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Multiculturalism and arts-based research *Themes in Finnish studies 1995-2006*

Finnish school system and teacher education

Characteristic of the Finnish educational system is that, similar to all Nordic countries, it is state regulated and free from expenses from pre-school to the university. Finnish children begin their school at the age of seven years. However, most of them have spent several years in kindergarten by that time or at least spent a preparatory year in pre-school preceding the actual school start. The new national curriculum for Finnish comprehensive schools (2004) lumps together art, music, handicrafts, and physical education and calls them *Arts and skills*. This curriculum area is allocated a minimum of five hours per week in grades 1-4 (children aged 7-10) and six hours in grades 5-9 (children aged 11-15). There is a forty-five minute lesson of visual arts per week for students in grades 1-6 taught by classroom teachers. In grades 7-9, visual art is taught by art specialists and is a compulsory 38-hour course with additional optional courses in some cases. One mandatory class, in both visual art and music, is required for upper secondary students aged 16-19. They also have a possibility for optional courses.

Unlike in the other Nordic countries, all teachers qualified for permanent positions in Finnish schools are required to hold master's degrees. Master's degrees in art education are offered by two universities in Finland. Minors or

courses in art studies for classroom teachers are included in class teacher education and offered by eleven departments of teacher education. At the University of Art and Design in Helsinki (UIAH), the six-year programme for art teachers includes studies in art and art education with associated studies in education at the University of Helsinki. The University of Lapland in Rovaniemi has offered a parallel program for 16 years now. Unfortunately the number of classes given by professional art teachers in comprehensive schools has been alarmingly cut down on during the last ten years. At the same time as classroom teachers get more responsibility for art education at elementary school, art studies in Finland's eleven teacher education programs are strongly reduced. Arts are usually taught by generalist classroom teachers whose education only includes approximately 135 hours of studies in visual art (more than half of this being individual readings). New teacher education programs offer a possibility for a classroom teacher to study an extra year and become a qualified art teacher for grades 1-9 (and for an art teacher to get the degree of a classroom teacher). However, so far only about ten classroom teacher students a year have been qualified for this double degree.

The reform concerning double degrees is connected to the ongoing process of standardizing European university degrees so that it is possible to continue from bachelor's level to master's level in all subjects taught at different universities. There are good and bad sides to this reform. In teacher education, the change reflects an idea of general transfer in the sense that a teacher is no longer assumed to need special age-dependent pedagogical skills. It also contains the misunderstanding that concepts and strategies of the disciplines underlying different school subjects would be similar or that a student could adopt them in a year. Teachers specialized in one subject are supposed to learn the strategies of all ten subjects that a classroom teacher teaches during a year. One solution to this dilemma has been offered by integration. The idea of integration is realized in the new Finnish core curriculum (2004) which decrees that in and between each school subject, holistic, integrative learning should take place within seven carefully defined thematic areas. However, interdisciplinarity is not an easy trick but a complex issue even between arts and skills subjects and it has to be studied carefully (Räsänen 2005, Puurula 1998).

The number of art classes in schools runs parallel with the changing professional titles of Finnish art educators reflecting paradigm shifts in the field. During the media revolution of the 1970s, we ceased being "teachers of drawing and handwriting" and became something that roughly translates as "teachers of imaging skills". In those days, art education in the Nordic countries was strongly influenced by the so-called polarizing method developed in Sweden, grounded in

semiotics that emphasized visual literacy (see Lindström in this publication). This is why Scandinavian art educators understand teaching “visual culture” as self-evident. For instance, producing and analyzing photographs and movies has been part of the Finnish art curriculum for thirty years. Also, contextualization through art history and media analysis has been included in the Finnish art curriculum since the 1970s. (See Räsänen 2005, Pohjakallio 1998.) However, it has presently been suggested that the current name of the school subject *Visual arts* should be changed into *Visual culture*. This has been proposed especially by those of us who were disappointed as the professional title adopted in the 1970s was changed into “visual arts teachers” in 1994 and felt that the emphasis shifted towards “fine arts”. Even though most art educators in Finland implement the open, postmodern art concept, many of them are afraid that the title adopted in 1994 puts too much emphasis on the receptive side of art teaching.

