

**THEATRICAL,
BUT NOT THEATRE.
ARCHITECTONIC,
BUT NOT ARCHITECTURE.
SCULPTURAL,
BUT NOT SCULPTURE.**

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What 間[Ma] does, or what 間[Ma] could do.

(As a traveling concept journeying through a series of site bound artworks
made for disparate spaces in Norway 2013 – 2016.)

Edvine Larssen

Research fellow

Norwegian Artistic Research Programme

KIT Trondheim Art Academy NTNU 2017

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Faculty of Architecture and Design

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Research Fellow

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Abstract

The concept of [Ma] is the framework for this Artistic Research Project.

In relation to the project, it brings an enmeshed understanding of time and space – as well as timing and spacing – in multiple layers. It considers the importance of the interstice, the unfilled or empty, as well as different states of being in-between or in tension. [Ma] describes something that reaches beyond language, even as sensory experience in, and through, time and space, felt in both mind and body. [Ma] is a concept shaped by language – that tries to avoid, language. It has been investigated here as a travelling concept through qualitative methods in search of what it *does*, and whether it could be relevant as a concept in the making and experience of contemporary art(s). Through these qualitative methods, a series of 16 categories functioning as sub-concepts has arisen that open-up the surrounding fields of [Ma], illuminating what this concept does or could do. These categories have informed, as well as fuelled, the process of making five artworks that are bound to disparate spaces, and are of variable duration. Time as well as space can be read as material components in the shaping of these five artworks, all of which can be described as passage works. What this artistic research project shows is how Art and [Ma] are concepts, and practices, that share qualities, and how [Ma] can be understood as particularly relevant for installation art and other art forms that are bound to space and time and demand the physical presence of the participant.

Introduction:

This text is a written reflection relating to an artistic research project made during a Fellowship in The Norwegian Artistic Research Programme hosted by the Art Academy in Trondheim (KIT) at NTNU.

The concept of [Ma] should be read as the overall framework for the project. 間[Ma] is strongly connected to both spatiality and temporality particularly time understood as various forms of duration. The artistic research project has searched for possible links between 間[Ma] and contemporary art, and crosses various fields of practice, all of them linked with, simultaneously, space and time.

This text reflects upon and relates directly to both an investigation of 間[Ma] through qualitative research methods and to a series of five artworks made by the artist during the period 2013 – 2016 and bound to various sites and spaces in Norway.

Part 1 of the text will introduce and discuss 間[Ma].

In this part, it will become clear how [Ma] is investigated in the project as a travelling concept, rather than simply how 間[Ma] functions in the Japanese language and in its original context.

Part 2 introduces the methods used in this project.

In this part, the qualitative method used to research the concept 間[Ma] – stepwise deductive induction (Tjora, 2012), via interviews – will be presented. This is a method generally used within social sciences as a means to create new theories.

Part 2 will introduce this method and how it has been utilized in this specific artistic research project by turning the final steps of this method into a generator for the making of, and reflection upon, art in the context of [Ma], rather than as a way of constructing new theory on [Ma]. Through this method, an investigation is made into whether [Ma] could be a useful concept for contemporary art.

The middle of part 2 will reflect upon the practice-based methods employed here, as well as highlight relevant experiences that informed the work.

The end of this section will reflect on *tension* as a new departure relating to [Ma], and upon how installation art, as a genre, connects with [Ma].

The five artworks made as part of this artistic research project are presented in the following chapters:

Artwork I: *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness* was planned, built in-situ, and shown in the gallery space TSSK in Trondheim, in 2013. This installation is discussed in **part 3** of the text.

Artworks II, III, IV: *At any given moment*.

Artwork II was made for and experienced by moving between two ancient stone vaulted cellars in Levanger, presented by LevArt in 2014.

Artwork III was presented, as a second instalment, during *Bastard – Trondheim International Festival for Performative Arts*, in 2015, where it was re-made; now experienced by moving between two cellar spaces in Trondheim.

Artwork IV is the third manifestation of *At any given moment*, presented this time as an artist-book, published by *LevArtText* in 2016. In this version of *At any given moment*, the book is explored as an alternative space. This version also functions as a reflection of *Artwork II* because it presents actual experiences gathered from it, written by those who participated in this work. At the same time this artist-book is a unique artwork that can be experienced without any previous knowledge of *Artwork II*.

The choice to present the artwork *At any given moment* in three different locations and contexts, here denoted as artworks II – IV, was made due to an interest in understanding how the site or space might affect the finished work, as well as the making of it, and consequently also how it is perceived and experienced. By presenting the same artwork three times, the research has enabled, in greater depth and breadth, various practice-based insights and reflections upon the consequences of moving an artwork made for a specific site to another one. How does this move affect the artwork, the site and the experience of the artwork? And how has this artistic research project affected the work each time it has been remade and moved to another site? All three versions of *At any given moment* are discussed in **part 4** of this text.

Artwork V: *Pust*. was planned for, and made, as an extension to a wooden architectural structure situated outdoors on a beach. It was a part of SALT, a festival for art, music and architecture, that took place at Sandhornøy in Nordland in 2015. This work is discussed in **part 5**.

Choosing to make works for the disparate spaces and spatial contexts mentioned above has enabled a series of reflections on how a space or a site can influence the making, as well as the experience, of artworks, and provided a way to investigate diverse aspects of [Ma].

Some sites were chosen as a direct consequence of the qualitative research done on this concept, noticing

for example a link between [Ma] and nature, as further discussed in part 5.

In order to give more of a feeling for the temporal nature of the works made during this artistic research project, and to convey more fully the uniqueness of the sites, all artworks (in addition to appearing in this text) are presented, via documentation, in the catalogue: *Theatrical, but not theatre. Architectonic, but not architecture. Sculptural, but not sculpture*, made in 2017. In the context of this text, this catalogue should be understood as an appendix, which should give a better understanding of the discussed artworks.

As artwork IV is an artist-book, it is an artwork that is also still existing in the world.

Situations/Situasjoner

Is the last artwork, and part of the final results of this artistic research project.

This work will not be discussed in this text.

Situations/Situasjoner will be operating in the in-between spaces and behind the scenes of Nordenfjeldske Kunstindustrimuseum in Trondheim during the period 02.12.2017 – 07.01.2018. It does not aim to function as a final exhibition summing up this artistic research project as this is performed by this text as well as the above-mentioned catalogue that functions as an appendix. Rather, this text and *Situations/Situasjoner* are both to be read as reflections on this artistic research project, although by way of different methods.

The project at Nordenfjeldske aims at creating experiential reflections in the context of [Ma] through creating an artwork that uses visual and sense-based language rather than more conventional communication.

Situations/Situasjoner can be understood as a bridge between the works made as part of this research project in the context of [Ma] and a point in the future.

A note on artistic research

Artistic research makes it possible to apply other methods, from different fields, to this project, allowing one to redress the lack of a strong existing methodology of its own (due to its lack of precursors). Artistic research is an interdisciplinary research field in which many choices of method are allowed. This produces complexity in terms of this field's research output, as there are many variations on how to commit to this research field. In my view, it is not about seeking the right answer to one set research question, but is rather about looking for new insights, reflections, or ways of reflectively experiencing something to be shared and discussed with adjacent fields. In this way, various art fields are helped forward as artistic research gains insights previously unknown.

As a brief introduction, I share a quote that illustrates current debate, taken from Schwab and Borgdorff's book *The exposition of Artistic research: publishing art in academia*:

“The lack of disciplinary frameworks puts some strain on key academic processes, such as peer review, which in their criteria make reference, for example, to existing disciplines, fields of study and methods. If, as suggested, art may transgress any criterion for its evaluation, since it transforms the ground on which the evaluation takes place, a practical solution needs to be found that allows for academic evaluation process and peer – review without fixed points of reference. The fact that academic processes of evaluation are challenged does not, however signal the fact artistic research may not fit into broad definitions of research, as employed, for example, by the current Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the UK, which defines research as a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared” (Schwab and Borgdorff, 2014: 14).

Part 1: Unpacking 間[Ma] as a concept

Contemporary art is not about answering questions. It is rather a way of communicating, sensing, reflecting and sharing information and knowledge, understood broadly by incorporating practice-based and experiential knowledge. Crucially, it is a way of asking questions and investigating something as-yet unknown. Art can be experienced and sensed as a part of life, shaped in and by the world. Art and [Ma] both operate as concepts that constantly float and travel in terms of their meaning and how they make sense in specific contexts. In general, they expand (culturally, geographically, historically, or even through time) as they travel and make journeys in and out of different contexts.

Concepts inhabit the potential to be rendered, because they are influenced and changed by the fields and contexts they are operating in. Through becoming part of the discourse of each unique field their meaning may become broadened and/or altered.

1.1. 間[Ma] in Japan

As [Ma] stems from Japanese language and culture it might be useful for the readers of this text to see the kanji¹ for [Ma] as it introduces the concept in a visual way; also for those of us who are unable to read kanji. The kanji [Ma] is written, or we could say drawn, like this:



In modern-style Japanese it can be described as picturing the sun underneath the sign for a gate or a doorway. [Ma] however is a very old kanji, and where it now reads as the sun, it used to be understood as the moon in old style Japanese. The kanji [Ma] has made an interesting shift. By moving from nighttime to daytime it slightly shifts its meaning as well as its emotional state.

The old-style sign for [Ma] describes the moon placed underneath a doorway, and through this it is drawing an atmospheric picture of a nocturnal moment.

As a way of illustrating this:

¹ Kanji is a system of Chinese characters and is one of the three writing systems used in Japanese next to the phonetic systems Hiragana and Katakana.

Imagine it is night and you are looking up at the moon through the slit of an open door. The sky is dark, but the moon is glowing towards you from above. This is a fleeting moment as the moon suddenly disappears behind a moving cloud. The moment of gazing at the clear moon while standing in the dark is therefore an ephemeral moment, and this temporal moment is drawing the kanji for [Ma].

If we are to imagine what is described in this nocturnal moment by picturing the sun in a similar fleeting moment, the atmosphere dramatically changes. The melancholy of the moonlit night vanishes with the brightness of sunlight.

In this artistic research project, light and darkness play important roles, as will become clearer in the parts discussing the artworks.

1.1.1 [Ma], a travelling concept

In Japan, [Ma] operates as a word used in many everyday situations where it describes, for example, room, space, time, pause or interval, according to how it is placed and combined with other words within a sentence. [Ma], however, also operates as a concept that comes closer to the definition of a mini-theory.

Mieke Bal's book *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities - a Rough Guide* uses the idea of travelling as a metaphor for gaining new information and knowledge. The journey itself becomes visible and takes part in this expanding knowledge.

The journey that concepts take when moving into new areas and fields leaves traces that are visible. Through the traces left on the concept during its journey, it will change, and its meaning will be expanded.

Bal states: "But after returning from your travels, the object constructed turns out to no longer be the thing that so fascinated you when you chose it. It has become a living creature, embedded in all the questions and considerations that the mud of your travel spattered on to it, and that surround it like a field" Bal (2002: 1).

1.1.2 What [Ma] does rather than what [Ma] is

Bal also makes a clear distinction between *words* and *concepts*. While words are used to describe what something *is*, a concept deals more with what something *does*. The concept is more flexible owing to the likelihood of its mutation during its travels.

Concepts constantly question their surrounding layers of meaning by enabling discussion, reflection and even debate, and they might be deciphered variably according to different cultures or disciplines. "In fact, concepts are, or do, much more. If well thought through, they offer miniature theories, and in that guise, help analysis of objects, situations, states and other theories" Bal (2002:22).

A concept is constructed, built or shaped by its context and can undergo various metamorphoses through its journey in and out of many contexts and fields. By contrast, words are here understood as more general labels, providing relatively fixed definitions and lacking the ability to change.

Bal's writing about concepts can be read as a backdrop making it possible for me to observe and study [Ma] in a way, hopefully, that exceeds the gaze of a foreigner fascinated with an incomprehensible word. Bal's description of concepts as miniature theories is useful in the context of this artistic research project as it opens-up the possibility of observing, studying and discussing [Ma] on the same terms as any other theory. As she states: "Precisely because they travel between ordinary words and condensed theories, concepts can trigger and facilitate reflection and debate on all levels of methodology in the humanities" (Bal, 2002: 29).

By using Bal's theory of concepts, this artistic research project has progressed from questioning, in the early stages, what [Ma] is, to an understanding that the more relevant focus for this investigation should be what [Ma] does. In *doing* lies an active position closer to art: there is always an active position in the making of art, be it producing an object, writing a book or composing a symphony. The question of what it does is also closely related to how art is deciphered (or not), because art is not simply about answering a single set of questions.

The change of scope appeared about halfway through the fellowship period, and it became a vital turning point for the project as this shift of focus opened-up the possibility of deeper reflection on [Ma] in the context of contemporary art.

The works made as part of the project are site-bound, and made for disparate spaces. The site itself becomes an integral part of the artwork to such an extent that there is no way to separate its space from the added elements of art as these become totally integrated.

Another primary concern is, as mentioned above, how art is experienced not just through the gaze, but also sensed through and with the body.

The artworks made as part of this project are to be experienced by moving through each unique space, by spending time there. Space and duration, each fundamental to sensing and understanding [Ma], are to be understood as actual materials that shape the artworks in this artistic research project.

1.1.3 間[Ma] introduced to the West

[Ma] was introduced to an art audience in the West in 1978 when the Japanese architect Isozaki Arata² designed the exhibition³ *MA – Space-Time in Japan*, at Musée des arts Décorative in Paris. This exhibition showed works in the framework of [Ma] by Japanese practitioners from various fields and was received with great interest by a Western audience. The exhibition, as well as the catalogue accompanying it, strove to go

² In Japan it is polite to present the family name first. I have chosen to follow the Japanese tradition when referring to Japanese references throughout this text.

³ In the years following the first exhibition, it also travelled to other cities like New York in 1979 and Stockholm in 1980, and it was finally shown in Japan, for the first time, in 2000.

beyond the *word* [Ma] as it is used in everyday life in Japan. In the context of this exhibition [Ma] is a concept in which several approaches, and their ramifications, are on display through presenting works of art that open-up onto the fields surrounding [Ma].

In his book *Japan-ness in Architecture*, Isozaki states: “I hoped to present the ways in which [Ma] shows up in different modalities of thought and speech: logic, visual, and performative” (Isozaki, 2006: 95).

Isozaki is not concerned here with what [Ma] is, but he is rather reflecting on what [Ma] does when he introduces a series of sub-concepts operating on different levels as a way of opening-up to diverse understandings of it. He notes how he sees [Ma] in relation to each of these sub-concepts: “I had introduced *sabi* – the sense of extinction – as a section in [Ma], because undoubtedly it is in [Ma]” (Isozaki, 2006: 100). *Sabi* is a concept describing dying beauty. Isozaki here describes [Ma] as a changeable process, a process moving from beauty to total decay.

If we think about the kanji as described in part 1, we can understand this notion of dying beauty in the moment of gazing at the soft moon as this moment will become erased in its meeting with the harsh sunlight.

In another of his sub-concepts – *Susabi*, Isozaki writes that [Ma] is an empty space in which different moments appear, pass and disappear. In yet another sub-concept, *hashi*, meaning bridge in Japanese, Isozaki draws on how [Ma] divides the world just as a bridge divides and connects. For instance, the bridge, and [Ma], might be a connection between a divine and a more profound world, divine understood in this context as the world of spirits, and the profane as the world of humans. In all these sub-concepts linked to [Ma], my understanding is that the focus and key to understanding and sensing it lies in perpetual change.

By choosing works from contemporary artists that exemplified [Ma], or that resonated with each of these sub-concepts, Isozaki was staging [Ma] in such a way that the Western audience felt they could connect with it without having to understand the *word* [Ma]. In the catalogue of the exhibition from when it was shown in Stockholm in 1980, Lars Berglund writes about how the thoughts and concepts surrounding [Ma] might appear distant for most Japanese in their contemporary life. He goes on to reflect upon how there are several similarities to [Ma] in our own culture and how “this exhibition not only allows a deeper contact with Japanese culture, but also enables another access to our own”⁴ (Isozaki, 1980: 11).

⁴ Translated from Swedish by the author.

Through my work with this artistic research project and via my own personal experiences with the concept [Ma] this statement is recognized as highly appropriate.

1.2 Finding 間[Ma]

While spending several months living and working in Japan between 2006 and 2007 as a participant in the artist research programme at CCA Kitakyushu, my interest in Japanese Noh theatre⁵ emerged. In reading about and discussing Noh with Japanese friends, an awareness of [Ma] made itself present to me. Noh theatre is often referred to as *the art of [Ma]* in Japan. It occurred to me during this period that it was intriguing how a single word could contain a joint meaning about vast notions of time and space. It had a complexity that seemed extremely relevant to my work as an artist on how the notion of time seemed to be interwoven with the spatial.

Becoming increasingly interested in researching this concept, it became evident that there was little information available to me as a non-Japanese speaker. However, on the Columbia University (NY) website, [Ma] was, and still is, described (in a course for undergraduate students about buildings and cities in Japanese history) as:

The Japanese spatial concept is experienced progressively through intervals of spatial designation.

*In Japanese, ma the word for space suggests interval. It is best described as a consciousness of **place**, not in the sense of an enclosed three-dimensional entity, but rather the simultaneous awareness of form and non-form deriving from an intensification of vision. Ma is not something that is created by compositional elements; it is the thing that takes place in the imagination of the human who experiences these elements. Therefore ma can be defined as **experiential place** understood with emphasis on **interval** (Day, 1998).*

The reason for including this online description of [Ma] is to introduce a very similar platform from which I started to unfold this concept. Although I knew that there existed a vast amount of writing on [Ma] in Japanese, it took some time to locate available texts in English or Scandinavian languages.

