Sensing On the Move: *Music Across Borders* Documentary
(*Screen Production Process as Method in Artistic Research*)

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… the more we allow cinematic practices to infuse documentary and anthropology, the more we might be able to experience it in a sensory and sense-making way.\(^1\)

**Abstract:** This article is a presentation of, and reflection on the documentary film *Music Across Borders*. It draws on understandings from oral traditions of the Aŋlɔ-Eʋe language\(^2\), storytelling and music making to discuss ways of making meaning of the everydayness of life in migration in the Global South. The article elucidates examples from the film to address the notion of the ‘multilocality’ of sensing and knowing\(^3\) linked to concepts of wellness, inequality, and development in migration in the Global South. The article draws on indigenous knowledge and understanding in the Aŋlɔ-Eʋe language to explore the implications of migration on the self, the environment and technology with reference to the MIDEQ Hub’s focus on inequality and development. It illustrates how the film applies the musicality of language and music as language to communicate untranslatable understanding through intuition in the spaces of silence and of the moving body in migration. Processes of storying on screen, create transformative interaction and change which metaphors everyday life and its ‘processes of storying, sensing, and expressing with which people navigate their private and social spaces, including the physical virtual and technological spaces they inhabit with others on the move. Storying and storytelling methodologies used to produce *Music Across Borders* shed a light on artistic research as a point of synthesis for doing multidisciplinary research in contexts of South-South migration.

**Keywords:** film, story, process, sensing, knowing

**Introduction**

*Documentary filmmaking as artistic research methodology*

This article draws on my practice-based PhD research production *Music Across Borders* film\(^4\). It is a 45-minute documentary film, that treats music as language and the musicality of language on

\(^1\) Lancker 2013.

\(^2\) Aŋlɔ-Eʋe language is spoken from along the coastal region of West Africa and is part of the larger ‘Gbe’ language group stretching from the South-Eastern Ghana to Southwestern Nigeria.

\(^3\) Geurts 2002.

\(^4\) Available at https://vimeo.com/204053874.
screen, highlighting the phenomena of understanding, and knowing through intuition, borders, migration, interaction, and collaboration between people of various cultural racial and musical backgrounds and traditions. The article reflects on the film; the storying of its conception, making and sharing with audiences and how that relates to new insights and understandings of doing artistic research in the context of South-South migration. It charts what is transformative for those who participated in its multiple processes. These insights point us to how documentary filmmaking can help us better understand the relationships between migration inequality and development. The reflection is important because it builds a space to learn from the ways in which working in collaboration with others to story on screen and share the experience alongside insights on the screen story process is applicable to South-South migration. It informs the filmmaking aspect of the Migration for Development and Equality (MIDEQ) Hub’s Multilingual Arts, Creative Resistance and Wellbeing work package - Work Package 11 (WP11). This pertains to considering artistic research methodologies in the context of South-South migration, looking specifically at how cinematic story processes can inform, how we research human interaction, sensing and transformation for navigating and understanding equality and development.

In discussing the process of making the film in this article, I present documentary film making as an important ‘artistic research’ method, distinguishing artistic research as a research paradigm (separate from ‘art-based’ social research methods) and examine the opportunity it offers the MIDEQ Hub to ‘braid’ multiple research disciplines and approaches. This builds on the work of the Creative Arts and Translating Cultures Hub of the Researching Multilingually at The Borders research project (RM Borders).

For example, artistic methodologies are capable of research that uncovers the emotional and mental health issues resulting from inequalities associated with South-South migration. It lends itself to easier presentation of the lived experience, how it is expressed, represented, and communicated through research. As such, artistic research, works alongside quantitative and qualitative research approaches to expand on the scope of conducting, disseminating, and understanding South-South migration research.

**The ‘self’ as a cinematic story site**

Documentary storytelling as demonstrated in *Music Across Borders*, observes the self as a cinematic story site of dynamic transformation. Even though the film was not made as part of MIDEQ research, reflecting on its making opens insights relevant to the ways of working of the Multilingual Arts, Creative Resistance and Wellbeing work package. These insights are excavated from theoretical explorations of indigenous epistemologies and ontological dimensions of artistic research and understanding. The film narrates the interactional experience of Katrine Suwalski returning to Ghana in 2015 to collaborate with Ghanaian musicians twenty years after her first visit. Through discussing the experience of directing and producing *Music Across Borders*, the treatment of music and the moving image as cross-border language(s) is observed and discussed in relation to the multilingualistic approaches and possibilities within artistic research in the context of South-South

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5 More at www.mideq.org.

migration research. The reflection takes a storytelling approach to discussing three key ideas including 1. Process, 2, Relationship, 3. The Transformative Social Interaction resulting from making the film. This is a narrative looking specifically at how the three ideas can be understood in the context of artistic research methodology and as a multilingual, and multidisciplinary approach relevant to MIDEQ Hub research:

1. With an interest in ways in which music and the moving image can be brought to bear on South-South migration research. In so doing, to facilitate ‘making sense’ of inequality and development in relation migration through ‘story’, drawing on understandings of the everyday processes of resorting to story, for ‘sense-making’ and its applicability to research through artistically storying South-South migration experiences of the past into relevance in the present, projected into the future.

