An aesthetic education

An education in aesthetics in the setting of a Danish folk high school through the theatrical arts

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Animals fill themselves; man eats. The man of mind alone knows how to eat.

Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste* (1825), trans. Fayette Robinson

This chapter has been written on the basis of experiences and ideas about modern *life* learning, which have been important for the establishment of the Performers House Folk High School. The section also includes reflections that form part of the process of evaluation that has taken place over the course of the three years and more for which the school has now existed.

This chapter constitutes a case study about this form of learning that is getting the students of Performers House to learn to take action through art and to experience and reflect through aesthetics. This learning process has an existential aim, seeking to train our students both in theatrical art-skills and personal life-skills. My thesis therefore claims that the aesthetics have certain extraordinary learning possibilities and that this learning very much is connected to how the learner is consciously able to deal with the aesthetic experience: an experience that offers the learner an interaction between senses and analysis. The extraordinary learning therefore starts when I observe that I’m observing, and through this position am able to interact with my expression and the community.

As a consequence – in my terms – aesthetics should be understood broadly, and in this context as distinct from art. Aesthetics must therefore *not* be understood as learning about art history or about the sublime in art. On this basis, aesthetics is to be understood as a universal human language that includes a sensory, emotional, intellectual element and a form element. It can be used to formulate thoughts, insights and knowledge that cannot be formulated through discursive language. The aesthetic offers no fixed right answers, but a multitude of possibilities outside absolute models of interpretation. Aesthetics are distinguished by the interaction between me and my memories/experiences and formulation/expression and a receiver/community. Aesthetics are marked by a desire to discuss, to meet. Regardless of form and expression, aesthetics are marked by a wish for communication and interaction.

It is in the synergy between experience, reflection on our experiences and the specific actions through which these are expressed that make up our transitory formation of identity. Therefore aesthetic *life* learning means looking at oneself while one looks – listening to oneself while one listens – tasting while one tastes – in brief, rediscovering the sensory dimension or the aesthetic experience in life. I stress,
rediscovering. For me, the aesthetic means seeing the basic, latent possibilities in people, where significance and meaning are linked to values and norms, which are in turn linked to religion and the prevailing power structure. Even though the aesthetic is highly fashionable today, it is not a new solution to all our problems, but rather a possible means of experiencing ourselves and the world around us.

One of today’s great drama teachers and directors, Augusto Boal (2000): writes as follows, going right to the heart of the matter of why it is meaningful to use the aesthetic process in a reflective, awareness-forming and educational context:

Theatre is mankind’s first invention, and it paves the way for all other inventions and all other discoveries. Theatre was born in the moment when mankind discovered that one could observe oneself. Observe oneself while acting. Discover that one can observe oneself in the action of observing. Observe oneself as an observer. Observe oneself in a situation.¹

The ideals and motivations behind the education we provide

The former paper mill in Silkeborg, which is today home to Performers House, was founded at the end of the 1840s. At that time Denmark was undergoing a transition from a distinctly agrarian economy to being a country with a blossoming industrial sector and new democratic movements. The first folk high school was also founded during this period – in 1844.

Just as the founders of the folk high school movement must have done, I would like to consider the nature of our times and the prospects for the future, and thus to describe Performers House as a learning project firmly rooted in the context of the present. How are we to describe our present situation? What trends for the future can we see? What significance can we see in art and aesthetics?

It is surely true to say that our culture is no longer dominated by the concept of a universal authority that can ensure that we hold to the paths of truth and righteousness. Our lives are no longer anchored in stable absolutes that can provide answers to all our existential questions.

Finding answers to questions about who we are, how we should behave and what we should do now requires personal input and effort. We can of course point to different types of organisation that can provide us with a framework within which to find a sense of identity. We can join a political party, give our allegiance to a religious movement, put our faith in science or be members of a bikers’ club or a sports association. But, whatever our choice, it is only our own personal conviction that convinces us that West Ham is the world’s greatest football team, or whatever it is we believe. Others will feel that their convictions are right, and ours are wrong. It is thus possible to create a framework, a type of order, for ourselves – but not to claim that it is universally valid. In brief, philosophy, sociology and our own everyday experiences all tell us that our lives are not bound by absolute rules as to what a person can, should and must do. Our days are marked by a lack of clarity. It is no longer self-evident who we are, why we are here and how we should behave.

Things are just the same in our working lives. The key concepts here are to be flexible, creative and innovative, to think creatively for the advantage of the company, 24 hours a day. Lifelong learning from cradle to grave is essential.