Research programmes and networks

The former College of Industrial Arts was admitted university status in 1973. During the last quarter of a century, approximately 30 master theses each year have been written at the School of Art Education (previously called Department of Art Education) at the University of Art and Design Helsinki. The amount of MA theses doubled as the art teacher program was started in 1990 in the Faculty of Art and Design at the University of Lapland. Most of the postgraduate research reports published in art education in Finland are dissertations written at these two universities training art teachers. The structure of the doctoral program at the UIAH and Lapland is similar, following the model of other Finnish universities. Approximately one year of full-time study of classes in theory and research methods of art education is required. After introductory seminars doctoral students often continue their work as members of more focused research groups.

While researchers at the University of Art and Design Helsinki or University of Lapland seldom have art theoretical background, the case is different with the research done at the University of Jyväskylä, Department of Art and Culture Studies which has a theoretical program in arts education (see Sederholm 1998, Pääjoki 2004). Similarly to the Swedish system with no doctoral degrees in art education, some postgraduate research with educational emphasis is also done in departments of teacher education (see Karvinen 2004, Kallio 2005). A number of master-level theses are submitted in each of them every year, too. The first Finnish dissertation on art education by Inkeri Sava

(1981) also was completed at the faculty of education at the University of Helsinki. (See also Saarnivaara 1993.)

Typical of Finnish postgraduate students is that beside research they have a full time job. This usually means that the approximate time to complete doctoral studies is often (against all recommendations) 10 years. Only a few students get research grants; these students usually belong to some research group financed by the Academy of Finland. One example of this kind of state-supported research was the graduate school *Multicultural art education* organized by UIAH 1999-2002. Ten doctoral students from Finnish art universities got 1-3 –year grants for study in this “consortium”. An action research project called *Art education in a multicultural context (Taikomo 1997-2000)* by researchers from art universities and the city of Helsinki, was executed within the graduate school. This educational development work was carried out in the lower grades of a school with a multicultural emphasis. (Sava 2001) Another team of action researchers at the graduate school participated in a project called *Images and identities (1999-2003)*. They investigated visual arts education in comprehensive and upper secondary education and in folk high schools, teacher training universities and museums in Finland. The main research question of the group was how educators in these institutions understand the role of art education in their professional identity. The group was also interested in how beginning and experienced teachers of visual arts were adapting to the new role of a cultural worker while simultaneously functioning as teachers, artists, and researchers. (Räsänen 2005)

Because of the young age of the discipline and the need of PhD-level art educators at Finnish universities, doctors of arts have been drawn into the everyday university work with very few possibilities for research work. One exception is the research project *Expressive artistic activities and self-understanding of children from immigrant and adverse social background (Syreeni 2001-2003)*, which was a continuation of the research project *Taikomo*. *Syreeni* continued as part of the national multidisciplinary research programme on marginalisation, inequality and ethnic relations. The general aim of the project was to intertwine expressive artistic activities and the phenomena of ethnicity, diversity, social class adversities and being obliged to be an outsider in the culture. The project followed the action research model and took children's life narratives as the starting point for expressive activities. (Bardy et al. 2004)

The most recent research project at the University of Art and Design Helsinki funded by the Academy of Finland is called *Artistically based experiences in art education and teaching (Artbeat 2007-2009)*. In this research project, the artistic process is studied as part of an art educational activity, and

the role of contemporary artistic features in teaching is investigated. A commonly asked question is if contemporary artistic activities can be useful as interdisciplinary agents for teaching both in art schools and in general education. The composition of the research group is in line with the recommendations of the Academy of Finland, i.e., in addition to six students at UIAH and other Finnish universities, the group has three international students from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The research project is connected to the network *BaltArt* started at the School of Art Education in 2004. The aim of the network is to link together art institutions and individuals in different cities around the Baltic Sea. Corresponding international cooperation is going on between countries in Northern Europe organised by the University of Lapland. In addition to specified networks, the University of Art and Design in Helsinki has a large population of international students, five of them doing their doctoral studies at the School of Art Education. The school also has invited visiting professors from U.S. universities since 1987. Harlan Hoffa, Arthur Efland, Elizabeth Garber, Patricia Stuhr and Karen Keifer-Boyd each have taught a semester at the UIAH. The graduate school *Multicultural art education* also arranged several seminar series with international teachers like Arthur Bochner and Carolyn Ellis (narrative research methods) and Patti Lather (feminist research methods).

