

**MFA THESIS:**

# **CREATING MAGIC**

**SARA LUNDKVIST**

**CERAMICS & GLASS 2012**

**KONSTFACK**

**SUPERVISORS:**

**AGNETA LINTON, BEATRICE HANSSON, EMMA GÖRANSSON**

**EXTERNAL SUPERVISORS:**

**BELLA RUNE, CHARLOTTE HYLÉN-CAVALLIUS**

## **ABSTRACT**

This essay addresses the ability of glassmaking to be a research tool. By using a fieldwork method in the investigation of the “New Age” movements social and material relations I want to show crafts ability to tell and rewrite stories by reflecting on material cultures, the materiality of objects and their relations to us humans. By my artistic investigation I look upon values, aesthetics and social aspects connected to the “New Age” movement and its material artefacts. I am interested in the fascination of material objects and how you can claim a value to “things” and to use the objects ability to expand and to convey. My artistic investigation is based on material expressions and how I can create and show that as material communication or material storytelling.

## CONTENTS:

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>IDEA AND BACKGROUND</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>QUESTIONS</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>METHOD</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>EXPECTED KNOWLEDGE RETREIVAL AND OUTCOME</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>THE MAGIC STONE AND TOUR WISH MAY COME TRUE</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>MATERIAL CULTURE</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>ETHNOLOGICAL FIELD WORK</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>MATERIAL STORYTELLING</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>NEW AGE MOVEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
NEW AGE AS ARTISTIC INVESTIGATION	16
REFLEXIVITY	17
<b>MAGICAL ARTEFACTS, FETISH AND RITUALS</b>	<b>18</b>
RITUALS	18
FETISH	19
<b>FIELD WORK FORMATION</b>	<b>20</b>
PREPARATION	20
<b>OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>21</b>
VISUAL OBSERVATION	22
<b>FIELDWORK INVESTIGATION</b>	<b>23</b>
SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE	23
ACTIVITIES	25
SOCIAL RELATIONS	26
AESTHETICS	27
<b>THE MATERIALITY OF THE OBJECT, ARTISTIC REFLECTION UPON THE SUBJECT</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>DISCUSSION</b>	<b>31</b>
FUTHER DEVELOPMENT AND REASHERTCH POTENTIAL	32
<b>SUMMERY</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>REFERENCE LIST</b>	<b>34</b>

## INTRODUCTION

My master degree work is an artistic investigation in glass based on values, aesthetics and social aspects connected to the “New Age” movement and its material artefacts. By looking at how artefacts are used as vessels of meaning and spirit I want to explore aspects of desire and our ability to charge things with values like hope, faith and dreams. An artistic investigation in the ability of materials, objects and things to carry a deeper importance and value depending on what we charge them with. Values that even can be supernatural or magic.

My artistic investigation is shown as a material experience in glass where I create a crystal like landscape formation. A mobile like installation made of flat glass in crystal shapes with glass objects in colours and forms inspired by the New Age aesthetics with aura like presence and mystical sense. The objects are glass castings with bright colours in layers and fading in a rainbow-looking way.

It is also an investigation of the *fascination* of material objects or “things” and how to use the ability of objects to expand and to convey. I want to look at how you can claim a value and create mystique and magic around an object. I will use and borrow the intense and loaded material expressions that exist around spiritual artefacts in my artistic practice. This is because I am interested in if you can charge material objects with importance such as faith and hope. How I can do that as a crafts practitioner? As the maker of the objects, I think that I have a position to change the objects and their social and spiritual relations.

In this investigation I want to find a new way to discuss and look at my practice and to find a possible way for me to do an artistic investigation based on material culture. I will use my material knowledge to investigate material relations in order to use these relations and values around things and use them within my practice where I am reflecting and rewriting them to make an artistic claim. In my work I want to create a material experience, material stories and a relation between the viewer and the object. The aim is to communicate a story around my work. As a maker I am interested in studying and understanding how to use the definition and idea of material culture and I think that I have a possibility to use its channels of communication to tell new stories.

## IDEA AND BACKGROUND

I am working with craft based art within the craft field of glass and ceramic where I am creating objects with specific skills and materials. During my two years at Konstfack I have become more and more interested in the materiality of objects and their relations to us humans, the objects silent language and so called material culture and how material relations can influence us and how we influence it.

Material culture is a term for field study that comes from archaeology, museology, anthropology and ethnography. It is a kind of study where you look at the social relations of the object rather than only to the three dimensionality in the object itself<sup>1</sup>. I see myself as a person who is creating material stories based on investigations of material culture, with in different aesthetic fields and interactions with different aesthetic values. In those investigations I am searching for and looking at desire and fetishes that are connected to material objects, such as the desire of having or owning.

When talking about material relations and material meaning we often talk about the car, the cup or other material objects that has great importance for our society. Tim Dant points out the relationship between material objects and humans, how the relationship is characterised of a particular culture. How the activity around the artefacts is developing the society. The interaction between material objects and individuals, how the objects can symbolize social status and represent social relationships.<sup>2</sup>

In my master project I will discuss the importance of the material objects in the “New Age” movement. A culture that easily could be seen as a fake or not trustworthy culture with a mix from all kinds of different cultures and religions. My belief is that the New Age culture points out something very significant and important when it comes to objects and social value that could be connected to the craft scene and our ability to create and tell new stories or build meaning trough the objects.

By investigating the “New Age” artefacts , their social relations, values and aesthetics there is an opening to bridge over to the field of ethnology and the theories about material culture. Trough my practice I am looking at the ideas around material culture and ethnology. I see it as I am borrowing tools from these traditions and testing them in a craft context. Methods from material culture studies and ethnology which are a wide subject where I will focus on a field work based investigation that will be made through observations of the “New Age” cultures relation to its related artefacts and how they are used in a social and spiritual ways.

---

<sup>1</sup>Design history, understanding theory and method. Kjetil Fallan. 2010 p. 35

<sup>2</sup>Materiality and society, Tim Dant, 2005. p. 2-5

## QUESTIONS

### **-How can I create a material communication or material storytelling?**

I am interested in how objects are being shaped, exist and communicate. I need to understand how the material objects function as communicators. Is it just about shape, colour and form or can I control or shape the social relations and expectations as well?

### **-Is it possible to capture through my practice the “New Age movements” ability to give a greater importance to objects than the object itself?**

Religious or holy objects seem to be given a kind of extra function beyond its material dimension. With this question I am looking at how I can find a method for my artistic process of creating to capture the soul, belief and values from the “New Age” movement and how I can use its material and aesthetic expressions and structures to tell stories.

### **-How can I use the concept of material culture studies and ethnology in my artistic practice and thesis to find a new way of discussing and in order to get a new perspective on my practice?**

This question will work as a base in my investigation to find a structure to work from and as a discussing tool of my artistic investigation.

## METHOD

My master project is an artistic investigation and my method is mainly based on the skill, craftsmanship and knowledge of within my practice that I will use in the glass workshop. Within my practice I am experimenting with the material glass to find out techniques that are specially created to suite my subject; to capture the material objects ability to be charged with a great value and importance.

My work is based in the significance of “things” and is not based on verbal language. I am using my practical knowledge to get an understanding of material relations to humans and to use those material relations, rewrite them and change their contexts. I am using my practice as a method and a research tool through my master project.

Some of my work has similarities with ethnology since I say that I am doing a fieldwork based investigation. Ethnology is a wide subject in cultural studies to convey knowledge in how humans lives and thinks in different contexts and times. By using qualitative methods as interviewing, observations and archival material to understand humans different ways of living. The focus in ethnology is mainly based in the humans every day life where to investigate the economical, political, and how technical processes shapes the living conditions in different social and cultural contexts<sup>3</sup>. In my studies I am going into a spiritual or religious culture where I observe, investigate and expose myself to the cultures activities. I see my method as a study of human phenomena.

The artwork created within my master project is a reflection upon my investigation that is channeled through my craft practice. By identifying and analysing various phenomena which I am using in my practice where the reflection takes place I am trying to capture and make claims about material culture.

I will through my research and new knowledge create a mystical material experience that is an interpretation of my research. My choice of subject for my master project is something that I find it really hard to verbalise. I look for and work with the human relations to objects, a relation to objects that takes out of the object from its physical context and puts it on a higher material value or gives a bigger importance to the object. There is a relation between the object and the viewer that you cant see or touch. This is in many ways communal experience based on social aspects and understandings but of course different depending on who you are.