On one hand you could say that part of the potential of our times lies in the fact that aesthetics and art are constantly being linked to other areas. This applies, for example, to teaching, to employee development and to development of organisations, to leadership performance and every possible other kind of performance, all with the goal of furthering the creativity and innovation that are seen as being so crucial if society is to develop and if we are to take the lead in this era of creativity and aesthetics.

On the other hand it is important to understand that the focus of the learning project that we are developing at Performers House lies not in creating flexible and creative employees destined for the fast
lane of business life, where the aim is one of constant innovation and change. Instead, we see the potential of art and aesthetics in their appeal to the individual student and his or her ability to tackle the complexities of our modern era, his or her ability to cope with life and live it to the full. At the same time, I am convinced that this aesthetic training project is to the benefit of all society – including business.²

My mission is therefore rather to promote what one might call a form of self-education. This might be described as ‘Learning to be yourself without being self-centred’. Or, as the German professor and philosopher Thomas Ziehe put it, ‘To be able to find something in yourself other than yourself’.³ What I am saying here is that we go to the limits of what we can do in our reflective behaviour. This is what is contained in the notion of an aesthetic education.

At the centre of an aesthetic education based on experiences lies the challenge of the formation of tastes and of the appreciation of ways of living and perspectives on life. It involves going beyond the self, while at the same time still recognising the self as oneself. At Performers House, the basis for such a modern life learning project is an emphasis on making connections across borders – both the borders between disciplines and borders of other kinds. I believe that the meeting between art forms and between global and European cultures that we have at Performers House gives significance to and highlights the differences and similarities that form the framework for our individual existences. We are not talking here about integration, then, the notion that everything should be the same, but rather of the fact that differences as disturbances actually nourish the learning that occurs in meeting.

Our desire to use theatre, dance and music both as forms of expression and as learning processes is rooted in everyday life and fellowship. In the full spirit and tradition of folk high schools, the artistic/aesthetic process gives opportunities for interaction between handiwork and action, the physical and the bodily, communication and expression, feelings and the immediate surroundings, the musical and the poetic, and the community and the individual. The essential element in this interaction is the opportunity for our students to learn that the artistic process (artistic action) has a number of essential prerequisites that are complementary to the conditions of life of postmodern mankind.

The personal life-skills that we are aiming at through the training in the artistic/aesthetic process could be listed as:

- **Presence** – understood as the ability to be present, to create in the present on the basis of personal experiences and memories, to involve the past in the here and now.
- **Change** – to be able to react in relation to what has been planned, the prearranged, both in relation to what is going on in the present instant and to the opportunities (or necessity) for change that are constantly with us, and in interaction both with the other participants in the artistic process and with the audience, thus involving the past in the present.
- **Individuality and the community** – to be able to focus on the personal process and at the same time to accommodate an awareness of contact with the surroundings in terms of fellow actors and the audience. This involves a training that simultaneously accommodates both ‘inner’ and ‘outward’ dialogues, and promotes the ability to use the present situation to examine oneself from the outside, reflectively and within a context.

It is important for an understanding of the whole aesthetic education project to make clear the distinction between art and aesthetics. Art is the outward expression, while aesthetics is the inner existential space of experience. Art involves the deliberate shaping that goes into making a work into reality. Technical skill, use of one’s hands and reflection upon what constitutes good handiwork are important elements. Through his or her handiwork, the artist is able to express the most complex concepts through a universal idiom that can span time and place. The aesthetic becomes an artistic expression.

Aesthetics concerns the sampling of all the many sensory possibilities in our existence. It embraces the sensory reality of fellowship, of process, indeed of all participation – the involvement of the body, the

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² Ziehe, ‘To be able to find something in yourself other than yourself’.
³ Ziehe, ‘To be able to find something in yourself other than yourself’.

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liveability of life, a great sensitivity to our surroundings. At the same time it must be emphasised that the skills and techniques that are associated with artistic expression are involved in enabling the meeting with the other participants in the process – fellow-actors and the audience. The interaction that arises from the encounter with the audience and one’s fellow actors increases the opportunities for reflecting the process/product in the surroundings (that actors can communicate with one another and that the whole expression can make contact with the audience), and thus in the final analysis strengthens the learning project.

It is therefore essential that the aesthetic and the artistic dimensions do not stand alone. They work best in a situation of reciprocity. Working with the technical competences of art means involvement in the process of examining and interpreting the surrounding world, and vice versa. This is how art and aesthetics are to be understood in this chapter. It makes no sense to formulate a clear delineation between the two dimensions in relation to aesthetic education.

