

# *Crafting Material Bodies*

*Exploring co-creative costume processes*

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# OPENING PAGE

## *Crafting Material Bodies – exploring co-creative costume processes*

Welcome to the artistic research PhD thesis by Charlotte Østergaard.

At the centre of this research lie three artistic projects. In *AweAre – a movement quintet* we listened to the *AweAre* (connecting) costume and discovered that it was a co-performer with a demanding “voice”. In *Community Walk* we explored how the connecting costume “threw” us in multiple directions: it evoked playfulness between us and with others (people and urban/nature elements) while at the same time provoked a strong sense of exposure. In *Conversation Costume* we explored how an assembly of costumes invited us to co-create different connections and/or compositions with the space and with/between us and other people, and we experienced that the costume assembly lead us in surprising and unexpected directions.

With this research I suggest that it is critical that in co-creative situations we cultivate our listening abilities *towards* human and more-than-human others and I argue that costume is a tool that enables us to do so. Moreover, I argue that co-creativity is a call to *listen*, which implies that we must *host with communal hospitality*.

Artistic research by Charlotte Østergaard.

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# **ABSTRACT**

At the heart of this research are relational encounters between people and textile materials. As the title, *Crafting Material Bodies*, indicates, the research explores how human bodies are crafted by material bodies (costume) and vice versa. In the research textile materials and people are my co-creators and as co-creators they are invited to relate to, affect and become affected by other human bodies and more-than-human materials. As the subtitle, *exploring co-creative costume processes*, indicate the main quest is to explore how we (humans) co-create with textile and costume materials and to explore how textile and costume materials become equal co-creating partners.

In the artistic projects I invite fellow artists, like performers and designers, to explore specific connecting costumes (that connect two or more people) with me. As co-creators I invite them to engage, respond, inform, influence and/or interrupt our costume explorations in ways that matter to them and to critically reflect on our explorations. In the projects I study how listening become instances of relational acts or entanglements between humans and more-than-humans that evoke curious embodied and conversational dialogues. Such dialogues are invitations to listen with the textile and costume materials, with our bodies, to share embodied experiences, to co-create and to elaborate on the various creative perspectives. During the artistic projects I act as more than an observing designer/researcher. I am the host that have crafted the costumes in collaboration with the textile materials and as host I also actively take part in exploring what the costumes evoke. The goal is to explore how being a participating host affects the explorative costume situations.

The research has four focal themes – crafting, listening, hosting and co-creating – which are explored though three artistic projects. The artistic project *AweAre*, a movement quintet, explores the act of listening, *Community Walk* explores the act of hosting and *Conversation Costume* explores the act of co-creating, while all three projects explore different aspects of crafting. As the themes are entangled, all three projects contain aspects of the four themes.

With this research I suggest that it is critical that we, in co-creative situations, cultivate our abilities to listen with human and more-than-human others, and I argue that textile and costume materials are mediums that enable us to do so. With this research my ambition is to formulate ideas on co-creative methods that value material-discursive listening and where the hosting attitude is orientated towards the communal doings. The aim is that listening with costume and hosting with communal hospitality towards our listenings become tools for designers to gain a deeper understanding of how costume affects performers, and the broader scope is that the research contributes to discussions on how teams can collaborate with humans and more-than-humans in more generous and inclusive manners. One example is that we acknowledge that our different disciplinary perspectives are creative possibilities in our common doing and that we recognise that how we share and exchange our differences has an impact on how we flourish co-creatively with our human and more-than-human co-creators.

# FRAMEWORKS

With the following four texts I contextualise the research and place it in artistic research:

- In *Lydhørheder – language(s) beyond the linguistic* I suggest that crafting is a non-linguistic language that we must attend to.
- In *Four Core Concepts* I introduce four theoretical concepts that I use as lenses to think-with in the artistic projects.
- In *Costume Contexts* I situate the research in relation to costume and design scholars, artists and practitioners that my research builds on and connects to.
- In *Artistic Research Method* I frame my artistic research method, position myself as artistic researcher and unfold how the artistic projects and the research has evolved.

Apart from that, this section includes Lund University's *spikblad* document and the text *Acknowledgements*.

## ***Acknowledgements***

What is presented on this Research Catalogue page is the submitted thesis for a doctoral degree in artistic research in Performing Arts at Malmö Theatre Academy, Lund University, December 2024. This artistic research was carried out between 2020 and 2024 at Malmö Theatre Academy, Lund University, Sweden.

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At the centre of this research lie three artistic projects wherein I collaborated with many people.

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I dedicate this artistic research to my closest textile family: my sister Camilla Østergaard, mother Ehs Østergaard and in memory of my father Paul Østergaard (who from the mid 1990s undertook practice-based research at Aarhus School of Architecture at a time when no one really recognised practice as research).



## ***Lydhørheder*** – language(s) beyond the linguistic

The ambition with this text is to unfold why crafting is the central lens that I use throughout this research, or, rather, I will try to unfold the values that are, to me, embedded in crafting.

*Lydhørheder – language(s) beyond the linguistic* intertwines two of the key themes in the research: listening and crafting.<sup>1</sup>

### **A short introduction**

I use the word ‘crafting’ as a tribute to the (domestic) labour of women and to honour the knowledge of older and former generations, like my grandmother Elna Østergaard (1906–1991) who taught me to mend socks when I was a child. When I mend, I am reminded that people of former generations cared for their belongings in ways that we seem to have forgotten<sup>2</sup> and that we are trying to relearn. Thus, crafting or “mending with Elna” forces me to attend to the way in which I care for and reuse textile materialities.<sup>3</sup>

As with my grandmother, crafting is a language that runs in my family. My only sibling Camilla Østergaard (1965) was born with Down Syndrome. As children our mother Ehs Østergaard<sup>4</sup> taught us crafting skills like knitting, weaving, embroidery and printing. Ehs intuitively used her textile craftsship<sup>5</sup> as a creative tool to expand, shape and sharpen my sister’s motor abilities. This meant that during our childhood we (Ehs, Camilla and I, and sometimes our childhood friends) spent hours and days crafting together. Thus, crafting created a strong connection between us and is our shared language. In what follows I will approach how crafting – as a non-linguistic and non-

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<sup>1</sup> As a craftsperson, crafting and listening are intertwined. When I craft, I attune my sensitivity towards the “voice” and “wills” of the textile materialities – I listen to how the materialities resonate intellectually and intuitively. However, the intention with this text is not to unfold my sensitivity towards textile materialities – I will return to this in the artistic projects.

<sup>2</sup> In the years 1957–70 (in Denmark) the financial boom and the increases in wages, combined with a double income in many families, resulted in an increase in private consumption, which grew by 75% (<https://danmarkshistorien.dk/vis/materiale/servicesamfundets-fremvaekst-ca-1960-1980>). The mass production and the cheap products that it produces makes us, as consumers, less aware of and care less for the consequences of our mass consumption.

<sup>3</sup> For years I mended socks mainly to save money. Today the awareness of the massive climate changes that are caused by our mass consumption means that I (and others) have gained a new understanding that mending is an act of care.

<sup>4</sup> Ehs Østergaard (1938) was educated in the 1950s as textile designer or art and craftsperson. Throughout her life, Ehs has worked extensively with textiles, including hand-printed serigraphy for home decor, children's clothing, women's fashion, and textile pieces for exhibitions.

<sup>5</sup> I employ craftsship instead of the gendered craftsman<sup>ship</sup>.

normative language – awakens and challenges me to constantly attune my listening or my *lydhørhed* towards other people.

### **The Danish word *lydhørhed***

The Danish word *lydhørhed*, which translates to responsiveness<sup>6</sup> (the act of reacting and responding to someone or something), somehow loses its meaning in the translation. In Danish *lydhørhed*<sup>7</sup> means that a person is welcoming, present, attentive (for example observant, cordial and caring), flexible (for example compromise-seeking or cooperative), benevolent (for example considerate, helpful, tolerant, positive, kind and straightforward), responsive and good at perceiving small nuances.

The Danish word *lydhørhed* combines the morphemes *lyd* meaning sound, the imperative *hør* meaning to hear and *-hed* which denotes something or someone, for example an action, a situation or a person that has a certain characteristic. The interlinking of the words addresses a situation where a listener actively or consciously chooses to listen to a sound that has certain characteristics. Thus, *lydhørhed* contains more than “just” being responsive. Inherent in the word is an attunement that enables relational exchanges with humans and/or more-than-human others and between someone and something. *Lydhørhed* (singular) addresses the personal ability to listen to others that includes oneself. *Lydhørheder* (plural) is a reciprocal listening ability.

This text is an attempt to address the view that we (humans) have different *lydhørheder* in the sense that we are sensitive to different verbal and non-verbal languages. I suggest that if we attune our *lydhørhed(er)* we can explore how we (humans) relate and respond to the world differently as well as that we can express what we experience in different ways. What I like to approach is that we can orientate our *lydhørheder* in polyphonic ways. I argue that by attuning our *lydhørheder* towards languages that may at first seem foreign, unfamiliar or unknown to us we open our senses to, for example, non-linguistic ways of communicating. In the open-mindedness towards our different expressions and thus different ways of communicating, our creative exchanges and dialogues most likely become rewarding in unexpected and/or surprising ways.

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<sup>6</sup> *Responsive* originates from Old French *responsif* and directly from Late Latin *responsivus* as “answering”, and from Latin *respons-*, past-participle stem of *respondere*, meaning “responding readily to influence or action, able or inclined to respond”. *Respond* originates directly from Latin *respondere*, meaning to “respond, answer to, promise in return”.

<sup>7</sup> Building on ordnet.dk and Danish Dictionaries.

As relational (human) beings, I argue that it matters how we attune our *lydhørhed(er)*, since the attunement has an impact on how we sense-listen and relate to and with others – and to and with the world. In the following I invite you on a short journey through reflections on how categories and abilities or norms and expectations influence our *lydhørheder*. I will end this introduction with reflections that relate to the research.

### **Open(ing) categories**

In the interview by Brad Evens titled *Histories of Violence: Neurodiversity and the Policing of the Norm*,<sup>8</sup> Erin Manning<sup>9</sup> says that

neurodiversity is a movement that celebrates difference. [...] The “neuro” in neurodiversity has opened up the conversation about the category of neurotypicality and the largely unspoken criteria that support and reinforce the definition of what it means to be human, to be intelligent, to be of value to society. (Evens 2018)

Manning suggests that categories like “neuro” force us to discuss norms of, for example, who (people) we consider to be valuable in Western societies. Manning advocates that by opening categories we can include and value experiences of “diverse” (contrasting with “typical”) or different others that at the same time provokes us to look at ourselves and question what we experience as typical or normal.

Manning argues that we do not need

more categories but more sensitivity to difference and a more acute attunement to qualities of experience. This would allow us to see that knowledge circulates and it is through this circulation that learning happens: language and other forms of expression move through us and it is through this movement that we learn. [...] To make this claim is to open language beyond linguistics to value modes of expression that functions across and beneath in excess of words (including, of course all that beyonding that takes place through the linguistic itself). (Evens 2018)

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<sup>8</sup> A *dialogue-series* by political philosopher and critical theorist writer Brad Evens on the question of violence.

<sup>9</sup> Erin Manning is a Canadian artist, cultural theorist and political philosopher.

Manning beautifully addresses how we must attune our sensitivity towards the qualities of our experience<sup>10</sup> and how we must learn from the richness of how we experience experience.

Moreover, Manning reminds us that we express our experiences beyond linguistics. By opening categories of language we can explore different ways of expressing experience and we can learn from expressions that we normally categorise and/or stigmatise. In opening the categories of expression we can value the movements of knowledge that circulate between our expressive bodies.

In the context of my research this implies that we – my co-creators and I – cannot expect that what someone categorised as a dancer experiences and expresses is like what someone categorised as a designer experiences and expresses. Moreover, the categorisation of someone (for example as dancer) somehow categorises how someone else (categorised as designer) expects that they (the dancer) will express their experiences. Opening categories of expressions suggests that we must be open-minded towards ourselves and each other by attuning our *lydhørheder* 1) beyond the explicit and implicit expectations<sup>11</sup> that we have and 2) towards bodily expressions that are beyond and beneath the linguistic. In the open categories we must co-creatively embrace and explore the diverse and polyphonic nature of expression.

### **Language abilities**

In *Performing with Parkinson's: Leaving Traces* Pohjola et al. examine “the subjective experiences of what it means to perform as a dancer in a dance company that is based on PD [Parkinson's disease]” (2023, 102). In the article<sup>12</sup> one “participant emphasized the significance of discovering a new language of communication and its profound meaning, both while dancing and in everyday life” (Pohjola et. al 2023, 109). The quote beautifully unfolds how through dance the respondent discovered a meaningful (non-verbal or non-linguistic) language that they did not know prior to the experiences of performing with the company.

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<sup>10</sup> Manning argues that “autistic perception experiences richness in a way the more neurotypically inclined perception rarely does” and that “autistic experience is something neurotypicals could learn a lot from, not only with regard to perception itself, but also as concerns the complexity of experience” (Evens 2018).

<sup>11</sup> For example, with “the category of costume” we expect that we will experience something specific and/or that with “the category as dancer” we expect that someone (the dancer that can be oneself or the Other) expresses themselves in a specific way.

<sup>12</sup> The article is based on research conducted through semi-structured questionnaires.

In their conclusion Pohjola et al. write that

according to the experiences of the dancers, artistry has no bounds or limitations. Even if the physical body is limited, artistry can still be reached beyond physicality. Dancing offered the individual the possibility to be part of a communicative body and to have faith in daring to open oneself and be seen. Here is my body; here is my movement – here I am. Importantly, PD [Parkinson’s disease] was set aside; what prevailed was only dancing, a universal language that connects human beings. (Pohjola et. al 2023, 111)

“The universal language” of dance suggests an attitude towards dance (as language) that is not defined or evaluated by a person’s ability to perform, for example, ballet, hip hop or flamenco in particular predefined ways. Instead, the dancers defined their bodies and thus their language as “‘differently abled’ instead of ‘disabled’” (Pohjola et. al 2023, 106). Thus, the communicative dance body was not defined by Parkinson’s disease and the differently abled does not devalue the dancers’ abilities. On the other hand, “different” indicates that the dancers have abilities that are somehow different from the norm.

I suggest that the differently abled is a call towards the observer – for example an audience – to attune their *lydhørhed* towards the dancers’ differently abled dance language. I suggest that the differently abled indicates that 1) it is a language in its own right that 2) points more to the observer’s (audience, viewer) ability to listen than to the differently abled language. The differently abled challenges the observer: they must be willing to attune their *lydhørheder* towards a dance language that may be different to the dance language(s) that they are used to in other performance contexts.

The categorisation (disciplines) and abilities (skills) are interlinked in the sense that both come with specific cultural expectations. In the context of my research, inherent in the differently abled is that other people’s (my co-creators’) experiences and expressions are always different from mine. As researcher, I can judge and evaluate differently abled expressions from the abilities that I expect are inherent in a specific category *or* I can attune my *lydhørhed* to be curious towards the multiple unexpected abilities that my co-creators have.

### **Crafting abilities – craft languages**

Another example of a differently abled body is the American fibre artist Judith Scott (1943–2005), born deaf and with Down Syndrome. In 1987 Scott enrolled in Creative Growth,<sup>13</sup> where “fabric quickly became her passion and medium of choice, and for the next eighteen years of her life, Scott created sculptures using yarn, twine, and strips of fabric, to wrap and knot around an array of mundane objects she discovered around her” (art 21). In the process of discovering fibre or textiles as a sculptural medium, Creative Growth gave a *lydhørhed* to Scott’s tactile-sensitive abilities and artistic talent.

In the article *Judith Scott – renowned for her fiber art sculptures* Tom di Maria<sup>14</sup> is quoted as saying that

I believe that the sculptures she [Judith Scott] created are essentially evidence of her process and evidence of who she is. They're her stories tied and untied. I think she was unspooling her life history before us. [...] I think she was also trying to mark her place in the world: This is what I do, this is who I am, this is my contribution. I think most artists strive for that. (Marech 2005)

Maria suggests that crafting<sup>15</sup> textile sculptures became Scott’s language. The organisation’s philosophy<sup>16</sup> enabled Scott to develop her non-linguistic or non-verbal crafting language. The organisation valued, exhibited and promoted Scott’s sculptures, which has made her work internationally renowned. I argue that Scott intuitively expressed herself through crafting textile sculpture and the organisation’s *lydhørhed* enabled Scott to communicate with a world that was beyond her reach.<sup>17</sup>

I will end this short section by turning towards my sister. Eight years ago, Camilla (as mentioned born with Down Syndrome) was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease, which implies that her quite

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<sup>13</sup> According to their website, Creative Growth (founded in 1974) is a non-profit organisation based in Oakland, California, USA.

<sup>14</sup> Exclusive director of Creative Growth.

<sup>15</sup> I use crafting instead of, for example, textile artwork. I suggest that the intertwinement of the crafting process and the crafted product (not the separation) is the crafting language.

<sup>16</sup> The organisation works for inclusion of artists that are “differently abled” in the contemporary art scene by, for example, providing a supportive studio environment and gallery representation. Creative Growth has established a model for a creative community guided by the principle that art is fundamental to human expression and that all people are entitled to its tools of communication. I argue that within Creative Growth’s philosophy *lydhørhed* is a penetrating value.

<sup>17</sup> In a Western society where people like Scott are categorised as “disabled”, as Other Others, Creative Growth enables them to discover their artistic “voice”. Moreover, the organisation promotes their artworks to a broader public and thus offers them a “place in” and not outside society.

advanced crafting skills, including her poetic-peculiar textile expressions, are dissolving. During the past few years Camilla's craftings have changed "in stages" that have included sampling textile techniques in surprising (quite strange and random) ways. Today Camilla mainly cuts textiles into pieces. Even if Camilla (opposite Judith Scott) has language, when I ask why she crafts as she does, Camilla has no words to explain.

With Alzheimer's as her companion, it is as if the Alzheimer's reveals itself through Camilla's craftings and it is only through her craftings that I can become familiar with her "state of mind". Thus, in my *lydhørhed* (attentiveness) towards the transformation in Camilla's crafting language, I hear "things" that she is unaware of and that she therefore cannot explain. When I open my *lydhørhed* beyond my crafting expectations, I see/hear/sense<sup>18</sup> her presence and I feel her love. As Camilla's younger sister, as Charlotte, her way of being in the world, her otherness<sup>19</sup> has shaped and sharpened my *lydhørhed*. With Alzheimer's as a companion that we cannot escape, I must constantly attune my *lydhørhed*. I must embrace the new otherness that appears in her crafting language – an otherness that has its own surprising beauty and that inspires me artistically and relationally in multiple ways.

### ***Lydhørheder***

The above-mentioned situates values that are fundamental to me: beyond categories, *everyone is able*. I suggest that the prerequisite is that we must attune our *lydhørheder* towards the unique abilities that everyone has when they express themselves – abilities that are not defined by strict disciplinary perspectives but have plural understandings of abilities.

In collaboration we (as a general we) tend to categorise our collaborators. Somehow the categorisation makes us judge and evaluate whether our (own and others') abilities are valuable and/or normal within the categorisation. When we enter collaborative situations from the categorisation perspective the category often defines who we are and what we must do (produce and perform) in the situation – which can be productive but potentially also limits what we are able to do individually and collectively. For example, in performance contexts I have often been

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<sup>18</sup> Rather than (intellectually) analysing the changes of Camilla's craftings, I listen to the changes with my heart and compassion.

<sup>19</sup> For example, attending the same primary school as I, Camilla was different from everyone else who I knew as a child. I did not see it then, but today I understand that in the eyes of most of my childhood friends (including some of my parent's friends) Camilla was the Other Other.

hired because I am able to design *and* produce costume. In these productions, categorisation often implied that I was expected to fulfil a choreographer's vision and that the dancer was expected to embody my design.<sup>20</sup>

I assume that if we expect that collaborators must embody specific categories and perform specific abilities, we potentially prevent them from expressing their abilities in unexpected ways. At the same time, we prevent ourselves from experiencing how everyone has abilities beyond and beneath the category in which we have placed them. By categorising others, we also categorise ourselves and we potentially limit our *lydhørhed* towards more unexpected expressions. We also categorise who is valuable and thus invited to discuss the experiences and expressions that we produce together.

Manning reminds me that I am always more than one category – I am a daughter, a crafter, a sister, a single and childless woman, a native white Danish person, an artistic researcher, a costume designer, a textile artist, a friend, a self-chosen aunt and much more. When I collaborate, I am always all these categories *simultaneously* as my co-creators are all their categories. In situations where I am invited to perform more than one category, I experience how the intersections between categories allow me to explore, expand and express my abilities in multiple or polyphonic ways. At the same time, the intersection of categories challenges me to be open-minded towards my collaborators beyond what I expect as typical abilities (skills) for their category (discipline). To open categories and abilities is a call to be attentive to how my *lydhørhed* bodily situates and orientates me, including the imperative that I must attune my *lydhørhed* to include and embrace expressions that are (and can be radically) different from mine.

I have used the examples of Judith Scott and my sister Camilla's art/craftworks to illustrate that crafting textile materials crafts languages beyond the linguistic. I suggest that their crafting language(s) is intuitively rather intellectually (analytically, conceptually and/or linguistically) expressed *as well as* that their crafting expressions are valid ways of communicating to and with others. Moreover, the artworks of Scott and Camilla show that if we attune our *lydhørhed* beyond categories (for example the category of being disabled), we allow other (unexpected) abilities and expressions to flourish. I suggest this approach applies to co-creative situations, especially if we

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<sup>20</sup> This approach indicates that I must accomplish *my* assignment (the visual expression) and that my "main dialogues" with the performer are on how the costume fits the functionality (for example related to the choreography and the movements of the dancers) and the overall visual expression.



are willing to move between what we expect and what is unexpected, between what we know and what is unknown.

Furthermore, I have unfolded how *lydhørhed* is a two (or more) directional intertwined relationship: it circumscribes situations where a sound source expresses an experience and a hearing source listens to what is expressed. I suggest that crafting, like other non-linguistic language sources, expresses mattering (for example experiences and relationships with the world) that cannot be expressed in words. The same might apply to the listening source: the listener may experience that linguistics cannot express what the listener hears from the sound or crafting source.

Beyond categories I expect that we always enter collaborative situations with expectations. In the context of my research, I suggest that it is productive – however familiar my co-creators are to me – that I meet my co-creators as familiar foreigners. As familiar foreign co-creators, I expect that we have different abilities, that we experience the world differently and that we express our experiences differently. In the research situations I must attune my *lydhørhed* in relation to my co-creators and to the situations that are between us.

In co-creative situations we must collectively explore and develop our *lydhørhed* beyond, beneath or behind linguistics, for example by including materially-crafted and bodily-crafted expressions. When we enter co-creative situations, we might expect that materially- or bodily-crafted expressions must be performed in specific ways that follow specific rules. For example that a dancer must perform a ballet pirouette in a specific way or that a crafter must knit a specific pattern. Therefore, when we start co-creative explorations, we must (individually and collectively) attune our *lydhørhed* as an attempt to understand what the crafted bodies (human-bodies or material-bodies) express. The crafted expressions might be unexpected or unknown to us since the crafted language(s) might not follow expected, normal or normative rules and/or categories. Thus, we might experience that some expressions will be foreign, unknown and/or surprising to us. At the same time, the expansion of language categories allows us to learn from and be inspired by other expressions and expand our expressions in polyphonic ways.

In collaboration I suggest that crafting language(s) is something that we craft together. The collective language of crafting are fluid and organic processes that implies that we must constantly navigate and negotiate. If we do not focus on categorisations and we do not evaluate specific

abilities, we might learn from the otherness – for example other non-linguistic languages – that I suggest are always present between us whether we acknowledge this or not.

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## *Four core concepts by four scholars*

In *Living a Feminist Life* Sara Ahmed write that

Concepts are at work in how we work, whatever it is that we do. We need to work out, sometimes, what these concepts are (what we are thinking when we are doing, or what doing is thinking) because concepts can be murky as background assumptions. But that working out is precisely not bringing a concept from the outside (or from above): concepts are in the worlds we are in. (Ahmed 2017, 13)

In the artistic project research, four core concepts – vibrant matter, making kin, orientation and entanglement – are the lenses that I use for thinking-with the four focal themes, namely crafting, listening, hosting and co-creating. The four core concepts contain values that resonate with mine. Moreover, the authors/scholars and their concepts challenge me to relate to and reflect on the interconnections between aesthetic choices and ethical implications or dilemmas that are embedded in the aesthetic choices I make. Below, the four core concepts and the authors are shortly introduced in a personal manner. I return to the four core concepts in the artistic part of the research called PROJECTS.

### **Jane Bennet – vibrant matter:**

In the book *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* the American political theorist and philosopher Jane Bennett<sup>21</sup> challenges western human-centric perspectives that matter is passive. In Bennett's vitalism, things – like litter, electricity, foods and metals – possess vitality and vibrancy that influence human actions and political landscapes. Bennett writes that “if matter itself is lively, then not only is the difference between subjects and objects minimized, but the status of the shared materiality of all things is elevated” (Bennett 2010, 13). By emphasising that we – where we includes things or more-than-human matter – share materiality, Bennett

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<sup>21</sup> Jane Bennett is professor of political science and Andrew W. Mellon Professor of the Humanities at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA. Bennett is the author of five books, including *The Enchantment of Modern Life* (Duke University Press, 2001), *Vibrant Matter* (Duke University Press, 2010) and *Influx/Efflux* (Duke University Press 2020). Bennett's articles have appeared in journals like *Political Theory*, *Theory & Event*, *Contemporary Political Theory*, *Polity* and *Theory, Culture & Society*.

challenges fantasies that humans are unique beings that can escape their materiality and master nature (Bennett 2010, ix).

What opened my understanding of Bennett's political ecology was a short description of a personal encounter with an assemblage of trash (Bennett 2010, 4). Bennett's encounter reminded me of the Danish author Hans Christin Andersen's fairy tales<sup>22</sup> where objects – like toys, teapots or needles – come to life at night and are animated with human qualities. Andersen's animations are perhaps more playful than Bennet's encounters, which are more theoretical. However, Bennett's things have things-power (Bennett 2010, 4) that provokes and affects humans and they (Bennett's things) are not subordinate to humans as perhaps Andersen's human-animated objects are (they act like humans).

Bennett's vibrant matter is an ethical call to awaken and expand our (human) sensitivity and attention towards the materialities that surround us, and if we are sensitively open we can see that this applies also to costume. For example, crafting costume requires sensitivity and care for textile materialialites and when we wear and explore costume we must be sensitive towards the costume's materialities since they will vibrate with our bodies in multiple ways. Bennett's call resonates in the sense that we (costume designers/researchers and all our collaborators) cannot and must not enclose costume in *one* specific performance concept or meaning. Costume potentially has multiple vibrating lives if we are sensible towards their inherent qualities. Bennett's ecological approach suggests that costume has circular qualities and/or appearances in the sense that each time we wear or encounter a specific costume (for example re-encountering a specific costume in different events and/or with different people) its materialities will potentially vibrate in new or different ways (than the day before or last year) that evoke different affects in our human materialities or bodies.

### **Donna Haraway – making kin:**

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<sup>22</sup> I grew up with this big red book with silky thin pages and with very few illustrations that contained all Hans Christian Andersen's (1805–1875) fairy tales. I remember many situations from my childhood of sitting on the sofa and where one of my parents read the fairy tales to my sister and me. As an older child I re-read several of the stories many times.

My first encounter with the American ecofeminist Donna Haraway<sup>23</sup> was the article *Situated knowledge: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective*<sup>24</sup> wherein she argues that research is not objective but situated. Haraway's situatedness highlights that a researcher (like all humans) has particular ways of seeing (perceiving) the world and there are thus always aspects that are out of the researcher's sight (perception). Even though the researcher's sight is partial, the researcher must expose their partial and yet particular sight which solicits being critical towards what is taken for granted within this particular sight. Haraway's notion of situatedness has strongly informed my research position.

In *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* Haraway introduces the land(s) or era(s) of the Chthulucene which is inhabited by interconnected critters like plants, pigeons, ants, spiders, fungi, humans, bacteria and jellyfish and where elements like soil and water are matters that matter. It is worldings that cares for more-than-human beings and where "kin making is making persons, not necessarily as individuals or as humans" (Haraway 2016, 103). Thus, in the Chthulucene human exceptionalism and individualism (Haraway 2016, 30) are no longer valid. With tales of Navajo weaving, cat's cradle (a game that I played as a child) and the crochet coral reef project, Haraway argues textile practices "are *thinking* as well as *making* practices, pedagogical practices and cosmological performances" (Haraway 2016, 14). Its heart warming that in the hands of Haraway women's handicraft is valued as communal arts practices (Haraway 2016, 78) and does not separate thinking and making. In the words of Haraway, language becomes

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<sup>23</sup> Donna Jeanne Haraway is professor emerita in the history of consciousness and feminist studies departments at the University of California, USA. Haraway is a prominent scholar in the field of science and technology studies and has contributed to the intersection of information technology and feminist theory and is a leading scholar in contemporary ecofeminism.

<sup>24</sup> With the text Haraway challenges traditional notions of objectivity and neutrality in scientific research. Haraway "insist on the embodied nature of all vision and so reclaims the sensory system that has been used to signify a leap out of the marked body and into a conquering gaze from nowhere" (Haraway 1988, 581). With the concept of situated knowledge (1988) Haraway provides a productive framework that argues that knowledge is contextual, embodied and influenced by power dynamics. In the text Haraway argues that "we need to learn in our bodies" (Haraway 1988, 582), which implies that in research situations we cannot escape our sensory systems and affectedness. Situated knowledge positions research as an embodied practice wherefrom "infinite vision is an illusion" (Haraway 1988, 58) and only "the partial perspective promises objective vision" (Haraway 1988, 583). Haraway continues that "situated knowledge are about communities, not about isolated individuals. The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (Haraway 1988, 590). This suggests that research is relational, involves embodied dialogues with others and that it is attending to the particularities of the relational practices. The translations of the particularities are critical, interpretive and always partial (Haraway 1988, 589).

speculative fabulations that playfully tangles academic tradition and science fiction and thus theory and practice intertwines.

Haraway opens worlds of playful fabulation that suggests that costume are companions that we can and must make kin with. Haraway's kinship makes me wonder whether we – while wearing and exploring costume – are more occupied with sensing ourselves, our own bodies, than trying to make kin with costume as material-companions. Haraway makes me speculate on ways of becoming familiar with the “persona” of the costume even though the costume persona or companion “only gains life” in the encounter with our human-bodies. To me, Haraway's kinship suggests that exploring costume is not an act of animating a “dead” material-body, but is an act of relating to a living companion. Kinship requires that we (humans) are willing to attend to and care for costumes as (un)familiar relatives or interrelated bodies. Haraway's kin making suggests that costume research is becoming familiar and becoming-together with costume as situated encounters where human-bodies and material-companions (costume) are equally important and valuable.

### **Sara Ahmed – orientation:**

The first time I read the British-Australian author and scholar Sara Ahmed's<sup>25</sup> text *Orientation Matters* I was touched – I felt recognised as practitioner and as woman. In the text and dialogue with Edmund Husserl's<sup>26</sup> writings on writing, Ahmed writes about writing and in her text tables are present. For example, the table that enables Ahmed to write and the dining table that as shared place allows the family to cohere as a group (Ahmed 2010, 248). While reading and lingering with the text, Ahmed's tables translated to textiles and writing to crafting: where ideas (concepts, hunches, moods, feelings or others) are written or crafted with textiles and it is through the writing or crafting that these ideas are explored and developed in and shared with others. Moreover, like the dining table, crafted (for example as costume) or yet not crafted textiles allow

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<sup>25</sup> Sara Ahmed's scholarship and authorship includes intersections of feminist theory, lesbian feminism, queer theory, affect theory, critical race theory and postcolonialism. As Ahmed writes on her website “until the end of 2016, I was a Professor of Race and Cultural Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London having been previously based in Women's Studies at Lancaster University. I resigned from my post at Goldsmiths in protest at the failure to deal with the problem of sexual harassment.” <https://www.sarahahmed.com/bio-cv>

<sup>26</sup> Edmund Gustav Albert Husserl (1859–1938) was an Austrian-German philosopher and mathematician who established the school of phenomenology.

people to gather and in the shared orientation towards the textiles the group can write or craft collective doings with the textiles.

As with Husserl, in *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* Ahmed recognises the phenomenologists – including Merleau-Ponty<sup>27</sup> – that her work builds on. In dialogue with the “old masters” she points towards aspects that they – in their time and positions – did not see or pay attention to. Ahmed notes that “the familiar takes shape by being unnoticed” (Ahmed 2006, 37) and thus falls into the background. Ahmed pays attention to backgrounds and argues that our backgrounds orientate us and that our beliefs and identities are constructed through societal norms that are embedded in us through our backgrounds. In the book Ahmed generously shares personal stories which situates her queering perspectives on phenomenology. In a time of political populism,<sup>28</sup> Ahmed’s reflections on otherness<sup>29</sup> and queerness are highly relevant and have orientated my thinking. In the research I have, for example, experienced that costume in specific situations can queer us and costume as queer objects can make us experience the world slantwise (Ahmed 2016, 107).

Still, it is Ahmed’s concept of orientation that has my main attention. As our orientation is informed by our backgrounds, we potentially do not arrive to costume explorative situations with similar orientations. When we explore costume, and if we do not attend to our orientations – for example what we expect, presume and assume – then what we take for granted falls into the background. Apart from attending to how our different orientations inform what we can and will do, I also use Ahmed’s concept of orientation to address and reflect on the act of hosting in explorative costume situations.

### **Karen Barad – entanglement:**

In the book *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* the American theorist and quantum physicist Karen Barad,<sup>30</sup> through their agential

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<sup>27</sup> Maurice Jean Jacques Merleau-Ponty (1908–1961) was a French phenomenological philosopher strongly influenced by Edmund Husserl and the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889–1967).

<sup>28</sup> In Denmark, political segregation between Copenhagen and western/northern areas of Jylland and a much more outspoken political hostility towards refugees than fifteen years ago – just to mention a few worrying issues.

<sup>29</sup> I address otherness in a slightly different manner than Ahmed in *Lydhørheder* – language(s) beyond the linguistic (link).

<sup>30</sup> Karen Barad is Distinguished Professor of History of Consciousness at the University of California at Santa Cruz, (USA) with affiliations to philosophy and critical race and ethnic studies. Barad has published numerous articles in the



realism, defines agency as relational-dependent and not as something that one has. In the book Barad applies their concept of entanglement (informed by Niels Bohr<sup>31</sup>) to philosophical and social realms and argues that everything in the universe is fundamentally interconnected, both at the quantum level and on larger scales. By suggesting that relationships are the basis for reality Barad challenges “the presumed inherent separability of subject and object, nature and culture, fact and value, human and nonhuman, organic and inorganic, epistemology and ontology, materiality and discursive” (Barad 2007, 381). In Barad’s agential realism we do not live as separate entities; rather, reality is entangled phenomena where we exist due to our entanglement with the world. This suggests that in costume phenomena we (humans) emerge through and with our entangled relationship with costume and it is only in entangled relationships with the costume that we – humans and costume or the explorative costume phenomena – exist.

The concept entanglement implies that – in research situations like exploring and studying costume – the boundaries between us (where us includes costume) are more fluid than fixed. As researcher, I must acknowledge that I am dependent on the human and more-than-human co-creators that I entangle with in the research situations. Due to the entangled nature of the costume phenomena, it is in the creative tension between us and how we negotiate our creative tensions (Barad 2006, 378) that I can approach our co-creative relationship. As such, creative tensions and negotiations are matters that matter. At the same time as I (the researcher) must recognise that even though I attend to our creative tensions and negotiations, I might not fully understand or grasp my co-creators’ creative perspectives. For example, our creative expectations towards what we will explore in the present are most likely informed and thus entangled with past experiences. And where is the costume in the equation of our entangled creative negotiations? Barad’s concept of entanglement helps me to approach the complexity of our tensions in costume phenomena. Moreover, Barad’s entanglement challenges me to attend to and reveal the ethical dilemmas that are embedded in research phenomena (for example in my research position).

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fields of physics, philosophy, science studies, materialisms and nuclear colonialisms. Barad is the recipient of an honorary doctorate from Gothenburg University, a Fulbright fellowship and the Kresge College Teaching Award, among other honours.

<sup>31</sup> Niels Henrik David Bohr (1885–1962) was a Danish physicist who made foundational contributions to understanding atomic structure and quantum theory, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1922.

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## Costume Contexts

In 2015 I attended *Critical Costume*<sup>32</sup> at Aalto University, Finland. At the conference scholars and practitioners presented various perspectives on costume. As a first-time conference attendee, I was struck by the openness of the organisers and of the fellow attendees to share and exchange. Even though I as costume designer and educator in costume had wonderful colleagues, at *Critical Costume* I met and entered a costume community that I did not have at home.

In the first volume of the journal *Studies in Costume and Performance* editors Donatella Barbieri<sup>33</sup> and Sofia Pantouvaki<sup>34</sup> write that costume is “emerging as a vibrant area of research, [that] is still in the early stages of development, particularly if compared to more established fields such as architecture or drama” (Barbieri and Pantouvaki 2016, 3). With the journal the editors’<sup>35</sup> “ambition is to ultimately alter the way costume is perceived, being often subsumed onto others’ work and dissolved into a range of other different scholarly priorities” (Barbieri and Pantouvaki 2016, 5). It can be argued that costume is still an emerging research area.<sup>36</sup> Either way, *Critical Costume* and *Studies in Costume and Performance*<sup>37</sup> offer important platforms where costume scholars and practitioners can share and exchange their research and the platforms have manifested an awareness of and attention to the ever-growing international costume community of costume researchers.

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<sup>32</sup> *Critical Costume* is a biennial conference and exhibition. The first *Critical Costume* was held in 2013 at The Arts Centre at Edge Hill University, United Kingdom, and the founding conveners were Sidsel Bech, Rachel Hann and Sofia Pantouvaki. *Critical Costume* has also hosted costume events at international forums and is currently a partner of the Prague Quadrennial in its Knowledge Exchange Platform.

