Arts-based research in music education – general concepts and potential cases

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the topic of arts-based research in music education is investigated by presenting different general concepts related to arts in research, and discussing them in relation to the author's own previous research conducted within music education. The chosen theoretical focus is on Bresler's aesthetically based research, Knowles and Cole's arts-informed research, Eisner and colleagues' arts-based research, Irwin, Springgay and colleagues' a/r/tography, as well as on the more common term and approach in the Nordic countries: artistic research. Different from the specific artistic research literature, in arts-based research literature there are strikingly few examples from music, especially compared to the visual and literary arts. Does that mean that music education research is hardly ever arts-based, that we do not reveal the arts' actual place in our research or that the ways we use arts in our research processes are defined by other concepts? By comparing the different processes in research already conducted to the aforementioned theories, some potentials and tendencies related to the use of arts in music education research are exemplified and discussed. The discussion reveals potential arts-based research processes in all the different phases of a research project, including the question development, the data collection and the result development phase. In the concluding discussion, questions related to the many terms, the Nordic countries' use of the terms, the necessary competencies and qualities in arts-based research, as well as some epistemological questions, are raised.
Keywords: music education, qualitative research, research methodology, arts-based research

Introduction

In this article, *arts-based research* methodologies are investigated in relation to two previously conducted research (and development) projects in music education. First, some general concepts related to arts in research are presented and discussed. Secondly, I use the different stages in my own conducted research processes as impulses to discuss tendencies and potential for arts-based research in music education. In the Nordic countries' music discourses, the term *artistic research* seems more common than *arts-based,* with some even seeming to see artistic and art(s)-based research as more or less the same (eg. Aho, 2013; Schwartz, 2012). However, as will be clear in the presentation, the two terms often have a significantly different content, with artistic research usually confined to professional artists investigating artistic processes (Hannula, Suoranta, & Vadén 2005; Hultberg, 2013; Jullander, 2013). Whether one agrees with this rather restricted definition or not, I am more comfortable with the term arts-based research. This also because arts-based research is often used as an "umbrella term" (Bresler, 2006; Finley, 2008; Leavy, 2009), covering several arts-related methodologies. As such, it could be defined as qualitative research that draws inspiration, concepts, processes and representational forms from the arts, exploring the "alternative researching possibilities that fuse the creative and imaginative possibilities of the arts with social science research" (Knowles & Cole 2008: xi).

Before the 18th century, no substantial differences between the arts and sciences were recognized (Barone & Eisner 2012). However, according to Cahnmann-Taylor (2008), there were few, if any, explicit references to the arts in research until the 1980s. "The term *arts-based research* originated at an educational event at Stanford University in 1993" (Barone & Eisner 2012: ix), and the first Arts-Based Institute was offered to the members of the American Educational Research Association, also in 1993 (Eisner, 2008). The first European Conference on Arts-Based Research was held in Belfast in 2005 (Eisner, 2006), and in 2013, "Music education research in relation to artistic research," was the topic of the Nordic Network in Music Education Conference. However, the conference also discussed arts-based research (such as in the keynote held by Liora Bresler), and maybe in doing so revealed a common vagueness in concepts regarding the arts in research in the Nordic countries.

When it comes to *artistic research*, Hannula, Suoranta and Vadén claim that, "music and music pedagogy are the most developed fields" (2005: 16), at least in the Nordic countries. According to Bresler, however, "in the conversation about the arts in research, literature, visual art and drama have taken a leading role" (2008: 225). Ignoring the specific artistic research genre, in the art(s)-based/informed, etc. literature mentioned

here, "musicians and music educators have seemed to be the least interested among arts educators in exploring art-based enquiry" (Smith, 2013: 90).[1]

Does this mean that music education research is hardly ever art(s)-based? Does it mean that we hide the role of aesthetics in our research? Or does it mean that the ways we use art or music in our research are defined by other concepts? Have we worked more or less arts-based, but never defined it as such? These questions made me go back and review my own research, asking: *Have I used arts-based processes in my previous research projects?* At the moment, I am involved in a postdoc and a senior research project funded by The Research Council of Norway. Both projects are explicitly defined as arts-based, with the research questions related to methodology, aesthetic learning and emotion knowledge. It was these projects that made me want to go back and investigate my older projects as arts-based as well.

The eldest of the two projects started in 1989, before the term arts-based was presented for the first time. The written text discussed here was my "hovedfags-oppgave" (Vist 1992), although the project also includes other articles (Vist, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c) and two piano method books and a CD, published almost a decade later (Vist, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). The second project started in 2003, and contains a PhD thesis and some related articles on *music experience as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge* (Vist, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Vist & Bonde 2013). Although it is more explicit in its use of arts-based processes, it does not mention the term arts-based research even once. Thus, this article will present and discuss different concepts related to arts in research, and if the two mentioned examples of research in music education, or at least certain aspects of them, could be seen as arts-based research. Hopefully, this may inspire others to rethink their research as well.

Concepts

As mentioned, there are many terms in this field, describing more or less the same phenomenon, though with clear distinctions on a detailed level: Artistic research (Borgdorff, 2012; Hannula et al. 2005; Hultberg, 2013; Jullander, 2013), A/r/tography (Irwin & de Cosson 2002; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, & Gouzouasis 2008), Aesthetically based research (Bresler, 2006), Art-Based Research (McNiff, 1998; Schwartz, 2012), Arts-Informed Research (Cole & Knowles 2008), Art-related research (Kerry-Moran,

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1   This tendency is confirmed by a search in *Academic Search Premier*, *Eric* and *ISI Web of Science* in August 2014: Combining "arts-based research" and "music education", only 10–14 results are presented.

2008), Arts-inspired research (Barone, 2008) and Arts based research (Barone & Eisner 2012) or Arts-based research (Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund 2008; Eisner & Powell 2002; Finley, 2008) to mention some of the most common. The article format makes it impossible to present them all, so using arts-based research as an umbrella term, the chosen theoretical focus is on Bresler's aesthetically based research, Eisner's arts-based research, Knowles and Cole's arts-informed research, Irwin and Springgay's a/r/tography and Borgdorff's and Hannula's artistic research. McNiff's (1998) *Art-Based Research* reveals many similarities with Eisner's arts-based research, and also refers extensively to music therapist David Aldridge, but is clearly developed in a visual art therapy discourse and will not be further discussed here. Nor will Schwartz (2012), who uses the term art-based research more in line with artistic research, describing it as "the driving force of innovation for art production and art reception (ibid: xxix). Arts-based inquiry, arts-inspired and arts-related research are also left out, as are terms related to specific art medias (such as ethno drama, lyric inquiry, etc.). This article confronts two cases of music education research with some common *general* terms related to arts in research.

