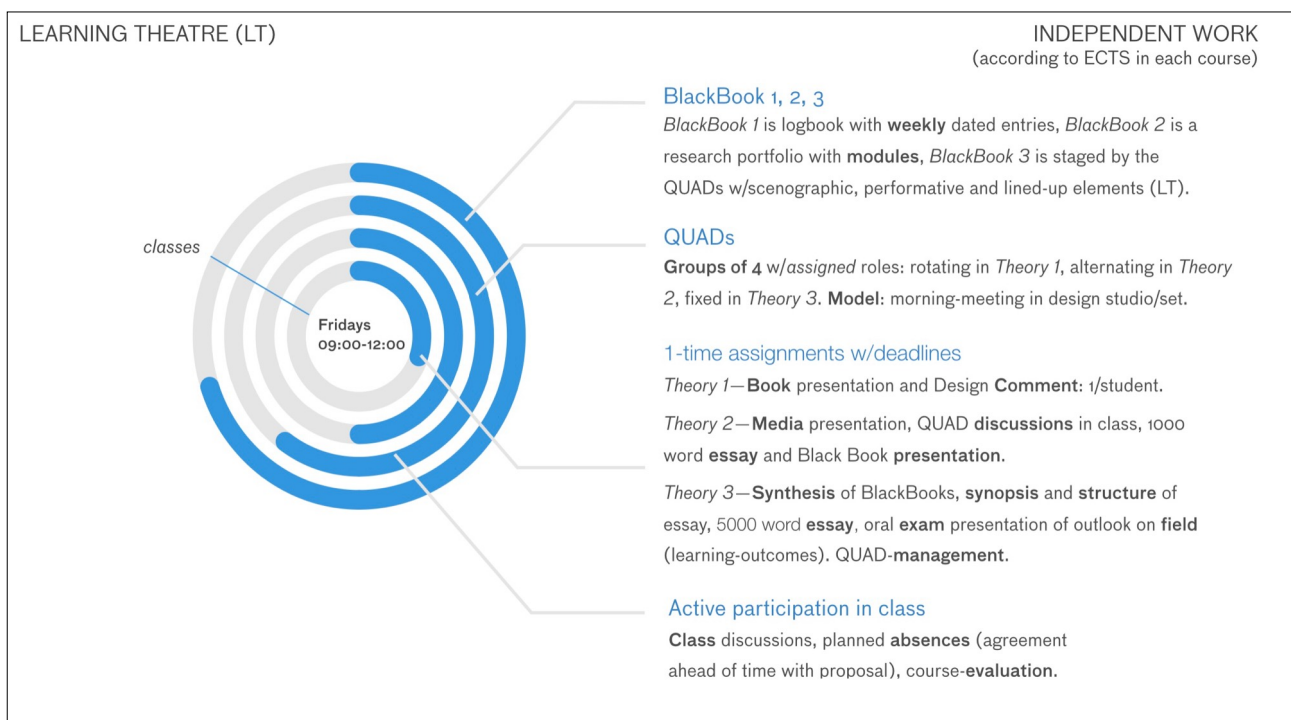PROCESS:

Given the circumstances, I have been asking myself if I have some *good news* with me to share in this forum. And I thought that it would be an interesting approach to pretend *throughout* the talk that I have some *really good news*. Not too much, of course, but just a tiny bit; staying with the news to the bitter end, and see how it goes. The good news is: repetition builds up a light *push* that —when it happens—tops and *exceeds* it with potential *impact* on the scope and power of what is going on. Scoping 'a particular wave-theory of repetition aiming at rhythmic *precision*'.

What distinguishes *dramaturgy* from straight academic research is that tiny push: it is *not* added but grows from within the research, to *cascade* its amplified effects on areas of practice that are beyond it. I do not say that *all* teaching is like this. And I got reminded about that during a brief exchange with Yaniv Cohen—a teacher and MA student at the Dance Department—who said he occasionally reminded himself that he is choreographer, *not* a theorist. Along the same vein, I too remind my self, upon occasion, that I am *not* a dramaturg. Rather an *actively receptive* theorist.

LEARNING THEATRE (LT)   INDEPENDENT WORK
                                                         (according to ECTS in each course)

classes

Fridays
09:00-12:00

BlackBook 1, 2, 3
BlackBook 1 is logbook with **weekly** dated entries, *BlackBook 2* is a research portfolio with **modules**, *BlackBook 3* is staged by the QUADs w/scenographic, performative and lined-up elements (LT).

QUADs
Groups of 4 w/*assigned* roles: rotating in *Theory 1*, alternating in *Theory 2*, fixed in *Theory 3*. **Model:** morning-meeting in design studio/set.

1-time assignments w/deadlines
Theory 1—**Book** presentation and Design **Comment:** 1/student.

Theory 2—**Media** presentation, QUAD **discussions** in class, 1000 word **essay** and Black Book **presentation**.

Theory 3—**Synthesis** of BlackBooks, **synopsis** and **structure** of essay, 5000 word **essay**, oral **exam** presentation of outlook on **field** (learning-outcomes). QUAD-**management**.

Active participation in class
Class discussions, planned **absences** (agreement ahead of time with proposal), course-**evaluation**.

The temptation to walk *some strides* along with the dramaturg simply came from an idea—hatched with Mika Aaltonen at the Finland Futures Research Centre in 2009—that we called the *Learning Theatre*/LT. Developing an arrangement allowing people from different walks & stations, roles and capabilities, to *learn together*: exploring the site, building a situation, playing it out… learning performatively. A learning theatre would be something *between* an anatomic theatre and a dramatic theatre. Making sure that the structure is there to *contain* learning *without* excluding.

