

Third International Conference on Dialogical Practices:

## «Listen to me!» - Humanizing Human Practices

23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> September 2015

Kristiansand, Norway



## Abstracts

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*Workshop 13*

*September 24<sup>th</sup> 1430-1530*

**Dialogical environments: how can material surroundings support or suppress dialogical practices?**

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Certain things have agency and contribute to the structure of space and timing inside institutions. The use of things forms the users' understanding of themselves and the institution they are part of. Hence, things influence on how we talk and communicate. Some things might support dialogical practices; other things might suppress the dialogue. As researchers we have both been interested in place, space and materiality. Melhuus did her research in kindergartens and Larsen in district psychiatric centers (DPC). Our findings led us into discussions about shared overarching questions connected to how human and non-human things influence each other, and how certain things regulate the structure, space and language of the two different institutions. Together we decided to collaborate, and reanalyze our data. Our aim was to get a more elaborated and nuanced understanding of the influence the things present in institutional space has on people inside both kindergartens and DPCs. Even if kindergartens are meant to support and promote all children's development, and DPCs are supposed to treat people with a diagnosis we noticed similarities and differences on how materiality takes place in an institution meant for children and in one meant for people having mental health problems. We also noticed that the language used was influenced by materiality.

To be listened to is important if you are a child or a psychiatric patient. We want to show how materiality might support or suppress dialogical practices, because we have noticed a lack of focus on the relations between how we talk and where we talk in research on dialogue.