The roots of cooperation between Nordic researchers in art education can be tracked down to the yearly summer courses for art teachers that the Nordic countries have taken turns to organise for 40 years now. Although these courses have a practical emphasis, new research has also been introduced during them. At the official level, research cooperation between the Nordic countries was first realized through the Network of Nordic Researchers in Visual Arts Education during the years 1994-1997. Four “summer schools” for doctoral students were organized with the support of the Nordic Academy for Advanced Study (NorFA). The theme of the first week-long research seminar was called *Art, cognition and curriculum* and it was organized in Bräkne-Hoby, Sweden, in 1994, with Arthur Efland and Judith Smith-Koroscik as guest lecturers. The next workshop for Nordic researchers in visual art education was held in Helsinki, Finland, in 1995. The summer 1996 a symposium on *Traditions and methods in visual arts education* took place in Tisvildeleje, Denmark, with Brent Wilson as the keynote speaker. Another research course was held that summer in Ronneby, Sweden, on the theme *Intelligence, creativity and curriculum*, chaired by Howard Gardner. The following summer’s symposium *The cultural context: Comparative studies of art education and children’s drawings* took place in Vilnius, Lithuania. (See Lindström 1998, 2000.)

In addition, congresses of the International Society for Education through

Art (InSEA) in Stockholm 1988, Helsinki 1992 and the *InSEA on Sea* congress 2003 organized cooperatively by Finland, Sweden and Estonia have been signposts of Nordic research. Presently, the cooperation seems to have slowed down, with some individual researchers working on reports like *Nordic research in visual arts education in museums and galleries* (Illeris 2004) and this publication. In addition to the InSEA congresses, meeting researchers in the congresses of the Association for Teacher Educators in Europe (ATEE) and the European Educational Research Association (EERA) have been important as opportunities for the Finns to position themselves in the international research community. The special interest group of aesthetic education in the Nordic Educational Research Association (NERA) has also offered a site for art educators to exchange ideas. Proceedings of these conferences are often important documents of research exchange even though articles in them are not included in the Finnish bibliography (Chapter xx) because of their un-refereed nature. At the national level, researchers in art education have attended the yearly meetings of the Finnish Educational Research Association and in the Symposium of Research in Didactic Studies. Also, research seminars arranged by art universities, especially the annual seminar on research methodology at the University of Lapland have been important for the development of the field (see Tuominen & Kurki 2001).

Methods of Finnish postgraduate studies

Although studies at the postgraduate level have been formally possible at the University of Art and Design Helsinki as long as for a quarter of a century, the altogether twelve dissertations in art education have been defended during the ten-year period covered by this report. Two doctoral degrees have been earned at the University of Lapland, which started its program in art education in 1990. Fourteen researchers have defended a “little dissertation” at the UIAH and two in Lapland, thus earning a licentiate’s degree, which is an academic degree between the master and doctoral levels (an individual holding a doctorate from an art university is called Doctor of Arts, DA). The first postgraduate examination at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki was taken in the Department of Art Education, and it was the licentiate thesis of Ulla Hosia (1988). Four more licentiate theses (Seitamaa-Oravala 1990, Mantere 1991, Ovaska-Airasmaa 1992, Räsänen 1993) were published before the first dissertation was defended (Räsänen 1997). It has not been possible to earn a licentiate at the UIAH after 1999, but this degree is still admitted at other

universities (five of them are connected to art education and included in the Finnish bibliography). In addition to the doctoral studies completed in art education departments, some related research is done also at the other Finnish universities (ten such items are included in the bibliography, most of them originate in the faculties of education).

