

EDUCATIONAL PORTFOLIO

Educational profiling document

Application to the merit scheme for outstanding teachers



Picture: Blind folded elderly man led through the city by young woman. Photo: zURBS.

Cecilie Sachs Olsen

Professor Art in Society

Department of Art, Design and Drama / Institutt for estetiske fag

Faculty of Technology, Art and Design

OsloMet – Storbyuniversitetet

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PART 1: EDUCATIONAL PROFILING DOCUMENT

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. A journey towards transformative, inclusive and creative teaching

The Palestinian-American scholar Edward Said, urges us to ‘view the academy as a place to voyage in, owning none of it but at home everywhere in it’ (1994: 17 – 18). He says that we should not see the search for skills and knowledge in higher education as the search for ownership, control and mastery. There is a significant difference between owning something (taking it into possession) and making something your own. Mastery based on possession and ownership comes with a dark colonial baggage: The colonial master sees himself as superior to others because he has conquered them intellectually and can therefore insist on the supremacy of his practices and worldviews over theirs.

Resisting this form of mastery, Said encourages us to regard our journey as teachers and students as being willing to travel into unknown and unfamiliar worlds that we can never fully own. This way, he says, we might traverse and crossover fixed positions and inhabit the academic world in more inclusive, playful and mobile ways. Observing how higher education is becoming increasingly end-product driven rather than processual, guided by a neoliberal desire for control, individual authorship and competition, I believe Said’s plea is more urgent than ever.

In this educational profiling document, I outline how I have worked over time with teaching, assessment and supervision to encourage students and faculty to inhabit the academy in transformative, creative and inclusive ways. Starting as a lecturer in human geography and now a professor of art in society, I have sought to create connections across diverse communities of knowledge to support creative experimentation and open-ended enquiry that can challenge and change status quo.

1.2. The structure and focus of this profiling document

The profiling document follows the guidelines stipulated by OsloMet. The CV lists my pedagogical activities. The remaining parts foreground the theories that have influenced my pedagogical approach. These theories are situated within two complementary fields: 1) critical, decolonial pedagogy and feminist learning and teaching (Jong, Rosalba, Rutazibwa, 2019), which are concerned with epistemic diversity, embodied learning, student voice, pedagogical partnerships and anti-oppressive pedagogy, and 2) ideas and theories concerning the idea of ‘education as aesthetic experience’ (Barone 1983), including creative and open-ended experimentation, practice-based learning, real-world learning arenas, collaboration and collective authorship.

2. PEDAGOGICAL CV

I am an award-winning teacher with a decade of teaching experience at undergraduate, master and PhD level. My experience in the field, lecture/seminar/tutorial room, and in doctoral and master supervisions, is enhanced by my track record of gaining funding for developing creative and critical pedagogy. I have developed exciting inter- and transdisciplinary teaching programmes that draw together theory and practice.

2.1. Pedagogical training

19/08/2024 – 22/08/2024 Summer school in supervising artistic and practice-based research, PASS – Centre for Practice Based Art Studies, University of Copenhagen.

This international summer school brought together PhD supervisors to discuss how to best supervise students doing practice-based research within the arts (attachment 1).

01/09/2016-01/09/2017 Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Teaching and Learning, Royal Holloway, University of London.

This is a formal teaching qualification, the equivalent of post-graduate diploma in university level teaching, through which I achieved the prized status of Fellow of the UKs Higher Education Academy (attachment 1).

2.2. Education

2014-17 PhD Human Geography, Department of Geography, Queen Mary University of London, UK

2009-11 MSc (cum laude) Urban Studies, 4Cities Interdisciplinary Euromaster, Universities of Copenhagen, Brussels, Madrid and Vienna, DK, BE, ES, AU

2007-09 BA (1st class Hons.) Theatre Research and Cultural Communication, Copenhagen University, DK

2003-07 BA, Acting for Theatre and Film, GITIS – the Russian Academy of Theatre Arts, DK/RU

2.3. Positions

2022- Professor of Art in Society, Department of Art, Design and Drama, Oslo Metropolitan University, NO

2021 Senior researcher, Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Oslo Metropolitan University, NO

2017-21 British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway University of London, UK

2016-17 Lecturer in Human Geography, Department of Geography, Royal Holloway, University, UK

2012-14 Research assistant, Chair of Architecture and Urban Design, Zurich
University for Science and Technology (ETH), CH

2012-13 Research assistant, Institute for Critical Theory, Zurich University of the Arts