My work does not have a theoretical focus as of a design/art theorists and since I am working with materials and objects in practice it gets more important for me to understand the material culture I am working with. Not less significant is the importance as a maker to explain and communicate trough writing when there mostly exists academic writings in the field of craft from theorists with a non-or limited skill and knowledge in the practice of craft. In my thesis I want to investigate the theories around material culture

---

<sup>3</sup>[www.erg.su.se/utbildning/vara-utbildningar/etnologi/vad-gor-en-etnolog-1.54250](http://www.erg.su.se/utbildning/vara-utbildningar/etnologi/vad-gor-en-etnolog-1.54250), 10/3 2012 12.13

and use its methods as a possible way to discuss what I am working with. Through theories around material culture to seek and to get understanding of my own practice. I will use material culture way of looking on the relationship between artefacts and social relations in the New Age movement. To look at how people are identifying them self by consuming the movements artefacts, how the activities, aesthetics, social relation, significance and value looks around those artefacts. To understand the material relations importance in order to use it in my practice. Since my work is about material relations it will be important to document the process with images and descriptions of the working process.

## **EXPECTED KNOWLEDGE RETREIVAL AND OUTCOME**

With this project I expect to get a deeper understanding of my practice and how to create material values through how we charge objects with hope, faith and desire. How material objects around us are created with significance and value around them as well as how we use material objects and its related status in order to identify and express ourselves and others.

I think this project also can shed light on how we are putting materiality, expression, attributes and importance to objects. Sometimes even supernatural and magic. Trough this project I expect to find a new language to understand and speak about my practice in a possible material culture based way. I hope to bring a new perspective to the craft field and to my practice. I want to find a new approach and to show my practice as a method with research potential.

The result will be an artistic investigation in glass that manifests a reflection upon material objects ability to carry meaning and play roles outside its physical being. This will be showed as an artistic material experience in glass. I am looking at how the materiality, aesthetics and functions of objects can work in many different ways and layers and I hope that this will raise knowledge for me on how I can communicate through my artistic practice.

The intention is to explore and understand glass makings ability to be a research tool and to show crafts potential to create and tell new stories through objects. I think this also could bring new knowledge how craft can work as a tool to put light on different social relations by social and cultural studies around material culture.

## THE MAGIC STONE AND YOUR WISH MAY COME TRUE

One of my previous works from 2010 made at Konstfack “The Magic Stone and your wish may come true”<sup>4</sup> was a project that paved a lot of the ground for this project. “The Magic Stone ” was an investigation in the culture of New Age with its aesthetics and values and its material culture, a culture with a wide range of ceremonies, with all kind of frills and with special and strong aesthetic expression. An aesthetic with different expressions around the objects that could be seen as bad taste but with a great value to the “New Age” practitioners , that for me was an interesting theme to investigate through craft. I chose to work with the New Age stones where there is a believe that the stones has preternatural powers that could influence your life, by carrying the stone with you, the power you would influence your life to the better. The New Age stones have a special value for the believer in the New Age culture, a high value that was important for me to highlight and create the desire for the preternatural and the unknown. I wanted to transform the New Age aesthetic and desire to my own work in order to displace it and understand it through a new perspective.

In the beginning of my investigation I went for exploration trips with one of my own stones made from porcelain. The stone travelled to different New Age stores in the city of Stockholm and was displayed with real stones in stores and storefront windows; this change of contexts went to be an interesting meeting that I wanted to continue working with and it came to be the beginning of a collaboration and a interference in the New Age culture.

For the exhibition of the “The Magic Stone” at Konstfack I did not only show the final object, I also chose to give away small silk bags with a little crystal stone made from porcelain together with a short story about the stone they were holding in their hands, a small crystal coming from the big magic stone with powers to make your wishes come true. A sort of holy souvenir.

I see my previous project “The Magic Stone” as a founding investigation for my master project that I am using and working further on with. In the project I found it very interesting how the practitioners in the movement created values around there material objects and how it even can bring a greater spiritual value. In the project I sensed that it could bring the craft field a new perspective through a research like investigation. For my master project I am going to continue working with loaded subjects and with material values. It is important to point out that the purpose of my work is not to make fun or disparage the “New Age” material culture but to see its importance and functions as well as seeing it as a strong model of how we consume feelings through material experiences.

---

<sup>4</sup>Lundkvist Sara, The Magic Stone, BA project, Konstfack 2010



Photo: Sara Lundkvist, 2010<sup>5</sup>



Photo: Sara Lundkvist, 2010<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Lundkvist Sara, Stockholm 2010

<sup>6</sup>Lundkvist Sara, Stockholm 2010

## MATERIAL CULTURE

As mentioned before I found my previous work given to work further with since I found the New Age practitioners relation to their artefacts very interesting. My interest in these relations to objects led to the theoretical term material culture. In this thesis and in my artistic investigation the understanding of material culture in the New Age movement lies as the main core in my work. A subject I found important to understand in order to be able to use its channels in my artistic reflection and creation.

*"... Everyday things are just as essential to understanding society and culture."*

Material culture is a term for interdisciplinary studies where you look at human relations to physical material objects to understand the significance they have for the culture and society.

The first you may think of is what the subject material culture means. It is concrete things in cultures that has meaning for the culture, things we have around us in our daily life that are material based as shoes, makeup your daily use of your coffee cups, things that are made by humans and have a material value. It could be objects that you put minimum value to but can have a great significance for a culture.

Material culture is the relationship between objects and social relations, a cultures relationship to materiality. The significant you can say about material culture is that you as a viewer or user of the objects that decide the relation to the material and only you have that relation and another have a different relation to the object depending on social and cultural background. It depends on witch experiences, expectations, traditions that lies between the object and the human. It is the viewer that in this case that has the leading role and not the object, the experience of the material. The subject material culture is a term that you cannot see and touch it is in between the object and the human, witch makes it to be a private relation but that also can be a group experience or understanding. A material culture study is study in artefacts and objects as a subject unto themselves separate from their context.

*"Things is a term so obvious it needs no definition and can therefore ostensibly stand in for absolutely anything. Yet in so doing it might also be alleged that 'things' means absolutely nothing. 'Thingness' lends artefacts an elusive quality trough which it is possible to start to examine the particularity of the significance of the object world within the context of the social world."*<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup>Design history, understanding theory and method. Kjetil Fallan. 2010 p. vii

<sup>8</sup> Wild things, the material culture of everyday life. Judy Attfield. 2000 p. 15

As Attfield describes above, the problem of studying material culture, the things social meaning is that the things does not mean anything in them self. To understand material cultures around the things you have to understand and know the culture history, tradition and the and knowledge around it. Attfield is also writing about the understanding of the material culture as an opposition between the mind and body where the memories of an object or associations to the object speak a silence language and the memories are a very personal and intimate form of knowing a material culture. On the other hand it is also a shared knowledge in cultural traditions.

*“It is only when a thing acquires a name that an artefact announces and thereby calls attention to itself. But in so doing, it also becomes a representation which distances the thing from its meaning. Thus the central problem of studying material culture- the social meaning of the physical world of things – necessarily revolves around the unresolved relationship between the object and its meaning, a relationship that is most succinctly defined by the term – the object/subject relationship that focuses on the dynamic interplay between the object and its social meaning, not resting entirely on either one as determining the other.”<sup>9</sup>*

I see material culture as a method or viewpoint and a interesting way of discussing the meanings and relationships of material objects. I think that it is important to understand the material culture questions around the subject you are working in and with. Material culture is a subject and method that I think is important to understand when working in the craft field. In order to understand a specific material culture I need to study how it relates, its traditions, expectations and the activities around the artefacts.

---

<sup>9</sup>Wild things, the material culture of everyday life, by Judy Attfield. 2000 p. 15-16

## ETHNOLOGICAL FIELD WORK

In order to understand the material culture in the New Age movement and to work with its relation to objects I have chosen to work with a field work investigation method. A method that brings you deeper in the subjects to observe and to interact with the culture to study its material and social relations.

Ethnology is a term for social studies where an ethnologist is entering a specific culture, environment or ethnic group where they study human behaviour, cultural pattern and social relations.

One of the ethnological methods is field work, a method that I am using for my artistic investigation. The ethnological field work is studies in social physical environments where you put your self out in the physical environment that you want to study, it is an experience based description of the reality where you learn from practice. Field work is a social project where there is an ongoing interplay and a participating observation. these are ethnological and anthropological methods for field work. An interplay between the researcher and other humans where different phenomenons are studied to get access to the silence language, structures and knowledge. In the book Etnologiskt fältarbete they point out perspectives to the reality.

