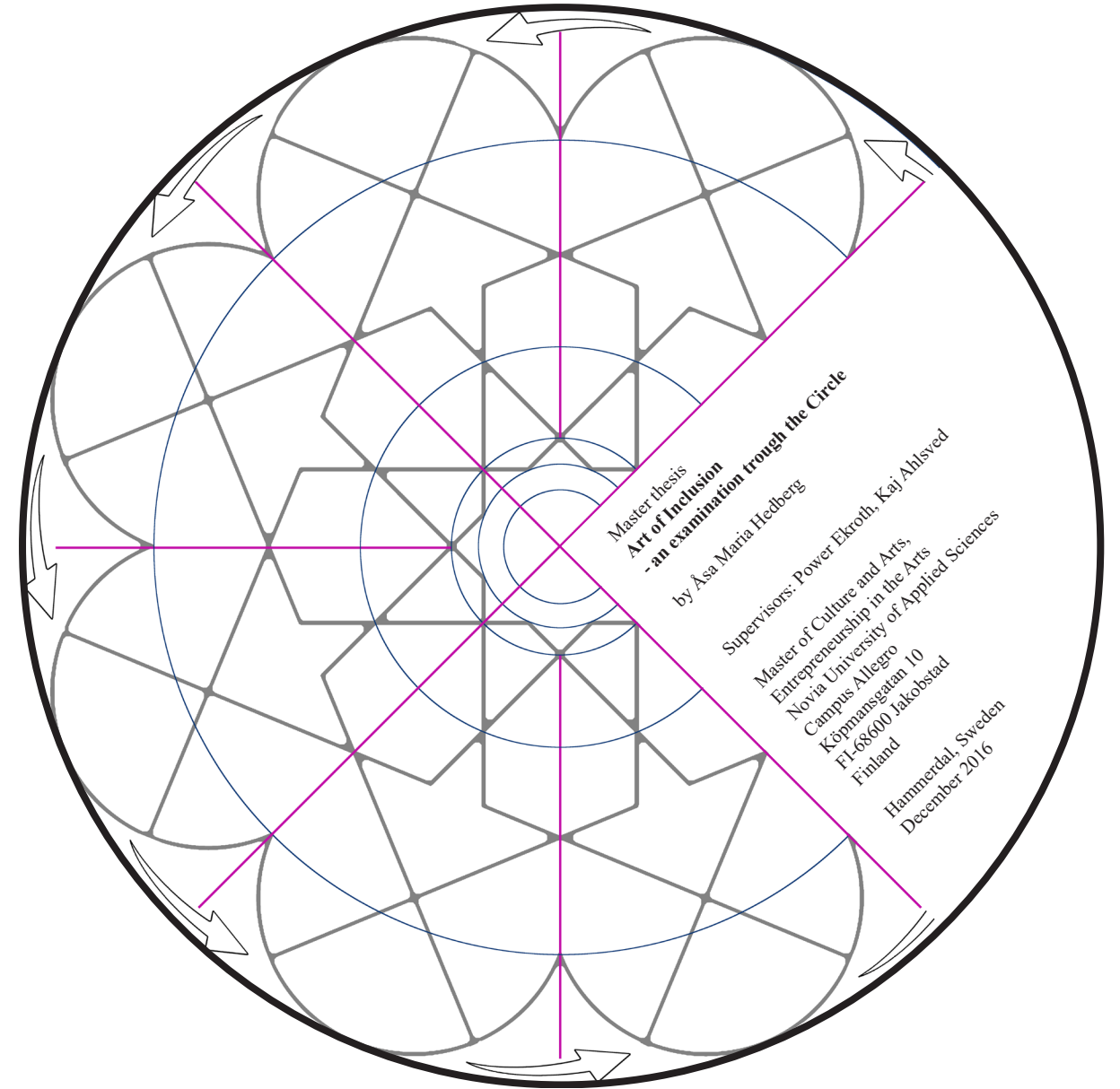


ART OF INCLUSION
- an examination through the Circle

K

eywords and genres

Art ○ Circle ○ Symbols ○ Inclusion ○ Exclusion
Participatory art ○ Participation ○ Co-creational art ○ Public art
Street art ○ Public space ○ Unfired ceramics
Clay ○ Molten glass ○ Performance ○ Commissioned work
Art Fairs ○ Circle dance ○ Heliga danser ○ Svenska kyrkan
Art mecenats ○ Sociology ○ INVOLUTIONS





Art of Inclusion – an Examination of the Circle is the master thesis of the artist Åsa Maria Hedberg. It retells the process of an examination of the circle, used as a conceptual and visual tool in two public art acts: IMPRINT and IMPRESSION. The purpose of the study is to understand the characteristics and effects of the circle when used in participatory art of the artist. The study also aims to position the artist within the field of participatory art and artists of today.

The use of the circle is found to inform the art of the author-artist when her art works conceptually touches upon the subject matter of inclusion/exclusion. The socio-political aspect of openness of the circles of societies to any newcomer, will be an increasingly important future topic for artists to take on and engage in.

As a parallel, the international art world is another circle that includes and excludes. The artist learns from her participants and will find her way in.

Prologue

T

his study is the master thesis of Åsa Maria Hedberg, performed and written in 2016 within the program 'Master of Culture and Arts – Entrepreneurship in the Arts' at Novia University of Applied Sciences, Jakobstad in Finland.

The included images are photographs and documentation from the process, circumferential art works and two main participatory circle art works - IMPRINT and IMPRESSION - all performed during this study.

This work and thesis could never have come true but for the help of friends and family. I specifically wish to thank Ingrid, Linda, Gudrun, Annalena, Jens, Petra, Maja, Jimmy, Jenny, Kjella, Fia, Anders and of course Atlas, Pär and my mum for all sorts of assistance from mounting a yurt, helping out with documentary photography and film, proof reading, pushing, cheering and debriefing.

Writing about participation in art and the circle, I see my work in new light and in relation to an international art scene. For me, the investigation of the circle did not start with this master project; on the contrary this study is in line with my earlier works. After this investigation I look forward to future possibilities for performing inclusion/exclusion.

This master thesis will be published as an attachment to a circular artist book to be printed in a limited editin of 100 copies, prepared during the study. Find it via asamariahedberg.se.

Åsa Maria Hedberg, Hammerdal, Sweden, December 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Keywords and genres

Cover

Abstract

Prologue

Table of contents

I.	INTRODUCTION – Where do the circle begin?	1
I.I	INVOLUTIONS – participatory art of the author	2
I.II	Entrepreneurship in the Arts	8
II.	TO EXAMINE THE DESIRE TO INCLUDE	11
II.I	Formulation of a research question for the study	11
II.II	Purpose	12
II.III	Delimitations and presumptions	12
III	ART OF PARTICIPATION AND THE CIRCLE – a background	15
III.I	Participatory art, co-creation and performance art	15
III.I.1	Participatory geometry; the practice of Olafur Eliasson	18
III.I.2	Clare Twomey; participation through ceramic objects	19
III.I.3	Jeppe Hein - public commissions of participatory art work	20
III.II	The performed circle – dance and performance art works	23
III.II.1	Maria Rönn – dance as rite and prayer	27
III.II.2	Radouan Mrziga – dancer and performance artist	28
III.II.3	Efva Lilja - art of movement and writing	29
III.III	The form of a circle and its meanings - geometry and symbolism	32
III.IV	Imprints as a symbol of exclusion from the circle of a society	37
III.V	Dance notations - written language of circle choreography	37
III.IV.	To belong or stand aside - notions of inclusion/exclusion	39
IV.	METHODS AND IMPLEMENTATION	43
IV.I	Methods for IMPRINT – clay circle performance	43
IV.I.1	Making of circle choreography	43
IV.I.2	The time frame of the summer solstice circle	44
IV.I.3	A square as a set of fixed rules	45
IV.I.4	The stamp questionnaire	48
IV.I.5	The performance – my own rules and guides	49
IV.I.6	Methods for invitation	49

IV.II	Methods for IMPRESSION – hot glass circle	50
IV.II.1	Making of choreography for hot glass circles	50
IV.II.2	The public sphere of a square for a hot glass circle	51
IV.II.3	The performance – rules and guides	52
IV.II.4	Methods for invitation	52
IV.II.5	Written feedback	53

V.	RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS	57
V.I	IMPRINT	57
V.I.1	IMPRINT – circle solstice performance	58
V.I.2	Outcome of circular stamp questionnaire	65
V.I.3	Optional extra questionnaire - some voices	68

V.II	IMPRESSION	70
V.II.2	IMPRESSION – molten glass performance	70
V.II.3	Written input from participants	76
V.II.4	To leave the periphery to join in	76

VI	DISCUSSION AND CRITICAL ASSESSMENT	81
VI.I	The result in relation to the purpose and thesis question	81
VI.II	Inclusion contra exclusion – to measure perception of...	84
VI.III	Choice of methods and actual circumstances	87
VI:IV	Side effects of learning outcomes	89
VI.V	The open circle	90
VI.VI	Future work - the socio-political aspect of the circle	91

VII.	CONCLUSION	97
------	------------	----

VIII	BIBLIOGRAPHY	101
------	--------------	-----

IX	EPILOGUE	107
----	----------	-----

ATTACHMENTS SORTED IN THREE FOLDERS;

Folder # 1 Earlier works by ÅMH

Folder # 2 Circumferential works

Folder # 3 The works

I. INTRODUCTION – Where do the circle begin?

“A circle have no beginning nor an end. Its vaulted line leads back to the point where it once emanated. It is always aspiring inwards, towards its own center just as it also is thrown outwards, away from its own center.”

(Rönn 1997, 28, translation from Swedish by the author.)

How did I enter a circle quest resulting in this thesis text? I think the duality described by Rönn is key to my interest. For me; working as an artist, stays between the draft towards a calm steady center point and the more wild and fast spinning ideas of the exterior. I spin with hopes for temporary performance art work, made for there and then. I then lean back towards a center of making permanent public art work and payment for fired ware and glass objects. My practice resemble a potters centering of a lump of clay on a throwing wheel; after sufficient impact from inner- and outer forces; I wobble less and my work is more centered and focused. This study year have made my practice more pronounced.

My belief is we all naturally belong to different circles but that we sometimes feel excluded or exclude others. Other times we aim and work to welcome and include people into our social circles. The circle is a strong symbol, often fully closed without any perceivable entrance. I hope to make this thesis text an accessible and open text encircling what I concluded.

I.I INVOLUTIONS – participatory art of the author

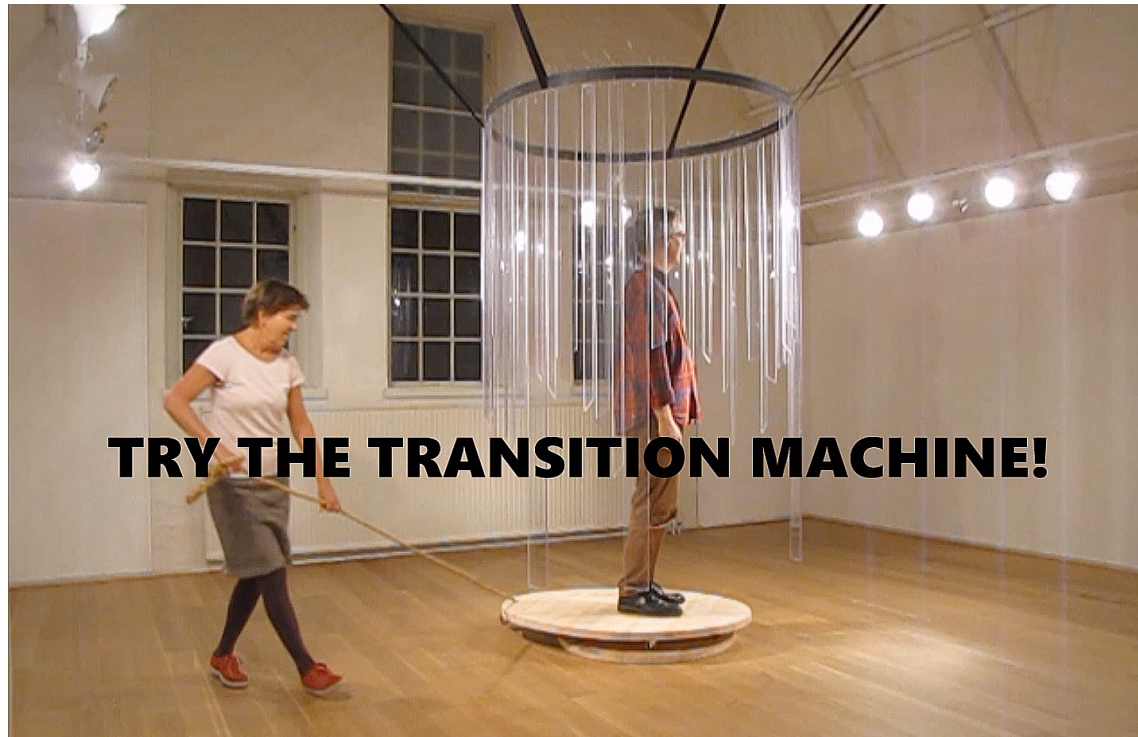
In my work as an artist I have had a wish to enable interaction and participation with or within the works. This has become my over all motif – to let the audience and visitors use or change the work. The conceptual matters for my art have touched upon environmental aspects, human rights; especially concerning refugees and the situation for teenagers.

Many of my works have had the purpose of enabling change of mind through bodily action. An example of this is the work *Somersault of Act and Mind – triptych part III* (Mölnlycke city center 2013, illustration #1) where the visitor is invited to use a rubber asphalt strip to perform a 360 degree turn around, a somersault. This can be done physically by joining in alongside the two human aluminum figures – the underlying idea being a stimulation of mental change. In *Somersault of Act and Mind – triptych part III* the participation it self draws a full circle or a spiral in the outline of a somersault.



Illustration # 1, right; Somersault of Act and Mind - triptych part III

In another more recent work, *the Transition Machine* (Ahlbergshallen, Östersund 2015) the circle is once again the agent and active form for participation. A dark voice - presumably the voice of God - urges visitors to try the transition machine. Hesitantly people then pull one another physically in turns for the full circuit impact from the machine. The environmental movement of transitional societies compared to the Christian notion of a U-turn upon repent, involving the mercy of a helpful God, where background material for the work. The concept dealt with whether personal change is possible - unless we help each other. *The Transition Machine* only worked for believers who helped one another 360 degrees around. (Illustration # 2 and film documentary, attachment *Documentary Fire drawings* in Folder #1 Earlier works by ÅMH.)



Glowing Conversation – Sanctuary of LIVE (Stockholm 2010, Östersund 2013) is a participatory art work activated by the voices of its visitors. A six sided transparent polycarbonate room with a curved sitting bench inside made up a sanctuary for conversation. Mounted to the sides were origami porcelain structures with hidden lamps. Inside the pod, a concealed microphone connected via a computer to the lamps. The structure would glow and glitter when people sat down for a chat. The work was a comment on digital conversation rooms, an act to make a reserve for human dialogue eye to eye. (Illustration #3 and #4)

In *And Ahad said; let's sit down on the floor*, I shared my memories from the time I lived in South Africa, from the viewpoint of my friendship with my muslim neighbour Ahad. Here I worked and played with the circle via the Islamic golden rule and tessellated the stories and the geometry. On the opening day I let my visitors walk into the gallery room literally shattering my memories into even smaller chards. Telling my stories through the day, the true happenings faded and I felt a homecoming. In the evening the tiles were fixed for the rest of the exhibition. (Illustration # 5)

I have come to call my works INVOLUTIONS, a word invented from the Latin verb *volvo* meaning 'to roll' and the preposition *in*; to give the new word the meaning of making someone involved by being rolled in to or encircled by my art, usually both literally and by engagement.

