Roskilde University

Festival as embodied encounters

on Kulturhavn in Copenhagen

Simonsen, Kirsten; Koefoed, Lasse Martin; Neergaard, Maja de

Published in:
Journal of Intercultural Studies

DOI:
10.1080/07256868.2017.1386633

Publication date:
2017

Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (APA):
Simonsen, K., Koefoed, L. M., & Neergaard, M. D. (2017). Festival as embodied encounters: on Kulturhavn in Copenhagen. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, *38*(6), 637-650. https://doi.org/10.1080/07256868.2017.1386633

General rights
Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

Take down policy
If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact rucforsk@kb.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Download date: 25. Apr. 2024

Festival as embodied encounters: on *Kulturhavn* in Copenhagen

Kirsten Simonsen, Lasse Koefoed & Maja de Neergaard

kis@ruc.dk lmartin@ruc.dk mlsdn@ruc.dk

Department of People and Technology, Roskilde University, Postboks 260, 4000Roskilde Denmark

Abstract

The paper is part of a research project on *Paradoxical spaces: Encountering the Other in public space* which explores how cultural difference is experienced, practiced and negotiated in public space. Specifically, this paper explores the yearly 'multicultural' festival *Kulturhavn* taking place along the harbour of Copenhagen. Multicultural festivals can be seen as places for on-going identity negotiations, where individuals and groups define meaningful concepts of identity along with notions of exclusion (Duffy 2005). In the paper, we adopt a performative approach abandoning the distinction between bodies and space and embracing ideas of 'embodiment' and 'rhythm'. We explore participant engagement emphasizing bodily practices as well as sensuous experiences, but also differential processes and orientalist images produced in, and through, encounters. Among the wide range of activities at the festival, we focus on three: food; dance; and taekwondo. The methods in use are participant observation, including use of the researcher body, and different kinds of interviews.

Keywords: Encounter, festival, body, multiculturalism, Orientalism

Acknowledgements: This work was supported by the Danish Research Council under the Grant DFF 1327- 00077.

Introduction

Multicultural festivals are useful events by which to explore social and cultural transformations of urban spaces. They are mainly about participating in the creation of community identity forged by food, music, dance, arts, sports and/or other aesthetic practices. They become sites for on-going negotiations within urban space as participating individuals and groups attempt to construct meaningful concepts of identity as well as notions of inclusion/exclusion. In this paper, we, as part of a wider research project on *Paradoxical Spaces: Encountering the Other in public space*, explore cross-cultural encounters in the festival *Kulturhavn* in a former harbour area of Copenhagen.

Kulturhavn is an annual festival of leisure associations that has been running in former quay areas since 2001. During the festival, Copenhagen's clubs, associations and evening schools offer free activities and shows informing about leisure activities in the city. The organisational work is done by the municipality, but all practical arrangements and performances on the festival are conducted by volunteers and professionals from the associations. In this way, the festival can be seen as a kind of fair for the leisure time activities of the city, an activity that simultaneously breaks with, and feeds into, people's everyday life. This is why Berg (2011) characterizes the festival as a 'heterotopia', in order to describe how, as an intense, temporary event, it creates a space that is in opposition to everyday life while at the same time mirrors it. In this environment we ask questions such as: what is the role of the festival in forging cross-cultural encounters? What forms do such cross-cultural encounters within the festival take, and how do they connect to broader socio-cultural relations? To address these questions we have conducted fieldwork at the festival in 2014 and 2015.

To present the answers, the article is organized as follows: we start with two sections framing the study, and setting out some of the interpretative repertoire. First we look on the very phenomenon of multicultural festivals and extract some dominant (paradoxical) perspectives from the literature. Second, we shortly outline our critical phenomenology approach, which, from a basic understanding of the lived body and its intercorporeality, involves issues of embodied encounters, emotions and spatio-temporal rhythms. These two sections are followed by another describing our methodology. In the major analytical section, we have, for reasons of both depth and variety, chosen to focus on three practices – food, dance and taekwondo – and in the concluding section we return to the questions of different modes of encounters.

Multicultural festivals

> The festival is, in fact, a paradoxical thing; festival events function as a form of social integration and cohesion, while simultaneously they are sites of subversion, protest or exclusion and alienation. It is precisely this paradoxical nature that creates the festival's socio-spatial and political significance for notions of community and belonging. (Duffy and Waitt 2011: 55)

Festivals are rooted in the human desire to mark or *celebrate* important happenings, a rite of passage dating back from the middle-ages and carnival traditions right up to the present, involving celebration, joy and a break from work and the routine of everyday life. Festivals are situated in time and space where performers and participants constitute meaning, identity and belonging in a process together. The festival as a research field is extensive and very broad. Some of the main themes are cultural, social and economic impacts, and time-space analysis on the spatial distribution of different types of festivals and their evolution over time. Festival research also covers political, historical and theoretical discussion describing the main roles of festivals and their typologies (Cudny 2014).