*“The ontological position falls within the critical realism is that there is an reality independent of our perspectives, but we will never be able to reach them. This means that empiricism never is a description of actual reality, but empirical data shows the reality in that way you can reach it trough a specific method.”<sup>10</sup>*

So when it comes to the reality there is never one true reality. Since we have different perspectives on it. Thats why it is impossible to reach the truth of reality. In ethnology you talk about reproducing others reality but then we all have different perspectives on things. As I see it there is no reality that is the true one. This has an importance for my artistic work where I can expand the perspective I will get from the field work and use my own reality or how I would like the reality to look like. The result is always an interpretation.

Since I have chosen to work with field work where interviews have a great importance, I will in my investigation interview practitioners of the “New Age” movement in order to get a new perspective and wider understanding of the culture. Here I have an opportunity to go deeper into the subject and to get another persons inner knowledge, dreams and values, to get different perspective of the culture to benefit my project where I will be able to get out of my artistic role and look at my investigation from another perspective.

---

<sup>10</sup>Etnologiskt fältarbete, by Lars Kaijser & Magnus Öhlander. 1999 p.19

Material studies and material significance have also a great importance for ethnological field work, what is the significance of material and artefacts. Field work is one method to understand the relation between human and object.

*“Sometimes things seems to strength and sometimes contradict what people express by word and act. Sometimes things will help us to see what people want, sometimes revealing what people do not want to say. Sometimes people do somethings with the things, other times the things do something to the people.”<sup>11</sup>*

By using methods from ethnological fieldwork and material culture you can study the significance the material objects have for humans social relationship to their culture. By using a fieldwork method you will get a inner perspective of the culture and by so doing you will get new knowledge and experience that you would not get from an outside perspective.

---

<sup>11</sup>Etnologiskt fältarbete, by Lars Kaijser & Magnus Öhlander. 1999 p. 90

## MATERIAL STORYTELLING

In my artistic practise I want to borrow and use the channels of the material culture in the New Age movement and use the experiences and knowledge from the field work investigation. This in order to create new stories and interpretations around the subject. Since my artistic practise is based on working with materials and in this case the material glass where I am working with the glass to tell and make new stories through objects. Therefore I have chose to call the outcome of this project material storytelling.

As a craft maker that creates objects in glass and ceramic I see myself as a person who is creating material stories based on investigations in material cultures. I want my objects to be able to talk to the viewer to tell a story with in a material culture, it has a lot to do with how to communicate your objects to the viewer and how I as a maker by studying and understanding material culture have the power to use its channels of communication to tell new stories. Within material storytelling the use of verbal language is not in focus. Instead I use the silent relations between human and object.

As Esther Leslie writes about in a essay from the German cultural theorist Walter Benjamin; the interaction between storytelling and craft where the craft practitioner take a step further to illuminate and create a story. By the ability to tell stories from the practice. The craft skills can translate to storytelling. An experience knowledge that will come out as a hand made memory.

*“True experience is conceived as close and practised knowledge of what is at hand. The hand touches, has practical experience of life”.*<sup>12</sup>

As in his example of pot-throwing where the hands touch and form the clay, hands with knowledge and experience. Storytelling could be compared to craftsmanship since they contain similar ways of working, thinking, seeing, and acting. The storyteller is forming her material the human life and the craftsman form the mould and the raw material.

I think craftsmanship is storytelling but I would like to call it a material storytelling, a title that I think can be used to explain mine and many other craft practitioners working methods.

In my master investigation where I am exploring the material culture around the New Age movement and in my artistic investigation I am reflecting and analyzing my new knowledge through the material glass. It is here were I tell new stories from my perspective, it is here where the material storytelling is created.

---

<sup>12</sup>Leslie Esther, The Craft Reader, Damson. Oxford 2010 p. 387

## NEW AGE MOVEMENT

The choice of subject of interest lies in the movements way of being able to claim and create great values to and around material objects based on faith and belief. A belief of spirituality and material objects contagion of paranormality and healing energy. A mechanism that creates a greater importance and value to the object than the object itself. I would say that we have mechanisms like these around us in our daily life with material objects but within the New Age movement it is visible in a perhaps more powerful and outspoken way. The movement is in some way built on or manifested thru material objects with a value that goes beyond materiality to a spiritual level based on faith, hope, dreams and desire. In my artistic investigation I want to capture that mechanism that takes place around those objects to create a material experience, a material storytelling.

The New Age movement is a western spiritual movement from USA that developed in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the movement is a mixture from a big number of different cultures and religions and is basically based on methods and objects to create and find your inner wellness and a seeking for a deeper truth and sense of living. The methods, activities and rituals have a wide spectrum and it could be everything from different ways of healing, couching, readings to fortune amulets<sup>13</sup>.



Photo: Sara Lundkvist, 2011<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Hammer Olav, På spaning efter helheten NEW AGE en ny folketro. Finland 1997 p. 18

<sup>14</sup>Lundkvist Sara, Wien 2011

## NEW AGE AS ARTISTIC INVESTIGATION

When talking about art and design connected to the New Age movement it is something that often creates a disapproval and I could even get a sense of it being a taboo subject. One of the reasons could be the unserious and fuzzy view of the movement with its different spiritual methods.

From an outside perspective the movement often tends to have a lower status connected with the aesthetics and taste. New age has a kitsch-esque way of mixing symbolics and material expressions that can be experienced as un-genuine and shallow.

In the book *Destination Culture* there is a chapter about bad taste, how objects, things and style connected with a non-purpose and function or with a made-up and not honest purpose are connected with bad taste. In a world where the objects are artificial, synthetic, plastic, fake, ingenious and fantastic, obviously made-up.<sup>15</sup> I think the New Age movement's artefacts generally have a bad taste stamp because of the made-up-ness around the movement. How the nature is transformed to be consuming items with a diffuse function and purpose. Since bad taste is connected with a lower social status and class I think this subject is interesting and more relevant to investigate. It is also because the New Age movement is a relative unexplored subject in an art and craft connection.

Once one of my supervisors at Konstfack told me that I had succeeded if I wanted to catch the worst taste in aesthetics. I on the other hand think that the New Age movement is not only carrying a bad "taste" but if you look at it from an outside perspective that is what you are going to see, an unserious, fuzzy, bad taste movement. But if you go deeper in the movement you will find useful examples of material phenomena with a great value to the art and craft scene. The New Age world is expert in using material objects as vessels of meaning. A phenomenon that can be studied if you want to understand how values and importance is created. This is something that I think can be useful tools within design, art and craft.

There are some artists that have tried out methods from the occult and the New Age movement in their artistic creations to get creative input. Within different parts of the New Age movement it is common to get in a state of trance and connect with your inner spirit or the spirit world. One artist group who has been using these occult and New Age related rituals in their art is the Swedish artist collective "*We Work In A Fragile Material, (WWIFM)*",<sup>16</sup> in the winter of 2006 they went out in the woods for one weekend with 300 kilo clay and by using different rituals and exercises they got to a greater state to create art in. One of the methods they used that proved to be the best was the drum meditation with 30 minutes intervals. After that they gathered to create sculptures of clay inspired by the spiritual experience from the meditation.

The group had a kind of a schedule or plan what would happen those days in the woods. Each member

---

<sup>15</sup>*Destination Culture*, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett. 1998 p. 272

<sup>16</sup>Konstnären, nummer två 2006. p. 22

selected a so called Goetias demon to represent them, they used tarot cards to get answers around there artistic future and when the midnight came they played “the spirit in the glass” at the Ouija board.

The sculptures that was made in the occult rituals where later on burnt in atmosphere of alchemy, where the clay went pure and free from demons and spirituals.

I think these methods can create a more amusing way of working with and to create art as well as being a method that will bring you further in the creation in unexpected ways. Even if the methods could be seen as funny its a tool for getting a greater creativity. I believe this way of working also creates a greater value to the final result since the process of making is a important part of the work within the craft scene and by adding a spiritual dimension to the method, WWIAFM expands the concept of making clay figures. By great value I mean that a story is created around the object by using occult methods and rituals that brings a layer of meaning and importance to the object.

## **REFLEXIVITY**

My base for this investigation lies in my earlier personal experience in the New Age movement that brings an inside perspective on the movement. An experience that I am using in this project.

Through the age of 13 and until I was around 15 me and my friends had a period of time that we were highly engaged in occultism and in the New Age movement. While being in the age between childhood and the adult life we were experimenting with different kinds of rituals and methods to find answers about something higher then life it self. We were holding essences in the full moon, trying to contact spirits and reading tarot cards. The New Age stores were for us a holy place and that we had a great respect of. Entering a New Age store and you were greeted by a imbued smell of incense and the air vibrated of mysticism. My greatest interest was the crystals and stones, each stone had a specific importance and by using and carry the stones with you it would give you the energy from the stone. For 2-3 years my pockets were full of stones with different abilities depending on what the day would bring and what I wanted it to bring. I kept my stones in a wooden cabinet with a moon and sun decoration and in the cabinet the stones were carefully wrapped in black silk fabric. Every full moon I had a purifying ritual with the stones to get rid of the bad energy they had taken from me, every thing around the stones was made in a carefully respectful way.

