"Just Building": Togetherness as Art and Education in a Copenhagen Neighborhood	*Helene Illeris* *University of Agder*

Through a process-oriented analysis of the Copenhagen-based art project The Hill*, this article explores the pedagogical potentials of the concept* performative experimental community*. The aim is to propose ideas and strategies for teacher certification courses and university programs that stimulate students to reconsider the role of art education in the current political, economical, and environmental situation. Central questions addressed by the article are: What is the potential for using art and education to explore alternative ways of living and of being? How can art educators challenge individualist self-understandings through new forms of* togetherness? *How can we create fissures in neo-liberal educational agendas? In the conclusion, six key notions are presented, followed by a brief discussion of performative experimental community as approach, content, and pedagogy for becoming art teachers.*

Introduction

Since the late 1990s, neo-liberal governance has turned art teaching in Scandinavian public schools into an instrument for the fulfillment of pre-established educational goals and measurable learning outcomes. In primary and secondary school (1–12) classrooms across Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, centralized state authorities now direct teaching toward so-called "competence aims" and "knowledge requirements." In teacher certification programs, students are required to master predefined repertoires of skills and forms of reflection (Ministry of Education and

Research [Norway], 2009; Ministry of Higher Education and Science [Denmark], 2012; Swedish National Agency for Education, 2013). These authorities afford teachers and students little agency, as well as resources including time, to develop alternative and/or critical approaches to art education.

In Denmark, where I live, the latest reform of the public school system, implemented from August 2014, is further challenging the democratic structure of public schools and teacher certification programs. Instead of collectively negotiated contracts, teachers' conditions of employment are now regulated through individual contracts between the employee and the school or university college (KL [Local Government Denmark], 2014; Ministry of Higher Education and Science [Denmark], 2013). Consequently, it is now up to local leaders, who often know little or nothing about art education, to decide how much time an art teacher or teacher trainer should employ for preparing each lesson and where and when this work should be done. While teaching "participation and co-responsibility" within an atmosphere of "freedom of spirit, equality and democracy" is still an obligation by Danish law, the structural conditions have become so restricted that one must ask whether public schools and teacher certification programs are suitable structures for teaching these values (Braad, Hedegaard, Nørregaard, & Simonsen, 2014).[1]

The newly published Danish anthology *Læring i konkurrencestaten* [Learning in the Competition State] (K. Illeris, 2014) explores connections between neo-liberal educational policy, learning, and sustainability. In the first essay, the economist Ove K. Pedersen (2014) describes in detail how the competition state since the 1990s has used the educational system to stimulate an opportunistic self-understanding of the students through individualized classification (Pedersen, 2014, pp. 24–25). On the contrary, according to the editor of the book, learning for sustainability focuses on "the relationship between people, ways of associating with each other, how we collaborate and solve conflicts, reciprocal recognition, and respect" (K. Illeris, 2014, p. 215). In order to oppose individualism favored by the competition state, educators and educational researchers need to develop meaningful learning processes that emphasize identity-building, community, and sustainability (K. Illeris, 2014, pp. 214–222).

On the background of these considerations, and under the impression of the global economical and environmental crises, in 2010, I began a long-term research and development project called AESD (Art Education for Sustainable Development) (H. Illeris, 2012a, 2012b), hosted by the University of Agder in Norway, where I now serve. Along with the concept of sustainability, a central focus for this project, which I am exploring with colleagues and local artists, is the concept of *togetherness*. Togetherness stands for ways of "doing collectivity" without returning to essentialist and romanticist conceptions often related to the concepts of community and community-based art education (CBAE) (H. Illeris, 2013).

An important aim of the project is to propose ideas and strategies for teacher certification courses and university programs that stimulate students to reconsider the role of art education in the current political, economical, and environmental situation. Central questions addressed by the project are: What is the potential for using art and education to explore alternative ways of living and of being? How can art educators challenge the individualist self-understanding promoted by the competition state? How can we create fissures in neo-liberal educational agendas?

