Walking with the Trouble: Exploring More-Than-Humanness Through Playful 'Walk-Shops'

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ABSTRACT

How can humans transcend their human perceptions and explore more-than-human experiences in arts education events? This question was explored in an iterative process of playful arts-based workshops rooted in posthumanism. Two workshops were organized as 'walk-shops' in the local environment and involved various approaches to engage with more-than-human experiences. Each walk-shop evolved from an affirmative response to a previous workshop experience. The paper discusses how these playful continuations can fuel radical imagination and transformation. We argue that workshops can develop iteratively when one actively pays attention to the situated possibilities within the context of the arts education event.

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Prologue: The Trigger Event

The stage of the event is elevated and well-lit. The panelists are introduced as professors and lecturers. The two moderators introduce themselves as The Wolf and The Fox Lady, the latter sporting a fox tail on her belt. *(Who was the fox that the tail once was a part of?).*

Explorative Talks is a stage for interdisciplinary discussions pairing academics, artists, and business representatives coming together in unanticipated constellations. On this occasion, which we attend from an audience position, the specific task given to the invited academics is to use imagination to move beyond conventional ways of thinking. For this purpose, the panelists step into the role of different animals – a horse, a whale, a rabbit, and an elephant – wearing hats featuring various ears and noses.

> *A play. To play. To be playful... like the little child that, with cat-like softness, drops to its knees, saying, "Now I am a cat?" "Come now! We must hurry," says a parent. The cat carefully licks its paw. There is no hurry...*

Their minds roam free, they elaborate verbally and speak with elegance. But was it boundary-breaking? Disrupting conventional patterns of thinking? The participants in the conversation did not quite manage to let go, to play, to embody something more-than-human. Whatever that means.

> *...like the little child that, with cat-like softness, drops to its knees...*

There is a slight opening into more-than-human sensibilities when the elephant shares how they have been plundered for tusks and tears, forced into painful antics for human entertainment. It spoke of suffering. Of pain. An opening. But there could be more.

> *Play. The possibilities of imagination; understanding that something can be different. I am you, you are me? I am the soil, a tree, an animal, a mite...*

Part I: Situating the Study

Introduction

The human perspective has long been the central focus of arts education, with creative expression often perceived as an extension of human consciousness. Zollinger and colleagues (2022) argue that "Members and institutions of dominant Western/ized cultures think, act, make policy, and create structures as if the endeavors of learning and teaching are solely human undertakings" (p. 25). Yet, there exist compelling arguments to challenge this conventional human-centered understanding of arts education. Various posthuman scholarship offers a paradigm shift away from human exceptionalism. A central idea in posthuman theories is that humans exist in a complex web of relationships with the more-than-human world, including animals, ecosystems, and technology (Braidotti, 2019; Frost, 2016; Haraway, 2016;). For education, it means that anthropocentrism, the idea that humans see themselves as the center of the world, imposes a perspective on knowledge that views relationships solely between humans (Ceder, 2019). The posthuman lens allows us to reconsider the boundaries between humans and non-humans, thus opening up a world of possibilities in arts education (Berglin & Eriksson, 2019; jagodzinski, 2020). Based on the issue of anthropocentrism permeating educational institutions, Zollinger and colleagues explore the relationship between pedagogy and the more-than-human with the use of "art, collaboration and play" (p. 26). As a concept, anthropocentrism is debated, as some argue the term hides the fact that all humans do not participate in anthropocentric activities such as climate destruction (Demos, 2017). But as situated in a capitalist Western art and education context, the concept can help us to illuminate and challenge the anthropocentric practices this field is involved with.

Based on the experience of being in the audience of the trigger event, as described in the prologue, the authors of this paper set out to explore more-than-humanness through the practice of workshops in arts education contexts. We explored an approach to workshops that through playfulness shift away from anthropocentrism to a more profound understanding of becoming with a more-than-human world. This paper aims to study the iterative process of planning and performing two arts education workshops with an interest in exploring more-than-human experiences. The workshops

were held in two distinct contexts: one at an art institution and the other at an arts university. As we wanted to challenge a conversation-focused setup, as experienced in the trigger event, the workshops were organized as walks in the local environment. This approach, which we refer to as *walk-shops*, offered a novel lens through which to engage with embodied experiences. We also explored an *affirmative iterative* approach, a concept introduced as a fusion of the two terms 'iterations' and 'affirmative critique'. The concept was used to translate the critique of a past event into productive planning and performance of a new event. In the prologue and description of the walk-shops, the text considers aspects such as intuition, affectivity, embodiment, and attention to detail through a playful writing style.

The paper consists of three distinct parts. In this first part, we situate the study in a research context and outline its theoretical and methodological foundations. Part II consists of a presentation of the two walk-shops. Finally, Part III takes a closer look at the walk-shops through analytical discussions on more-than-humanness, playfulness, situatedness, and affirmative iterations.