These few years in the New Age movement have then become an embarrassing memory of passing over to the adult life. Looking back at my rituals and care for the stones may seem ridicules but in fact that kind of treating the objects created a higher value to the stones. I now see my time in the New Age movement as a great experience of material culture and an experience of a material relationship and like most experiences it has also shaped my view on what is beautiful, interesting and aesthetically attracting.

## MAGICAL ARTEFACTS, FETISH AND RITUALS

In our every day life we all have specific rituals, it could be like regular bedtimes, meals and holiday festivities. The artefacts that are in the “New Age” movement are often loaded with and connected to specific rituals and values. Through a deeper belief in the objects that also creates a material fetish around the objects. I will in my field work look at the activities in the movement that are connected with rituals. By using artefacts in rituals they create expectations, faith and a greater spiritual belief around them. Here I will get a deeper understanding of the rituals importance and the fetish around it that also have a field work view.

### RITUALS

Suzanne Blier Preston writes in the book *Critical terms for art history*, *Ritual*. Suzanne Blier Preston writes about her field work in northern Togo, West Africa in an Batammaliba family where she did her Ph.D study. A field work that revolved around their ceremonies and rituals in the village which showed the gender differences between men and women and the differences from the West, the way you may have learn to be polite could be the opposite in the Batammaliba village.

Ritualized behaviours can also be how you fold the newspaper in a particular way, the way you are folding your clothes and how you put up your lotion, make up kit, etc. in the bathroom cabinet. These rituals create a “reality” that gives their lives a sense of order and that serve as a means of making somethings one’s own.

*“Clearly distinctions between assumed rational and irrational acts to term such as “magic”, “fetish”, and “tradition”.*<sup>17</sup>

As Blier describes about Batammaliba that the rational in the village could be irrational in the West but of course this is all around us in the society depending on witch culture you are a part of.

As In the New Age culture that may look like an irrational movement with all different activities around harmony and wellness if you are standing outside the culture, but if you are a practitioner of the culture it may seem to be the most natural.

*“While rituals are necessarily defined by features of cultural and temporal specificity, and are indeed perceived to lie at the crux of given religious belief system, these same rituals often are framed in such a way as to transcend specific context of worship and belief.”*<sup>18</sup>

---

<sup>17</sup>Critical terms for art history, by Nelson Robert and Shift Richard. *Ritual*, by Blier Preston Suzanne.2003 p. 299

<sup>18</sup>Critical terms for art history, by Nelson Robert and Shift Richard. *Ritual*, by Blier Preston Suzanne. 2003 p. 301

Rituals are highly connected to religions that are connected to belief, in Christianity you have rituals (the acts and activities) in the baptism, the communion, funeral, etc. And all of those rituals are connected to objects and materials, you have the baptism font and water, the grail and wine and the coffin and urn with soil. As a Christian you are expected to have a belief and faith in these rituals, objects, and materials. In Christianity as well as in the New Age movement there is a connection to objects and materials that is related to rituals and actions like crystal healing, taro reading, aura soma, etc. These are all examples of rituals with a material focus where the objects are part of something bigger.

## **FETISH**

Fetish is connected to rituals since you have a high fascination and emotional interest in specific materials. A material fetishized material could be described as a material whose power, desirability, or significance a person passionately overvalues or a material expression of a personal or a cultural fixation. The desire and the fetish are connected to aesthetics and sometimes religion. Material objects that are charged with powers capable of satisfying the desires.

As Pietz, William writes in the book *Critical term for art history* about the Fetish.

*“Attributing intentional purposiveness to material objects associated by chance with the gratification of human desires, the fetishist both mystified the physical world by attributing to it a human-oriented teleology and refined the social world by subjecting all capacity for moral autonomy to mechanical rituals and dogmatic beliefs.”<sup>19</sup>*

When the fetishes of material objects and the desire are so present that they will be a part of you and in some ways structure your life they become something like a belief connected to the material objects that are a part of owning and having. I believe that this is what happens in the New Age movement. I think that it shows how a fetish and belief of the material objects are creating a type of life style.

---

<sup>19</sup>Critical terms for art history, by Nelson Robert and Shift Richard. Fetish, by Pietz William. 2003 p. 308

## **FIELD WORK FORMATION**

In this chapter I am focusing on explaining how I prepare the field work to have a base to work from. How I participate in and interact with the culture, the observation and documentation and how/who I am interviewing and evaluating the input that will bring be the answers to my questions.

I am doing a field work like investigation. To interact with a culture with a limited knowledge and not really knowing what the outcome will be. In this case I am dealing with the New Age movement. This could put me in a sensitive position to feel exposed in front of the subject that I am researching. When engaging in spiritual contexts, something that is closely connected to my personal life this risk and judgement is of course present. It could be compared as an exploring trip in the New Age jungle. I better not get lost. For my artistic field work investigation I need to have a structure but also be open minded for the culture to get the result that I am looking for. Trough out my investigation I work in parallel with my artistic reflection on the New Age movement, I am going back and forward between in the movement and my artistic creation and comparing, reflecting and going back again.

## **PREPARATION**

Before I am interacting with the New Age culture I need to prepare, the first and most important I have to ask myself is what knowledge do I want to get out from the field work. For my artistic investigation I want to capture the core/s and the soul of the New Age movements material world in order to find the significant value that exists in the movements artifacts. My field work is around the artifacts in the movement where I will look at the aesthetics, the social relations, activities and significance and the veil of mystique that are around the objects. To get to that knowledge around the artifacts I am going to do observations of the cultures relations to their artifacts, my methods is my camera and notes when moving around in the culture where will be focused in New Age's shops.

In my investigation I have decided to interview Margareta Hulten owner of the New Age store Isis Kammare at Storkyrkobrinken, a small street in the old parts of Stockholm. She is working as an professional astrologer and seeress. In her professional work she is writing horoscopes for different magazines as Cosmopolitan, Amelia, Tara and so on. On my first year at Konstfack I got in contact with Margareta Hulten that become to be a collaboration that resulted in an window display with my porcelain crystals in her store. This time I decided to let her do an tarot and astrology reading on me and a interview and discussions on her view on the New Age artifacts.

## OBSERVATION AND PARTICIPATION

I have put myself in the New Age culture and in their activities in order to analyze the relations to their artifacts and how they are using rituals connected to objects. But also as a way of entering the movement and not investigate it from an outside perspective but from the inside. This field work like investigation in different activities around the New Age culture has also brought on an investigation in myself, how my expectations of the movement looks like and why I have these expectations.

I have tried out different activities in the movement such as aura soma therapy, aura photo, New Age fair, tarot and astrology reading. The one I will focus on now is the belief in the Tarot and astrology reading.

Before I stepped into the New Age store Isis Kammare, Storkyrkobrinken, Stockholm in order to get a Tarot and astrology reading from the astrologist and Tarot reader Margareta Hultén, I put myself in a research mode and expected that this was only a method for my investigation with no belief in the activity that would come. The reading started with that Margareta took my personal code number and because I did not know my time of birth I had to call my mother. And then Margareta printed out around 30 pages about me and my life. My convinced relation to the movement that I was there with no belief and only for an investigation purpose suddenly disappeared, when Margareta could point out specific cases in my life on the exact month and year I found myself becoming a believer in what she was saying. You could say that she just is a person that easily can read people or that the astrology and Tarot reading was true. When a person you do not know tell you what's going to happen to you, the result is an emotional experience.

After the tarot and astrology reading I had an interview and discussion with Margareta in order to hear her perspective around the significance and value of the crystals and objects in the movement. I was prepared with a lot of questions but I soon realized that most of the questions were irrelevant to her.

I would not get the answers that I was looking for. I have met the astrologist Margareta a few times now and I had an idea about what answers I would get but of course that was not the case.

## VISUAL OBSERVATION

In my fieldwork investigation I have used the camera as a tool for documentation. That came to be have great value as a tool for my reflection upon the New Age movement.

A tool that can capture memories and moments that otherwise would be impossible to remember, a tool that extends the investigation and the visual process and a language to analyze and discuss the field work observation. It allows for an absolute check of position and identification in the cultural events. Photos are precise records of material reality.<sup>20</sup>

The book Visual Anthropology addresses the problematic sides of photographic documentation when investigating cultures with a camera. In this case it was an investigation of Navajo sand painting around the religious activities and the objects, a medicine bundle of a Navajo singer. Navajo is the largest Indian tribe of the United States of America.