Presentation of the Research

In this article, I will contribute to the AESD project through an exploration of the pedagogical potentials of the concept *performative experimental community*. In a previous text (H. Illeris, 2013), I tentatively defined performative experimental community as a social situation where a group of people is temporarily brought together to collaborate (or perform collaboration) around some kind of praxis. I also defined a performative experimental community as a dynamic political endeavor, "a way to re-enact being through praxis, and thereby to try to create social-material alternatives to individualization" (H. Illeris, 2013, p. 82).

In order to further this discussion, and to engage with the criticism that I have met regarding my project (in particular, Kallio-Tavin, 2014), I will use the example of an art project called *The Hill*, enacted by the Danish artist group Parfyme in 2006 and reported on its homepage (Parfyme, 2006). The project consisted in a temporary construction site, where the five artists of Parfyme went "to work" every day for a period of three weeks. My research interest in this project concerns how artistically generated forms of togetherness might challenge the logic of the competition state. I visited *The Hill* briefly back in 2006, but lately my interest in the project has increased due to the AESD project and the discussions that *The Hill* generates among my students when I present to them pictures and texts from Parfyme's homepage (Parfyme, 2006).

In this paper, I will engage with how *The Hill* works educationally as an example of an artwork that is performative, community-oriented, and pedagogical. Akin to Deleuze and Guattari's (1991/1994) idea of "experimental empiricism," and the recent use of it made by Olsson (2009) and Springgay (2011), I present and theorize *The Hill* to produce meaningful encounters and discussions in my everyday life as an educator of future art educators and researchers. Through this analysis of *The Hill*, I will generate sub-concepts that constitute a "plane of reference" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991/1994) for understanding the pedagogical potentials of performative experimental community. To show how my concepts are generated, I will invite the reader to follow me through a process involving theoretical and pedagogical investigations of *The Hill*. My writing will be process-oriented; each of the three sections of

the paper will represent one sub-study delving into one or two aspects of *The Hill*. In each section, I will establish encounters between artistic and philosophical concepts with examples and thoughts from *The Hill* to generate a new theoretical framework for performative experimental community; and I will consider how this new theoretical framework opens new ways of thinking about the role of community-based art education in art teacher certification. My path will be as follows:

- Section I will use Parfyme's writings and pictures to present *The Hill*. The discussion will emphasize the pedagogical potentials inherent in Parfyme's strategic approach to their artistic practice.
- Section II will present critical theories of community-based art by Claire Bishop (2012), Miwon Kwon (2004), and Nicolas Bourriaud (1998/2002). It will do so in order to discuss the pedagogical potentials of *The Hill*, focusing on how to conceive of community in a way that is anti-essentialist and performative.
- Section III will delve deeper into the concept of togetherness through a brief presentation of Jean-Luc Nancy's (1986/1991, 1996/2000) philosophy. The aim is to see if and how *The Hill* is able to exemplify performative experimental community as a form of being in its making rather than as a pre-defined entity.

I. Presentation of *The Hill*

The Hill was an art project, organized and enacted by the Danish artist group Parfyme[2] in August and September 2006. *The Hill* took place in Mimersgade, a street in a working class neighborhood of Copenhagen with a high concentration of immigrants and socially marginalized Danes (City of Copenhagen, 2010, p. 10). Situated in an open area with a lawn adjacent to the street, the project was part of a larger public art project called *TAKE A SEAT!* According to the curator, this project aimed at "challenging people's idea of a quarter, both those looking at it from the outside and those living here" (Skovbjerg Jensen, 2006).[3] *TAKE A SEAT!* was launched as part of a new strategy adopted by the City of Copenhagen where permanent urban renewal projects were preceded by temporary projects of "mostly of an artistic character" (City of Copenhagen, 2010, p. 10). The aim of financing these projects of "temporary urbanism" (Bauman, 2012) was to make them function as "a lever for a better urban life, more integration and more recreational square meters" (City of Copenhagen, 2010, p. 3).

