



UOA D32

ART AND DESIGN:
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE



RESEARCHER

Mike Inglis

OUTPUT TITLE

The Other Travel Agency – Inner Journey

OUTPUT TYPE

Group of Artefacts

DATE

May – December 2019

FIG. 1
Poster for *Travel Agency – Inner Journey*. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019.



01 / STATEMENT

The Other Travel Agency – Inner Journey is a body of mixed media installations and sculptural structures that was produced through collaborative art making and diverse forms of public engagement.

Building on Inglis' longstanding participatory-driven work with Outsider artists, the project explored equality in disability-focused arts studios and communities and involved disabled artist groups across the Nordic countries.

The project was organized by the Nordic Outsider Art Network and commissioned by Inuti (a foundation in Stockholm that practices art therapy for people with intellectual disabilities) and the Kettuki Association, (Finland's nationwide studio network for Outsider artists) for the annual European Outsider Art Association conference (May 2019). Many of the participants were autistic: the project encouraged new forms of communication and social interaction through the medium of art.

The output was disseminated through a series of international exhibitions. It was first presented at Inuti Gallery, Stockholm (24–31 May 2019). It was subsequently invited to join a large touring show, *The Other Travel Agency*, which brought together Nordic Outsider Art Network contributions from the four Nordic countries. This was launched at the European Union Parliament Gallery, Brussels (24–26 September 2019) to an audience of over 5,000. The work then toured to Pertti's Choice, Helsinki – a cultural production space for Outsider art and culture (11 October – 11 December 2019), where it was seen by over 500 people. The exhibition included a filmed documentary made by Inglis, recording this experience and featuring contributions from the artists involved (see Appendix, page 21).

Inglis' research was 'highly commended' by Building Better Healthcare Awards (2019).



FIG. 2
Background: wall collage, multiple artist contribution by Mike Inglis, Anders Wettler, Edvin Mattisson, Esme Alexander, Carl Bernalt, Lisbet Hemse, Ariella Rose, Jens Nilsson, Marianne Schmidt, Hugo Karlsson, Max Avasoo and Buster Hollingsworth. Foreground: sculptural work by Mike Inglis and Max Avasoo. Floor piece by Max Avasoo. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.

02 / RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

FIG. 3

Lotte Nilsson-Välímäa, mentor,
fixes the door vinyl artwork
produced by Buster Hollingsworth.
Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019.
Photo Mike Inglis.



The output brought together research through collaborative practice (community-engaged and participatory art; performance and installation) and research into the history of Outsider artists.

Inglis has a longstanding participatory, socially-engaged and community-oriented practice that engages the interface between Outsider groups and contemporary art. This project used that expertise to explore issues of equality in disability arts studios, and in particular how methods of contemporary art practice can have real impact on equality, participation and agency within such organisations.

A week-long workshop at the Inuti Foundation, Stockholm, resulted in two full wall mixed media installations, to which all the artists contributed, a series of nine sculptures, a door installation and an animation. These mixed-media works were mobile and were placed or pulled through the streets around the Inuti Gallery, as a live sculptural performance on 24 May 2019 for the 50 attendees of the conference as well as the general public and local community. The works were subsequently exhibited inside the INUTI gallery and in the street 24-31 May 2019, under the title *Travel Agency – Inner Journey*.

The works were subsequently invited to tour in an international exhibition, *The Other Travel Agency*, which was presented at the European Parliament gallery, Brussels (24–26 September 2019) to an audience of over 5,000, and Pertti's Choice, Helsinki, a cultural production space for outsider art and culture (11 October – 11 December 2019), seen by over 500 people. *The Other Travel Agency* exhibition included a filmed documentary created by Inglis, recording this experience and featuring contributions from the artists involved (see Appendix, page 21).

FIG. 4

Background: wall collage, multiple artist contribution by Mike Inglis, Anders Wettler, Edvin Mattisson, Esme Alexander, Carl Bernalt, Lisbet Hemse, Ariella Rose, Jens Nilsson, Marianne Schmidt, Hugo Karlsson, Max Avasoo, Buster Hollingsworth and Eva Karin Gedeon. Foreground left: sculptural work by Jens Nilsson. Foreground right: suitcase sculpture by Mike Inglis. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



03 / ORIGINALITY

Inglis' participatory methodology draws on the model of 'Person-Centered Therapy', which was developed in the 1940s by the American psychologist Carl Rogers as a model that diverged from traditional understandings of the therapist as expert, to an empathetic and non-hierarchical relationship between therapist and client.