The idea that precision can develop rhythmically—from a pulse rather than a particle—is bound to impact the way we think and act: the *learning theatre* as shown in this view will appear as a night-mare if conceived as a list of piecemeal items. But it an *also* be considered as a visual exploration of a theatre that is deconstructed in terms of what takes place *on stage* and on the *floor*: think of the Venice opera in the days of yore, where what was taking place *off* stage—where a masked audience extending the carnival to the opera, engaged in picnics and democratic pleasures[1].
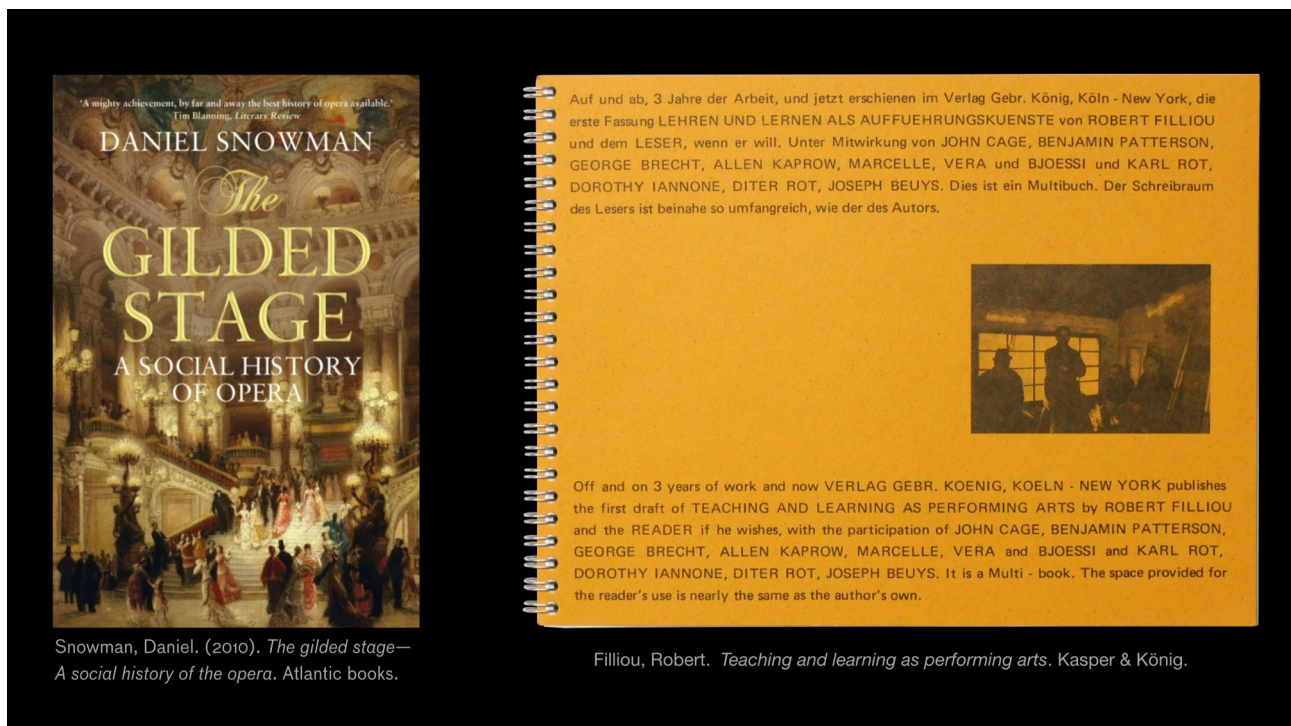
Snowman, Daniel. (2010). *The gilded stage—A social history of the opera*. Atlantic books.

Filliou, Robert. *Teaching and learning as performing arts*. Kasper & König.
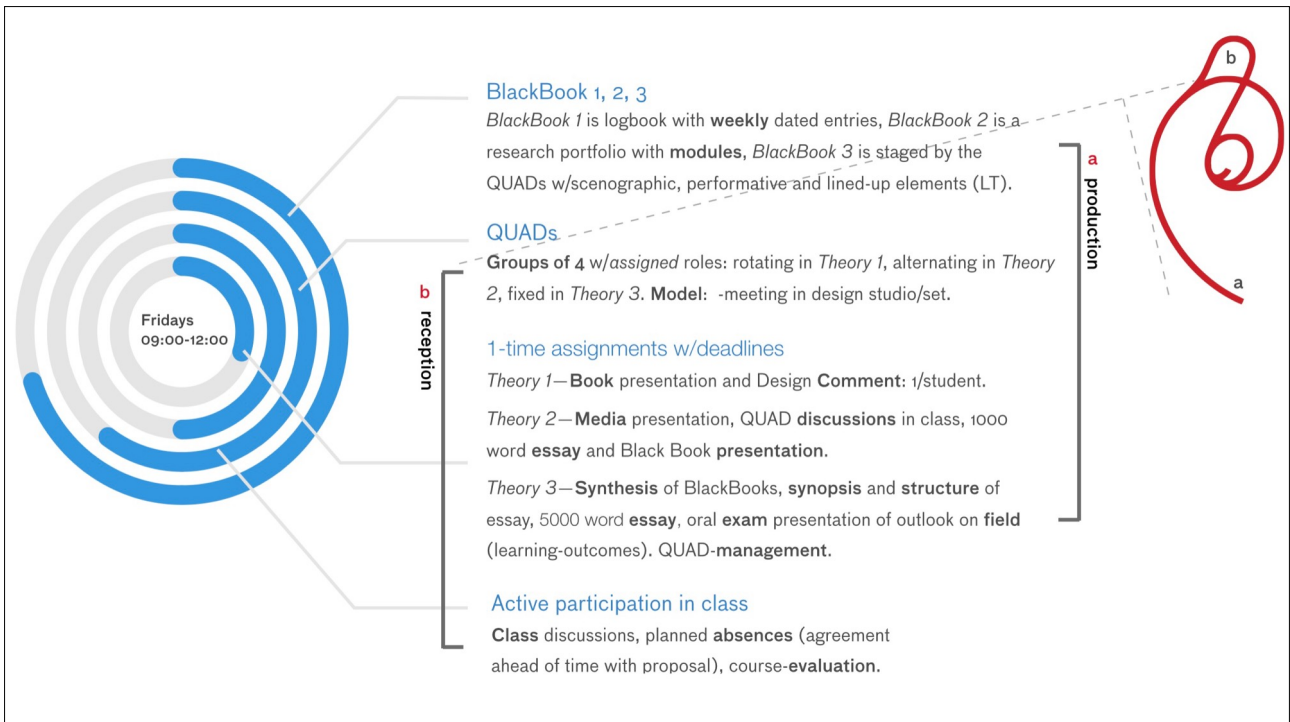
Ideas that in modern times were cultivated in the *Fluxus* movement, and notably by Robert Filliou in his ideas of *la fête permanente*. The permanent party[2]. Of course, the images that I am drawing on here are ones that are based on *hosting* chaos, and establishing a structure to *host* chaos in the *theatre*. Hosting chaos in the theatre we have already moved from the chaotic to the *complex*. The likelihood that we will get very far, based on these ideas alone, in way of teaching is not overwhelming. We have to address what is at the other end of the spectrum which is *simplicity*.