Workshops, Walking, and Arts Education

Workshops are a creative, participatory, and process-based methodology employed in art education research and art education in general (Gude, 2013; Klinkner & Widmeier, 2019). They serve as a space for immersive exploration and facilitate a collaborative environment where educators, students, and researchers can exchange ideas, share experiences, and collectively generate new insights. One key aspect of using workshops in art education research is the emphasis on hands-on, experiential learning (Forsler, 2021). Further, the interactive nature of workshops allows for the exploration of diverse perspectives and the co-creation of knowledge. Workshops in art education research also provide a space for refining and testing pedagogical approaches.

Workshops can be seen as an educational event that productively blurs the distinction between education and art, creating a dynamic situation that allows us to embrace the playful aspects of the walk-shops. That is, we were not limiting ourselves to certain educational frameworks, teacher ideals, and learning paradigms. This idea is consistent with Hammoor's perspective (2019), which emphasizes

that physical interventions, artistic responses, and collaborative efforts are crucial in a playful, diffractive approach to teaching. Hammoor encourages a messy and inquiry-driven, performance-based process in collaborations, moving away from a linear style of teaching that reinforces fixed ideas. Workshops can be used to move participants away from rationality and thinking towards exploring new ways of engaging with their bodies and the space. These are approaches used in performative art practices, for example in the field of socially engaged and participatory art (Sholette, 2018; Thompson, 2012). The walk-shops of this study took place in different art education settings and can be seen as participatory art. In this context, we view the walk-shops as staged situations for collective experiences.

What primarily differentiates our walk-shops from workshops is the walking aspect of the event. Springgay and Truman (2018) have, inspired by posthuman scholars, developed walking research approaches engaging with a more-than-human world. They engaged in walking events through an approach of research-creation which places the investigative process at the fore. Having a collaborative approach, the walking events engage with artists, researchers, and other collaborators. They identified four aspects of relevance for understanding walking methodologies: place, sensory inquiry, embodiment, and rhythm.

Situating the Walk-Shops

Based on experiences from the trigger event presented in the prologue, we planned and performed two walk-shops. Grounded in the local contexts and inspired by the possibilities that art spaces offer, the walk-shops were designed to facilitate a playful engagement with the world, embracing human and non-human entanglements. A central component was walking; thus, we coined the term 'walk-shop'. The two walk-shops took place in different contexts which we will present next.

Index is an art institution known for its collaborative learning programs, activities, and research processes. The authors were invited to facilitate a workshop as part of a three-day seminar titled *The Urge, The Echo*, aimed at developing knowledge about learning and pedagogy in contemporary art. It was intended for teachers, artists, theorists, students, writers, and cultural critics with the explicit goal of breaking away from a conventional

seminar format and instead embracing practices, such as workshops, where participants are teaching and learning reciprocally. Index is nestled between two four-story residential buildings and in front of the institution there is a small garden between the buildings.

The arts university, where we both work, hosts a research week each year. Our workshop was part of a "node", a parallel track, on the theme *With Animals*, which was fueled by posthuman thinking and led by the ambition not to learn *about* animals but *with* animals. The approximately ten participants who signed up for the workshop were master's program students, university teachers, and researchers. The arts university is housed in a former factory building characterized by ample natural light, long corridors, white walls, and a diverse array of spaces.

Each of the two walk-shops was introduced by presenting the experiences that led to the present walk-shop, that is, the trigger event and the first walk-shop. We communicated the posthuman intention of the workshop, wanting to encourage participants to engage in an exploration of how we can break away from, or grow beyond, anthropocentric habits. The main activity, walking, differed between the two walk-shops – walking as a specific animal respectively walking as a landscape for a microscopic animal – and will be presented in Part II. We ended the walk-shops with a reflective writing exercise. We ended the walk-shop through collective storytelling; someone began reading a sentence from their text, and then participants spontaneously filled in with snippets from their reflections. These storytelling moments were captured simultaneously in writing and will be transformed into illustrations in Part II.

The empirical material consists of documentation from the planning of the walk-shops, teaching materials, and field notes produced after the walk-shops. Hence, we study the walk-shops from a planning/teaching/artist perspective, rather than from a student or participant perspective. However, as we participated in the organized walks, the field notes also consisted of the authors' own embodied experiences of challenging more-than-humanness. The analysis in Part III introduces a few sections of central ideas that evolved through the two authors' analytical discussions and readings of theory and previous research in the field.

Affirmative Iterations

Through the process, two concepts emerged as central to understanding our methodological practice: iterations and affirmative critique. These were fused into *affirmative iterations*, which we introduce here as a concept for understanding a planning process of situated arts education workshops. In exploring affirmative iterations, we cultivate an affirmative approach to the concept of iterations, delving into the intricate interconnection between each event or action and its organic evolution from the preceding one.