2.4. Teaching experience

Time frame	Level	Course	Role	Responsibilities	Credits
OsloMet, Faculty of Technology, Art and Design					
2023 -	PhD	PINS: Philosophy of Science of Sustainability	Course leader	Developing course design, content and material; lectures, supervision	5 ECTS
2023 -	MA	Kreativ Praksis i Samfunnet	Team teaching	Developing course design, content and project brief for student group work	5 ECTS
2023 -	MA	Elective: Estetiske fag I samfunnet – Kunst og demokrati/Art and democracy	Course leader	Developing course design, content, curriculum, coursework material; lectures, supervision	10 ECTS
2022 -	MA	Study specialization: Kunst i Samfunnet	Course leader	Re-developing course design, content and curriculum; lectures; seminars; project weeks; field work; excursions; supervision	20/15 ECTS
2022 -	MA	Masteroppgave Kunst i Samfunnet	Course leader	Progression seminars and supervision	60/45 ECTS
2022 -	MA	Vitenskapsteori og forskningsmetode 2	Team teaching	Developing course structure, lecturing	5 ECTS
Arkitektur og designhøyskolen i Oslo (AHO), Institute of Form, Theory and History					
2019	MA	Elective: Being Tectonic	Course leader	Developing course design, content and curriculum; seminars	7,5 ECTS
Royal Holloway University of London, Department of Geography					
2018	PhD	So, you want to change the world? Exploring creative methods for social change	Seminar leader	Developing seminar; workshop; fieldwork	N/A
2018 -19	PhD	Seminars and summer school: Listening (to) field, voice and body	Course leader	Developing content, curriculum, fieldwork; lectures; seminars; organizing one-week fieldtrip	N/A
2017 - 18	BA	Urban Interventions	Course leader	Developing course design, exam form and assessment criteria; field work; lectures; seminars	15 ECTS
2016-18	MA	Cultural Geography	Team teaching	Lectures; seminars; supervision; marking	15 ECTS
2016 -17	BA	Creative Geographies	Course leader	Lectures; seminars; coursework supervision	15 ECTS
2016 - 17	BA	Tutorials: Study Skills and Key Concepts in Geography	Team teaching	Seminars; supervision; developing tutorial handbook	N/A

Queen Mary, University of London, Department of Geography, Department of Theatre and Drama					
2015 - 16	MA	Art, Performance and the City	Course leader	Lectures; seminars; coursework development and supervision	15 ECTS
2015 - 16	BA	Offstage London	Team teaching	Lectures; fieldwork	15 ECTS
2015 - 16	BA	Geographical Research and Practice	Team teaching	Lectures; seminars; supervision; fieldwork	15 ECTS
Zurich University of the Arts, Department of Critical Theory					
2013 - 14	MA	Art and the City	Team teaching	Lectures; seminars; supervision; fieldwork	15 ECTS
Invited international guest lecturing [selected]					
HDK Valand, Academy of Art and Design (Sweden)					
2024	MA	Design and the posthumanist perspective	Guest lecturer	Lecture: The arts of multispecies placemaking	15 ECTS
University College Groeninge, Department of Humanities (the Netherlands)					
2024	BA	Arts in Society	Guest lecturer	Lecture: Acting UP!	15 ECTS
University of Victoria, Department of Geography (Canada)					
2023	BA	Sustainable Cities Field School	Guest lecturer	Lecture: Curating Degrowth and the Arts of Transformation	N/A
Cornell University, Architecture, Art, Planning (USA)					
2022	MA	Option studio/Gary Bates	Guest lecturer	Lecture: From tourism to the Tour	N/A
Columbia University, GSAPP (USA)					
2022	MA	Architecture Studio III	Guest lecturer	Lecture: The Tour as Care	N/A
Roskilde University, Department of People and Technology (Denmark)					
2022	MA	Nordic Urban Planning	Guest lecturer	Lecture: Socially engaged art and the politics of multispecies cities	N/A
Academy for Applied Arts Baden – Württemberg, Department of Performance Studies (Germany)					
2014	BA	Art and the City	Guest lecturer	Project week/workshop: Lectures; seminars; fieldwork; coursework supervision	N/A

2.5. Supervision and mentoring activities

I have supervised 15 MA students and 2 PhD students to completion, and I am currently supervising 5 PhD students. I have been external examiner of 2 PhD vivas and seminar opponent of one PhD. To further support early career researchers (ERCs), I lead the research group *Creative Practice: (trans)forming space, place and environment*. The group offers peer-to-peer support and exchange around using creative practice as research method. I further lead the work of supervising PhDs and ERCs who want to apply for Marie Curie postdoctoral fellowships at my department.