<sup>33</sup> Scenographer Donatella Barbieri (PhD) is principal lecturer in design for performance at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London (UK). Barbieri has, among many other things, published the award-winning book *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body* and is editor of *Studies in Costume and Performance*.

<sup>34</sup> Scenographer and costume designer Sofia Pantouvaki (PhD) is professor of costume design at Aalto University, Finland. Pantouvaki’s accomplishments include over 80 designs for theatre, film, opera and dance productions in European venues. Pantouvaki lead the research project *Costume Methodologies*, is the chair of *Critical Costume* and editor of *Studies in Costume and Performance*, among other things.

<sup>35</sup> Apart from Barbieri and Pantouvaki, the editorial team included curator, theatre scholar and educator Kate Dorney.

<sup>36</sup> To my knowledge I am the first artistic researcher at Lund University SE – that was founded in 1666 – to do artistic research on costume and I am the first costume designer in Denmark that does artistic research in costume at a third-cycle university level.

<sup>37</sup> Not to forget that other international organisation like OISTAD and curated projects like *Extreme Costume* (PQ11) and *Tribes* (PQ15) at the Prague Quadrennial (and others) have offered import international platforms for costume scholarship, research and practice.

My research is a tribute to the costume communities – local and international – that I am grateful to be part of. In what follows I will situate the research in the costume and design landscapes that are known to me and that my research builds on. At the same time, I acknowledge that there is rich costume and design landscapes beyond what I mention and what is known to me.

### Costume thinking

At *Critical Costume 2020* Sofia Pantouvaki introduced the term *costume thinking*. Pantouvaki argues that

*costume thinking* is not about costume or design, as much as about *critical thinking through costume* – a means to articulate how costumes becomes a tool for analysis, negotiation, communication, experimentation, expression of ideas and behaviours. Beyond the designing for the body, costume thinking addresses the philosophical dimensions of human existence and the ways in which costume creates space for critical thinking. (Pantouvaki 2020, *Critical Costume*)

Pantouvaki's costume thinking highlights that costume is a critical practice and “a way of *think[ing] through* as well as to *act* or *do*, and even to *be* as a researcher” (Barbieri & Pantouvaki 2020, 5).

My artistic research project is deeply planted in the soil of practice<sup>38</sup> – in the act and art of doing. Thus, the critical costume thinking that this artistic research evokes emerged from practice and I, as researcher, speak with the voice of the artist practitioner that I am. Thus, as artistic researcher I think with practice and my thinking emerges with practice.

Embedded in the critical costume practice is that costume is not “seen anymore as being ‘in service of’ performance in a subordinate role, but rather as a central contributor to an often-renewed sense of collective practice, proposing new directions in turn, to the making of performance itself” (Pantouvaki & McNeil 2021, 1). As such, the costumes that are at the centre of

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<sup>38</sup> I was educated in fashion at Design School Kolding, Denmark in the 1990s. Over the years I had the privileged to move *between* costume, textile and fashion practices, *between* design, craft and art arenas and to have worked *between* practices of conceptualising, sketching, crafting, fitting, wearing, performing and more. I have designed costumes for more than 65 performances, mainly situated within contemporary dance, and over the years I have collaborated with numerous dance companies and independent choreographers. As costume designer I have often been hired to design *as well as* to produce costumes. For me, this double role has blurred the borders between the creative design process and the more concrete production phase. Hence, I do not always know where designing ends and making starts – sketching and making complement one another and are a part of my conceptual thinking process.

this research are beyond character and dramatic text *and* are not created to support specific choreographical score(s). In three artistic projects specific costume are the starting point for co-creatively investigating what costume enables us to do. Therefore the critical thinking in the artistic projects is not exclusively solitary but include co-creative thinking-with our doings.

### **New materialism and costume**

In *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body* Barbieri writes that “costume required a high level of material investment” (Barbieri 2017, 32). In the book Barbieri’s historical examples shows that textile material/costume have been creative resources for performance artistes long before the concept of new materialism<sup>39</sup> was coined. An example is Loie Fuller’s *Serpentine Dance* (1890). In Fuller’s encounter with the “generous fluidity of the fabric” (Barbieri 2017, 126), “the performer and the material became equal creative partners” (Østergaard 2022, 44). In context of Martha Graham’s *Lamentation* (1930), Barbieri suggest that “it is possible to assume that the choreography would have been developed through the use of costume from the very beginning” (Barbieri 2017, 128).

Fuller and Graham were dance pioneers who was aware of textile materials and costume potentials as creative partners and I sympathise with their material/costume attitudes. Even though Fuller and Graham used textile as more-than-human co-creators in their performance-making processes, in their time – in the industrial revolution – there was perhaps less focus on balance(s) between human and more-than-human matter as there is today in a world facing such a profound climate crisis.

In *The scenographic, costumed chorus, agency and the performance of matter: A new materialist approach to costume* Donatella Barbieri and Greer Crawly<sup>40</sup> argue that in costume new materialism become “ethical negotiations in which [there] is a re-balancing of human and non-human matter” (Barbieri & Crawley 2019, 144). This re-balancing is “questioning hierarchical and territorial dualism not only in terms of mind/body, nature/culture or subject/object but also in

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<sup>39</sup> The terms 'new materialisms' and 'neo-materialisms' were independently coined by Manuel DeLanda and Rosi Braidotti during the second half of the 1990s. The new materialistic approach I employ in this research is informed by Jane Bennett, Karen Barad and Donna Haraway.

<sup>40</sup> Greer Crawly (PhD) is lecturer in scenography and honorary research fellow at the department of drama, theatre and dance at the Royal Holloway University of London (UK) and senior lecturer in spatial design at Buckinghamshire University (UK).

terms of male/female, local/global and present/past [... and] the power asymmetries intrinsic to these binaries” (Barbieri & Crawley 2019, 146). This suggests that we need to revise our design and performance-making production structures. With new materialism as creative partner, we – researchers and designers – must re-evaluate how we collaborate. As my research aims at studying relational and co-creational aspects of costume I do not intend to reproduce structures where someone envisions a performance or an event that the collaborating team materialises by, for instance, visualising, embodying and/or producing specific parts of a production/performance/event. Thus, in the research (1) I do not expect that my co-creators will or must embody a predefined vision of mine, (2) I do not intend to act as an outside observer who watches, witnesses, analyses and/or directs the situations and (3) I have no intention of positioning myself hierarchically above people and materials.

### **Connecting Costume(s) as prototyping**

At the centre of this research is costume that connects people – what I call connecting costume. The concept of connecting costume emerged during the KUV<sup>41</sup> project *Textile Techniques as Potential for Developing Costume Design* (2016/2017) as a reflection on the power that I have in performance contexts: with my designs I decide what performers will wear in a performance. Inspired by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche’s concept of “will to power”,<sup>42</sup> I crafted several connecting costumes that connect two or four wearers. While crafting, I imagined that the experience of being connected would create sensations of being limited and/or restricted. As it turned out, while testing these connecting costumes with acting and dance students the costumes evoked quite a cheerful atmosphere and playful energy between them.

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<sup>41</sup> KUV or *kunstnerisk udviklings virksomhed* translates to “artistic research”. At the Danish National School of Performing Arts (DNSPA), I had the privileged to complete two KUV projects on costume: (as mentioned) *Textile Techniques as Potential for Developing Costume Design* (2016/2017) funded by the institution and *In Dialogue with Material – on Physicality in a Design Process* (2018) funded by the Danish Cultural Ministry. Both projects studied aspects of design processes and in both projects colleagues and students with other discipline backgrounds and/or perspectives were invited to participate and to actively shape our shared processes and they thus inform the research. In a second project (2018), for example, I held a three-day workshop where we – a group of students and colleagues – explored bodily effects of ready-made costumes and textile materialities. In both KUV projects the general response from all participants was that our different perspectives and positions were valuable and challenged and/or expanded their biased assumptions.

<sup>42</sup> Nietzsche used this concept to describe what he likely viewed as the primary driving force in humans: the will to power. However, he never systematically defined the idea in his writings, leaving its interpretation open to ongoing debate. Thus, I drew inspiration from Nietzsche’s concept.

I claim the concept of connecting costume, however I am not the only artist that explores and/or uses costume or wearable objects that connects performers to each other. Therefore, I like to acknowledge a few artists/designers who with their artistic works related to the connecting costume concept perhaps more as distant relatives than as the close family that have informed the connecting costume concept directly.

For the performance *Gravity Fatigue* (2015),<sup>43</sup> fashion designer Hussein Chalayan's (TR/UK) garments included costumes – made in stretchable textiles – that connected two dancers as duos. Artist Marlin Bülow's (SE/NO) site-specific performances<sup>44</sup> – for example *Firkanta Elastisitet* (2017) and *Elastic Bonding* (2019) – are movable installations where dancing bodies in elastic textile costuming are connected to the (performance) site. In the *Costume Agency* (2021) workshop #5 called “in relations”, costume designer Zofia Jakubiec (PL/NO), with the project *Untitled*, created a dance performance in-process with a costume that connected three dancers. In Chalayan and Jakubiec's performances the connecting costumes are tools to generate choreographies and in Bülow the site-connected performers become movable sculptures. In the works of Chalayan, Bülow and Jakubiec the costumes are made for specific performances or events.

Even though the connecting costumes in this research are crafted to specific artistic projects, they also travel between events. As such, the connecting costumes do not merely belong to one specific performance context. Moreover, the connecting costumes are not crafted to fit specific bodies and thus anyone – regardless of age or gender, for example – can wear the wearable parts on top of whatever they are wearing. As my research intention is to explore what the connection costumes evoke in the wearers, I suggest that the costumes act more as prototypes than as finished products. In *Probes, toolkits and prototypes: three approaches to making codesigning* Sanders and Stappers write that prototyping “confront[s] the world, because the theory is not hidden in abstraction” (Sanders & Stappers 2014, p. 6), as they are designed to “provoke or elicit response” (Sanders & Stappers 2014, 9). I suggest that in employing prototyping within artistic research the connecting costume(s) becomes an invitation to respond and medium to evoke dialogue. Moreover, prototyping highlights that we – humans and more-than-humans – are in “a

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<sup>43</sup> The performance premiered at Sadler's Wells in London and was created in partnership with choreographer Damien Jalet.

<sup>44</sup> As written on Bülow's website: “the work resides in the intersection of textile, performance, installation, and sculpture to create tension between the venue's architecture and setting and traditional representations of bodies in classical sculpture”.

state of constant becoming” (Arrigoni et al. 2014, 14) and thus prototyping are openings for exploring different interpretations of what the connecting costume(s) do and how they affect us sensorially and relationally.

### **Costume collaboration**

International scholars Madeline Taylor<sup>45</sup> and Suzanne Osmond<sup>46</sup> have made important research costume collaborations between costume technicians, designers and performers. Their research explores, in different ways, hierarchies within contemporary production, at the same time as their research beautifully attends to and thus values the labour undertaken behind the scenes in wardrobes by costume technicians.

Madeline Taylor’s research explores interpersonal dynamics, collaborative mechanisms and emotional intelligence in contemporary costume productions. Taylor writes that realisation processes “requires not only understanding the material costume and how it is created, but also the emotional intelligence to navigate the collaborative process” (Taylor 2021, 274). Taylor here highlights that costume technicians’ skilfulness includes much more than their crafting abilities. For example, in the process of making costume the technicians’ emotional intelligence enables them to navigate the costumes’ designer’s aesthetic vision or “aesthetic orchestration”<sup>47</sup> (Pantouvaki 2010, 73).

Suzanne Osmond’s research explores collaborative decision-making and creative problem-solving in fitting situations. Osmond introduces the term “embodied conversations” that “refer to the

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<sup>45</sup> Madeline Taylor (PhD) is both a maker and a researcher of costume. Her research explores contemporary costume practice, design collaboration and social engagement using clothing. Taylor has been awarded a prestigious Marie Curie-Sklodowska Postdoctoral Fellowship to travel to Aalto University in Helsinki, Finland. Under the mentorship of Professor Sofia Pantouvaki, she will join the *Costume in Focus* research centre and complete a project investigating how costume practitioners are embedding Industry 4.0 technologies such as 3D printing and digital patternmaking into their work.

<sup>46</sup> Suzanne Osmond (PhD) is senior lecturer at the National Institute of Dramatic Art (Australia). Osmond is editor of the international peer reviewed journal *Studies in Costume and Performance*. In 2017 Osmond was a post-doctoral research fellow within the funded *Costume Methodologies* research project at Aalto University (Finland).

<sup>47</sup> Sofia Pantouvaki writes that “one of the most important periods in the realization of a theatrical scenography is during the last phase of rehearsals and fittings. Then the design ceases to be an idea expressed in a two-dimensional drawing and becomes a reality, taking on its final three-dimensional form. At the fittings in the sewing-room as well as at the rehearsals on stage, all the members of the artistic team, including the performers, are made privy to the image the designer has in mind. [...] It is the most opportune moment for smoothing out possible difficulties and for a more general revision of the original idea in the light of reality, any necessary alterations being made, if possible, on the spot” (Pantouvaki 2010, 72). Pantouvaki argues that “the realisation of a visual environment for the theatre can be seen as an ‘aesthetic orchestration’” (Pantouvaki 2010, 72–73).



specific phenomenon of collaborative interactions that occur on and around the body of the performer in the costume design process” (Osmond 2021, 277). Osmond uses the term to highlight that non-verbal gestures and facial expressions are equally important in communication between collaborators. Thus, in costume collaborations like fitting situations, collaborators must be aware and attend to the embodied conversations – their own and their fellows’.

Taylor and Osmond’s research is conducted at larger theatre institutions with inhouse wardrobes, whereas my research is not situated within institutional settings or structures. Osmond and Taylor’s research highlights that we in costume collaborations must attend to interpersonal dynamics and embodied conversations and/or languages. In context of my research, this suggests that I – as the researcher that hosts costume encounters – must pay attention to the dynamic and the dialogues that the situations and the costume encounters evoke. As host I must also attend to how I invite people into specific costume encounters and how my hospitality enables collaborators or co-creators to respond to the costume encounters in multiple ways.

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## **Artistic Research Method**

### Positioning this artistic research

#### **Performative post-qualitative inquiry**

My artistic PhD research is inspired by post-qualitative research. In *A performative paradigm for post-qualitative inquiry* Østern et al. suggest “that settling artistic research within a performative research paradigm would ease and facilitate the struggle, releasing the performative potential of artistic modes of enquiring”<sup>48</sup> (Østern et al. 2021, 276). They continue that “with a performative research paradigm, the research focus shifts from what a research phenomenon ‘is’ to what it ‘does’ [...] from being to becoming” (Østern et al. 2021, 6). In the context of costume, artistic research is to study the phenomenon of costume through the friction of explorative doing – not by enclosing costume in what it is – by studying what the costume phenomenon enables the artistic researcher to do and explore the different becomings or matterings that emerge in the doing. In *What is (post)qualitative research?* Lesley Le Grange proposes that “(post)qualitative research [that is] informed by an immanent ethics opens up pathways for all those involved in research to increase their power of acting, to express their generosity, and love the world (all of life) – it is an invitation to dance (just do)” (Le Grange 2018, 9). This suggests that artistic research is generously opening the doing – the costume explorations – to those who are involved as participants or co-creators. In the shared or communal doings and in becoming-with co-creators the artistic researcher can study specific costume phenomena.

Østerne et al. continue that the performative paradigm

moves from trying to stabilise knowledge towards emphasising knowledge as fluid and complex knowledge-creation; from language to languaging, from meaning to meaning-making, from text to body, affects and materialities; from subject, identity and being to relations, entanglement and becomings; from something pre-existing to something being enacted. (Østern et al. 2021, 283)

This implies that the artistic researcher – in the inquiry of specific costume phenomenon – must navigate the different artistic and embodied expressions of the participating co-creators.

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<sup>48</sup> Østern et al. write that they experience “doctoral processes as being friction-led in a productive way” (Østern et al. 2021, 276).

Moreover, it is through the shared or communal doings with the participating co-creators that the researcher must navigate the different embodied perspectives of the costume expressions. As such, it is through the entangled relationships that the research situations foster that temporal explorative costume communities in-becoming are crafted. In the entangled costume communities language(s) are co-created that did not pre-exist but that emerge in the entangled process of becoming together.

### **Ethical consideration in artistic research**

In *Perspectives on Ethics in Performance Practice* Camilla Eeg-Tverbakk<sup>49</sup> writes that

a central aspect of artistic research ethics concerns orientation and transparency related to aesthetic choices and preferences. When art practice turns into artistic research, there is a need for the artist to consciously situate herself in regard to her practice and her materials. [...] Ethics is a question of relations and power of definition, of our understanding of self and others; thus it pertains to the encounters we have with and in the world, and questions of how we act – and react – in specific situations. (Eeg-Tverbakk 2021, 1)

Eeg-Tverbakk suggests that when art practices become artistic research the artist researcher must critically reflect on the ethical implication of their aesthetic choices. For example, the researcher must be critical towards the cultures and values that are embedded in their practice and detect whether their aesthetic choices promote certain hierarchies between collaborating people and/or between people and materials. As such, ethics is the demand of the artistic research to reveal the dilemmas that emerge during the research.

Eeg-Tverbakk introduces the concept of ethics of the unknown, that suggests that the artistic researcher must embrace that there are always aspects of the research that are unknown to them, and which resonates with Haraway's notion of situatedness (link) that advocates that the researcher's sight and perspective is partial.

Informed by Haraway and Eeg-Tverbakk, this research is conducted from my partial perspective of my practice. In the research I will enter the dilemmas of artistic research practice and "stay with

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<sup>49</sup> Dramaturge Camilla Eeg-Tverbakk (PhD) is a professor at Oslo Met in Norway. Eeg-Tverbakk is practicing dramaturgy within the scope of interdisciplinary performing arts. Her research concerns new dramaturgies, staging of documentary material, applied theatre and ethics and artistic research.

the trouble” (Haraway 2016, 31) by navigating and negotiating the temporal communities that I form with people and textile materials/costume in the three artistic projects.

## Crafting as a research method

### **Crafting repetitions – crafting entanglements of theory and practice**

This artistic research stems from my artistic practice and as I unfold in the artistic projects, in the slow process of crafting textile materials become more-than-human co-creators.

Even though the last artistic projects in this research were conducted in 2021 I continued to craft new versions of connecting costumes which I explored in different settings with different people/audiences. I crafted as pauses or getaways from the theoretical readings. However, the crafting provoked me to linger with the theoretical readings that I was doing. Craftings became intuitive-intellectual exercises of listening-with theories through the craftings<sup>50</sup> — or perhaps it was vice versa. Either way, craftings became ways of approaching theoretical concepts and thus the continual craftings became critical for the development or movement of the research.

In *Living a Feminist Life* Sara Ahmed writes that

a movement comes into existence to transform what is in existence. A movement needs to take place somewhere. A movement is not just or only a movement; there is something that needs to be kept still, given a place, if we are moved to transform what is. (Ahmed 2017, 3)

Ahmed points at feminist movements that ripple like waves that transforms us. At the same time, Ahmed argues that to explore what moves and transforms us we need to keep still. We need to be attentive to the matter that moves us, and potentially what moves and transforms our practices. In this research I do not explore feministic movements per se. However, I argue that during the research craftings act like Ahmed’s “place”. Craftings’ places or situations enable me to explore which theoretical concepts resonated as co-creating partners that moved, evoked and provoked my thinking and my language.

Thus, through craftings I have, for example, explored that kin-making (Haraway) are acts of listening with textile materialities. I realised that craftings orientate (Ahmed) me towards textiles

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<sup>50</sup> I write craftings in plural to suggest that it contains both the process and the product (costume) and where the product includes the event (an explorative situation).

and techniques *and* towards people, places and perspectives. I have explored that crafting entanglements (Barad) include much more than textiles and me. Craftings (re)awoke and (re)attuned my sensitivity of the vibrant matter(s) (Bennett) in the artistic projects.

In this research crafting(s) practice has expanded to become a method with a double<sup>51</sup> transformative effect: the literal where specific textile materials are transformed into a product, in the projected where we co-created and co-crafted with the connecting costumes; and the metaphorical where craftings became methods to develop my thinking and language. As such, craftings became embodied acts of thinking-with the research material and that opened new perspectives and new (in)sights into the research material.

Thus, in the research I have continued to craft and re-craft and have invited others to craft with me. The act of crafting(s) became an artistic method to listen-with and think-with the craftings that fostered the view that the specific theoretical concepts – the four core concepts – offered vocabularies and conceptual lenses with which to re-explore and re-discover the four focal themes – crafting, listening, hosting and co-creating. As such, through and with craftings I found connections or entanglements between theories and practice(s).

## The artist researcher's embodied mind-fullness

### **The researcher's position and embodied archive**

In the artistic projects I positioned myself as the host that participated and co-create alongside fellow co-creators. In *The Body as the Matter of Costume: A Phenomenological Practice* Donatella Barbieri proposes “the designer's own ‘mind-full’ body as critical to a costume-practice-led methodology”<sup>52</sup> (Barbieri 2021, 320). For example, to explore the effects of costume with ones own body is “learning by doing, undoing and redoing” (Barbieri 2007, 6). As mind-full or phenomenal bodies, our criticality relies on our intuitive, imaginative, sensitive, reflective, responsive, thinking, listening, sensing, tasting, touching and digesting abilities and our willingness

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<sup>51</sup> There is a third aspect of crafting that occurs with the human co-creators: in the shared or communal doings we crafted matterings, potentials and more between us. Perhaps and most likely there are other transformative aspects of crafting that I have not noticed.

<sup>52</sup> Barbieri employs LEM as a movement-based approach to costume. LEM is the physical theatre teacher Jacques Lacoq's creative approaches of Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement. Barbieri writes that “in LEM the creative work takes place between the rehearsal room and the workshop, in a continual dialogue between space and the plasticity of the participant's own creatively engaged body, extended and fragmented through the interaction with elements of design, which are created in response and in anticipation of movement” (Barbieri 2013, 149).

to discover that we are mind-full in different ways. As such, as participating host my mind-full body has been a critical tool with which to learn and re-learn through and with our shared material-discursive doings. Moreover, during the research I realised that part of being a mind-full body was that many research situations were stored as vivid embodied memories.

In *Body Archive* Susanne Franco and Gaia Clotilde Chernetich write that

the metaphor of the “body as archive” or the “body archive” refers to the idea that the body can be understood as a “storage place” of corporeal documents and therefore of incorporated knowledge. Through this lens, the body retains sensory, emotional and cognitive experiences that are accessed as movements, gestures, patterns and rhythms. (<https://www.dancingmuseums.com/artefacts/body-archive/>)

Body archiving is mainly addressed with dance practices and/or research. Laura Griffiths writes that the dancing body is a site “where knowledge that can be considered as ‘archival’ is stored as a result of dance-making processes and experience” (Grifits 2024, 4). I do not suggest that my research has produced dance-making process like those that Griffiths studies and unfolds in her PhD thesis. However, being mind-full and bodily engaged in the three artistic projects I argue that I can draw and rely on the memories that are archived in my body. Not in the sense of that I can repeat or recall specific movement scores or patterns, however I clearly recall situations and dialogues that I had with specific co-creators. Thus, several situations are archived as embodied memories of specific encounters<sup>53</sup>.

As such I suggest that a part of the artistic research practice or method includes relying on embodied or archived memories. In the interview situations – with the co-creators – our different embodied memories were an active recourse between us. As such, through and with the embodied memories I could (re)discover and (re)learn how the participating co-creators remembered and perceived our costume explorations in similar and different manners to mine.

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53 A few examples: I clearly remember the surprising sensation I had of dancing alongside the four dancers (*AweAre – a movement quintet*) while I was stabilising the rip in the *AweAre* costume. A weirdly funny sensation of tagging along to movement, rhythms and tempos – that were not mine – while trying to remain still and repair the rip in the costume. I recollect a dialogue that I had with a participant (*Community Walk*) – a sensitive dialogue on queerness – and how I bodily tried to shield my fellow from the eyes that were staring at us. I can physically sense the experience of taking off the costume (*Community Walk*) after walking for twelve hours: a sensation on the right side of my body that many voices kept talking and that I had to lay on the right side to silence them. I still sense the subtle vibrations of strings during an explorative session in darkness (*Conversation Costume*) which I experienced as a non-verbal or embodied dialogue with my co-creators.



As such I agree when Østern et al. suggest that “the researcher position is one of material-discursive entanglement, and the affected researcher body is a necessity and resource for understanding. The researcher body becomes a friend instead of an obstacle” (Østern et al. 2021, 281).

## The progression of the research

### **The progression of the three artistic projects**

The three artistic projects that I have conducted in the research have informed each another. The first artistic project derived from experiences I, as hired costume designer, had in the performance productions within contemporary dance. In these productions there was rarely time allocated to explore the costumes, for example as a movement generating source. In the often rather short encounters I had with the dancers during the productions I experienced their sensitivity towards textiles/costumes and I dreamt of having time to listen to and learn from their embodied experiences of specific costume.

Therefore, in the first project – *AweAre – a movement quintet* – my ambition was to listen to and learn from and with the four dancers’ who were connected through and with the *AweAre* costume. In the project I drew on experiences from artistic projects/collaborations<sup>54</sup> where the costume material and/or the collaborating people were offered an extended or leading role. Thus, in *AweAre – a movement quintet* I placed the *AweAre* costume and the four dancers’ experiences at the centre of the inquiry. The aim was to explore what relationship(s) emerged between the dancers and the costume. In the process I acted as the host that hosted sharing sessions where I listened to and learned from the dancers’ individual and collective experiences of their relations to and with the costume. Thus, the listening was the method and/or the force that drove our co-creative process forward. Additionally, we co-created a short performance that to us represented

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<sup>54</sup> I drew on experience from, for example, two artist research projects on costume (2016/17 and 2018/19) undertaken at the Danish National School of Performing arts where I invited colleagues and students to explore costumes together – and to share our experiences. I also drew on experiences from artistic collaborative projects like the explorative MASK project (2016/17) that was co-created with costume designer Jeppe Worning, where we created costume expressions on each other’s bodies and also invited dancers and a photographer to contribute. The performance project *Traces of Tissues* (2018/19) co-created with dancer/choreographer Sally E. Dean also informed the *AweAre* project. For example, before we started the co-creative performance-making process with the seven performers we (Sally and I) explored the costumes ourselves to 1) explore the potentials of what the costume enabled us to do and 2) to gain an understanding of how the performers would potentially be affected by the costume.

our co-creative process. With the first artistic project I realised that it was rewarding to listen, and it was enlightening to explore how the costume affected the dancers.

I wanted to pursue this inquiry of how connecting costume creates affects and relationships between people. However, in the second project – *Community Walk* – I wanted to pursue the inquiry from a different perspective. My aim was to ‘reverse’ the roles and explore how a connecting costume affected me. Thus, I placed myself at the centre of a twelve-hour costume exploration and invited twelve co-creators to partake for one hour each. With each of the twelve co-creators, we – as a connected pair – walked, talked and explored the costume in the urban landscape of central Copenhagen. My aim was to explore how the twelve guesting co-creators orientated our explorations, how we co-creatively negotiated through the costume in the urban environment. The intention – that was also the challenge I gave myself – was to explore whether it was possible to enter this new unpredictable landscape and at the same time act as an inviting, listening and responsible host.

As I was preparing the last project – *Conversation Costume* – I intuitively knew that I needed to challenge the perception I had of connecting costume in the two first projects. For example that the wearable part of the costumes had specific bodily placements and distributed rather fixed positions in the costume. As it turned out, I crafted nine knotted pieces that became a part of what I called the costume assembly. As we started the *Conversation Costume* explorations, I was unsure whether these knotted pieces could be called connecting costumes and/or whether they would be perceived as costume or were rather some kind of textile objects. During the two weeks of the *Conversation Costume* explorative process we co-crafted multiple compositions with the costume assembly and as such the assembly had open-ended connecting costume potentials.

### **The overall dramaturgy of the three artistic projects**

#### **Phase one – preparing**

In the opening phase I prepared and framed the specific artistic project. I crafted the costume and I invited (and informed them of the framing) participants (performers, designers and other artist) to join the project as co-creators.

#### **Phase two – exploring**

The second phase was the actual artistic project: the shared exploration of the costume with the co-creators. During our explorations with the costume we had conversational dialogues where we shared and listened to how we were affected by our entangled explorations. In the dialogues we discussed how to progress and thus co-authored the explorations in the projects.

As a closure of each of the three artistic projects I asked the co-creators for advice and/or for creative suggestions. For example how to develop the explorations, the framing, the listening and/or new versions of connecting costume. These reflections<sup>55</sup> were valuable in the development of the next artistic project and the co-creators' reflections have lingered in my mind-full body and have pushed my thinking forwards.

### **Phrase thee – interviewing**

In the third phase I conducted semi-structured interviews with the co-creators. I asked about their embodied memories of the costume, the relational aspects of our explorations and I asked them to critically reflect on our shared doings, the framings and my hostings.

During and after transcribing the interviews I searched for overall and/or sub-themes, for similarities and/or differences between the co-creators' statements/reflections and noted down my first thoughts and reflections. After a while I returned to the interview material – I re-listened to the interviews and re-read the transcriptions – and I often discovered additional aspects that led to me re-interviewing several of the participants.

During this phase I also edited and re-edited the video documentation of the artistic projects and edited some to the interviews to use them as sound in the videos. Even though the participants

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<sup>55</sup> *AweAre – a movement quintet*: The four co-creating dancers elaborated on the materiality of the costume and wondered what would happen if parts of the costume were not crafted in stretchable textiles. They also speculated on what would happen if audiences were invited to wear and explore the costume with them. For me, the last reflections showed that the dancers had a wish to share the embodied experience of wearing the connecting costume with others (the audience) – the experience of being connected with and affected by other bodies. Moreover, the dancers encouraged me to continue developing the “listening/hosting” method.

*Community Walk*: In this project I did not have the twelve co-creating participants together (as a group). Instead, I asked everyone to send me a short audio recording with an immediate response and/or reflection on the experience. Several participants reflected on being a part of durational work and pointed to me as the connecting body. In the interviews several participants commented on the exposure and the playfulness of the costume and reflected on how I hosted the situation. This and more will be further unfolded in the project.

*Conversation Costume*: The participants reflected on the size and dimension of the knotted pieces. They wondered what would happen if the knotted pieces were much bigger than our human-bodies. For example, would bigger knotted pieces have evoked another kind of listening and/or have provoked, questioned and/or reversed the power relation between our human-bodies and knotted pieces? As such, the co-creators reflected whether the textiles potentially take control of our human-bodies.

had consented that I could use the documentation material, I like to mention that I contacted the participants to again ask for their approval to do so.

#### **Phase four – extracting**

In this phase and as part of further developing the research I wrote articles and presented the research at international conferences and at local seminars.

At some of the conferences I also explored how I could present my research in performative ways, for example by testing different ways of including the connecting costume in a presentation. For instance, my contribution to the *PARSE* conference in Sweden (2022) was a workshop with the costumes and in the keynote at the *NOFOD conference* (2022) I included a short explorative intervention/session where I invited the audience to explore different version of connecting costume. These and other manifestations allowed me to re-explore the connecting costume in other contexts, which has been a rewarding understanding, re-discovering and re-questioning of the connecting costume concept.

In the articles “*Kostume-drevne performances – kostumers generative og performative potentialer*” (2022) and “*Listening through and with Costume*” (2023) I explored aspects of the artistic project *AweAre- a movement quintet*. In the articles “*Performing Ethical dilemmas of stretching towards Others in fitting situations*” (2022) and “*Creative work in Public*” (2024) I explored different aspects of *Community Walk*. As such, writing these articles have pushed my thinking forward.

As mentioned in crafting repetitions, a part of my research method has been continually (meditative) crafting, resulting in manifestations that emerged as reflections on the artistic projects. For instance, during a two-week residency at the Inter Arts Center in Sweden (November 2021) I invited different people to craft and explore costume/material with me, which allowed me to re-test and develop my thinking on and around the artistic project *Conversation Costume*, as well as the co-crafting event *Knotting Connection* (link) (2023), which I hosted at the performance festival *Working the fields at Gylleboverket, Sweden*, which also expanded my thinking on connections between co-creating and (co-)crafting.

Even though the abovementioned manifestations are not directly and formally artistic data that I use, address and unfold in this research. However, the manifestations – like conference presentations, articles, craftings and the explorative events – have been crucial for the

development of this research. To offer an overview I have created a research timeline that, apart from the three artistic projects and the intermediate seminars, also contains the different manifestations that were critical for the development of this research.

### **The progression of the intermediate seminars**

A part of the doctoral study at Lund University is three intermediate seminars. Each seminar – that is open for colleagues and others – aims to ensure a progression of the artistic research and to do so an external opponent is invited to evaluate and discuss the research with the doctoral student. The intermediate seminars follow the guidelines of Malmö Theatre Academy, Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Lund University. As written on the website:

Review of ongoing PhD projects is a key component of the third-cycle education, both for the doctoral students and as quality assurance of the department, University and discipline. [...] At these seminars, the doctoral student can present different types of material, and artistic performance can be part of the presentation. [...] The seminars are designed on the basis of the nature of the specific project and are intended to support the doctoral students in their continued work.

Below, the guidelines for the three seminars are addressed in note form and I will shortly unfold what I produced for the specific seminars. For all the seminars I handed in written material that responded to the guidelines and that represented where I was in the research process. As the written material for the intermediate seminars is not required to be publicly accessible, I have only shared the material with the opponent, my supervisors and a few local colleagues. The writings for the three intermediate seminars are part of my research data and the material can be accessed upon request. Below I mention some of the theoretical references that I used in the texts for the first and second intermediate seminars, and here ([link](#)) is a full list of references.

23.02.2021: **25% seminar, online** (Zoom attendance).

Opponent Dr. Karen Arnfred Vedel, Copenhagen University, Denmark.

Guidelines for the seminar: Preliminary plan for the entire project, research design and feasibility in relation of artistic practice, theoretical and artistic contextualisation.

Writing: As I started the research co-creation was the central theme. To approach co-creation I dived into how design has developed since I was educated in the 1990s. For example, how

methods like design thinking and co-design have become business strategies and concepts that appear in various academic fields. I also explored what co-creative processes might be or imply in the context of my research. To do so I used examples from research on co-design within the fields of design (e.g., Elizabeth Sanders 2014, Sanders & Stappers 2014) and craft (Groth et al. 2020), I reflected on collaborative atmospheres (e.g., Marilyn Stember 1991, Gernot Böhme 2017, Rikke Lund Heinsen 2020) and I addressed ethical dilemmas (Eva Skærbæk 2001, 2009, 2011) of co-creating. I sketched a research design that combined ideas for artistic salons (e.g., Dena Goodman 1989, Étienne Wenger 1998, Clair Bishop 2012, Sara Ahmed 2017) and artistic manifestos (e.g., Martin Puncher 2019, Lidewij Edelkoort 2015, Bruce Mau 1998, Rachel Hann 2019, Sara Ahmed 2017). I unfolded this salon/manifesto research design that included material, bodies and crafting (with reference to, e.g., Donna Haraway 2016, Jane Bennett 2010, Keld Fredens 2018). Even though I did not address it directly in the 25% text, the four focal themes – crafting, listening, hosting and co-creating – were emerging. Apart from this text I also wrote a text that is a first draft on the artistic project *AweAre – a movement quintet* – which is more descriptive than reflective. The artistic part of the seminar: In the month leading up to the seminar I crafted several new connecting costume versions that I intended to present as an example of how I explored costume in the artistic project. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic the seminar became digital, and thus the physical or interventional part of my presentation became impossible. Still, it was crucial to me to present how I collaborated/co-created with others. I therefore made a video that contained, among other things, an extract of a material-sampling session that I made (especially for the video for the seminar) with three participants. Access to the video presentation is upon request.

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16.05.2022: **50% seminar, online** (Zoom attendance) and some local colleagues were present **in-person**.

Opponent Dr. Suzanne Osmond, the National Institute of Dramatic Art, Australia. Osmond attended online.

Guidelines for the seminar: The development of the project in relation to artistic, methodological, theoretical and ethical choices.

Writing: At the time of this seminar the manifesto research design had transformed into hosting and listening. In this text I situate (Donna Haraway 1988) and contextualize the research in relation to costume thinking (Sofia Pantouvaki 2020), co-creation (relating to theatre contexts: Ben Walmsley 2013 and Tanja Beer 2021; additional references like Tim Ingold 2016, Karen Barad 2007, Astrida Neimanis 2012) relational thinking (e.g., Lene Tanggaard 2013, Karen Barad 2021) and prototyping (e.g., Madeline Taylor 2021, Suzanne Osmond 2021, Sally Dean 2021, Sanders &

Stappers 2014). I have a chapter called Material Improvisations where I introduce play (Susan Marshall 2021) and the designer's mind-full body (Donatella Barbieri 2021), I dive into listening as improvisation techniques (e.g., Karmenlara Ely 2015, Robert T. Valgenti 2022) and I unfold how listening is part of my artistic practice. Additionally, I introduce the three artistic projects. In the appendix I offer – what I called – glimpses into the projects. The glimpses were re-writings of parts of published articles and at the time a not yet published chapter in an anthology. As such, these glimpses were – as I wrote in the text – thoughts in-process on the artistic projects.

The artistic part of the seminar: The 50% seminar was partially online and partially with people physically present. As I knew the seminar was approaching, I began to prepare an exhibition to give those that attended in-person a physical experience of my research – representing where I was at the time with the research. My vision was to make an exhibition that artistically reflected on crafting and on the multi-vocal qualities of the three artistic projects. As a reflection on crafting I drew a few full-size drawings of myself that focused on my main tools – my hands – and thus the only part that was drawn proportionally and in detail was my hands. Moreover, while transcribing the interviews the richness of this data became apparent, for example, the multi-vocal qualities of the participants and their perspectives on the projects. As a way of lingering with this data I made pop-up illustrations of the three projects. However, in the practical planning of the seminar it became apparent that there was not a space available that enabled me to make the exhibition that I had envisioned. As it turned out I placed the pop-up illustrations and a few other things like mappings of key concepts in the three artistic projects on tables in the space where the seminar took place.

