



Brief

Curating a Context for a Preschool Practice in Public Spaces – Another Direct Democracy Emerges

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Public Spaces are designed with adults in mind (Hickey & Phillips, 2013) and are often understood as an adult domain where children are not supposed to be heard or seen (Bessell, 2017). Children's right to speak and be listened to is enshrined in the Act on the Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 12 (SFS 2018:1197) and the state is legally obliged to enable children to express their opinions and that these opinions are recognized as urgent and important. However, Lundy (2007) believes that it is not enough to only offer children the opportunity to express their concerns, but the state must – according to law – also offer the children a place where there is an audience that listens and reacts to the children's concerns. This article is interested in how the preschool practice could offer children the opportunity to express their concerns *about* public spaces *in* public places. Almost all research on children's rights to take place in the city focuses on children's understanding and meaning-making of the city. Research in childhood sociology and cultural geography shows that society's youngest citizens usually have little opportunity to directly influence the design of public spaces. This article stems from posthumanist researchers attempts to move away from understanding children's influence – agency – as an individual intentional action of meaning making, and rather focus on how agency emerge in, with, through and by various ongoing human and more-than-human relationships and productions of reality. Furthermore, this article draws inspiration from posthumanist intervention studies in preschool research where the researcher, together with other practitioners, examines and intervenes in what can emerge when meetings between different practices, disciplines and areas of knowledge are established. Theoretically, the article is based on the philosopher Isabelle Stengers consideration

of creating *Another science* which actively participate in creating a democratic sustainable society, and which is applied here to experiment on how to create another practice of public spaces and thereby another way of practicing democracy. The article furthermore draws on Mol's (2002, 2021) reasoning about *Empirical philosophy* in order to pay attention to how different social-material practices create different public realities. Methodologically the article is inspired by Artistic Site-specific walking practices where it becomes central to curate a context for Art in everyday life situations. Within these practices, context emerges in meetings with other surroundings and people and thereby changes the meaning of the Artwork. Curating a context thus means establishing collaborations and meetings between different practices. The curating of context that the researcher activates in this article is about moving everyday preschool practices into public spaces. The article describes how three new public practices emerge when the researcher, a preschool group of six children and two participating pedagogues used artistic site-specific walking methods to activate and become activated by different situations that arose in a bus travel, an underground train travel and a walk through the Brunkeberg Tunnel in Stockholm. In these empirical activations new public practices emerge which demark a collective participating singing practice on the bus, a kinesthetic practice of direct presence emerges in the underground metro and where the embodied and sensorial contact zones are established through another practice of reading road line. In this way, a different kind of public place is created that establishes direct democratic meetings in public spaces. Another direct democracy emerges in these public spaces, which is activated through a *direct* participation.

Keywords: *preschool; democratic public spaces; artistic site-specific walking methods; posthumanism*