In the following I discuss how the present, change and the relationship between individuality and fellowship contain the key to understanding the artistic and aesthetic process as the basis for our education project. How and why can the artistic and aesthetic disciplines at Performers House be linked to modern life learning, and how is this achieved in practice? I describe aesthetic education in four sections – as communication, as hope and memory, as space and, finally, as process.

Aesthetics as communication

Birds sing without knowing anything about music. Singing forms a part of their activities as animals, like eating, drinking and mating, and their singing never varies. A nightingale will never try to sing like a swallow, or a thrush like a lark. In contrast, humans are able to sing and to observe themselves while they sing. A warning scream from an African ape will be clearly understood by an Amazonian ape of the same species, whereas the word that signifies a warning – ‘Danger!’ – spoken in good Portuguese will never be understood by a Swede or a Norwegian – who nevertheless will be able to understand the warning from the signals conveyed in the face of the person shouting.4 Or, in other words, from the mode of speaking the word.

(Boal, 2000: 27–8)

What does it mean that communication has meaning and that this is linked to what I have taken a word from the theatre to call the subtext (the mode)?

When we use the word subtext in connection with communication, this implies that there must be something above. What is above is what we call the text – the words and symbols that normally constitute the form of the message. Text and subtext thus signify what could be called the outer and the inner elements of communication. In theatre, this construct is also linked to those physical actions that can quite reasonably be termed the subtext of the action (the purpose).

• Selection of information is part of the outer element of communication, which is therefore associated with the text and the action (the form).
• Feelings, senses and vocal expression (mode) belong to the inner element of communication (see Figure 29.1).

Communication

What is special about aesthetic communication is that, at one and the same time, we work with the sensory and the meaning aspects of symbols, and consciously use the sensory and meaning-forming patterns that exist within language quite independently of the cognitive truth value or normative correctness of the message.

Feelings are the prerequisite for aesthetic communication. The question is whether feelings are not always a prerequisite for every communication. This is not to be understood as meaning being under the
control of our emotions. Reasoning and analysis are always present as important factors. The interaction between sender and receiver that takes place around the symbols or form of the message in the public space (the outer element) is the primary goal of the communication as such. It is also here that interference is greatest, which constantly leads to new choices and adaptations by sender and receiver through the inner aspect of communication in the form of reflection, analysis and sensibility to bring order to the system. This relationship – this interaction – is what I term the aesthetic experience.⁵

In a psycho-physical learning perspective, I wish to focus further on aesthetic work in an area that I have termed the ‘pre-context’. If I am to make a serious attempt to isolate the meaning of the aesthetic, I believe it is important to try to describe the process that goes on before the symbols or the work are published to the surrounding world.

In placing the aesthetic experience within the inner element of communication, Figure 29.2 presents a development regarding the content of the subtext. In contrast to Figure 29.1, which reflects a traditional view that the subtext is associated with the feelings and the senses, the presence of analysis together with

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**Figure 29.1** Communication as form and mode

**Figure 29.2** Communication in ‘the pre-context state’
feelings as part of the inner element of communication represents a development of the traditional view of the subtext.

In contrast to current views that perceive feelings and reasoning as meeting consciously in the context, Figure 29.2 suggests a continuous interaction between feelings and reason that makes possible an adjustment of choices in a ‘pre-context state’. The need to make adjustments can be linked to interference from voice quality, experiences, or memories (inner pictures) related to the subject, and may thus be linked to both feelings and reasoning. From our own experience in dialogues, we recognise the preliminary ‘Er … ’ or the lowering of the eyebrows as signalling the moment before information is conveyed to the public sphere through the message.

This suggests that the interaction between form (inner pictures) and analysis takes place in the ‘pre-context’, before the action and symbols are presented, and that the emotional quality of the communication thus lies in the choice of memories and objectives, in the vocal quality of the sender and the receiver, and the circumstances under which the communication takes place.

Aesthetics as hope and memory

My description of aesthetic communication and my subsequent attempt to identify the aesthetic as an existential space for experience involve the question of what comes before feelings, so that these are available and ready as a precondition for the appearance of the aesthetic experience and the subtext of the communication.

The function of feelings can be described as being the conveyor belt for communication and its solid basis – the sensory layers of meaning in the meeting with reasoning, in the creative present. Feelings arise as a result of the sender’s memories, which take the form of pictures, senses, emotional memories, purposes – in brief, as the subtext of the music score, manuscript or movement. This individual process is constantly in play in the creative present in the meeting with the receiver and the other actors. The individual process is thus continuously affected by fellowship, which at the same time is itself changing through the meeting with the sender’s individual expression. This means that feelings are in a constant state of flux, and consequently a performer can never repeat (copy) an expression, but must recreate the expression in the present moment.