Artistic research

Despite the use of arts-based research as an umbrella term, artistic research and arts-based research might also be seen as two distinct approaches to art in research. From a Swedish perspective, Jullander (2013) acknowledges that artistic research may not be the most common term in English-speaking countries. From a Finnish perspective, Hannula et al. (2005) write that the notion of artistic research is relatively new and can have many meanings, as its forms and principles are not yet firmly established. However, on a general level, I find quite a consensus in different (European) texts. In 2013, *Svensk tidsskrift för musikforskning* published a collection of articles which was "meant to contribute to the international discussion (...) of artistic research" (Lund 2013: 9). In his introductory chapter, Jullander (2013) claims research to be artistic when it is self-reflective, deals with topics relevant to the author's own musicianship and (normally) includes an artistic part. In his opinion: "[A]rtistic research would require a multimedia presentation in a symbiosis of text and artistic expression" (ibid: 19). Similarly, the art work is the focal point, artistic experientiality is the very core of the research and the research "must be self-reflective, self-critical and an outwardly-directed communication" according to Hannula et al. (2005: 20):

> Artists carry out research about the reality that surrounds them, about them-
> selves, about their instruments of work, and about the complex networks

linking these. (...) Artistic research means that the artist produces an art work and researches the creative process. (Hannula et al. 2005: 5)

Situated in the Netherlands, Borgdorff claims that, "artistic research seeks to convey and communicate content that is enclosed in aesthetic experiences, enacted in creative practices and embodied in artistic products" (2012: 45). As a rule, artistic research will result in an original work of art. It is research in the arts, although the research unfolds both *in* and *through* the acts of creating and performing:

In part, then, the outcome of artistic research are artworks, installations, performances and other artistic practices (...) This means that art practice is paramount as the subject matter, the method, the context and the outcome of artistic research. (Borgdorff, 2012: 46)

Jullander further claims that, "[i]t is crucial that the artistic researcher possesses professional artistic competence, that 'the researchers are the artists themselves'" (2013: 14). This often seems to be taken as a matter of course in artistic research. One exception worth mentioning, though, is Hultberg (2013). As a (professional) music educator and researcher cooperating with performing artists, she defines artistic research as "research starting out in artistic practice" (ibid: 79).

Jullander's discussion, titled "What kind of knowledge is involved" (2013: 18) is interesting, considering the different limits for knowledge of artistic and arts-based research. What is discussed is discursive (word-based/propositional) versus tacit or non-conceptual knowledge, and not topics. The topic seems anyway to be *knowledge relevant to artistic processes*; other areas relevant to music education are not considered. Borgdorff claims that artistic research seeks to provide a specific articulation of the pre-reflective, non-conceptual content of art. "It thereby invites 'unfinished thinking'. Hence, it is not formal knowledge that is the subject matter of artistic research, but thinking through and with art" (Borgdorff, 2012: 44). The specific contribution artistic research makes to our knowledge, understanding, insight and experience "lies in the way these issues are articulated, expressed and communicated *through art*", as Borgdorff (2012: 57) writes. This often pre-reflective and embodied knowledge is constituted in and through practices, actions and interactions, "in a form that is not directly accessible for justification" (ibid: 47).

The purpose of the research is to broaden and deepen the knowledge and understanding of the discipline or disciplines in question. Hannula et al. (2005) claim that artistic research is practice-based and -driven research, and not about art history or sociology, "but about the self-reflective and self-critical processes of a person taking

part in the production of meaning within contemporary art" (Hannula et al. 2005: 10). Furthermore, "[a]rtistic research is often said to be characterized by an *experimental approach*, which separates it from the humanities (…) while instead bringing it closer to the natural and technological sciences" (Jullander, 2013: 16).

However, it also "seeks in and through the production of art to contribute not just to the artistic universe, but to what we 'know' and 'understand'" (Borgdorff, 2012: 54). In this, the distinctions between a/r/tography, arts-based and artistic research become less clear. Borgdorff even claims that today's visual and performing arts are often critically engaged with other life domains, and that gender, globalization, identity, environment and other philosophical or psychological issues might be addressed in artistic research projects as well. This is confirmed by Aho (2013), who writes that it has "broadened to include other than purely artistic goals" (ibid: 65), for instance in accepting traditional research prose as end products. Still, artistic practices contribute first of all to the art world.[2] If all the aforementioned concepts were seen as a continuum, artistic research must be placed in the very end, closest to the art world. Let us now go to the opposite end, to the term closest to regular qualitative research.

Aesthetically based research

In "Toward Connectedness: Aesthetically Based Research," Liora Bresler (2006) suggests that "aesthetics is at the heart of both artistic experience and qualitative research." She also claims that, "artistic processes, in particular, the space surrounding art experiences, can illuminate significant aspects of qualitative research" (ibid: 52). Central to these processes is the quest for *empathic understanding* and *the tri-directional relationship* intensified by the expectation to communicate with an audience. The connection to the phenomena or artwork also propels a dialogic connection to oneself. Bresler argues that qualitative researchers, like artists, undergo introspective processes of "spinning, discovering, and presenting oneself turned inside to the public gaze" (ibid: 56). Thinking and feeling support each other in this contemplative, concentrated state, thus:

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2   In Norway, we have the *Norwegian Artistic Research Programme* (http://artistic-research.no/), which suits this description. It wants to contribute to artistic development at a high international level, but does not lead to a PhD, nor does it result in a regular, verbal thesis. It is a parallel program to PhD studies, and the participants become associate professors if enrolled in academia afterwards. Interestingly enough, the Norwegian title of the program is: *Program for kunstnerisk utviklingsarbeid,* thus avoiding the research term and instead "safely" preferring the D (development) in R&D (in Norwegian: FoU), while in Sweden "the term *konstnärlig forskning* is firmly established" (Hultberg 2013: 13).

> Examining the ways in which the arts provide rich and powerful models for perception, conceptualization and engagement for both makers and viewers, I highlight their potential to cultivate *habits of mind* that are directly relevant to the processes and products of qualitative research. (Bresler, 2006: 52)

Hence, the habits of mind, the way we think, feel and perceive using concepts and approaches common in aesthetic processes is her focus, and not whether or not we explicitly use art works or art media in our research processes. Experience with arts affords and stimulates habits of mind that can be useful in qualitative research. For example, the process of the perceptual contemplation of an object is also central to the conduct of qualitative research. In another article, Bresler suggests that "learning to hear cultivates sensitivities essential to social science inquiry" (2008: 225), and she explores "ways in which various musical processes of listening, performing, composing, and improvising can inform the processes of social science research" (ibid: 226). Special themes could be systematic improvisation, disciplined empathy and embodiment. As a result, musical encounters would probably be necessary for preparing the researcher, giving him/her this aesthetic competence or tools for doing *social* research.

This way of thinking gives a chance to increase one's sensitivity towards the qualities of the topic in our research focus, and reveals how a sensitivity towards qualities links (qualitative) research and art appreciation together. However, is using concepts and habits of mind from the arts world the same as working arts-based in research? Bresler herself, "finds it useful to maintain a (soft) distinction between works of art and qualitative research", acknowledging "the different purposes, expectations and criteria held among the different practitioners" (2006: 53). Above, I used arts-based research as an umbrella term. Seen as a large part of the aforementioned continuum, the arts-based genres can stand next to the artistic research or the end closest to the scientific side, or somewhere in-between. I find room for Bresler's approach under the umbrella term, on the drippy edge closer to social research than to the art world. After all, the habits of mind that Bresler's thinking stimulate, and the conduct that may follow, are at the core of how the aesthetic or arts-based worlds can contribute to research, thereby increasing the sensitivity, value, variety and meaning of the research. As Bresler (2006, 2008, 2009) claims, musical lenses provide tools for perception and analysis – and reflection I may add – in qualitative research.

Arts-informed research

Another concept placing itself closer to regular qualitative, social research than many other arts-based methodologies is arts-informed research:

> Arts-informed research is a mode and form of qualitative research in the social sciences that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts broadly conceived. The central purposes of arts-informed research are to enhance understanding of the human condition through alternative (to conventional) processes and representational forms of inquiry, and to reach multiple audiences by making scholarship more accessible. The methodology infuses the languages, processes, and forms of literary, visual, and performing arts with the expansive possibilities of scholarly inquiry for purposes of advancing knowledge. (...) Bringing together the systematic and rigorous qualities of conventional qualitative methodologies with the artistic, disciplined, and imaginative qualities of the arts acknowledges the power of art forms to reach diverse audiences and the importance of diverse languages for gaining insights into the complexities of the human condition. (Cole & Knowles 2008: 59)

In arts-in*formed* research, the term "form" relates to many aspects, such as genre/medium, technicalities, communication, aesthetics, or procedural elements, methods, structural element, etc. According to Cole and Knowles, it is important to distinguish it from methodologies such as arts-based research in order, "to achieve complementarity rather than methodological hegemony", using Eisner's (1993: 9) argument. However, there is little in what they say that goes directly against Eisner's arts-based research, even the fact that the arts can play a lesser role. Nonetheless, what is emphasized here brings different qualities of the research to the forefront, thus also influencing the results.