2.6. Teaching Awards

- 2020 Royal Holloway University Team Teaching Prize in recognition of the innovative GeoHumanities PhD Summer School: Listening (to) field, voice and body

2.7. Pedagogical development, - research and – financing

- 2024 – Member of Akademiet for Yngre Forskere (AYF), working to enhance the links between education and research, and to promote research policies that ensure inclusive educational environments (attachment 7)
- 2024 – Recipient of Erasmus+ grant (scheme: Cooperation partnerships in Higher Education) of €400.000,- for the project ‘ACT UP! Active Citizenship through Theatre for Urban Politics’ (attachment 5).
- 2023 – Vara member of the faculty board for the Faculty of Technology, Art and Design at OsloMet, contributing to make strategic plans for developing the educational portfolio of the faculty.
- 2023 – Member of Social Art Educators forum for educators using creative and social practice in their teaching.
- 2023 – Panel member for Independent Research Fund Denmark (DFF), evaluating research applications
- 2022 – Playing a pivotal role in re-structuring the master’s programme and thesis *Master i Estetiske Fag*, including evaluating the programme and initiating new courses, exam forms and assessment criteria for master thesis (attachment 3).
- 2022 – Developing interdisciplinary PhD positions at department level and across the faculty. The positions that I got funding for had more than 120 applicants each.
- 2018 Recipient of Techne Conflux grant of £10.000,-for developing a PhD Summer School in the GeoHumanities.
- 2018 Recipient of British Academy Rising Star Engagement Award of £14.902,- for developing community-based teaching and learning with ERCs, PhD and MA students (attachment 11)
- 2017 Fellow of UK’s Higher Education Academy (attachment 1).
- 2017 Recipient of Techne PhD training day fund of £1000,- for developing a workshop for training PhD students in using creative methods for social change.
- 2016 – Leading and contributing to educational development in 10 BA, MA and PhD courses (5 of them at OsloMet), including developing new courses from scratch, as well as new exam forms and evaluation criteria to accommodate artistic and practice-based forms of teaching and learning.

2.8. Publications on teaching and education

- 2025* – Sachs Olsen, C. *Kunst og Samfunn – et Tverrfaglig Perspektiv*. Cappelen Damm Akademisk. [forthcoming]*
- 2024 Sachs Olsen, C. & Dalziel, M. 'When research is and isn't your home'. In Haylock, B., Wilkinson, J. & Anderson, C. (eds.) *Artistic Research in Practice*. Valiz. [forthcoming].
- 2024 Sachs Olsen, C. 'Drama in Drammen: promoting active citizenship through applied theatre', *DRAMA*, 61(2): 16-27.
- 2022 Sachs Olsen, C. 'Imagining transformation: Applied theatre and the making of collaborative future scenarios', *GeoHumanities*, 8(2): 399-414.
- 2017 Sachs Olsen, C. 'Education as aesthetic experience: Exploring concepts and models of creative pedagogical practice'; paper submitted as part of the requirements for the fulfilment of the CAPITAL Postgraduate Certificate in Academic Practice in Teaching and Learning, Royal Holloway University of London
- 2016 Sachs Olsen, C. & Hawkins, H. 'Archiving an Urban Exploration – MR NICE GUY, cooking oil drums and uncanny bikinis', *cultural geographies* 23(3): 531 – 543.

*This is a textbook for BA and MA students on the role of the arts in society. It has been accepted for publication with Cappelen Damm.

2.9. Pedagogical partnerships, exchange and collaborations

My dedication to developing the quality of education at OsloMet goes beyond the ordinary in several ways:

1. I have initiated a semester-long 'pedagogical partnership' (Cook-Sather 2014) with a dedicated group of students to co-design the course content of MEST5030 (for documentation see attachment 9, and for student testimony, see attachment 14).
2. I have engaged students as co-researchers in my research project *CONTRA – CONflicts in TRAnsformation*, providing experiential learning outside of the classroom. They participated in the development of Drama Labs (Bragernes ByLab) (for student testimony, see attachment 14)
3. I have initiated a student-staff exchange platform called tEST arena. This is a monthly meeting place in which students and staff exchange research, ideas and projects, and get inputs from guest speakers.
4. With my colleague Henrik Holm, I am developing a 'ped-pod' (pedagogical podcast) providing advice to students concerning research methods, in an easy digestible manner. We also plan to publish a textbook in philosophy of science and research methods for MA students in arts and aesthetics.

5. I have started a film club at Nordic Black Theatre for staff, students and the public. The club screens films concerning the role of art in society (as research method and as object of inquiry).
6. In collaboration with *Nasjonalmuseet* and *Den Kulturelle Skolesekken*, I have developed *Lyden av Oslo* – a playful audio walk that teaches school children about urbanism and architecture. I am now working on making it a national educational project for youth aged 10-14.
7. In collaboration with *KORO - Statlig Etat for Kunst i Offentlige Rom*, I have developed the series *Kunst til Stedet* which teaches students, municipalities and practitioners about the role art in urban development and placemaking.
8. I have initiated a collaboration with *Oslo Kommunes Kunstsamling* on a yearly Urban Interventions seminar in which master students collaborate with the municipality on developing a public art project in Oslo (attachment 2).