Applying this approach to artistic practice, Inglis developed a non-hierarchical collaborative process that is unusual in collaborative socially-engaged arts and offers a new paradigm: the process of art production is embedded in the community and fully collaborative from its inception.

Travel Agency/The Other Travel Agency builds upon Inglis' previous two-year NHS hospitals engagement project *Resonate | Disseminate* with Grampian Hospital Arts Trust and his 2019 artists residency with Project Ability in Glasgow, with whom he has an ongoing relationship.

It also linked with progressive Nordic practices that explore the value of collaborative practice to mental health, as well as improving equal opportunities for people of differing abilities to make art. For instance, it built on Inuti's ethos of a collective of equals, where disabled artist participants and studio staff decide on the practices, projects and daily running of the studio, extending this model to the field of contemporary art practice.

Inglis used low-tech materials that enabled a rapid process of working that foregrounded the building of group relations rather than the finish of the products. The use of recyclable and reusable materials enabled Inglis to arrive at the insight that sustainable and everyday working models encourage participation and can be recreated by diverse groups in different settings.

The displacement of certain materials, genres and tropes of contemporary art – such as text-based banners and sculptural installations of found objects – into the community revealed new insights into the way contemporary art can bridge the professional and the amateur, and demonstrated its relevance for communities outside the art world, including those that are disadvantaged. By moving away from the customary traditional materials and techniques of Outsider art practices, and by taking the works into the street and out of the studios, the work changed audience expectations of the type of work that can be produced by disability arts studios.

Lastly, Inglis' research offers new models of creative participation for small to micro organisations that face real financial and operational challenges – demonstrating a model of added value that does not increase financial burdens.

Project collaborators



FIG. 5
Hugo Karlsson, animator. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 6
Max Avasoo, mentor, European Outsider Art Association Conference. Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 7
Buster Hollingsworth, artist. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 8
Emma Asplund, artist, and Mike Inglis. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 9
Eva-Karin Gedeon, Manager. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 10
Text panel by Mike Inglis. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.