Even though I do not consider mapping a key method in my research, I like to address that mapping is a part of my design toolbox. Thus, throughout the research it has been natural to map people, concepts, words (for example the meaning of words in Danish and English) and other key components of the research. Mapping was a way of lingering with specificities of the research. In the mappings that I placed on the tables the four focal themes were apparent, however yet not directly pinpointed.

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28.02.2024: **75% seminar. In-person** and attractance via Zoom was possible.

Opponent Dr. Rachel Hann, Northumbria University, UK. Hann attended in-person.

Guidelines for the seminar: Presentation of the entire project (more or less complete) in relation to how the chosen theories and methods interact with the artistic content of the project.

Writing – the first draft of the dissertation on Research Catalogue: In the period between the 50% and the 75% intermediate seminars I realised that crafting, listening, hosting and co-creating are the four central themes for how I explore costume as a co-creative phenomenon (the subtitle of the research is *exploring co-creative costume processes*) and that four core theoretical concepts connected with the themes. It was as if the four focal themes and the four core concepts had been waiting like seeds in the soil and the interconnectedness between them enabled me to re-explore and dive further into the three artistic projects.

For the seminar I made a draft of the entire artistic research on Research Catalogue – this version is not public and can only be accessed upon request – that includes texts, videos, sound files and photos. The draft was in three sections: theoretical framework (in the final FRAMEWORKS), artistic projects (in the final PROJECTS) and findings/perspectivation (in the final CONCLUSION).

The theoretical framework contained a theoretical framing in the context of costume, an introduction to the four core concepts (Bennett's vibrant matter, Haraway's making-kin, Ahmed's orientation and Barad's entanglement), an introduction to the four focal themes and a draft of this text on method. In the artistic projects I paired the core concepts and the focal themes in the three projects, which have not changed. In the reflections I discuss the focal themes and at the time I had not drawn the final conclusions or articulated the main findings. The draft that I wrote for the 75% intermediate seminar on Research Catalogue is the foundation for the final thesis. After the last seminar the textual parts were further developed, several videos and sounds have been re-edited and the graphical design of the Research Catalogue page has evolved to become less linear and more in line with the co-creative approach I practiced during the research.

The artistic part of the seminar: For the seminar I had the opportunity to make an exhibition. As I argue in *Lydhørheder* – language(s) beyond the linguistic (link) textile is a language and I had an ambition that this language as an exhibition must be part of my defence. Thus, the seminar was a perfect opportunity to test ideas of how to do so. I envisioned a spatial composition of all the connecting costume versions and all the knotted pieces in-process I have crafted during the research. As people – the opponent, colleagues and a few friends – entered the space, I invited

them to place themselves anywhere and if they felt like it, they could move more freely in the space during the seminar. As it turned out, it felt that the seminar was situated in the midst of my artistic practice – and as people entered the space, they touched the textiles and they had placed themselves close by or in between the textile objects in ways that were beyond my imagination.

## Research timeline

### 2020

June: artistic project *Awe Are – a movement quintet*

July: artistic project *Community Walk*

August: conference (peer-reviewed) *Critical Costume 2020*. Paper presentation: The fitting room – Communities of practice and the ambiguity of touch.

November: two weeks residency at Inter Arts Center (Sweden) where I invited different guests to join textile/costume explorations.

### 2021

February: 25% seminar intermediate seminar – opponent Karen Arnferd Vedel, University of Copenhagen, Denmark.

August: artistic project *Conversation Costume*.

August: invited speaker, *Critical costume* panel discussion #2 (online). As written on Critical Costume 2020 website: “This panel will discuss the role of costume in investigating (re)newed bodily materialities in an era of climate crisis, bio-technologies and theories of new materialism. In particular, the panel will share examples from their practice that explore the role of material in thinking through ideas of ‘body’ and the changing perspective on what costume offers as a field of study to interdisciplinary questions of appearance, embodiment, and human-technology interfaces.” Moderator; Rachel Hann. Panel: Tanja Beer and Charlotte Østergaard.

### 2022

May: 50 % intermediate seminar – opponent Suzanne Osmond, National Institute of Dramatic Art, Australia.

March: PARSE conference (peer reviewed), University of Gothenburg. Sweden.

Workshop: AweAre.

June: conference (peer-reviewed) IFTR conference, Reykjavik University, Iceland. Paper presentation ‘*Co-costuming as an orientation towards spaces of in-betweenness – transformative co-wearing and co-locomoting encounters in between places and spaces*’

July: conference (invited keynote speaker), NOFOD (Nordic forum for dance research) conference: *Moving, relation, commanding, Choreographies for bodies, identities, and ecologies*, The Danish National School of Performing Arts, Denmark. Keynote: ‘*Listening through and with costume – a dialogical performance-making process*’

October: local seminar, *Immersive days*, Inter Arts Center, Sweden. Presentation with composer Yann Coppier: “*inside our – outside in*”.

November: local seminar, *Communality & the Arts: Place, Sustainability and Heritage* seminar, Inter Arts Center, Sweden. Paper presentation: ‘*Co-costuming as an opening for temporal socio-material entanglements – a dialogical process of co-wearing a connecting-costume*’.

November: conference (peer-reviewed), *Critical Costume 2022*. Paper: Ethical dilemmas of listening *through* and *with* costume. Video for CC (online) exhibition: *Creating temporal and spatial connections through and with co-costumed entanglements*

### 2023

March: local seminar, Crocus network meeting Inter Arts Center, Sweden. Presentation “Costume as kin-making material”

June: artistic project; The Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Prague, Czech Republic. PQ performance: *Community Walk* <https://pq.cz/pq-2023-info/projects-2023/pq-performance-rare-experiences/community-walk-charlotte-ostergaard/>

June: Invited speaker PQ talks: “Models of collaborations: performers and scenographers”

<https://pq.cz/pq-2023-info/projects-2023/pq-talks-curated-by-barbora-prihodova/models-of-collaboration-performers-and-scenographers/>

August: *Working the fields*, Gylleboverket’s performance festival, Sweden. Festival contribution: *Knotting Connections* .

### 2024

February: 75% intermediate seminar – opponent Rachel Hann, Northumbria University, United Kingdom.

April: Festival PÅ TVÆRS, Foreningen for integreret moderne dans i Danmark, Dansekapellet, DK. Exhibition: En tekstil dialog – en udstilling med søstre Camilla og Charlotte Østergaard.

May: SWOP-festival – international dansefestival for børn og unge, Aaben Dans, Denmark. Festival contribution: *Connect* <https://aabendans.dk/forestillinger/connect/?lang=en>

June: Art-based research PhD course, Aarhus University, Denmark. Workshop “costume e and embodiment”.

October: local symposium: Fremtidens ledende fælleskaber (Leading Communities of the Future) organized by *Kitchen Collective*. Presentation: *Værtskabets betydning for ledelse – skab dit eget værtskab* (translates to: The importance of hosting – the values of how you host).

October: local seminar, Lund University *Future Days*, Skissernas Museum, Lund, Sweden.

Presentation: *Costume as partner in play and creativity*

<https://www.staff.lu.se/calendar/costume-partner-play-and-creativity>

### 2025

January: PhD defenses – opponent Donatella Barbieri; London Collage of Fashion/ University of the Arts London, UK.

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# PROJECTS

## Organisation of the projects

The organisation of the artistic projects is inspired by Karen Barad's concept of 'cutting-together-apart' (Barad 2014, 168). With this concept Barad argues that research can never produce absolute separations of entangled parts of research phenomena, while at the same time the concept is a method to cut into these entangled parts. The concept is further unfolded here ([link](#)).

As you enter the three artistic projects you will encounter a short introduction to the specific project *and* a figure that has several entry points or paths (highlighted in blue). Each path cuts into specific areas of the project that consists of a composition of texts, videos, photos and/or sound. In each of the three projects I explore the relationships that emerge and my ambition is that the voices and perspectives of my co-creators are present. This research rests within artistic research ([link](#)) and I have chosen a personal reflective tone in the projects. Other than that, there are aspects of the artistic projects that remain unexplored as they fall outside the scope of this research.

In each of the three artistic projects I invite you to explore the pathways in any order. I am aware that the non-linearity of how the artistic projects are composed can at times be confusing. At the same time, my hosting attitude implies that the co-creative approach was adopted in order to make our different interpretations and perspectives present. In similar and yet different manners, I suggest that there are multiple ways to enter and dive into this research. As such, the paths are invitations to be playful, surprised, speculative, doubtful or whatever you experience when you create your way through the three artistic projects that forms this research project.

## The artistic project *AweAre – a movement quintet*

The artistic project *AweAre – a movement quintet* was a costume-generated performance that was co-created with four dancers and performed at Ny Carlsbergfondet's (New Carlsberg Foundation) performance festival *Up Close* in Denmark (2020). This project originates from the fact that I have for years designed and produced costumes for contemporary dance which has given me a love for the art form and a fondness for collaborating with dancers. However, in this project I do *not* focus on relationships between costume and choreography. With this project I explore how the *AweAre* costume – that was crafted to connect four dancers – acts as a shared starting point for a co-creative process of listening with the costume. A process that implied that we co-creatively explored how the four dancers listened and were affected by their placements in the costume. In this project I combine Jane Bennett's concept of "vibrant matter" and Donna Haraway's concept of "making kin", firstly to suggest that crafting the *AweAre* costume was a process of making kin with the vibrancy of textile materialities. Secondly, I suggest that the values of vibrant kin-making were crafted into the *AweAre* costume implied that I had to explore and listen to how the dancers' made kin with the vibrancy of the costume. This artistic project studies how *listening* became a tool to share and navigate the dancers' different experiences and how this listening tool allows us to negotiate and co-create a relational performance score.

The co-creators were the dancers Alex Berg, Camille Marchadour, Daniel Jeremiah Persson and Josefine Ibsen. Victor Dahl composed a soundscape for the performance.

### Making kin with vibrant matter

#### **Crafting**

As a starting point I will shortly address crafting. The verb *crafting* originates from the Old English *cræftan*, meaning "to exercise a craft; to build, to make skilfully". The noun *craft* originates from Old English *cræft* (West Saxon, Northumbrian) and *-creft* (Kentish), meaning "power, physical strength", and in Old English it includes "skill, dexterity; art, science, talent" via a notion of "mental power". Thus, the verb *crafting* points to the craftsperson's ability to control their doing through mastering and embodying specific techniques and thus embedded in crafting is an urge to

strive for mastery. As such, one could argue that crafting implies that the craftsperson, no matter their exact profession, must constantly improve their physical abilities and mental power to embody and perform their skilful doing. Additionally, crafting suggests that a craftsperson crafts their materials in order to embody or master specific techniques that can include mastering and handling specific tools. For example, a skilful designer and a skilful dancer will most likely master and embody different techniques, materials and tools.

The origin of the verb *crafting* highlights the craftsperson's strength to master specific skills, while less emphasis is placed on other aspects involved in the crafting processes such as tools, spatiality, temporality and more-than-human materialities. In the context of costume, crafting indicates that the craftsperson – a designer, a maker, a tailor or someone else – must master specific techniques to shape specific textile materials according to a design. The mastery insinuates that the craftsperson potentially positions themselves hierarchically above the textile materials and that the textile materials are in service of and/or must subordinate the design. However, as an artist craftsperson, it is the textile materials that has my interest, as they are a constant source of inspiration.

In what follows I will dive into Jane Bennett's concept of "vibrant matter" and Donna Haraway's concept of "making kin" – concepts that in different ways attend to more-than-humans. I unfold how I combine these two concepts as lenses to think-with in the artistic project *AweAre – a movement quintet*.

### **Sensibility towards the vibrancy of materialities**

In *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* Jane Bennett writes that "to experience the relationship between persons and other materialities more horizontally, is to take a step towards a more ecological sensibility" (Bennett 2010, 10). This suggests that crafting includes more than the craftsperson's skilfulness and more than a human-centric perspective on mastery. The craftsperson must "step back" and be sensible towards materialities in order to create a horizontal relationship to the materialities that are present in the situation. Bennett continues that there is an "ethical task [...] to cultivate the ability to discern nonhuman vitality" (Bennett 2010, 14) by "affecting and being affected by other bodies" (Bennett 2010, 21). Bennett's vibrant matter is an ethical call for humans to distribute agency to bodies other than the human. Thus, the craftsperson's skilfulness includes the ability to be sensible to and affected by the vibrancy of the

materialities. This suggests that human mastery is not a matter of controlling materialities. Rather, it is a matter of crafting horizontal relationships with the material matter that are present in the situation.

In the context of crafting costumes, inherent in crafting is that the craftsperson has the power to select the specific techniques that they will use to craft the chosen or curated textile materials. Consequently, the craftsperson's aesthetic choices will shape the crafting process: the technical choice(s) will inform and affect the craftsperson's sensibility towards the textile materials *and* the textile materialities will inform the craftsperson's attitude towards the crafting techniques. How can the craftsperson be sensitive towards the consequence of their aesthetic choices and, at the same time, create a horizontal relationship with the textile materials that allows both parties to flourish in the process? How can crafting foster vibrant procedural relationships between the craftsperson, the techniques and the materials? These questions have guided my thinking on how to form horizontal relationships with textile materials that include attending to the values that are embedded in this horizontal crafting attitude. Attending to textile relationships and crafting values suggests that the craftsperson must listen to more their visions. To reflect on the above-mentioned questions, I turn to Donna Haraway's concept of making kin.

### **Kin-making**

In *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* Donna Haraway writes that

kin making is making persons, not necessarily as individuals or as humans. [...] [M]aking kin and making kind (as category, care, relatives without the ties by birth, lateral relatives, lots of other echoes) stretch[es] the imagination and can change the story. (Haraway 2016, 103)

Haraway's kin-making stretches kinship to include forming relationships with kinds that are not human, which is an invitation to include these other more-than-humankinds in our stories or worldings. In Haraway's wording, "ancestors turn out to be very interesting strangers; kin are unfamiliar" (Haraway 2016,103). In Haraway worlding kin-making is becoming familiar with what is unfamiliar, whether the strangers are human or more-than-human. In the context of crafting this highlights that the craftsperson is familiar with, and thus has knowledge of textile materials. At the same time in each crafting process the craftsperson must become familiar with the qualities of the specific textiles as if it was an act of becoming familiar with unfamiliar ancestors. It is through the

making-with or crafting-with that the craftsperson makes kin or forms relationships with more-than-humans like textile materials.

In recognition of the fact that nothing makes itself, Haraway points to sympoiesis as the act of making-with (Haraway 2016, 58). Sympoiesis describes complex, dynamic, responsive and situated systems of worlding-with or doing-with “a host of companions” (Haraway 2016, 31). It is important to note that symbiosis within biology includes “three main types of symbiotic relations based on the ways in which symbionts live together as mutualism, commensalism, and parasitism. In a mutualistic symbiosis both partners benefit from the relationship [...] Commensalism may be used in a broader sense than only relating to nutrition, where one symbiont takes advantage of the other without causing any harm. In parasitism, one of the symbionts takes benefits at the expense of the other” (Bodiciu 2023, 497). As such I suggest that within Haraway’s sympoiesis is an acknowledgement that relationships with more-than-human companions are not just pleasurable and calm but can also be challenging and demanding.

Making-with are situations where humans and more-than-humans become familiar with each other and where both parties as companions are important and valuable. Making-with suggests that crafting consists of processes that serve more-than-human needs and more than the craftsperson’s (designer, choreographer, performer and/or others) aesthetic visions and needs – crafting comprises “open-ended exploratory processes” (Haraway 2016, 78) where textile materials are the craftsperson’s creative companions.

Haraway argues that kinship is not a given but requires attention and endurance from humans to allow more-than-human bodies to become ‘persons’ on their own terms. In the context of crafting costume this suggests that the craftsperson must not only be sensitive towards the textile materials as vibrant matter, but that the craftsperson must be willing to make kin in the textile materials as non-human persons or companions in order to make-with them. Thus, crafting encapsulates situations where the craftsperson must explore and search for the vibrant kinship that can emerge with the textiles.

Crafting costume involves processes where the craftsperson becomes familiar with the ‘personalities’ of their textile companions and through the dynamic tension between them they make kin. In crafting processes it matters whether the craftsperson cares for and listens to or ignores or overrules their textile companions. Moreover, as crafting processes are temporal, the

craftsperson might potentially and most likely only become familiar with parts of the textile companions 'personalities'. This *includes* the fact that the kinship – becoming more familiar with (un)familiar particularities of specific textile materialities – that hopefully emerges with the textile materials is potentially different than the craftsperson had imagined prior to the crafting or kin-making process.

Even though I have above used only crafting as an example of the processes of making kin with vibrant textile materialities, it also applies to studying, using and analysing costume. In *Thinking with costume and material: a critical approach to (new) costume ecologies* Pantouvaki et al. argue that

costume is not merely a passive artefact, or a project created from idea to material, but an act of correspondence (Ingold 2013), 'something active with which you engage and interact' (Malafouris 2013, 149), an enactment between makers and materials. (Pantouvaki et al. 2021, 203).

In the article Pantouvaki et al. do not directly point towards the concepts that I use in this artistic project, however as with other costume and performance-making colleagues, they are influenced by new materialism. I strongly agree when Pantouvaki et al. propose

that thinking *with* costume and material, taking the material into consideration as co-actant and collaborator for the creation of meaning, leads to a costume practice where the thinking, the material (world) and the body (soma) are co-constitutive, intertwining 'between intentionality and affordance'. (Pantouvaki et al. 202, 204)

As an artist craftsperson that crafts costume some of my key collaborators or co-creators are textile materials. While crafting I listen to and with the textiles as more-than-human co-creators. In the crafting process we – the textiles and I – are co-crafted or co-constituted and as such the textiles inform and influence my costume thinking. However, in this project it is the listening with the textiles and the costume that has my attention.

## The *AweAre* Costume

### **The backdrop for the *AweAre* costume**

The *AweAre* costume was developed from the knowledge I gained from a costume that – like the *AweAre* costume – connected four people and that I crafted in one of my KUV projects.<sup>56</sup> This costume's wearable parts were woven. Due to the way in which I technically wove with textile 'threads', and due to the looseness of my weaving, as the wearable parts were worn the 'threads' did not stay in place. Thus, over time the shape of the wearable parts transformed, which made it almost impossible to figure out how to dress and place the wearable parts on wearers' bodies. While I crafted this four-person connecting costume I had imagined exploring the costume in multiple settings. However, due to the transformation it became impossible. At the same time, the vibrancy of this connecting costume had awoken my curiosity and I took the first opportunity that presented itself to craft a new version.

As an opportunity, the *AweAre* costume started as an exhibition project and thus it was originally crafted for the curated exhibition *The Biennale for Crafts and Design* in Denmark (2019). In the exhibition context *AweAre* was potentially more a wearable object than a costume. In the exhibition space *AweAre* hung from the ceiling on four hangers and there was an invitation to the audience to touch and wear it. As I wanted to be as inclusive as possible, as I crafted *AweAre* my aim was for the wearable parts to have a stretchable fit that would enable exhibition guests with different body sizes, heights, etc. to fit into them, as well as making the part easy to put on on top of whatever the guest or wearer was wearing. As I did not want the shape of the wearable parts to transform I was eager to develop a more stable, yet flexible, interlocking technique than the weaving.

### **Crafting the *AweAre* costume**

I have suggested that crafting is making kin with textiles. In the following I will unfold how I made kin with the vibrancy of the textile materialities, or how the process of crafting the *AweAre* costume was a vibrant kin-making process.

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<sup>56</sup> For this KUV (*kunstnerisk udviklings virksomhed* translates to artistic research) project, *Textile Techniques as Potential for Developing Costume Design*, (2016/2017) I invited three tailor colleagues (employed) at the Danish National School of Performing Arts to join me. Side by side and in dialogue we (individually) developed several costumes using crafting techniques inspired by braiding. One of my research ambitions was to invite the tailors to make costumes from a perspective different to that of their daily work at the school. As they usually produce costume in collaboration with and from drawings made by scenography students, they never develop their own costume ideas. As I was challenging the tailors, I also wanted to challenge myself. Therefore, I intentionally chose a role of stretchable material that the tailor workshop had stored for years which I did not find particularly inspiring. The textile smelled and its yellow colour was a bit too murky to my taste.



As mentioned, my intention was for the *AweAre* costume to connect four people. My ambitions were that each of the four wearable parts had subtle references to everyday clothing – having details like a sleeve or a collar – and that each part should appear visually different. As my intention was to develop a crafting technique that made the shape of the wearable part flexible yet stable, the interlocking had to be tighter than the weaving was in the KUV version. Moreover, opposite the KUV version where the weaving as technique was recognizable, my aim was that the interlocking be less visually readable. Hence, my intention was that the interlocking technique sampled weaving with braiding and knotting. As the yellow colour had grown on me and as I had different stretchable and machine knitted textiles – in cotton and polyester fibre combinations – in different shades of yellow in stock, I decided to use them.

To interlock the different stretchable textile materialities, I cut them into strings and then started interlocking the textile strings without a specific crafting plan. My reference point was the KUV version with the four connected wearable parts. However, I had no intention of replicating the visual expression of this costume, but I had no clear visual image of how what became the *AweAre* costume would look. Prior to the crafting process I had not produced any sketches of the shape or compositions of the four different wearable parts. I trusted that the textiles and the crafting process would lead the way and thus that the visuality would emerge along the way.

I decided to simultaneously craft the four different wearable parts – at first without any sense of shape or form – as a way of becoming familiar with how to interlock the three techniques. As soon as I had a base for each wearable part I placed them on a mannequin and continued the crafting and shaping of the parts on the mannequins. The mannequins I have at my studio are mainly torso kinds, with the consequence that the wearable parts are mainly crafted as torso kinds. To explore the fit and the tactile sensation of these torsos I regularly tried the wearable parts in-process on my own body.

Based on the experience from the KUV costume I knew that I had to pull and stretch in the wearable parts to explore how stable the shapes of these parts were. Through the pull-stretching I realised that the interlocking had to be tighter than I had imagined. Moreover, when placed on the mannequin it became apparent that the references to everyday clothing (visually) became vague if the interlocking was too loose.

While crafting, it felt like the textile strings informed the techniques, and vice versa, including that the dynamic tension between the textile strings and the crafting techniques made me attentive to how I 'listened' with my hands. For example, the smoothness and almost endless stretchability of the polyester fibres and stubbornness of the cotton fibres required that my crafting 'grip' be quite rough. Some of the strings (no matter fibre combinations) were – due to how I had cut the textiles – quite fragile (especially the strings that I had cut in widths less than two centimes) and required of me to be sensitive and careful.

It was a process where I simultaneously had to make kin with each string in relation and response to the colours of the strings, with the crafting techniques and with how the shape of each wearable part as well as how the composition as a whole evolved visually. For example, from my aesthetic viewpoint the visuality of the parts – and thus potentially of the whole composition of the costume – became less dynamic if one of the interlocking techniques became visually too dominant or readable. Hence, there had to be a tension between the three techniques of braiding, weaving and knotting – they had to be interlinked or sampled in ways that blurred or blended the techniques into one another.

During the crafting process I additionally experimented with ways of connecting the four wearable parts. I experimented with combining textile surfaces and strings with an ambition to create a natural transition from the wearable parts to the connecting parts of the costume. In the crafting process, being a single body presented a limitation to physically test whether the connecting parts could carry the weight of four bodies. The crafting or interlocking of the wearable parts had given me some knowledge of and kinship to the 'personalities' of the different textile kinds that I could build on. At the same time, I stretched, dragged and pulled the connecting parts in as many ways as possible to discover weak points where the connecting parts could potentially tear under the weight of several bodies.

### **Visiting memories of crafting *AweAre***

As I unfolded in the beginning of this path, the *AweAre* costume was originally crafted for an exhibition project. Thus, the costume was crafted before I started this research, and I can be criticised for describing a crafting process that took place before the research started. On the other hand, in my artistic practice textiles are my creative source and recourse. In the slow crafting process textiles are vibrating, stimulating and inspiring companions. As the textile companions

leave my hand and my studio space, they have taken a shape and they will form other relationships that are beyond me; like in the exhibition space where *AweAre* had a life of its own. However, the experience of making kin with textiles during crafting processes remains within me as precious embodied memories that I can induce.

I was offered the PhD position at Malmö Theatre Academy in March 2019, but the employment did not start until January 2020. Thus, as I was crafting the *AweAre* costume the research was already in the planning stage. As I started the research, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world (March 2020) and the artistic research plans I had were cancelled or postponed. The Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns also resulted in that I together *with* the *AweAre* costume as my creative companion, was invited to the *Up Close* performance festival. The festival became an excellent opportunity to co-explore the *AweAre* costume with four dancers. As Danish governmental regulations – at the time of the invitation – prescribed distance between people, I decided to prolong the length of connections between the wearable parts. As I crafted the prolongations or re-crafted the connecting parts of the costume, my memories of crafting the *AweAre* costume was induced.

## The values of kinship

As an opening I will offer a short reintroduction of *AweAre*. As I wrote in the article *Costume-generated performances – costumes performative and generative potential*<sup>57</sup> the *AweAre* costume have

four wearable parts. These four wearable parts are uniform yet varied in their shape. The costume is crafted in stretchable textiles and the wearable parts of the costume are connected through a combination of textile strings and textile surfaces. The stretchable textile implies that each wearable part can stretch and fit different human body sizes. From the outside the *AweAre* costume reads as a unit. However, from the inside the experience of wearing the *AweAre* costume is different. The stretchability of the costume, for example, implies that when one wearer moves they

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<sup>57</sup> The Danish title is *Kostume-drevne performances – kostumers generative og performative potentiale*. I have translated the title and quote from Danish. In the quote I have recomposed the order of the sentences.

will stretch the textiles, whereby they will affect the other wearers' movements.  
(Østergaard 2022, 51)

The name *AweAre* plays with combining 'to be aware' and 'to wear'. The name is also a tribute to my friend Sally E. Dean<sup>58</sup> who has introduced the term "aware wearing"<sup>59</sup> (Dean 2021). Aware wearing highlights that costume affects performers' bodies and describes for example how performers can become aware of somatic impacts of costume.

In hindsight, I realise that the name *AweAre* also points towards the awareness I have in the crafting process. Therefore, in this path I attend to my crafting values to explore how and/or which values I crafted into the *AweAre* costume, including which implications these values had for the further life of the costume.

### **Crafting as kin-making**

In another path (link) I described that the process of crafting the *AweAre* costume was a kin-making process. I am fully aware that the kin-making is seen from my perspective – the human perspective – and that I cannot know how the textile materialities perceived our kin-making process. Yet, as craftsperson I search for the places where flows between the textile materialities and my hands, eyes and my body/mind emerge and flourish. Places where the textiles and I merge or become together during the crafting process.

In my practice many crafting processes are slow and thus costume often emerges over time. Like with the *AweAre* costume, my intentions and/or how I imagine an outline of a costume sets the direction. The intentions are starting points that allows me to focus and become absorbed in the crafting process. I intentionally use the word outline – that is somehow vaguer than design – to highlight that what I describe here slightly differs from when I design costume. When I design costume, and as I start to produce specific designs, I have a clearer visual goal and thus the crafting process is often quicker.

While crafting, my intentions and/or the imagined outline slip in and out of my attention: sometimes I attend to a specific direction – a specific part or a detail –, sometimes I do not attend

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<sup>58</sup> Sally E. Dean is a somatic practitioner, dancer, choreographer and artistic researcher at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway.

<sup>59</sup> Dean writes that "aware-wearing" focuses on "how the experience of costume effects and 'affects' bodies (affective being a philosophical term not simply equivalent to emotions)" (Dean 2021, 374). Through "a somatic, multi-sensorial, performance approach" (Dean 2021, 393), Dean's aware-wearing advocates that the "body and costume move each other in metaphorical and literal manners" (Dean 2021, 375).

to any direction, and sometimes I realise that I must change direction. Attending to specific visual, tactile, compositional or other directions or orientations, the slow repetitive crafting process awakens and controls my attention. In the repetition, through the repetitive movements, I enter a mode that attunes my attentiveness towards exploring the relationship or kinship between the crafting techniques and the textile materials. The repetitive crafting rhythm often becomes meditative. In the meditative moments – that can last hours and days – I am aware of the emerging composition, but I do not judge or evaluate what is in-process. I am in flow with the textiles and with the crafting techniques. I sense them on my skin and in my body–mind. Returning home after a meditative crafting day in my studio, I somehow sense the touch of the textile materials. I sense how the textiles have affected me – whether my hands, shoulders and/or other parts of my body are sore. The crafting lingers in me while I make dinner and reminiscences of the crafting process sometimes slip into my dreams. They are – on and off – with me and I do not know whether it is the crafting technique(s), the textile materialities, the emerging composition or the sense of my sore body that I sense. In these moments and/or situations I become aware that an intuitive flow is awakened and is flourishing. In the intuitive flow I have a strong sense of having metaphorical dialogues with the textiles and with the crafting techniques. It feels like I listen to what the textiles ‘say’ and what they ‘want’. I listen to how the textile materials and the crafting techniques inform each other in ways that I often cannot fully grasp and that I therefore cannot put into words: I just sense dialogues between us. In the intuitive flow I am unsure whether I am in control or whether it is the crafting process that controls my attention. However, I am sure that it is not about being in control or having power over the textile materials through or with the crafting techniques. I just know that if I give in to the intuitive crafting flow I will most likely be surprised by what occurs. In the lingering and meditative crafting process I sense dialogues between the textile materialities and the crafting techniques, and I trust that if I listen carefully, they will tell me things and that our metaphorical dialogue will lead us somewhere.

As a craftsperson or as a crafting designer I appreciate these repetitive and meditative crafting processes even though I know that they might interrupt my sleep and that I will experience moments where I feel stuck or when I lose my direction in the kin-making process. I argue that the *AweAre* costume arose from the kinship and the metaphorical dialogues that I had with the textile

materials and the crafting techniques – a process where I simultaneously made kin with the textile materials and the crafting techniques. However, I cannot say that I fully know the qualities and characteristics of both kinds, but in the crafting process I became familiar with aspects of their or our interwoven kinship.

### **Kinship**

Haraway reminds me that kinship is being in sympoiesis with other kinds, for example textile materials. In the sympoiesis or kinship I must be kind (the adjective) or sympathetic and open-minded towards other kinds, whether these are human or not. In the crafting process the textiles and I become kin even though we are of different kinds. I suggest that in crafting processes I must constantly attune my *lydhørhed* (link) or listening abilities, my willingness and skilfulness to make kin or become familiar with the more-than-humans as a way of honouring the vibrancy of the textiles and as a way of acknowledging that I can never fully know them.

Jane Bennett reflects that “perhaps the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one’s response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating” (Bennett 2010, 37). This suggests that we are not only interconnected with the assembly we are part of, but we are responsible for the way that we respond to the assembly; like the textile materialities, the crafting techniques, the mannequins, my studio space and other kinds that are part of our assemblage. As a craftsperson textile materialities intrigues me as more-than-human companions. The technical crafting knowledge that I have gained over years is the bridge that allows me to collaborate or co-create with the textile materials. As with crafting the *AweAre* costume it was a process of making-with the textile materials, and that included the other kinds or companions that were part of our assembly. Together we crafted the *AweAre* costume, or maybe the costume was crafted as an effect of the kinship that emerged in our assembly. Either way, as such the *AweAre* costume was co-created.

### **Crafting values**

Haraway writes that string figures – like Cat’s Cradle – are *thinking* as well as *making* practices (Haraway 2016, 14). This suggests that crafting is practices that – apart from producing products – craft speculative and facultative ways of being with the world.

As craftsperson I sensed that the kinship that I experienced with the assemblage was woven into the pattern or composition of the *AweAre* costume. As such, I suggest that the values of making

kin and co-creating with an assemblage was crafted into the *AweAre* costume. However, the question is if other people sense these interwoven values. Still, the interwoven values have a consequence for the further creative life of the *AweAre* costume and I am therefore accountable for the continuation of the kin-making and co-creating. Firstly, to *craft a material body* is to acknowledge that a costume like the *AweAre* costume will *craft material bodies* or will craft and affect the humans who wear it. The act of *crafting material bodies* entangles human bodies and textile materials (costume), and in their encounter they are never separate but are interlinked. Secondly, the *AweAre – a movement quintet* performance involved four dancers who simultaneously had to become familiar with the costume and each other. Even though I had crafted the *AweAre* costume, I could not predict how the four dancers would meet or make kin with the costume and what our encounter would craft (Østergaard 2023, 93). As I was aware of the values that I had crafted into the *AweAre* costume I was responsible for the continuation of the kin-making and co-creating processes, but I could not expect that the dancers would make kin and co-create in ways similar to mine.

### *AweAre – a movement quintet*

*AweAre – a movement quintet* was created for the performance festival *UP CLOSE*.

The festival that took place at Det Classenske Bibliotek (20–21 and 27–28 June 2020) and were developed in response to the Covid-19 lockdown in Denmark by Ny Carlsbergfondet (New Carlsberg Foundation). The festival curator Natalia Gutman invited twelve artists/artistic duos to create and perform fifteen-minute performances and each of the twelve performances were performed three times (13:00, 15:00 and 17:00) on one of the four festival dates. Invited were, among others, the visual artist duo Hesselholdt and Mejlvang, choreographer Tim Matiakis and solo dancer Astrid Elbo, performance artist Lilibeth Cuenca Rasmussen and I was the only costume designer.

*AweAre – a movement quintet* was programmed (June 27) with two other performances by the composer Louise Alenius and the artist duo Maja Lee Langvad and Kristina Nya Glaffey.

In this four-minute edited video of *AweAre – a movement quintet* the dancers reflect on their experiences of performing with the *AweAre* costume.

## Co-creating *AweAre* – a movement quintet

I was invited to the *Up Close* performance festival by the festival curator art historian Natalia Gutman. Gutman specifically asked me to develop a performance with the *AweAre* costume. As unfolded the *AweAre* costume was originally created as a textile project for the curated exhibition *The Biennale for Crafts and Design*, Denmark ([link](#)). At the opening reception I had invited four dancers to improvise in the costume, and this improvised performance resulted in Gutman's invitation.

As I received the invitation for the *Up Close* performance festival I saw it as a perfect opportunity to study how four dancers and I could co-creatively explore aspects of the performative potentialities with the *AweAre* costume. I intentionally write aspects as an acknowledgment of the fact that, in the rather short rehearsal period (23 and 25 June), we only managed to touch upon aspects of the *AweAre* costume's performative potentials.

As I knew the process of co-creating the fifteen-minute performance *AweAre* – a movement quintet would be part of my research, the dancers signed an informed consent agreement. In the following I will anonymize the dancers as much as possible. I use the pronouns them and they.

The following is written from the I-perspective which build on my embodied memories of our co-creative process. Edited extracts from a collective (zoom) interview<sup>60</sup> made two weeks after our process will accompany the text in which the dancers unfold and reflect on their experiences of the costume and of our co-creative process.

### **Starting points**

As mentioned, when I was invited to the festival the *AweAre* costume was already crafted. Due to quite strict Covid-19 regulations at the time of the invitation I decided to prolong the connecting part of the *AweAre* costume. This crafting adjustment made me revisit the kinship values ([link](#)) –

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<sup>60</sup> I conducted this online interview with the dancers two weeks after the performances (July 2, 2020). At their request the four dancers were present and thus the interview was a conversation between them where they bounced from each other's reflections. Eight months after the performance process (March 2021) I interviewed three of the four dancers again individually. In these interviews I asked them about their embodied memory of the *AweAre* costume and of our shared process, as well as asking them to reflect on my role in the process. Almost three years after the performance process (May 2023) I made a conversational interview with X on their perspective on listing as a dancer and in relation to our process.



kin-making and co-creating with the vibrancy of the textiles – that I had crafted into in the *AweAre* costume.

Prior to the process of co-creating *AweAre – a movement quintet* I had a few experiences with people wearing, moving and improvising in the *AweAre* costume. One of them being the improvised performance at the opening of *The Biennale for Crafts and Design*. The duration of these improvised explorations was rather short. Nonetheless, these experiences had shown me that a playful atmosphere quickly emerged between the people who wore the *AweAre* costume. I decided to invite one of the dancers that was part of the improvised performance (who I call X) to be a part of developing *AweAre – a movement quintet* for the festival and we discussed how to proceed. I knew that our rehearsal period was short, and it seemed most productive for X, as my co-creator, to suggest three dancers who they knew and who they wanted to share the *AweAre* costume with. Thus, I invited three dancers – who I did not know and had not met – to perform and with whom to co-create the performance.

We also decided that we would co-create a score not a choreography<sup>61</sup> with the group. This offered the four dancers the freedom to improvise and to keep developing the performance while they performed. However, we did not define what kind of score we hoped to develop – we trusted that a score would arise between the four dancers, the *AweAre* costume and me (the host).

### **The co-creative process**

Here we are on the first day (**23 June 2020**), in a black box studio space at Malmö Theatre Academy, Sweden; four dancers, the bright yellow *AweAre* costume and me.

I am placed as an outside witness, and I have no intention of acting like a choreographer or director. Moreover, I do not intend to dictate or decide which dancer will inhabit which wearable part of the costume. I therefore suggest that they explore each of the four wearable parts and placements in the costume. After the first two test-rounds we pause, and I ask the dancers to share what they have experienced. They talk about the playfulness between them and how a specific wearable part touches their body and makes them aware of particular limbs. The dancers are quite articulated in explaining what they experience, but I also sense politeness in their answers/explanations.

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<sup>61</sup> We discussed that a choreography implied that we had to develop predefined and repeatable movement sequences for the performance whereas a score (to us) contained openness that invited the dancers to continue their relational explorations with the costume while they performed.

After testing the four different wearable parts I ask the dancers to share which placement they prefer. No one is in doubt. Every dancer has a clear preference for a particular placement, though these preferences overlapped and do not include all four placements. There is thus no problem on an individual level but there was a puzzle in the communal as preferences overlap. What solves the puzzle is that X is willing to, or maybe feels obliged to, inhabit the placement that no one has shown interest in, X included.