2.10. Dissemination activities

I frequently participate in panels, conferences and seminars to discuss the roles of creative and artistic practice as methods for fostering engagement, critical thinking, and practice-led and experiential learning. This autumn I gave the opening speech at the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO) on exactly these topics. My research and teaching concerning the development of Drama Labs with my students, has been included in the publication *Reimagining the University in the Climate Crisis: A catalogue of transformative university practices in Northern Europe* (2024) published by Utrecht University (attachment 8). I have also done guest appearances in podcasts such as *Verdibørsen* (NRK P2), *Pia og Psyken*, and *My Perfect City* (BBC World Service); events, seminars and conferences such as *Cities & Society seminar* (UiO), *Living Labs seminar* (KTH Stockholm), *Relasjonell Velferds Konferanse* (Drammen Kommune), *Oslo Urban Week* (Henning Larsen Architects), *Kulturytring Drammen* and *Arendalsuka*. Finally, I have done a TED-talk through which I gained valuable presentation skills, which I now teach my students.

3. TEACHING REPERTOIRE

My teaching is informed by the work of my socially engaged artist collective, zURBS. For decades, we have worked with(in) communities and localities to include marginalized voices and perspectives in responding to societal challenges (for publications documenting this work, see attachment 6). Based on this work, I have developed a wide variety of creative teaching methods. Key here is to accommodate student diversity and enhance student participation. In the following, I detail how these two foci are reflected in my teaching repertoire.

3.1. Accommodating diversity

OsloMet has an ethnically, socioeconomically and culturally diverse student group, and promotes diversity as a core value. I strive to reflect this value in my teaching.

Classrooms, and what we teach, are not neutral but linked to research agendas and knowledge production relating to the historical exclusion of women and people of colour from the academy. This means that diversity is more than just a call for inclusion – it is an invitation to critically reflect on how teachers and institutions can avoid reproducing and legitimizing exclusion.

My teaching contributes to this critical reflection by promoting anti-oppressive pedagogies (Fritzsche 2022) that asks of students and teachers that they develop self-reflexivity and learn to see the world through the experiences of others. In class, I introduce artworks as ‘discussion-pieces’ that raise difficult questions concerning representations of race, gender, sexual orientations, ableism, privacy etc. (see e.g. week 4 in attachment 2). Facilitating such discussions is not easy. Many teachers, including myself, are aware of our own privileged position as white, middle-class, able-bodied, cis gender people and are concerned that we unwittingly discriminate against students from a position of ignorance. Anti-oppressive pedagogies may also be met with resistance from students in response to difficult course content, a perceived lack of ‘objectivity’ from the teacher, and the unsettling of deeply held understandings about the world. To tackle these challenges, I strive to create a safe learning environment in which we can talk about our differences and not be afraid to learn and ask questions. I do this through an ‘embodied learning’ (Wagner & Shahjahan 2016) that includes learning through the body and not only the intellect. It teaches students to hold contradictory perspectives while also processing emotional reactions to challenging course content. It also connects responses to lived experiences and helps us understand how these responses are implicated in relations of power and privilege. For example, I often practice ‘check-ins’ at the beginning of class to foster community and awareness, to connect students’ experiences to course material and to help students recognize the value of emotions in the learning process (see attachment 9).

I furthermore find that humour is important to handle difficult emotions, for example in teaching about sustainability and climate change. In the exercise ‘high-carbon culture is ...’, I get students to articulate the contradictions they are experiencing in their own lives, not in a self-blaming way but with humour: ‘High-carbon culture is banning plastic straws but buying water in plastic bottles’; ‘High-carbon culture is reinventing yourself rather than society’. The point is not to resolve these contradictions but to acknowledge them as a step toward a heightened awareness and political mode of being in the world. By using exercises like these, I aim to provide a safe space for reflecting on own experiences and explore issues beyond a solely intellectual frame of reference. I believe, this embodied and reflective approach is important to accommodating diversity and cross-cultural differences in the classroom and beyond.

3.2. Enhancing student participation and engagement

Through the work of my artist collective, I have developed a keen interest in the learning potentials that occur from collaborations with(in) local sites and communities (attachment 2 and 6). Accordingly, I not only bring the surrounding world into the classroom by inviting practitioners and guest lecturers to share cases and experiences, but I also actively develop teaching that take place outside the university, using urban space as a key learning arena. For example, in the courses I have developed such as *Urban Interventions*, *Art in Society* and *Creative Practice in Society* (attachment 2), students develop site-specific creative projects and interventions in response to societal issues and challenges relevant to specific urban sites and communities. Research shows that students who engage in learning experiences outside the classroom report having higher levels of motivation, recall the course material more vividly and have improved academic performance (Claiborne et al. 2020; Ryan and Deci, 2017). This has been confirmed by my students who have reported that these activities have opened their eyes to new ways of engaging with and applying the theories and perspectives discussed in class (attachment 14).

