

Editorial II

EMAL-Digital – Multimodal Special Issue

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This Special Issue has its origins in a desire to convey research in a more multimodal format. The initiators were professionals associated with EMAL-digital, one of four clusters in the Embodied Making and Learning (EMAL) research group at the University of South-Eastern Norway.

The work on the Special Issue was started in spring 2021 by cluster leaders Lovise Søyland and Ingrid H. Høibo. After some probing into the terrain about the possibility of publishing multimodal scientific articles, they contacted Editor-in-Chief Janne B. Reitan of the journal *FormAkademisk*. Reitan had long had ambitions and a desire to include modalities such as video and sound in the journal's offerings. She enthusiastically welcomed the idea and the collaboration.

The 'Multimodal Special Issue' is thus the result of several years of collaboration. In addition, a new multimodal template is now available to all via *FormAkademisk*. This template and the work with it are mentioned in particular by Reitan (2024) in the editorial text.

The contributors to the articles in this issue are primarily from EMAL. The members of EMAL work with various aspects of learning through creative practices within art, craft and design, based on a view of learning and cognition as 'embodied' – i.e. rooted in the body (Gulliksen, 2017). It is as a body that we humans exist in the world, experience the world and learn to know it. Through sensory presence in direct contact with the environment, profound experiences are developed in the individual. Imagine getting to know a mountain for the first time. You can choose to join a mountain tour or read about and look at pictures of a mountain. The mountain tour requires something from you, that you invest in something. Your body gets tired – you feel the wind in your hair and the sun on your face – you smell nature, and it is impossible not to observe the landscape as you move along a path or over a mountain. This, in turn, can provide other entrances and ways to read about, study pictures of the mountain and understand what the mountain is.

With learning, it is the case that when the learner gets room for action and the opportunity to use the whole body and reflect on their own experiences and actions, the learning is profound and lasting. When the learner gets a chance to use their hands, thus gaining practical experience through interaction with materials and working with tools and different technologies, curiosity and ownership of what they are doing increases (Søyland, 2021). Practical creative learning is largely about the active side of knowledge – knowledge in action, which requires other forms of communication than what can be conveyed with words and still images (Riis, 2017).

The fields that the professionals in EMAL relate to are changing, and several include art-based processes within qualitative research. Art-based research draws inspiration, concepts, processes and forms of representation from art and creative work (Barone & Eisner, 2012). In this way, the exploratory and creative process with materials, tools and technologies can be

the research method itself. Within art-based research, the presentation of the process from creative work and/or the actual result from the process will also be part of the empirical data that will benefit from being able to be communicated through various modalities. The very goal of art-based research is ‘to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable’ (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 1).

The article format may appear to be somewhat restrictive for many who work with educational arts, crafts and design. The Special issue and the development of a multimodal template in collaboration with FormAcademic are therefore based on a need of those in the field to include multimodality in articles in ways other than what we have had access to in the Norwegian context. The purpose of the template is to use other modalities, such as sound and video, to convey embodied making and learning in arts and crafts.

We want to contribute to the readers getting even closer to the material and ensure that text, images and video interact so that the reader gains a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of what is conveyed. Video is a medium that reacts in parallel with our senses and that can make us feel, comprehend, think and understand in ways other than words alone can. In this way, video can help to expand our understanding of scientific communication.

What follows is an overview of the various articles on the main theme of this issue. Here, it is also discussed how the individual articles make use of the new template’s multimodal possibilities where applicable.

Articles in the Special Issue

Marie Skeie, Doctoral candidate, Department of Visual and Performing Arts Education, USN, investigates in her article, ‘Collective Processes in Land Crafting. Neighbouring through Natural Dyeing’, multi-sensorial aspects and the relations between humans and non-humans in the process of collective plant dyeing. She creates video using a hand-held camera that follows her movements as she walks into the landscape. We can recognise the movements of her body by watching the movement in the video, and in this way, we are invited into the forest. Skeie also communicates the plant dyeing process to the readers by presenting video excerpts from the changes that took place over a longer period in the plant dyeing pot. As observers of the process, we can see what happens when the colour from the plant fibres is released and mixes with the boiling water in the pot.

Karete Roksvåg, Associate Professor, Department of Visual and Performing Arts Education, USN, explores in her article, ‘Abstrakt og poetisk multiplananimasjon. Et a/r/tografisk utviklingsarbeid om kroppsliggjort kunnskap’ [‘Abstract and Poetic Multi-Plane Animation. An

A/r/tographic Exploration and Research on Embodied Knowledge’], the abstract multi-plane animation as a technique and artistic form of expression and its potential in exploratory and creative processes with young children. Through video, we are invited into her exploration with ink meeting moistened paper. We get an insight into her process, which can trigger wonder and new understandings. With the new *FormAkademisk* template, she also gets the opportunity to show the final multi-plan animation, which is the result of an artistic and didactic exploration.

Karete Roksvåg, Associate Professor, and **Lovise Søyland**, Associate Professor, PhD, both from the Department of Visual and Performing Arts Education, USN, take us into a project with early childhood teacher education students where an artistically exploratory and creative digital practice involving material-based stop-motion animation is examined in the article, ‘Hands on! Materialbaserte og kunstneriske utforskinger og uttrykk gjennom stop-motion animasjon’ [Hands on! Material-Based and Artistic Explorations and Expressions through Stop-Motion Animation’].

Silje Bergman, Associate Professor, PhD, Department of Visual and Performing Arts Education, USN, presents in her article, ‘Digital kompetanse og interpikturalitet i kunst og håndverksfaget’ [Digital Competence and Interpicturality in the Educational Subject Arts and Crafts’], insights into how professional digital competence in arts and crafts can be developed through links between digital image processing on tablets and analogue printing techniques.

Lovise Søyland, Associate Professor, PhD, and **Ann-Hege Lorvik Waterhouse**, Professor, PhD, both from the Department of Visual and Performing Arts Education, USN, take as their starting point an a/r/tographic investigation into contemporary drawing as action through a teaching project with a group of early childhood teacher education students. In their article, ‘Ikke helt A4! Betydningen av utforskende, kroppslige og materielle tegneprosesser’ [‘Not exactly A4! The Importance of Exploratory, Bodily and Material Drawing Processes’], they explore what happens when students are invited to engage in material, exploratory and bodily drawing processes and to go outside of what is not exactly A4.

Audhild Lindheim Kennedys, Doctoral candidate, Department of Culture, Religion and Social Studies, writes in her article, ‘Fra feltnotater til etnografisk tegneserie – metodologiske refleksjoner’ [‘From Field Notes to Ethnographic Cartoon – Methodological Reflections’] about our understanding of how the visual and textual modalities are created when we make a cartoon, thus offering important perspectives that we can use in the actual interpretation and analysis of our empirical data as well as supplement our field diary.

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Finally, we would like to thank Janne B. Reitan, Editor-in-Chief of FormAkademisk, and Erik Hansen at OsloMet for investing time and effort to provide us with new opportunities in scientific publishing in the Special Issue and the field of educational arts, crafts and design.

We hope readers will enjoy and benefit from the issue and the new template.

Notodden, September, 2024

Lovise Søyland, Karete Roksvåg and Marte Sørebo Gulliksen

Special Issue Editorial Team

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