The emphasis on an audience beyond the academy – and fine art public, I may add – is one such quality, although this is also pointed out by artistic researcher Hultberg (2013: 82) and arts-based researcher Leavy (2009: 12). There has even been a Centre for Arts-Informed Research established "for promoting innovative research that infuses processes and forms of the arts into scholarly work for purposes of advancing knowledge and bridging the connection between academy and community" (Cole & Knowles 2008: 59). Another defining element is a commitment to one (or several) art form(s), which is reflected in elements of the creative research process, as well as in the representation of the research "text". This makes Cole and Knowles (like Eisner)

emphasize the artist-researcher's prior experience and familiarity with the particular art form in use. Following this, arts-informed research focuses on the *methodological integrity* – that the art form in use is the best "to illuminate and achieve the research purpose" (Cole & Knowles 2008: 61). They also stress that the creative, arts-informed inquiry process is "defined by an openness to the expansive possibilities of the human imagination"(ibid), even welcoming the natural flow of events and experiences and possibility for serendipity. Moreover, as in most other arts-based genres, the reflexive present of the researcher-as-*artist* should be evident in the "text". This demands us to see the researcher as an important research instrument, in addition to seeing the presence and signature of the researcher in the research, although the researcher is not necessarily the subject in arts-informed research.

Eisner's Arts-based research

According to Bresler (2008: 227), "the scholar who first framed the arts explicitly as model not only for knowledge but for the *process* of inquiry was Elliot Eisner." Eisner uses the term arts-based, both with (Eisner, 2008) and without (Barone & Eisner 2012) a hyphen. The content, though, seems to be the same in both cases; a kind of qualitative, social research "guided by aesthetic features" (Barone & Eisner 2012: ix).

Similar to Bresler's habits of mind, Eisner talks about *artistic modes of thought* (Eisner & Powell 2002: 135). Eisner and Powell interviewed social scientists about artistry in their science and the way their research is conceptualized and designed. Two important features they found were empathic knowledge and imagination, and nearly all the interviewees spoke about this kind of identification with another's emotions and experiences. "[S]uch empathy is a necessary condition for deep forms of meaning in human life. The arts make such empathic participation possible because they create forms that are evocative and compelling" (Barone & Eisner 2012: 3). Through remarks about visualization, audition and employment of metaphor, the interviewees also emphasized imagination as important, as a way to deepen understanding. "Empathy can lead to imagination, and imagination may lead to complex outcomes of insightful solutions," Eisner and Powell claim (2002: 153).

Barone and Eisner want the work of arts based research to afford, "the capacity for inviting members of an audience into the experiencing aspects of a world that may have been otherwise outside their range of sight" (Barone & Eisner 2012: 56). According to them, the purpose of arts based research is to raise significant questions and engender conversations, rather than proffer final meanings. Consequently, the contribution of arts based research is not to support a scientific reduction of ambiguity or to put claims in propositional forms. Instead, it is to address complex

and often subtle interactions, and provide images of those interactions in ways that make them noticeable, making arts based research "a process that is pervaded by a dialectic activity in which ideas are held tentatively rather than permanently and where conclusions are always partial and temporary" (ibid).

Another feature of artistry in science described in the aforementioned interviews was the use of the physical body as a source of information with the potential to generate a heightened sensory and emotional experience, and a somatic form of knowledge (Eisner & Powell 2002). Eisner (and his colleagues) "became convinced that the premises, principles, and procedures employed by artists can serve certain purposes for engaging in social research that, in important ways, complement those of the science" (Barone & Eisner 2012: x). Therefore, the various art media have a more pronounced role in most arts-based research than with Bresler:

> Arts based research is an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication in order to express meanings that otherwise would be ineffable. (…) Arts based research represents an effort to explore the potentialities of an approach to representation that is rooted in aesthetic considerations and that, when it is at its best, culminates in the creation of something close to a work of art. (Barone & Eisner 2012: 1)

In contrast to most descriptions of artistic research, arts-based research is clearly about aspects of the social world, and not only art, insofar as "enabling others to *vicariously re-experience the world",* using "the expressive qualities of an artistic medium to convey meanings that are otherwise unavailable" (Barone & Eisner 2012: 20). Different arts use different forms of representation. These forms make possible different forms of understanding– viewing complex phenomena in a plurality of ways. Hence, different art forms can also be in use within one project.

Arts-based research is not only practiced by artist-academics, nor only by arts educators or professional artist. However, each form of representation imposes constraints on its performers, and provides its own affordances. Thus, doing arts based research is not necessarily the same as doing it well. The researcher must be able to meet a certain threshold of quality in the art media in use. The capacity for inviting members of an audience into the experience demands competencies related to the art medium and symbol system, which should also have practical consequences for the preparation and education of researchers. The concept of literacy needs to be expanded from verbal language to literacy in several aesthetical symbol systems or media as well. "The development of skills necessary for making the transformation

from material to medium is a very important aspect regarding the ability to do arts based research" (Barone & Eisner 2012: 62).

There are many researchers inspired today by Einser's arts-based research, also developing it in different directions. To give two examples, Patricia Leavy's *Method meets art* (2009) defines, in line with Eisner, arts-based research practices as "a set of methodological tools used by qualitative researchers across the disciplines during all phases of social research" (ibid: 2). She claims "arts-based practices allow research questions to be posed in new ways, entirely new questions to be asked, and new nonacademic audiences to be reached" (ibid: 12). Additionally, "[a]s representational form, the arts can be highly effective for communicating the emotional aspects of social life (ibid: 13). Susan Finley (2008) claims that there is a need to reorient arts-based research towards critical pedagogy and to take a political, moral stance to fight increasing social inequality. She wants to define the purpose of arts-based research as "to unveil oppression and transform unjust asocial practices" (ibid: 75). I find it dangerous to narrow the term like this. It is better when she writes that "[a]rts-based methodologies bring both arts and social inquiry out of the elitist institutions of academe and art museums, and relocate inquiry within the realm of local, personal, everyday places and events" (ibid: 72). This is in accordance with most of the described arts-based genres, and it certainly leads us to the next one, a/r/tography.

A/r/tography

"A/r/tography is an arts-based research methodology that inquires into educational phenomenon" (Jevic & Springgay 2008: 67). Thus, teaching acquires a different role than in Eisner's arts-based research. A/r/tography is also "living inquiry in and through the arts in diverse and divergent ways (Irwin & Springgay 2008: xix). While Bresler maintains a soft distinction between works for art and qualitative research, a/r/tography merges research, teaching and artmaking. The "a", "r" and "t" stands for artist, researcher and teacher. The second part, "graphy", indicates an emphasis on writing as well: "Art and writing unite the visual and textual by complementing, refuting, or enhancing one another" (Irwin 2004: 31). Although primarily developed in- and referring to visual arts, a/r/tography acknowledges the possibility of musical "images" as well, and to use the many (arts-based) languages available (Irwin, Beer, Springgay, Grauer, & Xiong 2006).