The celebration of culture, identity and belongings is a key element of multicultural festivals and can serve a platform for common experiences (Lee 2012). As pointed out, festivals can have the role of uniting people and can be experiences of community. Music, dance and food, for example, can assist the construction of place identity and provide a sense of belonging. However, multicultural festivals also complicate any simple relationship between place and identity because they demonstrate the heterogeneous state of both. A multicultural festival is a de-territorialized and

transnational space. As argued by Duffy, ‘anxieties that arise around issues of cultural authenticity within such festivals point to concerns of hybrid identities that may challenge and threaten the maintenance of clearly demarcated identities in the face of transnational relations’ (2005).

The literature on multicultural festivals generally shows a double perspective. The first is that multicultural festivals are *expressive* and come closer to *art* than instrumental performances of identity and belongings. Multicultural festivals are connected to a series of practices and doings that constitute identities rather than performing them. Music, dance and food create an artistic space, which relates to sensuous experiences such as taste, smell, seeing, listening and touching. As argued by Frost (2016), festivals are associated with spontaneity and with a sense of being carried away by the momentum of the event through improvised action and kinetic excitement. The festival can be seen as a lived experience of multiculturalism. Recently, Kingsbury (2016) has pointed to the aesthetic ‘justification’, which refers to ‘art’s capacity to infuse human experiences with arousing affects, constructive meanings, and affirmative power, as a useful tool for understanding multicultural festivals. Following Nietzsche, the aesthetic can be understood as constitutive of what people can do, sense and imagine in the interplay of the two artistic forces: Apollonian and Dionysian principles and drives. As analytical figures, Apollo is associated with dreams, moderation, illusion and individuality and Dionysus with music, excess, ecstasy and intoxicating energies. Dionysian forces could be music, dancing, lyrics, painting and performances. When experiencing Dionysian joy, subjectivity becomes complete forgetfulness of the self; something Duffy (2005) describes as related to the practice of listening to music (se also Wood et al. 2007). Recent studies on the aesthetic engagement with festivals points to the fact that that they are comparable to *theatre* and belong to a playing culture - when we experience festivals together, it affects our existential feeling of being (Ryan and Wollan 2013).

The second perspective on multicultural festivals is the *commodification of Otherness*. Here, freedom becomes choreographed and limited by the *gaze* and the festival becomes more a site for cultural consumption (se e.g. Jamieson 2004). The performance of identity within a multicultural framework can, as argued by Duffy, turn into images of difference of the exotic, specially the exotic East (2010: 684). What she revealed from the study of performance of music and dance at multicultural festivals was that a significant part of the identities performed in the cross-cultural context was a situation where the performer was constructed as non-white Australian identities performing for a white Australian audience. The construction of the exotic East becomes a product to consume, and ultimately a process of commodification. The festival becomes a place for consuming or *eating the Other*. As bell hooks points out:

> The commodification of Otherness has been so successful because it is offered as a new delight, more intense, more satisfying than normal ways of doing and feeling. Within commodity culture, ethnicity becomes spice, seasoning that can liven up the dull dish that is mainstream white culture (2006: 366)

Here, pleasure and enjoyment of encounters with difference comes as a *desire* for the primitive or fantasies about the Other where members of the dominating group and race reaffirm their power over the exotic Other. Said (1977) also had an eye on how imperial constructions of the exotic East works. He underlines how "The Orient was almost a European invention, (...) a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences" (p. 1). The exoticization of the Other is a powerful component of Western hegemony. The Other becomes a product, a caricature that serves as a resource for pleasure – as hooks formulate it: "The overriding fear is that

cultural, ethnic, and racial differences will be continually commodified and offered up as new dishes to enhance the white palate – that the Other will be eaten, consumed, and forgotten" (hooks 2006: 380).

Embodiment and sensuous experiences

In recent years many authors have been arguing for a performative approach to festivals (Duffy 2005, Duffy et al 2011, Frost 2015, Kingsbury 2016, Ryan and Wollan 2013, Vannini et al 2010). Duffy et al. (2011) write that '[a] performative framework requires abandoning the familiar distinction between 'bodies' and 'space' and embracing an alternative set of concepts including 'fold', 'mobility', and 'embodiment'. It is our argument that this requirement can be fulfilled from a starting point in Merleau-Ponty (1962, 1968) and his sensuous phenomenology.

Merleau-Ponty emphasizes that we *are* our bodies and all the experiences and the meanings that animate our lives are based in active corporeal involvement in the world. The means by which bodies in this sense possess the world are perception and bodily motility, and they are based in sensuous practices; in looking, listening and touching, etc., as acquired, cultural, habit-based forms of conduct. It is an active process relating to our on-going projects and practices, and it concerns the whole sensing body – *a lived body* that 'knows' itself by virtue of its active relation to the world. His term for this extended conception of the body is *flesh.* The most important aspect of this flesh is its *reversibility*, by which practices and perceptions of the body-subjects are connected in an 'intermundane space'. Body-subjects-objects are visible-seers, tangible-touchers, audible listeners etc., enacting an on-going intertwining between the flesh of the body, the flesh of others and the flesh of the world. One significant consequence of this 'mediation through reversal' is the way in

which it grounds the principle of exchangeability or *intercorporeality*. Since we are all 'perceiving-perceptibles' our experiences are transitive; we share sensuous experiences and even partially inhabit the 'feeling' side of another's body. One does not just perceive another body as a material object; rather one is affected by the meaning of its appearance. The other body is animated and its animation communicates and calls for response.