2. Looking at ways in which researcher engagement in/with the story processes can produce interaction which deals with the challenge of inequalities, to create developmental change and transformation for the individual and communities in migration, in the Global South.

3. Considering the role of story interactions in the filmmaking process for undertaking migration research in a manner that creates ripples of ‘multi-stories’, further transformation and development into the future. This is related to how sustainability can be understood and performed.

With these three key ideas, I elaborate on how artistic research:

a. Can reframe and recreate identities relying on the phenomenon of story;7

b. Plays a major role in creating reality8 and memory making on screen9 It takes cognisance of the multi-locality of knowing and the narrative forms in which they occur. This is uniquely important in relation to how the problems of inequalities and development can be presented and represented within MIDEQ Hub’s research processes, findings dissemination; and...

c. Allows the space to excavate indigenous knowledge within the multiple cultural contexts, sites, and intersections of MIDEQ Hub research.

For example, reflecting on Music Across Borders as part of my research process and methodology

7 Barrett and Bolt 2007 and Inglis and Thorpe 2012.
8 Nelson 2009
9 Bordwell and Thompson 2013.
presents an exploration opportunity to imbed traditional Aŋlɔ-Eʋe sensing, conceptualising and bodily ways of knowing,\(^{10}\) in relation to storytelling on screen to shape understanding.\(^{11}\) This is relevant to the language(s) in which we research and understand research, engage with research participants and partners in the Global South where indigenous knowledge is imbedded in multilingual practices, and the important role of arts and cultural practices of communication, education presentation and representation.

This reflection, (itself a composite part of artistic research practice) on documentary storytelling, reviews the interactive, collaborative ‘process of making’ with others through music-as-language and language-as-music on screen. My perspective on this, stems from Van Lancker’s idea of a unique way of allowing “cinematic practices to infuse documentary and anthropology, … in a sensory and sense-making way”\(^{12}\)

Adams et al., look at stories and sense making, the process of creating understanding, and reflexivity in considering a researcher’s location in research and representation. They point out how “…Autoethnographers use reflexivity to trouble the “relationship between researchers’ ‘selves’ and others”\(^{13}\) I am critiquing my ‘privileged’ position as the director, in the process of making and sharing the *Music Across Borders* documentary film. I draw on their description of how reflexivity includes the acknowledgement of and willingness to critique the researcher’s privileged place in society and how stories break long-held silences on power, relationships, cultural taboos and forgotten and/or suppressed experiences. These are important considerations for contextually placing the documentary lenses on inequality and development. In so doing, I invite colleagues involved in South-South migration research to embrace the opportunity for collaboration with artistic researchers beyond the idea of doing ‘arts-based’ social research. Artistic research methodology has its lenses on process-of-making, production, the acceptance of the messiness of process, unexpected changes in direction, devising, making, remaking, and sharing in ‘unfinished’ forms of performance, exhibition, and other forms of public engagement to initiate discussion interactions and reflections. Additionally, the possibilities of multilingual practices add new insights about dealing with linguistic ‘inequality’ for example. Equally, artistic ‘production’ implications of research are directly linked to the creative industries and to the individual and community development opportunities thereof, for creating sustainable understanding of and activities for development not only at MIDEQ Hub research sites, but also within migration research practice itself.

**Story**

**The phenomenon of story**

I take a phenomenological stance to define ‘Story’ as what and how we communicate to and with others and ourselves about our lived experience in time and space drawing on the multiple linguistic

\(^{10}\) Geurts 2002 and Bresler 2004.

\(^{11}\) Tarkovsky 1989: 76.

\(^{12}\) Schneider et al. 2013.

\(^{13}\) Adam et al. 2015.
capabilities available and at the disposal of the research community. This draws on Gibson’s theory of affordances\(^\text{14}\). It involves our thoughts ideas, knowledge, understanding and beliefs. It also implicates our bodies, the bodies of others, in research contexts; - the experiences of the self, the other, and the environment and technology through time and space. It includes how jointly we make sense of the social on a moment-by-moment basis through all life events. Additionally, it is how we perceive, express, and narrate our encounters in different places at different times, our understanding of our perceptions and other’s perspectives. It is how we sense and understand; our perspectives and how they are shaped, troubled, dismantled, and reshaped. The considerations take cognisance of where we sense things from; moments, memories, imaginations, what we have seen, heard, touched, tasted, smelled, and felt physically psychologically and emotionally. It is also what we express; how we communicate knowledge, learning, beliefs and understanding and habitually carry out our individual and community practices but also how we interact with, open up to and embrace new ones. It is a core part of the habitual pursuance, conducting, and maintaining individual and community wellbeing. Story then forms the basic framework for communicating what we have experienced in the past, how we anticipate the future as we engage with others in the world in the present on a moment-by-moment basis in the here and now. From these points we can understand South-South migration its inequality and development implications through such frameworks via the phenomenon of story and storytelling. Additionally, from the Eʋegbe concept of story creation ‘Glikpakpa’, we can apply metaphorical understandings to story processes and methods relevant to doing artistic and creative research in the Global South.