We continue, somehow more focused now that the placements are divided. The atmosphere is playful, and the dancers explore the movement possibilities in their wearable parts and explore how their placements impact the group.

At some point and rather suddenly the textile that connects three of the four dancers' rips.

Watching at a distance, I do not notice, but once I get up close, I can see that I must act quickly otherwise the costume cannot last the rest of the day. I do not want to interrupt the dancers' playful explorations. So, while the dancers continue to move with costume, I move with them and tie extra string here and there to stabilise the rip. It is as if we are dancing together and for a moment I visualise the performative potential of this shared or entangled dance. During the rest of the day the dancers' 'push and pull' stretches the extra attached strings, which prolongs the connection or the part of the costume that connects them.

The 'push and pull' effect is something that the dancers unfold in our sharing sessions. The 'push and pull' is a bouncy sensation whereby when one of them moves, this movement affects the movements of one or more of the others. They also explain that the 'push and pull' is rippling sensations of movements that moves through the textile material that connects them, from one person to the next. While moving, we also discuss how much they can or dare to lean into the materiality of the connecting parts, and counterbalance with each other and the costume. They explain that the counterbalancing with the stretchable material gives them a new sense of gravity. Additionally, the dancers quite quickly refer to the costume as a "person with will and power" and a "force" that generates movements between them. What they do not say, but what is obvious to me, is that the dancers mainly follow their own impulses, which means that when someone follows an urge, this person will for a moment drag the rest of the group in a specific direction. Or rather, this last reflection is in hindsight. On the day we were trying to grasp the 'push and pull' dynamic.

The next day (**24 June 2020**), while I am repairing the rip in the costume I reflect on our rehearsal. It was not directly articulated, but I sense that our rehearsal was quite different from the performance-making processes that the dancers are used to.

I reflect on that the dancers' playfulness somehow made them change directions constantly, and at the same time the multidirectional quality of their movements had no clear direction. Their movements made the impression of running on the spot and of 'pushing and pulling' which, as movement quality, could potentially have looked like a struggle, but it mainly looked messy or read as non-directional. I knew that the playfulness was an important starting point, but I wonder whether the playfulness somehow blocked something other.

To overview the composition and to repair the rip I have placed the wearable parts of the costume on mannequins and thus the costume takes up my entire studio space. Even though I was aware of the composition, here with the backdrop of the rehearsal day I see and rediscover the composition of the costume in a new light: one placement is distant and maybe even disconnected from the other placements in the costume. I realise that I have crafted a costume that creates a hierarchy between the dancers – which is a revelation but also shocking. To approach the hierarchical question, I know that I need to pay closer attention to how we listened to the different placements in the costume.

The next day (**25 June 2020**) we meet at the performance location Det Classenske Bibliotek (Copenhagen, Denmark) where we have one hour to rehearse in the space. We discuss whether the performers shall enter and exit from the same door or from two opposite doors – we decide on the former. The dancers explore the simple dramaturgical score: entering the space, moving to the end of the space, turning and returning to exit from where they entered the space. Before we know it, the hour is over.

I have rented a smaller rehearsal space in Nørrebro for the rest of the day. As we restart, I ask the dancers whether they have specific explorations that they like to test. I share my reflection of that their playful – that I also acknowledge – implies that they mainly follow their own impulses. I suggest that they explore how they can listen to the different placements in the costume and that they move in a slower tempo to be able to do so.

As the dancers explore how to listen to the four different placements in the costume, the concentration between them is intense. The slower tempo also allows the dancers to test different bodily positions in the counterbalancing, for example laying on their backs or on their side and twisting their bodies in the wearable parts. We pause and I ask whether and how they hear the people in the different placements of the costume. In hindsight, it is clear that all of us are trying to grasp the 'hearing' or 'listening' dynamic and that we thus search to find words that describe the hearing and listening exchange.

The performance day (**27 June 2020**) arrives. What is most vivid in my memories is that as soon as the dancers entered the performance space I almost forgot the audience. During the performances I listened to their movements and the dynamic between them. Even though the dramaturgical score was simple, the three performances were quite different. In one performance it was very visible how the 'push and pull' rippled through the movements from one dancer to the next. Even though I was at a distance I have a strong embodied sensation of bouncing with the dancers in these 'rippling' moments. In another performance the movements of the dancer placed 'in the middle' showed me that the 'push and pull' was a sensation of being enclosed or trapped in the middle. In the last performance I realised that the two dancers who were placed at the same end of the costume as a pair could counterbalance with each other in their part of the costume. Even though it might have looked as if these two dancers simply followed the performance score, I experienced that this pair had the power to direct or retain the group, including the power to decide when the performance would end.

In all three performances I experienced the four dancers and the costume as a collective body became an organism that navigated together. As an organism the dancers and the costume were friendly towards each other, and it was as if the costume acted as the silent but very demanding friend. In moments when the dancers counterbalanced with each other the costume demanded of them to navigate or negotiate who was willing to give in and who was controlling who. Even being friendly with the costume the dancers happily left it behind between the performances. On the other hand, in the interview one of the dancers reflected that on the performance day the costume became a part of their body and that they felt 'whole' as soon as they wore the costume.

## Attuning to making kin

As a starting point I would like to include a short summary of reflections unfolded in other paths. I suggested that I crafted values of kinship into the *AweAre* costume. Bennett reminded me (re-quoted) that “the ethical responsibility of an individual human now resides in one’s response to the assemblages in which one finds oneself participating” (Bennett 2010, 37). As craftsperson I was responsible for the assemblage that I curated. Thus, as a responsible craftsperson I must be aware of and attend to how my handling and/or mastery of the (chosen) crafting techniques affected the way that I, as single human in the privacy of my studio space, made kin and became familiar with the vibrant ‘personalities’ of the stretchable textile materials. I suggested that the values of kinship imply that during the crafting I must curiously explore ways of creating relationships with the textile materials by listening to, responding to and being affected by them as well as having a metaphorical dialogue with them.

I unfolded the process of co-creating the *AweAre* – a *movement quintet* performance. From crafting the *AweAre* costume to the performance-making process the assemblage had transformed: it now included the four dancers who I invited to co-create the performance and a costume about which I did not know how it would craft or affect the four dancers. I argued that the values of kinship imply, firstly, that I must acknowledge that the dancers as fellow craftspeople have trained their sensitivity in different ways than I have. Thus, the techniques that the dancers master informed the way that they approached the *AweAre* costume. Secondly, the value of kinship implies that I was accountable for inviting the four dancers to make kin with the *AweAre* costume in ways that mattered to them and/or related to their craft-skilfulness. I therefore had to be open-minded and curious towards the dancers’ experiences and towards the relationships that the *AweAre* costume evoked and/or provoked between them and us.

### **Becoming familiar**

I chose to host an iterative rehearsal process that consisted of explorative sessions where the dancers moved and improvised with the costume, and of sharing sessions where I asked the dancers to share their sensorial experiences of their placements in the costume (Østergaard 2023, 93) and to reflect on how they experienced the collective dimensions of the costume. In the

sharing sessions – where everyone had time to speak – we gained insights into how the costume affected the four dancers in similar and yet different ways.

What seemed similar was what the dancers called the ‘dramaturgy of the costume’, which was somehow also the dramaturgy of our co-creative process. One dancer described the dramaturgy as a progression that started with an awareness of and absorption in exploring their wearable part/placement to gradually expanding their attention towards embracing the collective dimensions of the costume. Another dancer described the dramaturgy as “getting to know yourself in relation to the costume and the costume getting to know us”. This reflection points to the fact that the dancers made kin and became familiar with the costume, but also that the costume had to become familiar with the dancers. At the time of our rehearsals the concept of kin-making was not yet on my research agenda. Nonetheless, the costume was a kin-maker which made the dancers refer to it as a more-than-human person or persona (Østergaard 2023, 94).

### **Attending to details**

The four dancers, the costume and I were a new constellation or assemblage in the situation that we all had to become familiar with. Haraway reminds me that “the devil is in the details” (Haraway 2016, 47), and I had to pay close attention to the playfulness between the dancers to discover the nuances of what happened between them and to approach what they experienced. Moreover, as the host I had placed myself as an outside eye or as a witness – an act that could have indicated to the dancers that I intended to direct or that I was the curating or evaluating ‘eye’. Even if I did not intend to act in any of the former roles, as host I had to pay attention to how I acted since I was actively affecting our temporal and situational assemblage and our creative relationship. Thus, as the host, I argue that the way in which I attended to and listened to the experiences of the dancers mattered. Haraway writes that

details link actual beings to actual response-abilities. Each time a story helps me remember what I thought I knew, or introduces me to new knowledge, a muscle critical for caring about flourishing gets some aerobic exercise. Such exercise enhances collective thinking and movement too. Each time I trace a tangle and add a few threads that first seemed whimsical but turned out to be essential to the fabric. (Haraway 2016, 115–116)

Haraway points to the fact that attending to nuances of the dancers' experiences was an exercise of attuning my lydhørhed (link) and my ability to listen and respond to them. I also had to exercise and/or explore how I could craft conditions that made the dancers able to listen and respond to each other and to the costume. I needed to attune my response-abilities as a way of gaining knowledge of how the costume affected the dancers in different ways, and as an opening or invitation to the dancers to co-explore the costume and co-create the performance.

As mentioned (link), I asked the dancers to select and negotiate their placements in the costume. Even though I thought that offered the dancers agency, the short try-out of the different wearable parts and/or placements gave them no grounds to understand the impact of their choices. Thus, the question is whether the choice offered the dancers agency or not. However, the question highlights that whatever conscious and unconscious choices I made, my choice affected the collective process and informed how our co-creative relationship unfolded and flourished. Thus, as the host I need to be aware of and I must attend to how my choices affect what the dancers are able to do as well as maintaining cognisance that it affects our creative relationship.

### **Listening and sharing**

The Danish philosopher Professor Emeritus at Copenhagen Business School Ole Fogh Kirkeby writes in *Protreptik – selvindsigt og samtalepraksis*<sup>62</sup> that a key concept in his modern version of protreptic<sup>63</sup> is translocutionarity,<sup>64</sup> which suggests “that you do not know what you mean until you hear yourself say it” (Kirkeby 2016: 72).<sup>65</sup> Translocutionarity indicates that speaking is not a matter of formulating the perfect argument or explanation – it is the act of listening to oneself while speaking. This suggests that when we explain what we experience our attention is orientated

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<sup>62</sup> In English this translates to: Protreptic – self-awareness and dialogical practice.

<sup>63</sup> Kirkeby writes that “the very word protreptic means ‘to turn a human towards something’. In Aristotle's book [Protreptikós eis ten philosophian] it was philosophy, but in general it can be understood as turning it [the human] towards the essentials of their life, i.e., towards the values that can lead them towards themselves and towards the responsibility for the community [...]. The goal is to create reflexive awareness of one's own basic attitudes, to develop ideals for the good life and to create one's own commitment to interpretations of values based on the community” (Kirkeby 2016, 38; I have translated the quote from Danish). Kirkeby has developed a ‘modern’ version of the dialogical practice where the protrepto (such as individuals, groups and organisations) becomes, through etymology, for example, aware of basic values – an awareness that potentially helps them flourish in ‘new’ ways. It is worth mentioning that Kirkeby does not perceive protrepticism as a therapist or coaching practice.

<sup>64</sup> Kirkeby (in a mail dated 24/9 2024) has kindly translated translokutionaritet to English and has shortly addressed that the name of the concept originates from the Latin locutio meaning “I speak.” By placing trans (meaning through) in front of “I speak” Kirkeby's concept means “though the speech”. In the book *Protreptik – selvindsigt og samtalepraksis* Kirkeby etymologically unfolds the concept in some depth.

<sup>65</sup> Translated from Danish by the author.

towards our experiences. As we speak, and if we listen to ourselves while we speak, we can approach, unfold and discover new or other insights pertaining to what we have experienced. For example, by listening to ourselves while speaking and explaining we awaken our embodied memories with specific costume, whereby we recall and potentially re-discover how and what we sensed and how we were affected by this costume. Additionally, when we speak, we most likely consciously or unconsciously listen to and compare the present experience with past embodied memories.

In the context of sharing experiences, it does not only matter how we listen to ourselves, but it also matters how we listen to others. I suggest that when we listen to someone who explains how they have experienced a costume we might or might not understand or fully grasp what they are trying to explain. On the other hand, if we are open-minded their explanations might give us an inkling of something that is familiar and/or it might evoke some of our own embodied memories with costume. When we share our experiences of costume, we must embrace the fact that when we listen to others sharing their experience, they might have experienced something completely different to what we have. I suggest that if we are willing to listen with curiosity to each other's costume experiences and if we allow each other's explanations to be dwelling, hesitant, searching or something other, we potentially open ourselves to other people's experiences.

I argue that in our sharing sessions one of my hosting response-abilities was to ask open-minded and curious questions that invited the dancers to explain and approach how they experienced a specific situation. Another responsibility was to exercise my abilities to listen to the dancers' experiences and to embrace that specific improvisations or explorations with the costume would evoke different responses from the four dancers. Moreover, in the sharing sessions I exercised listening to the dancers with kindness and in a non-judgmental manner as an attempt to listen to what was not said or what was said between the lines – with an awareness that what I heard between the lines was my interpretation.

I suggest that our sharing sessions informed and focused the costume explorations and the dialogues that followed. I argue that our sharing sessions and our dialogues became the key element that evoked a collective awareness and crafted a shared language that made us attend to the collective dimensions of the costume (Østergaard 2023, 96). Thus, our different listening(s)



became a way of thinking together that moved the process forward and made us discover the relational and performative potential of the costume in the situation.

Other than that, through the dialogue we explored how the dancers could co-exist in the costume; not that co-existing was a matter of consensus or that the co-existing was purely pleasurable. In the collective interview the dancers shared how exhausted they felt after the rehearsals, after the performances and even one week after the project ended.

The dancers described how their wearable part had 'pushed and pulled' their bodies in ways that had made them quite sore. Moreover, re-listening to the interview, the dancers' descriptions of the 'after-effect' made me aware that the position 'in the middle' was more challenging than I realised in our process. This dancer's reflection on the 'after-effects' showed that even though I tried to listen as broadly as possible and to the four different placements in the costume, there were still aspects that I missed and that I did not hear. I can only speculate; I wonder why this dancer did not share their sensation of struggle in our sharing sessions. Perhaps because they were polite, perhaps they had not formulated the struggle while we were rehearsing or performing, perhaps the bodily soreness made them more aware of how challenging it was to be placed in the middle or perhaps something else entirely. Separate from this, in an interview I conducted one year after our process and the performances the dancers could quite quickly recall the embodied memories of the costume.

### **Attending to dilemmas**

Even though I argued that I crafted values of kinship into the costume, in the rehearsal I realised that I also crafted a hierarchy into the composition of the costume. During our process, but also through the interviews, it became apparent that the costume had a three-divided hierarchy: *at one end* two dancers were interrelated and empowered and could thus somehow control or overrule the movements of the others; *in the middle* the dancer was trapped and unfree; and *at the other end* the dancer was 'on the edge', with little possibility of interacting with or influencing the group. As host, I could not ignore the hierarchy that was embedded in the costume. I was accountable for how the costume was crafted and thus it was my responsibility to approach the hierarchy and to find ways to navigate the hierarchy together with the dancers. In our short rehearsal process, and in the performances, we managed to approach the hierarchy by beginning

to explore how to listen to the different placements in the costume. However, as mentioned, it was not until the collective interview two weeks after our process that I realised how challenging the middle position were.

As I crafted *AweAre* I made kin with its textile materials and its composition. Still, our listenings and co-creative process revealed that the *AweAre* costume had a persona that I did not know existed while I crafted it. Through the interviews it became clear to me that in our process I only just began to become familiar with the *AweAre* costume. There is still much that I do not know and that I potentially will never know. What I do know or rather, what I learned is that the *AweAre* costume's materiality and composition demanded of us to listen. I wonder whether perhaps we humans had less control and that the *AweAre* costume controlled us, our actions and listenings. For example, even if some of the dancers had more power than others it was the force of the costume that provoked the hierarchy.

Bennett notes that we “open up space for forms of ethical practice that do not rely upon the image of an intrinsically hierarchical order for things” (Bennett 2010, 12). With the *AweAre* costume a space of dilemmas appeared. During the process we touched upon aspects of the dilemmas related to the hierarchical placements in the costume, and during the interviews other aspects became apparent to me. In the process we discovered the movement/listening hierarchy of the *AweAre* and we only managed to approach some of those dilemmas of the hierarchy.

## Listening with the *AweAre* costume

### **Visiting as a part of listening**

I have unfolded that in our sharing session we listened to the dancers' experiences of their placement in the costume. In the listening we tried to understand and gain insights on how the placement affected the dancers in similar and different ways. As the host, our sharing sessions enabled me to ask questions and to listen to how the dancers described their experiences. From my position the dancers' explanations often contained something other than and more than I saw and something that I did not expect. As I did not experience the bodily effect of costume, the sharing session was crucial. The sessions became openings and ways for me to approach and 'visit' the four dancers' placement in the costume and ways to gain (in)sight of their perspectives on the collective dimensions of the costume.

I mentioned that while repairing the costume I ‘visited’ my meditative crafting state, and as I was repairing the costume, I realised that I had crafted a hierarchy into the costume. I intentionally use the word visit to suggest that ‘visiting’ was ways of listening to and approaching the dancers’ experiences and ways to recalling the dialogues that I had with the four dancers and/or what had happened between them. Haraway writes that

visiting is not an easy practice; it demands the ability to find others activity interesting, even especially others most people already claim to know all too completely, to ask questions that one’s interlocutors truly find interesting, to cultivate the wild virtue of curiosity, to retune one’s ability to sense and respond—and to do this politely! [...] [H]olding open the possibilities that surprises are in store, that something *interesting* is about to happen, but only if one cultivates the virtue of letting that one visit intra-actively shape what occurs. They are not who/what we expected to visit, and we are not who/what were anticipated either. Visiting is a subject and object-making dance, and the choreography is a trickster. Asking questions comes to mean both asking what others finds intriguing and also learning to engage *that* changes everybody in unforeseeable ways. (Haraway 2016, 127)

Haraway suggests that visiting is practicing our abilities to attend to others with curiosity, politeness and a willingness to explore things or aspects that we did not foresee.

Visiting my meditative crafting state was ways of thinking-with the materiality and spatiality of the *AweAre* costume in the present and in the past. Therefore, while repairing the costume I re-visited or re-discovered the composition of the costume. For example, I realised that one placement in the costume was quite distant from the others. At the same time, the repairing or crafting helped me linger on how I listened to the dancers the previous day. For example, I recalled the dancers’ embodied sensitivity towards the costume and I visited or re-listened how the dancers had described that the costume pulled on specific limbs and how the ‘push and pull’ affected them. Moreover, the lingering made me re-consider what I heard. For example, I speculated on what the dancers – especially the dancer placed in the distant position – had said, what they left unsaid or what they had potentially said. The crafting and the lingering on the dancers’ expressions offered a new awareness or new perspective on the costume’s materiality and spatiality. Through the re-listening I made kin with and/or became familiar with aspects of how the costume affected the

dancers that I did not hear or understand the day before, which enabled me to see contours of the costume from their embodied perspectives. Through the dancers I learned something about the costume that I did not know. I became familiar with new or other aspects of the costume 'persona' that I was unaware existed. In this new light the costume became a teasing, provoking and challenging persona that had a demanding voice. As the crafter and the host I could not ignore the challenging persona and the hierarchy of the costume that I had just discovered. I needed to re-attune my sensitivity towards the different placements in the costume and together with the dancers we had to discover how or whether we or they could listen to the four different placements in the costume.

### **Re-attuning our listenings**

Of course, it was not only the 'visiting' or re-listening that made me reconsider what I saw or heard. By repeatedly listening to what and how the dancers described their experiences and thus their perspectives on the costume I constantly gained new (in)sights that made me re-attune my gaze and made me pay closer attention to how I listened to the dancers' movements with the costume. The re-attunement became a relational attunement that made me listen to the dancers' embodied articulations or dialogue in more profound and polyphonic ways.

Moreover, the iterative process of exploring the costume and sharing and listening to what was explored and experienced made us collectively pay closer attention to the nuances of the different placements. As such the iterative process made us constantly re-attune to our listenings whereby we co-creatively became familiar with the *AweAre* costume. I intentionally write listenings in the plural to highlight that in the repetition of sharing and listening we learned something new or something that expanded our listening. We shared and discussed our perspectives, inklings, assumptions and creative solutions of how to navigate and negotiate with the costume persona. Each time we listened we attended to and discussed different details that made us re-attune our listenings. In the first few sharing sessions our focus was rather human-centric, yet, at the same time, these sessions orientated us towards the more-than-human persona; towards the vibrancy of costume and towards making kin with the collective costume body.

I do not insinuate that we listened to and heard the same, however sharing and discussing what we heard or learned though our listenings unfolded aspects of the costume persona that none of us could have approached singlehandedly. As such, our listenings created connections or a co-

creative relationship between us and the costume. Through our listenings we realised that *AweAre* was a persona with a will or power to force or generate movement between the dancers. This wilful persona invited the dancers to be playful and at the same time demanded of the dancers to pay attention to how they moved together as a collective body. The *AweAre* persona demanded of us that we attended to how we listened and responded to each other.

### **Listening ‘mediator’**

In individual interviews (2021) I asked the dancers to reflect on my role. One dancer responded that due to our ongoing dialogue “it felt like we were invited into your research inquiry”. Another dancer said that my role was to “ask the right questions that triggered the discussion”. The dancers’ reflections suggest that my questions were for them to further explore and unfold their own sensations and/or experiences and the listenings enabled them to become familiar with their fellow dancers’ sensations and/or experience. Moreover, the dancers indicated that my questions were an important part of evoking dialogues between us.

A third dancer reflected that “it was sometimes difficult to empathise with the others who were placed in different parts of the costume”. This dancer explained that the “lack” of empathy for fellow dancers was because “it was difficult to break out of a role or sensation while being inside the costume. Therefore, it was important for us inside [the costume] to have someone to go to, to have an exchange with”. This dancer suggested that I acted like a “communication centre” that “connected” them as well as that I was a “bouncing person or the voice to bounce our sensations back on and who would see it from a different point of view”. The last reflection indicates that – despite the cheerful and playful atmosphere – the dancers did not necessarily understand or empathise with their fellow dancers’ experiences. This dancer suggests that my position acted like a mediator between the dancers even though, or perhaps because, I was placed outside.

### **Complexities of listening from a placement**

In a conversational interview on listening (2023) I had with one of the dancers, they said while reflecting on our first rehearsal day from their placement and thus viewpoint from within the costume:

“I remember them having fun in their power position or in the hieratical setting of the costume. I could sense and hear them – and I listen to them from my point of view, which was from further away. But they couldn’t hear me. [...] I know that *they*

at some point thought that I wasn't listening to them – because they were having fun doing something and I wasn't joining. But I couldn't join due to how the costume was made. So, for them they might have felt that they were listened to me”.

The dancer's reflection highlights that the composition of the costume created a hierarchy between the four dancers that not only affected their movements but also affected how they were able to listen to one another. Even though the dancers thought that they listened to their fellows, it did not imply that their fellows felt heard or listen to. Thus, due to the different placements or positions in the costume it was easy to misinterpret or have a different perception of what was 'said' and how someone responded or did not respond, for example to an invitation to 'join the fun'.

The dancers' reflection highlights that the costume's stretchability (the 'push and pull' effect) and spatiality (the composition of the four placements) simultaneously caused rather different sensations and/or experiences and thus fostered embodied dialogues where what was 'heard' and 'said' was sometimes interpreted quite differently. Additionally, the quality, tempo, rhythm or direction of the dancers' movements constantly changed and thus the nuances of their embodied dialogues constantly evolved and/or changed directions. Thus, listening with the costume – with the stretchable and spatial connectedness – was complex.

As the host placed outside as witness, it was also hard to depict who or which placement was causing the shifting movement qualities, tempos, rhythms or directions. It is most likely that I – like the dancers – at times misinterpreted what caused the changing dynamic between them. Thus, as the mediator between the dancers, what I heard or how I interpreted what I heard was never neutral and thus neither were my listenings. Nevertheless, in our sharing session my question and the suggestions I made in the process arose from my curiosity of trying to understand or explore the dynamic between the dancers and to do so co-creatively with them.

### **Complexities of movement dynamics**

Even though there was a playful atmosphere between the dancers, or perhaps because of it, their experiences was different. The dancers' playfulness was somehow caused by the costume's stretchability, while at the same time the composition or the spatiality of the costume, made it complex if not impossible to grasp whether the origin of the dancers' movements was the materiality or the spatiality of the costume. Moreover, the dancers' movements were not

coordinated or choreographed and therefore it was hard to detect, depict and decide in which way one dancer's movements affected the movements of the other dancers. Thus, who or what was causing and affecting the dancers' different experiences? Bennett writes that "a cause is a singular, stable, and masterful initiator of effects, while the origin is a complex, mobile, and heteronomous enjoiner of forces" (Bennett 2010, 33). The heteronomous quality suggests that what was causing and effecting the dancers' experiences operated independently of them. This indicates that the costume as the mediating connector evoked movement impulses in the dancers and provoked movement forces between them. The dancers' movement impulses were dependent on the dancers' willingness to be affected by the costume's materiality and spatiality. The forces were dependent on the intra-action between the dancers and the costume, and as such the dancers and the costume became interdependent. This suggests that the origin of the dancers' different movements was in a constant state of flux between the movement impulses evoked in the dancers and the collective forces that the costume provoked.

However, even though placed outside, I had no clear overview and it was complex to grasp the movement impulse and forces that were at stake in between the dancers. As an attempt to understand or further approach the dynamic of the collective costume body we or they slowed down in tempo and tried to listen to the different directions or placements in the costume. As mentioned, during the three performances the dancers curiously continued to explore the dynamic of listening with their collective costume body.

### **Listening as practicing curiosity**

Once more I return to Haraway, who suggests that we must "cultivate the wild virtue of curiosity" and that we must "do this politely" (Haraway 2016, 127). The origin of the word 'curiosity' points to the desire to see, learn and know what is strange or unknown, including carefully paying attention to details. I suggest that implied in Haraway's pairing of curiosity and politeness is that when we show curiosity towards other people we must sense and respond to the other person in a considerate manner. On the other hand, curiosity, hand-in-hand with politeness, could be interpreted as if our listenings and responses are polished, and thus that our curiosity or interest is somewhat superficial.

Our sharing session was invitations to all of us to listen, to ask and be curious towards the dancers' different experiences. We listened politely, and at the same time through our listenings we

expanded our (in)sight and empathy towards each other's sensations, experiences and perspectives of the costume's spatiality and stretchability and/or the personality of the costume persona. Through the listening dialogues we co-creatively made kin with and/or became familiar with relational aspects of the costume. For example, the listenings made us aware that we related to and with the costume in different ways. Our different ways of relating with the costume at the same time became openings that made us curious to explore the differences. Our curiosities made us respond to each other's perspectives and made us explore ways in which we could co-creatively navigate and negotiate with the costume.

### **Relational listenings**

Haraway suggests that we must study "relations with relations" (Haraway 2016, 34), which is both intriguing and complex. During the costume explorations and/or performance-making process I related with the dancers through how they made kin or related with the vibrancy of the costume. We related with each other through sharing and listening. Our dialogues created relationships between us. As we continued to curiously explore and discuss how we could listen with the costume our relationship became closer.

Bennett writes that "Derrida points to the intimacy between being and following: to be (anything, anyone) is always to be following (something, someone), always to be in response to call from something, however nonhuman it may be" (Bennett 2010, xiii). This suggests that responding is being in response to or with fellow humans or more-than-humans, and to follow them. Not only did the costume connect the four dancers, but the costume was also our shared orientation or our relational meeting point. Even though I was placed outside, our sharings and listenings implied that I became closely engaged with the dancers' entangled relationship with the costume.

In *The scenographic, costumed chorus, agency and the performance of matter: A new materialist approach to costume* Donatella Barbieri<sup>66</sup> and Greer Crawly<sup>67</sup> write that the performativity of costume is generated through material discursive processes (Barbieri & Crawley 2019, 143). In our case I suggest that the performativity of the *AweAre* costume was evoked by the stretchability of

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<sup>66</sup> Scenographer Dr. Donatella Barbieri is principal lecturer in design for performance at the London College of Fashion, University of the Arts London (UK). Barbieri has, among other texts, published the book *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body* and is editor of *Studies in Costume and Performance*.

<sup>67</sup> Dr. Greer Crawly is lecturer in scenography and honorary research fellow at the Department of Drama, Theatre and Dance at the Royal Holloway University of London (UK) and senior lecturer in spatial design at Buckinghamshire University (UK).



and the 'push and pull' between the different spatial positions. Moreover, during the process I followed the dancers and we bounced between exploring, listening, sharing and reflecting/discussing, whereby we co-creatively became aware of aspects of the performative potentials of the *AweAre* costume. I write aspects in the acknowledgment that our process was rather short.

Barbieri and Crawley suggest that employing new materialist approaches to costume include "ethical negotiations in which [there] is a re-balancing of human and non-human matter" (2019, 144). This suggests that in performance-making processes the costumes are as important as humans. I argue we – us humans and the *AweAre* costume – became interdependent partners that related through and with our different bodies and/or materialities. Moreover, I suggest that the performative potentials that we explored were caused by how we related and listened to the costume as our co-creative partner.

## Listening matters that matters

### **The collective costume body**

I named the costume *AweAre* which – at the time of naming the costume – was inspired by and a tribute to Sally E. Dean who with her term "aware wearing" highlights that we (not only performers but also costume designers and other performance-makers) must be aware of how costume affects wearers. As such, the sharing session and the listenings that the sessions evoked came from a genuine wish to explore how the dancers were affected by the costume and how they formed co-creative relationships with the costume. Reflecting on our process, it has become apparent that the costume's name has an expanded or additional perspective. The *we* in *AweAre* was critical. The three *AweAre – a movement quintet* performances that the dancers performed at the festivals were versions of how *we* (that includes the costume) became during our process. In our short rehearsal process the dancers' made kin with the *AweAre* costume and through their explorations we became somewhat familiar with the costume's demanding personality. I argue that in the three performances the dancers and the *AweAre* costume became a collective costume body. A collective costume body where the dancers and the costume depended on each other. They became an organism that listened with and responded to the 'push and pull' in the stretchable textiles that connected them. The connections became vibrant matter that vibrated

with their movements and the vibrations affected their embodied dialogues. As an organism they listened to and with the vibrations between them. At times the vibrations evoked subtle and careful listenings, at other times it provoked surprising and rapid responses that changed the direction of the organism. Even though the collective costume body was a vibrant organism, it did not imply that the navigating and negotiating within the organism was pleasurable. It was exhausting and demanding.

### **Cultivating listening cultures**

In our process my aim was to explore relational and co-creational aspects of the *AweAre* costume. As an attempt to create a relational awareness or mindset in our rehearsal process, I hosted the sharing sessions. As mentioned, in the sharing session I had a genuine interest to hear, explore and gain knowledge of how the costume affected the dancers, individually and collectively.

Eva Skærbæk<sup>68</sup> writes that “independence without any link to dependency leaves both parts ignored, invisible and unloved” (Skærbæk 2009, 49). Skærbæk reminds me that if I do not show that I depend on and care for the dancers as fellow co-creators they become invisible. Therefore, it is critical that I, the host, listen to the co-creators as it is through the listenings that I show that I care about how costume affects their bodies.

As much as listening is offering attention to co-creators it is also a hosting orientation that the host demand of the co-creators. However, listening is not easy. This artistic project showed that listening is something that we consciously choose to do and even though we choose to listen to our fellows there are always things or aspects that we do not hear. Either because we do not want to hear it or because we cannot hear it from our position, or perhaps we are unaware that there are things or aspects that we do not hear – which is somehow straightforward and yet complex. In our process there were aspects that I, as host, did not hear and that I thus did not pay enough attention to, and there were aspects that I became aware of retrospectively.

Still, I suggest, that the repetitions of the sharing sessions became more than an offer: it became collective acts where we practiced how to listen. I argue that in the artistic projects the listenings that made us more empathic towards viewpoints other than our own and which made us pay closer attention to the listening dynamic between us. Thus, exchanging our different experience and viewpoints became critical for developing a collective awareness. Together we discovered the

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<sup>68</sup> Theologian Eva Skærbæk, (PhD) professor emeritus Østfold University Collage, NO

hierarchy that was embedded in the costume, and we approached the hierarchy by listening to the different placements in the costume. These co-directional listenings increased our collective awareness or collective listenings, which created another challenge since the collective listening was demanding and, at times, tiring and overwhelming. At the same time, I still suggest that the collective awareness became affirmative; though not affirmative in the sense that it created harmony, consensus or a sensation of being completely understood or 'heard'. The affirmative was an acknowledgment that the costume had a hierarchy and that the hierarchy 'hid' in the playful dynamic between the different placements – where some placements were heard, and others less so.

I suggest that as we enter new collaborations listening is collaborative culture that we must rehearse and cultivate co-creatively. I suggest that *listening with costume* attunes our *lydhørheder* (link) towards our co-creators. I argue that curious and open-minded co-creative costume processes include the critical, affirmative and caring act of listenings with the human and more-than-humans other with whom one is in an interconnected and co-creative relationship with.

### **Listening stretch-abilities**

Listening is not just an offer we give to other people; it is being willing to stretch oneself towards our co-creators whether the co-creators are human or not. What became apparent was that the *AweAre* costume, and especially its stretchability, taught me something about how *listening with costume* is acts of stretching towards the textile materials and toward the 'personality' of the costume.

As I was crafting the *AweAre* costume, interlocking the three crafting techniques – braiding, weaving and knotting – demanded time and patience *and* my full attention. The textiles' stretchability was demanding, and they required of me that I used my strength to interlock them. I still sense the soreness in my body – especially a sensation that my hands were swollen – after days of interlocking. As I listened to the dancers describe the 'after-effect' of the costume I empathised with them but I did not connect the two. In hindsight, it seems like part of the kin-making that is embedded in the *AweAre* costume is the demand of the stretchable textile materials.

The demand of the stretchable materials was also in the demand of the *AweAre* costume: I had to stretch myself towards the dancers' experiences of how they were 'pushed and pulled' by the

stretchability of the costume. In other words, as we were exploring and ‘struggling’ with the *AweAre* costume, it was especially the textile materials and its stretchability that challenged us to stretch our listenings to include ourselves but also to listen beyond ourselves. The *AweAre* costume demanded that we co-creatively stretched our listenings towards what the stretchability and spatial positions evoked and provoked between us. As mentioned in another path, one of the dancers suggested that I as the host acted as the mediator between their experiences, however I suggest that the costume was our mediator: a mediator that made us relate by stretching our listenings towards shaping a co-creative relationship with the costume.

In collaborative or co-creative processes I suggest that we must be willing to stretch our listening towards perspectives and positions that are different from our own, and that in the stretch we will learn something that we did not know prior to the stretch. The ontological question is how far we (humans) can stretch ourselves towards different human and more-than-human others without stretching ourselves beyond our limits or boundaries. What the *AweAre* costume and the dancers taught me is that I must be willing to stretch my listenings to learn things or aspects about costume that I do not know and that I cannot approach singlehandedly. Listening is also entering into landscapes of (ethical) dilemmas of how costume affect our bodies and what relationships the costume crafts between us. This project shows that listen with costume demanded of us to stretch our listenings beyond what we expected or knew which was rewarding to our co-creative relationship.

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## The artistic project *Community Walk*

In the artistic project *Community Walk* (2020), that was part of the festival *Wa(l)king Copenhagen*, I walked for twelve hours (11:00–23:00) in the central area of Copenhagen (Denmark) dressed in a bright yellow costume that connected me to twelve different guests, one at a time. The invited guests were designers, performers, choreographers and visual artists, and I walked with each guest for one hour. As series of connected pairs, we navigated and negotiated with the costume in the unpredictability of the public space. In this artistic project I use Sara Ahmed's concept of "orientation" to explore how crafting is an orientation towards something specific and how the costume during *Community Walk* fostered bodily orientations that threw us in different directions. Additionally, with Ahmed's orientation I approach what *hosting with communal hospitality* implies. For example, by exploring how I navigated between being a curious participant and being the responsible host.

The participating guests were Agnes Saaby Thomsen, Aleksandra Lewon, Anna Stamp, Benjamin Skop, Camille Marchadour, Daniel Jeremiah Persson, Jeppe Worning, Josefine Ibsen, Julienne Doko, Lars Gade, Paul James Rooney and Tanya Rydell Montan.

### Orientation(s)

In this path I unfold how Sara Ahmed's concept of "orientation" informs the artistic project *Community Walk*. For example, that positions or placements are our starting points and that my hosting orientation frame and inform our explorations with the costume. Before I do so, I would like to share that hosting stems from a genuine wish to share experiences with other people and from an urge to explore relational aspects of costume, such as exploring what happens when we are connected with a costume and thus share a material-discursive space.

#### Positions as starting points

In *Queer Phenomenology – orientation, objects, others* Sara Ahmed writes that to be orientated depends on taking points of view as given (Ahmed 2006, 14). Thus, our orientation towards things or objects – whether they are human or more-than-human – depends on the view we have from our placement or position. For instance, what we see, take for granted, assume and/or expect informs our viewpoint or orientation. Ahmed continues that



orientations are about how we begin: how we proceed from “here,” which affects how what is “there” appears, how it presents itself. In other words, we encounter “things” as coming from different sides, as well as having different sides. (Ahmed 2006, 8)

Ahmed suggests that how things appear to us depends on the view we have from our position. As we encounter things how things appear are our starting point. For example, how a costume appear to us affects what we expect or assume that the costume will enable us to do.

In collaborations the challenge is that as we arrive to collaborate, we will most likely not see, expect and assume the same. For example, in *Community Walk* we encountered the connecting costume, our expectations and assumptions regarding what the costume would enable us to do was most likely different. I had crafted the costume and the guests had only images – that I had e-mailed them – and as such our (in)sights to the material qualities of connecting costume were different. Thus, our starting points, or orientations towards the connecting costume, were different. In other words, our point of departure was informed by the (in)sights or overview we had of the costume.