This understanding of the body and embodiment set the scene for three more concrete qualities of festival practices. The first of these is the spatio-temporal organization and *the bodily rhythms* of festival spaces. To unfold that, we look to Henri Lefebvre's ideas of 'rhythmanalysis', which is a kind of phenomenological-hermeneutic description of the relationship among the body, its rhythms and its surrounding space (Lefebvre 1991, 1992, 2004, Edensor 2010, Simonsen 2005). Rhythms can be defined as movements and differences in repetition, as the interweaving of concrete times but always also in relation to space and place. Lefebvre talks about localized time or temporalized place to underline the spatio-temporal reality of rhythms and their participation in the production of space. He writes:

> The body's inventiveness needs no demonstration, for the body itself reveals it, and deploys it in space. Rhythms in all their multiplicity interpenetrate one another. In the body and around it ... rhythms are forever crossing and recrossing, superimposing themselves upon each other, always bound to space... Such rhythms have to do with needs, which may be dispersed as tendencies, or distilled into desire. (1991: 205).

Bodily rhythms, then, represent the surmounting of divisions between the sensory, the mental and the social and open up the in-between-ness of sensing and making sense. From this point, the festival space

can be seen as a 'polyrhythmic ensemble' (Crang 2001) of social and bodily interrelations each with their own rhythms – from general flows of visitors and activities, to the relationships among the visitors and between visitors and performers.

The second consequence of the initial understanding of embodiment concerns *cross-cultural embodied encounters*. It grows out of Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on the interrelational structure of our embodied existence. The constitution of others, he says, does not come after that of the body; 'others and the body are born together from an original ecstasy' (Merleau-Ponty 1964:174) – that is, an original intercorporeality already functioning as a pre-personal form of communion. However, in order to include difference and power relations, our understanding of cross-cultural embodied encounters is also informed by postcolonial thinking (e.g. Said 1977, Ahmed 2000, Alcoff 2006). When we use the term encounter, then, it suggests a meeting, but a meeting particularly involving two characteristics: surprise and time-space. It involves surprise (and maybe conflict) because of its inevitable content of similarity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, or incorporation and expulsion that constitutes the boundaries of bodies or communities.

At one level, encounters therefore refer to face-to-face meetings as we experience them in everyday life. They are, however, also temporal and spatial through historical-geographical mediation. They presuppose other faces, other encounters of facing, other bodies, other spaces and other times. In this way, they reopen prior histories of encounter and geo-political imaginations of the Other and incorporate them in the encounters as traces of broader social relationships. Put differently, particular encounters both inform and are informed by the general: encounters between embodied subjects always dwell between the domain of the particular and that of the general, the framing of the encounter by broader relationships of power and antagonism. As such, this understanding of

encounters adds to Merleau-Ponty's ideas of the social body as a body opening up and intertwining with the world (other bodies and materialities) by accentuating that this world is not a general but a differentiated world, and in such a world what is meant by the social body is more often than not 'precisely the effect of being with some others over other others' (Ahmed 2000: 49).

That leads to the third issue we want to emphasize: encounters are deeply charged with *emotions*. The 'strange encounter' (Ahmed 2000) is played out *on* the body, and it is played out *with* emotions. As a basis for interpretation, we suggest a phenomenologically-inspired understanding of emotion starting from Merleau-Ponty's visions on emotion. As a first approximation, we can condense his view as a notion of *situated corporeal attitudes*, understood as ways of being and acting in relation to the world (Crossley 1996). This account gives occasion for a double conception of emotional spatiality (Simonsen 2007). One side of emotions is an *expressive space* of the body's movements, which might be seen as a performative element of emotion. Emotions are something practised and, as such, connected to the expressive and communicative body. The other side of emotional spatiality is *affective space*, which is the space in which we are emotionally in touch – open to the world and aware of its 'affect' on us. This means that emotions are not just active bodily actions, something that our bodies express or articulate. Another aspect is how we are possessed by them or swept into their grasp. It is the felt sense of having been moved emotionally, the more passive side of emotional experience. This active-passive doubleness of emotions is what we shall see played out in the concrete encounters analysed below.

Methodology

The empirical work was conducted through participant observation, on-the-spot interviews, photography and audio recording. The on-the-spot interviews – some of them with visitors concerning the festival and its activities, others with performing participants or coaches concerning their presented activities – functioned as supplement to the observations. In practice, combining participant observation, media recording and interviews sometimes proved tricky. It can be difficult to be occupied with immersion in a situation while at the same time tracking whom to approach next, etc. Always being two or three researchers present helped solving this problem by dividing the roles between us or dividing the day into time zones occupied by different methods. Our field notes, including photography and audio recordings, was our major material. Photography served as 'visual note-taking' (Pink 2007) in order to register the festive scenery, bodily gestures and social interactions and serve as a reminder for later re-enactment of particular sensual experiences. Similarly, audio recording served both to record on-the-spot interviews and little atmospheric soundscapes of music, talk, traffic noises etc.