Physically, *The Hill* consisted of a small provisional construction site situated in the part of the lawn closest to the street. At the beginning of the project period, the site included a mobile site-shed that the artists had constructed by themselves before the project began, and a pile of building materials, mainly planks, wooden boards of different sizes and shapes, and large pieces of green felt. After the establishment of the construction site, the project began: Every day from nine to five for a period of three weeks, the four artists went "to work" constructing their artificial "hills" out of planks and wooden boards covered by felt.

Figure 1.1. Beginning the process of construction.

Figure 1.2. The artists of Parfyme having lunch inside the mobile site-shed. Photos: Parfyme.

Writing about their motivation for participating in *TAKE A SEAT!*, Parfyme emphasizes their choice of site as the result of a spontaneously driven process rather than of a careful selection:

> We had been thinking about building an outdoor hillscape for awhile. At first, we were about to carry it out on one of Copenhagen's main squares, but due to bureaucratic delay of our plans, we had a chance to reconsider. "Hey isn't it a little cheap just to add to what is already nice and neat? Boys, let's pick another place." And then, Christian Skovbjerg turned up with his "TAKE A SEAT" project, and we joined forces and chose Mimersgade. (Parfyme, 2006)[4]

An approach like this, which falls between playful idealism and pragmatic realism, is typical of Parfyme, as is its style of writing, using first person plural and direct speech, and referring to themselves as "boys." On their homepage, they define their projects as based "on both practical research and immediate actions, without too much planning" (Parfyme, 2009). A preferred way of working is by constructing mobile or moveable structures that can function as a physical base for social interventions in the public space. For example, their projects previous to *The Hill* include touring Denmark with a mobile shed-hut that was transformed into a café in a number of local squares around the country (*Tour de Denmark*, 2001), and building a removable but completely functional circle-shaped mini-golf court out of wood and green felt in a square close to the central station in Copenhagen (*Monument*, 2004).

However, the most interesting part of The Hill was not to be found in its planning process or site-specificity but in the actual forms of social practice that The Hill gave rise to during the three weeks of 2006. In their introductory text, the artists describe how the project uses a rigorous framing in time, space, and forms of activity in order to lay down the premises for spontaneous actions and openness toward eventual participants:

> Here we are 6 days a week for 3 weeks, building for you, whatever you say, to-morrow! What's going to happen?—We'll see soon enough. Too much bother, and we might have to modify things or eventually remove them. Anyway, it's worth the try: we have to construct a way out of the problems. (Parfyme, 2006)

In fact, the artists became a new point of reference for various forms of sociality through their daily presence in Mimersgade. When expressing their curiosity about what was going on, local residents and occasional passersby were invited to participate, both in the construction activities and in other of the artists' everyday activities including conversation and drinking coffee. In their report about their experiences, the artists emphasize the communicative force of making an "undefinable intervention" in people's everyday lives:

> But the hills are good as a point of reunion—to get to talk to people. What the f . . . are you doing? It feels satisfying to construct something that people do not understand right away. As a needed, undefinable intervention into everyday life. (Skovbjerg Jensen, 2006)

One thing that Parfyme emphasizes in particular, on their homepage, is how the group established close relationships to many of the local school-age children hanging out in the area during the afternoon (Parfyme, 2006). Soon after the artists had begun their work, some of the children began approaching the "builders" asking them what they were doing and why. The artists answered that they "were constructing" and then began to ask the children what they would like to have built on the area. When the children accepted to engage in the project by coming up with ideas for new constructions and by assisting in the actual building, the project started to change.[5] Alongside the artists' hills, new sites began to emerge: a small soccer field with goals, a small viewing platform, and a skating ramp.

Figure 2.1. Dialogue with the school children.

Figure 2.2. Constructing soccer-goals.

Figure 2.3. Local children playing on the hills.