*"Why don't you buy a ceremony.. After all you wouldn't expect one of your White friends to share his medical treatment with you"*<sup>21</sup>

In my investigation of the movement I saw the importance to go deeper in the culture and to participate with its activities in order to get closer to its reality. A reality that I would not be able to grasp if I saw it from a distance.

It is important to study artifacts in their home environment and its surroundings. If you take out the object from its context you will lose the meaning and relations of the object. I am not seeking to take beautiful pictures but to capture the objects in their context.

In the visual observation you are looking for patterns in order to define meaning. The relationships that forms a whole structure.

---

<sup>20</sup>Collier John, Jr., Collier Malcolm. Visual Anthropology. Mexico 1986 p. 9

<sup>21</sup>Collier John, Jr., Collier Malcolm. Visual Anthropology. Mexico 1986 p. 136

## FIELDWORK INVESTIGATION

(See the attached material booklet for pictures)

In my field work I am looking for connections my observations, my participation and in the interview. I want to find the red thread that shows the role of the material culture in the movement. My focus lies in the use of crystals within the movement. They are the base or subject from where I investigate the movements relationship to material objects. The common patterns and subjects that lies in my investigation are significance and value, activities, social relations and the aesthetics. By looking for patterns in these parameters I am looking for knowledge about and within the movements relationship to artifacts and material objects.

## SIGNIFICANCE AND VALUE

When studying and reflecting on the visual images and on my experience of being in the movement I could see how the movement puts expectations around the objects linked to its distinction and spirituality. The crystals are displaced as a eye-catcher and are in the centre of the New Age spatiality, with different formations and significance, from jewelery, clocks to the small tumbled stones with a belief of energy.

Every crystal has its own significance that is associated with expectations and believe that the stones are loaded with energy. When standing in a New Age store there are countless of glass containers filled with various stones together with notes of its purpose and use.

As an example of this significant and spirituality to a crystal taken from one of the biggest New Age online shops "amuletten".

*"Amethyst (purple quartz).*

*Amethyst is very calmative and good for stress relief. It is said to work for headaches and insomnia. Amethyst is a stone with strong and purifying vibrations and can be used for meditation and healing. It strengthens our intuition and spiritual presence.*

*Star sign: Aquarius, Pisces*

*Chakra: Skull"<sup>22</sup>*

Looking at my participation in the movement thru aura reading, aura soma therapy, tarot and astrology reading. They all have spiritual values that are communicated and embedded in material objects. In the interview with Margareta she mentions the rituals and the significance of the materials, how the objects could be loaded with energy.

---

<sup>22</sup>[www.amuletten.net](http://www.amuletten.net), 2012-03-04 20.30

- As you know Margareta I am working a lot with crystals in my master project and I am trying to find the core of the great value around the New Age objects, there is a story and meaning around the objects that I find very important and interesting. I am thinking of when I was a kid and were collecting those stones and that they were very important for me, how my daily life revolved around the meaning of those stones. So I am trying to find back to that importance to create that great value and relation to the objects. In your store what kind of objects do you want to highlight and sell?
  
- *I have had various times in my life, in the beginning when I was sharing space with others I went so tired of the New Age practitioners how they were acting around the objects and the rituals they had connected to them, so when I opened my own store I only wanted to sell stone jewelry. But now I feel the opposite I want to focus on the core in me what is important for me and that is the magic, it is herbs, the own force and to find the goddess in me and others. The greatest is to find inspiration, you could say to open your heart to find God or open your heart and find the inspiration, the viability. And of course I could say that the crystal is carrying energy that is radiating the energy. The crystal could be programmed to be used on the body and to carry on energy as love and healing and so on. I do not believe that an object in itself is holy but the symbolic of the object could be holy, there are so many different aspects of the goddess or the God if you so wish.*

In the interview I found it interesting that when Margareta says that the crystals could be programmed with energy and that an object in itself is not holy but the symbolic of the object could be. So then it is us, the humans that decide the crystals significance and how we want to use them.

Objects that are found within the new age movement have a presence of being very important. This is perhaps because they are charged with a high amount of hope, faith and expectation. A belief that the objects are carrying an energy of different kind of wellness and in this belief there are also expectations around the objects. There is a certain and very clear way of putting hope and expectation to material objects within the New Age movement, it is almost like the way we tend to depend on medicine.

- Do you have any object that you put a great value to maybe something you always carry with you?
  
- *Yes of course I have, you could say I have a lot of those things.*

Margareta goes to get her bag and starts digging among all her things, it takes time so it seems she use to carry around with a lot of things in her bag.

- *This For example is an amulet that I always carry with me, it is an seven star ornament and it symbolizes the seven planets and in the saying that the first seven planets, it is on a base of gold and what the gold gives and this is all of the power of the planets and then you put a diamond in the centre then the diamond is the highest form of a crystal, this is purity. The gods power and the power of the planets. And this is an ankh cross that says to produce energy, this is an old coin from india that I found but that I honestly do not know what it stands for but I thought it was so cool and I cant be without it.*

*When I am going I usually carry with me a cross stone (starolit).*

- What does the cross stone mean?

- *It is not a beautiful one, the stone is used in most of the Shamanic traditions and the stone is a symbolic the four directions, the four seasons or elements. It stands for magic and to invoke power. This stone is amazing special with a crystal then the power gets really great.*

*When talking about magical objects there are some objects that have a greater value like starolit and crystals.*

Margareta talks about some of the objects that she puts a greater value to and that she usually brings with her. In one hand she talks about the pureness of the highest form of the crystal the diamond and the gold, like they have a stronger energy and value because they are precious metals and the highest form of gemstones. But then she talks about the old coin from India that she just thought was cool and do not have any outspoken value. I think this is important and what I want to highlight that this mechanism of charging objects with value could be applied to any objects around us.

## **ACTIVITIES**

The activities around the movement have a wide span but are usually connected with wellbeing and it could be everything from, crystal healing, coaching to tarot reading and spirituality. Activities that are connected with expectation, faith and rituals. How the material objects are used and are based in special rituals in different contexts. They are like spiritual utility objects.

- I think it is interesting and what I am working with when you said that it is not the object in it self that has the power or holiness but it is us humans that are programming and puts the objects with different values.
- *You know I can be so tired of when people are messing as an ex with taro cards if the card is upside down or if you touch the card with the wrong hand, I mean what do you think it is, It is only paper. The magic is not what we create around the object it is the human in it self. Some times the New Age movement just feels like an theatre performance. Some people need rituals to get a structure in there life, the ritual could serve a perhaps If you know what will happen you put your self in that mood and that is a good thing. But magic can rise anytime with or with our rituals.*

### **SOCIAL REALATIONSHIPS**

The New age Movement is also based on social relations, from social relations of identity and group membership that both are connected with aesthetic consumption. The New Age movement is also very much a industry based on consumption connected to objects, experience and identity.

When it comes to the New Age movements crystal that comes originality is a raw material from the nature and still is but in the movement it transforms to an consumable item to strengthen and make your life better.

- When we are talking about magical power in objects it makes me think of the nature, is it the energy from the nature that has the power?
- *I have been in all different kinds of traditions but this with the earth and the nature are the greatest the mother of earth, it really is. For me talking about the nature is the most important to work with mother of earth and to save the earth. You know what we are doing here that could be seen as playful but the core for me and what I want to achieve is to work together to save the earth. The nature and earth is the power of all beings.*

## **AESTHETICS**

My observation started in the New Age's stores where I looked at the aesthetic of the objects and how they were displayed. Something you could say about New Age stores is that they almost look al the same, the window display with silk fabric and with al kind of frills of things from crystal formations, Buddha figures, angels to dreamcatcher and jewelery This mix of different material symbols from all kinds of different spiritual cultures makes it look like an unserious movement. But in the same way there is a feeling of entering a "wunderkammer" with different kind of collecting items and a desire of wanting those small items. The aesthetics around the objects are mainly based on a natural romantic appearance. Something that is very present in the use of crystals. Different kinds of stones carry different meaning and are supposed to hold natural or even supernatural powers.

Every time I interacted with the New Age movement I was always thinking what am I doing here, with a mix of feelings from embarrassment to excitement with respect and fear.

By entering the New Age stores I somehow expected to get the same experience that I got when I was a teenager but there were something missing and it struck me that the mysticism was gone. The aesthetics and the display of the artifacts were not thought true and did not bring the value that I had for the stones, even if the stones in them self are still as beautiful as I remember them. I wish that the aesthetics were more extravagant, bigger crystals, more color as a world of crystals and auras.