Ahmed’s use of the word *side* suggests that there are sides that are invisible or unknown to us and thus our sight is always partial. Thus, whoever we are – the participant performers or the participating host – as we arrived there are sides of the costume and/or of the event that we had no sight of and that was unknown to us.

### **Durational placements**

Ahmed writes that “orientations shapes what bodies do, whiles bodies are shaped by orientations they already have” (Ahmed 2006, 58). As we arrive, we have an orientation that will shape what we can or will do. In *Community Walk* we did not arrive with the same orientation and thus we did not proceed from the same here. The fact that I placed myself in the centre (walked for twelve hours) and the participants were placed as visiting guests (walked for one hour) meant that we did not enter the costume at the same time and the duration of our participation in were different. Therefore, as a new guest arrived our orientation towards the costume as a material-discursive space were different. A few of the participating guests had been part of the artistic project *AweAre— a movement quintet*, but most of the participants only had images to guide their interpretations of what the connecting costume enabled us to do. My intention was to explore

whether there was any difference between having some knowledge of wearing a connecting costume and ‘jumping in’ rather unprepared and spontaneously. As it turned out, the unpredictability of the public affected and orientated the experiences of the costume in ways quite different than placing the exploration in the safety of a rehearsal space. Thus, there were not noticeable differences between the participants that had worn other versions of connecting costume and those that had not.

Ahmed writes that to

turn towards objects within phenomenology [...] is not about the characteristics of such objects, which we can define in terms of type, the kind of objects they are, or their functions, which names not only the “tendency” of the objects, what they do, but also, what they allow us to do. (Ahmed 2006, 33)

In this extract Ahmed suggests that objects in a phenomenological sense are not about their characteristics or functionalities but about what they allow us to do. Still, to turn towards phenomenology is to experience what the specificities of costume – for example its materialities and compositional properties – *do* to our bodies and what these properties *allow us to do*.

In *Beyond Costume* Rachel Hann<sup>69</sup> writes that

both the experience of dressing within costume and interpreting its semantic overtones, offer a means of positioning costume as a mode of place orientation where costume affect performers as part of a reciprocal conditioning between body and fabric. (Hann 2019, 48)

Hann points to what costume communicates and how costume affects performers bodies.

Moreover, Hann suggest that “costume choreographs action, while the choreography activates costume” (Hann 2019, 48). This can be interpreted as stating that costume is a device that enables designers, performers and other performance-makers to develop choreographies or embodied dramaturgies. In line with Hann, in *Costume Agency – artistic research project*<sup>70</sup> costume designer Christina Lindgren and dramaturg Sodja Lotker suggest that in costume performance-making

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<sup>69</sup> Rachel Hann (PhD) is a cultural scenographer and current AHRC Fellow based at Northumbria University, Newcastle (UK). She researches more-than-human cultures of performance design, climate crisis and trans performance.

<sup>70</sup> The Costume Agency project (2018–2022) explored “how costume performs” (Lindgren & Lotker 2023, 13). The project was initiated and facilitated by costume designer Christina Lindgren and dramaturge Sodja Lotker (PhD) and was supported by Norwegian Artistic Research Program and Oslo National Academy of the Arts. In the eight workshops multiple costume designers (professionals and students) and performers were invited to join and contribute to the research.

processes of performativity come from the material<sup>71</sup> (Lotker 2023, 35), including that costume is a tool to discover new sides of characters<sup>72</sup> and new concepts for the interpretation of dramatic texts (Lindgren 2023, 28). As such Lindgren and Lotker argue that costume allows us to generate performances.

In the context of *Community Walk* my former experiences with other connecting costumes gave me knowledge of the bi-stretch textile materials in combination with the spatial composition had stretching and bouncing tendencies that potentially made us playful. Susan Marshall<sup>73</sup> suggests that being playful with costume is to be “mentally flexible, spontaneous, curious and persistent” (Marshall 2021, 63–64). I suggest that when we are spontaneous, we are flexible, instinctive and intuitive in our responses, and when being curious our attitude is perhaps a bit more persistent, analytical and/or reflective. In Marshall’s case the costumes are modular, and the playfulness explored some of the very many different possible ways in which the modules could be combined and worn primarily by one person. The knowledge I gained from other connecting costume versions was that playfulness meant being curious towards how the stretching (com)positions orientated and affected us bodily and collectively. It is also about being willing to spontaneously bounce with the materialities and with the wearing partner(s), as a game of bouncing and navigating together. Thus, I expected that our explorations with the connecting costume in *Community Walk* would be playful.

However, I had no experience of wearing and exploring a connecting costume in an urban setting. I did not know how such a placement and the duration of twelve hours would affect me physically. Moreover, situated or placed in a public environment implied that I could not predict or control what would happen. The question was how I could partake and at the same time host a situation that was unknown to me, and that to some extent was uncontrollable. How could I create conditions that orientated us towards attending and exploring what the costume allowed us to do?

### **Hosting orientations**

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<sup>71</sup> In workshop #2 Lindgren & Lotker explored costume and materials through devising methods.

<sup>72</sup> In workshop #1 Lindgren & Lotker worked with act 4, scene 4 of Henrik Ibsen’s drama *Hedda Gabler* (Lindgren 2023, 20). By repeating the scene, they (the researchers and actors) explored how changing Hedda Gabler’s costume (six different versions) affected the character (and actor playing Hedda Gabler) and the three other characters/actors in the scene.

<sup>73</sup> In the thesis *Insubordinate Costume* costume designer Susan Marshall (PhD) explores how performers and designers become inventive and playful with her modular costumes.

My intention in *Community Walk* was to place the twelve participating guests and myself as horizontally as possible in the costume. Ahmed writes that

spaces too are orientated in the sense that certain bodies are “in place” in this or that place. [...] Orientations affect how subjects and objects materialize or come to take shape in the way that they do. (Ahmed 2010, 235)

In the context of hosting, even though we most likely arrived with different orientations, I suggest that the costume as material-discursive spaces are orientated by how hosts host. For example, the host’s invitation indicates to the guests what they are invited to do and how they are expected to act to be in place. In the situation the attitude of the host indicates whether the guests are in place, out of place or whether the placemaking is a negotiable and shared explorative matter. As such, the host’s invitation frames the place or space, and the host’s attitude will orientate and affect what the guests and the host are able to do together *as well as* how the space materializes. An invitation can open, provoke, inspire, excite, confuse, limit or in other ways orientate guests’ interpretations, assumptions or imaginations of what being in place implies. Even though the host has framed the situation, the host cannot assume, expect or know how the invitation will orientate guests. The guests arrive with their partial sight of the site that is partially informed by the host’s invitation, and that is most likely also partially informed by the guests’ former experiences of situations that might be alike. Still, an invitation will orientate how the guest and the host – individually and collectively – enter situations or events. As they arrive their orientations will affect how they can proceed and progress. In other words, an invitation will orientate the orientations we have as we arrive. As we proceed, our orientations will affect how we attune and/or (re-)orientate ourselves towards each other, towards the connecting costume as the material-discursive space that we will share and explore together. Moreover, our orientations – as our starting points – affect how humans or more-than-human others materialise themselves to us.

As an attempt to create a shared space or starting point for *Community Walk*, I crafted the connecting costume and five rituals (link) to frame the event. The framing was a crucial part of my invitation and through the initiation the guests were informed about the conditions of their participation. As they arrived their orientation might, or might not, have been informed by my invitation. I write *might* since it is reasonable to suggest that the guests’ orientation was also

shaped by, for example, experiences and/or encounters that happened five minutes or five years prior to their arrival. No matter what kind of orientations the guest arrived with, it still mattered how I invited the guests into the costume as well as how I hosted the situation, since the hosting attitude informs what the guests are able to do.

As mentioned, my ambition was to create a horizontal relationship between us. As a host with good intentions, how could I guide and direct my guests to enter the costume and the material-discursive space? Ahmed notes that “within the concept of direction is a concept of ‘straightness’. To follow a line might be a way of becoming straight, by not deviating at any point” (Ahmed 2006, 16). ‘Straightness’ implies that the host has articulated and/or unarticulated expectations towards the guest, such as expectations regarding how the guest must be in line or place and/or what kind of actions are considered as stepping in or out of line. The framing or the hosting encompasses rules, values, cultures, expectations and directions to guide the guests that indicates how the event is expected to proceed. ‘Straightness’ as a hosting attitude or strategy is therefore not just a guideline but is a direction to ensure that guests stay in line. ‘Straightness’ as *the* hosting strategy or hosting orientation potentially controls, limits and imprisons guests in the realm of expectations. On the other hand, if ‘straightness’ is used as a critical tool towards the hosting intentions, it asks the host to consider how strict the directions are and whether the host is willing to re-orientate the hosting directions and thus (re)negotiate and re-orientate the hosting attitude. Therefore, not only in the preparation of, but also during an event like *Community Walk*, the host must be critical towards the ‘straightness’ of hosting intentions to discover which expectations and assumptions might be ‘hidden’ in the directions, invitations, framings and/or attitudes.

## Crafting Orientations

### **Craft as orientations**

Sara Ahmed writes that “to be oriented in a certain way is how certain things come to be significant, come to be objects *for me*” (Ahmed 2010, 235). Ahmed suggests that our orientation determines whether we notice things that are nearby or that surround us. Orientation is the way that our attitude and attunement are directed and how certain things materialise and become a bodily presence to us. Thus, in crafting processes we must attend to our orientation.

Like Ahmed's object, textile materialities become significant *to me* when I craft. Crafting orients me towards sensorial experiences and compositional potentialities of specific textile materials. The sensorial experiences of specific textiles orientate me towards my body, which might be implicit. On the other hand, these orientations that bounce back and forth between the textiles and my body are essential. This bouncing awakens my sensorial orientations and sparks an urge to collaborate or co-create with the textiles. As a gift, the textile materials spark my imagination. Sparked by the bouncing orientations, I imagine outlines of costumes: for example aesthetic and visual expressions, functionalities and assumptions of sensorial experiences. The way that I am orientated in a specific situation affects how I envision a costume and how I will craft a costume. For example, while crafting the *AweAre* costume (link) my ambition was to make kin with the textile materials. I was orientated towards listening with the textile materials, aiming to spark a dialogue with and between them and the crafting techniques. I was orientated towards a metaphorical and imaginative dialogue with the textiles on how to craft or shape the *AweAre* costume.

Ahmed notes that "the things we are orientated towards is what we face, or what is available to us within our field of vision" (Ahmed 2006, 115). For example, the way that I face textiles and crafting will orientate how I envision a costume and/or the things that are available in the situation, which will orient how I can and will craft a costume. Things include, for example, material, compositional and functional considerations. The things that are available are always contextual and situational. In *Community Walk* some of the things or considerations were the duration and spatial elements that were entailed in the invitation to participate in, and contribute to, the *Wa(l)king Copenhagen* festival. As I will unfold below, the festival context orientated me towards crafting a connecting costume that I would wear and share with twelve different guests in the urban landscape.

### ***Wa(l)king Copenhagen – the festival context***

The *Wa(l)king Copenhagen* festival was developed by Metropolis<sup>74</sup> as a response to the Danish Covid-19 lockdown. Metropolis invited 100 different artists to over 100 days (starting 1 May 2020)

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<sup>74</sup> On their website Metropolis write that "Metropolis is a meeting point for performance, art, city and landscapes – an art-based laboratory for the performative, site-specific, international art. Copenhagen International Theatre is behind Metropolis and has initiated and created a large number of festivals and projects in Copenhagen." During the festival I collaborated with Trevor Davis, Katrien Verwilt and Louise Kaare Jacobsen.

to artistically (a)wake or (re)activate an area, chosen by the invited artists, in central Copenhagen for twelve hours. I was invited on 7 July 2020 – *Community Walk* was on 30 July 2020 – which offered little time to plan and organise my contribution. However, the awareness of the fact that I was the only costume designer who was invited to participate in the festival, immediately orientated me towards envisioning a connecting costume creating a material-discursive space between two people in the public environment. Due to the personal nature of the invitation I pictured myself as being ‘in the centre’, and that twelve different guests would join the walking-exploration with the costume for one hour each. As opposed to the artistic project *AweAre – a movement quintet*, I was orientated towards wearing and experiencing the bodily effects of being connected and of sharing a material-discursive space for twelve hours with twelve different people.

### **Crafting the connecting costume for *Community Walk***

The connecting costume that I envisioned was recognisable in its idiom and was crafted in flexible or stretchable textiles. My ambition was that the costume should depict clothing that was so common that it somehow disappeared in the public environment and that it was as visible and/or readable as a traffic light. The immediate impulse was to craft the costume in bright yellow, but since the *AweAre* costume also was crafted in yellow nuances I searched for textiles in bright reds, greens and blues. However, I kept returning to the bright yellow bi-stretch materials that I had in stock.

I did not want the costume design to represent or repeat more classical aesthetic choices or designs of mine, such as resembling the *AweAre* costume or other connecting costume versions that I had crafted prior. As mentioned, my intention was to explore the costume from ‘inside’ and, at the same time, I did not want the costume to be too comfortable for me to wear in the sense that it reproduced clothing that I have in my wardrobe and that I wear in my daily life.

I imagined that the costume should resemble relaxed sportswear like track suits, not too tight or bodily revealing, the kind of casual clothing that many people of different ages wear in their daily life in public: not fashionable and not pointing towards specific sports activities.

The connecting ‘track suit’ costume that I envisioned consists of two visually similar jumpsuits that were connected at three points: arm, torso and leg. I wanted the jumpsuits to be functional and flexible in the sense that it would be easy to enter or jump into, that the size enabled the

participants to wear the costume over their own clothing and that the fit was easy to adjust to the measures of the twelve participants. As it may or may not appear, the costume that I imagined orientated me towards quite specific visual, functional and material aspects. In principle, I could have made a sketch or a technical drawing and hired someone to produce the costume. I did not. Instead, I made a prototype of the jumpsuit to test how to make an adjustable size, to test the placement of the three connecting points and to test other functionalities, such as the length of the opening and the number of buttons, including testing size-adjusting mechanisms to tighten the waistline and make the pants/legs shorter. With these functionalities in place the costume could have been easy and quick to craft. However, I had far from enough yellow bi-stretch material in stock to make two similar jumpsuits. There was no time to order additional bi-stretch textile from any supplier and no fabric stores in Copenhagen had any bright yellow bi-stretch. Thus, I decided to dye whatever whiteish bi-stretch textile I had in stock. Due to the fibre combinations of the textiles the dyeing of the different fabrics turned out as a pallet of yellow nuances. From the textile pallet I created or sewed a yellow-collage piece of fabric. With some fiddling, there was just enough fabric to sew two jumpsuits. The leftover pieces of fabric I sewed together, and the length of the sampled pieces decided the length of the connecting parts of the costume. In the end the two jumpsuits appeared visually alike, but they were not as similar as I had imagined. However, I was pleased with the collage-pattern look: the collage-look referred to track suits but did not look too much like mass-produced clothing. The limitations of the bi-stretch available in the situation, meant that the 'track suit' connecting costume version had a visuality of its own – a look that I could not or did not envision prior to crafting the costume.

I finished crafting the costume a few days before the event, which potentially offered me time to rehearse in the costume. However, placing myself 'in the centre' was an ambition to challenge myself to explore a connecting costume on new and other terms and/or perspectives than I had done prior.<sup>75</sup> Another intention was to place the twelve participating guests and myself as equally

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<sup>75</sup> In other contexts I have physically explored costume through wearing—alone and collaboratively with colleagues and/or with students. These explorations were often situated in private and 'controlled' settings – for example in indoor studios or rehearsal spaces – with a duration of one to three hours. However, I was not entirely without experience of rehearsing with costume in an urban setting. In the performance project "Traces of Tissues" we – Sally E. Dean, six performers and I – had all rehearsals taking place in different parks in the UK, Denmark and the Czech Republic. Nonetheless, in "Traces of Tissues" I was mainly placed outside in the role of co-curator (with Dean) of the performance material that the six performers co-produced.



or horizontally as possible in the material-discursive space. Thus, I did not rehearse any walking in public prior to the event, in the hope of enabling a more spontaneous and intuitive walk.

### **The spatial orientations of crafting**

Previously I suggested that crafting is a matter of the crafter's orientation and thus crafts and design people must attend to our orientation. I unfolded that the Metropolis invitation orientated me towards crafting a connecting costume and towards placing myself in an unfamiliar situation. The crafting process or strategy that I described is perhaps in line with more classical design processes where a costume design concept is informed by the performance context. However, crafting costume involves more than the conceptual framework of the design/performance and more-than-textiles.

Ahmed's orientation starts at the writing table with tools like a pen and paper, which are aspects that enable her to write. Like writing, crafting is an activity that orientates the crafter towards things that enable the labour of crafting. The video highlights and values the spatial conditions and the tools that enabled me to craft the costume for *Community Walk*.

## **Starting points and framings**

### ***Community Walk* brief (30 July 2020)**

On the Metropolis website I introduced *Community Walk*:

In a time when we are encouraged to keep distance from other people, *Community Walk* is an investigation of the physical presence of other people. How do we meet and greet when familiar rituals such as handshakes and hugs are discouraged? How do we recognise the presence of other people when we individually and collectively perform social control in the fear of an invading but hidden enemy? Over 12 hours, I will together with 12 guests explore proximities in and distances of communities. Caused by the places and the people we pass; we will have physical and verbal dialogues on the concept of community. What is the "state" of our communities? (I have translated the text from Danish)

In *Community Walk* I invited six women and six men to participate. The participants were either trained/educated and working as dancers, performers, actors and/or choreographers, or educated and working as designers within costume, scenography, fashion or visual art. The participants

were between twenty-two to fifty-six years old, had different European backgrounds and identify themselves as male, female or queer.

Three of the participants had been a part of *AweAre – a movement quintet*, and I invited them to have a shared reference point. I had collaborated with several of the participants in other performance or artistic contexts. For example, one had hired me to design costumes for several performances, one I had hired to perform in a performance project, and several participants and I had been hired by performance collectives or theatre institutions to collaborate on different performance projects. Together with one of the participants we had co-created several independent textile/costume experimental projects. A few of the participants were former students and several of the participants I consider friends.

The Metropolis festival paid the invited artists a fee, which I used to hire a videographer, who was also the last participant, to document *Community Walk* with video and photo. Thus, the third person in *Community Walk* was the videographer that followed us a by walking behind, in front and/or beside us. The participants signed an informed consent contract that *Community Walk* and the video/photo documentation would form part of this artistic research. Throughout this artistic project I will use the gender-neutral pronouns ‘their’ and ‘they’, not only to anonymize the participants but in respect of the different pronouns they use for themselves.

### **Naming the project**

In naming my contribution to the festival, I wanted to point towards the notion that walking is an act of doing something in common which potentially create a sense of community. As I use and understand the Danish<sup>76</sup> word *fællesskab* (community), imply that when you invest yourself in what we do in common you also offer something to the common doing. By investing ourselves in the common doing we collectively create a community or relational space.

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<sup>76</sup> The etymological notions of the words in Danish and English are quite similar. Still, the Danish word *fællesskab* resonates differently in me than the English. *Fællesskabet* (the community), which connotes fellowship, relationships and friendships and to do something (*fælles*) in common do not imply that we have agreed or be in line. *Fællesskaber* (communities) is precious to me and I thrive in *fællesskabet* (being in relation with others) where we do something and learn with each other.

Apart from that, I was inspired by how educational theorist Etienne Wenger, in the context of “community of practice”<sup>77</sup> (Wenger 1998), describes participation. Wenger suggest that participating involves

the social experience of living in the world in terms of membership in social communities and active involvement in social enterprises. Participation in this sense is both personal and social. It is a complex process that combines doing, talking, thinking, feeling, and belonging. It involves our whole person, including our bodies, minds, emotions, and social relations. (Wenger 1998, 55–56)

With Wenger’s definition of how we as humans participate in communities of practice, I decided to use the English word community. Therefore, in the name *Community Walk*, the concept of community contains both a reference to Wenger and to the Danish words *fælles* (common) and *fællesskab* (community).

### **The walking routes**

In preparation for *Community Walk* I planned a detailed walking route that led from one transitional location to the next. At each location a new participant would enter the costume. As the transitional places had to be easy to find, I chose places like squares and train stations. My overall ambition was that *Community Walk* related to walking routes and/or outdoor places where I meet friends *and* that were part of my daily walks/routines during the Covid-19 lockdowns. The walking route travelled through various urban environments, for example different parks and squares, pedestrian streets, sidewalks of busy roads and quiet streets and harbour sites.

### **The five rituals**

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic governmental restrictions, audiences were not allowed the gather. Consequently, Metropolis arranged that audiences could follow the *Wa(l)king Copenhagen* festival via live streams on Facebook. Thus, every artist that contributed to the festival, was asked to live stream five to ten minutes every hour – in total each artist produced thirteen live streams. During

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<sup>77</sup> Wenger’s concept of “community of practice” refers to a group of people that share common interests, concerns or passions for something they do together, and in the shared doing they also engage in a process of collective learning. Wenger, in collaboration with social anthropologist Jane Lave, introduced the concept in their book *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation* (1991). Wenger further developed the concept in his book *Communities of Practice: learning, meaning and identity* (1998).

*Community Walk* we had no idea whether any audiences followed our live streams. With the insights that I gained during *Community Walk* I would have organised the live stream situation differently. However, in this artistic research the focus is not to discuss the live stream situation and its implications. Still, the requirement to live stream had an impact on how I framed *Community Walk*. As a framing I created five simple rituals that I repeated with each participant.

- Welcome ritual: greeting a new participant.
- Transition ritual: undressing/dressing, passing on the costume to the next participant.
- Testimony ritual: the departing participant shortly reflected on their experiences of the walk. This ritual mainly served *Wa(l)king Copenhagen* but as it turned out it has also formed a valuable part of the documentation for my research.
- Farewell ritual: greeting the departing participant. I asked each departing participant how they wanted the new participant and I to bid them farewell.
- Walking and talking ritual: exploring the costume and jointly navigating elements, the environment and people who we passed by or who passed by us. In the introduction to the participants, I wrote, for example, that “walking and talking” would be about physically exploring how we could sense each other through the costume, and that, prompted by the places and the people who we passed, we would physically and verbally reflect on the concept of ‘community’.

During the live stream situation, that included the welcome, transition, testimony and farewell rituals, I asked each participant to share a few insights to our dialogues and to share their experiences of being connected through a costume. The participants’ statements in the live stream situation, are part of the data that I call ‘testimonies’, where the other part includes short self-recorded respond on the experience that I asked each participant to send me in the hours after their participation. In the pathways I quote the participants’ statements from their testimonies and from interviews I did with each of them individually after *Community Walk*.

### **The walking and talking ritual**

The main ritual of *Community Walk* was walking and talking. ‘Walking’ was an invitation to physically sense each other through the costume and jointly navigate and negotiate the costume, people who we passed or who passed us and the urban/nature elements.

'Talking' was an ambition to have dialogues on what constitutes communities as my contribution to *Wa(l)king Copenhagen* was to 'take the temperature' on the state of our communities. I did not search for answers, and I did not intend to lead our dialogues in a specific direction. My ambition was to spark fluent dialogues between us. However, in this research I do not intend to unfold or discuss the state of our communities, and I will not retell or reveal the participants' personal stories.

My interest lies in how the concept 'walking and talking' orientated the walking explorations. UU described that 'walking and talking' was almost "like holding hands". UU reflected that this style of walking and talking side by side, more resembled their daily life than their performance practice. In the situations of literally 'just' walking and talking, the connecting part of the costume dangled between us, indicating that we forgot or did not pay attention to the costume. On the other hand, the dangling connection touched the ground and created subtle sensations – at times almost imperceptible – of different pavements, structures and coatings such as cement, tiles, cobblestones, pebbles and grass. We hardly addressed these sensations, but the awareness of the dangling connection slipped in and out of my attention throughout the twelve hours. As such, these subtle sensations made me aware of different surfaces and thus created spatial orientations. Several of the participants reflected that 'walking and talking' frame was like two tracks of communication that battled to become the driving force (Østergaard 2024, 177). At the same time, UU reflected that

"if you didn't feel like talking or didn't feel like moving, you could switch between them. In some way, the physical connection could almost interrupt the conversation. In any case, I did not experience it [talking] as a limitation, more an expansion and increasing of one's possibilities."

As was the case with UU, I experienced that the participants quickly and naturally switched between and/or blended verbal and physical dialogues.

## Entering and exploring the costume

### **A sense of exposure**

As *Community Walk* started, the first participant and I dressed in the costume sitting on a bench 50 meters from my home at a busy square with several traffic lights. As I was dressing in my

jumpsuit, my part of the costume, I was aware of people who passed us on bikes, in cars or in busses. At the same time, I attended to whether the participant needed any guidance to adjust the costume. In the eleven transitions that followed I remained dressed in my jumpsuit and the other jumpsuit was passed on from one participant to the next.

In the testimonies and interviews almost all participants spoke about a somewhat unpleasant sensation of exposure that included a heightened self-awareness as they dressed in the costume (Østergaard 2024, 177); a sensation that stayed with them as we started to walk. NN said that “in the beginning I remember feeling awkward. Not being a person that is visible, then this bright costume and people looking at us – but also at *me*.” This testimony expresses that the experience of walking in the costume felt somewhat uncomfortable for them as a non-performer. As a performer, OO reflected that “not having the comfort zone of the performance space” made the situation vulnerable. WW remarked that the experience of the transition saying that

“we were in the square and people were looking and wondering – you see it in their faces, in their expression, in their eyes. Maybe they slow down, or they sit at the café and turn around to look. So, you were on the spot. Not that I'm not used to being on the spot in public space as a performing artist. I've for example been a samba dancer wearing costume with feathers and stuff. But this was a different setting because it was not about looking beautiful or representing a culture. It [*Community Walk*] was experimental I would say. And so, it's a different gaze that you get from being in a costume like this.”

NN, OO and WW's experiences reveal that entering the costume provoked a heightened awareness of themselves and of the people who were in our nearby surroundings.

The transition situation orientated the participants' attention towards outer gazes and towards the fact that the visibility of the costume made it impossible for us to hide or blend into the public environment. In their interview CC reflected that “it's a little peculiar to recall that when I stepped into the costume, I experienced an increased self-awareness and, after a short period of time, I experienced something completely opposite.” As CC mentions, they quickly forgot the heightened self-awareness and the sense of exposure. WW reflected that “the casualty of relating to each other by walking and talking meant that I could zoom out from the outer gaze.” KK said that our dialogue became “such an intimate experience and the space [the public surroundings] became

less relevant or less imposing which had the effect that the self-consciousness disappeared naturally.” As with CC, WW and KK, all participants registered a shift of awareness, but none of them could report when the shift happened.

### **Exploring the costume**

As we start walking, I invited most of the participants to test-stretch the costume with me. In the test-stretch we counterbalanced with the costume, which involved us leaning in opposite directions and stretching the connecting part of the costume to its limits. In their interview AA reflected that “in order to become free in my exploration it was important that you kept repeating that I didn’t have to worry about the costume. Otherwise, I think I would have wondered whether it was ok to stretch the costume to the limits and if there was some unspoken limitation for my explorations.” So even though the test-stretch was often quite short it also offered the participants – like AA – the experience that the costume or the stretchable materiality had the strength to carry our weight.

Another physical invitation – that I offered almost everyone – was to walk on the opposite side of a pillar or a pole in order to hang around the pillar or pole together. The ‘hanging’ orientated us towards each other and often created intimate moments.

The simple invitations acted as openings that re-orientated the participants’ sense of exposure towards co-exploring the possibilities with the costume (Østergaard 2024, 179). Thus, the test-stretch and ‘hanging’ orientated us towards the space that we shared – the costume. Being orientated towards the costume gave AA “a childlike freedom to explore a new parameter that I didn’t know what it could do”. The new parameter suggested that the costume was different and/or had qualities and possibilities different to those AA – as a performer – had experienced with costumes that they had worn prior. For AA this new parameter invited their playfulness to flourish.

KK reflected on the experience of exploring the costume, saying:

“because you are linked to another body, I think the costume invites and encourages you to test the edges of it – how it stretches, how it sits on the body, and how we work together with gravity. In your choices you are dependent. You coexist and are co-dependent on another physical entity. That entity embodies the conversation or

the material, what it informs, what the other person will do and not do – it directs and drives. It's impossible not to respond. You must respond.”

MM reflected that the costume’s “physical connection [implied] that we didn’t necessarily have to be body to body. After all, it is a provocation but also an invitation to be together. You depend on each other. You also have to cooperate and be willing to accept initiatives from each other.”

KK and MM highlighted that the costume was an invitation to explore and negotiate. CC said: “I think that the costume draws your attention to the space between us.” This indicates that the stretchability highlighted the spatial connection of the costume – and vice versa – that fostered the sense of our connectedness or an experience of being interdependent.

### **Inward and outward orientations**

As I have unfolded above the test-stretch and the ‘hanging’ invited us to become playful with the costume. KK reflected that “the costume was a shield that allowed you to do other things than in your daily life.” For example, in a spacious park we explored different styles of walking, running, jumping and crawling. During our exploration KK “felt like other people were both in the same universe and existing parallel to us.” KK indicated that the costume allowed us to immerse ourselves in our shared space and the explorative immersion made us forget how we appeared in public.

Opposite KK, OO reflected that the visuality of the costume created a constant sensation of having “an outside observer observing”. For example, during our walk OO and I passed a group of people who seemed to be waiting to enter a museum. The documentation shows that we felt that these people looked at us as if we were some kind of odd entertainment. In the interview OO reflected that

“we had the opportunity to take off the costume and blend in. Whereas minorities cannot shed off their skin colour or identity, if it reads physically, and therefore they can’t hide from the gaze of other people. [...] The weirdness of being connected through a costume offered us the experience of exposure and a sense of not belonging and our presence questioned norms”.

In the situation our awareness of our appearance, combined with our interpretations that people possibly judged us, not only exposed us: it created a sensation of being queered.



KK and OO's reflections reveal that the costume had an inward and an outward orientation. In situations where the costume orientated us inwardly – towards our intimated relationship – it became a protection from outer gazes that allowed us to become immersed in our exploration. In the situations where we were aware of attracting outer gazes, or assumed that we did so, we attended to and speculated on how we appeared outwardly. At times this made the situations more vulnerable and/or made us more hesitant in our physical exploration.

During all twelve walks our attention constantly shifted between being immersed in our intimate relationship and being affected by the outward sensation of exposure. Moreover, in the moments when we attended to our appearance the visuality of costume reminded us that the situations differed from how we appear in public in our daily life and/or from various performance contexts. However, in the situations where our orientation shifted it was hard to detect whether it was the inward or the outward orientation or somewhere in between that was the cause or effect.

## Video edit of the twelve hours

This 36-minute video is a condensed version of the twelve-hour Community Walk, showcasing all twelve participants. It features a variety of locations we explored and captures some of our encounters with both humans and more-than-humans. The video perspective shifts with the final participant, as I held the camera while walking. "

Some clips from this edit will also appear in videos within other pathways. These shorter video edits delve into specific topics explored within their respective pathways.

## Orientations towards humans and more-than-human elements

### **Orientations towards urban/nature elements**

In their interview NN reflected that "in our daily life urban environment and architecture is often transparent." For NN, navigating together dressed in the costume in the urban landscape became

"a playground that changed your perspective. Like if you are a person in a wheelchair some urban elements, that are invisible for many people, become visible obstacles. I think our awareness was sharpened because we were in an unusual situation."

NN suggested that the costume orientated and awoke their awareness towards urban elements in a fashion different to that of their daily life (Østergaard 2024, 180).

One example of how elements became obstacles or openings was a situation when WW's attention was drawn towards two yellow barriers that were randomly placed on a sidewalk. On WW's initiative we explored how we could tangle with and between the barriers and how we could stretch and move the barriers with the connecting part of the costume. In their interview WW reflected that they were surprised by their playfulness with the barriers. For WW this exploration differed from the way that they normally generate movement material in site-specific performances. WW's spontaneous impulse to entangle and move with the barriers became a game where WW commented or 'directed' our actions – almost like when children negotiating while playing, for example by saying "now we say that I am the father, and you are the mother and now we do..." This game that WW called "our yellow community" made us forget the surroundings.

Another example occurred on the large square Israels Plads. II reflected that the square

"invited me to lay down on the soft coating and the seating stairs invited us to investigate how the different levels of the stairs affected the sensation of the pull between us. While I was laying down, I could sense how the direction of the pull changed while you moved around me. And, when I was at the top and you were placed at the bottom of stairs the sensation of the pull also changed depending on how we moved in relation to each other."

With seating areas, benches or stairs that offer an overview of the square and areas for physical activity coated with bouncy and soft material, Israels Plads' architectural programme focuses on social activities (Østergaard 2024, 180). The square is often populated with groups of people socialising and exercising, for example playing football, basketball or skateboarding. 'Hence, it seems reasonable to suggest that we followed the square's prescribed programme' (Ibid.). Even though we followed the square's programme, we explored surfaces and architectural elements in ways that differed from the other people who were present at the square.

As with NN, WW and II, 'I experienced situations with all twelve participants where urban/nature elements caught their attention and fostered encounters with trees, street signs, lamp posts, building columns, benches, different kinds of roadblocks and other urban/nature elements. In the

situations the elements became sites of embodied dialogues' (Ibid.) and/or embodied explorations of how these different elements invited us to stretch the connection by, for example, moving around, tangling, hanging or counterbalancing with each other. Other elements, like the wind, were momentarily present, which made us explore in which ways we could catch the wind and transform the connection into a parachute or kite. In these moments the wind became present between us as a co-creating partner or as a host that directed our movements.

### **Orientations towards other people**

Several of the participants had an urge to invite other people into our explorations. Thus, in various situations we invited people to, for example, jump over or crawl through the connecting part of the costume. The most successful interactions were situations where we focused on capturing people's attention while standing still and making eye contact (Østergaard 2024, 182). Often the interaction was cheerful, short and occurred in places with proximate distance between us and other people, and it was often easier to approach people in smaller groups than getting a single person to accept our invitation. MM reflected that the spatial dimensions of a place had an impact on their relationship to other people. MM unfolded:

“there is something with the dimensions of the space and the intimacy of how many people could see us. For me, the narrow streets were liberating in the sense that I could relate to and interact with other people. Whereas Rådhuspladsen [the central square in Copenhagen] was more intimidating. On the other hand, in the big square you somehow disappeared since others [people] could ignore you. In the narrow streets you somehow forced others to acknowledge your presence, which might have been intimidating to them.”

As MM suggested, proximity seemed to be a condition for interacting with people. At the same time, MM said, the proximity that made us approach people might have provoked some people to step out of their comfort zone. On the other hand, when walking in a very busy pedestrian street, navigating other pedestrians at a very close distance, it seemed as if the people looked right through us or looked the other way (Østergaard 2024, 182).

Apart from the people we invited into our explorations, we had many accidental guests who were perhaps not guest per se. Still, many people that we passed affected our orientations and explorations whether we interacted or spoke with them or not. In several situations we sensed

that people commented on us as we passed them or as they passed us. However, we often only heard parts or tiny bits of their comments. Moreover, on several occasions we sensed that people that passed in cars, often at quite some distance, yelled after us (Ibid). Even if in many of these situations we did not stop to ask and/or respond to people's comments, their comments were often hard to ignore. As the comments or responses were orientated and thrown towards us, we could not avoid noticing how the comments orientated and affected us bodily and affected our conversations.

Ahmed writes that "accidental or chance encounters do happen, and they redirect us and open up new worlds" (Ahmed 2006, 19). As accidental encounters, these by-passing people became some kind of accidental guests that interrupted and/or re-orientated what our doings. In other situations more-than-human elements like the wind re-orientated our awareness to the connection and the space between us. In several situations nature/urban elements like trees and pillars and/or the city plan, for example the width of streets, distances between benches, squares planned with different level settings, surfaces and coatings, acted as encounters with strangely intriguing guests that called for our attention and curiosity to explore and play with them.

Ahmed notes that "being in place, or having a place, involves the intimacy of cohabiting space with other things" (Ahmed 2006, 111). As *Community Walk* was placed in public we were never alone. Like in the situations mentioned above where humans and more-than-humans interrupted us, they at the same time became unexpected guests, however they were often unaware that they acted as accidental guests that affected us and re-orientated our explorations. Even though the accidental guests and us were at the same place, we were not necessarily in-place together. We inhabited the connecting costume and shared material-discursive space and thus, our space somehow excluded other people. However, in many situations it felt as if these human and more-than-human others walked right through our material-discursive space and as temporal by-passing guests that were hard to ignore.

Ahmed suggests that accidental encounters can open new worlds. As accidental encounters or participants, the human and the more-than-humankinds affected us differently. The more-than-humankinds often sparked curiosity and playfulness whereas the humankinds often evoked place-relational negotiations, negotiating different positions of the material-discursive space, for example being inside, outside, beside or alongside and being in and out of place. Thus, placed

inside the costume there was no clear division of who was affecting our material-discursive space and as host I could not protect us from interruptions or interferences by the accidental participants.

Moreover, many of our encounters were familiar since they fostered interactions with other people, while at the same time these encounters were strangely unfamiliar since the encounters would never have occurred without the costume. The encounter with the more-than-human elements were playful and these encounters at the same time seemed to queer us in the public setting. Then there was all the ephemeral, random and surprising encounters that perhaps cannot be described as encounters. For example the comments from people that passed us close at hand or at a distance, as well as the fact that many people passed by us as if we were transparent. The unexpectedness and strangeness of these 'almost' encounters pointed to the view that we looked and appeared strangely unfamiliar in the public setting.

## The material-discursive space

In *Orientation Matters* Sara Ahmed writes that "bodies as well as objects take shape through being orientated towards each other, an orientation that may be experienced as the cohabitation or sharing of space" (Ahmed 2010, 245). It was *through* the object – the connecting costume – that a shared material-discursive space emerged between us; a shared space that orientated us towards each other and towards exploring how we could co-inhabit the costume.