Figure 2.4 Local children on the viewing platform. Photos: Parfyme.

Through the creative participation of the more than 30 children involved on a regular basis during the project period, a social learning process began that at least for the artists, entailed new kinds of experiences:

> As it turned out, yes, this was a task that involved demanding pedagogic efforts besides the job of construction. After school-time kids were everywhere, well, of course, it's their hood. Kids who, in one way seem addicted to the chaos and excitement of being in a gang (or a mass), used to problems, conflicts ("I'll call my bigger brother!"), but at the same time bringing their own genuine energy and speed. (Parfyme, 2006)

As more children started to participate more frequently, the character of the project changed in new and unexpected ways. "The kids were everywhere," the artists write, and from the quote above, the reader understands that both the children's presence—and what could be understood as the children's anarchical behavior—challenged the artists by involving "demanding pedagogic efforts." In fact, as time passed, children designed and built more constructions until some children convinced the artists to stop building and to play a soccer match instead (personal communication with Pelle Brage, August 27, 2014).

While the artists expected their audiences to participate occasionally in the construction process designed and carried out by the artists, the children's participation was more encompassing. The children wanted to influence what to build, how to build, and how the constructions should be used. At the same time, the children's participation in *The Hill* was *non-voluntary* (Helguera, 2011, p. 16) in the sense that if they were informed that they were taking part in an art project, they probably did not know anything about what might or might not entail as art.[6]

Figure 3. Soccer game. Photo: Parfyme.

Playfulness/Curiosity and Pragmatism/Respect

When discussing the pedagogical potentials of *The Hill* in my art and art education courses, two things raise the curiosity of my students: the apparently "loose" framework adopted by the artists in planning their work, and their "self-centered" way of responding to the participation of the children. I have already mentioned Parfyme's approach to planning as being *playful* in the sense that the group favors immediate action (i.e., "just doing it") over long periods of research, and *pragmatist* in the sense that they respond to "what comes up" in a very practical manner. From an interventionist point of view, the playful pragmatism of Parfyme's projects functions as a critique toward the restrictions of societal structures, "an experiment directed to supplement, or at least comment on, the very slow (and democratic, yes, yes, yes) urban planning process" (Parfyme, 2006). Following this line of thought, Parfyme uses "being loose" as an artistic tool for criticizing formalist procedures of urban planning and to question provocatively how playfulness is thwarted by the inertia of inefficient democratic processes.

My students are most engaged in what they perceive as Parfyme's "self-centeredness." The artists pursue their artistic idea of "just building" without trying to understand the social and personal reasons for the children's need of attention. The texts and pictures on Parfyme's homepage tell little about the artists' interaction with the children at *The Hill*, but from a pedagogical point of view, what we imagine happened can be equally important. The self-centered approach of the artists perhaps *allowed* the children to participate in ways that were equally self-centered. If we imagine that, at least initially, the children's focus was to have fun and the artists' focus was on building, we might imagine that the two parts could meet on a more equal basis than if the artists possessed preconceived educational

intentions toward the children. Parfyme responds intuitively to the "energy and speed" of the children; the artists accept the children's "chaos and excitement of being in a gang." They do not condemn their behavior or try to explain it psychologically, culturally, or socially. At *The Hill*, the artists and the children respond to each other with curiosity rather than through "having a common project."

When returning to the concept of performative experimental community, and how to develop definitions of what this concept might entail pedagogically, *playfulness/curiosity* and *pragmatism/respect* are salient. The former is understood as a "loose" and apparently "self-centered" approach both to planning processes and to social practice, and the latter is understood as an underlying seriousness regarding how to respond in a sympathetic, honest, and respectful way to whatever "comes up" during the social processes launched by their projects.

