem (critical thinking and reflection), in a way that leads to a meaningful solution. In this process, creativity plays an important role, because creativity assists the individual in creating new insights that may lead to new actions and learning (Dewey 1988, p. 134). Therefore, problem identification and problem solving are also related to creativity by the individual's ability to criticise given knowledge, structures of power and cultural understandings of the world (problem identification), as well as to see and imagine new possibilities for thinking and action (creativity and problem solving) (Dewey 1988, pp. 139-140).

Even though the interviewed artists do not use the terms "problem identification" and "problem solving" to describe their artistic work processes, their narratives imply that their way of linking learning and creativity can be broadly understood in the light of a problem-based approach to their artistic work. In other words, when talking about their creative processes, they describe a problem identifying and problem solving way of working when creating artistic expressions. One example is film director Annette K. Olesen, who identifies problems when watching TV, wondering whether any of the news items can be transformed into a storyline for a film. In this process, she imagines what could be converted into a theme or artistic problem and how a film could be a solution and an expression of this problem.

The interviews, however, also indicate that not all problem identification and problem solving are solely related to cognitive and verbal effort, or even are fully accessible to conscious thought. Problem identification and solution also seem to be a matter of bodily or cultural habits that are challenged. This is the case for dancer Palle Granhøj, when he works with the so-called obstruction technique (when the dancers prevent each other from making certain moves by touching a specific body part of the improvising dancer). This *touching* prevents the dancer from continuing his or her movement and constitutes a problem, which the dancer solves by making moves that he or she would not otherwise have done and which have the potential to renew expressions in dancing. Other examples of problem solving activities described in the interviews are improvisation in jazz (musicians Benjamin and Anders Koppel), or acting experiments (theatre director Kirsten Dehlholm, actress Julia Varley). In these cases, the problem can consist of disharmonies or even mistakes or challenges in relation to the art form – a problem that requires experiments as well as construction and testing of competing hypotheses for solutions. In this way, when learning is understood as problem solving, it follows that learning can be the first step leading to subtle or revolutionary changes in the individual artist's knowledge and skills (learning), but also to a wider extent in an art form's taste, ideals of beauty or performance (creativity).

Action, community and creativity

According to Dewey, problem solving processes are also related to *action.* Action is the way individuals and groups demonstrate and use knowledge. Embedded in this idea is the assumption that a learning process is an action of actively creating knowledge. In this light, problem identification and problem solving can be seen as the way in which a learning and knowledge building process are identified by the person him or herself and by others. The learning process has creative potential, if the problem solving process has led to a result valuable for broader community interests. This assumption shows Dewey's pragmatic approach to learning, as his idea of a learning process is related to what is "useful" for the person him or herself and in society. For this outcome, human beings' creative powers have to be nurtured through working with real-life problems. The creative learning processes explain why individual and collaborative learning can lead to results suitable for action, change and "making the world better" (Dewey 1966/1944, pp. 98-99).

The pragmatic and experiential approach to learning seems to be a fruitful starting point for approaching how artists perceive learning and creativity as intertwined. This is possible, if we assume that the artists experience and perceive some aspects of the creative process as problem identifying and problem solving. The following excerpt, where theatre director Kirsten Dehlholm explains how she learns, might serve to support this assumption:

> I learn in collaborations, and I learn from practical experience. As part of the research I read a lot, but I don't think I would be a good university student. I learn from being with other professionals in a process of investigation. I learn from sharing and developing ideas for the project. I learn on the long way it takes before the project actually is a finished work of art. There are so many practicalities on the way before we see a finished result. There I learn a lot.

In the light of Dewey's experiential learning theory, we begin to understand the artists' expressions of learning and creativity as inseparable, as creativity can play different roles in a learning process: as a vehicle for learning, as a consequence or "product/outcome" of learning, as a tool for learning and as a structure and framing of learning.

Cognition, arts and learning

The way in which the artists merge learning and creativity can find one theoretic explanation in the pragmatic approach to learning as shown above, but combining the pragmatic approach to learning with a cognitive framework for

interpretation can provide even more interesting understanding of the artists' perception of creativity and learning as intertwined.

As shown, one of the main aspects of Dewey's theory of creativity and learning is the ability to identify and analyse a problem. This *problem finding* aspect of learning has gained interest in educational research on creativity. *Per se*, a problem finding approach to learning is seen as supporting creativity. Whether the outcome of the *problem solving* process is a creative product, a creative process, obtaining a learning goal, or finding new learning goals is from an educational perspective of secondary importance (Chand & Runco 1993, Starko 2010, pp. 182-183).

Within the so-called *critical creativity* perspective (Starko 2010, Wakefield 2003, Chand & Runco 1993, 2003) the idea of problem finding as a creative effort of action is combined with cognitive concepts of learning as a thinking process. The premise for this research is that genuinely creative people are seen as having the ability to invent problems, the skill to raise questions that no one has thought to ask before, or to which there are no immediate answers in the present surroundings or cultural setting (Wakefield 2003, p. 255). Wakefield for instance links *problem finding* to Piaget's concept of *accommodation* (Wakefield 2003, pp. 257-259).

To explain briefly accommodation, we outline a short overview of Piaget's learning perspective, as it has had a huge influence on research into learning, as well as on cognitive creativity research. In Piaget's perspective, learning is considered an active cognitive adaptation and equilibrium process. Piaget's basic idea is that the individual is striving to maintain a cognitive state of equilibrium in relation to external sensory impressions and influences. For this purpose, the individual develops a mental structure, referred to as a pattern of mental schemes. A mental scheme is a concept with which Piaget describes how experience and knowledge are structured, remembered and put into use in the individual's thinking. From birth onwards, the individual will organise his or her experience according to these schemes. His or her thinking processes will operate in one of two ways to adapt to (learn from) any sensory impressions in order to create and maintain cognitive equilibrium:

1. *Assimilation.* Assimilation is a means of maintaining equilibrium in the individual. It refers to a process where new sensory experiences are actively adapted into what is already present in the individual's existing mental structure ("existing knowledge").
2. *Accommodation.* Accommodation sustains equilibrium by adapting the individual's thinking to new experiences by changing his or her mental structures,

often described as "developing a new mental scheme" ("new knowledge") (Piaget 1954, p. 353).

According to Piaget, any learning activity can be seen as either assimilation between a given situation and past patterns or accommodation (adaptation), which models these patterns to the situation or creates new patterns (for an exhaustive explanation, consult Piaget & Inhelder 1997). If assimilation were the only cognitive process of adaptation, there would be no learning –or new ideas or creativity– as only mere confirmation of prior learning would take place. On the contrary, if accommodation were the only adaptation process, individuals would adapt to the outside world without being able orient themselves or to make use of previous knowledge and experience to make new ideas useful to action and thinking, and again, no learning or, in the case of the interviewed artists, creativity would occur (Piaget 1954).

In short, creativity and learning are intertwined by the way in which the individual "finds problems", that is, raises questions to which there are no immediate answers in the surrounding culture and deals with the unexpected (Dewey 1988, Wakefield 2003). This means that creativity as well as accommodation posits the individual's *explorative* approach to the world (Chand & Runco 1993, Runco 2003).

Given this, we may assume that if the artists have a systematic, voluntary and intentional practice of exploring their surroundings, this might explain some aspects of the artists' experiences of learning and creativity as intertwined in their artistic processes. Annette K. Olesen gives an example of an explorative approach to her surroundings: "Simply, it is almost a… a driving force, all the time to seek non-knowledge [what you do not know in advance]".

The explorative approach is, however, not only directed towards the environment and physical and social surroundings, but also towards the artists themselves and learning and discovery processes of their own abilities, skills and knowledge. In order to develop as artists, some of them deliberately put themselves in situations where their existing knowledge or habitual ways of carrying out their art are not completely adequate. For instance, painter Michael Kvium talks on several occasions of his efforts to "break my own limitations" or to "work against restrictions" in order to progress and develop his expression of art. These limitations can be of outer origin such as financial, but Kvium focuses on the limitations of his own existing repertoire of expressions. In a learning perspective, this existing repertoire of expressions can be seen as comparable with mental schemes and existing knowledge: knowing how to express his idea, or being able to find good scenes for his paintings. If this is seen in the light of cognitive

learning, Kvium deliberately seeks and creates opportunities for accommodative learning processes (Piaget & Inhelder 1997), or knowledge reframing processes (Chand & Runco 1993). For him, it is not enough to assimilate new ideas to existing and known expressions, because then he feels limited in a way that hinders his development as an artist. His efforts can be seen as an example of intentionally working at the tipping point of equilibrium, which is also a way of conceptualising creativity in research (Runco & Charles 1993).

As a further note, Piaget stresses that accommodation is an adaptation process that requires considerable mental effort and energy. The individual's motivation for engaging in accommodative learning may be impeded by uncomfortable, insecure or, in extreme cases, threatening environments and situations. Accommodation can also be the cause of psychological anxiety, because accommodation requires the individual to leave familiar knowledge, embedded in cognitive structures and to move into uncertain and unknown areas of knowledge, where previous knowledge schemes do not provide sufficient explanatory force (Piaget 1973). This can lead to fear and doubt in one's own ability and talent and uncertain situations may lead to a feeling of loss of control, or loss of competence and skill, since competences and skills which hitherto seemed adequate, under the new circumstances are of limited value. An example is Julia Varley's story, when she arrives in Denmark from Italy to become part of the Odin Teatret:

> Because in Italy, I was doing a particular activity, I was organising. We were doing performances, which had a sense for us, because we were performing in occupied factories, in schools, and we were doing parades. So everything had a sense. But then I said, okay I'm going to Denmark, because I can learn something and bring it back to my colleagues… and I arrived there, and I didn't speak the language, and I was just.. I was not useful to anybody. I was just a burden. I couldn't perform like they performed, and I realised, I didn't know what an action was, […] I could see, what they did, the Odin actors, and I could see there was a power there that I couldn't [share].

Varley feels a loss of competence within the field of acting, because her experiences of doing theatre as political statements have no value in the new context in Denmark. Nevertheless, her goal is to learn the Odin way of doing theatre, but she, so to speak, pays the price of accommodation. She is left in doubt as to her own competence and skill and she has no possibilities of assimilating, by relating the new experiences to her existing knowledge and mental schemes. The consequence is the feeling of being useless and out of place.

On the other hand, many of the artists express a need for accommodative situations, as they experience their creativity growing. Before we proceed to social learning perspectives, film director Annette K. Olesen's statement below

will exemplify the creative potential of learning through accommodation, as one of her ways of working with her art is to purposely put herself in uncertain situations:

> All the time, I look for opportunities to express myself in surroundings in which I feel unfamiliar and a little unsafe – simply because it immediately promotes my creativity, I feel.

To sum up the above insights, we have unfolded learning perspectives, which might explain the artists' experiences of learning as intertwined with creativity. One understanding is learning as a process of exploration, where the individual finds problems by a critical, question-based approach to surroundings, matters of course and own knowledge and certainties. Another understanding is, if learning is seen as accommodative and assimilative adaption processes, where the individual tests existing knowledge and adapts to new insights and in the case of the artists, new expressions within the art form. These insights on learning add to our understanding of the artists' expressions of learning as a part of the creative process of developing art works.

Socio-cultural dimensions in learning

A socio-cultural perspective on learning can shed further light on the artists' experience of learning and creativity as intertwined. Many years of research into learning shows that the social surroundings, or as we would prefer to term it, the culture and cultural environments, play as vital a role for learning as they do for creativity. The socio-cultural perspective on learning contributes to an understanding of the relation between individual learning and social surroundings and, subsequently, of the relation between creative new ideas and traditional cultural heritage (Kaufman & Sternberg 2010, Sternberg 2003).

Tools and meaning-making in the arts

Lev Vygotsky is widely acknowledged as one of the first to describe the significance of culture and environments in individual learning - a socio-cultural perspective on learning. He knew of Piaget's thinking and research, but challenged and questioned his individualist approach. Vygotsky's work on the impact of culture in developing an individual's thought and knowledge can contribute to our investigation of how creativity is experienced as intertwined with learning, as described by the interviewed artists. In Vygotsky's perspective, culture is a dynamic, delimited, and socially created phenomenon, which is expressed by a complex interplay between common interpretations of occurrences in life, habits, worldviews, and acceptable ways of behaving and expressing oneself. These cultural

dimensions of social reality are unified and expressed by the way in which *language* is used in the particular social contexts (Vygotsky 2012, 2004a, 1997, 1978). Vygotsky's interest in the significance of culture in individual learning manifests itself in his emphasis on the role of *tools*. *Tools* is a metaphor for symbolic concepts for thinking, which are shaped in the individual when growing up and which again shape the individual's thinking, understanding of experience and ways of acting. Vygotsky's hypothesis was that the social environment and culture deliver these tools for shaping experiences into learning and knowledge in the individual, especially in the use of language (Bruner 2004, Hamann, Warneken, Greenberg & Tomasello 2011, Tomasello 2003). According to Vygotsky, language as a tool for the individual's thinking and for the cultivation of the individual's actions (and thus for learning) cannot be underestimated. This is termed *mediation*. The figure below depicts Vygotsky's idea of mediation by means of cultural tools: the individual (subject) cannot understand the world (object) and learn anything directly, but always *by means of* something (mediating tools):

Figure 7. Vygotsky: learning through mediation (Vygotsky 1978, p. 40).
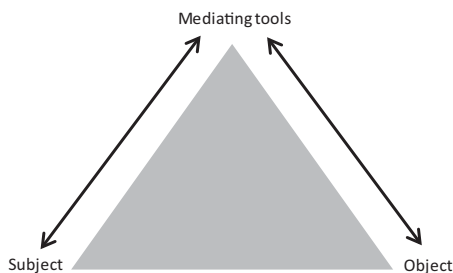
The model conveys Vygotsky's socio-cultural epistemology: that learning and understanding are mediated by cultural means such as language: "language is both a result of historical forces that have given it shape, and a tool of thought that shapes the thought itself" (Bruner in Vygotsky 2004a, p. 2). Embedded in this understanding of learning is the idea that the tools are also the means by which individuals make themselves understood in relation to other individuals, and that mediation is one of the main ways in which humans socially relate to each other.

Determinism and spontaneity

But what about the creative part of the artists' experience of learning and creativity as intertwined in the artistic process? The focus on language might seem a way of describing some kind of cultural determinism, where the individual, by

using language and cultural tools, reproduces the culture and social structures of society, while creative discovery and exploration are neglected. However, Vygotsky also saw language as the means of some extent of individual liberation from both personal historical-biographic circumstances and biological heritage (Bruner in Vygotsky 2004a, p. 9). This perspective entails that language has a culturally determining function as well as performs a tool for individual spontaneity. In his way of perceiving language, the creative power of learning emerges, as mastering language in all its cultural forms (scientific, artistic, spontaneous dialogue etc.), the individual not only performs or exercises existing culture, but has the potential to renew common understandings and ideas. As Bruner interprets Vygotsky: "Spontaneity is not so much "overcoming" history as it is turning it to new uses, converting it, so to speak, from a fate into a tool for change" (Bruner in Vygotsky 2004a, p. 10). In this light, language embeds inventive powers that allow humans to imagine, creating new ideas and putting them into use. These inventive and imaginative aspects of Vygotsky's concept of tools and language have aroused huge interest over recent decades in research on creativity (Hamann et al. 2011, Runco & Charles 1993, Sternberg 2003, Tomasello 2003)

Summing up, cultural mediation is seen as the means by which the individuals create meaning, make themselves understood in a cultural context and finally the means by which they imagine new ideas and explore new uses of ideas. These characteristics indicate that a tool is not only verbal language, but can be any mediating system of symbols, including those of a given art form. The implications of this are obvious when thinking of the artists' experience that learning and creativity seem intertwined in artistic processes. With Vygotsky in mind, the art forms deliver *expression formats* (notes, harmonies, rhythms etc. in music, colours, shapes, lines etc. in visual arts and so on) as tools, tools for thinking, shaping experience into learning, making oneself understood by the social surroundings through the expressions of the art form. In other words, we have reason to assume that the interviewed artists learn by means of and mediated by their arts, and that arts and their mediating function assists them in knowing and learning when creating and expressing an artwork. In our interviews, this shows in the narratives about growing up in a musical family like Anders and Benjamin Koppel, or Marco Nisticò, where the members of the family simply "breathe music". Music itself seems to be a mediating tool for understanding both music as culture and the social relations to others in the family when playing music, just as the culture of making music together is constituted by the family members, who use music as a mediating tool for constituting the family culture. There is a similar example

of family culture in Mary Jordan's interview, where her grandfather spends months creating beautiful landscapes for Christmas expressing the art form of design and displays, and at the same time provides Mary Jordan with tools for understanding visual expression, which she later on uses for shaping her own expressions in filmmaking. So, by understanding learning in the Vygotskyan way, the artists' expressions of learning and creativity as interwoven make even more sense.

Culturalism and creativity

With Dewey, Piaget and Vygotsky as a basis, we now move on to some of the more recent learning perspectives that might contribute towards explaining the artists' experience of learning and creativity in artistic processes. Jerome Bruner has carried on the work of the three above theoretical perspectives in his later works on a socio-cultural learning theory (Bruner 2006, Gredler & Shields 2008). Like his predecessors, his conception of learning builds on an assumption that learning is based on experience, cognition/thinking/interpretation of sensory impressions and culturally mediated understanding and meaning-making. Like Piaget, Bruner sees the individual's learning as active construction of knowledge, where the individual creates meaning in experience – "knowledge is not found, it is constructed" (Bruner 1996, p. 19). Bruner combines this with Vygotsky's idea that the construction of knowledge is not happening in a vacuum, but in the individual's interplay with other persons, social surroundings and the cultural symbolic systems that convey meaning to knowledge.

A central point to our investigation of the artists' statements of learning and creativity as intertwined is the concept of externalisation and the production of works (*oeuvres*). Bruner states that the individual, by using the tools of the culture to, for instance, draw a picture, tell a story, play or listen to music, externalises understandings of the world and puts them into play in a social context. The externalisation can be directly mediated in relation to other people in a concrete situation by conversation, action or creating a product, but externalisation can also be in relation to a symbolic presence of "others", understood as society or culture in a more general sense. Whatever the purpose of externalising his or her understanding of a matter, "externalizing, in a word, rescues cognitive activity from implicitness, making it more public, negotiable, and "solidary". At the same time, it makes it more accessible to subsequent reflection and meta-cognition" (Bruner 1996, p. 24). On this basis, there is reason to assume that individuals externalise knowledge and understandings when they wish to communicate and thereby create and maintain social relations. Related to the artists of our study,

this suggests a communicative intention associated with creating an artwork, and to do this, the artists explore what can be externalised and expressed in the *oeuvre*, the work of art.

In the examples from the interviews we see how the artists, in exercising their art form and externalising their artistic ideas, use cultural tools of the art form as a way of communicating and negotiating their ideas in collaborative settings. An example is Marco Nisticò, explaining the possibilities of learning through externalisation when using his *tool of singing* to externalise ideas. He thereby contributes to a whole opera, which draws on visual arts in the form of scenography, orchestral music, conducting, drama and literature. He emphasises negotiation as a tool: "I think it is important in this kind of collaborative art form that people stay flexible.. you AND me". This quote is interesting in light of Bruner's idea that "the work is bestowed with a life of its own by its creators" (Bruner 1996, p. 74). The work, in the example, the opera, becomes a reification of an externalisation process of the individual (Nisticò's interpretation of his part in the opera) as well as a reification of negotiation of meaning between collaborating individuals (Nisticò and the rest of the opera crew). In this process, the work implies a possibility of reflection and learning for the participating artists, because the externalisation process, the negotiation process and their product are interwoven. In the interviews, we also recognise this reflective, metacognitive and, at the same time, social dimension of the relation between the individual artists and their artwork, which again can shed light on the artists' experience of learning and creativity as interwoven in artistic processes.

Domains and the creative process

Since the artists indirectly suggest that learning and creativity may be interwoven in artistic processes, it might be interesting to look at creativity theories that involve social or system traits and examine them from a learning perspective, because learning, like creativity, seem to take place in relation to social and cultural surroundings. As shown in chapter 1, Csikszentmihalyi particularly understands creativity in domain terms, by making creativity a matter of socio-cultural negotiation amongst individuals within a field and working in a domain. He draws from the domain thinking of Bourdieu's cultural fields and Foucault's development of symbol systems (Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi 2003, pp. 188-189). Moreover, he distinguishes between everyday creativity (small c) and high achievement Creativity (capital C). By everyday creativity (small c), Csikszentmihalyi (1997) means the creativity that arises in everyday practical

problem solving, quite similar to Dewey's concept of learning as a problem solving activity. Csikszentmihalyi's research introduces a creativity that has the power to change a paradigm or a domain, capital C creativity. When capital C creativity is understood as change in society and culture, the social, domain-and-power-related aspect is incorporated in the understanding of creativity. In a learning perspective, the implications are interesting. If creativity is basically a socio-cultural negotiation, learning might depend, among other things, on the individual's ability to persuade or convince others of the value of an idea or solution. Another consequence is in line with Piaget's idea that creativity is a basic element of development because they both involve new ideas and reorganisation of thoughts (Sawyer et al. 2003): learning as well as creativity is dependent on the social environment and its ability to change on the basis of individuals' ideas (Csikszentmihalyi 1997).

The artists' experience of learning as intertwined with creativity might be explained by means of learning theories that relate the domain-based understanding of creativity to pedagogy and education. Howard Gardner (1993) has elaborated a specific psychological and pedagogical approach to creativity, while still incorporating domain theories into his understanding of creativity. He describes an interactive perspective on creativity that recognises the importance of interactions among individuals, domains and fields. Gardner is in line with Csikszentmihalyi in assuming that individuals are creative in particular, domain-specific ways. Gardner's view is inspired by Csikzentmihalyi's model for creativity as well as on his own research on multiple intelligences. Gardner, like Csikszentmihalyi, focuses on *creative functioning*, not on certain personal, creative characteristics. This means that for Gardner and Csikzentmihalyi, statements like "He or she is a creative person" make no sense. For Gardner, the creative individual is "a person, who regularly solves problems, fashions products, or defines new questions in a domain in a way that is initially considered novel, but that ultimately becomes accepted in a particular cultural setting" (Gardner 1993, p. 35). Consequently, the relation between the individual and the social environment is interesting, as the domain(s) in which a person develops creative ideas is/are affected by the individual's kinds of intelligence and personality – the individual is, so to speak, the driving force of social change by means of creative thought and creative action. Gardner also emphasises the significance of social support and domain and field opportunities in the process of developing the individuals' creative thought and action.

In this perspective, learning and creativity can be regarded as interwoven in the artistic process when the artists experience how they learn specific elements

of a domain while developing new expressions. The domain-based understanding of creativity also suggests how creativity can be spurred on by collaborative learning when going *beyond* artistic domains. An example is, when Rune Fjord explains his collaboration on shaping and designing a creative room for employees of the Ministry of Economy in Copenhagen:

> They obviously dealt with things other than innovation processes, but […] we had an integrated dialogue, which was in fact a mega learning process […] they threw in ideas about how it was to work there, and… What are we supposed to do? […] we developed a physical creative grip for this […] but the process was in dialogue, and brought the art down to earth – a really great process.

In light of the quote, we understand Gardner's emphasis on the significance of social interaction and negotiating learning environments, as the collaboration with the civil servants in the ministry is characterised by dialogue. This means that domain and field opportunities in the process seem to have been present and the dialogue was experienced as contributing to the development of Fjord's creative thought and action.

Aesthetic learning and senses in learning processes

The last of our selected theoretical approaches to learning, in which it is meaningful to speak of learning as intertwined with the creative process in artistic work, is an aesthetic learning perspective. The aesthetic approach to learning opens what in the pragmatic, cognitive and socio-cultural approaches to learning seems to be "the black box" of body and senses. The black box expression refers to presupposed phenomena or concepts, which are not explained, but rather used as commonalities or pre-understandings in a line of arguments and reasoning. In the pragmatic, cognitive and socio-cultural approaches to learning, the senses and body are presupposed as an instrument for learning, and the material and physical environment seem to be presupposed as objects for human attention. Body and physical surroundings thus seem to have an implicit significance for learning, because the focus of attention is construction of meaning, knowledge and understanding. In contrast to this position, the aesthetic learning perspective focuses on nature and cultural and artistic products as material bodies in interaction with the individual and his or her bodily-sensory perception, as well as on cultural meaning making and interpretation of sensory experience. In other words, aesthetic learning refers to the interplay between body, culture, nature and the transformation of knowledge forms into different modalities (Dewey 2005, Jensen 2011, Langer 1957, 1961).

K. E. Løgstrup (1905-1981) was a Danish philosopher whose works have had large impact on pedagogy and understanding of human relations in the public sector professions in Denmark. His works are only in part translated into English, which in some ways limits his thoughts to a Scandinavian context, and which furthermore concentrates on his religious and ethical ideas (Løgstrup 1979, 1997). However, we will briefly introduce some of his later works, where he developed a specific understanding of the significance of arts and aesthetic experience for learning, enhanced imagination and empathy. To this end, he investigated the correlation between art and knowledge building (Løgstrup 1983). In our study of the interviewed artists' experience of learning and creativity as interwoven, his ideas about artists and their way of working with artistic processes can add to and offer a sensitive vocabulary for our understanding of this experience.

Løgstrup's fundamental idea is that artistic activity and its products in the form of music and art can be seen as basic human *faits de vie* (expressions of life). With the concept of *faits de vie*, focus is on the time and space (here and now) of human life, and on body and senses in the aesthetic experience. According to Løgstrup, the aesthetic experience is a receiving, but active process, where the individual investigates the given sensory impressions. Løgstrup sees the artist as an expert on this receiving process, as the artist uses the aesthetic experience as a starting point for further investigation of the impression of the senses. The reason for this prolonged investigation of perception and aesthetic experience is that the artist's mode of working is to examine and explore the *attunement* of the sensory impression and the situation. Attunement encompasses the details, the moods, the sounds and so on, which as a whole constitute the feeling of the situation. This attunement is what the artist articulates and expresses in the artwork. Therefore, the artist's first professional tool is the way in which he or she investigates the impression of the senses. Subsequently, this sensory attention shapes the impressions into an artistic expression (Løgstrup 1983, pp. 9-13).

This aesthetic approach to the world is one of the ways in which the artists in the interview work with learning as a creative tool. In the example with Kvium above, his statement of *working against own limitations* can be viewed as having an aesthetic origin. In order to fight limitations in his own expertise, he tries to stay open, to investigate his works further, not to be content with immediate expressions and routines. The quote below expresses how Michael Kvium more specifically pushes both his creative process and learning:

> If you don't have this space, where you can't formulate what you experience and if
> you don't dare to be so humble that you actually sit down and wait and wait… What

does the painting want? What is it trying to tell me? […] There, you are very small. There, you really are the craftsman, who should try as far as possible to listen to what the work wants. This is not taking place only once […] this is going on during the entire process, that you repeatedly have to draw back and say "hey, it is actually not me who is deciding. If I decide everything, then I am not an artist". […] So [the work] has to contain something, which might be many tiny things that other people do not notice. But for me it is very important that they get through this process. And it [the work] also has to stay in the workshop until I have seen it on a very bad day and a very good day.

In the effort of creating his paintings, Kvium continues to investigate what he sees with his eyes, trying, as well as he can, to understand the impression with as little bias and prejudice as possible. Relating to Løgstrup's concept of attunement, Kvium's openness to his senses is used to conceive an impression and attune to the content of the situation – the painting. The strong emphasis on and awareness of senses and bodily impressions is for Løgstrup the way in which the artist works against his or her own pre-understandings, expectations and immediate interpretations of situations. According to Løgstrup, the patient, open and sensitive approach to sensory impressions expressed in the quote, is generally in opposition to the ways Western people at large approach sensory impressions and learning. In everyday life, non-artists move quickly from perception to understanding, interpreting and completing sensory impressions at speed to move and progress in daily actions, chores and doings (Løgstrup 1983, p. 9). The relation to assimilative and reproductive learning is obvious, but these processes are also necessary to function in daily life. However, fast interpretations based on pre-understandings of the situation will confirm existing understanding and knowledge. The point is that in order to get to a renewing, creative approach to the world, individuals must from time to time separate sensing from understanding and explore what they sense as purely sensory impressions, like the quote from Kvium indicates.

The best way to illustrate this point is Løgstrup's reference to the human way of relating to sounds. Sounds are persistent sensory impressions and a fundamental part of the way we orientate ourselves in the world. We cannot close our ears as we can close our eyes. Therefore, the mind will always sense and understand sounds simultaneously. Løgstrup refers to the siren of an ambulance. We hear the sound and at the same time we understand and know that it is the sound of an ambulance. The sound of the siren will immediately convey the understanding and knowledge of the ambulance – the sound itself: its tone, peak, its quality, is rarely paid attention to, when it comes to our daily orientation in the world. The artist works differently.

By attempting to separate sensing from understanding and by listening to, exploring and describing the sound as sound, the artist tries to come to new understandings of the sound and the immediate interpretation of it as a siren. The sound might be interesting to investigate as a composer, as a musician or as a singer, if it could widen their expressional width. This separation of perception and understanding is not only a creative effort, it also encompasses a learning dimension. The learning dimension can develop into a first step of creative renewal, because the basic sensory impression can lead beyond the culturally given world views, and by means of this identify problems, describe phenomena in new ways. According to Løgstrup, this can spark new common understandings, expressions, ways of thinking of phenomena in the world (Løgstrup 1983, pp. 9-10), in other words, what we could understand as creative renewal.

This creative renewal requires a more phenomenological, receptive, sensory-aware approach to surroundings than everyday perception. Moreover, this artistic-inspired attention to the world is what can stimulate creative endeavours to express attunement, and to express sensory impressions in ways that create new meaning and understandings of the world. In other words, one of the creative dimensions of learning is related to sensory awareness and abilities to express impressions. The aesthetic learning perspective can in this way assist in understanding the artists in the study and their experience of learning as part of the creative art-making process.

Learning and creativity as intertwined and interwoven. What are the perspectives?

In this chapter, we have investigated approaches to learning that deepen our understanding of the artists' experience of learning as intertwined with creative processes in artistic work. Specific learning approaches can be related to creativity in artistic processes in ways that shed new light on both creativity and learning. The learning theories discussed underline how creativity can be considered as a modus or dimension of learning and vice versa. Creativity can be part of a problem solving process, where it plays an important role in imagining new ways of thinking and doing things, or learning can be considered as part of a process where the individual creates new meanings and deeper understanding of both new and familiar phenomena. Creativity and learning can also be linked to aesthetic and sensory awareness, where the individual explores the surroundings and experiences new approaches to and creation of meaning for well-known phenomena. The point is that when the artists in our study express a feeling of

learning and creativity as intertwined in the artistic process, it is important to note that the learning perspectives in question all refer to the following traits of learning as depicted in the model:

Figure 8. Relations between learning and creativity in artistic work.
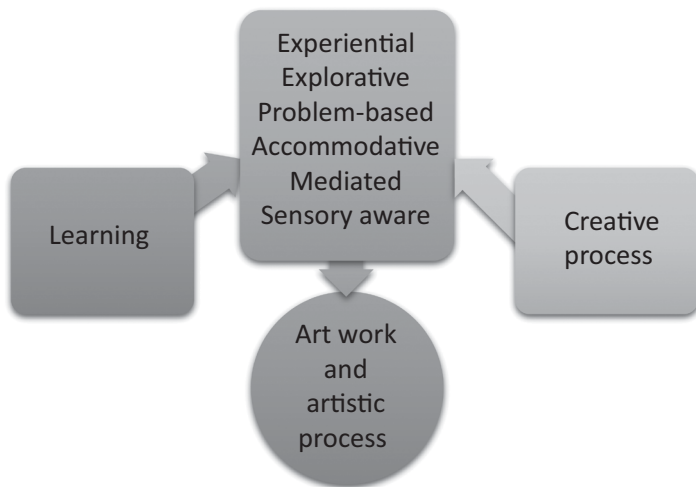
Having investigated how learning can be interesting in relation to creativity, it is essential to know more about the specific workings of learning as part of creative processes in artistic work, as well as about how artistic cultures and communities support and foster learning in creative processes. Therefore, before we proceed to the following chapters, we will present the ways in which we have chosen to differentiate between the above conceptual aspects of learning and creativity when further introducing the voices of the artists over the next chapters. The purpose is to explore the concepts of creativity and learning in new ways in relation to artistic processes. To this end, new understandings of the relation between the two dimensions can be investigated in ways that shed light on learning and creativity as described and expressed by the artists' narratives. This new light will be a step forward in relating artistic creativity to other domains, as a way to make the artistic approach to learning relevant for educational, formal, and informal learning settings.

As a means of structuring this examination, we have organised the chapters into three areas, where the above learning concepts will be elaborated with other, newer learning theories. The following chapters will take their point of departure from empirical findings in the study, which means that more empirical

material from the interviews will be presented and analysed. The three areas will be:

- Chapter 6: Knowledge building and skills. The notion of knowledge building can be seen as the formational or competence-developing part of learning. Focus is on the learning processes related to the individual, such as technique acquisition, experimentation, reflective processes etc.
- Chapter 7: Apprenticeship. The notion of apprenticeship is closely related to the cultural and social learning theories, which were outlined above. Apprenticeship is about the interplay between the individual and the domain/surrounding culture, what this means in respect of learning and change in the individual and change in the culture and how creativity emerges as cultural change.
- Chapter 8: Perspectives for formal learning environments. Focus is on the cultural, environmental aspect of learning processes in passing on traditions of an art form, as well as the environmental significance of the artists' possibilities of acting, thinking and changing in creative ways. This will be investigated by means of an interesting concept of serendipity as a way of conceptualising and making transferrable to educational settings the way in which artists work and learn in explorative, uncertain and unpredictable creative processes of art-making.

Chapter 6: Creativity and ways of building knowledge and skills

In the previous chapter, we outlined some of the learning perspectives that could explain the interviewed artists' experience of learning and creativity as intertwined in the artistic work. We saw that the intertwined experience of learning and creativity can be meaningfully interpreted, if learning is understood as explorative, problem-based, accommodative, mediated and sensory-aware.

In this chapter, we move to a deeper examination of the ways in which the artists express themselves on learning as an *intentional* and *conscious* action. As we saw in the theories, not all learning is understood as intentional, or even wanted. Some learning processes are related to socialisation, environment, societal and social change, compulsory education and daily interaction with other people. However, the reason for focusing on the artists' declared learning intentions is to explore whether they have special ways of creating opportunities to learn in the explorative and open fashion, which leads them to experience creative power. In other words, we ask the questions: Do the interviews reveal any specific ways in which artists operate with purposes and goals for learning and do they subsequently develop and use particular strategies that allow explorative and other creative ways of learning?

The examination of these topics is expected to provide us with deeper understanding of the individual intentionality of learning in creative, artistic work that may be inspirational in other learning fields seeking to promote creativity, especially in education.

Learning purposes, goals and strategies in artistic work

As we saw in the previous chapter, a meaningful understanding of learning processes in artistic work seems to involve both an individual and a social dimension and learning seems to happen in the interplay between the two. However, while endeavouring to identify if the artists operate with special purposes and goals for learning and inherent strategies for learning, it seems analytically necessary to focus on their learning processes *as individuals,* to the extent this is possible. Another reason to focus for a while on individual learning is that, as shown by quotes in the previous chapter, the interviewed artists appear to engage in creative artwork and artistic processes in ways that require conscious awareness of

own learning and awareness of learning opportunities. This awareness seems to result in personal learning purposes and strategies that can be worth considering as potentially valuable in other fields, such as education.

Several themes emerge from the interviews that make it analytically possible for us to frame the interpretation and understanding of the artists' learning purposes and use of strategies for learning:

1. Adequate expression
2. Continual learning
3. Open engagement with the world

These themes are not the only ones that show how the artists operate with learning purposes and goals and develop learning strategies. However, these topics are selected because they relate to the explorative areas, where the artists are particularly explicit about their intentions for learning within the art form.

Adequate expression: technical skills, craftsmanship and the body

As a starting point, we will concentrate on the artists' narratives about strategies for learning technical, bodily and cognitive functions and skills in order to master and exercise the given art form, in other words, how they learn their craft. These strategies are interesting in relation to explorative aspects of learning, because they display relationships between the artists' body and thinking. The performing artists' narratives, in particular, imply that the body is experienced as a precondition for learning and building knowledge in the arts, as well as for creating artistic expressions. This may seem a self-evident or even trivial observation. However, in examining the ways in which these artists are aware of their bodies and explain their strategies concerning bodily learning and related thinking, we might develop a deeper understanding of bodily conditions for creativity and develop possibilities for transferring concepts concerning bodily learning strategies into other learning fields. In this investigation, it is relevant to ask the experts in embodied learning and symbolic expressions, the artists, about these processes.

Without technique, creative ideas die

Arts in general can be defined as bodily related: both making and listening/seeing rely on sensory and bodily activities. The artists within the performing arts, however, use their bodies as means of expression and art-making in visible ways and the artists within these fields unfold compelling narratives on strategies for learning the craft and mastering the bodily abilities required by their art. Even

though actors and dancers patently elaborate on bodily abilities as a part of their creative expressions and therefore as a purpose of learning, we will begin with the musicians. The purpose of individual musicians in mastering their instrument or their voice is to become able to express their ideas, feelings and subjectivity through music (Burwell & Shipton 2011) as well as to be able to create music in collaboration with others. This is illustrated in the following interview excerpt from opera singer Nisticò:

> Technical work helps your creativity in a way that gives you the tools to be creative. You can have as many ideas as you want, but if you cannot do them, because your technique doesn't allow you to, you can't and it stays in your mind. You can't express any of that, only very, very little and very limited, so we [my father and I] don't work much on interpretation or creative ideas per se […] but of course the technique is the one thing that really allows us to be creative, I think.

It seems of crucial importance for Nisticò to have an idea of the purpose of engaging in the learning process. The purpose in Nisticò's case is the wish to express his musical ideas within singing. The precondition for realising this wish is to learn singing technique and, subsequently, he develops a strategy for learning the technique and craft of singing. In other words, technical skills are experienced as a precondition for expressing ideas within singing and therefore, Nisticò has a meaningful purpose and a related motivation for learning the technique. This experience of preconditions for being able to realise a purpose is interesting from a learning perspective. This observation suggests that an important question to raise when starting an explorative learning activity is: what is my purpose and what are the preconditions for being able to realise my purpose?

In the musical field, the main strategy for learning the preconditions for the art, the craft and techniques is of course practicing. For non-musicians, it might seem peculiar to investigate practicing as a learning strategy, as it may seem specific to the musical learning field. However, we do not believe practicing to be a need exclusive to the arts or music. We indeed believe that looking closely into the workings of practicing sheds light on questions that hold a more general relevance to learning fields other than music.

Practicing as a learning strategy

Practicing is the intentional learning strategy that musicians use when their purpose is to build technical skills and craftsmanship. But what types of learning processes are involved in practicing? We will seek some answers by quoting musician and composer Anders Koppel:

> Well, it's completely banal, practice slowly, no pedal and all that. So it sticks in your memory […]. So, I remember that once –no names!– I heard a colleague practicing and it was in tempo from start to end, all the time, over and over again and it was the same places, which broke into pieces every time and finally I said, "practice slowly, dammit! Nothing is happening! You are only practicing the errors!"

What is presupposed by saying "practice slowly" is that body and mind cooperate at different levels when practicing: Firstly, the body (fingers, arms, shoulders, feet –pedals of the piano– and so on), is moved in particular ways to produce sounds, which requires awareness of kinaesthetic learning. Secondly, the body (ears and hearing) receives and processes the produced sound, which requires awareness of sensory impression and aesthetic learning, much in line with Løgstrup's idea of the senses as intentionally separated from understanding (Løgstrup 1983). Thirdly, the quote indicates that the musician's critical reflection is required to identify passages where it is necessary deliberately to play slower, if the technical skills are not yet adequate to produce the desired sounds (Smeltz 2012, Burwell & Shipton 2011). Fourthly, this requires that the musician can identify the problematic passage - the hard nut to crack-and use adequate tools to solve the problem, for instance playing it slower. The relation to Dewey's problem-based learning seems clear (Dewey 1966/1944), although it appears from the quote that problem identification and problem solving are not necessarily an easy or natural process or strategy in practicing. However, the quote implies that developing routines that emphasise "good habits" like patience, slow tempo, no sound-improving technology (such as pedals on the piano) and so on, increases the likelihood of being able to find problems and developing and refining technical skills to solve the problems (Smeltz 2012). Given this, the quote indicates that the repetition involved is not only a reproductive effort or mindless mechanical movements. It is an effort involving cognitive reflection in combination with awareness on sensory impression (sensorial hearing of the sound with the ears, then "critical hearing" and judging the sound, like separating sensing and understanding in Løgstrup's perspective (Løgstrup 1983) or separating physical movement and professional-artistic judgement (Burwell & Shipton 2011, Williams, Fredrickson & Atkinson 2011).

Furthermore, this analysis underscores that practicing as a learning strategy for developing techniques requires an enactive approach to learning (Dewey 1988). The enactiveness includes the will, patience and ability to identify problematic passages by critical hearing and mirroring, to reflect on them and repeat them over and over again (Smeltz 2012). The connection to the discussion on learning purpose in the previous paragraph seems evident: the will, perseverance

and patience for carrying out a learning strategy like practicing seem to require a deep sense of purpose.

This said, the body can be seen as a starting point, a focus point, for learning processes in relation to the art form (Løgstrup 1983, Polanyi 1962). This must accordingly mean that the body is of great importance in any effort to identify points of interest for developing learning strategies in order to master the craft of a given profession. The training of bodily awareness and senses as a strategy for learning the craft of the profession can be of more general interest, if related to *exploration* as a learning concept (Bruner 1996, Dewey 1966/1944, Jarvis 1999).

Is there anything we can learn from the musicians' practicing as a learning strategy in a more general sense than just learning to play an instrument? We believe so.

Firstly, other learning fields may be inspired to focus on learners' initial motivation for developing learning strategies – do the learners experience a need and subsequently a purpose for learning and is the purpose interesting and engaging enough to spark the will, energy and patience to develop learning strategies? Even learning strategies that might require patience and a long term perspective in order to carry them out in form of routines and "good habits"? Can they wait for the effects of their learning efforts?

Secondly, the quotes indicate that practicing activates both body and thinking, which might inspire in other fields a similarly enactive approach to developing learning strategies. We refer to the sensory-aware openness to own production of expression (in this case, sound, but it could equally be other expressions including maybe even written text?) This sensory-aware openness seems to have explorative qualities that might be an aspect of creativity also when learning crafts and skills in a profession?

And finally, the quote may also give rise to the consideration: in an experiential learning perspective, is it always given that individuals *can* identify problems, or does the field of knowledge or practice require that learners actually learn how to identify problems? This question deserves further attention in future research, as well as in considerations for teaching and learning activities and pedagogy.

Continual learning: how to creatively renew artistic expression

The learning theme of adequate expression and the learning strategy of practicing are interesting in respect of developing bodily and body-reflective routines and habits for technical skill development, which is an obvious precondition for expressing creative ideas in the arts, but also interesting in respect of tools for explorative learning. One of the themes of explorative learning we term *continual learning,* which we would like to distinguish from the term *life-long learning.*

(The term life-long learning indicates an educational-strategic and political-economic understanding of how to "use" learning to improve the individual's competitiveness on the labour market (European Commission 2014) or to solve societal problems such as social inequality (UNESCO 2014).

Contrary to the political-societal objectives, the artists' goals for continual learning seem to be personal development in their art form and ongoing renewal of artistic expression. Interpreting the artists' interviews under the theme of continual learning allows us to encompass their use of explorative learning strategies in order to renew artistic expressions, as the purpose of continual learning seems to be to pave the way for explorative aspects of learning as a way of developing creativity in artistic work. The term emerges from understandings of learning like "learn to receive and be open" or "learn from day to day" (Kvium), "integrated dialogue with collaborators" (Fjord), "learning in the making" (Klejs), "seeking non-knowledge" (Valeur), "learn constantly as a performer" (Nisticò). Furthermore, the theme of continual learning implies that the intended renewal of expressions must be in ways in which the artists can still recognise their own personality and originality. This active effort brings to mind Piaget's concept of equilibrium, where the individual adapts and learns in assimilative and accommodative processes, so that renewal can take place, but making use of existing knowledge and skills (Piaget 1954).

Challenging oneself as a learning strategy

One strategy for carrying out the purpose of continual learning emerges from this quote, painter Julie Nord:

> I am very good at setting myself tasks and then being inspired by them, but I do not work very well if those conditions are too narrow. So I set myself tasks all the time, right, that I can break, but so that it will not be too monotonous.

Nord's use of the term "task" is interpreted as a problem-based strategy for continual learning. In this light, the task constitutes the problem and solving the task involves learning while also stimulating inspirational experiences and opening up to creative possibilities. We can interpret these tasks or problems as having the function of widening her scope of exploration and facilitating continual learning.

This understanding of tasks in a problem-based learning perspective can be looked upon through the perspectives of Peter Jarvis' understanding of professional learning. Nord's quote seems interesting in light of his concepts of learning, as an individual according to Jarvis can learn in two different, problem-based ways:

1. When the person experiences a situation which differs from the expected (disjunction). The person is forced to rethink the situation, identify the problem and compose a strategy for solving the problem.
2. When the person challenges him- or herself in well-known situations by trying to imagine how things could be different, or by trying to see the situation from different perspectives or interpretative angles (Jarvis 1999, pp. 61-63).

We find it worth noting that the first way of learning in many ways is characterised by its dependence on circumstances in the situation and the individual's response to its problematic and unexpected aspects. The second way of learning seems to depend on the individual's active, self-challenging and problem-inventing approach to the situation, which has a more intentional and therefore strategic connotation.

A closer examination reveals how the heritage from Dewey emerges in the pragmatic, experiential and problem-oriented basis for Jarvis' understanding of learning. However, Jarvis transforms the learning concept of *problem* into a more neutral term, *challenge,* which allows him to focus on explorative sides of learning. His challenge, however, still involves problem identification, problem solving, hypothesis composition, imagination and action, as Dewey described (Jarvis 1999, pp. 74-75).

If Nord's strategy of setting herself tasks is interpreted as challenges in Jarvis' understanding, interesting aspects of continual learning emerge, as Jarvis concentrates on learning processes of the professional *expert*, by which he means an experienced and highly competent practitioner, like Nord. According to Jarvis, the experts' purposes in learning are not necessarily to master skills or logic of the profession, but rather to explore and occupy themselves with matters of deep interest, or to avoid "getting bored" (Jarvis 1999, p. 75). The experts' learning strategies for deepened understanding or avoidance of boredom involve the second type of learning, that is, they intentionally set up challenges for themselves, looking at well-known situations but in new ways, using imagination and explorative approaches to the situation – inventing challenges. In this respect, Dewey's learning concepts of hypothesis composition and testing, exploration and experimentation are useful for Jarvis. These qualities of expert learning correspond to Nord's quote above, as her strategy of setting herself tasks seems to involve "breaking monotony", implying that this is to avoid getting bored. Summing up, Jarvis takes a slightly different position from Dewey in relation to problem identification, in the fact that expert learners intentionally sets up challenges for themselves, *without* the need of the circumstances or the situation imposing the challenge on him or her. The expert learners question their knowledge,

anticipations and perception of situations without any outer cause; they do not take any presumptions for granted (Jarvis 1999). In other words, Jarvis' experts tend to find and define their own challenges and Nord's tasks can be understood in this light as a way to renew her artistic expressions. This strategy of challenge might even be interpreted as a creative effort, because setting tasks for herself helps her in a continual learning process, by which the way is paved for explorative and creative aspects of learning.

Changing perspectives of meaning as a learning strategy

Similarly to Nord, author Siri Hustvedt deliberately challenges herself in writing processes:

> I'm driven to read and read and read more. I even read against myself, that is, I read writers, Anglo American analytical philosophers, for example, with whom I have little sympathy, writers whose sensibilities are directly opposed to mine, but I like to take in their arguments because they sharpen my own, and they have altered my thinking about some questions.

The quote can be understood in light of Jarvis' expert learning strategy of challenging oneself, in Hustvedt's case with the arguments of her fellow-writers with opposing sensibilities.