⁵ Traditional Japanese form of theatre, thought to be one of the oldest traditions of theatre in the world still in active play today. Noh is a stylized form of theatre using masks, symbols and slow gestures. Noh storytelling is suggestive, and the audience has to imagine much of it. The Noh tradition that we are familiar with was formalized by Zeami during the Muromachi period (1336 to 1573).

1.2.1 Space experienced through time experienced through space

Kristina Fridh, a Swedish architect and researcher from the University of Gothenburg has written a chapter on [Ma] in her book *Japanska rum*.⁶ Her book highlights how there is a pronounced difference between Western and Japanese ways of perceiving space and spatiality.

We are, in the West, often unable or unwilling to entertain aspects of how [Ma] reflects a combination of timing and spacing. Bearing this in mind, and trying to avoid [Ma] being looked at as something exotic, a concrete comparison could be given on how these cultural differences affect perceptions of spatiality and timing, as well as how they might relate to the concept:

In old-style Japanese houses we find several moveable screens rather than fixed walls.

These screens could open up, in various ways, and change the layout of the rooms in a house.

By moving these screens, spaces that appear at one moment as small and enclosed can transform into larger, more open ones, and vice-versa. These screens also enable the house to open up to the external environment, and in this way leave no barrier between the inside and the outside



These Japanese houses are highly flexible and can – beneficial for today’s climatic conditions – become airy and open-up to the outside in the hot summer. This allows natural drafts to come into the house when needed, or alternatively screens to be drawn over to protect from the sun. In the cold winter the same house can become more intimate; the small space easier to heat.

In Western architectural tradition the focus lies more on the specific purpose of each room, establishing a system in our language for the labelling of these rooms: the living room, the study, the bedroom, the kitchen etc. Western housing tradition lacks this ability to easily change a layout and purpose thereby enabling a house to be closely connected with its natural surroundings.

⁶ Translates as ‘Japanese rooms’ or ‘Japanese spaces’.

The Japanese tradition of the moveable screen offers a way of approaching architectural space in everyday life as something social and adaptable. The space used for dinner parties during the evening could easily function as the breakfast room in the morning, and the bedroom for sleeping at night. The Japanese tradition is based on an on-going rhythmic cycle, an interval of events, and flexibility, rather than on a linear approach where everything is fixed and hard to change.

Parallel to the way concepts are considered to be unfixed, for instance by Bal, this tradition of one's living space(s) as something in constant flux can be seen as a crucial aspect of the concept [Ma]. Ongoing change is important to the understanding of [Ma].

To my knowledge, [Ma] has been mostly studied in the field of architecture in the West, often with a strong focus on its spatial aspects. Architects are occupied with spatial inquires highly relevant to [Ma], but through this research project I hoped from the very beginning to open-up a way of understanding how [Ma] could also be relevant for art.

[Ma] is often translated into English as negative space,⁷ or the silent moments in-between, for example the notes in music. As [Ma] has this ability to constantly change, it can be understood differently according to the specific context it operates within:

“Indeed, the conceptual prescription of this term varies with its speaker. An architect uses it to mean space, a musician to mean time” (Fridh, 2004: 25).

Isozaki also makes this point about its flexibility:

“Originally [Ma] means the space in between things that exist next to each other; then comes to mean an interstice between things – chasms; later, a room as a space physically defined by columns and/or byobu screens⁸; in a temporal context, the time of rest or pause in phenomena occurring one after another” (Isozaki, 2006: 94 - 95).

In this latter quote, we can begin to understand some of the routes [Ma] has taken to become as complex as it is today, and to notice how this concept might have the ability to further change according to its context.

[Ma] does not display *time* and *space* as separated terms, but rather embraces both time and space through various notions of intervals. The concept of [Ma] could easily be connected to Western time-space theories,

⁷ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma_\(negative_space\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ma_(negative_space)) 25.05.2015

⁸ Japanese folding screens

but I will not be discussing these in the text, as they exceed the scope of this project.

“The traditional Japanese consciousness of space is totally different from the time-space theory. That any similarity exists is a myth that has haunted European architects for decades and which must be destroyed once and for all” (Nitsche, 1966: 117).

For several years Günther Nitsche has been occupied, in academia, with the study of [Ma], beginning with a paper in the journal *Architectural Design* in 1966, followed in 1993 by the book *From Shinto to Ando*. He sets up a thorough introduction to [Ma] by placing its layers of meaning in a system of diverse realms (Nitsche, 1993) from one-dimensional to four-dimensional, as well as in realms of experience and the domain of metaphysics. As a model, it demonstrates many layers of complexity surrounding [Ma].

In traditional Japanese building styles, constructions are made using wooden posts and beams. [Ma] also refers to the distance between these posts in the planning and building of a house. This distance can even be described as [Ma]; it is something not precisely determined, but can still be seen as a building rule or system in this tradition. This understanding of [Ma] exists within Nitsche’s one-dimensional realm and holds a more defined meaning in this context. In terms of how I am discussing [Ma], this one-dimensional realm could be understood as beholden to the *word* for [Ma] rather than [Ma] as a more complex *concept* with more scope for interpretation and how it appears in the higher realms that Nitsche also lays out.

In these higher realms, as well as in the last two domains mentioned in Nitsche’s text, [Ma] appears as more theoretical and closer to the notion of the concept, a la Bal.

In 2012, Nitsche gathered all his own writings as well as other relevant material on [Ma] for a website (Nitsche, 2012) as a way to allow more access for reflection and discussion on it. It is also relevant for further information on how the kanji [Ma] is used in Japanese language and how in several combinations it changes its meaning according to how these are combined. But I will not go further into this here as my focus is on what [Ma] *does*, or *could do*, and in working through how it travels in the context of contemporary art.

1.2.2 The becoming of an artistic research project in the context of [Ma]

On beginning to unfold [Ma], the aim was to grasp it through reading about it. But I was also trying to create [Ma] in my own imagination, looking for ways to fuse notions of emptiness with human experience, wanting to grasp what could lie in the *intensification of vision*, as it was stated in the Columbia University description of [Ma] (Day, 1998). Through my reading, I was intrigued by its complexity but, finding it difficult to grasp on encountering Nitsche for the first time, it therefore made sense to unravel this concept as part of a larger research project.

As a way of constructing a method to research potential silent or hidden knowledge surrounding the concept [Ma], and as a way of looking at how [Ma] could be relevant for art, the plan became to commit to ten qualitative interviews to be carried out in Japan in April 2014. At this stage it was vital for my research project that I felt I could understand [Ma], or at least some parts of it, in order to move forward with the project.

Part 2: Qualitative Research. Methods locating the fields surrounding [Ma]

Qualitative research is commonly used in the social sciences – in sociology, psychology and anthropology – as a way to gain insight by learning from individual reflections, emotions and experiences. While quantitative research is usually aimed at explaining what something is, qualitative research is more focused on understanding. The results of qualitative research are therefore descriptive rather than predictive.

“Interesting ideas for research seem to grow out from facing actual problems, questions or phenomena triggering one’s curiosity” (Tjora, 2012: 14)

Through a dialogue with a professor in sociology at NTNU, Aksel Tjora (also the author of the book *Kvalitative forskningsmetoder i praksis*⁹), it became clear that qualitative research methods would suit my project and its aims to reach new insights about [Ma]. Tjora’s book contains detailed descriptions of various methodologies and discusses how, when and why these different methods might be useful.

The first decision made in my project was to interview English-speaking professionals, from various art fields and living and working in Japan, about [Ma]. Choosing professional practitioners in fields linked to my own research and art practice became a way of narrowing down the research to a manageably sized group relevant to this specific project within the field of artistic research. It was important to be realistic in terms of the number of interviewees, bearing in mind the amount of material that would be gathered via transcriptions of all the interviews. I had to consider how this material would require focus and attention on my return from Japan. How I would make use of the material gathered in these meetings was an important question from the very beginning.¹⁰

Ten appropriate candidates for the research on [Ma] were located, with some advice from international colleagues, and with help from the Norwegian embassy in Tokyo.

These ten interviews took place in Tokyo and Kitakyushu, Japan, in April 2014.

⁹ Title roughly translates as: ‘qualitative research methods in practice’.

¹⁰ The decision that my interviewees were not to remain anonymous was based on the fact they were not giving any sensitive, private information, but rather all spoke to me about [Ma] in relation to their professional practice. All interviewees agreed to be named in this reflection.

Who	Profession	Where, when	Language
Kitazawa Hideta	Wood Carver/Noh mask maker	Tokyo, 14.04.14	English
Fukiko Iwata	Master of the Tea Ceremony (Sadou)	Tokyo, 15.04.14	Japanese via translation
Furumori Koichi	Architect	Kokura, 18.04.14	Japanese via translation
Tsuiki Noriko	Kimono designer and weaver	Kokura 19.04.14	English
Omori Kyoko	Photographer	Kokura 20.04.14	English
Kataoka Mami	Curator at the Mori Arts Museum	Tokyo 22.04.14	English
Shirakura Minako	Artist	Tokyo 23.04.14	English
Furuuchi Tokiko	Landscape Architect	Tokyo 25.04.14	English
Reijiro Tsumura	Noh Actor	Tokyo 25.04.14	English
Daigo Iishi	Architect	Tokyo 27.04.14	English

2.1 Sharing [Ma]. Who. How.

From the tradition of Noh theatre the experienced actor Tsumura Reijiro (who in addition to his traditional Noh acting experience has also played in Noh versions of Ibsen and Shakespeare's plays, both in and outside of Japan) became an interviewee.

I participated in a tea ceremony (Sadou) with Master Iwata Fukiko in a highly traditional tea-house in Akasaka in Tokyo together with Matsumoto Mio, an illustrator trained in England, and the nephew of the tea ceremony master (who at the time was also an apprentice in the art of the ceremony).

Kitazawa Hideta, a wood carver working both with the making of Noh masks as well as architectural features for temples and shrines, was also interviewed. Kitazawa mainly works in a Japanese context, but is also experienced with making Noh masks for Noh performances in America, and gives lectures and classes in Europe. In visual art, I interviewed the Tokyo-based artist Shirakura Minako who has lived for a short period in Norway as artist-in-residence at Dale in Sundefjord.

The chief curator at the Mori Art Museum in Tokyo, Kataoka Mami was interviewed on-site at Mori arts tower. The interview with the landscape designer Furuuchi Tokiko took place at the site of her design project Tokyo T Site.¹¹

¹¹ <http://real.tsite.jp/daikanyama/english/> - 30.08.2016

I interviewed the founder of Kokura Ori,¹² kimono and fabric designer and weaver Tsuiki Noriko.



I interviewed the photographer Omori Kyoko in her studio. She specializes in photographic commissions, in Kokura, Kitakyushu. I also interviewed two architects: Iishi Daigo, the director of + Future-scape Architects in Tokyo, and Furumori Koichi, director at Furumori Koichi architectural design studio, in Kokura, Kitakyushu. I met with each of them at their offices. All of these interview situations tried to focus on each interviewee's personal understanding of the concept [Ma], and how and if it related to their own professional practice.

Qualitative interviews would open things up for exploration and in-depth questioning that best fitted the project. Considering the aim of this artistic research project, and that it also involved the making of artworks, the decision was to use qualitative semi-structured interviews. Through this method the interview situation defers to the conversation, but is still structured by the researcher via an interview guide prepared beforehand.

There were other methods that I might have adopted, for example survey interviews, but here the questions are rigid and there is no room for the researcher to improvise in the meeting with the interviewee.

Rather, the method that was chosen allowed for unexpected answers, as well as actions to take place during each interview. It enabled me, as the researcher, to lead the conversation actively towards the information that was most relevant to this specific project, and that had a closer link with art practice.

Through this method, I, as the researcher, avoided becoming a silent and passive listener: I could give comments, and it was also possible to verify information acquired in other interviews and to follow up each question based on this previous knowledge.

¹² <http://shima-shima.jp/en/> - 30.08.2016

Via this method, these conversational interviews could lead on to new paths where I avoided the dangers of being told the same basic conception of the word [Ma] by each and every person; I was allowed to interrupt, in a polite manner, and to follow up with new questions at any time where it felt appropriate. In the actual interview situation I was attempting to reach beyond the translations of [Ma] found in the dictionary. Rather than trying to simply answer a question, what is [Ma], these interviews were made in search of insights that could open-up practice-related perspectives. They might also add more discursive breadth to a site-bound field in the arts, through this discussion of the concept with these practitioners from different and dispersed fields of practice.¹³

2.1.1 The interview guide



Preparing an interview-guide was an important step in the methodology.

This guide should act as a compass for the researcher during the interview.

The structuring of the guide was made on the basis of my existing knowledge, but required much reflection and refinement in order to make sure that the answers that followed actually were exploratory, rather than merely confirmatory.

In the planning of the interview-guide, before going to Japan, the choice was made to focus on questions with an open ending, questions where the interviewee would be unable to answer using simple yes or no.

The questions should rather encourage the interviewee to elaborate.

In the making of the questions for my interview guide thought went into how the questions could open-up the fields surrounding [Ma], mainly with relevance beyond Japan. By means of this method each conversation

¹³ All interviews except for the tea ceremony, and the interview with the architect Furumori Koichi, were conducted in English in order to secure a direct dialogue with the interviewees. Exceptions were made so as to experience an authentic tea ceremony, and due to the simultaneous translation from Matsumoto Mio who has lived for 10 years in London. The interview with Furumori Koichi was simultaneously translated by his colleague Iida Tomohiko who participated in an interview that lasted more than 2,5 hours.

was steered towards findings apparently new to me as a way of unfolding the complexity of the concept [Ma], closer to a mini theory than to the word and how it functions in Japanese everyday language.

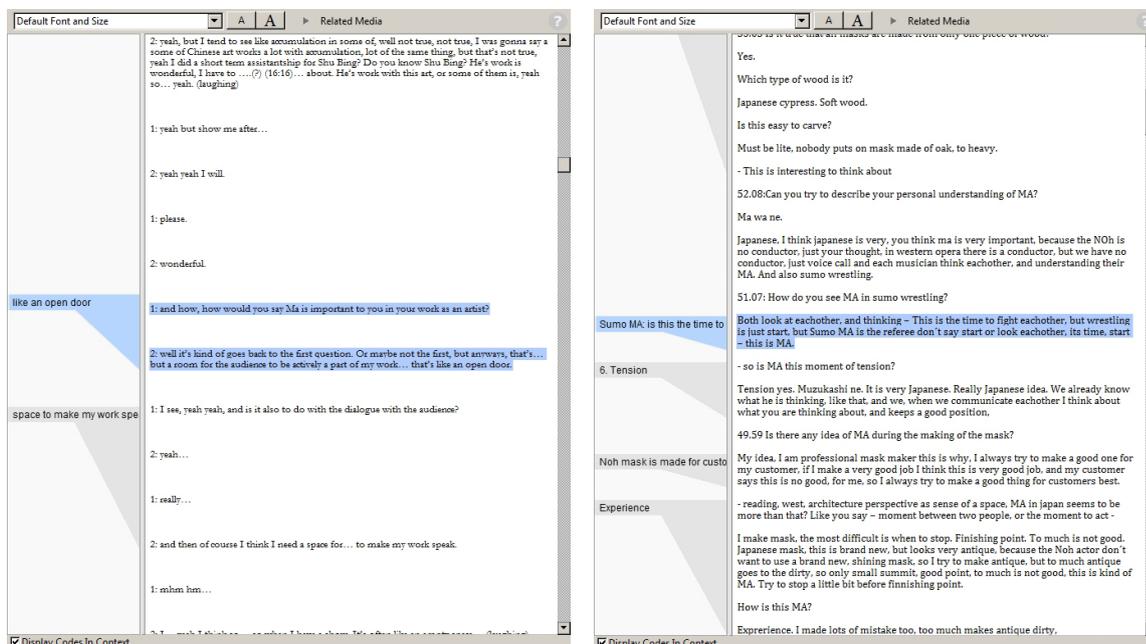
With the acceptance from the interviewees, the interviews were recorded as sound-files via a small recording device, and later transcribed as text files. This allowed me to be relaxed in each interview, knowing it was possible to return to their answers after our meeting.

2.1.2 Coding

When all the interviews had been transcribed as text, they were fed into the qualitative analysis programme: hyperRESEARCH. This programme was chosen as a tool to help me, in the first instance, to sort the text material, and later to navigate towards new findings and insights.

By using hyperRESEARCH for the vast amount of text made as the result of transcribing all the interviews, each text file could become manually coded.

This coding process sifted through these interviews sentence by sentence, searching at first for anything that might stand out in the text as relevant or interesting to this specific project. Anything catching my eye seeming relevant for this project would, in this first stage, be turned into a code functioning as a shorter version of the initial section of the text highlighted. During this phase, codes were created that still sounded close to the original text; it created a shorter, more distilled version still proximal to the actual interview material. (Tjora, 2012)



All text from interviews was made available for coding.

Through this meticulous process, an initial list of 459 codes shaped as short sentences or single words was made as an extract from the total amount of text.

These are some examples of what these codes/maxims looked like, hopefully illuminating how this process worked:

: We should feel [Ma] rather than read about [MA].

: Sense of space is just one idea of [Ma].

: Gap.

: Sumo. [MA] is the time to start.

: Sport has [Ma] related to distance or sometimes timing.

: To indicate [Ma] maybe relation or relationship.

: Light is also important part of understanding [Ma].

: The movement.

During the process of coding each of the interviews into a list of recurring reflections, it became possible to discover diverse aspects of [Ma], even previously unnoticed ones, such as sports.

2.1.3 The fields surrounding [Ma]. Codes becoming categories

Working with these 459 codes, shaped like the examples given above, the next step was to re-code each of them according to areas of interest, aiming at creating a shorter list of about 10–15 categories. In the end I was left with a list of 16 categories drawn from the 10 interviews via this method of coding.

Again, the focus was on what I, as the researcher, saw as most interesting or surprising. During this work recurring notions of *space* and *time* were omitted in creating the categories, this was a way of steering clear of what seemed most obvious or already well known to me via other sources. In the new categories brought to light via this method, the focus was on what [Ma] *does*. What could the concept bring to action, rather than theory alone?

