

## Visual Inquiry: Exploring Embodied Organizational Practices by Collaborative Film-elicitation

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Keyword:	Qualitative Research, Creativity, Communication, Organization Theory
Abstract:	<p>Analysis of visual data is underdeveloped in visual research, and this article gives a methodological contribution on how to perform collaborative video research on organisational practices, combining ethnographic methods and intervention through film-elicitation. We provide guidance for how to 1) collect ethnographic data with (and without) camera, 2) make preparations for film-elicitation, and 3) facilitate collaborative sensemaking with participants. Building on an enactive approach, we argue that film-elicitation based on a preliminary visual analysis and categorisation conducted by researchers, re-enact the immediacy and vitality of lived experience. This is done through enabling organizational members to create communicative constructs of the culturally embedded, inarticulate, and embodied aspects of social conduct. As such, we argue that video research is a powerful means for process-oriented theories concerned with capturing the multiplicity of organizational practices.</p>

## Introduction

Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead pioneered the field of visual anthropology in the 1930s through their studies of Balinese and New Guinean culture. With experience in using photography and film as ethnographic media in novel ways over several decades, Mead eloquently points out what is at stake:

“There is no such thing as an unbiased report upon any social situation... It is comparable to a colour-blind man reporting on a sunset. All of our recent endeavors in the social sciences have been to remove bias, to make the recording so impersonal and thereby meaningless that neither emotion nor scientific significance remained. Actually, in matters of ethos, the surest and most perfect instrument of understanding is our own emotional response, provided that we can make a disciplined use of it.”

(Margaret Mead 1968, p. 15-16, cited in Jacknis, 1988, p. 172)

While visual methods have a longstanding position in fields like anthropology and sociology, organizational researchers have been rather reluctant about performing studies through the use of visual means (Steyaert, Marti & Michels, 2012; Bell & Davison, 2013; Shortt & Warren, 2017). However, in recent years there has been a growing interest for visual methods and development of qualitative methodologies for organizational research, and most notably video research (see for example, Gylfe, Franck, Lebaron & Mantere, 2016; Zundel, MacIntosh & Mackay, 2016; Jarret & Liu, 2016; Toraldo, Islam & Mangia, 2016; Iedema, Forsyth, Georgiou, Braithwaite & Westbrook, 2006). This development has coincided with a ‘practice turn’ in organization studies (e.g. Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina & Savigny, 2001; Orlikowski, 2002; Reckwitz, 2002) giving rise to an increased interest and attention towards studying the mundane social activities of everyday organizational practices. Despite this interest in ‘deep’ data collection there is at present a lack of methodological considerations and explorations on how visual methods can be applied to obtain new insights by tapping into the elusive knowledge of the multifaceted interplay of actors in the course of their day-to-day activities (Bell & Davison, 2013; Drew & Guillemin, 2014; Toraldo et al., 2016; Whiting, Symon, Roby & Chamakiotis, 2016). Visual methods are proposed to engage with previously overlooked areas in organizational research such as exploration of embodiment (Emmison & Smith, 2000), a better recognition of the ‘situatedness’ and complexity of organizational activities (Zundel et al., 2016), and lived experience in organizational work (Riach & Warren, 2015). Still, there is a need for a greater understanding of how visual organizational research

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3 can be an integral part of research design and not just supplementary material to data  
4 gathering and/or analysis (Bell & Davison, 2013).  
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8 The aim of this article is to provide a methodological contribution to the discussion on how to  
9 perform collaborative video research on organizational practices combining ethnographic  
10 methods and film-elicitation. To understand how organizational practices unfold and change,  
11 it is essential to evoke and bring forward the various implicit meanings, ambiguities, and  
12 diversities among the participants on how they perceive and reason their joint actions.  
13 Collaborative film-elicitation is a method for stimulating such conversations and has the  
14 potential to obtain a deeper understanding of the multifaceted interplay between actors. The  
15 core activity of film-elicitation consists of screening recorded video material as a preliminary  
16 analysis to participants who appear in, or are affiliated to the videos, with the aim of evoking  
17 collective reflections and implicit understandings of the social interactions displayed. In this  
18 article, we present an enactive approach to video research using ethnographic accounts and  
19 elicitation as a means to create communicative constructs of the culturally embedded,  
20 inarticulate, and embodied aspects of situational interactions. This is by bringing forth the  
21 immediacy and vitality of the participants' everyday practices through videos. The empirical  
22 basis for our exploration is a study of an architectural team developing a prospect for a new  
23 national library in Norway. The overall objective of this study was to examine what  
24 characterizes the architects' creative work when at its best, in order to promote extraordinary  
25 practices in future projects.  
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39 Ontologically, our approach builds upon a view where agents are not primarily seen as the  
40 locus of representation, or the cognizing subject as the ultimate foundation of intelligibility,  
41 but rather as agents engaged in practice and social activity (Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2002). The  
42 theoretical underpinnings of this view are inspired by and build upon practice-based theories  
43 viewing organizational practices as situated and recurrent arrays of activities of  
44 organizational members (Schatzki et al., 2001; Orlikowski 2002, p. 253). An implication of  
45 such a view is that the world is not pregiven but brought forth by social activity. Our reality is  
46 thus situated within a domain of action which is emergent, open-ended, multiple, and  
47 (re)shaped on a continuous basis (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1993).  
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55 While traditional qualitative methods like observation, interviews and focus groups would  
56 provide descriptions and representations *about* a phenomenon (e.g. Styhre, 2010; 2011), they  
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3 would to a lesser extent tap into the immediacy and richness of the enacted collaborative  
4 efforts and tacit coordination on *how* they unfold, as our approach does. Ongoing social  
5 efforts are charged with emotions and expressions enacting reality through our senses in ways  
6 which exceed what can be captured by language alone (Knorr-Cetina, 1991; Pink, 2007).  
7 Studies of organizational practices thus require methods pursuing rigour and flexibility while  
8 maintaining closeness to the phenomenon at hand. In the following sections we will first  
9 outline a perspective of organizational practice building upon theories of enactivism and  
10 discuss how film-elicitation can be used to re-create and evoke the multiplicity of  
11 collaborative actions. We will then introduce and discuss our exploratory methodological  
12 research approach applied in an empirical study of a group of architects in Oslo and New  
13 York. We conclude by discussing some implications of using video methods for  
14 organizational research and other fields of interest.  
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## 24 **The Embodied Nature of Video Research**

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26 According to Tsoukas and Knudsen (2002) it is possible to distinguish between  
27 *representationalism* and *enactivism* in theories of action. While the former assumes that  
28 actions follow explicit rules on the basis of cognitive representations of a world with certain  
29 pre-given features, the latter subscribes to a view where thinking cannot be separated from  
30 action, and cognition is more than mental representation (Varela et al. 1993; Tsoukas &  
31 Knudsen, 2002; Wilson, 2002). Building on the latter perspective and Collier's (1974)  
32 dichotomy of the visual as data versus experience, we make a distinction between visual  
33 material in video research as entities *representing* multimodal data, and visual material as  
34 means for *evoking* lived or living experience. Traditionally, visual studies build on a  
35 representative approach with an underlying assumption that visual data contains 'hidden'  
36 features and details waiting to be uncovered by repeated reviewing and manipulation of time  
37 and place through editing (Hindmarsh & Pilnick, 2007; Zundel et al., 2016). Another  
38 assumption is that "the researcher is the best placed to provide overall analysis to the  
39 research, including the images" (Guillemin & Drew, 2010, p. 184). It also adheres to a view  
40 that multimodal data can be linguistically translated and used as a source for theory building  
41 and triangulation (e.g. Toraldo et al. 2016; Ray & Smith, 2012). Our methodology, on the  
42 other hand, is founded on an enactive approach that "emphasizes the movements and  
43 multiplicities that feature in the enactment or the day-to-day production of organizational  
44 processes" (Steyaert et al., 2012, p. 35.). The purpose is not to reveal, discover or represent  
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3 reality, but rather to intervene and “...evoke, elicit and engage viewers in affective dynamism  
4 that comprise physical phenomena and our sensuous perceptions” (Wood & Brown, 2012, p.  
5 143). A fundamental ontological tenet of enactivism is that the world is not fixed and  
6 pregiven but continually shaped and co-enacted by the types of actions in which humans  
7 engage – it is perceiver-dependent and experience-based (Varela et al., 1993). The social and  
8 situated activity of the mind and body – brought together – is the fundamental building block  
9 of the social world and the foundation of intelligibility (Tsoukas, 2005). An actor’s  
10 understanding does not reside in his or her head but is implicit in the *practices* in which he or  
11 she participates (Tsoukas & Knudsen, 2002). Video can in this regard be a means to enact  
12 and bring organizational practices back to life through the eliciting process, and to evoke  
13 embodied memory and stimulate elaborations on situated action (Dempsey, 2010; Pink,  
14 2004).