A/r/tography is concerned with self-study, being in community, relational and ethical inquiry, and the in-between. The method is practice- and practitioner-based, and as such, "seeks understanding by way of an evolution of questions with the living inquiry processes of the practitioner" (Irwin & Springgay 2008: xxiii). Irwin and

Springgay pay attention "to the *in-between* where meanings reside in the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time" (ibid: xix). The in-between artist, researcher and teacher is deeply committed to practice. Usually research is seen as finding knowledge. As in action research, a/r/tography is more concerned with "*creating the circumstances* to produce knowledge and understanding through inquiry laden processes" (ibid: xxiv).

Like in arts-based genres in general, a/r/tographers emphasize meaning rather than facts and certainty, and are more interested in questions than clear answers. "[A]/r/tographical work entails living and inquiring in the in-between, of constantly questioning, and complicating that which has yet to be named," according to Irwin and Springgay (2008: xxxi). Some types of meaning, understanding and knowing cannot be conveyed through verbal language, and thus one acknowledges the existence of other forms of knowing. Referring to Aristotle's three kinds of thought, Irvin describes a/r/tography as an "attempt to integrate theoria, praxis, and poesis, or theory/research, teaching/learning, and art/making" (2004: 28). She uses the concept of *métissage* as a metaphor for artist-researcher-teachers who integrate these roles in their personal and professional lives and to describe an act that erase borders. The a/r/tographer "embraces a métissage existence that integrates knowing, doing and making, an existence that desires an aesthetic experience found in an elegance of flow between intellect, feeling, and practice" (Irwin, 2004: 29).

A/r/tography also uses the concept of *rhizome* to describe "an assemblage that moves and flows in dynamic momentum" (Irwin & Springgay 2008: xx). The rhizomes activate the *in-between* and invite us to explore the interstitial spaces of art making, researching and teaching. Meaning is also considered (in)between beings. Inspired by Bourriaud's (1998/2002) relational aesthetics, Irvin and Springgay describe an interstitial space in which meanings and understandings are interrogated and ruptured. They emphasize learning as nonlinear, dynamic and relational, in addition to being unpredictable, participatory and evolutionary (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind 2008). Furthermore, a/r/tography is a thinking that reflects on interembodiment and on being(s)-in-relation, as well as communities of practice. Research becomes a process of exchange that "emerges through an intertwining of mind and body, self and other, and through our interactions with the world" (Irwin & Springgay 2008: xxi-xxii). Thus, a/r/tography is a way of being, with an understanding of research as intercorporeality, relationality and process. Like Bourriaud, they see the meaning as not emerging from the artwork itself or by the artist alone, but as a situation in which the artwork, a/r/tographer and public are mutually confronted and interrogated. "A/r/tographers don't simply research phenomena in the arts using qualitative means; they are

artist-and-teachers-and-researchers who examine educational phenomena through an artistic understanding and inquiry process" (Springgay, Irwin, & Kind 2008: 87).

This method is not just done, but lived: "The lived experiences and practices are inherent in the production of works of a/r/t and writing (graphy) made by individuals creating and recreating their lives" (Irwin, 2004: 33). Together with the merging mentioned above, this may also be the reason why – when reading a/r/tographic literature – I find it difficult to see it all as research. The references by Irwin, Springgay and their colleagues presented in this article certainly are, but I could not defend everything elsewhere presented as a/r/tography as research. It is not my intention to draw a line in this matter here, but the "D" in the wider term R&D (research and development) may not be a disadvantage. It may even feel liberating for many competent practitioners, at least when confronted with the expectations from researchers in more traditional fields.

Two research projects

"There are still more researchers writing *about* arts-based research criteria than those producing examples of what it looks like," Cahnmann-Taylor (2008: 12) claims. This article could also be considered an "in-between" in this aspect. In the second part of this article, I will shortly present different phases and processes of two completed research projects, so I can discuss them in relation to arts-based research in the third part. However, following the ideas of living as an a/r/tographer and the habits of mind described above, it may be irrelevant to talk about completion. After all, as part of a third ongoing project explicitly defined as arts-based, I am now in the process of writing this article about the two older ones, thereby connecting the three projects. Neither will it be easy to define what is, and what is not, part of these research projects. As one example: The genres above may include processes of thought and reflection *in* arts media. When my research topics are related to aesthetic experiences and learning, as well as emotion knowledge and social competence, life and the arts give impulses for reflections relevant to my research almost every day, clearly affording an opportunity for lived (and arts-based) inquiry.

Project 1: Tangentkista – six-year-olds' potential as piano players

After finishing a master's degree in piano performance, I started with what I in this article call Project 1. It included my "Hovedfag" in music education – today, this will

be juxtaposed with a master's degree, with a thesis (Vist 1992) being a bit expanded (in my case 143 pages, including music scores). The project also includes several years of (what was then called) educational R&D studies (Vist 1994a, 1994b, 1994c), resulting in three arts-based publications (Vist, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c).

The thesis' research question is about *six-year-olds' motoric potential for playing the piano*. In two case studies, two girls (both six years old) attended individual (and some group) piano lessons with me as the teacher, once a week for five months. The case studies were based on participant observation; the data collection consisted of field notes and aural tapes. The observations was done parallel to the literature review, thus in the thesis the observations were more used to illustrate and comment on the theoretical findings, and through this also sparingly referring to the music.

Due to the research question, the project was not defined as action research. This choice was also grounded in the fact that for both the educational method (curriculum) and the music in use, I mostly planned, composed and arranged the semester before the observations, even trying some of it out on other young piano pupils first. Here, it is particularly interesting that what must be considered an important arts-based research tool – the music – was only presented in the thesis as attachments.

Reading the thesis today, there is surprisingly little methodological information about the development of my compositions and arrangements. In three lines, without referring to the sources involved, I tell that reviewing existing music methods for young beginners gave me the ideas and inspiration for my own compositions and arrangement to use in the piano lessons. Claiming (in my thesis) the researcher (me) to be the main methodological "instrument", the compositions (mine) are barely mentioned. Actually, the chapter on method starts with saying that this thesis is supported by two legs, one theoretical and one practical, formed as an observational study. It is the theoretical leg, the literature review, which is the major one in shaping the thesis. With this, I meant the verbal theory on general piano teaching and technique, motoric development, creativity and other texts related to early childhood. The reference list – six pages long – does not include the mentioned piano methods or music that inspired me.

As mentioned in the thesis, my compositions and arrangements were defined as examples of what was played, and were only put as 26 attachments, not as part of the project's results. Typically, the thesis was comprised – with the exception of these attached musical scores – 100% of written language. The only part of the written text that could be considered imaginative literature and arts-based was the narrative presented in the preface. It describes a piano lesson. Every incident had happened for real during the data collection, but not in *one* lesson or with *one* girl, as in the narrative. Reviewing the comments from the readers, it seems as if these two pages

were important to "get on the inside" of the topic, to gain an empathic understanding of the six-year-olds and of the joy of being a piano teacher.

Over the next decade, this piano method was further developed and the music tested with many other young pianists – by both a fellow piano teacher and myself. In the log we kept, this R&D project was even described as action research. The complete piano method was published as *Tangentkista* (Vist, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c) – two piano books and a CD. Consequently, the final results of the project were presented as arts-based products, but never as scholarly research.

Project 2: Music experience as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge

The second project contains my PhD thesis and some related articles on *music experience as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge* (Vist, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009a, 2009b, 2011; Vist & Bonde 2013). The data collection method was qualitative, semistructured individual interviews. Though including some aesthetic communication in one or two interviews, these interviews were conducted using regular verbal (and body) language. But seen in relation to Bresler's aesthetically based research, habits of mind potentially developed in aesthetic encounters (such as the quest for an empathic understanding and the connection to oneself through connecting to the interviewee) will be discussed below.