II. Community-Based Art

From the late 1960s, the terms "community arts" or "community-based art" were used about art projects based in dialogical exchanges and creative actions involving one or more artists and a local community, often based in an economically depressed or otherwise marginalized area (Morgan, 1988). However, it was only in the early 1990s, with the "social turn" (Bishop, 2012), that community-based art became one of the most important contemporary art currents, now with a new variety of designations, such as "participatory art," "socially engaged art," "dialogic art," "interventionist art," and (most recently) "social practice" (Bishop, 2012, p. 1). While during the 1960s, community arts were based in a discourse of creativity and participation as inherently subversive and anti-authoritarian, contemporary community-based participatory projects find themselves operating in a much more complex terrain. On the one hand, they are still celebrated for their democratic character, blurring the divisions between art and life or art and politics. On the other hand, some of them are criticized for being politically naïve, concealing economic differences and inherent power relations under a combination of good intentions and personal promotion of the artist (Bishop, 2012, p. 16).

Another relevant critical perspective on community-based art regards the definition of the concept of community. In her book *One Place After Another* (2004), the American art historian Miwon Kwon criticizes community-based art for essentializing the idea of community as an existing and stable social entity. In contrast, she seeks to emphasize the qualities of what she defines as collective artistic praxis that is open-ended, process-oriented, and performative:

> Community-based art . . . is typically understood as a descriptive practice in which the community functions as a referential social entity. . . . In contrast, collective artistic praxis, I would suggest, is a projective enterprise. It involves a

provisional group, produced as a function of specific circumstances instigated by an artist and/or a cultural institution, aware of the effects of these circumstances on the very conditions of the interaction, performing its own coming together and coming apart as a necessarily incomplete modeling or working-out of a collective social process. (Kwon, 2004, p. 154)

The French curator Nicolas Bourriaud uses the word *interstice* to define tentatively "a space in human relations which . . . creates free areas, and time spans whose rhythm contrast with those structuring everyday life, and . . . encourages an inter-human commerce that differs from the "communication zones" that are imposed on us" (Bourriaud, 1998/2002, p. 16). Together with Kwon's *collaborative artistic praxis*, I believe that Bourriaud's notion contributes to our understanding of how social processes can be viewed as *performative*. Instead of producing some form of change within an existing community, the interstice allows for the possibility of "doing collectivity" without responding to the rhythm structuring everyday life. In a similar way, collaborative artistic praxis opens up for a provisional group "performing its own coming together and coming apart."

Sustaining Contradiction and Interstice/Performance

According to the research by Bishop and Kwon, the critiques of being politically naïve and essentializing community adhere to many collaborative art projects curated within the framing of community art.[7] Also the curator-led project *TAKE A SEAT!* of which *The Hill* was a part, could be criticized for concealing the structurally generated problems of the Mimersgade-quarter because, as we have seen in the previous section, it was launched as part of a public strategy sustaining artistic projects that would function as "a lever for a better urban life, more integration and more recreational square meters" (City of Copenhagen, 2010, p. 3). In other words, following the logic of Bishop's criticism, the political intention behind *TAKE A SEAT!* was to conform local inhabitants to what the city council had defined as "a better urban life," rather than to propose a real political alternative.

Although the *The Hill* was inscribed in *TAKE A SEAT!* by an urban renewal discourse, it challenges this discourse. By insisting on "just building," Parfyme does not try to promote other discourses such as social inclusion, creativity, community, or pedagogy. Indeed, *Parfyme* attempts to overcome, or at least question, the presupposed role of acting as midwives for social improvement. Even if, in accordance with their pragmatic credo, they had accepted to work within the frames of urban renewal and community arts, *The Hill* allows for an ongoing process of becoming and unbecoming, *a performance of possibilities of togetherness*. It questions site-specific community art through its ability to "sustain contradiction that cannot be reconciled with the quantifiable imperatives of positivist economics"

(Bishop, 2012, p. 16). *The Hill* creates an interstice that stands in contrast to the logic structuring everyday life, including life in educational institutions. It accepts contradictions, and even exposes them, without the need for solving or reconciling them.