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24 Enactivism has its main historical roots within what could be called ‘biological system  
25 theory’, and its theoretical basis is autopoiesis; both a theory of living systems and cognition  
26 (Maturana & Varela, 1980). Inspired by a phenomenological interest in bodies both as  
27 physical structures and as lived, experiential structures, Varela et al. (1993) described how  
28 actions are constituted and patterned, emphasizing the *embodiment* of knowing, cognition,  
29 and experience. Some of the main sources to embodiment theories can be traced back to the  
30 works of Ryle (1949), Heidegger (1962) and Merleau-Ponty (1963), and discourses of  
31 embodiment and situatedness have become increasingly frequent in contemporary social  
32 theories (Haraway, 1988). Embodiment encompass reflection—both *on* experience and *as*  
33 experience — in which body and mind have been united: “Embodiment is the property of our  
34 engagement with the world that allows us to make it meaningful (...) embodied interaction is  
35 the creation, manipulation, and changing of meaning through engaged interaction with  
36 artifacts” (Dourish, 2004, p. 126). By employing the notion of embodied *action*, it is  
37 emphasized that sensorimotor processes, perception, and environment are relational and  
38 fundamentally inseparable in lived experience (Varela et al., 1993, p. 173). To illustrate; for  
39 more than twenty years the anthropologist Maurice Bloch studied the Zafimaniry people in a  
40 remote forest village in Madagascar. The people in this village were badly affected by the  
41 anti-colonial revolt in 1947, when the French burnt down their village and several people  
42 were killed as a result of their sympathy with the rebels. When Bloch was asking about these  
43 events he was given the same authoritative account he had heard many times before of what  
44 had happened, where “... the arbitrariness of specific events in time [were reduced] to a well  
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3 honed cultural pattern” (1998, p. 107). However, one day he and his adoptive village father  
4 were caught by heavy rain and took shelter in a hut, and he was given a totally different story.  
5 This story was organized by the topography that lay before them; it was factual-oriented,  
6 event-focused and was “... concerned with evoking the presence, movement and events  
7 concerning people long departed which had taken place in the space at which we were  
8 looking while we were talking” (1998, p. 107). This story articulates a compound narrative  
9 composed of environmental and bodily cues, emotions and memory enacted in-situ, not as a  
10 translation of elusive knowledge, but as an elicitation tapping into a particular embodied  
11 interpretation of past events.  
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19 Correspondingly, the method of film-elicitation stimulates embodied narrative performances  
20 where participants make their experiences and everyday practices sensible to themselves and  
21 others (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2011). That is, by viewing episodes as they happened,  
22 participants can interpret, reflect and produce novel insights *from within* about the nature of  
23 the practices they are part of, and what made or makes them happen (Steyaert et al., 2012).  
24 The relation between the elicitation situation and organizational reality can thus be seen as a  
25 researcher enabled ‘re-creation’ and ‘co-creation’ (Svensson, 2009, p. 172), rather than a ‘re-  
26 presentation’ reducing the multiplicity of organizational reality. Film-elicitation is in this  
27 respect a visual method that has the potential of re-enacting the immediacy of practices by  
28 “tapping into specific episodes unfolding in local ‘epistemic cultures’, where knowledge is  
29 embedded in specific, local ways and where any sense of meaning is subject to the  
30 contingencies and accountabilities of the prevailing situation” (Zundel et al., 2016, p. 5).  
31 Such re-enacting goes beyond psychological and social processes of interpreting relational  
32 emotions among individuals retrospectively (e.g. Jarrett and Liu, 2016; Stockton, Morran &  
33 Clark, 2004) as it is the unfolding of the enacted individuals-cum-collective activity of  
34 performing collaboratively that is elicited. That is, an approach that not only generates meta-  
35 interpretations of *what* people are doing but also accentuates a deeper engagement of the  
36 relational, and sometimes contradicted or contested aspects of *why* their practice is as it is.  
37 Josephides (2008) found that the Kewa in Melanesia uses elicitation techniques to contest and  
38 negotiate meanings and intentions in their daily interaction. In the language *siapi* ‘eliciting  
39 talk’ is a strategy for understanding what is left unsaid by making contested claims. The  
40 Kewa has a distinct awareness that one never knows what is going on in other people’s heads.  
41 When respecting the other as a thinking human being, with the right to their own thoughts  
42 about how things should be, “[...] the need to elicit the meaning of others and negotiate  
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3 understandings becomes even more pressing” (Josephides, 2008, p. 43). To understand how  
4 organizational practices unfold and change, it is thus essential to evoke a variety of implicit  
5 meanings, ambiguities, and diversities among the participants. Film-elicitation methods  
6 stimulate the dialogue on the individual perception of collaborative actions, with the aim of  
7 obtaining a deeper understanding of the multifaceted interplay between actors in an  
8 organizational setting.  
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## 14 **Re-enacting Embodied Experiences**

### 15 **Research Setting**

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17 From empirical studies on organizational practices we know that people provide best  
18 accounts of their work when they are *in* a work situation (Lave & Wenger, 1991), but being  
19 in a work situation might not always be the best time to give such accounts. Since  
20 organizational practices are inherently collective in nature, it requires a methodological  
21 approach enabling exploration of patterns of interrelatedness of practices *among* actors. The  
22 content of such an exploration and the process of gaining it, are not clearly separable  
23 (Tsoukas, 2009). We are taking the anthropological stance, not approaching the visuals as  
24 text that has to be decoded, but rather we approach the visuals as *something with which things*  
25 *are done*. This allows us to investigate further the relationship and interaction between  
26 people, their actions and the visual objects.  
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3 Our video research method was explored in the setting of an internationally recognized  
4 architectural firm with offices in Scandinavia and the US. Since the establishment in 1989  
5 they have had success in winning large competitions worldwide. At the time the study took  
6 place they were approximately 120 architects, landscape architects and interior architects  
7 from a number of different countries working at the Scandinavian headquarter office. The  
8 research process can be divided into three phases (see Table 2 for summary): 1) ethnographic  
9 fieldwork with (and without) camera in the architects' office where the researchers recorded  
10 all team meetings throughout the project period, as well as individual interviews; 2)  
11 preliminary analysis by the researchers and preparation of analytical categories and videos  
12 describing architectural practices (re-creation), and; 3) facilitation of workshops where the  
13 researchers elicited the architects' perceptions through group discussions and elaborations on  
14 the categories and videos presented (re-enacting), contributing to a co-construction of the  
15 analysis.  
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25 \*\*\*\*\*Insert 'Table 2: The three-step field guide' about here \*\*\*\*\*  
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### 29 **Data Collection: Ethnographic Fieldwork with (and without) Camera**

30 Two researchers trained in methods of visual ethnography followed a project team of  
31 architects with a camera for four months at their weekly meetings, from start to end in a  
32 conceptual competition for a new national library. These meetings were the main meeting  
33 point for the whole team and the main collective arena for the team's creative work where the  
34 architects presented, discussed, and generated new ideas towards a shared creative concept.  
35 The researchers had different roles; one was behind the camera and one was observing and  
36 taking notes. The latter concentrated on the content of the dialogue, whereas the researcher  
37 who filmed moved around mostly with a handheld camera; sometimes zooming in on details  
38 of the architectural sketches and models or people talking, sometimes getting an overview of  
39 people's responses, other times placed in the background to capture the whole collective  
40 setting in one frame. The aim was not to make recordings for public screening, but rather to  
41 record thick data (Geertz, 1973) containing the necessary contextual information for it to be  
42 analytically accessible outside the setting. We recorded approximately forty hours of footage  
43 in addition to handwritten notes and headnotes (Barnard & Spencer, 1996). In parallel,  
44 twenty individual semi-structured interviews with key employees in the firm were conducted.  
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3 Being a 'fly on the wall' is more easily described than accomplished. It calls for an  
4 established environment of trust and reliance for the collaboration to succeed. Before filming  
5 we presented the research objective to the team and emphasized our interest in their  
6 collective, rather than individual activities. Even though many of them had a natural  
7 scepticism in the beginning, fieldwork with camera seemed to be a *raison d'être* for our  
8 presence (Henley, 1998), making our intention appear evident to the participants. Our  
9 experience was that the participants soon saw us as a natural part of the team and to a degree  
10 forgot our presence, as well as being eager to tell us what progress had been made in our  
11 absence.  
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19 We talked regularly with the architects between meetings and it soon became clear to us that  
20 as outsiders we did not see the same or make the same interpretations as those directly  
21 involved in the project. As a participant observer one has a selective ability to grasp the  
22 ongoing action as it unfolds. While recording, the ability to distinguish the irrelevant from the  
23 relevant in real time was a challenge, as the meetings were intense and rather disorganised  
24 from an outsider perspective. Consequently, all meetings were filmed in their entirety,  
25 leaving us with a massive amount of visual data to examine. We also experienced that  
26 looking through the lens of the camera created a distance to the field which was somehow  
27 comfortable, but on the other hand it weakened the researcher's ability to grasp the subtleties  
28 of the atmosphere. The feeling resembled the experience of looking at the footage and not  
29 actually 'being there'. It was in this respect an advantage to be two researchers in the field  
30 simultaneously, since we could pay attention to different matters and share these experiences  
31 afterwards to conduct a comprehensive analysis of our collective observations.  
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41 The observations of the architects' work reinforced our assumption that filming was  
42 significant to tap into the nuances and elusive characters of the architects' collective work  
43 practices. First of all, we observed how the architects were committed to continuous  
44 teamwork throughout the entire idea and design process. They argued for prolonged  
45 conversations as a central tool, especially in the beginning of the conceptual phase of an idea  
46 process, with the goal of reaching a collective understanding of the concept they wanted to  
47 develop. The company has built their philosophy on a culture of consensus and cooperation,  
48 inspired by egalitarian values prevalent in the work life of the Nordic countries. As a result,  
49 everyone is expected to voice their opinion, but also to be open for new ideas suggested by  
50 others in the team. Most of the time their discussions revolve around visualisations and  
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3 materialisations, like models and sketches, produced in and between meetings. They would  
4 always have a visual representation of an idea, a sketch or a model placed in front of them on  
5 the table and explained to us how they need these material objects to create a shared  
6 understanding of the imminent possibilities for further creative development and exploration.  
7 The visualisations were not intended to resemble buildings at an early stage in the concept  
8 process but were rather regarded and perceived as ideas until the project entered the design  
9 phase where actual drawings were made. The architects communicated ideas through speech,  
10 but their movements, body language and gestures were significant to capture on video, as  
11 hands and arms, and sometimes the whole body was used to (sometimes soundlessly) convey  
12 arguments, meaning and visualise design solutions or possible obstacles. Often the suggested  
13 ideas would be conveyed as “air sketching” (Hagen, 2014); using their hands with or without  
14 a pen pretending to draw without touching the paper or leaving a mark. For instance, the  
15 architects in our project aspired for an environmental focus in their design. In one of the latest  
16 meetings, the project leader re-made the model of a detailed building to look like a green  
17 puffy box by sprinkling the model with green moss solely with her hands, while the whole  
18 team sat in silence (Figure 1). Sometimes parts of the idea sessions went on without a single  
19 word uttered.  
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33 \*\*\*\*\*Insert “Figure 1: Green moss 3D-model” about here\*\*\*\*\*  
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### 38 **Video Analysis: Preparing for Elicitation**