However, when examining the artists' strategies for continual learning, the quote is also interesting if interpreted in light of Jack Mezirow's theory and concept of *transformative learning*. As described in the chapters 2 and 3, transformative life experiences often have led the interviewed artists in their creative development. In a learning perspective, transformative life experiences can lead to deep transformative learning processes, where the individual's insight of the world is changed. In order to approach the concept of transformative learning, Mezirow's premise is that adult learners strive to create meaning in experiences in order to learn. He builds on Piaget's concepts of schemes, of which the individual creates a so-called meaning structure of knowledge and understanding. The meaning structure consists of two related levels of interpretive functions: meaning perspectives and meaning schemes. Meaning perspectives refer to cultural and linguistic structures, by means of which individuals and groups create meaning by ascribing coherence and significance to experience. In other words, meaning perspectives refer to the individual's basic assumptions, which frame the way in which experiences are understood, interpreted and given meaning and they function both as a verbal-conscious and tacit-unconscious interpretative framework for experience. Meaning schemes function as situational articulation of basic assumptions on a conscious and verbal level.

According to Mezirow, a transformative learning process often begins with a *disorienting dilemma*. A disorienting dilemma refers to occurrences in individuals' life that are inconsistent with their meaning perspectives and prior experiences and in relation to which existing knowledge is experienced as inadequate (Mezirow 2012, p. 19). The individual's meaning perspective is inadequate to create meaning in the situation. A disorienting dilemma may lead to rejection of the situation as a defence mechanism, which does not lead to learning. A disorienting dilemma may also be a starting point for a transformative learning process, involving self-examination, critical assessment of assumptions, exploration of options for new roles, relationships and actions, reframing understanding of oneself and the world or reality (Mezirow 2012, pp. 22-23).

In light of transformative learning, Hustvedt's quote is interesting, as we could go so far as to suggest that the author carries out a learning strategy of continual learning by deliberately putting herself in "disorienting dilemmas". She does this by intentionally seeking out writers and works whom she knows express worldviews or attitudes different from or even opposite to her own. Relating to Mezirow, we may assume that this way of acting forces her to question basic assumptions of the world, or in Mezirow's understanding, own meaning perspectives, as a part of her creative process.

Impossibilities and obstruction

This point of self-imposed challenge as a way of working with creative processes and obtaining creative outcomes emerges, as mentioned, as a general pattern throughout the interviews, for instance from the educator's view by theatre director Eugenio Barba:

> You teach people to be creative in the sense that challenge is the daily bread. You challenge yourself, you challenge yourself that you must not say it is not possible. The impossible is the possible, which takes more time.

The important point is the almost naturalised understanding that challenge equals creativity, to the extent that Barba deliberately challenges his pupils and actors with the aim of making them overcome inherent limitations ("it is not possible"). We interpret this as teaching the students and giving them the experience that intentionally challenging themselves then solving the challenge can create something new and sometimes creative and innovative. Another important point is the notion of time: when you challenge yourself and learn from overcoming inherent limitations, it takes time – there is no quick way to overcome a self-imposed challenge, something that seems impossible. This notion of "impossibility" may again be interpreted in light of Dewey, Jarvis and Mezirow

as yet another strategy for challenging oneself or putting oneself in a disorienting dilemma. In the case of impossibilities, the disorienting dilemma intends to stimulate imagination (Dewey 1988, Jarvis 1999, Mezirow 2009): how can impossibility be solved? The interesting point is that the teacher scaffolds this strategy, as he uses impossibility as a tool for *teaching* the students to challenge themselves or to put themselves in disorienting dilemmas and in this way stimulate imagination. That is, creating and solving impossibilities can be interpreted as strategies for continual learning.

In chapter 3, we heard how dancer Palle Granhøj works with the method of "obstruction" as a tool for furthering creative processes. In a learning perspective, obstruction can be seen as a way of challenging oneself, again implying learning to be part of creative processes. Granhøj even believes that the strategy of challenging oneself can be converted into fields other than dancing, such as administration:

> […] We have experienced some constraints, which have forced us to think differently, forced me to think differently and so I use it [obstruction] equally as much in managing [the ensemble][…] and in collaboration with the staff. Here, [in using obstruction as a method for managing] I did not come so far […]. There was a time when I thought it might be fun to develop [an approach to] collaboration from obstruction […] from the creative obstruction method that I use on stage and we could use it in administration, too.

In this quote we see how the dancer sees intentional challenge as a strategic tool that allows, or forces, individuals in many different fields of work to think differently and thus to learn, act and think creatively. Interestingly enough, this learning is not limited to the professional domain, but extends to forms of organising one's daily work. What is implied in the quote above is the way in which constraints can challenge habits of thinking and therefore urge to think differently, in this case, about managing the ensemble. As mentioned above, challenge as a learning concept is positively linked to deeper forms of learning, transformative learning and the like, but also a way in which individuals engage in continual learning. Granhøj sees obstruction with its embedded transformative approach to learning as something worth disseminating in other fields, for example as a general mind-set in other contexts such as administration.

Challenge as a strategy for continual learning and creativity

In light of an explorative and transformative learning perspective, the concept of challenging oneself seems to be one of the tools that the interviewed artists use for carrying out the strategy of continual learning. However, as we know from Mezirow, a challenge or a disorienting dilemma will put the person under

pressure, to which the individual can respond either by learning and transforming or by rejecting new perspectives (Mezirow 2010, p. 23). There is reason to believe that the rejecting response impedes a given creative process, as it does learning. Therefore, challenge may not per se promote the explorative learning related to creativity, but must have specific qualities in order to work as a tool in strategies for continual learning. The interviews display a broad variety of types of challenge:

- Tasks (Nord: inventing own, meaningful challenges)
- Disorienting dilemmas (Hustvedt: deliberately seeking views and understandings –of art or more broadly the world, values, culture– that challenge own meaning perspectives)
- Seeking opponents (Hustvedt: Understanding and learning from other perspectives challenges own basic assumptions of the world)
- Impossibilities (Barba: creating and solving impossibilities challenges imagination)
- Obstruction (Granhøj: working with intentional obstruction of work challenges habits and routines)

What seems to unite these types of challenge in respect of supporting explorative, continual learning is, first and foremost, voluntariness. Secondly, there seems to be a cultural understanding that challenging oneself serves a higher purpose of developing artistic ideas and expressions (or creative thinking and acting in collaboration and managing a team in Granhøj's case). This means that challenging oneself seems to be culturally accepted as a strategy for exploration and continual learning and is conveyed in teaching, collaboration and other relations. There is also reason to assume that the artists experience a need for these learning strategies: if we relate to the theme of ongoing learning, the deeper purpose of this learning approach is of course that artists use the learning strategies to develop and renew artistic expression. This leads to the assumption that these strategies potentially support artistic creativity, as they offer the cognitive background for creating new and valuable artworks.

However, before rushing out to encourage, for instance, students and pupils in the educational system to challenge themselves into disorienting dilemmas or impossibilities, considerations on certain precautions are necessary. We know from learning theories and psychological theories that the concept of challenge and transformative learning is not without its problematic aspects (Mezirow 2010, Piaget 1954), especially if the challenge is not voluntary, but imposed by the environment. Being forced to go beyond basic assumptions, meaning perspectives and other ways of creating meaning and coherence, as

challenges and accommodative, transformative learning processes demand, can involve fear, feeling of loss of control and of predictability, or even anxiety. In other words: transformative learning can be frustrating. This does not mean that frustration is necessarily negative per se. Frustration can motivate and spark learning and change (Mezirow 2012, p. 23), but pedagogies and educational designs might have to incorporate ways to consider how to tackle or even contain frustrations in explorative and creative learning processes. The artists above understand the transformative aspects of challenging oneself positively, but as the following quotes indicate, processes on the transformative path can occur, which are experienced as unpleasant. These other sides to challenge and transformative learning should be considered, if a learner or an educator, facilitator or teacher intentionally involves or demands challenge in any creative learning strategies.

Feeling lost: disorientation, crises and frustration in learning

These next pages will relate to the way in which challenge may appear as an outer condition for learning, when not initiated by learners themselves.

Some of the artists' narratives touch on the experience of disorientation and feelings like fear and doubt, as learning their art seems to challenge previous basic assumptions and meaning structures. Actor Julia Varley says:

> So the first feeling of apprenticeship came when I arrived in Denmark. Because there suddenly I realised that I didn't know anything. […] I was no longer useful. Because in Italy, I was doing particular activities, I was organising, we were doing performances, which had a sense for us, because we were performing in occupied factories, in schools and we were doing parades. So everything had a sense. Then I said, okay I go to Denmark, because I can learn something and take it back to my colleagues. I arrived there and I didn't speak the language and I was just… I was not useful to anybody, I was just a weight. I couldn't perform like they performed and I realised, I didn't know what an action was. I had always done theatre, because I wanted to do, to move and not to sit down and just being at a chair. It's like, I could see, what they did, the Odin actors and I could see there was a power there, that I couldn't.

Varley describes a situation where her previous experience and knowledge do not apply to create meaning and which therefore challenges her basic assumptions of the world. She seems to struggle to understand (obtain equilibrium in) the new situation by adapting using assimilation (relating the new impressions to her previous experience as an actor in Italy) and accommodation (she has to find new ways to understand acting and reframe her views on acting). Even though she expresses the experience of knowing nothing about theatre in the new context, the quote still implies that she knows enough to appreciate that

the Odin Teatret has theatrical expressions, which she experiences as powerful. This becomes her deepest motivational factor for learning within the art of acting: the feeling of meeting something bigger, more powerful than herself, more powerful than she has ever met. This is a profound way of expressing what this meeting does to her: she wants to be them! This motivational experience of purpose is however juxtaposed with an experience of challenge, but in this case the challenge has a demotivating effect. Her encounter with another way of making theatre and action gives her the experience that what she has until then held for acting, her existing knowledge and tools for creating meaning, are inadequate to create meaning in the new context. This experience of inadequate knowledge can be viewed in the light of what Mezirow refers to as a "disorienting dilemma" or what Dewey would call "experience of a problem". Varley appears to experience this sense of inadequate knowledge and tools for creating meaning not only in actions and knowledge about her field, but even in the most basic of all tools for create meaning – language (Vygotsky, Bruner). This challenge can seem too overwhelming to overcome.

Painter Julie Nord describes her struggle with the expectations, the teaching and an overload of impressions at the Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen as a major challenge:

> I tried out a lot of styles and was also impressed with all the art that we saw and with what it was capable of and finally … I got to a point where I gave up … where I actually thought: "I cannot contribute anything here". It became too confusing … and I went dead in making videos, because there was so much technology involved … and I thought, actually I might illustrate children's books? And then I sat down at home and tried to make a children's book. I sent it to a lot of publishers and got it back again from everywhere … [they stated] that they "would only have talented suggestions"… It was really quite a big crisis, where I actually gave up. And yes, travelled to India to help with learning and meditation in a monastery and was really in sort of a crisis …

Nord experiences her meaning perspectives as inadequate in the encounter with the complexity of both the painting traditions and the way this tradition is administered and passed on to the younger generation in education. This constitutes a meaningful example of Mezirow's disorienting dilemma, but with a different outcome than transformative learning: Nord gives up, she escapes to India and she rejects art (she teaches meditation while in India). In this case, the disorienting dilemma does not lead to a transformative learning process (Mezirow 2010). Nord gives voice to the deeply frustrating aspects of a disorienting dilemma, a stage of learning and development where nothing is certain and nothing makes sense in relation to previous experience.

However, Nord's crisis, or challenge in form of disorientation, prompts her to rethink and reframe her situation. She solves the challenge by taking up drawing instead of painting or video-arts. In this way, she solves the problem of being in a state of mind that she does not like and transforms it into a situation that she feels comfortable with (Schön 1987, p. 28), creating new meaning perspectives (Mezirow 2010). This solving of the challenge, however, took a long time:

> Well, for the first time in six years I felt really at home in what I did, because it was simple. I found out that it sort of fitted with the racing thoughts I have in my head - so that I work with one single media. In this way I can formally limit myself – it made room for saying something and uncovered what I thought I had to say.

Concluding in a learning perspective, Nord's process of finding a meaningful art form for expressing her artistic intentions can be interpreted as a transformative learning process and at the same time as a creative endeavour. Nord's narrative is one out of many similar examples in the material, which indicates that a strategy of continual learning in relation to artistic creativity involves a potential for transformational change. Within this strategy of continual learning, challenge can be meaningful and motivational, when used intentionally and self-imposed as a tool for explorative learning and creativity, but can embed the risk of leading to demotivation and frustration if imposed on the individual by the environment. Still, the above excerpts seem to indicate that even the frustrating challenges have a potential for creative renewal. If Nord had experienced the Academy of Fine Arts and the education in painting and video-arts as smooth and meaningful, she might not have felt the need for a different means of artistic expression. Consequently, without the experience of mismatch, problem, crisis, she would not have found herself, as a means of solving the problem, or developed drawing as an independent, newly re-appreciated by the art world and fully expressive art form. As a result of this process, she deeply innovated the very meaning and use of drawing, originally and traditionally seen as just preparatory to painting. Because of her transformative learning and problem solving, Nord developed it as an art form, which is displayed in museums as art in its own right.

Open engagement with the world

Apart from continual learning, the artists' explorative learning in the creative artistic process can be interpreted as what we term *open engagement with the world*. Learning through an open engagement with the world seems to be motivated by the artists' seeking inspiration and exploring possibilities and limits for personal expression in their art form. The theme emerges from statements

underscoring understandings of learning that appear related to "being with other people" or "doing investigations of the world" (Dehlholm), "learning to have a bigger vision of the context" or "having community work" (Varley), "you AND me" (Nisticò), "travelling and internships" (Jordan). All of these examples have come up in the interviews when talking about learning, which again, often spontaneously, leads to narratives on inspiration, exploration and expression. In these narratives, the encounter with the world and the people in it provides opportunities to explore, discover and learn, which is transformed into renewed artistic expressions. But what are their strategies for engaging openly with the world? We will take some examples over the following pages and examine them in depth.

Curiosity killed the cat – but not learning

In the following excerpt, Siri Hustvedt indicates how strategies for engaging openly with the world can occur:

> The interviewer […] asked me, why I was so interested in neurobiology? Why I kept reading this material? And I said, […] "I am just so curious". And then, she said, "why?" I realised, I didn't know why, but it is a profound question. […] Curiosity is crucial to learning. I am driven to know things. I cannot stop learning. And yet, I do not expect to reach any final answers because I do not believe there is an ultimate Truth to be found.

In order to maintain an open engagement with the world, Hustvedt positions herself as not having nor expecting final answers to anything. This lack, or suspension, of having or expecting final answers, leaves Hustvedt with the opportunity to explore and to shape and model her knowledge in response to what she experiences. However, this exploration is not directed completely into the blue, since she appears to let her exploration be guided by her *curiosity*. Curiosity incites Hustvedt to seek information and knowledge and curiosity seems to function as a tool for becoming aware of areas of knowledge and areas of interest. This curiosity-driven, explorative and creative strategy for learning provides Hustvedt with a chance of achieving deeper knowledge of more things, which can eventually become material for the creative process of writing. In this way, we may assume that curiosity is experienced as being of strategic use and significance for engaging openly –and creatively– with the world.

The quote can also be interpreted as a further aspect of the already mentioned patterns of the artists' strategies of setting themselves tasks, challenging themselves, working against own limitations as in transformative learning processes. But still, as the quote indicates, curiosity appears differently than intentionally challenging oneself. Curiosity appears to be related to personal urge, pleasure,

pleasure of learning, pleasure of finding out new things and exploring world-views different from one's own in a playful way. However, like challenging oneself, curiosity can be difficult to bear as it can lead individuals to always be on the move, which can be exhausting (see for instance Litman 2005).

The reflective practitioner – a curious practitioner

Like Hustvedt, musician Benjamin Koppel also mentions curiosity:

> You take in new stuff and try it out. So it is about, if you are curious, you try to go new ways and find new pathways. Then, if you are lucky, some kind of renewal is brought about – if not for anybody else, then for yourself.

In this case, curiosity is experienced as involved in playing and improvising with other musicians or in composing new music. Interpreted in a learning perspective, Koppel experiences that curiosity functions as the starting point of an explorative and creative process of open engagement with the world in improvisation ("finding new pathways in music"). Pursuing Dewey's ideas on explorative aspects of experiential learning, Donald Schön (1987) elaborates on experimental, improvisational and reflective dimensions of learning in his idea of *the reflective practitioner*. Briefly, according to Schön (1987, pp. 22-23), the reflective practitioner operates with three levels of knowledge and learning in practical action, such as playing in collaboration with other musicians: knowing-in-action, reflection-in-action and reflection on action. Knowing-in-action is based on the practitioner's total knowledge (experience, formal education, training, skills, practicing) and is articulated as actions in response to particular situations in practice. In practice situations, knowing-in-action is made up of several actions, assessments and recollections, which in most cases will be experienced as verbally tacit knowledge, but as mentioned is articulated in action, such as when Koppel plays with other musicians. In other words, knowing-in-action refers to spontaneous, intuitive performance of actions, which can be difficult retrospectively to describe and substantiate in relation to verbal, conceptual or theoretical criteria (Schön 1987, p. 25). Concerning reflection-in-action, the reflective practitioner rethinks and remodels what he or she knows to adapt knowledge into action in response to practical situations and their requirements, which in Koppel's case can be the other musicians' musical ideas – or errors. This rethinking and remodelling is done out of a wish to perfect or improve the situation and is carried out by experimenting and improvising (Schön 1987, pp. 28-29). If the practitioner is surprised in action, if the situation turns out differently than expected, he or she can engage in a retrospective and evaluative kind of reflection,

reflection on action. Reflection on action happens after the situation and draws on the practitioner's conceptual and verbal knowledge, which is put to use in order to create meaning from the experienced situation. The retrospective character of reflection on action implies that the practitioner does not necessarily know in advance if his experiments and improvisations are of so much value that a change in his or her knowing-in-action is brought about (learning) (Schön 1987, p. 115), or, as Koppel puts it, if "some kind of renewal is brought about" in the group or even in the field of music (creativity).

Koppel declares that the motivation for the experimental approach to the situation is to satisfy curiosity – "if you are curious". Again, this implies that experimentation and curiosity are experienced as related. What the interviews with Hustvedt and Koppel bring into the reflective practitioner approach to learning is how they utilise their own curiosity in creative work – curiosity as a component and a motivation for developing experimental as well as reflective strategies in engaging in explorative learning processes in their field, an open engagement with the world. In this respect, reflection and learning can be seen as driven by curiosity and experimentation and they eventually lead to creative processes and outcomes, as Hustvedt suggests.

If we go deeper into the matter of experimentation from the perspective of the reflective practitioner, Schön (1987, pp. 66-75) distinguishes between three types of experimentation in practice:

- Explorative experiments: these give an immediate answer to the question "What if…?" This is the experiment with "trying out new stuff", as Benjamin Koppel describes above
- Action testing experiments: the individual investigates whether the action leads to the expected result. This action is more intentional compared to the first one. This is seen in his further reflection: "trying to find new pathways"
- Testing of hypothesis: The individual formulates different hypotheses, which are tested in comparison to each other. The different tests are related to different hypotheses and the choice between them is based on practical testing. This step is embedded in the evaluative aspect of the quote, where Koppel states: "if you are lucky, some kind of renewal is brought about".

Together, these three types of experimentation constitute the practitioner's ability to *improvise.*

Improvisation seems to be closely related to the creative process (as described in part 3 in this book), but as shown, it can also relate to learning and discovery. Improvisation is commonly explained or defined as not necessarily built on solid knowledge, but more a tentative way of reasoning. The

Oxford Learners' Dictionary says: "to make or do something using whatever is available, usually because you do not have what you really need" (The Oxford Learners' Dictionary 2014). Improvisation derives from the Latin: *improvisus,* meaning *unpredicted:* "to do something without preparation" (Merriam-Webster 2014a). In music and theatre, improvisation is used as a tool of expression (Rudlin 1994) and occurs based on previous accumulation of knowledge and constant practice. In this light and in light of the artists' interviews, improvisation can be seen as a highly professional, learning- and reflection-based and knowledge-using activity that allows creative engagement with situations, surroundings and the world. Understood in this light, improvisation does not appear as a result of arbitrary or random action. Going back to Koppel's statement of "trying out new stuff" in relation to Schön's components of experimentation, curiosity and experimentation seem to lead to improvisation as yet another important tool for engaging openly and creatively with the world, and thereby for learning.

Practice, challenge, curiosity and improvisation

In this chapter, focus has been on the artists' individual and personal learning processes. This has deepened our understanding of how the artists intentionally develop strategies for explorative learning referring to the three themes of adequate expression, continual learning and open engagement with the environment. We have seen how each one of the strategies requires different tools for being carried out and to trigger learning.

These strategies have been interpreted as:

- *Practicing* as a sensory-based and aesthetic, as well as an explorative and reflective strategy for learning, which can give rise to the following questions concerning learning in a broader sense:
  o Precondition as leading to a feeling of necessity – the question is, are we good at pointing to and letting learners sense and experience the preconditions for mastering any field of knowledge and practice, as well as a subsequent feeling of necessity for learning, purpose for learning, in teaching and education?
  o Sensory impressions and their potential for learning and reflection: do we provide opportunities for the learners to develop sensory awareness on their own actions, practical and academic alike, with the purpose of supporting open and explorative ways of developing expressions, both practical and academic?

- *Challenging oneself* as a reflective and transformative learning strategy, which can consist of setting oneself tasks, putting oneself in disorienting dilemmas, seeking opponents, impossibilities and obstruction. These learning strategies seem of almost immediate transfer-value for other learning fields, however with awareness of:
  o The willingness and preparedness to handle frustration, on the part of the learner as well as of the teacher or educator
  o Ways, both teacher or educator and learner, to create optimal frustration that leads to learning, not to demotivation
- *Curiosity* as a guide for explorative, experimental, reflective and improvisational strategies for learning in artistic and creative engagement with the environment. These strategies can lead to some considerations for learning in a wider sense:
  o Considering the creative powers of practical reasoning by highlighting the role of practical action, experimentation and improvisation in learning and supporting reflection in and throughout action
  o Considering the creative learning powers of letting learners guide their learning strategies by curiosity.

These themes have led to deeper understanding of the ways in which the artists learn their craft and how they exploit learning processes to foster and facilitate their own creativity.

In the next chapter, we will look at the significance of the social and cultural environment in relation to opportunities for individual learning and creativity.

Chapter 7: Creativity, learning and apprenticeship

In the previous chapter, we examined the ways in which artists develop and use individual strategies for learning and knowledge building, with the purpose of acquiring skills and creative approaches to learning within their respective fields of art. However, there is more to learning than these individual strategies in artistic work processes. The artists also learn by participating in artistic communities, by experiencing and acting within artistic cultures of practices and by engaging in formal education and schools.

As we know, the interviewed artists seem to develop learning strategies for mastering the craft of their art and these have the function of paving the way for continual, explorative, open and creative engagement with the world. This engagement with the world includes experiences within artistic communities, school and education. But do these social and cultural settings support and contribute to these learning strategies and if so, then how? Do the interviews reveal anything about if artistic communities and educational programmes intentionally and actively create learning environments to provide artistic learning opportunities and if so, can other fields learn from that? Or do the artistic communities and art educations rather function as a resource that provides tools for thinking, acting and learning and can other fields learn from that? Lastly, we make a brief investigation into how the interviewed artists experience learning opportunities within formal education, with the aim of learning how to improve conditions for creativity in education.

Apprenticeship and the situated understanding of learning

Following up on these questions, it is interesting that the interviewed artists, guided by their learning strategies, seem to make use of learning opportunities provided by many different learning environments and social and cultural settings, as well as by interaction with many different agents in the artistic field and other fields as well. Examples are Inger Exner, who cannot say that she learned her art in one particular place, but rather followed a "gut feeling", Jordan, who does internships, attends schools and makes random interviews to collect material for films, Ramsland, creating spaces for learning by going to university,

reading other authors, letting others read his manuscripts, taking in what he needs to proceed and leaving out the rest. In order to understand the learning conditions across these varied contexts, a situated learning perspective seems relevant. Lave (1999), Lave and Wenger (1991), Wenger (1998), Diller (1975) and Polanyi (1964) have all contributed to the understanding of learning within social practices of work or production, which can also include schools and educational institutions (Lave 1991, Collins et al. 1991, Brown et al. 1989). We interpret the interviews according to and inspired by theories of situated learning and communities of practice, where the concept of apprenticeship appears as a way of comprehending the individual's use of learning resources in social and cultural environments and the embedded practices. Artistic communities, artistic educations and schools provide the artists of our study with learning resources in intentional as well as unintentional ways. We were fortunate to have interviewed Anders and Benjamin Koppel, father and son and members of a ramified artistic musical family. This allowed us to study situated learning and apprenticeship in quite a unique way, as their narratives of "the family" seem meaningful when looked upon as an artistic community of practice. Anders Koppel has a special position in this musical family, as his father was the famous Danish composer Hermann D. Koppel and his son Benjamin is an acknowledged jazz musician and composer. This places Benjamin and Anders Koppel in a position, as father and son, to reflect on the learning efforts and possibilities of creative development in the "family-within-the-art-form" as a context for examining situated learning within a community of practice.

Shared work, distributed learning

In the outset for our examination of the interviews in light of apprenticeship and situated learning, we quote Benjamin Koppel:

> Of course you build on and get a lot of inspiration and learn a lot from the people in your surroundings and in our case it is the family. I myself have learnt an awful lot from my father and my grandfather, of course - partly because we have worked together and done all kinds of things.

The quote points to the basis for understanding, how learning opportunities are conceptualised as embedded in a community of practice. According to Wenger, a community of practice is a group of human beings with a shared purpose of work (Lave & Wenger 1991, p. 93, Wenger 1998, pp. 72-73). Other theories emphasise the importance of a shared object of activity, i.e. *what is done* together (Engeström & Kerosuo 2007), a shared work task or shared production (Lave & Wenger 1998, Wenger 2001). The shared task is furthermore qualified by having

a common goal, which in this case is musical performance. This work with the shared task towards a common goal structures what the collaborating persons, each with their individual skills and knowledge, need to learn. The individuals make use of the learning resources present in the work situations. Learning resources, according to Lave and Wenger, include (Lave & Wenger 1991, pp. 94-112):

- Ways of structuring work (the individual learns the logics of the community by experiencing how labour is divided, in what order the tasks are done and who decides what to do and when etc.).
- Language (the individual learns the cultural understanding of reality in the community by the way in which situations, actions, impressions are interpreted in general by the participants, which words are put to use to create a certain meaning and reality, as well as space for negotiation of meaning etc.).
- Artefacts (the individual learns the skills of the community by observing and trying out how objects are used and how they contribute to common understanding of the situation and the task and if they are conveyed with meaning in use).

In this way, the community-of-practice perspective emphasises the learning opportunities arising when a person learns while solving work tasks in collaboration with other persons. Benjamin Koppel's quote can be interpreted as the experience that sharing a task and working together with other musicians (Engeström 1999, Toulmin 1999), being active in striving for a common goal and creating a product or a performance (Lave & Wenger 1991) provide him with opportunities for learning and result in a learning process. Continuing this line of interpretation, we may assume that he observes what the others do, imitates their actions and ideas and builds on them when trying out his own new ideas and experiments ("done all kinds of things") in the shared practice of making music.

Relating the above to our questions about the individual's opportunities for learning in an artistic practice, it is evident that a shared task is not a learning setting created from pedagogical principles. On the contrary, the situations in which Benjamin Koppel seems to learn are "real" working tasks, which are structuring what needs to be learned.

The interesting point, however, is the way in which Benjamin Koppel relates the word *inspiration* as well as *learning* to the shared work process. Inspiration can encompass both a learning aspect of creativity as well as the social and situated basis for creativity. So, as far as the situated learning perspective is concerned, we argue that the understanding of creativity as part of a learning process

may be emphasised by the term *inspiration,* but inspiration deriving from *a shared object of work.*

Inger Exner, too, spontaneously relates learning to inspiration and as a concluding example of the significance of shared work as opportunity for learning and inspiration, she states: "Considering architecture, I learned the most from the joint work that we did" [with Johannes Exner, her husband]. Again, if interpreted in a situated learning perspective, both learning and inspiration derive from and are shaped by a shared work task, a shared work experience.

Non-verbal learning opportunities

The following is formulated by A. Koppel:

> With regard to family and music and apprenticeship and such, it is no coincidence that there are so many families within the musical field… it is evident that if you get into the world of music and learn the language before you are three years old, then you have already gone far.

This quote seems particularly meaningful when interpreted in a situated learning perspective, since A. Koppel uses the word "language" about music. This may imply that music in itself is experienced as a meaningful activity, where the music functions as both means and end. As a means, when functioning as a tool for creating meaning within the art form, among the musicians and in interaction between musicians and audience and as an end, when the purpose is to give a performance (Agawu 2008, Graham 2005, Rebuschat et al. 2012).

In chapter 2 we discussed to which extent art can be understood as language (Langer 1953), and we saw that there are traits and functions of art that resembles, but that *per se* are more than a language. In a socio-cultural and situated learning perspective, however, it is interesting to look at learning opportunities related to socialisation and apprenticeship, as these among other factors relate to language acquisition and use of language. The quote suggests that art, in this case music, for A. Koppel contains a language dimension. We furthermore understand that he experiences a non-verbal side to this language dimension and subsequently a non-verbal opportunity for learning (Lave & Wenger 1991, Wenger 1998). According to Lave & Wenger, situated learning is not only related to what can be expressed with words, but also to the non-verbal aspects of interaction between the learner/apprentice and the community of practice, where knowledge is built, learned and articulated through action (see also Polanyi 1962). The non-verbal dimensions of interaction in learning are related to the way in which the apprentice participates in the community of practice within a legitimate peripheral position, where imitation and adaptation are ways to

participate (Lave 1991, Wenger 1998). The basic workings of this non-verbal side of imitation and adaptive participation can be studied in detail in the musicians' interviews, because they participated in music within the family culture before they could even speak, but still were able to articulate meaning within music (Polanyi 1962). This participation provided the musicians with imitative and adaptive learning opportunities by having a possibility of acting and articulating the art form at home in interaction with family members. Therefore, the quote above seems important in a situated learning perspective, as it implies and intensifies the non-verbal sides of imitative and adaptive learning opportunities of apprentice learning, as mentioned, without the use of spoken language. As opera singer Marco Nisticò states, when asked to describe his first meaningful experience with music: "I can't really exactly pinpoint the first time, because it was always there, we were always singing". Participation in music therefore provides learning opportunities that are of a non-verbal, but nevertheless profoundly articulate nature (Polanyi 1962). The point with this analysis is not the family aspect, even though the narratives of the musicians' learning and development within the arts are intriguing and interesting in respect of family and learning. The point is that even though non-verbal learning seems most obvious when talking about small children and infants, much learning later on in life occurs non-verbally as well as verbally (Boyle 2012, Hanna 2008, McDermott, Mordell & Stoltzfus 2001).

Meaning-making and art

Pursuing the line of non-verbal learning opportunities read into the excerpt above, this way of using music as a means of creating social relations and meaning together with other musicians is extended beyond the family into other social environments, especially of course professional settings with other musicians. Again, musician and composer Anders Koppel:

> If you think that you can find the reasons for playing these exact, say, first fifteen notes, then I think that you will get entangled in a huge mess of explanations. I guarantee you, it is an interplay between a billion of different factors – it is not possible to unscramble these.

The quote intensifies how we can interpret the non-verbal nature of creating meaning with tools apart from spoken language. It indicates that music is created in ways that are so specifically related to the culture of music that it is not possible for the musicians to unfold the underlying logic by means of words, only by means of music (Agawu 2008). The fashion in which the notes are put together to create music is the fundamental way in which they function as components

in a language, by means of which the musician senses, understands and communicates with other musicians. The linguistic logic is a logic that is embodied.

In this way, the non-verbal learning opportunities can be seen in an experience-based learning perspective, where doing and experiencing are ways to learn (Dewey 1988) and in a socio-cultural learning perspectives referring to Vygotsky's and Bruner's *tools for thinking* (Bruner 2006, Vygotsky 2004, on tools for thinking, see also chapter 5 in this book). If the quote above is taken to its farthest consequence, it can be seen as an example of how a group of people use music as a tool for mutual understanding. The point is that this kind of understanding is articulated (Polanyi 1962) or mediated (Bruner 1996) with music instead of words and that part of the family culture is comprised of musical tools.

Learning a craft is essential for artists. According to Sennett, craftsmanship can be seen, using a sociological term borrowed from Bourdieu, as *social capital*: craftsmanship is knowledge and skills, accumulated and passed on by means of social interaction (Sennett 2008, p. 245). He also observes that when social practises change, such kinds of knowledge are at risk of being lost. Examples are the violin-makers' workshops of Stradivarius and Guarneri, where the knowledge needed to create the masterpieces died with the masters – their knowledge was too closely tied to the person to be passed on or even explicated (Sennett 2008, pp. 73-76). The point is here that craftsmanship cannot be fully explicated by means of words. It must be lived, experienced and practiced in order to become knowledge and subsequently in order to be learned, as the quote above indicates.

However, while the apprenticeship concept of participation and socialisation is useful in discussing some of the learning opportunities arising in shared tasks and production, it is in many respects insufficient in order to explain and conceptualise the more creative traits of learning and discovery, which emerge from the interviews. The situated learning perspective seems to operate with the understanding of communities of practice as a rather static and stable social phenomenon, even though both Lave and Wenger acknowledge that communities of practice can and do change (Lave & Wenger 1991). Change in a community of practice is often explained as deriving from large-scale transformations at societal level, where communities of practice are forced to adapt to a dynamic society – in other words, change is understood as something coming from outside of the community. The situated learning perspective therefore to some extent lacks concepts for explaining the creative and renewing potential of the individual, the apprentice, entering a community of practice, as emphasis seems to be on apprentices *conforming* to the social and cultural practices of the community, in our case, to the given art form.

The renewing and creative potential of the way in which the newcomer puts cultural tools to use will be the focus of the next quote. Again, we refer to the socio-cultural concept of tools. As noted by Bruner, tools for thinking and creating meaning are provided by cultural practices and the tools are necessary to socialise and adapt into a community and a culture. However, he also sees the same tools as a means of creative renewal of and within the given cultural practices, as the individual will put them into use in particular and unique ways in order to learn and in order to narrate him- or herself into the narratives of the culture (Bruner 1996, 2002). This raises the question: which learning possibilities allow the apprentice to participate in the community and what happens in the community when the newcomer exploits learning opportunities by putting the cultural tools to new uses?

Mutual learning and own uniqueness

We have discovered a number of ways in which the apprentice is allowed to participate and use cultural tools in the community. One of the statements is interesting in a situated learning perspective within a community of practice, formulated beautifully by musician and composer Anders Koppel. He describes what happens when he plays with his son, Benjamin Koppel, who immediately before this quote has explained that he has learned a lot from his father:

> But it goes both ways. I have also learnt an awful lot from Benjamin and still do. That is also why, I think, we work together, because we can still learn from each other – it is still "electric", so to speak. I am thinking: "Oh, now I am going to work with him, so I'd better do my best". It is a challenge, a huge challenge, every time we do something together, Benjamin and I … And that is really great.

According to the perspectives of communities of practice, mutual engagement and commitment are one type of outcome, when individuals share a common goal of a task. Mutual engagement creates a climate in which exchange of knowledge and community knowledge building can arise. This is termed mutual learning, which could be an interesting way of interpreting the outcome of the relationship between the two musicians above (Sánchez-Cardona, Sánchez-Lugo, & VŽlez-González 2012, Wenger 1998). The shared practice of music seems to be an opportunity for mutual learning for both Benjamin and Anders Koppel. However, mutual learning implies symmetry in power-relations among the participants. If we go further into this, we might explore the workings in the opportunities for mutual learning in asymmetric power-relations, which emerges from the interview by the formulation "have learnt an awful lot from Benjamin". This implies that the father, the experienced member of the

community of music, learned from his son, when he grew up as musician and put musical tools to new uses, just as his son learned from him in respect of socialisation and learning the craft.

If we go into this assumption, we might discover more aspects of the workings of mutual learning, when seen as apprenticeship and communities of practice. A. Koppel mentions the word challenge and we may interpret this challenge as an experience of having a learning possibility when playing with B. Koppel. It might be seen, in the first place, in relation to generations, even though B. Koppel is now an expert in his field. However, one kind of learning opportunity for the experienced musician emerges, when the newcomer, as B. Koppel once was, with his or her individual personality and taste puts the tools of musical culture to uses that are new, sometimes immature, but in any case part of a process of creating meaning and learning (Bruner 1996, Veer & Valsiner 1994, Vygotsky 2004a). In this case, these new uses can be guided, corrected or even forced into culturally acceptable or conventional ways. They may however also be experienced as a challenge that forces the experienced practitioner to learn. The quote does not indicate under what circumstances the new uses are experienced as a challenge leading to learning, or if the experienced practitioner (A. Koppel) intentionally allows himself to be open and challengeable toward the new uses that his son presents – or if he is curious. However, this is still a unique observation in relation to the perspective on learning in communities of practice outlined above, where the newcomer, the legitimate peripheral participant, is positioned in the role of the *learner* (Edmonds-Cady & Sosulski 2012, Lave & Wenger 1991). In the quote, it seems as if learning opportunities also arise the other way round: A. Koppel as the experienced musician can be positioned as a learner by being or letting himself be challenged by the newcomer's - the apprentice's - different and therefore potentially renewing use of cultural tools. Put into situated learning terms: the apprentice can provide the master with learning opportunities by putting cultural tools to new uses, if the master is willing to conceive this as "inspirational" or "electric". This requires, on the other hand, that the master or culture of the community allows himself/ itself to be challenged by the apprentice or legitimate peripheral participant and creates space for new uses of cultural tools. Or we can transfer this insight to the concept of mutual learning, as a way to practice mutual learning could be to put the individual participants in the learner's position in turns.

The fact that the word "electrical" is used to characterise the mutual learning opportunities that arise from shared practice, we interpret in the same way as when B. Koppel uses the word "inspiration" in one of the previous quotes. "Electrical" and "inspiration" imply energy, renewal, mutual learning (Coto Chotto & Dirckinck-Holmfeld 2008, Wenger 1998) and a creative climate for mutual

learning in the relationship among generations in the family. More generally, in the situated and socio-cultural learning perspective, we might hypothesise mutual learning opportunities created by putting the community, as well as the apprentice, in an active learner's position.

But from where does A. Koppel's particular approach to mutual learning derive? An answer may lie in the following quote:

> To have a well-known composer as a father - this is the first component of a "backpack", you could say, but from there on onwards you still create your own way. You are alone, basically, just like all people are when you create your own pathways in life – and then you get a network of friends and family and all that, but there is only you yourself, whatever your social background and heritage, to keep up the steam, so to speak. Nobody does it for you.

As a member of a musical family, A. Koppel implies an experience of expectation within the field of music: After the first socialisation, learning the craft, techniques and logics of music (the backpack), an important task is to create one's own voice in the choir, so to speak, one's own contribution to the community in a wider sense. In other words, a learning task embedded in the quote above is to elaborate and get to know one's own uniqueness and to express this uniqueness. If the two quotes of mutual learning are seen in relation to each other, it seems as if this particular family provides learning opportunities to elaborate, create and express one's own uniqueness by alternately putting oneself in the learner's position. If A. Koppel puts himself in a learner's position in relation to B. Koppel, it also provides B. Koppel with an opportunity to compare his own use of musical tools with A. Koppel's, finding out what is similar and what is different. This will involve an opportunity to learn and refine what is unique and what is in common with others in the community. By means of alternately putting themselves in the learner's position, both parties benefit from learning opportunities where the relationship between uniqueness and the community is conveyed while participating in musical practice.

Within a mutual learning aspect of a situated learning perspective, what Koppel says above can be interpreted as appreciative and supportive, as a father is expected to be towards his son. There are, however, other sides to learning opportunities in receiving newcomers into a community of practice. Learning opportunities might also involve opportunities or demands to unlearn previous habits, worldviews in order to become legitimate peripheral participants at all in an artistic community of practice. Barba is an example of a different way of receiving newcomers in his theatre company:

> In the beginning, I put very strong rules, […] and this was in order to make them grow. Rules, or principles, were made in order to cleanse them of the mentality from outside. For me, what is the enemy of creativity? It's what we've been learning at school and in the family.

One interpretation of this quote could be in light of situated learning, seeing Barba as "the master" in the old-fashioned sense, the master who sets the rules (Lave & Wenger 1991), who does not accept uses of cultural tools other than his own and in this way enforces his own logics and cultural practices on newcomers as a condition of participation. In this apprentice perspective, the quote could be interpreted as an uncompromising line of teaching the young actors, where the ideas of the newcomers are not taken seriously or as an opportunity for mutual learning, at least not before they have socialised and submitted to the ideals and artistic values of the company. In a situated learning perspective, it might appear that there is very little room for negotiation of meaning, as this way of socialising newcomers seems to be devised in order to uphold a stable cultural practice within the community of the theatre.

However, the way in which traits from the outside world, from school and family, are interpreted as an *enemy* of the art and creativity of the art and must be "cleansed off", might indicate a different interpretation than that of the authoritative master. As Sennett argues, an apprentice submitting to the authority of a master can also indicate an acknowledgement that the master possesses and enacts greater knowledge than oneself. The authority so to speak personifies an ideal and a purpose for learning: "I might become like this one day" (Sennett 2008, p. 60). In order to understand the learning possibilities provided by the culture of Odin Teatret, it may be necessary to operate with *unlearning* as a learning opportunity. In the case of Odin Teatret, the newcomers have to unlearn the non-excessive, compliant and conforming learning habits that they have learned in schools and families. Barba experiences that the newcomers enter the theatre with learning habits and strategies of conforming, uniforming and non-excessive behaviour, which he explains in other parts of the interview. In the artistic expressions in Odin Teatret, however, the opposite is wanted: excess, individuality, strong expression. Paradoxically, the group aims at conforming its members into non-conformity, creativity and rigorous artistic expression, traits that the newcomers have very likely been previously corrected for in families and schools.

We will see in the following pages, maybe, a little more of the traits that Barba wants to "wash off" his students in order to create a unique, artistic expression within theatre: in a socio-cultural understanding of learning, what is it that Barba opposes in his students, what do they bring that he seeks to make them unlearn?

Formal education, schools, conformity and uniqueness

When turning to formal education and school, the artists experience and interpret the educational institutions and schools as cultures providing certain

learning opportunities, as Mary Jordan explains in her experiences from elementary school:

> These educations were very geared to making everybody the same and making them conform. If you have a unique thought, there is a feeling of alienation, a feeling that you are different. As a child, I had lots of problems with that, because it was all like getting condemned for being someone with a heightened sense of vision or a unique feeling about something.

Mary Jordan experienced that the logics of educational culture provided students with learning opportunities that had the purpose of conforming and standardising the students. This left her as an individual with limited learning opportunities and support for developing and finding her unique personality. Her statement can be seen as a qualitative example of what Bruner terms *the complexity of educational aims* (Bruner 1996, p. 66). The complex aims of education produce, what Bruner terms antinomies. Antinomies are described as pairs of "large truths", which, in spite of both being true, contradict and oppose each other. Bruner examines three areas of education, where he identifies antinomies of fundamental significance for the educational system and the way in which teaching is practiced and legitimised:

1. The area of educational function embeds the antinomy of individual-realisation (of the self) versus culture-preservation (maintenance and reproduction).
2. The area of perceptions of nature and performativity of mind embeds the talent-centred versus the tool-centred antinomy.
3. The area of perceptions of knowledge embeds the particularism versus universalism antinomy, by which he refers to the significance put on local knowledge and experience in relation to cultural-historical canonical knowledge (Bruner 1996, pp. 67-69).

When Mary Jordan explains how she experienced the demand for conformity as opposed to her finding her uniqueness, we see this as a qualitative example of the first antinomy: she appears to having experienced excessive emphasis on the maintaining and reproductive learning opportunities in school and less focus on individual realisation. Many of the artists experienced the demand for conformity within school settings as constraining and oppressive and in Mary Jordan's case, this was the effect:

> And the discouragement… Luckily, I had a very encouraging family and an encouraging grandfather who was able to sidestep that, but most people don't. […] The idea of creativity and this idea of unique thought, is really, really, really, really backwards in society, because what they don't understand is that this is […] what actually should be harnessed in people, because this is actually what creative visions and inventions [are about].

This emotional hardship might be an example of possible consequences of Bruner's first antinomy, as he finds two extremes in the approach to the societal, normative purpose of education. One extreme is that the function of education is to enable the individual to realise his or her full potential, where teaching should provide pupils and students with cultural tools to realise it (Bruner 1996, p. 67). This might conflict with the other "large truth", education's function of cultural reproduction. However, Bruner's hypothesis in this case is that this approach to educational purpose is not so much cultural reproduction, but rather that the educational system is seen as part of promoting society's economic, political and cultural goals. He poses the question: can education be at the same time a tool for individual self-fulfilment and a method for cultural reproduction and main-tenance (Bruner 1996, p. 67)? He investigates the antinomy in extremis: focus on the individual entails a risk of overrunning a society or culture by too much un-predictability, while a predominant focus on cultural reproduction in its extreme can lead to stagnation, hegemony and conventionalism.

The example in Jordan's quote above describes her personal experience of the antinomy, and in her case, its consequence seems to be alienation to educa-tional, cultural conventions in the classroom. We may interpret it in the sense that she experiences an excess of reproductive learning possibilities and limited learning possibilities for self-fulfilment, as Bruner terms it. In her case we may say that the culture and language (tools) within her school context play a role in upholding and reproducing conventions, and her feeling of alienation may derive from a lack of learning possibilities for realisation of personal potential (heightened sense of vision, unique feeling of something). Her suggestion is to harness uniqueness or self-fulfilment and create more learning opportunities for this purpose, both, as may be interpreted from the quote, for the sake of the individual and for a general enhancement of creativity in relation to a visionary and inventive society.

Other consequences of what can be described as the antinomy within ed-ucational functions we see in this quote by Ramsland with an example from university:

> Then I started at the university. So I thought, well, now I was going to deal with literature in a fantastic way and at first I was quite disappointed, this scientific approach… it was not just exactly what I had imagined and this scientific approach to literature, I thought it pulled everything [to pieces]. So it was boring for me to go to university. [But] why do they touch us, these texts? The university was not about that, I thought. It was about taking them apart and putting them into cultural and mentality-historical contexts and things like that. […] It had just nothing to do with being…with doing your own writing, or to [learn to] write [literature] yourself.

Ramsland's expectations of learning opportunities in his education were obviously different from what he experienced. According to Bruner's theories, Ramsland experienced that learning opportunities provided by education in Danish literature were reduced to reproducing academic skills and knowledge with the purpose of maintaining academic culture (taking apart etc.) and learning opportunities related to artistic self-fulfilment were not an aim at the university. The effect in Ramsland's case was disappointment and boredom. We may also interpret the quote in relation to the antinomy of talent versus tool: as Bruner (1996, p. 68) states, education is either seen as a place for knowledge to be created inside the individual's head according to inherent talent, or is conceived to be a place for teaching as a way of providing students with tools for individual knowledge building. Evidently, Ramsland experienced university as a context whose goal was to put academic knowledge into his head and this was not his purpose in learning, as his self-fulfilment was to write literature himself. Perhaps this is the reason why he considers himself as being self-taught. However, he has used some of the learning opportunities from university, as this excerpt shows:

> However, afterwards I can see that there was one thing, which interested me very much, which I thought was exciting: narrative theories about stories and how stories are built up […] and how to build up plots, structures - narratology, which we studied in philosophy of science. I used it a lot in my work, as a way to read the texts. And actually, while I was there and I read many of the texts, there was a shift, where I changed from writing poetry to writing prose. So all of a sudden, I started to think of stories in a different way. And I actually believe that it has influenced my way of thinking stories and story lines and my way of being aware of the narrative structure and giving me the desire to write prose.

This quote is an example of how Ramsland took advantage of the learning opportunities at university in order to pursue his own unique learning purposes and goals to obtain, in Bruner's term, self-fulfilment. He actually changed the focus of his learning and self-fulfilment goals, as he went from writing poems to writing novels with a storyline and plots – narratological tools for making meaning and creating art.