The idea of applying the circle as form more directly to my work - aesthetically and conceptually - was one of the openings to how this master thesis came about. My wish was to study and question the circle as more or less suitable for making my kind of participatory art works as I saw how I repeatedly tried to encircle people with my art.

Illustration # 2 left; The Transition Machine, video still



Illustration # 3 left; Glowing Conversation - Sanctuary of LIVE detail and illustration # 4 this page; Glowing Conversation - Sanctuary of LIVE full view

I.II Entrepreneurship in the Arts

This text is written as a thesis within the master course ‘Master of Culture and Arts - Entrepreneurship in the Arts’ at Novia University of Applied Sciences in Jakobstad, Finland. Some of my informants were artists and curators that I met during our study trips to Berlin, Germany, Sharjah/Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and that I listened to in lectures in Jakobstad, Finland. All in all this examination is colored by impressions from the study year.

As the title of the course suggests, we as artists/students have been learning about how to become more skilled and successful in being entrepreneurs within the field of arts.. To make works that are shown, seen and talked about is important. To first and foremost make art that is relevant, great works, but also to find and make use of contacts and opportunities.

To write and publish texts on art can be useful for the artist, a master thesis included. This text explains my examination of the circle as participatory art, but also places my work within the contemporary art scene. Through the study year I have found platforms and scenes that will suit my art and art making. I would also say I have found my artist tribe, my likes.



Illustration #5, right; And Ahad said, let's sit down on the floor / ضررألا يلع سولجن نحن. دح الالاقو

II. TO EXAMINE THE DESIRE TO INCLUDE

Having an overall interest in making art that invites an audience to participate, I have lately begun to question how open the work actually is, and the true possibilities for people to engage with it.. In the best of worlds everyone would feel comfortable on my grounds, happy to join in. On the other hand; opening up an art work to become a participatory piece will also scare some of the audience away.

As the discussions in Swedish media in the autumn of 2015 was roaring with statements on the inclusion/exclusion of refugees in Swedish society, I wanted to look into the notion of something that might hold people together. I chose the circle as an old symbol for inclusion/exclusion, as a conceptual tool, both literally and figuratively, for this study.

II.I Formulation of a research question for the study

I decided find answers to my questions about whether the circle as a form could activate or strengthen participation, or make the concept of inclusion more clear to participants. So the main question behind this study reads:

Will the use of the circle enhance participation in my art and give participants a feeling of inclusion?

II.II Purpose

The main purpose of this thesis and master project is to study the characteristics and effects of the circle when used in my participatory artwork. I will discuss my work in relation to contemporary artists and art scenes, and place the work I make in a context, also in regards to my choice of material, in this case raw clay and molten glass/fire.

II.III Delimitations and presumptions

For this thesis, it has been important to narrow the scope to one subject out of my many ideas and interests. The study shall include two major implementations of investigative art works, in order to study the circle and how it will affect the audience's openness for participation in my works.

In addition to this, circumferential artworks will be executed with the purpose of understanding the circle, performance and participatory art in relation to my materials. The circumferential work will also serve as a method and means for the creative art process itself to bloom. These works are presented as attachments in Folder #2, Circumferential works.

As in any work of art, I have made decisions about the form in which the art will take shape or materialize. In my case, I will make use of two of my favorite materials; raw clay and molten glass. In contrast to using clay being in public art in the form of fired ceramics, and glass art being sold as refined and perfected art objects, in this study the materials will function as a canvas and tools used for participatory performances.

Naturally the choice of 'canvas' for this study will have various effects on the result. My two main participatory artworks will be performed outdoors in public space, in a city center, inviting the audience to engage with the work.

The notion of the circle is in it self as omnipresent as the roundness of the earth. Consequently, this study will not claim any overall definite conclusion or answers about the versatility of the circle when used in participatory art. The aim is merely to study the circle used for and within my own participatory art.

III ART OF PARTICIPATION AND THE CIRCLE – a background

So what constitutes a circle? What are the parameters that allows a form to be perceived as a circle? What conceptual values and meanings lie within this ancient symbol? This study will begin with some background horizons that shall serve as a backdrop to the examination. In no essence is this chapters with its sub-chapters intended as full summary of any of the headlines. The other way round, they are glimpses of inspirational input that I carried with me as I found them during this study.

III.I Participatory art, co-creation and performance art

Art as a commodity - fine art products, such as sculpture and paintings for sale - can be said to be one line that continues throughout art history. Many collectors want to buy art objects and traditional galleries can easily showcase items for sale. As a parallel line, performative art is a vivid, complex and expansive branch of the art tree. Artists rejecting consumption, artists wishing to make political statements, or even the idea of trying to influence or change the world can be mentioned as causes of the flourishing status of various performative art styles. Female liberation and equality, as well as other social justice issues, have been, and continue to be topics raised. Other works speak about environmental concerns or show solidarity with indigenous peoples.

Performance is said to exist in the moment only, there and then, and no reproduction is valid. Naturally, performance art has been documented on film and through photography, and also by drawn layouts or descriptive instructions. These representations are used both prior to art happenings and afterwards to be able to talk about the acts. Some artists produce and sell photography and installation art objects from their performances. Peggy

Phelan (Vail, 1997, 207 - 234) speaks of performance art as an art form that can only exist in the present. She also sees that other art forms are striving to the same status of here and now. Lovisa Tobiesson (Bodland ed, 2004, 60 - 69) speaks about the necessity for the artist performer to be in the presence of both spatiality and temporarity. That a performance is the lived moment.

Participatory art is another mode of performance.

Here the work of the artist comprises an act of invitation, sometimes for a moment of co-creation. The audience is welcome on board; to act on a stage or to sculpt; to build or reshape a work to its completion or deconstruction. Digital techniques have made possible co-creation from a distance, of time and geography. (Falk 2014)

Groys writes (Frieling 2008, 21)

‘...many modern artists have tried to regain common ground with their audiences by enticing viewers out of their passive roles, bridging the comfortable aesthetic distance that allows uninvolved viewers to judge an artwork impartially from a secure, external perspective. The majority of these attempts have involved political or ideological engagement of one sort or another. Religious community is thus replaced by a political movement in which artists and their audiences both participate.’

Another interesting point made by Groys is that the invitational act in participatory art could be perceived as an act of empowerment of the audience - but that even more than this, it's a way for the artist to free her- or himself from the judging eye of an uninvolved viewer.

Within the arts and crafts movement, co-creational performance art still relies on material, but the underlying idea is the main focus. Lippard and Chandler (Lange-Berndt ed. 2015, 176

- 178) talk about the artist as a true conceptualist without the use of material, a dematerialization of the art, but conclude that ‘The idea has to be awfully good to compete with the object...’

Some artists within the field of participatory art have chosen to work outside the white cube of institutional scenes. An inspirational source in the field of performance is Austrian artist VALIE EXPORT. Her works, called the Tapp- und Tast-Kino (Tap and Touch Cinema) have been called ‘guerilla performances’; in the performances she let people touch her naked torso inside a box she wore instead of clothes. Many of EXPORT's works have been performed in outdoor public space, meeting the audience in the street, with the artist simply showing up and starting to make her work. In the work Einkreisung/Encircle performed 1976, EXPORT examines the urban environment using her body, discussing female identity in a world of Modernist male design. (Frieling 2008, 110-111, Taylor 2005, 40)

In Imponderabilia, 1977 (Frieling 2008, 112-113), Abramovic and Ulay also make use of their bodies to create participatory performance. Performed at the entrance of the Galleria Comunale D'Arte Moderna in Bologna, Italy, the naked bodies of the artists make up the boundary that has to be passed should the visitor want to enter the gallery.

There are three artists and their works which are of particular importance to my work and to this study; Eliasson, Twomey and Hein. I will give short introductions to their practices in the following sub-chapters.

III.I.1 Participatory geometry; the practice of Olafur Eliasson

Olafur Eliasson is another artist who often works in the public space. His work is often made on a monumental scale, sometimes close to Land Art. To realize his works, Eliasson requires a full-time staff of one hundred persons.

As Eliasson changes the colour of a river in Los Angeles into stark green (Hoffmann 2005, 117), people in the area become participants just by living there, as their natural surrounding landscape has changed from one day to the other. Installations by Eliasson are temporary exhibitions to walk into that can make huge impact and affect the audience.

Eliasson is interested in the physicality of nature in relation to human culture. Many of his works are based on elementary geometrical forms. Thus the circle has often appeared in his works. The work *Your circumspection disclosed* (Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy, 1999) is just one example.

Solstice and planetary movements have been the themes of Eliasson's works. In the exhibition *Winter Solstice* (2007-2008, Jarla Partilager, Stockholm) and in *Summer Solstice* (2008, Jarla Partilager, Stockholm), the audience was invited into rooms where reflections and light were used for projecting and describing the aesthetical structures of our solar system. *Daglyspavillion* (VKR Holding, Hørsholm, Denmark 2007) is a circular experiment where the daily passing of the sun encircles the visitors that enter the structure.

The both sculptural and documentary books that Eliasson has published influenced my wish to present my work in the form of a circular artist book. (<http://olafureliasson.net/tag/TEL2660/book-as-sculpture>)

III.I.2 Clare Twomey; participation through ceramic objects and matter

Clare Twomey is a British artist and research fellow at the University of Westminster, London, UK. Her work is based in the ceramic tradition and her work spans over large-scale installations and site-specific works, and also includes sculpture. The work of Twomey has been of importance to this study as I sought to find artists that are based in a ceramics practice where raw clay or fired ceramics is the medium or canvas for a conceptual idea of an interactive work of art.

In *Consciousness/Conscience* (2001-2004 at The World Ceramics Biennale, The Crafts Council London and TATE Liverpool), Twomey uses bone china to discuss the theme of consciousness and conscience. The work consists of up to seven thousand hollow ceramic tiles that are laid out as a walkway that the visitors of the biennale and the exhibitions in London had to walk on to reach the rest of the exhibitions. The audience had to make a decision whether to destroy the work by walking on it, or stay outside. Twomey notes that 'The crushed boxes trace the pattern of activity in the same way tracks are recorded in snow.' (Press statement <http://www.claretwomey.com/press.html>)

Twomey comes from the tradition of ceramic art making, where clay handling and the technical firing skills of the maker are celebrated as much as the final art object and the intended concept. She retells the story of the making of *Consciousness/Conscience* in terms of having to search for a business that properly could make all the thousands of tiles exactly the way she needed them for the concept. As Mark Currah notes;

'It is possible to remain outside of the discreet space in which the floor-piece is laid, but immediately you walk into it and the ceramic breaks under your feet, your status is changed and you become a participant, activating the work, and the decisions you make start to affect the physical make-up and appearance of the piece. Twomey's role as mak-

er has undergone a subtle shift. She is now more akin to the position of the composer who sets the parameters of a musical composition down as a score, but gives the business of interpretation over to the players.

(Currah, 2003 in the press text for Consciousness/Conscience)

In Trophy (Victoria & Alberts's sculpture court, London, 2006), Twomey again uses a ceramic material to research and to discuss the notion of a trophy. Thousands of small ceramic birds were placed in the museum's sculpture court, on top of the permanent sculptures, on the wall sockets, and all over the floor. Several questions are raised, about human nature and the wish to own objects, and the wish to collect representations of a moment from an art event that the visitor encountered. Twomey states;

'My ambition for *Trophy* was to make desirable objects that could be owned, treasured and taken, a material reminder of an experience, a choice and a risk, the risk being to leave with an object from the V&A's collection.'

III.I.3 Jeppe Hein - public commissions of participatory art work

Danish artist Jeppe Hein works in the field of site specific outdoor public art, and also exhibits worldwide. His works are sometimes permanent site specific installations of interactive art, like the work *Path of Silence* (Kistefos-Museet, Jevnaker, Norway 2016), where the artist was commissioned to make a work responding to the environment of the museum's outdoor area.

One of Hein's long standing projects is the Modified social benches researchal project;

ongoing, last exhibited in New York (in Jeppe Hein: Please Touch the Art New York, USA, 2015-2016 and London, UK, 2016). It deals with how we socialize and how the form of a bench can spark new meetings and conversations.

The work of Hein often relies on sophisticated - or simple - computerized machinery to work. Many works are triggered by human presence and the action starts when the audience arrives. This is seen in *Moving bench #1 and #2* and in *360° Presence*. (Hoffmann 2005, 54-55 and http://www.jeppehein.net/pages/project_id.php?path=works&id=140 and more). In *360° Presence* Hein introduces a heavy steel ball, seventy centimeters in diameter, that starts to roll as soon as any visitor enters the gallery room. The object is activated by human presence. Hein states:

'The visitor seems to have no control over or effect on the movement or direction of the ball, and is thus left without possibility to stop the aggression imposed on the space and himself. On the contrary, it is the visitor's presence that makes the ball move around and destroy the white cube.'

A work that's equally aggressive towards its participants and gallery guests is the work *Bear the consequences* (Brändström & Stene Gallery, Stockholm, Sweden, 2003 and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Germany, 2015). In these two works it appears like Hein is commenting on the possibilities of interactive art works and what he can or can not do in a public setting. Metaphorically the works could be interpreted as comments on human interventions in the environment.

In *Light Pavillion* (21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, Japan, 2011), lightbulbs in series are hanging by their chords from the ceiling, maybe ten in each row. Randomly, hidden machinery pulls the cable lines outwards so that the outline of a light

pavillion is seen and can be entered. And the visitors of the gallery do. But just suddenly, the lamp cords start to move back into a centered bunch again. The audience does not know or understand how and why it opens or closes. The reason for these sudden changes is that the movement of the cords is happening due to someone pedalling a bike in a far off end of the gallery, without being able to see the pavillion rising and falling.

Geometric patterns are often present in Hein's work. Space in Action - Action in Space (Museum Lenbachhaus and Kunstbau München, Munich, Germany, 2002, 50th Venice Biennale, Italy, 2003, Præstø, Denmark, 2006) is a circular pavillion where the walls are made up from showers of water that shoot up from the ground. At first the circle seems to be fully closed but as visitors come closer the water in a section stops, forming an entrance into the center of the circle. The water then shoots up again, closing the full circle with its visitors inside.

III.II The performed circle – dance and performance art works

One ancient form of the circle is the performed circle. Historically people have gathered to dance together in circles and the tradition is still alive in many different ways in various nations. For this background chapter I am not going to retell a perfect history of the traditional ways of performing a circle, but rather mention a couple of examples that have given me tremendous inspiration for this work. I will present the dancers/artists/writers Maria Rönn, Radouan Mrziga and Efva Lilja specifically. But before doing so I would like to start off from the Swedish traditional folkloric circle dance.

During a major political conference held every summer in Sweden, Jimmie Åkesson, leader of the Swedish Democrats - a party with roots in Neo Nazi organizations, spoke about how he wants to spread Swedish values to immigrants. He suggests;

-‘Instead of African dance when celebrating the National day one could have Swedish folk dance.’

(<http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/se-akessons-jarnrorsmiss-i-almedalen>)

Vail (1997) on the contrary argues that the culture of a society in regards to dance is the sum of its living performed dance cultures. In other words; if one wants to define Swedishness in regards to dance, traditional folkloristic circle dance would only be a small percentage of the Swedish dance culture of today. So many other dance styles are vital today, wherever people meet and dance together. If inclusion and not only integration is our goal, being aware of this ‘new’, more true reflection of Swedish culture will be important.