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40 Several scholars have emphasised the lack of attention given to the *analysis* of visual data  
41 (Mondada, 2006; Warren, 2005; Prosser & Loxley, 2008; Bell & Davison, 2013), especially  
42 in participatory visual methods (Vince & Warren, 2012; Ray & Smith, 2012). Some studies  
43 combine analysis of video material with other data sources like observations, interviews and  
44 field notes (e.g. Collier & Collier 1986; Knoblauch, 2006; Smets, Burke, Jarzabkowski,  
45 Burke & Spee, 2014; Lui & Maitlis, 2014). In other, and more recent studies video analysis  
46 has been conducted in multiple ways; by dividing data into fragments that are thoroughly  
47 transcribed using certain codes (Heath, Hindmarsh & Luff, 2010), by using software package  
48 designed for content analysis of verbal and behavioural matters (Iedema et al., 2006), single  
49 frame analysis of explicit micro-behaviours (Gylfe et al., 2016; Zundel et al., 2016),  
50 identifying “interesting” scenes for capturing the subject’s perspectives (Lahlou, 2011), or  
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3 using analytical tools like Goffman's frame analysis for selecting sequences for individual  
4 screening (Jarret and Liu, 2016). Shortt and Warren (2017) argue for a combination of  
5 dialogical and archaeological approaches in visual research for grounded visual patterned  
6 analysis (GVPA) for obtaining a broader level of meanings to be interpreted from the  
7 analysis of photo-collections. However, how to analyse video material containing patterned  
8 social action for the purpose of collective film-elicitation is underdeveloped in the literature.  
9 We will in what follows describe an analytical framework of how this can be accomplished  
10 and follow Guillemin and Drew (2010) in that the researchers are in the best position to  
11 provide an overall analysis at this stage of the visual research process. This is because of their  
12 distance to the field, and their previous research experience and training in identifying  
13 patterns and interpreting data within the context of other empirical work and theoretical  
14 frameworks. Yet, we hold that the participants are in the best position to enrich the analysis  
15 in novel and unexpected ways in collaboration with the researchers.  
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24 Both Vince and Warren (2012), as well as Ray and Smith (2012) suggest three broad  
25 approaches to photographic analysis; 1) content analysis, 2) thematic analysis, and a 3)  
26 hybrid approach. When applying these in a collaborative video analysis we found that a  
27 fourth approach should be added; the *enacted approach*, which specifically addresses  
28 elicitation of collaborative sensemaking processes. The four approaches applied on video  
29 analysis can be described as follows: 1) *Content analysis* is in a narrow sense the cataloguing  
30 of identified elements in the visual material (Banks, 2007, Collier, 2001), usually performed  
31 as the first step in a visual analysis. In a video each still frame could possibly be subject to  
32 content analysis. Even though micro-behaviour analysis is common in some areas of  
33 organizational research (Gylfe et al., 2016; Heath et al., 2010; Liu & Maitlis, 2014), it will  
34 not be the main object of interest in a qualitative research project studying the unfolding of  
35 creative practices over time. Rather, the way to conduct a content analysis for collaborative  
36 video screening is by mapping the social interaction in a *sequential* manner (Knoblauch,  
37 2006; Lahlou, 2011), looking for sequences of interaction that are part of recurrent patterns of  
38 creative practices and stand out as noteworthy and engaging. The analytic selection process  
39 of deciding which sequences to be included from the flow of events, activities, interaction,  
40 and behaviour, is informed by the ethnographic knowledge from the field. By using this  
41 technique, it is an advantage to structure the viewing process according to a chronological  
42 principle to make sure that one does not miss out on these sequences. The selected sequences  
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3 are then described and categorized, but not transcribed like in Heath et al.'s video analysis  
4 (2010).  
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8 In our project, after the observation period ended and the competition proposal was handed in  
9 by the team, the researchers spent two days watching the footage following an open viewing  
10 procedure (Collier & Collier, 1986). The written field notes from the observations, as well as  
11 transcripts of interviews were used as a guide to choose what footage to pay special attention  
12 to. This also reduced the problem of "data overload". To organize further editing, we wrote  
13 down the timecodes of the chosen sequences within each take. We found that the videos  
14 provided us with details of the communication and interactions giving us the opportunity to  
15 somehow recreate the field experience and – although distant in space and time – allowed us  
16 to bring forth nuances, connections and make distinctions that we were not able to do when  
17 we were in the field. This process of analysing the video content was a step towards finding  
18 patterns in the social interactions, and also a step towards creating meaning and new  
19 analytical categories because we could pause and discuss, rewind and replay, and write down  
20 keywords and interesting phenomena. For instance, we discovered that the architects' final  
21 concept presented to the jury had its initial appearance as early as in one of the first meetings  
22 several months earlier. The main idea was introduced in the beginning of the project – a huge  
23 bookshelf being the main structure of the building – but was not followed up in team  
24 discussions before the end of the competition period.  
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37 2) *Thematic analysis* is about categorizing the empirical material and identifying patterns in  
38 the data material (Ray & Smith, 2012; Collier & Collier, 1986). In some visual research  
39 projects, the thematic analysis also encompasses frequency measures in the visual material,  
40 but for our project, finding statistically defined patterns were not an eligible solution for  
41 analysing creative behaviour. Our search for patterns was inspired by grounded theorizing  
42 (Charmaz, 2006; Suddaby, 2006), where we based on the content analysis examined field  
43 notes and interviews for samples of repeated sequential coordinated actions and interactions  
44 in the project meetings. As a result of the analytic process we identified twelve categories of  
45 collective creative practices (see Table 1 for description). Each of the categories had a  
46 distinct core, yet they were interconnected and partly overlapping. They should also not be  
47 understood as exhaustive interpretations of the material, as they would be subject to further  
48 justifications and elaborations by the participants in the subsequent elicitation sessions.  
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3 Based on the thematic analysis, twenty-two video sequences ranging from thirty seconds to  
4 one minute were extracted. They were all one-takes and not edited within each sequence. We  
5 chose excerpts that displayed distinct characteristics of the architects' creative practices and  
6 gave them titles inspired by the dialogue in the sequences (see Table 1). The videos  
7 corresponded to what Ambady, Bernieri & Richeson call "thin slices": "...brief excerpt of  
8 expressive behaviour sampled from a behaviour stream" (2000, p. 203) similar to Goffman's  
9 "slices" of significant moments (1974). Ambady and colleagues argue that "thin slices", less  
10 than five minutes of video, provide a substantial amount of information because the viewers  
11 bring into the viewing process a vast set of previous understandings of context, history,  
12 culture, and social conditions that constitute their judgements of the videos. They found that  
13 expressive behaviour is more accessible and reveal more than verbal communication in  
14 viewing videos because the viewer extracts most information from appearance, gestures and  
15 manner of speaking. The sequences' start and end point were decided based on the  
16 information needed to make sense of the interaction in the sequence, and were guided and  
17 focused around momentary situations like a) the start of a conversational theme, for instance  
18 when someone said "What if,...", b) moving things, for instance when a person took the  
19 model they were discussing and put it on a light table, c) shifting attention to other objects or  
20 topics, for instance when the leader changed the model to look like a green box, or d) the  
21 change in intensity in the creative work, for instance when some says "I don't see that at  
22 all..." opposing against a suggested idea.  
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38 3) *The enacted approach* is an essential component to visual analysis when doing  
39 participatory video research. We define this approach as the analytic process in which the  
40 context of production and reception of the video is deliberately framed for enacting collective  
41 elicitation. This approach is connected to an awareness about the conditions for gathering the  
42 footage, the context of viewing and the kind of audience the video material is being screened  
43 to. Following Banks (2001), the content of an image is first of all its internal narrative; the  
44 story that the image conveys for the viewer. The external narrative consists of the social  
45 context the image is produced, and being viewed in (Banks, 2001). These are intertwined, but  
46 it is the external narrative, the images as a product of human action and the social relation  
47 entangled to the imagery, that is the analytic focus for collective film-elicitation. The camera  
48 does not film, humans do (Byers, 1966). The researchers' intentions behind the filming as  
49 well as their field experience should therefore also be taken into account in the analysis  
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3 because they impact the “organizational features of the recorded practices themselves,  
4 revealing their local order and intelligibility as reflexivity produced by their display to and  
5 for the camera” (Mondada, 2006, p. 52). Videos are reflexive, as they carry both the bodies in  
6 the video and the bodies behind the camera. MacDougall claims that “we see with our bodies,  
7 and any image we make carries the imprint of our bodies; that is to say, of our being as well  
8 as the meanings we intend to convey” (2006, p. 3). Hence, both the image production and the  
9 image reception inform our understanding of the video material (Prosser & Schwartz, 1998).  
10 Therefore, this analytic approach goes beyond the image itself and integrate both background  
11 contextualization and anticipations of how the viewing process will unfold. With the  
12 architects as the main audience in mind, we searched for video sequences that would display  
13 discrepancies between what was said during interviews and observed during fieldwork and  
14 filming. The analysis is in this respect deliberately made to provoke both opposition,  
15 elaboration and confirmation. Overall, the videos extracted were aimed at displaying the  
16 elusiveness of creative work that is not easily communicated in words alone, and to stimulate  
17 the discussions and reflections in ways that would enrich understandings for both researchers  
18 and participants.