Looking at this diagram it makes sense in a *different* way if we consider that it is *recursive* and has been developing *iteratively* over time; having developed over the 10 last years, or so. Then it becomes comparatively *simpler* than if we look at it as a something one came up with at a meeting of semester planning. So, the temporal frame we see it in determines—up to a point—how we *receive* its contents. But it is not simple enough for the good news I have pledged to stay with here. So, we need to model actively the *feasibility* of the levels tasks in the diagram.

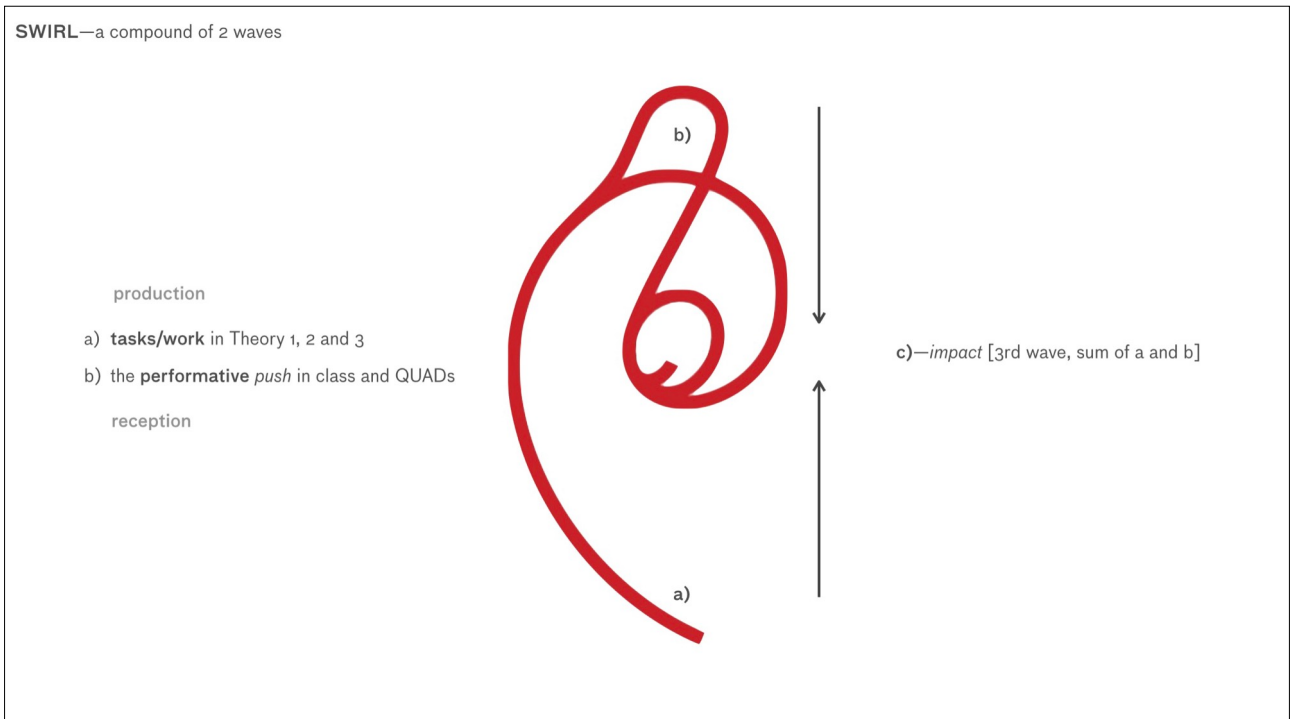[1] Snowman, Daniel. (2010). *The gilded stage—A social history of the opera*. Atlantic books.

[2] Filliou, Robert. *Teaching and learning as performing arts*. Kasper & König.
In his practice, Filliou separates between *good* work, *bad* work and *undone* work as all included in an investigation, such as features in the BlackBook.

BlackBook 1, 2, 3
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To round up: what has been conveyed here, about the LT as a process, is about navigating in a creative class situation, beyond the "bi-polar" modes of *order* and *chaos* (which I think most of us know from their practices at KHiO). So, my compass, or wind-rose, in the LT-process is the *simplex*: that is a *compound* of simple and complex negotiated through the LT through a series of transactions between teacher and students: what one might call *transactions in knowledge*, rather than negotiations about the course-plan. A concept that I bring from social anthropology[3].

PERFORMANCE:

SWIRL—a compound of 2 waves

production
a) **tasks/work** in Theory 1, 2 and 3
b) the **performative** *push* in class and QUADs

reception

c)—*impact* [3rd wave, sum of a and b]

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3 Barth, Fredrik. (1990). The guru and the conjurer: transactions in knowledge and the shaping of culture in south east Asia. In *Man*. See also: Falk, Ida. (2022). *Transactional aesthetics—and so can you*. PhD reflection. KHiO.

The push generated from within repetition is clearly a *performative* concept. In the present setting, however, repetition is also linked to *reflective practice* and *theory development*. Not only to crafts and performing arts. And it is in this sense that we have developed it in the learning theatre. By *we* I mean myself, the students and the professional staff, in ways that I hope will transpare towards the end. As for now, we will home in on the pulse in repetition. Based on the understanding that repetition is a particular wave-form, rather than a line-up of particles. The propagation of a push.
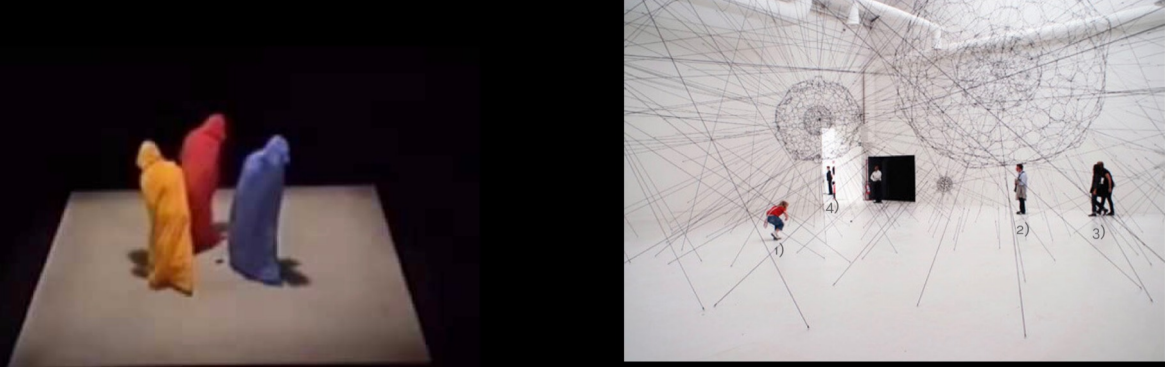
A definition of the *dramaturg* I came by during a seminar with Tore Vagn Lid (2015) is as follow: s/he does *research*, acts as a *house-critic* and is weary of *pathfinding* and *goalseeking* in *real time*: s/e is the *receptive* party to productions—for instance the production of an MA project—which is why, as an active asset (in a class, studio or set), s/he will convey the tiny push that I want to stay with throughout, as my piece of good news. Not so much to draw attention to the contributions of the dramaturg, as to the dramaturgical dimension of the work MA students do in theory classes.