Participant observation was our primary method and it involved inspiration from recent discussions of incorporating the body in empirical research (Pink 2009, Longhurst et al. 2008, Wacquant 2004, Crang 2003). These discussions and experimentations are dealing, not only with the observation of bodily gestures and practices but also with the body as an actual 'instrument of research'. In relations to research on festivals, Wood et al. (2007) and Duffy et al. (2011) write about 'participant sensing' and argue about how this emphasis helps them to explore how 'meaning is produced and sustained in-the-moment' and the 'in-between-ness of sensing and making sense'. Our observations then involved "reflexively learning through the bodily sensations and responses that occur inevitably as part of the embodied experiences of the researcher within different spatial contexts."

(Paterson 2009: 767). Also, approaching our methodological work partially from a phenomenology of the body, it should be emphasised how perception is never 'empty' but always already embodied and situated in the world. Therefore, it is important not to associate observation with a mere instance of 'information pickup'. Indeed, what happens during observation is that the movement of the body and the seeing of the eyes is "a dynamically experienced bodily happening" (Sheets-Johnstone 1999: 236). More specifically, our observation techniques were inspired by recent writings on ethnography, especially Pink's (2009) rethinking of ethnography through the senses. In practice this meant not only sensing the general rhythms and atmospheres of the festival and its activities, but also bodily engagement through accepting invitations from dance groups to participate in their performance and through tasting of the food available at the festival.

Kulturhavn as embodied cross-cultural encounters

At the festival, the public is met by sensuous experiences of views, sounds, smells and the sense of being pushed and jostled by expectant co-visitors. It is a recreational cultural event where the atmosphere – the intensity of many people, activities and impressions – is central. The festival has its own rhythms, imposing themselves upon each other. Some people move determinedly for specific activities, others stroll through the crowd and drop in where something catches their attention, and others again sit on the grass picnicking or enjoying the sun. To explore cross-cultural encounters, we have chosen to focus on three separate activities: eating, dancing and martial arts, here represented by taekwondo.

Food and cosmopolitanism

In this section we address the symbolic and performative dimensions of food and eating and discuss how they connect with cross-cultural encounters. It refers to a geography of foreign foods and culinary styles that demonstrate how urban food consumerism, through its taste for diversity, is able to produce a sense of worldliness and cosmopolitanism (Cook and Crang 1996, Duruz 2005, hooks 2006, Molz 2007, Cook et al. 2008). In the prominent text by bell hooks, food, commodification and cultural encounters gets critically linked to the notion of 'eating the Other'. Her expression is metaphorical and serves to address the "'nasty' racist unconscious of the white supremacist capitalist patriarchal 'mainstream'" (Cook et al. 2008: 822). However, in hooks' description, cultures tend to be essentialized and separate. She does have a point with essentialism, as it addresses the taken-for-granted and unquestioned creation of Others that 'white cultural appropriation' draws upon. This process is certainly present at the cross-cultural meetings at the festival, but we also need to understand the overlapping and border-crossing cultures that arise. To

this purpose we lean on Cook and Crang (1996) who couple cultural difference to the cosmopolitan and the variety of 'foreign' food outlets, to a general demonstration of urban worldliness – *the world on a plate.* Rather than seeing food as representative of one particular culture or nation, they suggest that we consider different cuisines through their "variety of cultural flows and networks, in particular of migrations and tourisms" (p. 137). They emphasise that taken-for-granted borders between certain foods and Others are rarely very clear: "associations of food with Otherness assumes boundaries between "us" and "them" that, in reality, are far from distinct" (Molz 2007: 79). Following that line of thinking, we in this section consider the symbolic and sensual qualities of food consumption.

The food court, Copenhagen Street Food, lies in an old, spacious industrial hall, which, until recently, functioned as a paper warehouse. The hall is situated on a small island, Papirøen, just along the harbour. There are 35 different food stalls. The quayside runs alongside the food court and during the festival it is furnished with a couple of bars, a dancing scene and some extra seating and tables. Locating part of the festival at the food court provides the festival with an international reference that outdoes the classic hotdog stand or chucks waggon and provides a more exotic, culturally-mixed food consumption. The interior layout forces visitors to walk along narrow passageways between rows of food stalls – looking, smelling, and tasting. Like a flâneur, one can move between different cuisines and alternately feel delighted or repelled, amused or surprised while browsing through the many different culinary options. In general, the visitors were either white, middle-class of seemingly Danish ethnicity, or tourists. Their motive behind choosing to eat at the food court is to have fun and enjoy themselves.

The first point to emphasise is how eating at Papirøen was a way of performing openness to other cultures. People had usually chosen food from different cuisines. They expressed their joy in trying different things, and they emphasised how it was nice that, if you are in a group, everybody can eat according to their liking. For some, their choice of food was based on familiarity with the particular cuisine while others had followed their curiosity.

> That's what's interesting about this place – you never know what you're gonna end up eating. (Male, Swedish ethnicity, 30-35 years old)

The performance of openness resembles Molz's (2007) study of 'culinary tourism', which is "not necessarily about knowing or experiencing another culture but rather about using food to perform a sense of adventure, curiosity, adaptability, and openness to *any* other culture." (Molz 2007: 79) As with dance and sport, food is used to discover, adapt and relate to other cultures. Going to Papirøen without knowing 'what you're gonna end up eating' can be seen as an approach to cultural difference which is not about the particular difference but about consuming difference per se.