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32 \*\*\*\*\*Insert Table 1 about here\*\*\*\*\*

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35 4) *The hybrid approach* is according to Vince and Warren (2012) best achieved by an  
36 integration of the textual and the visual in a “holistic and forceful manner” (Vince & Warren,  
37 2012, p. 13), and can take many forms, as the name suggests. There are several methods  
38 available for doing this, including involvement of participants, identification of photoset or a  
39 photoscript with text and photo (Ray & Smith, 2012). In our project, the videos and the  
40 categories-as-text were intended to be mutually dependent sources of understanding,  
41 becoming reciprocal frames of reference. There is not much written about the  
42 contextualization in techniques like film-elicitation, although one agrees that it is needed  
43 when screening raw data to an audience (El Guindi, 2004). Textual information supporting  
44 the visual material appears to be necessary, since visuals as a form of data are “not capable of  
45 talking for themselves” (Ball, 1998, p. 187), remaining ‘mute’ facts (El Guindi, 2004) as they  
46 are ambiguously polysemic (Goffman, 1979), beyond description (Barthes, 1977) and  
47 multimodal (Rose, 2007). They “make sense in relation to other things, including written  
48 texts and very often other images [but] they are not reducible to the meaning carried by those  
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3 other things” (Rose, 2007, p. 11). They have to be interpreted and the visual availability has  
4 to be exposed both for the audience and for the purpose of research.  
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8 In our project, the written material of categories following our video sequences consisted of a  
9 title, a definition, quotes from interviews, as well as references to the organizational  
10 creativity literature. The categories’ titles were either inspired by expressions or metaphors  
11 from the architects’ daily language, or by relevant literature. With one exception there were  
12 two video sequences for each category of practice. By preparing a set of printed A5 cards  
13 describing the twelve categories with still images from the videos for distribution in the  
14 workshops with the architects, we transformed our analysis into material objects (see Carlsen,  
15 Rudningen & Mortensen, 2014). The intention behind this was to prompt dialogue on how  
16 physical models, sketches and materials used by the architects enable creative exploration in  
17 the architects’ everyday work life.  
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### 25 **Collaborative sensemaking through film-elicitation**

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27 There are many ways of conducting film-elicitation. For instance, one can involve  
28 participants in the beginning of the project by engaging the participants in filming themselves  
29 (Worth & Adair, 1972; Holliday, 2004), in the editing and analyzing process (Turner, 1992;  
30 Engeström, 1999), or at a later stage by getting reflections and opinions about the  
31 researcher’s filmed and edited material; turning the filmed subject into informants (Krebs,  
32 1975; Asch & Connor, 1994), for cross-check of data (El Guindi, 2004), for stimulated recall  
33 (Stockton et al., 2004; Dempsey, 2010), methods for problem solving (Iedema et al., 2006),  
34 or as a combination of these approaches (Lahlou, 2011; Jarret & Liu, 2016). In this project,  
35 we have used film-elicitation as a way of collectively evoking culturally embedded,  
36 inarticulate and embodied aspects of situational interactions – making participants co-creators  
37 of the analysis. We will in the following give a detailed account of our way of using film-  
38 elicitation as co-creation and collaborative sensemaking.  
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48 The phase of film-elicitation consisted of two workshops where the videos and categories  
49 were presented by the researchers and explored in collaboration with the architects. The first  
50 session involved only the members of the filmed project team and took place at the  
51 architects’ office one afternoon after normal work hours. The second session included  
52 employees from the whole office, both from the Scandinavian and the US office. In both  
53 workshops, the researchers presented the twelve categories of creative practices with the  
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3 associated video sequences as a preliminary analysis of the architects' creative practices, with  
4 the researchers taking turn in presenting. The presentation lasted for less than an hour,  
5 opening up for questions and clarification of content, rather than encouraging discussions at  
6 this point. To build rapport during the presentation, the researchers used the architects' own  
7 metaphors and way of communicating when describing the various practices. Secondly, we  
8 attempted to create an atmosphere of relaxation and enjoyment by giving an informal  
9 presentation where everyone was included and could feel free to contribute. Laughter and  
10 comments from the audience were in this respect a good indicator of attention and  
11 recognition. The researchers deliberately highlighted the ambiguous nature of the practices to  
12 avoid closed interpretations (Martinez, 1992) where conflict, discrepancies, and  
13 contradictions are smoothed out, often leading to group conformity (Asch, 1956). Our  
14 facilitation of the subsequent discussion consisted of three strategies operating in parallel: 1)  
15 sustaining progression, 2) encourage elaboration, and 3) making connections. *Sustaining*  
16 *progression* implies maintaining conditions for a flourishing discussion to take place, for  
17 instance when it gets sidetracked, becomes dominated by one or a few people, or several  
18 issues are discussed in parallel. The aim is to keep the balance between following up on  
19 interesting discussions and the need for progression to cover everything planned. *Encourage*  
20 *elaboration* is about evoking more details or examples, addressing or inviting others to voice  
21 their opinion on issues brought up by the participants. It also encompasses challenging an  
22 interpretation by suggesting alternative understandings or eliciting through making contested  
23 claims, in addition to pointing out possible contradictions in what has been said so far in the  
24 discussion. *Making connections* is a reflective strategy of observing, noticing potential  
25 contribution that is not followed up on in the discussion, and combining and suggesting for  
26 the group, when appropriate, aspects they should consider to discuss. It also includes  
27 summing up from time to time during the discussion, to get additional comments and  
28 confirmation of correct understanding. Overall, these strategies are used to obtain a  
29 multiplicity of voices, as it is the breadth and depth of the social, interactive and co-  
30 constructed aspects of their practices that is the key concern for our investigation.