That is, a framework to progress on the subject matter that Pierre Bourdieu (1972) evoked in terms of *what communicates from body-to-body, before words and concepts*. The small pulse that tops, rides and builds through repetition. Like waves on the seashore. Taking our attention *a little bit away from* interfacing between software and hardware—that rules our time—to focus on the *impact* of repetition, wave, pulse, period on *wetware*: essentially the human body and its allies at this level of events. What happens when repetition happens through rotation/alternation?

This is something we do in the LT when we *rotate* book and media presentations throughout the course period, in the first and second term. It builds a *potential*: obviously because the students learn from each other, and the growing precedent of comments/questions from me, but also because they can reach a point where it the *class* learning. That is, a form of trans-individual learning, where the *level* individuals can reach is tied to the level of the *class*. Not all classes make it to this level. Other classes excel at it. A challenge to improve our pedagogical understanding*s*.

Since *ideally* we'd want all the classes to have that chance. A tool developed from the pandemic onwards were small groups called QUADs. These groups were organised and developed to insure that the students would get *not only* a social security network, but also *professional* support from each other. The rotating pattern of the QUAD was inspired by a *choreographic* piece of Samuel Beckett, named QUAD. Because it counts 4 different sound and movement pulses that are organised in such a way that they do not walk in each other's way, yet build a forceful pulse.

QUAD—Samuel Beckett

EXTRAterrestrials—Bruno Latour tasking Twitter "addicts" to ground themselves in their *terrestrial* wetware:

1) make a statement of an *idea*;

2) *support* that idea with research;

3) *critique* this research;

4) propose a *hands-on* approach.

These are the roles of *our* QUAD

To develop a *weaker*—real though tiny—version of this we tasked four roles with a list proposed by Bruno Latour to *ground* a culture which *digital ubiquity* has transformed into *extra-terrestrials*: people whose perspective is tied to satellites more than embodied learning. Hence his procedure intended to aid us seek some terrestrial grounding, when we intercept an idea and want to work with it: **1)** make a clear statement of the *idea*; **2)** support it with research findings; **3)** *critique* this research; **4)** propose a *hands-on* framework to enable an immediate practical response to it.

These are the roles we use in our QUADs. The students have 15' each to get this role based interaction afoot: not to solve/explain the idea but to *initiate* activity after the QUAD. The objective of the QUAD is to generate that tiny *push* which will make each student set on what they want to do after, and what they want to do with the harvest: this is the little *push* we are concerned with here. In the first term the students are in *different* QUADs each week. In the second term they *alternate* between a *chosen* and a *random* QUAD. In the last term they they work in a stable QUAD.

We are in the 3rd year of working with QUADs now, and we are learning *new* things all the time. During the 1st the QUADs are left to work on their own, to find out how it can work and what it can be. The 2nd term (MA1) we have QUADs operating in *class* and also experiment with different spatial arrangements for the LT. In the 3rd term (MA2), the QUADs are responsive the needs of its members, the rigging of the space and being present onstage during each other's examination. This is done to enable the students to define and hold their space/ground in the LT.

In a research-based MA there is no *single* body of knowledge. The students are enabled in being responsive to the *site*, the *situations* and how they *play out*: the interception of this responsivity in real time is essential to make comments that will go home with each student. *Responsibility* translates into the *ability* to be *responsive*[4]. When realised in small groups, the ripples and pulses that traverse the classroom as I say something, become readable and highly informative. Not in the sense of seeking consensus with the class, but reading the situation and playing it out.

PRODUCTION:

Beyond the SCHOLARLY STUDY

breathe in...

Jean Piaget (1896-1980) in his study

record/replay...

breathe out...

push

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[4] The challenge of teaching in a class of reflective practitioners, in my experience, is that the demand on practical relevance is key to all understanding: the language needed varies with the tool and its marks (cf, Jacques Derrida: "I have only one language, and it is not mine. And: one cannot have but several languages." Cf, *intra-action* K. Barad.

As most of us probably know Jean Piaget is the father of a stage-theory of human development. We start with the *sensory motor* stage (0-2 years), then we enter the *pre-operational* stage (2-7), the *concrete operational* stage (7-11), the *formal operational* stage (11 into adulthood). However, Piaget's working-space invites other considerations: the sense in which as *surface* is something to be *had*—in this case stacks of *paper*—that is *not* locked to any particular stage: it is like tactility to the senses[5], it traverses everything else and is likely with us for all the duration of our lives *).

The space we see is inhabited. Perhaps more a den than a study. Yet, the *photos* are in a tradition of painting: chiaroscuro studies. As we view the photos of Jean Piaget in his work-space, we have *prior* knowledge of the *image*. And in the art-*world* and -*education* Piaget's *stages* appear to be telescoping freely into each other. In this field, it therefore will be almost impossible not to take stock of the photos in that way. What is more, Piaget is smoking his pipe while taking notes—. Piaget is seated in his reading—Piaget is listening to recording—*theorising*.