Following spread; illustration # 6;

Traditional Swedish folk dance circle performed on National Day 6th of June 2016



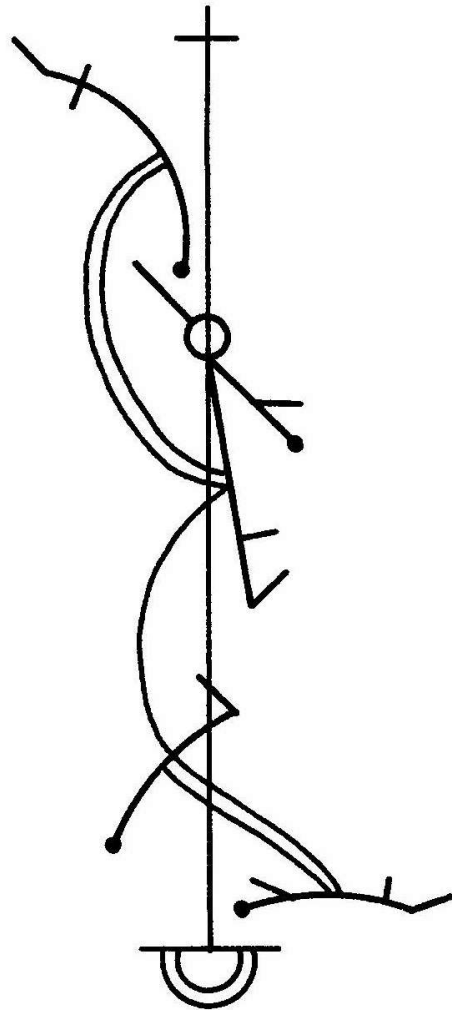


Illustration # 7; Laban notation figure

III.II.1 Maria Rönn – dance as rite and prayer (theology/rite)

One of my ways into the circle as a performed form is the ritual circle dance called ‘Sacred dances’ led by the Swedish Lutheran State Church (‘Heliga danser’ in Swedish). This ritual dance is taught and performed together with any participants that want to join. The origin of Sacred dance in Sweden is to be found in inspiration from and connections with other communities in Europe, notably from Germany, England, Scotland. The pioneers in making the use of the circle for ritual dance in Christian liturgy were Bernard and Maria Gabriele Musin, among others (Rönn 1997 and mariaronn.com). In Sweden, Maria Rönn, a priest from Stockholm, has been a forerunner and advocate for a new use of the circle as a holy form to use within the concept of Sacred Dances in Christian chapels. I did a taped interview with Rönn in the fall of 2016 and asked about inclusion contra exclusion through the circle. Maria says;

‘The circle exists as a form for holiness, for sure! It also exists outside the church and it’s present in other religions as well. I cannot understand how a circle could ever be excluding. One could just make a larger circle then, around the whole world so that every human being would be included.’

(Maria Rönn 6th of November 2016)

Within the concept of ‘Sacred dance’, the tradition is to mainly dance in a circle, and much of the inspiration have come from Greece and Balkan. Dances are often performed with participants holding hands to form a circle and the choreography starts with a short sequence of foot steps to be repeated throughout the dance. Hands are often held in a way where one hand ‘receives’ and the other hand ‘gives’; in other words, one hand is laid

with its palm down on top of the neighbor's palm, and the other hand the opposite way. Sometimes candles are held in each conjunction of two participants' hands. Maria Rönn strongly suggests that circle dance as 'Sacred dance' is reliant on the participation of every dancer. Unless everyone takes their responsibility in trying to form the circle it will be less round or even wobbly. But the point in dancing, from a sacred aspect, is to strive for some sort of holiness.

III.II.2 Radouan Mrziga – dancer and performance artist (aesthetics/repetition/body)

During one of our study trips during the master program of Culture and Arts, we were fortunate to be in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates in time to get to see the artist Radouan Mrziga, from Morocco/Belgium, do a performance during the exhibition 'Time is out of joint'. Mrziga used his body to measure out a geometry on a dance mat by marking angles, distances and circles down with masking tape. His work was accompanied by four old fashioned tape recorders, somehow synchronized with the sound of birds twittering. His own clicking, counting, breathing added to the sober soundscape. This performance seemed only to serve the beauty of the shapes, the aesthetics of the dance and the calmness of repetition. Mrziga squared the circle and circled the square using his body as calipers. (See Wade 145 - 153) The underlying concept of the work was explained separately in text form. Most of us viewers, sitting all around Mrziga's mat, were completely astonished, breath-taken, thrilled, as he kept going for approximately 45 minutes.

On a few occasions the masking tape that Mrziga was using detached from the mat, making him run/fly backwards to the point where he would attach it. As this kept happening, Mrziga eventually had to ask his audience for help in holding the tape down in the starting end. The day after the performance we were both still in Sharjah at the March meetings of the Sharjah Art Foundation, and I had the opportunity to speak to Mrziga. I asked him

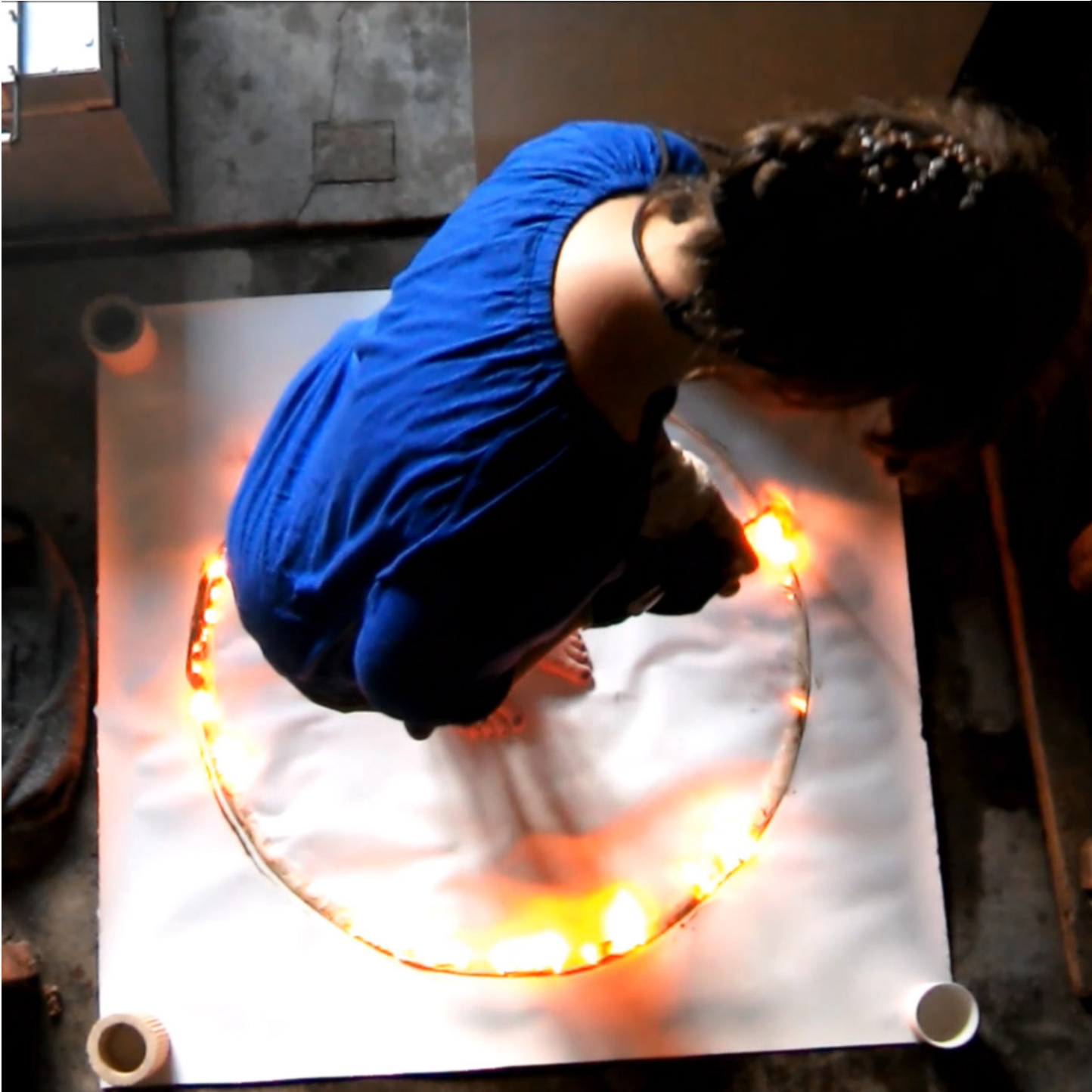
about his work in general and about the performance from the day before specifically. I then learnt that it had never happened to him before that he had 'broken the fourth wall' to let the audience into one of his performances.

My encounter with Mrziga's work, both as an example of the beauty of ritual geometry, and also as a chance for seeing and understanding the meaning of breaking the fourth wall, fed into my project.

III.II.3 Efva Lilja - art of movement and writing

Another important source of inspiration for this study is the artist and professor of choreography Efva Lilja. Based in Stockholm, she has worked in several artistic fields, and since the 1990s she has been engaged in artistic research. One of her latest publications is 'Art, Research, Empowerment - The artist as researcher' (Lilja 2015), an educational book for any artist that aspires to do research in art. Many of Lilja's opinions on how art is a field on the move within the academic research setting are truly empowering. She highlights how art should be acknowledged as a true science in its own right and that this means it needs its own specific tools and methodologies.

That is to say; Lilja speaks of artistic processes as unique in the sense that they sometimes have to have other frames than those used within humanistic or natural sciences. When it comes to documentation of artistic research processes, some art practices may not fit into standard academic models. Lilja mentions performance art, dance and installations as types of artworks that can be documented by film and texts, but where those formats will always only be representations, not the true work. Lilja gives examples of atypical presentations of artistic doctoral studies, partly presented in the form of seminars or panel debates instead of written text. Every country has their own set of rules for academic work, and Lilja takes us through many of the European systems, from her horizon on the Swedish academic scene.



‘In the qualifications for the Swedish arts PhD, there is no requirement for text-based reflection/documentation.’

(Lilja 2015, 64)

Lilja by no means wants to discredit the value of documentation, but on the contrary she recommends every artist to find the appropriate way that their specific art needs to be structured and presented.

To make this study I had to work my way through many trials and errors with more or less pleasing results. I have come to call them the ‘Circumferential works’. (See Folder #2 Circumferential works.) One of my earliest and dearest ideas was to present this text in a circular artist book, a choreographed text circle. As this text is rewritten one last time I have finally come to terms with doing the opposite. The graded thesis text will be saved to a circular usb-pen, attached to the circular art book. This way, the edition of one hundred artist books can be made as true works of art, better mirroring the feel, sense and smell of inclusion/exclusion of these participatory circles.

Illustration # 8; A still from a documentary of one of the circumferential art works

III.III The form of a circle and its meanings - geometry and symbolism

The oldest known mathematical description of the circle is by Euclid, a Greek mathematician in the 300s BC. His work ‘Elements’ is still used for definitions in geometry. ‘Elements’ is a document of 500 pages, consisting of thirteen books. The circle has its own volume, book number three. Euclid gives no short definition of the circle, instead he describes any and all circumstances regarding the notion over several pages (Fitzpatrick 2007).

Another way to mathematically understand the term of the two dimensional figure called a circle is described as follows in James/James (1976, 53 - 54);

‘CIR’CLE, n. A plane curve consisting of all points at a given distance (called the radius) from a fixed point in the plane, called the center. The diameter is twice the radius [...]. An arc is one of the two pieces bounded by two points on the circle. The circumference is the length of the circle, which is $2\pi r$ if r is the radius [...]; sometimes “circumference” is used to mean a circle itself rather than its interior. The area of a circle (i.e., the area of the interior) is πr^2 , or in terms of the diameter d , $\frac{1}{4}\pi d^2$.’

The circle has always been of great importance in all kinds of human activity and social life. Interestingly, today when the world is turning social activity into a digital matter in the form of lived connection via the internet, we see social networks using the circle in various company logos. Many of the logos exist in square form too - but it seems important for social media to also have a circular ‘face’ or symbol.

Here is a set of examples:

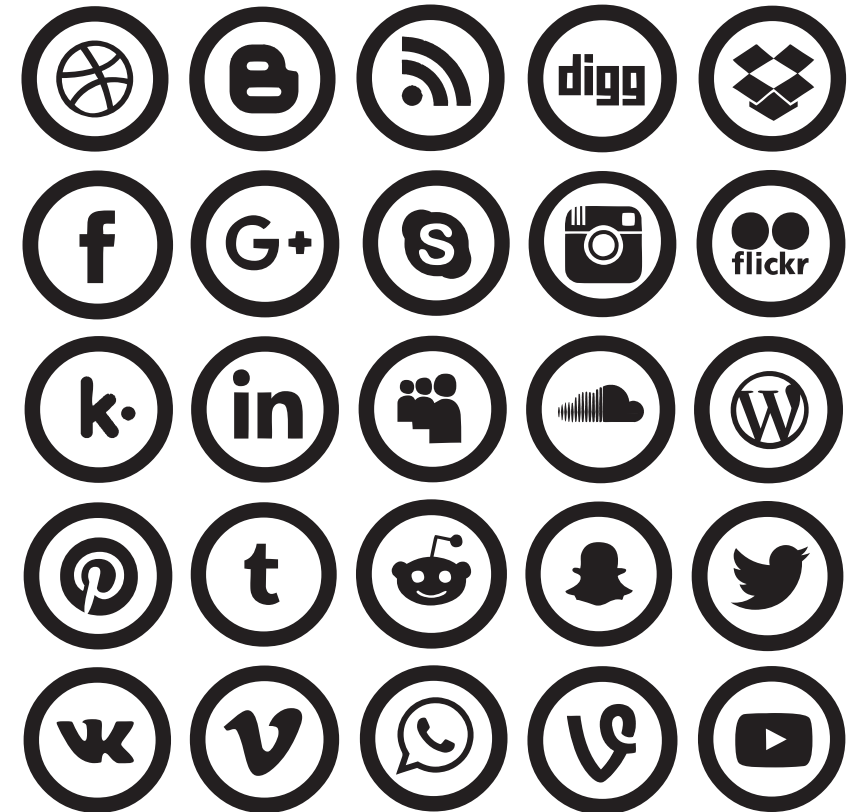


Illustration # 9 - Letters A - Y of font called ‘Social Circles’

When it comes to symbols and their interpretation, Jean C Cooper's 'An illustrated encyclopaedia of traditional symbols' is always a good start. The following quote says something of the significance that the round enclosed form has had and still has as a symbol:

‘Circle A universal symbol. Totality, wholeness; simultaneity; original perfection; roundness is sacred as the most natural shape; the self-contained; the Self; the unmanifest; the infinite; eternity; time enclosing space, but also timelessness as having no beginning or end, and spacelessness as having no above or below; as circular and spherical it is the abolition of time and space, but also signifies recurrence.’

(Cooper 1978, 36)

Two cultures of interest to me as an artist that inspire my work have been the Sami, as I have my roots with the Sami people, and the different Arabic cultures. The circle plays a great role within both of them. For the Sami the circle stands for spirituality. The circle of the Sami flag represents both the sun and the moon. The circle also holds the four elements together. (Sami informational center: <http://www.samer.se/1146>) (Arabian Geometric Patterns 2004) Another inspirational source describing the circular geometric structures of planetarial dances are those described in Martineau. (Martineau 2001).

In contrast to the metaphorical use of the circle in the diagrams of the circles of a society in sociology, there are also those who try to apply the circle as a direct tool. One example of this is the 'restorative practices of classroom circles' by Amos Clifford, who lives and works as a teacher in San Francisco in the United States. He has developed a method using the symbol and form of the circle in a 'restorative' way. He teaches ways for students to become what he calls 'skillful participants in circles' (Clifford p 32). He asserts that:

‘Circles have their own set of guidelines that are essential for them to function well.’