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50 The overall goal for the visual and textual material presented to the architects was described  
51 the following way:

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53 *“The categories should not be read as final answers. We hope to enrich the language*  
54 *of innovative practices and make people see new opportunities for developing and*  
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3 *acting. It is also worth mentioning that the categories reflect a much noted quality of*  
4 *all creative practices – that of a paradox.”*  
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8 \*\*\*\*\*Insert ‘Figure 2’ about here \*\*\*\*\*  
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11 After the presentation the participants were asked to individually choose three videos from  
12 the presentation (Figure 2) and answer four questions: 1. What did you see? 2. Why did you  
13 choose those particular films? 3. Why do you want more of these practices? 4. How can you  
14 make it happen? The architects were then asked to choose one of the categories describing  
15 the creative practice (see Table 1) they found most important to focus on in their shared  
16 creative work. Asking the participants to reflect and take individual notes before the group  
17 discussion begins, was an attempt to avoid the discussion being dominated by the first  
18 speaker and his/her reflections. The discussion started with the participants taking turns  
19 presenting and arguing for their choice of categories to the rest of the group, before  
20 collectively deciding on one category they wanted to explore more thoroughly in smaller  
21 groups. This approach made sure the engagement in the discussion arose from the  
22 participants’ own interests. Finally, the groups were asked to discuss how to promote this  
23 practice in future projects to make sure that their reflections influence further work. In both  
24 sessions, they expressed that all of the categories were both useful and interconnected, giving  
25 them a hard time following the task given of deciding on one category to discuss and  
26 elaborate on. By keeping to our strategy of sustained progression, what happened next was  
27 not in the script of the researchers.  
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31 First of all, the categories were well received by the participants as they spontaneously started  
32 systematizing the categories, pointing to thematic clusters and conceptual relations between  
33 categories, for instance placing them according to dimensions such as individual versus group  
34 or concrete versus abstract (see Figure 3). This happened in both sessions and was not part of  
35 the tasks given by the researchers. This could be interpreted as an attempt to avoid the  
36 predefined “rules” set by the researchers and aligned with the company axiom that “no one  
37 tells the architects what to do”. Architects’ autonomy is deemed a sacred value in their  
38 creative work.  
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42 \*\*\*\*\*Insert ‘Figure 3’ about here\*\*\*\*\*  
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3 The prepared tasks described above were more or less declined by the architects and the  
4 discussion took unexpected turns. Yet, the intentions behind the tasks were still accounted for  
5 through the facilitation of the workshop.  
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9 Secondly, the architects interpreted the categories in new ways, reformulating them in their  
10 own words as well as adding more information to them. For example, the creative practice  
11 “Acquiring Uniqueness” initially defined as “using the availability and access to internal and  
12 external resources to find new possibilities” was reintroduced by one architect as a “smooth  
13 transition between doing the impossible possible and turning reality into dreams”. Another  
14 example from the plenary session provided another reinterpretation of our preliminary  
15 analysis. One group chose the category “Architectural Shamanism” (that we will account for  
16 more thoroughly below) and introduced it as:  
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22 *“An energy that is not possible to measure, not in money, it is not visible, you can’t*  
23 *touch it, but it is a kind of energy in the office and a spirit that can take different*  
24 *forms. It can be a person, like our leaders, and of course a lot of other people. It can*  
25 *be our mission, the feeling of being on a mission. It can be nature – architecture and*  
26 *nature are very closely combined. It can be the tool that we use and it can be the*  
27 *common atmosphere.”*  
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33 This explanation from the architects is a further specification of our more general definition:  
34 “Spiritual leadership in creative processes as the ability to use exceptionally sensory  
35 apparatus to connect to and draw upon cultural worlds and understandings that seem beyond  
36 entry”. By listening to our descriptions of their own practices first, and then justifying and  
37 elaborating them in their own words, the architects talked about their shared understanding of  
38 creative practices in ways they previously had not. To paraphrase Harper (2000);  
39 deconstruction of phenomenological assumptions happens when people overcome common  
40 belief by the introduction of new ways of framing. Film-elicitation is in this respect a  
41 generative approach that provides stimulus for eliciting reflections and emic elaborations  
42 leading to a co-created analysis.  
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51 Thirdly, the sessions of elicitation not only gave the researchers and participants more details  
52 about the architects’ shared understandings, but also revealed conflicting views and opinions.  
53 For instance, in the first session a discussion emerged on the concept of “Materializing the  
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Idea” (Figure 4). While discussing which category to choose, two of the participants disagreed on how they perceived the use of tools in their work:

*A: “We are going to find out what is most interesting to discuss, and I don’t think (that is) “materializing”, because we are doing that. It is so physical and we do it all the time, so concrete and tool-based. I don’t think there is more to find, even though it is important. We materialize and materialize. We manage that.”*

*B: “I don’t think so at all. We are going in the wrong direction in how we command it - becoming more specialized. We have so advanced tools – tools that more and more people refuse to touch - and that kind of tool-thinking is dominant.”*

The recent introduction of 3D software, advanced printing machines and robots in architectural practices, challenge the presupposed ways of approaching tools and materials, without this being explicitly addressed in the everyday life of the organization. In the second session with the majority of the office, the same topic was raised again when one of the architects stated in plenary: “We don’t know how the new tools affect us”. He was putting into words what was left unsaid by managers and rarely reflected upon in daily life. The combination of videos and categories seemed to provoke discussions and reflections about contested understandings, friction and divergent opinions among the architects that we as researchers and the architects themselves would not have discovered otherwise. This is particularly important in organizations characterized by strong communal values and an ethos of equality and autonomy. The videos’ multiple opportunities for interpretations and the way the videos display expressive behaviour made it especially suitable for discussion purposes, as several and possibly alternative views among the architects came forth. The tasks given in the workshop spurred discussion on issues they seemed not to know they perceived differently.

In the literature on organizational creativity, artefacts are understood as repositories of mental structures supporting collective meaning construction, but how they actually affect the unfolding of the creative process is underexplored (Stigliani & Ravasi, 2012). Elicitation is well suited for bringing forth ‘silent’ aspects of mental structures inherent in both conversational and material practices with artefacts bringing forth individuals’ different perceptions, and how these are negotiated and enacted during creative accomplishments. However, as the example indicates, studies of artefacts should be extended to also include the *tools* producing them. One senior architect told us during the workshop that when looking at

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3 a new building, he is able to see, based on shapes and curves of the façade, what kind of 3D  
4 software that was used to construct it. While some take them for granted and do not pay  
5 much attention to what impact they have on their work, others see tools as a critical  
6 component of how their creative work is performed and something they should be concerned  
7 about.  
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14 \*\*\*\*\*Insert 'Figure 4' about here\*\*\*\*\*  
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17 Another example from the first workshop with the project group, describes different  
18 perspectives on leadership. The firm strives for egalitarianism and a flat structure, and this  
19 was highlighted in the interviews; every architect is required to voice their opinion as well as  
20 inspire others. Our observations, however, indicated that the leader of the firm had great  
21 influence over the ideation process and which direction it should take. In the workshops we  
22 called this category 'Architectural Shamanism' to extend the understanding of leadership as a  
23 practice not only connected to one person. We were not sure how the architects themselves  
24 understood this practice, as we had been given divergent signals about leadership. We also  
25 had a hard time in the editing process finding a relevant "thin slice" for the collective part of  
26 shamanism, and consequently this category had only one video whereas the rest had two. In  
27 the beginning of the selected video the leader asks "What if..?" and the group of thirteen are  
28 all listening. Transcript from the workshop shows that there is more to "architectural  
29 shamanism" than displayed in the video. Here is how they got a clearer sense of what this  
30 practice means to them in the discussion that followed:  
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40 *A: (...) Inspiration comes from around the table. The shamans are many, many.*