Iteration is a concept derived from action research that implies that interventions in a practice that is repeated in cycles of planning, action, and reflection (cf. Casey & Coghlan, 2021). In traditional action research, the primary focus is often on problem-solving and the identification of areas that require improvement (Rönnerman, 2004). In a broader sense, iterative cycles can also be applied to an artistic process working with process-based or performative work as participant-based art such as our walk-shops. In these, the walk-shop setup is adjusted to improve the work but is also adjusted as a result of situated circumstances related to for example place, room, and participants. These circumstances distinguish the arts-based and situated approach from conventional action research.

To engage with iterations in a way that resonates with our posthuman approach, we draw on an affirmative stance in performing critique. Affirmativity as a concept is developed, for example, by Braidotti (2010a, 2010b), to handle critique in critical theory. She discusses the problems in the relationship between creativity and critique: "namely how to balance the creative potential of critical thought with the necessary dose of negative criticism that is constitutive of oppositional consciousness" (Braidotti, 2010a, p. 413). Hence, building on a conscious approach of posthuman ethics, opposition, or critique, does not need to be restrictive or negative, but rather to create something that produces affirmative empowering alternatives.

Staunes (2016) argues that a few components of affirmative critique are for it to embrace affective intensities, understand phenomena as multilayered, with different components such as visual, auditory, tactile, et cetera, and be expressed or mediated in a variety of ways (p. 67). When fusing education with research and artistic practice, each iteration (i.e., lesson/workshop/seminar) can be seen as critically

engaged affirmatively, through a critical and careful sensibility (cf. Gunnarsson, 2018; 2022), building on what works and how the situated practice can be developed (cf. Wessels, 2022). In this way, affirmativity can be a productive contribution to the aspect of iterations when planning and executing art education events through an organic evolution. To conclude, our approach to affirmative iterations is not centered on criticizing the past but rather focuses on a responsible engagement with the potential to reuse, reiterate, and reimagine aspects for further educational explorations.

Part II: Enactment of Two Walk-Shops

In the following sections, we will detail the two walk-shops we planned and executed with a focus on the walking segment of the events.

Walking with the Trouble of Pretending to be an Animal

How does one achieve sensitivity and full involvement in pretend play? The transition from human to more-than-human; on the threshold to another time and space; away from the adult's imperative, "Hurry now!" to a place where time and space dissolve; a place where one is, for example, a cat.

Come on, let's pretend; now I'm a cat that carefully licks its paw...

Inspired by the elephant's empathetic story but triggered by the awkward use of animal hats in the trigger event (see prologue), we wanted to facilitate a new iteration where participants could experience more-than-humanness through physical pretend play. A walk, an attempt to play, to break with our anthropocentric habits...

...playful continuations. Radical imaginations. Paw-licking transformations.

The participants were asked to choose an animal that inspired them; they were to go for a walk *as* this animal. To help them approach possibilities of how their animal character would act on a walk, they first reflected on the animal's characteristics. For example, considering a snail: its senses are primarily tactile, feeling its environment with the foot; its pace is notably slow; and its typical position is close to the ground.

Hey, wanna come play with us? We play animals. I want to be a horse, my favorite horse. Which animal do you want to be?

The animals were released into the outdoor environment between the two four-story buildings outside the art institution—a small patch of grass with garden furniture, some bushes, and a footpath. The animal bodies, almost all four-legged, were seen crawling on all fours or holding their bent hands as hooves or paws in front of their upright bodies. Outdoors, they looked for the habitats that suited the animal's character and habits. On the small patch of grass, a horse grazed and a cow stood glaring as it would slowly ground its jaws. An octopus desperately tried to find its way into crevices. A dog sniffed around among the bushes and then decided to pee against a lamppost while a cat slunk away along the row of houses to get lost in a major street…

After 30 minutes the walk was over, and everyone was asked to return to the gallery. One animal refused to return; collaboratively, we captured the animal and led it back indoors. There we sat down on the floor in a circle and engaged in collective writing as the humans we were (see figure 1).

Landscape Manifestations! Demodexian Explorations!

The play went on; from animals to landscapes.

The Demodex is a hair follicle mite belonging to the order Trombidiformes, part of the class Arachnida and the animal kingdom. As a fully developed creature, it has eight legs on an elongated body. They walk 8–16 mm per hour in the human landscape, moving from one hair follicle to another and tending to avoid light. Almost half of all humans serve as landscapes for Demodex. *(Who wants to be a mite?)*

You are the animal; I am the landscape; a habitat for mites. Altering anthropocentric perception? Possible? Necessary! Meow – or what does mites sound like?