The very first years of the doctoral program in the Department of Art Education at the University of Art and Design Helsinki were influenced by research done in the former Soviet Union and West Germany. The shift to Anglo American theories took place at the end of the 80s. If we look at the research during this quarter of a century from the perspective of paradigm shifts (Kuhn 1962), we can see that the knowledge interest in the Finnish research on art education, similar to educational research in general (Habermas 1971), has turned from prediction to understanding and emancipation. This has meant the rise of interpretative, constructivist and phenomenological hermeneutic paradigms. Methodologically, the research projects in Finland carried out to date have placed emphasis on the last mentioned paradigm. The influence of critical traditions, such as participatory action research, feminism and other postmodern phenomena, can be recognized as well.

If we describe Finnish research in art and education using Kuhnian terminology, we can say that during the 1990s, there has been a battle going on in the research community between the more traditional methods and arts-based research. Some scholars have wanted to see so called artistic research not only as a new methodology but considered it as a new paradigm. According to Lather (1992), we are living in a post-paradigmatic world ruled by deconstructive approaches and different post-phenomena. As Lather suggests, Kuhn's conception of paradigm shifts should be abandoned and the research world should be seen as a field of constant paradigm wars with no winners. Instead of speaking about a new victorious paradigm, a more fruitful way to look at post-positivist research is to see it as cross-disciplinary fertilization of ideas. Thinking this way, artistic research could be placed on the margins of the paradigm map and see that it both borrows from other methods and has an influence on them.

The Finnish debate about artistic research has been going on in parallel with - and very often without noticing - the North-American discussion about arts-based research. Ever since Elliot Eisner's (1991) pioneering writings about connections between art and science, discussion about arts-based methods has become world-wide and the methods have also become accepted in the field of educational research (see Barone and Eisner 1997, Diamond et al. 1999). The American Educational Research Association (AERA) has housed an Arts-Based Educational Research (ABER) special group for 11 years. There is also a

network of researchers in the field located at the University of Toronto by the name of the Center for Arts-Informed Research (CAIR). As Tom Barone (2006) summarizes, alternate labels of the Eisnerian-style arts-based research suggested are aesthetically-based research, a/r/tography, image-based research, arts-inspired research, practice-based research or arts practice as research.

At the Finnish art universities, arts-emphasized dissertations have been possible for over twenty years now; so far a doctoral work still has to include a theoretical part. The first doctors to include an artistic part (concert) in their dissertation came from the Sibelius Academy and the first “artistic” research report in visual arts was published ten years ago at the University of Art and Design Helsinki (Eskola 1997). Since then, almost all dissertations at the School of Art Education at the UIAH have at least commented on artistic research, and arts-based methods using visuals as data and as a form of investigation and reporting are broadly utilized in studies in process. Close to these methods are studies using narrative approaches where the written form of the report often turns into a verbal work of art (Nelimarkka 2001). In her thesis, Krappala (1999) opens an insight to contemporary art by dissolving barriers between fiction and facts. The form of a research report has also been challenged by presenting results of the research process in an exhibition (Pullinen 2003) or publishing artistic research data and/or results on cd-roms (Paatela-Nieminen 2000, Kankkunen 2004, Ulkuniemi 2005). Several books about artistic research in general (Kiljunen & Hannula 2002) and arts-based research in art education have been published. In his book of the philosophy of science, Varto (2000) has used art education as an example of how a new discipline is formed (see also Varto *et al.* 2003).

