

Makerspace and the library

1. My name is Gro Skåland, and I am a phd candidate at the Department of Educational Science, University of Oslo. I started this phd project in January 2018, and I aim to study learning trajectories at a makerspace in the folk-library in Oslo named Folkeverkstedet.



2. It may be interesting for you to know that I started my working career as a carpenter. This is me together with my family at my father's carpentry, and in the background you can see "the wall of fame"; diplomas for 4 generations of accomplished apprenticeship in carpentry.

3. My academic work concentrate on the theme "learning bodies". The title of my bachelor thesis is "The mathematical body" and this was a theoretical exploration on how the concept of space grounding our numeral system is connected to metaphors for body experiences.

4. The title of my master thesis is "Where do the chromosomes walk?" How metaphorical gestures supplement digital and analogue representations of theoretical concepts in natural science. This was based on a video observation on group work in the science class.

5. Until now I have visited maker spaces in Oslo, Stockholm and Uppsala together with the natural science library of Oslo. I am also working on a review of research on makerspaces and

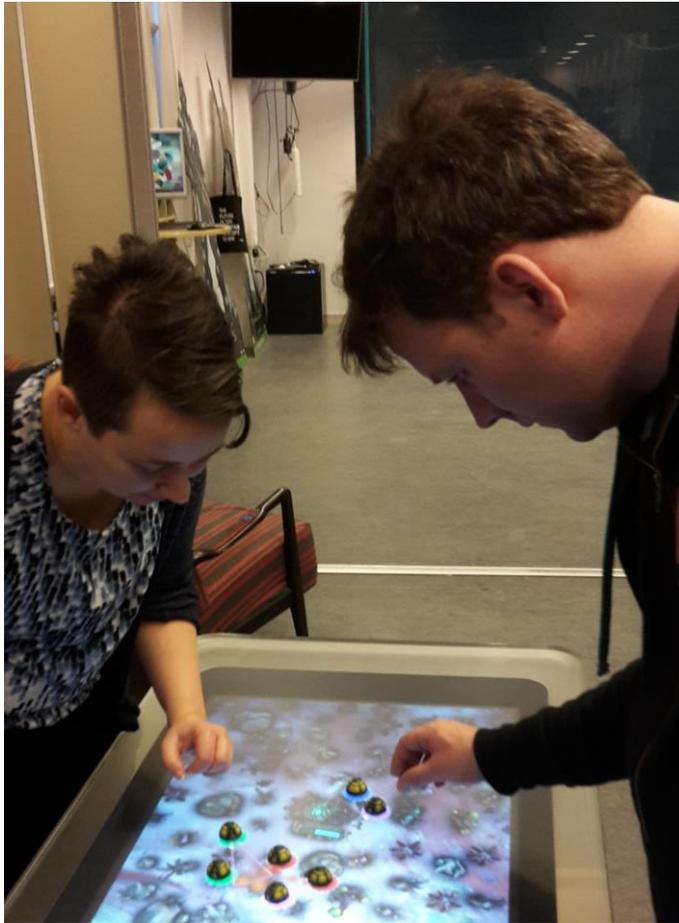
continually explore literature on the role of the body in human interaction, making and rethoric.

6. As I take a cultural historical view on makerspaces the library institution as a specific context need to be theorized in the light of the *values* held by the library. Therefore this presentation shed light on some problems discussed in library science and politics.



7. The folk-library in Oslo was founded by Carl Deichman in 1780, when he granted his collection of books to the city. This was a time coloured by the belief that accession to a "collection of good quality" would *enlighten* the people and *cultivate the best in man*.

8. This philosophy has sustained far into our time, but what a collection *is* have changed. In 2018 the library is no longer a provider of books in the same way - they also collect music instruments, music, computer games and much more.



9. However, the definition of what "good quality" is has been left to the library, making the library an authority in the question of what "good quality" is - there is an imbalance in power-relations which in some opinions can be unhealthy for a democracy.

10. From the 1960s and further this problem have been discussed, as the enlightenment concept has been the leading philosophy until the 1990s. However, the *digital revolution* has forced the library to rewrite their mission, as they are only one of many providers of information.

11. Gradually, the most important role left for the library is to be the physical meeting place and ground for *participation*; the library talk about *sharing knowledge*, and the words *sharing and participation* headlight a horizontal power-relation as users also define content.

12. Then - Providing knowledge is seen as a premise for critical thinking and participation in public debate. The definition of the Norwegian folk-library ´s mandate today is to provide "collections of good quality" *and* organize and initiate *social processes*.

13. Current discussions have turned towards a definition of the library as an arena for *knowledge production*, pointing at the fact that sharing knowledge is not only a transfer between people - sharing transform our ideas and leads to change.

14. The library in the *digital age* has for a long time been interpreted as the possibility and the ability to use digital information tools. However the notion of participation and knowledge production also asks the library to offer social space relevant for the digital age.

15. Providing a makerspace the library interpret these kinds of environments as social spaces where important knowledge sharing and public debate is going on. In other words - in the makerspace public debate is redefined as a *physical and material debate*.

16. The change concept further underscores how the material debate going on while making is about changing our future and should be possible to participate in for all inhabitants. However the collection is often restricted to the possibilities to use the web and 3D printers.

17. Folkeverkstedet has been designed to offer both digital tools and arts and crafts tools, but the users have not been as active as the library expected. Today the arts and craft section is closed, and this is also caused by conflicts because of noise and mess around the workshop.

18. There are reasons to ask if this type of maker environment support the democratic goal to offer collections representing a diverse society. Pulling up this question, I underscore that tools and material are not neutral but suggest use and are used differently among people.

19. Tools and material bear implicit cultural meaning and offer different ways of thinking *and* doing. Further, the political and historical aspects of tools and material are worth noting as the library still has the mandate to collect a diverse collection *facing back in time*.

20. To sum up: I have a normative question: Should we understand Folkeverkstedet as a space for debate? An empirical question: How does a material debate unfold? And an interventional question: How can the folk-library facilitate material debate at Folkeverkstedet?

Watch the next page to see some pictures from our memorable seminar :).