June Vail, an American researcher and critic of dance, discusses dance in relation to culture and culture in relation to dance, from the horizon of being an American in the Swedish society of the 1990s (Vail, 1997). She sums up her study in a last chapter under the headline 'Cultural choreographies: Borders, dances, dialogue'. Vail is an early source speaking about how many Swedes have a low self esteem when it comes to our own culture. One example is how some can only relate to one traditional dance - 'Små grodorna' performed once a year around the maypole on Midsummer Eve (Vail, 1997, 143).

Vail speaks about how a culture has difficulties in seeing its own boundaries and definitions. She also concludes that if the idea of what constitutes a certain society/nation becomes too blurry, the inhabitants will have a problem with inviting others into an inclusive mode, as there isn't much of a circle to invite newcomers into. Vail's book is almost twenty years old, but regarding cultural choreographies in Sweden it still seems valid.

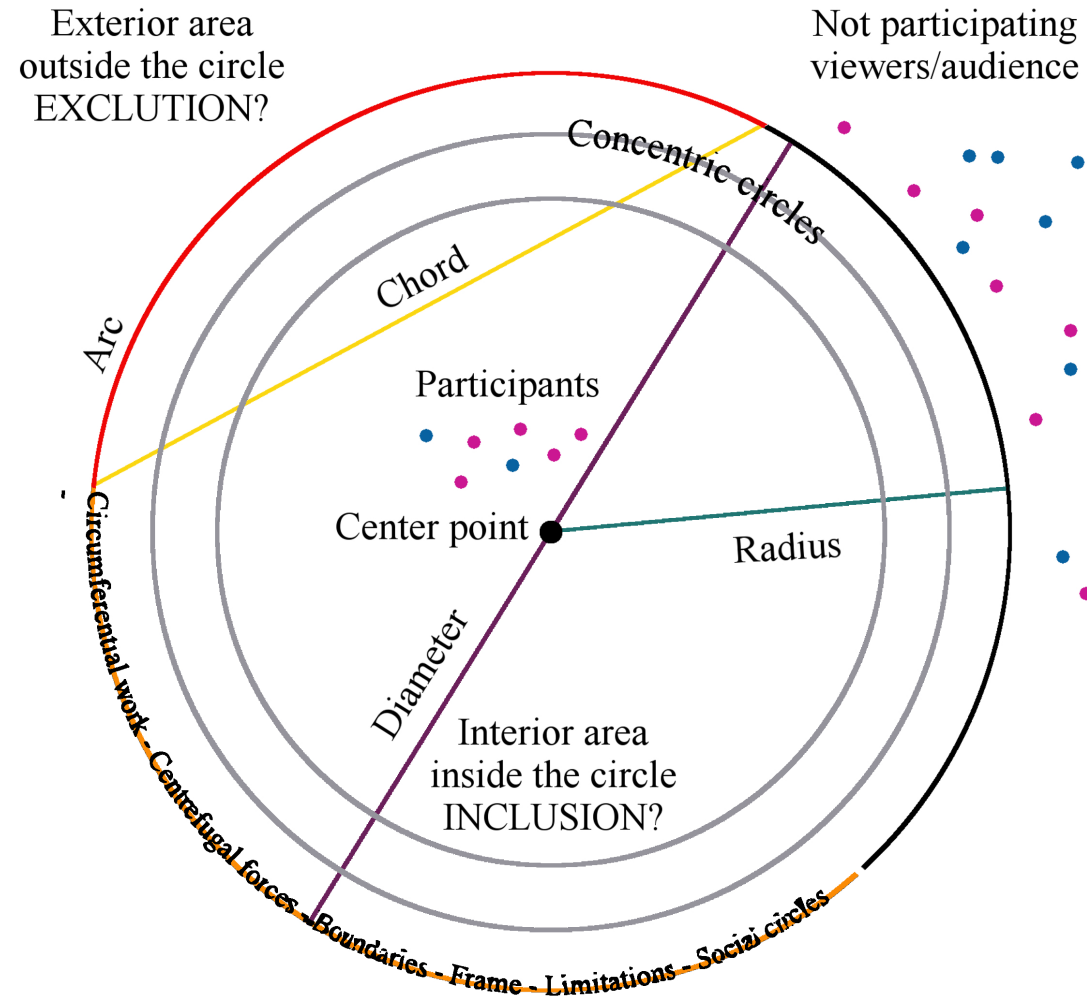


Illustration # 10 Concepts for circular participatory art by the author

III.IV Imprints as a symbol of exclusion from society

During the fall of 2015, Europe saw more refugees than ever before. Migrants are trying to reach new countries to avoid war, famine and terror. Politicians in many of the European countries tried to make it look less inviting to head for their nation. Sweden and Norway were no exception. In articles in the major newspapers in Norway, and retold by Swedish and other foreign news media, Norwegian prime minister Erna Solberg speaks of different ways Norway will change to the worse for those who still would like to seek asylum in Norway (Hufvudstadsbladet, No 2015-12-29, Dagens Nyheter Swe 2015-12-29, Svenska Dagbladet Swe 2015-12-28).

One of the statements is that Norway from now on shall not only take fingerprints and photographs of migrants, but also their footprints. The footprints are to be stored for ten years.

Prior to Solberg's announcement, to 'put down your foot' meant to stand for something, to make a statement. The idea of the footprint has also been used repeatedly by the green movement to problematize the consumption of each and every human being, asking what 'footprint' we will leave during a lifetime. But suddenly, the imprint of a foot would mark a registration of an individual, someone unwanted asking for inclusion. Registering every migrant would also give a hint that they were potential criminals or terrorists as it was not seen as sufficient to only use finger prints and photography.

III.V Dance notations (choreography)

There are several different notational systems in use worldwide for the communication of how to perform a walk, dance or other movement. Around sixty systems are in use today (Hutchinson-Guest 1998). There are two predominant systems in the *Benesh Movement Notation* and the so called *Labanotation*, named after their inventors Joan and

Rudolf Benesh and by Rudolf von Laban respectively. German born Laban constructed a theory system called *eukinetics* where characteristics in movement were described as opposite qualities. Both the Benesh and the Laban systems have extensive and distinct sets of characters and rules for how to graphically describe a certain movement or performance.

Within the tradition of circle dance called ‘Sacred dances’, taught and performed within the Swedish Church, dance leaders have used a visually much more accessible notational system, a straightforward pictorial sign table consisting of arrows and lines, letters hinting left or right and a half circle symbolizing the direction of the tip of the dancer’s nose. The notations for each dance are usually accompanied by an instructional text of intent, often a note on the meaning of a specific ritual.

There have also been several artistic notations of movement not distinctly derived from any of the more formalized systems. Some examples are collected in ‘Traces of Dance’ (Loupe, ed. 1994), a review of notational art works. The authors discuss some different notational system makers, but their purpose is more to show the art of drawing movement. Some sketch works take the form of texts flowing around the surface, with words working their way as the dance or the performance would have gone. Other images bear witness of times when handwritten text and illustration had to be perfectly precise should the next person to perform be able to follow in true repetition.

III.IV. To belong or stand aside - notions of inclusion/exclusion

**‘He drew a circle that shut me out —
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But Love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.’**

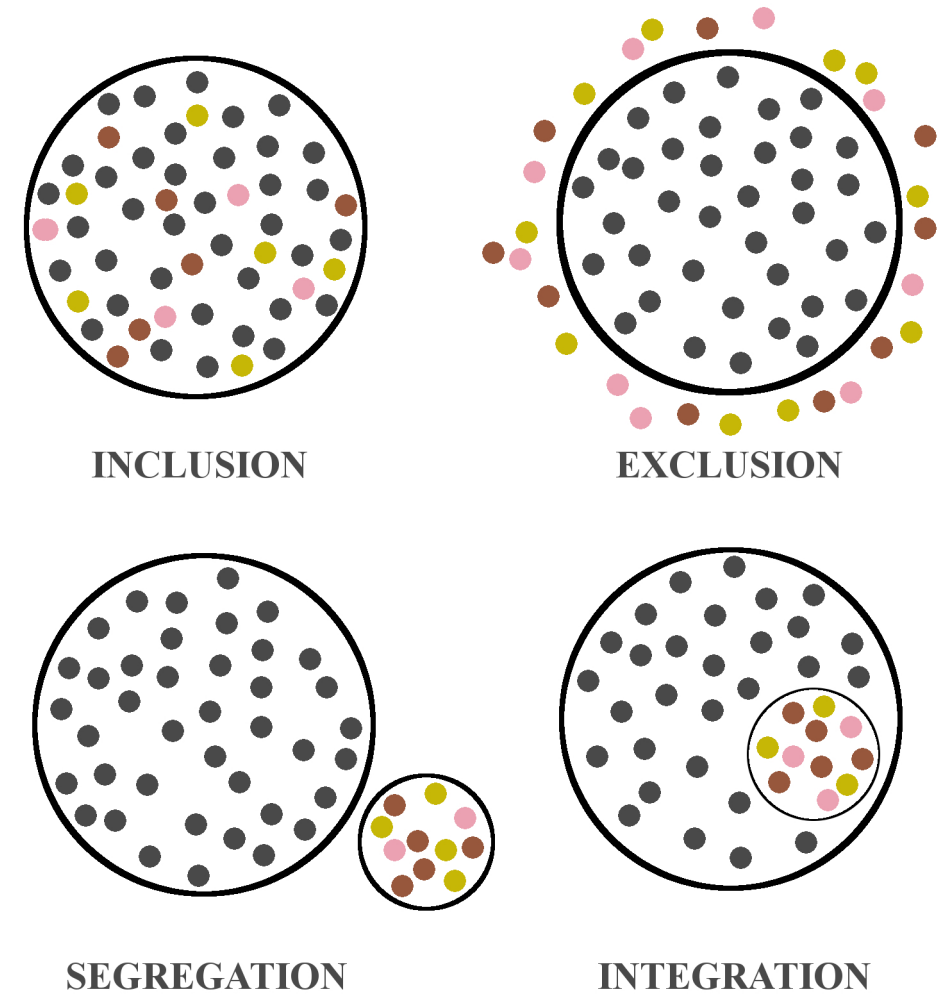
(Markham 1913)

A line drawn as a full circle will always create two areas; the interior and the exterior. Within sociology and pedagogy, the two inversions of inclusion/exclusion are commonly used as metaphors referencing people to be inside or outside the interior or exterior social area of a communal body, for example a village, a city or a school class.

The status of a society as a whole can be depicted in four different circular diagrams for inclusion, integration, exclusion and segregation. (See illustration # 11, following page)

- INCLUSION - everyone irrespective of origin, age, disabilities, sexual preferences, religion and more are all mixed together within the circle
- INTEGRATION - here everyone is inside the circle but smaller circles form islands. The majority of the people stays homogeneous.
- EXCLUSION - anyone with a divergent origin or background is excluded from belonging to the circle of the society.
- SEGREGATION - in a segregated society smaller circles form outside the main circle of a society like parallel universes

Illustration # 11, right; Conceptual circles of inclusion/exclusion



IV. METHODS AND IMPLEMENTATION

In order to study the circle and to make use of and examine its inherent charisma/characteristics through the two main participatory art works called IMPRINT and IMPRESSION, I planned and worked through the methods explained in the following chapter.

IV.I Methods for IMPRINT – clay circle performance

The idea of IMPRINT was based on making a work of art with maximum perceived inclusion for the audience, where I would make a large scale artwork in raw clay through an invitational performance, a participatory art act. One initial performance with a raw clay circle was made in May a few weeks before IMPRINT. More information on this will be found in the attached folder of circumferential works. Here I concentrate on the main work of IMPRINT.

These were the methods I used;

IV.I.1 Making of circle choreography

The idea of letting people put their foot down, making a mark on the clay, had to be made very easy to access if anyone should be able to join in. I focused on:

An outdoor public site with a maximum fluctuation of people had to be found – for various reasons I choose the main square of Östersund, a small town in the north of Sweden. The

clay would be laid out straight on the ground to be accessible to people in wheelchairs and people with limited vision.

I would invite people in and explain the process of putting their feet down in the shape of a counter-clockwise wave or fan. Each group of participants would put their feet down as explained exactly four minutes after the hour and four minutes past the half hour.

The pattern for the clay would be a circle geometry derived from Sami and Arabic cultural patterns, using different kinds of clay, with colors corresponding to different human skin tones. The circle form would be made from various symbols of importance to me as an artist and for this project. The imprint of the feet would form larger and larger concentric circles. The choreography for the one hour circle dance would be made with help from Sacred dance-leader and cantor Ingrid Grahn, Östersund.

IV.I.2 The time frame of the summer solstice circle

As summer solstice is a time when northern Sweden is blessed with daylight twenty-four hours around the clock, I decided to make use of this astronomical circle when choosing the time for my clay performance. Also, this suited my aims of making an artwork as open as possible, as the solstice nowadays has no strong active religious organization or sect claiming it. My hope was that Christians as well as Hindus or Muslims or Atheists for that matter could feel comfortable with a sacred act of art on the merely planetary occasion of solstice.

The time frame for the public to join in would be set to the circle of a day and a night; a twenty four hour long performance. This decision was made to make the work accessible to as many citizens as possible, not just the ones that could come within a shorter time span. The word dygn in Swedish stands for the twenty-four hour circle that makes up one day and one night, a circle of everyday life.

An invitational circle dance on the clay would be held at 00.04 – 01.04, one hour. During this hour, including the solstice at 00.34, the choreography would be as simple as possible and the gestures would give a hint to anyone standing on the side to feel welcome to join.

IV.I.3 A square as a set of fixed rules

All in all the public outdoor areas of a cityscape or a town is a set square of rules. To make IMPRINT I applied for a permit from the local police. The police works together with the municipality of the city of Östersund, and one of their officials called me to make sure I wouldn't stain or destroy the paving of the fairly new square. For the setup I decided to use large white plastic tarpaulin to make the project clearly visible from any entrance to the square. This was also done to keep the clay off the new black slate tiles. On one side I put up a working space for pin rolling the clay, which was also to serve as an area where I could stand and inform and invite by-passers to join in.

To make a clear statement about the work being about inclusion and that I was trying to understand what makes my audience feel included – or not – in my artworks, I made an effort to raise a circular yurta tent where I could hang and display the circle questionnaires as they would number up throughout the twenty-four hours.

Illustration # 12, following spread; A group of participants mark their input on one of the stamp questionnaires



IV.I.4 The stamp questionnaire

To collect facts about the actual inclusiveness of IMPRINT I had made a circular stamp questionnaire for each group of participants. Female participants were told to use a white color and males a gold color to mark their feeling of inclusion through participating in making a foot imprint in the clay. I wanted to see if I could come to any conclusions regarding the experiences of my participants. As my work had the intention of examining the possibilities for more people to participate in my artworks, I wanted to be able to see if there was any difference in gender. In other words; would more men want to stop and join in? In pure numbers, females tend to visit galleries and museums more often than men do.

The question I decided to ask was: ‘How well (center equals maximum) do You feel included by participating by putting down a foot in clay in the art work IMPRINT?’ For those willing and wanting to give a more in-depth response, I prepared one hundred copies of a longer questionnaire asking (in Swedish and in English):

- Write something about Your impression from participating in AVTRYCK/IMPRINT!
- What are Your thoughts on the circle as form? Is it including or excluding?
- What do You think about art that invites You to participate?