When developing new teaching formats, it is key to be mindful of the experiential and developmental readiness of students regarding content, activities and modes of presentation. I therefore spend much time creating a supportive learning environment. For example, I break larger groups into smaller ones using tutorials and seminars to ensure that concepts, tasks, and assessments can be discussed in greater detail than possible in larger groups. I also encourage peer-to-peer support as students are invited to present their work to each other and provide feedback (see attachment 4). I further provide one-to-one sessions in which students can workshop their coursework essay (arbeidskrav) with me in preparation for the exam. These sessions are helpful in improving students' writing skills as it enables us to work collaboratively and hands-on with their texts. I also provide elaborate written feedback on coursework to ensure that students understand their grade and can decipher what is needed to improve it (attachment 4). I emphasise that independent thought and originality are highly valued, and that the argument they build is more important than demonstrating a fixed body of knowledge.

I am committed to provide teaching centred around the idea of lifelong learning (Laal 2011) that navigates informal and formal learning processes alongside the different individual backgrounds, needs, maturity and levels of experience of the students. In this regard, I find the use of digital technologies helpful to enhance teaching and learning flexibility, providing new possibilities of where and when to learn and to teach. However, I do not believe digital technologies automatically improve teaching and learning processes and contend that such tools require a specific attention to enabling high-value interactions with and between students. Hence, I prefer a blended learning approach (McLean et al. 2019) that combines online teaching material and

opportunities for interaction with traditional place-based classroom methods. I find online tools such as AnswerGarden, Miro and Kahoot helpful tools to engage students, but prefer to combine these with more analogue creative formats that can also work digitally such as: role-play formats to enable more quiet students to speak up in group work; videos to provide contextualization and base for discussion; practical exercises to directly apply and test approaches discussed in the class and take these further through creative inventions; 'speed-date' formats to engage larger groups through pair-interactions in a playful setting. This wide repertoire of teaching formats and activities is designed to suit different situations, student numbers and engagement levels. I structure my lectures in a way that allows for different activities to be used according to the specific situation in that lecture. Hence, I can adopt the teaching approach and style as the lecture unfolds.

4. DEVELOPING QUALITY WITHIN EDUCATION AND TEACHING

As demonstrated in my CV, I have developed a series of new interdisciplinary courses, including new course- and study plans, ranging from undergraduate (BA) core modules in the field of geography, to postgraduate core modules in the field of visual arts, and PhD core modules in sustainability studies and the GeoHumanities. What makes my contribution to enhancing quality in teaching stand out as beyond the ordinary is my focus on promoting student voice and advancing student-teacher relationships as key to this work. This focus stems from my exposure to the *Teaching Excellence Framework* (TEF), which was introduced by the UK government at the same time as I took up a teaching-focused position as lecturer at Royal Holloway University in 2016.

TEF assessed the teaching excellence at British universities through proxy metrics such as student satisfaction, retention and employability. It spurred intensive debates around the conceptual slipperiness of 'teaching excellence', problematizing universalist notions of 'excellence', and pointing to how it might be more useful to talk of 'teaching excellences' to reflect a plural sector and a diverse student body. What particularly interested me with these debates was the views on student voice and the student-teacher relationship that, in my opinion, lies at the core of assessing teaching quality.

TEF consolidated the prevailing view in the UK of students as consumers and of the teacher as supplier of educational services in what amounts to an individual contractual relationship. I witnessed how this view reduced the student voice to a metric of satisfaction (Carruthers et al. 2020), and that the versatile, unpredictable and surprising paths to new understanding (which is specifically relevant to aesthetic educations), risked being deprived. I worried that learning processes would become shorter and, in the worst case, be reduced to a simple question-and-answer pedagogy.

Hence, in my work as a teacher in both Norway and the UK, I have strived to develop quality within education and teaching by focusing on developing student voices and student-teacher relationships based on more progressive social and collaborative (rather than individual, profit- and market driven) aspects of education. I have done this by facilitating new models of collaboration between students and faculty, in which we discuss, co-design or revise course materials and curriculum together (i.e. attachment 9). As elaborated below, these models include ‘pedagogical partnerships’, ‘dynamic feedback papers’ and ‘peer teaching and advocacy’. The student-teacher relationship developed through these models, is one of critical pedagogy and popular education (Freire 1968). It recognizes that students and teachers have much to learn from each other.

4.1. Pedagogical partnerships

Taking over the *Art in Society* course at OsloMet, I initiated a semester-long ‘pedagogical partnership’ (Cook-Sather 2014) with a group of students (attachment 9). The group got paid as student assistants to co-design with me the curriculum, pedagogical approaches and course material. The aim was to ensure greater diversity in the educational content, bringing in: 1) knowledges from different cultures, traditions and disciplines, and 2) more perspectives from scholars and practitioners historically sidelined by what Claire Bishop (2020) calls the art discipline’s ‘foundational whiteness’.