The 16 categories describe various qualities belonging to [Ma]. Together, these can be understood as the backdrop shaping the final results of the project, in particular how this work investigating [Ma] has fuelled the development and making of the artworks made during the project.

Category 1	Feeling
Category 2	Experience
Category 3	Transition
Category 4	Movement
Category 5	Communication
Category 6	Tension
Category 7	Interstice
Category 8	Beauty
Category 9	Social
Category 10	Awareness
Category 11	Spiritual/Religious
Category 12	Beyond language
Category 13	Imagination
Category 14	Nature. In nature
Category 15	Composition
Category 16	Silence. Quiet

► A fold out chart of these categories can be found at the back.

As mentioned above, this project does not aim at creating a new theory on [Ma], but rather attempts to open-up the surrounding fields by unveiling and making connections between various aspects of [Ma], by asking what it does or could do. It questions if it as an active concept could become relevant for making and experiencing art that deals with space and time-based enquiries.

In this artistic research project, methods such as interviews and coding have been used, methods borrowed from social sciences as a way of exploring as well as mapping and navigating around the surrounding fields discovered via this method. This has opened-up to me important aspects of [Ma] that I had not previously known about, such as tension, transition, and the connection [Ma] has with nature. And through this research my own practice has also expanded and deepened.

Arriving at a stage in this project at which the list of the 16 categories of [Ma] were brought to light through the coding of the ten interviews, it became evident how [Ma] was relevant for both reflecting on and experiencing art, and also for the action of making art and how it is situated in the world. I would describe [Ma] as a concept that deals with an enmeshed awareness of time and space, as well as timing and spacing, in multiple layers. It considers the importance of the interstice, the unfilled or empty, different states of being in-between or in tension. [Ma] reaches beyond language, working on us as sensory or felt experience,

in and through time and space, both in mind and body. [Ma] is a concept shaped by language that tries to avoid language.

These categories are highly valid for art, and some of these categories could easily be considered to categorize important sides to it such as social commitment, participation, imagination, experience, affect and perception. All these could very well be concepts describing important aspects of contemporary art genres, for instance performance, installation, site-specificity and relational art. Each of these categories has cross-fitting aspects. A cluster of qualities pertaining to [Ma] have a strong resemblance to many aspects belonging to art, and how it takes diverse shapes and forms, but also in how it is experienced and perceived in many different ways.

The 16 categories are equally important in this investigation in the context of [Ma], but I choose not to write chapters or sections on all of the them, but rather to focus more on just some of them in this text, such as the notion of tension, as this surfaced as important to [Ma] throughout the project.

In parts 3, 4 and 5 of this text (the parts discussing the artworks) several of the 16 categories, such as experience, movement, transition, feeling and imagination, can be found circulating in and around these works, although I do not specify the category each time they occur. My aim is rather that the reader will be able to make these connections by keeping the fold-out chart of the categories visible when reading these chapters about the artworks. As [Ma] can never be defined easily through language alone, I choose to write more freely hoping that the reader will be able to discover and sense the variety of connections [Ma] might have with these works, although at certain times helped through using the list of categories as a tool.

2.2 Experiential knowledge. Site visiting (a method)

Through several years of practicing as an artist, my own methods have become developed for exposing a space or site over time, and it has enabled me to fuse the space with the artwork to make them inseparable. The method involves visiting spaces and sites in person, working through walking and making reflection-notes, as a way to gather experiential knowledge belonging to each unique place.

Reflection through note-taking, and site visits made through walking, have jointly functioned as methods for making the site-bound artworks part of this project. Notes have meticulously documented findings and reflections throughout the project, and in various situations, although I have tried to follow my intuition in this process. During the Japan trip in 2014, reflection notes were made both in-between and after each interview. These notes contained observational thoughts, ideas for questions to follow up with in my next meeting, a short description of the place we met, as well as anything else springing to mind as relevant to

consider and/or remember. This method is based on gaining knowledge by travelling to a site, and how this site-visit then exposes hidden sides to it, in an equal way to how travelling concepts become broadened through travel. This specific knowledge and sensitivity can only be gained by committing to a physical journey.

The reflection notes function as part of the data belonging to this research project. This data makes it possible to compare my own reflections made via these notes with the data gathered from, for example, the actual interviews; it provides a way of making connections and spotting alternative routes of inquiry.

Several site-visits have taken place as a part of building the art works made for this project. In Trondheim, the gallery TSSK was visited many times during the planning and instalment of artwork 1. In Levanger, several sites were visited in a search for the potential site for artwork II, and the chosen sites were then visited frequently during the period of developing this work. Sandhornøy in Nordland, the site for artwork V, was visited twice prior to its instalment, and various site-visits were made in Trondheim to allocate the spaces for artwork III.

The reflection-notes document specific measurements and scale, sound qualities, temperature, associations, durations, colours, odours, vegetation, quality of light, available power sources, water pipes, windows, or anything that might seem relevant on each visit. These notes could be gathered only as the result of physically going to each unique site, experiencing it by using all the senses.

Besides written reflections, photographs as well as simple drawings and sketches were made during these site-visits as a way of remembering specific visual aspects. Drawing details became a way of remembering, when working on site. The notes, the drawings and the photos that were made during each site-visit also enabled the building of scale models on returning to the studio.

2.2.1 Noh theatre.

I was offered the chance of meeting several of the interviewees in this project more than once. For example, being invited to be present at a teaching session with the Noh actor Tsumura Reijiro, as well as to experience him perform as a Noh actor at the Kita Noh theatre in Tokyo. After this performance, he invited me backstage to see the mirror room where the actors prepare with their masks before going on-stage, and I was even allowed to peek onto the stage and out over the audience from a back-stage perspective.

For the actual interview with Tsumura I was invited to his private house where it took me by surprise that he had his own full-scale Noh stage. During the interview it occurred that Tsumura went on stage, where he demonstrated, through his performance practice, aspects such as rhythm, timing, spacing and movement while

linking this to notions of [Ma]. Tsumura talked about [Ma] as non-verbal communication between the actors and musicians on stage.

It seems important to mention that Noh plays don't have a tradition of employing a director, but rather they are composed by the communication between actors and musicians. In Noh theatre [Ma] exists in relation to movement and movement relates again to the sound communicated. Tsumura talked about long [Ma] and short [Ma] in Noh.

In Kristina Fridh's book *Japanska Rum* (Fridh, 2004), in her chapter on [Ma], she also writes about Noh theatre and how it became perfected to its current state during a period very much inspired by Zen - the Muromachi period (1333 – 1573). Worth mentioning is also how between the years 1400 and 1418, the Noh actor Zeami wrote his renowned work *Fushikaden* (Zeami, 2006), written at the time as a guidebook for Noh actors. It has become one of the key source documents for discussing Noh.

In this book he runs through different stages of the age of the Noh actor, and uses the image of the flower in relation to readiness, and presence of actors in terms of what could be described as fine-acting, or acting at the highest possible level. In Noh, the audience must be drawn into the play, as this is a gestural theatre in which the story must be fulfilled in the minds of the audience. Noh theatre has little tradition of using props on stage: they are kept to a bare minimum so that the play can be experienced through the actors' slow gestures, masks, music and overwhelming costumes.

Most, if not all, of the categories made from coding the interviews on [Ma] - experience, transition, movement, between-ness, tension, composition, spiritual/religious, beyond language - could be considered relevant to Noh theatre, making it clear why Noh is called the art of [Ma].

2.2.2 Tea ceremony (Sadou)

Preparing to go to the tea ceremony in Tokyo in 2014 I was asked to bring a pair of new white socks to wear during the ceremony as a way to show respect for the tatami room. Being a guest in a Japanese tea ceremony, with a master explaining every step of this seemingly simple, but highly complex and beautiful ceremony, has given me a basic knowledge and interest in rituals: how we create meaning through repeating seemingly meaningless actions. Through repeated actions rituals appear, which again provide new layers of meaning, carved in and through time. For example, a work is not art during its making or rehearsal in the studio – it is still unfinished at this point, still in the making. The exhibition opening is the ritual where what is presented to the world becomes Art, with a capital A.

2.2.3 Shinto shrines

Visiting Myouken shrine in Fukuoka with the architect Furumori Koichi, we talked about [Ma] in relation to the experience of visiting a shrine.



When arriving at a Japanese Shinto shrine one enters the shrine's grounds through one or a series of Torii gates.¹⁴ The shrines are often placed at the top of a hill with steps leading up to the grounds and building(s). From the bottom of the steps the shrine building(s) is hidden from view. Furumori talked about [Ma] becoming present as you begin picturing the shrine in your own imagination as you walk, moving up the stairs, passing through the Torii gates, moving towards it. This was something I later considered when visiting Isé shrine in 2015 after a recommendation in the interview with Kataoka Mami on where to experience a sense of [Ma].



Isé shrine is one of the most venerable holy places in Japan, where parts of the shrine are rebuilt as part of a ritual taking place every 20 years through a process apparently requiring eight years preparation. Isé shrine actually consists of 125 shrines and spans an area similar in scale

¹⁴ A Torii is a symbolic gateway or portal marking the entrance to a sacred place such as a Shinto shrine.

to Paris; large parts are situated deep in a forest. The Torii gates at Isé are large and many, and moving around the shrine grounds even I (as a non-religious person) felt a strong presence that is impossible to describe apart from feeling humble and filled with a great aesthetic sensation of being present at this place, in this exact moment.

After taking time moving slowly up the stairs, entering one gate while leaving another, the shrine appears visually and physically in front of you. But equally important as gazing at the shrine building, seems to be this walk, through which you are filled with expectation.

[Ma] appears in this situation as something felt and sensed through both movement and a ritualistic expectation linked both to nature and the spiritual or religious.

2.2.4 The scent of cedar

Visiting the wood carver Kitazawa Hideta in his workshop enabled me to see and experience different stages in the making of a Noh mask, from a plain block of cedar wood to something roughly carved and finally to the finished, perfected and painted mask. Time had a very strong presence in his workshop.



The scent of the freshly made Noh mask was intriguing to me. In other interviews related to Noh, I asked whether the scent of the mask would affect the preparations a Noh actor makes to go on stage. Later I

discovered that the scent of cedar leaves the mask as time passes, eliminating the idea I had that the scent of cedar affected the preparations of the Noh actors.

2.2.5 Communication beyond language

These physical experiences in time and space have turned out to be very important in relation to building my own understanding of [Ma] and how working with [Ma] has altered my own work, as well as how I reflect on them.

The meetings with people and places during the research, has given me new insights regarding embodied experiences of different kinds: experiences reaching beyond language. Being invited to physically enter a Noh stage from the perspective of the actor was a very illuminating experience. Seeing the curtain in the theatre, like a colourful, yet opaque, veil between the mirror room and the stage, a veil to be manually lifted by wooden sticks for the entry of the actors to almost flow onto the stage in their heavy, extraordinary, almost out of this world costumes, has led to thoughts and ideas visible in both the works *At any given moment*, for which I use darkness as a veil, and in *Pust*. where the main element is an actual curtain, or veil, that also alludes to a sail.

[Ma] could also be proposed as a creator of rhythm, but not in the sense of rhythm in the context of Western pop music, as a repeated rhythmic pattern, but rather rhythm composed through layers of both spacing and timing. Music will not be discussed in depth as this exceeds my field of research, but I picture what [Ma] does when thinking about, especially, (Norwegian) improvisational music such as for example Stian Westerhus and Sissel Endresen, or the performances of Maja Ratkje with various collaborators, in which communication between the performers on stage happens through a spacing and timing between silence and sound, in tension.

Timing acts as communication between the musicians: when performing they are both actively listening and actively playing. Wordless communication appears between the performers on stage, but also between the audience and the performers through sharing this unrepeatable improvised moment.

[Ma] activates both spacing and timing in shared events. The communication between performers on stage, but also between the performers and the audience, without using language, activates various states of in-between-ness. A bridge is something in-between in how it simultaneously connects and disconnects. Understanding [Ma] in this context seems to lie between silent moments and the sound composed, rather than in the actual silence.

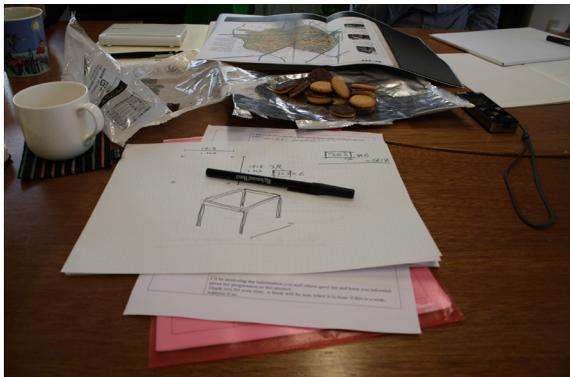
[Ma], could be also be said to create tension. This tension occurs between the sound and the action, in a fragment of time when the unexpected can still happen.

2.3 Tension (and the act of sharing)

Before doing the interviews, the notion of *tension* in the context of [Ma] was still hidden from sight.

In 2013, prior to these interviews, the architect Furumori Koichi sent me a short text in Japanese on [Ma] in order to help me get started with my research. By hiring a professional translator in Tokyo this section of text became available to me in Norwegian. In this text [Ma] is linked to martial arts (Kamishiro, 1999), among other things, in a reference to *The book of five rings*, originally written in 1643. Here principles of martial arts are illustrated through the tradition of carpentry. It proposes that both carpenter and fighter must care for their tools; they must make sure the tools are sharp, thereby allowing a planned result without unexpected faults. A carpenter, as well as a fighter, must master the planning of correct measurements in order to succeed: “Making sure the measurements are correct, they see to all the necessary tasks in an efficient manner; this is the rule for carpentry” (Musashi, 2005: 10-11).

In the interview made later on with Furumori Koichi (who sent me this text), his first response to what [Ma] is, was that it is a basic rule in Japanese architecture.¹⁵ This statement seemed to coincide with how Nitsche sees [Ma] working in his first realm. Furumori Koichi expands the scope of this rule when he talks about how [Ma] also exists in many sports. This made me realise that talking about [Ma] as a rule in architecture goes beyond referring to concrete measurements from point A to point B.



As the English term *martial arts* implies, Japanese martial arts could be posited somewhere between the notion of art and (fighting) sport. The Norwegian term for martial arts is, in a rough translation, *martial sports* (*kampsport*). In Norwegian, we do not have the same conception of this as a form of art. This suggests that martial arts hover between more than one field, offering us more evidence of the layering surrounding [Ma].

While undergoing the long process of planning and committing to the interviews, as discussed already, the notion of [Ma] as vital for many types of sports began to emerge. From the interviews, codes appeared

¹⁵ Based on my interview with the architect Furumori Koichi, Kokura, 18.04.2014

such as: *it is very similar to sports; baseball also has [MA]; sports and performance has this rule as well; and sport has [Ma] related to distance or sometimes timing.* I reflected on how both sports and art deal with an audience, and how [Ma] relates to these fields because of the act of sharing.

And through other data gathered from the interviews, in codes such as: *Sumo's [Ma]: this is the time to fight,* and, *how you start is [Ma],* the conception of *tension* as a crucial aspect of [Ma] appeared. Through these sentiments, I have chosen to use sports as a way of discussing [Ma] in relation to tension.

In many different sports a moment of tension can be noticed when both the audience and athletes are held for a moment in shared suspense. Take Sumo. In Sumo, the two wrestlers gaze at each other while contemplating and planning when to act, when to begin fighting. This tension affects when to start fighting, but also from what distance regarding the spacing between the wrestlers. In this way it combines a spatial notion with a temporal one. In the codes gathered from the interviews it became clear that some see this spatio-temporal pause in sumo as [Ma].

There are similar tensions in other types of martial arts, but I will try to show how we can transfer this notion of tension as a layer surrounding [Ma] through sports closer to home: chess and football.

In football we could probably refer to something similar to the precise skills used in carpentry. One needs the knowledge of spacing, between yourself, as a player, and team-mates, also of how far the ball might travel, how fast it can move. You need to know when to pass it to another player to score a goal. The skill of knowing that the ball will go exactly where you want it, and at the right time, is vital in football.

[Ma] can be tension in a series of floating moments. Take for instance chess. While waiting for the next move there is a distinct tension between the two players, but also in the on-lookers or audience.

The distancing in both time and space in both of these sports echoes the notion of how [Ma] relates to interval. In chess, as well as in football, there is an interesting shift: relief, as the player's move finally happens, but in the same instant a new interval of tension begins, created by the distance in time and space while waiting for the other player to move – again, when and where to.

In football the audience and players are in a constant flow of tension and relief, according to how long and how distant the other team is in keeping control of the ball; the placement of the players, on both sides, must be precise in relation these spatial and temporal dynamics.

In terms of where and how art and sports overlap, it seems that the notion of [Ma] could be used as a way of understanding the oscillation between tension and relief, and how they are present beyond caring about winning and losing.

In terms of [Ma] creating tension, the audience is also important in other fields. In installation art the work is activated as the audience moves around and inside it. In Noh theatre [Ma], as tension, is created between the imagination of the audience and the slow drama, taking place on stage. The actors wear masks hiding their facial expressions. Through a very slight movement of a hand, a gesture, or a particular movement, the actor changes the character's state of mind from, for instance, happy to melancholic. Thus, [Ma] as tension is shared, between the audience and the drama on stage. In linking tension to the notion of sharing, tension creates a relationship of shared experience.

Let's take conversation as an example. Here there is tension gathered by means of [Ma] via an on-going interval between the silences during listening, and the sounds of the spoken exchange. Both parts in a conversation are active: the act of listening and also the action of speaking shape a meaningful conversation as there is no way of giving a relevant response in terms of spoken activity if one has not reflected upon what is said, through listening and contemplation.

[Ma] deals with many notions of tension. It seems valid even in terms of situating my own practice in the field of installation art, as I describe in the next part.