Second, the performance of openness and curiosity acted as extension of people's sense of *cosmopolitanism*. The place represents a mix of migrants running the food stalls, tourists visiting the city on vacation, locals of Danish ethnicity, and foreigners living in the city temporarily. In this sense, the food, the staff and the eating visitors represent a mix of different flows and networks. The many different foods are 'displaced cuisines' (Cook and Crang, 1996). The interviews showed that people were there either by recommendation from friends or because a friend or relative had brought them along. The place is a site that people want to know about and be able to present to others. Visiting the place, then, is a way of doing the city that adds to one's cosmopolitan identity.

Culinary shopping streets (Duruz 2005) and food courts "epitomize cosmopolitanism precisely through their assemblage of a multitude of foreign foods and culinary styles" (Molz 2007: 80). Together, food and eating, migrants and visitors, are mobilized as social and material symbols of cosmopolitanism.

Third, the openness to difference and the sense of cosmopolitanism has a corporeal and sensual aspect represented in the place's intensity and the movement of visitors along the food stalls. As one woman said, the place resembled a 'southern atmosphere'. You can certainly find a Turkish or Thai restaurant in Copenhagen but here the atmosphere is more informal – you mingle and 'matter to each other', she says. There is more small-talk and the people working on the food stalls are eager to talk to you about their food:

> you somehow matter to each other, and you happen to touch each other and rub shoulders when you are passing by. (Female, Danish ethnicity, 35-40 years old)

In this way, the atmosphere is also instantiated through the pulse and corporeal intensity of walking around the place, smelling the food, and 'following your stomach', as another woman put it.

Dance: motion, emotion and exoticism

Dance is a ubiquitous and somatic practice that is performed in a generative relationship between moving bodies and space. It is *bodies in motion* physically as well as kinaesthetically, emotionally, aesthetically, culturally, socially and politically. But dance is also *Meaning in motion* (Desmond 1997) where dancing bodies enact social positions of gender, class, ethnicity and race – it is simultaneously bodily and social, simultaneously about sense of self, collective experience and

shared identifications. In this sense dance is contextually formed, but it is also a mobile practice capable of travelling across time and space. For instance, tango with its hybridized roots in the dockside neighbourhoods in Buenos Aires, travelled to the salons of Europe, Asia and USA, to return altered and 'respectable' as a national symbol for the Argentine population (Savagliana 1995, McCormack 2008)

Like general theorization of bodies, contemporary understandings of dance pull in two directions: one (representational) towards understanding and denaturalizing the social differentiation of bodies, and another (non-representational) towards a generic and celebratory notion of the embodied nature of human existence (Thrift 1997, Nash 2000, Cresswell 2006, McCormack 2008). In accordance with our premise in Merleau-Ponty and 'critical phenomenology' we reject this binary opposition, which, in our view, involves a new version of the old division between mind and body. We cannot separate one from the other.

In *Kulturhavn*, dance takes a prominent role; there are four dance areas and considerable amounts of people are drawn to them. Part of the aim of the performances is social; that is, recruitment of participants to the leisure organisations conducting them. A particular case was a small Philippine dancing group drawing attention to a NGO doing social work in the Philippines; but the main aim was obviously the performance in itself with its playfulness, joy and expressive potential. We experienced a number of performances by groups adopting exotic names such as El Duende, Tribal Dance, Orient Express, Global Generation and Global Kidz.

The first characteristic of the dance, then, is one of an *expressive space*, a lived space of dance as an expressive practice performed by body-subjects communicating simultaneously the symbolic, the

sensual and the emotional. This practice displays what we earlier referred to as the Dionysian dimension of the festival. It also expresses the rhythmic relations between bodies and space as suggested in Lefebvre's rhythmanalysis (Lefebvre 1991, 1992, McCormack 2008). The bodily movements of the dancers become an extension of the space of their bodies and the rhythms are crossing and re-crossing, superimposing themselves upon each other, always bound to space. This includes the relations between musicians, dancers and spectators, involving applause from the spectators and a final participation on the scene. Almost all of the dance groups finished their performance by inviting the audience to the stage, in this way creating a participatory experience.

In these rhythmic relations, the expressive space is intertwined with an *affective space*, constituting the more passive side of emotional spatiality. The mobile bodies, the music and the rhythms, are together creating the affective space. This space encloses the audience, but it also reaches out from the site of the performance as a *sonic spatiality* capable of touching at a distance (see e.g. Smith 2000, Wood et al. 2007, Duffy et al. 2011, Revill 2016). A saying from one of our spectator interviews, which is representative of many of them, is: 'we were simply *drawn* in here because flamenco is so life-affirming; exciting rhythms, the dance and the music'. The material practice of music has the power to affect people, to draw them into the dance marquee and while there being captured by the intense atmosphere of the entanglement between music, dancers and spectators. The performances, then, create encounters of shared emotional experiences between people, most of whom will never see each other again. These are encounters where sensing, feeling and tacit understanding are more prevalent than articulation and representation.