In condensed form, I would put this as follows: the receiver sees what happens and hears what is said through reasoning; and through feelings the receiver ‘reads’ the subtext of the action and the words. The presence of feelings is linked to memory, which through creative action – the creative present – is linked to the future. In this way, change and development are characterised by their accommodation of both past and future – a contradictory concept which the Danish writer Johan Fjord Jensen called rather poetically *hope and memory*. In hope lies the possibility for change and action, and in memory is hidden experience and knowledge/professional competence; both these concepts are contained within the framework of the present (action) – the creative present.

The challenge in working with feelings and sensations lies in the assumption that the emotional state is not subject to our will. An aesthetic education demands a degree of sensuality for being able to work with these processes, and this often means a change at the level of identity.

Consequently, I will describe two paths in relation to memory – two paths that constantly overlap and interfere with one another. The two paths provide an understanding of how one can consciously work with feelings and the sensory, both in artistic expression (recreatively) and in an authentic aesthetic situation:

- Memories as involuntary associations – ‘the intermitiences of the heart’, as Marcel Proust called them. Tripping over a stone recalls memories of a holiday. The taste of a cake brings back a childhood experience. In this way it is possible to recreate a forgotten time in a new time; and in order to hold on
to those memories, they must be recreated in an art work – a kind of recycling. Creativity is thus tightly bound up with memory and the senses. This type of intrusion of memory is characterised by:

- occurring constantly, and thus having a large influence on a person’s voice (which has the side effect that the emotional state has significance for the ‘pre-context state’, and thus also on the choice of information and subtext in the message or form of expression);
- the fact that it cannot be worked on through practice of technique.

- Memory as a deliberate choice – the securing of selected memories (highly selective recall). Securing memories involves an ability to associate new operations until the memory is found. These memories are a condensation of previous operations. The memory is thus not the entire preceding operation, but a distillation – a type of memory ‘light’. The selective memory is characterised by:
  - being part of a selected feeling;
  - belonging to both the ‘pre-context’ and the public space of communication;
  - the observation of observation constantly being part of the process of the selection of recall;
  - the presence of feelings and recognition as complementary objects;
  - the fact that it can be worked on through practice of technique.

Aesthetics as space

When the message is produced in the public space, it is often in a consciously determined form. That the form of the message is consciously determined means that the message in the public space is part of the staging, but it can, however, be easily dominated by a search for the perfect form and hence an exaggerated focus on the technical skill of the performer. I will try to explain more clearly through a couple of examples. One of the distinguishing features of our time is a desire for authenticity in relations with the world. There is talk of authentic leadership, of authentic teachers, salespeople, politicians, etc. – but if the form is deliberately chosen, can it at the same time be authentic? I will try to answer that question with a counter-image. The authentic is also a current ideal for expression within various art genres, for example Dogme film. In this connection, reference is often made to the English director Mike Leigh’s ‘method’ of building up dialogue. It is important to emphasise that the authentic is a consciously targeted form that can only be achieved through great (professional) artistic skill.

When there is emphasis on the process, the process comes to underlie the expression (the form). The expression is then rather the opposite, and occurs in an unconsciously chosen, unintended form. The result is then an authentic form that directly reflects the individual’s personality. It is still a mask, but not one that is determined by requirements for a perfect mode of expression or technical skill. By separating the aesthetic experience from an aimed-for form, the aesthetic space becomes accessible to everybody. That is, for me, the crucial point if aesthetics is to be involved in the way in which we communicate and transform ourselves – in brief, in aesthetic learning.

A folk high school is for all adults of 18 years or over, and should be seen as a free space for learning, fellowship and education. There are no auditions or entry tests, and a folk high school is a totally examination-free zone. The ultimate togetherness that is found in the boarding school format creates unique opportunities as a framework for both non-formal learning and the informal, self-directed learning that goes on the whole time among the students. The factor that all students have in common is that they have chosen to attend the school entirely of their own free will, motivated by the subject areas and the fellowship that each separate folk high school offers.