Cook-Sather et al. 2018 show that pedagogical partnerships are particularly important to students from underrepresented backgrounds, who have found that the partnership can counter the ‘nonbelonging’ they often sense when starting university (i.e. unfamiliarity with academic discourse, language, frames of reference, etc.). By bringing the voices of these students into the classroom, pedagogical partnerships show that their experiences matter. In turn, this does not only ensure the relevance and quality of course content, it can also strengthen the relations of trust between student and teacher.

4.2. Dynamic feedback papers

Encouraging and enabling continuous student feedback is central to develop quality in both curriculum content and teaching style/formats. In addition to the mandatory evaluations and report to be completed at the end of each course, I ensure feedback from my students *during* the courses to ensure legibility and relevance for that specific student group. I do this, for example, through dynamic feedback papers. Here, students are asked, anonymously, to write down three things they like about the course and three things that are unclear/difficult/in need for improvement. I incorporate this feedback in the further development of the course and make sure, in subsequent lectures, to address the issues that were considered unclear/difficult and in need for improvement.

4.3. Peer teaching and advocacy

Students are often set to view peers as competitors for grades and attention, which can lead to a reluctance to be ‘on the same team’ (Cook-Sather et al. 2018). To foster a collaborative spirit, I aim to create a culture of peer teaching and advocacy. Peer teaching refers to the pedagogical approach of ‘hverandreundervisning’ (Baltzersen and Eri 2022) in which students take turn in teaching the class. I conduct peer teaching by organizing ‘class colloquiums’ in which groups of 2 – 3 students present key course texts to the rest of the class and subsequently facilitate Q&As and discussions. Because the group wants to appear competent, they try to explain the text in their own words, which helps them gain a deeper understanding of the text.

To encourage peer advocacy, I emphasize that the development of individual or group projects, should be a collaborative effort by the whole class. This means that the students present their work-in-progress to each other, and it is the responsibility of the whole class to ensure that each project reaches its full potential. This focus on community building rather than solely individual capacity encourages students to consider the collective conditions of authorship and ownership. This is important for teaching students that creative work does not take place in a vacuum; it always builds on what came before, including the ideas, practices and inspirations of peers, colleagues and other practitioners/artists. As McKittrick (2021) argues, this is a relationship not of mastering what we know but of sharing *how* we know. This, to me, is an essential sentiment for quality in teaching and education.

5. EVALUATIONS BY STUDENTS AND COLLEAGUES

5.1. Student evaluations

Feedback from students have evaluated my teaching as ‘encouraging’, ‘engaging, enthusiastic and passionate – making it more fun to learn’ (Student evaluation of *Creative Geographies* course, 2016/17). My passion for what I teach has been described as infectious and ‘mirroring on to students’ (Student evaluation of *Art in Society* course, 2024/25). Students appreciate how my lectures and seminars ‘gave students the chance to have a voice and share their opinions and ideas with the rest of the class and learn how to listen to others’ opinions and ideas’ (Student evaluation of *Urban Interventions* course, 2018/19). My focus on individual feedback as well as group work and group presentations has further been commended by the students for helping them develop their confidence in delivering presentations and in academic writing skills (Student evaluation *Art in Society* course, 2023/24). My persistent use of case-studies and practical examples to illustrate or challenge theory has been described as ‘particularly helpful’ and ‘making [lectures] easy to follow’. While my practice-based, innovative and creative approach to teaching is often unfamiliar to students, they seem to appreciate how it provides them with new perspectives and thoughts on their field. They also

commend the time I spend on creating a safe, inclusive and warm learning environment. For detailed student evaluations, see attachment 14.

5.2. Peer assessments

Colleagues have described my teaching as ‘exceptional’, ‘outstanding’ and ‘with an apparent ease, humour and inclusiveness’. They have further commended me for my ‘engaging and innovative style’ and for how I dedicate ‘huge amounts of time and effort to creating a productive and supportive learning environment’ (statements from prof. David Pinder and Harriet Hawkins). After taking up my professor position at EST/OsloMet, I received the ‘EST Vandremedalje’ in recognition of extraordinary contributions to the educational quality and -environment in the department. In the ‘award-speech’, study leader Petter William Hansen highlighted my ability to make teaching more inclusive as well as my passion for developing teaching practices that aim to change society for the better. Institute leader Liv Klakegg Dahlin commends my ‘rare ability to initiate projects with students and colleagues’ and master program coordinator Jo Cramer further highlights my ‘genuinely collaborative mindset’ and ‘enthusiasm for teaching and learning that elevates the whole team’. For detailed peer assessments and testimony from my institute leader, see attachment 12 and 13.