But then, what about the artists' experiences within arts education? Is this education that encourages the unique thought, the unique idea, the unique personality who seeks personal fulfilment (Bruner 1996, p. 80)? Has it cracked the code of learning in an interchange between individual uniqueness and cultural conformity? One example of this is Julie Nord, who had the experience of being exposed to traditions in ways that demanded that she find and make unique contributions to the field of art she was studying (visual arts and video

design). This is her answer, when asked what she learned at the academy of fine arts:

> I learned to be tremendously confused and I learned, I think, to lose my innocence and both are important and pretty hard to go through…[…being confused and losing innocence]… Is this idea of the original, to have originality in yourself. And you are torn into small pieces… you are told that everything you've made, somebody else has made before. When you display images, then you are told what they look like and what traditions you move in.

The learning possibilities for Nord seem to be related to the huge emphasis put on originality from the side of the educators, which may relate to the self-fulfilment aspect of Bruner's antinomies. The way to create these learning possibilities is to present the students with a wide range, even overload, it seems, of traditions of expression. The effect in Nord's case was confusion, discouragement and destruction of her experience of being unique or special. In this way she put into words a feeling of disintegration in an educational setting, which might be on the self-fulfilment side of educational function to an extent, where mainly the individual is in focus and where traditions are presented as something, which should not be repeated, but renewed.

Mary Jordan, filmmaker, concludes:

> I would say very, very, very little of my formal education has contributed to what I do now in any way. I feel at this point the education model is prehistoric, I mean, it does not embody the way we live anymore, with technology and with experience.

This quote implies that Jordan experiences school and society as disintegrated, in ways that hinder creative renewal in educational settings. She feels that school and education operate within logics that do not provide learning opportunities needed for building competencies for modern society.

Teachers, educators, other masters and opportunities for learning

In spite of the discouraging and demotivating experiences that schools can provide, positive learning opportunities arise also within formal educational settings, as this quote from Mary Jordan expresses:

> I did have one teacher in particular, when I was young… that was my English literature teacher, who realised I had a unique creativity. I used to love to write poetry and he really, on the side, provided me with sort of a [guidance or] harness… and spent a little time with me, realising that "this is a unique person here". But that's just luck and there are not that many teachers who would have spent that kind of time with a student.

From the perspective of situated learning and Bruner's antinomies, this experience can be seen as a significant learning opportunity for self-fulfilment, provided by a significant grown-up: the master within the school setting, the teacher or educator (Bruner 1996, Lave & Wenger 1991). This learning opportunity consists of what could be termed feedback (Brown, Harris, & Harnett 2012), which is crucial for students' engagement in learning, if given in an appreciative fashion (Harris 2011). In the quote above, the feedback or mirroring leads to a turning point in Jordan's way of understanding creativity in her own learning processes. Because of the teacher's response to her writings, we understand that Jordan's view of her own writings changes and she feels stronger in her uniqueness or feeling different ("harness"). In light of Vygotsky, the quote can be seen as an example of how "the child begins to practice with respect to himself the same forms of behaviour that others formerly practiced with respect to him" (Vygotsky 1966, pp. 39-40). In the way described in the quote, the teacher's practice towards Jordan and his way of conveying meaning to her writings gives her the tools to think of herself and her writings as an expression of uniqueness and particularity. In this meaning making, she discovers, learns and begins to practice towards herself the same understanding: that what she thinks and expresses can be regarded and conceptualised as *unique* and not as an *error* in relation to educational objectives. This is a strong illustration of one possible effect of the antinomy of education's function, self-fulfilment or cultural reproduction. The feeling of alienation caused by the school's focus on cultural reproduction is changed by the teacher's ability to spot unique needs, in this case Jordan's need for positive feedback on or mirroring of her writings as something other than waste of time or erroneous in relation to educational goals and objectives. Because of this teacher, self-fulfilment was suddenly an opportunity within the school culture. The fact that Jordan emphasises this particular teacher implies that the majority of the teachers conveyed to her that her unique thoughts and ideas were not appropriate in the school context, providing her with learning opportunities to fulfil educational goals and objectives, but not to realise unique potential (Bruner 1996).

In educational research, there is a significant focus on teachers' role in enhancing student engagement through positive feedback (Brown et al. 2012) or formative assessment during a learning process within a given school curriculum (Havnes, Smith, Dysthe & Ludvigsen 2012). However, it seems as if there is little attention to the role of teacher response, feedback or mirroring students when it comes to providing learning opportunities to "find their own unique traits", to develop strategies for self-fulfilment in Bruner's sense, or to support learning which might be extra-curricular, but valuable. When we look at the role of the teacher in Jordan's quote, the important aspect in her experience is that, from Jordan's point

of view, it is not the norm within school culture that a teacher spends time and invests energy in creating learning opportunities for developing *the unique*. According to a number of recent research reports, the teachers' purpose is different: when asked to teach pupils and students fixed curricula, the teachers will develop teaching and assessment practices aiming at correcting the pupils in relation to what is right or wrong in study programmes. Then the pupils start to act accordingly: things in the world and their own actions can be labelled right or wrong. Sir Ken Robinson, for instance, has done important research on educational thinking and some of its practical effects on the way teachers act in teaching. He claims that the educational system was designed to meet the needs of industrialisation and hence is organised in line with principles of manufacturing and structured by the logics of universities (Robinson 2009, 2001, Robinson et al. 1999). This means that standardising, testing etc. have a tendency to become an end *per se*, and not a means for the teacher to design learning environments for both skill and knowledge acquisition. When the understanding of education is that pupils and students are to learn standardised specificities and to be able to reproduce them as unchanged, comparable and testable as possible, the unique thought will risk being dismissed as an error (Bruner 1996, Robinson 2001, Starko 2010). New ideas might be assessed as wrong, undesirable, inconvenient or maybe just awkward, when compared to curriculum and educational learning objectives. However, they might still prove to be of value, when put into play in experimental ways in other social contexts than educational ones. An interesting aspect is that this analysis suggests that teachers lack tools for creating learning opportunities to support uniqueness and particularities, as focus in educational research and practice is on the significance of teachers' feedback and formative assessment for student learning outcomes in relation to curricular goals and objectives.

When Nord finally found out how drawing was an art form within which she could express herself, she also refers to a teacher as providing her with support for mirroring her talent, as in the following quote:

> […] then I actually just sat by myself and drew drawings at home. I didn't think of it as art in particular, what I was doing. But fortunately, I had a professor at the academy, who… although we disagreed a lot […about painting and art], he still encouraged me to leave out everything except the drawings … he thought that I created dreadful paintings, right, and he thought that I should go for drawings and try that out…and I did. But I actually left the school, the academy and this was the beginning of what I do today.

Nord is grown-up in this reference, but still she experienced, like Jordan as a child, the importance of a teacher who pointed out some of her particular artistic potential and encouraged her to do what was her unique expression and art form and not what was expected from her at the academy. In this way, we could

say that he provided her with learning opportunities in relation to finding her engagement and unique contribution to the artistic field.

What can the educational field learn from the artists' narratives?

We began this chapter by asking if artists' social and cultural environments provide opportunities for learning and developing learning strategies that support creativity in their fields. In answering this question, the analyses of the artists' interviews pose challenging and inspirational insights to other learning fields such as education and pedagogical research within the field of creative learning in a broader sense. We see that the artists experience both challenging and inspirational aspects of participating in communities of practice and in educational settings and that there are interesting questions regarding individuals on the one hand and the community on the other. Or, as Bruner conceptualises it in epistemological terms, the learner moves between cultural antinomies. But how do the interviewed artists solve this problem of both adapting to culture and renewing it by participating? Gardner's (1993) concept of *fruitful asynchrony* in learning and his observations in relation to this are interesting. Gardner points to the tension, or lack of fit, between conventions involved in creative work on the one hand and individual need for unique expression on the other (Gardner 1993). Creative individuals, as is the case with a number of the interviewed artists, are unlikely to fit smoothly into the conventions of a field or to have a conventional set of talents developed in conventional ways in the field. The examples of the interviewed artists brought out experiences of similar tensions more generally within the educational system, from elementary school to university and academy level (Nord, Jordan, Barba or Varley). Tensions may furthermore emerge between personal strength and weakness, political forces in a field, or new conceptions and traditions of the past (Gardner 1993, Starko 2010, p. 102). If we look at the interviews, we see even more interesting aspects emerge: the artists seem to use the tensions, consciously or subconsciously, as a drive to find their own pathways of learning (Ramsland, Barba, Nord, Jordan) and to use the tensions as learning possibilities to develop their personal creative strengths as well as creative possibilities in their fields. The tensions between the individual and the social and cultural environment in which the individual is situated is therefore a point of consideration in the arts, as well as in other educational settings, as we saw Bruner indicate above in the concept of antinomies and Gardner too, in the concept of fruitful asynchrony.

This may be one of the reasons why artists make their way into artistic domains that are often experienced in providing opportunities of fulfilling this urge.

On the other hand, they experience a strong need for having a social and cultural environment that offers meaningful opportunities for acquiring skills and socialising into a culture and for learning and creating as well. This is a relevant aspect of any formal or informal learning setting, since it can be seen as a key problem in education, teaching and learning, as outlined by Bruner in his concept of antinomies: is the function of learning and education individual self-realisation or cultural reproduction (Bruner 1996)? If we look at the quotes above, some pedagogical choices need to be taken by teachers and educators: can the feeling of alienation, as described by Jordan, Ramsland and Nord, be turned into fruitful creative development, if teachers and educators become aware of and are allowed to support uniqueness, individuality and any creative originality deriving from this? Furthermore, the questions seem to suggest that teachers and educators need to consider both individual and social environment and to frame learning in ways where individuals can voluntarily choose to seek and nurture asyncronism, antinomies and oppositions in given environments in order to learn the most possible.

This raises a further question within education of how to develop the unique and original ideas of the individual, when at the same time striving to achieve, as well as possible, predefined goals and objectives of education. If we want to learn from artistic learning practices, we might point to the importance of the teacher and to the importance of developing cultures of education and learning giving the opportunity to develop individual learning strategies as well as expressing the unique thought in relation to existing knowledge and practice.

But how can the teacher be helped by the insights of the interviews? On the basis of the analyses of this and the previous chapter, we suggest the following ways in which the teacher or educator can be inspired by the artists and the chosen theoretical perspectives by considering choosing approaches to teaching according to the requirements of the single pupil, student and situation. We suggest the teacher develops teaching that creates learning opportunities, which can seek inspiration in what we, based on the analyses above, would term *the community of practice approach, the situated learning approach, the craft approach* and *the uniqueness-supportive approach*. We will briefly sum up our ideas:

Community of practice approach: The important traits of the community of practice approach are interesting, when put into play in teaching practices such as:

- Considering how to create learning environments with possibilities of *working with shared objects or tasks*
- Considering how to plan opportunities for *mutual learning* with a declared emphasis on *mutual inspiration.*

Bruner (1996) offers valuable pedagogical concepts by emphasising the intentional pedagogical use of *oeuvres* or works to externalise reflections and negotiation of meaning – and this could be enriched by pointing to the shared dimension of the work by developing possibilities for the students to reflect on how the object, their peers and perhaps even the teacher inspire them.

The situated learning approach: in a teaching perspective, the situated learning perspective offers a framework for considering carefully which opportunities for non-verbal learning are provided by the social environment.

- The subject itself as language. An emphasis on the tools for thinking within the subject encourages students to use the subject as a language. Learning in this way gives the students the tools for learning as well as renewing the subject field
- Family as metaphor. The family metaphor is useful when wanting to create learning environments that invite participation.

The craft approach: This approach is needed in a strength-based and experiential pedagogical practice, where the teacher's focus is on the ways in which students build knowledge by doing and acting. This means that the pedagogical question types shift from the teachers asking themselves questions like *what should the students learn*? to asking the pupils and students: *what kind of knowledge and skill must be acquired in order to realise your own wishes* and later on questions like *what kind of professional does the student want to become*? These questions facilitate student considerations on preconditioning learning factors like skills required to do or act according to their ambitions in life. In such a framework, the pedagogical perspective will shift from the system, the teacher and predefined goal and objectives, into the student-centred, long-term supportive and appreciative perspectives to facilitate personal development.

The asyncronicity-approach: this approach may be the hardest, but yet the most important, if we want learning to support creativity and creative renewal in a field. There is need to develop methods for teachers:

- To spot unique traits in pupils and students
- To support the pupils' and students' own ideas and support them in self-reflection and self-assessment
- To work with diversity of the pupils in the community, so that the unique traits of the individual are seen in relation to the whole group of pupils and students.

The above perspectives are all based on a single assumption: that the teacher or educator has the role of someone who provides learning structures that not only

favour mastering of knowledge and skills, but also nourish creative renewal of knowledge.

With these tentative pedagogical considerations, we will proceed to the next chapter, where some of these ideas are elaborated within the context of Western educational thinking.

Chapter 8: Perspectives for learning in educational settings

Over the previous chapters, we have examined the narratives of the interviewed artists in a learning perspective and we have found individual aspects of linking between learning and creativity, as well as social and cultural dimensions of the artists' possibilities of learning in ways that relate to creativity. Our special findings were that learning and creativity seem connected by their explorative, unpredictable, problem-inventing and serendipitous aspects and that the interviewed artists develop intentional learning strategies to create opportunities for explorative, curiosity-driven, challenging and skill-building learning processes within their art forms. Finally, we found that social and cultural dynamics are of crucial importance for the possibilities of the artists to learn in ways that support development of their own unique thoughts, ideas and actions and contributions to their fields, as well as development of creative approaches to the world around them. Therefore, this chapter will explore the question: can we frame the insights from the interviewed artists in educational settings and if so, then how? And more broadly, what can education learn from the arts?

What is at stake in formal learning settings?

Before we can answer the question above, it is necessary to recapitulate and describe briefly the cultural and discursive context in which educational systems are embedded and why creativity is an issue at all in education. Over the past decade, huge changes in the public sectors in Western culture have been explained and legitimised by the term *globalisation*. In the political discourse, globalisation is narrowly understood as the single nation's relation to a *global market*. Therefore, globalisation discursively relates to market indicators such as fast development and exchange of knowledge and goods, mobility of workforce and the possibilities inherent in information technologies and the like, understood as being the new conditions for global competition between nations and consequently among their public sectors (Biesta 2010). We see increasing political concern about the *risks* attached to this state of competition on a global

market. In 2006, for example, the Danish government appointed a council for globalisation, which reasoned for several policy changes in this way:

> If we do not renew ourselves, we may find it difficult to maintain Denmark's position as one of the world's richest countries. There will also be a risk that Danish society will become more fragmented, if too many people in society are ill prepared to meet the demands of tomorrow's jobs (Danish Prime Minister's Office 2006, our translation from Danish).

In the EU, too, the European Commission formulated risk as an argument for educational change:

> Europe's global economic ranking is changing rapidly. By 2050, Europe's share of world GDP is likely to be half of today's 29%. So far, Europe has been able to keep its share of world exports (20%) and in that respect our performance is better than that of other advanced economies. But China, India and Brazil have started to catch up with the EU by improving their economic performance faster than the EU has, year-on-year, over the last five years (European Commission 2013a).

We see similar formulations in, for instance, the USA, in a foreword to an educational policy reform bill by President Obama:

> A generation ago, we led all nations in college completion, but today, 10 countries have passed us. It is not that their students are smarter than ours. It is that these countries are being smarter about how to educate their students. And the countries that out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow (U.S. Department of Education 2010).

The quotes convey an understanding of globalisation as inducing risks of performing worse than other nations. This has given rise to a number of changes in public sectors in the West, including educational systems. The risk of falling back or even failing in global competition legitimises the attention focused on two aspects that educational systems will have to provide: students with high performance in knowledge reproduction and high performance regarding innovation.

These conceptualisations of the risks of globalisation have resulted in increasing interest in the relation between creativity and learning within educational research. Creativity seems interesting for educational thinking and policy development because of the close association of the concept of creativity with modern ideas of innovation. Innovation appears to be the solution to the risks formulated in the three quotes above and is also seen as a precondition of businesses' ability to compete and survive on a global market and as a way to solve complex societal problems. Developing creativity in education would appear to be the proper way to increase nations' innovative abilities. Therefore, the interest for the potential of creativity has intensified more broadly in educational research and practice.

However, if we understand creativity in light of the interviews, we can see that the way the artists experience and perceive the links between learning and creativity may posit some challenges to the political desire to strengthen creativity within education, since education as a system has other logics at play besides creativity. Creativity might, being intertwined with inventive, explorative, unpredictable and problem finding learning processes as emerged from the interviews, challenge or even oppose other educational goals, such as cultural reproduction, acquisition and demonstration of acknowledged knowledge etc. (Bruner 1997, Robinson 2010). Also the political-cultural valuation of measurable homogeneity and uniformity within education versus individual uniqueness and cultural diversity emerging from the interviews, may lead to an assumption that creativity might be seen as a risky endeavour for an educational system that strives for so-called certain knowledge ("what works"), predictability, standardised measures, accountability and control (Biesta 2010).

Why this educational focus on accountability and control? As mentioned, researchers like Robinson and Biesta point to the fact that the orientation towards the world and global markets is discursively constructed as a situation of competition between nations, this including their educational systems. This competition gives rise to a need for parameters of comparison across borders. We see these comparison parameters in the design of, for example, the OECD's PISA studies, the Bologna Process and the ECTS system. To enable international comparison, national learning goals for schools and educational programs are also centralised with a subsequent tendency to uniform and standardise the measures of national educational "output". The logic is that standardisation makes it possible to control how the mass of students is doing in comparison to that of other countries (Robinson 2010, Biesta 2011, 2010).

Therefore, standardising educational objectives and testing students in relation to these standards are justified by a political "necessity" of comparison and competition. And the focus on developing methods that increase the students' abilities to perform on the standards seems to be the only way to avoid for instance so-called poor performance in international comparative studies of students and students' academic skills. The risk here seems to be a negative image in the competition between nations. Another risk might be that young people do not undertake studies, so they do not get well-paid jobs, which reduces the income of society. Lastly, young people might drop out of or fail to complete training and education. Here, the risk is wasted societal expenses (= investments) in education (European Commission 2013b).

Again, we see a tendency relating to Bruner's antinomy of the function of education: if standardising is the answer to comparison and competition between

nations, then knowledge reproductive abilities of students are normatively wished for, as they are the way to improve performance in standardised test parameters (Biesta 2010, Westbury 1998/2002). However, we saw that a strong focus on standardised, reproductive dynamics in education may impede creative development, as this focus has a tendency to forget individual, particular and unique traits of a learning process and an individual's participation in social and cultural practices in education and other contexts in life. The explorative, unpredictable, serendipitous learning processes related to creativity can become invisible, because they are not (yet) encompassed by standards, or they can be dismissed as incorrect, or even pose a risk, a danger, to performance in the standards.

However, if competition, standardisation, accountability, risk minimisation and the need for epistemological certainty (certain knowledge), are seen as values for educational quality, then how does this play along with creativity? As we have seen in previous chapters, the artists that we have interviewed also face competition and risk in their creative processes, as they voluntarily engage in potentially transformative learning processes as part of their artistic practice. The risks consist of uncertainty regarding the outcome of learning and creating experiments, improvisations and self-challenging learning carried out. They tackle this uncertainty in respect of the outcome of their efforts by, for instance, using their curiosity or by learning the cultural logics of their field by participating. Even so, they risk failure and lack of acknowledgement from their field. These risks on the personal level (micro) appear similar to the risks at societal level (macro): just as individuals risk being left out of a field, so countries risk being left out of the dynamics of power and influence. However, the artists meet the risks with a different logic than do the political and the educational establishments. Their answer is not to standardise or to create measures for certain knowledge or "what works". Nor do they think in ways, which have the *purpose* of minimising risk. They do something else. As we can see from the interviews, they actually have kinds of methods or an approach and strategy to learning that allow them to manoeuvre "in the unknown" and transform uncertainty and unpredictability into creative production. The differences can of course be explained by differences in accountability. As we understand from the interviews, the artists feel responsible first and foremost for themselves and the heritage of art form, and they refer mainly to their field of art, whereas politicians and educational developers have responsibilities involving a broader public, as they also have to consider public spending. But even though educational logic deals with systems, while artistic logic deals with individuals, it could benefit from the logic of individuals in order to create circumstances for the individual to unfold,

in this case, creative potential. Therefore, what we in particular, based on the interviews, can learn from the artists is the way in which they describe how they manage risk.

Daring to be deliberately stupid

The approach described above can be examined in relation to the following brief narrative from Michael Valeur. In this excerpt, Valeur describes the way in which he facilitates groups in creative learning processes and how he experiences that non-artistic learners express a person-and-context related risk dimension. He himself approaches the risk dimension in creativity and learning as follows:

> I think that others panic, if there is something that they don't know or aren't familiar with, they avoid it. I don't do that, I just say: "I don't know anything about this", that's it. So, it is about being deliberately stupid. By the way, I do the same when I write. I set out with this approach: I just start here, I don't need to be any smarter, I can always become smarter at the end of the process, so it is something about daring to be… daring to be stupid.

This approach to risk in respect of a creative artistic process is interesting. Valeur's impression is that many people feel more secure, if they know or are familiar with the phenomena they handle in their lives. This might be related to the wish to "be smart" or "smarter than others", but it may also be related to cultural logics similar to the ones in the educational system: certain knowledge is better than uncertain knowledge, the known is less risky than the unknown. Valeur's approach is different. He does not fear being regarded as "stupid" – and we know from the previous chapters that creativity and creative processes often contain an explorative approach to the world. This explorative approach requires, according to Valeur, putting oneself in a kind of non-knowing position. This non-knowing position implies a loss of control, which in a culture occupied with certain knowledge, predictability and accountability may appear risky (Biesta 2010, Darsø 2004). Valeur verbalises the risk attached to the explorative approach, where the learner may appear as non-knowing, non-expert, which in turn may challenge certain understandings of professionalism – or, as he states, the learner may appear "stupid". As we saw above, this is a very severe risk within education and other domains in Western societies, as the main approach to being competent is the assumption that you know the answers to questions, answers to standardised tests and so on. Therefore, to insist on a non-knowing position can put the person "in danger", if the cultural understanding of relations to other cultures, other societies, other communities, other people implies competition and the attendant need for certain knowledge and control.

However, Valeur uses this non-knowing position as a principle or a strategy in order to be able to discover unexpected ideas – to be creative and even become smarter in the end. These characteristics of Valeur's way of handling risks in discovery-based and exploration-based learning processes are interesting in relation to creativity in education. This refers to research on self-efficacy. Bandura's concept of self-efficacy well describes Valeur's observations of his participants, as their fear of leaving the comfort zone can be related to their expectations of mastering the requirements of the specific situation. This expectation of living up to the requirements of the situation determines whether they can be motivated to engage in an activity (Gallagher 2012, Bandura 1997, p. 27). According to Bandura, motivation to engage in learning and creative processes depends on the individual's perceived self-efficacy or efficacy beliefs. These beliefs refer to the individual's expectations of being able to *master* or learn the given activity itself at all. Doubts in respect of mastering the activity may result in giving it up in advance. Efficacy beliefs also relate to the individual's expectations of the *result* of the activity. If the result is expected to involve for instance accommodation or transformative change of frames for interpretations of experience, motivation might also decrease (Gallagher 2012, Bandura 1997, pp. 64-66). Both types of expectations encompass the experience and judging of risks linked to learning and change. To examine how the discovery and exploration aspect of creativity and learning can be handled in respect of risk, we elaborate the concept of serendipity over the following pages.

What is serendipity?

The interviews with the artists indicate that risk, uncertainty and unpredictability may even be embraced as a term and condition for their work and creative development. This embracement of risk is demonstrated above, where Valeur insists on keeping an intentionally non-knowing position in a creative process – as a precondition for having learned something new when the process is over and as a way of enhancing the likeliness of creative new ideas arising during the process (Chand & Runco 1993). This approach to learning and creativity is interesting in light of the concept of serendipity. Serendipity as a scientific concept encompasses and takes into consideration the non-linearity and the risky unpredictability of a creative process, as well as a discovery-based learning process. Serendipity is defined as the process in which people are "making discoveries, by accident and sagacity, of things, which they are not in quest of" (Walpole, 1754, quoted in Remer 1965, p. 6). The point of this description of serendipity is that, when people make discoveries of *things they were not in quest*

of, chances of developing creative new thoughts, ideas or concepts increase, as do chances of learning. As a concept within creativity research, serendipity describes artistic and scientific (research) processes and their relationship to coincidental and accidental discovery. Serendipity refers to individual and community development of a sensitivity and an awareness of the unexpected (Horan 2011, Roberts 1989).

Until recent years, serendipity had been considered a phenomenon in line with intuition, a metaphysical, mystical and decidedly unscientific concept (Horan 2011). However, it gained renewed interest in English-speaking countries in research on creativity as a concept describing the ability to make fortunate discoveries by chance or accident (Horan 2011). Serendipity can explain and shed light on some of the aspects of creativity that may seem unscientific, ineffable and intangible – and therefore risky when striving for *certain knowledge, predictability* and *control* within educational systems. Royston M. Roberts claimed that educational thinking and teaching need to focus more on accidental aspects of learning. These are understood as the individual mistakes and original interpretations of well-known concepts and cultural ideas, which can have the potential to bring about renewal in a field of knowledge when used as a trigger for investigation and examination of the phenomenon in question. To substantiate his claims, Roberts collected numerous examples of groundbreaking scientific discoveries based on accident or coincidence in the book *Serendipity: Accidental Discoveries in Science* (Roberts 1989). In Denmark, Odin Teatret and Nordic Theatre Laboratory are doing research, which has resulted in an interesting focus on serendipity as a concept of interest for research in artistic processes such as improvisation and performance within acting and dancing. The research is disseminated in Danish, but we will refer to and translate important points from this research in order to understand and substantiate the concept of serendipity.

The origin of the term serendipity is attributed to Sir Horace Walpole (1717- 1797), British earl and author. Walpole heard an old Persian fairy tale on one of his many travels around the world about the three princes from Serendippo. Serendippo is ancient Sanskrit for Sri Lanka.

In order to show the background of the concept, we will recapitulate the story of the three princes, as the content of the story can be quite incisive related to the narratives of the interviewed artists.

In Serendippo lived a king with his three sons. Through their childhood and youth, the three princes were thoroughly trained in both art and science by the best artists and scientists that their loving father, the King, could find. When they became adults, their father pretended to be dissatisfied with their

education and the three princes were sent into exile. The three princes departed, and soon, they met a camel driver, whose camel was gone. The three princes asked if the camel was blind on one eye, missing a tooth and was lame and if it carried honey on the one side and butter on the other and several other things. Astonished, the camel driver confirmed the princes' questions. However, since they could provide an accurate description of the lost camel, he believed that they had stolen it and he got them thrown into prison. Later, the camel was found and the princes were released. By this time, however, the emperor of the country had heard of the incident and he called the princes to the palace. When asked how they were able to provide an accurate description of a camel that they had never seen, the three princes explained that the grass was eaten only on one side of the road (the camel was blind on one eye). There were lumps of chewed grass with the size of a camel tooth (that had fallen out through the hole in the tooth row). There were three ordinary hoof prints and the fourth hoof was dragged (the camel was lame on one leg). Ants flocked on the one side of the road (to butter that had fallen from the camel's load) and flies on the other (spilled honey from the camel's load). In this way, by *sagacity, knowledge and luck*, the princes reasoned their way to a description of the unknown, lost camel (Boyle 2000).

What can be learned from this tale of the three princes of Serendippo? If we sum up what serendipity is all about, there seem to be three aspects of relevance to pedagogical research or practice:

- Serendipity and accidental discovery require a high degree of knowledge and skill (the princes are thoroughly trained within different fields of knowledge and they know methods for searching out new knowledge).
- Serendipity requires a willingness to "test" own knowledge and skills in a process where there is neither a standardised or formulated objective nor syllabus (Horan, 2011) and where there are risks of making mistakes (the princes are sent into exile, they have no specific task and have to fend for themselves).
- Serendipity requires "sagacity" – the open and sensory awareness of the immediate physical and social surroundings (the princes see many details in their environment and pay attention to them, although they can seem insignificant at first glance).

However, to understand the creative power of accidental discovery, there are more striking examples than that the princes, such as Fleming's discovery of penicillin. We know that he found this medically revolutionary substance by accident – a petri dish with bacteria was left overnight outside of the refrigerator and the sample was spoiled, as a small fungus had killed the bacteria. But

instead of throwing the sample away, Fleming noted the clear area and paid attention to the fact that the bacteria seemed to have been killed. By relating to his expert knowledge of bacteriology, he reasoned that this discovery was important and elaborated the idea, with the result that antibiotics came to save millions of lives (Roberts 1989). By analysing the characteristics of the concept of serendipity, we can see that serendipity, as mentioned several times, is related to "chance and coincidence" in different discovery processes, but this is not "*mere* chance and coincidence". Taking creative advantage of chance and coincidence requires knowledge, courage and a mind open to unexpected sensory inputs. But what is even more interesting is that the concept of serendipity can be related to learning in highly interesting ways, if we consider Dewey's experiential learning perspective:

Figure 9. Serendipity and learning.
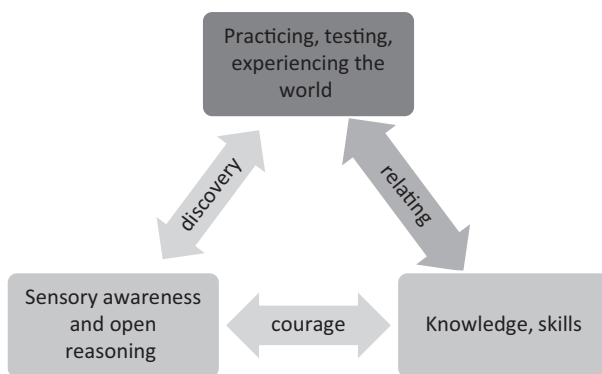
As the artists' interviews also indicate - specifically Valeur's above - creative and learning processes incorporate chance in quite subtle ways. Other examples are Granhøj, who takes in different, unknown dancers in improvisational processes and names this "serendipity", Jordan watches and talks to strangers to "extract information" for her films and Rønsholdt changes his artistic course in the encounter with the unknown. This way of working with one's own and culture's existing knowledge in a renewing fashion is the key to understanding artistic creativity's potential in other fields. Given this and considering educational and other learning environments, serendipity might be a component worth investigating in order to handle the risks connected with engaging creativity in learning processes. The concept may offer a way to be aware of concrete tools for accepting, sustaining and handling risk, as discussed below.

Enticing learners

The similarities between learning and the creative process, especially if learning is viewed more as a discovery process than a process of acquiring certain knowledge, are related to the idea that knowledge is actively constructed by the individual in thought and idea as well as in action, habits and routines. A discovery process may however bring learners from a position of comfort ("I know what I know") into the so-called *risk zone* ("I can see that there are many things that I don't know") (Sarasvathy 2008), or into accommodative rather than assimilative learning processes (Piaget 1954). The experience of loss of control or competence involved in discovery processes can be a barrier for learning and a barrier for creative development too, unless the feeling of uncertainty is addressed and taken in consideration in teaching or facilitating creative learning.

From this perspective, Michael Valeur makes a number of points in relation to his own role when facilitating creative processes for groups of non-artistic professionals. When enticing his clients into learning and creative processes, he takes seriously their need for certainty as a basis, both for having "something" to put into play in a creative process and for feeling the courage to experiment with new and unknown concepts or materials:

> Then, when I send a project to people, some of it will be something with which I know that they are comfortable and something that they know and can grasp and then I try to coax them over the edge. In this way, in both learning projects and in art it is the work of seduction, to entice people into places that they didn't know they could go to – and this is because it is my artistic project.

Valeur carries out his facilitating learning projects in the way described above on the basis of his own experience:

> To me, the basis of creativity is an encounter; that is, when two ends, which I didn't know were related, meet; when new knowledge is created. So, I often take this feeling, when […] I am starting a new project, also a learning project, by saying: What do I know? […] I keep insisting that, I mean, I try to say that in every project, I do, there must be this "unsolved material". I believe that in the unsolved material not only creativity, but also learning is hidden.

What is notable in the excerpt is the way that Valeur takes care of his participants and handles the experienced element of risk. The element of risk is handled in his way of framing his projects. Some of the material will be familiar to the participants (low risk) and some will be unknown (high risk) – the familiar signals comfort and security, the unknown makes room for risk taking, learning and creativity. In this way, Valeur takes seriously the learners' feeling that unpredictability and uncertainty of learning and creativity is risky. It is important that a

teacher or facilitator addresses and examines this aspect of experienced risk associated with unpredictability and uncertain knowledge, if the creative traits of the artistic processes are to be taken seriously as a potential for educational and organisational settings. In light of serendipity, Valeur handles risk by addressing the learners' need for certain knowledge, predictability and control (to feel competent) and uncertain knowledge, unpredictability and loss of control (to feel incompetent in certain respects) in a creative learning process.

An interesting aspect of learning emerges in this excerpt. The somewhat uncontrollable processes of creating new objects (physical as well as mental) are the main interest of Valeur as a teacher/facilitator as well as an artist. Firstly, uncontrollability is about, as a creator, being willing to learn and, as a learner, being willing to engage in processes that bring him or her out of the so-called comfort zone of well-known knowledge, failure to do which might hinder spotting a new, valuable idea (Borbye 2010, Sarasvathy 2008). Secondly, uncontrollability is about the teacher or facilitator managing the unpredictability of his/her own and others' learning processes that, due to the demands for leaving parts of the individuals' certain knowledge base, are deliberately challenging and therefore potentially transformative to a smaller or larger extent (Mezirow 2010). Above, Michael Valeur deals with this by operating with an idea of enticing the learners. Enticing the learners can be seen as a way of taking care of the process and in that way persuades them to do new things they would not otherwise have done. Valeur manages the elements of uncertainty and unpredictability embedded in such creative and learning processes in two ways:

1. He takes responsibility for the process by basing it on well-known knowledge and using this base to spark the learners' curiosity and in this way guide them into uncertain and unpredictable areas of knowledge
2. He gives the learners the responsibility for conveying meaning to the things that happen in the process.

From a pedagogical perspective, this might be a way of creating and constituting a safe, but still challenging and alluring, body-activating environment for experiments and for sensory awareness and open reasoning. He creates a learning environment where his learners can be deliberately stupid without being afraid of appearing non-expert or unprofessional.

Valeur's pedagogical considerations above take into account the two components that make it possible to work strategically with serendipity in a learning perspective and take advantage of the main characteristics of serendipity, which are chance, surprise, suddenness: the interplay between deep knowledge and the willingness to take a risk (collaboration with chance). These three components

are also the focal point of Benjamin Koppel's way of learning new things by improvisation in music:

> You take in new stuff and try it out. So it is about, if you are curious, you try to go new ways and find new pathways. Then, if you are lucky, some kind of renewal is brought about – if not for anybody else, then for yourself

In this excerpt, a reference to the experimental dimension of learning is obvious, as already shown. But, the excerpt can also be viewed in light of serendipity, in the way Benjamin Koppel describes the trying out of new stuff: if you are lucky, some kind of renewal is brought about. However, as embedded in the concept of serendipity, the luck does not appear by mere chance, but is created by the artist being highly skilled and open to the situation, in this case, the improvisational structure of the music and other musicians. The sensory awareness component of serendipity is also brought to the fore, as trying out new stuff entails that musicians listen to the sounds, harmonies and rhythms from their own and others' instruments and respond to and value these. Serendipity is hence "not an effect of trivia, but an effect of mistake or accident, which reveals a knowledge of knowledge by pointing out of what one is blind because of habits, traditions, approved knowledge and the normalised etc." (Christoffersen 2007, p. 16, our translation from Danish).

Restrospective appreciation

The quote brings into consideration and accentuates an important characteristic of serendipity: it is only possible to identify valuable ideas in light of existing knowledge and *in retrospect*. Just as it is not possible to know that something is new or ground-breaking before the ground is broken, the domain is changed before the novelty is conceded and when the domain is changed, then the novelty is accepted and therefore not really new. So, the retrospective characteristic of serendipity is noteworthy in a pedagogical or organisational learning perspective, because it is contradictory to much development of educational policy as we saw at the beginning of the chapter. When striving for certain knowledge as an end and standardised tests as a means of meeting this end, the educational system overlooks how creative ideas are brought about and that they are often not identified as creative or valuable until the process is over. In risk minimisation efforts, educational systems put so much emphasis on predictability and prescriptions that valuable ideas might become invisible or interpreted as errors or mistakes when compared to standards and prescriptions. But the fact that it is not possible to predict the exact results of explorative learning and creative processes in advance does not mean that they cannot be controlled. It only means

that it is not possible to predict the precise learning outcomes or the exact content of creative learning processes, when inspired by artistic practices. However, even in a risk minimising educational context, the concept of serendipity could offer the beginning of a tool to spot unexpected, potentially valuable new knowledge and result in a problem finding process within education or organisational development processes.

Prepared mind: the unique and special meets the conformist and common

Roberts gives an example of serendipity as finding a good and fruitful idea by accident when searching for something else, referring to a well-known error, which turned out to be one of the most significant discoveries in modern times: Christopher Columbus is used as a metaphor for accidental discovery. He set sail to find the sea route to India, but found a –for Europeans– unknown continent, which eventually was discovered to be full of new opportunities. By reinterpreting this "accident", Amerigo Vespucci turned the error of Columbus into new opportunities for Europeans (Roberts 1989). In this way, serendipity also denotes the ability of turning an accident or an actual mistake into positive questions and opportunities for new thoughts and ideas. This is possible, because accidents or mistakes have the potential to raise interesting problems by challenging conventional ways of looking at and interpreting the world. Continuing this line of thought, Roberts argues that individual learners and novices in a given community of practice and their mistakes and immature ideas have the potential to challenge that culture and spark creative renewal – and that this is at the same time what constitutes the creative potential of the uniqueness of every single individual (Roberts 1989). The pedagogical task is to develop a cultural practice, which creates space and structures for this uniqueness to be put into play with culturally given ideas, and thus spark originality (Roberts 1989, Starko 2010, p. 124).

Even more important, according to Roberts, is to strive to promote students' curiosity through what he terms *prepared mind* (Roberts 1989). When reading Koppel's statement above, prepared mind could also be related to a term like *receptive mind*, or *receptive attention*, where more phenomenological aspects of creativity are put into play in the learning process (Løgstrup 1983). Whatever word is used, emphasis is placed on considering ways of promoting pupils' and students' awareness of unexpected and "wrong" results in any learning or knowledge-producing situation (Roberts 1989), because this is the beginning of explorative and discovery-based learning. This receptiveness is intentionally cultivated and nurtured by the artists in this study.

In this way, we consider the concept of serendipity as relevant for learning as well as for handling creative, unpredictable processes in relation to the discourse of risk within education. With serendipity, the existing culture of learning and its focus on high standards for subject matters can be combined with pedagogical considerations and development of educational policies supporting discovery-based learning and creativity. The reason for this assumption is that serendipity, as mentioned, does not refer to discovery out of thin air, so to speak, but to exploration and discovery on the basis of extensive and deep knowledge about a given area or field. Achievement of extensive knowledge is, as shown already, a focus of the existing educational culture, which leads to the hypothesis that serendipity has the potential to make sense, even within an educational culture that has risk minimisation, standards and control as priorities. The concept of serendipity helps to clarify that, in a learning perspective, it is not enough for the system to raise academic standards by standardising, testing and reproducing certain knowledge, if there is a wish to foster creativity. The educational system as a whole might consider developing spaces for risk: sending pupils and students *into exile* as did the princes' father, the king, into risky, uncertain and unpredictable discovery processes, although with the *backpack* (as Anders Koppel so beautifully stated in the previous chapter) of solid and useful knowledge.

Serendipity in the classroom

This whole unfolding of the concept of serendipity in relation to education has the intention of showing the risky, uncertain, unpredictable nature of the kinds of explorative and problem finding learning strategies and learning types that emerge from the artists' interviews in relation to creativity. However, the wish to enhance creativity through education may be furthered in light of the concept of serendipity. As mentioned, the challenge for the existing culture of learning and education is its wish for certain knowledge, predictability and control as ways of minimising risks associated with globalisation. Serendipity could be a different "way to go" for education in respect of handling risk, not to minimise risk, but to handle it in a way that furthers learning types involved in and enhancing the likeliness of creative processes in education. Serendipity emphasises in a pedagogical sense discovery and creativity, but not out of the blue, so to speak. On the contrary, serendipity underscores that discovery is made on the basis of extensive and deep knowledge in both individual and domain – as we saw in the tale of the three princes of Serendippo. That students and pupils should obtain and demonstrate extensive knowledge is already an aim of educational policy development, even though the means by which these objectives are believed to

be obtained might be questioned. Educational research seems to disconfirm that standardised testing and comparison actually lead to deeper and more extensive knowledge in students and pupils (Biesta 2011, 2010, Robinson 2001, Westbury 1998/2002). Even though this is not our focus here, educational culture and policy discursively value deep and extensive knowledge building in pupils, which at least discursively corresponds with the premise of serendipity as a scientific concept (Roberts 1989).

On this basis, educational thinking should focus on reducing to a minimum the risks of failing to equip the coming generations with adequate knowledge. However here, too, educational thinking could learn from artists that acquiring deep knowledge requires the students' active, intrinsic motivation and ownership in the learning and knowledge building process and not extrinsic motivation in terms of conforming to standardised measures for comparison on national and international levels. But even so, deep knowledge and skills are not enough, if creativity is wanted as a competence for students and pupils. Room must be found for teachers and educators to bring pupils and students into situations where there are no precise content prescriptions or learning goals, but rather a learning and knowledge-producing framework, where the pupils and students are given the possibilities to explore their knowledge without a fixed objective. Here, we come back to Dewey and his experiential, experimental, problem identifying and problem solving approach to learning and pedagogy (Dewey 1966/1944). The point is that the task of teachers and educational developers is to develop approaches whereby pupils and students are supported in building solid knowledge in an academic understanding, but where they are also sent into exile (like the princes) to identify their own problems, develop hypotheses and test these in serendipitous learning processes. In more concrete terms, the concept of serendipity could legitimise and facilitate development of pedagogical approaches like Valeur's, where the learners' existing knowledge is valued, but the objective is to *do* something with this knowledge, explore possibilities and potential for discovery in respect of creative renewal and risk of error.

Evaluation – how to evaluate unexpected knowledge?

In relation to discovery-based learning and creativity, development of evaluation methods is needed, because this would be one way to work with accidental discovery and serendipity in educational settings and cultures. If evaluation of a discovery-based learning process is planned, it is meaningless to establish standardised objectives and learning goals, because the students are expected to discover new knowledge, "if not for anyone else, then for themselves", as B. Koppel

stated above. This constitutes a problem for the above outlined educational culture with its strong focus on the fulfilment of objectives and detailed learning outcomes. Evaluation methods operate with a prescriptive conception: we know in advance what the students should learn and what goals they need to reach - have they learned and achieved these objectives?

However, evaluation of accidental discovery and serendipity will require a sensitivity to unexpected ideas and development of measures to reward new insights (Ellis & Barrs 2008, p. 74, Ellis & Lawrence 2009). The problem of prescriptive evaluation forms is that valuable ideas and unique thinking can be ruled out as faults or problematic issues with the individual pupil, as we saw in Jordan's and Ramsland's cases. Jordan felt alienated in school and Ramsland felt "maladjusted" in elementary school and bored at university. But still, a fundamental question is left open: does the very idea of deliberately developing and supporting pedagogical considerations and approaches that heighten possibilities for accidental discovery not contradict the whole idea of serendipity? This question is discussed in research and academia. However, the discussion can be simplified by addressing the pedagogical question of intention and considering what level of intentions educators and educational policy developers have for learning and creativity: 1) Is the intention linked to certain predefined *learning goals*, where the serendipity aspect will be related to whatever means the learner chooses to reach the learning goal? 2) Or is the intention linked to certain *processes* that the learner goes through, after which the given learning outcome or creative result could be examined, but not compared to a predefined learning goal, rather to a more situational description of the value of the learning process? And in respect of uniqueness and community: how are the original traits of every learner perceived, interpreted and contained in social learning settings and how are they thought to be brought into play with commonly negotiated goals and shared tasks and work in education?

Whatever the answers, evaluation will have to take into account retrospective and descriptive aspects of such pedagogical approaches. Some researchers in the field of learning, education, creativity and arts argue for different kinds of portfolio methods, which could be a way to take account of the learning process as such, as well as the retrospective aspect of explorative learning and creativity. Other researchers have developed different taxonomies for the evaluation of process and outcome, where emphasis is placed on the students' ability to assess the quality of their own and others' work (Ellis & Barrs 2008). Assessment as self-reflection and insight may in this way lead to serendipitous findings and learning. But before reaching the self-reflecting stage, it would be worth considering how pupils' and students' ability to be sensory aware of physical and

social environments could be encompassed by a portfolio, as we have seen that this sensory awareness can contribute to raising intrinsic questions for creative renewal. Even further, how is this sensory awareness related to their ability to judge whether they make valuable and creative discoveries and at what level (own learning, valuable for peers, helping others, genuine new, creative ideas for a wider community or domain)?

In addition to a student-centred portfolio, it might be relevant to develop a teacher portfolio based on observation, so that evaluation can be directed towards the learning processes and creative processes, while they take place. Such a framework for observation could ask questions such as:

- In what ways do pupils or students take risks?
- In what way do they find or discover new knowledge, ask "stupid questions" and get ideas?
- At what level do they comment on their own and others' work (Ellis & Barrs 2008)?

This raises questions of documentation: what considerations should be made in advance of the process, who is going to demonstrate what and in which way (Ellis & Barrs 2008)? These ethical and practical considerations are embedded in teachers' pedagogical profession and practical judgement, but it is even more important to make them explicit when engaging in explorative and serendipitous processes in education.

This understanding of evaluation could be valuable in relation to the focus of this chapter, because it encompasses, includes and could reward discovery learning with its risk dimension. Such an evaluation approach, taking into consideration uniqueness, serendipity, social and cultural environment as well as knowledge building and renewal, might have the potential to create a navigation tool for teachers and educators, so they can manoeuvre in uncertainty, unpredictability and provide a sense of control. This would, however, not be a prescriptive kind of control, but a retrospective, descriptive, evaluating and maybe even appreciative way of defining visible learning and creative progress in learning.

Part Three: Creativity in Relationships
by Lone Hersted

Chapter 9: Creativity in a Relational Perspective

The present and the following three chapters provide an approach to creativity from a *relational* perspective, primarily based on the interviews with the 22 artists, who, as earlier mentioned, are working within different fields of art. Here, we look at the influence and inspiration of significant others and the significance of the cultural environment concerning the development of creativity. Furthermore we examine how the interviewed artists collaborate in teams and projects and how they organise and lead their working processes. In the last chapter we will take a closer look at artistic leadership and reflect on perspectives for leaders concerned with creativity outside the artistic world. What mainly interests us here is how creativity can be nurtured and enhanced in collaborative settings.

The Relational Perspective

There is no simple standard formula that can be applied to enhance creativity. While we are aware of the fact that there are big differences within the specific art forms and traditions, we intend to indicate some general lines among artists from different fields concerning creativity as something they have in common. This might be considered as problematic because creativity has many different shapes and aspects and develops in different ways within the different art forms and traditions. While aware of this risk of falling into the trap of generalisation, we intend here to identify and discuss some overall patterns.

The following four chapters are at a theoretical level generally inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin (1981, 1984), Valentin Nikolaevich Voloshinov (1929/1986), Lev Vygotsky (1933/1966, 1978, 2004, 2012), John Shotter (2008, 2010), John Shotter & Michael Billig (1998) and Kenneth Gergen (1995, 2009). They are also inspired by a series of scholars concerned with play theory related to creativity such as Johan Huizinga (1949/1955), Victor Turner (1974, 1988), Gregory Bateson (1972), George Herbert Mead (1934/1962) and Brian Sutton-Smith (1997). Furthermore we draw on creativity researchers such as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1999, 2000), Keith Sawyer (2003, 2007, 2010, 2011), Seana Moran & Vera John-Steiner (2004), Rosalind Searle (2004), Jane Henry (2004), Göran Ekvall (1991) and Teresa Amabile (1983, 1988, 1996b, 1998) and Amabile, Hadley & Cramer (2002). We also draw on general studies and knowledge in art and cultural history.