Themes of Finnish postgraduate studies

Visual culture can be seen as kind of a meta-concept for all kinds of images and visual material dealt with in art education as suggested by the promoters of visual culture education (VCAE). In his draft of a knowledge base of research in visual arts education (Figure 2 in this publication), Lindström uses the concepts *visual culture* and *visual communication* as counter-poles corresponding to **responding to and producing art**. Seen from the point of view of Finnish traditions of art teaching, *skills and procedures in making art* is also a central research category. In teaching, this includes emphasis on productive activities and views of art practice as research (Sullivan 2005) and is thus related to artistic research methods. One example of artists as researchers is the case of Lea

and Pekka Kantonen (1999). The book about their artistic and art educational projects is a polyphonic narration of their journeys to three cultures. This category also contains the research of artistic learning processes investigated in dissertations about artists' works. In her study, Granö (2000) explores three artists' childhood images. Based on her interviews, Granö collected an exhibition of the artists' works. Interviewing has also been used in two licentiate theses about contemporary Finnish artists. Piironen (1998) looks at the connections between art and play and Trygg (1999) is in search of the fascination of a photograph. Krappala's (1999) study is about the artistic process of a male photographer seen from the feminist perspective. Researchers have also analyzed their own creative processes as artists. Pullinen (2003) has carried out a visual dialogue with Albrecht Durer by circulating his works in his own production. Nelimarkka (2001) transformed her artworks into a philosophic and fictional text.

Visual culture was the main "paradigm" of Finnish art education during the 1970s. Notwithstanding this - or maybe because of it - only a few researchers have been interested in the area before the new "boom" of visual culture in the 2000s. The first academic study of the theme is Manninen's (1995) dissertation on the different meanings of cartoons as a hobby and a tool of resistance. Another work that belongs under the related titles *picture analysis* and *visual literacy* is Ulkuniemi's study (2005) of family photography. Paatela-Nieminen (2000) approaches child culture intertextually from the point of view of book illustrations. In her research report published in the form of a cd-rom, Paatela-Nieminen focuses on cultural differences of the illustrations in *Alice in Wonderland*. Beyond this, *child* and *youth study* do not have many representatives in Finland. Outinen (1995) is the only one who has studied children's drawings. There is no research on young children's art education after Ovaska-Airasmaa's (1992) and Kuosmanen's (1994) licentiate theses. Rusanen's (2006) manuscript for a dissertation about early childhood art education and kindergarten teacher student's professional identities will be defended during the summer of 2007.

In Finnish art education, **multiculturalism** (and identity issues in a broader sense) can be distinguished as its own research category. Cultural studies have been the contextual reference of several studies done in Finland during the last ten years. Many studies have their roots in the postmodern concept of culture and the methods developed in cultural studies have been broadly applied. As part of multiculturalism, Kankkunen (2004) looks at the "gender play" in art education through the lens of feminism. Her research report is a cd-rom where theoretical groundings wind up with rich visual school-

ethnographic material. Kantonen (2005) is an artist whose dissertation about art workshops for youngsters in four different cultures is a mixture of social and multicultural issues.

Multicultural issues have been looked at both as intercultural practices and textual discourses. **Discourse analysis** has also been used to see the way art teachers ground their work. Rantala's (2001) perspective to the field comes from sociology. She relates written documents of the field to the ways students in art schools for children and youth (a wide-spread after-school system) talk about art. In her licentiate thesis, Pääjoki (1998) used discourse analysis to study different conceptions of art education, especially the DBAE-movement. In her dissertation (2004), she focuses on how multiculturalism is approached in different fields of arts education. Apuli-Suuronen (1999) uses discourse analytical tools when comparing written documents of Finnish and Swedish upper secondary school art curricula in her research, which is the only study in Finland related to the category of *arts education policy*. Discourse analysis is also used in Pohjakallio's (2005) dissertation of the changing justifications for art education between 1945-1990. Her study is based on biographical interviews and it is a part of a larger research project on the *history of Finnish art education*. Another work related to this field is Mäkelä's (2002) licentiate thesis about the Finnish folk-school teacher training seminars in the years 1899-1945.

Art appreciation is an example of an area where different research categories overlap. Because this concept has its connections to the field of aesthetics and museum education, *art understanding* is a more proper word to describe the first dissertation study of the Department of Art Education at the UIAH. In her thesis, Räsänen (1997) builds bridges between different approaches in art education and develops a constructivist-experiential framework for *picture analysis* as a tool for identity construction. Her main idea is to find connections between the cultures in and beyond the artwork by contextualizing its viewer and maker. Räsänen's description of aesthetic development has connections to *child study* and her discussion about visual conceptualization refers to *theories of learning and meaning making*. Similarly to Räsänen, Merta (2006) emphasizes the role of productive activities as a tool for understanding art and self while portraying elementary teacher students. Parallel to the analysis of students' art interpretation following Räsänen's "model" of picture analysis, Merta describes his own *processes of art making*. Picture analysis has obvious connections to art criticism and often also to discourse analysis.