The articulated arts-based processes were clearly stated as not being the analysed data, and only described under "pilot studies" (Vist, 2009b: 69ff). For instance, as part of the preparation before the interviews, and in line with van Manen's (2001) hermeneutic-phenomenological method, a self-interview was conducted (Vist, 2006). "An effective way to grasp just what is involved in emotional competence is to look inside oneself," Saarni (1999:1) claims. The self-interview can be considered a kind of log, but the imaginary social framework proved the experience to become something completely different. It was written down as imaginative writing and clearly experienced as arts-based. Sitting down with a laptop and the interview guide in front of me, I did a small routine of meditating, followed by the visualization of myself as an interviewee, interviewed by myself, the researcher. As soon as my fingers touched the keyboard, strong images and memories entered my mind (Vist, 2006). The process could best be described as writing fiction; both the interviewer and the interviewee started living their own lives in my – the writer's – imagination, thus giving the characteristic flow of an aesthetic experience. Both accepting today's post-modern and constructivist views of truth as coherence and meaning, as well as correspondence (Alvesson & Sköldberg 1994), the gap between science and art in this case was clearly diminished.

I also used arts media as an important reflection/thinking tool (Vist, 2009b). Besides my own musical (solo) expressions, I had the opportunity to use two co-supervisors. Through exploring my own piano playing and ensemble skills, other reflections on my research topic became available. Moreover, it turned out that my hobby, salsa dancing, provided many contributions to the reflection process (Vist, 2007). I used these media during the development of research questions and preparing for the data collection, as well as during the analysis and the results development.The reflections were written down in a log. Thus, the main function of my logbook appeared to be as the connecting link between the aesthetical reflections done *within* music and dance while playing piano and dancing salsa – and the more traditional verbal reflection and thinking afforded in a prepositional medium as the log and PhD thesis. However, as previously mentioned, this musical and embodied media were only used as reflection tools and as an aspect of my research design, and not as part of the analysed data. Nevertheless, thoughts from the log definitely appear in both the thesis and its results, more or less explicitly.

Analysing and discussing the projects as arts-based

In this third section, the two projects will be discussed in relation to different genres of arts-based research, even including artistic research to a certain extent. However, I would not call any of the projects artistic for a few reasons: Firstly, because in none of the projects arts are "paramount [both] as the subject matter, the method, the context and the outcome" (Borgdorff, 2012: 46). Secondly, the carefully formulated research questions, as well as the content of the questions, might not be approved by the most traditional artistic research guardians. Although the second project's topic (music experience as a mediating tool for emotion knowledge) definitely sought "to convey and communicate content that is enclosed in aesthetic experiences…", its aim was not necessarily to "contribute first of all to the art world…" (ibid: 45). And although the first project's question was also "…enacted in creative practices and embodied in artistic products" (ibid: 45), motoric development in six-years-olds may not be an obvious topic in artistic research, as defined above. Thirdly, also due to the competence and identity of the researcher: Although I, during the years of the first project, also worked as a professional pianist, my identity changed, and while conducting the second project my identity (and income) was no longer related to being a performing artist. Finally, and most importantly: the projects' issues were not foremost "articulated, expressed

and communicated *through art*" (ibid: 57). Nonetheless, theory from artistic research can still enlighten and inspire the discussion around these projects.

I feel more at home with the term arts-based research, especially when used as an umbrella term. Some of the arts-based projects exemplifying Barone and Eisner's (2012) term appear to be clearly experimental (Case, 2012; Sullivan, 2012). Considering the traditional qualitative research theses included in my two projects, it might be right to say that there are clearly arts-based processes included in both projects, but that the spirit of the projects are less arts-based than what is considered the ideal in Eisner's arts-based research. I am closer to the arts-informed genre, but for this discussion I see the different genre descriptions within arts-based research more like prototypes (Rosch, 1978), with some genre terms being closer to my research than others, but acknowledging that my research processes have characteristic elements from several arts-based genres, and that different projects might be closest to different genres. Thus, I would consider both projects to be qualitative research, and as educational research also social science research, using arts-based research processes to some degree.

Leavy (2009), Bresler (2006), Cole and Knowles (2008) and Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2008) see data gathering/production/collection, analysis/interpretation and representation/writing/dissemination as phases in which arts-based processes can contribute to the research. There is no reason for arts-based processes not to be part of any research phase (Leavy, 2009). Hence, I would like to add or emphasize processes that are part of even earlier phases as well, such as research question and design development. Inspired by Jørgensen's (1993) categorization of research phases (question development, data collection and result development, my translation), and Hennink, Hutter and Bailey's (2011) design cycle, ethnographic cycle and analytic cycle, I divide the discussion in three. Both authors include dissemination in their last research phase. Although it could never be separated from the result development when discussing dissemination that also includes artistic media and educational settings, we might sometimes benefit from looking upon it as a specific phase, or as an element within each phase. Equally, the terms *(research) question development* (i.e. "problemutvikling" Jørgensen 1993) and *design phase* may not give the best images of what the first phase could include. This article, for example, could be defined as part of the first phase of my ongoing arts-based research project as well as being a very late phase of the previously conducted ones. However, this fact may also give impulses to further reflection upon the phases in relation to arts-based research.

Question development/design cycle

According to Hennink et al., the tasks in this cycle or phase are "the formulation of a research question; reviewing research literature and incorporating theory; developing a conceptual framework for the study; and selecting an appropriate fieldwork approach" (Hennink et al. 2011: 5). In artistic research, to "put research questions into words at an early stage (…) can be more a burden than a boon" (Borgdorff, 2012: 56). I will claim that qualitative researchers may also allow themselves an "incubation" phase, or at least let the research question develop along with the researcher's reflection through all the various research phases. Acknowledging the daily living inquiry in arts media may reveal how early one starts to reflect upon a topic. Therefore, when formulating a verbal research question, there may have been a period in which the researcher's tacit understanding and sensitivity in exploring uncharted territory have been more crucial in identifying challenges and solutions (to use Borgdorff again) than is otherwise made explicit.

As mentioned above, the phase of composing and arranging most of the music in Project 1, as well as playing through relevant scores – which could also be considered a literary review – was not made an explicit part of the research project. Acknowledging this as an arts-based research process in the design cycle (although also transmitted to later phases) may underscore how arts-based practices afford opportunities to explore the topic and thus help develop research questions as well, whether in words or as compositions. More importantly; in this way the very first ideas of the thesis' topic first manifested itself in this kind of arts-based, *unfinished thinking,* as an *in-between* the non-verbal background of (me as) a child not allowed to play piano at the age of six, and the coming master thesis proposal. This could also be considered as developing a non-verbal conceptual framework or making more explicit my implicit knowledge as a practitioner, as well as a formative and aesthetic approach in which the sensitivity towards form undertakes the emphasis on defining concepts. For this reason, in describing the design of the entire Project 1, the first phase would have to be revised, and the new version should acknowledge the arts-based phases of the project to a larger extent than is done in the thesis.

Entering the formal and verbal literature review (theory on six-year-olds, etc.), it became clear that the question formulation had to be limited to the *motoric* development to keep the expected page- and timeframe of the thesis. I could not have composed the music with only knowledge about the children's motoric development. The music score studies and my own composing/arranging necessarily had a more holistic approach, which also included my practice-based knowledge of the six-year-old's emotional development, intellectual and social interests, etc.

