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Can I? Dare I?

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Abstract

This article describes the role of an arts-based research project in the lives of young people participating in a youth workshop. The participants shared stories about their past, present and future with words and pictures. We sought to answer the question: What is the meaning of looking at one's own life story in the context of a communal art project? We familiarized ourselves with a youth workshop via staff interviews, observation and through documents. The goal of the project was to produce a work of art in eight weeks. During the two months, the young people in the project described their lives in written assignments, made paintings of their lives so far, wrote working diaries and were interviewed. The paintings together formed a larger whole, which was

on display at a shopping mall. The study opens new points of view by analyzing the meanings produced by those who participated in the project.

Introduction

A young person's life is grounded in a variety of factors which include, among other things, education, employment, family, friends, hobbies and free time. Workshop activities may with good reason be included in the significant social circles in a young person's life. The central goal of youth workshops is to improve the educational readiness of individuals in danger of becoming socially marginalized or who cannot for other reasons compete in the labor market. This article begins from the idea that a young person without education or employment is in danger of marginalization (Levitas, 1998). In discussions of social exclusion, a marginalized individual is often defined as disadvantaged in different aspects of life. This exclusion is seen as a temporally cumulative phenomenon. The life of a marginalized individual appears to be alternative to the societal norm. For a young person this means, for example, the risk of drifting into a divergent lifepath (Notkola et al., 2013, pp. 242–243).

Our study shares the view that each young person matures in a unique fashion, following their respective paths. We are interested in adapting arts-based methods for supporting maturing young people and developing youth workshops.

Youth Workshops in Finland

Youth workshops are functional communities for under-29-year-old people. Working and work-related coaching aim to improve the readiness of the individual to apply for education or job opportunities and improve their life-management skills. Youth workshops revolve around the concept of learning-by-doing, which is reinforced by coaching. The workshops are work-oriented communal learning environments (Sivenius & Friman, 2016). They support the capacities for holding a job, teach and reinforce the social skills required in a professional environment, and focus on future orientation. In 2015, there were workshops in almost every municipality in Finland with approximately 15,000 participants altogether.

The Youth Act (1285/2016) defines the purpose of youth workshops as improving the possibilities and readiness of a young person to secure and/or finish their education, join the labor market, or find the correct social service they require (Chapter 4, Section 13 of the Youth Act). They are meant to further the maturation development and societal inclusion of young individuals. Youth workshops may be managed by municipalities or a community producing youth services. The vast majority of young people in youth workshops are directed there by a public official.

Administratively, youth workshops are situated between different governing bodies. Within public services, workshops fall under both social and youth work as well as the education and labor markets. Their actions are directed by youth, educational, social and employment policies. On a national level, youth workshops emphasize various aspects of action.



Figure 1. Youth workshops.

In the article, we discuss young people who have been either directed to or who have voluntarily sought the services of youth workshops. We believe that the methods and practices depend on the set goals within the individual context of a young person's situation in life and their readiness. One of the main targets of youth workshops is the activation of young people (Sivenius & Friman, 2016, p. 53; Komonen, 2007, p. 20). It has several stated goals, but the most important one is to improve the educational readiness and working abilities of young people who are in danger of becoming marginalized or are at a disadvantage in the labor market. In Finnish public discourse, the borderlines of who are considered marginalized are often drawn to include those with only basic education, and who are outside the labor and educational markets (see Myrskylä, 2011; 2012).

Arts-based Research Project

Art orientation is to be understood as the ability to have a different point of view into supporting the development of workshop clients (Sivenius & Friman, 2017). Our interpretation of art orientation is based on the possibilities that arts-based research brings into the study of the study of a functional project that traditional study methods may not be able to grasp (see Rolling, 2010; Eisner, 2006; Finley, 2008; Foster, 2012; Sullivan, 2006; Barone, 2006).

We emphasize the role of the arts-based study in carrying out the communal project. Experimentation and academic study will bring new perspectives to the methodological discussion of the field of study. Research based on arts-oriented material has been seen as a valuable doorway into the experienced (Eisner, 2006, p. 11). Arts-based research makes use of the unique approach of art by enabling entry into human knowledge and understanding as the foundation for the study of education (Sullivan, 2006).