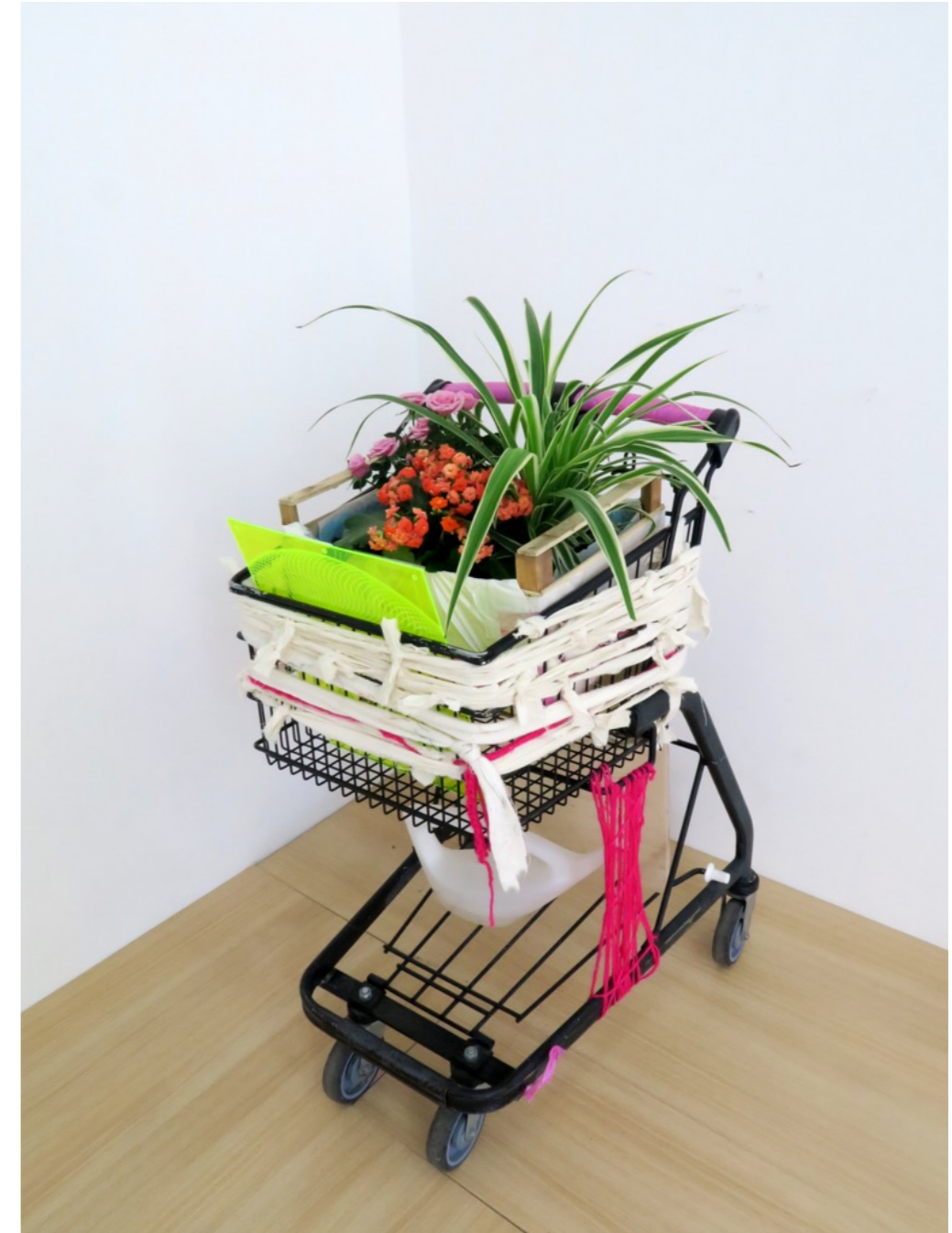


FIG. 11
Mobile sculpture flower trolley by Ariella Rose, artist, Esme Alexander, mentor, Max Avasoo, mentor and Mike Inglis, artist. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.

FIGS. 12 & 13

Performance piece and text panels
by Anders Wettler, artist. Inuti
Gallery Stockholm, May 2019.
Photos Mike Inglis.