The following questions have been guiding us through our research for this part of the book: How do the interviewed artists seek inspiration from others and how do they work together in groups/ensembles, projects, communities and networks? How do cultural and artistic heritage and tradition influence their work? How do they organise their work while working alone or together with others? How do they communicate with their working partners and other stakeholders? And how do they lead creative working processes, while working alone or collaboratively? Related to that, we have also been looking at the impact of recognition and feedback in creative working processes. Instead of focusing exclusively on the individual artist, the following chapters focus mainly on the impact of relations and social, cultural and organisational factors that seem most conducive to creativity. Several interesting keywords have shown up as through-going elements during our analysis of the interviews such as: the impact of tradition, significant others, inner social audiences and external recipients, teamwork, collaboration, aesthetic sensibility, relational responsiveness, communication, improvisation, frames and rules for play and confidence. These key elements appear to be closely linked to creativity in relationships and have guided us in dividing the following four chapters into more specific subthemes. But before we go further and dwell on these subthemes, let us explain why we have chosen to investigate creativity from a *relational* perspective in the following chapters.

As we see it, we have inherited a strongly individualistic view of creativity from Western culture and psychologists studying creativity are typically taught to study the individual mind and behaviour focusing on cognitive processes and behavioural actions. Many attempts have been made during the last thirty years to develop creativity tests for use among both children and adults (specifically in the U.S.). However, the problem is that these tests tend to focus on the individual and the genetic factors seen isolated from the surrounding social, cultural, educational and economical context, as if creativity were something inherent, inside the head of the person. Much attention has been paid to people who are considered as "specially gifted and talented", without taking in consideration the importance and significant role of relationships, the learning environment and the social and cultural context.

Most of what we have heard and read until now in creativity literature and the media about artists and highly creative people is based on the myth of the lone genius or the misunderstood, "antisocial" outsider working within a solitary venue. Often this image is constructed and reinforced, for instance, in movies about artists' lives. However, our interviews with the artists show that their lives are more social than often presented in the media. We do not think that human beings are isolated entities. On the contrary, our minds are more social than we

are taught to believe and therefore we are interested in what would happen if we approached creativity from a relational, rather than an individual perspective? Our interviews with the artists have shown that their creativity springs from the soil of relationship and we see these artists as social persons fully engaged in processes of creation with other community members, cultural circles, or in dialogue with other artists, directors, gatekeepers and significant others. And we are not alone in this standpoint; in fact the importance of social process in creative work is gaining increasing interest among scholars and creativity researchers.

As long ago as 1983, Teresa Amabile criticised the tendency of taking an overall individualistic approach to creativity research in her book *The Social Psychology of Creativity* where she recommended that researchers focus more on the impact of learning and the social environment, instead of looking upon creativity as something inherent and genetic.

> As a result of the focus on individual differences, some potentially important areas of inquiry into creativity have been virtually ignored. There has been a concentration on the creative person, to the exclusion of "creative situation" – i.e., circumstances conducive to creativity. There has been a narrow focus on internal determinants of creativity to the exclusion of external determinants. And, within studies of internal determinants, there has been an implicit concern with "genetic" factors to the exclusion of contributions from learning and the social environment (Amabile 1983, p. 5).

So, creativity can be seen as profoundly social. The aim of the following chapters is, as above mentioned, to explore the influence of relational, cultural and organisational factors that can positively or negatively affect creativity among artists. It is our hope that these chapters might serve as an inspiration for leaders, educators, consultants, change agents and researchers who are concerned with creativity but are perhaps working in fields that traditionally are not defined as "artistic".

During the interviews we discovered that it sometimes is difficult for artists themselves to talk about their creativity in analytical terms and a few of them even avoid using the word "creative" in their daily practice. Some of them might prefer just to talk about their "artistic work" or their "working processes". Nevertheless, the interviewed artists have contributed to this book with a rich treasure chest of narratives and, through reading and analysing them several times, we saw some interesting and broadly applicable patterns and tendencies emerging from the interviews. It is our intention here to share these findings with you and to disseminate the voices and the inspiring stories of these different artists. We think that we can learn a lot from these people and we might even learn something about how to nurture, enhance and develop *our own* creativity and how to facilitate and lead creative processes together with other people.

The relational and collaborative approach to creativity is still a young research field. Nevertheless it is our impression that in coming years an increasing number of books and papers will appear, dealing with creativity from a relational perspective. A prominent scholar in creativity, Keith Sawyer, writes:

> We are drawn to the image of the lone genius whose mystical moment of insight changes the world. But the lone genius is a myth; instead, it is group genius that generates breakthrough innovation. When we collaborate, creativity unfolds across people; the sparks fly faster and the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Collaboration drives creativity because innovation always emerges from a series of sparks – never a single flash of insight (Sawyer 2007, p. 7).

Here, Sawyer breaks with the idea of the lone genius and indicates that creativity does not derive from one single seedbed or from one single individual but from the complex interplay and exchange between people. He also claims that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts – a thought, which has often been cited in team development theory, termed *synergy*. The idea of synergy is that a cohesive group is more than the sum of its parts and describes the ability of a group to outperform even its best individual member. In short, synergy happens when the sum of the whole system is greater than the sum of its parts: $1 + 1 = 3$. When there is synergy, we not only have the individual elements but we also have the relationships between them that add further complexity to the system or the group. Following this way of thinking, then complexity can be seen as a fertile soil for creativity and here relationships and collaboration become central.

Vygotsky, too, was critical towards the myth of the lone genius and saw creativity as a relational, historical and accumulative process. For instance in one of his essays entitled "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood" he wrote:

> Every inventor, even a genius, is also a product of his time and his environment. His creations arise from needs that were created before him and rest on capacities that also exist outside of him. This is why we emphasize that there is a strict sequence in the historical development of science and technology. No invention or scientific discovery can occur before the material and psychological conditions necessary for it to occur have appeared. Creation is a historical, cumulative process where every succeeding manifestation was determined by the preceding one (Vygotsky 2004b, p. 30).

In other words, Vygotsky stresses the importance of having the right conditions, such as a solid economic foundation and living in the right historical moment, in order to be creative and to be considered as such. No one creates alone but in relation to others and in relation to the surrounding culture.

As mentioned above, in thinking about creativity in Western culture, we usually focus on creative individuals, uniquely gifted or inspired, seen from an individual-oriented psychological point of view. Springing to mind are perhaps

our heroes - Michelangelo, Shakespeare, Mozart and Picasso. We praise their so-called "originality" and glorify their achievements as if their ideas had leapt out from the private space of their own minds, or been sent by the "muses" or from a divine force. But actually we know that, for instance in the Renaissance, artists worked in workshops closely together with assistants and apprentices. Famous artists like Botticelli (1444-1510), Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) and Michelangelo (1475-1564) did not work alone - they were always surrounded and assisted by colleagues and pupils with whom they had collaborative interaction. And there are several examples of a similar collaborative approach to creativity in our own time as well. Andy Warhol's Factory in New York (where he and his colleagues used a method, which they called "art fabrication"), the factory-like studio of Jeff Koons in Soho, New York and later on Koon's factory in Chelsea, where he works with 90 to 120 regular assistants, not to mention visual artists Olaffur Eliasson and Jeppe Hein, who have their studios in Berlin, or theatre director and visual artist Robert Wilson, who founded the creative Watermill Center on Long Island, just to name a few. These artists work collaboratively with a series of working partners and assistants. But often the media and the art industry itself have the tendency to favour the "lone genius" and in doing so, they keep the myth of the isolated artist alive.

In Dialogue with Traditions

In fact if we study the history of the arts, we see that often creativity has grown out of dialogue within and among traditions and from exchange between traditions and across cultures. We use the word *dialogue* here, because we want to emphasise the language of art or the language of a particular artistic tradition as a specific way of relating to each other. This artistic language is not necessarily literally based on words, though it can be, but might be based on sounds, bodily movements or other visuals, like, for example, the language of jazz, classical music, opera, ballet, sculpture, painting, design, architecture etc. To grow up within a specific artistic tradition is somehow like growing up within a specific language. As a young apprentice of an art form, for instance classical music, the student learns to navigate and orient him- or herself within a tradition and by practising and rehearsing, little by little, he or she learns and becomes familiar with this tradition. He or she does not only learn the language *of* music while learning to play the piano or the violin, but he or she also learns the language *about* the music, e.g. when the student talks about the music with his or her music teacher, with other musicians or maybe even with relatives interested in music. For instance, how could Mozart think about difficulties in composition

without being embedded in the language *of* and *about* music? Without this language, which comes from a long musical tradition, what would there be to think about? Language (and thereby also languages of music, of dance, of architecture, of design etc.) is fundamentally a product of people in relationships and language (in this case the language of music) only becomes meaningful when people agree on how it functions, following conventional rules and structures in the language. On one hand we have the language *about* music and on the other hand the language *of* music (where music is a language unto itself). Mozart, who was composing already at the age of six, was actively participating and embedded in a whole tradition *of* music as language, as well as in a tradition of language *about* music, which, after all, is based on tradition and relationships. In other words, he grew up and became familiar with this language. Only by participating actively and sharing in the tradition of music could he contribute to it.

Let us take an example from the artists interviewed for this book: Musician and composer Anders Koppel is well known for combining different musical traditions in his work, for instance, elements of music from the Middle East and from jazz. He was born into a family of musicians. His father was an outstanding composer and pianist and their home was filled with music from early morning to late evening. In the following excerpt, Koppel describes the merit and advantage of being embedded in music and the language of music from early childhood:

> With regard to family and music and apprenticeship and such, it is no coincidence that there are so many families within the musical field… it is evident that if you get into the world of music and learn the language before you are three years old, then you have already gone far, this is the case in music families and then you keep building upon this foundation.

Yet, participating in and being embedded in a specific tradition is not necessarily in itself creative. One could say that, in fact, by embracing a single tradition we might even reduce our creative potential. If we live in a single tradition and this is all we know or appreciate, then we can do little more than sustain the tradition. It is very difficult to "think outside the box" if you do not know there is an "outside" (Hersted & Gergen 2013).

One of the potential keys to creativity, then, lies in combining different traditions because if we only live in a single tradition, we will come to see its constructions of the world as authentic and right. Our horizon becomes narrow and we do not see any need to seek further as we know we are right. But one artistic expression from a specific period is only one way of interpretation or expression. And there could be multiple others. In effect, when we participate in more than one tradition, we are not tied to a single way of understanding, but can suspend

it, play with it, experiment and try something different. Participating in more than one tradition opens up different perspectives and broadens one's horizon (Hersted & Gergen 2013).

When multiplying traditions of art and culture, new and unexpected combinations emerge and novelty results when ideas and practices from two or more traditions are brought together – when there is borrowing, assimilating, associating, deconstruction, layering, sampling and so on. Before we go further with the interviews of the artists, let us look at a few examples from the history of art and culture.

In the 18th century, several artists in Western Europe had a fascination with Turkish art and culture, including Turkish dress, customs, food and music. Many composers took part by writing "Turkish" pieces of some sort, for instance Mozart used inspiration from Turkish music in his works "Turkish March" and "Rondo alla Turca". Beethoven also used inspiration from Turkey in his Symphony No. 9 and Joseph Haydn composed a "Military" Symphony with strong Turkish influence. In our time, modern jazz musician Dave Brubeck, during a trip to Turkey, composed his "Blue Rondo a la Turk". With an authentic Turkish irregular meter, a melody hinting at Mozart's famous Rondo alla Turca and backed by the traditional jazz drum set, this piece is a commentary on the influence of Ottoman music that still echo through the West.

In the middle of the 19th century, when Japan was forced to open up its frontiers for commercial exchange, a tremendous interest in Japanese art and culture was born in the Western world. In 1867 at the World Exhibition in Paris the Japanese pavilion caused great excitement. People, with their cosmopolitan attitudes, admired the exotic strangeness, which clearly indicated a high degree of civilized cultural development in the Far East. Suddenly women from the French moneyed classes began wearing kimonos and using China crockery and screens in their bourgeois homes. A whole Far East wave within fashion, art, sculpture, porcelain and furniture was brought to Europe and inspired a lot of designers and artists. The Japanese woodcut tradition, represented by Hiroshige and Hokusai, served as a huge inspiration for the development of Impressionism and Post-Impressionism as seen in the works of Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Paul Cézanne and Toulouse Lautrec, to mention a few.

African folk art has also had a significant impact on European creativity. Several French expressionists, for example, drew inspiration from African masks and African woodcuts and absorbed from these traditions techniques of simplification and stylisation etc. Later on, many German expressionists also became interested in African folk art, including the German expressionist group *Die Brücke* (formed in Dresden in 1905) who were hugely inspired by works from

Africa and the Pacific area. Picasso was inspired by African mask art, as can be seen in his cubist painting *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon* (1907), a pivotal work in the development of modern art.

In the field of theatre an entire movement started in the late 19th century when several Western theatre directors became fascinated with Eastern traditions of art and philosophy. The big reformists and innovators - such as Konstantin Stanislavski, Bertold Brecht and Antonin Artaud and later on, at the end of the 20th century, Jerzy Grotowsky, Eugenio Barba and Robert Wilson – all sought inspiration outside their own Western tradition and experimented with philosophies, aesthetics and artistic expressions from the East. Bertold Brecht, for instance, in 1935 became strongly influenced by his Moscow meeting with the Chinese actor Mei Lang Fang from Peking Opera. This meeting inspired Brecht to develop his well-known technique of *Verfremdung*, which became a significant new approach to theatre and a strong contrast to the dominating Stanislavskian tradition of "feeling empathy" with the characters.

The above-mentioned are only a few examples of art works and movements inspired by the meeting between two or more traditions. In the Western world there is a strong tradition of seeking inspiration from abroad, which possibly derives from the travels of ancient Greeks who became inspired by Egyptian, Persian and Syrian art and architecture. We now have a long European tradition of absorbing languages, recipes, art forms and different ways of life from other cultures – a tradition, which was resuscitated in the Renaissance. The encounter with the unknown, with something different from one's own tradition, can often result in unprecedented creative and innovative works. In chapter 11 we will see how some of the interviewed artists get inspiration from travelling and cultural exchange. Not only are creative people and artists dialogically engaged and embedded in a tradition, but as seen above, their creativity may often result from their participation in and dialogue with two or more traditions. This does not mean that we neglect the individual person as creator, but the point is here that he or she is never creating totally alone. The individual can obtain inspiration and engage in creative work by participating in more than one tradition and is, in this way, capable of creating new expressions by combining and assembling elements from the different traditions in new and surprising combinations and compositions.

Internalised Others and Inner Social Audiences

Why do we think that a strong individualist point of view on creativity is misleading – or at least missing something? Because, even when we seem to work

alone, for instance writing a chapter of a book, composing a piece of music, or drawing a sketch for a painting, we are not totally alone. The ideas that emerge when we are alone can be traced back to previous relationships, traditions, other art works and collaborations. Vygotsky claimed that all the higher functions originate as actual relations between human individuals (Vygotsky 1978, p. 57), which means that our intrapersonal processes derive from social processes, or, that all private thought is a derivative of social experience, in other words: people learn to think about the world through interaction with others:

> Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level and later, on the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological). This applies equally to all voluntary attention, to logical memory and to the formation of concepts. All the higher mental functions originate as actual relations between people (Vygotsky 1978, p. 57).

For Vygotsky, then, creative work is profoundly social: "Art is the social within us and even if its action is performed by a single individual it does not mean that its essence is individual" (Vygotsky 1925/1971, p. 249). One could claim that the creator of art is embedded in culture and relationships and has internalised the surrounding culture, which he transforms and externalises into artistic works. We cannot isolate the individual from the surrounding society and culture; even when we are alone, we are related to the world. Kenneth Gergen goes one step further and claims: "What we call thinking, experience, memory and creativity are actions in relationship. Even in our private reveries, we are in relationship". (Gergen 2009, p. 63). And later on he continues:

> What we do privately is not taking place in an "inner world" –called mind– but is to participate in social life without the audience present. Implicitly there is always an audience for our private reveries. Private deliberation is, then, a partial performance (Gergen 2009, p. 79).

Seen from a relational approach, we are always already embedded in culture and the social and we are constantly in dialogue with thoughts and ideas from others with whom we have been talking, or whose books we have read, movies we have seen, music or interviews we have heard on the radio etc. Our creative ideas arise and have their being within relations and seem always to build on references from other persons. The Russian literary theorists Bakhtin and Voloshinov wrote about the inner voices, which we can hear and talk to in our so-called inner dialogues (Bakhtin 1981, Voloshinov 1986). We can consider these voices as *internalised others* (Tomm et al. 1998) and say that internal speech and reflective thought arise from the relationships and interactions between people.

These inner voices are also called by Voloshinov/Bakhtin *the inner social audience* and they can both motivate and inhibit creativity. They can be seen as active and dynamic while they are influencing the artists' minds and actions and inspiring them for creative endeavours. As Voloshinov writes: "Each person's inner world and thought has its stabilized *social audience* that comprises the environment in which reasons, motives, values and so on are fashioned" (Voloshinov 1986, p. 86). If we follow this idea, it means that all our utterances including artistic expressions and artistic works are to an extent *jointly produced* outcomes between human beings. With inspiration from Bakhtin and Voloshinov, John Shotter and Michael Billig claim:

> […] Even in our own inner dialogues, the dialogical relations with others and otherness are at work in us, in which new reasons, new motives, new values and so on can be fashioned (Shotter & Billig 1998).

Several of the interviewed artists in this book talk about *inner voices,* with whom they are in current dialogue – voices that inspire or in another sense have a strong influence on their artistic work. Even a solitary act like writing has its origins in relationships. Writer Morten Ramsland explains how he is deeply inspired by characters and grotesque stories from his own family story and how "ghosts and psychological wreckage and demons from the past are repeated in the next generation and shape the new narratives". Furthermore he reveals how the dark sides and ghosts from family life sometimes are overshadowing him and how he confronts these dark sides and ghosts while writing and "moving around in the stories of childhood". Among other things, he says:

> I was very inspired by the stories of my own life; I mean my own childhood, my own family history and the people closest to me, and their stories.

These quotes lead us to the theory of internalised others. Sutton-Smith describes it in the following way: "All of us carry dozens of characters around in our daydreams with whom we carry on imaginary encounters and conversations, none of which are real in the usual sense." (Sutton-Smith 2001, p. 3). This leads as well traces back to Bakhtin who, inspired by Dostoevsky, described a polyphonic (multi vocal) approach to writing novels (Bakhtin 1984). In the case of Ramsland we see how the characters from his childhood or youth are expressed and are interacting with each other in his writing process. Creating these characters is not only a cognitive process for Ramsland, but seems rather to be a matter of physical enactment and embodied imagination, for example, when he says: "And it is really physical, I think, I have the sense that my body becomes very smooth and different, floating in one or another way…"

Sutton-Smith claims: "There is in all our minds an internal dialogue of voices, just as in play and festivals there is a dialogue between the different characters, some of whom change their shape as the dialogue proceeds" (Sutton-Smith 2001 p. 128). One thing that distinguishes a writer from another person is his capacity to construct storylines between and around these fragmentary voices and to give this rich and complex material an overall dramaturgical structure where these voices interact with each other. The structuring element is one of the writer's most important tools, because the structure allows the reader to take part in and dwell in the imagination of the writer and encounter the writer's universe accompanied by the reader's own inner voices. The voices of the writer and those of the reader are, during the reading process, mingling together. When the imagination of the reader meets with the imaginary universe of the writer, new images, scenarios and stories emerge.

If we continue with the example of Ramsland, not only family members but also different role models can be defined as significant others. Ramsland explains:

> When I was quite young, you know, when one tends to lean on role models…I think I had a feeling that my favourite writers, role models, were expressing something deep inside myself and I would like to be able to express these things myself and then I tried to write like them in one or another way. And then, little by little, I found my own voice, my own way of doing it and such a process is, in many ways, blurred, but for me, it was closely related to the fact that I had many different literary role models in different periods of my life and then I might have rejected them later on. My relationship to them was as if they were, at least earlier in my life, superior to me and then maybe in a later moment, I knocked them off their pedestal, thinking that they were ridiculous and stupid, when I came to another moment in my life, which did not suit them.

Ramsland explains in the interview that he stands on the shoulders of others, a whole tradition of writers from whom he received inspiration and learned a lot. One could claim that in the beginning of his career he internalised the voices of the writers with whom he felt most familiar and he could identify. Being in an inner dialogue with these voices, watching and stealing ideas from them, gradually helped him to find and shape his own literary voice as a writer and then these voices were left in the background, sometimes even, as he mentions, "knocked off their pedestal". One could, in this later phase, speak of a process of independence or liberation from the role models (the masters) when they were standing in the way of his creativity or simply were not inspiring him as a writer any longer. The literature on art and psychology often mentions that the artist at a certain moment in life has to liberate himself from "his father" or "the masters", in order to create his own identity as a human being and as an artist. Ramsland describes

this in his own words: "My relationship to them was as if they were, at least earlier in my life, superior to me and then maybe in a later moment, I knocked them off their pedestal". He goes on to explain about the impact of the voices from his masters and the battles with and between these voices, which had become internalised as inner voices:

> So it has sort of been like a wrestling match with them and I looked up to them and it was like I had to pull them down, throw them away and find others and find, seek my own way. […] But I have learned a lot from them and it is as if I have my own distinctive voice, my own material and at the same time I have learned a lot from the others who have a voice, who in one way or another are close to my voice. You see the world of literature as voices, some are closer to yours, some are further away. […] And that's how you learn, isn't it? You do it by seeing what others are doing and you do it by borrowing some ideas, because some ideas run through books and so I think to write books is like finding your own voice and another thing is to recognise that you're not – that you stand on the shoulders of a lot of other people. And if you want to progress, you have to use tools and ways of doing things that others used before you and borrow them and get the best out of them and find your own way and by not getting pulled too close to one of those major bodies and becoming trapped by their gravity. So when you're a writer, you borrow a lot of ideas from tons of places, from your own life and from people you know, from books you read and so on.

In the quote above, we recognise that Ramsland has learned a lot from other writers. In fact he has stolen some of their tricks and ideas, he has combined different ideas and elaborated them and in doing so, little by little, he has created his own style of writing and gradually has created his own identity as a writer. In other words, he has become a *writer* himself. Regarding learning and achieving inspiration from others, he also mentions the importance of not "getting pulled too close to one of those major bodies and becoming trapped by their gravity" which means that for him it is also a delicate matter of not being absorbed totally by the impact of a master. He adds: "It is a matter of not stealing too much, just a little and letting yourself get inspired by as many writers as possible, so that you don't imitate one voice too much".

It appears that these literary voices described by Ramsland have fulfilled the role of significant others, as important, transformative role models who made a difference to him in his life. Another writer interviewed for this book, Michael Valeur, who also works as a script writer for computer games, describes the significant and transformative role that his Danish literature teacher and an encounter with a specific book came to play in his childhood and early youth:

> What has really served me in moments of my life when I have experienced big changes have been "lethal" novels or people, meeting whom at that time was "extremely dangerous". The first person was my Danish literature teacher when I was in fifth grade, who

suddenly told my working class parents that I had a talent for writing and that they should buy me a typewriter. And he insisted and made enormous demands on me and had extremely high expectations. And I came from an environment where people did not…my father was a carpenter and my mother a hairdresser […]. And then at the age of seventeen, I encountered the book "Vandalism" written by Tom Kristensen and that's a book you should never give to a seventeen year-old boy!

In other words, Valeur's teacher in Danish literature became a *significant other,* who made a difference in his life by supporting him, but also by challenging him and in this way, widening his horizon and helping him to develop specific skills within his writing. Helped by the enthusiasm and demands of his teacher, the young boy, who had grown up in a working class family, became a pattern breaker.

It is not only significant others from the present or the past (in the example above, a teacher and a well-known writer) who can make a difference in the creative development of a person. Audiences, too, to whom one's work may speak in the future, are an influence. Several of the interviewed artists describe this phenomenon. Here, for example, Valeur talks about the importance of having recipients for his texts, an audience for his work:

When I write, there are two things. There is something I write in order to communicate with others, where there is something I really wish to tell other people, a part of my world, which I want to send out to the rest of the world. And then there is a part, like, saying: "I don't know anything about this, now I just write in order to "get high" by encountering new stuff". So there is always something extrovert and something introvert related to my writing processes. The introvert part comes in a way from "inside", but the extrovert part comes from people and things I meet, they are born there and the fantastic thing about it is exactly this meeting. So unfortunately, I would love to say that I'm one of the writers that write for their own sake, but in fact I am not, I need an audience of some kind, in one or another place.

Here, Valeur broaches the theme of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which elsewhere has been described profoundly in creativity studies by scholars such as Csikszentmihalyi (1996, 1999, 2000) and Amabile (1988, 1996b, 1998). Briefly, these scholars distinguish between inner and outer motivational factors, claiming that many creative people are driven by a strong intrinsic motivation, which leads them to continue working on a task that fascinates them, despite external obstacles. Intrinsic motivation refers to the kind of motivation that works from inside an individual rather than from any external or outside rewards, such as money, fame or recognition. Intrinsic motivation does not mean, however, that a person will not seek rewards or recognition; it just means that such external rewards and symbols of recognition are not enough to keep a person motivated. It seems like Valeur is motivated both by intrinsic factors and extrinsic ones,

such as meetings and contact with other people and the imagination of potential readers of his texts. In other words, extrinsic factors such as relationships with others different from himself seem to have become intrinsic motivational factors in their role as his *inner audience*.

As we see in the quote below, the imagination of potential recipients can be a very strong motivational factor. These recipients can be real or imaginary, but in this case they always seem to be present in the conscience of the writer and have become internalised others. Valeur describes how he is dependent on the imagination of an audience –or readers– of his texts and how he uses his writing as tools for communication with other people, even people he might not know personally:

> I'm deeply dependent on the thought that somewhere, somebody is receiving my text and getting joy from it. I have written a lot of things, which have never come out […] but I don't feel my text is accomplished before it has met or has captured the reader.

When Ramsland writes his books, he consequently takes the recipients into consideration during the writing process and he explains in the interview how he literally invites up to five specific and very different people into the writing process in order to give him feedback on his drafts. Each of them gives him feedback from their own perspective, their own taste and preferences. He describes it in this way:

> After working on a book for over two and a half years or something like that, then I have some readers whom I know - my wife, some old friends and a couple of writer colleagues, in all around four-five people - to whom I send the text and then I ask them to give critical feedback on it. They're readers whom I know really well, I know what they like. And I know if one likes this…or if one thinks this is simply too much, then maybe it isn't too much at all, but if another person says that he or she thinks this is too much, then clearly it must be too much. So I know what they like and I know their reactions and that, I think, is important, because at that moment it might be difficult for me to figure out how this text might work on the reader, now, when I myself have read it so many times. So at that moment I need to see my text through new lenses.

One interesting point here is that Ramsland tells us he actually writes for two or more years *alone*, before he feels ready to take the next step and invite the *feedback givers* into the process. Then he might continue working on the book for half a year or so, taking their feedback into consideration, before he sends the finished manuscript to the editor. And at that moment he enters into a dialogue with the editor, seeks help from him and tries to look upon the text through his eyes in order to see it from a new perspective.

> I don't know, sometimes I use half a year, where I rewrite my text on the basis of the critique and then I have my editor to whom I finally send my text, when all the other

readers think that now I can't get any further […] there might still be some parts in the book, which I don't think function yet and what would he think about that? Is he able to see things in a new light? Then I use his eyes to look at the text again. So for me it's a matter of revisiting the text with fresh eyes.

Ramsland also points out that the feedback should not come too early in the process, because in the early phase, the material is too vulnerable and critical feedback might kill his motivation for continuing the work. This means that feedback, seen from his point of view, is very much a matter of *timing* and it is important to withhold criticism until the right moment, because creative processes can be extremely delicate and vulnerable. He explains this in the following way:

I remember that once I read an interview with Björk, who said that when her songs "came out", they were like little kittens, who couldn't tolerate the light and I feel a little bit the same way when I write. The first thing you write, in the moment when you write it, then it can… well, then it might be good to imagine and make yourself believe that this is really good and YES! At that moment you should not receive too much criticism, because maybe your text isn't that good and maybe it is more a matter of keeping the good energy. The energy you mobilise in such a project is of vital importance because the energy has to contribute to the fulfilment of the project. But in that moment when the first ideas are crystallised, then they should not be criticised into pieces. At that moment they need peace and quiet in order to grow, until they can resist criticism without breaking in one way or another.

Let us go back for a while to the role of an *inner audience,* not only as a motivating, but also as a guiding factor. Theatre director Eugenio Barba explains in the programme for one of their stage productions called *Talabot* (Barba 1988) that he always operates with at least four different categories of spectators in mind, when he works on a new theatre production. As a director of theatre he has internalised these four types of spectators as an inner social audience and he has trained himself to observe performance rehearsals from their different perspectives. One could say that all four spectator categories become significant voices or imaginary gatekeepers: 1) *the child* (who understands the actions on stage literally), 2) *the spectator* (who thinks that he does not understand anything of what is going on, but somehow feels attracted to it), 3) *the alter ego of the director* and 4) *the fourth spectator* (who looks *through* the performance and grasps a broader message from it). According to Barba, each moment in the performance should ideally be justified in each of the four spectators' perception. The child (no. 1), who captures the performance literally, probably will not be seduced by metaphors, references, symbolic images etc. The second spectator (no. 2) might not understand the significance of the performance and maybe he does not know the language spoken by the actors, or maybe he does not recognise the story, but

nevertheless he might be attracted by the energy, the images, the rhythm and the whole kinaesthetic experience. Then, there is the alter ego of the director (no. 3), who should be able to watch the performance every night without getting bored, as if he were being confronted by a mysterious enigma, which would never leave him. Finally, there is the fourth spectator (no. 4), who is almost mute. He notices what others would *not* notice: details of the material, the fine craftsmanship, the techniques, the quality of the props, the special light effects and the efforts and personal needs and motivational drivers of the actors. Imagining these four categories of spectators not only serves as a kind of motivation, but also helps in making directional decisions during the rehearsal and montage period. In this case, the imagination of different recipients and the ability to see the work of the group from different spectator perspectives seems to serve as an important contribution and a *tool for guidance* in the artistic process.

For painter Julie Nord, the imagination and the future presence of the recipients can be both a *motivating* and a *demotivating* factor, because, as she explains below, it puts her under pressure, in particular if she has too many exhibitions in the same period:

> It is important to have a recipient and it is wonderful when somebody wants to show your work, but I must also recognise that I can't do a lot of exhibitions. I'm not the kind of person who can do 23 exhibitions a year and if I have too much pressure on me, then it affects my life quality and in fact also my work. I really need time. I think that the work must have the time it needs. Of course it is not always like that in reality. Sometimes you also do your work and get the feeling that you need to vomit before an art exhibition, which you need to get ready for.

As illustrated in the examples above, the internalised others and social audiences seem to play a significant role in the creative process and artists are never working totally isolated or alone, while all traditions of thinking, action and creation result from people in relationship. We learn from others and we build on ideas from others and so on and even the imagination of an *inner audience* seems to have a strong influence on the decisions we make.

Creativity can be seen as a highly sophisticated form of creating meaning and learning in relation to others and the surrounding world, through dialogues carried from the past, in the present and even imaginary dialogues with significant others in the future. In the previous chapters on creativity and learning we studied the impact of education and learning related to creativity, as well as the influence of participating in formal and informal learning settings. From participating in face-to-face relations, participating in cultural events, meeting with the art world and active engagement in educational programmes and learning settings, the artist acquires an enormous range of resources and becomes familiar

with a specific tradition or language within the art world, such as the language of Cubism, the language of electronic music, the language of Scandinavian design, the language of modern jazz, the language of Bournonville's ballet, or the language of Noh theatre, just to mention some examples. The point is here that the artist is never an isolated being but always developing him- or herself in response to others. Creativity is entirely relational and emerges in environments and communities of people who share ways of thinking and acting and learn from each other. As Csikszentmihalyi claims, psychologists tend to see creativity exclusively as a mental process [but] creativity is as much a cultural and social as it is a psychological event (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). In short, as singer Marco Nisticò explains in his interview: "You create with and for other people - that's all we do. All we do is related to other people".

Csikszentmihalyi emphasises the significance of the field, the domain and the individual and the interplay between them. The field refers to the social organisation of the domain. Belonging to the field are the audience and the so-called gatekeepers, among others the teachers, critics, journal editors, museum curators, agency directors and foundation officers who decide what belongs to a domain and what does not (Csikszentmihalyi 1999). These gatekeepers are making judgements about the artists' work and are also playing a significant role concerning the possibilities for promotion, visibility, contacts, financial support and recognition of the artists. The artist is often very dependent on the recognition of these gatekeepers in order to be able to make a living out of his or her artistic work. After all, the success and often the very survival of the artist in general depend on social validation. In this way these gatekeepers frequently become significant for the artist, not necessarily as artistic inspirers, but probably more as *influential* or even *powerful others*.

Chapter 10: Collaboration in Artistic Teamwork

As we have seen in the previous chapter, the interviewed artists are essentially engaged in dialogue with a whole set of traditions and internalised others. But obviously, they are also in moment-to-moment dialogue and interaction with people around them in their daily life. In the present chapter we will mainly look at how these artists engage in and collaborate in creative teamwork. We might assert that artistic creativity is always collaborative because it draws on the ideas and work of past or contemporary creators and also depends heavily on interaction with the audience, readers, publishers, curators and with different kinds of cultural providers. In this way artists are always in dialogue with the past, the present and the future. In this chapter we will take a closer look at these collaborative and dialogical practices and maybe we can even learn from them. The following questions have been guiding us through our research and the structuring of the present chapter: How do these highly creative people work collaboratively in groups, ensembles, projects, communities and networks? What kinds of components appear to be important in their different ways of collaborating? How do the interviewed artists relate to and communicate with their working partners and other stakeholders? How do they coordinate during the process and move towards the final artistic product together? And could there also be some challenges to collaborative artistic creativity?

Let us start with an example of a collaborative situation during rehearsals for an opera, explained by the opera singer himself. He interprets the score of the composer; he tries to understand what the composer wants to say and then he fuses this interpretation with his own ideas. It is all a matter of co-creation, a synthesis between the composer's work and the singer's interpretation. But the co-creation does not stop here, because there is also the conductor, who presents his own interpretation of the work and several other stakeholders contributing to the creation of the entire opera. Marco Nisticò here explains this kind of co-creation while working as an opera singer, in his own words:

> When I manage to bring enough of my sensibilities and my ideas to what is already written on that page, then something creative happens and then you also have collaboration with other people, which is very important, you know you are never working alone by yourself … There is a bunch of people around you; there is a conductor who has his own ideas about the music and the text, very often there is a stage director, again the same

thing and there are all your colleagues, you know the people, you also have to react to what other people are doing. So opera itself is very much an ensemble creative endeavour, I mean, you do it all together.

Nisticò speaks here about interpretation of music and co-working with directors and colleagues in a classical tradition to consider, for example, how to interpret a composition which was already written down on paper perhaps decades or hundreds of years ago. He explains to us that he does not repeat the notes mechanically but contributes to the creation of music by adding his "sensibilities and ideas" to the written score. Creativity in his case mostly concerns how to interpret the score and how to combine and unify the different interpretations of the different collaborators, so here in one way or another there is a strong element of negotiation between the many different voices who have "a stake" or interest in the artistic outcome. This seems to be a common challenge in classical music and a representative example of collaborative creativity within clearly defined structures and while working from a specific score.

Let us turn to another kind of collaborative creativity, which differs from the performing arts. The visual artist and designer, Rosan Bosch, runs a design studio where people with different professional backgrounds (e.g. designers, architects, communication experts and anthropologists) work closely together. Originally Bosch was educated as an avant-garde artist in the visual arts and later on she became a designer. When Bosch was asked to explain her own experience of creativity, she answered as follows:

I think that a lot of the things I do […] - I might be creative but it's not something I'm conscious about! When I am conscious about creativity, that is when I am in a development process together with other people and that's where I am the most creative. Actually, when we work as a group and somebody has an idea, which inspires a new input from another person that wows the group – it reminds me of child's play. You know? One hand on top of the other and you get a kick and you forget time, while working and building an idea together. That's when I'm the most creative!

Here, Bosch describes the special experience of group flow when people communicate and create new ideas in a collaborative way and time and space are largely forgotten during the work. In this kind of process it appears that one must give up a part of one's ego and *go with the flow* in a common process where the trajectory is unpredictable. These kinds of group conversation are based upon strong improvisational elements, which means that one never knows where the process will lead. Sawyer points out parallels between conversation and improvisation:

The most creative conversations are like improvisational theatre dialogues; each speaker reinterprets what was said before and builds on it in a new direction so that unexpected creativity emerges from the group (Sawyer 2007, pp. 142-143).

As mentioned earlier in this book, we are aware of the differences among the different art forms and disciplines. However it seems that the interviewed artists have something in common: they are skilled in picking up and building on each other's ideas and in letting these ideas melt together during the working process. It could be seen as if the individuals were losing part of themselves and creating a *common space* by relating to each other. When interviewed together with his working partner, visual and digital artist, Signe Klejs, composer Niels Rønsholdt explains about this kind of experience in collaborative artistic work:

> Sometimes when Signe gets an idea or says something, then I look upon it as if it was me, myself, who got the idea, whereas in other collaborative constellations, I look upon the other as another person. Especially when Signe and I are pretty far on in the process, then it's as if it could have been me, myself, who formulated the idea and you also get a more outspoken relationship to the ideas, without becoming negative or degrading, staying sincere and trustworthy. This level of honesty is something I only experience together with Signe and I can't imagine myself having the same level of honesty together with others, because in relation to Signe it's almost "myself" and "my own ideas". And that's exactly because we've created the ideas together and quickly we lose the sense of who it was who articulated the idea. In fact, we would not be able to go back and say where the ideas derived from, because they were created in a common space.

In the case above, it strikes us that it does not seem important to Rønsholdt who it was that originally articulated the first idea behind a piece of collaborative artistic work because, after all, the ideas *have been created in a common space* and they have been developed and refined together. Apparently, dedication to the work itself here goes beyond individual vanity.

An illuminating illustration of collaborative creativity can be found in Picasso's inspiring relationship with Braque. Often the creative invention of Cubist painting is attributed solely to Picasso, but in fact this new and revolutionary direction in painting was the result of an intense collaboration and exchange between Picasso and Braque. When Picasso was introduced to Braque in 1907 they started working closely together until the beginning of World War I in 1914, when Braque enlisted with the French Army. During that period they spent a lot of time in each other's studio, examining each other's work, challenging and encouraging each other. According to Sawyer and Gilot & Lake, Picasso described it in the following way:

> "Almost every evening I went to Braque's studio or Braque came to mine," […] "Each of us had to see what the other had done during the day. We criticized each other's work. A canvas was not finished until both of us felt it was" (Sawyer 2007, p. 134 and Gilot & Lake 1964, p. 76).

In addition to this example, Sawyer informs us that during this period of intense collaboration, both painters signed their names on the back of the canvas, which can be interpreted as if they agreed that the individual identity of each painter was less important than the collaboration, which had actually created the work. Picasso described the collaborative experience with Braque in the following words: "At that time our work was a kind of laboratory research from which every pretension of individual vanity was excluded" (Richardson 1991, pp. 245-246).

This example is highly interesting seen from a relational point of view, because it seems that both artists had given up a part of their individuality and entered into a *common space*, in *a joint action*, where new shared ideas and practices could emerge. Joint action can be defined as a kind of social activity based on improvisation and is not (according to Shotter 1997) a matter of acting 'out of' any inner plans, but a question of moving 'into' a situation already partially shaped by previous talk and intertwined activities with the other. The overall outcome of joint action is not up to any of the individuals concerned in it; it is entirely novel and here, one could add, there is potential for collaborative creativity. Shotter defines joint action in the following way:

> It is activity which is, so to speak, distributed between us, it is *joint action* in the sense that it is action we do as a group, as a collective, as a 'we' or an 'us' […]. Indeed to the extent that everything done by any of the individuals involved in it is done in spontaneous response to the others or othernesses around them, we cannot hold any of them individually responsible for its outcome (Shotter 2010, p. 83).

Furthermore Shotter (1997) explains: "Thus, as neither 'mine' nor 'yours', the 'situation' itself constitutes something to which we can both contribute: it is 'ours'". In this way while the artists construct a common space between them, it seems like the relationship creates an identity, which becomes bigger than both individuals. We see this, for instance, in the collaborative work between Rønsholdt and Klejs where Rønsholdt explains: "There are also emerging ideas that I only come to think about, because it's in relation to Signe, because I talk with her and the ownership always is *ours*". This is parallel to the term by Sawyer (2010 p. 372) called *collaborative emergence*, where new and unpredictable ideas emerge from the interaction between collaborators. According to Sawyer such a collaborative process is irreducibly complex and cannot be reduced to individual properties. In order to grasp what is going on in such a collaboration, studies of each individual are not enough and might even be misleading; what is important here would be to look at the process and study the relational interplay between the collaborators.

Unfortunately we have not had the opportunity in this project to follow the artists' collaborative working processes over a longer period and our findings rely mainly on descriptions of their work from our interviews. Nevertheless, the artists themselves describe very clearly what is important for them in terms of collaboration in artistic work processes. This, at least, gives us some hints and little by little patterns begin to emerge. So let us go further and look at some of the findings concerning relational elements, which generally characterise collaboration in artistic teamwork according to the artists. The quote above by Rønsholdt leads to the following component, which we define here as confidence.

The Role of Confidence

The interviews suggest that collaborative creative relations depend very much on the development of *confidence*. When we say here confidence, we refer to self-confidence, confidence in working partners and confidence in the unpredictable process. Together, these aspects of confidence seem to be recurring vital elements that contribute to collaborative artistic work. Let us now proceed to unfold these elements by continuing listening to the comments of the artists themselves. For instance, musician and composer Anders Koppel explains the value of confidence as follows:

> I can explain it in a simple way. Something that really inhibits my creativity is the lack of confidence. If I notice, you know, any kind of quarrel, then, I lose motivation and think "What the hell…" In short, I really think that confidence and collaboration are wonderful launch pads.

So artistic collaboration seems to be very much a matter of relating, tuning in and building up trust. It is a matter of *resonating* or *moving in accordance* with each other and also a matter of enjoyment. Koppel adds:

> Concerning collaboration, I would say that there is no better run-up to a concert than having a great time together in the band room just before it starts. […] It's not just a matter of getting into harmony between the minds on stage and in the music - that's of course pivotal - but it's also a question of having an enjoyable time together, absolutely.

Klejs also mentions the importance of building up an atmosphere based on trust and confidence while working with other people:

> It has to do with confidence […] this kind of confidence is very important. In every collaborative project we spend the first hour just talking with each other at an informal level: "How are you doing?" and "How are you today?" etc. It's a matter of tuning in and getting connected and also a matter of offering a space for dialogues about more personal issues […] actually I can't imagine any kind of collaboration where you aren't connected.

And her partner, Rønsholdt adds:

> This kind of relatedness into the private sphere is a kind of battering ram into the creation of fellowship.

Confidence seems necessary as a foundation for the collaborative creative work, thus you have to loosen up and open yourself towards your working partners in order to co-create new ideas. Rønsholdt sees confidence as pivotal for his ability to devote himself to the persons with whom he works:

> For me it's very important that we can connect in a personal space […] I can only devote myself to a relationship, where I feel a big amount of confidence in the other person, a basic personal confidence.

This kind of confidence and relatedness, which Klejs and Rønsholdt here describe, is very delicate and builds, according to themselves, mainly upon dialogues, where the artists show confidence in each other, both at a personal and at a professional level. This requires what we could call a specific *aesthetic sensibility* for each other and for the creative process in itself. And it also requires that the collaborators do not attempt to control and constrain each other, but on the contrary that they offer each other a space of freedom. At the same time they seem to invest a significant part of their identity in the work and they do not necessarily distinguish between private, personal and professional domains.

While working as a writer and a scriptwriter for computer games, Michael Valeur often participates in collaborative projects. In line with Klejs and Rønsholdt, he emphasises that something, which enhances his creativity is confidence, in addition to recognition. When he experiences being recognised, he dares to take risks and move out "on thin ice":

> In fact I function incredibly well with recognition. If I sit down working together with others and they say: Wow, this is great, Michael, then I move into play mode and then something comes out, which is in fact the thing which is going to be fun. I want to move to places where I feel insecure, but it has to be with a good feeling, which I get when I'm together with people and I know that they like what I'm doing, then we can really move out to places where the ice is thin. That works! […] I thrive really badly while working with a very critical working partner. Then I get blocked and I start asking myself: Is this good enough? But this is because I'm always extremely critical concerning my own stuff; I never think that it's good enough. […] I really need somebody who says: it's good enough, Michael, actually it's damn good! And then I move on and then I flourish.

In order to develop new material, artists have to take risks and try out new things. They need to have a curious and explorative approach to their work. As mentioned earlier, artists' creativity in collaborative settings is closely linked to the matter of having created a culture of confidence when moving together into

the *unknown* and *unexpected*. Actress Julia Varley describes here the vulnerability and unpredictability, which is often related to the creative process:

> Each creative process is different, so you can never rely on what you did the time before. The only thing you can rely on is that you trust that at some point it will start working. So in all of your desperation and tears and aargh… inside you, you know that at some point it will come out, but it's like, you can't know how to make a creative process, you know that you can do it, but every time you have to learn how to do it.

Something, which strikes us here is that, even after more than forty years of experience of theatre, Varley expresses doubts and despair, which she experiences as a part of the creative working process. At the same time she expresses a certain humility towards the process and the necessity of showing confidence and surrendering oneself to the process despite the desperation. Creativity –whether on an individual or a collaborative level– is not a bed of roses, but also contains elements of struggle, challenge, risk-taking and learning. Challenging oneself and each other and taking risks depend closely on confidence, because without a basic confidence in oneself, in the group and in the process, challenge will not be successful.

Improvisation and Relational Responsiveness

We will now take a closer look at two other components in collaborative creativity: *improvisation* and what we could define as *relational responsiveness*. We have already touched upon improvisation as related to the creative process (chapter 3 on composition) and as a component of learning (chapter 6 on reflective practice), but in the following, we take a closer look at improvisation in a relational perspective. In improvisational jazz, for instance, the musicians are not interpreting a score, but are often building upon already existing material in other ways, perhaps by combining different fragments from a wide repertoire and developing this material into something new during the interplay among them. Through many years of practising, these jazz musicians have developed highly refined skills in creative improvisation, which come into play as a collaborative activity in-the-moment.

When jazz musicians draw upon existing material, they draw on a kind of flexible repertoire, which during the improvisation is transformed and sampled into something else, in the encounter with the other musicians and in contact with the audience. These musicians have developed a capability to modify already existing material consisting of structures, fragments and phrases into a new and *not-planned* structure, in the present context of the other musicians and the audience. The musicians are playing-as-they-go. In fact, playing improvisational

jazz together with others can be considered as a highly sophisticated endeavour, which requires advanced skills in listening, communicating (through the music) and combining the different musical elements in-the-moment. Musician Anders Koppel explains some fundamental principles of improvisation within collaborative working processes:

> I remember there was a very famous teacher of theatre improvisation […] and his point of departure for theatre improvisation was to say 'yes' no matter what happened and that's an extremely good basis for improvisation, because in the moment when you say 'no', then it's like the play suddenly stops. You can say 'yes' in many ways, for instance if a thematic material, a word, a rhythm, or something else is presented and maybe you can't really follow it, then you can say ´yes´ in other ways. You can say 'yes' by doing the contrary to what is presented, which means that you make a sort of counterpoint, e.g. if one plays a series of short tones, then you can play a series of long tones. So in a compositional way of thinking you try to work with the entire picture, which functions at many levels.

The importance of this willingness to say 'yes' to each other (just as Anders Koppel mentioned above), especially in the phase of developing material for a new production, is well known in the theatre world, when working with improvisation during training and rehearsals. During improvisational training and rehearsals, the actors make invitations and give responses, which again are new invitations in an ongoing cycle. For instance, if an actor reaches out his hand in order to feel whether it is raining (in the fiction) and another actor puts an imaginary coin into his hand or shakes his hand, saying: "I'm pleased to meet you", then the bad improviser might think; "Oh this idiot has completely misunderstood my intention" and he might start sulking, but the good improviser, on the contrary, will follow the other's initiative no matter what and respond to it in a creative and elegant way.