In many CBAE programs (e.g., Jokela & Huhmarniemi, 2008), students identify and design projects that respond to the community's presumed social needs and problems. But they design these interventions without engaging with the structural and political decisions underlying these needs and problems and without questioning how their studies contribute to essentializing rather than problematizing the notion of community (H. Illeris, 2012a, 2013). *The Hill*, by contrast, opposes the idea of community art as an educational means to achieve pre-established goals of "helping someone in need." Instead, the project allows for participants to find a momentary fissure in everyday life where they can perform in multiple and contradicting ways without being forced in advance to represent a particular social group. Looking at these qualities, I believe that important notions for exploring the pedagogical potentials of performative experimental community could be those of *sustaining contradiction* and *interstice/performance*. The first notion refers to the political potential of performative experimental community to op-pose the idea of community art as a sort of charity. The second notion refers to the possibility for participants to find a temporary position in an open process that fissures everyday life through "coming together and coming apart".

III. Togetherness

As her theoretical reference, Kwon uses the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy in order "to figure out a way beyond and through the impossibility of community" (Kwon, 2004, p. 154). Following Kwon, I would like to delve a bit deeper into Nancy's concepts of community and togetherness in order to prepare for a deeper art pedagogical understanding of *The Hill*.

In the preface to his early book *The Inoperative Community* (1986/1991), Nancy discusses essentialist understandings of the subject and compares them with another essentialism, namely that of community. In Nancy's view, the politi-cally damaging understanding of subjectivity as "absolute immanence" has con-tributed to the loss of the idea of community as a force that *cuts into* the subject and dissolves its presumed unity. "The relation (the community) is, if it *is*, nothing other than what undoes, in its very principle . . . the autarchy of absolute imma-nence" (Nancy, 1986/1991, p. 4). For Nancy, community can never be constructed or even performed as such, but it can be grasped performatively as an act of *un-working* singularity in front of the plural. Community can be understood as a way to grasp, what Nancy calls "the *in* of being-*in*-common":

> The community that becomes *a single* thing (body, mind, fatherland, Leader
> . . .) necessarily loses the *in* of being-*in*-common. Or, it loses the *with* or the
> *together* that defines it. It yields its being-together to a being *of* togetherness.
> The truth of community, on the contrary, resides in the retreat of such a being."
> (Nancy, 1986/1991, p. xxxix; emphasis in original)

In later writings, especially *Being Singular Plural* (1996/2000), Nancy elaborates
how singularity and plurality reciprocally un-work each other through recipro-
cal *exposure*. According to Nancy, "singular" is not a subject or an individual that
exists in its own right: "being-singular" is only to be understood in relation to
"being-plural," and singulars are by definition incommensurable with each other.
Furthermore, as suggested by Christopher Watkin (2013), the "plural" of singular
plurality:

> is nothing but the exposure (*exposition*) of singulars each to the other, an expo-
> sure that can never itself be substantialized and made into one further quality
> or capacity. It is not and cannot be a property or trait that any of the singulars
> possesses. (Watkin, 2013, p. 528)

Being-in-Common and Exposure to Togetherness

The Hill is an example of how processes of Nancy's being-*in*-common might be
enabled, even if only at a hypothetical level. In *The Hill*, one could say that to-
getherness comes into presence because no particular collectivity or community
is presumed in advance, and no particular "we" is constructed. Togetherness in
The Hill can be seen as a form of *exposure* of the participants to the *praxis* of doing
something, for example, playing, drinking coffee, building, discussing, relaxing.

In the sense of Nancy, it is possible to view *The Hill* as a possibility, not for
establishing a particular form of community or collectivity, but for un-working
community through the fragile being-*in*-common of togetherness. The pedagogi-
cal potential of community in Nancy's sense is about learning to live within the
openness of being singular plural as a possible alternative to a neo-liberal under-
standing of education as a way to achieve predefined individualized aims and stan-
dards.