There are, however, more issues at work in these encounters, most of them relating to embodied identities and difference. The dance groups are ethnically mixed while the audience is dominantly

of Danish ethnicity. Our on-the spot interviews show how the spectators welcome the cultural mix. They express their appreciation of the presence of 'so many cultures' at the festival. Also, the enthusiasm was great when individuals seemingly native to a dance's 'place of origin' entered the scene, in some sense constructing them as 'mythical bodies' with a predetermined genetic ability for the dance (Hensley 2011). Conversely when a spectator watching an ethnic Danish woman dancing flamenco, exclaimed: 'it is not authentic', demonstrated anxiety about the loss of clearly demarcated identities and disturbance of the imagination of an authentic Other (Duffy 2005). These feelings make sense when considered through the lens of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1977). It is the exoticizing or romanticizing side of the imagination of the Other, the seemingly harmless side of exploitation, seeing the Orient as the site of dreams, images, fantasies and obsessions.

Orientalism also appears in the performative side of the dance. For example, a participant in a group calling themselves *Tribal Dance* told how their particular style was created in San Francisco: 'They took what they could find out from belly dance, and then something from hip-hop, from flamenco, from gipsy dance and mixed it all'. The same is the case with the costumes. They have also spread the dance all over the Western world. This eclectic style, Shay and Sheller-Young (2003) writes, is communicated via a 700-member e-mail service, more than 300 web pages and shared video-images of the formations of the dance. The participant explains:

> It is the same movements we learn, and then we can elaborate on them as we like. But there are some basic elements that are repeated. That means, I can go anywhere in the world where there is another 'tribal group', and I can dance with them immediately. (Female, American-Danish ethnicity, 50-55 years old)

So, here we meet an *American Orientalism* performing its own hybrid fantasies and imaginations of the Other, making it travel across time and space, only to land in a Danish festival as a product of the global cultural politics of orientalism.

Martial art and Taekwondo

Taekwondo is a bodily practice that unites body and mind and consists of different crushing and fighting techniques originating from various forms of ancient Korean martial arts. Compared to other combat sports without explicit norms and clearly defined stages like boxing (Wacquant 2004) and mixed martial art (Spencer 2009, Green 2011), Taekwondo is more codified and has a concern for details, analysis and philosophical knowledge where the (master) instructor is guiding and demonstrating and where progress is clearly marked by visible signs like the colour of the belt.

In *Kulturhavn*, the taekwondo performances attracted a lot of people. Most of the performers in the show and the spectators were 'ethnically' mixed, creating a transnational space of encounter. Among the spectators were many families with children who were clearly fascinated by the show. The atmosphere in the performance was open, positive and engaged. First a small show was performed including both fighting, various crushing techniques and defensive martial arts. The most spectacular part of the show was a specific bodily technique where pieces of wood were crushed into two pieces with the foot, accompanied by a high-pitched battle cry. The show was guided by the instructor and was followed with exercises of different fighting techniques. After the show, people were invited to participate in a workshop trying basic martial techniques. What had looked fascinating, easy, elegant and controlled turned out to be quite difficult and challenging.

A first observation is that the taekwondo performance creates a *bodily expressive space*. It is a sensuous experience and practice of embodied competences existing below language and consciousness. The show is performed rhythmically. The actions flow into each other in a dynamic way. All techniques, however, are clearly marked. Martial arts like taekwondo include control over breath, balance, power, coordination, agility and stamina. The show is at one moment infused with silence and concentration – a female spectator watching the show raised her hand to her mouth just as the high sound of the fighting cry *kihab* helped the performer to break a piece of wood. *Kihab* creates the necessary bodily energy and strength, the instructor explains. It consists of 'ki' - life energy - and 'hap' – concentration. In taekwondo bodily capability plays a crucial role in intimate relation with other bodies.

But taekwondo is more than bodies in motion. It is also about values that have spiritual and *existential* dimensions. As one of the spectators, a mother to a 12-year old girl, explains:

> My daughter loves taekwondo. She likes the physical exercise of taekwondo and to get out among other children and learn something. Taekwondo is both martial arts and a lot of different values like discipline and respect. And you learn to focus on things that are important in life - the troubled kids learn to focus and shy and introverted kids to be more outgoing. It works fine with the mixed cultural backgrounds. In taekwondo they are all equal - when they stand there in their tracksuits the only thing that separates them is the belt. (Female, Danish ethnicity, 35-40 years old)

Taekwondo is more than a sport, the teacher explains; it is also a lifestyle, a form of spiritual discipline, group attachment and respect for others. It is a community of practice that unites the

corporeal and the spiritual, body and mind, by combining bodily activity with encouragement of honourable values.

The teacher from one of the clubs explains that the members are very mixed, with backgrounds from Korea, Philippine, Indonesia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Denmark. It is also a *social community*, he explains, where friendship and values, such as respect for difference, are important. Even though Western representation of martial arts are powerfully associated with specifically Asian traditions and the Asian body, the experience was that the taekwondo performance and the participants created a cross-cultural encounter with a focus on sport and community more than on ethnicity and orientalist fantasies about the Other. In the on-the-spot interviews, many of the respondents emphasize the symbolic 'colour blindness' of the sport: 'the only thing that matters is the colour of the belt'. Taekwondo creates a space of inclusion where neither skin colour, national identity nor religion makes a difference, only the abilities within the specific community, that is, a community where the categories lose significance (Koefoed and Simonsen 2012).