Maintaining our focus on animals but embracing our humanness, we explored microscopic animals and centered the walk around the mite. Typically, we go for a walk in a landscape, but now we need to shift our focus: the subject walking is the Demodex; the landscapes they walk in are us, humans.
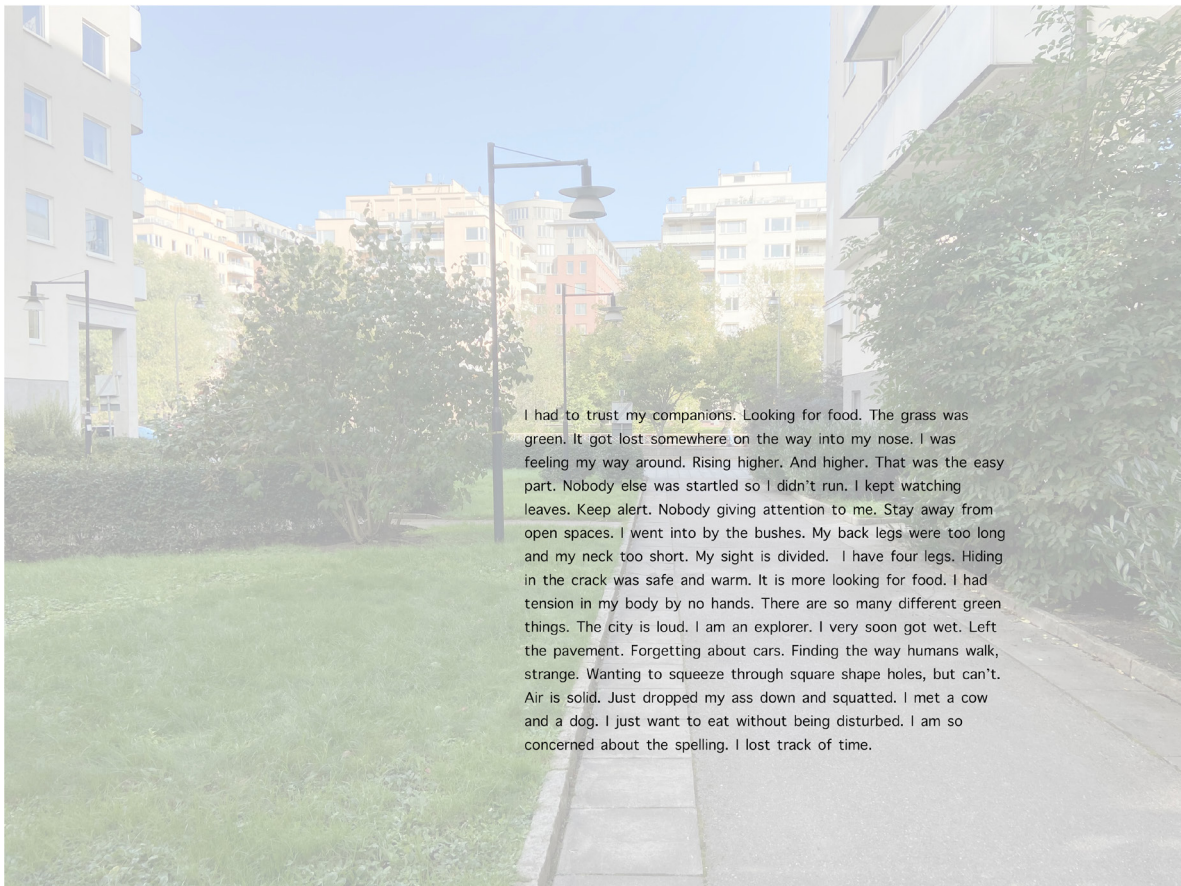
I had to trust my companions. Looking for food. The grass was green. It got lost somewhere on the way into my nose. I was feeling my way around. Rising higher. And higher. That was the easy part. Nobody else was startled so I didn't run. I kept watching leaves. Keep alert. Nobody giving attention to me. Stay away from open spaces. I went into by the bushes. My back legs were too long and my neck too short. My sight is divided. I have four legs. Hiding in the crack was safe and warm. It is more looking for food. I had tension in my body by no hands. There are so many different green things. The city is loud. I am an explorer. I very soon got wet. Left the pavement. Forgetting about cars. Finding the way humans walk, strange. Wanting to squeeze through square shape holes, but can't. Air is solid. Just dropped my ass down and squatted. I met a cow and a dog. I just want to eat without being disturbed. I am so concerned about the spelling. I lost track of time.

Figure 1. Illustration of collectively produced text on a photo of the walking location. By tina carlsson.

When going for a walk, the subject approaches, enters a landscape. The subject is taking part in the landscape, changing it, and adapting to it. The landscape can appear to the subject as beautiful, dangerous, fruitful, nurturing, full of fresh air, nature, or with a breathtaking view.