Krapp's Last Tape
by Samuel Beckett
with Harold Pinter

Sombra del opus... magnum.
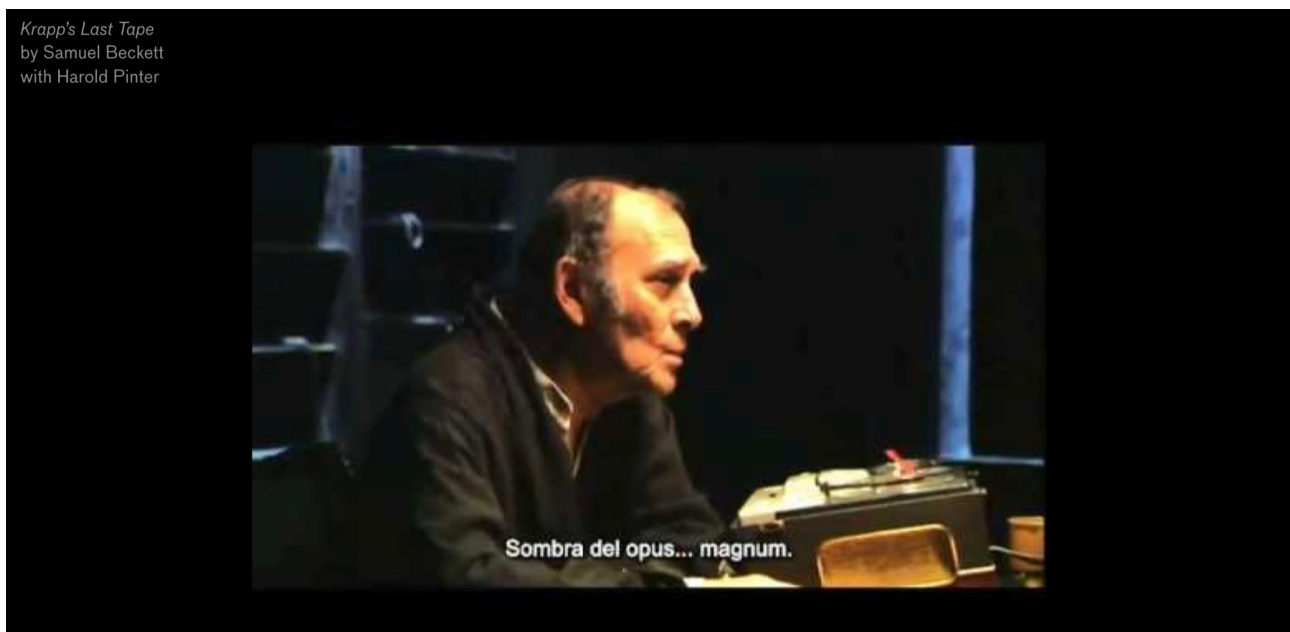
This shorthand is not intended as satire. Yet, the distance to Harald Pinter's version (my favourite) of Krapp's last tape—by Samuel Beckett—requires but a little push. So, this is what we are talking about when we engage with logbooks in the theory courses at the MA in design. Keeping a record and replaying it: making sure that *all* Piaget's stages will be hosted. Even before any marks are made the problem of how we acquire the surface and take it into possession, is prompted by borrowing the *floor* from the BlackBox, the *wall* from the WhiteCube and their "sum".

So, the sense in which the *surface* is something to be *had*—before anything is written, drawn or photographed—is a given task, in the form of the BlackBook, from day one in MA1/T1 through the exam in MA2/T3, which is in the autumn. The space that holds it the learning theatre—of which you see the basic arrangement here—which is extended by the QUAD: the presentations that take place in the arrangement that you see, mediate between an object and a digital projection on the wall, with a distance through the entire class, sitting in two opposing rows[6]. There are 3 moments.

[5] Pallasmaa, Yohani. (2005/1996). *The eyes of the skin*. Wiley.

[6] In ARW 2020—together with Petrine Vinje, Lisa Lie and Bjørn Blikstad we did an experimental tripartite and phased session involving the audience actively: *progressive interaction | receptive intra-action* was the title. During the session we had the audience turn their chairs to that they would be seated in facing rows. In this phase we used an object camera to project an image of it on the wall. The initial confusion as to where the object was in the room, gave rise to reactions recorded after the session: headaches and nausea were recorded, valley of the uncanny reactions. Hence the splitting of the object and image at two ends of the room, to explore further the affordances of image and object and image perception in the class-room. The present arrangement became stable through various tryouts in the pandemic. Superficially the present arrangement has references both to the British Parliament and Biblical covenant of the parts.

The students turn between the *object-end* and the *image-end* of the room and in passing they see *each other*. We have had more vivid discussion in class with this arrangement. In design, being seated by a desk—or, with a hard surface/board—is a truly complex act. *Homo sedens* has even been used (by Peter Opsvik) to determine *humans*: in our culture as *seat* is associated with judgement, power and learning. The table is a place of ritual[7] *destruction* and *reordering*: what we broadly understand as *reading*. Here organised as a communicative act that *communicates*.
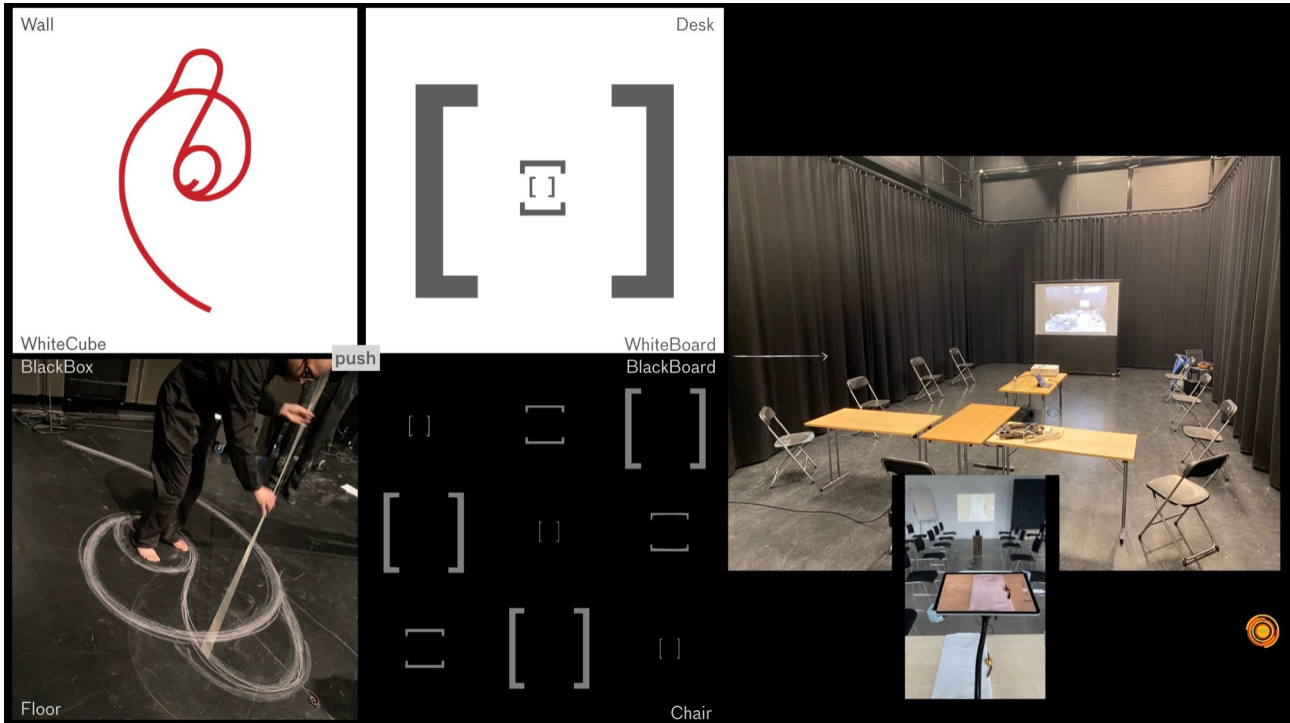
In the extended readings that we do in class, are again extended by an act of *making*: the BlackBook the emerges from the work in the QUAD, in similar sense as the table emerges as a