A more direct connection to art appreciation in its aesthetic meaning is seen in Viitanen's (1998) research about the art preferences of elementary school

students. Art appreciation is also the goal of Issakainen's (2004) study of *museum education*, where she discusses information networks as a channel of mediating art and describes cooperation between one school and a museum. Another project aimed at connecting schools and museums is described in the licentiate thesis of Bilund and Svahn-Kumpulainen (2005). A historical view to art museum education can be found in Suominen's (1998) licentiate thesis about Alfred Lichtwark.

An important issue related to Finnish research in art education (as well as educational research in general) is the relationship between research and practice. Dissertations connected to the **school practices** are the sites where research categories emphasizing *visual arts* or *education* meet. Both action research and methods related to it have been used in Finland, with researchers also working as teachers. Action research has been connected to critical pedagogy and "artistic action research" has been discussed (see Räsänen 2005). More ethnographically orientated methods have been used in the studies of Kankkunen (2004) and Kantonen (2005). Both Räsänen's (1997) and Viitanen's (1998) dissertations about art interpretation have strong connections to school practices. So does Karvinen's (2004) study about arts and interdisciplinarity at elementary level which is also an example of *education through art*. In her licentiate thesis, Forsman (1997) searches practical tools for classroom teachers to promote visual thinking through instructional discussions. *Educational assessment* is approached in two licentiate theses. Grönholm (1999) describes one portfolio process and Raevaara (1999) interviews students and teachers participating in group critiques in fine art classes at the UIAH.

Contemporary art theories and issues of **philosophy of art education** have been vividly discussed among Finnish art scholars during the period of this report (see Varto 1996, 2003). However, philosophy is the theoretical background only in Kallio's thesis (2005) on the significance of the image in educational context. In her licentiate thesis, Miettinen (1998) discusses aesthetic education and the meaning of art in personal development. Laitinen (2003) puts the issue into school practice by studying the possibilities of visual art education in backing up the youth's aesthetical and ethical thinking. *Theories of learning and meaning making* in Finnish research in art education very much touch upon the issues of postmodern *art theory*. Empowering environmental art is the framework of Hannula's (2002) licentiate thesis. Karppinen (2005) makes conceptual analysis of basic crafts education by asking what art makes of crafts. Sederholm (1998) studies the ways to approach experiential and social modes of contemporary art. Her work has connections to integration and *multimodal teaching and learning* in arts education.

Looking towards the future

Seeing Finnish studies in art education (both at master's and doctoral levels) in relation to Lindström's knowledge base of visual arts education, it is easy to fill most of its categories. Some concepts used by Bresler (2006) in her handbook of research in arts education serve as useful subtitles when looking at the Finnish research in progress (see also Eisner & Day 2004). For example, *informal art education* is an area which becomes visible. At the School of Art Education at the UIAH, *social issues* are approached in ongoing studies about art's role in social and health care, art education with old people, with bed patients and with children suffering from dysphasia. Painting as a matter of inquiry is studied through a dialogue between a researcher and a person with autism. Perhaps *technology* as an important contemporary aspect of skills and procedures in making art might deserve its own subtitle, too. The calls for virtual learning environments in art education are discussed in three Finnish studies in progress. There is also an ongoing study focused on process learning in www-based media education. One doctoral student approaches the switchover from analogical to digital photography through a globally shared process of making "solargraphs" with lensless cameras.