Instead of saying 'no', the improvisational jazz musician or actor says 'yes' in many different and often elegant and playful ways. They do not stop in front of the audience and start problem solving and criticising the proposal of the other. They need to be skilled within their artistic domain and keep themselves open towards a wide range of response possibilities that can maintain the dialogue and the flow. The wider the repertoire the artist has, for instance as an improvisational jazz musician or an actor, the better, because that enables him or her to connect and relate to the others in many different ways and in this way maintain flexibility in the improvisational interplay with others. Again it is a matter of trust and the ability to maintain an open approach towards each other and the willingness to follow each other, in other words, we could claim that it is a matter of *living embodied relational responsiveness*.

Being a good improviser is to a high degree a matter of being relationally responsive to the collaborators (and sometimes even to the audience). In fact we see *relational responsiveness* as central to improvisation in collaborative creativity. But what do we mean by *relational responsiveness* and how do we see it in practice? Let us now unfold the term relational responsiveness. Shotter (2010 p. 122) explains relational responsiveness in the following way:

> Something very special occurs when two or more living beings meet and begin to *respond* to each other – much more happens than them merely having an *impact* on one another. Something special occurs that begins thus: As soon as we enter into such mutually responsive relations with those around us, then, instead of one of us first acting individually and independently of all the others and then another replying to us in the same way, the actions of all of us are to an extent 'shaped' in the course of their performance by our spontaneous responsiveness to the actions of all the others (and the other things) around us. Thus as a consequence, none involved can in fact account for their actions as wholly their own – besides ourselves, events issuing from the others and othernesses in our surroundings exert a formative influence in shaping *our* expressions (Shotter 2010 p. 145. Italics are the author's own).

As Shotter writes: "Something special happens" and in order to illustrate what we mean by *relational responsiveness*, we might go back and take a closer look at the jamming jazz orchestra as an example of a creative team working closely together at an improvisational level, where each individual, playing a single instrument, is capable of listening, "tuning in", relating to each other and creating something new out the existing material, by picking up the rhythm or a musical theme of a colleague or playing a rhythm in contrast to the dominating rhythm etc. Of course, each musician needs to master his or her own instrument, but this is not enough in order to make music together. While improvising within a jazz orchestra the musician needs to show confidence and say 'yes' to the other part without knowing where this 'yes' will lead him or her. In other words, the musician cannot plan the musical course strategically. It is to a very high degree a matter of following each other, being responsive and seeing where it leads.

Relational responsiveness is closely linked to *responsibility* and taking care of the entire work and the relationship, which emerges *between* the participants in their interaction. We could also see this as a kind of co-construction, because the artist does not exclusively focus on his or her own material but on the common space as a whole, as we shall see in the example below. Related to this is also a high degree of self-discipline and dedication, which is necessary in all kinds of collaboration. The musician Benjamin Koppel describes it in the following manner:

> There are incredibly many ways to do it and I think that the important thing here is whether it will function. Whenever you 'follow' or do something that 'compromises',

you must have the certainty that everybody shows responsibility, a common responsibility for the collaboration, which emerges when you communicate in the music. And if everybody in the group has that feeling and that's not something that you articulate, before you start to play, then you can feel this, this chemistry, which possibly both is human and musical… so if there is this kind of collaboration and everybody offers something to it, but also takes the responsibility, then you can say 'yes' or comment or develop or challenge in innumerable ways. That's why you never finish, because it's fun. New possibilities open up, but it requires that everybody takes responsibility and that everybody has a notion of saying 'yes' to the collaboration, which is emerging… and which is necessary in order to communicate both verbally, as humans, but also in the music.

As mentioned above, relational responsiveness is particularly relevant in improvisational jazz and improvisational theatre (much more can be said about improvisation in jazz and here we recommend Barrett 2012). Improvisation provides the possibility of an immediate and prolonged playful and experimental engagement with the medium and with the collaborators. As mentioned earlier, in order to be able to collaborate and improvise together, the participants need to manage their professional field, for instance knowing how to play an instrument and they need to have a certain notion of the entire musical landscape. On the other hand, they need to be willing to leave their own individual repertoire and cede control in order to open up for the unexpected to happen. In their interplay they contribute to each other's ideas and they react and create on the spot while being responsive to each other. At the same time, in the moment of playing, they withhold criticism. This does not mean that they do not give feedback to each other after a concert or a performance, but the important thing here is that they do not do it while playing. While playing together they co-create a common space and build up a new collaborative repertoire. They seem to balance between order and chaos, structure and spontaneity and it requires very much the ability to listen and follow each other in *coordinated action*. We will return to the concept of coordinated action later on in this chapter.

Until now, we have been writing a lot about improvisation in jazz and theatre and some readers might think that classical music, for instance, does not leave space for improvisation, because most often classical music is being played from a score written beforehand by a composer. But in our interview opera singer Marco Nisticò describes how his creativity flourishes in the co-creation with the conductor, precisely when the conductor offers him a space for playing with ideas about the staging of the opera and then actually listens to him and builds upon his ideas. This exchange and improvisation with ideas does not go on in front of the audience as in improvisational jazz or improvisational theatre, but

is an important element during the rehearsals *before* the final staging. Nisticò explains:

> I come in and I start basically improvising some ideas about the staging and then the director is able to really take that and maybe clean it up and make it into something that works even better and that's a great thing.

While reflecting on collaboration and improvisation in artistic teamwork in general, one might presume that improvising alone might be easier than improvising in groups. In "saying yes" to the others, the artist has to loosen up, open him- or herself towards the process and set him- or herself free without being too constrained by daily norms and conventions that prevent him or her from being creative. This does not mean that there are no rules (a theme which we will address in the following paragraph), indeed in this chapter we have encountered the rule of "saying yes" to each other. But if we see openness as a contribution to the collaborative process, then it might be these kinds of challenges, which, in the best case, enable group members to reach a point where they surprise each other and themselves, where new ideas emerge that they would not have come up with, if working only on an individual basis. The whole is more than the sum of its parts, as Aristotle wrote in Metaphysics (Aristotle 1933/350 B.C.E.). This idea is often in technical terms called synergy and happens, for instance, in improvisational jazz, where the music is greater than the sum of its parts (the individual musicians). According to Sawyer (2010, pp. 366-378), collaborative creativity is more than just a contribution from each individual and emerges in non-linear, complex interactive processes, which cannot be predicted.

To sum up, it appears that the development of collaborative creativity increases when the participants are relationally responsive and responsible to each other, when they give space to each other and are open towards improvisation, when they have developed the necessary professional skills in order to respond to new challenges and when they experience a high degree of mutual confidence in each other. We will now go one step further and examine some other important elements related to collaborative creativity such as structure and spontaneity, playfulness and rules for play.

Between Structure and Spontaneity: Playfulness and Rules for Play

Our interviews have shown that while working in a group, the artists receive impulses, stimuli and inspiration from the others and they build on and play with these elements. Here comes another important key word linked to creativity,

which is *playfulness*. Playfulness is very important in creative processes because through playing the participants experiment and try out new possible actions and ideas, in other words; a playful atmosphere serves as a frame for risk taking.

Composer Niels Rønsholdt, among others, mentions the significance of humour, lightness and loosening up in collaborative work with his partner, Signe Klejs:

> Rønsholdt: I think what is important to us while working together is actually humour. And that's quite interesting, because the compositions I make at an individual level have nothing to do with humour, on the contrary, they are very 'black', I think, and our collaborative works are also very…at least they cannot be classified as 'humoristic artworks' in any sense…but what characterises the moments when we really achieve good ideas is, when there is a sort of lightness around us, when we loosen up and take things more easily.
>
> Klejs: There is always a kind of curiosity related to what the other is saying. There is something playful about it. It is a space where we have fun and we feel good and I'm always curious about what Niels has to say.
>
> Rønsholdt: Once, while working on a project in New York, we made a little ball out of masking tape from a dustbin. We fooled around throwing the ball to each other while talking together and one of the programmers commented on that and said that it really looked like we were having fun together.
>
> Klejs: Yes, we were throwing this ball in each other's faces while discussing how to make the next move in the process.

According to Rønsholdt and Klejs there are some playful aspects in collaborative work, which apparently give life and lightness to their working process. When we take up the issue of play here, it is not because we think that creative artistic work is about playing and fooling around in a *vacuum* but we have noticed, from our interviews, that *playful aspects* often occur within a frame or a set of rules. Our interviews insist on the point that it is a matter of finding the right balance between structure and spontaneity. For instance, Michael Valeur, who teaches collaborative writing, tells about one of the ways in which he works with the enhancement of creativity in groups of writers from within a clear frame:

> Once I worked with something I called *The Cube*. When people tend to work in a very linear way, then I draw a cube where four persons could write together. They start individually in each corner writing a little text of five, ten lines. Then they write another little text, which can be read before or after this text. Everybody does that. We work within this cube. Then, at a certain moment, people meet and now they must try to link the texts together by writing "bridges" between the small texts and then it turns into a whole story, which can be read in a crisscross and forwards and backwards. And that means that you make these little, but very intense tension fields, but all the time you have to grasp what the others might have thought and then finally you create a frame around the entire text, which might for instance be a wedding, a funeral or something like that.

What we can notice here is that Valeur, as facilitator of the collaborative writing process, sets a very clear frame ("the cube") and a set of simple rules for the process, which contribute to establishing the necessary confidence and willingness for risk-taking during the process. Later on in this chapter we will take a closer look at the significance of play and rules. Something which we find interesting here is that, at first, Valeur makes people work on an individual basis by giving them an individual task and then he gives them the task of relating to each other and building up textual "bridges" among their text bites. In this way, the writing process becomes a recursive task, where each change prompts others to make more changes. The writers, in the example described here by Valeur, collaborate synchronously to develop the text and they respond to and adjust their contributions as they are made.

This kind of relating and responding requires the ability for improvisation and of "saying yes" to each other, as well as the ability of spotting the potential in the text bites from others. In order to be able to see the possibilities and potentials in a text or another kind of material, the writer needs to be able to envision what is not yet articulated or expressed. And in order to build a "bridge" to the material of a colleague, the writer might have to leave or redefine his or her own original ideas and show confidence in the possibility that something new and maybe even more interesting will appear. Leaving or redefining one's own ideas might seem extremely challenging to many people and that is one of the reasons why group work can also be very difficult and hard to accomplish. Another reason for difficulties arising in group work might be that the needs for spontaneity and structure seem to differ from person to person. Some people work at their best within very clear structures while others feel they are being strangled.

As mentioned earlier, it appears that, simultaneously, when showing responsibility for the work, the artist also needs to be *playful* and, to a certain extent, maybe even *irresponsible*. This might be seen as a paradox, but maybe it is more a matter of *being irresponsible in a responsible* way and allowing yourself and your collaborators to play within a frame or a set of simple rules. For instance one simple rule for a painter could be like: *Today I only allow myself to use the colour blue* or in the case of a dance company during the rehearsing and searching for new material: *Today the size of our movements should only be 20% compared to the same choreography we did yesterday, but we will still keep the same intensity of energy in our movements.* Or in the case of Rønsholdt who made a rule for himself as a composer where he decided to deconstruct and make new compositions out of songs by the Belgian singer-songwriter, Jacques Brel, where Rønsholdt made a rule for himself that these songs should be played backwards. These are just examples, but the rules allow the artists to play and experiment, and then new material emerges.

The internationally recognised drama teacher and theatre director, Keith Johnstone, wrote about play in theatre back in the late Seventies emphasising the element of play as an important part of training and rehearsals for actors:

> If I want people to free-associate, then I have to create an environment in which they aren't going to be punished, or in any way held responsible for the things their imagination gives them. I devise techniques for taking the responsibility away from the personality. Some of these games are very enjoyable and others, at first encounter, are rather frightening; people who play them alter their view of themselves. I protect the students, encourage them and reassure them that they'll come to no harm and then coax them or trick them into letting the imagination off its leash (Johnstone 1979, p. 118).

According to Johnstone it is a matter of liberating oneself and loosening up the fantasy but, as mentioned before, this requires a foundation of confidence within the group. What is important to make clear here is that when Johnstone talks about taking "the responsibility away from them", he refers to the kind of constraining responsibility that sometimes leads to very controlled and rigid behaviour and inhibits creativity. It might often be necessary to liberate oneself from this kind of pressure in order to be playful, experimental and creative. Johnstone (among others) suggests a series of playful games and exercises in the actors' training programmes in order to loosen up, encourage creativity and stimulate collaboration within a group (Johnstone 1979).

But how then can we understand words like *play* and *playfulness*? Let us, for a moment, take a closer look at play. Artistic creativity is not identical with play, but while looking at our interviews we can see that artistic creativity contains some *playful aspects*. In fact some of these aspects were described long ago in the works of Plato and Aristotle, who wrote about the bonds between music and play. For instance, in the Laws of Plato (Pangle 1980), the close relationship between cult, ritual, music, dance and play is described. And when studying indigenous cultures elsewhere in the world, for instance in Latin America, in Africa, in Bali or in Greenland, we can still see a clear relationship between these elements

Huizinga, who wrote the often-cited book on play theory, *Homo Ludens,* (Huizinga 1949/2002) saw an indissoluble link between play and poetry. Later he recognised that the same was valid, possibly to an even higher degree, in the bond between play and music, as did Plato and Aristotle. Huizinga defines play as follows:

> Summing up the formal characteristics of play we might call it a free activity standing quite consciously outside "ordinary life" as being "not serious", but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly. It is an activity connected with no material interest and no profit can be gained from it. It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in an orderly manner. It promotes the formation of social groupings, which tend to surround themselves with secrecy and

to stress their difference from the common world by disguise or other means (Huizinga 2002, p. 13).

Briefly, according to Huizinga, play is a "free activity", which is more or less structured by its own rules and unfolds in accordance with its own boundaries of time and space.

Vygotsky considered play as a dynamic and complex activity and, in line with Huizinga, closely related to creativity. According to Vygotsky (1933/1976), play can be seen as a social form of *embodied imagination*, where another reality is created, which refers to the impressions from lived experience.

> Everyone knows what an enormous role imitation plays in children's play. A child's play very often is just an echo of what he saw and heard adults do; nevertheless, these elements of his previous experience are never merely reproduced in play in exactly the way they occurred in reality. A child's play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired. He combines them and uses them to construct a new reality, one that conforms to his own needs and desires. Children's desire to draw and make up stories are other examples of exactly this same type of imagination and play (Vygotsky 2004b, p. 12).

Vygotsky distinguished play from other activities while claiming that: 1) the participants create imaginary situations in play and 2) play is always based on rules. If we follow this idea, then rules can be seen as helpful, because they can constitute a frame for play.

Let us take a look for a while at the significance of rules for one of the interviewed artists. In the following quote, Granhøj tells us about the importance of making rules in order to frame the creative working process. These rules often concern a special kind of conduct, both during rehearsals in their search for new material and during the entire performance in front of an audience. Granhøj explains:

> We make rules all the time, for instance the dancers who are rehearsing on stage and the rest who're looking at them…if somebody needs to go to the toilet in the middle of a rehearsal, then there is a rule saying that this is forbidden, because it disturbs too much. Attention must be paid to the people who're working and people accept that, in fact you could say that it's an old-fashioned dictatorship. Most often I'm the one who makes the rules, but of course I'm also open towards proposals of new rules presented by others and we can try them out, but I have a certain degree of experience and am able to decide if it doesn't work. In fact it's mostly rules concerning our conduct, not only on stage. I have probably got some inspiration from the Odin Teatret in this matter, for instance that there must be some kind of respect for the person working on stage, because in order to devote himself to the work, he needs to experience that others support him…therefore we have rules…nobody is allowed to enter and disturb the rehearsal…we never have guests, the dancers have to feel totally safe and confident with

the situation…for instance if you move around naked, or if you cry…there has to be a space for all these things within a frame of safety. We make the rules in order to create an atmosphere of safety and confidence.

Through the rules Granhøj creates a frame for the work, characterised by concentration and dedication, which can be defined as a sort of safety zone for new possibilities and experiments, where traditional distinctions between what we consider as 'normal' and 'abnormal' are dissolved. This can also be seen as a kind of emotional scaffolding, which enables experimentation and playing with new ideas. Here, risk taking and playfulness can be seen as two sides of the same coin. Looking upon this in Vygotskian terms, one could claim that the rules create a safety frame for working in the zone for proximal development (ZPD) (Vygotsky 1978). Remember Valeur in the previous chapter, who said:

> I want to move to places where I feel insecure, but it has to be with a good feeling, which I get when I'm together with people and I know that they like what I'm doing, then we can really move out to places where the ice is thin. That works!

In the case of both Valeur and Granhøj, the ZPD is the artist's starting point, the underlying basis for further experimentation. From here the artists move to the edge or even abandon the ZPD to go on to discover unknown landscapes. Moving to the edge or maybe even abandoning the ZPD would appear to be, for artists, a strong motivational factor, seemingly related to excitement and arousal.

Granhøj emphasises that, by working with the dancers within this frame of clearly defined rules, they avoid falling into communication problems and they also seem to be in a better position for reaching each other in a sort of mutual understanding.

> The obstructor [artistic director] learns to see the dancer and to guide the dancer in this collaboration. I develop a set of rules and simultaneously I define a way in which to instruct the dancer… this space where I'm together with them, with new people… and then we try to provide a forum where we understand each other, which is one of the things, I discovered later, …one of the biggest problems in a creative phase, when the dancer doesn't understand the director or vice versa, then a communication problem arises…well, it doesn't happen with me, because from the beginning I define this set of rules, so there are rules, rules, rules…

It appears that, by working within a set of rules, collaboration between the dancers and the director becomes easier. Furthermore it seems that by introducing new rules of conduct they suspend conventional expectations, norms and habits in order to make space for new ways of expression. During the rehearsal period, they construct a social world together, which is an alternative to conventional daily life. This safety zone offers a frame for play, experimentation and risk

taking. Without this safety frame, based on a specific set of rules, there would probably be no creativity.

In 1955 Bateson (published in 1972) suggested that play is a paradox because it both *is* and *is not* what it appears to be. For instance when animals bite each other playfully, they know that the playful nip connotes a bite, but not what a bite connotes. We can say that the playful nip may not be a bite, but it is indeed what a bite means. When the dancers in the company of Granhøj are dancing around naked in the rehearsal space something serious is at stake and, at the same time, there is also something playful about it. Turner in 1969 defined play as "liminal", meaning that play occupies a threshold between real life and non-everyday life, a special zone or state in-between reality and "fantasy" or "imagination" (Turner 1974). We can use this idea of play as liminal as a thinking tool, although the concept might be difficult to grasp because it is ambiguous, as seen in Bateson's example where the animals bite each other in play. It appears to us as if Granhøj builds the rehearsal space into a kind of liminal space framed by strict rules to protect it and facilitate play and creativity. As mentioned earlier, it can be considered as a kind of safety zone, which allows risks to be taken.

A similar approach is seen at Odin Teatret. Here, the director and the actors have established a training culture for experimentation and play based on long sessions of focused psychophysical training. This kind of training has the aim of enhancing the actors' presence, concentration and creativity by liberating the actor from daily constraints. At the same time this training culture is built on new constraints or what we could call rules of conduct. Together they have built up a training culture with extra-daily training techniques and actions, where other rules and logics prevail than those of everyday life. These extra-daily training techniques are mainly built on old traditions from the East and inspired by the Polish theatre director Jerzy Grotowski. Scholars of theatre and anthropology have described this practice as a negation of daily life or *via negativa* (e.g. Grotowski 1968/2002, Christoffersen 1989, Watson 2002).

> In keeping with Grotowski's notion of Via Negativa, craft for Barba is not about accumulating skills. It is concerned with discovering how to engender and project presence in every action on stage (Watson 2002, p. 15).

In this way, the training at the Odin Teatret is a method based on the idea of eradicating an actor's personal psycho-physical and vocal blocks (and as Watson mentions not just a method based on accumulating skills). The intention behind this kind of training is to reach another level of presence, another state of being, in the search for new raw material for a theatre production. In order to facilitate this de-blocking process they establish rules to build up a safety zone around

their work – similar to what we have seen in the case of Granhøj during periods of rehearsal and of Valeur when facilitating collaborative writing.

The writer Ramsland also seems to create his own protected space in his writing studio where he allows himself to play at a liminal level. He tells us that he does not allow anyone to disturb him while working and that he completely avoids answering the telephone during the hours when he is writing. In the following excerpt, Ramsland explains how he experiences the bonds between playing and writing:

> The creative process [is] very anarchistic and very intuitive […], I also think more or less that I have had a playful approach, to play with the stories, play is a part of writing for me in one way or another. Play with stories, play, really I do that a lot, play with the difficult things, the embarrassing things or the embarrassing stories, let them develop in different directions and so on.

As mentioned earlier, the need for rules and structure might differ from person to person and probably also depends very much upon which phase of the process the artist finds him- or herself in. For instance, in the case of Ramsland, it seems like he needs a very loose structure in the phases of creating new ideas and new material for his writing. For Ramsland, as for several other of the interviewed artists, the creative process seems to involve the whole person, the writer becomes emotionally touched, he laughs and cries and experiences loss of both bodily and emotional control. Somehow it seems as if writing in his case were a kind of mental and physical release. As we have seen in the interviews with e.g. Rønsholdt, Klejs, Varley, Barba and Dehlholm there is a strong dedication implied in this kind of working. Ramsland explains it in the following way:

> Well… it feels like a sort of uncontrolled state into which the body falls or floats, where it feels like – what does it feel like? Ah, it's very much … for me it's a very emotional state, I mean emotionally, I'm very affected by it. I write, I laugh, I cry and I let go. For me it's about… it feels like letting go of some physical control, both emotional and physical control, where I just float along with it. And it's purely physical, I believe, I have a feeling that my body is different, soft and different, sort of indistinct.

When Ramsland works creatively during the writing process and plays with his stories, it seems to be an entire psycho-physical experience. He loosens himself up and releases a kind of *embodied imagination,* which seems to play a vital and significant role in the working processes. Writing might seem like a very solitary and individual activity, but in fact, in the case of Ramsland, it is extremely relational. In the interview he tells us how he literally plays out different characters of his novels by walking around in his studio, moving and talking like the characters, experimenting and playing with them: What would they say? How would

264

they say it? What would they think and feel etc.? This way of enacting the different characters of a novel can be defined as a kind of role-play, where he brings the characters of his script to life. Ramsland *plays* with the characters in his texts, characters that in one way or another often derive from his childhood and his youth. In order to do this, it appears that he moves on the edge between control and losing control, in a liminal sphere between reality and fantasy. He even describes how his heart beats faster and his body is warmed. It seems like he moves into a kind of sensorial or kinaesthetic level of presence, which stimulates both his memory and imagination. Apparently, for some interval of time, his ordinary sense of self is extended or partially obliterated.

> It's like I lose control of myself, physically, mentally and emotionally […]. I don't know if you can talk about it as a control thing? I'm trying to control it some way or other, you know in the creative process. But a lot of the time it's like speed, my heart beats fast and I get warm all over my body and now and again, I want to jump up from my chair and walk around the house and talk to myself – a bit like that and that's why I don't like being interrupted. That's also why I like writing in my studio in Vestergade, because there isn't anyone to interrupt me, because I scurry about and make gestures and talk and so on. It's like I'm filled with something and I let it go…

In order to understand what is at stake, it might here be helpful to take into consideration Nietzsche, who, inspired by ancient Greek mythology, saw Greek tragedy as developing in the dialectic relationship between Apollo and Dionysos (Nietzsche 1872/1993). Apollo represented harmony, self-control, the well-defined and well-structured, while Dionysos, the great Olympian god of wine and comedy, represented the ecstatic, intoxicating, playful and transcendent. The two forces are diametrically opposed to each other, but at the same time they seem to walk side by side, usually in violent opposition to one another and according to Nietzsche: "[…] until finally, by a metaphysical miracle of the Hellenic 'will' the two seem to be coupled and in this coupling they seem at last to beget the work of art that is as Dionysiac as it is Apolline – Attic tragedy" (Nietzsche 1872/1993 p. 14).

The interviews point to the idea that in artistic creativity we have elements of both categories; the Apollonian *and* the Dionysian forces. As we see, several of the interviewed artists need to work within a set of structures or a set of rules and on the other hand, they need to play and take risks by moving into the unexpected and unknown. In other words, they seem to move between structure and spontaneity. Let us go back for a while to the case of Granhøj, who explains:

> I construct rules and they [the dancers] have to learn this set of rules, which I have learned over almost twenty years, where I've found a lot of… rules… it's a matter of rules… in principle and it's called: rules, rules, rules, rules and it's about finding new rules when they have learned to master these rules, one could say that, in every situation,

the task for me is to find new rules […] I define the rules and I define the tasks. If I see a dancer who has made a piece of material, then I let him know if I can see the potentials in this material.

Within the frame of rules –rules for play– whether pretend play (role-play or *mimesis*) or more rule-based games – the participants usually feel safe, because the play functions as a frame for their activity where they can try out new things and experiment in a fictional world without serious consequences. In pretend play (mimesis) the players often define their rules themselves, rules that can be constraining but at the same time liberating for creativity. In the case of Granhøj, where the artistic director has the function of a kind of *game master*, the rules have to be challenging for the dancers. The rules are not only offering a frame for safety but also functioning as productive and motivating obstacles for the dancers. When the dancers have learned to master the rules and these rules do not seem challenging or interesting any longer, the director invents new rules. In this way he keeps challenging the dancers and probably these new challenges intensify the motivation as well. On the other hand, the rules help to increase focus and to structure the daily rehearsals. Granhøj explains:

> When we're doing rehearsals, the process is completely structured. During the first hour, the dancer develops his own material, and the rest of the day we work with the obstruction of this material […]. In this way it's very safe for the dancers, because they know that this is the way we work.

The example of Granhøj is of a dance theatre that has an artistic director who defines the rules and that has rules to be followed until he, as game master, presents a new set of rules. This is different, for instance, in improvisational jazz, where the musicians do not have a formal leader and the musicians have to first coordinate about what kind of rules to follow. For instance, before they start playing, they coordinate and decide to play within specific chords and in a specific time signature and then, within these constraints, they explore the possibilities of expression while playing together. In improvisational jazz, sometimes, they even challenge or transgress the rules, but when they do that, they are conscious that they are doing so and they have a reason to do so. If they were only following the rules all the time, it would probably lead to predictable and boring music. In the moment they challenge and maybe even transgress the rules, something totally unexpected can emerge and then, after a while, the participants may turn back to the rules again or define a new set of rules. This phenomenon of defining rules for play also exists in different fields of artwork related to the technique of "obstruction", which has been described more fully in chapter 3.

Let us for a while turn our attention back to Vygotsky, who emphasised the relationship between play, creativity and rules, claiming that:

> The more rigid they [the rules] are, the greater the demands on the child's application, the greater the regulation of the child's activity, the more tense and acute play becomes. Simply running around without purpose or rules is boring and does not appeal to children (Vygotsky 1978, p. 103).

Clearly, our book is focusing on creativity among adults, but nevertheless this theory might be relevant concerning creativity in general. Hence, in the interviews with the artists we see examples where they define rules for themselves in order to sharpen their creativity and expressivity. This practice seems to be very much in line with Vygotsky's thoughts on the role of regulations and rules in the enhancement of play and creativity. For instance, Granhøj has a similar approach while directing his dance company:

> I often see people who are seeking inspiration in a kind of freedom and this doesn't exist in my world, inspiration only appears in limitation…I can only speak for myself, but maybe it isn't only me, maybe it's like that for mankind, that it's there where we find our strengths…in limitation, not in freedom.

Following Granhøj, inspiration and creativity seem to be honed not in freedom, but within constraints. Like Granhøj, theatre director Barba explains the importance for actors of working within a structure or a physical score, which he defines as a "river bank, which controls the energy's organic flow" (Barba 2010, p. 33). Furthermore in his books and at seminars and workshops, Barba often accentuates the importance of rules:

> The actor moves within the rules and confines that he sets himself. His scenic existence rests on these rules turned actions (Barba 2010, p. 199).

Summing up on this paragraph, in overall terms, rules can be seen as helpful obstacles or structures, which enable artists to experiment and play, but we must also be aware that people flourish in different ways and that some people need looser structures than others in order to be creative.

Communication and Coordinated Action

Two other important elements in collaborative creative work are communication and coordinated action. If collaborative relations are central to creativity and communication is central to collaboration, then communication and creativity are intertwined. Below we will take a closer look at communicative aspects of collaborative creativity. For instance, when Rønsholdt and Klejs work together, both verbal and visual communication play a central role, especially when a new

idea is being crystallised, but also in the process of coordinating, developing and launching the work. For this artistic couple the common formulation of a *basic idea* is a driving force and a guiding principle for the working process. Because these two artists work closely together and build upon the ideas of each other, we have chosen to cite a passage from our interview, because the dialogue in itself illustrates their collaborative way of working where they build upon each other's ideas:

> Rønsholdt: We always work from a foundation of an idea in the verbal space and we get started by formulating the concept and then we continue the process by using our draft […]. We work a lot through talking with each other, because that is something you can do, when you're two people working together, then you can really talk […]. I'm sure that this offers space for some specific kinds of ideas and then there are other ideas, for which this way of working doesn't work. For instance, I think that ideas, which are really craft-based might find it hard going in this working environment, which is basically based on verbal communication. This verbal environment gives rise to certain ideas, which have a conceptual quality I think, because all the time we verbalise what we think and the ideas have to be verbalised.
> Klejs: But during the processes we almost always have access to drawing material, digital illustrations, visual examples and video tests, which is material that comes into the picture quite early in the process.

In the case of Rønsholdt and Klejs it seems like their communication is not a matter of using *either* spoken words *or* visual material but a kind of creative, multi-media dialogue, which is based on *both-and*. The dialogues between the two artists might prevailingly be spoken in the initial phase, but then, after a while, it seems like they scaffold their ideas by using visual materials, drafts and 3D-models, which seems to help them in order to qualify and establish their ideas as more solid artistic concepts. The use of visual scaffolding is often found in the world of design and architecture and is a method to support the development and presentation of an idea, a visual supplement to spoken words. For instance designer, Rosan Bosch relates to and communicates with her customers by using rooms, specific outdoor spaces, specific objects, models, art works and other visual artefacts –most often in three dimensions– and very often she uses art as a reference in order to inspire and stimulate creativity by customers and also to build up a common language and a reservoir of references together with her customers:

> We invite them and show them art projects. We have so many art books. I often use art as a reference, because you can apply metaphors in order to visualise something. Maybe the artist meant something entirely different, but I apply my own interpretation and then I show it to the customers. We use it as a reference and then –based on that reference– we talk about things and then the conversation becomes something completely different.

I mean – it's also about languages. It's kind of one- or two-dimensional, so we have to talk in three dimensions. There is an inherent challenge in my profession as a designer because it relates to at least three dimensions and not all people are used to communicating in three dimensions.

In short, what Bosch uses a lot as a designer in her communication with both customers and working partners is verbal communication combined with visual scaffolding very similar to the communication processes between Klejs and Rønsholdt as earlier described. Let us for a while go back and take a closer look at the communication between Rønsholdt and Klejs. Profound dialogues based on both verbal and visual communication seem to be helpful for this working couple in order to develop a strong foundation for their artistic collaboration. Rønsholdt explains:

When you communicate so much about your work, then you also develop a conceptual groundwork and a verbal foundation for an idea, which really results in a very strong foundation, which is visible and verbalised and it's not theoretical in any sense, but for an artist it will be an artistic foundation, not in an academic sense, but it's just as if the idea is based on something.

Not only is their capability for communicating successfully together important, but also their capability of being outspoken, while respectful discussion and being able to solve conflicts seem to nurture the collaborative process. Klejs describes it in the following way:

What is it then? How do we create this space where we can verbalise all these things? I think that something we have learned is…and something we might be capable of doing, because we're a couple… to be totally outspoken, because we tell each other everything…even though I have many working partners I can't do that with everybody, one might have some kind of blockage and you don't want to hurt the other person etc., but we've have built up a sort of method where we, in fact, can say everything to each other and we can also discuss and argue and then we go back and continue.

And later on she adds:

In our way of talking together during the working processes, we always speak to each other in respectful ways. We create a space around our idea-generating processes, which is funny and playful. We never say anything bombastic to each other […]. We might express, for instance, that it can be difficult to see what the other person sees [in a specific idea], but then it opens up for an opportunity to explain to the other about the idea and here, I think, it's extremely important that you just don't reject anything.

Collaborative creative processes can be very vulnerable and the ways in which the participants communicate with each other seem to be crucial. One single

word can destroy the confidence and the motivation for continuing together, as can criticism, judgement or lack of interest in the ideas of the other. As Klejs explains: "We never say anything bombastic to each other", which means that they tend to be careful in their communication with each other. This also seems to be the case when giving each other feedback, for instance, later on in the interview Klejs adds: "We never experience any kind of negative shooting down of an idea". What strikes us when hearing Klejs and Rønsholdt talking about their ability to communicate and work together successfully is that they apparently have developed a high degree of mutual confidence in their relationship and this is essential to their creative collaboration.

Let us go back and take a closer look at what happens with communication among musicians playing together. As mentioned, success in playing music does not only depend on each single person's skills in mastering an instrument, but also on the ability of the musicians to listen carefully to, relate to and coordinate with each other. As we have seen, it also appears to be a matter of *relational responsiveness*, *aesthetic sensibility* and *communication* in the group. Below, the musician Benjamin Koppel explains how playing music together is very much a question of *give-and-take* and of *timing* – in other words, a matter of communicative skills:

> It's about being conscious about the collaboration, but also daring to risk... it's both a matter of responsibility and also a matter of offering something of yourself, because when you play jazz or improvisational music, then it has a lot to do with taking and giving space. You have to be able to take space, play a long solo and unfold yourself, but you must also be capable of giving space to others at the right moments. It's a matter of timing and you can work with that on all levels. You don't necessarily have to be professional or play at a high level in order to do that. It's a matter of trying to understand those dynamics within timing and the collaboration which... well...this is a phenomenon in many aspects of life, not only in music.

We could say that what Koppel, among other aspects, is describing is a kind of 'turn-taking', which is an important communicative skill (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). Turn-taking refers to the process by which people in a conversation decide who is to speak next and depends on both cultural factors and subtle cues. The cues do not necessarily depend on words but can also be non-verbal, for instance a signal with the eyes. This way of coordinating is very much a matter of the notion of timing and the ability to "tune in" in a reciprocal process. Turn-taking, "tuning in" and timing are not only important elements in improvisational music but also in improvisational theatre. If you are too early or too late with a line in a play, then this line is not *responsive* to the other actors' lines, but appears as an isolated utterance out of context. In the same way, if your bodily

movement or reaction to the other actor's movement or cue is too slow or too fast, then the audience does not believe in the mimetic interplay any longer.

In The Mira Quartet, while rehearsing and playing a concert together, the four string players communicate constantly with each other, not only with their instruments, but also with their bodies and facial gestures. In other words, their communication with each other is a set of embodied actions where they enter into close contact with, are responsive to and listen to each other with a high degree of awareness and attention towards each other and towards the music as a whole. One of the musicians in The Mira Quartet refers to their communication in this way: ""Then", she said [a person among the audience after the concert]; "it was fun to see how you were looking at each other and how it worked in the process"". Something special is going on in the communication between the musicians when playing together. Apparently a high level of relatedness is of vital importance. Benjamin Koppel describes an example of communication in music while playing with an entire symphony orchestra:

> I would say that collaboration is a matter of… when I for instance work as a soloist with the symphony orchestra I try to create a community with the orchestra. It's not only when I'm playing in a band, five persons on the stage, it's also when I play with a symphony orchestra that I try to create this community. And they do the same, most of them, at least. And then you play together, have contact, eye contact, communication and that sort of thing.

Benjamin Koppel stresses the importance of *communication* in the broad sense of the word. Through playing together, the musicians communicate and receive stimuli from each other and from the audience who respond to their music in different ways. It seems like the presence and responsiveness of an audience is of high significance for their performance. Benjamin Koppel explains:

> Well, it's the communication between the people you play with and also with the audience. There would be no music without the audience in one way or another […]. During a concert then the audience is of pivotal importance. It doesn't matter whether there are forty thousand or three listeners, but the fact that somebody is listening is extremely important.

Creating together, no matter whether in music, theatre, dance, collaborative writing, movie making or in other collaborative art forms, is both a matter of offering ideas and building on the ideas of others. This is metaphorically called by Sawyer (2007) *deep listening*. Sawyer emphasises the importance of the skill of listening or observing while working collaboratively together in a group or ensemble by describing an example from an improvisational theatre group:

> Trained improvisational actors listen for new ideas that other actors offer in their improvised lines, while at the same time coming up with their own ideas. This difficult

balancing act is essential to group genius. Most people spend too much time planning their own actions and not enough time listening and observing others […]. When team members practice deep listening, each new idea is an extension of the ideas that have come before (pp. 14-15).

This approach requires that the actor controls his or her own ego and manages the sharing and improvising by balancing deep listening together with his or her own creative impulses. It requires collaborative responsiveness and a sort of aesthetic sensibility of the whole group where each member of the groups builds upon ideas and initiatives of each other. Here, on the one hand, the group members need to pay attention to each other but, on the other hand, they also need the courage to take initiatives and risks. And some actors might need to work alone in certain periods in order to create material and interact with the group later on in a continuing back-and-forth-process.

Not only do group members need to practice deep listening. If the group has a director, then he or she also needs to show this ability by listening carefully and showing patience with the process.

In addition to deep listening, the director can stimulate the artists by using poetic communicative skills. Some artistic directors are very much aware of the ways in which they communicate with their collaborators. Theatre director Eugenio Barba, for instance, is well known for using metaphors in order to stimulate both the actors and the audience. Often, in order to initiate a creative process, he uses seductive and puzzling metaphors as a way of stimulating creativity among the actors. Appropriate metaphors can open up new ways of thinking, new ideas and new images. For example, Barba might stimulate improvisation among the actors during the training by saying: "The man who knows there are no walls behind him" (Turner 2004, p. 36). In this enigmatic way he challenges the actors and attempts to stimulate their fantasy and creativity.

There is much more to explore about communication in artistic collaborative work and in chapter 12, *For Leaders concerned with Creativity*, we will take a closer look at the significance of communicative resources among artistic directors.

In short, communication, resourceful dialogues and coordinated action seem to be vital elements among the artists and their directors in order to enhance creativity and inspire the collaborative process. These elements are not only important during the creative process, but also play a significant role concerning the positioning of the artists and building up legitimacy and recognition in the surrounding artistic field and in society in general. It is not only the artistic outcome that matters, but also the stories told about the outcome, about the creative process and about the persons behind it. In this way there are many levels and aspects of communication. Through stories, communication, dialogue

and coordinated action, artistic identities, realities and products are currently constructed.

Challenges to Collaborative Creativity

Most of the examples on collaborative work we have presented until now in this book seem very positive, but does group work among artists always develop in thriving ways? What if creativity in groups might also sometimes be enveloped by myths? Seen from the outside, it often appears as if the creative process flows easily from the enthusiasm fostered by people working collaboratively together. And we have heard in the interviews that it is a question of coordinated action and a matter of "saying yes" to each other by following each other's ideas and initiatives. As a part of our research, however, we find it fruitful to take a closer look at the difficulties in collaborative creativity. In the following paragraph, we will explore some of the more challenging elements related to collaboration in groups. Collaboration is not always easy and does not always develop without bumps in the road, but requires competencies in communication, relational skills and skills regarding conflict resolution. All these are social skills. In a theatre group, for example, it is important to master your professional techniques as an actor, based on your body and your voice. But this is not enough. In order to work within a group and be creative together you need to have developed relational and communicative skills and often also skills of mediation and conflict resolution. Otherwise the group or the ensemble can become dysfunctional and get stuck in non-productive patterns of communication. Different interests and power dynamics in a group can rapidly become very destructive and pose a serious threat to the creativity of the group. As mentioned earlier, creativity is a very vulnerable process, which must be nurtured and cared for, if it is to flourish and develop. Let us now discuss two significant challenges, *inclusion* and *exclusion*.

According to our interviews with the artists, dynamics of *inclusion* and *exclusion* seem to be crucial for the creative process. Attempts by the individual to be included in a group might sometimes seem like an existential fight, because excluding forces can be very dominating in the group. It might cost hard work and energy to achieve a position as a legitimate member of a group and being recognised as such in the group. Below, Julia Varley tells a story about inclusion and exclusion. The narrative is about her experience of being in a transitional phase in her career, when she still only had the status of apprentice in the Odin Teatret. Being an apprentice meant that officially, socially and professionally she was not accepted yet as a fully integrated member of the group.

I was sitting alone in a car, it was Torgeir and Iben's car and it was autumn, which here in Denmark is winter, so it was cold and they were inside having a meeting and I knew that something was happening there and in fact I got to know a long time afterwards that, during that meeting, Eugenio said: "Who has brought Julia here? What are you doing with her? You have to take responsibility for her being here. She can't participate in parades of the Odin" and nobody answered, so nobody took responsibility for me, because Iben thought that Torgeir was taking responsibility and Torgeir thought it was Iben. So there again, it's like I felt double, this feeling of being just a weight and not being wanted. And that was a big shock, because by contrast, in Italy I had previously led the theatre group of a political organisation and I was the one who knew all the languages and suddenly I didn't know Danish, so it's like I had to rebuild myself completely.

Varley had to leave her former identity behind, accept being positioned as an apprentice and start learning from scratch in order to become an integrated member of the group. In her own words she *had to rebuild herself completely.* She entered into a troublesome learning process – a process, where she depended on the goodwill and the willingness of the other group members to share skills, techniques and knowledge among the more experienced members of the group. She began more systematically to participate in a kind of peer-to-peer training but, during the first couple of years, in the position of a *newcomer*, an apprentice. According to the ideas of Mezirow this could be understood in the terms of transformative learning. As described in chapter 6, Mezirow (1995) claims that transformative learning can arise out of a *disorienting dilemma*, triggered, for instance, by a life crisis or a major transition in life, although it may also occur from an accumulation of transformations, for example, in fundamental beliefs and values. Varley explains:

The only thing I could do was start from the beginning, to learn. And there I mean it was a lot of self-apprenticeship, because nobody was responsible for me. Of course they organised the actors and maybe they felt a kind of injustice that I was there and so they organised… I mean I had voice work with Iben, I did acrobatics with Tony and I did some composition with Silvia, so it's like they put me into situations where I could do something and then I started working with props, with the small stilts and with flags with Tage together with Francis, who was another pupil that he had at that time. And I think it was with Tage, I began to have the feeling of learning from a master, but that came some time afterwards, because in the beginning I was a lot alone at the Odin, because they were going on tour.

In this learning process Varley had to work intensively with her own body and voice and imitate and adopt the movements, the use of voice and the bodily rooted techniques of the other actors. Seen from the outside it seems like she paid a very high price in order to become a legitimate member of the group. She had to dedicate herself to this intensive training because this physical approach

to learning and working as an actor is the whole foundation of the Odin Teatret and part of their artistic profile. By adapting herself to the other group members' style of work, little by little, Varley became accepted as a member of the group and over the years she developed her own path and her own professional identity as an Odin Teatret actress.

In order to understand the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion it might be helpful to look at the forces, which generally are at stake in groups. Drawing on Bakhtin (1981) and Gergen (1995) we could say that in any kind of group or team there might be both centripetal and centrifugal forces at work simultaneously. Centripetal forces try to unify and gather the team, while centrifugal forces, if too strong, can split the entire group into atoms, as when group members are moving in multiple and oppositional directions without coordinating at all. In order to balance these two forces and keep a positive forward-moving dynamic, the group or the team itself must develop a capacity for regulating their own *centrifugal* (dispersing) and *centripetal* (unifying) dynamics. Developing communication skills and defining provisional or long-term rules within the group might be helpful. Or an inspiring and integrating leader, who can formulate a vision and indicate a guiding pathway, could make a vital contribution. But very often, the strongest motivation is created when members have been formulating a vision by themselves. Leading groups consisting of self-aware and highly ambitious artists is a very complex challenge. How does one lead strong individuals to become team players? This theme will be discussed in chapter 12.

From Varley's narrative about Odin Teatret, we might derive the hypothesis that, in this phase of the group's development, the group could not allow anyone to differ too much from their standards and professional norms. The performance they were preparing seemed to have been considered of significant importance for the group's image and its future. If an actor stood out as too different before the public, this could perhaps damage the image and professional profile of the theatre. In other words, the group saw the necessity to protect itself and draw a clear line between insiders and outsiders. The group had to demarcate itself in order to define its own professional identity. This clarification process was negotiated while Varley sat freezing in the car and was not allowed to participate in the meeting where decisions about her future affiliation were made. Obviously this transitional phase must have been very hard for the actress, always wondering: "Am I *in* or am I *out*?" And later on, when she found out that her affiliation with the group had been the issue of their discussion, it came as a shock to her. In other words, her whole identity and existence was at stake and she found herself in a trembling state of doubt and insecurity. The way out of this kind of limbo meant subjugation and surrender to the norms and practices of the group. One

might even claim that a kind of decomposition of identity was going on here, which generated a space for building up a new identity as a professional Odin Teatret actress. Here she explains her experience in her own words:

> So it is very difficult for an actor with experience to accept that you are no one. A musician comes with a kind of technical knowledge, which can be used directly, but as an actor, when you start at Odin, you start from nothing. So the first very difficult step is to accept that you know nothing and the older you are, the more difficult that is. When you do that, then all your experience comes back […], but it's that very first step which is very hard for some actors and that is why some people leave.

What strikes us when listening to Varley's story is that she had to start from a new beginning, leaving behind everything previously learned and starting as an apprentice, who, little by little, learns the group's techniques, follows their rules and becomes socialised into their ways of working. Before becoming fully integrated in the group she had to learn and adapt herself to their techniques, methods and aesthetic preferences and leave her previous identity and experience in political theatre in Italy behind. She describes the feeling of loneliness during that transitional phase when she had not yet become a fully-fledged member of the group. Not only did Varley have to learn a new language, Danish, but she also had to learn a new *artistic* or *aesthetic* language, which was the specific language of the artistic work at the Odin Teatret. The group was, at that time in its history, working intensively on developing a distinct artistic profile in its search for identity and its fight for legitimacy as a group. Seen from the perspective of the group, Varley had to go through a transformative process before becoming accepted as a fully-fledged member, but seen from an individual perspective, it appears to have been a hard and extremely vulnerable process. After two years' intensive training from early morning every day, she finally became "adopted" into the group and legitimate member of the theatre. Turner (2004, p. 13) informs us that during that period, Barba was very clear that the Odin members were expected to work every day from seven in the morning, so if they wanted to train apprentices it had to be in their own time. Under these circumstances, one of the integrated members of the group, Tage Larsen, worked and trained with Julia for two years before she was fully adopted into the group.

The story of Varley is primarily about exclusion and unification. A related challenge in collaborative work in groups is *groupthink* (Janis 1972, 1982). Groupthink is a social phenomenon that occurs within a group of people, in which the desire for harmony or agreement in the group results in a futile or destructive decision-making outcome. Groupthink appears when group members try to minimise conflict and reach decisions based on consensus without critical evaluation of alternative ideas or viewpoints. In groupthink the group starts

protecting itself and experiences the outside world as a threat to their existence, becoming closed to other people and their opinions and values. Newcomers, in particular, may represent the outside world. If groupthink goes on for a longer period, conditions for creativity are minimised, because it becomes difficult for the group to renew itself and come up with new ideas.