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43 *B: I think also that the shaman has a professor role that isn't involved in the daily*  
44 *work, but comes from the outside, with clear eyes or new eyes. And can tell – 'oh,*  
45 *you're forgetting the important thing - what about this, what about that'.*  
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50 *C: It comes down to how you define the spiritual leadership, too. I mean, a spiritual*  
51 *leadership based on one spiritual leader or spiritual leadership based on a feeling*  
52 *within a group. And a group can be an entire office. And I think that maybe spiritual*  
53 *leadership like in an office is driven more by a process itself, and what happens with*  
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3 *a process, and that is why one project is so different from another. It's never the same*  
4 *spiritual type of leadership.*  
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8 *D: Well, it is, because I think it's the ownership of the idea that makes a difference*  
9 *when you have a spiritual leader with very strong individual ideas. Like a master.*  
10 *Telling people what to do. Then there is the other... the transcendent spiritual leader,*  
11 *a master who turn the pupils into masters themselves. If you have this approach, then*  
12 *you accept that the ideas are not yours. But as long as you think of yourself as a*  
13 *master, you have ownership to the idea, because you strongly believe that you have*  
14 *the right and best ideas, better than your employees'. That thinking makes a huge*  
15 *difference in our setting.*  
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22 *A: When the master is able to let go a little bit?*  
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25 *D: Yeah, but that's the entire... shift. I mean, then you will become a true master,*  
26 *because you will turn people around you into masters instead.*  
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30 *B: Right.*  
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34 The architects told us that they get inspired by different people whom they see as shamans,  
35 and that the 'Spiritual shamanism' (renamed by the architects) can take different forms such  
36 as a person or a feeling. C and D in this transcript are senior architects who has worked at the  
37 firm for a long time, whereas A and B are new to the firm. In this discussion, it seems like the  
38 seniors are trying to inform the new employees on the firm's ideology by telling them how  
39 this practice works. When we addressed our difficulties in finding "thin slices" displaying  
40 such shamanistic practices to the participants in the workshop, one of the architects  
41 responded that this practice might not be recognizable for other than the architects  
42 themselves, individually in the moment. This interaction shows how film-elicitation  
43 contributes to making the implicit, embodied and situated nature sensible by "zooming with",  
44 that is, incorporating participants' understandings of the category in terms of meta-  
45 interpretations of their experience (Jarrett & Liu, 2016). Several scholars have pointed out  
46 that we do not know much about how teams select and build on each other's ideas during  
47 momentary interactions (Kohn, Paulus & Choi, 2011; Hargadon & Bechky, 2006), how they  
48 evaluate and make decisions on which ideas to follow up on and not (Harvey, 2014), and how  
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3 ideas are reframed, tweaked and synthesized into a coherent solution (Harrison & Rouse,  
4 2014, Harvey, 2014). Film-elicitation represents a compound nexus of relational, affective,  
5 explicit and tacit aspects of collective interaction and sensemaking that is not only brought to  
6 life, but also further co-created when they become voiced and connected during an elicitation  
7 session. As such, film-elicitation is a promising means for providing in-depth understanding  
8 of the situated dynamics of organizational creativity and how ideation processes actually  
9 progress.  
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16 Fourthly, throughout the discussion the categories became part of the participants' gesturing  
17 and body language similar to the practice of 'air-sketching' referred to above. Excerpts from  
18 our field notes illustrate how the videos, titles and categories of creative practices not only  
19 encouraged people to reflect and discuss verbally, but also stimulated bodily interactions:  
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22 *One of the architects is obviously disagreeing with the others about which practice to*  
23 *choose and playfully shouts: "Resistance!" (referring to the practice "generative*  
24 *resistance") while raising her hand like an axe. Then another architect moves her*  
25 *hand back and forth horizontally while saying "shifting attention" (name of another*  
26 *category), followed up by the third architect uttering: "We need a shaman here"*  
27 *("architectural shamanism") while using her fist as a hammer towards the table.*  
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34 The metaphoric and emic descriptions on the printed cards in combination with videos of  
35 expressive behaviour, effectively enacted lively communication and gesticulations. Carlsen et  
36 al. (2014) describe this event as tactile and sensory-motoric engagements with metaphors  
37 generating stories for collective sensemaking in a playful way. Metaphors are strongly linked  
38 to flows of experience and express an emotional reality beyond conscious awareness  
39 (Tsoukas, 1991) that can be accessed through elicitation.  
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45 In the beginning, there were some scepticism among some of the architects about  
46 'objectifying' and expressing their creative practices in words. They were afraid that the  
47 'magic' of their work would disappear (see Hagen, 2014; 2017). However, during the  
48 research process their critical stance changed. The norm in the company after completion of a  
49 competition phase is to rush off to the next competition proposal or contract assignment  
50 without debriefing or reflecting on what they have accomplished. The participants expressed  
51 a need for opportunities to reflect on their own practices and exclaimed by the end of the  
52 workshop that "we should do this after each project". After the session, several commented  
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3 that they found it inspiring to get access to their colleagues' ways of thinking about work  
4 practices, discuss divergent views and get new ideas for how they could work creatively  
5 together. We were told that the continuous replacement of team members on a competition  
6 project is part of the company's policy for spurring a renewal of ideas (but more  
7 pragmatically it can be seen as a financial decision of allocating resources within the  
8 organization, due to shifting times and repeated processes of downsizing). Only two out of  
9 the total twenty team members had a stable role in the team throughout the project. All other  
10 team members were either temporarily or permanently taken off the project or put on the  
11 project again at a later date. In effect, very few in the group had a continuous perception of  
12 the process they had been part of. Our presence and later presentations of video recordings  
13 and observations thus represented an opportunity for all team members to be reintroduced to  
14 the process in hindsight - in other words, to re-enact their creative process.  
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## 25 **Discussion**

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27 The aim of this paper is to provide a methodological contribution to the study of collective  
28 practices in organizations, by applying an exploratory research approach for engaging with  
29 participants in proactive and elaborate ways. Our approach builds upon a worldview where  
30 we "no longer assume reality to be simply out there, waiting to be represented or interpreted,  
31 but understand it as an outcome of performance" (Steyaert et al. 2012, p. 39). Film-elicitation  
32 can thus be understood as an intervention generating insights from within and of embodied  
33 practices, based on "thin slices" of video and "thick slices" of ethnographic data, re-enacting  
34 the bodily, sensory and emotional presence performed in recurrent organizational activities.  
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42 As the work of Josephide (2008) on the elicitation techniques of the Kewa shows, the attitude  
43 towards others as counterparts in a continuous elicitation process is similar to what Hannerz  
44 (2006) describes as studying 'sideways'. That is, seeing participants as counterparts with a  
45 related repertoire of knowledge to the researchers. In our study, there is an analytic  
46 relationship between the researchers and the participants who themselves are producers of  
47 internal theorizing that, although different from academic propositions and claims, can  
48 inform research on organizations and thus make participants become co-constructors of the  
49 research (Holmes & Marcus, 2005).  
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3 In our methodological approach it is the researchers who bring their disciplinary  
4 understanding and preliminary interpretations back to the field and thus re-creating it, before  
5 presenting these as a set of tentative categories of practices, and as such re-enacting the  
6 creative process together with the participants. These are not intended to be interpreted as a  
7 fully fledged analysis, rather as a set of preliminary, partial and open-ended constructs to be  
8 used as a tool for engaging participants to conceptualize and categorize their work. Since  
9 understanding is implicit in social activity, and reflexivity is manifested in the manner  
10 individuals articulate and interrelate their actions, videos can be a “wayward medium” taking  
11 unexpected turns (Banks, 2001, p. 99), providing new data, connections and interpretations of  
12 social life, enriching the work practices in new ways (Iedema et al., 2006). The unforeseen,  
13 the unquestioned and the unlooked can bring forth new data, connections and interpretations  
14 of social life when the participants are engaged in affective ways. When evoking and  
15 discussing individuals’ assumptions and assertions we find as Martinez that the participants  
16 have to be considered “both active, resourceful, motivated and critical *and* passive,  
17 submissive and alienated at the same time” (1992, p. 134). Methodologically this implies that  
18 elicitation by visual means is not about obtaining coherent and accurate descriptions of  
19 people’s actions, but rather to recognize their inherently ambiguous nature, prompting  
20 narratives, engagement and articulations concerning social life not easily grasped by  
21 traditional qualitative research methods. It also implies that one needs a strategy for  
22 facilitating and managing the elicitation process, as well as a clear motivation for the tasks  
23 given, in order to meet the aim of the study. By explicitly stating that ‘this is not finished’,  
24 the research invites the participants to contribute to a re-enactment of recognizable  
25 categories, as well as challenging and enriching the participants’ views. Our empirical  
26 account shows that the categories of creative practices and videos invited the participants to  
27 find new patterns, reformulating the findings, engaging in bodily and playful ways, and  
28 voicing conflicting opinions. The videos elicited both affective and engaging behaviour, and  
29 new and conflicting ideas and opinions about their shared and future work practices.

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48 Videos are described as *compressed performances* (Pinney, 2003, p. 6) where the meanings  
49 do not pre-exist, but are activated in the social setting they are displayed. Our categories of  
50 creative practices and videos are not intended to represent reality, they “[...] are rather part of  
51 our reality [...] they make it possible to understand our world differently, sometimes better”  
52 (Sikora, 2015, p. 24). The ‘thin slices’ actualize the immediacy of expressive movements,  
53 allowing individuals both to be engaged participants and observers reflecting on what is  
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3 going on, nearby and from a distance. This is explored through the tentative categories  
4 presented, and the videos thus become ‘voices’ embodying generative power that makes  
5 people active in the construction of meaning. The videos stimulate a multiplicity of the  
6 participants’ voices that again influence and re-enact each other. This experience is what  
7 highlights and emancipates the collective potential of the method. Warren (2005) writes  
8 about stills, but we find, like her, that videos can act both as voices communicating their  
9 internal narrative (Banks, 2001), i.e., what the video displays, *and* enable voices in the  
10 external narrative, i.e., the social context the video is produced and screened in. However,  
11 collaborative elicitation extends the two ‘modes’ of voices. While Warren acknowledges the  
12 multimodality of visual material as a strength, our approach enhances the strength of  
13 collaborative discussions about the visual material, letting the multiple voices influence each  
14 other. In that way, complexity and ambiguity can be revealed and accentuated. Collaborative  
15 film-elicitation provides a vibrant atmosphere of both coherence and divergence, giving  
16 impetus to sensemaking processes generating detailed, rich, and multifaceted interpretations  
17 and perceptions of actions – also in the abstract as meta- reflections and reconfigurations of  
18 the conceptualizations presented. Rather than gaining “thicker” or more data on predefined  
19 categories, this method makes participants collaborative engaged in the construction of the  
20 analysis. The architects’ embodied sense of their work activated through the videos elicited  
21 analytical valuable sources of information. The video material is in this regard not the end  
22 product or a final result, but rather the beginning of a new analytical process of co-creation.  
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37 The two different workshops demonstrate that film-elicitation from one project team can be  
38 used for the same purpose also with other participants that was not directly involved in the  
39 project, but who are nonetheless familiar with the settings it took place in. Birnholtz et al.  
40 (2007) show in their study of organizational regeneration of a summer camp for children that  
41 even with many new staff members every year, as well as other changing conditions, the  
42 organization is still perceived by the participants as ‘the same’ organization. They suggest  
43 that the ‘sameness’ stems from a coherence and similarity of the actions undertaken every  
44 year. Organizational practices can be described as recurrent patterns of streams of actions  
45 “enabled and constrained by a variety of organizational, social, physical, and cognitive  
46 structures – from which organizational members enact particular performances” (Pentland &  
47 Rueter, 1994, p. 491). The architects that are not part of the project, could also extend the  
48 videos into coherent stories of “trajectories of actions” (Hindmarsh & Pilnick, 2007) when  
49 supported by the contextualization on the printed cards – indicating that particular and  
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3 situated activities also display general performance characteristics. Even though short  
4 sequences of performances are temporal achievements, single instances are according to  
5 Hindmarsh and Pilnick (2007) not bracketed accomplishments, but retrospectively and  
6 prospectively organized. Video recordings make it possible to gather spatially and temporally  
7 distributed data, which can then be reorganized through editing. Film-elicitation thus enables  
8 participants with broad experience to be co-constructors in identifying patterns of activities  
9 rendering organizational practices across time and space.  
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16 Film-elicitation is also a type of reflexive science where the researcher unpacks “situational  
17 experiences by moving with the participants through their space and time” (Burawoy, 1998,  
18 p. 5). As such it is a powerful means for process- and practice-oriented theories concerned  
19 with capturing the complexity of organizational functioning, in order to extract the general  
20 from the particular and move from micro-activities to macro-processes (Bell & Davison,  
21 2012; Burawoy, 1998). Video’s ability to grasp the situatedness of organizational activities  
22 enables opportunities for multimodal analysis with reflective practitioners, and offers new  
23 possibilities for theory development by making tacit, inarticulate and embodied aspects of  
24 organisational phenomena sensible.  
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## 31 32 33 **Conclusion**