Arts-based methodologies are not limited to merely one manner of implementation (Jansson & Rantala 2013). Project work presents the young people in this study an opportunity to broaden their understanding of the lives of themselves and of others. Expressive and biographical methods enable processing of one's own life, feelings and experiences. Our study combines the aspects of arts-based study that emphasize the creative process as well as practical methods which comply well with action research (see Leavy, 2009; Känkänen, 2013). An arts-based project as a methodological resource and praxis will produce data regarding the project's idiosyncratic social reality. This subtle forming of knowledge is a constant fluctuation: it is a hermeneutic circle, where the gathering, analysis and reporting on material intertwine (Sivenius, 2012).

Forming knowledge ethnographically operates through a hermeneutic process. As both a methodological resource and a praxis ethnography produces information of the social reality it is used to study. It is a subtle, interpretative process that is in constant motion in the hermeneutic circle that functions as a cross-referential field of gathering, analyzing and reporting of data. (Sivenius & Friman, 2017, p. 28.) This article uses ethnographic study in the sense of processually studying learning and understanding in the interpretation of the arts-based project. Ethnography can be defined as being present in the object of study—a certain context and its description as a cultural environment. As researchers we shift between participation and observation while analyzing social interactions and strive to understand all the elements that certain kinds of behavior in different situations comprise of (see Geertz, 1973).

Arts-based research, when attempting to understand the experiences of both the conductors and the participants of the study, is the systematic employment of the artistic process (see Finley, 2008; McNiff, 2008; Leavy, 2009). Leitch (2006, 551–554) emphasizes the possibilities that the combination of arts-based methods and narrative methods might yield. Integration of these two methods can overcome the limitations of verbal and written expression to capture the significance of the experiences of the subjects (Leitch, 2006; Barone & Fisner, 2012).

Creating art, as well as doing research, are attempts to better understand reality, oneself and the world (see Foster, 2012). Gadamer (1979) in *Truth and Method* writes about the similarities between truth and experiencing art. This is the act of truth, the foundation of human understanding. Our understanding is not without a foundation, but rather is entwined with our pre-cognitions of, for example, the possibilities for supporting young people with an arts-based study. This pre-cognition is a result of our dialogical relationship with the object of study, where the interplay of different perspectives offers new points of view. A dialectic fusion of horizons occurs with the end-result of a horizon of understanding that includes and surpasses previous points of view. Application requires being conscious of the individual's personal history – their horizon – and for the researcher being able to apply the object of study in their actions. We utilize Gadamerian hermeneutics as an interpretative process, where everyone involved in the research gains a new horizon. (Sivenius, 2012.)

Hence, despite the objectives of the study, certain experienced acts may become meaningful during the project. Artistic work may alter a young person's way of thinking (Sivenius & Friman, 2017). This development necessarily occurs within its social and cultural confines and defines a framework for thinking (Taylor, 1989).

Arts-based practices that have been applied in, for example, health and social affairs and different organizations, have a part to play within the larger society (see Varto, 2010; Heinsius & Lehtikoinen, 2013). Arts-based methods improve creativity, critical thinking and enable dealing with one's emotions (Schiuma, 2011). Methods create space to observe and become aware of the metaphorical connections between issues (Polanyi, 1966). Creative self-expression supports the individual's open-mindedness, tolerance for disorder and encourages risk-taking behavior. By taking part in an art project, the young person can elevate their self-knowledge.

Arts-based acts can record the experiences of young people in constant interaction. Art offers the possibility to build bridges not only to the past, but to the future as well. The young person authoring their own art piece may be able to reach something unexpected. Large or small, it can prove to be meaningful to the young artist (Rinta-Panttila, 2007, p. 49). Art orientation

combines creativity with practicality and serves as a meeting point for art and personal development. This reality brings about situational decision-making. When a young person leaves a mark with their own creation, this mark will live on. The young person has the possibility to pursue a sense of freedom in the process of developing into a human being. An art project as an educational method makes the doer visible; the doer, whose words and deeds may defy our existing knowledge (see Benner, 2005, pp. 57, 60–61).