6. DOCUMENTED PEDAGOGICAL DEVELOPMENT WORK

As detailed in my CV, I contribute to pedagogical development work through several appointments and memberships in educational boards, forums and organisations, as well as through securing funding for educational initiatives (attachments 5, 7 and 11). Key here has been to systematically promote innovative practice-based learning and epistemic diversity in higher education (Aarseth, Bråten & Lund, 2022). Epistemic diversity refers to the presence of diverse perspectives, theoretical starting points, and knowledge approaches within a research-, teaching- and/or learning community. It challenges what critics call an ‘academic monoculture’ or what Santos (2015) calls ‘vanguard theory’. This is a form of thinking that explains everything in advance, thus excluding knowledge or experience that do not fit its descriptions. This is often reflected in the demand for arts to be useful, and to contribute to the never-ending quest of finding applicable solutions to narrowly defined problems. But I would say that the task of arts education should not be limited to produce concrete solutions. Rather it should be to develop the skills, methods and knowledge that help broaden the understanding of the problem. This means making space for more explorative approaches that help students navigate complexity rather than simply reducing it. I believe promoting epistemic diversity is key to this work. Below, I detail two key initiatives I have undertaken in this regard: 1) developing new assessment criteria to better

accommodate open-ended and practice-based learning processes (attachment 2 and 3); and 2) establishing an Erasmus+ partnership with higher education institutions in the global North and South to further promote epistemic diversity in higher education (attachment 5).

6.1. Assessment criteria for practice-based learning

Practice-based learning centres upon creative practices in which practice is not necessarily a problem-solving process, but an open-ended enquiry into (embodied) experiences that may lead to a change in how we see ourselves and the world around us (Candy 20202). Since these forms of enquiry are unpredictable and not always easy to assess, they are often perceived as hard to accommodate within the controlled pedagogical spaces of higher education (Hellman & Lind, 2021). I have therefore worked systematically to develop new assessment criteria that accommodate, even promote, practice-based learning processes.

At Royal Holloway University, I developed a new set of assessment criteria for my *Urban Interventions* module. Being mindful of the differing experiences with practice-based work among the students, I developed criteria that ensures equitable opportunities for students to excel by focusing on oral and written reflective accounts of practice, rather than assessing the quality of the practice itself (attachment 2). This assessment stood in stark contrast to the written, theoretical exam essay that is the standard assessment in geography. In applying to get these criteria approved I had to make an extensive analysis of existing assessment criteria to make a strong case for the academic rigour of the new criteria. At OsloMet, I have continued this work. In addition to playing a pivotal role in re-structuring the master's programme, including revising courses, adding new ones and changing the thesis structure and exam, I have led the process of developing new assessment criteria for the practice-based component of the thesis (attachment 3).

6.2. Erasmus+ partnership

Epistemic diversity is linked to what Santos (2015) calls 'rearguard theory', which he positions as an alternative to 'vanguard theory'. Rearguard theory engages not only with a diversity of ways to study a subject matter, but also with the affective, situated experiences that shape knowledge. Within education and teaching, this entails blurring the boundaries between institutionalised learning and other spaces of knowledge making. As demonstrated in my teaching repertoire, I have developed several courses through which urban sites and communities become key learning arenas. Based on this work, I was invited to be part of an international team developing the Erasmus+ project ACT UP! (attachment 5). The project started December 2024 and is oriented around developing theatre-based educational methods to foster active citizenship among students in response to the climate crisis. I played a key role in articulating the pedagogical approach of the project, including the focus on fostering active citizenship;

developing ‘pedagogical partnerships’ between students and staff; and using urban space as arena for engaging in climate politics. This pedagogical approach was recognized by the EU expert panel as ‘speaking to multiple needs’ and for developing ‘innovative methods for practical and useful solutions and new insights into very relevant topics’.

The project is a collaboration between the Universities of Groningen, Tartu and Cape Town, and was commended by the EU expert panel for its diverse geographic positions and the non-European perspective that it brings in. The sharing of skills, knowledge and findings across these North-South regions was considered as bringing important ‘added value at the EU level.’ The pedagogical methods will be compiled in an ‘ACT UP! Toolkit’ of shareable open-source educational materials to promote epistemic diversity across universities in Europe and beyond.

7. REFLECTIONS ON MY PEDAGOGICAL JOURNEY

My pedagogical journey is rooted in my background within socially engaged art and is linked to what has been termed ‘the pedagogical turn’ in contemporary art practice (Reed and Jickling 2011). Bringing this turn with me into higher education, I have developed a wide repertoire of pedagogical practice that has creativity at its core. I understand creativity here as ‘the process of defeating tried and true habits, employing new strategies, and taking risks to enact change’ (Philip 2013: 4). Accordingly, I have developed creative pedagogical practice that: promotes open-ended inquiries and affective experiences; enhances embodied and practice-based learning; produces epistemic diversity; includes real-world learning arenas; strengthens student voice; and explores new forms of collaboration and collective authorship. This work has been recognized internationally as a ‘transformative university practice’ (attachment 8).