Looking closely, arts-based research processes are also appearing in the design cycle of Project 2. As previously mentioned, habits of mind, such as the interviewer's empathy and understanding towards the interviewee, was an explicit approach during the interviews (Vist, 2009a: 82f). The concept of empathy was originally used in relation to aesthetic experience and art appreciation (Eisenberg, 2000; Goleman, 1996). Even so, I have never claimed that this could be considered an arts-based approach, and my interview approach is most likely influenced by the way I live and thus by art. Does it benefit the field of arts-based research if this is enough to consider research arts-based? As I indicated above, I accept Bresler's aesthetically based research as arts-based in the broader umbrella sense, but better specified as an aesthetically based or informed element. Other elements mentioned by Bresler are also the dialogic connection to one's self that is propelled by the empatic connection to the interviewee, as well as the perceptual contemplation. I can confirm that my experience fits with Bresler's notions, in which both of these aspects were clearly apparent during the interviews and during the processes of analysis that followed. And they also clearly bear a resemblance with aesthetic encounters.

Although the term arts-based was not used in Project 2, some parts were explicitly described as arts-inpired, particularly the "pilot studies" (Vist, 2009b: 69ff). Still, the data collected in these pilots were not appraised enough to be used and analysed as data. Thus, the arts-based elements were more clearly stated, but not explored for its knowledge potential or explicitly used in the analysis and result development. The pilots, which used non-verbal arts media as a reflection tool, will be discussed as part of later research phases, with the exception of the self-interview, which could be a tool in the first phase as much as in the second. In this case, it belongs in both places.

Preparing the interview design, and inspired by van Manen's (2001) hermeneutic-phenomenological approach, I conducted a self-interview, an imaginative interview, sitting down with my laptop and a draft of the interview guide, "interviewing myself". Although close to an autobiography, in the thesis the experience of this was described as writing fiction, with the two characters (the two Torills) "starting to live their own lives" in my imagination. Imagining the interview setting (this habit of mind) opened up for detailed narratives and creative thinking. But is this research? Although the *frame or setting* of the self-interview was an illusion, the stories I told had all happened in my life. My experiences both occurred and were constructed, as in an ordinary interview. Narrative forms are now accepted as relevant in research and as a good way to develop knowledge, also outside arts-based research (Kvale, 2002), and some of the most developed art forms in relation to research are the literary arts (see Knowles & Cole 2008; Springgay, Irwin, Leggo, et al. 2008). In discussing "Can Arts Based Research Be Fictive?", Barone and Eisner (2012) write that

"In conventional academic discourse, 'fictional' disqualifies it from consideration as legitimate research" (ibid: 101). The self-interview is not fictional to the extent they mean, but their answer to their question is still "yes":

> Works of fiction may indeed, through their recasting of the empirical particulars of the world, achieve extraordinary power to disturb and disrupt the familiar and commonplace, to question and interrogate that which seems to have already been answered conclusively, and to redirect the conversation regarding important social issues. (Barone & Eisner 2012: 101)

The fictive context of the self-interview also provided an opportunity to test the interview guide and to develop it further. It also may explain why the research- and interview questions were formulated as they were, which helped to make the researcher's tacit experiences and understandings verbal and open for further critique and inquiry. In almost every arts-based genre, to make the researcher's self become visible is necessary in order to make the research processes valid and reliable. Revealing the structure of the researcher's own experiences can enlighten the reasons behind the choices taken in the research process. Maybe the term "intra-view" would be a better concept than interview, but it is also possible to consider it not only as a pilot and self-reflection, but as regular data ready to be analysed, and as such, leading us to the next research phase.

Data collection/ethnographic cycle

This phase is about acquiring an overview of the types of information possible to obtain, and to use the appropriate methods in obtaining it (Jørgensen, 1993). According to Hennink et al. (2011), it also includes the design of research instruments. Consequently, the compositions in Project 1 could be considered as part of this phase as well, as could the self-interview.

Looking more closely at Project 1, audiotapes of 40 lessons were collected, containing both verbal conversation and piano playing. The method in use were aurally based, hence the teacher/researcher (me) also performed a lot of music with- and for the six-year-olds. Does this make me an artist-reseacher-teacher or a/r/tographer? I definitely did inquire into educational phenomenon, as well as in- and through the arts (Irwin & Springgay 2008). I definitely merged research, teaching and art making, and I later emphasized "graphy" in writing the thesis. However, did "[a]rt and writing unite the [aural] and textual by complementing, refuting, or enhancing one another" (Irwin 2004: 31)? In my opinion, the lack of explicitness in relation to the arts-based

processes weakens the processes in relation to the ideal a/r/tography. The underlying ideas about art, research and teaching were influenced by earlier research traditions to an extent that might put into question the use of the term a/r/tography, especially considering the written results. Nonetheless, there were definitely aspects that point towards a/r/tography, in both the data collection and the results, as exemplified in *Tangenkista's* use of many arts-based languages – visual, verbal, aural and embodied (Vist, 2001a).

A/r/tography is concerned with self-study and being in community. Despite the self-interview in Project 2, both projects go beyond the study of "self". The "being in community" was not anything I aimed for in the projects, but looking back, this actually may be considered as very striking in Project 1, although not mentioned in the thesis: The inquiry presented in the thesis was conducted in my home, in a room used for piano teaching and early childhood music groups. The participants were recruited from the local community, and the two girls in the case study came to me after I had put announcements out in several of the community's kindergartens, announcing my music groups for children four to six years old. One year later, some of these children were invited to participate in Project 1. In the later parts of the project, children were recruited from the community music school where I worked.

Project 1, like a/r/tography, is practice- and practitioner-based. But today, I must admit that my teaching and habits of mind did not always "seek understanding by way of an evolution of questions with the living inquiry processes of the practitioner" (Irwin & Springgay 2008: xxiii). However, the ethical, the relational and "the *in-between* where meanings reside in the simultaneous use of language, images, materials, situations, space and time" (ibid: xix) was more explicit than in traditional piano teaching, and even more explicit in the later parts of the R&D project. Does that make me an a/r/tographer? Remembering that projects *defined* as a/r/tography succeed to a different extent, I will claim that at my best, I was living as an a/r/tographer, regardless of whether my research should be described as a/r/tography or not. The project could be considered as an "attempt to integrate theoria, praxis, and poesis, or theory/research, teaching/learning, and art/making" (Irwin, 2004: 28). "In a/r/tographic practices, the identities, roles, and understandings of artist/researcher/teacher are intertwined in an approach to social science research that is dedicated to perceiving the world artistically and educationally", claim Springgay, Irwin, and Kind (2008: 84). There is nothing in this quote that is *not* seen in the project.

The (lack of) use of the arts-based pilots in Project 2 – as data – are already mentioned. The formal data collection in the projects was traditional semi-structured interviews, except for some short arts-based demonstrations by the interviewees. But in investigating the mindsets described in aesthetically and arts-based research

methods above, it is interesting to see how they ressonate with the methodological description in the thesis. Empathic knowledge, understanding and imagination aquired through arts encounters have previously been seen as necessary habits of mind during qualitative research, thereby demanding arts-based experiences by the researcher. The interviews were described as having an empathic approach (Vist, 2009b: 82), and quoting Fog (2001), claiming empathy to be an important necessity in interviews. However, although the arts make such empathic participation possible because they create forms that are evocative and compelling (Barone & Eisner 2012: 3), this can also lead to a dangerous seductive interview invading the interviewee (Fog, 2001). Another aspect worth mentioning may be the experience of improvisation. Leaving the semi-structured interview guide could be associated with improvisation in music, the needed competence to carefully listen and in a split second to understand the potential for knowledge development in the interviewees' answer. This is about "the ways in which the arts [and interviews] provide rich and powerful models for per-ception, conceptualization and engagement for both makers and viewers", to quote Bresler (2006: 52).