For these reasons, Performers House places emphasis on the aesthetic and the authentic, but in interaction with the discipline of art.
Aesthetics as process and product

It is important to understand the aesthetic as more than party games, entertainment or breathing space, but to take it seriously, if it is to be used in an awareness-building and learning context. One must take aesthetics seriously and not simply be satisfied by the fact that it certainly does also involve play, entertainment and freedom. Of all the aesthetic processes, it is the theatre that comes closest to and most easily approaches life as we truly live it. If we compare theatre with dance and music, we see that dance and music involve an additional dimension of abstraction or stylisation in their expression (for example, dialogue is sung in opera, and movements are strictly choreographed in dance) in comparison with the theatrical tradition.

These three forms are further differentiated from literature or the visual arts, which lack the direct interaction between the sender (the artist or work) and the receiver (the audience). It is my belief, however, that if one is aware and deliberate in one’s choice of form of expression, these differences in forms of expression need not have great significance in a context where the aesthetic serves as a platform for learning.

On one of the first evenings after the arrival of a new group of students, we present our particular folk high school and the whole folk high school tradition. I take the opportunity to explain why we have called our folk high school ‘Performers House’ and not, for example, ‘Performance House’. I explain that, here at Performers House, the focus is on the individual performer – not because the individual as a performer should sit and contemplate his or her own navel all the time, but because the individual has an obligation to make an effort, and to prepare as well as possible for the encounter with the community through artistic/aesthetic work and through the opportunities for communal living offered by the residential nature of the school.

I also make clear our performance concept: performance is carrying out a specific action, under specific circumstances, as precisely as possible. The specific action is associated with knowledge of the discipline, handicraft, the technical skills of art – being able to carry out precise movements in dance, to play the right notes at the right time in music, etc. The specific circumstances involve everything that pertains to the specific action: the performer’s voice and physical condition, the same factors for co-performers, whether or not the audience are attentive or are taking the opportunity for a short nap, the inevitable coughing that comes in at the most sensitive moments, the physical setting, the acoustics of the space, the distance to the audience, etc. When, as a performer, a person is able to tackle the specific circumstances of the action, it means that, even on ‘bad days’, when the circumstances seem to frustrate at every turn, there is a high basic level of performance. The performer has become professional. It is as in life, when a person is able to tackle any situation when life keeps constantly playing tricks. That person has become a survivor, capable of functioning in life. The specific circumstances are therefore the real focus of our performance training. ‘As precisely as possible’ means that our definition of performance has no bottom line or examination. The aesthetic cannot be weighed and measured in the traditional sense of a measurable result. It is about making an effort; if our students make an effort, they cannot do better.

Product as process

All the longer courses at Performers House conclude with a major project – a performance or a concert, either based on one discipline or on some form of interdisciplinary cross-over. A final project is the ultimate product; the product is the process.

The function of the teaching staff in the project is like that of a Board of Directors; they use all their artistic knowledge to set the project on its feet as a worthwhile experience for a broad public. The target audience goes beyond the participants’ friends and family, and thus their normal comfort zone. Our final projects are typically presented four to six times for different target groups. It is important to emphasise that the process of preparing for the final encounter involves a number of presentations related to intermediary
projects and café evenings. The aim of these is to create a performance culture wherein people dare to perform even when they doubt their own abilities or are unsure of the quality of what they have to show.

The overall goal of our final project is to experience the significance of the specific circumstances. It awakens reflections in our students on what it means to perform – on recreating rather than repeating, on what made the performance a good one or not a good one. The reflections of the students on themselves and on the specific circumstances are what make evident the significance of the circumstances of the performance. Part of our evaluation therefore involves creating a communal framework for our students within which they can share their reflections. This process in relation to a specific product gives rise to the opportunity for two encounters.

The ‘encounter with one’s self’

A person does not just wander in off the street and create an aesthetic experience or a work of art. First of all, the process involves creating trust between the participants and

- the director, so that the participants are ready to accept that an external observer is a facilitator and a creator of a framework, both for the performance as a whole and the contribution of each individual;
- the other participants, so that the community forms a secure framework within which the fear of failure and the risk of being exposed to ridicule are minimised. In fellowship (‘we stand together’) there is the opportunity for individual participants to be strengthened and thus in a position to make an extra effort, to the benefit of themselves and for the group.

This crucial trust is naturally bound up in the communal way of life of the folk high school, and it is also built up through a series of aesthetic/theatrical experiences for the students throughout the course, which are ‘tuned’ in relation to the students’ self-awareness, and current challenges and changes that emerge into the spotlight during the course. In the meeting with oneself – between the past/memories and the current context – the learning that is achieved through the other parts of the high school stay is reflected in the realisation or ‘action’, which is so important when one participates in the aesthetic process. The whole ‘training element’ is a precondition for participants’ ability to ‘appear’ in an aesthetic space and thus to become co-creators of the content framework.