2.4 Installation art

"Installations are artworks that work with thresholds, and on thresholds, between different spheres and states. Of crucial importance are the subtle transitions between the physical, aesthetically organized space constituted by an installation, and the reflecting, sensing viewer who moves within it" (Petersen, 2015: p. 28).

Anne Ring Petersen, in her book *Installation Art Between Image and Stage*, gives a thorough and considered overview of the various ways to reflect around and discuss this wide-ranging genre, 'Installation art', within contemporary art practice. In the book, she doesn't just discuss the term itself, which in the art world has come to describe a multiplicity of forms and works. Installation art is often substituted, as a label, onto works that are difficult to define through the criteria of other more distinct genres. The term itself becomes ambiguous, as it often seems unclear exactly what it defines. Petersen attempts to characterize the identity of Installation art through investigating, in-depth, its movement between image and stage.

Michael Fried famously criticized the relationship between theatricality and art in his essay *Art and Objecthood*, written as a critique of many artists working within Minimalism, a predecessor to Installation art. Minimalism was a movement, or period, when the viewer, as an active beholder and participant, made him/herself present in the work.

Installation art, in my understanding and use of it, following Claire Bishop, Petersen, and also taking-in Ilya Kabakov's term *total installation*, creates a spatial situation *surrounding* the beholder. Installations are sometimes described as *passage works* in which the focal point lies with how we move around them and how we come to situate ourselves inside of them.

If we follow this logic of Installation art, the beholder in an installation could also be referred to as a participant. Installations occupy the entire surrounding space of the body, leaving no boundaries between fiction and reality, object and subject; in a way it is about restaging reality as fiction, and fiction as reality. Installation art is a term that hovers between several denotative fields as it takes many shapes, uses disparate materials, and it even uses non-materials such as time. Theatricality in art, following Michael Fried's critique in the 1960s, is connected with the relationship these artworks have had, and continue to have, with time. By the end of the 1970s Rosalind Krauss had introduced the idea of the *expanded field* in which she moves the category of sculpture away from the pedestal, and away from placement between two things that it isn't: architecture and landscape.

Sculpture in the expanded field is simultaneously architecture *and* not-architecture, or landscape *and* not-landscape, creating a field of several possible entry and exit points that are important for the re-identification of art, allowing artists to move away from the staler terms that they have reluctantly had to place themselves and their works within. Maybe this is a reason why so many artists and institutions use Installation art as a term to describe ambiguous works: as it operates as such a flexible term.

Installations can neither be experienced, nor perceived in a single glance; these works are, by their very nature, made using time as one of the components, creating the artwork by combining space and time with experience and awareness. Appreciating, and experiencing, duration is therefore a vital part of Installation art as a genre.

Following on from this, it becomes clear how [Ma] could be seen as a fruitful concept for reflecting on important aspects in art operating at the threshold between categories. On consideration of how several of the categories of [Ma] became visible via this project - *experience, movement, awareness, imagination, transition*, or even the category *social* – it was obvious how they corresponded with the descriptions used when defining installation art as, for example, passage works, works made in a collision between space, time, object and subject.

Returning to tension, installation art touches upon several levels of tension. It is sometimes unclear where the borders lie between the artwork and the *real world*. Entering a work of installation is a totally immersive experience. There is a tension regarding how to participate in these types of works.

“Installation art must necessarily become an art form with built-in tensions between, on the one hand, the familiar and the everyday, and on the other hand, the distanced and artificial” (Petersen, 2015: 172).

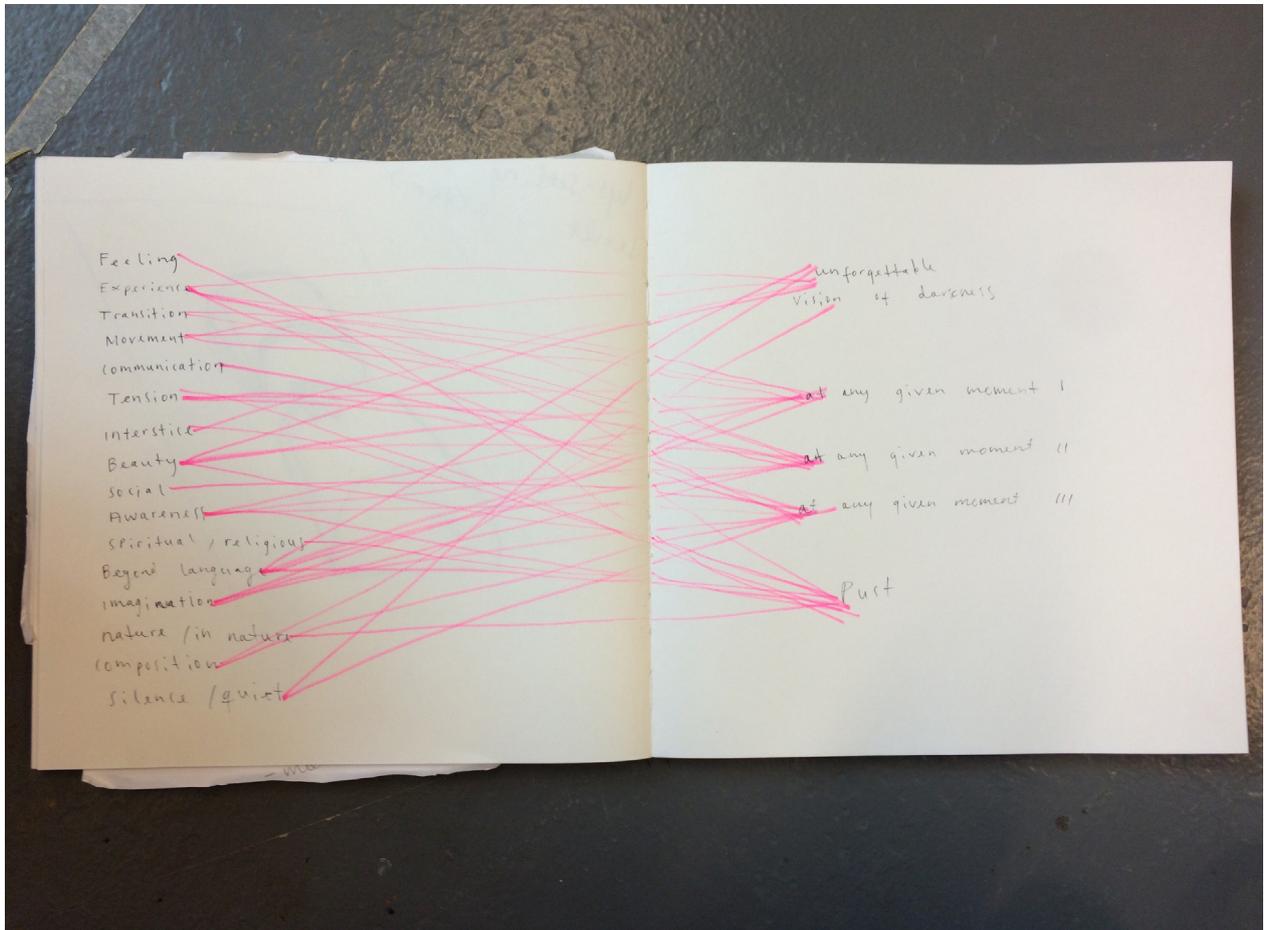
This tension also shapes the question of how these works are to be defined as installations, in their very nature, hover between different fields. Obviously, installations have a clear reference to architecture or performance, to how all these fields are pre-occupied with the production of space through time; perhaps not in an identical way, but clearly related through their joint focus on spatiality. However, reading Kabakov’s lecture on total installation, one understands that an important separation between architectural interiors and installations (even though the latter also create interiors) does exist, and it lies in the dependent relationship between the installation, as an artwork, and the viewer.

“... an architectural interior does not require the continual presence of a person for an understanding of its fullness and perfection and it can exist as a work of art even without him. Such autonomy does not exist in the total installation” (Kabakov: Lecture six).

The installation as an artwork is activated when the participation of the viewer takes place.

As an artist working with architectural structures in works involving space and time as actual materials, I like to think that I have an awareness of the tension, created by the composition, between the filled and the unfilled. It is always present when making an exhibition or a new artwork. By making sure there is enough empty space for the participants to fill with their presence, and for them to move around in, sensing and reflecting it as they go, these works come to be experienced with the body. Through this, the unfilled becomes filled with both action and meaning, allowing the body to become the mediator that bridges with the void. In the context of [Ma] a notion of silence is always present as a connection between different states or actions. The idea of the unfilled in these installations could also be claimed to be a way of creating silence as a bridge connecting the work, the participant and the space, or alternatively a triangle in which each does not exist without the other.

Artworks



Most of the rest of this thesis will reflect on the following five artworks made during the artistic research project:

- 1: *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness*
- 2: *At any given moment*, Levanger
- 3: *At any given moment*, Trondheim
- 4: *At any given moment*, Artist Book
- 5: *Pust*.

At any given moment could be read as central to this artistic research project in how it investigates and brings-forward several aspects discovered in the context of what [Ma] does.

This work also displays an important shift that occurred midway through the project. *At any given moment* was made without any sculpted or built-objects added to the space as part of the construction of the artwork. It therefore moves towards a theatricality or performativity slightly new to my practice as an artist, and should

be understood as a direct consequence of the specific research in the context of [Ma] in which space has to be experienced as part of flow, and with ourselves in motion.

This shift became visible in several aspects of *At any given moment*, in each of its three versions. While the first version was shown in an art context, the second was presented in a theatre, and the third operates as a book. Each work has the ability to operate in these different spheres as they slide between various fields, across thresholds, made visible in this research into different contexts of [Ma].

All five works reflected upon and discussed here were made during a time-span between 2013 and 2016. *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness* was made in 2013, before doing the interviews on [Ma] in Japan in 2014. Some works were made after unveiling the categories on [Ma], such as *Pust.*, made in 2015, as well as the second and third versions of *At any given moment*, made in 2015 and 2016.

The following text will reflect on how the conception of [Ma] has become broadened, and therefore also changed, during the period of making these works as a parallel activity to working on the interview material on [Ma] by asking what [Ma] does or could do.

Part 3: Artwork I. *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness.*

Available to the public: 05.11.2013 – 01.12.2013

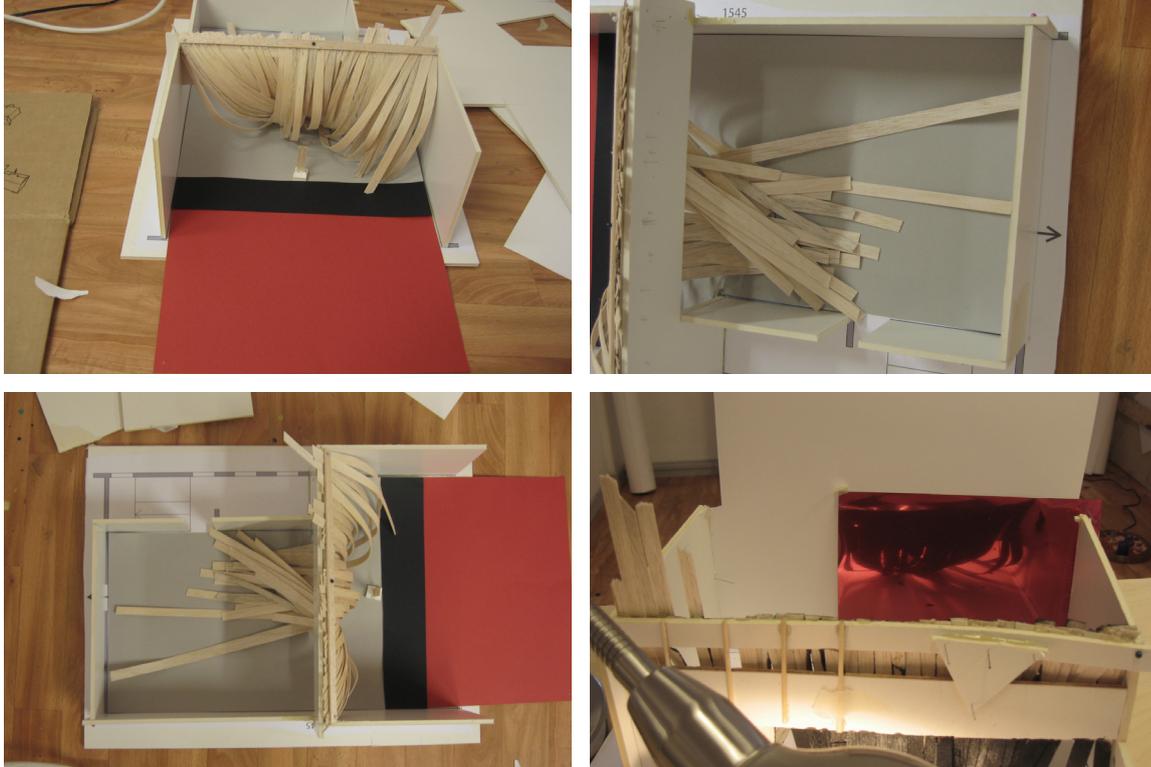
TSSK (Trøndelag senter for samtidskunst), Trondheim.



The installation *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness* is the first work in the series related to this research project in the context of [Ma]. This work was made prior to the interviews made about [Ma] in 2014.

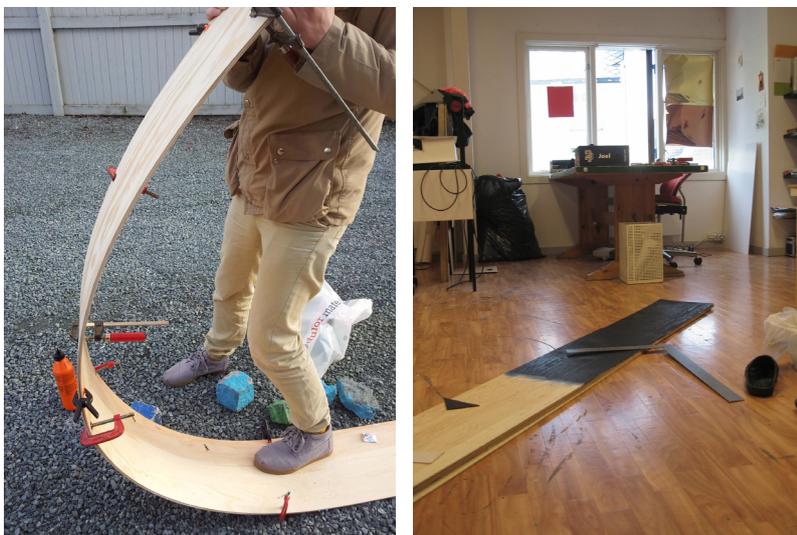
The starting point for this installation could be claimed to be the actual architecture of the gallery space TSSK in Trondheim. Visually, this was a difficult space to work with as the ceiling height varies between five metres and less than two metres, due to a mezzanine office floor hanging above parts of the gallery. This architectural feature creates a sense of two separate rooms, even though it is, in reality, one large open space. TSSK has a large window surface covering about 5 x 10 metres, offering natural light and a visual connection between the inside of the gallery and the outside world where those passing by can easily peak into the exhibition space.

The initial and overall idea was to somehow create a work that would turn the whole space of this gallery seamlessly into one artwork rather than working around what felt like two spaces in one. After several site-visits, a long time was spent making sketch-works in cardboard models, searching how to create an installation, turning what I felt were the weaknesses of this space into strengths.



The idea for the curtain-like structure made with black ribbons, appeared through working on these models. The final sketch for the actual work was constructed in the model by using a model-building material, balsa-wood. This is a material that has great flexibility and lightness, but it is also brittle and would not be able to take the strain of this work at full-scale. The challenge was now how to translate the work from a small model into a full-scale installation at TSSK.

Over several months, materials were tested, both in the studio but also in sections at full-scale during repeated visits to TSSK, researching how the materials might behave in the gallery space as well as at actual scale.



This installation alluded to two spaces via an architectural, yet sculptural construction. It dropped from the ceiling to the floor and was sculpted from several individual black ribbons all made from attached wood. This sculptural *gesture* created an architectonic obstruction that drastically altered the space, as well as the sense of space. The ribbons were made from painted and glued birch veneer, but when experiencing them in the space they appeared almost like rubber, curving their way from the ceiling, touching the floor and heading towards the back of the space using the floor as a contact surface.



The rubber appearance was the result of tests made through the models, as well as in scaled material tests on site. These tests began using cheaper veneers such as pine, but as this material kept breaking, a more exclusive material was needed, in terms of the necessary behaviour and strength of the material - in order to achieve the desired curvature, flexibility and drop. The installation was, in the end, built by using a thin birch veneer, a very strong yet highly flexible wood material. It served for the black ribbons. The boards became cut into slices in the wood workshop before preparing most of the wood using a specific type of black paint in the studio.

Upon arrival at TSSK, the wood was joined with glue to make the individual long ribbons before building the construction in-situ.

3.1 Creating space for encounters

Unforgettable Vision of Darkness references both the architectural and the theatrical. The red colour of a classical theatre curtain appeared in this installation in a glossy reflective vinyl covering the full surface of the windows at TSSK. The vinyl turned the inside of the gallery into a closed situation. The large wooden construction and those walking inside of this installation were reflected, in the surface of the vinyl. This reflected space was not physically accessible to us, and yet it created several transitions in our imagination, and it was altered via our own movements inside of the installation.



The work followed Ring Petersen in her discussion of installations as art moving away from the design of objects, in which installations create spaces in which the spectators become participants. One must actively move within the work to experience it. In this type of installation there is a similarity to both architecture, in its creation of space for human interaction, and to theatre, in how it produces scenes of enactment, marginally on the outside of reality.