surface to be had, through the rotating presentations that we do in class. This page from Araitz Mesanza's BlackBook: the BBs can be alot "hairier" than this. It is selected because it shows a creative use of the parameters discussed in class: this is an annotated bibliography, with some notes of the experimental context on how the element has been found and its relevance.
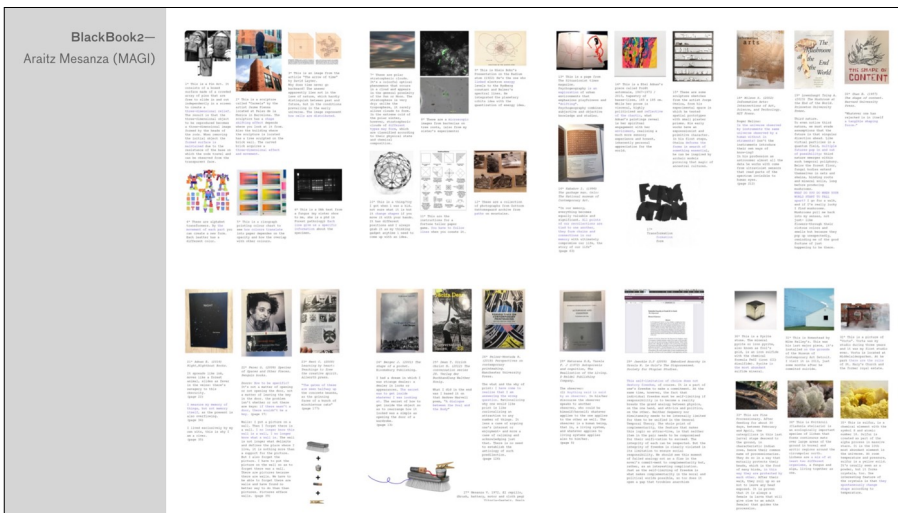
The BlackBook provides a search and reading material for the two essays developed by the students: one in the spring (MA1) and one in the fall (MA2) in preparation for the exam. The exam itself again takes place in the *learning theatre*, where the candidates are flanked by the QUAD. In addition we have an external examiner—we have had Bojana Cvejic from dance twice, Håkon

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[7] Leach, Edmund. 1964, p. xiv:
«'Ritual' is a term which anthropology uses in diverse senses. My own view is that while we only run into paradox if we try to apply this term to some distinct class of behaviours, we can very usefully think of 'ritual' as an aspect of all behaviour, namely the communicative aspect.»

Caspersen one—and the *specialised staff*, who have had at least one mandatory tutorial with their students, participate in the discussions with each candidate rounding up their sessions in the LT.

CONCLUDING REMARKS:
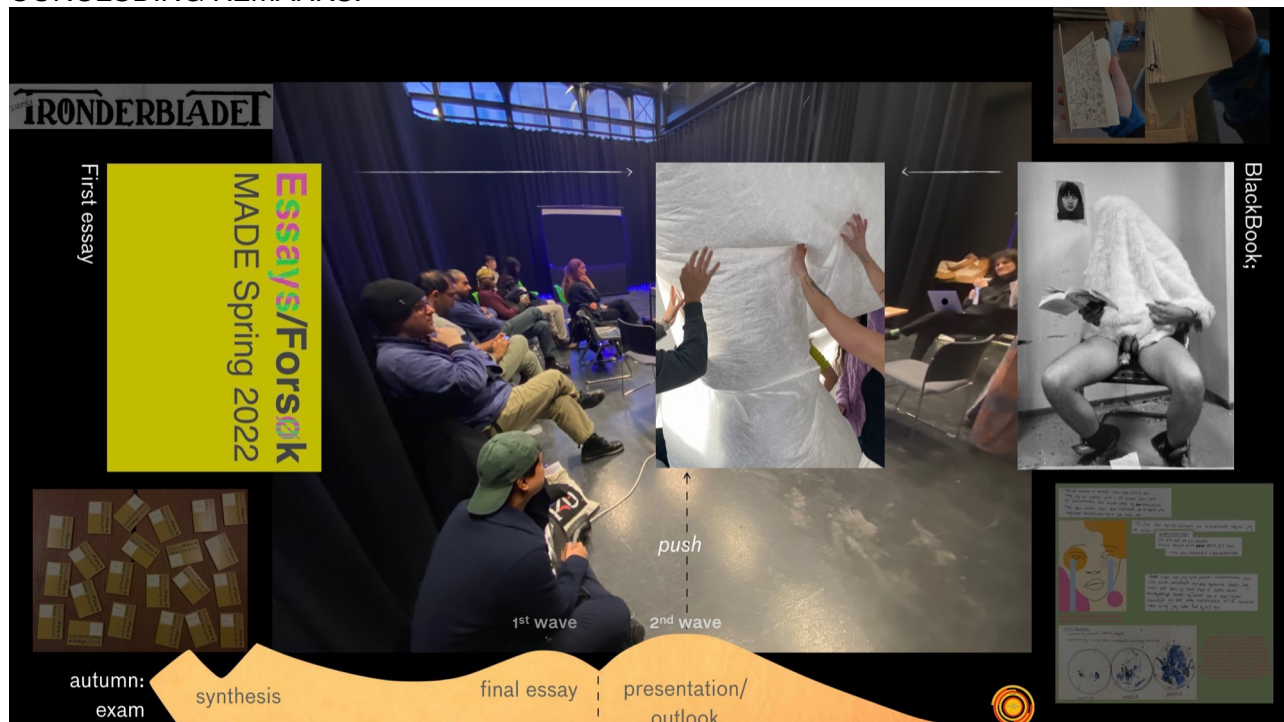
The students are having a real exam in *theory* that is moderated by *both* theory and practice. They are going through a real ordeal in a space which is acquired as a working space, in several steps with their colleagues in class. So, they can define their ground in the space of the exam: first acquired in their setup, and then taken into possession through the examination process. The exam asks them to take their work to the horizons of theory and beyond: this is the final push. It is a test as to whether the students are able to *transpose* what they have learned and *apply* it.