To summarise what I have unfolded in other paths, placed inside the costume the visuality of the costume provoked a heightened self-awareness and sense of exposure. At the same time the inward orientation created a relaxed and trustful atmosphere between us that sparked our willingness to explore the costume. Thus, the inward orientation orientated us towards our relationship and our connectedness or dependence. The twelve-hour walk fostered multiple encounters with human and more-than-human others that were placed outside the costume; encounters that threw us in multiple directions and that created sensations and experiences of, for example, exposure, vulnerability, curiosity, open-mindedness or playfulness. The sensations and experiences we had inside the costume were, at times, caused by the outside responses that included how we interpreted these outside responses. The interplay and/or counterplay between the inside and outside perspectives resulted in us constantly re-orientating ourselves and

thus we had to navigate and negotiate between our inward experiences and the outward expressions.

### **Queer orientations**

Ahmed suggests that “the stranger has a place by being ‘out of place’ at home” (Ahmed 2006, 141). As mentioned, the connecting costume crafted an experience of sharing a space, like sharing a temporal material-discursive home that was strangely out of place in the public environment. In some situations the costume was ‘a home’ that protected us from outside gazes and in other situations the costume was ‘a place’ that exposed us and showed that we were out of place. Thus, we had to navigate and negotiate how we could be at home in the costume, as a temporal home that was strangely (un)familiar. Internally the ‘costume home’ had defined borders or lines between us and the outside world, but the lines were not visible to the outside world.

Ahmed writes that “it is given that the straight world is already in place and the queer moments, where things come out of line, are fleeing” (Ahmed 2006, 106). Straightness as place-making orientations draw lines for how we expect that we must act in public. When we cross the straight lines of expectation, we potentially queer the moment and as such we appear as being out of line. Even though we might know that we are out of line, the queer moment might still be surprising, unexpected and out of our control. During the twelve hours we experienced many moments that somehow queered us and/or the situation. The queer moments were often evoked or provoked by outside responses or comments as well as how we, placed inside the costume, interpreted the outside responses or comments. For example, fleeting moments where by-passing people looked, stared, saw through, commented on, chit-chatted about, yelled towards or in other ways ignored or noticed us, affected us.

Ahmed continues that “queer orientations might be those that don’t line up, which by seeing the world ‘slantwise’ allows other objects to come into view” (Ahmed 2006, 107). As Ahmed suggests, queer orientation allows us to see outside of the lines and outside the norm. As such, walking in public while connected through a costume allowed us to view the world slantwise or from other perspectives than those of our daily lives. What came into view was that the costume acted as a queer object that orientated our orientations towards material and relational aspects of the costume. I write in the plural to indicate that our orientations were not always in line, as well as that we were not always affected in the same ways. In the queer moments we had to navigate and

negotiate the relational encounters with the accidental guests or participants and/or the fleeing relationships that ‘popped up’ around us and that affected us. In other words, the costume orientated us towards human and more-than-human others what were placed outside the costume.

### **Towardness**

Ahmed writes that towardness

is the fact that what I am orientated towards is “not me” that allows me to do this or to do that. The otherness of things is what allows me to do things “with” them. [...] Rather than othering being simply a form of negation, it can also be described *as a form of extension*. The body extends its reach by taking in that which is “not” it, where the “not” involves the acquisition of new capacities and directions—becoming, in other words, “not” simply what I am “not” but what I can “have” and “do.” The “not me” is incorporated into the body, extending its reach. (Ahmed 2006, 115)

Ahmed argues that our orientation towards the otherness of things or objects enables us to do things *with* them. In the extension we do things that we ‘normally’ do not do, which expands our embodied capacities and (reach)abilities. The otherness – that the placement inside the connecting costume entailed – placed us in different positions that offered us a perspective other than what we have in our daily lives. The positions orientated us towards the otherness and queerness of the costume and of our material-discursive space, which allowed us to co-explore our bodies outside our normal or everyday realm of expectation. In the moments and/or situations where the costume acted as a queer object it enchanted us. Jane Bennett describes enchantment as a “state of wonder [where you] notice new colors, discern details previously ignored, hear extraordinary sounds, as familiar landscapes of sense sharpen and intensify” (Bennett 2001, 5). Thus, as queer object, the costume enchanted our sight of our everyday surroundings and made us encounter sides of the city that are out of our sights as sites for physical or embodied explorations in our daily lives. The enchanting moments or situations were sensations of being captured and captivated by a site and immersed with encountering the site. In these situations we expanded the (reach)abilities of our bodies. However, trajectories or boundaries between Bennett’s enchanting situations and Ahmed’s queering moments were

fleeting. As such, in similar yet quite different ways the costume's queering and enchanting qualities evoked, provoked and opened our sight to explore other or new sides, whereby we had new possibilities of gain new (in)sights. As such, *Community Walk* was not an either-or of being immersed or queer, but rather a both-and of immersion and queerness and flux between the otherness of perspectives of being positioned inside and outside of the costume.

It is evident that we with the costume and with the placement in public had multiple relational encounters in other or different ways than we have in our daily lives and that also differed from our performance and/or design practices. Placed inside the costume, our *towardness* allowed us to immerse ourselves in our explorations. In the immersed situation something or someone became visible and included, whereas others stayed out of our sight and were thus invisible and excluded. Placed inside the costumes, our towardness was therefore embodied explorations that included accidental participants and/or excluded them from encountering our material-discursive space. At the same time we could not prevent accidental participants from entering our shared material-discursive space.

In *Tribes: Costume Performance and Social Interaction in the Heart of Prague* Sofia Pantouvaki reflects on the PQ15<sup>78</sup> project *Tribes*.<sup>79</sup> Pantouvaki writes that as a costume "action-based event" *Tribes* had "both 'informed' and spontaneous spectators" (Pantouvaki 2027, 26). Situated in

the most touristic part of the heart of Prague [...] photography – especially selfies – is a part of the daily landscape. This resulted in the medium of photography becoming a tool for social interaction with the costumed bodies. Therefore, taking photographs became a means for communication between viewer and object of the performance in the *Tribes* project. [...] On the other hand, the photographic lens did not always result in positive feeling for the interaction in provoked. (Pantouvaki 2017, 33)

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<sup>78</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> *Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space* (The Czech Republic), June 18–28, 2015.

<sup>79</sup> *Tribes* – a walking costume exhibition – was curated by dramaturge and artistic director of the Prague Quadrennial Soudja Lotker. Lotker writes that "the core idea was to use the city – Prague – as a gallery/exhibition space and costumed living people as exhibited artefacts, as an experimental exhibition, a play on what makes an exhibition of performance design" (Lotker 2017, 7). There was an open call to contribute to and participate in *Tribes* that, as Pantouvaki describes, "invited a minimum of 4 people" that "are fully masked" and "have a dress code" (costumes of similar aesthetics) as well as "a behavior code (unified was of acting)" (Pantouvaki 2017, 27). During PQ15 "83 tribe walks happened/took place during the 11 days. Some days there were only 6 walks, some days there were over 20" (Lotker 2017, 10). It should be noted that all 83 tribes followed a pre-planned walking route devised by the PQ15 team.



Even though we did not experience the accidental participants as “*occasional spectators*”<sup>80</sup> (Pantouvaki 2017, 34) who were orientated towards taking selfies, it also seemed like the photography, at times, entered and interfered with the ‘inside-spheres’ of the tribes. At the same time, and as an orientation, the photography enabled communication and/or exchanges between the costumed bodies, often fully masked, and the occasional spectators. Pantouvaki suggests that “the *Tribes* exhibition project showed that costume can have unlimited forms as well as an expanded potential for communicating ideas and experiences” (Pantouvaki 2017, 36). Pantouvaki suggest that placing costume encounters in public spaces expands our potentialities. During *Community Walk* we expanded our capacities and (reach)abilities in different ways and in different situations. Even in situations that made us feel vulnerable and exposed, within the safety of our shared material-discursive space we expanded our reflections towards speculation on how it might be to be vulnerable and exposed in public. How those placed outside of the costume tended towards our otherness affected and somehow expanded our capacities and (reach)abilities, but it remains uncertain whether the people placed outside in any way expanded their capacities and/or (reach)abilities.

## The participating host

As mentioned (link), my ambition with *Community Walk* was to challenge myself by wearing a costume that was not too comfortable for me and exploring the costume in a public environment. However, not only did I place myself in a situation that was challenging to me, but I also invited participants to join me in this unfamiliar setting or situation. Sara Ahmed writes that

in a familiar room we have already extended ourselves. [...] If we are in a strange room, one whose contours are not part of our memory map, the situation is not easy. [...] [T]he work of inhabiting space involves a dynamic negotiation between what is familiar and unfamiliar. (Ahmed 2006, 7)

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<sup>80</sup> Pantouvaki notes that the audience “consisted of both ‘informed’ and spontaneous spectators” (Pantouvaki 2017, 26). Pantouvaki continues that “the audience that happened to be present at a specific place in a given moment of a day in which a tribe would pass by would become *occasional spectators*; these individuals became audience members because of the momentum. [...] [T]he spectators’ bodies were engaged in experiences of the *Tribes* through their own movement. [...] [E]very spectator had the opportunity to watch as much of the performance as they wished” (Pantouvaki 2017, 34).

Ahmed points out that in familiar rooms or situations we have already extended ourselves and thus we are more at ease in our bodies than we are in those situations that are unfamiliar to us. In unfamiliar spaces and situations we cannot necessarily draw on our embodied map and we must thus navigate and negotiate how we inhabit the space. In *Community Walk* we had to inhabit the costume and the shared material-discursive space through dynamic negotiations of what was familiar and unfamiliar to us, individually and collectively. As host I had to navigate familiarities and unfamiliarities of the costume, the participants, our shared space and the public surroundings, and negotiate the creativities that the situations evoked between us. As series of connected pairs we had to navigate and negotiate the potential unpredictabilities that occurred in the situations. As participating host my ambition was to explore who we became, how we acted and/or negotiated as creative partners in public and how the public environment orientated and affected our creative doings.

### **Participating and hosting**

Even though it was an active choice, I did not reflect upon whether it was a good idea to place myself at the centre. I did not question whether I was able to host and participate simultaneously or what this double role required of me. I had no prior experience of walking in a costume for twelve hours and I did not know what to expect, for example what the event would provoke and/or evoke in me, in the participants, in us as series of connected pairs and/or in those people that we would meet or pass. Still, the duration of the event was quite different than I had imagined. I had expected moments of exhaustion. Instead, I experienced that my energy was constantly amplified by the arrival of new participants. Each time I had to be attentive, tune and re-attune myself to the participant that just arrived, and I was genuinely curious to explore which (new) perspectives and creative suggestions this person had to offer. During the twelve hours I was engaging with the twelve participants and my energy or focus was more directed towards them than towards myself. Consequently, I forgot daily actions like eating, drinking, and even going to the toilet.

Even though I knew all twelve participants, with each participant I arrived at a new encounter, and they arrived at the encounter with me. As a pair we arrived at the beginning of our 'walking and talking' journey, where we opened creative 'doors', however in each of the twelve walks we never opened the exact same 'doors' as we did in the previous walks. Thus, even though I had created a

structure that I repeated with all twelve participants, the twelve journeys or walks were not just a repetition.

As we constantly moved or walked through different areas of central Copenhagen, new surroundings, new surfaces and structures, new nature/urban elements, new by-passing people and many other 'things' were temporarily present as potentialities or as sites for explorations. During the twelve hours the city showed different sides of itself, from noisy streets with busy commuters to silent parks with soundscapes of birds, from streets with no people to pedestrian streets packed with people, from streets where people socialized at cafés in relaxed manners to streets with hectic night life. During the twelve hours we walked under the sun, under greyish clouds and under the moon and the stars. At places I sensed the touch of the wind, but I always sensed the presence of the participating partner that I was connected to.

With each participant I explored how I related to them, how we related to each other, how my invitations could create a trustful and playful atmosphere between us and how the framing framed us. As host I invited the participants to become co-creators who could initiate and host actions and/or explorations that interested them.

### **Ritual transformations**

As the consistent participant I experienced that some rituals transformed, particularly the transition ritual changed during the day (Østergaard 2024, 183). In the first couple of transition situations I experienced some awkwardness or uncertainty between the arriving and the departing participant in terms of how to handle and hand over the costume. The awkwardness transferred to me as a sense of insecurity of how I should act or perhaps it was the other way around? In costume fitting situations I always, in a careful and respectful manner, offer my assistance and if requested I accommodate the dressing. Being placed inside the costume I was unable to offer the same kind of assistance. Moreover, placing the transition situation in public, they were not comparable to fitting situations. Still, the situation reminded me of how I act in costume fitting situations, and it was uncomfortable and felt somewhat unethical that I, the host, did not know how to act or whether I acted in an adequate manner (Ibid). At the same time, I did not want to direct or dictate how the transition should be performed.

As such, the transition ritual departed from the caretaking that I normally undertake in fitting situations, implying that I had specific expectations towards myself – expectations that I was

unable to fulfil. Over time the ritual transformed from a somewhat awkward situation to become a relational ritual between the departing and arriving participant, where one helped the other to get dressed in the costume. It became an act of care – that happened between participants, several of whom did not know one another prior to the act – and a generous invitation from the departing to the arriving participant to step into their part of the costume and to continue the walking exploration. Witnessing the transformation of this ritual was touching.

## Hosting as sharing

Sara Ahmed's reflections on "the politics of sharing" (Ahmed 2006, 123) originates from an analysis of orientalism and whiteness as a straightening device that produces straight lines and reproduces racial hierarchies (Ahmed 2006, 121). Whiteness and the racial oppression it produced is highly relevant to acknowledge as a white person; however, this is not the topic of this research. Still, I am white, and I experience the world from this perspective. As such, I must always discover and uncover the bias that my whiteness produces. I must constantly be willing to re-learn and re-educate myself. In the context of hosting, Ahmed's arguments on the politics of sharing and its implications are useful.

### Sharing

I have suggested that the costume created a shared space between us. Ahmed writes that while sharing is often described as participation in something (we share this or that thing, or we have this or that thing in common), and even as the joy of taking part, sharing involves division, or the ownership of *parts*. To have a share in something is to be invested in the value of that thing. [...] So the word "share," which seems to point to commonality, depends on both cutting and on division, where things are cut up and distributed among others. (Ahmed 2006, 123)

Ahmed notes that sharing is cutting, dividing and having a share in or part of something. Ahmed reminds me that there was an uneven share between us who participated and in the relationships that emerged with by-passing people and urban/nature elements. As such, it seems crucial to explore what, with whom and what parts were shared. Even though the costume created an intimate and shared space between us, *Community Walk* was place in public, which meant we never possessed the spaces that we walked through and/or the places where we temporarily

paused. Public spaces are in principle accessible to everyone. However, it is debatable whether we – the public – always share the public places with those human and more-than-human others that are present. In several situations during *Community Walk* it seemed as if sameness was a matter that mattered in public. Even though we shared the public space with other people we had to navigate their responses. In some situations it felt as if we, perhaps due to our appearance, existed in a parallel space where we had to negotiate whether we had some kind of share and/or how we could share the public space or places with these people.

Walking in public connected through and with a costume, we shared experiences of appearing queerer than alike, of being included and excluded and of including or excluding others in our shared space. Even though we shared the experiences of walking in public it did not our experiences was shared. The shared space was relational a encounter between us and we firstly had to become aware of our own expectations towards our creative relationship. Secondly, placed in public, many ‘things’ happened simultaneously, which often disturbed and prohibited us from focusing only on exploring our relationship with costume, and thus our shared space. Thirdly, we only had one hour together which implied that we often did not manage to share our different expectation and how we experienced our encounter(s).

### **Sharing part(iality)**

In *Community Walk* I had divided the twelve hours into twelve parts. In the interview NN reflected that “at first, what struck me the most was to jump into the chain of actions and the knowledge of my place within this twelve-hour history.” NN unfolded that the participants had a partial whereas I had the full twelve-hour experience of the event. Nonetheless, for one hour we co-authored the encounters we had. In our shared space, we experienced that these encounters, at times, were co-authored by accidental guests and/or were the effects of by-passing people with whom we shared the public space. However, it is doubtful that the accidental guests experienced that they co-authored or even shared an encounter with us.

In their interview KK proposed that “the costume was like an archive that gathered all the different information. The costume became the connector and the vessel.” KK suggested that the costume collected our different experiences which indicates that there were connections and perhaps a sharing between everyone who participated in *Community Walk* – even though most of the participants did not meet and/or did not know each other. KK proposed that the costume as

an archive crafted a metaphorical space between the twelve participants. In the interview situations it was clear that the costume had crafted a space between us, and the participants shared how the costume space resonated in their embodied memories. Most of the participants reflected that our one-hour explorative walk transformed our relationship into a more playful one than in our prior encounters. They felt enriched and surprised that our encounters made them daring and inventive in the way that they and we encountered the public space, and several mentioned our dialogues as inspiring.

Despite my own involvement throughout the twelve-hour walk, my experience was also partial. I can never fully grasp or know what the twelve participants experienced and thus I can never fully unfold *Community Walk* and its implications. I can uncover my partial perspective of the experiences and encounters that I shared with the twelve participants. Ahmed reminds me that “the gift of life is often a gift of parts, which are unevenly distributed” (2006, 123). Even with my partial perspective I spent time with each of the twelve participants while they only spent time with me. As such, I had the gift of exploring the costume with twelve different participants and the twelve participants gave me the gift of participating and responding to the costume, our shared spaces and the encounter(s) we had with others in different ways. Moreover, as the consistent participant, I received the gift of exploring the complexities of hosting an event like *Community Walk*.

### **Hospitality as sharing points**

In *Navigating in the Landscape of Care: A Critical Reflection on Theory and Practise of Care and Ethics* Eva Skærbæk writes that “every one of us holds some of the life of the other in our hand” (2011, 44). Skærbæk translates a well-known quote by the Danish theologian and philosopher K.E. Løgstrup which I relate to as a part of my cultural baggage. Skærbæk unfolds Løgstrup’s words by suggesting that “we are interdependent in the sense that we influence each other with what we do and say and by what we do not say and do; we are each other’s authors” (Skærbæk 2011, 44). Skærbæk suggest that we co-author each other’s experiences, which implies hospitality is more than the duty of the host; it is an ethical demand and a call to attend to the fact that we affect each other. For example, how we are hospitable towards other people affects what we can do and become together. I therefore suggest that embedded in hospitality is not just an expectation of but a demand for reciprocity in the exchange between the guest and the host, where they

orientate themselves towards their relationship as socio-cultural exchanges. However, in the socio-cultural exchanges the host<sup>81</sup> cannot hide behind a role but must reveal and invest themselves in the relationships with the guest by being hospital (*gæstfri*) towards cultures and the potential unfamiliarity or otherness of the guest. Moreover, the host must recognise that they depend on and will affect the guest. Even though in their exchange the guest and the host co-author each other's experiences, the host is still accountable.

Being an accountable host suggests that the host must attend to their socio-cultural expectations towards guests, as these expectations will inform how the host's hospitality is orientated.

Moreover, as an accountable host the host must create conditions that enable the guest to respond creatively and the host must embrace that the guest might respond in ways that are not in line with the host's expectations. As such, the host must decide how they respond to the guest and the host must act and respond accordingly. I argue that the host – as an act of curiosity and generosity towards the guest – must step aside to explore the creative (in)sights of the guests. By stepping aside, the roles or positions of host and guest become less fixed, which in turn enables entanglements between hosting and guesting, allowing them to become sharing points and openings for exchange.

### **Communal sharings**

In *Community Walk* I had to step aside to orientate my orientation towards what the participants wanted to offer to our shared space. Moreover, the stepping aside included being beside as a participating partner and exploring what we could do in common. As such, as creative partners the participants' contributions were paramount. The participants co-authored *Community Walk* and as co-authors they illuminated sides of the sight that would have remained out of my sight without

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<sup>81</sup> Embedded in the etymological notion of the Danish word *vært* (host) is reliability and credibility and that someone shows kindness. In Danish you can be a *vært* (host) and you can *beværte*<sup>81</sup> (which translates to the English 'host'), which is the act of inviting and offering something to someone and/or that you treat or wait on someone. *Beværte* also points towards the older Danish word *gæstgiver* (which also translates to the English word 'host'), which combines the words *gæst* (guest) and *giver* (to give), meaning the one that gives to the guest. The Danish word *vært* can indicate a profession and includes cultural expectations that the host has some kind of social skills in how they attend to and behave towards guests. For example, embedded in being a 'good' *gæstgiver* is an expectation of that the host shows *gæstfrihed* (hospitality). The Danish word for hospitality (*gæstfrihed*) combines the words guest (*gæst*) and freedom (*frihed*). Thus, within the Danish *gæstfrihed* (hospitality) there is an expectation that the guest will have freedom. However, what is intrinsic in this 'guest freedom' is unclear. Still, being hospitable suggests something specific (relational and cultural expectations) whereas hospitalities (the plural) suggest that there are multiple perspectives on what is embedded in the act of being hospitable towards others.

their valuable (in)sights. Thus their (in)sights expanded my sight of the material-discursive space that we shared and explored in public.

Ahmed suggests that “a queer genealogy would take the very ‘affect’ of mixing, or coming into contact with things that resides on different lines, as opening up new kinds of connections” (Ahmed 2006, 154–155). To use Ahmed’s words, in *Community Walk* the costume and the shared material-discursive space that it evoked invited our creativities to mix. As we mixed our creative lines, other lines opened that mixed or blurred the borders between who was inside and outside of the costume. As participating host I followed the participants’ crossings, which made me cross lines that I could not have crossed singlehandedly.

As the consistent participant in the series of co-creative pairs, *Community Walk* displayed a series of *we’s* (we in plural) that – like small communities – had multiple voices, encounters, qualities and other. In the series of intimate communities (I refer to the Danish word *fællesskab* that I unfold here link), I had to embrace multi-directional qualities of our communal encounter and multiple times during the twelve hours I had to re-orientate myself – attuning myself towards the guests – as an affect and/or respond to the twelve participants and their creative views. This involved re-orientating my hospitality to include views that were directed or orientated towards sights I did not see.

As a community of participants I learned from and with the participants, for example from their different ways of co-inhabiting the costume and our shared material-discursive space. As such, *Community Walk* acted unexpectedly and surprisingly as an intervention towards me. The event or artistic project placed me in an unusual situation and the position of participating host amplified that I gained another kind of knowledge placed inside explorative situations than by merely observing or witnessing from the outside. Hence, as researcher and as human, *Community Walk* felt immensely transformative.

## Walking with costume

As mentioned, the festival *Wa(l)king Copenhagen* was a response to the Covid-19 pandemic: it was an artistic invitation to (re)wake the city by walking. In *Konsten att gå* (The Art of Walking) artistic researcher Cecilia Lagerström writes that there is a growing number of artists who use walking as



a central theme in their artistic practice<sup>82</sup> (Lagerström 2019). The growing interest in walking was, for example, very visible at *Alliances and Commonalities 2024*<sup>83</sup> where the conference conveners – due to the fact that many proposals centred around walking – decided to create an additional stand “on walks, and walking.” It can be argued that research on walking as, for example, an artistic expression or shared experiences or events is more visible as a ‘trend’ in dance, choreography and site-specific performance contexts<sup>84</sup> than it is in costume practice and/or costume research. However, the PQ15 project *Tribes*<sup>85</sup> (link) shows that walking dressed in costume in a public space contributes other or new aspects to walking and costume discourses. Sofia Pantouvaki writes that “without the text, *Tribes* succeeded in proving the performative as well as the narrative and communicative potential of costume thorough the language of the body as a result of embodied experience and everyday life encounters” (Pantouvaki 2017, 36). Moreover, as an exhibition project “*Tribes* invited costume to escape the boundaries of the conventional exhibition space in order to be more communicative in direct connection with the public” (Pantouvaki 2017, 37). Pantouvaki suggests that placing costume in events like *Tribes* in public spaces positions costume in other ways than in theatre or exhibition contexts that enables, for example, costume to escape the boundaries of (dramatic) text and/or static exhibition displays. It can be argued that by the naming the artistic project *Community Walk* I missed the opportunity to highlight that costume was paramount. On the other hand, walking became the medium to

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<sup>82</sup> Lagerström writes that walking in public “invite[s] the surroundings and passing observers to influence the wanderer” (Lagerström 2019, 22). It is interesting that Lagerström (in the book) has the need to introduce the term “teatermarkörer” (Lagerström 2019, 80) – which I suggest translates to theatre marker – instead of costume/costuming. Lagerström suggests that ‘theatre markers’ “move something [an event] away from the usual [everyday] situation or environment” (Lagerström 2019, 48) and when using ‘theatre makers’ or costume and make-up indicates that a performative (inter)event(ion) is occurring in a public environment. Moreover, the ‘theatre markers’ implies that the wanderer appears as stranger and evokes or provokes diverse reactions from spectators (Lagerström 2019, 77). I have translated the Lagerström quotes from Swedish.

<sup>83</sup> The conference was held at Stockholm University of the Arts, Sweden. October 17–19 2024.

<sup>84</sup> For example, in *Suriashi as Experimental Pilgrimage in Urban and Other Spaces* (2022) choreographer Ami Skånberg writes that the aim is that her practice-led-thesis “contributes to the burgeoning field of walking arts practice, bringing a Japanese dance-based practice into a dialogue with debates and practices of Western dancing and walking” (Skånberg 2022, 3). In *Mixed reality in Public Space Expanding Composition Practice in Choreography and Interaction Design* (2023) choreographer Marika Hedemyr studied and created walking experiences for audiences where mobile phone-based augmented reality (AR) become mixed with reality (MR). Skånberg’s practice springs from Japanese traditions whereas Hedemyr’s emerges from site-specific performance contexts.

<sup>85</sup> During the PQ15 festival 83 groups of masked and costumed people walked in the centre of Prague.

encounter and approach costume from the perspective of hosting and participating in communal<sup>86</sup> acts. The costume became a technical device that connected me to twelve different artists and walking in public became the technique that orientated me towards exploring how I could act as a responsible host during the communal acts. Placing the event in public amplified the view that being accountable for the event I sat in motion do not imply that I can predict or control what will happen during the event. Still, as the host I was responsible for how I responded to the unpredictability and uncontrollability that the public environment. For example, when by-passing people approached us or commented our appearance, I did not expect my fellows to respond, however, I was responsible for how I responded. By responding curiously but not too inviting, for example with a smile, and sometime just ignoring the by-passing people's comments I politely excluded them from getting too close. Even though some people became accidental participants, they remained positioned as by-passers and as by-passers they affected our common doings, for example re-orientated our dialogues or our physical explorations. I suggest that how I responded to the unpredictability and uncontrollability of the public orientated our orientations, or rather with my responses I acknowledge the unpredictability and uncontrollability of the public while at the same time I indicated that I was orientated towards the material-discursive space that I shared with the fellow artists.

I had invited the fellow artists to join me since I was curious to explore how the costume and the event would spark their creativities. As host I was responsible for creating conditions that enabled the fellow artists to respond to the costume and the event and, importantly, I had to repeat my invitations. As it turned out the costume and the event sparked the fellow artists' creativities in multiple and often surprising ways. As co-creators they invited other people and more-than-human elements to momentarily entangle with us and the costume – these entangled moments became part of our common doings and was a share act of communal hospitality towards human and more-than-human others. Thus, as host I had to host with hospitality towards the communal doings of the twelve co-creators that with their creative orientations offered perspectives that were different to mine. With their creative orientations the co-creators expanded our common doings and our communal costume doings with and towards human and more-than-human

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<sup>86</sup> As mentioned, *Community Walk* pointed towards Wenger's "community of practice" and how we participate in practice and towards how I understand the Danish word *fællesskab* (community). Embedded in the Danish word *fællesskab* (community) is that you invest yourself in what we (as a smaller or larger community) do in common.

others. As such, *Community Walk* taught me that I as host must be hospital towards what we share by being willing to re-orientate my creative doings in order to open a space where our creativities can flourish together. I am accountable; I must be willing to re-orientate my creative expectations and thus let go of creative control.

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## The artistic project *Conversation Costume*

The artistic project *Conversation Costume* (2021) was part of a workshop facilitated by the *Costume Agency* project that were held at Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Norway. With *Conversation Costume* I re-enter the rehearsal space to explore a 'costume assembly' with two participating performers who were also my co-creators: Fredrik Petrov and Jonathan Ibsen. In the different pathways I will use the co-creators' first names and switch between calling them co-creators, hosts and co-hosts.

In this project I use Karen Barad's concept of "entanglement" to unfold that crafting costume for *Conversation Costume* intertwined in an internal dialogue with my sister's craftings *with* an ambition of approaching the concept of connecting costume from new or other perspectives. The costume assembly contained, for example, a number of textile pieces in-process. During our co-creative rehearsal process I participated – on as equal terms as possible – in the physical explorations of the costume assembly. In this project, I explore how we combined and tangled with the costume assembly in different ways *as well as* explore how the costume assembly crafted and tangled with our bodies during our explorative process. With this artistic project my ambition is to approach what an open-minded *co-creative costume exploration* evokes between us as co-creators and at that same time explore which hosting dilemmas this open-minded hosting approach provoked.

### Cutting into entanglements

In this path I unfold how Karen Barad's concept of "entanglement" informs the artistic project *Conversation Costume*. I dive into specific aspects embedded in Barad's concept to explore how the complexities of entanglements relate to studying relational and co-creational costume phenomena. For example when we practice costume we need to be aware of which rules or structures we choose to follow. Do we have (pre)defined roles and if we do, we need to question why and what the purpose of these roles are. In our roles or positions, do we direct or co-create and who do we listen to? Moreover, do we assume that our practice must lead in specific directions?

#### **Karen Barad's concept of entanglement**

Karen Barad's concept of entanglement derives from their work on agential realism which draws from Niels Bohr and quantum physics – especially from the concept of quantum entanglement – that argues that particles are interconnected in such a way that the state of one particle is dependent on the state of other particles. In *Meeting the Universe Halfway – Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* Barad writes that in “the dynamic nature of scientific practice [...] humans enter not as fully formed, preexisting subjects but as subjects intra-actively co-constituted through the material-discursive practice that they engage in” (Barad 2007, 168). This suggests that people who partake in, for example, artistic research are co-constituted through their engagement with practice. In addition, costume as practice and as research phenomena are entanglements of human and more-than-human materialities or bodies. Therefore, within Barad's agential realist framework humans and costume do not exist as separate entities that interact. Instead, being entangled implies that we are shaped through our intra-actions with the material-discursive practice that costume phenomena is.

Barad has two important points on intra-action: (1) “intra-action affects what's real and what's possible, as some things come to matter and others are excluded, as possibilities are opened up and others are foreclosed” (Barad 2007, 393) and (2) “intra-acting responsibly as part of the world means taking account of the entangled phenomena that are intrinsic to the world's vitality and being responsive to the possibilities that might help us to flourish” (Barad 2007, 396).

In the context of costume, Barad's first point suggests that what seems real and important in costume is an effect of what and who we include and exclude from our practices. Who and what is invited to be included in our costume practice(s) affects the way that we practice our costume practices. Our conscious and/or unconscious choices (1) affect our experiences of what are possibilities and impossibilities, (2) reveal that there are aspects that we do not consider as relevant or important and (3) potentially prevent us of from seeing or imagining that there are other perspectives on our costume practices which at the same time (4) indicate that costume can be practiced in multiple other ways.

Barad's second point suggests that we are accountable for how we engage with the entangled costume phenomena. How we respond and are responsive to the vitality and vibrancy costume phenomena determines whether and how we flourish with practice. Our attitude – for example



our perspectives on and assumptions of costume practice(s) and our willingness to be open towards attitudes that are differs from our own – shapes or crafts what we experience as essential and we are accountable for what we perceive as essential in the costume practice and/or costume phenomena that we entangle with.

## Components

In *To Think with Agential Realism*<sup>87</sup> Malou Juelskjær writes that Barad's intra-action is "the activity where relationships are created" (Juelskjær 2019, 23). The activity is "relationally conditioned" and "it is in the causality [...] between the components that their creation is re-understood" (Juelskjær 2019, 23). In the text Juelskjær uses the Danish word *omforstået* (re-understood) that, according to the Danish dictionary, does not exist. However, in this context the word suggests that intra-action evokes new or other understandings and thus in each relational entanglement we must be willing to re-understand components. This implies, for example, that we must reconsider and/or re-evaluate our assumptions of and perspective on the components we entangle and relate with.

The concept of components suggests that as humans we are co-constituted but also affected in a phenomenological sense by other components, whether these components are human or not. How we relate-with other components and how they relate-with us will affect what we see, hear or sense. At the same time, in entanglements we might have to re-orientate our orientation while we relate-with. As components we become-with other human and more-than-human components. In the context of costume, this suggests that when we craft textiles and/or explore costume(s) we are co-constituted or co-composed through our entanglement with other components, for example combinations and qualities of fibres, surfaces of textiles, shapes of costumes and fellow human explorers. As components we co-constitute other components and as components we are dependent on the other components.

Employing the concept of components in the context of *Conversation Costume* suggests that the human and the more-than-human participants, the space, the duration, the framing and other

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<sup>87</sup> The title *At tænke med agential realisme* and the Juelskjær quotes are translated from Danish by me. In the book Juelskjær builds on Karen Barad's work. Malou Juelskjær (PhD) is lecture at Aarhus University, Denmark.

aspects of the entanglement were components that acted as relational openings between the different components.

Barad continues that “relata do not pre-exist relations; rather, relata-with-phenomena emerge through specific intra-actions” (Barad 2007, 140). This implies that a costume phenomenon does not exist prior to the relations(hips) that it entails. It is in the active engagement(s) of relating-with the entanglement between different components that costume phenomena can be investigated. In other words, it is through the relationships that specific costume intra-actions evoke that the phenomena be investigated.

### **Cutting into entangled components**

Barad argues that “intra-actions enact agential cuts, which do not produce absolute separation, but rather cut together-apart” (Barad 2014, 168). Barad’s cutting together-apart is an acknowledgement that research never produces absolute separations between components. For example, when I write about crafting, I cannot separate my aesthetic choices or curation of crafting techniques from the textile materials – that I, by the way, also have curated, and vice versa. In our together-apartness the crafting techniques and the textile materials are never independent entities *and* without the textiles and how I use crafting techniques our entangled together-apartness becomes a statement of intent and not a practice of relating-with other components through and with my body.

In *The scenographic, costumed chorus, agency and the performance of matter: A new materialist approach to costume* Donatella Barbieri<sup>88</sup> and Greer Crawley<sup>89</sup> argue that “costume is itself ‘doing’” (Barbieri & Crawley 2019, 146) and suggest that the “Baradian temporal and specialized ‘agential cut’, a doing rather than a being, in which material relationships and forces are selectively included to make connections, is enacted. An agential cut permits the placing of costume at the centre” (Barbieri & Crawley 2019, 147). By placing costume phenomena in the centre the researcher is able to cut into “all implicit in an engagement that seeks to understand what the material does, its attributes [...] in order to engage co-creatively with it” (Barbieri &

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<sup>88</sup> Donatella Barbieri (PhD) is senior research fellow and principal lecturer in design for performance at London College of Fashion: University of the Arts London. She is the author of *Costume in Performance: Materiality, Culture and the Body* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2017) (Prague Quadrennial, 2019 Best Performance Design & Scenography Publication Award) and founding editor of *Studies in Costume and Performance*.

<sup>89</sup> Greer Crawley is a senior lecturer in spatial design at Buckinghamshire University, lecturer in scenography at Royal Holloway University of London and editor for *Blue Pages Journal of The Society of British Theatre Designers*.

Crawley 2019, 148). Thus, cutting together-apart is a method to follow specific components that are part of the costume phenomena. Even though crafting textile materials and the act of *crafting material bodies* or costume is an important part of my research practice, when the textiles are crafted I must leave that path and cut into what the costumes evoke and provoke in explorative situations with other people. In each situation I must relate-with-phenomena by cutting together-apart to explore the relations that emerge and how or whether they flourish. As such, Barad's cutting together-apart is to follow specific parts to investigate the specificities of where, when or how different components together-apart relate-with-phenomena whereby they shape and affect the research phenomena itself. And as Barbieri and Crawley write, Barad's agential cut foregrounds costume's specific material intra-actions and their inherent ethical tissue (Barbieri & Crawley 2019, 149).

### **Temporal we's (we in plural)**

Barad's concept of entanglement suggests that through intra-action components form or craft an assemblages or ensembles of temporal we's. In *Conversation Costume* the we(s) were co-composed through practices of, for example, crafting, composing and exploring. As an assembly or ensemble, we, they, you and I arose and existed through the entangled nature of relating-with the costume phenomenon that we were part of and that the temporal we(s) depended on. By cutting into specific relational we(s) I can discover which intra-actions – for example concrete and metaphorical embodied dialogues – emerge during, around and/or after specific costume explorative situations. By cutting into the specific we I can approach who we are and were in the situation. A we that is organic, evolving, changing and surprising and that emerges through an entanglement of multiple human and more-than-human components.

Inspired by Barad's concept of entanglement I cut together-apart to explore the situated and temporal we's that emerged and that were co-composed during *Conversation Costume*. I will unfold how the process of crafting nine knotted pieces in-process became an entangled we that intertwined specific and metaphorical dialogues and explorative situations that, for example, included people who were not present in the space. In other pathways I will cut together-apart to explore how specific components, for example we (humans), that participated in the *Conversation Costume* explorations and the costume assembly co-created temporal we's. I will explore how the framings of *Conversation Costume* and of the Costume Agency workshop formed, re-formed and

transformed the we's that related-with *Conversation Costume* during the two weeks – like Barad's writing on relata-with-phenomena – as a costume phenomenon.

## Crafting entanglements

The process of crafting costume for *Conversation Costume* differed from how I crafted the connecting costumes in the two other artistic projects in this research. In *Conversation Costume* the crafting process entangled dialogues that were beyond, besides or alongside the textile materials and the crafting techniques and the process were interrupted and re-started. In the process I had to re-orientate my crafting strategies and thus the process led into an unexpected direction.