Unforgettable Vision of Darkness was a staging of the gallery space TSSK as a total artwork (a *gesamtkunstwerk*) for the participants to be fully immersed in. The large windows of the gallery were covered with the vinyl that altered the external façade as well as the total situation inside. The entrance from the street appeared as a large silver coloured mirror as the vinyl covered its surface. Indoors, the red colour covering the windows was bleeding away from itself, casting a red glow onto its surroundings. The glow from the vinyl rippled away from the window surface, glazing the space and those moving about inside it. The glow changed the spatiality by seemingly altering even the quality of the air. Through an added red mist that came about through the reflections from the vinyl, the air almost felt as if it was thickened due to the density of the colour.

The vinyl obstructed the visual link between the outside and the inside of the gallery, creating an enclosed situation for the participant to enter into, as if walking into another reality than the one on the street outside. Director and composer Heiner Goebbels creates theatre pieces with a similar approach:

“... not as a representation or a medium to make statements about reality, is exactly what I try to offer. In such theatre the spectator is involved in a drama of experience rather than looking at a drama” (Goebbels, 2015: p.2).

When moving into the installation *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness* from the entrance, there seemed to be four spaces operating in this work. The physical space you entered into, the room bathed in the red mist from the vinyl – the first space encountered – and there was another space appearing behind the sculpted curved ribbons, a lit space where the back side of the ribbons took on another form, and where there is also enough floor space for walking around in. Through lighting as the gesture, yet another space opened-up at the far end of the gallery. A series of wall washers, facing towards the end wall, created an imaginary space with an on-stage presence, yet beyond physical reach, just as in the already-mentioned imaginary space existing in the surface of the glossy red vinyl.

During a return to Japan in October 2015, locations suggested in the interviews by the interviewees, as a way of sensing [Ma], were visited with the help of a grant from the Scandinavia – Japan Sasakawa Foundation. Following several suggestions to experience the architecture of Ando Tadao, Naoshima Art Island (where Ando has designed several large museums and hotel complexes dedicated to art) became another destination during this journey around Japan. With relevance to the installation *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness*, the encounter with the works of Lee Ufan, a Korean artist and philosopher living and working in Japan, needs to be mentioned. Ando has designed the Lee Ufan museum on Naoshima island.

Lee Ufan’s works could be described as almost minimalist in the way they allow simple materials such as natural stones, glass and steel to be composed against seemingly empty space. In Ufan’s book, *The Art of Encounter*, he describes how his relationship to art involves a connection between the inner - meaning one’s embodied space for thoughts, reflections and sensing - and the outer, the external reality understood as the world. In Ufan’s understanding of art (also when he is discussing his own work), these two realities, the internal and the external, must meet through what he describes as the art of *yohaku* (Ufan, 2004). *Yohaku* translates as *blank* or *empty*, and is considered relevant to [Ma]. Ufan expands the notion of *yohaku* beyond the meaning of total emptiness, by adding the layer of *resonance*.

“What I mean by *yohaku* is not simply the space that is lacking in reality. For example, if a drum is struck, the sound reverberates into empty space. The space of this vibration, including the drum, is what I call *yohaku*” (Ufan, 2004: 11).

Empty space, in his thinking, is not about meaningless nothingness, but rather it shapes a space for encounters through various resonances with aspects of reality. Ufan seems not only to open-up important thoughts concerning emptiness, but he also allows us to stretch the concept of *yohaku* in terms of what it does, in a similar way to how I approach [Ma] in this research project.

The idea of resonance allows emptiness to shape a relationship between the inner and the outer, perhaps through the tension of this meeting. This encounter allows a possibility for critical reflection, imagination and poetic sensing of the world, and tells us that the unfilled is not meaningless, but rather meaningful. In an art context, and also beyond it, this emptiness places the participating viewer in a central position by offering them the empty or unfilled space to fill. This places the beholder or participant in an active position rather being a passive receiver of the artwork.

Norwegian artist Knut Henrik Henriksen, whose work has several connections to mine, should also be mentioned. Henriksen's works are clearly architectonic, and he alters spatiality through simple, but striking gestures using generic building materials. *Architectural Doubts* (2004), produced at Hamburger bahnhof in Berlin, was constructed using a vast number of pinewood panels. His installation *Scale of Proportions which makes the difficult and good easy* (2016), made at Galleri Standard in Oslo, where the ceiling height in the gallery was altered to become just a bit too low while leaving the rest of the gallery-space seemingly empty, also used these basic materials. In this work there are no *artworks* to be seen. The alterations made to the existing architecture in Henriksen's works slightly change our perception of space, and affect, through his choice of materials, how we connect with it. They alter how we sense and experience not just the space itself as marginally different, but how we also experience ourselves in the space in the meeting with these works as they bring forward memories, as well as imagination. What is left out is as important as what is added and it is here that I see a clear link between my own works and those of Henriksen.

Unforgettable Vision of Darkness was made and shown in 2013, prior to the interviews on [Ma] shaping this research project. At this time, I had just started researching the concept, so my conception of [Ma] was still quite limited and mostly concerned with notions of a meaningful emptiness, [Ma] as a sensing of place, in how space is experienced by spending time in it, as well as time being experienced by moving through space. In this section it could also be important to state what my initial title for this research project was: *The Potential Drama of Empty Space*¹⁶, a title I chose to change in 2015 as by now my research had broadened my conception of [Ma] from asking what [Ma] is, to what [Ma] does. The research methods used in this project

¹⁶ *Det tomme roms potensielle dramatik* in Norwegian

helped me unveil a much broader side to this concept than the concern of empty space, so a change of title felt necessary.

However, despite lacking, at the time, a full awareness of the surrounding fields of the concept [Ma], and although it bore in mind the original working title for the overall research project at this time, this installation clearly dealt with important aspects of [Ma] that were broader than simply empty space.

Going back to the categories created as part of this project - category 4, `movement`, and category 13, `imagination` - each of these categories is highly present in this installation, as discussed in this section. The vinyl covering the windows, and the end wall of the gallery are described above as imaginary spaces that are highly important to the experience of this artwork. These imaginary spaces exist as part of this artwork made via the participant's movements. This installation is not a work to be looked *at*, yet rather creates a space for encounters wherein the artwork appears through a meeting *with*, a sensing of, and communication with the various compositions on display here.

Part 4: Artwork II, III and IV: *At any given moment.*

Overview

At any given moment started growing as a work after an invitation from LevArt¹⁷ to participate in the project *Deep Sites*, taking place in 2014. This invitation was received in the winter of 2013 while waiting for the application to the Norwegian artistic research programme to be processed. Immediately I realised that *Deep Sites* could become a perfect context for my artistic research project if I was to get this fellowship.

“In *Deep Sites*, the city emerges as a place where past and present, reflection and confrontation, common ground and spaces that normally lie more concealed are woven together. A place rich with potential and imagination, where new visions and political ideas and solutions developed in the past are (re)activated in the light of current challenges and ecological and economic crises” (LevArt. Erikstad, 2016).

The initial site-visit in Levanger was made together with the curator of LevArt, Anne-Gro Erikstad, in the early spring of 2013. During this trip, several sites in Levanger were visited in search of a potential space for making a new site-bound work for the *Deep Sites* project. We went to see a stone vaulted cellar built between 1650 and 1750, located in Kirkegata in the centre of the old town. When we arrived at the house where this cellar was located we were led to a standard wooden door often found on domestic houses in Norway.

This door, despite its mundane appearance, hid the reality of what exists beyond where a marvellous space was hiding, behind it.

As we moved through the doorway, we found ourselves on an ancient stone-laid staircase full of dust and rubble. The staircase led us into what felt like another world, and another time. Inside, the cellar had a strong odour of soil and dust. It consisted of two separate rooms that were connected via a small portal made out of a set of crafted, carved stones, in various shapes and sizes. The rest of the cellar was made from rougher, more natural looking stones and sand. The ceiling of the cellar was vaulted, leaving no barrier between wall and ceiling. Its surface was chipped and dusty, and showed strong signs of the passing of time.

During this initial visit, I was told about another stone vaulted cellar in Levanger, a cellar stemming from the same era and within walking distance of the one we were in. Revisiting Levanger several times after this first visit resulted in a site-visit to the other cellar. This cellar was situated in Sjøgata.

¹⁷ LevArt . For more information: <http://levart.no/>



This other cellar was smaller than the first, and its only room had recently been restored. The vault had been covered with a new white chalk surface. A small opening, functioning as a window without glass fitted into it, allowed some daylight to enter into the cellar. The light from this, as well as that coming from the entrance giving access directly from the garden, made this cellar seem almost bright and shallow when compared with the cellar in Kirkegata. That one was situated deeper below ground, accessed via a longer stone-laid staircase; it appeared much darker as there was no actual daylight entering the space.



Early in the process of working with this piece, the choice was made to work with both of these stone vaulted cellars, with the plan to make a single work combining both of these spaces. There was a clear challenge to make an exhibition in these spaces bearing such a strong historical presence. The stone vaulted cellars were anything but neutral *white cubes*, making them perfect for this research project focusing on site-bound works to be made linking disparate spaces as a way of investigating [Ma], and trying, also, to reflect on how the spaces might affect the making, as well as the result, of the artwork.

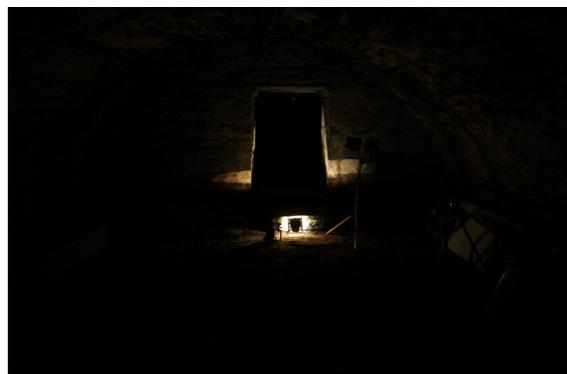
During continuous site-visits to Levanger, the measurements of both spaces were made, with an initial aim to build scaled models in the studio. The plan to build models stayed as an idea for a long period of time. But, in the end, it sufficed that a series of snapshot photographs made during these visits were printed on plain paper. The photos were attached to the walls of the studio and sketches and notes were made directly on to them. Through this process a continuously growing mind-map evolved.



The cellar space in Kirkegata, the one with two rooms, was, as mentioned above, totally dark, and even without artificial lighting. As there was no electrical power serving the cellar, a line had to be laid from the building above, via the staircase.

Work-lamps found in the space were used during the site-visits. By moving these crude work-lamps around, there began a testing process, focusing on how the space changed its character according to how it was lit. And through observing the placement of the lamps, what became hidden and what was revealed, what went on in the shadows, and what appeared in the lit areas of the space, could be studied, via observation. In this way, the simple work-lamps permitted a way of sensing the space through the alternating situations of darkness and lightness.

The various light scenes made with these lamps were photographed using a mobile phone camera. This added material to an ever-growing mind-map wall in the studio. The process of moving the lamps around in this space stimulated ideas through the body and its movement in these spaces.



The idea of involving both of these cellars in the shaping of a singular artwork arrived at an early stage of the project, without yet knowing that it would become the artwork *At any given moment* and that it would appear in three different versions in this artistic research project, as presented and discussed in this second half of the text.

In the ensuing parts of chapter 4, *At any given moment* will first be presented and discussed in its initial version made in Levanger. Then the text will reflect upon the role of the participant in relation to this work, and how performativity seems to be a vital concept for reflections on *At any given moment*. Moving on from this, the text will introduce and reflect on a new notion invented as part of this research project: a *veil of darkness*. Next, the methods of gathering shared knowledge from the participants who experienced this work will be introduced, leading on to how the artwork then moved to another site and context for a second version, this time in Trondheim.

The final version that resulted in an artist book, is then presented via its collective making process. It became more than just a book: something to be understood as an alternative space through which to explore the artwork.

4.1 Artwork II. At any given moment

Available at multiple times each day during the period: 07.09.2014 – 20.09.2014

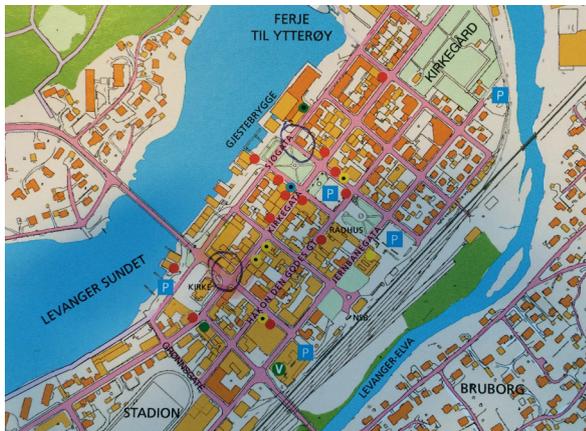
Location: cellar in Kirkegata 5, cellar in Sjøgata 3, streetscape Levanger.

This section begins with a short description of *At any give moment* as a way of inviting the reader into this work, before it is discussed further.

At any given moment is a durational artwork to a large degree experienced individually, although accompanied by a guide acting as part of the piece. It takes place both above and below the ground, moving between two stone vaulted cellars, dating from between 1650 and 1750, located at different addresses. The artwork is partly experienced in total darkness, only a series of pre-programmed, slow, demarcated scenes of light unwraps the space of the cellar little by little, changing subtly, in and out of darkness. At any given moment is created in the absence of added art objects and, rather, acts on the senses and our ability for reflection. The piece asks the participant to complete the experience, and hence the artwork, in their own imagination and through their own references and memories activated through this durational experience.

The mind-maps conferred an awareness of the body and its presence and movement in the cellar spaces. This led on to studying a street map of Levanger, searching for possible walking routes between the two

cellars. Walks were made from one cellar to the other, repeatedly, trying different routes. They took about five, seven or 10 minutes, according to the pace I walked at, or which route I chose. During this process of physical movement made by walking, I arrived at a method to get to know the spacing and timing that bridged these cellars together as well as separated them.



At any given moment uses space and time as actual materials shaping the artwork.

Through experiencing and engaging with these materials, the artwork emerges.

As already discussed, spatiality and time are vital aspects of the concept [Ma], to be explored further as components materialising the artwork.

At any given moment is not a performance in a traditional sense, but it could be discussed along the lines of performance, for example following Josette Féral in her claims that performance is an exploration of the under-sides of theatre by showing what is hidden, on the inside, or on the reverse side (Féral, 1982). In her view, performance lacks narrativity, and in this way spectators have a challenging task when confronted with it: they must become active. Performance is, in Féral's view, a breaking away from the subject acting on stage, as well as from the traditional role of the spectator; rather, it involves the spectator as a participant entering shared space, it speaks not only to the mind but also incorporates the senses. "Exactly like the body, therefore, space becomes existential to the point of ceasing to exist as a setting and place. It no longer surrounds and encloses the performance, but like the body, becomes part of the performance to such an extent that it cannot be distinguished from it. It is the performance" (Féral, 1982: P. 207). In Kabakov's view on the total installation the artist must become a *director* of these works by foreseeing every possible scene created by movement within the work. The participant is the main *actor* in a total installation. It is towards the viewer that everything in these artworks points, and, as briefly discussed in part 2.4, it is in this meeting between the viewer and the space that these works appear.

At any given moment, in the second cellar, reveals a series of five scenes made only from lighting. It is like a play in which everything, apart from the lights, has been removed: there are no actors, no text,

no scenography, only scenes of light in which the participants themselves must complete the experience. Mieke Bal (Bal, 2002) describes how the viewer becomes a performer through the very act of looking, and how memory is an agent allowing this act to create a kind of performance happening through performativity: memory remains linked with past events and yet also comes to the surface in the present. Memory becomes, in Bal's view, the bridge between performance and performativity, between a thing staged and something more open to subjective action.

In his book *Aesthetics of Absence*, Heiner Goebbels reflects on absence, something familiar to many visual artists. Goebbels' piece *Stifters Dinge* (Goebbels, 2007) is, for example, a theatre work in which all the usual aspects of a play are in place – curtains, the set, the audience seating, music, lights etc. – yet without any actors or performers. As it unfolds, this creates something with a strong connection to installation art.

Anne Ring Petersen (2015) also investigates the proximity of performance, performativity and theatricality in relation to Installation art, making it evident how *At any given moment* can be read as a work that follows different approaches to how installations are shaped.

So far, several of the categories of [Ma] have made themselves present in these reflections around *At any given moment*. This work must be experienced, felt and imagined through movement and participation. The presence of the participant is what constructs this as a work.

Unforgettable Vision of Darkness, presented as artwork I in the previous chapter, also creates a space for the spectator to act in. The body is the key in this artwork that could only be experienced via moving and walking, by engaging with the space. *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness*, however, still displays added construction within the space, construction bearing both architectonic as well as sculptural features, built in addition to the interior of the gallery.

At any given moment, on the other hand, does not present any added objects or built constructions. It is not an exhibition, but rather creates a *situation* in which those participating can become part of it, for a specific duration of time. This situation takes place in highly specific environments, in two historic stone vaulted cellars as well as in the movement between them. These spaces not only become part of the situation, but the situation is created *because* of these spaces. In this situation, there is no clear narrative to be played out, yet a lost narrative exists in the buried history belonging to these ancient cellars. The very situation creates the actual work of art, through its presence and construction, made through space and time. The work transitions between the past and the present and travels through memories, as well as the imagination, creating an artwork in the mind of each participant, although, crucially, it is shaped through bodily experience. As with [Ma] this artwork exists in the mind and imagination of each person taking part

in the situation, so this work is built in relation to what [Ma] might do, rather than its linguistic definition.

4.1.1 A shift between actor and audience simultaneously.

“When nothing is being shown, then the spectators must discover things for themselves” Goebbels (2015: P. 5).

Returning from Japan in the spring of 2014, the planning of *At any given moment* went on parallel with doing the meticulous coding of the transcribed interview material (as described in part 2).