A category that is necessary for Finnish research in art education is **environmental education**. It has been a central part of our curriculum since the 1970's. Environmental education (including nature and environmental art as well as design of everyday objects and architecture) is an interdisciplinary but still independent area connected to contemporary theories of art and culture (see Mantere 1995). There is a strong emphasis on environmental and community-based art education at the University of Lapland. Both Mirja Hiltunen's (1999) licentiate thesis and Anne Keskitalo's (2006) dissertation have their focus on environment and contemporary art. In her doctoral study, Keskitalo (2006) transforms the experience of travelling to her own work of art and relates it to school practices. Of the thirteen dissertations in progress, three have their roots in the general emphasis on environment and community in the department. Another stream in Rovaniemi is characterized by visual culture. Seija Ulkuniemi's licentiate thesis (1988) and dissertation (2005) are about the genre of family photographs. In addition to the theoretical part, this study includes interviews in the exhibitions of the researcher's photos. Four dissertations in progress at the University of Lapland belong to the category of visual culture, three studies deal with artistic processes and one with art teachers' biographies.

One researcher looks at art schools for children and youth from the boys' perspective. Finally, postmodern discourse is examined through texts dealing with education of art. (See www.ulapland.fi)

The category of environmental education cannot be separated from the context of **contemporary art**, which seems to be the starting point of the majority of studies in progress at the School of Art Education at the UIAH. Three foreign doctoral students at the University of Art and Design Helsinki have environmental education as their research area. One student investigates playful and performative aesthetic elements in the environment and another one looks at the epistemological foundations of art-based environmental education through ethnographically informed inquiry. Places in contemporary Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian art are studied by one student. Environment and contemporary art are connected also in a study about the environmental art of contemporary outsider artists. Art theoretical emphasis can be recognized in topics such as situating meanings of portraits, painting as a reflection of a worldview or an artist's ideals. The roles of a viewer in contemporary art exhibitions and family workshops are studied. One student wants to develop postmodern art in East Africa through the use of material culture. Postmodern breaking of boundaries continues in studies about aesthetic preferences in *design education* and about the identities of craft teacher students. Bridges between arts and crafts are discussed in a study about artefacts as tools of being in the world. Also, curricula for design education and international cooperation of vocational craft education are studied.

Multicultural issues continue to be the area of several studies in progress. A student from Turkey is asking how architectural planning of Helsinki takes the cultural diversity of people's everyday life and needs into account. The meaning of pre-defined form as a tool for skill and character development in studying traditional Japanese arts is studied from a Finnish perspective. In her case study, another Finnish woman studies the frontiers of her identities and differently signifying aesthetic processes in Africa and Finland. One research project in progress is entitled "The significant other: postcolonial transgression". Gender issues are focused on in a study about art education and boys. The taboos of sexual divergences in art education are approached in a comparative study of the themes of young people's visual expression in Finland and Estonia. A doctoral student looks at masculinity in painting while another one focuses on femininity in women's three-dimensional works.

School practices seem to have a minor role in the Finnish research in art education in progress. Strategies for integration are approached through musical means in upper secondary school art education and dialogical forms of

interaction in art learning in a folk high school are studied. The subject of one doctoral study is portfolio assessment at the comprehensive level. Obvious and explicit connections to school practices are evident in a historical study about the elementary school trainee teachers' art education in the years 1900-1940, and in a thesis about an artist-teacher Aleksanteri Ahola-Valo. Autobiographical narratives and life history interviews are used in a study about Finnish art teachers' professional identity. Another study is focusing on the art teachers' conceptions of art.

In this article, I have loosely applied Lindström's categorization of the knowledge base of research in visual arts education. A methodological angle of approach to the field from the Finnish point of view shows that the first refinement needed in Lindström's rough categorization of research approaches (see Figure 1) is the subtitle **arts-based research**. This is very clear especially when we look at the studies in progress at the University of Art and Design Helsinki (see www.uiah.fi). At least six dissertations in progress belong to the subcategory *artists as researchers of their own work*. Also, there are some art educational projects in progress that are executed by artists as researchers. In these studies like in other artists' projects, research results are introduced in art exhibitions. This has been the case for example in the baking performances realized with children in South Africa and Finland. Children's artwork also becomes part of the teacher-researcher's art production in a study where students' visual interpretations of Brueghel's paintings are used as a basis for the artist's own artwork.