As we have seen earlier on in this chapter, relationships and collaborative working processes can *enhance* creativity, but we see as well that, on some occasions, they can also *inhibit* creativity. Collaborative processes can be extremely painful, especially when the participants are unable to relate to each other in a mutually inspiring way or when somebody seems to be excluded or isolates him- or herself from the rest of the group. It is not a simple task to work creatively in groups, because on the one hand, there must be a space for pluralism, polyphony and contradictory ideas and on the other hand it is also necessary to become unified, to carry out *coordinated action* and to follow some common rules or a shared vision. Here, Benjamin Koppel describes how it influences his creativity when his fellow musicians do not manage to follow each other:

> I have been in situations where people have followed their own course, especially in jazz, where people have dropped out of the musical community and then it becomes a sort of egocentric run or boast, showing off… where you don't find this collaborative approach and therefore nothing comes out of it and then… this inhibits the collaborative creativity. This might result in you deciding not to give a shit about it and then you also start running your own run. But it isn't very interesting and this is not what music is about. For me, music is a matter of collaboration.

When the participants act independently, the group becomes dispersed. One could say that the centrifugal (dispersing) forces take over and become stronger than the centripetal (unifying) forces. Then there is no longer any balance between individual projects and collaborative work. The centripetal forces will always work through stability and if they become too strong, then there will be little development in the group. It seems to be a matter of keeping this delicate balance between offering space for multiplicity while also maintaining an overall sense of coordinated action by following basic rules or principles, or by working from a common vision, idea or concept.

Chapter 11: Organising Creative Work

In this chapter we investigate and shed light on how the interviewed artists organise and carry out their creative working processes. In this context we are curious to examine the following: What is important for the interviewed artists in terms of organising and working conditions - either while working alone or in groups? How do these artists organise themselves and their work processes? How do they foster creativity in collaborative work? How do they get started with a new process of collaborative work and how do they develop new ideas and new material? And how do they relate to others for instance through networking, community building and cultural exchange? In the present chapter we will provide our answers to these and related questions based on the interviews with the artists.

Pathfinding and Emergence

Heraclites once said that "we never step in the same river twice." This quote reflects a way of seeing life as ever changing and consequently seeing humans as ever changing too. Following the line of Heraclites, life can be seen as unpredictable, marked by coincidence and happenstance. We might say this is especially relevant to the life of an artist. For many artists very often there is no guarantee of work and often these jobs are not very well paid unless you are very famous. Many times the artist jumps from one project to another, not knowing whether he or she will have enough money to pay the rent. Not having a safe economic base or a solid organisational working platform under one's feet requires a strong personality and the ability to live with a high degree of risk. As humans beings most of us experience from time to time difficulties of orientation and this challenge seems to be amplified in the case of artists. Being an artist often requires networking and in many cases even sales skills, unless you are fortunate enough to have your own sales agent. Working and living under such conditions can be very tough and you become as an artist very dependent on success, because only success can provide financial funding for your next project. This way of working and living is far removed from that of a traditional wage earner in, for instance, the public sector. Most of the artists interviewed for this book have reached a moment in their career where they are able to work under more or less stable

conditions, but some of them are also confronted by economic challenges and insecurities, even though they might have achieved national and international recognition and awards as highly professional artists.

In general, many artists are typically jumping from one project to another with changing working partners and working in different projects based on shifting financial sources. In this way the working conditions of the artist in general are very unstable. Of course, there are exceptions to this description, for instance if the artist has a lifelong position in a symphony orchestra or has achieved a long-term grant from the state or another source of funding. It also obviously depends on whether the artist is in the early years of his/her career or has built up a certain profile through a lifetime of artistic work and achieved a more or less stable economic foundation. Despite these uncertain conditions it seems that the majority of artists have a high level of job satisfaction, according to a research project carried out by Bille et al. 2013. The research project, which included 49 countries, showed that despite high unemployment and low income, on average artists enjoy higher job satisfaction than other employees, mainly due to more autonomy in their work life.

Nevertheless, taking these elements into consideration, it often means that strategic planning in the long term is impossible for many artists and that many of them have to accept most of the tasks they are offered. This also means that frequently artists have several projects going on at the same time, while at other periods there is not much to do, except continuing work, rehearsing and improving skills or drafting applications for new projects. The artists of our study seem to move in the midst of complexity and it appears that instead of long-term strategic planning, they practice rather a kind of *pathfinding*. Pathfinding relates in many ways to the concept of serendipity (chapter 8), but with a longer and time-and life-related perspective. In our sense of the word, pathfinding is about moving through life without having a clear plan beforehand and about finding one's own path and professional identity through artistic development by maintaining an explorative approach to life and work (see also Ingold 2007, Chia & Holt 2009). By using the word pathfinding here, we mean the act of finding or making a path through an unknown landscape or, metaphorically speaking, a previously *unexplored or untravelled wilderness* without any safety or guarantee of success. As we have seen in an earlier chapter, several of the interviewed artists did not fit into the traditional educational system and instead they created their own paths for learning across the system. It seems that their tendency to pathfind continues throughout their entire career. Concerning pathfinding, film director Olesen explains: "You're forced to follow new paths that you didn't expect. It's like having confidence…" And theatre director Barba says: "Artistic paths are

always individual and try to escape prefabricated mechanisms and recipes. These are paths that breathe and remain alive according to a personal need, which is also a mythology and a self-discipline" (Barba 2010, p. 19).

As suggested, there is a high degree of risk related to being a pathfinder and the artist needs to be creative and courageous to follow paths that might lead in unknown directions. Often, these paths have not been followed by anyone before, so the pathfinder must experiment and create the path. Pathfinding does not mean that the artist does not attempt to structure his or her work; most of them do that on a day-to-day level. As discussed in the preceding chapter, the majority of the interviewed artists emphasise the importance of repetitive daily routines, rules or rituals as necessary for their creativity. These routines, rules or rituals might give the artists a sense of being in control, which may be a necessary prerequisite for exploring the unknown.

So if the interviewed artists in general work as pathfinders, how do they, on a daily basis, organise their work and maximise their creativity? A common pattern is that they emphasise the importance of ensuring *a frame* for focused and concentrated work. Valeur, who works contemporaneously as a fiction writer, a teacher and a scriptwriter for computer games, describes it in this way:

> I simply have to avoid watching too much television or being involved with other kinds of mass media. There are so many tendencies in the mass media to reduce things to clichés and you really have to be careful that these clichés don't influence your work, that you don't repeat these things. It helps a lot to go out and look at some really good art […] I know that I will not watch TV when I'm in the middle of a creative process, instead I'll go out and look at paintings or read some good literature, which means keeping my mind pure.

For the interviewed artists it seems crucial to protect themselves from distracting factors and they develop strategies to avoid disturbances. For instance, the painter and illustrator Julie Nord tells us that she avoids as much as possible being in contact with the Internet when she is working in her studio. In fact the majority of the interviewed artists have their studios and working facilities outside their home in order to protect their work from domestic disturbances. Only a few of the interviewed artists have their basic working place at home: Hustvedt, Inger and Johannes Exner, Klejs and Rønsholdt and Valeur. The latter three usually work at home when their children are at school.

During the interviews we discovered that most of the interviewed artists do in fact have a family life with children. Indeed, several of them do not seem to distinguish clearly between work and private life. For them these two worlds appear rather to be intertwined and mingled together. Nonetheless, finding a balance between family life and work is not always an easy task and virtually all

the interviewed artists fight against time pressure and try to structure their daily work in a disciplined way. Below, Valeur illustrates the dilemma of having children and simultaneously working professionally as an artist.

> I did an interview with Tom Waits some years ago, where I asked him how the hell he manages having children and being creative and he said that you have to recognise that your art and your kids hate each other. It's like walking with two dogs at the same time that really hate each other. And that, I think, is true and now I don't want to say anything negatively about having children, because actually having children enriches my life so much, but the everyday life you have with children is very much in contrast with the artistic working process. So this has been something, which I had to learn to accept, that is how I can manage to unify these two worlds and I'm deeply dependent on both.

While interviewing Valeur in his home, an oblong apartment in an old factory building, I noticed that there were no doors in the entire apartment, apart from the door to the bathroom. How could he have five children and work creatively on all his projects without having the opportunity to close the door and work in silence? How could he be creative under these conditions? Valeur describes how his way of structuring work has changed, since he became a family man:

> Some years ago I would have claimed that the most important thing was working without any time pressure. That it is important that you have the opportunity to relax during the process. That was because I was frustrated about having little children, without having any time for reflecting more deeply on my writing. But now that I have many children and never have any time for reflection, then sometimes I have the opposite experience, that is, if I just set my stopwatch for one hour and say to myself: "Now you just have to write as much as you can without having time to think about editing, now you just have to depress the accelerator", then sometimes I'm actually capable of doing so, because of this time pressure and then, after an hour, I just stop, no matter where I am in the process. So there is no recipe, but it might depend on in which phase you find yourself in your life and there are different techniques you can use.

Valeur chooses to use the stopwatch, which, in his case, seems to be helpful in order to enhance his creativity and productivity in a busy everyday life with many children around. The stopwatch can be seen as a specific way in which he challenges himself. This technique recalls *free writing* or *non-stop-writing*, which is a pre-writing technique where a person writes continuously for a limited period of time without regard to spelling, grammar, topic etc. It produces raw material and helps the writer to overcome blocks of apathy and self-criticism. It is a technique used by writers to collect initial thoughts and ideas on a topic, often as a preliminary to more formal writing. In this way Valeur forces himself to write something within a limited interval of time, which might be a kind of help for him in order not to censure his own writing too early in the process. Below,

Valeur describes how his working process must develop in a dynamic way to prevent stagnation:

> I work best at home, but only if I also have the opportunity to go somewhere else in between. In a way it's tricky to interview me about creativity, because in my case, it's always about finding a balance between contradictions. As soon as one thing becomes too stationary, then it doesn't function any longer. In some periods, I really need tranquillity in myself, but I also know that if I find myself in this tranquillity for too long a time, then I get stuck, which means that I also need to be interrupted and that kind of thing […] I really need to break out, to keep the dynamic, so it's more a matter of movement than a state.

So Valeur works at his best in intervals and for him it is a matter of finding "a balance between contradictions", a balance between ensuring a frame for the focused word and, on the other hand, seeking inspiration in the surroundings. Most of the interviewed artists are pretty much aware of the necessity of clearing away the obstacles that might prevent them from creating and they attempt to organise their lives in such a way that they minimise the appearance of undesired hindrances even though this is not always an easy thing to do. For instance, Dehlholm and Klejs and Rønsholdt have hired professional managers to do a significant part of their sales and administrative work, but nevertheless they still spend a lot of time in coordinating these tasks and writing applications for future projects. Almost all the interviewed artists write their applications by themselves and spend a great deal of their precious time on fundraising, networking, organising their business and elaborating PR material. These activities might take focus away from the artistic process itself and might not necessarily enhance their creativity. On the other hand, if the artist is forced to write about and present his or her artistic ideas and concepts in applications and at meetings, this verbalising process might be helpful in developing and refining the ideas. But writing applications is not necessarily always enhancing creativity. Here below, the painter and illustrator, Julie Nord, describes how the work with applications and searching for funding sometimes makes it very difficult for her to be creative:

> My work is very two-sided and there is a huge part of communication related to it. I have to write a series of applications and project descriptions, I have a lot of meetings and I have to raise funds, seek sponsors and… I try to divide these tasks, because for me it's very difficult if I have three days with sponsor meetings and project descriptions and these kinds of extrovert tasks […] and then I can't come up with a new idea…in fact there must be some kind of…a free passage, where I don't have to think too much in rational terms […] In fact I just need time…an open space, where things can happen and where I have time. I spend a lot of time looking at books and I use images and pictures as catalysts for ideas, I look at art, but I can also just sit down and look at old books about tapestry, I can go on the Net and look at family photos or similar things, depending on what kind of themes I'm working with at that moment.

What seems important for Nord is to find enough time for activities, which cannot be characterised as strategically goal oriented, but could be seen as more contemplative, "a free passage" or "an open space" as she calls it, where new ideas can emerge without rushing. This "free passage" or "open space" could also be seen as a time for finding new inspiration and a valuable and important time for incubation (see also Amabile 1998, 2002, Sawyer 2007 and Torrence & Safter 1999). So if this free time is of vital importance to creativity, how then to deal with the essentials of administration and fundraising and how do the artists find the right balance between creative contemplation and "keeping house"?

As mentioned earlier, Rønsholdt and Klejs have hired a professional manager to relieve them of some of the administrative work and to help them establish new professional contacts. When asked about how they organise and prioritise the tasks related to their artistic work, Rønsholdt informed us that they follow what he calls "the birds' nest principle", explaining that, "the bird who calls in the most desperate voice will be the bird to which we pay our attention here-and-now". This indicates that they do not plan in a detailed way beforehand how and when to resolve the different tasks. On the contrary, they seem to be improvising and multitasking most of the time, in other words: *pathfinding*.

In addition, they also explain to us that in order to coordinate their ideas and actions they actually give high priority to spending time in dialogue with each other. Rønsholdt says:

> The fact that we can almost always sit down and talk together for a couple of hours is of crucial importance, especially in the phase of idea development. Here I think it's pivotal that we don't rush and force the process, but that we can find moments to talk together at any time.

Giving priority to the process and taking the necessary time for dialogue seems to be of vital importance. In order to avoid too much administrative work and instead prioritise dialogue, the Exner architects decided to organise themselves in such a way that the staff of their company would always fit into a Volkswagen van. As Johannes Exner explains:

> During the years, Inger and I have made some serious decisions. One of our first decisions was after we had won the competition for St. Clement's Church and the world started showing interest in our work. At that moment we decided that we didn't want to become a big company. And we decided to be no more than eight in the studio, because only eight people can fit into a Volkswagen van and in this way we could always drive around and talk together. And we've kept that promise. I can tell you why, because otherwise you would become too focused on administration and economics.

Our interviews show that the matter of ensuring time for incubation, contemplation, dialogue and experimenting is of crucial significance for the artists. In terms of organising, apparently, the Odin Teatret has found a successful strategy for dealing with administration, project coordination and fundraising while simultaneously leaving significant open space for creativity. Here, administrative work (and even cleaning work) is distributed among all the group members and does not rely on one single person. In addition to this, the organisation has developed from a hierarchical organisation with one single leader to something similar to a matrix organisation based on several network-based projects going on at the same time. The artistic director still plays a significant role as the head of the theatre, but at the same time, every actor also works as an independent project leader and theatre director where he or she coordinates his or her own artistic projects and raises funds for collaborative artistic or pedagogical projects with people outside the group. This may include people in local schools, the local hospital, the nearest university etc. or with artists and theatre researchers from foreign countries. For instance, Julia Varley coordinates several of the festivals in which Odin Teatret is involved and she is also the driving force in the worldwide Magdalena project for female theatre artists. In this way, the group keeps and extends its relationships with the surrounding world and obtains external funding or other kinds of valuable resources (e.g. manpower and publicity). For instance, while organising a festival in their local community, they count on students and schoolteachers to help make the festival become a reality. In this way leadership and project coordination is distributed among many hands. At the same time, it should be mentioned that they do have a bookkeeper and other administrative employees to run the theatre and coordinate and promote overall activities. This leads us to conclude that in the case of Odin Teatret it is not a matter of *either-or*, but *both-and*, with the involvement of an intense network of local, national and international working partners and supporters. In fact the Odin Teatret is one of the most productive local theatres in Denmark. In 2013 they presented 174 performances and a total of 375 if we include their co-productions with other artists. Out of these, 209 presentations were shown abroad (Christensen 2014). But even though the Odin Teatret seems to have found a way of distributing leadership, administrative work and coordinating multiple projects, it is not always easy to protect the creative artistic work from disturbing and distracting tasks. In fact this dual workload can be quite stressful. Actress and project leader, Varley explains:

> The feeling of time has changed. In the early years we had a lot of time. We still say that
> we have a lot of time, but we don't. We have a lot of time compared to other companies,

but the need for survival, of earning money, of going on tour, of doing administration has changed so much that it changes your perception of time, in rehearsal too.

Undoubtedly, the Odin Teatret has an extremely high productivity level and the Odin actors have devoted themselves completely to the work of running the theatre, both the artistic work and a significant part of all the administrative tasks. What strikes us when dealing with Odin Teatret is also the fact that only one of the female actors has a child, the rest of the women are childless, while several of the male actors do have children. Developing an artistic career at a high professional level might have its human costs and does not always go hand-in-hand with family and children but, as mentioned before, the majority of the artists interviewed for this book surprisingly do have children and have found strategies for combining artistic work and family life. We saw this in the case of Valeur, who explained to us that he has found a kind of balance between artistic work and family life. But having a family also requires a certain economic foundation. As a writer Valeur seems to have found a pragmatic strategy, which apparently works for him in order to survive and achieve the necessary income for living and maintaining a family. He tells of his "two hands doing different kinds of projects at the same time" and describes how these different ways of working actually complement and enrich each other. He calls these activities "left-hand" and "right-hand" projects. The "left-hand" projects are more commercial than the "right-hand" ones, which are more sophisticated at an artistic level. The interesting thing here is that there is a kind of mutual dependency between the two types of projects, a sort of a dialectic dynamic interplay:

> It moves in two kinds of balances and I need to have both kinds of projects. It's a kind of interplay between abstract and concrete projects all the time. In my artwork I move in this tension field. What I do besides my art work is related to the development of scripts for computer games, learning projects, etc. and in fact I earn my living by the activities I do with my left hand and I get almost nothing out of the writing projects I do with my right hand. So my left hand is very much in demand, but I would never be able to do what I do with my left hand alone, if I didn't spend a lot of time working with my right hand. One could say that the texts I think are of highest quality and where I have invested a lot of energy are almost impossible to get published, unless you are lucky enough to find financial support from somewhere else. On the other hand, some of the things that I write on "urgent demand" have immediate success and so I conclude "well, the world's taste differs from mine", that is, what I think is essential is not identical with the demands of the world.

What strikes us here is that Valeur explicitly says that he would be unable to do the "left-hand" projects without investing time and energy in working simultaneously on his "right-hand" projects. It seems that while working on the

"right-hand" projects, he develops and experiments with new creative ideas. This leads us to think about whether organisations in general could learn to a greater extent from this practice by offering more time and resources for "right-hand projects", for instance experimental labs or practise based research, which could lead to innovation and the creation of new products and new ways of working in the long term, instead of focusing mainly on projects which give immediate profit.

Concerning the theme of organising creative processes, there are apparently no universals. Different people flourish under different conditions and there might be different ways of practice that are more convenient for some disciplines of art than others depending on the specific art form. Some people need structures and they might even think naturally in structures, while others cannot fit into a rigid structure but, on the contrary, need freedom in order to work more intuitively. The latter is the case with Ramsland. In the following excerpt, he tells how different writers have different working processes and how he works at his best by following an intuitive approach:

> There are huge differences in how different writers work. There is no one single way of doing things. At the beginning of a new project I always have this intuitive approach and then, in the final phase, I become very structured. And then there are other writers, who're really structured from the beginning and almost have the novel inside their head from the beginning to the end. They might walk around for months and take some notes and then they develop the characters inside their head and things like that. […] On the contrary, I myself can't hold a whole novel in my head. I can't have this kind of overview or overall structure. It's not something that I can plan ahead. It's something that emerges during my writing process. There are big differences in how artists work, even though the results in one way or another might resemble each other.

Ramsland apparently works very intuitively (see also Policastro 1999, Dreyfus 2001, Dewey 2005 and Pallasmaa 2009) and avoids working within too rigid structures in order to let the work emerge little by little, at least in the early phase of writing a novel. Similarly to Valeur, he explains that he works at his best in short "waves", but also that these waves, or, one could call them, *intervals*, require a certain "space". Apparently these creative intervals cannot be predicted or planned beforehand. On the contrary, his creativity seems to depend to a high degree on the necessary time for incubation (see also Amabile 1998, 2002, Sawyer 2007). And first of all, he has to make a protective space for that to happen. Apparently he also offers himself space and time for improvisation and play, for instance, while taking a break and dancing around with his earphones. He adds:

> I have to make room for what's going to happen, for what's coming. And so I enter the flow where I'm writing and suddenly it happens. I write a lot of stuff during maybe an

hour or an hour-and-a-half or thereabouts and there's this flow and creativity that comes at some point during my working day if it's a good working day – but you cannot force it. I cannot sit down and be in this flow for eight hours. It comes in waves and sometimes it's one wave and sometimes there's a pause and I do something else or just read a manuscript or edit a little, or sometimes I dance with my earphones on and something like that […] I mean, you could say my writing method is very intuitive and a bit anarchistic in the beginning, where I sit down and get started and just write and somehow or other, it happens!

Rønsholdt and Klejs also seem to work at their best in short intervals characterised by a high energy level. Here they explain:

Rønsholdt: I simply experience our collaboration as a physical sensation […] and you'll notice that often we refine the ideas during the process […]. All our projects develop over several short intervals. We don't sit down and talk about it for several days or weeks. It happens in short intervals – one hour here and three hours there. This gives good, natural fresh air in the system; you dive into the process and then you move out of the process again. We dive into the process together.

Klejs: These conversations we have, or intervals, are very energetic. They're characterised by a kind of naturalness and when the energy has gone away, then there isn't anything left… and then little by little it builds itself up again.

In fact, many of the interviewed artists insist on the point that you cannot programme and plan your creativity strategically, but that you can organise a frame for your work from which creativity is likely to emerge. One may even be surprised. Valeur explains it in this way:

Something, which is really fantastic, and many artists confirm it, is when there is something that you have a vague sense about and suddenly it takes shape. This is something really amazing when you work as an artist. But in fact it's even more radical, because sometimes it's something you might not even recognise, something that you don't notice is going on and then suddenly it manifests itself and this I find really fantastic. It might happen in two ways; for instance while working together with others with whom you really vibrate positively and then you create something bigger than yourself, but it can also happen when you start to work alone on a new text and then the text takes over and you just have to make sure that you stay in the saddle, so that in the end you keep control of the structure. But this excitement you get when you initiate writing on something that you think you know and then suddenly you move into a little unexpected corner and then…creativity explodes!

What strikes us here is that Valeur describes above how creativity can explode unexpectedly in the working process "from a little corner" and how the "text takes over". Apparently in this example it is not a matter of having a full overview of the whole work but maybe more a matter of loosening up and following the dynamic of the emerging material itself.

Composer Anders Koppel also stresses the virtual impossibility of having an entire overview or overall structure of the work beforehand. In line with Ramsland and Valeur, Koppel prefers to start from "a little corner" of the entire project and see how it develops. The development of the composition does not follow a linear movement but is characterised by scattered attempts, often requiring his starting again from the beginning. Koppel takes several detours and produces a lot of wreckage before he achieves a final composition. It appears that he builds up a series of prototypes before he reaches a final product. This process cannot be planned from A to Z but is characterised by emergence and experimentation, in other words pathfinding at a micro level. As he explains:

> I see it very clearly when I begin composing a new piece of music. For instance I might have finished a piece, which I find incredibly successful and the last two weeks of the process is a real pleasure because in this phase you're refining the last details. And then you have to start from a new beginning. Then you have to reinvent the wheel and start from scratch. And I start thinking: this can't be true! And then after a couple of days I suddenly recognise that in fact the process doesn't differ from last time - it's just a matter of starting by working from a little corner of the project. If you try to take an overview of this gigantic amount of work and all these endless hours of struggling, you get blocked and it doesn't work. But if you have a sort of feeling of what it is that you want to do and if you start from a little corner of that, then it can grow from this starting point. This is in fact how it works.

Instead of trying to take an overview of "this gigantic amount of work" it apparently helps Koppel to start from "a little corner" and see where it leads him. Both writing and composing, as we have seen in the examples, are activities that can be done alone and therefore the writers and composers do not need to coordinate directly with other colleagues during the creative process. In this way they may have a bigger amount of freedom in their work. In theatre and dance you primarily work as an ensemble or a group and here the need for organisation, structures and rules increases proportionally with the increasing number of participants. Often the level of complexity reaches that of larger groups or organisations. This may be one reason why rules and structures become so important for both Granhøj and Odin Teatret compared to, for instance, Ramsland and Koppel as we have seen in the previous chapter. But something that the interviewed artists seem to have in common is that they avoid over-structuring their working processes and leave gaps open for improvisation, detours, digressions etc. They seem to be pathfinders at different levels, both in their ways through the educational system and life overall, but also in their creative work processes at a micro level.

Developing New Material and Moving in Process

How do the artists get started with a new process of collaborative work and how do they develop new ideas and new material? According to Barba, at Odin Teatret they draw on multiple sources in the early phase of a new project, for instance, songs, articles, fables, legends, poems, novels, theatre plays, fragments of religious texts, news stories, biographies of historical figures, memories, pictures, photographs, anthropological essays, or metaphors (Barba 2010, pp. 88-89). In this way they start a new working process from a *divergent* approach where complexity is favoured in order to stimulate themselves in their search for new ideas and material. Later on, the process becomes more convergent as the director starts sorting out the material and refining it. Finally, these selected bites of material are combined by the director in new and complex structures, in a *montage*, which will most often end up containing multiple layers. They move from complexity to order, but it is an order, which at the same time is complex because it is multi-layered and contains multiple possibilities for interpretation by the spectators. But seen from the actors' point of view, when they are in the middle of presenting a production in front of an audience, there is a clear order, a clear structure, which they have to follow. If we turn our attention back to their working process, before ending up with a clearly structured performance there is no linear plan and no single point of departure. In the initial process of creating and searching for new material, a set of complex and multiple factors are playing and intermingling with each other and in this kind of mixture the actors find their path in close relationship and collaboration with the artistic director. For instance, Varley explains:

> When exploring we do not know in advance what the final result will be, nor how it will be used. At the beginning of a creative process we concentrate on the preliminary tasks to be solved without foreseeing their outcome. Strange and sometimes confused questions and suggestions provoke our curiosity and induce us to make digressions along the way. It is important to know the technical principles that underlie the process, but it's unproductive to anticipate what the performance that is growing will be.

As we see, the actors at Odin Teatret do not plan the outcome beforehand, but instead they settle into the process and let the ideas and new pieces of material emerge during the work sustained by underlying technical principles. Not before the final phase does the director make the overall decisions, inserting a kind of order, while composing a structure from the material created by the actors.

In contrast to Odin Teatret, which initiates its collaborative working process from multiple sources and from a high level of complexity, other artists seem to work from a clearly formulated core idea or concept. As an example, concerning their collaborative working processes, Rønsholdt and Klejs explain that the basic

idea of a project is the guiding star for them. The idea is something that they develop and carry out together and it serves as a foundation for their choices and actions during the entire process. A dialogue between Rønsholdt and Klejs is illuminating:

> Rønsholdt: It is characteristic that, when we are in this initial phase where we work in this verbal area and talk together a lot, then our work becomes conceptually strong. In these intervals there is almost always a certain kind of unrest, because when we interrupt the process, we're almost never done, but in the middle of something. This is when we work at an idea level in the initial phase.
>
> Klejs: The whole idea is something that we carry forward together. It's not that I, for instance, only think in visual terms and that Niels only thinks in auditory terms. As specialised professionals [in design and music] we blend together completely and it's also clear that in the next phase, some moments arise where Niels demonstrates a certain expertise on how to make a musical composition, but that doesn't mean that I'm not a part of that process, actually we're totally entangled together, in the implementation phase of the work, too.
>
> Rønsholdt: […] In our latest work, I remember that we were sitting in a Vietnamese restaurant in New York one week before the performance and we had prepared a lot of material and soundscapes and then we decided to cancel all our material and start over again. The core idea was still the same, but the concept about how the idea should manifest itself visually and auditorily, was changing.
>
> Klejs: And we came to this decision because at that moment we had had some experiences, we had the material in our hands and we had the opportunity to try out things and then we kept questioning ourselves: What is actually the core idea? And then we moved a step further and clarified the idea.

Rønsholdt and Klejs inform us that they produce and discard material several times before arriving at a satisfying result but that the core idea remains intact during the process. Discarding material and starting over again only one week before the performance in public requires courage and confidence in oneself, each other and in the process itself. Creative processes do not necessarily move in a smooth line. As we will see in the dialogue below, creative work can also be associated with a kind of frustration or, as Rønsholdt and Klejs mention, a sort of *unrest* or even *crisis*. Apparently, Rønsholdt and Klejs have learned to tolerate this kind of frustration and see it as a kind of premise in the process, even though it feels uncomfortable. They explain this as follows:

> Rønsholdt: This unrest…
>
> Klejs:…can also be called a crisis…
>
> Rønsholdt: In this state of unrest, we often formulate questions to each other. In fact it has become a technique, which we have developed. We move two steps backwards and ask each other: "What is it all about?" Or: "How was it then?" You follow a lead and

sometimes it's necessary to walk back and follow a new lead… it can be really inspiring to change it all.

Klejs: I think we both know that the unrest is a premise…we're not afraid of it, even though you might feel it's uncomfortable. I think that we're always in agreement when it's present…

It appears to us that many of the interviewed artists have developed a capability for sustaining work and motivation even though they bump up against this kind of frustration or unrest as described by Rønsholdt and Klejs. Although it is uncomfortable, they keep on working. It seems like their curiosity and commitment are strong enough to overcome the frustration or crisis. During the phase of frustration the artists start questioning themselves again, which is possibly productive, as it leads them to be even more explorative. The crisis leads them to stop and re-orient themselves. The creative process does not just proceed in a smooth flow. It is a matter of pathfinding, taking detours and experimenting without becoming absorbed by fear and despair. Possibly Rønsholdt and Klejs move beyond the zone of proximal development in their crisis and find that "it can be really inspiring to change it all" as Rønsholdt explains and possibly there is some kind of excitement related to this kind of risk taking, similar to the excitement of gambling.

This enforces the findings of chapter 4, and suggests a close connection between frustration and creativity. Varley explained to us that sometimes the director exposes the actors to confusing and even contradictory demands. Below Barba explains that he, on purpose, creates "obstacles, quicksands" and "earthquakes" in order to shake the security of the actors, because re-orientation, according to Barba, is a must for the ability to create something new:

> I build resistances, obstacles, quicksands – a factual earthquake, which shakes our security, whose consequences compel unexpected solutions. In this way we try to escape from involuntarily repeating what our experience has imprinted on us. When we begin to rehearse for a new performance, we must re-orientate ourselves from scratch, using our know-how in a different way. It is neither an easy task nor a pleasant situation. Some of my actors today react against it, because this process presupposes a huge waste of energy, time and wreckage of materials, which have taken weeks and months to create.

In order to avoid artistic stagnation and repetition Barba challenges the actors to move beyond the ZPD, but the actors seem to have learned to tolerate this insecurity and have developed ways in which they are able to re-orient and adapt themselves to rapidly changing circumstances and demands. The path is not linear but often filled with bumps and detours. Even though it might be extremely painful, the actors agree to discard a large amount of material, which has taken a lot of time to develop.

There is also a rich use of metaphors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Barba is well-known for using ambiguous and inspiring metaphors while directing the actors in search and development of material for a new performance. Concerning his own pathfinding as a theatre director, he writes:

"I believed that I was *in search of a lost theatre*, but instead I was learning to be in transition. Today I know that this is not a search for knowledge, but for the unknown" (Barba 1995, p. 5). This poetic quote of Barba emphasises that the artist must always be in search of something, that he or she must always be curious and always in movement, or as Barba says: *in transition*. If we follow the logic of Barba, maybe we could add that too much stability and establishment can pose a danger to creativity and that the artist can never rely on former success but must learn to be *in transition* in his or her search for something. This transition can be seen as related to the *unrest* or even *crisis* described earlier by Rønsholdt and Klejs. In this state nothing is completely safe.

In addition to the use of metaphors and poetic talk, Barba uses a very dialectical way of thinking and speaking and as mentioned before, it appears that he even confuses the actor on purpose and puts the actor into situations of ambiguity or *double bind* (Bateson 1972). In this kind of double bind situation the actor receives contradictory tasks and at first he or she might become frustrated and then he or she is spurred to be creative in order to overcome the frustration. The actors at Odin Teatret seem to have developed strategies for coping with such paradoxes. Apparently they have developed effective ways for dealing with and tolerating a high degree of frustration and ambiguity. We might even add the word complexity here. This is echoed by Klejs when she says that: "I think we both know that the unrest is a premise…we're not afraid of it, even though you might feel it's uncomfortable".

These kinds of creative processes, whether on an individual or a collaborative basis, are about exploring, challenging, devoting oneself, making detours and being prepared for the sorting of raw material. We notice that all this requires a lot of energy and time. In chapter 12 we will go deeper into the issue concerning the creation of environments and working conditions conducive to creativity.

Through our reading of the interviews, in spite of different personalities and different art forms and traditions, it becomes clear that none of the interviewed artists works in linear ways with production lines from A to Z. Instead of working within fixed structures, creative work seems to flourish in more or less loosely defined structures and seems also to appear in sporadic intervals or waves. This might have to do with the need for contemplation and incubation time and, as also mentioned, many of the interviewed artists often have several projects going on at the same time, which implies a certain ability for multitasking and flexible

planning. Instead of following linear strategies, the artists move as pathfinders through unpredictable landscapes, exploring and creating their own paths for creation and survival and, let us not forget, they do so by mingling and communicating with other people. As we will see later in this chapter, they do it by taking part in communities and surrounding society in their own way and by exchanging and deriving inspiration from other artists' work, from other traditions and other cultures different from their own. This way of navigating in life has the advantage that it offers the opportunity for improvising and exploring the unexpected and it offers spaces for serendipity to emerge (as mentioned in previous chapters on creativity and learning).

Figure 10. Pathfinding (example).
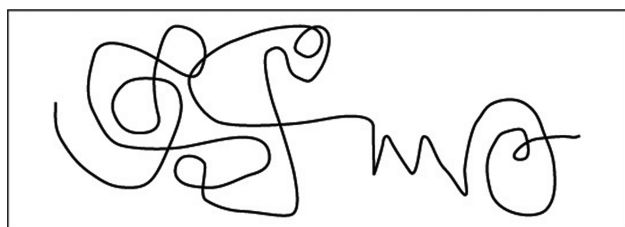
Apart from energy and time, it also requires strong motivation and curiosity to maintain an open and explorative approach over a long professional life. This is all the more challenging because the public may consider the artist anarchistic, not serious, provocative and even a threat to the existing structures and institutions on which the society is built. Therefore, very often established society will put pressure on the artist and try to make the artist adapt him- or herself to existing "normal" structures and norms of society, for instance by forcing the artist to move towards a strong commercialisation of his or her work.

Organising, Community Building and Networking

Let us now look upon how artists take part in society and, for instance, create communities around their work. In the Romantic era we tended to see the artist as a lone rider, not really integrated into society, but very often excluded, misunderstood and balanced between insanity and genius. But as suggested in previous chapters, this image is inadequate for understanding the creative artist today – and perhaps in earlier times as well. What strikes us while looking at our interviews is that most of the artists have a high competence in organising and social networking and the majority of them are skilled in working with changing

work partners. Not necessarily because they always wish to do so, but sometimes because they have to do so, due to organisational, artistic and economic factors. This is often seen in major productions of theatre, dance, opera, cinema, classical music, architecture and design.

In fact, several of the interviewed artists are organised into formalised groups or ensembles, such as Granhøj Dans, Odin Teatret, The Mira Quartet, Hotel Pro Forma, Rosan Bosch Studio, Rune Fjord Studio and the architects Inger and Johannes Exner, while others are participating in short term ad-hoc projects and loose networks. Even the painter Michael Kvium tends to work with a group of assistants and he is also well-known for having collaborated closely with other recognised artists in sculpture, painting, performing arts and theatre. Often in these kinds of projects they work closely together with others for a limited period or in intervals. Although a few, for instance the writers, work at a more individual level, they still participate actively in networks and dialogues with colleagues, other artists from different fields, agents, publishers, relatives and friends.

Our interviews with the artists reveal that networking and close relationships with art institutions, curators, publishers, professional managers, educational institutions and institutions for financial funding are essential, not only for the financial survival of the artists, but also for their inspiration, motivation and learning. Often the artists have a dual focus, working on their art works (as shown before, often in collaboration with others) while at the same time keeping the business going, which means being active in building up and maintaining a network, participating in ongoing dialogues with the surrounding world, their audience and the gatekeepers, by using social media, attending meetings, exhibitions, premieres, concerts, competitions etc.

Visual artist and designer Rosan Bosch develops new ideas together with her customers and describes how she invites her customers on expeditions in order to construct a common set of references together with them. In this case, research and creativity become intertwined as a collaborative journey together with the customers, in other words, *user-driven innovation*.

Once I did a project with a group of archaeologists from a museum where we had to develop a different type of exhibition, because they were changing the display concept. So we –me and one of my colleagues– took the archaeologists to Sweden to see a castle, which is a museum in an outdoor sculpture park called Varnas. We went to see a fantastic exhibition by Ann Hamilton, who is an American installation artist […] and we completely jump-started the process we were in. And once, we had this group of guys from a community, from a library at a school and together with them we visited several projects that we thought were relevant for the kind of architecture and design we were

talking about. In this way we can discuss what works and what doesn't work. I mean it's also a matter of giving people the same references as you, because you refer to them and when you talk to them, you have to go and study their world. But they, in a way, also have to come and study your world!

As we notice, some of the artists working on a collaborative basis have created artistic companies, where they work together at a highly professional level and several of them have succeeded in building up a whole community around their work consisting of other artists, assistants, followers, sympathisers, audience members, customers, gatekeepers, reviewers, scholars, students etc. Some of the companies even have board members who help them in facilitating new contacts. During our interview with the artistic director of Hotel Pro Forma, Kirsten Dehlholm, she emphasised the vital role of the board and her manager in the process of organising and building up a little artistic community around their theatre production:

> Since our manager started 10 years ago, we have built up a "normal" structure for working. We are a small organisation. Few people in the core with different specialisations. Still we are very linked in the mutual work. We have one weekly meeting, a what-to-do meeting. The manager is working as a producer and develops strategies. He is my closest collaborator. There are always things, which have to be done, but I don't have a very strict structure myself. I just have very long working days. And many different projects on the table as each project takes 2-4 years to develop.

Through the years both Hotel Pro Forma and Odin Teatret have become artistic and cultural institutions. They have become established as companies and are more or less secured through funding from the authorities. They have also created learning and training environments for the development of new generations of actors and performers by organising programmes for artists-in-residence. In the case of Odin Teatret they have defined themselves as a theatre lab and have established a worldwide organisation called ISTA - International School of Theatre Anthropology. And as regards Hotel Pro Forma, director Dehlholm explains:

> Hotel Pro Forma has an internship programme for students coming from many countries for four months in the spring and the fall every year. Four to eight students from various disciplines. We give them assignments, they do research and they come up with new ideas and results. It gives good energy and creates new artistic collaborators for the future. This is a new constellation that we call Atelier Hotel Pro Forma. Here we also include artists–in-residence. I would say that this is creative! We have a creative time together with them and I am very happy about this. This is a new situation and this is very much the result of work we did together with our board.

With this artists-in-residence programme, Hotel Pro Forma has created a dynamic environment around its artistic work and, in this way, the theatre

contributes to the development and learning processes of future generations in performing theatre. On the other hand, having these young artists and students around as an integrative part of their working processes apparently serves as an inspirational and motivational factor for the director and the artists working in the theatre. We shall now take a closer look at how the artists also seek inspiration from travelling and cultural exchange.

Inspiration from Travelling and Cultural Exchange

"To travel is to live", wrote the Danish fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen in his autobiography *The Fairy Tale of My Life* (Andersen 1871/2000) and this seems to be also true in the case of several of the interviewed artists. In addition to developing a network, belonging to a community and having a solid base for their artistic production, several of the interviewed artists emphasise the importance of travelling in order to find inspiration. This may include travelling together with customers and working partners, as is the case with Bosch and Fjord or travelling abroad in order to work with international collaborators as we see in the case of companies such as Odin Teatret, Granhøj Dans and Hotel Pro Forma. Painter Michael Kvium works and lives both in Denmark and in Spain and seeks inspiration in the landscape and art of Spain. Movie director Mary Jordan has lived in Canada, USA, Australia, Thailand, Burma and India and has travelled in more than 50 countries. The couple Rønsholdt and Klejs are based in Denmark but also have an apartment in Berlin, where they stay for periods seeking new inspiration. Shortly before our interview with them they travelled to New York for a whole month, taking their children and their parents as baby sitters. Here they worked together with artists from New York on a huge interactive art installation on Ground Zero. Shortly after, they went to Beijing in order to do a new art project with Chinese artists and so on. Also members of The Mira Quartet tend to travel together, for instance, to Vienna where they take music classes together and we might define this as a collective learning journey. These are just a few examples.

Now we will shed light on a special activity practised by Odin Teatret when travelling around the world, not only to present their work, but also to find inspiration through cultural exchange. Odin Teatret calls this activity "barter". Instead of exchanging money and material goods, they exchange cultural goods and artistic techniques. They are known for organising series of short and long-term learning encounters. These encounters have also contributed to the creation of a new movement and an entire research field called *theatre anthropology,* which has been developed further under the auspices of ISTA.

The work with barter began in 1974, when the Odin Teatret went to stay for five months in the rural village of Carpignano in Southern Italy. They went to the village in order to develop material for a new production. When the inhabitants in the village asked them who they were and they replied that they were 'actors', they were questioned about their identity. This led to the development of barter as a tool for relating, communicating, identity construction and exchange of cultural tools and sometimes even the exchange of techniques for dancers and actors. Since this experience, the company has continued to develop barters with communities and artists they meet in different areas of the world, for instance with indigenous people in Amazonia, with farmers in the Andes mountains, with beggars and children in Latin American slum quarters, with actors from Japan, Taiwan, China and with dancers from India and Bali (see also Barba 1979, Watson 2002, Turner 2004). In this way they relate to people and artists different from themselves, exchanging songs, dances, traditions, small comical sketches etc. As we see in the case of Odin Teatret, barter serves as an aesthetic communication vehicle, a way of creating contact beyond daily spoken language and a way of developing new material for artistic outcomes. In our interview, Barba explains:

> We were in a small village preparing a performance and people wanted to see theatre and… okay, we had another performance and we could even do a performance for them, but they were very poor. This was in the early seventies in one of these South Italian villages and there were only women, children and old people left, because all the men had emigrated. And I don't want to work for free, no one does, only idealists. It took me a long time before I could say "Ah, but you can pay back with something, which is the equivalent to what we are doing. We are doing something that is cultural, you can pay me in cultural goods." "But what are these?" they said. And then I said: "Okay, you have songs, you can dance" and so this became the first barter, because we are no longer speaking about theatre, we are speaking about something, which always characterises the performing expressions of every society, such as singing together and dancing together.

The matter of being different from each other is the underlying basis for the meeting and the creative inspiration. According to Barba, the Odin Teatret actors are in search of themselves in the encounter with others. Only through meeting with the *otherness* do they discover their own identity. In his book *The Floating Islands* from 1979, Barba describes these encounters in poetical terms.

> […] It is just this difference, this "otherness" that has been our point of departure. We do not want to "teach" anything, nor inform the people here of their social or cultural situation. […] Our stay here is built around the idea of barter. Imagine two very different tribes, each on their own side of the river. Each tribe can live for itself, talk about the

other, praise or slander it. But every time one of them rows over to the other shore it is to exchange something. One does not row over to carry on ethnographic research, to observe the other's way of life, but rather to give and to take: a handful of salt for a scrap of cloth, a bow for a fistful of beads. The goods we trade are cultural (p. 116).

Apparently, for several of the interviewed artists, travelling and inspiration from other cultures is of vital importance, while the encounter with *the otherness* will often put one's own identity, work and culture in perspective and open up new horizons, which can inspire and stimulate creativity. As we have seen in chapter 9 the encounter with other cultures and traditions can serve as a strong contribution to the development of new ideas and new ways of creating.

Chapter 12: For Leaders Concerned with Creativity

The present chapter builds upon thoughts on leadership presented by the interviewed artists themselves and draws from their perspectives the outline of a new movement in leadership based on a more relational approach than currently dominant (for relational leading see Hosking, Gergen & Dachler 1995, Hosking 2010, Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011, Hersted & Gergen 2013). We have structured this material into a series of sub-themes, but in practice they are closely related to each other. The central sub-themes in this chapter concern: leading and motivating within the arts, creating frames for the creative process, the challenge of deadlines and goals, nurturing a collaborative climate, the role of recognition and leading for creativity in a relational perspective.

In general, the leadership literature has paid little attention to *artistic* leadership - ways of leading and organising within artistic environments. We believe there is great potential here and that leaders, consultants, change agents and educators in general can gain inspiration from artistic leaders, specifically in terms of building up creative, collaborative working and learning environments. It is our hope that the insights from our research will inspire the readers to stimulate and foster more effective and creative collaborations in their own professional areas outside the world of artists, even though the general work conditions and organisational context might differ significantly from the world of the arts.

The Challenge of Creativity in Today's Organisations

In today's world creativity in organisations is of crucial importance. We live in a constantly changing society and it is often argued that, in order to survive, organisations must develop and adapt themselves to the surrounding world to avoid stagnation and, in the worst case, elimination. The ongoing changes in society are related to increasing globalisation, shifting markets, major environmental challenges, limited fossil fuels, conflicts between nations and religious and ethnic groups, developing technologies, new social media, increasing diversity in the workforce, higher levels of education, shifting political policies etc. In situations of rapid change, the need for adaptability and improvisation is high. To thrive and to resolve major global challenges requires continuous innovation.

Renewal requires coming up with new ideas concerning the development of new solutions to complex problems, new products and technologies, new ways of organising, learning, producing, communicating and promoting etc. In other words, organisations today and tomorrow rely on adaptability, flexibility, creativity and the capability for innovation. And as Puccio and Cabra claim: "It would seem generally accepted that for organizations to adapt they must have employees who are flexible, adaptive, imaginative and able to tolerate ambiguity – in short they must be creative" (Puccio & Cabra 2010, p. 147).

But the question of adaptability and innovation is not the only reason for organisations and leaders to be interested in fostering creativity. We also think that creativity as a value and an important element in the workplace can contribute to the creation of better working environments and higher job satisfaction. As mentioned in the previous chapter a comprehensive research project (Bille et al. 2013) showed that artists experience a higher extent of job satisfaction than other occupations (despite lower income), because they like what they do, they experience a high degree of autonomy, have flexible working hours and are able to make their own decisions about where and when to work. The project showed furthermore that this increased job satisfaction was not driven by differences in personality. Amabile and her colleagues, too, have shown that creativity, affection, enjoyment, intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction are closely related to each other (Amabile et al. 2005).

But developing organisations and environments where creativity and people can flourish demands a new kind of leadership. It also requires new ways of leading, which can ensure the appropriate conditions for collaborative creativity to emerge and inspire the actors to challenge themselves and each other, to experiment and implement alternative solutions. Amabile, Burnside and Gryskiewics argue that creativity is the crucial "front-end" of an innovation process and, that ideas must be generated by individuals and teams so that they can be successfully implemented (Amabile et al. 1999, p. 1).

We think that creativity is very much a question of collaboration over time and not just a matter of breakthroughs by a few individuals (see also Littleton & Miell 2004). We already see a tendency in many organisations today for working in small temporary, cross-disciplinary teams or project groups where people must collaborate in order to create new ideas and convincing results. Related to this way of working is the need of more informal ways of communication and decision-making and less bureaucracy. Traditional ways of leading, based on command and control and deriving from the industrial age, are no longer sufficient. We need to seek inspiration from other kinds of environment based on other assumptions and approaches to work. In order to prepare leadership

for the enhancement of creativity we can draw inspiration from people working within the fields of art.

Leading and Motivating within the Arts

Concerning the question of leading, it is first important to note that some of the artists interviewed for this book work for long periods by leading themselves. They seem to be very independent and capable of organising themselves in different ways that work for them. We have noticed this practice of self-management among the interviewed writers, visual artists and also to some extent among the musicians (in particular the musicians of rhythmical music). These artists often work autonomously and do not necessarily have a formal leader to rely on. This also means that they might work in project groups in more or less informal settings where leadership is shared among all group members and can be defined as *collaborative leadership*.

The situation is different for artists working in an established theatre, a dance company, a movie production, a design or architecture studio, a symphony orchestra or in the staging of opera, where several people work together in a more complex level of organisation. Here, the leadership function is often formalised and the leader plays a significant role in decision-making. The larger the group of people working together, the more complex the level of organising and the greater need for clear working structures, rules and deadlines. If, for instance, one person is not ready at the planned deadline, it will affect the entire process – damaging the production and affecting the economics. So in these artistic and cultural institutions there may be a necessity for what is traditionally called *management*. Imagine, for instance, the challenge of planning and producing an entire production of opera or ballet, including the planning of a PR campaign, production plans, promotion and sales, tour planning and having to solve a series of logistic, technical and human challenges on the way. In these kinds of production in large artistic and cultural institutions, leadership differs little from the type of management we see in more traditional organisations, where planning and scheduling play a significant role and often leadership in this kind of institution or company is divided in two functions: the artistic director and the (administrative) manager. We see this for instance in the case of Granhøj Dans, Hotel Pro Forma and Odin Teatret.