The notion of [Ma] as a changeable state rather than a fixed presence was becoming intriguing, and fuelled a further process of making and reflecting on this work. A question occurred: whether it could be possible to recreate, in my work, the simultaneously inter-changing roles of actor and spectator? It became one of the research questions I kept returning to.

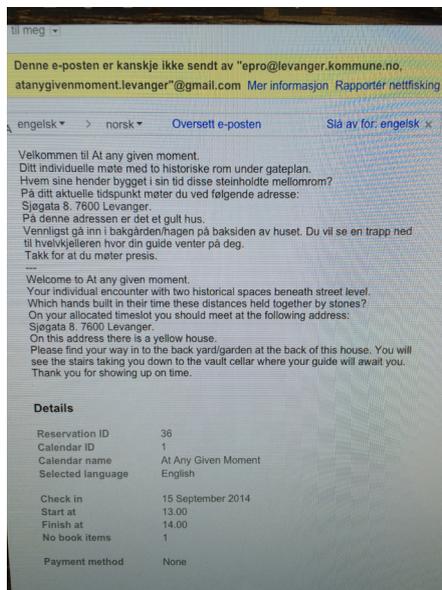
Each individual's experience of *At any given moment* would be different, despite the framework being the same for everyone - the cellars, the guide, the directing, as well as the pre-programmed light scenes. This variety resulted from several specially constructed and changing conditions, as the coming section will highlight.

During the walk through the town streets, as the participant and guide move between the two cellars, each participant would experience something different to the previous one. In this part of the piece, the cars driving by in the streets would vary each time and the people moving about would not be the same, or they would not be in the same place at the same time. The weather would vary, and everyday events like the ringing of the church bells would not appear for all. During these walks, random events in the streets would shape the artwork differently for each participant.

One male and two female guides, not trained actors, were engaged for *At any given moment*. Rather than giving them a fixed script to follow in detail, the directing was done in a manner through which they were able to behave according to their own initiative, as long as certain criteria were followed.

What was emphasized to the guides was the *content* of what would be presented to the participant rather than the exact words or order of words. There was some consistency, for instance when the participant first enters into the work and meets with the guide for the first time. The participant had to locate the point of entry via information received by SMS or email when making the booking to experience the piece.

The message they received consisted of a short description containing information on the address, the time to meet, as well as the colour of the house where the cellar would be found.



The participant was asked to show up on time, and had to walk into a private garden, without needing to meet the owner, there to locate the entrance of the cellar where the meeting would take place. Having found the cellar they had then to walk down the steps to find the guide awaiting them, sitting at a large table.

The guide would welcome the participant as part of the artwork *At any given moment*, and then state the exact day, date and time as a way to instigate the artwork as a situation in that precise, present moment.

The guide would ask the participant to turn off their mobile phone, and for it to be carried by the guide throughout the piece as a way of ensuring that the participant would not be suddenly disrupted and distracted from the situation.

The guide was directed to phrase the information in the form of suggestions for the participant who should never be *told* where to go or what to do, but rather feel invited to follow the guide, if they so wished.

The participant could leave the situation at any time.

The guide was directed to stay calm, even if the participant appeared nervous, talked a lot, or even moved around. The guide should try to be as quiet and calm as possible. The idea was that the guide, through their calm behaviour, would enable the participant to be at ease in the situation.

After the guide led the participant out of the first cellar, and onto the streets of Levanger, nothing was to be said during the walk. Through the action of walking, the guide initiated an unusually slow pace. The guide was directed to keep a slow pace even if the participant speeded up.

The guide was to stay silent for the entire duration of this walk, without revealing where the next destination was. The slow pace allowed for an intensification of the awareness in the situation. The slowness gave

time for the mind to start wandering, reflecting, and making observations that would not be possible when walking at a normal pace. The participant had the chance to become aware of their own presence, their own placement and their own surroundings. The slowness made the events of everyday life appear almost as staged events. During the walk the participant would not know how this piece would unfold and might start searching for something to be played out in the street as part of the artwork. The heightened awareness opened-up the construction of an imagined artwork in which even random everyday events appeared like staged events, although subject to interpretation.

British artist Hamish Fulton, who is often described as a walking artist could be mentioned in reference to this work. Participating in one of Fulton's workshops on walking, in Japan in 2007, as part of a small group, I, along with a few others, made a series of walks initiated by and together with the artist. One of these walks has some relevance for the sequence of the piece *At any given moment* discussed above.

This walk with Fulton would take about 10 to 15 minutes at a normal pace, but we were asked to spend 60 minutes on this route without speaking. It was raining heavily, and I remember struggling to walk sufficiently slowly as I got steadily colder due to a lack of rain gear. During this walk I found myself becoming more and more alert in terms of the surroundings. It was as if every sound, my every movement, every car, any visible sign, would be read; people in the street, even insects, would be given much closer attention. Fulton's focus on slowness and duration has influenced the making of *At any given moment*, but there are also clear differences. For instance, he brings his walks back into the gallery space as artworks made through large graphic vinyl prints mounted onto the walls of the gallery. He turns the actual walk into a representation of the walk, rather than presenting walking as an experience the viewer can take part in. Hamish Fulton is the one actually walking. The artist is the one experiencing the actual event, while the viewers are left with the representation displayed on the gallery walls.

In *At any given moment* it is not the artist making the walk, but rather the work unfolds through the experience of each individual, and parts of this experience take the form of a *presencing* induced in the act of walking. As the guide and participant are walking in the street, they are also observed. The walk acts slightly outside of expected behaviour owing to its unusually slow pace. It could be read as a kind of performance from the perspective of those walking by. Both the guide and the participant are, in this moment, actors staging an event for those observing them.

A note on this: When observed by someone situated outside of this situation, *At any given moment* undergoes a flip. The participant looks for other staged events outside of this walk. The participant becomes doubly aware, not just of being almost an actor within it, but also as an actual viewer or spectator experiencing the artwork. People passing by might read the same participant-viewer as an actor, acting out a strangely slow performance in the street together with the guide who is wearing a blue, customized overall that might be

read as a costume. The guide walks with, but apart from, each participant, so the guide is also both an onlooker and an actor. The guide both observes the participant but is also observed by the participant, as well as by random people in the street.

Walking is important for the construction of many artworks. Tanaka Koki's work *Of walking in Unknown*, shown at the Venice Biennale in 2017, was built from documenting a four-day walk made by the artist from his hometown Kyoto to the nearest nuclear power plant in light of the Fukushima disaster. Amy Sharrock's work *Drift*, from 2012, constructs an artwork via a conversation between a participant and the artist, via a mobile phone: the conversation dictates where the participant walks, and thereby where the artwork takes place.

The Canadian artist-duo Janet Cardiff and George Bures Millers, in their series *Video Walks*, also ask the spectator or participant to walk alone. Through digital technology, such as an iPod, the participant is anchored into these art-walks through the small screen of the device, as well as the headphones, and told where to go. For these walks, the artists made films, walking with the camera on the exact same route the audience were asked to walk. Cardiff and Miller have added the dimension of a fictional, semi-structured story to these works, and as participants we are made to follow it, via the screen. A voice talks to the participant through the headphones, asking him/her to observe certain events appearing on the screen while they are moving through a particular place. These events will only occur on the screen, but other events will take place where they are situated. For example; in the walk made for the theatre Hau 1 in Berlin, *Ghost Machine* (Cardiff, 2005), there is a scene in which the participant is told to walk into a shower room inside the theatre building. While I was experiencing this work I saw that someone was having a shower as I walked into the room, but only on my screen. I also heard the sound of running water through my headphones. But, allowing my eyes to leave the screen and gaze at the actual shower physically in front of me, the exact same shower that appeared on the screen with a person inside of it was empty. I was alone in the changing room.

In these works by this artist-duo, the spectator's own sense of hearing in real time is cut off from the actual world via the headphones, so the spectators are enclosed in a fiction. We are transformed into ghosts in a film already played-out in the very spot we are in. We can't affect the action, we can merely observe events that have already taken place, in a similar way to how Ebenezer Scrooge in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* is made to revisit his own past without the ability to interfere in it.

In *Video Walks*, each participant follows the same narration on the screen, but what goes on in the actual real time and place will vary. This creates a double layer of experience: one moves around in one reality, yet follows another through the iPod, and thus the artwork is produced in a double exposure.

At any given moment does not unfold as a piece through any technological features other than the series of programmed light scenes, but is rather unfolded with the guidance of an actual person with whom the participant spends time investigating underground spaces in the city. In another sense, one experiences it alone.

Walking is an important part of experiencing and participating in any work of installation art. The movement as we navigate around and within the work that surrounds the viewer transitions not just the body through space and time, but also alters our awareness; it is where the artwork is brought to the surface of our imagination, bringing it to life. As mentioned in the section related to Shinto shrines, [Ma] can be felt in moments when moving up the stairs towards the shrine. *At any given moment*, in a similar way, is created through several moments of transition, by walking the piece one becomes connected with both what one can see, but also with what cannot be seen but must be imagined or felt.

4.2 Darkness as a veil

James Turrell is an artist whose practice, over several decades, has focused primarily on the sense of seeing. Several of his works invite us to spend time simply observing. In his many famous *colour fields*, the viewer is made to feel that they are losing their sense of gravity as they are immersed in a field of light. Here, colours slowly but subtly change, surrounding the viewer, causing a strange state of almost weightlessness as the body in space loses its sense of what is up and what is down. Turrell's work *Minamidera* is a part of the Art House Project¹⁸ at Naoshima. In a building specially designed by Ando Tadao, Turrell leads the viewers into a space seemingly totally dark. In this work our eyes are forced to adjust. The spending of time in this space will allow for the eyes to start seeing the contours of it due to a small slit in the wall where a tiny amount of daylight passes in.

My experience of Turrell's installation happened in 2015, over one year after making *At any given moment*, in Levanger, but there are several aspects connecting these works that are worth reflecting on.

Turrell's work, and my own *At any given moment*, are, as I see it, using darkness as a veil. Darkness veils the shape and scale of the spaces they inhabit in such a way that the participants lose their sense of direction. In Turrell's work, darkness is slowly unveiled by a tiny, but even, distribution of light. Only a small amount of light allows for our eyes to start seeing as the pupils become enlarged, allowing the eye to become more sensitive to seeing in a darkened space.

¹⁸ <http://benesse-artsite.jp/en/art/arthouse.html> (07.11.2016)

In *At any given moment* a veil of darkness operates at intervals by re-veiling itself over and over again. There is no continuous light entering the space; the only source of light occurs during each passing light-scene.

These scenes trick our eyes and brain into thinking, for a moment, that we can see in the dark. As the light in each scene appears very slowly, it creates a similar experience to when we begin to see in semi-dark spaces due to the enlargement of our pupils.

The veil of darkness in *At any given moment* reoccurs at various intervals, moving in and out of total darkness, at which time we are not able to see at all.

During the instalment of the light-scenes, several days were spent working in the dark cellar collaborating with a lighting technician. All parts of this instalment process had to be tested, for some of the time at least, in complete or semi-darkness, in order to strike the right balance between darkness and light. During the process of testing, careful notes were made regarding how many seconds the light would be up for, at what level and temperature, and how long the dark intervals would last. The challenge was to open-up the space of the cellar little by little, a little like unwrapping a gift whose content should be kept hidden until each layer of the wrapping paper is removed.

At first, there should be no way of sensing how large the cellar was. The participant should feel as if they were walking into a void. The light scenes should appear to create passing, yet physical paintings, appearing so slowly that your mind could not start noticing them before they were about to fade-away again. The composition between darkness and light was important, and everything had to be adjusted according to our eyesight and how rapidly or slowly we adjusted to the darkness. Each scene had to be individually adjusted to achieve the precise amount of light required to open-up just a part of the space, for example to expose only the doorway leading into the cellar from the staircase leaving the rest of the space hidden from view.

The timing between each scene, as well as the timing and spacing of the full sequence of five light scenes, with variable dark veiling intervals, had to be tested and experienced over and over in the cellar. It was time-consuming to test for the placement and number of lamps required, to achieve the right spread.

To plan these sequences for the eyes of participants and guide coming in directly from daylight¹⁹ was vital. During this work we discovered how each of our visual perception diverged if one of us had to leave the cellar while the other stayed on working in the dark space. Light hitting the eyes would affect sensitivity towards darkness in such a way that it would also affect how the light scenes were experienced. We found that if we stayed in the cellar for a long period our eyes could easily see, using very minimal lighting. But to reach this

¹⁹ All the available time slots for *At any given moment* were during daytime. There were no available evening sessions as the cellar could neither be entered nor exited when it was dark outside.

state of sensitivity we stayed in the dark for a long period of time, not exactly resembling the situation the guide and participant would experience. This had to be taken into consideration in the planning of each interval between light and darkness. As Turrell would have known, understanding how someone coming in directly from the outside would experience the scenes was vital as it would take a long time for the eyes to adjust to the dark environment.

The longer we spend in the dark, the better our eyes can see in the dark as our pupils expand, a bit like an adjusted camera lens. We had to keep leaving the cellar, waiting outside in the light during the adjustment of each light-scene, to re-adjust our own sense of vision. We continuously moved between darkness and light, from spending time in the dark cellar to time above ground in the light, in order to create the compositional flow between the five light-scenes and the veil created by lightlessness.

4.3 Sharing; At any given moment.

The artwork *At any given moment* was, like [Ma], shaped in the imagination through participation in the situation. In this research project it has been important to gain insight about how this piece affected those participating in it, with a focus on some of the categories of [Ma]. What was experienced? Which reflections and associations were made? How did participants feel in the situation?

As a way of collecting insights on these questions, various methods of gathering feedback from those participating in the work were chosen:

- A:** Gathering feedback through meeting and talking with the participants after their experience.
- B:** Asking the guides to keep a written log, noting down their personal experiences and observations in the time before the next participant arrived.
- C:** Sending emails to everyone who participated, asking them for a voluntary written reflection about how they experienced the situation.
- D:** Organizing two informal discussions. One was open to all who had participated.

The second was organized by personal invitation to a smaller group of selected participants (see Artwork III. Trondheim).

The feedback that was given through these means provided me with valuable insights, both as an artist and as an artistic researcher. It even offered input about how to make adjustments to *At any given moment* in its second instalment, as well as functioning as the material shaping artwork IV.

During its opening day, *At any given moment* was experienced by five participants. I talked to all of them individually, afterwards, as a way of gathering insights about how it was experienced – important at this early stage.

The informal chats mentioned above gave me the idea to follow up by gathering more feedback from all participants via email. I chose to avoid using interviews in this part of my research as I worried that it would be awkward for some people to discuss their response to this work in a one-to-one meeting with the artist. About 70 people in Levanger, whom all had experienced the work, received an email message (from the same email account that had been used when booking to see the work). The email address was unconnected to my person, but held a connection to the artwork; this way it was more open for the participants to answer in a direct and honest way. The email replies from the participants varied in length from a few sentences to more than a full A4 page in length. The format was kept open, allowing each person to respond in an intuitive way.

The guides who acted in the piece were given a book in which they were asked to note down, daily, their own reflections and experiences with each participant. After the first day the guide noted:

“People are impatient. Ask a lot, walk to fast (almost away from me).”²⁰

Speaking with the participants and reading the comments from the guide after the first day of showing *At any given moment*, made me realise that the initial encounter between the guide and the participant felt slightly uncomfortable for both. It became clear this was caused by the fact that nothing was actually happening at this stage, apart from a short introduction given by the guide as the participant arrived in the cellar.

From the second day of showing the piece, some small adjustments were made as a test by adding a short poetic text that I had written during the preliminary site visits:

Distance created by stones
Unknown hands
lays lifts
lays
lifts
Head bends, body bows
Upright I stand, my body rooted in another time

²⁰ From the guides logbook 07.09.14 (day 1). Translated by the artist.

The instruction now included the reading of this poem. The guide, at their own pace and at a moment chosen by them, would read these short sentences as a way of directing more attention to the environment of the cellar. The reading of this poem took place in the first cellar.

After the second day the guide writes:

“Today’s audience is a lot more patient (maybe I appear calmer?), and it works well reading the text.”²¹

Adding the reading of this poem seemed to allow the guide to behave more calmly as she/he could focus on the action of reading, rather than just being silent with a person she/he had never met before. This simple task of reading led to a reduced tension in the initial phase of the piece, bringing the guide and the participant closer together as the guide felt more confident in the situation as an active reader, and the participant as a more passive listener. After this adjustment was made, the participants seemed more relaxed and appeared to ease into the situation in a slightly different way by comparison with the response given on the first day. The poem also opened-up the surrounding context of this work through imagery and imagined narrative.

Entering an artwork requires a degree of mental preparation, as if passing through a gate. The active triggering of imagination elicited through reading the poem seems to have worked to shift the participants, as well as the guide, into a state of readiness to experience what not only surrounded them, but also what they were taking an active part of.

The same email address was also used to invite all the participants to take part in an informal discussion held in the cellar in Sjøgata where the piece was partly played-out. This event took place on the evening of September 20th, 2014, the final day of showing *At any given moment* in Levanger. Ten people participated in this conversation, including one of the guides. The conversation was recorded and later transcribed.



²¹ From the guides logbook 08.09.2014 (day 2). Translation by the artist.

In the same way that [Ma] seems to appear as we climb stairs while moving towards a shrine, *At any given moment* also created an expectation for what was to come; it activated the imagination to complete the experience. *At any given moment* invited its participants to connect the actual and physical experience of being led by a guide, to be walking as part of an artwork, with imagined images, narratives and memories.

What was absent or unfilled in this work told an ongoing story that kept being reconfigured through each individual participant who experienced it. The situation created in this piece was interwoven with the past belonging to the historic cellars, but also with an imagined future.

4.4 Artwork III. Relocating *At any given moment*

Artwork III. *At any given moment*

Available at multiple times every day: 31.08.2015 – 05.09.2015

As part of: BASTARD Trondheim International Festival for Performative Arts.

Location: Cellar, Trondheim public Library. Cellar, Søndregate 7. Cityscape Trondheim.