In a landscape called human – who is the subject walking? Climbing limbs, not mountains; seeking shadow beneath a hair, not a tree; cruising fat folds, not parks.

To immerse participants in more-than-humanness, we projected huge microscope films of the mite Demodex on the wall on the long side of the room. It was not until we started talking about Demodex that participants understood that the crawling creatures they saw on the wall were the same as those invisibly wandering on their skin.

We asked participants to walk together in pairs and share experiences of being aware of their bodies as landscapes for the Demodex. Thinking about the mites in their hair follicles, about the mites happily moving on their skin. *"Please, return the landscape to this seminar room at 2 pm!"*

The landscape bodies sauntered their way through the corridors of the university. Sometimes close together to create bridges between different landscapes and enable the migration of the mites. Participants avoid scratching their faces, *it's nothing, just a mite!* Some landscapes avoid light to increase the mites' freedom of movement on the skin. Do dark rooms create better living conditions? Walk straight, walk soft? Outside or inside… rain? Did you bring your raincoat?

Staying with the trouble, evolve, develop, change, try, alter, try again, hang in there. Storytelling is not fiction (see figure 2).

Part III: Analysis

In this part, we will discuss the different potenti-alities we see for workshops based on our experi-ences. The analysis is structured into four sections
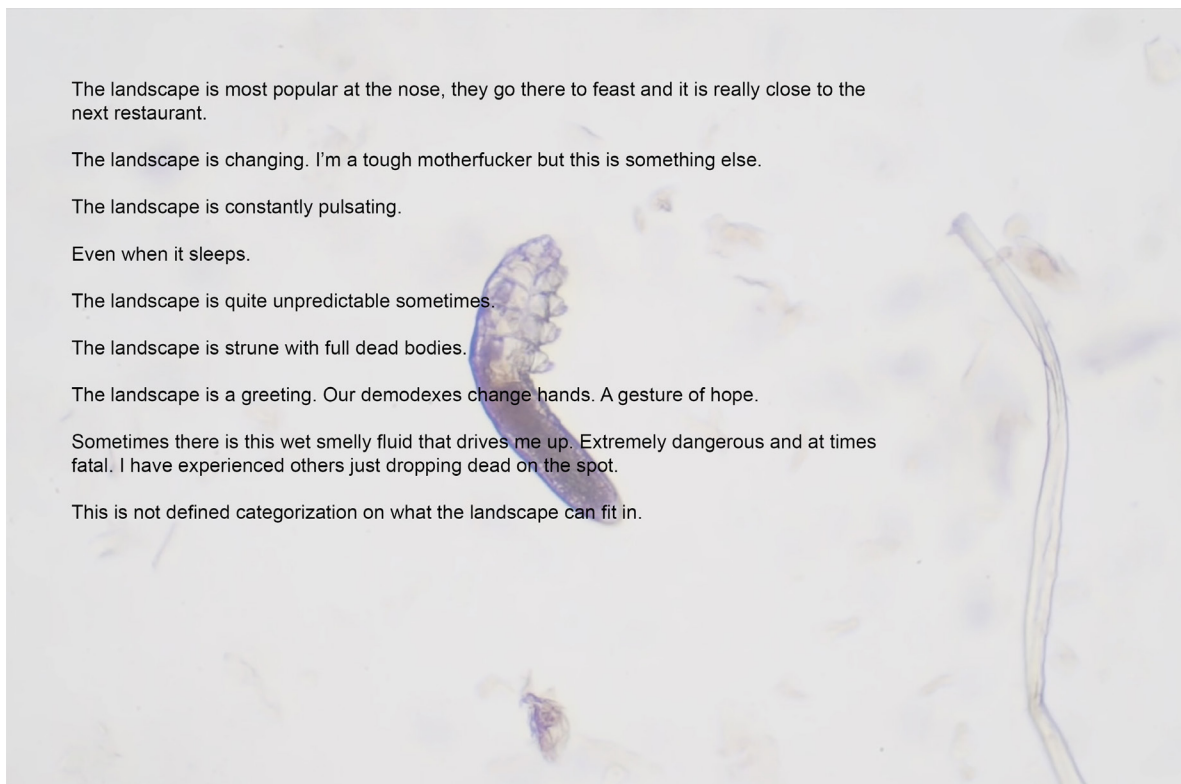
The landscape is most popular at the nose, they go there to feast and it is really close to the next restaurant.

The landscape is changing. I'm a tough motherfucker but this is something else.

The landscape is constantly pulsating.

Even when it sleeps.

The landscape is quite unpredictable sometimes.

The landscape is strune with full dead bodies.

The landscape is a greeting. Our demodexes change hands. A gesture of hope.

Sometimes there is this wet smelly fluid that drives me up. Extremely dangerous and at times fatal. I have experienced others just dropping dead on the spot.