A project's art orientation includes the method, the material and the instrument, all of which can be viewed as external, physical actions (Malmivirta, 2011, p. 225; Dewey, 1966, p. 14; Miettinen, 1998). Schönau (2012) suggests, that art education can be used to uphold young people's taking responsibility for their lives. Mantere (2007, p. 194) sees visual arts as requiring comprehensive involvement, such as handwork, treatment of materials and emotional activation, instead of mere consistency and goal orientation. Artistic work teaches about life and helps in making sense of the world (Laitinen, 2003). This facilitates understanding of oneself and others. Artistic recreation breathes life into stories, provides different interpretations and widens the artists' horizons. The project participants can immerse themselves in thinking about their past and building their future (Löytönen & Sava, 2011, pp. 115–116).

Arts-based in the Context of Youth Workshops

We studied the arts-based approach to scientific inquiry through the functional project we carried out in a youth workshop in Eastern Finland. In crude terms, the study frames itself with a wide conception of humanness and an understanding of the effect of artistic methods on forming knowledge (see e.g. Kallio, 2008). Within a youth workshop environment, art orientation can be viewed as a multi-disciplinary study of human experience. It serves as the methodological framework for the depicted project, producing one perspective of reality, i.e. how a young person appears as a social and interactive participant in the project.

The project has been guided by the comprehension of creative actions playing a role in understanding the social dimension of reality, workshop coaching and individual growth. From this starting point we form our conclusions and offer, to an extent, practical suggestions. Art orientation is the baseline in the planning, execution and practical actions of the project, which creates knowledge from co-operative artistic efforts. The reflective work encourages participation in producing information about alternative methods of seeing and doing things.

We view the arts-based project as a hermeneutic circle and as a method. It is not a comprehensive method that informs us of the ultimate truth, but rather describes the conditions of understanding (Sivenius & Friman, 2017). Our interpretation does not have a fixed starting point but rather is based on our pre-cognitions of the subject under scrutiny. It is

formed in dialogue, in a never-ending hermeneutic circle where individual elements and the whole they comprise reflect one another. Interpretation and understanding are continuous processes and thus do not yield absolute truth. (Gadamer, 1979, pp. 249–253).

It enables the participants to better understand their lives by making them visible. The artistic and literary elements intertwine in the hermeneutic spiral, or the processual nature of the communal project. It is precisely the context and the practices that give meaning to understanding a new concept (Sivenius, 2012, p. 121). The content and the end-goal become more tightly defined as the project advances.

As an action research our project produces information of the experiences of young people in a youth workshop environment (Kjørup, 2011; Borgdorff, 2011). With visual and textual methods, it opens doorways to better understand the past and the present as well as verbalize the future. The project marries study and practice by blending the characteristics of action research and an artistic orientation.

Execution

Our study set out to produce empirical data from voluntary participants in the research of an arts-based project as a methodological option. We clarified to the participants our intent with the project and its role as an interventional step. We intended to include the young people in every phase of the project and hoped they would feel ownership of the project from the planning phase onwards.

We familiarized ourselves with the youth workshop by staff interviews (N=6), observation and reviewing documents. The work of art planned by the young participants, the workshop staff and the project manager (one of the researchers) took eight weeks to complete. During that time-period the participants, firstly, wrote descriptions (later referred to as written assignments) of their lives; they processed (sketched, sought out and made it visible) their life-stories with acrylic paintings, wrote working diaries and took part in a theme interview upon completion of their art piece. The staff was interviewed as well in the final phases of the project. The paintings formed a collaborative work of art that celebrated the 20-year history of the youth workshop. It was displayed at a local shopping center.