Concluding remarks

In accordance with our critical phenomenology approach, we have analysed the festival as a 'polyrhythmic ensemble' of social and bodily interrelations, each with their own rhythms – from general flows of visitors and activities, to encounters among visitors and performers. The festival offers sensuous experiences of views, sounds, smells and of being jostled by co-visitors. It momentarily creates an atmosphere where the pulse and corporeal intensity makes you rub shoulders with and 'somehow matter to each other'. The cross-cultural encounters, however, mostly relate to the organized activities to which the visitors assume roles as spectators and momentary

participants. They provide sensuous experiences of difference through the aesthetic and communicative practices of the performing bodies, creating a doubleness of *expressive* and *affective* space extending out from the performance sites.

However, these encounters often take the form of what we, with hooks (2006, originally 1992), called *eating the Other*. Whatever we talk about food, dance or taekwondo, this issue of consuming the Other is prominent. This issue connects closely to Said's critical analysis of *Orientalism* where the exoticization and romanticization of the Other are theorized as a powerful component of Western hegemony. Our analysis further showed that consuming difference added to the visitors' identity as cosmopolitan, urban citizens. Openness to Other's products or performances becomes part of what Nava (2002) has analysed as an aesthetic or *affective cosmopolitanism.*

The significance of the issues of consumption and identity connects to the ethnic composition of the participants. While the performers of the activities we analysed (except the 'tribal dance' group) had an ethnically-mixed composition, the dominant make up of the visitors was of white, Danish ethnicity. It made the negotiations of identity complex and paradoxical. The emotional attitudes of the visitors were curiosity, openness and enjoyment, but the consumer position tended to instantiate distance and to underline differences rather than transcend them. Also, the anxiety about authenticity signals a wish to maintain distinct identities expressed through ethnic practices. On the other hand, some of the associations organising activities expressed signs of ethnically mixed communities. That was the case with some of the dance groups, but the most conspicuous example was the taekwondo clubs with their practising of existential and social values. This is worth emphasizing considering the role of the festival as a 'fair' for leisure activities in the city.

References

Ahmed, S., 2000. *Strange Encounters. Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality*. London and New York: Routledge.

Alcoff, L.M., 2006. *Visible Identities. Race, Gender, and the Self*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Berg, A.M., 2011. *Byen på den anden ende – en undersøgelse af folkelige festivaler og kultur i dansk planlægning*, Ph.d. dissertation, Department of Geography and Geology, University of Copenhagen.

Cook, I., 2008. Geographies of food: Mixing. *Progress in Human Geography*, 32 (6), 821-833.

Cook, I., and Crang, P., 1996. The world on a plate culinary culture, displacement and geographical knowledges. *Journal of material culture*, 1 (2), 131-153.

Cook, I., Crang, P., and Thorpe, M., 2000. Regions to be cheerful: culinary authenticity and its geographies. *In:* I. Cook, D. Crouch, S. Naylor and J.R. Ryan, eds. *Cultural turns/geographical turns: perspectives on cultural geography*. Harlow: Prentice Hall,109-139.

Crang, M., 2001. Rhythms of the City: temporalised space and motion. *In*: J. May and N. Thrift, eds. *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality.* London: Routledge, 187-207.

Crang, M., 2003. Qualitative methods: touchy, feely, look-see? *Progress in Human Geography,* 27 (4), 494–504.

Crang, M. and Cook, I., 2007. *Doing Ethnographies*. London: Sage.

Cresswell, T., 2006. 'You cannot shake that shimmie here': producing mobility on the dance floor. *Cultural Geographies,* 13 (1), 55-77.

Crossley, N., 1996. *Intersubjectivity. The Fabric of Social Becoming*. London: Sage.

Desmond, J.C., ed., 1997. *Meaning in motion: new cultural studies of dance.* Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Duffy, M., 2005. Performing identity within a multicultural framework. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 6 (5), 677-692.

Duffy, M., Waitt, G., Gorman-Morray, A. and Gibson, C., 2011. Bodily rhythms: Corporeal capacities to engage with festival spaces. *Emotion, Space and Society,* 4 (1), 17-27.

Duffy, M. and Waitt G., 2011. Rural Festivals and Processes of Belonging. *In:* C. Gibson and J. Connell, eds. *Festival Places: Revitalising Rural Australia*. Bristol: Channel View Publications, 44-57.

Duruz, J., 2005. Eating at the borders: culinary journeys. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space,* 23 (1), 51-69.

Edensor, T., 2010. *Geographies of Rhythm: Nature, Place, Mobilities and Bodies.* Aldershot: Ashgate.

Farrer, D.S., 2011. *Martial arts as embodied knowledge: Asian traditions in a transnational world.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Frost, N., 2015. Anthropology and Festival: Festival Ecologies. *Ethnos*, 81 (4), 569-583.

Getz, D., 2010. The nature and scope of festival studies, 5 (1), 1-47.

Green, K., 2011. It hurts so it is real: Sensing the seduction of mixed martial arts. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 12 (4), 377-396.

Heldke, L., 2003. *Exotic appetites.* London: Routledge.