This is not defined categorization on what the landscape can fit in.

Figure 2. Illustration of collectively produced text on a microscopic video still of the Demodex. By tina carlsson.

focusing on the aspects of more-than-humanness, playfulness, situatedness, and affirmative iterations.

More-than-Human Engagements

The topic of more-than-human experiences generated distinct possibilities for the walk-shop setup and the two walk-shops engaged with the more-than-humanness in different ways. Building on an affirmative critique of the trigger event, the walk-shop at the art institution focused on getting acquainted with the pretend play of occupying the role of a particular animal. From our position as both organizers and participants of the walk-shop, we observed what it looked like and experienced what it felt like to engage with animals' movements through human bodies. Walking on all fours was uncomfortable, limbs were either too long or too short, the balance was lacking in certain positions, and so on. Grosz (2007) argues with a reference to Uexküll that each organism - in this case, each animal - is surrounded by its 'Umwelt', which can be understood as an island of the senses or a kind of bubble-world. Living life is a sensing activity that involves a disruption of inside/outside taking into consideration the relationality with a

more-than-human world. The playfulness in the act of pretending to be a non-human animal through imitating offers a bodily experience or sensing, that is seriously attempting to open for a willingness to reach out to the other. However, it might uphold an idea of animals and humans as different 'others' rather than engaging in a sensing activity of the more-than-human relationality that is already there.

In discussions after the walk-shop, we noted that it was challenging to work with a definition of the animal's - the species' - characteristics from a human perspective without risking categorizing, or objectifying, the animal in a Linnaeus way. The participants, as humans, were individuals, while the animal became a representative of a species. We also observed that the chosen animals in the walk-shop were either domesticated - the sweet ones, the kind ones, the comforting ones - or exoticized animals. All chosen animals could have been transformed into soft stuffed animals in a museum shop, which indeed exposed our objectification of animals and our inability to move beyond that position. We wanted to retain the playfulness that pretending to be an animal had entailed but also challenge the anthropocentric habit of favoring certain animals over others. We discussed the relationships between

humans and animals in today's society and concluded that for the next walk-shop, we wanted to explore the microscopically small creatures that coexist with humans without us noticing. We were considering that possibly, there is no need to pretend anymore.

After some research, we became aware of the mite Demodex, which proved to be an interesting case for exploring a sensing activity with a more-than-human world. In an essay on literature and animals, Hird (2012) draws on bacteria to "provide an account of our intimacy with these nonspecies companions" (p. 332) and to explore the intricate relationality of human-animal becoming. She argues that working with companions that are intricately entangled in human life also demands a different kind of ethics. It is not possible to engage with a regular, what she calls an "Other-ethics based on face-to-face interaction, and its often attendant confluence with rights discourses" (p. 332). Rather, she develops an ethics of vulnerability which "begins from the starting point of entangled relationality, radical asymmetry, and indissoluble openness" (p. 332). We can here draw similarities to the kind of playful engagement with animals as other which the art institution walk-shop can be critiqued for performing.

What we wanted to explore in the arts university walk-shop was not about what it was like to *be* a Demodex as a subject; rather, we explored the human-Demodex relationality with an ethics of vulnerability; we explored what it was like being a human *for* the Demodex. In the art institution walk-shop, we took our human bodies for a walk as an animal, experiencing the otherness and limitations of the human bodies. As a contrast, now the human bodies were the landscape for the Demodex subject, embracing and noticing an already ongoing relationality, hence decentering the subjectivity aspect of being human. Being *for* someone or something is a deeply compassionate sensing activity, a posthuman ethic of vulnerability for companion species that "challenges the very notion that there is an outside to ourselves" (Hird, 2012, p. 344). In the walk-shop, we wanted to engage with more-than-humanness in a way that would subvert the idea of experience as individualized and possible to translate from one species to the next. Or to draw on Grosz and Hird, from working with an others-ethics-based playfulness to a relationality-based playfulness permeated by sensing and vulnerability.

In an art education context, when viewing the organisms of Lichen as a teacher, Zollinger and colleagues (2022) have directed their attention to the organism as "a fecund rebellion against the destructive humanism we perceive traditional pedagogies to promote" (p. 25). To playfully organize a walk-shop based on the idea of the Demodex was our 'rebellion'. It is not only the choice of working with more-than-humanness that makes Zollinger and colleagues' work important but how they employ "acts of noticing" (p. 25) as a methodology to return to a way of thinking and acting in more deliberately attentive ways to the relationalities we as humans are engaged with. They argue that many pedagogical practices in the Western tradition are way too embedded in individualistic and anthropocentric thinking and that engaging with more-than-human aspects of our relational lives is a method of approach to disrupting these habitual modes. Our walk-shops and Zollinger and colleagues' work are mere two examples of engaging with more-than-humanness in arts education. jagodzinski (2020) discusses the role of posthumanism in arts education:

> Perhaps more so, it requires a rethinking of subjectivity—posthuman as a new relationship with Nature, a decentering of humanist anthropocentrism, and a serious questioning of speciesism to provide an understanding of ontogenesis (the processes of becoming) and not fixated on ontology (the states of Being). (p. 285)

As was clear in the affirmative critiques and the process of planning these walk-shops, and as jagodzinski (2020) argues, we are not to sit comfortably with 'animals' as a category, but rather to explore the processual, ontological, existential that it means to do art and art education.