However, what interests us here is how the artists and artistic directors or leaders encourage and enhance creativity in their daily practice during the processes of art-making in collaborative settings. In the following pages we will present and discuss findings from the interviews related to the following general

questions: What do the interviewed artists consider as important for them in terms of leadership? How do they practise artistic leadership and enhance creativity in a group or a company? And what can we learn from the artists in terms of leading the creative process?

The interviews offer a rich and varied range of insights and practices of relevance to the organisational world more generally. For convenience, we have divided the discussion into three specific domains. First we take a look at the range of metaphors guiding leadership work. We turn then to the way these leaders create a frame for creative work and follow and nurture a collaborative context for creativity.

Metaphors for Leading Creative Work

At the outset, it is important to realise that there is no single or unified vision of leadership that is common across the various artistic domains. Rather, as we shall see, one may distil from the interviews a rich range of metaphors that variously inform their actions. Indeed, these artistic leaders draw on multiple visions of leadership according to the needs of the followers and the context. We will comment more on this variability at the close of the section. First we turn to some of the stories from the artists themselves.

We may use the reflections of theatre director Eugenio Barba as a launch pad for further discussion. When we interviewed Barba about his approach to artistic leadership, he mentioned a craftsman who had become a significant other for him as a master and a leader – a man, who had inspired him throughout his entire professional career in theatre. In effect, the master-apprentice relationship was of significant importance to Barba and in many ways he has followed this idea during his years as artistic director of the Odin Teatret. As Barba comments:

> In my life, the most influential model as leader was Eigil Winnje, a sheet metal artisan who taught me to weld when, at eighteen, I emigrated from Italy to work in Norway. He was the owner of a small workshop in Oslo employing seven people. He worked together with us, sharing the same tasks: Climbing on the roofs in winter time when we had to repair damage, giving advice and taking advice from the other craftsmen, controlling and judging the results of our work while always expecting the best, cleaning the workshop with the rest of us every Saturday afternoon before the day of rest. He remained in my memory as the leader whose authoritativeness did not depend on hierarchic authority, but on skill and on an attitude, which I would compare to that of an older brother, who knows more than the others and is always able to find a solution and set an example. To lead a theatre group is not a demonstration of artistic originality. It has to do with the ability to stimulate diversity and support individual initiatives without slackening discipline or disregarding the collective norms and values.

In this story we see how the craftsman as a leader in Barba's interpretation becomes a role model. The team leader is a craftsman and achieves his authority primarily through his knowledge and his professional expertise. Barba goes further and emphasises the importance of stimulating diversity and giving individual support, but simultaneously maintaining discipline, collective norms and values. What Barba talks about here is the creation and nurturing of a team culture or a "community of practice" in Lave & Wenger's (1991) terms. Even though the leader might serve as an inspiring role model and a master, as in the case of the artisan Eigil Winnje, he or she must, according to Barba, also ensure possibilities for the members to follow individual paths. At the same time they must coordinate and follow a common set of norms and values in the team. It is not a matter of *either-or* but of *both-and*; it is a matter of finding the right balance – a balance, which might vary according to the context and the working conditions at a given moment in the history of the group. In effect, Barba advocates individual initiatives within the frame and the rules of the organisation. In chapter 10 we wrote about the dynamics of both centripetal (unifying) and centrifugal (dispersing) forces in a group or a team and this is exactly what Barba refers to here. Without individual initiatives there would be no creativity among the actors. As a director, who works primarily with the montage of the actors' raw material, Barba is vitally dependent on the actors' ability to come up with new and inspiring material. In the following, Barba reflects on his leadership style during the early years with Odin Teatret:

> If you ask my actors that are still here from the early years, they will tell you that I was stern and severe, never laughing or having any sense of humour. I ordered: this must be like this, full stop and basta! Our working day followed strict rules. But the working process was built on improvisation and therefore it was fundamental that the actors felt free and had a capacity of expressing their inner world in precise physical and verbal signs. I was afraid in the beginning for many reasons, first because I felt insecure. I didn't know how to be a director, I had never directed and I was working with young people who had not gone to a theatre school, so we were illiterates seen from a theatrical point of view. So this inferiority or this insecurity made me construct a sort of defence. In addition, there was the fact that we were foreigners in Holstebro. This part of Jutland, in the early sixties, was a strictly religious area […] and this little town of 16,000 inhabitants, which had never had a theatre, considered dance and theatre as a sort of sin […] Therefore I paid a lot of attention to how my actors behaved outside […]. If an actor behaves in his private life in a particular way, people will generalise and say: "Oh those actors of the Odin Teatret, they get drunk and smoke marijuana". Then everybody from our theatre would be labelled and judged and this is unfair. Therefore I imposed strict rules of behaviour. It was a way of protecting our little group. Initially, we had many problems with the town, because there were protests against the way we did theatre. Our performances shocked the population here over at least ten years.

By listening to this story from Barba we can understand why he chose a strict leadership style in the early years of Odin Teatret. In fact it took at least ten years before the Odin Teatret became more or less accepted among the inhabitants of the town and in their initial years they tended to be a very closed group. Barba followed a severe leadership style, which, according to himself, was necessary in order to consolidate the group and create its identity and working culture. As a theatre group they had to distinguish themselves from the traditional theatre landscape and create their own artistic profile.

Something, which we find interesting here, is that the group did not develop in a vacuum, but in relation to others. For instance they defined themselves as an alternative to the traditional, classical theatre and to a high degree they searched for inspiration and role models in Balinese, Indian and Japanese theatre and dance traditions. Furthermore they had several working sessions with the Polish director Jerzy Grotowski, who frequently visited the theatre and was a significant inspirational leader for them. And they also received visits from other international theatre people, students and scholars. So in this way the group was not isolated. They defined themselves as a theatre lab and from the early years they created a learning environment around themselves.

The artistic director served as a kind of poetic ambassador for the group in their relationship to the surrounding world. By using his abilities as a skilled communicator and storyteller, Barba became a significant wall breaker in terms of building up relationships with important gatekeepers and authorities. In this way, little by little, the group succeeded in creating stronger relationships with the local people and the politicians of the town. In fact the relationship with the town has changed completely since the early years and for more than ten years now, the theatre has played a central role in planning and carrying out the town's annual festival. Here they have joined together with other artists and local volunteers in close collaboration with the municipality. In this way, the group has become more integrated into local society, but at the same time keeping their uniqueness as a group – their "otherness" so to speak. In short, they have become integrated and recognised in the surrounding society without being assimilated.

Over time conditions have changed, relationships have developed and so have the inner dynamics of the group. Some of the earlier members have left and others have been adopted into the group. What strikes us is that Barba tells us that he has changed his leading style by loosening up over time. According to Barba, throughout the more than fifty years of the group's existence, the actors at Odin Teatret have become more and more self–managing and some have even become directors for other theatre projects. In this way the methods of working developed by the group through many years of training and practice have now

multiplied and are moving in many different directions. The river now has many tributaries and it appears that the Odin Teatret has given rise to a whole new tradition or movement within theatre. In this way and parallel to functioning and working with a charismatic leading figure, the group practices what could be considered as distributed leadership (Harris and Spillane 2008). Barba explains:

> I don't intervene for years, because they are ready and they have become their own directors. After four or five years they have become my partners, they have got responsibilities that are very autonomous from me and each of them is developing very different activities.

Concerning the creative work for a new theatre production it might take the group around two years to develop a new performance. Such a process is divided into phases. According to Barba, the first phase is characterised by a high degree of freedom for the actors where they play, improvise and experiment in their search for the creation of small scenarios or scores. After a period of time, sometimes several months, they present these scores to the director. Very often, in this initial phase, the material is created at an individual level and closely related to the actors' own life stories combined with other sources of material (e.g. poems, images from books, songs). When the actors' raw materials are ready and composed or arranged in such a way that they are able to remember and repeat every single detail, a second phase starts, which could be called the "cutting and sewing phase". Here the director starts working on a montage of selected parts of the material presented to him by the actors. As mentioned in the previous chapter, he cuts the material into small pieces and rearranges parts of this material in new sequences and complex compositions often composed of several dramaturgical layers at a time. The artistic director here becomes a sort of "surgeon", who deconstructs the raw material from the actors. In this way he creates a *montage* of the actors' material deriving and elaborated from a diverse range of sources.

How, then, does the leader position himself towards the actors in this phase of montage? In addition to taking the position of "surgeon" he also takes other approaches in order to facilitate the creative process; he offers suggestions, gives hints and provides ideas, he stimulates the actors and he challenges them in order to enhance their creativity. The relationship between the director and the actors is essential in order to make the process flourish. Here, Barba explains:

> When it comes to the creative process for a performance, the personal relationships become more complex. It is a corps-à-corps between the actor and me. In the beginning I have to think in individual categories. Sometimes I am able to provide suggestions and hints, which are gratifying and stimulating. But I don't always succeed. Then it becomes interesting to follow the reaction of the actor who tries to emancipate him/herself from

my point of departure by materialising other propositions […]. The many years we have collaborated together have caused the growth of an anomalous working dynamic. The actors begin in total autonomy to improvise, compose, choose materials - scenes, texts, songs, use of objects, costumes, music and light effects - in total freedom and without my presence. They follow their interests and the fancy of the moment, ideas and suggestions dictated by the framework of the next performance, but always with the awareness of how to go beyond their horizon, not imitating what they have done before. Then, during the rehearsals, I begin to sew these materials, reducing and cutting them, establishing relationships etc. […]. But with the years, we begin to master also this elusive way of working. It is more and more difficult to find a point of departure, whose intricacy or simplicity startles my actors and me.

It seems the actors' relationship to the director is characterised by complementary opposites such as loyalty and emancipation, autonomy and dependence, suggestions and challenge. We notice that the actors are capable of working for long periods alone but in the final phase they need the director in order to connect and combine their pieces of work into a new common structure. In this way the leader can be seen as a kind of *connector*, a *unifier* of the group. Another element is that after more than fifty years of existence the group confronts continuous challenges of renewing itself. This leads us to the following question: Can we plan creativity? And can we be creative by command? Based on our interviews our answer would be *no*, probably not, but we can nurture creativity by being aware of the relational factors, by creating a frame for creativity to emerge and by allowing space for improvisation and play to unfold within this frame. More will be said about these elements shortly. Again, as discussed in earlier chapters, we must not forget the importance of education, training and discipline of the participants.

But how, then, can the leader sustain the motivation and discipline in such a group for continuing with hard physical training and artistic development over a long professional life? Here Barba explains:

All human beings act pushed by force, profit or love. But there are also emotional factors like a need for justice, dignity, recognition of one's own worth and the rejection of exploitation. I knew this from the very first day with Odin Teatret, so I eliminated many resistances against my demanding way of leading by making all of us earn the same salary and clean our working venues. We have a tacit agreement: you have come to me and collaborate with me because you believe I am the one who will help you to climb your personal Annapurna. However, persistence, resilience, continuous endeavour, fatigue and the fact of moving against the mainstream are contrary to human nature, which wants to achieve the maximum with the minimum effort. My collaborators who are no longer motivated can leave whenever they want and many have done so […] They must only give their utmost during the preparation of a performance, when we are all roped together, climbing towards a distant summit.

What strikes us here is that Barba challenges the actors and demands their uttermost, which means a hundred per cent dedication. He mentions that the actors are "all roped together" while climbing the mountain and in this way they are strongly depending on each other. Apparently, such efforts from each member of the group have become a significant part of their group identity. Within the group, it seems that each single actor has found his or her own path and personal ways of expressing him/herself artistically, but simultaneously the actors have created strong relational bonds with the director and with the entire group. We notice a strong mutual commitment and sense of belonging to the group. As we saw in previous chapters, together they have developed a culture of disciplined work, dedication and learning.

But how does Barba continue to enhance the actors' creativity? We saw in Chapter 10 that communication was intertwined with creative development. As a theatre director it is a matter of communicating in such a way that it opens up the actors' imagination and stimulates their ability to see new possibilities, to experiment with new ideas and to make sense of what they are doing. Through poetic communication, Barba builds up the self-understanding of the group and also positions the group in the theatre landscape. He works as a *poetic narrator* in order to enhance both creativity and the artistic identity of the group. Not only while directing but also in his books and articles and at seminars and workshops, he often uses metaphors such as *ghetto, exile, tribe, reservation, cell and floating island* in order to define the group identity. In fact, his first book about the work at Odin was entitled *The Floating Islands* (Barba 1979). Here, he describes the Odin Teatret as a little island floating in the sea, separated from the mainland but containing enough earth to be cultivated. According to Barba, the ground of this island is insecure and might suddenly disappear under the feet of the islanders, but it can also enable encounters and the transgression of personal limits. Something important is that this island is not isolated; it is floating in constant movement and sometimes it floats towards and connects with other islands.

The idea that the island might suddenly disappear can be interpreted as saying that the actors are forced to take risks and that they cannot take anything for granted. At the same time there is an expectation of transgressing personal limits - in other words, the actor has to fight for his existence and invest his whole identity in the project. Being an actor on the "floating island" seems to be an existential choice, a matter of life or death and by using this kind of metaphor the director makes it clear that he has high expectations of the actors and that they cannot rely on earlier success. Such a demand can be frightening and demotivating for some people and motivating for others.

In several of his writings, Barba calls the actor a *nomad* or an *immigrant* and in this way he gives emphasis to the desire and the condition of an Odin actor to always remain foreign and not allow him or herself to be fixed in a specific time and place. On the contrary, the actor must always be in movement, be curious and remain a traveller in the world. We noticed in the previous chapter that Barba used the word *transition* while describing his own artistic path finding. Concerning the working processes he also uses the word *journey* and expresses as well that they, as a group in their search for new material, are *building in the dark*. Furthermore he calls the theatre a *momentary bridge*, which serves as a vehicle in order to relate to others. Barba's use of metaphors is potent in creating vivid images and these lend shared significances and new ideas. He tends to speak in paradoxes and combines opposing words, as for example the use of the term "Chaosmos", which served as the title of one of the Odin Teatret productions. During our interview with Barba, he explained:

> Metaphors and paradoxes sharpen and overturn our customary way of seeing and thinking. Metaphor is the natural expression of artistic language. The value of our past - what we may call the classics even if created yesterday - is that legacy which becomes a wealth of metaphors and thus an inspiration for each new generation. Think of Homer's Iliad and how many meaningful metaphors for our epoch are contained in its verses about battle, treason and mercilessness.

By using poetic imagery, on the one hand, the director motivates and stimulates the imagination of the actors and on the other, he engages the audience and potential gatekeepers. We notice how Barba as a leader draws on linguistic and poetic resources in order to create possibilities for meaning and action. In addition to being a *surgeon*, he also positions himself as a *poet* and a skilled *narrator*. The use of poetic speech has a constitutive character because it opens up the listener's imagination and encourages the listener to see things in a new light or a new perspective.

Let us, for a while, take a look at one of the other interviews. Here we meet an artistic director for whom communication also plays a significant role in the creative working process. Movie director Annette K. Olesen relies on *storytelling* as a fundamental element in her leading style. She explains:

> What kind of story is it that I want to tell? What kind of material appeals to me emotionally? What is it that engages and involves me in this story? That's important for my collaborators to know. It's important for them to understand what drives me, because in the best case it comes off on them and they might have a similar experience as I have, I give them an opportunity to experience identification at a human level and then they can communicate about it and explain about it to others.

Olesen explains the necessity of involving the people with whom she works, by including them in the process and by stimulating their feelings of identification with the project.

> The most important thing, which an artistic director has to be able to do, is to create understanding and coordination concerning: Why are we doing this? How shall we do it? And then create the feeling of involvement and inclusion in the process. Of course one person is overall responsible, but everybody has a shared responsibility in order to release the work. It's a matter of transmitting a feeling of identification with the work we're doing, because if you succeed in transmitting the feeling of identification, then people will do things by themselves […]. It's my responsibility as the artistic director to formulate the *raison d'etre*, which basically means: Why are we doing this? Why? Why are we here preventing you from leaving the work place and picking up your child in the kindergarten at four o'clock?

As a movie director, Olesen is totally reliant on the commitment and the dedication of her working partners and therefore sees as one of her important tasks formulating the reason for making a movie together. Apart from being a *storyteller* and a sort of *conversational sense maker* she can be defined as an *integrator* and a *motivator*. The latter metaphors seem to be common to many of these artistic leaders.

When interviewed about leadership, Rune Fjord, who runs his own design studio, mentions several important elements. He emphasises the importance of ensuring the well-being among the co-workers, inspiration from outside and fostering a vision among the people with whom he works. Furthermore, according to Fjord, the leader must formulate a direction and provide the frame and required conditions for work.

> I would like to be, what do you call it… well I don't know the names of all those leading styles…but I think that I'm a very empathic person, I like when people feel good and I think that's important. Everybody contributes with their special skills, what they're best at. And then sometimes you need to have some fun as well, to do something else, for instance one day we go to Malmö. It's important to give priority to that kind of thing too, so that people will offer what they're best at professionally. In this way you create the most successful creative process. The most important thing an artistic leader should do is to formulate a direction and a vision and also provide the frame and conditions for work that are needed.

Thus, if we look back at our interviews with the artistic leaders, we can formulate a rich range of metaphors, which illuminate their leadership practices. These include *craftsman*, *surgeon*, *poet*, *storyteller*, *game master*, *challenge maker*, *concept developer*, *facilitator*, *gardener*, *ensurer of well-being*, *travel agent*, *integrator*, *connector*, *motivator* and *conversational sense maker*. Obviously, the interviewed artistic leaders differ in their professions and their approaches to art, but it is

our surmise that being an effective leader may require multiple positionings or approaches to action. One may have to shift the dominant metaphor of leading, depending on time, place, the actors and the project. No single style or approach is all-productive. Yet, all these leaders do attempt to establish a generative frame for the collaborative artistic process, while working as facilitators and motivators of creativity among their collaborators. In the following we will take a closer look at the challenge of creating frames for creative processes.

Creating a Frame for the Creative Process

So how do the artists and artistic leaders create frames for creative processes? What kinds of structures, rules or working methods are put in place, so that creative work is facilitated? And what do they emphasise as important for them concerning frames for work? Our interviews provided some significant insights.

In chapter 11 we wrote about the importance of confidence and of starting work from within a safety zone (ZPD). Confidence is especially important, according to Barba, because the actor must be willing to put him/herself at risk. As we noticed in an earlier quote, Barba expects the ultimate dedication from his actors: "They must only give their utmost during the preparation of a performance, when we are all roped together, climbing towards a distant summit". In our interview he continues and defines the actor as a *bull fighter* working within a net of relationships, taking risks while putting him- or herself at stake, lonely on the one hand and social on the other. Our interview with him suggests that the support and confidence of the leader is essential. Barba explains:

> The specificity of our craft consists in a complementarity: on the one hand you are alone during the creative process. It is your moment of truth similar to the torero facing the bull. On the other, you must feel a sense of commitment towards the others, first of all the spectators, but also your colleagues and the director […]. Theatre is separateness in a web of relationships. Each of us feels support and stimulation in being part of a collective working process, which is accompanying us to the threshold of a limit. But the decisive step - the one which makes you enter into another dimension, which is only yours, your unique and unrepeatable contribution - this step must be taken by you alone. At the same time, every moment of the work implies bonds, encounters, intertwining, individual and collective decisions, and the growth of a living structure. The result - the performance - is an organic reality, which is fictional.

In other words, in order to distinguish oneself, according to Barba, the actor has to transgress the limit of this safety zone. In this view, the efforts of the actor become almost an existential fight, a matter of "being" or not. At the same time, Barba stresses that: "Each of us feels support and stimulation in being part of a

collective working process…" In this way, the web of relationships to which the actor belongs, seems to encourage the actor to put himself at risk.

As we see, Barba nurtures bottom-up creativity among the actors in different ways while starting working from a high level of complexity, but we also observe strong elements of top-down decision making in his way of leading, especially in the final phase of montage where he combines the material from the actors into a specific order. Other directors consider themselves as being a kind of *concept developer*, one who defines his or her own initial concept as a launch pad and then collects specific work elements from selected artists with whom he or she is in close dialogue. Performance theatre director Kirsten Dehlhom can be seen as an example of this kind of director, one who works on the basis of a well-defined artistic concept. But even so there are also elements of montage related to it. In the initial phase of the artistic work, several months or even years before rehearsals with the actors start, she delegates specific tasks to the dramatist, the light designer and the stage designer without necessarily facilitating a common meeting among them all beforehand. According to our interview with her, it seems like she prefers to talk and coordinate with each of them alone and keep the artistic approaches separated in order to avoid them mimicking one another. In this way she becomes the connector and a kind of synthesiser among the different pieces of material created by these specialised professionals. Apparently from the very beginning and differently from Barba, she has a clear vision or concept concerning the overall design of the performance. Most of the creative work in this initial phase seems to take place in the coordination between the artistic director herself and the dramatist, the light designer and the stage designer. Dehlholm explains:

> My collaboration with actors is completely different than all other work I do. 90% of my work is together with professionals from many other disciplines like for instance light, text, music, architecture, video and natural science. Here the basic ideas of the performance are developed and built. Here we talk about contents and technical facts, many facts and practical issues are discussed. Often the included elements are developed independently of each other. This is in order to give ourselves obstacles, to prevent us from making illustrations. By the end it all comes together and we are positively surprised. This is a synergy effect.

In the following phase she invites the actors into the process. On first sight she seems to offer little space for the actors to develop their own creativity. On closer examination, however, she does provide a minimal frame for creativity. The director depends on the actors' ability to be present and vivacious and convincing on stage in front of the audience every night of performance. In accordance with several of the interviewed artists from the previous chapter, Dehlholm emphasises the importance of ensuring a strict frame for the work. It might

be questionable whether this frame could be too narrow for making creativity flourish among the actors, but this would require further exploration. Dehlholm claims:

> I work with clear frames for the actors. They fill out the space, which I give them. Not all actors like to work like that. But I find actors who understand this method of working. They like to work with rules that are very defined because here it is a challenge to be innovative and creative. Many singers, except opera singers, also like to work with strict rules for choreography and acting style. The singers don't need to express feelings in acting, because they have their music and this is their tool. Regarding the actors, they are trained in another way and they have other tools. Many of them like to have the freedom to improvise which is not my style. But in recent years I have met actors who really love to have rules, because they can use these rules as creative resistance.

Before our interview with Kirsten Dehlholm, the opportunity was offered to watch some of the rehearsals for one of her productions. During the interview she pointed out a situation from the rehearsals where two actors were improvising and dancing around with each other in a seemingly erotic way. Apparently they went further than was the director's intention; one might say they were "fooling around". Dehlholm commented on the episode:

> When we have kept the acting to a strict and minimal manner for some time, we may have some rehearsals where actors overact. This gives them a new energy but it also makes it clear for everybody what works and what doesn't work. […] There are pedagogical reasons to do it. I don't stop in a middle of a scene, I let it run to the end and then we find out what worked and what didn't.

Even while being strict, it seems that Dehlholm is aware of the pedagogical aspects of working as an artistic director. Her gentle reaction to the actors' "fooling around" in the middle of the rehearsal is relevant. Instead of criticising them, she let them play for a while before saying: "Okay… and now we go back to rehearsal". Here, the director showed patience and understanding for the need of playful aspects during work and at the same time was clear in her message.

As we have seen in several of our interviews, for many of the artists and artistic leaders it is matter of framing the work, creating a safe context for the process where people are not afraid of risk-taking. Apparently, it is a matter of finding the right balance and coherence between space, time, rules, structures, spontaneity, play, experimentation and resources. It might be a challenge for the leader to provide the necessary space and time for experiments and new ideas to emerge within a team or a group or in network-based collaboration, because the leader cannot control either the process or the outcome. He or she needs to be patient and show confidence in the people with whom he or she is working. Without disturbing too much, it is also important that the leader shows interest

in the project. It is furthermore important to avoid making too rigid plans and time schedules, but instead leave spaces open for experimentation, improvisation and playfulness – and maintain oneself open for the unexpected to emerge (see also chapter 8 on *serendipity*).

Something the leader must be extremely aware of, which has become even clearer through our interviews, is the importance of protecting the work processes from too much disturbance, for instance, too much administrative work and bureaucracy (as described in chapter 11). And if there is a disturbance, it should be inspiring and fruitful for the creative process. Our interviews show that time and space for focused work, contemplation and incubation (see Amabile 1998, 2002, Sawyer 2007 and Torrence & Safter 1999) are of vital importance for the enhancement of creativity. Below we will share some examples from interviews where the artists describe what is important for them concerning the matter of creating frames for their creative work. We think that it is important for leaders to take into consideration these needs if creativity is to be nurtured. Ramsland explains:

> The most important thing is time; creativity requires time and space. There are some romantic ideas that it's just a matter of waiting and then creativity will occur and there are a lot of people who go around dreaming about being creative somehow, but they don't have the time or the space. Being creative requires that you invest time in it and go deeply into the work and let up on other things that you could spend your time on. […] Right now I'm in my studio in Vestergade, where I can close the door and lock it. I don't get interrupted and nobody comes in. Only a few people know the address here and I prefer not answering the phone […], so there is very little interruption. That is how I work at my best. And then I can also put on my earphones if there is someone else in the building, in order to prevent myself from being disturbed. It is of huge importance for me that there should be very little chance of being interrupted.

Related to this concern with protecting time is the question of deadlines and goals. As we notice, working within strict deadlines can be stimulating and motivating for some people, while for others it can be extremely inhibiting. People are different and work at their best in different ways. Consider, for example the approach taken by the painter Julie Nord:

> I try to formulate some partial goals and some partial deadlines and over time I have become more realistic concerning what I can actually achieve, because I don't work very well under pressure. Also because my drawings are so time-consuming and if I know that I have an enormous pressure on me, then it's simply hell, because then it is very difficult to dedicate myself to the process. It just takes the time it needs to take […] It is a fantastic job, but it is also a hard job, because there is always this pressure from deadlines and so on. It is very much a question of finding a balance in order to keep creativity alive, so it won't die on a kind of stressful hamster wheel, where you are busy all the time.

I have also started saying no to even more activities and exhibitions, simply in order to be faithful to myself and my own production.

It is interesting to contrast this with the way Valeur describes his way of organising the writing processes in daily life. As we saw in an earlier chapter, he often uses a stopwatch, makes a short break every single hour and avoids using the Internet before lunch in order to keep focused on his writing. Like his colleague Ramsland he has built up a series of routines and rituals that help him to focus on his work.

It's incredibly difficult, but I endeavour to work at home, so that I don't get disturbed by phones, colleagues, and things that have to be done. In this way I have some time alone. And if I'm going to see somebody, then it is because I invite them. So it is a matter of being able to manage my own work. For instance, if you work in a firm that develops computer games, then there are always things, which have to be done. Then your concentration is interrupted, you have to sit down and write a series of e-mails, you are on the Internet and things like that. On the contrary when you are working alone, then you can turn on the music you like and you can also create silence around you. I wake up at 6 am and accompany my kids to school early in the morning and then I start working and from this moment I work in a very disciplined way without turning on the Internet or anything else […] If I'm capable of remembering a dream, then I try to keep hold of it. When I remember my dreams, then I write better and I can't explain to you why, but there is a special channel, which is open.

Another element, which strikes us here, is that Valeur actually takes the time for writing down his dreams, even when not directly related to the text on which he is working at the moment. This tells us something about his nurturing of creative potential even though his time schedule can be tight.

On the theme of time pressure, the following little dialogue between Niels Rønsholdt and Signe Klejs sheds light on some of their challenges concerning deadlines:

Rønsholdt: There is the deadline culture, which implies that you enter this state of emergency and then it's just…well in this state you can handle almost everything and the adrenaline works in such a way that you can go ahead and cope with less sleep.
Klejs: You don't get sick and you don't need to sleep.
Rønsholdt: You don't get sick and finally you almost don't need to eat anything and things like that and then it's enough! You can only do this for limited periods of time, but during the last period we've been very busy all the time and then it becomes a kind of…
Klejs: Permanent state…
Rønsholdt: Permanent state… and I can feel that I have to grow accustomed to it, because it might be like this…
Klejs: I have to be careful with that, because I don't think that I can stand it in the long run.
Rønsholdt: No. A question is how hard you push yourself and it can be quite fatiguing in the long run…

Klejs: Yes for sure and it taxes your reserves.
Rønsholdt: Because on the other hand, there is nothing as artistically inspiring as working with many things… it generates ideas!

It appears Rønsholdt and Klejs activate their maximal resources and invest almost all their energy in the projects. The adrenaline is up and they draw on their reserves. Klejs questions this way of working and living and points out that it may not be sustainable and healthy in the long run. Giving in to the absorbing flow might also contain a dark side. On the other hand, as a positive aspect, Rønsholdt mentions that this kind of multitasking also inspires and contributes to the generating of ideas.

At the same time, Teresa Amabile, who has been working with creativity research over decades, claims that creativity is most commonly related to low-pressure work environments and not nurtured by strict deadlines set by a manager (Amabile 1996, 1998, 2002). In addition to this and building upon Amabile's research, Sawyer (2007) concludes that "creativity requires that we encounter and internalize previous sparks of insight and it requires incubation time for those sparks to combine in the mind" (p. 167). Indeed, many of our interviews support this statement and show that for many people, we cannot rush creativity. Pressure of deadlines can often increase the rigidity of thinking and instead of being curious about alternatives, people feel forced to recycle old procedures, habits and ways of doing things. As we pointed out earlier, there must be time for curiosity, experimentation, play, exploration, following up, reflection, contemplation, incubation and making detours etc.

In summary, we have seen in the interviews that rules and frames can play an important role in fostering creativity. However, these structures must not become too rigid. The leader must also be aware of the fact that people work and flourish creatively in different rhythms and ways. A careful and intelligent way of leading and organising must include paying attention to these differences. The leader must remain flexible and be capable of varying his or her leading style in relation to the followers and the context and be careful not to force people into standardised models of working. Instead leaders must show confidence and encourage diversity and help individuals and teams to coordinate and integrate their differing working styles and differing ways of solving tasks.

Nurturing a Collaborative Climate for Creativity

We move now from issues of structuring to a major challenge to leadership: nurturing a collaborative working climate for creativity. Most traditional organisations are designed to minimise risk and possibly punish failure. These

are suppressive conditions for creativity because creativity –as we have seen– requires experimentation, improvisation and play. Participants need to try things out without fear of being punished for failure. Indeed, many artists and scholars of creativity claim that there is no creativity without failure. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, leaders who want creativity to thrive within their organisation must explicitly encourage the organisation's members to take risks and allow them to experiment and make mistakes as a valuable part of their work. It might be difficult to find the right balance between risk and control, but this is exactly one of the challenges that confront leadership today.

We have already seen the importance of creating a safety zone for people to work within. When people feel safe, they are more inclined to explore new areas and more courageous in challenging the status quo. People who feel insecure or do not have fundamental confidence in each other or in the leader are not likely to take risks. Psychologist Jane Henry (2004) claims the following:

> Generally the more creative the organisation, the more open the culture tends to be, people will feel free to make mistakes and challenge the status quo, conflicts are out in the open, the company will support risks, take decisions quicker and encourage networking. Less creative organisations are often rule and committee bound, people feel obliged to look busy, do not dare voice their opinion or suggestions for improvement and will cover up mistakes (pp. 167-168).

According to the findings from our interviews, we find that rules probably play a more central role in fostering creativity than previous research has shown. We do not think it is a matter of *not* having rules but a matter of what *kind* of rules the organisation values - for instance whether these rules are based on confidence and trust as opposed to command and control. Even Henry, who is quoted above, recommends a series of rules related to the facilitation of what is called creative problem solving (CPS) in groups. As she writes: "These rules help engage all members of the group and encourage them to contribute" (Henry 2004, p. 166). The rules that she recommends in CPS processes are:

- Split the stages of thinking
- Accept all ideas, sensible or crazy
- Be constructive and positive
- Use non-verbal media
- Involve all the group
- Alternate between divergent and convergent modes of thinking
- Use public display of key ideas
- Use visual display

- Stay open to intuitive hunches and gut feelings
- Listen to everyone
- Build on others' ideas
- Avoid criticism of others' ideas
- Avoid closing off options prematurely

We wonder what might happen if a group decided to work within this set of rules for a period of six months, for example. Would such an experiment contribute to collaborative creativity? The chances might be good if the leader and the organisational context support this process and provide reasonable working conditions, the necessary resources in terms of time, money, space, materials, access to knowledge and supportive feedback when needed.

In previous chapters we have also mentioned the production of "wreckage". We have seen this in examples explained by Barba, A. Koppel, Rønsholdt and Klejs. In creative work processes many ideas are proposed and materials developed that are never used. Although they might look like dead ends, these ideas and materials can be very important for the further development of the process. If an organisation wants to nurture a climate for creativity, it must be prepared for working in more circular processes and as mentioned earlier leave spaces open for improvisation, experimentation and detours. This is in contrast with the dominating tendency in our society today to optimise time and resources and reduce production costs to a minimum.

Another significant contribution to a collaborative climate results from the leaders' willingness to delegate decision-making. Several of the interviewed artists emphasise the necessity of creating a climate of fellowship instead of highly formalised hierarchies. Valeur explains:

> I would say that the good decisions are those where people agree on the result afterwards. The moments where I've felt that I was overruled by others or where I myself have resorted to my testosterone and said: "This is the way, I want it!" then something might come out of it, but it isn't the right thing that comes out of it. There must be some "peace in the valley", when you leave. There ought to be this feeling of having reached "the good". So for me decisions must be based on good compromises. I think that creative processes and great authority fit very badly, also in relation to the outcome you end up with.

Our interviews have shown the importance of generating trust and confidence, sharing ideas and giving the opportunity of making mistakes. This can be supported by nurturing a *no-fools-orientation* in the preliminary phase of a creative process. In line with Henry quoted earlier, we think that leaders and employees should be careful and humble about judging ideas too early in the process.

Assessment should not be part of the preliminary phases because it blocks creativity and instead of making individual assessments, which favour individualism and individual competition, it might be better if the group or team from time to time engaged in an internal dialogue about the process and the outcome. Here they might evaluate themselves and their work by asking themselves how they can learn from earlier experience and develop further in fruitful collaborative ways. In this way the evaluation takes a future-oriented direction and there are better chances of it strengthening team spirit. On the tension field between confidence and control, opera singer Marco Nisticò emphasises the importance of trust related to artistic leadership:

> If the leader is a good leader, I mean, if he is flexible and open to other people, the whole situation becomes a creative situation, but if he only follows his own reason the person is not flexible. I think it is very important that leadership is the right one and… sometimes I notice that the same person, who is supposed to be the boss, he changes, you know, he gets to know you and he relaxes and allows you to trust him. Leadership is basically a question of trust between the leader and the rest of the creative team. If the leader trusts the people, the people become able to create… if the leader doesn't trust the people and wants to control everything, then there is much less creativity going on…

It seems to be highly significant that the employees are positioned as resourceful and responsible contributors and that the leader shows confidence in the followers. The visual artist and designer Rosan Bosch says:

> If you have people working for you, then you might think you have to monitor whether they are actually spending their working hours on actual work. Jesus Christ, I mean this is so far out! People are responsible for what they do.

Very much in line with our findings, Sawyer (2007) emphasises the need for decentralisation of decision-making and recommends that the leader works more in terms of a catalyst, a facilitator, a connector, a cross-pollinator and carrier of knowledge. He describes it in this way:

> When information is shared through collaboration and decision-making is decentralised, there's no need for a hierarchy to gather and channel information to a single decision maker, as in the 1950s bureaucratic company. Instead, the manager is a catalyst and facilitator, acting as a connector between groups, a cross-pollinator and carrier of knowledge (Sawyer 2007, p. 173).

In regard to this and the earlier-mentioned elements, it is important to create a collaborative working environment, which emphasises the sharing of ideas. If creativity is to flourish within a group, then no individual should monopolise but should share his or her ideas; at the same time, the other members of the group should show interest in the ideas that he or she presents. The first

glimpse of an idea is never complete; but if there is something that attracts the attention of the other participants, it might be taken up, reinterpreted and developed further by others in the group. As we have seen in the interviews, new ideas take shape when they are woven into other ideas created by others and then synergy arises in relationships. This is what we see as collaborative emergence. In order to ensure the sharing of ideas it may be useful for the leader to ensure room and time for such activities and take the position as a facilitator or a process consultant in order to provide that idea sharing becomes part of the organisational culture. Again, it is a matter of creating a culture and a working environment, where a value is placed on *sharing* and not individual competition. Sharing of ideas can be supported by the use of social media and different kinds of digital platforms but can also be facilitated through meetings where dialogue is given high priority and maybe even visual scaffolding is used as we have seen in examples by Bosch and Rønsholdt and Klejs. Dialogue requires advanced skills by the leader and the followers concerning the orchestration of multiple voices at meetings, for instance, in cross-disciplinary project groups.

In order to nurture a collaborative and creative climate we must not forget the role of recognition. Our interviews reiterate the point that creativity is closely related to recognition and many of the interviewed artists emphasise the role of recognition as a motivational factor for their work. In the interview with Michael Valeur, he explains about the importance of recognition from his readers, his colleagues and other persons from the professional domain:

> There are people who're significant to you, where you think that the recognition from these people is really important. That concerns colleagues, for example, other people who're working artistically and creatively, people who have insider-knowledge; their recognition is really significant. In fact I really need that.

Valeur emphasises, too, the importance of recognition from the leader:

> Good leaders are people who can see where you are and your potentials and capabilities. They can see when it works for you and when it doesn't. That's something general but it's also an issue in the artistic working processes. These are people who can set fire under you, specifically where you have something special. It's about recognition […] when they say that "now it works", because this is the same as saying: "I'm interested in what you're saying".

In the example from Valeur recognition is closely related to the matter of showing interest in the other person's efforts, recognising the person in his or her process and spotting the potentials and strengths but also recognising when the person finds him- or herself in a difficult situation.

Granhøj, too, gives strong emphasis to recognition, but recognition symbolised in materiality, in this case a concrete building offered to the dance company by the municipality, which allows them to continue working:

> I'm afraid that recognition means everything to me. I have realised that. Some years ago I would have said that it didn't mean anything to me…but when we have to fight with the authorities in order to stay in this building and we meet resistance…well…when we come to that moment where I succeed in staying in this building, then in fact it is a matter of recognition, which allows me to continue working, so search for recognition is something fundamental. Maybe we as artists strive for recognition, we might have a bottomless craving for recognition, I don't know for sure, but that is my assumption today.

As our interviews suggest, not only recognition from a leader or an authority is important but also recognition from significant others, colleagues, other professionals, gatekeepers and from the users. Our interviews make the point that a receptive and positive resonance with the surrounding world is of great significance for the artists' motivation and creative production. We think that it is very important for leaders to be aware of this and that they strive to create a climate within the organisation, where people do not see each other as competitors but, on the contrary, feel good about appreciating and recognising each other for their ideas and efforts. Such an approach will contribute to and stimulate collaborative creativity.

Furthermore it is an advantage when people are capable of expressing and presenting their work to others in understandable and maybe even seductive terms, because then it becomes easier for other people to relate to their work and recognise their ideas. For instance, the fact that Rønsholdt and Klejs have developed a varied language about their work and their working processes seems to be a great advantage for them when they present their work to others - to cultural managers, curators, fund raisers and other gatekeepers. In their voices:

> Rønsholdt: It means a lot to the creative process how others react to your work. Constantly you move around and try out ideas and then you're aware of the reaction from others, you can somehow see it in their eyes, whether your idea really counts or not.
> Klejs: Yes, it's of huge importance for us, it really has a great significance whether somebody believes in us, for instance, that we have a publisher behind us and that these people are motivated to launch us at an international level and present our ideas and projects and that they wish to promote our projects and are willing to do all the other stuff, which is related to this promotion.

In short: recognition from the leader, colleagues, working partners, gatekeepers, the audience, readers and many others seems to be of crucial importance for enhancing motivation and creativity. In line with our findings, creativity researcher Rosalind Searle concludes that, "Research into teams has revealed that

participation, trust, task-based conflict resolution and external support are vital factors in creating a conducive atmosphere for creativity. Leaders, as well as co-workers, have significant roles to play in both the recognition and acknowledgement of creativity and in providing models of good practice" (Searle 2004, p. 184). We think that the leader who wishes to nurture creativity in an organisation must be aware of this concern and play an active role, for instance, by taking an appreciative and engaged approach and serving as an inspiring role model.

Leading for Creativity: A Relational Perspective

Earlier theories of leadership, like many creativity theories, are rooted in Western assumptions about the individual and his or her personal skills. Furthermore they are largely grounded in a bureaucratic framework developed for organisations in the Industrial Age. Often leadership has been linked to the ability to implement top-down decisions, where some people are destined to be "leaders" and others, to be "followers". Some are considered "natural born leaders". In this manner, emphasis is placed on the personality of the leader and specifically his or her drive, impact on others, ability to understand organisational functioning and to make so-called "rational decisions". This traditional paradigm focuses on how leaders can influence their employees to achieve desired objectives and goals.

However, if we wish our organisations to become more creative in our Post-industrial era, a new understanding of leadership is needed. Instead of seeing leading as an individual endeavour, we see leading for creativity primarily as a matter of leading within relationships. If we look upon leadership in a relational view, attention is then paid to the relationship between leader and followers and their ability to inspire each other in relational responsive processes. Here the basic assumption is that leading is a collaborative act within a social process, one that enables groups of people to work together and make decisions in meaningful ways. In a relational approach, leadership is not something that the single leader possesses, but something that is created and formed in the interplay between leaders, followers, collaborators, external partners and other stakeholders. In this perspective leadership is collaborative and constantly created and developed in relational processes. Leading for creativity relies on collaborative processes and depends on the contribution from all the actors involved. The participants must be recognised as resourceful working partners (see Hosking, Gergen & Dachler 1995, Hosking 2010, Cunliffe & Eriksen 2011, Hersted & Gergen 2013).

Csikszentmihalyi (1999) claims that highly hierarchical institutions, where knowledge of the past is greatly valued, generally see novelty as a threat. For this

reason, churches, academies and certain businesses promote older individuals to leadership positions as a way of warding off excessive change. Instead of clinging to rigid hierarchies and formal ways of communicating and making decisions, we see leading for creativity as a matter of co-creating an open-minded and risk-willing culture or working climate. In a relational focus, it is a matter of sharing, responding and motivating through reflexive dialogues and groups of employees and partners working together in collaborative constellations. Here, engagement and enthusiasm among the participants is of vital importance.

Sawyer (2007) and other scholars claim that collaborative creativity cannot be planned nor predicted and that it emerges from the bottom up, unexpectedly and through improvisation. In other words creativity has to be allowed to *emerge*. But if we cannot plan or predict creativity, what then would be the role of the leader? One important thing is the awareness of the significance of relationships. When collaborative creativity is at stake, relational leadership is essential. This means that the leader must nurture the relationships within the group and also give space for the development of the relationships between the group members and the surroundings. In the latter case, for example, the leader might encourage organisation members to read newspapers and books, seek inspiration from outside, take courses and search for new knowledge. Furthermore, we think it is important that the leader sets a frame where people can work both on an individual basis and share with others. As mentioned, we cannot command creativity but we can invite creativity to emerge by providing conducive work conditions. As proposed elsewhere "The leader cannot predict the consequences of a process, but new and exciting options are likely to emerge" (Hersted & Gergen 2013, p. 162).

Since collaborative creativity includes the ability to generate new ideas together in groups and teams, the leader must be able to loosen control, leaving a free space by offering the participants a frame for research and experimenting in their daily practice. The leader must be careful about not to interrupt and attempt to control the process too much.

For an individual or a group to develop, it is important to achieve constructive feedback from the leader and the surroundings. In addition, of vital importance is the ability to adapt to this feedback, which requires high flexibility, skills of improvisation and relational responsiveness within the group. In this respect, too rigid and formal structures will not allow the flexibility required in order to succeed because, as we have seen in previous chapters, it depends very much on dialogue, exchange of thoughts, building upon each other's ideas and coordinated action. It is a matter of finding the right balance between planning, structuring, improvising, experimenting, playing and path finding.

Moreover, leaders can play a significant role in supporting groups by creating contacts and practising lobbyism. We have seen the case of Odin Teatret, Hotel Pro Forma, Granhøj Dans and Bosch, where the directors also work as connectors to politicians, gatekeepers, cultural promoters and managers of cultural events at both national and international levels. If the leader functions as an ambassador for the group and builds up fruitful relationships with external bodies and authorities, he or she might provide extra resources or new possibilities, which can boost the performance of the group. These added resources or new possibilities can be in terms of time, money, administrative support, working facilities and material. They may also consist of access to knowledge and information, without forgetting openings for new relationships.

While looking at our interviews concerning creativity in a relational perspective, some central themes have emerged with frequency in our chapters. Our findings lead us to formulate a series of suggestions. For a leader who wants to enhance creativity in a collaborative setting, we draw attention to the following points:

- Participants derive inspiration and learn from each other and from significant others
- Participants bring in values, knowledge and ways of thinking from other relationships and from the cultures in which they have been participating
- The leader must encourage others in thinking and working together in collaborative and creative ways
- The leader must ensure diversity, dialogue and sharing of knowledge
- Instead of positioning him- or herself as an expert, the leader must develop skills in being a process leader in order to facilitate collaborative processes and encourage the creative potential among others
- The leader must ensure suitable frames and rules for play, but without becoming too rigid or over-structured
- A working environment based on confidence and recognition enhances creativity
- The leader can challenge and encourage risk-taking from within the zone of proximal development (ZPD)
- New ideas are often built on old ideas and developed through experimentation and sampling; it is therefore important to provide access to knowledge and inspiration from outside
- Creativity and learning are intertwined and it is important to develop the workplace as an environment for both individual and collaborative learning

- Overload of bureaucracy and administrative work is not conducive to creativity
- It is necessary to ensure time for experimentation, contemplation and incubation
- The leader must give space for pathfinding, detours and the production of "wreckage" instead of insisting on linear strategies of production
- By using metaphors, images and poetic ways of talking, imagination can be stimulated among employees, working partners, collaborators and even clients

Related to our findings, Ekvall (1991) has conducted comprehensive studies on creativity in collaborative settings. As he summarises, elements such as freedom (autonomy), trust, commitment and diversity of participants emerge as significant positive factors (Ekvall 1991). Ekvall notes the importance of open relationships between co-workers, as well as the significance of organisational support for new ideas for the enhancement of creativity. His research confirms, furthermore, the role of leaders in actively listening to the employees and the leader's contribution to the constructive handling of conflict. Also Amabile (1998) reaches conclusions similar to Ekvall. Based on decades of research, she identifies six overall categories of managerial practice that support creativity: challenge, freedom, resources, work-group features, supervisory encouragement and organisational support (Amabile 1998, p. 19).

Our interviews largely confirm the conclusions reached by Ekvall and Amabile. However, we would like to add and emphasise some insights from our research, which we think could serve as a further contribution to the debate on collaborative creativity and leadership. Below, we sum up some of the ways in which our inquiry expands on current thinking:

- While we find that while freedom is important, it is not a borderless freedom but a freedom within a frame. Working within a set of rules in fact enhances the creativity among the majority of the interviewed artists.
- It appears to us that the influence of role models and significant others has been underestimated in earlier research on creativity.
- Another important element is the importance of showing confidence with the actors and collaborators instead of exerting excessive control.
- An essential element is the relational factor. The leader must be aware of how he or she is functioning in relation to others in order to create and nurture an inspiring community of practise, a learning environment in which the employees and eventually clients or others from outside the organisation take part.

- An element, which is part of the relational approach, is the role of communication and how communication is intertwined with creativity and of crucial importance concerning idea development, constructive feedback and recognition. Related to this is the use of poetic and metaphorical communication and storytelling, which can be stimulating for the development of imagination and creativity.
- Furthermore we see the tendency among the artists of pathfinding instead of following strictly scheduled plans and strategies. This finding might serve as an important contribution to leaders who wish to enhance creativity in their own organisation.