Hensley, S., 2011. 'It's the sugar, the honey that you have': learning to be natural through rumba in Cuba. *Gender, Place and culture*, 18 (2), 195-215.

hooks, b., 2006. Eating the Other: desire and resistance. *In:* M. G. Durham and D. M. Kellner, eds. *Media and cultural studies: keyworks* (revised edition). Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 266-280.

Humphry, C., 2000. Bakhtin and the Study of Popular Culture: Re-thinking Carnival as a Historical and Analytical Concept. *In:* C. Brandist and G. Tihanov, eds. *Materializing Bakhtin. The Bakhtin Circle and Social Theory*. UK: Macmillan Press, 164-172.

Jamieson, K., 2004. Edinburgh the festival gaze and its boundaries. *Space and Culture*, 7 (1), 64-75.

Kingsbury, P., 2016. Rethinking the Aesthetic Geographies of Multicultural Festivals: A Nietzschean Perspective. *Annals of the American Association of Geographers,* 106 (1), 222-241.

Koefoed, L. and Simonsen, K., 2012. (Re)scaling identities: Embodied Others and alternative spaces of identification. *Ethnicities*, 12 (5), 623-642.

Lee, I.S., Arcodia, C., and Lee, T.J., 2012. Key characteristics of multicultural festivals: A critical review of the literature. *Event Management*, 16 (1), 93-101.

Lefebvre, H., 1991. *The Production of Space.* Oxford: Blackwell.

Lefebvre, H., 1992. *Élément de Rythmanalyse. Introduction á la connaissance des rythmes*. Paris: Éditions Syllepse.

Lefebvre, H., 2004. *Rhythmanalysis: Space, Time and Everyday Life*. London: Continuum.

Long, L. M., ed. 2004. *Culinary tourism*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky.

Longhurst, R., Ho, E., and Johnston, L., 2008. Using 'the body' as an 'instrument of research': kimch'i and pavlova. *Area*, 40 (2), 208-217.

McCormack, D.P., 2008. Geographies for moving bodies: Thinking, Dancing, Spaces. *Geography Compass,* 2 (6), 1922-1836.

Meyer, C.F. and Rhoades, E.K., 2006. Multiculturalism: Beyond food, festival, folklore, and fashion. *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, 42 (2), 82-87.

Merleau-Ponty, M., 1962. *The Phenomenolgy of Perception.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Merleau-Ponty, M., 1964. The Philosopher and His Shadow. In: M. Merleau-Ponty. *Signs*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 159-181.

Merleau-Ponty, M. (1968). *The Visible and the Invisible.* Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press.

Molz, J.G., 2007. Eating Difference. The Cosmopolitan Mobilities of Culinary Tourism. *Space and Culture*, 10 (1), 77-93.

Nash, C., 2000. Performativity in practice: some recent work in cultural geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24 (4), 653-664.

Paterson, M., 2009. Haptic geographies: ethnography, haptic knowledges and sensuous dispositions. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33 (6), 766-788.

Pink, S., 2007. *Doing Visual Ethnography* (second edition). London: Sage.

Pink, S., 2009. *Doing Sensory Ethnography*. London: Sage.

Revill, G., 2016. How is space made in sound? Spatial mediation, critical phenomenology and the political agency of sound. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40 (2), 240-256.

Ryan, A. and Wollan, G., 2013. Festivals, landscapes and aesthetic engagement: A phenomenological approach to four Norwegian festivals. *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift – Norwegian Journal of Geography*, 67 (2), 99-112.

Said, E.W., 1977. *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient.* London: Penguin Books

Savagliana, M., 1995. *Tango and the Political Economy of Passion*. Boulder, CO: Westview.

Simonsen, K., 2005. Bodies, sensations, space and time: the contribution from Henri Lefebvre. *Geografiska Annaler,* 87B (1), 1-15.

Shay, A. and Sellers-Young, B., 2003. Belly Dance: Orientalism: Exoticism: Self-Exoticism. *Dance Research Journal*, 35 (1), 13-37.

Sheets-Johnstone, M., 1999. *The Primacy of Movement.* Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Simonsen, K., 2007. Practice, Spatiality and embodied emotions: An outline of a geography of practice. *Human Affairs*, 17, 168-182.

Smith, S.J., 2000. Performing the (sound)world. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 18 (5), 615-637.

Spencer, D.C., 2009. Habit (us), body techniques and body callusing: An ethnography of mixed martial arts. *Body & Society*, 15 (4), 119-143.

Slocum, R., 2011. Race in the study of food. *Progress in Human Geography*, 35 (3), 303-327.

Thrift, N., 1997. The still point: resistance, expressive embodiment and dance. *In:* S. Pile and M. Keith, eds. *Geographies of resistance*. London and New York: Routledge, 124-151.

Vannini, P., Ahluwalia-Lopez, G., Waskul, D. and Gottschalk, S., 2010. Performing taste at wine festivals: A somatic layered account of material culture. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16 (5), 378-396.

Wacquant, L., 2004. *Body & Soul: Notebooks of an Apprentice Boxer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wood, N., Duffy, N. and Smith, S.J., 2007. The art of doing (geographies of) music. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 25 (5), 867-889.