Returning to the development of the pedagogical potentials of performative
experimental community, I would like to adopt the notions of *being*-in-*common*
and *exposure to togetherness* as central not only for defining what performative ex-
perimental community is, but in particular for challenging any temptation that
one might have for essentializing the concept. What I learn from Nancy is that the
idea of performative experimental community should not be understood as a fixed
entity leading to assumptions about exactly what it is and what it is not. On the
contrary, performative experimental community could be understood as a form of
being in its making.

Conclusion

In the beginning of this article, I tentatively defined performative experimental community as a social event where a group of people collaborates (or performs collaboration) around a specific task. I also asked if and how the enactment of performative experimental communities might facilitate the "art of doing to-getherness" as an artistic alternative to neo-liberal focus on control, predefined goals, and individualism. The case of *The Hill* and the theories I have used for my analyses illustrate the pedagogical potentials of performative experimental community as a pedagogical attitude or state of mind, not a predefined methodology. In fact, where in my previous text (H. Illeris, 2013), I used the term substantively, speaking of *a* performative experimental community as a physical entity to be observed and/or created, I now would prefer to speak of performative experimental community in a more conceptual sense as an *approach*.[8] I have also come closer to understanding how performative experimental community might challenge the individualist values of the latest reforms in the Scandinavian countries. In the model below, I have tentatively tried to illustrate my findings by using the conclusions from these three sub-studies to elicit six notions central to performative experimental community:

In sum, the six notions can be explained in the following way in relation to art educational projects:

1. *Playfulness/Curiosity* describes a way of approaching a situation that is apparently "loose" and "self-centered." This means that, like in the case of *The Hill*,
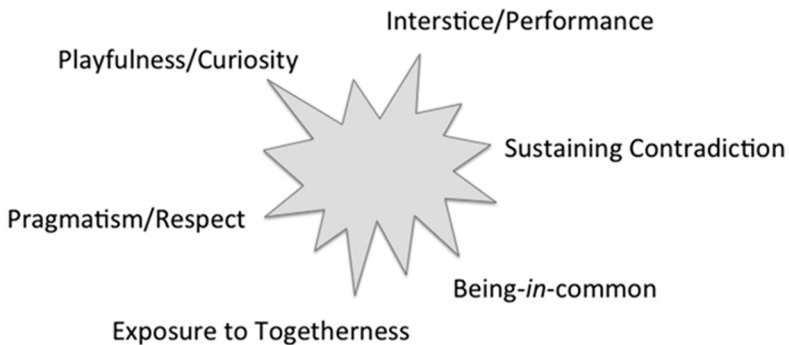

Figure 4.

> one tries to clearly enact one's intentions and interests in an open and inviting manner: "Hey, let's do it!"

2. *Pragmatism/Respect* is a seriousness underlying the playful approach regarding the activity itself and how to respond in a sympathetic, honest, and respectful way to whatever "comes up" during the related social processes.

3. *Sustaining contradiction* indicates the political potential of performative experimental community to accept, sustain, and even expose social and other contradictions within educational activities. In this way, performative experimental community opposes the idea of community arts or CBAE as a way of solving problems by aiming to achieve pre-established goals (i.e., "helping someone in need").

4. *Interstice/Performance* refers to the pedagogical potential of letting participants find a temporary position in an open process, which through its being art constitutes a symbolic fissure in everyday life "coming together and coming apart."

5. *Exposure to togetherness* denotes the exposure of the participants to the *praxis* of being together but not necessarily doing a collaborative activity. In *The Hill*, it seems that often the children just played around while the artists were building, or sometimes someone was building while others drank coffee, and so on.

6. *Being*-in-*common* describes a way of being that un-works essentialist notions of community and opens up the fragile possibility of togetherness, of being "singular plural" in the sense of Nancy. In this way, I believe that being-*in*-common constitutes a possible alternative to a neo-liberal understanding of education.