IV.I.5 The clay performance – my own rules and guides

For IMPRINT I made up some rules for myself, a process chart or a preferred sequence of events:

- To pin roll clay and place it along the edge of the pre-existing circle
- To inform and invite
- To guide people in on the tarpaulin and to show them where to stand
- To give a sign for the moment of imprint
- To guide people off the tarpaulin and
- To ask them to fill in the circle questionnaire
- To tell them about the longer optional questionnaire
- To try and get some food and short rests
- To register all my impressions
- To enjoy the moment

IV.I.6 Methods for invitation

Trying to make a work of art intended to be super-invitational, I aimed to spread the word about IMPRINT in as many forums I possibly could. Since this was a project with only half the budget covered, I would use ways of promotion that were free of charge. The information was spread via:

- Local radio SR Jämtland – in an interview in advance
- Local newspapers – as they chose to do an interview before the event
- Through a Facebook event
- Via Swedish television, which chose to cover my project in a news show
- Via direct messages through dance networks in Östersund and around
- Through information directly to circle dance group in the church of Marielund, Östersund

IV.II Methods for IMPRESSION – hot glass circle

To examine the possibilities and limitations of the circle used in participatory art, I also made the work IMPRESSION, where I encircled participants with molten glass and fire. I struggled with the setup for this part of my examination, but these were the methods I decided to use.

IV.II.1 Making of choreography for hot glass circles

In any ordinary hot shop for glass blowing and handling molten glass outside a furnace there are certain strict rules that glass artists working in the studio are familiar with. When glass making is done at a work bench, so called *bench work*, there are often two or three persons working together in a team. Tasks are thoroughly divided between the working participants. One person is the master or artist who is in charge. She or he has a team of different gaffers or helpers who handle the glass in various transitional stages. Since glass making can only be done within the limit of the glass being molten - it stiffens as soon as it gets colder once outside the furnace - it takes skill and coordination of the team to get everything made within the right window of time. Hence there is a very specific choreography within the workshop which determines where, when and how to move.

Having that knowledge and experience of how strictly even skilled glass workers would move around in the non-public space of a hot shop for hot glass handling, I had a long process of brain storming ahead of me, and some trials and errors to make before deciding upon a solution.

I had been accepted to perform IMPRESSION in the public square of Östersund during the event of the United Nations Creative Cities summit of 2016 (UNCC 2016). For the UNCC2016 I went for a fifty-fifty solution where the start of the circle was made from molten glass, and the rest of the outline from a fire circle made from technical gasoline on

cotton ribbons in iron U-bars. The circle would measure some eight meters in diameter to give enough space for the people I wanted to let inside to be safe with an extra margin. I was informed that people from the UNESCO meeting would mingle around in the public square from around eight PM until well past midnight. As I wanted to examine the inclusiveness of my participatory art works using the circle, I once again made use of the public square.

Aesthetically I decided to go for a plain full circle as in the most literal version; a circle that would burn a drawn line starting from my molten glass touch. The circle would run both clockwise and counter-clockwise interlocking as the fire lines met. Many other ideas of circular patterns and forms were discarded. I consulted a friend working with fire sculptures to discuss various methods and means. Some of the most powerful ways of performing a fire circle had to be dismissed as this was an open event and those methods presupposed more safety regulations and even practice from participants.

IV.II.2 The public sphere of a square for a hot glass circle

As I had sent in my proposal to make a hot glass/fire circle as a reply to a call from the UNCC2016 organizers and had been accepted, I postponed my worries about a permit. It was said that my performance would be included in an application for the food market also planned for the square that week. The Food In Action-network would pay for the permit.

I knew that a potentially dangerous art piece like this needed safe guarding and a proper permit and I took precautions to make my work safe: First of all I decided that I had to kill my darling idea of using molten glass for the whole circle around participants. For this I would have needed a better fence, some assistants handling the molten glass in time and so on. My method instead would focus on enlarging smaller molten glass fire drawings into a larger format, where the transition would allow for a 'hand-over' to a quickly spreading line of fire closing the circle around the participants. I had said I would do the performance

over and over between 20.00 and midnight. I had engaged one friend to help me, which was way too few but my budget was limited.

IV.II.3 The performance – rules and guides

The idea was to work the four hours from 20.00 through to 00.00 as a heartfelt performance. I decided to keep in mind that the work's function as an examination of an inclusive/exclusive circle of molten glass/fire would probably diminish from being a true work of art into a public event that had to be carried out in a keep-safe working mode.

Precautions had to come as the very first point on my agenda. As my budget was extremely low and I could only afford one single helper, safety was her main task. She accepted to watch the scene like a hawk scouting for anyone trespassing or not abiding the rules for participation and rules for being in the audience. To mark out the performance area and the area designated for people watching, we made a single rope square around the fire circle-to-be. Different fire extinguishers were placed around the scene.

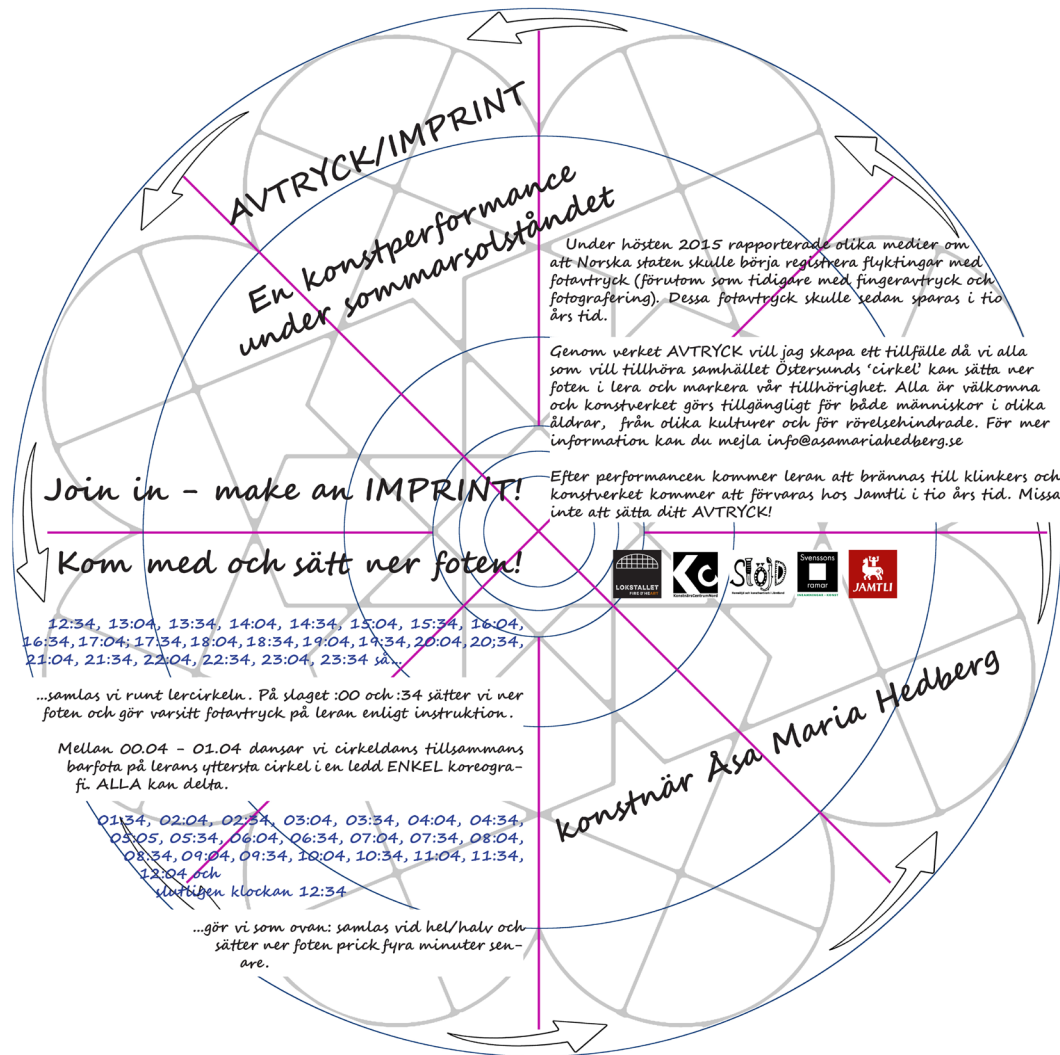
IV.II.4 Methods for invitation

IMPRESSION was scheduled within the program of UNCC2016 and printed copies of the program were given to all the delegates as well as being distributed in the thousands in and around the town of Östersund. I was also interviewed in English for a PR bureau hired by the UNCC hosts, the Good Tribe. The interview served as a mini invitation spread via Instagram and Facebook. For this second performance I did not personally invite any other media, but I happened to be interviewed by a Swedish news TV show hours before the performance.

IV.II.5 Written feedback

To gather statements from participants of the fire circle performance I had prepared blank papers and pens.. The idea was to let any and all impressions be welcome without so many directions or straight questions given. I would only hint that I would like to hear their opinions on the inclusiveness or exclusiveness of a circle in general and the one they had experienced in particular. Additionally, I would ask for their impressions of participating.

Illustration # 13, next spread ; invitational poster for IMPRINT



AVTRYCK/IMPRINT

En konstperformance under sommarsolståndet

Under hösten 2015 rapporterade olika medier om att Norska staten skulle börja registrera flyktingar med fotavtryck (förutom som tidigare med fingeravtryck och fotografiering). Dessa fotavtryck skulle sedan sparas i tio års tid.

Genom verket AVTRYCK vill jag skapa ett tillfälle då vi alla som vill tillhöra samhället Östersunds 'cirkel' kan sätta ner foten i lera och markera vår tillhörighet. Alla är välkomna och konstverket görs tillgängligt för både människor i olika åldrar, från olika kulturer och för rörelsehindrade. För mer information kan du mejla info@asamariahedberg.se

Join in - make an IMPRINT!

Efter performancen kommer leran att brännas till klinkers och konstverket kommer att förvaras hos Jamtli i tio års tid. Missa inte att sätta ditt AVTRYCK!

Kom med och sätt ner foten!



12:34, 13:04, 13:34, 14:04, 14:34, 15:04, 15:34, 16:04, 16:34, 17:04, 17:34, 18:04, 18:34, 19:04, 19:34, 20:04, 20:34, 21:04, 21:34, 22:04, 22:34, 23:04, 23:34 så...

...samlas vi runt lercirkeln. På slaget :00 och :34 sätter vi ner foten och gör var sitt fotavtryck på leran enligt instruktion.

Mellan 00:04 - 01:04 dansar vi cirkeldans tillsammans barfota på lerans yttersta cirkel i en ledd ENKEL koreografi. ALLA kan delta.

01:34, 02:04, 02:34, 03:04, 03:34, 04:04, 04:34, 05:05, 05:34, 06:04, 06:34, 07:04, 07:34, 08:04, 08:34, 09:04, 09:34, 10:04, 10:34, 11:04, 11:34, 12:04 och slutligen klockan 12:34

...gör vi som ovan: samlas vid hel/halv och sätter ner foten prick fyra minuter senare.

Konstnär Åsa Maria Hedberg

V. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATIONS

T

his chapter, presenting the results of the study, holds the stories of the making and performing of IMPRINT and IMPRESSION, and gathering input from participants. IMPRINT was performed in June 2016 and the sister act IMPRESSION took place in September the same year. In many ways the two works mirror one another as the works look much alike, but at a closer view they are opposites. This chapter will retell the acts of art and present the feedback given.

V.I IMPRINT



Illustration # 14; Making an IMPRINT in raw clay

VI.1 IMPRINT – circle solstice performance

The outcome and the result of IMPRINT can be described from many points of view. For the purpose of this essay, I will retell the twenty-four hours in a factual time-lapse story, making use of approximate clock times:

- 02:30 End of loading half a ton of clay and a yurta tent into my lorry van
05:30 Wake up call
07:00 We leave for Östersund – a one hour drive
08:05 Arrival at a sunny square in Östersund, start of unloading
08:20 Arrival of my assistant and colleague Linda Svedberg, we keep unloading
09:00 Arrival of two more volunteer friends and the start of mounting the yurta tent
- 11:50 The yurta is completed, the tarpaulin is laid out, the work scene is all set.
12:02 Swedish radio stops by to ask when would be the better time for an interview
- 12:19 Swedish television wants an interview. I am frantically pin rolling my clay to lay out the first circle to start the performance.
- 12:30 I put down the first piece of circle clay on the center mark of the tarpaulin
12:34 I put down my foot on the clay together with my assistant
- 12:40 My first guest foot imprinter stamps her mark on a first circle questionnaire and I nail it to the wall of the yurta tent.



Illustration # 15; Pin rolling the clay for IMPRINT



- 12:45 A journalist from a local newspaper wants an interview as I struggle to pin roll the next circle of clay
- 13:00 A new group of people have gathered to put their feet down four minutes later

Between 13:04 – 15:34

a circle of pin rolling – laying out the clay – foot imprints – questionnaire guiding and nailing keeps looping in a very quick flow except for a short break to answer a radio journalist about a better time to return for a live interview.

- 15:40 The radio journalist is back and wants me to be interviewed live on air. We decide to do the interview just after the 16:04 imprint.

16:15 Live broadcast interview from the yurta tent

17:04 The performance is back on with new guests with bare feet. The sun keeps burning from a clear sky.

17:30 No guests around and I get a short break

18:04 The performance continues after a quick pin rolling session.

18:34 A new group of imprints from participants

19:00 The first people arrive that have seen a reportage on the local TV news about the circle performance in the square.

Some friends arrive to cheer my efforts and to join in. The weather is turning more and more windy.

Illustration # 16, left; Helping participants make an IMPRINT

20:30 No guests and I find time to eat my breakfast sandwich and buy some food for the night as a friend safe guards the site.

23:34 Last imprints with interested guests before the hour long circle dance.

00:00 Five brave persons have turned up to dance a circle dance upon clay. As I have struggled all day to keep up with pin rolling for the next imprint and then to inform, take notes, guide the questionnaires I haven't been able to pin roll a whole circle for the dance. That does not seem to bother my guests as I explain my idea for the simple choreography.

00:04 We start to dance the invitational circle of inclusion
Some people pass by and we do our best to make gestures to wave them our way, to join in. We have success with one woman who joins the dance for some minutes. She also stands aside afterwards, taking pictures. One of the sweet ladies in the group keeps talking, sharing everything that comes to her mind on the topic of the circle. She apologizes for not being quiet but I find her input very sincere and nicely adding to the work.

00:40 All five of us still dancing realize that summer solstice just passed. Every one seems satisfied and pleased but a bit tired so we make a collaborative decision to stop. We end up in a tighter circle hug and then start sharing our thoughts on the experience. The debriefing takes a good hour before every one but me leaves the square.

02:04 No one but me is around, but for the wind that causes my tarpaulins to jump and throw my clay footprint circles up in the air and down again, despite being anchored with heavy insulation bricks. I take the lonely moment to eat my dinner and to recollect memories from the day. As I am still alone at half past two I sneak in to the nearby hotel to hear if they have any coffee or tea as I am getting a bit cold. But no and no, they did not have

any and would not offer me to wait while they boiled some water... At least I could use the ladies room.

03:00 Sometime around three, rain starts to sprinkle lightly. As the rain top of the yurta tent blew off in the wind just a bit earlier, I start to gather all the circle questionnaires from the walls, along with everything else that might be destroyed if it starts to rain heavily. I read all the longer questionnaires and realize how many people actually were present and interested. A few people pass the square every now and then, but no one is interested in joining in.

04:30 The skies have been getting more and more dark and there has been some wind on and off but the major rain fall did not begin. I am tired and thinking of leaving the site just for a while as it seems useless to stay when no-one comes around.