## **THE MATERIALITY OF THE OBJECT, ARTISTIC DISCUSSION UPON THE SUBJECT**

(See the attached material booklet for pictures)

Parallel with my investigation and observation in the New Age movement I am constantly reflecting upon my new experiences. My fieldwork like investigation in the material culture "New Age" has been a method to invoke a relation and feeling from my experience. One of the first things I wanted to do was to create my own fantasy of the New Age culture and the way I want it to look like to create the feelings I had in my earlier experience of the movement.

By using my experience and skill in the material glass and to use glassmaking as an investigation tool I can investigate and understand the material cultural relationship and value and by so doing I can rewrite and create new stories and relations.

By using the New Age tradition and aesthetics and my experience as well as expectations of the movement from the fieldwork investigation, I was reflecting upon the New Age material relation in my artistic investigation. I am using the glass ability and my material knowledge and experience to re-craft the subject, to reflect upon the subject and that will create a new perspective on material culture.

I want my artistic work and interpretation to be seen as an material study upon the material culture around the movement. This is what my study investigates and where it materializes and take the form of a material storytelling piece around material relations. You could say that my practice methods are material studies, where I am constructing material methods in glass in order to find the glass strength and ability to tell material stories based on my experiences from the field work investigation around its material culture.

When looking upon the meaning and value around the objects in the New Age stores with all its crystals and objects it somehow feels like it is a material world based on an idea of nature. The stones come from the nature but in the New Age movement it becomes something else, it is something in between. They have transformed the stones to loaded objects, filled with belief and expectations. A transformation from what they might call the mother of earth to consumable items that creates cultural and social identity, one of the reasons why the New Age movement is an interesting subject to investigate. This transformation I am interpreting through my material knowledge in glass.

When interviewing Margareta she said that she does not believe that an object in itself is holy but the symbolic of the object could be and that we can program crystals to carry a greater energy. I believe this statement of hers is important for my artistic creation since I am using the New Age ability to charge their artifacts with a high amount of hope, faith and expectation, a belief that the objects are carrying a greater energy. By using the materials ability to convey, me as an artist can use those mechanisms to materialize my

artistic investigation an reflection upon the material culture within New Age.

The fetish around the crystals can almost be seen as a functional part of the material object. A fetish and desire around the objects is also what I am looking for in my artistic work in glass.

My artistic reflection is shown as an experience installation in glass, an installation that is containing relations experience in the atmosphere of mystical, faith, dreams and hope. Since I work with material experiences and material relations I wanted to create a spatial and monumental sense with a overwhelming, powerful and mystical experience. In order to create a spatial experience I chose to work with flat glass cut out in shapes of crystals. In those crystal formations I wanted to create a mobile like installation with color shades from turquoise, purple to pink. By enlarging the crystal mobile I create a spatial effect, a spatiality that you could look into and even walk into in order to get the whole experience surrounding you. Because the crystals shapes are hanging lose in thin wires from the ceiling they have a movement that also creates a sound experience, a sound that could be compared with church bells or wind chimes. The experience of the mobil was a way to create a surrounding to the smaller glass objects. The essence of the material relation with the belief and expectation connected to material containing of power and energy.

In the smaller glass objects I wanted to work with colors and formations inspired from the New Age aesthetics with aura like and mystical sense. The objects are glass castings where I worked with bright colors in layers and fading in a rainbow like way. There are the tree-dimensional mineral like objects and the flat aura crystal like objects. You could say that I am working with the material glass in three different craft methods with different expressions, formations and significance. With the different working methods in glass I am creating different ways of working with glass to create various crystals landscapes.

I am creating my own place of worship where there is an ongoing experience and material story. The crystal mobile with its inner magical core, the pole of source with a vibration of energy.

*“When a crystal is cut to the proper form and when the human mind enters into relationship with its structural perfection, the crystal emits a vibration that extends and amplifies the power of the user’s mind.”<sup>23</sup>*



Photo: Sara Lundkvist, 2012<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup><http://www.sedonanewagecenter.com/newsletter/html/2008/cnanewletters8-11.htm>, 8/3 2012 14.38

<sup>24</sup>Lundkvist Sara, Stockholm 2012

## DISCUSSION

In order to be able to answer the questions in my thesis through my artistic investigation I started with the third question that worked as a base in my investigation.

-How can I use the concepts of material cultural studies and ethnology in my artistic practice and thesis to find a new way of discussing and in order to get a new perspective on my practice?

Since I wanted to investigate the New Age movements social and material relation I used a fieldwork method to interact with the movement in order to get an inside perspective. The fieldwork method contained observation, participation and interview, in those three methods the visual documentation of images had an important part. Images often tell more than words. In the field work investigation I put myself in the movement and exposed me for its activities around the spirituality. By so doing I went from an investigator being a sort of believer of the spirituality. A brief transformational visit that I believe had a great importance for my artistic investigation and creation. This experience was a way to find material to reflect upon the faith and value of the New Age movement. In order to create and capture my relation to the movement with its aesthetics and values. I could say that this came to be a method to capture through my practice the New Age movements ability to give a greater importance to objects than the object physical self. By using a method of interacting with the movement to create an experience of believing I could reflect upon the experience and investigation in order to transform the experience to my artistic creation.

It is important to point out that I am not a believer of the movement and my investigation was based on a research perspective. In order to be able to understand its material culture I had to try and experience the spiritual part of the movement believes. To put me in that position was rather hard. I also need to take a step back to the research perspective and reflect over the experience. To jump between these two positions was rather complicated.

With my new knowledge and experience of the social and material relation in the movement I could reflect rewrite and use the aesthetic expression in my artistic investigation. Not only using the aesthetics in the shapes, the color and form I found by doing this investigation as a method to even be able to convey and shape the social relations and expectations that are in the movement. With this ability I created an material communication and a material storytelling.

Since I have used a field work method to look at the New Age movement in order to understand and use its material culture and to be able to read its social and material relations. As mentioned earlier in the thesis this relation is something you cant see or touch, but I believe that in by placing myself in the movement and experiencing the relationship between objects and social relations, the cultures relationship to materiality I

will understand the material culture and be able to use its subjects as a source of inspiration and as a subject for artistic reflection.

Since this investigation is about relations to materiality it is hard to put words on it and to explain the field work conclusion. This investigation is dependent on its visual documentation and because of that I have attached a booklet with visual documentation to show the connection between the field work and the art work. This is also why my artistic investigation of the materiality of the object is so important. It is where the real investigation and reflection takes place and that is why I call my artistic investigation a material communication and a material storytelling work of art.

### **FUTHER DEVELOPMENT AND RESEARCH POTENTIAL**

I believe this method could be applied to many artistic approaches to get a deeper knowledge and understanding of the material culture you are working with. A method that could show craft and art as a artistic field with a research potential.

For my cultural study in the field work I was investigating and looking at objects ability to be charge with deeper values and belief by its social relation. This method is a way to go deeper in an artistic investigation and to reflect up on the society, our social relations and material relations that even could be seen as a study of human beings connection to materiality and aesthetics.

I see this method being able to be enunciate for craft based research. Working with craft as a research method brings a new perspective of talking about material culture where investigating and reflecting through material knowledge where the making brings the investigation a deeper importance and can raise new understanding. A new turn that can bring craft to be equally important and even more then with only a theoretical perspective with lack of material knowledge.

By opening craft and use our practice as a method to understand material culture I believe crafts potential and way of expanding creates a highly important point for crafts ability to appraise as a research method of social and cultural studies. By saying that I mean that there will always be a need and ability for craft practitioners to understand and use there practice in order to create new knowledge. In aesthetics, values, social structures and material as well as social relations.

## **SUMMARY**

This thesis addresses the ability of glass making as a research tool. By using a fieldwork method in the investigation of the New Age movement social and material relations I want to show the importance of material objects and crafts importance and strength to be able to tell and rewrite different stories by reflecting on material cultures. As a craft practitioner I believe it is important to in a theoretical way understand material relation then we are creating artifacts

By doing a field work like investigation in the New Age movement I got a deeper understanding of material relations then from an outside perspective and by doing so to understand the material relation I could also use those relations to rewrite and create a new story.

If you are a believer or skeptical to the New Age the movement anyway creates a deeper importance to the artifacts, an importance that could be associated to material objects in our daily life.