The Playful Potential of Workshops

Leaning towards affirmative iteration, we chose to use the trigger event (se prologue) as an opportunity to embrace playfulness as a possibility to move beyond conventional patterns of thinking around human-animal relationality. The pretend play of the elephant moved us from an anthropocentric view considering animals as a resource towards empathy with the elephant. Muka and Edblom (2013) argue:

> Play can be considered as a vital connection between the self and the world, involving a full imaginative engagement between inner and outer life. As such, play is not situated 'outside

reality' anymore but is the nature of reality itself. The world of play is reality, and thus when we play, we feel the joy of participating in reality on its own terms, and in the process, transform both reality and ourselves. (p. 12)

Inspired by the elephant story, we decided to explore the possibilities of pretend play to approach non-humans' perspectives on the world. Instead of using symbolic hats, we used embodied play as a template for the walk-shop at the art institution. Even though we had planned the walk-shop, it felt to some parts foreign, banal, and embarrassing, even to us. From a humanist perspective, the human has often been defined based on what is unique to this species, often in contrast to aspects that are essential for all others. The human is a thinking being, it possesses rationality and intention. Animals – which in an anthropocentric way often encompasses all animals except humans – means having a body, instincts, a habitat, and a place in an ecological system. Such humanistic thinking has been central in educational ideas, where schools and universities are often seen as places where thinking is rewarded over doing; the brain is prioritized over other body parts, such as the hand; the individual is prioritized over relationships (cf. Biesta, 2006; Ceder, 2019).

In the walk-shop, the participants were moved from rationality and thinking towards exploring new ways of embodied engagement with the space – even if that could feel embarrassing in the beginning. We were surprised by how seriously the participants undertook the task. One of the reasons that the participants were able to engage with play, could be that most of the participants were artists and that the walk-shop was carried out at an art institution. Muka and Edblom (2013) argue that artists have benefitted from the agency of play to push boundaries and challenge norms. At the art university, the act of play was more conceptual and performative than embodied, which was more appropriate for the variation among the participants and the more public space. Kraus and Cronqvist (2022) argue that it must be possible to think and act without social, cultural, and work-related constraints. "In our playfulness, it becomes visible that we can have, expand, and communicate our understanding of the world, that a person constructs their life according to stories, and that one knows there is a future to shape" (Kraus & Cronqvist, 2022, p. 4). By embracing playful arts-based workshops rooted in posthumanism, art educators can create spaces

where sensing with a more-than-human world can be possible.

Walking and Space as Situated

Situatedness extends beyond the specific context, such as an art institution or an arts university, to encompass broader factors. Drawing on Haraway's (1988) concept of situated knowledges, we view all teaching and art practice as situated, considering spatial, material, aesthetic, embodied, affective, ethical, and more-than-human aspects. Aligned with this approach to situatedness, Springgay and Truman (2018) argue that scholars who work with walking need to attend to place:

> how place-making is produced by walking, and the ways that walking connects bodies, environment, and the sensory surrounds of place. Walking becomes a way of inhabiting place through the lived experience of movement. Walking is a way of becoming responsive to place; it activates modes of participation that are situated and relational. (p. 4)

This thinking permeated our whole process, for example, we included the following situated statement as a part of the invitation to the art institution walk-shop: "The planning of this walk-shop appeared through the entanglement of one artist-researcher, one educational researcher, a lunch menu, a common workplace, the air, Donna Haraway's writings, and gallery Index". We included this statement to communicate our approach to a situated posthuman relationality which always involves and acknowledges a multitude of actors (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016). These aspects can be human and more-than-human; central and peripheral; significant and mundane. It can also be understood as a way to be transparent about how all educational and artistic practices are constantly situated, and constantly shifting. Further, considering situatedness and place is a reminder to practice, what Zollinger and colleagues call "the acts of noticing" (p. 25) and affirming what is often disregarded as contributions to a process.