But of course; then comes a friend who has biked in to Östersund to treat me to a breakfast melon! We sit in the middle of the square, close to the rain cover-coated imprint clay circle and eat, laugh and talk about art and art making. Speaking to a friend about the work makes many conclusions fall into place.

05:30 The rain is back on and I put up a sign saying that I will be back 8 – 10-ish and that I am taking a break because of the rain.

11:00 I am back on site after having slept like a rock. The sun is back in place but the tarpaulins are covered with water, too dangerously slippery to let any one walk into the middle.

11:00 – 12:34 Many friends come and go to ask how the work has gone and if they can join in.

We discuss the fact that the work couldn't be finished mainly because of the rain and how I have done all the job by myself. Clearing and cleaning the site takes another four hours. But fortunately I get some help as the rain starts to pour again when the yurta is to be dismantled



Illustration # 17; The artist in an interview with Swedish Television

V.II.2 Outcome of circular stamp questionnaire

All twenty-one circular stamp questionnaires were merged into a single illustration clarifying the overall input I was given. When the foot printers had washed their feet and gotten their shoes back on, everyone who had participated in the art work also put a stamp mark on a designated circular paper sheet. The paper measured 60 centimeters in diameters and the cork stamps only 2 centimeters which would allow for a wide range of opinions. I informed every group about the procedure and that I would leave them to put their marks down, as I did not want anyone to spot the center as a gesture to please me. For each turn I presented a fresh piece of paper so that no one would think about what the earlier groups had stated. Within each group people either stood in line to put their mark down, one after the other, or they shared a chat on how they felt and where they were going to put their marks.

The overlay presented on page 69, shows the marks of each group on a radius sorted towards the clock time their participation took place. To make the diagram readable I have shrunk the area of the outer field, from the radius point of 20 centimeters to 60 centimeters, as not a single stamp was put there. Also, for the sake of readability I have made the marks much smaller than they were in real life to be able to fit all the material from twenty-one circle diagrams into one fusion image.

A total of 86 persons joined in and made an imprint. 58 persons were women and 28 were men.

All in all seven people joined me for the circular solstice dance around midnight (two of whom just stayed for a shorter time). One of them was a man.

In regards to where people would put their mark, the larger groups tended to spread out their marks more while the smaller groups made more homogeneous decisions towards the center.



Illustration # 18; Circular stamp questionnaires hanging in the yurt, a woman giving input on her impressions

V.II.3 Optional extra questionnaire - some voices

Nineteen individuals chose to fill in the extra questionnaire. Most of them are written in Swedish. Here are some voices I would like to highlight (Interpretations were made by me):

-A bit improbable at first. But then wow. Really fun how four different nationalities participated at the same time in an otherwise empty square.

-Makes you think about how outsiders may feel. (As a reply to ‘Your thoughts on the circle as form; is it including or excluding?’)

-Really good to participate in a collaborative work of art, especially with other people, not only our friends.

-I love the circle as a symbol. The completeness. It is truly including. Everyone is allowed to join. Everyone is important.

-Interesting meetings and conversations with different people. (IMPRESSION) gives feelings of togetherness and openness here and now. Positive ripples over the water....

-Embracing and including but also ‘threatening’ to take part in something without having full control.

- The circle is a form that everyone can relate to. We are drawn to circles. (...) The circle is including, both naturally and culturally.

-It was an interesting experience, to put my feet on clay and that my imprint fit beside another person that I didn’t know, but still felt a lovely intimacy and kindness together with that person, was really awesome.

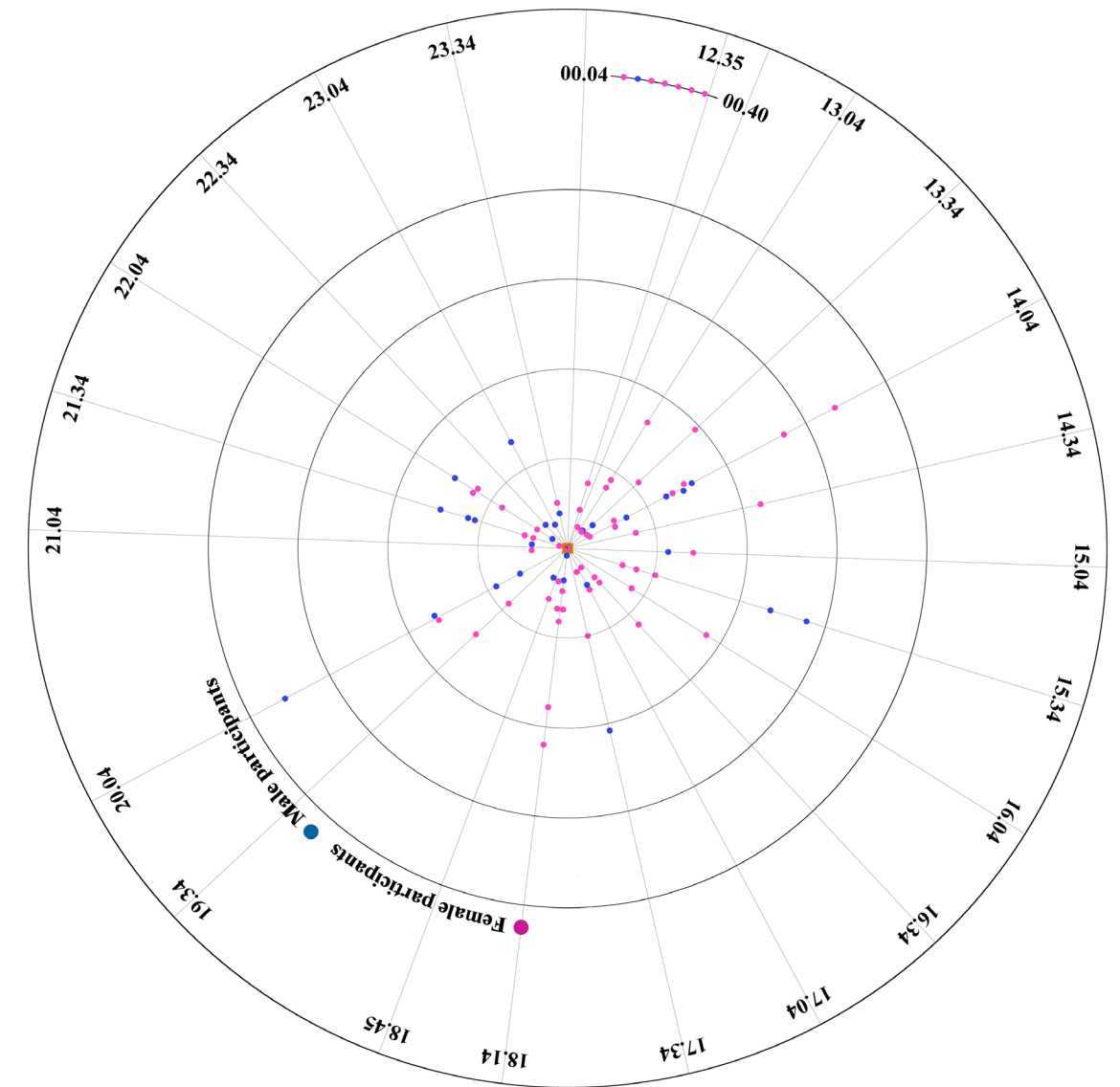


Figure # 1; questionnaire outcome, overlay time diagram, by the artist

V.III IMPRESSION

The sister act of IMPRINT was IMPRESSION, which took place against the backdrop of the annual meeting for the UNESCO Creative Cities network held in Östersund (abbreviation UNCC2016). The summit drew upon creativity in local food making and arts and crafts of all kinds were present. The vast program for the week felt like the Olympics for gastronomics and arts.

V.III.2 IMPRESSION – molten glass performance

The preparations for IMPRESSION took me through many loops of troubles and worries. I had realized I needed help with safety and security as my intention was to mirror the clay performance of IMPRINT by using the same scene; the public square of Östersund. The organizers of the UNCC2016 meeting had embraced my proposal to perform my hot circles at their event in mid-September, the invitation to ‘First impression - magic inclusion’ had been promoted via their network and printed in a brochure. I had no way back, no money and no help.

A couple of days before the UNCC2016 I learned that there was also no official clearance from the authorities for me handling molten glass and fire in the middle of the square. Both me and the organizer had thought the other part had taken care of applying for a permit. But after some intense days filling in application forms for the police and mailing back and forth I got the ‘OK’ barely twenty-four hours before I had to start the furnace to get the glass molten in time.

As I had no intention of not performing the IMPRESSION, everything was prepared and

packed in my mini van. So in Thursday morning, 15th September I drove to the square and unloaded my portable mini glass furnace and all the other tools needed for the work. The day was sunny and warm for a September day in Östersund and I shared the public square with market stalls of local food producers. My first intention had been to just stay there to safeguard the furnace so that people wouldn’t take too much of an interest and get too close to it, but as I was at the site preparing for the performance I realized I could use the my time there to invite individuals to be encircled by hot glass and fire later the same night.

This time the over all design of the public square was something totally different from the enormous empty square I used for the solstice circle clay performance of IMPRINT. Summer was nearly gone and the night was slightly chilly and pitch dark. Cosy food market stands with top quality locally produced products, closed for the evening, framed my centered stage. A huge open Sami tent with open sides hosted tables and benches with a band jamming was my neighbor. Also just close by another artist encouraged people to join in to spray paint her large wooden board. Most of this backdrop came as a complete surprise to me and I just had to smile and deliver my performance. As dusk fell, my assistant had a hard time keeping bikers from running over the set up as they swished down the sloping square on their way home from university or work. As the market stalls made other barriers, my ‘open’ space in the middle of the square was the only way they saw. Naturally we had the area fenced off, but it didn’t help much. We kept praying no one would get hurt or bike into the actual art piece...

The first circle of fire was performed around 20.50. As soon as I had finished preparations I started to draw fire circles on a piece of paper on the paving, explaining my intentions to the audience me around. As my performance was included in the program for the international delegates of the UNCC2016, the square now had turned into a cosy night time mingle area with fame chef Jamal Hashi from New York cooking snacks and a hot jazz band jamming loudly under a Sami yurta tent very close by my designated area of the square. I tried to invite people to stand inside the fire circle art work to-be, shouting louder and

louder. I had not been informed there would be a band and a bar and sort of a dance floor yurta. Here my promotion earlier that day came to help me: a lady I had a very long conversation with who knew my intentions came to the site bringing a friend, just in time for the first go. Another person also joined, introducing himself first as a pyromaniac. To say the least, with this whole set up I was a bit troubled about how my work would turn out...

I guided the three persons to the middle of the circle and had them confirm they felt safe and that they would stay put until the fire circle had gone out. I checked with my assistant that she had observed that it was time for 'go' and she made a sign of OK to start, people were securely fenced off. I gathered some glass and drew a small fire circle on the piece of paper on the ground and made three dots from the fire in the middle, showing the three persons included in the first fire circle. Then I gathered some more molten glass, swung the spike to make the glass flow longer - and finally lit the circle. The fire spread as planned. In a couple of seconds the fire met in a full circle.

I checked back with my included guests if they felt OK, and they said they did. I asked them to enjoy the moment. As the fire took much longer than I had expected to die down I opened the U-irons as a door into the circle to let anyone interested join in the circle. My permission from the police stated I was allowed to invite up to four people at one time into the circle, so it was a chance to see what would happen, but only one extra person went inside.

Illustration #20, next spread; IMPRESSION - participatory art of molten glass and fire

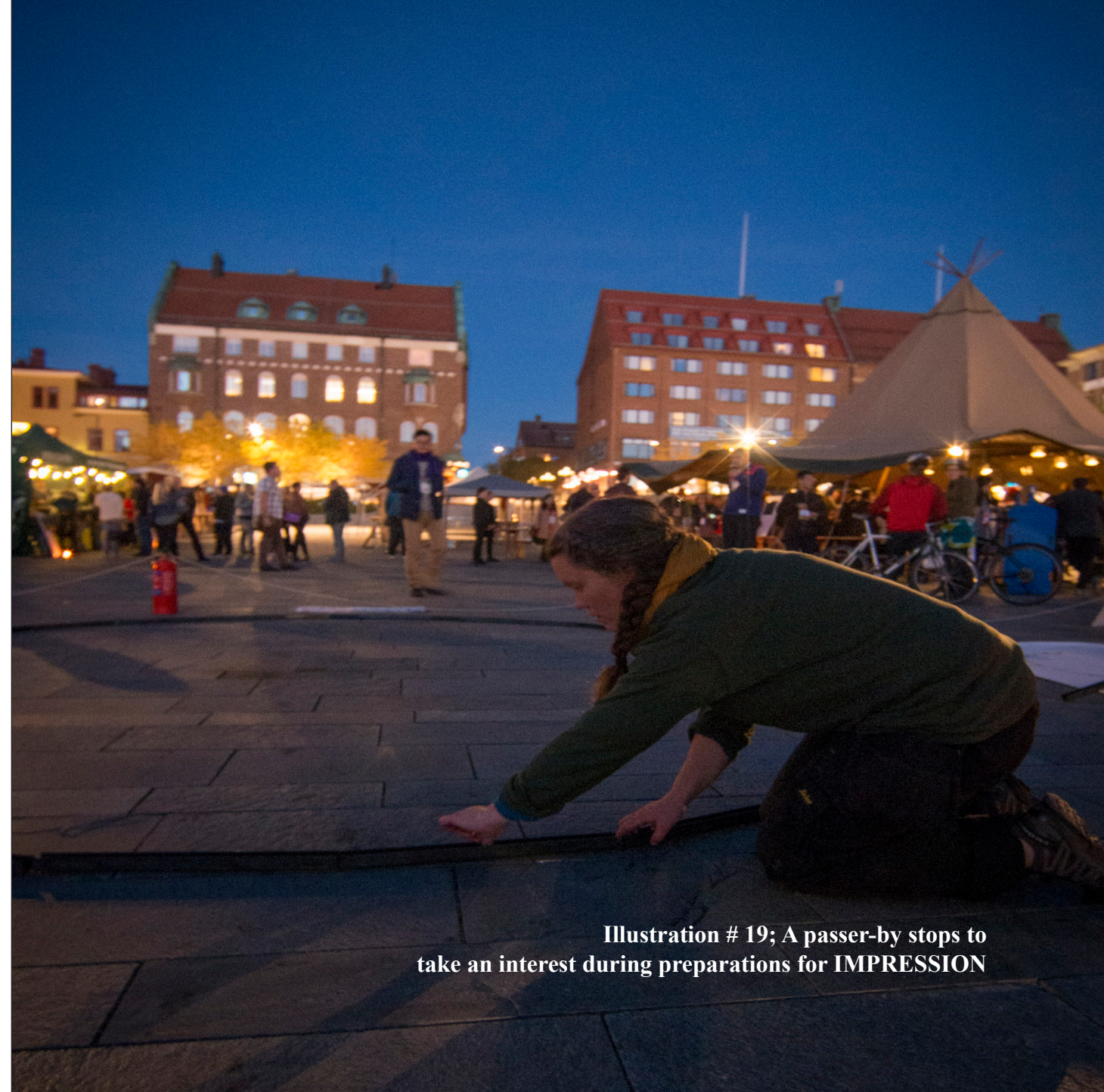


Illustration # 19; A passer-by stops to take an interest during preparations for IMPRESSION



V.III.3 Written input from participants

All three occasions happened much like this first go, and after the impressions the participants were given pen and paper and were asked to write down any thoughts about their experience in regards to the circle art work they had been included in, and any thoughts on inclusion/exclusion from the circle as a form. (All input on IMPRESSION is attached on the USB.)