Our arts-based project relies on ethnography and an action research method of approaching the phenomenon being researched. Utilizing different approaches, especially in a methodologically ethnographical study, enables access to the everyday routines of a workshop. Action research is based on interaction that seeks novel practices and procedures. Our understanding and interpretations deepen as the project evolves. We refer to our project

as inclusive action-research. It attempts to notice the youth workshop as a community in the different stages of the project (see Geertz, 1973; Tacchi, Slater & Hearn, 2003).

The approach of our research enables us to engage the young people and for them to become personally invested in the project. Arts-based research is based on the idea that the young people in the project mold, experience and understand reality through their senses, their actions and interactions. Functionality joins the corporeal and sensory experiences with actions (cf. hermeneutic circle).

We, as researchers, organize the project community and attempt to answer the given assignment together with the other participants (see Stinger, 1999). The point of view of this article touches upon what the social reality of the project has to offer. Reflective functionality binds us to artistic work as people who need cooperation, encourage others' participation and are self-reflective. At its best, this approach is able to describe the cultural reality of the project by means of the pictures and words created by the young people involved. Ethnographic functionality is concretely and symbolically *going there, being there, and being here* (Geertz, 1973).

Art Project Opens Points of View

Can words and pictures initiate internal and external dialogues in a young person? Are the results made here difficult to achieve by other means?



Figure 2. Sketching.

Visualization can be viewed as a language to build social reality (Jokela, Hiltunen, & Härkönen, 2015, pp. 435–436). Erkkilä (2012, p. 33) has stated that art orientation forms a space to relive previous experiences. We found that the young people who took part in the

research and participated in the communal art piece were able to have an internal dialogue and form interactive relationships with others.

Artistic expression as a means of upbringing joins together verbal language and illustration. During the study we noted that participating in a communal project gave the opportunity to verbalize personal experiences and communicate their shared situation with their peers. Pictures and words are complementary to one another (See e.g. Sava & Katainen, 2004, pp. 24–29, 36). Thus, young people in the project are able to better grasp the visual culture and story models that impact their lives.

[--] It's nice to talk to other youngsters, I've been rather anxious about starting this thing. I'm a little less anxious now [--]. (paraphrasing Working Diary 1)

Things that describe my work: The bottom part is birth. The middle or the present time shows bad stuff (thorns), difficulties and disappointments in life. Leaves are good, happy times and important people. The top part (a rose) shows what is hopefully a good future life and happiness. (paraphrasing Written Assignment 9)

What does working on a painting offer to a young person? A picture may be worth a thousand words, but it can also create a thousand words to help one's internal dialogue (Azevedo & Gonçalves, 2012). Colors in themselves can have significance as means of communicating experiences and as routes to self-knowledge.

A communal, cooperative art project carried out in a youth workshop offers space for self-expression. With the help of workshop coaches, the purpose is to create opportunities for experimentation and learning, which are prerequisites for achieving set goals. Successes orient the lives and goals of the young persons. Individual objectives set with coaches bring about experiences which facilitate constructive discussions about the future. A workshop is a working environment that allows participants to strengthen their skills, gain experiences and further their self-knowledge, which in turn will give them more realistic chances of accessing training and gaining employment. Training supports the personal growth, social empowerment, active participation, employability and work skills of young people through communal coaching with an emphasis on practical work. (see NWA.)

The communal work concretized participation, activity and self-guidance. The project and its methods formed a pedagogically sound environment, that included the methods and techniques of working and learning as well as the materials and tools used (Sivenius & Friman, 2016).

Can, then, an inclusive art project help understand and support the growth of young people? If their identity is the foundation for growth and creativity, then the project can help in self-knowledge and gaining confidence. It might encourage the young person to break previous thinking patterns and begin creating something new. The creative process has to do with combining deeds and words, even in unexpected ways (see Sivenius & Friman, 2017).



Figure 3. The creative process in action.

The art project relates to and reveals issues about life management and future orientation. Although it may prove difficult for a young person to deal with and process their own life, sharing experiences with others may prove useful (see Anttila et al., 2011, p. 9).