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36 The prevalent ‘practice turn’ in organization studies imposes methodological challenges for  
37 how to design and conduct research on everyday practices. We have introduced and argued  
38 for a visual methodology which constrains and enables elicitation of the embodied, tacit and  
39 inarticulate aspects of organizational practices that would not be easily discernible by  
40 traditional qualitative approaches alone. By building upon an enactive approach, we bring  
41 forth a perspective of organizational practice as coordinated recurrent social activities. This  
42 approach emphasizes that understanding and knowing resides *in* activity and is multimodal,  
43 consisting of embodied and sensory experiences and emotions, as well as cognitive  
44 reflections and entangled interactions. Obtaining insight into how practices are constituted,  
45 enacted and how they sustain coherence over time requires a methodological approach  
46 enabling movement from the particular and situated, to recurrent patterns of activities. Our  
47 study was thus divided into three phases: 1) re-creation through compound data gathering,  
48 that is, interviews, participant observation and filming, 2) re-enacting through a preliminary  
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3 analysis in the form of video extracts and identification of tentative categories, and 3) co-  
4 creation through film-elicitation, resembling organizational practice based on ‘thin slices’ of  
5 experience, that is, video and categories. This methodological approach renders a co-  
6 generative collaboration between researcher and the field, providing rich and elaborate  
7 understandings of the field of study, and as such could be adapted for use in other research  
8 settings concerned with exploring situated and embodied phenomena, or tracing complex  
9 issues over time and space by manipulating flows of actions.  
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16 What other organizational phenomena or analytical approaches would benefit from these  
17 methods? Film-elicitation when combined with ethnographic studies offer interesting  
18 possibilities and potential benefits for organizational research on innovation and management  
19 inquiry. Video can be used throughout a study, or in selected occasions for improving the  
20 quality of interventions in organizations (Hambrick, 1994) when collaborative researcher-  
21 practitioner interactions take place. Three modes of such sensemaking can be particularly  
22 stimulated by film-elicitation. *Dialogical sensemaking* (Cunliffe & Scaratti, 2017) is a form  
23 of engaged research that encompasses making lived experience of research participants  
24 sensible through recall and conversations. This could be used for studying intertwined and  
25 enacted phenomena like for instance mechanisms for coordination which “are constituted  
26 through coordinating” (Jarzabkowski et al., 2012, p. 907) or studying practising (e.g.  
27 organizational routines) and knowing (e.g. aesthetic understanding), not as separate entities,  
28 but as entangled socio-material and embodied activities (Langley, 1999; Tsoukas 2009).  
29 *Facilitated sensemaking* consists of action research based interventions of co-generative  
30 learning and social mediation exploring how practitioners create meaningful understanding.  
31 This approach can be used to study identity dynamics accommodating conflict and diversity,  
32 and how ambiguities are resolved and create shared understanding (Orr & Bennett, 2012).  
33 *Emergent-sensing* is about eliciting, articulating and making sense of endogenous and  
34 exogenous changes by connecting past and present experiences with future possibilities  
35 (Shotter and Tsoukas, 2014). Mason (2012) presents an illuminating case of how this can be  
36 done in her study of market-sensing practices and emerging market frames by use of video.  
37 Strategy-as-practice (Whittington, 1996; Johnson, Melin & Whittington, 2003) is another  
38 research stream where film-elicitation could be beneficial for obtaining in-depth  
39 understanding of everyday micro level strategy processes (i.e. actors, tools, and practices) of  
40 exploration.  
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3 More than seventy-five years after Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead documented the  
4 Balinese' behaviour in film sequences, it may be time for management and organizational  
5 research to follow up on their landmark studies. It is our belief that visual methods have the  
6 potential not only to inform research, but also to influence the way we think about, and study  
7 organizational practices, and thus become an impetus for further methodological innovations  
8 in organizational inquiry.  
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Categories of creative practices	Definition	Empirical examples and elaborations
<b>Materializing the idea</b>	Using different kinds of «boundary objects» - particularly sketches and models - to facilitate the exchange of ideas in the process. These materialized ideas are often half-finished and made with the intent to invite others to share and contribute to the process	«The model will stimulate ideas. It's a tool of clarity»  The sketches and models are a kind of prototypes, more or less functional, testing particular aspects of the ideas. an important trait of such «boundary objects» is that they are inviting, so that the members of the process feel invited to share and contribute. often this means that they are half-finished; they do not give the impression of being complete and unchangeable. There are differing opinions about when such objects enter the process and how they should be used.
<b>Acquiring uniqueness</b>	Actively using the availability and access to internal and external resources to find new possibilities. Ex. engineers, materials, other offices, co-workers, earlier projects, references ect. to gain knowledge and inspiration	«These things were so extreme that we had to have a good cooperation with a pyro-technician and engineers. A lot of the disciplines hadn't done these things before, so then it becomes a cooperation that becomes very flourishing when everyone though it's exiting and something new. We used a lot of time, but everyone really wanted to see it live.»  Most of the time one has the occasion to look at questions during the process, one doesn't necessary need to answer everything at once. One has to get to the core of the concept, maybe a small story, a sentence, a picture or a song or whatever – something that speaks and starts to have great possibilities to develop to something exciting.»
<b>Architectural shamanism</b>	Spiritual leadership in creative processes as the ability to use exceptionally sensory apparatus to connect to and draw upon cultural worlds and understandings what seem beyond entry. The spiritual leader offers a grounding position.	«The spiritual leader gives strong design direction, especially in terms of human values, as opposed to “this looks good”.»  «Does every office need a spiritual leader?»  «Yeah, I think at least one, otherwise you're just building constructions.»
<b>Generative resistance</b>	Acknowledging doubt, friction, anomalies and a resistance, not as noise to be avoided, but as important levers of imagination in everyday work.	«..that contradiction, or that resistance that arises, you've got to use it as a positive feature...to establish an understanding of the energy that is inherent in the project you have born...creativity is really about having the courage to ask the right questions...it is very much about finding the resistance, so “what is really the problem now?”, if you don't know that you are sort of groping in the dark... “where is the resistance in the project?” .... that project [referring to a previous project] turned out so well precisely because it arose in the intersection of resistance between all the external conditions.»
<b>Shifting attention</b>	The ability to enhance imagination and create breakthroughs in thinking by shifting the basis for collective perception and attention.	Shifting attention can be done through change of lead metaphors, jolts in bodily movement patterns, slowing down or speeding up, zooming in or zooming out - and probably most important; change of place.

**Table I.** Five out of the twelve categories of collective practices defined by the researchers before the collaborative phase of elicitation with the architects.