Adapting a site-bound artwork, *At any given moment*, a piece made for two individual cellar spaces in Levanger, to a new context and site, was a perfect challenge in the context of this research project. It was now to be tested as part of a festival for performative arts in Trondheim. A series of interesting questions arose in revisiting the piece in this new context. It offered the possibility of reflecting on how the new space might affect the artwork; how it could change in the move to another site and context.

Questioning whether it was possible to recreate it as the exact same piece for this new spatial situation in Trondheim seemed relevant. Also, how would this piece be read in the context of a theatre festival? These questions were pressing, but offered new opportunities for the project. Re-creating this piece allowed for productive use of the shared feedback from the participants and guides in Levanger, leading to some adjustments.

At any given moment plays out in our imagination, allowing physically unfilled areas to be activated, supplemented, and later completed, in our minds. But this raises the question of when the artwork really begins because the imagination is activated even prior to the encounter in the cellar. It could be said to begin in the imagination of the participant at the moment he or she receives the information about where to meet the guide. Right then, he or she starts imagining the described location. This could be the actual beginning of the artwork, even though it might happen several days prior to the experience of physically going to meet the guide.

At any given moment, now artwork III, was part of a festival, and tickets for it were sold at Avant Garden theatre in Trondheim. For this festival it was impossible to send out information via email or sms about where the participant should join their guide as the regular ticket system had to be used. In collaboration with the staff at the theatre, the decision was made to add a short text onto the ticket. Constrained by the number of characters permitted, it nevertheless conveyed the instructions in a poetic way.



The cellar where the participant would meet their guide was located inside the public library building in the centre of town, but not in the actual public area of the building.

To enter this new cellar-space, the participant had to pass a metal barrier with a sign saying *No Entry*, and walk down steps leading into the ancient ruins, dating from around year 1100 (CE), that are on permanent display in the library.

The sign might have said no entry, but the ticket would instruct the participant to enter, and to keep walking down the steps and into the ruins. At this barrier, what was part of the piece and what was a part of the everyday scene of the library became muddled in an interesting way.

As the ruins in the library date from another time in history than the spaces in Levanger, the history of Trondheim had to be taken into consideration when re-locating *At any given moment*. This led to a change in how the guide welcomed the participant into the piece. In Levanger it would be stated how the cellar dated from c.1650–1750, whereas in Trondheim this information had to be changed accordingly. When participants walked into the ruins, before locating the guide, they had to walk past skeletons on display in the historic exhibit. This different information and visual-input created another experience of the work, bringing forward another set of historical references, and therefore other imagined narratives.

In Levanger, the first cellar was located in a quiet street, at a private address. In Trondheim, the public aspect of the library gave the piece a more social dimension. There would always be people around who would observe the participant and the guide and their movements. The Trondheim version of the work was almost constantly observed by people outside of the piece, as it was performed, while in Levanger the guide and the participant would only occasionally be met by this external gaze.

4.4.1 Alternative exits

In Levanger the entrance to the second cellar was, as mentioned above, via a modern-looking wooden door, and the fact one was expected to enter a cellar was not at all obvious.



For that version a door sign was made as part of the piece stating only the title of the work, *At any given moment*, engraved into a brass plaque and placed as if it were a normal door sign indicating who lived in the house. In Trondheim the second cellar was accessed through a cellar door in the ground.



These two ways of accessing a space below ground were different, and this also opened-up a slightly different experience of the piece.

In the feedback given from participants in Levanger, none of the comments related an experience of feeling scared or uneasy, despite the fact that parts of this experience took place in a dark cellar. In the feedback in Trondheim, however, this often recurred in the written comments given by participants, as well as in comments from the guide:

“The moment when the door is closing behind me I experience a compact darkness, noticing also how I struggle to keep calm, awaiting anxiously for something to happen. Am I meant to be frightened?”²²

²² Excerpt from feedback given by an architect, F.P. Translated from Swedish.

“I imagined how it would be to sit in a dungeon, in prison, year after year.”²³

“She was really scared in the 15th century cellar, I had to make some conversation with her to calm her down and to assure her that nothing frightening would happen. Had to hold her hand during the dark sequences.”²⁴

There were other differences between *At any given moment* in Levanger and in Trondheim, such as the layout of the cellars. In Levanger, both rooms in the cellar with the light-scenes were almost at the same level. The guide could therefore allow the participant to move freely, making it easier to navigate, even in the dark, as it was possible to feel your way around carefully. In Trondheim, objects existing in the external reality triggered associations, such as the skeletons in the library. It underscored the interconnectedness between the exterior and the interior of this work, suggesting that there was no clear demarcation between inside and outside, but rather a gradual, and thus temporal transition.

Some slight changes in the direction given to the guides had to be made in Trondheim to make sure that the participant would actually enter the space on the lowest level, being the space with a vaulted ceiling. If the participant was allowed to stand more still, as in the Levanger version, he/she might have missed the light scenes as the layout of the three rooms in the cellar in Trondheim had varying floor levels. It was therefore necessary to make a change here and to direct the guides to lead the participants more strictly in this second version of *At any given moment*.

As the first light-scene appeared, the guide would pro-actively lead the participant down another set of stairs, taking them down to the cellar space with the vault. As the light faded out again, darkness would completely surround the participant in such a way that it would cut off a sense of direction, in a similar way to how it functioned in Levanger. But the difference now was that one had been led down an extra set of stairs, situating oneself deeply in a cellar.

Towards the end of the sequences with veiled darkness and shifting light scenes, in the second instalment, the participant had to be led back into the first space entered. The final light scene faded very slowly towards darkness, and the participant was not aware that this in fact was the end sequence as all scenes faded in and out from darkness, as discussed before. In this second version, the aim was to test how the participant was affected by slightly changing the ending of the piece.

In the first version the lights did not fade into complete darkness at the end, but were left at a point where the contours of the cellar become visible for the first time.

²³ Excerpt from feedback given by a writer, M.H. Translated from Norwegian.

²⁴ Excerpt from the guides log Thursday September 3. 16.30 Translated from Norwegian.

On returning to street level from the cellar, a slightly strange moment occurred when the guide handed back the participants mobile phone. This moment offered a chance for both the guide and the participant to start talking about their experiences thus avoiding an awkward situation when they came out from the dark cellar together. Hence, as the mobile phone was returned, the guide returned to being him or her-self, and in this way leaving the role as the guide. This moment would somehow break the spatiality of the piece, and mark how this was the exit point, ending the experience of the artwork as well as the artwork itself.

Comments regarding the ending of artwork II were given in feedback from several people. Following this, for the second instalment the instructions in this part of the piece were changed.

The guide was instructed at the end of the piece to simply open the inner-door of the cellar, displaying the stairs leading back to ground level; light would seep into the space making these stairs highly visible. The mobile phone was handed over in silence at this moment. The guide would remain silent, and the participant would leave the cellar alone. The guide would then close the door into the cellar and remain inside it, as part of the piece.

The guides were directed to stay in the cellar for several minutes after the participant left to make sure they would not meet in the street. Through this alteration I again wanted to question when the piece ends. As the guide stays behind when the participant leaves, the memory of the guide adheres to the situation created by these cellars. In this version the guide does not return to being him or herself in front of the participant. The guide wholly belongs to the situation. When the participant leaves the cellar, she or he no longer has access to the situation. At the moment of leaving the cellar this situation becomes available only through memory and imagination, belonging already to the past.

4.5. Artwork IV. Retelling At any given moment as a collective artwork

At any given moment, artist-book published by LevArText, November 2016.

Location: The book as a (portable) space.

People have different experiences and understandings of [Ma], as previously discussed. This multiplicity of viewpoints plays an important role in this project as a whole, and specifically regarding *At any given moment*, a work that will be experienced variably by each participant. The fourth work in this artistic research project was to create a hybrid.

Artwork IV is the artist-book version of *At any given moment*. This artist-book, as well as being another modality of the work, documents as well as reflects upon it.

At the same time as it reflects and documents a version of *At any given moment* that no longer exists (the Levanger version), it also creates a new artwork by investigating the book as an alternative space of encounter.

4.5.1 A research-data's journey

The process leading up to artwork IV, in the format of a book, began with planning for a presentation of artwork II for an obligatory presentation in the second-year research forum held by the programme funding my research. It was developed further at a Nordic conference on Artistic research in Malmö in 2015.

The presentation of Artwork II, *At any given moment*, was made as a performance lecture. Owing to the difficulties faced with how to present a site-bound artwork in which each participant would experience the piece differently (as discussed at length in part 4), the choice was made to create a performance-presentation through retelling the piece through the experiences of the various participants as well as the guides.

The text material that shaped this presentation was gathered from the research data collected from the participants and guides via email, as discussed in part 4.3 in this text.

During the performance lecture given in Malmö, the lectures of John Cage (Cage, 2011) hovered in the back of my mind. Cage's lectures were often presented in a strange and inconsistent way; he often tested various rhythmic and conceptual formats, making it hard, or even impossible, to follow for those listening. Cage's lectures would, however, make much more sense as art, as performances, and their conceptual structure said something important about process thinking/practice in art, helping us think through art as a generator for reflection.

Bearing his lectures in mind, my own presentation in Malmö started neither offering the audience any background information about the overall research project, nor about artwork II or how my lecture was to become a performance lecture, at all.

The idea for this presentation was an experiment:

How to present an artwork made as part of an artistic research project in a more poetic and experiential way? How could I present an artwork through means closer to art than academia, but still offer the audience research-based information?

What I wanted to test out on this audience was the actual reflections gathered from the participants who had in fact experienced and participated in this artwork. Rather than presenting it through the filter of my research on [Ma] or my own thoughts and ideas, I chose a presentation form nearer to the core of the research data gathered from the artwork.

However, the focus for this presentation lay very close to [Ma] by offering the audience a feeling of experiencing and imagining the artwork that was being presented. Rather than talking about and around it, this presentation offered the audience a more tangible sense of the artwork, and revealed how it was experienced in different ways.

The structure of the performance lecture consisted of a reading of a series of short text sequences, similar to those that were later used in the artist-book. The various excerpts of text that were read were selected from the material sent by the actual participants of artwork II. During the reading of these excerpts, images documenting scenes from artwork II were projected onto a screen behind me. The photos were shown in a chronological order that fitted with the descriptions in the text being read out.

The text excerpts were printed on individual cards with each card representing a selected detail from a description from each person. Blue cards presented the participants feedback, and red cards the guides.

The cards and colours visually emphasized how there was more than one voice being presented in the reading. Using these cards created a rhythm, segmentation, but also accretion of time through the action of laying the cards down on the floor, one by one, after each was read. Through this gesture the cards piled up, creating stacks on the floor, spaced in-between the audience and myself. When all the cards were read and left on the floor, I indicated that I was concluding the situation of being the presenter in an on-stage situation by silently joining the audience. As I sat down in the audience section the performance-lecture ended.

As a presentation given at a conference, this presentation failed miserably – my audience seemed puzzled and confused, to the point of being annoyed. It seemed this presentation was too close to art and too far from academia, even though this was a conference for *artistic research*. The presentation was too far removed from what the audience was expecting. It became apparent in the discussion after that many had been waiting for the actual presentation to start, and had not taken-in what was happening in front of them. After the performance lecture ended there was at first a long silence.

Following this rough start, however, the discussion became rather fruitful as the floor actually opened-up to more fertile discussion. The slightly annoyed, puzzled audience created a rather exciting discussion based on how confused they were by the presentation, and this heated feedback made something spark.

The question was: whether or not this presentation could create an artistic research hybrid by presenting documentation of an older artwork (no longer existing in the world) in conjunction with, and through, another, newer work – a performance or performative situation created through the reading. This situation also opened up further reflections about the documented artwork.

In this artistic research project, I encountered and tested various thresholds, coming to value the in-between as a focal point in [Ma] as well as in my own works.

I therefore realized that the material exposed in this presentation might still be worth pursuing, although maybe in another form, by creating another space, this time a book.

4.5.2 An alternative space emerging

On returning to the studio, an alternative space emerged, I realized that the material presented in this performance-lecture could be activated again in the space of a book.

Through a close collaboration with the designer Joana Bruno and the curator Anne-Gro Erikstad, from LevArt, who acted as the publisher of the finished book, the process of making artwork IV began.

By gathering and going through all the feedback sent to me by the participants of artwork II, the next step was to sort through the material and place the various reflections within a timeline of the various moments taking place in artwork II, according to its duration. The thought-process also involved a consideration of how to open-up this work beyond documentation by choosing excerpts that functioned well as text, enabling a new artwork to emerge.

At any given moment, both in the versions from Levanger and Trondheim, was defined and created by its location and its placement in time.

The artist-book *At any given moment* is also experienced alone, using the text as a guide to lead one through the work. It creates a portable space with the possibility to be owned by anyone, and carried anywhere, at any time. The book, as a space, offers the possibility of experiencing an artwork while being situated at a chosen location and during a chosen moment in time. This artwork and space can also be revisited and experienced in multiple ways.

Reflecting upon how Michel de Certeau distinguishes between place and space, where a place operates within a fixed order of things, while a space considers both time, change and mobility and is therefore changeable.

The book *before* it is read could be thought of as a place where each page stands in a fixed relation to the others, a place ready to become visited and explored. This place, the book, then becomes a space relating to De Certeau's definition of it as *space as a practiced place* (*De Certeau, 1984: 117*). The action of reading and turning the pages of this book creates a space through the activation of the reader.

In this book, the participant has the possibility

of re-configuring the piece *At any given moment* by changing its timing and spacing, by moving between the pages, turning them in any chosen way.

The space emerging in this artist-book can be entered and re-entered via any page in the same way you enter and re-enter various rooms within a building. Each page could even be considered as a room with several possible points of entry and exit, where the time you choose to spend in each room is also voluntary. Each page presents an individual experience, so each room of this house, the artist book *At any given moment*, when thought of as a construction, houses different participants' reflections on being part of the artwork in Levanger. Each page exists within the coherent, bound logic of the book, similar to the way rooms are joined together within a building, but the participating act of reading, looking, turning the pages, is what creates the alternative space where the artwork emerges through spending this time engaging with it.

A lot of time went into the planning of how to visually present this version of *At any given moment*, to allow the full potential of the work in this alternative space. It was important to consider the spacing as well as timing. The placement and layout of the text onto the pages was vital, leaving enough breathing space to offer the reader rest in each of the rooms of this imaginary house. The quality of the paper had to be considered, the sensation of touching it, the tactility of the transition when turning the paper by using the hand, but also the tone of the colour reaching the eye on each page.

This book is not just about what the text and the images display, but rather the space allows also for a tactile experience through one's transitions within the space.

When going through the reflections of participants (the parts written about their individual experiences inside the dark cellar in Levanger), it became important to consider how to sense the dark environment within the alternative space of the book. How could the sensation of experiencing darkness, veiling and un-veiling the space, be re-created using just paper.

By working with black text on black paper for all the text describing reflections on being inside of the dark cellar, the experiences in the dark alluded to a different temperature, another scent, another feeling from the descriptions of being outside in daylight.

The black paper looked and felt different from the white pages. The paper is slightly thinner, and the surface of this paper gives a kind of satin feel.

By choosing a black semi-opaque paper, this paper also holds a semi-transparent quality. When this paper is layered on top of the other black pages inside of the book, these pages are, before being lifted, experienced

as pitch black. The viewer must engage with the paper to experience the veiling and unveiling of the text now almost hiding on these pages.

The text on each black page is barely visible before lifting the page towards a light source. Little light is needed, yet light hitting the page is a necessity for moving around this area of the book. When moving into the dark after the white pages, darkness feels present. When turning the black pages one by one, each page can be slightly looked through, as a black veil: both distorting and also offering some insight towards what exists beyond this page.

Experiencing the durational piece in Levanger it was hard to see, even impossible to see, during some of the sequences in the dark. The black pages of the book aims at recreating, or evoking, a similar feeling using paper, and makes it clear how the participant of this book must also be present when moving around in this version of the work (it wouldn't be the same if one was read to).

In one of the interviews made about [Ma], light and darkness were discussed in terms of how we, as sentient beings, become more sensitive towards space when immersed in darkness. Maybe it is because we must then dare to sense and feel the space or spatiality, rather than just trust our eyes to inform us about each situation.

In this book - work, [Ma] might again be relevant regarding time, timing, and spacing. Specifically, it corresponds to a way of creating a feeling of moving into, and later away from, a silent dark space, to be experienced not just with our eyes.

After spending some time in the dark sequences of this book, when leaving the darkness (by turning to the white pages towards the end, after having spent time adjusting to the dark pages) the sudden whiteness of the paper will hit your eyes like a flashlight in the night.

Part 5. Art work V. *Pust.*

Available to the public: 08.08.2015 – 21.08.2015

Space: Sandhornøy, Nordland during SALT festival for Art, Architecture, Music and Nature.

Pust.

Translates to English as:

Breath. or/and: Breathe.

5.1 Nature. In nature

Artwork V, *Pust.* is made for a context and site outdoors.

At the beginning of this artistic research project my focus was mostly concerned with installations, mainly works relating to and created in proximity with architectural spaces indoors. I had no plans to make any works, as part of this research project, outdoors. I thought it vital to be able to control lighting and all other aspects of the environment of these works in a way impossible outdoors. However, working with the interviews researching the surrounding fields of [Ma] opened-up a discovery that at the time was new to me: the connection that [Ma] holds with nature, and the experience and sensation of being in and part of nature, as evident in category 14, 'Nature, in nature'.

Various intervals are evident in nature and some become visible, for example seasonal change, a constant transition strongly connected with [Ma]. The awareness of this aspect brought forward a major modification in the initial plan that had been to make all works in this project for architectural spaces indoors. This finding, that on-going intervals in nature could be investigated in the context of [Ma], made me rethink the original plan and begin testing outdoor conditions as well.