Comments and dilemmas on the Finnish bibliography

It is possible to characterize the research done at the School of Art Education at the University of Art and Design Helsinki as artistic research defined by identity issues seen from a multicultural perspective in its broad meaning. From the point of view of education, research in art education has very much followed the constructivist mainstream of Finnish educational research with some ideas of critical pedagogy. At the University of Lapland, several environmental and community-based art education projects have been conducted together with people living in the actual site of the project and art education students, schools and other institutions. These projects carried out in the northern socio-cultural environment have usually been documented and some feedback is collected, but the "results" of these researches-in-action have not always been consistently reported and the arts-based methods used in them are seldom explicated. Because of the artistic nature of the projects, they have not been documented in a manner that meets the requirements of a research report. This is one of the

problematic issues of artistic inquiry and arts-informed research: because their results do not always meet the rhetoric of the mainstream research community they often remain unnoticed.

Some earlier research in the field deals with the same problematic issues. For instance, some of the pioneers of Finnish research in art education are not included in the lists of research reports because their writings do not belong to the genre of academic writing. However, for example Antero Salminen's (2005) texts about perception and artistic development and Maria Laukka's (2003) research of child culture, especially of illustrations in children's books, have been significant for the Finnish research in art education. So has the experimental work done in art schools for children and youth that has been going on since the end of the 1980s when the system was established (see Hassi *et al.* 1998). Very few projects of these schools and to those executed in cultural centres for children have been documented (see Granö *et al.* 2006). It is sometimes difficult to see the boundary between investigative journalism, art criticism, essayist writing and arts-based research. I hope that the classification of Finnish research bibliography does justice to various forms and levels of research reporting, also beyond the established, authorized system.

A number of research articles are published in *Finnish professional journals*. The Association of Art Teachers is the oldest professional association in Finland and it has been publishing the journal *Stylus* for a hundred years now. Some of the articles are written in Swedish, the second official language of Finland. During its history, the articles in the journal have included discussions about the foundations and place of art education in our country. The majority of articles in the *Stylus* discuss the field using practical examples. Projects executed in museums and other cultural institutions are introduced too. The journal also includes interviews, book reviews and reports from international congresses. Only recently have more research-based articles been published; research done in art education departments in Helsinki and Rovaniemi has been introduced in special editions by the universities. Some earlier research articles in art education have been published in the Journal of Educational Research Association *Kasvatus* and in the Journal of Youth Research *Nuorisotutkimus*.

Due to their practical nature, only a few articles in the presently biannual *Stylus* have been included in the Finnish bibliography. Several research articles on the list are from the research journal *Synnyt / Origins* published four times a year on the Internet by the School of Art Education at the UIAH (<http://arted.uiah.fi/synnyt/indexeng.html>). The principal writers and target group of *Origins* are doctoral students in art education, but the aim of the journal is to act as a bridge between academic research and art educational practices.

However, the area of discussion in the journal has broadened from visual arts to other art forms like theatre and literature, often having an art theoretical and philosophical emphasis. Doctoral research in progress is introduced in the *Origins* (some of it written in English), which also makes it a meeting point of Finnish and foreign doctoral students, especially those connected to the *BaltArt* network.

The selection and categorization of articles and reports in the Finnish list of research in art education are of course my personal choices, although I have tried to be “objective” in the sense that an invitation to send information about their studies was sent to all Finnish art educators working at university level. One of the choices I made was to exclude from my list all research related to *theory and history of art, media and design* done outside art universities. Research in media education is included only if it relates directly to the categories of picture analysis and visual culture. My position as a writer of this article is that of an art teacher and researcher. The practice of art making forms the background of my professional identity. After teaching art at secondary and upper secondary levels I have been working 17 years as a lecturer and researcher at the School of Art Education at the UIAH. The last five years at the University of Turku have turned my perspective to classroom student teachers’ art education even though my emphasis still is on the substance of visual arts. In a sense this article is a memo or a narrative of a person who has belonged to the Finnish community of research in art education as long as it has existed and who is curious to see what the future will bring with it.

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