



**HDK – Högskolan för design och konsthantverk**

# **Lerbaserad erfarenhet och språklighet**

**Mårten Medbo**

Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i Konsthantverk vid HDK – Högskolan för design och konsthantverk, Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av Konstnärliga fakultetens dekan offentligt kommer att försvaras onsdagen den 14 december 2016 kl. 13.00 i Aulan/Konstbiblioteket, HDK, Kristinelundsgatan 6–8, Göteborg.

Fakultetsopponent:  
Docent Jonna Bornemark, Södertörns högskola.

# Abstract

Title: Lerbaserad erfarenhet och språklighet

English title: Clay based experience and Language-Ness

Language: Swedish with an English summary

Keywords: crafts, artistic research, practical knowledge, clay-based, language-ness, concept-crafting, theory-practice, craft, applied arts, beyond-the-conceptual

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During the course of the twentieth century, a doubt emerged – first within visual arts, and later also within crafts – where the relevance of the traditional way of making art was addressed, as were thoughts on what was termed ‘empty shape’. The notion that shape in itself was no longer artistically valid is closely linked to notions of materiality as hindrance, and immateriality as freedom – all of which have had a major influence on contemporary visual arts and crafts, in general, and, more specifically, on what I term ‘theory-practice’ within the field of crafts. During the past few decades, increasing proof of this influence on the field of crafts as a whole has also been experienced.

As a ceramist expressing myself through clay, form has never been empty, and clay never a hindrance, and my dissertation is an attempt to put materiality as hindrance, and immateriality as freedom, in context, as well as to reflect upon questions related to their emergence and what impact they have within the field of crafts. My point of departure here is my own experience as an artist and ceramist, where inquiring and exploring takes places through practical knowledge.

I argue that there is no such thing as immateriality in art and that all artistic expression requires bodily-situated craft skill of some kind in order to be materialised and communicated, as well as to take place in the world. I also argue that art should be seen as what I term ‘language-practice’. Through this practice I craft the concept of ‘clay-based language-ness’ and ‘language-like-ness’ in order to come as close as possible to describing, in words, the kind of communication I wish to create as a ceramist, as well as what art-making (‘art-crafting’) constitutes when conceptual artists create their art.

Regarding crafts as a language-practice, however, conflicts with the theory that is setting the tone as well as leading the field of crafts today. I therefore wish, and propose, to find a way out of this conflict-ridden situation. As part of this endeavour, I present the text-based part of the dissertation and the clay-based part of the dissertation – side by side.