[...] at first, I was like, I don't really care for this, I really don't know how to do it, I'm not good at this and I can't really draw or anything. But, when I started to just do it, I got excited and in the end it really felt like it was over too soon. I felt like I could do this forever, it was so nice. (paraphrasing Interview 17)

The project may be the starting point to the self-expressive possibilities creative work offers. Confronting art can act as a mirror of how and what one is, and what they can become. Forming objects from raw materials provokes ideas and induces changes in habits. This project revealed how an imaginative approach can support progressive inquiry. Self-reflection and a dialogue with others as an integral part of society supported the young people's development.

Art Orientation as the Motor for Change

What does an arts-based project mean to a young person? It can create space for the exchange of thoughts and ideas. During our project, we saw the young participants engage in multi-level discussions. Their self-expression became less restrained and many of them ventured to reveal personal things about their lives while working on their art piece.

[--] One important thing in my previous life was to stop substance abuse and to start fresh. The past has taught me a lot. I also have a difficult childhood behind me but I'm trying to tap into that resource, not get stuck in it. (paraphrasing Written Assignment 11)

[--] rising from ruins. [--] I've found a direction for my life and learned to appreciate friends and those close to me more than I used to. (paraphrasing Written Assignment 6)

Young people create symbolic representations of their lives which help in processing their feelings. These symbols act as means of self-expression and help voicing painful issues by creating a visual parallel to a concretely experienced thing. The possibilities of visualizing life stories within a project framework offer a new narrative description of the young artist's being. One may think that this will help in preparing the young person to face questions that we all must face, "Can I? Dare I?"

[--] the phases of the Moon, some of that growth and the like, 'cause I want to and believe that I can grow as a person [--] and the Sun is, like, life-force, you know [--] (paraphrasing Written Assignment 11)

The narrative process both sets guidelines for the young person to become aware of their life and offers the tools to construct their life story. Their verbalizations and visualizations make their experiences, memories and feelings visible (Sivenius & Friman, 2016, 56–57; Sava & Katainen, 2004, pp. 24–29, 36).

An art project in a youth workshop presents an opportune environment for development. Arts-based project work is emancipatory by nature. It sets out to create a place for alternative points of view, ideas and interpretations, which are not defined too narrowly. It encourages a creative way to look at the world and ponder life itself. Working in a group enables both peer learning and receiving feedback. Working on projects may well prove suitable for individuals having trouble in a school environment and facilitate learning essential skills. It may be seen as beneficial to developing self-evaluation and critical thinking. Learning new skills and recognizing existing ones are equally important to the young person.

Artistic work encourages young people to compare their work and ideas to those of others. Though both theoretical knowledge and personal experiences have their significance, hands-on practice is necessary to complement the thought processes. The project supports the participants to express themselves without fear of losing face. Learning by doing in an approving workshop community is an opportunity to make mistakes and practice your skills.

Self-expression Sharpens the Image

Artistic expression is reflective thinking in which the experienced and the sensed intertwine. With their storytelling, the young people open their respective pasts to become better structured in a socially interactive environment. The participants found importance in being part of the project.

[--] I'm closer to it [peace of mind] than ever, but there's still lots to learn about myself and being OK with myself [--]. That's pretty much all I hope for from the future, a kind of inner peace. (paraphrasing Written Assignment 7)

An arts-based project in a youth workshop environment supports other means of workshop guidance and coaching. In this process, individual coaching, planning for the future and work coaching, go hand in hand. At the same time, a young person can experience an impressive operation.

Artistic work may draw the young person's attention to the similarities of the creative process and real life. It grants the young person the opportunity to actively pursue solving their personal difficulties, which is one of the stated goals of youth workshops (Hentinen, 2007, 174).

During the project, the participants were able to see themselves from a new perspective. Self-examination and conversing with others as parts of the exhibition and the even in surrounding society strengthened their sense of self and potential.

