



At a lunch meeting hosted by rector Marianne Skjulhaug December 11th 2023 at KHiO, Deputy Director General Hege Høsøien (NLN) and myself spanned the relevance of developing a strategic collaboration between Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) and the National Library of Norway (NLN) outside a formal agreement, based on opportunities and resources generated by interacting, rather than initiating a strategic collaboration by working out a *formal* agreement. In the wake of the lunch, I took our guest on a mini-tour around KHiO. Both of us were uplifted.

From then on we have been playing with the idea of hosting a *sandbox* session at KHiO—initiated with a similar walkabout with a group of guests from the NLN—based on a tour in the workshops in the art & crafts wing, moving onto the performing arts complex and ending up in the Design dpt. to gather the rector's office for a *roundup*. The initial idea is that there would be KHiO people stationed along the way with a (very) short prompt to receive the visitor, give them a sense of where they are and activities branching from *here & now*. Say, starting from *earth, fire and wood* and onwards.

That is, workshops of *ceramics, metal and model/prototype* (wood)—via mills and *plaster*—proceeding to *paper*: the printmaking workshops are beyond dramatic for the NLN people since what they see there are machines that have produced the materials they have in their keep: as the NLN is a library yes, but first and foremost a national archive dedicated to *cultural history*. The population of employees with a PhD is relatively dense. But in a sense conversant with materiality and the qualities they represent in an historical, literary and exhibitiv. They have a conservation atelier.

The workshop-spaces at KHiO will speak for themselves, up to a point: like maximalist version of what they already know at the NLN. The threshold to prompt connections between our infrastructure and relevant activities is fairly low: for instance, I have talked with Ane Thon Knutsen about receiving our little troupe in the publication workshop, to link up her work in that space with an upcoming Virginia Woolf conference in 2027. The NLN will host a number of activities in connection with the Henrik Ibsen jubilee in 2028. These are *big* topics, but *focal* in the spaces at KHiO.

The thick of the troupe of visitors from NLN will be from the Dpt. of Media and Conservation: it is dedicated to research, and might be described as the *crossroads* at the NLN. They are used to and skilled at focussing complex mediations based on a fingertip knowledge of archival materials. It is a Dpt. led by Arthur Tennøe, who has been delegated the responsibility for NLN's participation and contribution. Like KHiO, the NLN is concerned with the impact of digitalisation on the operational aesthetics of the claims on truths/revelations that archives may have in store (more on this later).

This keeps NLN busy. Just as our work keeps us busy. Which is why a *lightness* of touch may be recommended in the first round of encounter. Neither is ready to put a lot of resources that we do not have into albeit interesting activities. The sandbox is to find out whether there are synergies between things we are going to do *anyhow*, and attract resources where a collaboration between our institutions makes this possible (a case in point for strategic collaboration). But also an event interesting in and by itself, to the extent that the KHiO/NLN encounter works as a warped mirror.

What the NLN already has pledged is that—in the wake of the sandbox at KHiO—they will host a seminar at the NLN, based on what comes out of the sandbox. The reason that I know that this can work, is that I have a research residency at the NLN and have interacted and contributed at some occasions. The archive may be a desert, in many ways. But what I have learned is that there are quite a few roses in the desert. Which reminds me that we have still half the tour left, to cover the whole idea of the walkabout, in this first scenario. So, I have been pondering in an itinerary.

Walking out from the print-making area we could walk outside the walls of the main building, making a stop at the FA academy and from there moving unto Dance. On our way, we would pass the windows of the library, and then enter the performing arts area, at Myldra and the big stages. From here we could move up the floors to meet with Theatre and Opera, and exit through the workshops down the stairwell, to where we entered Myldra. From here we could move to the textile and sewing workshops, via the library, to end up at the Design dept. as a the core of the “coffee grinder”.

This is what I have pictured. I have further imagined that the KHiO professionals that have given their prompt would join in with the troupe of visitors. So, that the little procession will grow in numbers along the tour, walk and talk with each other along the way, and end up for a *sandbox* session in the rector’s office. Of course, nothing is (nor can be) written in stone. But, in my experience, it is better to have a plan than not. So, basically, I am looking forward to join with people from the dpts. and workshops and see how we can do this. And *then* programme.

This is one reason for using walkabout in plural (header). Another reason is that after *each* stop, we are in a *new* place when we *walk out*: both in terms of what we are taking in and an increasing number of people. So, there is a lot to take in on both accounts. An alternative possibility is a leaner tour where I walk around with the guests, make arrangements to say hello in the workshops and departments (which I can because I have been all over). In practice, there might not be such a big difference: i.e., striking a balance between not making too much fuss, and taking it seriously.

Why am I doing this? It is not my big project. It is a delegated task from the rector. And what gets me running is that the alternative of not doing it would be a waste. That’s the temperature. Then round up between the institutions—after the sandbox at KHiO and the seminar at NLN—to decide whether we want/can pursue matters further. The *low-hanging* fruit is that we will spend an enjoyable day together with the NLN people June 20th at KHiO. The *high-hanging* fruit is that scoping

what we do at KHiO in the aspects pertaining to cultural history, is not a distant horizon but within hands’ reach (and in some aspects handy).

EARTH (α)	1. <i>ceramics</i>
FIRE (β)	2. <i>metal</i>
WOOD (γ)	3. <i>model & prototype</i>
PAPER (δ)	4. <i>print</i>
CHANGE (ε)	5. <i>academy of fine arts</i>
MOVE (ζ)	6. <i>dance</i>
ACT (η)	7. <i>theatre</i>
SING (θ)	8. <i>opera</i>
DESIGN (ι)	9. <i>design</i>

A personal question—of professional interest—that I have been tinkering with for a while, is whether we can make the day an example of whether/not it is possible to generate activities and create opportunities for each other, without Microsoft Office as the main driver. Is it possible to do what the Law on Universities and Colleges states, in its initial clause § 1-1 c: “The objective of universities and colleges is to [...] apply scientific and artistic methods and results both in teaching, in one’s own institution, and also in public management, culture and business.” (My trls.).

At some point we need lunch. If there is air to fund a lunch that is great of course: e.g. by the waterfalls.

Indeed, how to relate KHiO in story for someone who has not been around before, but with a knowledge of the elements? Can a walkabout help determine a readability of KHiO to a 3rd party, and level with a way of thinking?