

Editorial

Research for improved practice in art, design and crafts [Formgivning, kunst og håndverk]

We share the fear of many teachers that practical, creative work may be abandoned in the subject of art and crafts in primary schools or in the programme for art, crafts and design studies in upper secondary schools in Norway¹. Current curricula do entail practical, creative work; so, this fear must come from sources outside these curricula.

Some have argued that increased research in art, design and crafts contributes to the theorization of practice. We believe that this is a myth. In recent years, both master and doctoral theses within our field have had the opposite effect: They have helped to improve practice. In particular, practice within the field has been furthered by doctoral theses written by teachers of art, design, crafts and Sámi duodji (Sámi art and crafts), such as: Jorunn Spord Borgen (1998), Liv Merete Nielsen (2000), Gunvor Guttorm (2001), Maja Dunfjeld (2001), Marte Sørebo Gulliksen (2006), Janne Beate Reitan (2007), Berit Ingebretsen (2008), Ingvild Digranes (2009), Karen Brønne (2009), Nina Scott Frisch (2010), Laila Belinda Fauske (2010), Eva Lutnæs (2011), Biljana Fredriksen (2011), Mari Rørgemoen (2012), Torunn Paulsen Dagsland (2013) and Birte Brekketo (2013). These teachers have all offered an insider perspective to teaching in the field.

Of these theses, we especially highlight “Standpunktvrdering i grunnskolefaget Kunst og håndverk. Læreres forhandlingsrepertoar ” [Final assessment in the subject of Art and crafts. Teachers' repertoire and negotiation], written by Eva Lutnæs (2011). Lutnæs (2011) examines how teachers negotiate when they determine final grades in art and crafts, and she discusses how these grades relate to copy, originality, verblatity and visuality. Not many people read long dissertations; therefore, Lutnæs also places great emphasis on writing articles and on lecturing in courses and conferences on assessment issues. Lutnæs also participated in the development of the Oslo municipality instruction booklet: Evaluation of Art and Crafts in Secondary Schools: Supervisor [Vurdering i kunst og håndverk på ungdomstrinnet: veileder] (Ebbestad, Grøstad, Lutnæs, Moe, Spell, & Egeland, 2009).

In addition to the doctoral dissertations mentioned above, there are approximately 15 doctoral students in art, crafts and design who are expected to finish their doctoral dissertations over the next four years. And more are coming. This is a growing research area, with roots going back to the beginning, in 1976, of the master's degrees in forming at the Oslo Art and Design Education University College [Statens lærerhøgskole i forming Oslo – SLFO] and the Art and Design Education University College [Statens lærerhøgskole i forming Notodden – SLFN]. These two programs equate to the current Master's of Art and Design Education [Master i estetiske fag, studieretning Fagdidaktikk - kunst og design] at Oslo and Akershus University College of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design, Department of Art, Design and Drama [Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus, Fakultet for teknologi, kunst og design, Institutt for

estetiske fag (2014)] and the Master's of Art and Design Education at Telemark University College, Faculty of Art, Folk Culture and Teacher Education at Notodden [Master i Formgivning, kunst og håndverk ved Fakultet for estetiske fag, folkekultur og lærerutdanning, Institutt for forming og formgivning på Høgskolen i Telemark (2014)].

When Jorunn Spord Borgen defended her PhD thesis in 1998, she paved the way for all of us. The journal FORMakademisk (level 1) was established in 2008, with Janne Beate Reitan as the chief editor (Reitan, 2008), and its academic community participates in and organizes international conferences, such as the DRS // CUMULUS Oslo 2013 (HIOA, 2013). This shows that practitioners in art and design education are in the process of developing knowledge on practical and aesthetic subjects. In this way, the practice is strengthened.

Articles in this issue

PhD student *Øivind Røise*, Professor *Håkan Edeholt* and Professor *Andrew Morrison*, all from the Institute of Design at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design, as well as Associate Professor *Cato A. Bjørkli* and Professor *Thomas Hoff*, both from the University of Oslo, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Psychology, in their article *What We Talk About When We Talk About Design. Toward a Taxonomy of Design Competencies*, discuss what designers talk about in their professional competencies. In this article, they empirically investigate industrial designers' assumptions regarding their own design practices in relation to innovation. Through the application of a method potentially suitable for design research, interview statements from design professionals were categorised according to 12 pre-selected categories of potential design core competencies.

Askild H. Nilsen, PhD student at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU), investigates, in the article *Available outdoor space and competing needs in public kindergartens in Oslo*, how the utilization of outdoor space responds to changes in applied norms and laws over time. The hypothesis is that administrative space needs, such as parking, have been prioritized over play area space needs. To test this hypothesis, 201 public kindergartens in Oslo's outer city that offer full-day services were studied. The findings suggest that norms founded in laws win the battle over space, even when such a choice indirectly compromises the meeting of children's needs for adequate outdoor play areas.

Bjørn Magne Aakre, Professor at Nesna University College and Telemark University College discusses, in his article *Formgivning, design og håndverk. Fra Reform'94 til Kunnskapsløftet* [Programme for Specialisation in General Studies with Art, Crafts and Design and Vocational Study Programme for Design, Art and Crafts - From Reform94 to the Knowledge Promotion Reform] discusses the areas of art, design and crafts in Norwegian upper secondary education, with a particular focus on the changes that were implemented with the Knowledge Promotion Reform of 2006. The starting point of the study is the art, design and crafts programme that was introduced in 1994 as a combined study with common basic training, in which some of the craft disciplines led to a university admissions certification, while most of the disciplines led to an apprenticeship certificate. With the Knowledge Promotion Reform, these programmes were separated: the Programme for Specialisation in General Studies with Art, Crafts and Design continued as a program within the Programme for Specialisation in General Studies. Craft trades continued in a new vocational education program with the designation of Vocational Study Programme for Design, Art and Crafts. The study's questions were answered through support from two quantitative surveys, one before and one after the introduction of the

Knowledge Promotion Reform. The study suggests that the natures of the two programs have remained fairly similar in terms of content, learning and assessment methods, especially in basic education. Both programs are still dominated by females, and design is perceived to be central to both programs.

Harpa Stefansdottir, also a PhD student at the Department of Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning, Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU) examines, in her article *Urban routes and commuting bicyclist's aesthetic experience*, whether and in what way aesthetic experience is involved in the perceived quality of bicyclists' chosen routes between their homes and workplaces. It is important to distinguish aesthetic experience from experience related to the influence of instrumental features. The survey results indicate that aesthetic experience is valuable to most of the respondents and is, therefore, important in the development of high-quality bicycle routes for commuting. Greenery, contact with the natural environment and distance from motorised traffic are shown to be the most important influences on a pleasurable aesthetic experience.

Erling Framgard, Assistant Professor at Telemark University College, Faculty of Art, Folk Culture and Teacher Education, Department of Art and Design Education, has developed what he calls Investigative Practice [Undersøkende praksis] (UP) based on a critical approach inspired by Danish Visual Art Education. UP is a type of theme- and project-oriented visual art education, and it can be characterized as processual and problem solving, in which artwork is attributed meaning, and visualisations are perceived as meaningful and communicative. A fundamental understanding is that pictorial meanings are affected by the physical process of making. UP, therefore, pursues a conscious relationship between expressed content and ways of expression. UP seeks to synthesize individual- and discipline-oriented traditions within visual art education.

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Liv Merete Nielsen and Janne Beate Reitan
Section Editor Editor-in-Chief

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¹ The Editorial is based on (Nielsen, 2014)