Of course it is not clear yet how far we can extend our findings from artistic environments to more conventional organisational settings. But as we see it, one of the major challenges is that many of today's organisations are still characterised by rigid hierarchies, bureaucracy and lines of command, which makes it difficult to communicate and share knowledge in more informal ways. In addition, technological management systems and assessments of individual performance have become so effective in their regulation of conduct that they exclude time for experimentation and discourage risk-taking, improvisation, playfulness and informal dialogue. This kind of management often makes it difficult to legitimise taking time for reflection and the incubation of new ideas. As we have seen, creativity relies on these elements. An excessive level of control and distrust combined with high-pressure time schedules might produce short-term results but, in the long run, they often lead to a paranoid culture, the avoidance of risk-taking and stagnation.

An organisation based on command and control will find difficulty to adapt to change or develop new ideas and in this time of rapid social change, the chances for survival are reduced. In order to release the creative potential within an organisation we think that less bureaucracy is required and that leaders and followers need to define new and more flexible working environments and cultures based on dialogue, collaboration, confidence building, knowledge sharing, curiosity, play and experimentation. Furthermore, the allocation of time and resources for learning and team development must be of high priority. It is our hope that this book has given the reader some inspiration concerning creative work processes, the development of nurturing environments for creativity and also insights into collaborative creative work.

Epilogue

by Tatiana Chemi and Julie Borup Jensen

In the introduction to his *To the Actor (*1952), Russian actor and theatre director Michael Chekhov (1891-1955) saluted the reader in this way: "This book is the result of prying behind the curtain of the *Creative Process*" (Chekhov 1953, p. xi, capitals and italics in text). We, too, have attempted to give hints from behind the scenes of creative processes. As in Chekhov, this "prying" began for us long ago with our studies on creativity and artistic practices of creativity. Our latest research with artists from all art forms has been helpful and surprising, putting together the bits and pieces we had collected during the years. The interviewed artists let us have a look at their creative backstage and were generous in providing us with their narratives. Nevertheless, we are aware that our contribution is just a quick glance behind the scene of artistic creativity and that more studies will be needed in order to understand this phenomenon even better.

Overall, our research showed that combining the concepts of creativity, learning and relationship has the potential to reveal new and interesting insights into the creative process and to contribute to imagining new applications in various fields of theory and practice, where creativity as idea and phenomenon is relevant.

In part one, our research has contributed to the field of creativity with the insight that the act of defining creativity challenges artists, inasmuch as it forces them to speak a language –the propositional one– that they are not necessarily at ease with. However, they do not deny the definitional challenge and show a high level of reflection and self-reflection related to the topics of creativity and art-making. Our conversations with the artists reveal a probable definition of artistic creativity as being difficult to explain verbally, multi-faceted and complex, context-related and situated, compulsive (need, drive, urge), language-like but different from verbal or propositional language.

Artistic creativity is described as a sort of human universal: everyone has it as a potentially expressive force but its full realisation depends on craftsmanship, skills and virtuosity. This artistic state of mind is characterised by specific cognitive approaches and choices: wondering, asking questions and being curious, commitment to concentrated artistic practice, experimentation, play and hard work, communication, enquiry and action.

Artistic creativity can be broken down into a variety of structures but it seems to be basically conceived as a phenomenon related to thinking and processing impressions of the world, to solving problems often in non-linear ways and finding or formulating problems. Socio-cultural influences seem to be fundamental in framing artistic creativity with relational activities such as asking questions, wondering, being curious and engaging in a dialogue with oneself, with others or a tradition. Creativity is also explained in action-based terms as starting experiments and connections as well as doing things differently by making detours, staying deliberately in the not-knowing-zone and embracing uncertainty. The artists also describe creativity as demanding: a capacity for and commitment to concentration. Creating artistically is in many ways similar to research, but specifically it occurs through overlapping and interconnected waves flowing in complex, serendipitous patterns.

Artistic creativity is a long-term project and is related to identity-building. It often starts with transformative life experiences. Artists draw inspiration from a variety of experiences that are sought intentionally, over a long-term exposure. They then intentionally collect ideas in a sort of idea-reservoir always ready to be activated for specific creative purposes. Idea generation is not a problem: ideas are there, what artists focus on is "how to" engage in a dialogue with the medium. They do this by means of rules (these are necessary), internalisation (active and creative), stages in the creation process that are parallel rather than subsequent in time, virtuosity and commitment to hard work (expected and nurtured).

Artistic creation happens in a state of deep concentration and self-forgetting (flow).

Flow states are instrumentally induced in order to facilitate artistic creation, therefore artistic processes can be exhausting or frustrating as much as enjoyable. Artists report a broad variety of positively felt emotions in relation to artistic creativity and welcome challenges as a part of the process. Artistic creation is driven by strong motivational aspects, perseverance and resilience, to be cultivated throughout life.

In a one-liner we can say that creating artistically is a matter of AWE (Ability, Will, Environment), but also of *awe* as wonder and amazement.

In part two, concerning the relationship between learning, creativity and artistic processes, we found that when artists perceive creativity in the ways described above, they also experience learning and creativity as intertwined and interwoven with artistic work processes. However, not just any kind of learning process involves creativity and not just any kind of learning promotes or fosters creativity. Creative processes seem to relate to specific understandings and types of learning that in line with the creative process are experiential, explorative,

problem-based, accommodative, mediated and sensory-aware. These types of learning have both an individual-personal as well as a collaborative, social and cultural side to them.

The findings in relation to individual-personal learning and creativity were that artists tend to develop personal strategies for intentional learning, which begin with mastering the craft of a chosen art form and aim at creating opportunities to engage in open, explorative and continual learning processes. These strategies are used in relation to technique acquisition, continual learning and open engagement with the world. The artists carry out the strategies by means of practising skills involving sensory awareness and reflection, by challenging their own knowledge, meaning and basic assumptions and through curiosity. The outcome of these learning and development processes is sensory openness, experimentation and improvisation, reflective processes and transformative learning.

Concerning the collaborative, social and cultural sides of the explorative learning processes, we found that artistic communities of practice provide a range of learning opportunities and possibilities for artists. These learning opportunities seem to be of non-formal or informal and situated character within the communities. Apprenticeship is an interpretive learning concept in this respect. Also the formal educational system was examined in respect of learning opportunities and opportunities for creative processes in light of cultural-educational concepts. Our findings show that the learning potential of these environments seems to involve conforming aspects like participation in shared work, imitation and adaptation into the cultures of the art form, but also explorative aspects like mutual inspiration, finding own uniqueness, unlimited experiments and supportive mentors. The latter aspects seem to be dependent on the former, although excessive emphasis on conformity seems to discourage and demotivate the artists in respect of learning.

Our findings concerning learning have been examined within perspectives for formal learning environments. The interesting concept of serendipity functioned as a way to conceptualise and make transferrable to educational settings the ways in which artists work and learn in explorative, uncertain and unpredictable creative processes of art-making. Findings concerning qualities of explorative learning such as uncertainty and unpredictability seem to be challenging educational thinking widely in Western societies. Unpredictability bears a high risk in relation to the strong emphasis on competition and comparison that urge educational policy development to focus on certainty, predictability and standards for measuring and comparing. Therefore, we suggest serendipity as a concept for pedagogical consideration, which may help educators and educational developers both in managing strong focus on knowledge building and in letting

the students engage in unpredictable and uncertain activities to spark creativity within explorative learning processes.

Summing up parts one and two, the development of learners' creative approaches and skills depends on learning environments. Their ability to provide aesthetic, explorative and reflective learning opportunities and support is fundamental to learners. One effective tool for achieving creative learning environments is a pedagogical focus on the individuals' possibilities of finding their own uniqueness and realising their unique potential. This is achieved by relating to and interacting with a community. However, our research also shows that this area deserves serious further investigation, as well as practical development of pedagogy.

Part three is about creativity in a relational perspective and sheds light on important aspects of relational inspiration, collaborative creativity, organising creative work processes and artistic leadership. We also trace some perspectives of leadership regarding the enhancement of creativity seen from a relational approach.

On this subject, our findings show that artists' creative working processes develop in constant dialogue with traditions, at the same time as they search for opportunities and ways to create material "outside the box". The concept of "outside the box" means that artists combine and deconstruct elements from different traditions in order to renew domain-specific modes of expression. The interviewed artists do not work in a vacuum but always relate to others; ancestors, colleagues, family members, friends, audience, readers and gatekeepers such as cultural promoters, cultural managers, publishers etc. The artists achieve inspiration from significant others, who might even have a psychological function of internalised others and who play an evaluative or supportive role in the artists' way of thinking and working. The interviews have shown that the artists draw inspiration and motivation both from an inner social audience and from external recipients and that inspiration from role models seems to play a significant role in the development of an artist.

Our findings on collaboration in artistic teamwork concern the ways in which artists work together on a collaborative basis and build on each other's ideas. These collaborative working processes are characterised by relational responsiveness and responsibility between the participants and their collaboration is enhanced by elements such as aesthetic sensibility, confidence, experimentation, improvisation, playfulness, dialogue and coordinated action. Our findings furthermore indicate that most often these collaborative practices take place and develop within a set of common rules and a certain frame for creativity to occur. By establishing a frame of safety supported by a set of rules, the artists encourage each other and themselves to move towards the edge of the zone of proximal

development (ZPD) and maybe even abandon the ZPD. Within a web of relationships they challenge themselves and each other and take risks in an explorative search for new artistic material.

Concerning the artists' organising of creative work, we found that most of the artists have several projects going on at the same time and they move within the midst of complexity in a network of relationships. At the same time they tend to protect their work from undesired distractions by creating frames for their work in terms of time and space. Often the artists work creatively in waves or intervals. Instead of long term strategic planning, the artists rather practise a kind of *pathfinding*, which facilitates the emergence of new ideas and experimentation with the development of new material. It also means that they work within opposites and paradoxes, where they exert a high tolerance level for frustration. The artists find their creative and professional path by moving between structure and spontaneity and between individual and collaborative work. They give and achieve inspiration from participating in different kinds of relationships and networks, from travelling and from cultural exchange.

Our findings have led us to formulate a series of suggestions for leaders concerned with creativity. Firstly, the leader must leave the expert role and move into the role of process leader in order to liberate the creative potential of others. The leader must ensure diversity, dialogue and sharing of knowledge in groups and teams and provide access to knowledge and inspiration from the outside. Suitable frames and rules for play and experimentation are important, but without becoming too rigid or over-structured. Secondly, a working environment based on mutual confidence and recognition enhances creativity, but the leader can challenge and encourage risk-taking from within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). Thirdly, in order to minimise creativity-killing bureaucracy, the leader must provide space and time for pathfinding and detours, instead of insisting on linear strategies and rigid time schedules. It is necessary to ensure time for experimentation, contemplation and incubation. Fourthly, communicative skills and dialogical resources from the leader are of crucial importance. For instance, the use of metaphors, images and poetic ways of talking can stimulate imagination and creativity among employees

Summing up parts one and three, we found that the artists have recipients clearly in mind, but suspend their awareness of recipients in order to keep the artistic process open and surprising as long as possible. This also means that significant others are welcomed into the artistic process, but based on a feeling of trust and only when the process allows it. The organisational side of shaping creative processes involves breaks, pauses and interruptions, as these can have fertile influences on the process of creation.

To conclude, we can say that a great deal of attention and research is still needed in the field of artistic creativity. For instance, from our research some topics emerged very clearly, but could not be addressed in this book, as they involve wider research fields and implications.

One such topic is the alleged positive value of creativity. As mentioned by opera singer Marco Nisticò artistic creativity, like creativity in general, is ethic neutral.

Responding to our additional questions by email (15.04.2013), on the very day of the Boston bombings, Nisticò ended his correspondence with a footnote:

> I'm very shocked and saddened by what happened in Boston. Humans can certainly be creative in their hatred as well as in their arts. Unfortunately they tend to do more harm than create beauty… and that's really sad.

Creativity can be of any ethical value. There is no added value in the word as such and the creative skill can be applied to very different uses.

As early as 1932, Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud exchanged letters on the theme "why war?" (Einstein, Freud & Gilbert 1933). This conversation was then published for the League of Nations in 1933 and later documented and reported (1969). Caught between World War I and the terrifying forewarnings of World War II, the two scientists spent some time reflecting on the power of creativity, admitting that creativity in itself is a neutral power, which can be used for good, or evil. They concluded that the more creative an individual is, the more he or she is able to channel the vitality of creativity into constructive projects.

The neutrality of creativity can be symbolised in cultural artefacts such as gunpowder, a wonderful discovery, which can be used either to kill human beings, with guns, or to amuse them, with fireworks. What is conveyed in most literature, policy development, general and common understandings is that creativity is a purpose or a goal to be achieved, an end to a process, whereas our book clearly shows that creativity can also be seen as a means of creating renewal in a field. Whether this renewal is good or bad is sometimes a question of its concrete use, negotiations of good or bad, in other words, ethics.

Throughout our book artistic creativity is perceived and understood as constructive contribution to human development and the artist's creativity is applied to the fields of education and leadership as a progressive means of change and innovation, or even better as fulfilment. This means that development of creative pedagogies or leadership concepts should involve ethical considerations in respect of the purposes, outcomes and consequences of creative processes – are they good and for whom and why? This value-giving and ethical dimension

merits more attention, especially when creativity is developed in educational or leadership tasks.

Another aspect to the topic of ethics is that the societal demand for economic growth and competitiveness gives rise to a constant pressure in Western cultures to be willing to adapt, to be proactive and flexible. This discourse is increasingly legitimised by the term creativity, which then obtains a normative function. As we stated above, it seems as if creativity is a purpose *per se*. However, as we have seen in this book, creativity can involve deeply stressful, anxiety-provoking states for individuals, if the demands of creativity lead to imposed transformative and life-changing learning. Therefore, management or educational demands for creativity should entail ethical considerations on the consequences for the human beings involved.

A second topic that emerged in our interviews but did not find enough place in the present book is the relationship of creativity and power.

Today's rush for creativity and innovation raises constant demands for new inspiration, new methods and new tools. Organisations especially, but in growing magnitude also educational institutions at all levels, have felt a drive towards the instrumental use of artists and artistic creativity in business environments.

Financial power has always collaborated with artists, as the former would see its ideology celebrated in the latter's work and the latter would get funding and prestige from the sponsor. This is true for the Roman Emperors as well as for the free towns in ancient Greece, for the Roman Catholic popes and the Ottoman Empire's Suleiman, for the private patrons of the arts in the Renaissance and the public governmental institutions of the 20th century. Sponsorship has always been concerned with activities such as entertainment and decoration. The Sistine Chapel in the Vatican is not only Michelangelo's masterpiece but also an ideological manifesto for the Medici popes; Shakespeare's plays are not only a piece of dramaturgical perfection but also in their social context an element of entertainment for the Elizabethan court and subjects.

What have modern educational systems and organisations discovered in the arts, then? They have possibly discovered art as *Bildung*, development and creation of value or, rather, education in its wholeness of holistic personal development.

A third topic, strictly related to the others above, concerns the dark side of creativity, in terms of mental illness and coping strategies. Writer Siri Hustvedt, who is very interested in the neurological aspects of writing, mentions Dostoyevsky's temporal lobe epilepsy: "Temporal lobe epilepsy is sometimes accompanied by a need to write, […] but what Dostoyevsky wrote is no part of that. In other words there is any number of temporal lobe epileptics who have felt a tremendous

need to write and they write terrible stuff. For Dostoyevsky it all worked out, because we want to read what that man had to say in his novels". Even though the relationship between creativity and mental illness has been often investigated (Silvia & Kaufman 2010, Cropley et al. 2010), we believe that looking beyond the myth of the mad artist and looking into the close relationship between emotions and learning would bring new perspectives to this topic.

In our concluding remarks, we wish to go back to Michael Chekhov (1953) and borrow from his book *To the Actor* his "memo to the reader", where he warns the reader that all that his book contains is not understandable without active cooperation and practice of the actor's craft:

> I NEED your help.
> The abstruse nature of the subject requires not only concentrated reading, not alone clear understanding, but *co-operation* with the author. For that which could easily be made comprehensible by personal contact and demonstration, must of necessity depend on mere words and intellectual concepts. […] Unfortunately, there is no other way to co-operate: the technique of acting can never be properly understood without *practising* it (p. xv, emphasis and capitals in text).

With Chekhov, we believe that our words might have provided knowledge, insights and inspiration, but artistic creativity can never be properly understood without practising it.

Meeting the artists

by Tatiana Chemi

The study in numbers

Number of artists interviewed: 22.
Number of interviews: 18.
Number of minutes/hours of audio-files: 1378.66 minutes = 23 hours
Artistic modalities covered in the interviews: literature, poetry and scripts (Hustvedt, Ramsland, Valeur); dance and choreography (Granhøj); acting and theatre directing (Barba, Varley, Dehlholm); music (A. Koppel, B. Koppel, Nisticò, The Mira Quartet); film-making (Olesen, Jordan); visual arts (Kvium, Nord); digital arts (Klejs, Rønsholdt); design (Bosch, Fjord); architecture (I. Exner, J. Exner).

Artists' biographies

Below are all the artists interviewed in alphabetical order. The short biographies are just a brief indication of the impressive achievements of these artists. For each artist, we have added a reference to a personal web site or a specific web-resource, when the artist confirmed the accuracy of the source. Most of these artists' lives and works have been analysed and commented on in a long list of bibliographic contributions, which have been taken into consideration in the making of the present book and quoted accordingly. Lastly, we indicate which researcher conducted the interview and the date of the interview. Live interviews conducted through web-based communication are indicated as "Skype". Otherwise, the method used was the face-to-face individual or group interview. Artists interviewed together were: A. Koppel and B. Koppel; Klejs and Rønsholdt; I. Exner and J. Exner; Signe Madsen and Birgitte Bærentzen Pihl from The Mira Quartet. A couple of artists sent us additional information via email, also noted in parenthesis.

Anders Koppel (b. 1947). Son of Danish composer and pianist Herman D. Koppel. As a child he sang in the Copenhagen Royal Chapel Choir. He received piano lessons from his father and sister from age 4 and at 14 took up the clarinet, making several television and concert appearances, such as in 1962 with

the first performance of his father's *Variations*. In 1967 he joined the legendary rock group *Savage Rose* together with his brother Thomas. The band toured all over Europe, coast-to-coast USA and recorded 8 albums in studios in London, Los Angeles, Rome and Copenhagen. He left the group in 1974 to focus on his first solo recordings, *Valmuevejen* with Danish singer Otto Brandenburg and *Aftenlandet & Regnbuefuglen* in 1975. He co-founded in 1976 the world-music trio *Bazaar* (bassoon/clarinet, percussion and organ) and is still performing regularly after 9 albums and 35 years of career. In 1974-80 he was very active as a record producer and studio musician, also composing music for many films, plays, TV games, ballets, musicals, commercials and radio plays, as well as a number of works of various classics. Since 1996 he has also been playing with his son, saxophone-player Benjamin Koppel in the trio *Koppel-Andersen-Koppel* and recently in projects with international musicians such as Miroslav Vitous and Kenny Werner. With *Toccata for marimba and vibes* he began his career as a composer with success and went on to give more than a thousand performances all around the world. Anders Koppel is an exceptionally versatile musician and composer who moves freely among jazz, folk, rock and classical music. Koppel has received several prizes and awards and has twice been awarded a *Robert* for best film score ('94 and '96). In 2001, he was awarded a lifetime grant from the Danish State.

Read more at: http://www.myspace.com/anderskoppel

Interviewed by Julie Borup Jensen (04.10.2012).

Annette K. Olesen (b. 1965) is a Danish film director. Starting from her first motion picture, *Små Ulykker* (Small Accidents), she attracted international attention and professional recognition. The film was nominated for the Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2002 and received the Blue Angel there in the same year. She studied film direction at the Danish Film School, and graduated in 1991. Since then, she has directed, written and taught in the field of film-making. All her four feature films have been awarded several prizes at various international and national film festivals: 2008 *Lille Soldat* (Little Soldier), 2006 *1:1*, 2004 *Forbrydelser* (Crimes) and 2002 *Små Ulykker* (Small Accidents), all produced by Zentropa with external support. She has also directed short films and documentaries.

For TV she directed four episodes of the Danish TV series *Borgen*, based on the dramatisation of Danish politics, which gained international fame and was broadcast internationally. It became a hit in the UK and US. She also teaches at the Danish Film School and at several masterclasses around the world (Norway, Amsterdam, Cairo). She has been awarded grants and scholarships from several Danish national institutions.

Benjamin Koppel (b. 1974) is a Danish saxophonist and composer and son of Danish musician and composer Anders Koppel (see above). Koppel's musical background is deeply rooted in his family's tradition. The musical genres that his family cultivates range from classical to jazz and pop and Benjamin masters them all with the utmost perfection. He formed his first band when he was 15 years old and has appeared on more than 50 recordings. Benjamin debuted on CD in 1993 with the release *Benjamin Koppel Quartet*. Since then, he has released more than 35 records as a soloist, composed more than 200 pieces of music and worked on more than 100 CD releases. He is the man behind the festivals Valby Summer Jazz and Valby Winter Jazz. The variety of his musical collaborations is wide and has established him internationally as a sought-after musician. As a soloist and bandleader, he has performed and recorded with Phil Woods, Daniel Adam Nussbaum, Randy Brecker, Chano Domininguez, Phil Woods, Charlie Mariano, Portinho, David Sanchez, Sheryl Crow, Kenny Werner and others. In 2001 Benjamin Koppel formed his own independent record label, Cowbell Music, which releases high quality jazz as well as classical, crossover and pop music. Cowbell Music also books concerts for some of its affiliated artists. Benjamin Koppel is one of the most award-winning musicians of his generation, known for his versatility and virtuosity.

Eugenio Barba (b. 1936) emigrated in 1954 from Italy, his homeland, to Norway, to work as a welder and a sailor. At the same time, he took an M.A. in Literature and History of Religion at Oslo University. In 1961 he went to Poland to learn directing at the State Theatre School in Warsaw, but left one year later to join Jerzy Grotowski, who at that time was the director of the Theatre of 13 Rows in Opole. Barba stayed with Grotowski for three years. In 1963 he travelled to India where he studied Kathakali, subsequently writing an essay on this genre, which was immediately published in Italy, France, USA and Denmark. When Barba returned to Oslo in 1964, he wanted to become a professional theatre director, so he gathered a few young people who had not been accepted by the State Theatre School and created Odin Teatret in October 1964. Two years later, he and the theatre moved to Holstebro, a small town in Denmark, to create a theatre laboratory there. Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret became a legend in modern theatre: with 31 performances, 12 work-demonstrations and several barters (cultural exchanges) and international

performing projects, the group has gained international standing with its own independent and original theatre tradition. Odin Teatret contributes to the field of theatre science too, by conceptualising and practicing Theatre Anthropology and by founding in 1979 the International School of Theatre Anthropology, in 1990 the University of Eurasian Theatre and in 2002 the Centre for Theatre Laboratory Studies. Barba is a member of numerous editorial boards of international theatre journals and has written many influential books, translated into numerous languages. He has received many awards, among others: *Reconnaissance de mérite scientifique* from Montreal University, the Pirandello International Prize, the Sonning Prize from the University of Copenhagen and in 2011 the *Håbets pris*. He holds honorary doctorates from the universities of Aarhus, Ayacucho, Bologna, Havana, Warsaw, Plymouth, Hong Kong, Buenos Aires, Tallinn and Cluj-Napoca. Among the artists who have influenced the 20th century history of theatre, Barba is a true innovator, having worked in a whole new way in all areas of the theatre. Read more at: http://www.odinteatret.dk/about-us/eugenio-barba.aspx
Interviewed by Lone Hersted (12.02.2013, additional information 15.07.13).

Inger Exner (b. 1926). Danish architect married to architect Johannes Exner (see profile below). She grew up in Randers with four sisters. During her childhood, she was fond of drawing, although she received no form of lessons or training and none of her parents or siblings were masters of this art. After graduating from high school (Randers State School) in 1945, she had no doubts about moving to the capital to study at *the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture* in Copenhagen (1946-54). She entered the Academy after passing exams in drawing and maths, being one of only three women out of forty students admitted. While studying, she worked (1951-53) at Bjorn & Bernadotte, the first Danish design studio, which had a special flair for industrial design at that time. Inger's tasks allowed her to learn about industrial design, designing cutlery and calculators. In 1949 she got engaged to Johannes and married him in 1952. She had known him since high school. He followed her to the Academy and was inspired by her drawing projects. Together they had four children. They started their own drawing studio in 1958 and since then have been collaborating on building and restoration tasks, as well as on management of their studio. They share work-tasks, interests and public recognition (see Johannes' profile), even though she thinks of herself as the "practical" mind in the couple. At age 86 she began taking oil painting lessons.
Read more at: http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Kunst_og_kultur/Arkitektur/Danmark/ Johannes_Exner
Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (16.01.2013).

Johannes Exner (b. 1926). Danish architect and professor. Son of a Lutheran pastor. After graduating from Randers High School in 1945, he first studied forestry at agricultural college, then entered the *Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture* where he graduated in 1954. He married Inger Exner, whom he had known since high school, in 1952. They started their own drawing studio in 1958. Together with his wife, Johannes is known as an eminent expert on church buildings and restoration. Because of the couple's long work-life association, their achievements cannot be distinguished. They have built many churches in Denmark, Præstebro Kirke in Herlev (1966-69), Nørrelandskirken in Holstebro (1967-69), Islev Kirke in Copenhagen (1968-69), Gug Kirke in Aalborg (1973) and Sædden Kirke in Esbjerg (1978). These buildings are designed according to the so-called circumstantial principle, in their opinion, the one best suited to the Lutheran Evangelical Liturgy. While working for Professor Mogens Koch, Johannes strengthened his interest in surveying and restoration and also acted as an assistant in teaching these disciplines until 1965, when he became associate professor and head of the restoration, surveying and architectural history department at the newly established School of Architecture in Aarhus. He was a professor in 1984-92. Johannes and Inger also created *Frederik 9th's necropolis* at Roskilde Domkirke along with architect Vilhelm Wohlert, inaugurated in 1985. Johannes and Inger Exner are internationally highly respected. Their prominent works include the *Rundetaarn* and *Trinitatis Kirke* (1981-83). The work that brought them most acclaim was the restoration of *Koldinghus*, a royal castle from the mid-thirteenth century and known as the last royal castle on the Danish peninsula of Jutland. The originality of their restoration of *Koldinghus* (1972-92), with its regard for the standing ruin, was awarded the Europa Nostra Prize in 1994. They received several national and international awards, including the Eckersbergs Medal in 1983 and C. F. Hansen Medal in 1992.
Read more at: www.denstoredanske.dk/Kunst_og_kultur/Arkitektur/Danmark/Johannes_Exner
Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (16.01.2013).

Julia Varley (Odin Teatret) (b. 1954). English-Italian actress. Born in London, at the age of three she moved to Milan, Italy where she did her schooling, including Philosophy Studies at Milan University. Before joining Odin Teatret in 1976, she worked in Milan with several theatre groups - Teatro del Drago, Centro Sociale Santa Marta and Circolo La Comune, earning her living as an assistant film producer. With Odin Teatret, Julia Varley teaches in schools and universities and has synthesised her experience in four work demonstrations: *The Echo of Silence*, *The Dead Brother, Text, Action, Relations* and *The Flying Carpet*. Since

1990, she has been involved in the conception and organisation of ISTA and of the University of Eurasian Theatre, both directed by Eugenio Barba (see profile above). Since 1986, she has been active in the Magdalena Project, a network of women interested in and working with contemporary theatre and also artistic director of Transit International Project. In the framework of the Magdalena Project, Julia also takes part in the collaborative project *Women with Big Eyes,* which has been performed in Denmark and Cuba. In connection with Odin Teatret's intercultural productions and Holstebro Festuge, Julia has started an ongoing pedagogical collaboration with groups of young actors in Denmark and abroad. She has directed two productions with Pumpenhaus Theater in Germany *Auf den Spuren des Yeti* and *Blau*, two productions with Ana Woolf from Argentina *Seeds of Memory* and *White is the Night*, a children's production with Hisako Miura from Japan *Fox Wedding* and two productions with Lorenzo Gleijeses and Manolo Muoio *Il figlio di Gertrude* and *L'esausto o il profondo azzurro* and another with Gabriella Sacco *The Taste of Oranges* from Italy. She has worked as assistant director for the films *Anabasis* and *On the Two Banks of the River,* and for the production of the film *Come! And the Day Will Be Ours.* Varley is also very active in the field of publishing, being editor of *The Open Page* and author of two books, several articles and essays.
Read more at: http://www.odinteatret.dk/about-us/actors/julia-varley.aspx
Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (22.09.2012 and 24.10.2012).

Julie Nord (b. 1970). Danish visual artist who lives and works in Copenhagen. In 1994 she started her studies at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen and graduated in 2001. She performs neat, surreal and often very large drawings in pencil, felt pen, ink and watercolour. Her work is on show at several Danish public museums (Vejle Museum, AROS, National Gallery, Arken), and, among others, at *V1 Gallery*, Copenhagen, DK, *Houldsworth Gallery*, London, UK, and *Galleri Brandstrup*, Oslo, N. In spite of her young age, she has achieved international recognition since 2002, with exhibitions in Syria, US, UK, Sweden, Spain, Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Norway, Finland, Austria, Germany, France, Shanghai and Singapore. She has received several honorary or production grants and since 2003 has increasingly attracted press coverage of her works. Several publications have been written about her work.
Read more at: http://julienord.dk/English.html
Interviewed by Julie Borup Jensen (Skype 22.04.2013).

Kirsten Dehlholm (Hotel Pro Forma Teater) (b. 1945) Danish director and theatre manager, trained as a textile artist at art schools in Germany and Denmark.

After she completed her education in 1969, Dehlholm worked as a set designer for several underground theatre groups before she formed Billedstofteatret (Slide Fabric Theatre) together with Per Flink Basse in 1977 and Hotel Pro Forma along with Willie Flindt in 1985. Dehlholm is a visual artist, theatre director, writer and speaker and at Hotel Pro Forma she is artistic director and manager. Hotel Pro Forma has been active on the national and international scene for twenty years, during which it has experimented with works in the borderland between art, architecture and theatre. Although Hotel Pro Forma has performed more than forty works and these performances are fundamentally diverse, they share some common features, for example, a very clean and architectural aesthetic expression. For Dehlholm –as for her inspirations, Pole Tadeusz Kantor and American Robert Wilson– space and visual images are fundamental. They affect perception and the senses while posing the spectator great existential questions. The choice of a particular building or a specific place is crucial for the expression and the topics she subsequently examines, such as in very visual works like *Darwin and Evolution*, and *Operation: Orfeo*. She actively collaborates with architects, writers and composers, in an experimental approach that has gained her international attention as a unique innovator of performative language. She has performed all over Scandinavia and Europe, as well as in Israel, Hungary, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Singapore and Australia. Dehlholm received the Thorvaldsen Medal in 2013 and she receives from the Danish State a special lifelong grant for distinguished artists.

Read more at: http://www.hotelproforma.dk/?side=
Interviewed by Lone Hersted (17.10.12).

Marco Nisticò (b. 1967). Italian-American opera singer (baritone). Born in Naples, Italy, into a family of musicians he began his operatic studies there under the tutelage of his father, a singer at the San Carlo Theatre and teacher at the Naples and Avellino conservatories. He went on to study theatre and mime at the Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris, before moving to New York. Marco became a Resident Artist at the New York City Opera after a successful debut in the role of Morales in *Carmen* (Bizet) in spring of 2005 followed in 2006 by performances of Prudenzio in *Il Viaggio a Reims* (Rossini) and Schaunard in *La Bohème* (Puccini). In 2002 at New York's Brooklyn Academy of Music, he was heard in *Orfeo* (Monteverdi) and at the Wexford Festival Opera in Ireland as Figaro in *The Barber of Seville* and Duroseaux and Renaud in *Manon Lescaut* (Auber), and at the ASLICO festival in Italy as Taddeo in *L'Italiana in Algeri* (Rossini). In 2001, he toured extensively in The Netherlands as Figaro. Career highlights in recent seasons included collaborations with New York City Opera,

Sarasota Opera, Naples Opera, FL, Caramoor Festival, Guadalajara Opera (MX). Gotham Chamber Opera, and Toledo Opera. Most recent engagements include his return to Sarasota Opera as *Rigoletto* (Verdi), in the autumn of 2012 and Le Dancaïre in *Carmen* (Bizet) with the Metropolitan Opera, in February 2013. Read more at: http://www.marconistico.com/
Interviewed by Julie Borup Jensen (Skype 15.04.2013, additional information 15.04.2013).

Mary Jordan (b. 1969). American film director, producer, cultural entrepreneur and multi-artist. She grew up in the Bronx and in Toronto, Canada and studied literature, cultural and social anthropology and art. At the age of 18, after a trip through North Africa, she made her first documentary film, a work about female circumcision. At the age of 20 she was the producer for several Canadian directors. Since 2005, she has been mainly living and working in New York, and since 2013 she divides her time between the US and Estonia. In 2005 she was acclaimed by the magazine *Filmmaker* as one of the 25 new talents of independent film-making. She is active in not-for-profit activities, such as *Word Above the Street,* an initiative that produces visionary art exhibitions with a focus on social issues. While in Africa, she became aware of the issue of clean water scarcity, following which she started a public awareness campaign with the *Water Tank Project*. Jordan's first feature length film, *Jack Smith and the Destruction of Atlantis*, produced by the American artist Richard Prince, was named one of the top ten A-list movies of 2007 by Entertainment Weekly. The film received the Tribeca Film Festival Jury Award, the Best Documentary Award from the Turin International Film Festival, the Jury Award from the International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film and the Jury Award for Extraordinary Documentary Film Talent. It was shown at the Venice Biennial, Haus der Kulturen der Welt in Berlin, Brisbane Powerhouse, ISSUE Project Room and Nuit Blanche in Paris. Moreover it has been utilised as informational and educational material by film schools around the globe, including NYU and the New School. In 2013 she founded the Kau Academy at the Kau manor in the countryside of Tallin, Estonia. The academy will be a cultural centre for Estonian and international artists. Read more at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Jordan_(filmmaker)
Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (Skype 10.04.2013).

Michael Kvium (b. 1955). Danish visual artist. Started his career as a cartoonist at Horsens Folkeblad where he worked until 1979. Then he enrolled at the Royal Danish Academy in Copenhagen from where he graduated (1979-85). His works are represented in various museums in China, Switzerland, Netherlands,

Sweden, Norway and Denmark and his individual or collaborative works have been displayed in USA, Germany, UK, Belgium, New Zealand, Finland, Argentina, Brazil, Italy, and France. In his paintings, drawings and graphic art he works with a grotesque figurative realism. From the late 1980s, virus-like forms began visualising surreal life cycles. This is also reflected in his figurative pictures from the early 1990s, often in the form of human-like shapes wrapped in bandages as an expression of paralysis and existential claustrophobia, for example, Choir (1991, Danish National Gallery of Art). Larger exhibitions were held at ARoS Aarhus Art Museum (2006) and Ordrupgaard (2007) where, in addition to earlier works, they showed a new direction in Kvium's art, with the relationship to nature and landscape often treated in very large images. His work has given rise to a number of grotesque video stories, comics and performances, conducted in the Performance Group Worst or together with members of the workshop under the same name. Kvium received the Eckersberg Medal in 2001. He has also designed theatre sets in collaboration with director Katrine Wiedemann at Edison in 1997, for *Alice in the Underworld by herself* and Hans Kragh-Jacobsens (b. 1945), and at the Betty Nansen Theatre in 1998 for Tom Waits' *The Black Rider*. Together with Christian Lemmerz, Kvium created *The Wake* (2000), an eight-hour 35 mm silent film in several simultaneous versions inspired by James Joyce's novel *Finnegans Wake*.

Read more at: http://www.michaelkvium.com/

Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (30.01.2013).

Michael Valeur (b. 1961). Danish writer and musician. During his school years at Vallensbaek State School he was a part of the cultural environment from which the Danish punk band *Gate Crashers* and *Hubert Bath Hotel* arose. At the beginning of 1981, Valeur went to New York, where he got acquainted with the local punk environment. After his return, Valeur chose to focus fully on his writing. He read his poems aloud during concerts and demonstrations. In 1982 he joined the electro-synth band Scatterbrain on tour and started collaborating with Jesper Siberg. In the beginning, this was about finding soundscapes to accompany Valeur's words, but the project became increasingly ambitious. In July 1982, the two worked on the record *Darkness' Shattered Eye* (*Mørkets Splintrede Øje*). The recordings were made in Jesper Siberg's apartment in Copenhagen. They used a reel tape recorder, rhythm machine and synth, while the vocals were recorded on a microphone taped to a painter's ladder and Michael Rasmussen from *Before* added the drums. *Darkness' Shattered Eye* was released in December 1982 on Irmgardz. The same month, Valeur and Jesper Siberg performed on *Channel 22* on the Danish national TV-broadcast, Danmarks Radio. Valeur also appeared

at the Roskilde festival in '83-84 with his readings and in 1985 contributed to the anthologies *Ungdomsliv* and *Dreaming Tabs*. Together with Jesper Siberg he recorded *Love for the Knife*, released by Sam Records. Since then Valeur has continued his work in poetry, while also working on theatre scripts, radio dramas, augmented reality, computer games and multimedia development, teaching and lecturing activities and installations. Valeur is at the moment working on an educational project in collaboration with GearWorks and Nivaagaard, *Caught in the Paintings*.

Read more at: http://michaelvaleur.dk/

Interviewed by Lone Hersted (18.01.2013).

The Mira Quartet (Mira Kvartetten) is a Danish string quartet, which was founded by four soloists previously performing in symphony orchestras in Aarhus, Odense and Aalborg. They came together in 1999 in order to cultivate chamber music. The Mira Quartet members are Signe Madsen, who began playing the violin at the age of 6, Birgitte Bærentzen Pihl who started her training with the Danish Suzuki educator Tove Detreköy at age 3, Anna Dahl who was born in Poland and studied in the soloist class of Zygmunt Jochemczyk at Szymanowski Academy of Music in Katowice, Vincent Stadlmairs whose background is classical music and studied in Vienna with Other Navara, and with William Pleeth. These four experienced chamber musicians inspire and complement each other and are passionate about their work. In 2003/04 The Mira Quartet was the official ensemble for the county of North Jutland and was also in 2003 awarded the Sonning Music scholarship which funded their first CD. In 2004, they signed a contract with the Danish national broadcaster, DR, to transmit 5 of their concerts on radio. The Mira Quartet experienced a terrific start to their career, being frequently asked to be guests at music societies, music festivals and churches in most parts of Denmark. They also repeatedly visited Vienna to get inspiration from the Alban Berg Quartet and to play concerts. In 2008, the quartet was invited to Poland, where they played various programmes, including one with newer Nordic music. In 2009, the quartet had a great partnership with cellist David Geringas who visited them and with whom they played Schubert' string quintet.

Read more at: http://www.mirakvartetten.dk/velkommen

Interviewed by Julie Borup Jensen (29.04.2013).

Morten Ramsland (b. 1971) is a Danish author who grew up in Næsby, a suburb of Odense, hometown of fairytale writer Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875). In 1991, Ramsland graduated from Søndersø Gymnasium on Nord Funen. In

1999, he received his M.A. degree in Danish Literature and Art History from Aarhus University. Ramsland debuted as an author in 1993 with the acclaimed poetry collection entitled *When Birds Drift Away*. In 1998, he published the novel *Acacia Dreams*, which was not the great success he hoped for.

Ramsland had his final breakthrough in 2005 with the magic-realistic family chronicle, *Doghead*. The novel follows a Norwegian family and its turbulent life through the 20th century. The family saga took five years to complete but success was instant. *Doghead* brought him prestigious prizes in Denmark: the 2006 Danish Booksellers' Golden Laurel; Author of the Year; Book of the Year and the Reader's Prize, DR P2's Roman Prize 2006 and Danske Bank's Literature Prize, 2010. *Doghead* has also been translated into 13 languages. Ramsland himself recognises *Doghead* as a new breakthrough in his writing. In 2010, he followed up with another novel, *Sumo Brothers*, which received several mentions by media and critics.

Ramsland has also published six thoughtful picture books for children. His interest in painting, which he cultivated in his spare time, has become more and more a professional artistic expression, side by side with his writing. He lives in Aarhus with his wife and three children and divides his time between his double workshop for writing and painting, also travelling abroad to give talks about his writing and style.

Read more at: http://www.forfatterweb.dk/oversigt/ramsland-morten
Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (14.09.2012).

Niels Rønsholdt (b. 1978). Danish composer and sound artist. He studied composition at the Royal Academy of Music in Aarhus, Denmark, with Karl Aage Rasmussen and Bent Sørensen and in Berlin, Germany, with Helmut Oehring. His works include experimental operas, installations and concert music. In 2002, Rønsholdt and the Danish visual and multimedia artist Signe Klejs (see profile), started cooperating primarily with alternative opera and installation projects. Klejs and Rønsholdt, who also form a couple in their private life and have two children, have experimented for some years with the opera genre, with very recent interpretations of the meeting of opera and technology. Rønsholdt has received commissions from, among others, Akademie der Künste (D), Sound Around Biennale, Edition Wilhelm Hansen, Transit Festival (B) and the Danish National Opera. He was featured composer at the festivals Music Harvest 07 (DK), Happy Days 05 (N), Transit 08 (B) and Spor 09 (DK) and his music has been performed by, among others, Kammerensemble Neue Musik Berlin (D), Ensemble Intégrales (D), NING (N), BIT20 (N), Figura (DK), Athelas (DK), Reflexion K (D), Champ d'Action (B) and Ensemble Offspring (Au). Niels

Rønsholdt has received several scholarships, for instance from the Danish Arts Agency and the Akademie der Künste. In 2009 he was given a three-year working grant by the Danish State.

Read more at: http://signeklejss.wordpress.com/klejs-ronsholdt/

Interviewed by Lone Hersted (05.02.2013 and 20.12.2013).

Palle Granhøj (Granhøj Dans) (b. 1959). Danish dancer and choreographer. Granhøj is a self-taught dancer with a background in sports, who became a professional dancer in 1986. As a dancer he has worked with a number of internationally acknowledged choreographers. In 1990 he made his début as a choreographer with the piece *Torzo* and founded The Palle Granhøj Dance Theatre, which later became Granhøj Dans, where he has been artistic director and choreographer. Besides this, Palle Granhøj has worked for other performances, for instance *Fra Aros med Eros*, the gala opening of the Aarhus Festival 2004 in Denmark. Before this commission Palle Granhøj created *KJp* for Nomadi productions, Finland in 2000 and *Mette* for the Royal Danish Ballet in 1995. He is known for his compositional technique, obstruction, that shapes several of his productions, such as *Foot Face* (2002), *Obstrucsong* (2005), *Men og Mahler* (2013). The performance *Body Fluid* (1994) and its film version (1997) document the process of obstruction. Granhøj has received a number of awards, including the Final Award in the Nordic Choreographers Competition of Contemporary Dance, Copenhagen in 1992, Award for the performance *Obstruction Ultimatique* from the Danish Arts Foundation in 1997, the Reumert award, the National Award of Stage Art, Best Dance Performance, Denmark in 2001 and 2013. His collaborations are frequent and of international reach, such as the performance *Men og Mahler* (2013), which was the result of an international cooperation, subsidised by EU funds, involving dancers from Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Hungary. In 2014 *Rite of Spring - Extended* was nominated for best dance performance of the year.

Read more at: http://www.granhoj.dk/

Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (08.01.2013).

Rosan Bosch (b. 1969) Dutch-born artist and designer, lives in Denmark. She is the founder and director of Rosan Bosch Studio. With an international background in her personal life and education, she has had an international launch in her professional work too. She is partly educated at Hogeschool voor de Kunsten, Utrecht, Holland, and partly at Universitat de Bellas Artes, Barcelona, Spain and has for many years lived in Spain and Belgium, among other places. She now lives in Copenhagen with her husband and two boys. From 2001-2010, Rosan

Bosch was co-founder and partner of the art and design company Bosch & Fjord, which was a professional cooperation between Rosan Bosch and Rune Fjord (see profile). Bosch has worked professionally in art, architecture and design for more than 20 years. She prefers to work with interdisciplinary projects and to use creativity as a tool for innovation and change, which she does often by means of questioning deep-rooted cultures and traditions, creating space for new ways of thinking and acting. She is an expert artist and manager and combines both creative impulses and managerial and entrepreneurial structure. Rosan Bosch specialises in developing projects in close cooperation with customers, users and partners (user-driven innovation) in order to ensure an optimal connection between form, content and function. In this perspective she uses design as a tool for change - whether for urban spaces, schools or workplaces.

Read more at: http://www.rosanbosch.com/en/press#

Interviewed by Lone Hersted (02.11.2012).

Rune Fjord (b. 1966) Danish designer born in Copenhagen. He graduated from Design School in Kolding, from the Danish School of Design, Copenhagen and the Academy of Fine Arts, Reykjavik, Iceland. He has worked professionally with art since 1995. Rune Fjord is a creative resource, working in the borderland between art, architecture and design. For the past ten years, in cooperation with the artist and designer Rosan Bosch (see profile), Fjord had been a part of the art and design company Bosch & Fjord. Their first project in 2002 led to the breakthrough initiative MindLab, a creative hub for the Danish Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs. In 2011 the two founders decided to split the company into two individual companies. Fjord is very interested in designing, among other things, learning environments. He gives lectures on creative processes and from time to time teaches at the Design School in Kolding, where he graduated in 1995. He has recently published a book on space and learning environments (*Læringsrum*), together with Bodil Bøjer. The book focuses on the role of spaces for children's wellbeing in learning settings and gives hands-on ideas on how to generate such environments.

Read more at: http://www.runefjord.dk/

Interviewed by Lone Hersted (17.10.2012).

Signe Klejs (b. 1974). Danish visual and multimedia artist. She holds an M.A. in Experimental Media Design from the Design School in Kolding, Denmark. Her works of art aim to question the borders between body and technology by means of digital and interactive exhibitions and performance environments. Her approach is experimental and explores the tension field between individual, space

and technology by means of different ways of artistic expression. She mixes artistic modalities and actions through and with the body by working with digital technologies and different kinds of performing arts. Among her works are interactive installations, combined space- and internet-based art experiments and interactive set-designs for opera and dance performances. In 2002, Klejs and the Danish composer and sound artist Niels Rønsholdt (see profile), started cooperating primarily. Klejs and Rønsholdt, who are also related to each other in their private life, have experimented for some years with the opera genre, its form and what new technology can offer it and its audience. Very recently they developed an interactive computer application based on exploration of the opera world. Klejs' projects have been exhibited and performed throughout Scandinavia, in New York and Europe.

Read more at: http://signeklejss.wordpress.com/klejs-ronsholdt/
Interviewed by Lone Hersted (05.02.2013 and 20.12.2013).

Siri Hustvedt (b. 1955) is an American-Norwegian author. In 1967/68 she studied at the Rudolph Steiner School in Bergen, Norway, and spent the following summer in Reykjavik, Iceland, where she began to think seriously of becoming a writer. In high school she continued intensive reading and writing. In 1972, she returned to Bergen and spent a year as a student at the *gymnasium*, Katedral Skolen and graduated. Back in the United States, she attended St. Olaf College and graduated *summa cum laude*, with a B.A. in history in 1977.

In 1978 she studied English at Columbia University. She continued to write poetry, and was a research assistant to the poet Kenneth Koch. In 1982 she began teaching as a graduate assistant at Queens College. Her first published poem appeared in 1981. She married the writer Paul Auster in 1982. In 1986, Hustvedt received her PhD, with a dissertation on Dickens. Her first novel, *The Blindfold*, was published in 1992 and was translated into seventeen languages. Her breakthrough came in 2003, with the novel *What I Loved,* which became an international bestseller. Her fifth novel *The Summer Without Men* was published in 2011 and her latest novel *The Blazing World* was published in 2014. Her novels have now been translated into twenty-nine languages. She also writes about visual art and neurosciences.

Read more at: http://sirihustvedt.net/
Interviewed by Tatiana Chemi (Skype 10.09.2012).

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