[--] At the start I began thinking about how I'd make my piece [--] couldn't think of anything [--] I thought I can't draw or paint. [--] after some more thinking I decided to at least give it a shot. [--] When I got around to actually painting, I forgot the idea that I can't do it. It was really fun [--]. When I finished today, I was like, 'Oh no, was this it already?' (paraphrasing Working Diary 17)

When I started thinking about how I'd actually make my art piece, I couldn't think of anything. My first thought was that I can't draw or paint. When I got home from the workshop, I thought about it some more and decided to try

anyhow. I came up with a good plan and started working on it the next day, at the workshop. When I got to painting, I forgot about how I thought I couldn't do this. It was really fun and I paid so much attention to detail. Today, when I finished my painting, I was like, Oh no, is it finished already? (paraphrasing Working Diary 17)

Evidence suggests that a project such as that described here, does not require consistency and narrowly defined goals, but rather concrete involvement and working with raw materials, which are shaped into a visual representation of the young person's life. A communal art project seems able to play a significant role in increasing the personal capabilities of a young person within a youth workshop environment.

A communal art project seems to have an effect on increasing the resources of young people. The participants were awoken to shift their thinking (Mezirow, 1991; Freire, 1970) from being mere receivers to being parts of a larger whole which stirs their consciousness, steers their lives and indicates the possibility of step by step change.

Inclusive Artistic Process as Aesthetic Understanding

Visually and verbally inspecting their own lives holds its place in the development of young people. Arts-based work creates a setting for doing and experimenting. The fact that there is no wrong way of self-expression can reinforce the feeling of being in control of their lives.

[--] I'm doing better in life, I feel kinda free [--] not like behind a locked door [--]
] I've still got lots of good things ahead to look forward to [--] I'm happy that
I've finally gotten myself in a shape that I can manage in life. (paraphrasing
Written Assignment and Interview 17)

I know that I have the chance to make this day and this moment my own. I'm just not quite sure yet what 'my own' actually means. (paraphrasing Working Diary 11)

Our arts-based research project is but one example of efforts to better understand young people who have sought the help of a youth workshop. The art orientation we describe is based on communication between participants in a communal project. Artistic work opens opportunities for expression, identification and thinking. This aims at envisioning aesthetically, or gaining new perspectives, where the workshop coach and their client can encounter each other while doing and seeking (Varto, 2001, pp. 7–9). The role of the researcher is to record and interpret this social environment and phenomenon.

The arts-based research project brings about an approach to highlighting the strengths of young people and producing information on seeing and experimenting differently. The project and the experiences, creative use of available resources, inclusiveness and interaction it offers enable overcoming oneself and comprehending new things. Art orientation helps in finding the untapped potential of young people. It also helps building the co-operation skills of trust and inclusion (see Liikanen, 2010).

Art orientation serves as a tool to build a sense of self and one's life story (Krappala & Pääjoki, 2003), but this otherness is rather difficult to research or to understand. Our research project has aimed at opening viewpoints regarding how young people understand their own lives and how they construct their identities as parts of a subculture (Räsänen, 2011, p. 144). This growth consists of making new observations with artistic methods and means.

The arts-based project formed both the environment for, and the approach of the research. One of the goals of the coaching in youth workshops is to encourage young people to view their lives differently. This goal was reached with the visualization and verbalization of the lives of the young research participants. Functional research is an apt tool for creating inclusion and reinforcing trust. Young people can find where their interests and strengths lie through seeing and doing (Salomaa, 1952). Having a basis in arts has its benefits in producing more dialogue, more encounters and mutual understanding. Through artistic work young people can experience community, express their views and process their individual issues. Art is a way to empathize with and immerse oneself in the points of view of others; art facilitates a new kind of understanding.

Making Your Voice Seen

Our project showcases one manner of approaching a young person. Its communal nature enables the young people both to orientate and examine their lives.

“There it is, there it is”, a nice feeling tingling in your stomach when your handiwork was presented to everyone. (paraphrasing Written Assignment 8)

Working from an artistic starting point is premised on inclusivity and interaction. The attempted end goal is an aesthetic vision, or the act of seeing distinctly, where the workshop coach and the young person can encounter each other amid doing and seeking. An arts-based project may contribute to this encounter by emphasizing communal connections, among other things. The project is goal oriented, but as a creative venture it offers a space where young people can be supported in their efforts. Self-expression and letting their imaginations run wild can be very liberating for a young person.