I find these comments extra interesting:

-It felt exciting and full of expectations! Selected. To get to experience something that not everyone does. I thought that there would be a one meter high wall of fire and that everyone would cheer loudly. All of a sudden I felt stared at. :)

-The circle included and at the same time fenced off, being inside and being stared at created an excluded feeling, like the ring and the fire trapped (us).

-It felt exciting to join and I felt connection with the unknown person (joining her and her friend, note from author). I chose to stand back to back so that we would face three out of four quarters.

V.III.4 To leave the periphery to join in

The third circle of inclusion made for an extra interesting result. Everything started out just as the other two earlier rounds. Everything started out just as the two earlier rounds. Only this time I could see that all four persons who accepted my invitation to stand inside the upcoming fire circle knew each other, more or less. One person was someone I know and the other three appeared to be from the UNCC2016 network. At this

late hour - around 23.00 - people had eaten late dinner with some wine and voices and laughs were loud. I struggled again trying to explain my work and the way the performance would happen.

As I confirmed that the four people had understood the rules I went for the furnace and drew the paper sketch. I gathered twice again and got a really huge lump of molten glass on the spike. The swing made the glass thread longer than before and I got a perfect lighting as the glass attached and trailed the circle's edge for a couple of meters. This time many more people had gathered close by around the circle and as the fire spread along the circumference people shouted and cheered their ovations. The music happened to reach a crescendo as the fire spread and got more intense. After a minute the most intense feelings and the music had cooled down. I let the four people stay inside to wait for the fire to die down as I went to answer some questions from the audience. That's when I saw someone, just caught in the corner of my eye, jumping over the fire wall joining the four people in the circle.

My pulse bolted as I was accountable for the safety of anyone included in the artwork. My first reaction was that some lunatic had jumped the fire line to go bananas with the work and the guests inside. I soon learned that it was the initiator and chief of the whole UNCC2016 event who had watched her friends in the circle from the outside and now couldn't suppress the desire to join in. As I spontaneously cursed her action she happily cried back:

I **It is much easier to ask for forgiveness afterwards than to ask for permission ahead!**

As this performance, IMPRESSION, was supposed to be one of the artworks that I used to study inclusion in art via the circle I smiled, as she had surprised me by daring to

break the set restrictions on being in or outside the fire circle. She so desperately wanted to be inside that she just jumped in, risking both my anger and safety regulations. This rebellious action to join in on the closed circle made me glad that I had too little fencing around the site - but at the same time I realized I could not foresee what would happen if I kept making any more fire circles. The square was filling up with more and more people, many of them not so sober.

A film of the third go of IMPRESSION can be found in Folder # 3 The works on the attached DVD.

VI DISCUSSION AND CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

To examine the use of a circle with and for my art have not been the easiest of projects. This chapter will discuss some of the complications, but also find some essence in the results. Complexity causes many knots to untie but then again, hardship can make an artist wiser and better able to plan future artworks. The chapter will also connect this examination to the background material on the circle, participatory artwork and artists presented in chapter III.

VI.I The result in relation to the purpose and thesis question

The research question for this thesis was formulated ‘Will the use of the circle enhance participation in my art and give participants a feeling of inclusion?’ Certainly, I could simply argue a ‘yes’ or a ‘no’. My measured result from the stamp questionnaire of IMPRINT (figure 1) and most voices in the written feedback point in the direction of a strong ‘yes’. In this discussion I will bring up some questions that raise doubt about whether there can be any definite answer at all. For me as an artist, this does not count as a failure. Instead it serves as food for thought and points a finger towards the need for precaution. The results of input from participants must be taken as true, but still evaluated with a grain of skepticism. Any result from human input could and would differ if asking the same persons the same question just one hour later or under slightly different circumstances.

The idea of trying to work in a research-like way was tempting. Dealing with the aftermath of this study I wonder if numbers are of absolute value or even valuable at all for this kind of study. And if so, what does my study say about the circle as a form used for

opening up my art to be truly participatory?

I have found the circle to be a strong form to use, a powerful symbol, clear and stable to read visually. I found it easy to discuss the conceptual idea of examining inclusion/exclusion through the circle; the feeling was that most - if not all - people understood my intentions. The physical use of this well known geometrical form perhaps made the abstract theme easier to consider and discuss than if the works would have been visually more complex.

Artists offering their audiences to participate within physical site specific works like Hein and Eliasson use this minimalistic approach regarding choice of form in most of their works. The underlying concept may be the most complicated structure from physics/nature or a philosophical argument, but the works are made safe zones to enter - at least at first. Comparing this with my own practice has given me an important understanding. Less can certainly be more if less is strong and true. Some of my earlier works are harder to understand, as they both carry an intricate conceptual thought *and* are spatially and visually rich. On the other end of the spectrum there is a work like the Transition Machine (see page 4 and illustration # 2, page 5) where there is only the turning board with the rope handle, the translucent machine 'walls' and the repetitive voice inviting to participation. All input points towards the center point, the opportunity of trying the Machine.

I have understood the characteristics of how the center point of a circle can work as a strong magnet. The many unseen radii all strive towards the mid point and the work can be focused.

In this study, IMPRESSION represents the most pure use of the circle as a layout. The concentric circles growing outwards from a center point in IMPRINT could have made the work more easily read had I not been hindered by side tasks that I had to deal with. Later the rain was an obstacle that stopped the footprint circles from expanding much. The circular yurta and information texts, though, made the circle structure of IMPRINT more

clear. I still consider both these works quite clear of disturbing decoration. On the other hand, I would state that the conceptual idea of inclusive circles reached much further, way beyond the white tarpaulins. The subject matter of inclusion/exclusion spread like water ripples and one cannot say where the word stopped. Perhaps somewhere someone still think about inclusive circles in society and in works of art.

Most certainly, other factors than the use of the circle as a form are even more relevant to whether IMPRINT/IMPRESSION was perceived as inclusive or not. For instance in the case of the IMPRINT clay performance I made huge effort trying to spread the word via different media. Therefore I had many visitors that came because they felt welcome already from seeing my invitation in the local news on TV, or they had heard my call for participants on local radio some days prior to the performance. The use of a public square - without the need for people having to enter an art gallery - made the work accessible to people who never visit an art show. A definite result can be identified regarding participatory art works in general and for my future works in specific; for an audience to take part the acts need to be placed in common sites and talked about in news shows and local radio. People came to join my circles both because they had heard the message on TV, but also because the work was presented where they would walk to and from work or the grocery shop.

With IMPRINT I had visitors who were fairly new to Swedish society and I know some of them felt warm at heart by the concept. I did not ask people to register their origin when they filled in the questionnaires - but I can say that I had many more foreign language speakers participating than I have ever had as visitors in any indoor gallery or museum setting. Several participants told me that they were not regular art gallery goers but now genuinely interested and curious about my art as it showed up in their everyday path.

So the positive answers acknowledging a feeling of inclusion probably have various reasons behind them that were not related to my use of the circle, even though many people referred to the inclusiveness of the form itself. Yet another aspect is the artist persona. My

way of explaining, inviting, guiding, smiling and pushing people to take off their shoes and make a mark also contributed to the feeling of being welcome to join in. Being given the invitation in person, eye to eye, makes it harder to walk away from. This work can be seen as being halfway between performance and a participatory art piece where the artist isn't present (as a Converted Social Bench by Hein). As such my social skills and presence in the act will affect the outcome.

VI.II Inclusion contra exclusion – to measure perception of participation

So how does one measure and value the experience of inclusion from participation in an artwork and how would the 'role' of the circle be separated from all other impressions and perceptions facing someone deciding to join in the process of an art piece? How could a scale be made that shows how the different co-creational factors influence the feeling of being included in the two art works in this study?

What does the open-endedness of the work do to the passer-by; the way a certain art piece gives a hint that it actually needs your footprint too to grow? On top of this handful of queries comes the interpretation of the work; how open to different readings did I make the works for the individuals joining in or choosing to opt out? As soon as I start telling my story of intent some people will also feel excluded.

As an external visitor to Mrzigas' performance in Sharjah (see page 28-29), I was not invited to participate in his work - not even to hold an end of the masking tape. In no regards did this make me feel excluded from the act. Sometimes the exterior area is also an area of participation. It could even be the preferred place for various reasons. From the position on the outside there is the advantage of being able to look in, staring even, or judging. By not engaging, it will be easier to impose critique, both positive and negative. Through making IMPRINT and IMPRESSION I learned that the opposite is equally true. People will want to help out and they are eager to share a bit of what they read as the artists' work.

In a participatory art piece made from clay there is the potential for it to be fired and made strong enough to last hundreds of years, so there is always the little tickle of shared fame from having contributed to the work.

To study, picture or examine a work, the lens of the eye or camera has to stand back or look from above to fully see the whole scenery. I could not manage to collect input from people that did not enter the circles of IMPRINT and IMPRESSION - but it could be that they felt as included as anyone just by watching.

A result of the study is the insight that inclusion/exclusion in a participatory artwork has little to do with the interior/exterior areas of the circle itself. It is all about the perception of the minds and hearts of every soul on site.

Again, this result has parallels in the debate on refugees and migrants who stay in Swedish society for a longer while. We do not all agree what the dream goal for our society is. In 2016, nationalist movements are growing strong in many European countries and inclusion is not always the self-evident destination. The notion of integration has always been the politically correct one. Segregation is still not seen as an option. Exclusion, on the other hand, closing border after border seems to have become standard procedure. Still, a segregated exterior group might feel perfectly fine as long as they have their little exterior bubble. To help someone see that the water jet walls could come down, we who have the knowledge of how and where to enter the circle of a society have to welcome newcomers in a similar way that I would help anyone make their foot imprint. This is politics, but I believe this study shows that art can enable a feeling of belonging, a feeling of inclusion.

Trying to capture and collect some measurable results for an examination of this kind I tried my best to use scientific means; in other words I used questionnaires, counted participants, kept a working diary for the art pieces and so on. Still, it needs pointing out that measuring and weighing participatory art work in a truly scientific way is not very easy. Too many hidden parameters are always present in the work itself. An audience experiencing works of art are consumers of impressions. Contemporary art often makes use of more

than just the eyes and activates many of the viewers' five senses and my investigative art pieces for this study are no exception. In scientific research a study should be possible to repeat and then give the same results over again. This will never be the case in a study of a participatory work of art. Everything would be different should I perform these works again. The setting, the weather and all other conditions would be different. And on top of that, the audience and their preconceptions and desires to take part or not would be different, too.

The measured results from the questionnaire for IMPRINT could be considered 'hard facts' with measurable stringency. My aim was to make the questions as clear as possible, but still open enough that all participants easily could and would mark their answer with a stamp. I worked for some time trying to distill that kind of a question. Still, weeks later trying to summarize the study I can see various ways that misinterpretation or misreading could occur. Did people answer whether they felt included there and then in the actual art piece as a performance, OR that they did or did not feel more or less included in the community of Östersund by making a foot print? The only thing absolutely clear is that a large majority chose to put their mark very close to the center of the circle. The gender division is also definite; fifty-three people out of the eighty-one that made a footprint were female and twenty-eight were male participants.

As someone who is profoundly interested in research in art, I wanted to stress the above. This study is a thorough examination from one viewpoint at a certain time and angle, but performed again the results would probably be completely different. By no means is this a failure; it shows that art is art in the moment.

So, what is then the core issue for me, what would be a pleasing achievement in terms of results? Are measurable results important in art making? I say no. The experience of every single participant, including the artist, is the only relevant matter for a work of participatory art. Some of my earlier works have had themes and subject matters that I so strongly wanted to launch that the artworks balance on the border of propaganda. In the case of

IMPRINT and IMPRESSION, I have heard interesting reflections concerning the circle and inclusiveness - but also completely peripheral things that I had no idea that would surface in the minds of my audience. The best example of an idea that seems very far off the mark for me might be an elderly man who claimed that my work IMPRINT for him was all about how modern footwear twists feet into non ergonomic shapes with the result that people have permanently mis-shaped feet by the time they reach his age. He was light years away from my conceptual idea, but this was his reading of the work.

I also think of my need to keep making art and why the works made for this thesis became so important to me. If these works only create parallel universes where people can, at best, understand my conceptual ideas of wanting to say something on the possibilities of inclusion in society, do they have any relevance or effect in the real universe of our society after the performance of a temporary participatory artwork has been cleaned away?

VI.III Choice of methods and actual circumstances

IMPRINT and IMPRESSION grew to much wider dimensions than what I had in mind from the beginning. At the end of this study I see this as a difficult condition for sorting out clear results.

My initial dream in the fall of 2015 was to look at ways of working with clay and molten glass in an inclusive mode in public outdoor space. During the first semester of the program Master of Culture and Arts, I was asked what was the reason I keep making art, where my true passion in art making lies. This very important question stayed with me throughout the study year. My passion then led me to examine the circle and inclusion via work with raw clay and hot glass. On top of that I ended up making circumferential works including fire drawings and paper art. I also made all the preparations for a circular artist book to be printed in a limited edition.

As an artist I can always strive to make plans for the best methods to use for a certain art

work. During this study I have realized how fragile the methods and plans are if, say, the rain starts pouring down. Twomey's perfect plan for her piece Consciousness/Conscience could only come true with some help from a commercial tile company, and in an indoor space. Hein, working outdoors, is often installed as permanent public art. Making permanent works makes it possible to reduce the risk of any of the plans being changed. The audience's perception and the eager wish to participate might also change when a piece is always available. It will be less exclusive in itself, but probably also safer in choice of concept.

Making a list of all the things that might be planned or expected to be a certain way for a temporary shorter performance - and that could change after the performance has been fully planned and commissioned shows that anyone who wishes to try will need strong nerves. The list of prerequisites that can change includes:

Weather, finance, helpers/team at hand, co-operations, know-how/help from colleagues, scenery/stage, layout/choreography/script/story, ways of invitation, whether the work is temporary, recurrent or a more permanent work, the physical and psychological health of the artist, family situation, and last but not least the materials used.

As for the choice of raw clay and molten glass/fire, I will argue that they both played a major role as to whether people would like to join in or not. Most people instinctively wanted to try the feeling of putting their feet down into clay. A washing station with water, soap and a towel was offered to participants. Only one or two washed their foot afterwards, but having this option could have been key to why so many people felt fine with joining in.

Molten glass and fire used in IMPRESSION on the other hand kept people in general on the sceptical side. Not so many wanted to try the work, and no-one could see in advance how it would work out. Molten glass and fire generally kept folk at a respectful distance, whereas some visitors of IMPRINT would even try to walk in between the given times, trying to make imprints without permission and at the wrong time.

VI:IV Side effects of learning outcomes

Side effects from this study included ways of understanding my future art practice, such as:

- A need for a patron and a curator/project commissioner for each work.
- Bodily strains and limitations makes me need assistance from one or sometimes many helpers/gaffers/staff, depending on the work proposed
- I need a larger scene were my work could be made accessible, and a public square turned out to suit my work. I also need that stage to be further away from my local community, since friends do not see the fourth wall at all. They come, with all their love, to talk to me as a person, not even seeing the boundaries I have made for an art circle or me as a professional at work.

- My better works are all dependent on participants and the value of the artworks stands in relation to how open, visually strong and how tempting for participation they are.

- For every art piece I have a need of time **before** (wishing time) - **during** (staying inside a performance) - **after** (debriefing, breathing, clean up)
- Sometimes invitations in the form of advertising will be needed. Press contacts should be handled by someone else, shall I have any time for the actual art making.
- I will also need a salary at the end of the day. I cannot work for the sake of a cause in the long run, however passionate I may be about my concepts.
- In order to make interactive performance, I need the blessing of artistic calmness where the economical stress is already sorted out. No energy should slip away from the artwork, whether it's to constantly having to give beginners' courses in ceramics, producing ceramic tableware or sellable porcelain lamps, or applying for other stipends and opportunities.