## REFERENCE LIST

Adamsson Glenn, The Craft Reader. Esther Leslie. Walter Benjamin: Traces of Craft, Berg, Oxford 2010

Attfeld Judy, Wild things, the material culture of everyday life, Berg, Oxford 2000

Collier John, Jr., Collier Malcolm. Visual Anthropology. Mexico 1986

Dant Tim, Materiality and society, New York 2005

Fallan Kjetil(ed.)Design history, understanding theory and method, Oxford 2010

Hammer Olav, På spaning efter helheten NEW AGE en ny folktro. Finland 1997

Kaijser Lars and Öhlander Magnus, Etnologiskt fältarbete, 1999

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett Barbara, Destination Culture, United States of America 1998

Konstnären, nummer två, 2006

Lundkvist Sara, The magic stone BA project, Konstfack 2010

Nelson and Shift, Critical terms for art history. Blier Preston Suzanne, Rituals, Chicago 2003

Nelson and Shift, Critical terms for art history. Pietz William, Fetish, Chicago 2003

[www.amuletten.net](http://www.amuletten.net)

[www.erg.su.se](http://www.erg.su.se)

[www.sedonanewagecenter.com](http://www.sedonanewagecenter.com)



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



10

Inneractive

# Aura Photo

A photograph of a woman named Sara, wearing a grey hoodie, centered within a large, glowing, multi-colored aura. The aura is composed of various colors including green, yellow, orange, and red, creating a soft, ethereal glow around her.

Sara

ORANGE artistic, physical-creative expression, excitement

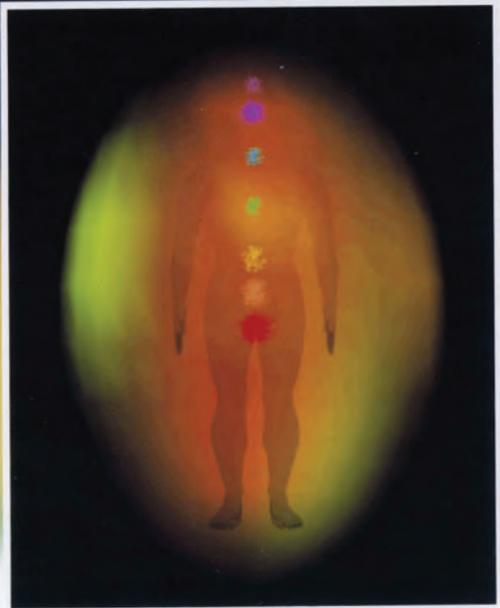
Blå Lotus, Hornsg 61, 118 49 Stockholm, [www.blalotus.net](http://www.blalotus.net)

4/3/2011 4:14 PM [www.blalotus.net](http://www.blalotus.net)

11

Inneractive

# Aura Chakra Photo

A photograph of a woman named Sara, shown from the waist up, with a glowing aura around her. The aura is composed of various colors including green, yellow, orange, and red. A vertical line of seven colored dots (chakras) is visible on her chest, representing the chakra system.

Sara

ORANGE artistic, physical-creative expression, excitement

4/3/2011 4:15 PM Blå Lotus, Hornsg 61, 118 49 Stockholm, [www.blalotus.net](http://www.blalotus.net) [www.blalotus.net](http://www.blalotus.net)