Result development/analytic cycle

This phase is about analysing data and developing results (Hennink et al. 2011; Jørgensen 1993). It has already been discussed as to whether one should talk about a separate dissemination phase. In that case, is it possible to find where the result development stops and the dissemination begins? Writing is presented as part of the analytic cycle, "to convey the key research findings" (Hennink et al. 2011: 269), as well as being something done throughout the research phases, as an analytical tool. In these projects, composing, playing and dancing could also be seen as analytical tools. Music performance/activities are further used in numerous lectures to exemplify the results from these two projects. Again, where does the dissemination/research stop and the teaching begin when you are teaching at a university, applying research-based teaching? These arts-based activities could be considered another a/r/tographical in-between, giving us another concept of research, one that also makes visible the merging of roles for university practitioners.

It is explicitly described in Vist (2009b) that I used arts media as an important reflection/thinking tool throughout the phases of Project 2, primarily piano (solo) performance, ensemble playing and couple dance (Vist 2007). As mentioned, these pilot studies did not generate formal data used in the analyses. The main function of my logbook appeared to be as the connecting link between the aesthetical reflecti-ons done *within* music while playing piano or dancing salsa, in addition to the more

traditional verbal reflection and thinking in the thesis. But in conducting a pilot or other activity that stimulates reflections on the research topic, would it not necessarily also influence the results?

It is hard to know exactly – and thus to write about – how my aesthetic encounters influenced the results, this much in the same way as it is difficult to verbalize artistic processes in general. Not presenting itself as arts-based, the Project 2 thesis did not really shed any light on such aspects of the result development. Borgdorff (2012) claims that artistic research seeks to provide a specific articulation of the pre-reflective, non-conceptual content of art, inviting "unfinished thinking". These articulations remained hidden in the verbal result. Nevertheless, as expressed in aesthetic as well as arts-based research: important habits of mind are related to how we experience thinking and reflection. Our thinking develops while we are using the verbal language, and thoughts can be created there and then in the encounter with the language (Vygotskij, 1934/2001). The same happens with any "language". I do not get away from the experience of strong and specific thinking and reflection directly in the musical medium. Writing the log helped me translate this experience into words to a certain degree, although not fully. There were embodied and aesthetic concepts (Johnson, 2007) and reflections that I may or may not manage to verbalize, but the log helped me to make explicit what was going on in my body and mind during musicking and dancing, other thoughts than what I was able to express when situated in the verbal discourse of my books and computer. This duality in the view of thought and language may also be seen as an in-between. Frisk and Östersjö (2013) criticize what they call the attempts "to make artistic reflection the cornerstone of a methodology for artistic research" (ibid: 43), as they find it delimiting for method development. I agree, but at the same time, this exposes the importance of artistic reflection in artistic- and arts-based research. To rephrase Frisk and Östersjö, "[r]eflection is an innate part of artistic [or music] practice and a natural aspect of artistic [and arts-based] research" (ibid: 43).

The results are more clearly arts-based in Project 1. Although only included as attachments in the thesis, after a decade of research and practice the piano method was published, not in a scientific journal, but as music (books containing scores, lyrics, drawings, etc. and a CD). Do the processes involved in developing this music deserve to be described as arts-based, in the way Eisner and his colleagues define it? What led me in this creative work was an embodied experience – and tacit knowledge – of what this age's kids were able to do and enjoyed doing on the piano. With Eisner's arts-based research, empathic knowledge and imagination are seen as important features, as is the capacity to generate a heightened sensory and emotional experience, and thus to invite members of an audience into an (re-)experience of what is investigated. Thus, we are talking about a somatic form of knowledge (Eisner & Powell 2002) and the use

of the physical body as a source of information, made possible through the knowledge obtained as a practitioner during hours of playing with six-years-old on my piano and in kindergarten music teaching. Of course, both theoretical studies and observations improved my knowledge, as well as the music. However, the vast body of embodied knowledge was already there, before the two formal legs of the thesis were developed.

It is hard for me to discuss whether my own compositions, etc. meet Eisner's demand of a certain threshold of quality. It is no matter of course that music meant for education, such as *Tangentista* (Vist, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c)*,* is understood as good art – though not that critics or reviewers consider it art. However, defending a relational aesthetic position, I will claim that one must consider the meaning and context of the music, while also discussing its quality.[3] Reviewing the compositions, at least it became clear that my competence was higher in the music than in their lyrics. Luckily, the books are also fully illustrated by the well-known illustrator, Thore Hansen, making *Tangentkista* "an effort to extend beyond the limiting constraints of discursive communication" (Barone & Eisner 2012: 1), using the expressive qualities of several artistic mediums to convey meaning, experiences and musical competence.

Conclusion – as further discussion

Eisner (2008) sees arts-based research as being placed between art and science, and in line with the in-between in a/r/tography, describing tensions in arts-based research that can also be motivating, and "evoke a sense of vitality" (ibid, p. 17). In the article's last part, I will make some concluding remarks, but also – as in the spirit of arts-based research genres – point to hopefully vitalizing tensions and areas of further discussion.

Arts-based research processes in-between genres?

In the introduction, I asked whether music education research was hardly ever art(*s*)-based, if it means that we hide the aesthetics' role in our research and if the ways we use art or music in our research are defined by other concepts. I will speak for myself: I definitely have used arts-based processes in these previous research projects, and also hidden them – not consciously, but in following the normal discourse of earlier music education research. Due to the content and the artist's role, the two projects are

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3 For readers supporting other aesthetic principles, it might be relevant to know that *Tangentkista* was one of three nominations to the TONO's Edvard Prize for contemporary composers in the genre of educational compositions (http://www.ballade.no/sak/musikkpedagogisk-komponist-hedres-med-en-edvard/).

not defined by the more common (in Nordic countries) concept of artistic research. I feel more at home with the umbrella term of arts-based research. The arts-based processes have been used in most research phases – by one project or another – but the major parts of the projects are using regular qualitative methodologies. Therefore, the projects are only partially arts-based, and it might be more correct to compare them with arts-informed research. With Cole and Knowles, the projects can be said to bring together "qualities of conventional qualitative methodologies with the expansive possibilities of the human imagination in the arts" (Cole & Knowles 2008: 59).

So how did the projects fit in relation to a/r/tography? I work in music education as a researcher, I am educated as a pianist and as a music teacher, and I hold a PhD in music education. I spend most of my spare time dancing, even teaching dance. Arts, education and research merge in my life as well, giving me a life in which everything seems to be connected, thereby affording many layers of meaning. I will claim that I am at my best (living as) an a/r/tographer, whether my research is described as a/r/tography or not. Not everything I do is research, but what in my life that does not have influence on my research is hard to tell. I am a teacher and a researcher. Not for a long time has my identity been comfortable with the term artist, but my way of living, my way of "breathing arts", puts it to the core of my being, professionally as well as privately.

Arts-based research – also in a Nordic context?

If this is the case for me, what about my colleagues in Nordic music education? Are art-based research processes possible to avoid when our subjects are within music education and music/arts encounters play important roles in our lives? Is it again the terms that differ? The article format does not give room for a thorough Nordic review, but scrolling the abstracts and some articles of recent volumes of the *Nordic Research in Music Education Yearbook (9-14)*, I did not find arts-based research or similar terms in what I read. Reviewing other publications (i.e. Aho, 2013; Hultberg, 2013; Jullander, 2013), I support the focus on artistic- compared to arts-based research in relation to research topics, and the lack of distinctions between the terms artistic- and art(s)-based research. As shown above, and taking articles from other parts of the world into account, the distinctions between artistic and arts-based seem much clearer.