Figure 4. A bird's eye view of the finished piece on display.

Theory and practice for an arts-based project progress in cycles which include planning, theoretical musing, artistic work, interventions, reflection, conceptualizing and the clarifying of goals. The end product is a public art piece that expresses what the young artists have experienced.

[--] maybe everyone needs to stop and think about the past, the present and the future, regardless of their age or situation. [--] what has it been like to be young, what is life for young people now? And now you have the opportunity to see into those lives through these beautiful works. We have more to say than you would believe. In fact, I had more to say than I thought I did. (paraphrasing Opening Speech 15)

“Yes, I Dare – Yes, I Can.”

Sometimes, after I'm fully healed, I'd like to travel abroad. (paraphrasing Written Assignment 17)

As a research approach combining words with images, the project produces data on experimenting and gaining perspectives. Participating and excelling can boost the young person's self-confidence and trust in others.

While working on it, the meaning of the art piece has become more clear. The ornaments represent a positive outlook on life and the hope that happiness will continue into the future as well. Even if it's difficult sometimes, I'm grateful that I'm alive “again.” (paraphrasing Working Diary 2)

What does the arts-based project mean and offer young people? Our research included the written assignments, working diaries and the art pieces in verbalizing the life stories and in increasing the self-awareness of the young people who participated. In addition to working on shared times, they were given the chance to work by themselves when needed. The subject matter was a life story that included the past, the present and the future.

The young people's work in the project was not assessed in the traditional sense, a fact which was made clear to the participants. The idea was for the individuals to engage in dialogues about the shared elements in their respective works. This process would form the communal work of art that combined the uniquely expressive individual parts into a whole.

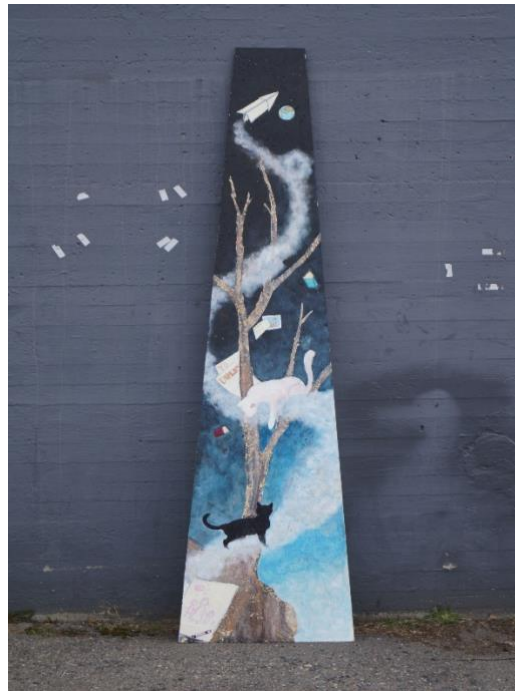


Figure 5. Life of a young person visualized.

Art orientation can manifest in the young person visualizing their reality through their senses, actions and interactions. In the art-based approach, it is possible to combine an educational approach with functionality. This is not a locked-in, goal-driven advancement, but the pursuit of a more open road sign in a Socratic framework.

The mission statement of youth workshops includes supporting a healthy, stimulating and future oriented life for young people. We take this to mean accompanying the young person and supporting them to learn from doing. Art-oriented work focuses the young people to find

their own strengths and interests as parts of society. Teaching about communal existence, being part of a larger whole ties to concrete actions in the art project as well as questions about the methods use in workshop.

The highest goal of growing up is to become a human. Growth and learning is a life-long project that is necessarily affected by the surrounding society. The art project as a research-based approach, by being unique within the certain group it binds together, takes shape and strengthens as it progresses. The project can be thought of as goal-oriented, but flexible companionship to young people with a tactful art-educational touch. The young person's best interests always come first. A communal artistic project gives the young person a sense of being respected and cared about by giving them a chance to be heard and recognized.

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