The ‘encounter with the audience’

The encounter with the audience involves a paradox: the greatest resistance and the greatest driving force. This paradox is at the same time a precondition for release and forward-directed energy.

The resistance arises from a fear of being unable to make an impression and a doubt that the performer can manage to interest anyone in the presentation as a whole. In consequence, doubt arises as to whether the whole has any meaning at all. It is impossible simultaneously to both be a participant in and experience the whole, and this can create a lack of confidence in the director and the process. In consequence, students often question whether the project is viable at all.

The driving force lies in the ambition to do things as well as possible and to make a difference. In this lies belief in the future. The more students approach their encounter with the audience with fear and trembling, the more (self-)disciplined they become and focused on achieving the best possible results.

The release comes when both the results of the whole and the work of the individual participants are seen reflected in the reactions of the public. The spectators cry, the spectators laugh. They applaud long and loud, and the students react immediately to the recognition. If the audience fall asleep or even leave, the frustration that this provokes will form a part of the specific circumstances. For the students to deal
with the frustration and gather themselves again for the next performance will require work, and reflection on one’s own performance and that of the others.

**Process as product**

Improvisation is the ultimate process wherein the product is the process. Improvisation takes place in an interaction between music, dance and theatre. The student is thus challenged to improvise on the basis of a discipline that is not his or her own. The improvisations vary between more abstract content and more concrete offerings, whereby students can express themselves in forms that can directly translate the dilemmas and beliefs arising from the complexities of their everyday lives.

An informed (situationally determined) judgement is about improvisation, where the quality lies in the process as a method of working and developing, and not in some predetermined final product! Making a proper assessment means partaking in the process – participating in life! There are a small number of prerequired factors that must be exhibited/practised when working with improvisation:

- The ability to work together requires trust (and give and take).
- The ability to participate in the process requires courage (to give up the concept of a final product).
- The ability to make the right choices requires a concept (permission to be wrong).
- The ability to create growth requires passion (faith in one’s own abilities, experiences and memories, and in those of others).

On the basis of these skills and prerequisites, a feedback culture is built up within the improvisation, with the simple rule of play, that one may not say no – since this would destroy what is in process. One must always agree to join in! An informed, situationally-determined assessment. Participants may seek conflict and dilemmas without blocking everything with a refusal – the participants are obliged to go along with the situation, to join in, and so move onward.

When musicians improvise together, they must simultaneously listen to themselves and to the others, and be attentive to what the other players ‘are at’ and when to let go of the musical figures one is working with and that one offers to one’s fellow musicians. There is not necessarily a score that determines what one plays. An experienced musician has many patterns and figures in his or her repertoire and can use them to create structure and meaning in what the uninitiated see as a random chaos of notes. In the same way, socially competent people have many ‘patterns’ for what it means to be human, and are in a position to combine and move between different perspectives until they hit upon a tone that makes it possible for a group to develop – and to swing.

**Conclusion**

In my introduction I claim that the language of aesthetics has special cognitive functions and potential. This special ‘something’ that we offer in the meeting with our students is to challenge them to educate themselves and learn about life on a meta-level within the artistic/aesthetic process as a method of approaching the great questions of life. As participants in the artistic/aesthetic process, they must interpret existence and the world around them in order to express themselves. This involves meta-evaluation. This process involves at all times their interrelationship with individuals and groups in close interaction, essential to one another. Artistic/aesthetic expression is performing communication with community and society. So their experience is to participate as both a duty and a right in the artistic/aesthetic process in a democratic society. Aesthetics as Hope, Memory and Space is learning by doing and reflecting: It is learning to be your self without being self-centred, using and developing art and aesthetics as life competences.
From my point of view, the level of meta-learning is therefore crucial, for you to be able to define that a learning process has taken place. The learning relation is always moving and changing and therefore it is at the same time a relation defined by insecurity, possibilities (choices) and instinctive actions. Somehow, the meta-level is embracing that a developing process has been going on and points towards an existential life education, so to speak: to deal with life as a process, and taste that you taste, observe that you are observing.

Notes
1 Boal, Augusto, 2000: Lystens regnbue, pp. 27.
7 Segal, Hanna, 1958: A Psycho-Analytical Approach to Aesthetics, pp. 131–133.
8 Keiding, Tina Bering et al., 2002: ’Hvor gør man af følelserne’ in Luhmann anvendt, p. 130.

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