### Costume context

*Conversation Costume* was as part of the Costume Agency's (CA) workshop #5, 17–26 August 2021. The CA workshop was originally scheduled to run in the first two weeks of August 2020 and the outcomes of CA workshops #5, #6 and #7 was intended to be presented the Critical Costume 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 lockdowns the CA workshop was postponed and the Critical Costume 2020 was transformed into an online conference.

To be able to partake in the CA workshop I had to send a proposal that needed to be accepted. In my proposal (January 2020) I wrote (slightly edited):

At the CC2020 workshop I like to dig deeper into the research of how costumes that connect people affect us bodily and collaboratively. How can costume that connects (connecting costume) act as conversational tools between me and fellow wearers during explorative situations where everyone shifts between positions of wearing, watching or directing?

After each explorative session the group will reflect on the individual and collaborative knowledge that appeared during the exploration and that we gained.

In between the explorative sessions I might alter some of the connecting costumes in accordance with the collaborative process and the collaboration with the group.

Before CC2020 I will produce two new prototypes. An all-in-one full-body garment version and a version in parts so that the wearers can dress each other and change connecting points. Having several prototype versions offers the possibility to research if and how different bodily connections create different movement structures/hierarchies and different reflections/conversations.

At the centre of my proposal was an ambition to craft new versions of connecting costume. The Japanese *Magic Pattern* techniques<sup>90</sup> served as the foundation for shaping the wearable parts of these costumes. As part of the proposal I sketched ideas in drawing and in textile as full body experiments. Within the proposal was intentions of that the connecting costumes, during the workshop, should be adjusted and/or further developed in close collaboration with the performers. As the proposal was accepted (early 2020) I continued to test the pattern-making techniques and I crafted early test versions of these new connecting costumes. But as the pandemic hit (March 2020) Scandinavia and the world I paused the crafting process.

### **Crafting**

As I returned to craft costume for *Conversation Costume* (spring 2021) the two other artistic projects in this research had allowed me to explore two different versions of connecting costumes with different number of people in different settings. Thus, my focus had shifted: I want to develop the connecting costume in new direction that would invite co-creators to craft and/or co-compose.

The new direction and the crafting re-orientation that it entailed included several crafting ambitions that did not directly relate to the concept of connecting costume. For example, I had an ambition to further develop the sampling technique that I used for the *AweAre* costume *and* for years I have had a wish to lean *knipling* techniques. I use the Danish word *knipling* that translates to the English lace. However, translating lace back to Danish is *blonde* which is less specific than *knipling*. *Knipling* points towards the specificities of the time-consuming lace-making technique which is what had my interest. In *knipling* the crafter produces lace that have quite specific patterns by hand with a thin thread and using very specific tools. *Knipling* has not gained as much public popularity as, for example, knitting and crocheting have in the past years. Still, *knipling* is an important part of Danish craft history and was around the 1600s quite a known industry – where women produced lace at home – in Tønder, the southern part Denmark.

Combining the two crafting techniques is somehow a contradiction, since the sampling blurs the borders between different interlocking techniques and the *knipling* or lace-making is a knot-like

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<sup>90</sup> From the book series *Magic Pattern* that introduces a playful approach to pattern cutting inspired by nature and geometry.

technique used to create lace with specific pre-designed patterns. Nevertheless, as an attempt to combine the techniques, or rather as an attempt to move the connecting costume in a new direction, I intuitively started to test how to tie or knot textiles together in random manners; random in the sense of being more unorganised and less three-dimensionally focused than the sampling technique that I used/developed for the *AweAre* costume. I knotted in ways that I imagined resembled the *knipling* technique, however without using any of the tools that are crucial for *knipling* and without creating lace-like patterns. As I crafted, I explored how I could tie string together and experimented or played with having different distances between that knots that I knotted. While I was crafting, I was eager not to create specific patterns or to create a wearable part, and I intentionally did not place craftings in-process on a mannequin.

At the time I had lots of stretchable textiles in various colours which I cut into a pile of colourful strings. The pile of string had quite a different feel to it than in previous projects. For example, quite colourful. The random manner thus included combining the colours in less organised or controlled manners than I normally do or had done earlier. In the crafting, in the knotting, I entangled with the textile string or maybe the material entangled with me.

### **A metaphorical dialogue**

This was an entanglement that at some point, surprisingly became visible to me as related to my sister Camilla's craftings. As mentioned in *Lydhørheder – language(s) beyond the linguistic* (link) with Alzheimer's as an unescapable companion, Camilla's crafting expressions have over years transformed to become wilder, less controlled and somehow more intuitive. During the different states of Camilla's crafting transformations her expressions have inspired me to craft textile samples as a way of decoding her crafting techniques. However, my samples read as analytical interpretations and were less intuitive, playful and/or colourful than Camilla's craftings. As I was tying knots and knotting the colourful textile strings together, I quite unexpectedly realised that there was a link to Camilla's crafting. I felt like I entered an internal or metaphorical dialogue with Camilla's craftworks and I intuitively knew that something was emerging or that I was learning something new from Camilla's craftings.

In dialogue with, or rather inspired by, Camilla, I tied the strings together with some knots close to other knots and also with more distance to other knots in a manner that was as random as I possibly could. As I was knotting I also chose the colourful strings as randomly as possible. With

the randomness I tried to craft as intuitively as Camilla, which is perhaps an impossibility. When I am in a creative flow I enter a meditative state of crafting, even if I do not think I evaluate how and what I craft in this state, perhaps I intuitively do so. I cannot know how Camilla experiences crafting since she cannot explain herself intellectually. Camilla's explanations lie in her craftworks. As I was knotting the 'randomness' was an attempt to let go of control, for example *not* to create specific patterns or compositions with the knots and with the colours. As I started a new knotted piece I was trying different variations of the random knotting technique.

I ended crafting nine knotted pieces in-process that were quite open-ended and rather unfinished – unfinished in the sense that I imagined that during the CA workshop we could potentially continue to craft and/or re-craft these pieces. I therefore decided to bring the extra string that I had cut and a pile of uncut textiles similar to textiles that I had crafted the pieces from. Because of the content of my original proposal – that the CA had accepted – I also brought the three connecting costume prototypes that I had crafted. As a totality I called this: *costume assembly*.

### **Crafting openings**

In the *Costume Agency – artistic research project* book I wrote that *Conversation Costume* was “inspired by the 17th and 18th century figurative ceramic arrangement placed in the centre of the dining table that aimed at cultivating conversation among the people participating. Moreover, in agriculture cultivating suggests that something sprouts or grows by using, for example, a specific method. For me, cultivating suggests a focus both on the process as well as on the product” (Østergaard 2023, 97).

Thus, my intention was that the costume assembly acted as entry points and as embodied dialogue evokers through which I could explore which kind of co-crafting and co-creative flows could flourish between us. Where one exploration could lead to the next and where our exploration could go in multiple directions. As such the flourishing that I aimed to explore focused primarily on the co-creative process and less on producing a specific product like a performance in-progress. This implied that I did not have any vision for the two work-in-progress showings that were scheduled during the CA workshop. Moreover, as my ambition was to explore how we could to co-create with the costume assembly I intentionally did not produce a rehearsal plan that included a list of tasks or explorations I wanted us to pursue.

My hosting intention was to create a non-hierarchical structure between us – being equal co-creating partners. I thus participated physically in the explorations throughout the entire process. Placing us horizontally as co-creators aimed to encourage us to initiate, host and/or co-host explorations and to elaborate on and jammed<sup>91</sup> with each other’s creative ideas. Moreover, like in *AweAre – a movement quintet*, another part of my hosting strategy was to have daily sessions or dialogues where we listened, shared and reflected on our different experiences and perspectives. As the performers were not acquainted with my work and as I was unsure how to approach the knotted pieces in-process, I – in the first rehearsal– started with what was most familiar to me in the costume assembly: the connecting costume. In the diary it is evident that our explorations with the connecting costume did not last for long. Instead, the performers or co-creators began to connect and tie different parts of the costume assembly together and connect them to the space and to their bodies. As one of the co-creators reflected the knotted pieces in-process offered more creative agency than the connecting costumes did. This reflection fostered ongoing dialogues that circled round questions like what constitutes costume and can textile objects as the knotted pieces in-process act like costume and at the same time be spatial or scenographic objects? These ongoing dialogues meant that the knotted pieces in-process became the centre of our attention and that the strings, the uncut textiles including the connection costume prototypes acted as practical tools to tie or craft the knotted pieces together and connect them to each other, to the space *and* to and between us.

## The co-creators’ reflections on our explorative process

I value my co-creators’ contributions and their reflections have informed my research. The following is an edited excerpt of an online interview that I undertook with Fredrik and Jonathan two weeks after our *Conversation Costume* explorations. I add that I have their consent to share their reflections and to use their names.

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<sup>91</sup> In the first rehearsal and as an opening I shared that jamming was inspired by how musicians engage in musical dialogues and spontaneously craft compositions on the fly. Equivalent to how improvising musically is to be collectively responsive, my aim was that the costume assembly enables us to have responsive embodied conversations. I suggested that jamming did not favour particular improvising techniques but was an invitation to mix and sample techniques.



Video: parts of the interview with Fredrik and Jonathan. Photo and video: Lydia Hann and Charlotte Østergaard.

## Material-discursive listening(s)

During the rehearsal process and in our dialogues, we realised that our understanding of listening was influenced by the value or belief systems in our backgrounds. For the performers their dance training meant that listening valued bodily proximity of touch – the touch of bodies and skin – of fellow dancers. Moreover, listening often required that they as dancers had to accept any given task. Listening to a task implied that they had to be inventive and produce *interesting* movement-material that was often more in service to an outside eye than listening to themselves and following their own sensorial and imaginative impulses. During our exploration the performers unfolded that listening to and with the temporal composition that we co-crafted and co-composed with costume assembly, enabled them to extend their bodies into the space and thus extend the reach of their listenings. One of the co-creators reflected that listening with the temporal compositions became an “extension of my own body, for example, my arms or legs. Exploring how can I reach out over the whole room and connect with the whole room and with you.” The other co-creator reflected that bodily entangling with the temporal compositions was

“a way to be bigger than oneself and to achieve power by suddenly being able to manipulate a space in a completely different way than you can with just your own body. I found that we have always been connected, even if it hasn't always been clear. We've kind of been moving together without touching each other at any point”.

For me, being physically active – allowing myself as non-performer to be part of the improvisation during our rehearsals and on the stage in our work-in-progress showcases – evoked listening qualities that differed from how I listen when I craft. For example, in the process of crafting the nine knotted pieces in-process I listened to the textile strings' surfaces, tactility and stretchability with my fingertips and with the strength of my hands, and I also listened to the metaphorical and actual dialogues that emerged around the crafting process. During our explorations I discovered that listening had spatial qualities that shifted from an experience of proximity to an experience of embracing the space. The proximate listenings was orientated towards sensorial and/or tactile

details of the knotted pieces, which felt like touching, responding and being affected by another body. The sensation of embracing the space arose as soon as we started to co-craft and co-compose the costume assembly in the space. It was an experience of sending or receiving vibrations through the material as well as spreading or extending our movements into the space. What I call embracing the space relates to what the performers called the extension of their bodies. Thus, by listening with the temporal compositions of the costume assembly our listenings had spatial qualities.

The spatial qualities always included proximate sensations. When the costume assembly and we were co-composed and entangled across the space I was orientated towards the proximate sensations and towards the spatial qualities, or rather my listenings was constantly bouncing and re-orientated by that which I experienced was calling for my attention. The spatial qualities of our entanglement in a composition called for careful listenings to and with the movements that occurred in the temporal compositions in order to listen to our spatial entanglements. For example, listening to the push and pull qualities and the changes of directions or re-directions of these push and pull qualities.

Moreover, with the temporally composed costume assembly as connectors, I was, at times, suddenly intimately entangled with my fellow co-creators' bodies in ways that would have, for example in fitting situations, crossed personal boundaries for the performers' and me. Thus, touching, being touched or being close to one or several of the co-creators' bodies I was orientated and attentive towards their (re)actions and responses. At the same time, I expanded my listenings towards my own experiences in a way that felt new or different to crafting and that allowed me to act in ways other than I do when I craft or fit a costume on a performer's body. Thus, during our explorations I expanded my listening abilities to listen with and to my body to the temporal compositions of the costume assembly and to how we tangled and moved with the compositions. For example listening with my size and weight, my flexibility and inflexibilities, my heart, mind and imagination.

During the workshop we explored aspects of what material-discursive listening includes and that which invited us to hear, see and sense ourselves, each other, the costume assembly, the space, and the interrelationships. Our listening practice, or how we listened, was co-created and co-explored through different explorative situations. In practice, our costume-body explorations

included, for example, different ways of relating, reacting and being affected by the costume assemble by 1) arranging, combining, composing or dressing the costume assembly on one's own, on each other's bodies or on/in the space, 2) wearing the costume assembly in different ways, 3) moving with or being moved by the costume assembly, 4) noting the spatial and relational dimensions of the costume assembly and 5) employing the effect of working in, for example, darkness, silence, sometimes semi-silence using our breath or breathing as vocal responses and with music.

## **Bodily compositions – the first work-in-progress showing**

In this path I unfold how we in the first work-in-progress showing invited our collages join and co-create a version of an exploration that I call 'composing and wearing, listening and moving'.

The 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' arose from an exploration that Fredrik hosted and where we had roles as wearer or composer. The composers co-compose a costume directly on the wearer(s) body/bodies and the wearer(s) responded to the composition by moved until the costume composition fell off their bodies. The composers witnessed the wearers movements. As the rehearsal ended we had explored multiple variations or iterations of the 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' explorations. We realised that it was not only exciting to be a bigger group but that our guests had offered embodied articulations that were different from ours. Thus, as the next day was the first work-in-progress showing we decided to invite our colleagues to co-create another iteration.

### **The first work-in-progress showing**

We had not prepared a detailed introduction and therefore our way of inviting our colleagues into the 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' exploration was improvised. Nonetheless, as the day before, Fredrik explained the rules, for example that we would work in silence and the two positions of wearer and composer.

As turned out, due to the number of participants there was a lack of material with which to compose. At the same time the lack of material implied that there was constant rotation and re-compositioning of the costume assembly. Even though the composers occasionally paused to witness the wearers it was as if the co- and re-compositioning had an organic quality as well as it became less clear who acted as wearer or composer. Apart from that some wearers hid under the

composition without moving at all during the session and three people placed themselves at the edge of the room and watched from a distance.

As Fredrik and Jonathan mention in the video, one participant reflected that the exploration, the act of dressing up, had childish and silly qualities. As they reflect, the childishness and silliness were an important aspect of our way of improvising or jamming. Not only did the childish playfulness liberate us from judging or evaluating how our actions looked from an outside perspective but, and importantly, the playfulness was an invitation to laugh and be silly together, which made us daring and open-minded in the way we listening to and improvised or jammed with each other and the costume assembly. As such, the childish playfulness was a way of jamming and sampling each other's ideas on the go.

Another aspect of the expanded version of the 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' exploration was our fellow colleagues' different modes of participation. Some were very active, others were more passive and a few acted as witnesses. In the rehearsals that followed the showing we had longer reflections or dialogues on participation, for example whether witnessing is active or passive and whether this witness-position indicates distance to what is explored. I pointed towards Wenger's different modes of participation<sup>92</sup> to suggest that the witness-positioning could indicate shyness or unwillingness to participate physically and at the same time show engagement in what was physically explored. We tried not to judge or conclude anything about our colleagues' positions or actions, though the reflection was nonetheless rewarding since it allowed us to share and listen to how our colleagues' actions and feedback affected us in different ways.

Even with, or maybe due to, the different modes of participation, the exploration was like an evolving organism – which seemed to contrast with our exploration the previous day that was conducted in rounds. Hence, it was a revelation to us that our CA fellows and the larger group's ways of participating went into multiple directions. They were less attuned than we had been to the rules and thus they were quite playful and jamful with the rules. Their actions indirectly

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<sup>92</sup> In *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* educational theorist and practitioner Étienne Wenger suggests that there are different modes of participation in practice: from being a newcomer (Wenger 1998, 117) to being master or an experienced. A newcomer could suggest that a participant is untrained. On the other hand, it could suggest that a participant enter with and offer other skills and perspectives than more experienced participants. In similar yet different quite ways, placing witnessing could indicate unwillingness to participate or interest in watching what is explored.

pointed towards the fact that we in our smaller group had orientated ourselves towards sameness. The showing made us realise how quickly unarticulated rules – a kind of ‘right way’ – had emerged between us, almost unnoticed.

Barad notes that what is real and what is possible – as possibilities that open or close – are iteratively produced and performed (Barad 2007, 393). This suggests that by opening our explorative process – by inviting our colleagues to entangle with the costume assembly – our colleagues’ different ways of entangling opened up new possibilities that were foreclosed to us due to the ‘rules’ we had developed. Even though we (Fredrik, Jonathan and I) crafted the invitation, the *we* that we (all of us including the costume assembly) produced and performed emerged through the entanglement of our different creative responses that the situation evoked. The *we* that the situation evoked was a temporal explorative community that all of us had a part in and was part of shaping.

## Spatial compositions – the second work-in-progress showing

Part of the CA programme/schedule included two work-in-progress showings. Showing work-in-progress indirectly suggests that the aim of the CA workshop was that each costume designer/artist and/or design team – the costume designer/artist and the assigned performers – had to develop a performance in-progress that progressed from one showing to the next. As mentioned in other paths, my ambition was that we co-creatively explore potentialities of the costume assembly and that I have no ambition of producing a performance in-process. Therefore, in the CA book I mention the showings as “co-creational work-in-progress potentials or fabulations” (Østergaard 2023, 99).

I have unfolded that in our first showcase (link) we invited our CA colleagues to participate in and thus our first showing was co-created with the participants. In the second showcase we decided to do something different: to ‘preform’ a co-crafting spatial composition and to improvise with the composition, all within a loose frame that built on the vocabulary we had developed during our rehearsals (Østergaard 2023, 99). What in the CA book I called costume-body-space improvisations I rename in the following and call ‘temporal textile landscape compositions’.

### **A contour of ‘temporal textile landscape compositions’**

What became the 'temporal textile landscape compositions' exploration(s) arose after two rather troublesome days (link) in the hours between a conversation I had with the assigned tutor team (Knut Ove Arntzen and Sodja Lotker) and our next rehearsal. The conversation with the tutors started as a reflection on how we could develop the 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' participatory showcase even though I knew we would not do so. We reflected that our showing was a textile landscape or a tactile text that organically transformed with the movements of the CA colleagues that participated.

The contour of what became the 'temporal textile landscape compositions' was a co-creative journey that started by co-composing a textile composition in the space. I then imagined that we would leave the space shortly, where I would offer us a listening intention or orientation, whereafter we would return to the space to listen, respond and entangle with the composition and each other. At this point a lighting designer had set up different lamps in the space and I was eager to test how different light qualities would affect us. I intended to include darkness since in earlier sessions we had experienced that darkness made us listen more intensely. Furthermore, I realised that our explorative sessions often stopped after a certain amount of time – therefore I wanted to explore if it was possible to extend the duration.

### **The 'temporal textile landscape compositions'**

Even though we had been struggling (link), and perhaps especially since we had been struggling and feeling stuck, the performers were more than willing to explore the journey. However, I did not explain my idea in detail. In the research diary I tried to capture the session but it is clear that my description is rather fragmented, and there are many aspects of our exploration that I do not unfold. Still, re-visiting the description awakens memories of the intensity of this exploration that lasted about an hour.

What was significant in this exploration was Fredrik and Jonathan through their actions several times indicated – by withdrawing – that they were wanted to end the session but I responded with dressing. Both actions (withdrawing and dressing) were unarticulated signs that we had developed. As my intention was to extend the duration of the session I repeatedly refused to accept my fellows' signs. What finally ended the session was that Fredrik collected and threw a chunk of the composition or of the costume assembly into the hallway and left the space – an action or response that was rather surprising. As such my non-accepting attitude provoked an

unexpected response which shook us out of the struggle or deadlock we had been in. The chain re-action surprisingly re-awoke the dynamic flow between us. Thus, in the subsequent dialogues we realised that we (once again) had established several unspoken rules and signs or embodied articulations and discussed that listening must include attending to oneself; allowing ourselves and each other to listen, respond and be affected in different ways. This highlighted that if we do not listen to ourselves the politeness in our responses can become polished ways of listening that aims to avoid potential conflicts. For example, avoiding showing that we are provoked or that we disagree. We did not address it directly but the unexpected chain re-action situation revealed that our listenings included more than responding politely: it was being playful, jamful and childish together and sometimes being annoyingly teasing and responding to the annoyance. As such, this first version of 'temporal textile landscape composition' opened new or other potentials listening with(in) our acts of co-composing.

In the last showing we performed new or other version of the 'temporal textile landscape compositions' exploration. We had a set few directions or dramaturgical scores: co-composing a textile landscape, leaving the space shortly to receive a listening intention, returning to perform a listening exploration that included the light designer could do whatever she was inspired to do, and we also had a pre-agreed light cue as a sign to finish. Thus, the showing was based on and was a fabulation of the embodied vocabulary or language that we had developed.

Video of the second work-in-process. The video is produced by *Costume Agency* project and they have granted me permission to use the video documentation of our showcase.

I suggest listening to the sound file with Fredrik and Jonathan's reflections our the second showing while watching the video.

## Staying with the troublesome

### **Loosing directions and orientations**

In the interview I asked the co-creators to reflect on our process including situations where they experienced that we struggled ([link](#)). This path related to their reflections and dives further into an exploration of and reflection on the dilemmas that our struggles provoked.

It is evident that our first showcase had excited us, and it was therefore tempting to further develop the 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' exploration into a participatory

performance in-progress for the next showing. At the same time, to wrap up our playful and jamful attitude after what was only three rehearsals felt like missing out on new or other explorative and performative opportunities with the costume assembly. We thus decided, or perhaps I convinced the co-creators, to continue exploring other potentialities with the costume assembly.

As an attempt to trigger new or other explorative directions and to approach the costume assembly from another perspective we moved to the hallway to explore how another space would inform our explorations. We crafted or co-composed different spatial compositions that we tangled with in different ways. For example, we explored the effect of running from one end of the hallway to the other while being tangled with the composition. However, due to the dimensions of the hallway our experiences were that however we tangled with the composed costume assembly we disappeared. Then we went outside the building and connected ourselves to different objects – like a large waist container and a fence – with the costume assembly. These explorations did not really spark any creative energy between us, so we did not pursue this for very long.

The next day we returned to the black box where we tied all the knotted pieces in-process together and to one object. However, this object read as a fashion idiom that mainly called for posing. Then we decided to explore different ways of responding, which had some potential. During these two rehearsals I wrote in the research diary, in a short and rather undetailed manner, what we explored. I mainly reflected on the concerns I have. I ask: “what happens when the space has been filled with other voices and then we are back on our own feeling a bit empty – are we missing the input of others?”

The question highlights that we had a wish to expand our three-person team, which was evoked by the excitement of the first showing. For example, moving outside the black box was a shared decision and conscious attempt to interact with other people or a hope that bypassing people would respond to our explorations. As we returned to the black box we left the door open in the hope that someone may walk by and drop in. However, the academic year at Oslo National Academy of the Arts had not started and there were still some Covid-19 regulations in force. At the time it was not obvious to us, however our ambition of expanding our team or interacting with bypassing people was bound to fail.



As we were searching for reactions and/or interactions with others we simultaneously tried hard to be inventive. However, our explorations were rather impulsive, and we did not long remain with any of the things that we tested. For two days we were groping blindly. I do not write it directly, but we were far from being as playful or jamful as we had been in the former rehearsals. We struggled to find new or other creative directions or possibilities with the costume assembly that excited us enough to pursue them further.

### **Troublesome days**

As described, even though we tested several things, for two days, we somehow lost the sense of having a shared orientation. As the host it was discomfiting and troubling that I did not manage to move our explorations smoothly from the excitement of the participatory showing into other interesting or exiting directions. As host I was accountable for what I had set in motion and yet I did not manage to make the transition back to our small team particularly easy for my fellows, and I was not particularly at ease with the situation.

As the co-creators reflected in the interview when I asked them about our struggling days, “it felt a bit scary and demotivating to have a sensation of running out of ideas”. The co-creators’ reflections point towards expectations that I also had that we had to be creatively inventive *all the time*. In the diary I wondered whether I “as host had to push or lead to make sure that we use our time effectively.” The effectiveness addresses a narrative that rehearsal processes *must* be creatively productive. Unproductivity is a failure, and the failure to progress creatively is the responsibility of the host who is accountable for the situation. I had somehow forced us to continue exploring, but our explorations were rather disorientated. I wondered whether in the midst of the situation I had lost my hosting orientation and whether ensuring creative efficiency contradicted my hosting attitude that, for example, valued time in which to listen. As we were struggling, who was I listening to? Was I listening to my expectations that in each and every rehearsal we had to produce something interesting *or* was I listening to external expectations – that I assumed others had of what a good host and a good rehearsal process is?

### **Being in the troublesome**

In *Staying with the trouble – making kin in the Chthulucene* Donna Haraway writes that

trouble is an interesting word. It derives from a thirteenth-century French verb meaning “to stir up,” “to make cloudy,” “to disturb.” [...] The task is to become

capable, with each other in all of our bumptious kinds, of response. [...] In fact, staying with the trouble requires learning to be truly present not as a vanishing pivot between awful or edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures but as moral critters entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meanings. (Haraway 2006, 1)

Haraway argues that being truly present with each other is learning to become capable of responding when we struggle, however troublesome it might be. The unfinished configurations suggest that we must embrace that explorative processes as relational entanglements are un-static and thus that explorative or co-creative processes are never just calm and pleasant.

Haraway reminds me that the troublesome is in fact places or situations that stir things up. For example, it provokes us to re-consider what we assume or expect collaborative or co-creative processes must contain, such as having certain structures and positions. In the stirring we awake and – even if we struggle – we might come alive to respond and entangle in new ways.

As mentioned, as we were struggling to find new or other directions I struggled with an assumption that a good host must be in control and is expected to lead or guide a team through creative struggles. However, I was caught up in a troublesome and stirring cloudiness where I was not in control and where I had no vision of how to direct or lead us past or beyond the troublesome place.

As an attempt to find other directions I revisited a list of ideas that I, prior to the workshop, had and that I interested in exploring with the performers that contained, for example, different (co-)crafting and explorative ideas. However, as we started the rehearsal process I decided not to share the list as list could indicate that I had specific visions or expectations for our process. In the research diary I reflected that “I bring a bag of ideas. Leave room for the others present to find their interest. Maybe some of my ideas aren’t in focus yet – maybe these ideas will enter the stage later and in other forms or in other situations. And maybe it’s ok that some ideas never enter the stage. Maybe it’s just not the right time or space – and maybe I don’t know how to make these ideas come alive just yet.”

Re-reading this points at two things. Firstly, even though we struggled I was doubtful whether the list with ideas had any relevance to where we were in the process. Thus, I wondered whether pursuing and/or pushing any of the ideas forwards was more out of desperation than from a

creative desire or urge. Secondly, I use the word bag instead of list. As Ursula Le Guin suggests in *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, bags contain things that we collect and that we can take out and share with others (Le Guin 1968, 168). As I had brought a bag of costumes I was eager to explore what the bag evoked in the co-creators and how that corresponded to their creative baggage. As such, it was less interesting to insist that we had to explore the costume assembly according to my baggage, and thus, once again, I decided to not pursue any of the ideas from my list.

### **Remaining in the troublesome**

As mentioned, during these two rehearsals we tried hard to be creatively inventive, which was quite draining. During these days I battled patterns or structures within me that assumed that being a responsible host was synonymous with leading and being in control. However, to me, co-creation or co-creating is not a matter of leading or controlling but is a genuine wish to share creative agency with others. In an interview Barad unfolds that in agential realism

agency is about response-ability, about the possibilities of mutual response, which is not to deny, but to attend to power imbalances. Agency is about possibilities for worldly re-configurings. So agency is not something possessed by humans, or non-humans for that matter. It is an enactment. And it enlists, if you will, “non-humans” as well as “humans.” At the same time, I want to be clear that what I am not talking about here is democratically distributing agency across an assemblage of humans and non-humans. Even though there are no agents *per se*, the notion of agency I am suggesting does not go against the crucial point of power imbalances. On the contrary. The specificity of intra-actions speaks to the particularities of the power imbalances of the complexity of a field of forces. (Barad in interview, Dolpijn & van der Tuin 2012, 55)

According to Barad, agency is *not* something that someone has and *not* something that can be democratically distributed. Agency is about the possibilities of mutual response between humans and more-than-humans as well as a quest to attend to power imbalances. As such, I must explore or speculate to whom and how we responded or in which way we were able to respond during the rehearsals where we struggled. Through exploring our responses I can approach and speculate on the power imbalances between us. Moreover, power (im)balances offer opportunities to speculate on relationships between us and the costume assembly, between the human and more-

than-human. Inspired by Haraway I use the word speculate. Haraway writes that “science fact and speculative fabulation need each other, and both need speculative feminism” (Haraway 2016, 3). To me, Haraway’s “speculative fabulation” highlights the research dilemma: what happened in the explorative situations is a fact, however what in fact happened is an interpretation. In the entangled position I can speculate and fabulate but I cannot claim an absolute truth of, for example, how and to whom we responded and I cannot objectively evaluate the power (im)balances between us.

To speculate on the days where we struggled: we were very caught up in our quest of seeking responses from other humans, which perhaps made us less responsive to what happened between us. However, despite our struggles to find new or other directions in our physical explorations that exited us, we had rather enlightening dialogues where we reflected on the nuances of co-hosing the first showing as well as sharing and discussing our different perspectives of the multiple ways in which the CA colleagues participated in the showing. Moreover, with the showcases – ours and the five that we attended –, as backdrops, we speculated on the differences and similarities between collaborative and co-creative structures and/or processes. As such, our dialogues were quite productive, at the same time, during the two rehearsals we were caught up in our assumptions that rehearsals had to be productive in particular ways, assumptions that physical explorations are the purpose of rehearsals and that they are more valuable than dialogues.

In the days where we were struggling and in between our rehearsals I was caught up in my own struggles and in the research diary I mainly responded to my vanity of whether I was a good host. At the same time the doubts made me revisit the values within co-creativity which – to me – are that co-creators bring other baggage, offer other perspectives and offer other (in)sights than mine. Reflecting on these values, I knew that even though it was uncomfortable I had to dare to remain in a troublesome place and trust that something would emerge between us that could spark our explorative orientations in new directions.

### **Dilemmas in the troublesome**

Even though I decided to dare to remain in the troublesome, I had an uncomfortable feeling of ‘running behind’ our rehearsals and being unable to address and/or discuss the struggles as they were occurring with the co-creators.

In the research diary I tried to understand what was occurring, which in fact was that I had only very vague creative hunches of what would lead our exploration in new or other directions, and I knew that the co-creators' creative hunches would be as good as mine. What was additionally occurring or rather shimmering in my system was that daring to remain in the troublesome place was not a choice that I made on our behalf. It was a consequence of my inability to respond productively to the situation. I was facing an ethical dilemma; I did not know how to move us past or beyond our struggles and as the initiating host I was wondering whether this rather vague way of responding was being responsible and acting as a responsible host.

Barad writes that "being in one's skin means that one cannot escape responsibly" and that "before all reciprocity in the face of the other, I am responsible" (Barad 2007, 392). Barad points out that hosting is facing the responsibility of the situation. Before the reciprocity that is embedded in the hosting hospitality the host must face their responsibility. As the initiator of *Conversation Costume* I had defined the explorative process as co-creative, and even if I had chosen another collaborative strategy we might still have faced troublesome rehearsal days. In *Conversation Costume* there was an imbalance in our starting points or starting positions: as the participating host I was also the researcher that had framed the co-creative exploration whereas the co-creators were hired by the CA research project to attend in the explorative process that I had defined. Even though we discussed the co-creative approach during rehearsals it did not change the fact that I had defined and framed how we would approach the costume assembly in the rehearsals. Even though I could not predict how my hosting strategy and the co-creative approach would unfold – for example that our roles or positions would be quite fluid – I was still responsible for what I put in motion during the rehearsals. Even though I knew that I was responsible, during the troublesome days I had to face the responsibility of insisting that we continue to explore other potentialities with the costume assembly and face the dilemma that my choices affected my co-creators. As I appreciated the creative relationship with the co-creators, and as I valued their contributions, I was worried that I did not step up to my responsibilities and thus that I did not show my appreciation for the co-creators' contributions.

Building on the Danish theologian and philosopher Løgstrup, dramaturge Camilla Eeg-Tverbakk<sup>93</sup> writes that

ethics as a relational practice demands risk taking, exposing yourself and letting go of some ego structures. I must dare failure, which demands courage in ethical action. Løgstrup operates with the concept of the ethical demand as a radical demand, because it is a demand that he claims is impossible to fully meet. The ethical demand is radical, says Løgstrup, because I can never know if the way I choose to act will serve the other's needs. I am responsible for the part of the life of the other that I hold in my hands on any occasion and for my own actions in response to each situation. (Eeg-Tverbakk 2021, 5)

As Eeg-Tverbakk suggests, the ethical stance in relational practice is to let go of the ego, for example the desire to be acknowledged as a good host. As host I must dare to expose the doubts, failures and dilemmas that I experience. The ethical demand implies that however I act I am responsible for my actions, and at the same time I cannot know how my actions meet the needs of the co-creators. For example, what they expect, assume, desire, long for or dream of.

## Co-creative patterns

### Diffraction

My aim with *Conversation Costume* was to approach what *open-minded co-creative costume explorations* imply. In several paths I have explored how our different experiences, perspectives and assumptions acted as openings, for example to entangle with the costume assembly in different ways and for dialogues exploring our different listening strategies. In this path I explore how different matters also informed our co-creative explorations. Here Karen Barad's "diffractive pattern[s]" (Barad 2006, 89) is a useful lens. Barad writes that

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<sup>93</sup> Dramaturge Camilla Eeg-Tverbakk (PhD) is professor at Oslo Metropolitan University, Norway. Eeg-Tverbakk was visiting Professor at Malmö Theatre Academy/ Lund University (2019-21), represented in the committee for artistic research in the Swedish Research Council (2022-24) and lead the research group for Artistic Research at Institute for Art, Design and Drama.

diffraction is a matter of differential entanglement. Diffraction is not merely about differences, and certainly not different in any absolute sense, but about the entangled nature of difference that matters. (Barad 2007, 381)

Diffraction patterns look like moiré patterns in drawing or moiré effects in textiles, however where moiré patterns/effects are artefacts or images that create optical illusions, diffraction is not illusive. Diffraction is tuning into patternings of differences. Barad explains that

waves make diffraction patterns (think of the pattern made by dropping two stones in a still pond, for example) precisely because multiple waves can be in the same place at the same time, and a given wave can be in multiple places at the same time. (Barad 2018, 65)

Like the stones in the pond cause multiple waves to appear and interfere, studying co-creative patterns through the lens of diffraction is exploring how different matters – whom, what, how and where – influence, inform, provoke, obstruct or in other ways interfere with the entangled explorations. Moreover, the diffractive patterns of the waves are never still but always in motion. Thus, exploring co-creative patterns through the lens of diffraction is a matter of following the waves to explore how and what they move.

In an interview Barad explains that they call diffraction a

methodology, a method of diffractively reading insights through one another, building new insights, and attentively and carefully reading for differences that matter in their fine details, together with the recognition that there intrinsic to this analysis is an ethics that is not predicated on externality but rather entanglement. Diffractive readings bring inventive provocations; they are good to think with. (Barad in interview, Dolpijn & van der Tuin 2012, 50)

As such, exploring co-creative patterns is a matter of carefully readings or listenings to the specificities – the nuances and the natures – of our entangled costume explorations and to the different matters that interfered with our explorations. In this path I will explore and unfold how different aspects of the CA structure were matters that, like waves, interfered, moved and affected different things between us during *Conversation Costume*.

### **Navigating different research agendas**

The main researchers of the CA research project, Christina Lindgren and Sodja Lotker, write that

as costume designer/director and dramaturg/curator we were very interested in understanding ‘how costume performs.’ [...] An important part of our research was also sharing, doing it together – we wanted to include as many costume designers, directors, theorists, light designers, students and performers as possible to make space for them to explore and join in our research (Lindgren & Lotker 2023, 13).

During their research (2018–2022) Lindgren and Lotker facilitated eight workshops and I was pleased that *Conversation Costume* was selected to be part of workshop #5 which ran parallel to workshop #6 and #7.

For the three parallel CA workshops Lindgren and Lotker had selected twelve different costume designers with twelve different costume projects to partake, and their intention was that we with our projects unfold different aspect of how costume performs. As the CA project generously provided black box spaces for our rehearsal processes, hired performers and light designers to partake in our explorations and arranged that a tutor team would support our creative processes, I was keen to return the CA’s generosity by delivering the outcome that the CA researchers were expecting: two work-in-progress showings.

Work-in-progress indicates or assumes that I had a vision or direction for how the costume assembly would generate a performance in-process and/or that we would develop the work-in-progress from one showing to the next. These assumptions somehow contradicted my research ambition of in collaboration with the performers to co-creatively explore *different* potentialities with the costume assembly. I feared that the two work-in-progress showings could imply that we would use most of our time rehearsing and producing a product to showcase. As an attempt to navigate the CA project agendas and my research goals I, on our first rehearsal day, stated to the two performers that my ambition was not to produce a work-in-process performance – that we would refine from one showing to the next – but that we co-creatively explore *different* work-in-process potentialities and/or fabulations with the costume assembly.

### **Sharing sessions – dialogues**

As I mention in other paths, my hosting strategy included that we each day shared, exchanged and reflected on our experiences of and perspectives on our explorations, for example what caught our attention and what inspired us sensorially and visually, individually and collectively. The sharing sessions became openings to discuss, for example, what worked and what did not work



and what interested us creatively and what was less inspiring. These discussions lead to new explorations where we either collectively agreed on something specific to pursue *or* where one of us suggested an exploration that this person wanted to lead or host.