Consequences for Art Teacher Certification Programs

Returning to the usefulness of this research for art teacher certification, the connection between pedagogy and community-based art lies not in working with existing communities; it lies in experimentation with creating new, ephemeral communities that open tenuous experiences of being-*in*-common. *The Hill* demonstrates the pedagogic potential of performative experimental community as an alternative to the narrowing of art education through the latest reforms in the Scandinavian countries. Below are three concrete examples of how I experiment with this pedagogic potential with student-teachers:

1. *As a general approach to teaching*, I understand the classroom from the perspective of performative experimental community. This approach enhances my focus on ways of interacting, helping me to be less eager to fulfill goals and more playful, albeit still respectful, in my approach. Also, performative experimental community helps me to be more attentive to subtle and impro-

vised forms of togetherness and to share with students my desire to look at our interactions the classroom as artistic interstice.

2. *As content*, I make art projects with students to explore the working of performative experimental community by establishing different forms of togetherness. For example, students choose to produce more or less subtle interventions in physical zones of the university like elevators, angles, or classrooms that eventually engage passersby.

3. *As a pedagogy for becoming art teachers*, I engage student-teachers in the idea that social relations can be considered as a material for art education and to work with the political insights of how this can be used pedagogically to question social realities. In particular, performative experimental community will be helpful for experimenting with non-essentialist forms of togetherness as a contrast to the self-opportunistic individualism promoted structurally by educational institutions bending to the demands of the competition state.

At a time when Scandinavian art teacher certification programs are challenged by market-driven reforms in new and pronounced ways, I hope that thinking and acting through the lens of performative experimental community can be of some inspiration for teacher trainers creating alternative approaches to art education. In spite of the difficulties we encounter, it is still possible to use "art" as a strategy to engage politically with education. Through the inspiration from collective art practices like *The Hill*, and through the engagement with concepts like performative experimental community, it is my hope that art education can be used as a symbolic place where teachers and students can experiment together with how to live our lives in more sustainable and collective ways than those offered by the neo-liberal competition state.

Notes

1. All translations from Danish to English in this paper are done by the author.

2. In 2006, Parfyme was Copenhagen-based. The members of the collective were Pelle Brage, Ebbe Dam Meinild, Laurids Sonne, Mathias Pharao, and Fabian Nitschkowsky. Today (March 2014) the group consists of four persons based in Copenhagen, Bergen, and New York. Their homepage (www.parfyme.dk) contains no names of the individual artists.

3. *TAKE A SEAT!* was produced by publik and curated by Christian Skovbjerg Jensen.

4. The site www.parfyme.dk is written in English by the artists of Parfyme, and all quotations are taken directly from this site.

5. According to Pelle Brage, one of the artists of Parfyme, the artists had no initial intention of making *The Hill* a project for children, but the children continued to stay around when they understood that the artists were willing to build something that they could use (personal communication, September 8, 2014).

6. Pelle Brage says he does not remember that the artists were talking about art with the children during the project (personal communication, September 8, 2014).

7. As one of her examples, Bishop (2012, pp. 16–17) mentions the curator Chales Esche's text on Tentaspin (2000) an Internet-based TV station for the elderly residents of a run-down tower block in Liverpool by the Danish collective Superflex, where he concludes that the project has enforced the sense of community in the building (Esche, 2001). Kwon (2004, Chapter 4) directs her most important critique toward the temporary exhibition program *Culture in Action. New Public Art in Chicago* (1993) curated by Mary Jane Jacobs and sponsored by the nonprofit public art organization Sculpture in Chicago.

8. Understanding performative experimental community as an *approach* means that I make the concept more abstract than it was before, by reducing it to the singular form and omitting the use of the (definite or indefinite) article. Quoting Olsson's (2009) review of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy, doing this is "not a question of being abstract for the sake of abstractedness itself; it is a question of being abstract enough so as to treat concrete everyday life in new and different ways" (p. 27). If performative experimental community shall function not only as yet another specific goal for art education, but as a condition for thinking art education at all, it needs to have a more abstract form.

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