The spatial features of the respective walk-shops were considered. The long white wall in the arts university seminar room indicated the possible creation of Demodex projections which can be understood as an embodied, aesthetic, and playful sensing activity. We were somewhat cautious about the reactions we might receive from this subtle yet

subversive approach. When the participants gradually realized the connection between the creatures on the wall and their skin, they physically experienced this relationship rather than just understanding it intellectually. Abstract concepts such as posthumanism, companion species, and relationality were not taught as concepts, but planned as sensing activities, for example walking. Sundberg (2014) draws on for example indigenous onto-epistemologies when stating that walking is "the embodied and emplaced movements involved in producing worlds" (p. 39). She argues that walking can help us tune into a multiplicity of knowledge systems: "As we humans move, work, play, and narrate with a multiplicity of beings in place, we enact historically contingent and radically distinct worlds/ontologies" (Sundberg, 2014, p. 39). The purpose of going for a walk in the walk-shops was not about discussion and thinking; rather, it involved an embodied experience with a specific landscape – a park or oneself as a landscape. Through that experience, to enact a different kind of world with a multiplicity of beings.

The spatial conditions in our walk-shops can be understood as a combination of on the one hand mundane and nothing outside the ordinary, and on the other hand a bit subversive and artistic. No matter how mundane or performative, they still matter. We understand these spatial impacts as a way to recognize the situatedness of a workshop, making use of the material and spatial conditions of the space. Having a conceptually challenging, yet simple, idea makes it easy to also gain ideas for how to adapt the space.

Iteration and Continuous Movement

Teaching is about attending to the cyclical nature of the educational process, involving planning, action, and reflection. For arts education and other educational contexts, we propose a cyclical process of affirmative iterations that also can be understood as an analogy to an artistic process. This process is not restricted to starting at the planning phase; it can be initiated by other events, as in this case which began with the trigger event. What was significant for each event was that each experience was met with an affirmative approach. Based on our critique of the trigger event, we saw a productive seed of pretending to be an animal, embraced it, and planted it into the art institution's walk-shop in a renewed way through a series of activities. Then, based on an affirmative critique of that event, we let a few activities remain. To begin, we felt the

need to keep the transparent approach of sharing our journey to the events that led us to the actual one. We also held on to the collaborative writing exercise, since it turned out to be a productive way to mediate and share the bodily experiences of the walks between the participants. These aspects were kept relatively stable, despite the context, the space, and participants being unalike.

In addition, the affirmative critique made us shift the walking segment of the walk-shop, as discussed in the analysis section above, from a walk as an animal to a walk as a landscape. In the words of Braidotti (2010b), "This position is affirmative in the sense that it actively works towards the creation of alternatives by working actively through the negative instance" (p. 45). The affirmative resonant reactions to past events served as the bedrock upon which we constructed our walk-shops. Our pedagogical and artistic approach amplified the inherent transformative power of the arts education events and the ever-changing method of the walk-shop.

Change is central in both iterative action research and discussions on affirmative critique. In the editorial for a special issue on the concept of affirmative critique, Gunnarsson and Hohti (2018) conclude with a few questions:

> Will the critique be able to change the things we critique? If we explain what is wrong and what lies behind, can we exceed what we already know? And what comes into existence as a result of these critiques? We see a possibility of rediscovering energy in the realization that the future is fundamentally open. The future is built upon the knowledge we produce - that is why it is important to imagine and to experiment. (p. 3)

Our ongoing affirmative iterations made us continue the walk-shop explorations as a way to imagine and experiment. Not needing to 'settle', but to perform and educate as a way to reuse, reiterate, and reimagine activities, ideas, events, and experiences. The essence of our methodological approach of playful affirmative iterations could harbor a cycle of growth that stemmed from appreciating the value of each step in the journey. The iterative teaching cycle is often illustrated as a circle or a spiral, emphasizing its continuous nature. This can be understood in line with posthuman onto-epistemologies where change, learning, and transformation are continuous and never-ending (Bodén et al., 2021). Education can with a posthuman and relational approach be understood as impermanent

(Ceder, 2019), or as infinite movement (Manning, 2007). This way, arts education is not only about creating change and movement; rather, "it is about observing the movement that is already there" (Ceder, 2019, p. 144).

Working/Walking Forward: Playfulness and Transformation

In our walk-shops, we did more than just traverse landscapes; we embarked on a journey of subverting ideas of human exceptionalism, creating a symphony of past and present experiences, as well as future possibilities of exploring arts education in a more-than-human world. The blend of affirmative, situated, and playful education not only challenged conventional pedagogical norms but also challenged us as teachers/researchers/artists to further push our practices with posthuman concerns at hand.

Both walk-shops provided fertile ground for actively engaging with more-than-human experiences. Participants engaged in playful exercises that hopefully helped them reconceptualize their relationship with the world around them. We argue that our playful, affirmative, and iterative approach contributes to rethinking arts education, toward embracing situatedness, complexity, and uncertainty. The affirmative iteration process of the walk-shops served as a model for how workshops can continuously evolve, responding to the ever-shifting possibilities within the arts education event.

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