VI.V The open circle

For this study I have circled my theme many times around now, both literally and bodily. The circle refuse to let me out of the loop and I keep inventing new ideas for circular art actions. As the participatory art work IMPRINT did not result in fully fired ceramic floor tiling, I have now begun to plan for a series of participatory IMPRINT acts where I will collect footprints of togetherness from many occasions, leading up to an upcoming exhibition. In a similar way, IMPRESSION will make for a series of interactive molten glass/fire circles.

Other ideas regarding participatory artworks include:

-Keep up the work related to dance and movement. To work through circles of inclusion as a description of momentum. To let go of the properly planned event and just work within sacred art circles. To succeed as an artist in participation in the holy making of a circle.

-I will keep working with circular performances. Find and keep in contact with colleagues in the field - many of whom I have found during this study year - who work in the field of performance, material based or not.

-To keep working towards the recurring dream of working within the field of artistic research, preferably evolving and involving the art of circular forces, be they including or excluding.

-To keep working on the inherent circular characteristics that lie within the working methods of both raw clay and molten glass.

VI.VI Future work - the socio-political aspect of the circle

‘Because it all comes down to some sort of consciousness of having to do your part of the work, like in a democracy. One can not just sit and wait for others to fix it, but you have to participate yourself!’

The words of Maria Rönn echo in my heart as this study nears its end. One week before I hand in my thesis, the world holds its breath after the people of the United States vote for a president who has said he will work for building walls between people, figuratively and literally. Following the media attention and political dispute around migration and the handling of refugees that has been increasingly heard since 2015, the whole world now seems to discuss on the one hand the right to exclude or, on the other hand how to make society more equal. Gender, race and religion are once more used for segregation, and one of the most outspoken proponents is the next president to be elected for one of the most powerful countries in the world.

My wish to work for and with the notions of inclusion/exclusion has always been close to my heart. I can confess that before last year it always felt as a ‘safe zone’, perhaps even a bit dull. In Sweden, surely no one was racist? But lately - and specifically through the work with IMPRINT - I understood that not everyone will be happy with an artist who speaks for inclusion. I see this as all the more reason to continue working on an inclusive circle.

In what ways can I mediate what I need to say, and still keep from making art that is purely propaganda? My wish to include the audience in my art remains, and I would still like to believe that my art will make some difference in the world. But what appearance/material/scene/mode will my participatory art need to use to come close enough to make real lasting IMPRINT?



This is one of the critical questions left with me - a true trigger for future works.

The wish to include stays with me.

One of my interests for this study was how newcomers in a society were let into the social circles or not. **My analysis of the migrant in relation to a new society now ‘flips over’ to mirror my own artistic path over this last study year, into a growing curiosity of how it would feel to be naturally included and welcome in the circle of the international art scene as someone truly belonging in the area inside.**

Would I be met with an invitation? Or will I face the longest of waiting years, seeking asylum, struggling to learn the new terminology and preferred language? Will I be seen as an intruder, one more person trying to get a bite of the cake? Being on the inside, would I then perceive that international art circle as too claustrophobic and long for the freedom I’d then realize I had on the outside? Being a restless soul of constant new curiosity and desire for new encounters I already know that I never belonged inside the stiff boundaries of calling myself a ‘ceramicist’ or a ‘glass artist’ though I often work in those materials. The conceptual idea always came before material however dear clay and glass are to me. But as my ‘backyard’ of northern Sweden won’t be sufficient for my art making needs and dreams, maybe it is time to fight for inclusion in the international art circle.

I am tempted to just jump the forbidden fire line and break the rules of conduct, and just ask for forgiveness afterwards. After all, the most important thing is to join in, to be there.

Illustration # 21, left;

A woman pulls her skirt and jumps to leave the periphery to join the circle of inclusion



Illustration # 22; The summer solstice circle dance

VII. CONCLUSION

In this master thesis I have examined the circle form as a base for my participatory art through the works of IMPRINT and IMPRESSION. The results gathered from questionnaires and open questions all point to an over-all perception that the artworks made the participants feel included.

I have found the circle to be a strong form to use, a powerful symbol, clear and stable to read visually. Works with fewer layers when it comes to the spatial and visual layout will allow the work to be more clear. A single geometric outline can make up a work.

The study has shown that the center point of a circle can work as a strong magnet. The circle form holds uncountable unseen radii which all strive towards the mid point, which serves as the focus of the work. The conceptual idea of inclusiveness behind IMPRINT and IMPRESSION created abstract circles that were larger than the actual physical works laid out and performed in the square.

In order to get an audience to participate in my art, my upcoming and ongoing works will gain from being located in public sites and talked about in news shows and on local radio. Many more foreign language speakers participated in IMPRINT than I have ever had as visitors in any indoor gallery or museum setting.

The overall positive response to my works probably has a number of causes other than the use of the circle, depending on the background of each participant, even though many people referred to the inclusiveness of the form itself. One factor that could have affected the outcome is the artist persona, which includes things like social skills and presence in the act.

Standing to the side in the exterior area - not engaging in the physical work - will make it easier to later impose critique, both positive or negative. But I also learned that people will want to help out and that they are eager to share a bit of what they read as the artist's work. Choosing to stand outside the circle must not directly be interpreted as a choice not to participate. One result of the study is the insight that the sense of inclusion/exclusion in a participatory art work has little to do with the interior/exterior areas of the circle. Should this study be repeated, every individual should be asked for their impression - including those standing outside the circle.

I believe this study shows that art can enable a feeling of belonging/inclusiveness, much like migrants can feel welcome in an open society. If a section of a wall can open, or a wave from a circle dance participant can hint that people outside the circle are welcome to join, these gestures in the layout or performances will be understood.

I argue that the only relevant result for a work of participatory art of this kind is the experience of every single participant, including the artist. As my wish to include the audience in my art remains, and as I would still like to believe that my art will make some change in the lived world, the input from the participants in this study gives me an incentive to continue studying the inclusive circle in various ways.

The one absolutely clear result of this study is that a large majority chose to put their mark very close to the center of the circle, marking that they felt included.

Several skeptical questions can be raised regarding the results, since a study of participatory artworks is not done in a laboratory setting where results can be seen as input from one variable at a time separated from all the others. So many underlying parameters are present in each of the works and tests. Any remake of my examination will give different values and results.

In any future project where I make public artworks dealing with the possibility of inclu-

sion, the information about the work and the gathering of feedback will have to be separated from the actual art piece. A performance needs to be an act of art and I as an artist need to work the space and time from my inner knowledge and feeling as an artist, not as a handler of public relations, informational guide or pep talker. The circle needs to stand out for itself, people can watch and/or join, but I should not speak and explain. The art of the circle has to stay safe guarded as art. Should anyone be interested in the background of my passion for making inclusive circles and playing with the fourth wall down, this additional framework has to be provided by a commissioning body or curator. If there's someone who needs to be *within* the magical circle of the art piece itself it's me, the artist - regardless of the fact that I also might invite participants.

I conclude that my future circle works will also need another type of support structure than the one I could set up for this study. Making inclusive performance art in the public space requires support according to the needs of the work, regarding economics, transport, handling of material, information, safe guarding as well as simple practical services such as water, food and some rest. To be clear, my art making needs support from patrons or a commissioning body.

The most important result from this study over all is my personal understanding of my working methods, the reasons why I need to make this type of art, and what circumstances I need for the works to happen. I learned that I have a true passion for the moment, the molten and wet stages of glass and clay, and that they serve participatory works of art well. The participatory performance, working in common places like a public square, is a way of working I will keep following, in Shallah/God willing.

Any thesis or academic work should offer some new insights of relevance to its field. Irrespective of how this study has its origin in my personal art journey, in the form of an examination of participatory art within the form of the circle - I still think and hope that my results can be an inspirational read for other artists, patrons, curators, and most of all for past or future participants in my works.

VIII BIBLIOGRAPHY

Literature

- Amilon, AnneLi. - Dansa med universum. - ISBN: 9789163729201
- Arabian Geometric Patterns. - Pepin Press; revised Edition edition. 2004
- ISBN-13: 978-9057680717
- Atkins/Freiling/Groys/Manovich - The Art of Participation.
- ISBN: 978-0500238585
- Benesh, Rudolf. - An introduction to Benesh dance notation
/ Rudolf and Joan Benesh. - 1956
- Benesh, Rudolf. - Reading dance : the birth of choreology / by Rudolf and Joan Benesh.. - 1977. - ISBN: 0-285-62291-9
- Bodland, Karin ed. - Spår av dans: människan, konsten och kunskapen. 2004
- ISBN 91-8501-83-6
- Brown, Ann Kipling.. - Dance notation for beginners.. - 1984.
- ISBN: 0-903102-71-4
- Clifford, Amos. - Amos Clifford, Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom
Circles Developed for San Francisco Unified School District, pdf book from
<http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/>
- Cooper J. C. - An Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Traditional Symbols. - 1978.
- 978-0500012017
- De heliga tecknens hemlighet : om symboler och attribut / Frithiof Dahlby.
- 1999 - ISBN 91-526-2694-6
- Den sköna geometrin, Gidlunds i samarbete med Riksställningar 1985
- ISBN: 91 7844 048 3
- Falk, Heinrich. - Performing beauty in participatory art and culture 2014
- ISBN: 9780415745291

- Fitzpatrick, Richard. - Euclid's Elements of geometry. 2007 - ISBN 978-0-6151-7984-1
- Frieling, Rudolf. - The art of participation, 1950 to now, 2008 - ISBN 978-0-500-23858-5
- Guest, Ann Hutchinson. - Choreo-graphics : a comparison of dance notation systems from the fifteenth century to the present, 1998 - ISBN: 2-88124-714-8
- Hodgson, John. - Mastering movement : the life and work of Rudolf Laban / John Hodgson. - 2001. - ISBN: 0-413-70530-7
- Hoffmann, Jens and Jonas, Joan. - Perform. 2005 - ISBN: 9780500930069
- James/James - Mathematics dictionary, 1976 fourth edition ISBN: 0-442-24091-0
- Koreografier, Skriftserien Kairos nummer 13 ISBN 978 91 87215 827
- Laban, Rudolf von, 1879-1958.. - The language of movement : a guidebook to choreutics [1966] - [1st American ed.]. - ISBN: 0823801594
- Laban, Rudolf von, 1879-1958. - Choreutics [by] Rudolf Laban; annotated and edited by Lisa Ullmann.. - 1966
- Lilja, Efva – 100 Exercises for a Choreographer and Other Survivors / Ellerströms 2012 ISBN 978-91-7247-306-5
- Lilja, Efva -Art, Research, Empowerment - The artist as researcher Diarium nummer: U14.011 / Elanders Stockholm 2015
- Markham, Edwin - The Shoes of Happiness; And Other Poems 1913 - not indexed
- Materiality Documents of Contemporary Art, Ed Petera Lange-Berndt / Whitechapel Gallery and The MIT Press 2015 – ISBN 978-0-85488-237-3
- Martineau, John. - A Little Book of Coincidence - Wooden Books Ltd 2001 - ISBN: 91-7738-615-9
- Preservation politics : dance revived, reconstructed, remade / editor, Stephanie Jordan. - 2001. - ISBN: 1-85273-079-X (pbk)
- Rönn, Maria. - Heliga danser : dans som rit och bön. Verbum 1997 - ISBN: 9789152623282

- Traces of dance : drawings and notations of choreographers / ed Laurence Louppe ; - 1994. - ISBN: 2-906571-28-8
- Ulin, Bengt - Klassisk geometri : motiv och mening, Solna : Ekelund, 1998 - ISBN 91-7724-974-7
- Vail, June, Kulturella koreografier, 1997 Carlsson Bokförlag - ISBN: 91 7203 200 6
- Wade, Nicholas J. Circles : science, sense and symbol /2007 Dundee University Press, ISBN:1845860195 ISBN:9781845860196

Journals and newspapers

Hufvudstadsbladet (NO) 2015-12-29
 Dagens Nyheter (SWE) 2015-12-29
 Svenska Dagbladet (SWE) 2015-12-28
 Dagens Industri (SWE) 2015-12-29
 Tidningen Dagen (SWE) 2015-12-29 (criticism)

List of images

Page Illustration/figure and credits:

Cover	Decoration from part of the layout for IMPRINT
3	Illustration # 1; Somersault of Act and Mind - triptych part III
4	Illustration # 2; The Transition Machine, video still
6	Illustration # 3 Glowing Conversation - Sanctuary of LIVE detail
7	Illustration # 4 Glowing Conversation - Sanctuary of LIVE full view
9	Illustration #5, right; And Ahad said, let's sit down on the floor / ضرر ال اى ل ع س ل ج ن ن ح ن د ح ال ا ل ا ق و
24-25	Illustration # 6; Traditional Swedish folk dance circle performed on National Day 6th of June 2016, Åsa Maria Hedberg

Page	Illustration/figure and credits, continued:
26	Illustration # 7; Laban notation figure by notator Judith Appleby
30	Illustration # 8; A still from a documentary film of one of the circumferential art works
33	Illustration # 9 - Letters A - Y of font called 'Social Circles' from ChristopherJ at http://1001fonts.com/
36	Illustration # 10 Concepts for circular participatory art by the author
41	Illustration # 11; Conceptual circles of inclusion/exclusion
46-47	Illustration # 12; A group of participants mark their input on one of the circular stamp questionnaires
54	Illustration # 13; invitational poster for IMPRINT
57	Illustration # 14; Making an IMPRINT in raw clay, Jimmy Dahlberg
59	Illustration # 15; Pin rolling the clay for IMPRINT Photography by Jenny Persson
60	Illustration # 16; Helping participants make an IMPRINT Photography by Petra Henriksson
64	Illustration # 17; The artist in an interview with Swedish Television, Photography by Jenny Persson
66-67	Illustration # 18; Circular stamp questionnaires hanging in the yurt, a photography by Petra Henriksson
73	Illustration # 19; A passer-by stops to take an interest during preparations for IMPRESSION Photo credit Kjella Jonsson
74-75	Illustration # 20; IMPRESSION - molten glass and fire performance video still by the artist and Linda Svedberg
92	Illustration # 21; A woman pulls her skirt and jumps to join the circle of IMPRESSION Video still from documentary film by the artist/Linda Svedberg
94-95	Illustration # 22; The summer solstice circle dance, photography by Petra Henriksson
69	Figure # 1; questionnaire outcome, overlay time diagram, by the artist

Other sources

<http://www.svt.se/nyheter/inrikes/se-akessons-jarnrorsmiss-i-almedalen>
<http://aleph0.clarku.edu/~djoyce/java/elements/elements.html>
Sami informational center: <http://www.samer.se/1146>
<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2013/01/03/inclusion-resolution-10-ways-to-include-a-child-with-special-needs-in-2013/>
<http://1001fonts.com/>
<http://olafureliasson.net/tag/TEL2660/book-as-sculpture>
<http://www.valieexport.at/en/valie-exports-home/>
<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/cream/research-projects-and-centres/ceramics-research-centre>

IX EPILOGUE

‘Walk slowly in a circle. Pick up speed gradually until you’re running, fast. Step it up a little and continue flying. When you can’t do that any more, land softly, sit down and contemplate what you have just experienced.

Do it.’

Exercise 86 Efva Lilja in 100 Exercises for a Choreographer and Other Survivors

Master thesis
Art of Inclusion - An Examination trough the Circle

by Åsa Maria Hedberg
info@asamariahedberg.se

Copyright © Åsa Maria Hedberg 2016