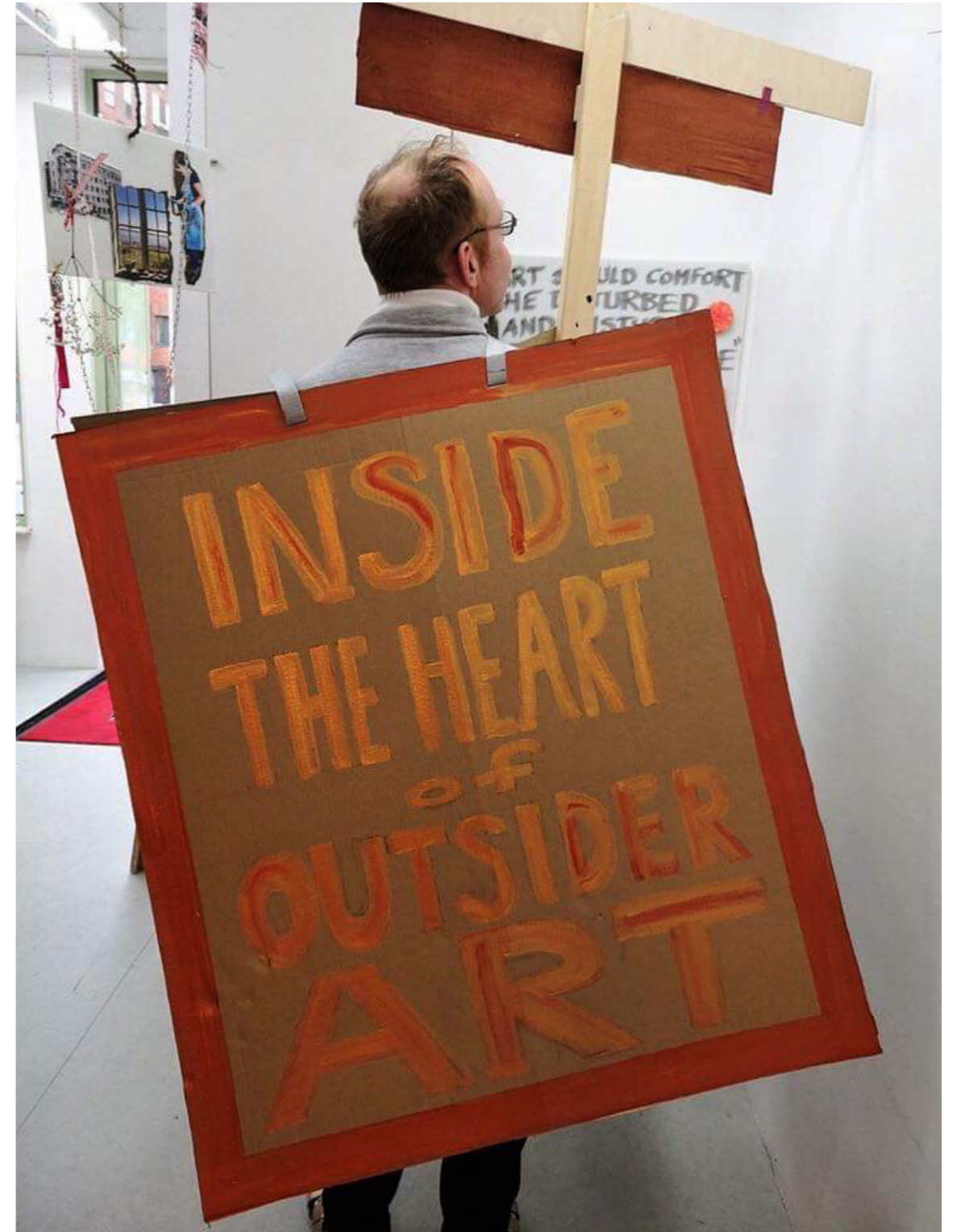


FIG. 14
Mobile sculpture by Jens Nilsson
artist. Inuti Gallery, Stockholm,
May 2019. Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 15
Buster Hollingworth, artist, and
Esme Allexander, mentor, working
on a mobile sculptural piece. Inuti
Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019.
Photo Mike Inglis.



FIG. 16
Adhocism workshop, left to right:
Carl Bernalt, artist, Mike Inglis
artist and workshop leader and
Edvin Matteson, artist. Inuti
Gallery, Stockholm, May 2019.
Photo courtesy of Max Avasoo.



04 / RIGOUR

Inglis spent over five years researching and documenting Outsider art practices and the studio practices of marginalised artists in healthcare, hospitals and Outsider art studios.

Travel Agency/The Other Travel Agency built upon insights from Inglis' earlier engagement project with NHS Grampian and Grampian Hospitals Art Trust (*Resonate | Disseminate*, 2017 – 2018), and his residency with Project Ability Glasgow (2019), a mental health and disabled artists' studio facility. Alongside these projects, Inglis undertook field research, funded by Fife Contemporary Arts and Craft and Edinburgh University (GBP 2,400), travelling to Finland and Sweden to research progressive models of engagement in the arts programmes of Inuti Foundation and the ITE Museum, Helsinki.

It was as a result of this research that Inglis was invited by Inuti and the Kettuki Association to develop *The Other Travel Agency* – for the European Outsider Art Association conference 2019.

The invitation enabled Inglis to extend his collaborative ethnographic arts working practice – which brings together workshop, collaborative, photographic documentation, filmmaking and field work – and to explore how his participatory and material methods could add value to this small arts organisation. Inglis' research is situated within and extends the theories first developed in the 1960s by the 'Artists Placement Group' that sought to reposition the role of the artist within a wider social context.

Inglis' approach was an opportunity to test and understand how a novel collaborative model could impact on participants' well-being and productivity, and share findings with an international community of peers. The project ran at Inuti studios for five days (20 – 24 May 2019), involving mixed-ability autistic artists, staff and Inglis in a process in which all participants' input and contributions were valued equally.

FIG. 17

Promotional poster, European Union Gallery, Brussels, September 2019.



05 / SIGNIFICANCE

In May 2019, Inglis was invited by the Inuti Foundation and Kettuki association, Sweden, to develop a participatory practice-based engagement project working with mixed ability artist members of the Inuti Foundation, onsite in Stockholm.

The project was funded by the Inuti Foundation, the Nordic Council of Ministers, and the Nordisk Kulturfond. The resulting collaborative project, *Travel Agency – Inner Journey* was exhibited at the Inuti Gallery as part of the European Outsider Association Conference in May 2019.