This is, in some sense, the hallmark of academic *freedom*: it is not a freedom that we are born with, but a kind of *educated* freedom. And it is developed on a track course where the students start with *pathfinding*: to show to others and themselves what they are capable of doing. That is, according to the pedagogy of *mastery*. In the final phase—up to, during and after the exam—the students pass unto a different mode: which is that of *goalseeking*. Based on what is achieved they can define an objective of *achievement*: commit themselves to reach for excellence in that area.

Hence the pedagogy of mastery and achievement are *combined*, but they are carefully *phased*. Paradoxically, students who have gone *straight* to goal-achievement have had a hard time to actually deliver during the exam. At the other end of the spectrum, those who do not see the point of pathfinding and goalseeking at all. Including those we *may* already have seen, and for sure are likely to spot in the future, who use *apps based on AI algorithms* to write their essays[8]. They will *not* pull off the exam, since the application of learning outcomes passes through them: *no* push.

With an MA which in practice is international the variety of contemporary cultures *not* based on the originality of the contribution—but where *copying* is OK and sometimes the norm—we have to get our options clear and define the standards of how we do things *here*. These standards are evidently not set in stone, they cannot be assumed and have to be discussed in order to be appropriated and conquered each time anew. There is nothing such as *rote* repetition, there is *always* the push. With each new wave there is novelty and a challenge to know and understand.

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[8] E.g., currently the AI bot ChatGPT. For a critique of the AI direction of digital development see Jaron Lanier (2010). An app devised to identify Bot-essays is being developed.
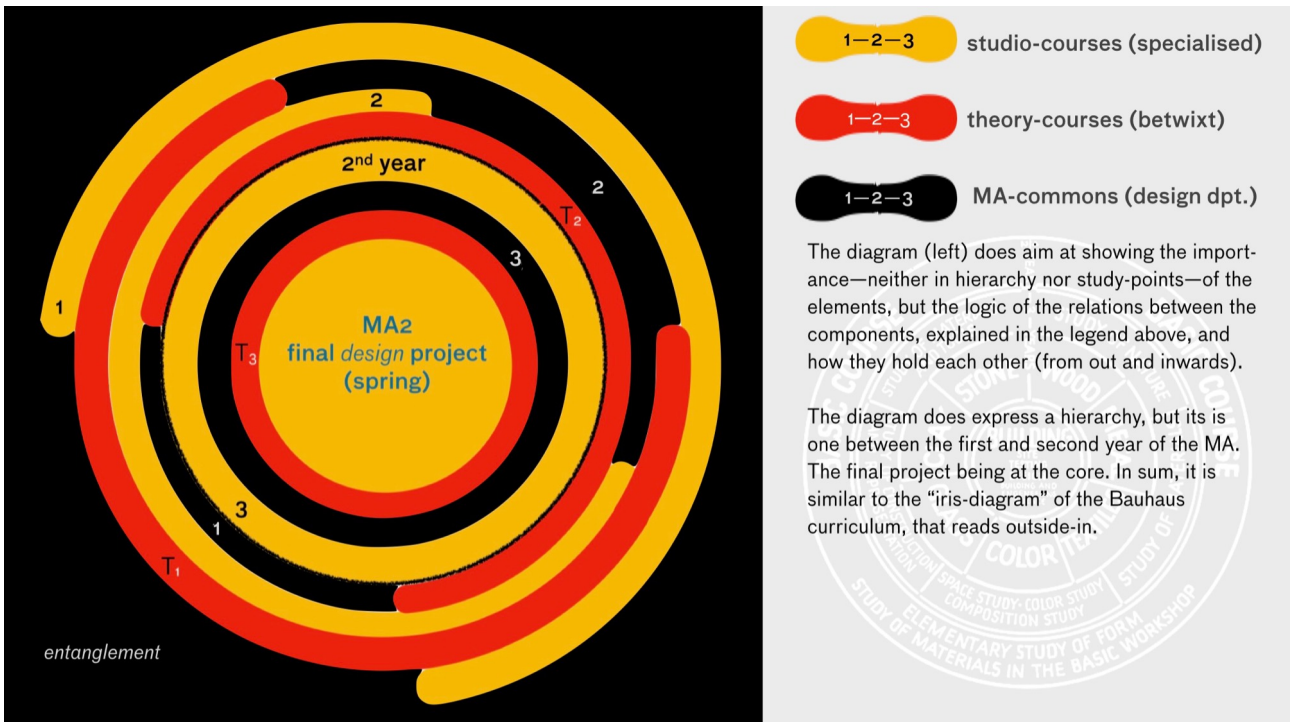
By the time the students reach their exams, they have been through a tangled diet of *studio* and *theory* learning: studio 1, 2, 3 and theory 1, 2, 3 correspond exactly with each other. And offer a grid in which the design commons articulates as a *corrective* and *wildcard* that does *not* allow the 'complementarity of opposites' to rest. Evidently, the students' *work* emerges *from* this entanglement and by the time they reach the theory exams in MA2, it is no longer possible to deliver a complete appreciation of the students' work without joining forces *across* practice and theory.
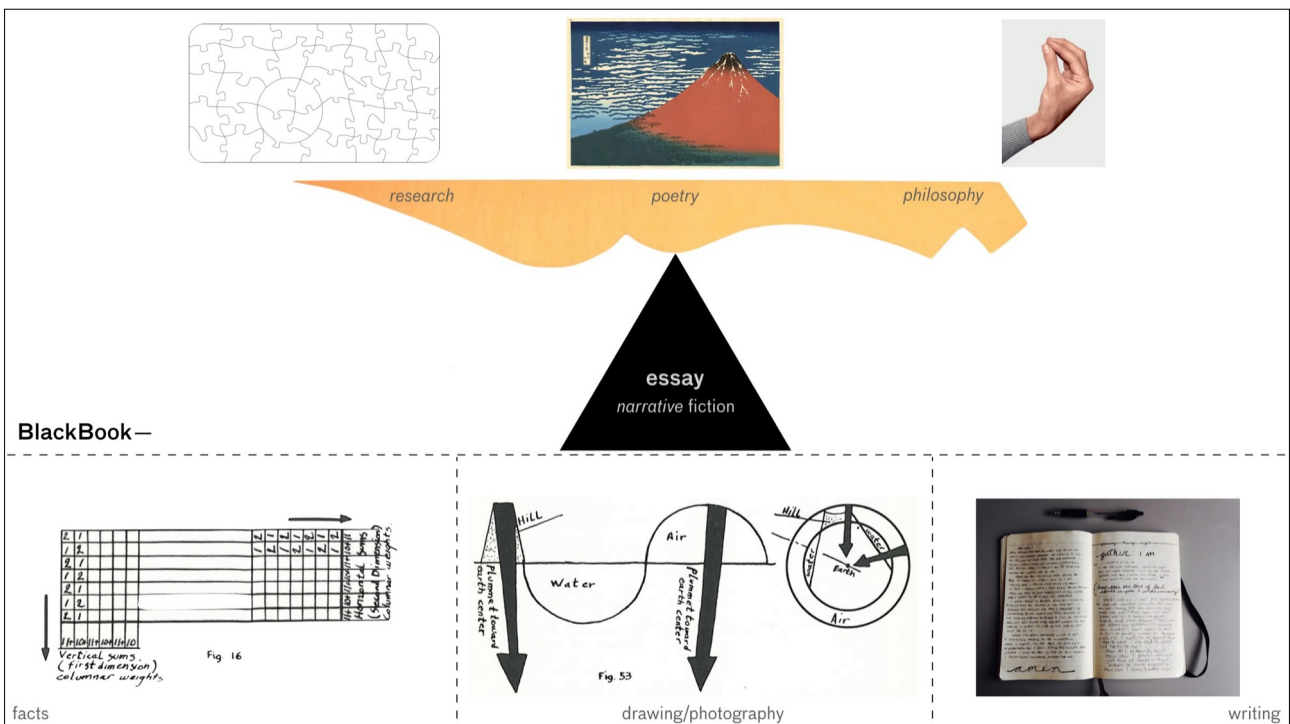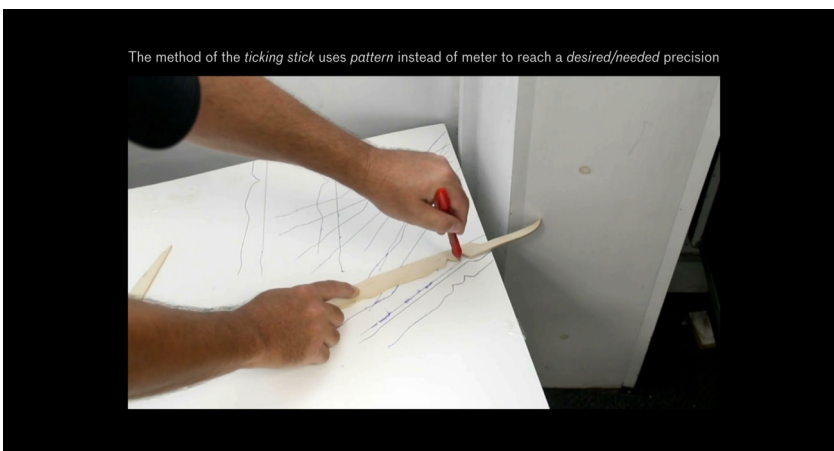