However, I did find interesting projects that might contain processes such as the ones described above, although not explicitly presented this way in the articles. Would Fink-Jensen (2013) agree that her use of astonishment as a point of departure in research may be described as one of Bresler's habits of mind? Describing a community music project among Palestinian children and youth in a refugee camp, could Ruud

(2010) accept his ethnographic study to include arts-based processes, although no such term is used in the article? Falthin's (2011) examination of algorithmic compositions as a learning tool are definitely using arts-based processes. Would he even agree on the term artistic research? In the same volume, Hultberg (2011) presents what seems to be parts of the previously mentioned artistic research project Hultberg (2013) in the 2011 volume under keywords such as "[a]rtistic learning and development, music performance, professional musicianship (…)" (Hultberg, 2011: 131).

In "Choral Singing as Health Musicking (…)" in the previous yearbook, Anne Haugland Balsnes (2014) discusses the relationship between music, education and health related to choral singing in three cases. "The author's own experiences as a trained choral conductor are used actively as a basis for further reflection", she writes (ibid: 153). How this is done only appears implicitly, as she is referring to other articles for methodological issues. In private conversation (17.1.15.), Anne explains that she also appears as a conductor and singer in some of the cases, thus definitely merging the role of artist, teacher and researcher. Much of this takes place in the community where she lives, which is also in line with a/r/tography. Furthermore, she explains how challenges in her work as a conductor have often given impulses to research questions; therefore, several research phases in her inquiries seem to include arts-based research processes.

I would like to challenge my colleagues to reconsider the music's role in their research – or to consider becoming more explicit about the role of music in their research. In this way, music research becomes an(other) area where music educators can exemplify and argue the value of music, and how it influences and enriches our lives, our thinking and hence also the formation of our society.

Quality – as artist, teachers *and* researchers?

As mentioned above, except for artistic research, arts-based researchers (and a/r/tographers) do not need to earn their living through their art – only to be committed to artistic engagement through ongoing living inquiry, according to Irwin and Springgay (2008). Likewise, teachers do not need to be K-12 educators ("grunnskolelærere" in Norwegian). Unfortunately, what researchers do and do not need to be is not even mentioned by Irwin and Springgay. In line with this, I questioned that everything written as a/r/tography is automatically defined as research. Following this, it seems that for further discussions, a concept such as *aesthetic validity* may be relevant to develop and investigate. Some discussions on measurements of quality in arts-based research already exist (e.g. Barone & Eisner 2012; Leavy, 2009; Piirto, 2002). Barone and Eisner are suggesting that "a piece of arts based research must succeed both as a

work of art and as a work of research. It must be, that is, of sufficiently high quality to lead members of an audience into a powerful experience, into a r*esearching* of social phenomena" (2012: 145).

To express oneself fluently in any language requires years of study. If one communicates the results in arts-based media, one at least has to know enough to know *when* it is beneficial to use arts-based research processes. In processes of reflection, the skills may not need to be the same as if presenting research results in arts-based media. In some processes, even a lack of competence may be relevant, for instance when practitioner-based approaches into beginner's learning processes are used to give a first-hand and embodied perspective. However, as Cahnmann-Taylor claims:

> [T]here is very little explicit training for current and future researchers to practice methods of inquiry that embrace tools and techniques from the arts as well as the sciences. Without explicit training, there can be no critical community to establish what constitutes quality in arts-based research. (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008: 11)

Different but important fields of knowledge in music education research?

"When research methods are stable and canonized, the rules of the game are relatively clear. With new games, new rules", Eisner (1993:8) claimed, and foresaw that the conceptions and competences in research would also change by new forms of understanding. Have we accepted the change of rules described by Eisner? According to Cahnmann-Taylor, earlier researchers risked that their research was seen "less as a piece of scholarship than a fictive invention" (2008: 5), mentioning the arts in academic studies. Although arts-based research methodologies are still in conflict with some scholarly climates, the postmodern turn has helped us in this matter: "[W]hat counts as knowledge and the nature of research have dramatically changed", according to her (ibid: 3).

So, if arts are accepted on the researcher's playground, is it useful with so many different concepts? For those spending much time in arts-based research methodologies, it may be relevant when Eisner (2008) claims the value of the mess, and that too clear definitions will complicate the creative vitality of the field. For others, some distinctions may help, and the literature presented here reveals that some distinctions have developed: Artistic research requiring a professional level of the artist/researcher and the artistic product, and the research content expected to be related strongly to

artistic processes/the authors' own musicianship being one tendency. The other genres do not put as strict a restriction on the researcher and the research topic. Arts-based genres consider themselves to be social science research, with a broader acceptance of topics, such as child development, social competence and emotion knowledge (as seen above). The strong relationship between music and emotion is well documented elsewhere (Juslin & Sloboda 2010). Sinner, Leggo, Irwin, Gouzouasis, and Grauer (2006) confirm that investigations in emotions are also a central topic in arts-based dissertations: love, fear, desire and hope were common themes together with death, power, memory, loss and suffering, as well as self-identity, socio-cultural landscapes and embodied experiences (ibid: 1238). Investigating collective memory, body image and sexual identity as arts-based research, Leavy claims "these highly conceptual topics, which represent some of the most fundamental aspects of human experience, [often to be] impossible to access through traditional research practices" (2009: 4).

In accordance with the above descriptions of artistic research, Aho writes that artistic research tends to be "highly exclusive in its definition of the artistic researcher as a researcher with formal art education" (2013: 66). The researcher's formal background may not even be the biggest problem. When most artistic researchers define the field of knowledge as "*performing artists' artistic processes*" (Hultberg 2013: 88), there will be an empty space for other topics – yet still within music education – that may also benefit from the use of arts-based means. If we stick to the above definition of artist research, we need the term arts-based research to cover processes in projects that aim for knowledge outside artistic processes and the artist's own musicianship. Another solution to the problem is suggested by Frisk and Östersjö (2013), who believe that the field of artistic research is now stable enough to embrace qualitative research methods found in social sciences, and to create a hybrid methodology that also includes artistic methods. Similar thoughts are expressed by Hultberg (2013), which may be in line with Borgdorff's claim (above) that today's arts are often engaged with other life domains, and that gender, identity, environment, etc. might be addressed in artistic research projects as well.

How come that in the US-dominated discourse of arts-based research, the focus on research topics and researchers' competence appears rather pragmatic, while the Nordic or European use of artistic research appears closer to aesthetic theories of autonomy? Does this reflect the dominance of different aesthetic theories? Researching artistic processes is an important field, but we cannot limit arts in music education research to a kind of "l'art pour l'art" discourse, unless we – in our teaching – agree with an aesthetic theory that advocates the autonomy of art. It may be unfair to claim that music as a mean in itself seems to be an implicit discourse in much of the artistic research literature, but my impression in reading some of these texts is that

subject matters (of music) outside the artistic work and processes do not exist. From a Bourdieuian perspective, it would therefore be interesting to investigate why – e.g. if this is about the few researchers' personal interests, or whether the cultural capital of being a professional and performing artist today influences the chosen research topics and methodological genres in music education research. A critical view on how our music research methodologies also shape the focus and discourse in music education may be important, whether one is researching artistic processes, interpersonal communication, social interaction, gender, identity, self, emotion – or research methodologies such as in this article.

However, I find it problematic when Nordic researchers –writing in English – claim that in our countries art(s)-based research is something different from that in the English-speaking world. We do need a terminology for research on topics other than artistic processes that use arts in research. Why not chose a term that is already there, and which has been in use for more than 20 years? I therefore suggest that we start using both terms – artistic as well as arts-based – also in the Nordic countries, with a slightly different meaning. We can still hold hands, agreeing that:

> As representational form, the arts can be highly effective for communicating the emotional aspects of social life. (…) Furthermore, the dramatic presentation connects with audiences on a deeper, more emotional level and can thus evoke compassion, empathy, and sympathy, as well as understanding. In this way, arts-based practices can be employed as a mean of creating *critical awareness* or *raising consciousness.* (Leavy 2009: 13)

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