**Table 2: Three-step field guide to collaborative film-elicitation**

<b>Data collection: Ethnographic fieldwork with (and without) camera</b>
<p><b>1. Getting access:</b> Meet the team before filming and present the main objective of your research. Emphasize the interest in the participants' collective rather than individual activities. Explain how the video material will be gathered, analysed and used in the team, and what procedures that applies for screening outside the team, e.g. ensuring informed consent from everyone.</p>
<p><b>2. The setting:</b> Choose the settings to film, for instance weekly meetings in a project team. These forums are usually the main meeting point for the whole team and the main collective arena for the team's work.</p>
<p><b>3. Team up:</b> It is an advantage to be several researchers with different roles for a comprehensive visual data collection; for instance, one researcher behind the camera and one taking notes (preferably with time codes). This helps keeping an overview of the excessive video material and to avoid "data overload" in the subsequent analysis.</p>
<p><b>4. How to film:</b> Use a handheld camera that enable you to move around; sometimes zoom in on details of the objects of interests or people talking, sometimes get an overview of people's responses, other times be placed in the background to capture the whole collective setting in one frame. Don't hide the camera, and film more than you think is necessary. Also make sure good quality of the audio, for instance by the use of external mic.</p>
<p><b>5. Ethnographic work:</b> Extend the fieldwork in between the filmed sessions and talk to the participants without camera for thorough ethnographic account of their work. Conduct individual interviews in parallel.</p>
<b>Video analysis: Preparing for elicitation</b>
<p><b>1. Content analysis:</b> Get an overview of all your ethnographic material and identify interactions sequences of expressive, noteworthy, and engaged behaviour informed by the ethnographic fieldwork.</p>
<p><b>2. Thematic analysis:</b> Identification of categories of practices by extracting samples of repeated sequential coordinated actions and interactions. These patterns should be understood as preliminary interpretations of the empirical material to be further elaborated by the participants.</p>
<p><b>3. The enacted approach:</b> The analytic process of searching for video sequences that would display the elusiveness of creative work that are not easily communicated in words alone, and to stimulate the discussions and reflections in ways that would enrich understandings for both researchers and participants. The analysis is deliberately made to provoke both opposition, elaboration and confirmation.</p>
<p><b>4. The hybrid approach:</b> Making of categories as integration of text and the visual as mutual dependent sources of understanding, and reciprocal frames of reference for contextualization and materialization of the analysis. Use metaphors in titles or text to spur engagement and emotions by the participants.</p>



## Collaborative Sensemaking through Film-elicitation

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**1. Presentation of preliminary findings:** Building rapport by using a way of communicating that the audience is familiar with. Make sure everyone feels included and free to contribute by an informal and playful presentation.

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**2. Facilitation of the workshop:** Strategies for facilitation includes: a) *Sustaining progression:* maintaining conditions for a flourishing discussion to take place, for instance when it gets side-tracked, becomes dominated by a few people or parallel discussions are taking place. b) *Encourage elaboration:* evoking more details or examples, addressing or inviting other participants to voice their opinion on issues brought up by one of the others, challenging an interpretation by suggesting alternative understandings or make contested claims, in addition to pointing out possible contradictions in what has been said so far in the discussion. c) *Making connections:* observing and noticing potential contribution that is not followed up on in the discussion, and combining and suggesting for the group when appropriate when there is something they could consider to discuss.

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**3. Tasks:** When giving tasks ask the participants to individually reflect and take notes before the group discussion begins to avoid that the discussion is being dominated by the first speaker and his/her reflections. Make sure that the engagement in the discussion arise from the participants' own interest by giving them a selection of opportunities to choose from. Include a question regarding the future to make the participants think about how they can apply new ideas in forthcoming projects.

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**4. Debrief with participants:** At the end of the workshop, ask every member in plenary to express what they found to be the most important lesson, insight or understanding from the workshop. **Debrief with researchers:** Write down your initial thoughts on the workshop (field notes). What surprised you the most?








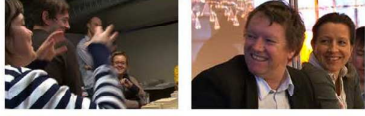
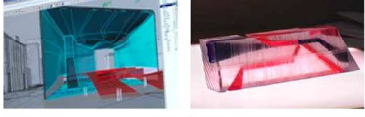



# Visual Inquiry: Exploring Organizational Embodied Practices by Collaborative Film-elicitation

Figure 1: Green moss 3D-model. Photo: Gudrun R. Skjælaen



Figure 2: This is the card the participants were given to ‘choose films for action’ as the first task in the workshop. It shows an overview of video sequences connected to the categories (displayed as stills) screened at the workshops. Photos: Gudrun R. Skjælaaen

Choose films for action (max. 3 - mark images)

Brokering imaginings		Shifting attention	
Prototyping experience		Thriving on the egde	
Generative resistance		Materializing the idea	
Generous concepts		Liberating laughther	
Feeling rightness		Architectual shamanism	
Finding resonance		Acquiring uniqueness	

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Figure 3: A sketch made by one of the architects in one of the workshops connecting the categories presented.

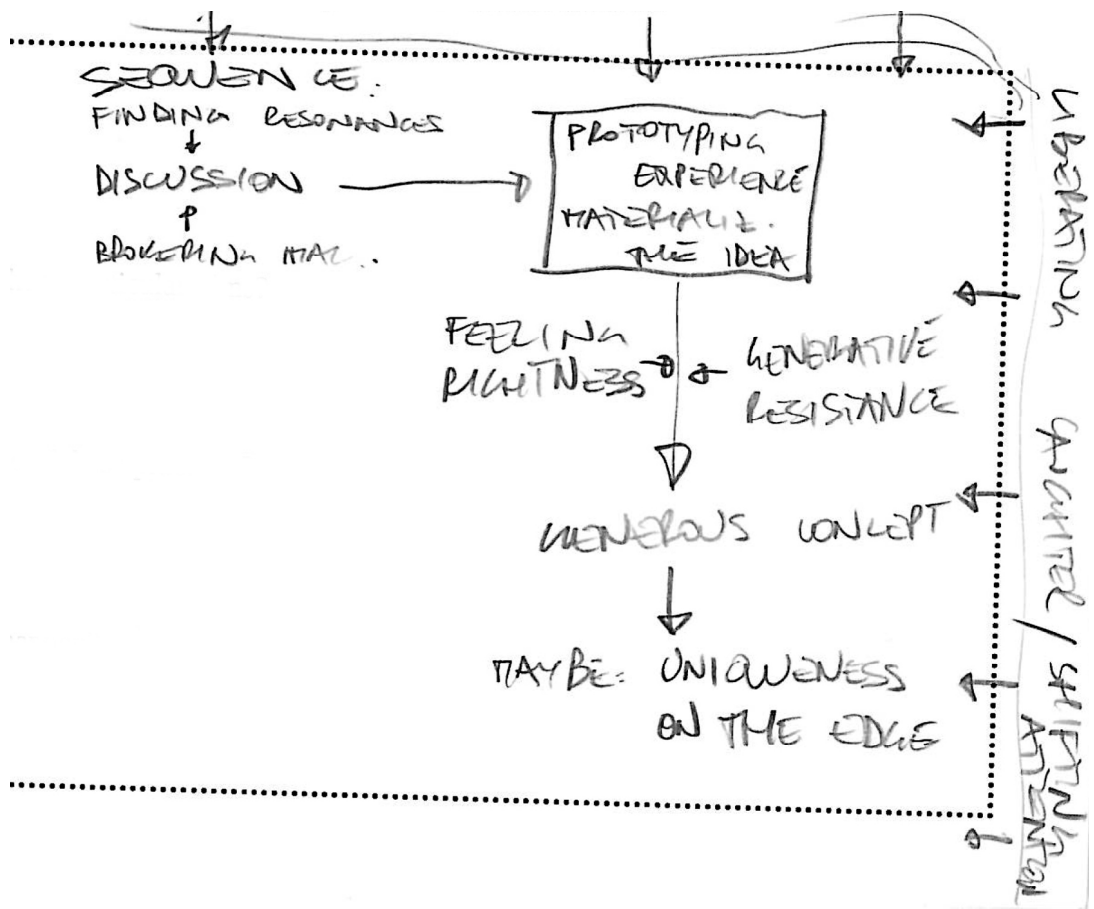
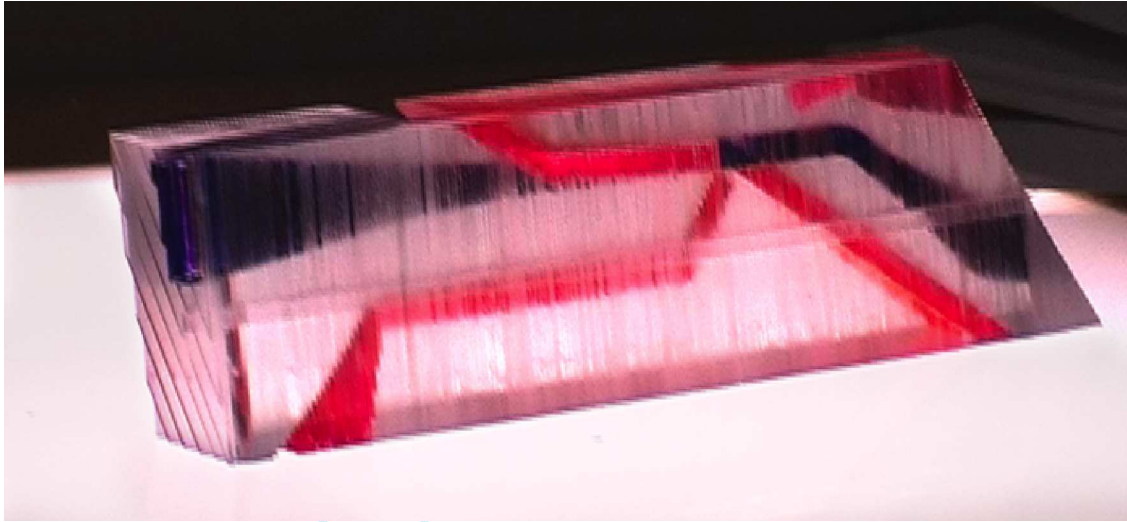


Figure 4: The printed 3D model associated with the practice “Materializing the idea”.  
Photo: Gudrun R. Skjælaen



Peer Review

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