So, in regard of the *essay* what do we require from the students? Well we require that they keep a *logbook*, that they are able to gather and synthesise the *field* in which they are making their research, and develop a *theory* from where they stand; in dialogue with the set of references that they have acquired and listed in APA7th alongside an image index at the end. When we consider

the superposition of production and reception as *two* waves in the compound swirl you see here, it in turns produces a *push*, which here is identified as the essay. I will show exactly how.

The essay builds on the foundation of the BlackBook, which typically contains some facts, drawings/photos and writing. The genre of the essay is composite: that is, in the literary tradition of the essay—that goes back to Montaigne—and where the point lies precisely in the outcome from sharecropping of different lines of research: philosophical, poetic search and imagery and empirical research. The result is a particular kind of fiction, here called *narrative* fiction. It is narrative in the sense that it can be told in many different ways depending on the push.

This sense of the essay—with the literary and academic essay at two ends of the spectrum—has a parallel in drawing: according the Robin Evans, architectural drawing combines *3 different geometries*. Geometry in the *mathematical* tradition, in the *engineering* tradition and in the *artistic* tradition. My impression is that it is in this tripartite combination that drawing is still being taught at KHiO. So, how do we account for these heteroclite combinations (featuring in the essay and in drawing), aside from manifesting a so-called *eclectic* attitude and the unwillingness to choose?

The method of the *ticking stick* uses *pattern* instead of meter to reach a *desired/needed* precision

Well, it may have something to do with the *kind* of fit we are working to achieve at an art-school as ours. Our research does *not* aim at generalisation but to mark and hit something *specific*, that in the process can be as precise as we need. In this respect, the ticking stick —used as a shape in the presentation—provides a great metaphor. Not because what we seek to fit *already* exists, as the example in the video, but because it uses *pattern* instead of meter to reach a desired precision. Each ticking stick is *personal* yet the relation between ticking-stick runs deep.

In the bigger picture this may be helpful not only be helpful in showing what we make and do can be *docked* to reality—and *improve* our sense of *mark* and *hit*—but also to define *mastery* and *achievement* on relative terms: using the *one* to set the *premise* for the other. That is the possibility to determine excellence on "indigenous" terms. Thereby proposing a way of address and a met-hod of approach to post-colonialism, and euro-centrism. Taking in the site, creating a situation, playing it out and *giving something back*. Contemporary dancers can be really good at this[9].

Finger-painting by Samuel Ingebrigtsen Komissar (b. 2021)

FIN...

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[9] Cf, preparations and travelogue from the ET PAF project (Expanding Theory at the Performing Arts Forum).

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