12



13



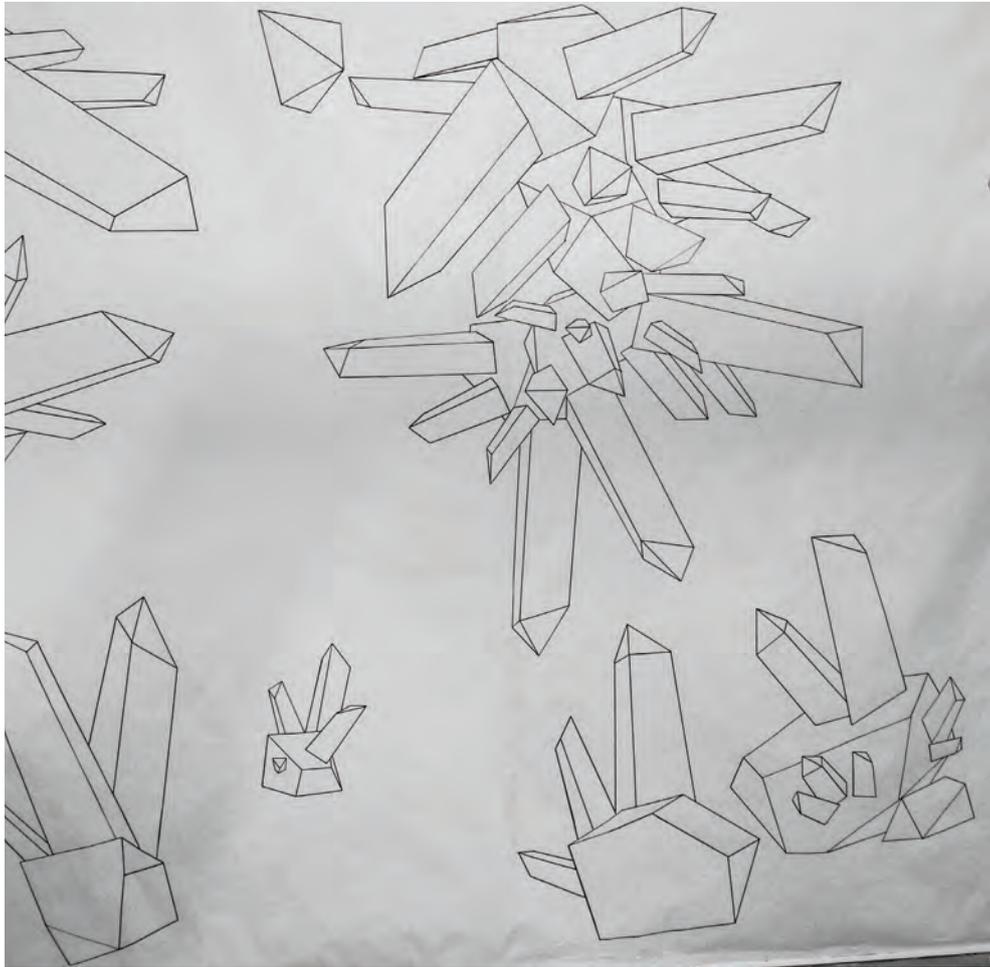
14



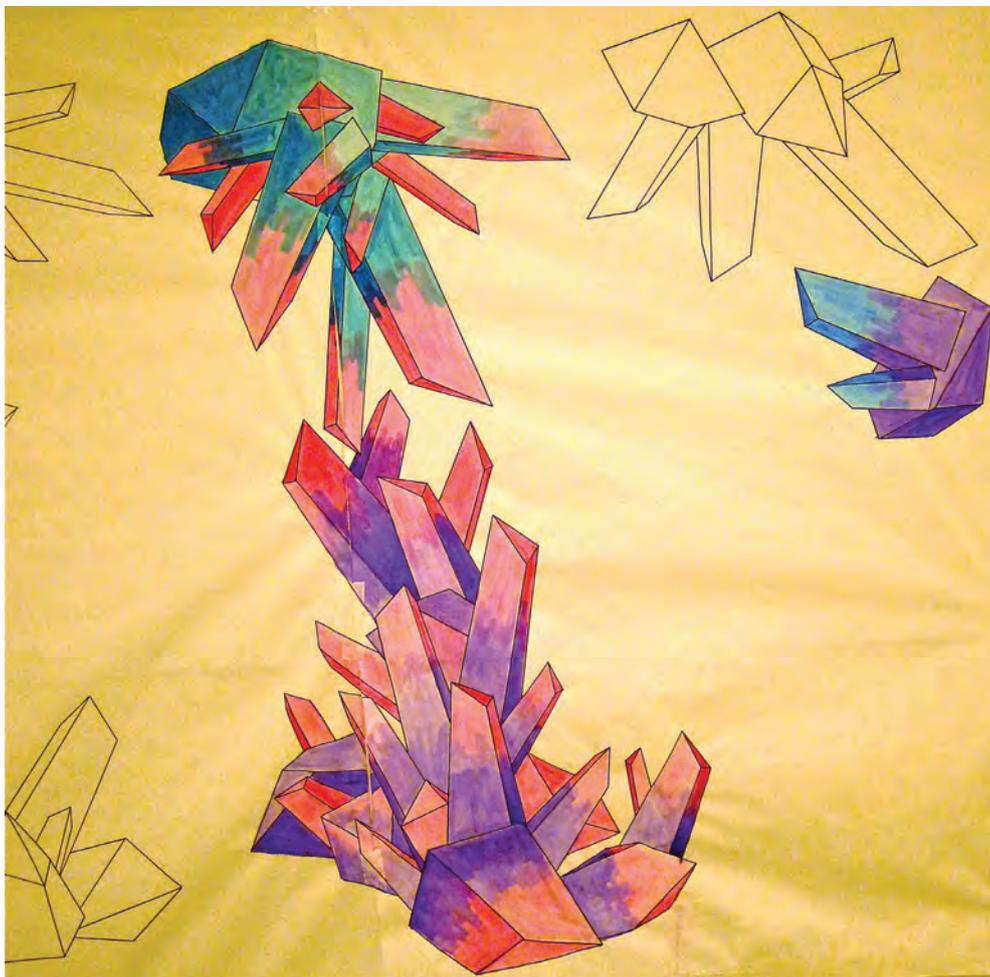
15



16



17



18



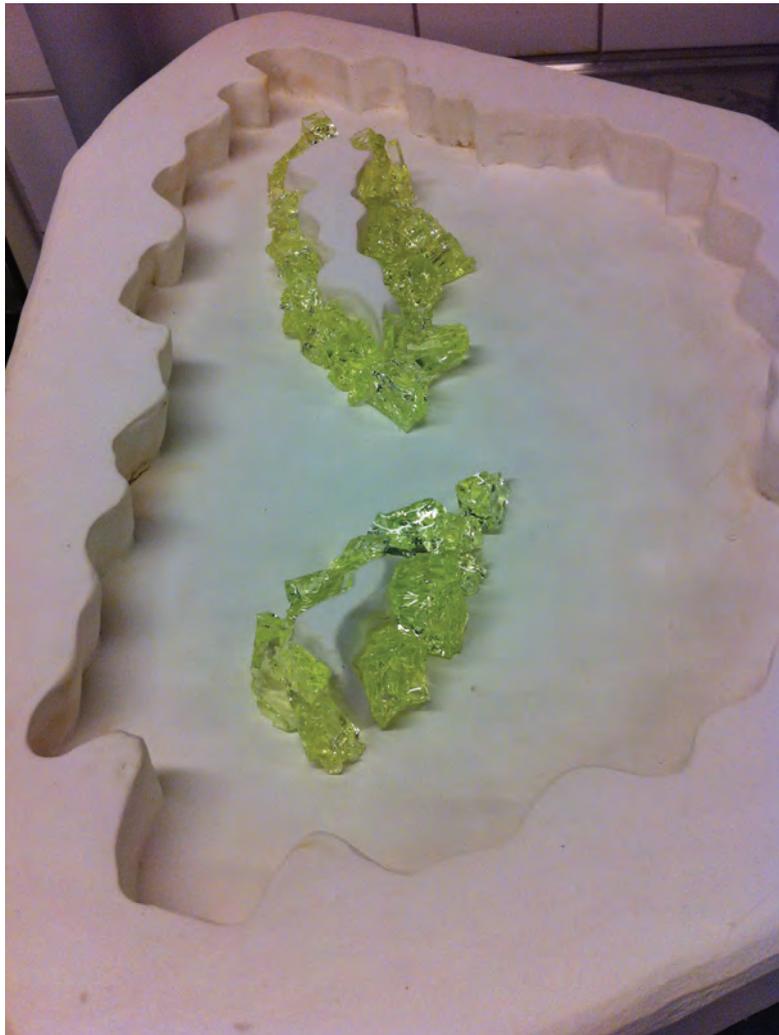
19



20

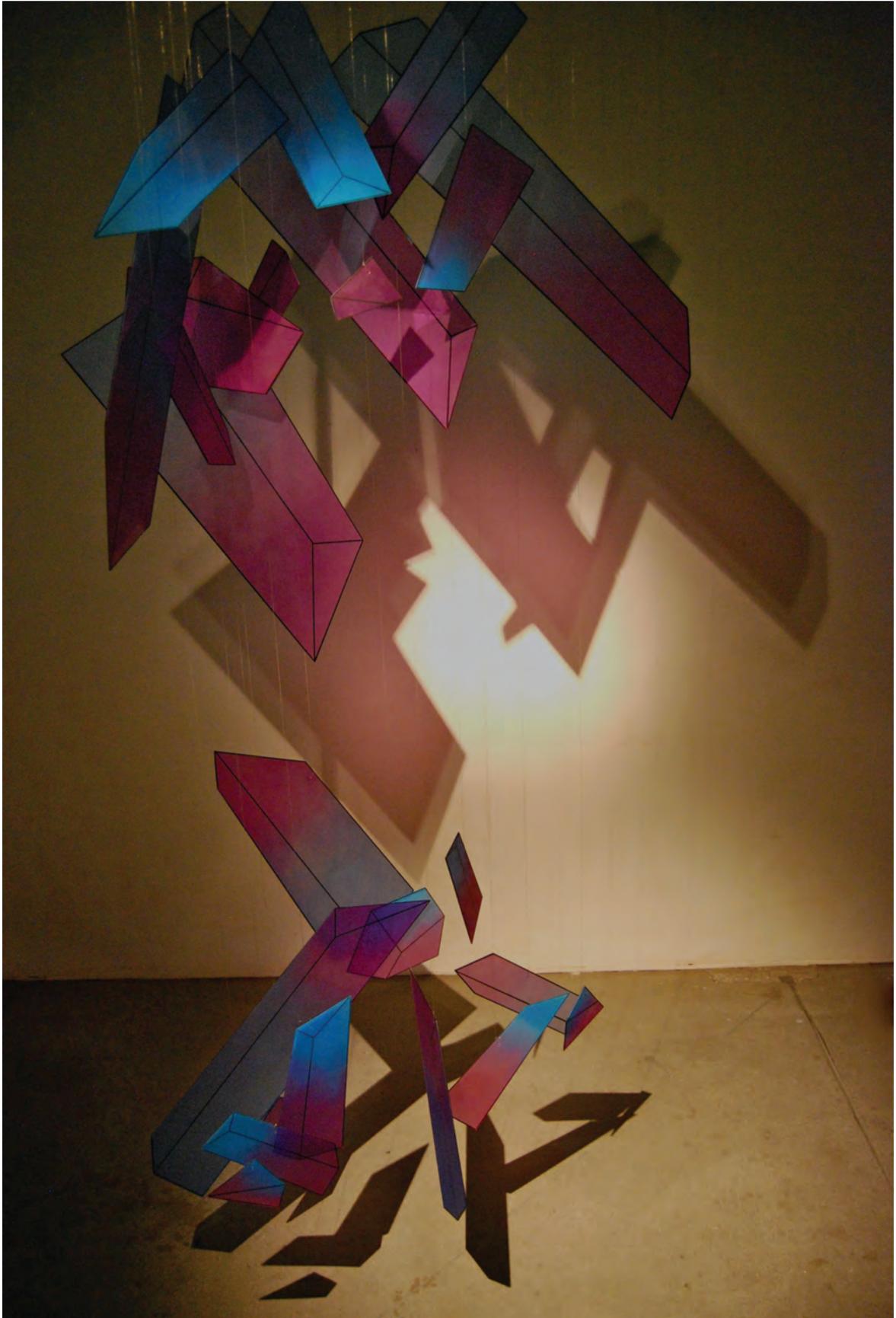


21



22







## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- 1.** New Age store Isis Kammare, Stockholm 2011, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 2.** New Age store, Wien 2011, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 3.** New Age store, Wien 2011, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 4.** New Age store, Wien 2011, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 5.** New Age store Kristall Rummet, Stockholm 2010, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 6.** New Age store Kristall Rummet, tumbled stones, Stockholm 2010, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 7.** Flat stones, Kreta 2011, Photo by Reino Björk
- 8.** New Age store Kristall Rummet, tumbled and flat stones, Stockholm 2010, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 9.** Tumbled stones, Photo by Kakan Hermansson
- 10.** Stone collection, Photo by Kakan Hermansson
- 11.** Aura photo from New Age fair, Stockholm 2011
- 12.** Aura photo from New Age fair, Stockholm 2011
- 13.** Aura Soma therapy with all the Aura Soma bottles, Stockholm 2011, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 14.** Aura Soma therapy with the Aura Soma bottles I choosed, Stockholm 2011, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 15.** Tarot and astrology reading, Isis Kammare Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 16.** Photo of Margareta Hedin amulet, Isis Kammare Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 17.** Crystal landscape sketch on the wall, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 18.** Crystal landscape sketch on the wall, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 19.** Studio work, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 20.** Test of window glass in formatations of crystals, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 21.** Clay positive in a crystal shape, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 22.** Plaster mould, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 23.** Work in progress kiln castings, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 24.** Crystal instalation in window glass, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist
- 25.** Crystal glass castings, Konstfack Stockholm 2012, Photo by Sara Lundkvist