My development of creative pedagogical practice is linked to my commitment to lead a shift in teaching practices towards a greater appreciation of the practice-based, creative and imaginative aspects of arts and culture. I consider education as an ‘aesthetic experience’ (Barone 1983; Ejsing-Duun and Pischetola 2023) that is open-ended, transformative, emotional and embodied. Dewey (1934) argues that aesthetic experience develops imagination and allows us to transform sedimented perceptions with new ones. According to Foucault (2000) this form of ‘transformative experience’ has the potential to question established norms and develop a conceptual grasp and creative understanding that move beyond the limits of the present.

As Dikeç (2015, p. 17) points out, an aesthetic relation to the world is one of sensibility rather than one of knowing: ‘[w]e neither identify nor determine anything in the object presented to our senses but judge it solely in its particularity as it is presented to our senses, without subsuming it under a general rule’. The fact that there are no ‘one right answer’ makes the openness of the creative process an opportunity to learn. The ability to cope with the uncertainty that this brings with it, enables students to go

beyond mastering what is known to focus instead on embracing what we do not yet know. This approach is very much in line with OsloMet's long-term strategy of developing skills and competencies in managing an unpredictable world. It trains the students in staying with the questions until they lead in a direction that was not necessarily predicted. It further promotes an understanding of knowledge not as a static outcome, but as a collective process of meaning-making.

This is not to say that all teachers should be artists or that the traditional lecture style of teaching cannot produce worthwhile educational experiences. Traditional lectures involve creativity when content is arranged and presented in a dynamic manner that encourages open-minded, independent questioning as well as imaginative and personally meaningful attitudes through which the students may enter a spirit of enquiry.

8. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR TEACHING AND PEDAGOGY

We need teaching and learning that enable innovative responses to the world's problems. Teaching that enables curious and open-ended forms of being, knowing and learning rather than trying to establish the mastery of fixed positions and conventional methods. As a merited teacher at OsloMet, I will continue to pave the way for forms of knowing that are sensory, relational and subjective, and further develop creative pedagogical approaches that foster epistemic diversity.

As a merited teacher, I am excited to transfer, and further develop, pedagogical tools and methods developed in the ACT UP! Erasmus+ project (December 2024 – September 2027) to students and colleagues at OsloMet. This involves developing pedagogical approaches that foster active citizenship by teaching students to become claimants of social and environmental justice, rights and responsibilities (Isin & Nielsen 2017). Political life in Norway and beyond urgently needs new practical knowledge and tools to strengthen active citizenship among young people. Younger generations across the world are burdened with increasing climate anxiety, feelings of powerlessness in the face of social and environmental injustices, and dissatisfaction with government responses to societal problems (Hickman et al. 2021). Making use of universities as stages for promoting civic activity and action among students is key to mitigate these challenges. This is also in line with OsloMet's strategy towards 2050, which is built around the involvement of the university in addressing pressing societal challenges, including protecting democratic values, promoting sustainable development and developing skills to tackle an unpredictable future.

With the funds received as merited teacher, I envision organizing a workshop series for colleagues that addresses the potentials and challenges for higher education to foster active citizenship among students and staff. I will also further explore this topic

in my master's teaching, as well as in my role as course leader in the PINS programme (Innovation for Sustainability). As newly appointed member of The Young Academy of Norway (Akademiet for Yngre Forskere) (attachment 7), I am furthermore committed to influence higher education policy to secure supportive research and learning arenas for equipping young/new researcher for facing climate crisis, geopolitical volatility, and increasing social and economic polarisation.

Finally, as a merited teacher I will also teach active citizenship within local communities. I am part of a research group following Sofienbergprosjektet 2024 - 2026, which aims to turn the Sofienberg church in Oslo into a community house for the surrounding neighbourhood (attachment 7). I plan to develop a series of community activities here, engaging both students from OsloMet and local residents in events and activities that address societal issues through artistic and creative methods.

Einstein once said that '[i]n science imagination is more important than knowledge'. However, in line with Best (1991), I think the dichotomy between knowledge and imagination is unhelpful. The risk is that creative practice can be cast off as mere 'play' that has nothing to do at a university – a loci of authority and rigour. Hence, rather than advancing a spirit of enquiry, one is much more likely to hinder or even prevent it by hardening conceptual boundaries. Instead, I will continue demonstrating through my teaching that imagination, creativity and knowledge imply each other, and that much can be gained by finding new ways to combine them.