

Art for exam

Akademiet high school in Drammen is a private school with 300 students. We provide three specializations, among which media and communication is one. Our motto is: For you who aspire a bit higher. The students at the school live up to this motto. It is not only the students who's ambitions are a bit higher, but also the teachers. It was on this background, the idea of inviting an artist to the school as a part of the exam, was developed. Akademiet follows governmental standards and aims, and teaching of students in media and communication shall relate to the real world and various careers in media business.

As a teacher it was natural for me to look in my social network for a suitable candidate for the job. Børge Kjeldstad soon became the choice. It was three reasons for this. First, I wanted a painter artist because several governmental knowledge aims for students in the third grade were met through the subjects history of expression, picture analysis and picture composition. The students also work a lot with combined text, and on this occasion they could easily write a news story about the school being transformed to an art exhibition for a day. Secondly I wanted the exam to simulate reality, and prepare the students for work life. Lastly, Børge is a friend of mine, and I had a personal interest in having a look at his artistic development.

Kjeldstad got interested immediately when I contacted him, and through a few weeks we made the plans for the project. In June 2011 Børge arrived in Drammen. We rigged the exhibition the day before the exam so that the students could meet an exhibition ready for curious spectators. 23 students completed the exam.

The exhibition, and Børge's part in it, went on like this: The students walked about for a while viewing the paintings. Then Børge started to talk a bit about himself and his relationship with the art. Børge chose to paint on one of the paintings he was later going to bring to Oslo as a part of a demonstration. This gave the students a closer relationship to Børge. They could easier understand that it was he who had made the paintings. Then Børge went through the exhibition, painting by painting, thoroughly explaining to the students the history and message of each picture. The students asked questions, took sound recordings and video/ stills all through this "guided tour". When finished, the students also then had the possibility to ask questions and take photos. Kjeldstad then went to Oslo. Most of the students chose to follow him to see how he worked in a different environment with his political engagement.

The result was several articles which were to be published in Drammens Tidene newspaper. Some of the students also created their own pictures inspired by Kjeldstad's works. There were also fairy tales written based on the paintings and their story.

The feedback from the students was unanimously positive. They found it exciting to talk with an artist, and they especially liked that the school's foyer had been transformed to an art exhibition. Their opinion was that this kind of exam was much more reality like than any other exhibition they had previously had. They also explained that they had picked a favorite painting, and that they had done in-depth studies of all the paintings.

As a teacher I must say I completely agree with the students evaluations. My opinion is that Børge was very good at explaining the history of every painting. He had the attention of the students and awoke their interest for all the works in the exhibition. It is a great experience for a teacher to see that what

you teach in theory, is coherent with the real world. The students had a great learning experience and this form of cooperation with professional work life is an important experience for them. Time and again throughout the exhibition I was confirmed that this is the right form for this exam for the students.

As a friend I also want to say a few words. It was incredibly interesting and fun to see Børge now compared to where he was in his art 10 years ago. He has had an enormous development, specially I will mention his portraits. They have more history, depth and expression now. I proudly look at the portrait he painted of me a cold autumn day 11 years ago, and I look forward to following both the friend Børge, his family, and the artist Børge, on his way further.

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