What mattered in the sharing sessions was that over the days we had time to return to matters. Besides co-creatively fabulating on new or other explorative ideas, other matters re-appeared as ongoing dialogues, for example our different perspectives on listening and jamming and the fact that our way of co-creating was a reoccurring topic. In the dialogues we shared and compared our practices to explore, for example, how listening informs our practices and reflected on whether our practices favour or promote certain listening strategies. Through the dialogues our practices entangled, or perhaps it was us – we – who became more and more entangled through and with our dialogues.

Sharing and comparing can potentially become judgmental battlefields. Haraway writes – about the arts activism project PigeonBlog – that the artist-researchers were learning to learn with generosity to interact with pigeons where “all the players [pigeons and humans] rendered each other capable; they ‘became-with’ each other in speculative fabulation” (Haraway 2016, 22). As an act of becoming-with, I suggest that comparing and sharing is learning-with our different practices. For example, when we shared and compared we discovered similarities, but it was the differences that mattered. It was the differences between our practices that offered us opportunities to ask genuinely curious questions on matters that differ from our own practice. Moreover, through the curious questions and in the mutual generous exchange we explored some of the assumptions that were embedded in our practices. At the same time, I argue that in the dialogues we became generous players that played each other capably and ably. Moreover, I suggest that in the mutual generous exchange or dialogues we are seen, heard and valued for what we bring.

However, the sharing and comparing of dialogues is not an easy game to play. It is a delicate game that in its seriousness can become heavy and prohibitive, but it can also be light, playful and bubbly. As the host that set this game in motion, at times I had to silence my urge to speak or to interrupt. I had to listen, and several times I repeated or rephrased questions to explore, learn and/or to better understand the experiences and perspectives of my fellows. The game of learning with generosity from each other’s practices and perspectives required time – time to linger and return – and required of us to be curious, generous and patient towards each other and ourselves.

My experience was that we willingly played along and during the rehearsal period we became more and more able to fabulate with our different perspectives and jam with our different ways of practicing. Even in the two days where we struggled (link) our dialogues were quite fabulating.

### **Sessions with tutor team**

Regarding *Conversation Costume* I have chosen to only touch upon the dialogues I had with the tutor team: dramaturge Sodja Lotker and theatre historian Knut Ove Arntzen. As the designer selected to explore a specific costume project during the CA workshop I was the only one of our three-person team who was intended to meet the tutor team: two meetings, each of one hour duration. My impression was that the CA project's aim was that the tutor team should support the costume designer's development of a performance concept and the progression of the costume performance from one showing to the next.

The performers were also hired to partake in another costume project by a fellow costume designer and thus they were not able or even intended to attend the tutor sessions. In the first tutor session I was not particularly at ease with the fact that the performers were not invited or able to attend. As we were in the midst of building a creative relationship it felt strange to discuss the co-creative strategies without their presence and reflections.

In another path I shortly address that the conversation in the second tutor session sparked my imagination. Surprisingly, the conversation also awoke one of the tutors' – dramaturge Sodja Lotker – curiosity and thus she attended the rehearsal that followed. Sodja's presence during what became the first version of the 'temporal textile landscape compositions' explorations was significant. Her dramaturgical (in)sights and genuinely curious questions sparked new aspects and dynamics into our co-creative explorations and into our ongoing dialogue.

### **Working alongside others – multiple voices**

As I mentioned, twelve teams participated in the CA workshops. Each team had seven three-hour rehearsals to explore costume and to develop a performance in-progress or showcase. The main co-creative team of *Conversation Costume* was Fredrik, Jonathan and I and during the process several CA colleagues engaged in and contributed to our process. Our dialogues often included reflecting on actions, reflections and perspectives offered by CA colleagues or were the effects of

embodied dialogues with people beyond our team. For example, after the first showing and as we returned to our rehearsals, we shared our impressions that we were the only team that invited the group to actively participate in the showing, whereas the other teams placed the group as audience. Moreover, we were the only team that jointly presented and actively participated in the showing. We did not evaluate or judge our colleagues' showcases; however, the impressions, that the showcases left, provided us with a lens to explore and discuss whether our co-creative approach was similar or different to the other teams' ways of collaborating. Our impression was that our listening and jamming with the costume assembly, as well as how we co-created explorations, differed from the other teams' ways of collaborating.

Apart from the fact that the showings offered us a lens to reflect-with, the showing also offered (in)sight into how the fellow costume designers positioned themselves in the showings, which indicated how they potentially positioned themselves during their rehearsals. My impression was that the costume colleagues placed themselves outside the costume explorations, leading or directing the explorations. I did not evaluate the costume colleagues' choices and creative decisions. Still, the costume colleagues' positioning helped me to reflect on the nature of my entangled position, for example that my active participation prevented me from having an outside overview of the performative and aesthetic expressions of our explorations. Instead, I experienced performative and aesthetic qualities and potentialities from within our entanglements. In the entangled position I was not looking but listening with my entire body to the complexities of the costume assembly and to our co-creative process. My experiences were that the costume assembly sparked our creativities in different ways and that sharing our different creative experiences opened doors that enabled us to elaborate on each other's creativities and to co-create explorations on the fly.

### **Documentation**

In this path I have, through the lens of diffraction, explored different matters that affected our co-creative explorations and that we navigated co-creatively. I will end this path with a short reflection on a different matter. The main documentation of *Conversation Costume* is the research diary that I mostly wrote using a computer, but aspects are noted in the sketchbook that I used while I was preparing for the workshop. In the diary I wrote what we explored during the rehearsals, I noted some of the co-creators' comments and some of the feedback we received

from our CA colleagues, I reflected on my position as participating host and I explored and elaborated on the worries or concerns I had during our process.

Being actively engaged in the explorative process I often forgot to document our rehearsals. I therefore do not have extensive photo material or video documentations and I only recorded a few of our sharing sessions. Two weeks after *Conversation Costume* I interviewed my co-creators, and their honest reflections have been valuable for this research.

If I was to repeat *Conversation Costume* I would expand the documentation to include a co-creative approach. I would invite my co-creators to contribute: to write, to draw, to take photos or videos or document it in whichever (short or long) manner or format they find interesting, and I would have used some of our rehearsal time to do so. However, at the time it did not cross my mind.

## Co-creative dynamics

My ambition with *Conversation Costume* was to study co-creative costume processes or dynamics. In the research diary I wrote that “I am at a point in my life where I am open-minded towards more multifaceted aesthetic choices that hopefully offer space for other people’s creative ideas.” The aesthetic choices that I mention include more than the visibility of the costume assembly; it is attending to how the co-creative structure shaped our creative relationship. Diving into *Conversation Costume*, it is evident that the co-creative structure shaped or crafted different dynamics between us. Barad writes that

dynamics are about change. To specify or study the dynamics of a system is to say something about the nature of and possibilities for change. This includes specifying the nature of causation, the nature of the causes that effect change, the possibilities for what can change and how it can change, the nature and range of possible changes, and the conditions that produce change. (Barad 2007, 179)

In the context of co-creative structures dynamics is not a matter of stability in the structure but about studying the possibilities for change, what can change and what causes changes in dynamics between humans and more-than-humans, for example exploring how fixed or fluid roles or positions are within the co-creative structure.

## Positions

The intention to position us as horizontally as possible was an ambition of sharing creative authorship with my fellow co-creators in the explorative rehearsal process. In practice the shared authorship meant that we could initiate and host explorations. The shared authorship also meant that our roles or positions changed: sometimes we were hosting, sometimes we were co-hosting, sometimes we were participating, sometimes we added other, more or new aspects to specific explorations and we always elaborated on each other's creative idea. Like in a former artistic collaboration<sup>94</sup> where the change of roles or positions fostered critical dialogues between us (Østergaard 2018, 63). However, in *Conversation Costume* we were never merely hosted or participated; instead, during the explorations our positions were fluid. It is evident already during the first rehearsal our positions began to blur and, at the same time, the "bodily boundaries" (Barad 2007, 377) between us and the costume assembly blurred or became more fluid. We became entangled. Moreover, our embodied dialogues blurred the boundaries between being professionals, being playful (grown-up) children and building personal relationships. Thus, the rehearsals were like ping-pong games where we played with, between and among our different creative ideas *and* with the fluidity of our positions. The playful ping-ponging crafted relational dynamics between us that was energetic, powerful and playful. However, it is evident that the co-creative gaming also crafted dynamics that were less playful. For example, we had two rehearsals where our energy was low and where we struggled with the fluidity of our positions. In the explorative situations it seemed as if it was the fluidity of our positions that caused the change of dynamics between us, however, the cause also existed in the space between complexities of entangled matters.

### **Jamming playfully – playful jamming**

As we started our rehearsal process I suggested that we explore how we could jam with the costume assembly. I intentionally used the word jam to indicate that I did not favour any improvisation technique over others. As we started to explore, my impression was that the way in which we jammed with the costume assembly sprung from the improvisation techniques that we knew from our practices. Thus, in our dialogues I encouraged my fellows to share what improvisation includes in their practices and from their perspectives. For the performers dance-

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<sup>94</sup> In the MASK project costume designer Jepper Worning created costume on each other's bodies. In the process we shifted between being the maker and the wearer.

improvisations often include listening and responding to tasks given by, for example, a choreographer. As a craftsperson improvisation often includes listening and fabulating with textiles on how I can sample different crafting techniques.

As mentioned, in our dialogues we returned several times to improvisation. In the generous exchanges we explored how our improvisational techniques differ, however, and importantly, we realised how closely our improvisational techniques intertwine with listening. Within improvisational techniques/practices there are often quite specific expectations regarding who shall/must listen and to whom.

As mentioned in another path ([link](#)), some of our CA colleagues expressed that participating in our first showing had childish qualities. In her PhD thesis *Insubordinate Costume* Susan Marshall writes that

the capacity to play and to wonder are two characteristics frequently associated with being childlike but the importance of wonder and the intrinsic link between play and creativity [...] are two characteristics I consider fundamental in the performers' approach to my modular costumes (Marshall 2021, 164).

In the context of *Conversation Costume*, in the exchange and open-mindedness towards our different improvisation techniques, jamming became a willingness to risk appearing childlike or foolish, while at the same time the playfulness that jamming awoke liberated us from attending to how we appeared in the eyes of each other or vice versa. As we jammed we did not have to prove that we were good improvisors or that we improvised in the right way. In the playful approach the novice could imitate the master and the master could imitate the novice. Or rather, it was not a matter of imitating jamming enabled us to expand our abilities. For example, as the novice I could improvise with my fellows and through their mastery or skilfulness I learned to improvise with the costume assembly in ways other than how I improvise with textiles while crafting. By listening to and learning from my fellows I did not become as skilful an improvisor as them. However, their mastery, or rather their playfulness, sparked my creativity, which made me dare to become playful with them and to playfully jam with our different ways of improvising with the costume assembly. As for the fellows, they expressed that the jamming, or perhaps it was the playfulness, liberated them from the expectation that they had to produce interesting movement material in service of an outside eye.

In the *Conversation Costume* explorations jamming and playing entangled; we jammed playfully and played jamfully. We played with the costume assembly as if it was an instrument and we played with our bodies as if they were violin bows and vice versa. In the rehearsals we jammed with our bodily and costume assembly instruments whereby we (co-)composed compositions on the fly. As the jamming implied that we entangled with the compositions, the compositions were constantly re-created or re-composed. Thus, as we were playing, we could not predict or control how the soundscape of the ever-evolving composition would sound: it had momentary monophonic qualities but it was mostly polyphonic in nature. Within the entanglement the jammings were curious and fabulating ways of exploring how we could play together and/or play along, for example by mixing and sampling, interpreting, interrupting, listening, disturbing, (co-)hosting, (co-)inventing, (co-)crafting and negotiating. At the same time the jamming was not only playful it included moments of being exhausted, stuck, disorientated and insecure.

### **Spaciousness**

My ambition was to craft a space where we shared creative authorship which, at the same time, questions or challenges my creative spaciousness of my hospitality. I intentionally choose the word spaciousness instead of openness. Openness as a spatial quality suggesting that a door is open and we are invited to enter, whereas spaciousness suggests that we are somewhere specific where there is space. Even though there is space there are also spatial conditions that we must navigate and that we are invited to negotiate. To me, the Danish *rummelighed* (spaciousness), as human and relational quality, is our ability to give space to others by being flexible and stretchable.

Therefore, throughout our explorative process I had to attend to my abilities to be flexible and to stretch my creativity towards co-creators' creativities. For example, I had to be willing to go along with my co-creators' proposals to discover potentialities in their creative proposals that were at first invisible to me. As such, I tried not to judge the co-creators' creative proposals which at times were challenging, especially in the few situations where a proposal was not in line with my creative preferences. These situations created in me a dynamic where I had to silence my urge to make counter-proposals and not fall for the temptation to say "I don't think this is a good idea" or "I know that this won't work". As I could not predict or know where any creative proposals would

lead, I had to go along. Moreover, I had to embrace the position that within all our creative proposals was a risk that the exploration would fail to awaken our creative curiosity.

If I had judged each and every proposal proposed by the co-creators based on my preferences and assumptions, it could have created a dynamic where my judgments determined which proposals and thus which explorations we would pursue. In other words, I would have limited the co-creators' creativity. As such, I would have failed to be spacious in my hosting approach towards the co-creators and I would also have failed to create the conditions for spacious space that accommodated our different creativities could co-exist.

### **Curiosities and responsibilities**

As it turned out during our rehearsals, we co-created a dynamic where we navigated between our different creativities, for example by being willing to go along with each other's creative proposals. Importantly, it was a dynamic of sharing our creative curiosities and then navigating and negotiating our different curiosities by generously and honestly discussing whether to co-create iterations of specific explorations or to explore related or less related creative ideas.

Based on my experiences from *Conversation Costume*, I suggest that spaciousness is relational dynamics where we co-creatively stretched our creative muscles, our creative flexibilities and creative curiosities towards the space between us. My proposal that spaciousness is relational dynamics of co-creative stretchings can be criticised for being an uncritical postulate since spaces have walls and thus there are always spatial limitations.

Barad writes that

we are responsible for the world of which we are a part, not because it is an arbitrary construction of our choosing but because reality is sedimented out of particular practices that we have a role in shaping and through which we are shaped. (Barad 2007, 390)

In line with Barad, I argue that co-creating is shaping and being shaped. Even though we cannot know what our creative proposals will shape, we are still responsible for the fact that our proposals will shape something. As our responses will shape the space that we share we are responsible for how we respond to each other's creativities and creative curiosities. Are we willing to stretch towards each other's creative experiences and expressions? Are we willing to let the stretching towards each other re-shaped our creative ideas?



It is essential that co-creation is sharing, however it is never easy to share. It requires that we are generous and honest in our spaciousness. For example, that I, as host, are willing to listen to the co-creators creative curiosities as well as that I am willing to share and negotiate my own creative curiosities, which includes acknowledging that sharing my preferences, biases and prejudices might re-shape my perspective. As I cannot and will not force co-creators to co-create, I can only propose by showing my own willingness to stretch myself towards the places or the spaces between us. Acting according to my proposal, I must also show that I am willing to practice. In practice there will be times where I fail to stretch towards the co-creators' creative curiosities, however I still dare to propose that we practice stretching our creative muscles together. Some of the most precious memories I have from *Conversation Costume* are from the showings. It is, for example, the memory of co-hosting the first showing. In the second showing it stands crystal clear how the co-creators – Frederik and Jonathan – including the light designer, generously shared their reflections and responded to the CA colleagues' questions and comments. Though their responses they took ownership of our showing and of our collaborative work, which touched me deeply. From my perspective the showings highlighted what happened during our process, which was that all the iterations of the 'temporal textile landscape composition' and 'composing and wearing, listening and moving' were not mine, they were ours, as we co-authored them.

## Entangled costume conversations

### Co-crafting connections

Barad writes that

responsibility—the ability to respond to the other—cannot be restricted to human-human encounters when the very boundaries and constitution of the “human” are continually being reconfigured and “our” role on these and other reconfigurations is precisely what “we” have to face. (Barad 2007, 392)

Reconfiguring our human roles suggests that co-creating dynamics are responding responsibility to what it is that we encounter – in our case, the costume assembly – and thus entangling with will play with and/or provoke the boundaries between our different creative curiosities such that they are reconfigured.

Moreover, Barad's responsibility decentres us (humans) and we must respond responsibly to the costume assembly as our more-than-human co-creators. In *Conversation Costume* we responded to the costume assembly as our more-than-human co-creator by co-crafting spatial compositions. The compositions connected and entangled us and thus crafted or shaped temporal we's. In the complexities of our entanglement none of our rehearsals and showings can be ascribed to one of us as they were co-crafted and co-authored. We all had a share in what we composed and as such I suggest that co-crafting and co-creating is sharing and being part of sharing the complexities of entangled processes. Perhaps the dynamics in co-creative costume phenomena are to navigate and negotiate not just to which extent we were willing to share but to stretch our creative curiosities to explore how many ways and variations there are of co-authoring creative connections between humans and more-than-humans.

### **Conversational dialogues**

I suggested that the costume assembly – like figurative ceramic arrangements ([link](#)) – evoked and cultivated embodied conversations between us, in line with Osmond's "embodied conversations" ([link](#)). Barad notes that embodiment is being of the world in its dynamic specificity (Barad 2007, 377). That we (humans) are *of* the world – instead of *in* the world – implies that we are always entangled with other humans and more-than-humans, which suggests that we communicate with the dynamic specificities of our entanglements. In costume phenomena the dynamism specificities are, for example, the tensions between our different creativities and between our human and more-than-human different materials and/or bodies.

In the different paths I often use the word dialogue instead of conversation. Conversation can be perceived as an everyday practice that is casual and informal, whereas dialogue perhaps has a deeper, more intentional focus on understanding or gaining new insights. However, Barad's entanglement confronts notions of separation and invites re-thinking of conversation and dialogue not just as communication between pre-existing entities but as encountering processes that shape and co-constitute temporal we's. As encountering processes, we jammed between lighter chattier or playful embodied conversations and dialogues where we tried to explore and understand each other's perspective on a more fundamental level. Moreover, through the embodied conversations with the costume assembly we expressed ourselves and in the conversational dialogues through and with the costume assembly temporal we's were shaped. What seems evident is that the

costume assembly sparked our conversational dialogues and through our conversational dialogues we became different versions of temporal we's.

Barad's concept of entanglement is complex: not only does it challenge notions asserting that we (humans) as individuals have independent identities, it opens worlds where we are *of* the world and where we only exist through and with encounters or entanglements. As researcher, the concept of entanglement made me re-consider and re-think what I take for granted. For example, it was revealing and rewarding to revisit the days where we struggled. In dialogue with Barad, I realised that I was stuck in traditions stipulating that in rehearsals we must produce something specific. In the days where we struggled I, as host, failed to see that our conversational dialogues were what we produced, which was crucial for our creative relationship. In the struggle I forgot that the name of this artistic project pointed towards the conversational and as such the conversations have many phases and forms.

### **Being connected**

Even though I attend to that we trained and thus crafted our bodies in different ways, in hindsight it is surprising that as I entered *Conversation Costume* I had a somewhat divided perspective on crafting and exploring: crafting was making costume and exploring was physically engaging with crafted costume. However, as we co-composed connections with the costume assembly the act of crafting and exploring entangled. As such, crafting became co-creative acts of composing and entangling the costume assembly and our bodies; crafting new connections and shaping relationships of becoming-with and co-existing with the costume phenomena.

Barad writes that "ethics is about mattering, about taking account of the entangled materializations of which we are a part, including new figurations, new subjectivities, new possibilities—even the smallest cut matters" (Barad 2007, 384). Barad notes the smallest matter matters. Being connected while studying relational and co-creational costume phenomena was complex and there are aspects that I did not notice. However, what was clear was that relational and co-creational costume processes crafted creative tensions and exchanges between us that made us open towards our differences. We entered material-discursive exchanges between being human and more-than-human bodies and/or materials and through our entanglement we became equal partners. At the same time, being entangled – connecting, hosting, participating, researching, relating – connected me with the ethical dilemmas that are always a part of

collaborating with others and being of the world. Barad's entanglement connects me to the act of responding responsibly and invited me to share the dilemmas I experienced within costume phenomena. As such the entanglement of *Conversation Costume* invited me to dive into the dilemmas and the pleasures of hosting co-creative and communal costume explorations.

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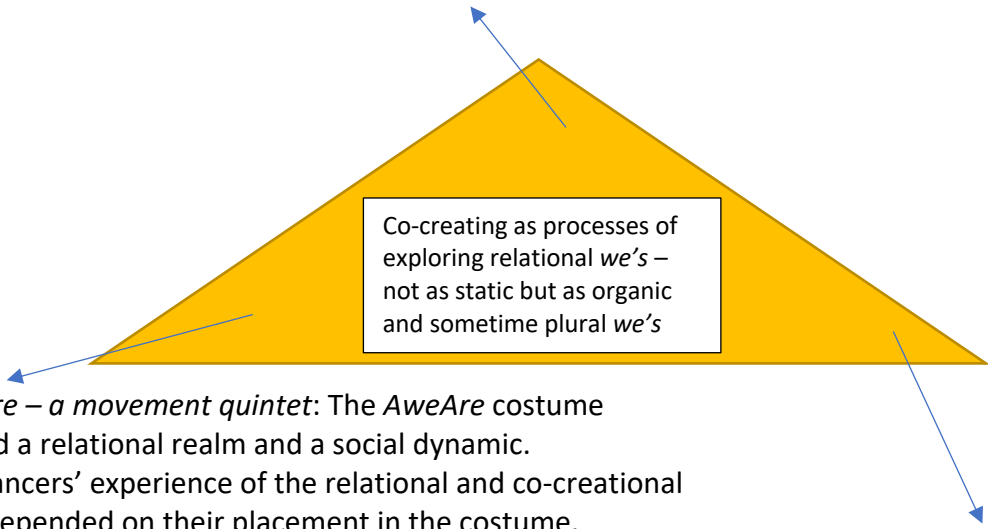
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# CONCLUSION

As I started this artistic research the quest was to explore co-creative costume processes; I imagined defining differences between collaboration and co-creation. However, as soon as I had an outline of what defined co-creation and what made co-creation differ from collaboration, I became doubtful and skeptical. Over time, I realised that I was not (re)searching definitions. Exploring co-creative costume processes was a quest to create relational realms with and between people and textile materials/costume where humans and more-than-humans became co-creating partners in the shared or communal doings in the artistic projects.

In the communal doings – exploring specific connecting costumes – we had to explore how the situatedness (the location and duration) of the projects crafted our relational realm. A common thread in the three artistic projects and that constitutes this research is interconnectedness between the co-creational and the relational. As such we co-creatively had to explore what kind of relational *we's* we became with the connecting costumes.

*Community Walk*: We were situated in the social realm of public space and the series of *we's*, including the connecting costume, were crafted by how the *we's* were orientated and affected by the social norms of the public and by the surroundings, as well as by the encounters with humans and more-than-humans that the *we's* had in the public realm.



Co-creating as processes of exploring relational *we's* – not as static but as organic and sometime plural *we's*

*AweAre – a movement quintet*: The *AweAre* costume crafted a relational realm and a social dynamic. The dancers' experience of the relational and co-creational *we's* depended on their placement in the costume.

*Conversation Costume*: We co-created the social by exploring how we became *we* with the

costume assembly. Even though we were a core group of three people, our relational and co-creational *we(s)* were affected by the colleagues who shortly participated in our entanglements and thus our *we's* transformed several times in the process.

As such the co-creational *we's* in the artistic project were organic. The four focal themes – crafting, listening, hosting and co-creating – enabled me to explore costume as co-creational or co-creative research phenomena. In the following I unfold what the four themes have illuminated and, as such, how these themes complement each other.

## **Crafting**

In the artistic projects I have insisted on unfolding how the costumes for each project were crafted to make my crafting intentions and values visible. As I was crafting the textile materials I simultaneously crafted my creative orientation, which became openings for nonverbal or embodied dialogues with the textiles. I have suggested that in crafting dialogues the crafter must listen carefully to and bounce dialogically with the material rather than trying to control it. If the crafter listens, the textile materials become vital partners or co-creators. As such, I argue that careful crafting listenings can (re)balance hierarchies between human and more-than-human matter. This kind of listening reveals that textile materials, as more-than-human co-creators, are as vibrant and intelligent as humans. In what follows I will approach several aspects that I suggest can awaken our human abilities to approach and experience textile and costume materials as vibrant and critical co-creators in co-creative processes.

### **Crafting labours**

In the research I do not mention gender directly, but, identifying myself as a female (woman, she/her) artistic researcher, I find that it is important to shortly address gender. I would like to note that the Danish word *køn* does not distinguish between gender and sex. Thus, when I refer to gender, I do not place people in stereotypes or normative categories but appreciate however people situate their bodies. I have chosen to use the word *crafting* instead of, for example,



*designing*. As I have explained, crafting orientated me towards the labour of women<sup>95</sup> and towards women that my practice builds on – which is arguably a gendered position. As mentioned above, to approach crafting with the sight of more-than-human co-creators, the materials become a mediator to re-think the balance between human and more-than-human matter/bodies and their positions. Therefore, crafting practice(s) are central to the research; this is a position that does not avoid nor focuses on judging or evaluating human co-creators' experiences and expressions in relation to gender.

Even though the crafting is centrally placed in the research, in the artistic projects I never directly unfolded my crafting practice to the co-creators, for example uncovering my crafting labour by disclosing the number of hours I spent on crafting a specific costume. Firstly, as I have explained in my analysis of the artistic projects, with the costumes I was very visible. Drawing further attention to the costume could have indicated that I expected that the co-creators had to be attuned to my labour and thus the costumes in particular ways, that I knew better since I had crafted the costume and/or that the co-creators had to embody my vision for the costume. Secondly, I argue that crafting is a language and thus I did not have to explain, as the costumes spoke for themselves.

With the research I suggest that costume makes the crafter/designer/researcher very visible, and if the researcher is not attentive they will occupy the entire space. As a way of offering space to co-creators, it is critical that the craft/design researcher shows that they value the labour that co-creators bring to the research. It is critical that the researcher acknowledges that with their craftship<sup>96</sup> the co-creators contribute, inform and affect the research. For example, artists like dancers are fellow crafters who have embodied skills, abilities and knowledge that make them sensitive towards costume material. Thus, by placing the crafting practice(s) centrally in the research, the researcher must be open towards crafting practices and perspectives that differ from their own.

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<sup>95</sup> In the context of costume, crafting values the sweat and tears that are soaked into costume materialities by performers and by the often unrecognised and unseen labour behind the scenes of making, washing, repairing and caring for costume.

<sup>96</sup> I write craftship and not craftsmanship as I prefer the more gender-neutral craftship.

## **Connecting costume**

In the research I crafted several connecting costumes. In the three artistic projects we have explored what these specific costumes enabled us to do. As the connecting costumes were different, they evoked or provoked different material-discursive spaces and explorative situations between us. In *AweAre – a movement quintet* the connecting costume evoked a collective costume body that evolved like an organism. In *Community Walk* the connecting costume became a spatial mediator that had an inward orientation, inviting us to explore the possibilities within the shared space, and had an outward orientation inviting us to explore the public/urban space with the costumes as a perspective through which to experience the space. In *Conversation Costume* the connecting costume was a fragmented assembly consisting of multiple textiles and costumes. Thus, the assembly became co-creating, co-crafting and co-composing factors. The similarities of the connecting costumes in the three artistic projects includes their spatial compositions and material stretchability, which evoked playful encounters between the co-creators. These playful encounters were characterised by being spontaneous, curious, at times childish and always with co-crafting and co-creating elements.

## **Listenings**

This research inscribed itself in current research discourses where listening is a tool to re-think relational practices within areas such as dramaturgy, sonic, somatic, post- and decolonial practices. In this research, listening connected with crafting explores how to re-balance hierarchies between humans and more-than-humans, by attuning the *lydhørhed* (link) towards other humans and towards more-than-humans such as textile materials and costume.

## **Costume as listening mediator**

In the research I have suggested that in order to make textiles co-creating partners, the crafter must listen carefully to the dialogical interplay with the materials. However, it did not imply that I could predict or know what the costume would do or evoke. As I have explained, it is only by listening to the (human) co-creators' experiences with the connecting costume that I became

familiar with the costumes. It was also through the costume that I became familiar with the co-creators' experiences and perspectives of the costume.

To summarise the concept of listening in relation to the first artistic project, *AweAre – a movement quintet*, I realised that listening was crucial for establishing collective awareness between us. By exchanging individual experiences of the placement in the costume, we gained knowledge of the hierarchy embedded in the costume. This provoked us to explore collective and directional listenings. With the second project, *Community Walk*, it became apparent how easily our internal listenings were disturbed and distracted by external factors and demanded different listenings. In the re-orientations new (in)sights appeared that could have potentially remained out of our sight otherwise. With the third project, *Conversation Costume*, we had time to dwell on how we (individually and collectively) listened with the costume compositions that we co-crafted. In exchanging our listening cultures we (re)discovered some of the biases (assumptions and expectations) that are embedded in our practices and with the new (in)sight we expanded our listening abilities and vocabulary.

What connected the three artistic projects was that the connecting costumes acted as more-than-human mediators demanding our attention. As mediators the costumes orientated us towards the compositional-spatial and textile-material specificities of our relational-dependent entanglements. What the projects had in common was that the spatial material-discursive entanglements affected us (humans), and by orientating our listenings towards our affectedness we gained (in)sights into how in similar and different ways we listen-with our entanglements. Thus, as co-creators we were dependent on learning with each other's (in)sights of how we listened-with our affectedness, and in the co-learning we expanded and cultivated our listening abilities. What also connected the artistic projects was that especially the stretchability of the connecting costumes kept provoking us to stretch our listening abilities towards the other co-creators and towards our co-creative entangled relationships. In the stretch towards the relational entanglements the listening-with became more profound.

### **Cultivating listening cultures**

The artistic projects reveal that as we enter new collaborations, listening is an approach that we must co-creatively cultivate. In order to cultivate our collective listening abilities we must attend

to the listening cultures (by attuning our *lydhørheder*) that are embedded in us through our practices. We must pay attention to what or whom (humans and/or more-than-humans) we listen to in order to explore if our listening cultures favour egocentric or human-centric visions and/or perspectives. In other words, we must co-creatively cultivate listenings beyond what is predefined within our practice, and beyond how in practice we categorise ourselves and each other. My claim is that we cannot listen beyond categories (of for example, designer, performer, costume or rehearsal) if we are not willing to critically explore the biases (assumptions and expectations) within our practice, such as exploring what kind of listening cultures our practices promote. I suggest that in order to cultivate our collective listening abilities we need mediators like the connection costumes to craft material-discursive spaces between us. With costume as our more-than-human mediator we can tune into nuances and details of how we relate and how we express our relationships with our co-creational entanglements. As such, the costume becomes the centre of our attention. I argue that ***listening with costume*** are acts of giving and taking where we (humans) must silence our urge to control the situation and allow the costume to orientate our attention towards our co-creative entanglements. Within the costume entanglements it is critical that we cultivate our listening abilities to be able to share affirmative and caring acts with our human and more-than-human co-creators. However, as my research also reveals, listening is to acknowledge that there are aspects of the co-creative costume entanglements that we do not hear, that we are unaware of or do not notice. Therefore, there is no guarantee that listening is affirmative or will meet the creative needs or dreams of co-creators. Even so, I argue that if we are open-minded and willing to stretch our listenings towards our engagement, we expand our listening orientations to include, embrace and approach the pleasures and troubles of co-creating or collaborating.

## Hosting

As I have explained earlier in the research analysis, hosting was an ambition to explore co-creative costume or material-discursive entanglements with the human and more-than-human co-creators by acting as participating host. I had *no* intention of being positioned hierarchically above any of the co-creators.

The invitation was to explore the connecting costumes, and the ambition was to discover what embodied dialogues the costume evoked. A common thread in the projects was offering time to share and exchange our perspectives on the embodied dialogues we had within the co-creative costume entanglements. In the research I named these exchanges sharing sessions, walking and talking and conversational dialogues. In the projects our exchanges – described as conversational dialogues – moved organically between being chatty and light, being deep and tuning into details and somewhere in between. In addition, some dialogues included other people who happened to be present.

### **Hosting listening dialogues**

I argue that embodied and conversational dialogues are closely related and yet they evoked different kinds of listenings. My claim is that in co-creative processes listening (as a dialogical theme) does not emerge without it being a hosting intention. The research reveals that, to manifest listening as more than an intention, the host must invite/enable dialogues where listening is a central theme and a dialogical instigator. In these dialogues the host must politely, sensitively and with genuine curiosity repeatedly ask the (human) co-creators to share how they listen with the connecting costume(s) within the co-creative entanglement(s). Additionally, the host must continually repeat the invitations to explore how *they* (the human co-creators) listen with the connecting costume(s) and how *they* listen with *their* affectedness within the costume entanglement(s). As such the host is responsible for orientating the co-creators towards listening, and accountable for making listening a shared or common direction, for example how welcoming the host is towards what the co-creators hear and how they listen. The accountability includes that the host must reveal and at the same time relinquish control in the dialogues by being *lydhør* towards the human and more-than-human co-creators. For example, by listening carefully to nuances and details in the co-creators' expressions, the host can (re)attune and (re)orientate their hosting *lydhørheder* or listenings towards co-creators.

In the research, the stretchable costume materials became a co-host that demanded my attention. The demand of the materials was to stretch my listenings towards the human and more-than-human co-creators and asking me to (re)listen to nuances of their creative expressions. By

stretching my listenings towards the co-creators I simultaneously orientated my listenings towards our communal doings. I argue that the dialogical pair enabled me to (re)orientate and (re)attune into specific details and to expand my perspective. As such, hosting with hospitality included bouncing between the co-creators' individual creative expressions (their affectedness) and the communal doings. Thus, I argue that it is critical that the hosting becomes a matter of **hosting with communal hospitality**. By hosting with communal hospitality, the co-creators' creativities become critical as their (in)sights expand and become co-authors of the communal doings. Additionally, by orientating towards the communal doings, the host learns-with the co-creators' creativities. As such, hosting with communal hospitality invites multi-vocal expressions and polyphonic qualities of the costume entanglements to become visible and reveals that polyphonies are aspects of the co-creative research phenomenon.

### **Hosting with sight of dilemmas**

Being an accountable host is to admit that even with listening as a manifested hosting intention there are always aspects of the co-creative costume entanglements that the host cannot or will not hear, see or sense. Thus, several aspects will remain unnoticed or unknown to the host. Moreover, the host's listenings are informed by their practice(s). Thus, the host must uncover the biases, such as assumptions and expectations, that are embedded in their listenings. My claim is that by *hosting with communal hospitality* the host can approach some of their biases in the dialogues with the co-creators by sharing how they listen or how they perceive what they listen.

Hosting is also to embrace experiences of feeling creatively stuck, being doubtful, facing the fear of losing the ability to host and facing the reality of momentarily losing hosting direction. Hosting is daring to stay-with and linger-with the troublesome and allowing the troublesome to stir and shake what the host might otherwise take for granted. Thus, inherent in the troublesome are opportunities to (re)discover some biased perspectives. However, facing biases is not easy. It can cause doubt and vulnerability, like in the research, where I at time doubted the softness of my hosting attitude and wondered if I had to become a more leading or directorial host. With the research I suggest that by remaining in the troublesome the host can (re)discover their hosting values.

## **Co-creating with (in)sight of pluralities**

Throughout the research, pluralities – like listenings, creativities, possibilities, orientations and stretchabilities – have been a common thread. Employing pluralities – rather than single, more defined affirmative options – indicates that the (human) co-creators in the entangled positions did not feel, sense, see or hear and thus experience the same. That is because the entangled positions evoked different responses, reactions, actions, needs, wishes, imaginations, expectations and assumptions. What we (humans) shared in the projects was that the connecting costumes connected our bodies and made us dependent on each other. In the material-discursive and relational-dependent entanglements we had to negotiate how we could co-create our positions. Our positions were crafted by the costume and by the practice and cultures we brought, like our abilities (what we consider as skills and as being skilful within practice, for example) and perspectives (such as our assumptions of categories like performer, crafter, co-creator, material and costume and our expectations towards rehearsals or co-creation).

The use of pluralities highlights that in communal doings our way of doing is informed by our practice(s) and thus there are always differences in how we do. My claim is that when we co-create – whoever we co-create with – it is the pluralities or our differences that make a difference. In co-creative costume entanglements our positions are never static and thus we can play-with, listen-with, learn-with and think-with our positions by which we become more than a predefined category with predefined abilities. If we are attentive and open towards our pluralities we can (re)discover and (re)orientate some of our biases. By co-creating with the (in)sight of our pluralities, we stir what we take for granted and if we are *lydhøre* and attentive, the stirring expands and cultivates our communal abilities. With the (in)sight of the pluralities, co-creating invites us to play with our positions and perspectives, which enables human and more-than-human collaborators to flourish co-creatively. The research reveals that the co-creating approach I am suggesting is demanding as well as playful, joyful, enlightening, confusing and tiring for the (human) co-creators that are involved.

This research explores co-creative costume processes and proposes that co-creating involves hosting with communal hospitality, fostering a way for partners to listen through costume. The aim is for *listening with costume* and *hosting with communal hospitality* to become tools for designers to gain a deeper understanding of how costume affects performers. The broader scope of this research is to contribute to discussions on how designers, performers, and other performance-makers can collaborate with human and more-than-human creative partners in generous and inclusive manners. Focusing on crafting, the research also aims to engage in discussions about co-design and co-creation within craft and design. It highlights that co-design extends beyond human matter, requiring designers / crafters to listen carefully to materials: listening *with* materials. Moreover, my research emphasizes that co-design and co-creation demand attentiveness and a willingness to relinquish creative control to both human and more-than-human co-creators.

In this research, I have proposed that pluralities enable us to learn co-creatively. However, I have only briefly explored the potential of attuning to the (in)sights of pluralities for co-learning. For future research, I aim to expand the listening(s) and hosting strategies developed in this artistic research project into pedagogical approaches and pedagogical *lydhørheder* within education. This future work will investigate/research co-learning carrying *(in)sight of pluralities*, employing and integrating decolonial and intersectional educational theories with indigenous or traditional craft practices from the Scandinavian or Nordic region.