Participants in the project were mainly autistic artists used to working in isolation and with traditional art materials. The common responses from participants and mentors alike was that the collaborative practice was a revelation, and yielded many benefits by energising the participants, encouraging and developing social skills and connections, as well as new ways to communicate outside of the gallery, reaching new audiences and breaking down barriers.

Inglis delivered an invited lecture on the research project at the conference at the Helio Pulitzer, Stockholm (24 May 2019). This lecture disseminated Inglis' new insights into participatory driven work with Outsider artists within an international studio healthcare system and with leading academics in the field of Outsider art. The conference was attended by representatives from more than 50 'Visionary or Marginal art' specialist organisations and mental health/disabled art therapy studios from 30 different countries. It was also attended by members of the general public, academics, curators, collectors and artists from studios across Stockholm and the Nordic countries.

Following the conference, the work was invited to join a large touring show, *The Other Travel Agency*, which brought together the Nordic Outsider Art Network contributions from the four Nordic countries (Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland). This was launched at the European Union parliament gallery, EXPO Exhibition space, in the József Antall Building, Brussels, 24 September 2019. The opening was followed by a panel discussion around 'Cultural Rights & Potentials: Visibility in the Arts for Disabled Artists', where Inglis presented *The Other Travel Agency – Inner Journey* to an audience of European Union MEPS and officials. The panel was led by Päivi Lilja, Executive Director of Kettuki Association and included speakers MEP Sirpa Pietikäinen, Kati Laakso, Director of Finnish Cultural Institute for the Benelux, curator Jaakko Blomberg and artist Anders Wettler.

The exhibition subsequently toured to Pertti's Choice, Helsinki, 11 October – 11 December 2019, a cultural production space for Outsider art and culture, and was the first social enterprise in Finland founded by disabled people.

Inglis' research was 'highly commended' by Building Better Healthcare Awards (2019).

FIG. 18
EU Parliament Building.
Brussels. CC0.



FIG. 19
Mike Inglis, artist, and Päivi Lilja,
Executive Director of Kettuki
Association and overall Project
Manager. European Union
Parliament, Brussels, September
2019. Photo courtesy of Päivi Lilja.



FIG. 20
Left to right: Anders Wettler, artist, Sirpa Pietikainen,
MEP European Parliament, Finland and Edvin
Matteson, artist. European Union Parliament
Gallery, Brussels, October 2019.



FIGS. 21 & 22
Mike Inglis, Artist's Talk, European
Outsider Art Association
Conference. Stockholm, May 2019.
Image courtesy of Lotte Nilsson-
Välilmaa.



FIG. 23
Artist Emma Asplund in the Inuti studio. Photo Mike Inglis.

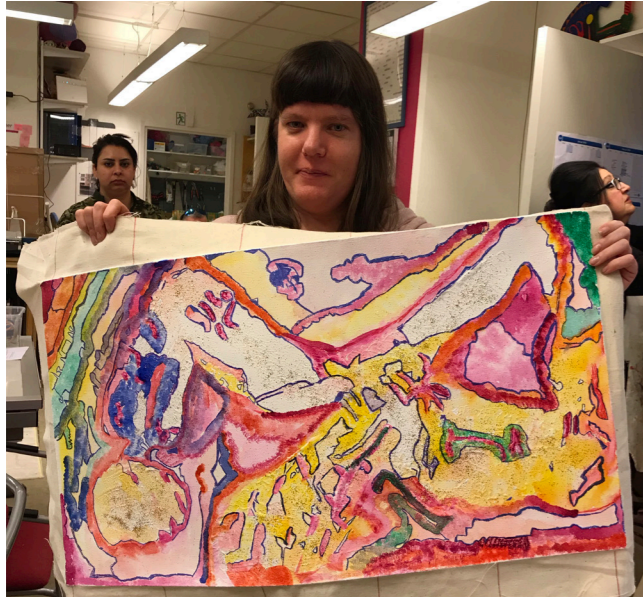


FIG. 24
Mike Inglis demonstrating new materials in Inuti studio workshop. Photo Max Mvasoo.



06 / APPENDIX

Mike Inglis, Resonate | Disseminate:
A holistic art strategy and hospital engagement project

<https://resonateartists.wordpress.com>

Travel Agency – Inner Journey
film documentation

https://media.ed.ac.uk/media/t/1_1ccmjag7



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