5.1.1 Invisible. Visible. Invisible

The initial site-visit to SALT²⁵ at Sandhornøy in Nordland was made in the beginning of May 2015. A week was spent in and around the landscape where the SALT project was situated at that time, walking around the vast beach and also driving around different parts of the island during my initial visit.

Sandhornøy, as a place, can only be described as spectacular. The mountains are high, the sea is amazingly clear and blue, the beaches are marbled in white and black sand, and wild animals like eagles, foxes

²⁵ <http://www.salted.no/> - website checked 22.02.2017

and flocks of elk or deer are always there or thereabouts. The initial feeling was that it would be impossible to work in these surroundings: what could be added to this context without simply drowning in the scenery?



At the time of this visit, the SALT project was still waiting to be restored after it had been hit by a large storm the previous year, a storm that had all but destroyed the wooden construction in the project called 'the pyramid', a construction that had been hosting the work by Chinese artist Yang Fudong at the opening of the festival. During my visit the pyramid was a shattered wooden construction lying broken on the beach.



It was clear how the forces of nature had taken charge at this site. Several constructions were broken, heavy wooden beams had been snapped like thin matches, and everything was covered, even buried in layers of sand.



While observing these constructions buried in sand, an awareness of the wind that had flung the sand around made itself present to me through simple test-like actions. At this time, I was not aware how important these simple tests would become for what was later realized as the work *Pust*.



SALT was situated in my home county, Nordland. Growing up here, an awareness of the seasons is important and always present. Ways of life change according to the seasons. In winter, a white carpet of snow covers the ground and everything stops growing. In the spring melt the carpet of snow rolls back and the first flowers appear, necessitating a change in footwear as the ground becomes bare for the first time in months. The light nights of the arctic summer, when the sun never sets, seem to last forever. But this season passes all too quickly, and as dusk comes earlier and earlier autumn soon arrives. As it sets in, the leaves change colour, and the forest offers up a fruitful harvest of berries and mushrooms that disappear as the winter carpet covers the ground yet again. And following this seasonal change the sun once again hides itself, leaving everything in darkness for months at a time.



Seasonal intervals are in constant transition: there is no clear beginning of spring nor is there a clear end to the winter. But these changes are in constant flux, creating an on-going tension between what has been and what will come. These intervals are part of the excitement as well as the mundaneness of everyday life.

Japanese artist Nakaya Fujiko's practice connects with the experience of natural phenomena: she uses a weather phenomenon, fog, as a changeable and sculptural material. Her artworks are created from carefully planned and constructed artificial fog that produce situations. In the artist's own words these *fog-works* come about through a dialogue with wind creating a stage for the fog to perform (Nakaya, 2013). Her use of fog as a material could also be thought of as a veil in a similar way to how I describe darkness becoming a veil in artwork II - IV *At any given moment*.

Through veiling parts of a landscape, or even a cityscape, through a temporal material such as fog, her works evoke different ways of seeing, as well as sensing, by temporarily sculpting the surroundings we move about in. Her works also display the dynamic of the wind by making it visible in how it moves the fog.

Ryan Gander's work, shown at Documenta 13, *I Need Some Meaning I Can Memorise* (The Invisible Pull), is worth mentioning. In this work a main space at Kunsthalle Fridericianum was left apparently empty. Nothing was left on display in the large white exhibition hall: the work consisted of an invisible breeze created by hidden technical apparatus. The breeze flowed gently through the indoor space, creating no visual experience, yet one could feel a gentle caress of the wind as one walked through.

Hanna Johansson discusses Gander's work as a meeting between the natural and the technological (Isoma, 2013) in terms of creating what feels like a natural breeze through totally unnatural processes, via technology. The same could be said about the fog works discussed above, as these works also result from complex technological features creating the simulation of something occurring as a natural process - fog. The invisible work by Gander had a strong hold on visitors simply with the displacement of a breeze. Had we encountered this outdoors we might not give it much thought, but the displacement of the breeze allows our senses, as well as our reflective gaze, to intensify.

Many artists work with textiles in various related ways. Annette Messager's work *Casino*, made for the Venice Biennale in 2005, alludes to travel into the belly of the whale in the tale of Pinocchio by moving large amounts of scarlet fabric around a room via large fans. Christo and Jeanne-Claude create strikingly visual projects with strong social aspects, both in their collaborative making (by inviting vast numbers of members of the public to take part in the realisation of the works) and also in how they evoke a collective memory of what could be through wrapping famous landmarks. When working outdoors the notion of land art could be important to mention, although this conceptual movement in the 1960s and 1970s was more concerned with using natural materials, or sculpting the natural environment into what became known as *earth works*.

Pust. made use of the beach and landscape at SALT, which became part of the artwork, as an environmental set, where those moving around in the landscape participated in a staged enactment, a performative situation, situated outdoors by the sea.



The large neon-coloured textile functioned as a veil hanging off the end of the wooden pyramid (designed by the architect Rintala Eggertsson, with reference to fish drying racks, an ancient tradition in this part of Norway as a way to preserve codfish).

Pust. continuously metamorphosed into new sculptural forms through natural movements of the wind; it could not be controlled in the same way as Ganders' soft fabricated breeze or Messenger's mesmerizing textile installation.

Pust. constantly changed its character, becoming altered as the wind lifted it while also blowing or breathing through it at various intervals occurring beyond human control. Just as Gander's and Nakaya's works make use of technology, *Pust.* is also made by using a technologically advanced fabric, a synthetic and extremely light, yet strong material that allows for this work to come to life in rough weather conditions.



Pust. holds a clear reference to sails and the sailing traditions along the coast where this work is situated. It was designed, sewn and mounted in a very similar way to how a sail would be produced and hoisted. Of course, a sail has a function – make use of wind to move across the sea – whereas *Pust.* allowed the wind to travel through the fabric as a way of leading our attention to an altered way of seeing.

The invisible quality that wind holds is what now becomes visible as it travels through the shape-shifting cloth. Our attention is led to observe the weather through a neon yellow mark dotted onto the slowly changing landscape.

Neon is a synthetic, man-made colour often used to highlight important matters that we would like to remember or take care of, for example using neon yellow marker pens to highlight the most relevant parts of a text when reading books, or wearing neon yellow vests to make us more visible as a way of safeguarding against accidents. Neon colours often signal something, and they need very little light to become visible as they have an inbuilt quality of glowing in the dark. Before mounting the fabric on-site, I considered neon ugly and un-natural; something opposed to beautiful, untouched nature.

Neon, as a word, stems from Greek *neos* meaning new. *Pust.* brought-in a new element, highly visible from the sea, from land, and from the air.

In showing something invisible, the wind, an alteration was made to the landscape by bringing in an alien element, neon colour. The weather conditions in the Arctic region were felt physically, now highlighted through *Pust.* This alien element directed attention to seeing what was already there – weather, wind, rain – but perhaps now with a new set of eyes, via a constructed temporal situation.

5.2 The seasons as interval. (An unaccomplished proposal)

The original plan was to work around notions of [Ma] as interval, as recurring transition. The idea here was to hoist the fabric of *Pust.* up and down, emphasizing the reference to a sail. It would go on throughout a full year, in various weather conditions and according to the change of season. The seasons would weather the cloth, adding another dimension to the work, as passing time would leave its visible mark.

However, at the beginning of August, just as *Pust.* was completing its first interval, summer, the directors of the SALT project decided to leave Sandhornøy and reopen in Oslo, in 2017. This sudden move, unfortunately, made it impossible to show and experience *Pust.* throughout the various weather conditions of a full year. And nor could it exist, as originally planned, for the duration of this three year-long research project, finishing in 2017.

Pust. was not just made for the wooden pyramid, but rather constructed in a close dialogue with the landscape and nature surrounding SALT (when it was still in the north of Norway). This specific landscape became the set in which the spectators moving around it would become actors in a larger imaginary piece to be constructed through their own movements.

Pust. hung from the end of the pyramid, and sometimes had an *on stage* presence made visible during still weather when the fabric dropped to the ground. In these moments, it would remind one of the feelings you get when sitting in front of the curtain in a theatre, waiting for what is to come. In other weather conditions *Pust.* took flight: on the verge of blowing away, or when placed behind the pyramid structure. At these moments it would give a sense of being *off stage*.

When moving around inside the pyramid structure, the back-side of the cloth would enable you to gaze at the landscape through a neon-coloured, semi-transparent veil.

This veil was more than six times taller than the height of a normal person, and it would operate in-between the body and the landscape like a filter, particularly when it hung draped inside of the pyramid.



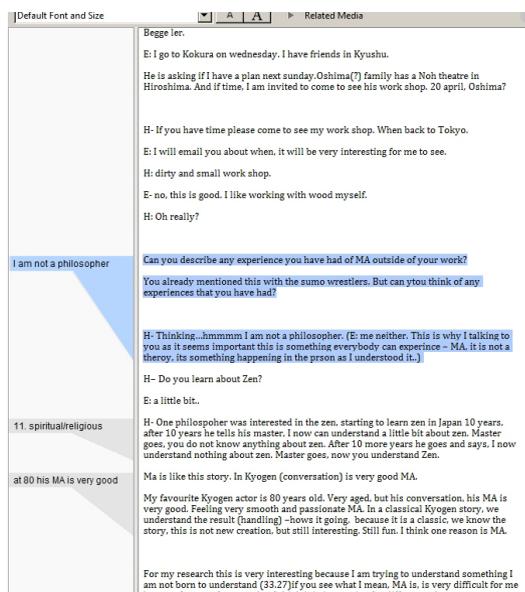
What *Pust.* was testing was how the wind and weather conditions in this specific region might be made visible, as an experience of nature, but also beyond it, as art. It would, therefore, be something different to move the piece, for instance to Oslo, as part of the research. It would lose its strong dialogue with the sea and the wind and the changing seasons and how they feature so dramatically north of the Arctic Circle. If I had moved this work away from Nordland, to the city, reference to the sail might have somehow become blurred, and the notion of [Ma]'s relationship with nature, and the seasonal transitions of nature so highly relevant in this part of the world, would not be tested in the same way. *Pust.* as an artwork with a duration of a full year, or longer, therefore unfortunately exists only as an imagined research idea.

Back to the beginning, a return to Theatrical but not theatre. Architectonic, but not architecture. Sculptural, but not sculpture.

“It is inconceivable to feel the space without the introduction of the external elements. The Japanese spatial concept is conceived together with experience.”

(Chang, 1984: 2.P.69)

During one of the interviews in which I searched for illumination on [Ma], I received an answer that puzzled me. It was a kind of refusal: the reply from the interviewee was that he was not a philosopher. It took a long time before I realised how relevant his answer had been.



Let's return to the title of this artistic research project: *Theatrical, but not theatre. Architectonic, but not architecture. Sculptural, but not sculpture.*

This title describes what something is like, yet without knowing what it is precisely, rather stating what it is not, as much as what it is. In the gaps between what something simultaneously is and is not, tension can, not only be found, it can be productive as well.

Tension as vital for the concept [Ma] became apparent in this research project through a methodology in which *presence* became a key element.

[Ma] is not captured through the use of language alone, as suggested in category 12, 'Beyond language'.

In the above-mentioned answer given to the question of what [Ma] is, "I am not a philosopher", the complexity of this concept is highlighted in a simple yet effective way. Maybe there exists no clear answer to this

question. This answer, that seems not to answer the question at all, nevertheless illuminates it in a poetic and thoughtful way.

This artistic research project has certainly found connections between art and [Ma]. Through using both my own practice as an artist, by making artworks in the public realm, and working-through qualitative research methods, the project has navigated its way around two highly flexible concepts; Art and [Ma].

As with [Ma], it seems that any clear answer to the question what art is, does not really exist. With art, this has actually long been accepted. Each of these fields constantly alters in terms of meaning, through on-going journeys.

At the beginning I was trying to understand what [Ma] *is*. This question was a default one that kept pushing the research on [Ma] into a tight corner. [Ma] kept getting trapped inside of Japanese language, as merely a word, and the connection [Ma] could have to contemporary art, also outside of Japan, was hidden from view and threatened to be read only as something exotic.

Choosing, however, to persist with this main thread of the project, despite a long period plagued by uncertainty, helped me to locate an alternative route through investigating [Ma] beyond being a word, by understanding [Ma] as a *becoming*, as a fluid travelling concept.

By altering the question to ask what [Ma] *does*, or *could do*, the emphasis of the project shifted, opening up new trajectories in which [Ma] as a concept could be understood as a method in itself in relation to the artistic research project.

All the artworks made as part of this artistic research project explore different aspects of [Ma], made visible through the 16 categories. These works are all works of passage, in which various combinations of experience, awareness and imagination, all vital [Ma] categories, lie at the core of the situations. All the works are carried and brought forward by those participating in them, giving them a clear reference to performativity without being performances as such, for which presence and presencing are vital.

Artwork V, *Pust.* not only related to how [Ma] was situated in natural surroundings, in nature, but, it was intended to be a series of ongoing artworks, as suggested in the proposal, to last for a year at least, marking the transitions and durational intervals of the seasons. This proposal was to give *Pust.* duration beyond summer, the season it in which it was originally made. Only in our minds can we imagine how snow and frost might have hit the surface of the large cloth as it moved and changed shape, and how this might have created frost crystals that would shimmer and sparkle, as crystals do, like a reflector during the darkest season

of the year. Imagination is another category of [Ma] (and art) showing how they have the potential to exist beyond what we see and have in front of us.

Artwork I, *Unforgettable Vision of Darkness*, is experienced through movement, and the participant must heed this as spatiality is what shapes this installation as an artwork.

This spatiality creates a performative situation that asked of the participant that they spend some time with it to allow this spatiality to begin to exist beyond what we see. In various transitions between different points in space and time this work starts to exist beyond its architectonic, theatrical as well as sculptural qualities, creating, rather something new, something in-between that might be [Ma], but not [Ma].

Artwork IV, *At any given moment*, is produced through various means of sharing.

Through the sharing of individual experiences describing a feeling of being situated as part of an artwork, a new, collectively created work appears, in another form. It is another modality of *At any given moment*, following on from artworks II and III.

Each of the versions of *At any given moment* have an element of tension. It appears between two strangers about to spend time together as part of an artwork. During the walk, when they are moving between the cellars, slowly and in silence, another tension appears, both between the two walking as part of this artwork and also with onlookers in the street. When this situation moves into a second cellar, where everything is veiled and unveiled, in and out of darkness, there is yet another tension, or at least a state of in-betweenness, in the durations between seeing, and being unable to see in the dark. Tension has been explored in many shapes and forms in this work, sometimes together with several of the other categories discussed here (they are interwoven, not given treatment in their own chapters). *At any given moment* makes use of silence, it creates transitions by moving between different locations, and it must be experienced, sensed and felt in real time, by spending time with the work. Even 'Beauty', the eighth [Ma] category, a clichéd and useless word in contemporary art, but more highly regarded in Japanese conceptions of space. It avoids describing something that is simply aesthetically beautiful, but instead, it portrays a subjective experience that fits well with how *At any given moment* challenges the participant to complete the experience in their own mind, through imagination.

“ Incompleteness affords the participant the opportunity to complete with his own imagination the object or activity” (Chang, 1984: 1. p.67).

As an experiment I have gone through the list of the 16 categories of [Ma] by testing what would happen if they were applied to the field of art. In carrying out this crude experiment connections between [Ma] and art became evident.

Art makes us feel (category 1), experience (category 2) and imagine (category 13).

Art is also a critical and discursive field in which tension (category 6) is important.

Art communicates (category 5), both between the work and the viewer, but also as part of a discourse, and as a social concept engaging with and for people. (category 9)

Art moves beyond language (category 12) and creates something we might not yet realize in our initial meeting with it. Art points to a way ahead, it is constantly moving forward (category 4). It operates in in-between zones, in the interstices (category 7) between all fields imaginable. Art transitions (category 3), in content as well as in form, between various fields, and plays an important part in collective awareness (category 10) as it brings forward unlimited, but often common questions, and new ways of experiencing and reflecting together. Art touches the religious or spiritual (category 11) in its ability to move beyond language, allowing us to sense, feel and imagine what we are incapable of seeing with our eyes, something larger than ourselves. Spirituality, or the feeling of being faced with something sublime can also be found in meetings with nature (category 14). Several movements in art, for instance land art, work in a dependent relationship with nature. It goes without saying how composition (category 15) is crucial to the making of all artworks, be it in how a painter places her brushstrokes on a canvas or how a performer composes the body in relation to space, or how a piece of music is composed between silence and sound.

Beauty (Category 8) brings individual experiences and reflections, from real life, to the forefront:

“The quality that we call beauty, however, must always grow from the realities of life” (Tanizaki, 1977: p.29).

Art offers us a way of communicating, even through silence (category 16). All that is quiet need not be empty or meaningless; it can be what fuels tension (category 6) that allows our perception (category 10) to be heightened.

This simple experiment shows how two fields, Art and [Ma], seem to have many things in common. I found that certain categories developed through the research methods in this project, through looking at what [Ma] does, are also relevant to contemporary art.

This artistic research has, in terms of [Ma], located many strata relevant for the project. It is possible to locate individual categories that say something about what [Ma] does (feeling for instance), but on their own these categories neither attain a definition of what [Ma] is, nor what it does. To reach any kind of understanding or sense of what [Ma] does, we must embrace a plurality of categories. [Ma] seems to share important aspects of what art can do by asking of participants that they engage in meetings with it, and understand that art also is, and does, a lot of things simultaneously.

Moving on from this thought, relating to the title – *theatrical, but not theatre, sculptural, but not sculpture, architectonic, but not architecture*, perhaps [Ma] could be claimed to be [Ma] at the same time that it is not [Ma] in how it continuously evades the confines of language, and is both being and not being at the same time.

Perhaps its existence as an interstice functions as a bridge between our imagination and the world, and therefore it makes no sense to try and unpack this concept once and for all; it is much more exciting to imagine where it could go next, and to allow it to take us where it will.

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EDVINE LARSEN