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Researching Unconscious in The Embodied Artistic process with Critical Reflection

In artistic working our "know-how" is based primarily on all-embracing bodily understanding. There is surely much knowing without words; we neither understand nor know exactly how the unconscious works in the art process. How the embodied nature of art can lead us to a new kind of knowledge and if these two aspects, the unconscious and embodiment in art, are in some way interrelated?

The embodiment feelings in the process of observing contemporary art are presented by Leevi Haapala in his dissertation "The Unconscious in the Contemporary Art".¹ Haapala is observing the relationship of art and unconscious as an interpreter and viewer, so he cannot describe deeply this event from the empirical artistic point of view.

In my artistic research I will argue that embodiment and the unconscious are interrelated in the art process, and the critical reflection is the way to study this event in practice-led research. I see that there is a mutual connection between the mind and the hand; knowledge is not moving in one direction only, from the thinking head to the drawing hand. Via concrete embodiment artistic working in the practice-led research we can perceive and understand things, which the conscious mind is not yet able or willing to reveal.

Researching one's artistic working inside the process is complex, and to observe

¹ Haapala, 2011, 22 and 28

the appearance of unconscious there is even more difficult. Critical reflection is a method to point out moments where and how unconscious,² for example the Freudian parapraxis³, is working in the embodiment art process. Haapala argues that the moment of observing the contemporary art is also possibility to step out of own comfort zone.⁴ I see that trying to stay out from comfort zone⁵ is a basis and good starting point for critical reflection in the practice-led artistic research.

² Matte-Blanco, 1998, 84.

³ Freud, 2006, 15, 20, 54.

⁴ Haapala, 2011, 16.

⁵ Mälkki, 2011, 138.