**Indigenous linguistic affordances – the ‘kpa’ concept**

The verb ‘kpa’ means carve but also the same word is also used for ‘carry on the back’, transposed to the storying process and conceptualised as ‘story carving’ and so, storytelling can be perceived a portal system - a narrative carrier of our lived experiences. Linguistically, the sonority of the word ‘kpa’ is onomatopoeic of the axe or the adze on wood, to signify ‘shave off and shape’ – to carve, in Eʋegbe (Eve language). Thus, processes of story creation easily become linguistically understood, when derived in the Eve language from the concept of shaving and shaping implication of the wood carving activity, and the sound emanating from carving tools on wood – kpa, kpa, kpa. In attending to the transfer of the concept of carving, story creation processes are conceptualized and illustrated through processes of creative fabrication and transformation. As an Eve, my language is an important conceptual point of reference. Creative arts research and its linguistic liberties means that traversing the multiple language nature of MIDEQ Hub research becomes placed within the reach of all the corridor researchers and partners across the Hub.

Drawing on my mother tongue Eʋegbe for the metaphors of ‘carving’ and ‘porting’

\(^\text{14}\) The term affordance and its initial development took place in the 1960s in the work of James Jerome Gibson. His well-known theory of visual perception. See Gibson, 1950, 1966 needs to be acknowledged here not only for making one of the most significant contributions to ecological psychology but also for reopening and trying to “solve” the longstanding debate over the mental and the material in psychological studies. Drawing inspiration primarily from Gestaltism Heft, 2003, Gibson invented the notion of affordance to be able to refer simultaneously to the “animal” and the “environment.” Glăveanu 2012.
highlights the importance of indigenous languages as part of research and meaning making in contexts of the Global South. The exploration of indigenous language also means approaching translation from an angle of multilingual practice and habituation, where the research interviewee is aware of the freedom to break into any language of their choice, repeating their stories in alternating languages including using music and other artistic forms at their disposal and within their linguistic competence. This example, albeit not a single answer to the multiple linguistic challenges of researching in multilingual contexts, creates and offers South-South migration researchers some initial ideas for embracing multilingual practices in their research. Cinematic language easily offer syntheses for multiple image and sonic communicative values. If carefully and properly used, film transcends a wide range of linguistic barriers especially those faced by migrants and the South-South migration researcher.

Thus, through film, it becomes easy to visualise and introduce meaning and relevance into structure, form, style, shape, and aesthetics to the material of the lived experience, in the form of themed fabricated multiple narratives woven and shaped into story – the shaping being the process of ‘storying’. Therefore, in discussing ‘story’, ‘storying’ and ‘storytelling’ in South-South migration research, raw material for the ‘carving’ would be the co-habited factual life events sensed with and alongside others in migrant’s and migration spaces and also in researching migration in the Global South. The story character then, becomes representative of the people, creatures, and the rest of the natural and supernatural worlds. In the case of the Aŋlɔ-Eʋe tradition for example, these would normally include conceptions of ‘Mawu’, (‘God’) ‘that which surpassed all’ ancient and ancestral spirits, deities, and the spiritual energies of all living creatures and inanimate entities. Some of these traditional cultural considerations are imbedded in understanding inequality and development and shape perception, behaviour decision and actions that affect individuals, communities and their lived experience.

The concept of ‘Kpa’ resonates with Leavy’s assertion that “[…] arts-based researchers are not discovering new research tools, they are carving them.” And so, through the Multilingual Arts Creative Resistance and Wellbeing work package, the MIDEQ Hub’s artistic researchers are in the process of carving arguably, the first arts and migration research practice, relevant to uncovering new understandings of inequalities and development implications of movement in the six Global South migration corridors: – Ghana – China, Burkina Faso – Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia – South Africa, Haiti – Brazil, Egypt – Jordan and Malaysia – Nepal. This reflection aims at adding to that carving through excavating what pertains in documentary filmmaking as research.

**Story, research, research material and technologies**

Story material available at the disposal of the South-South migration researcher includes the intersections of their own stories, thoughts, and imaginations with those of migrants and migrant communities; how they capture and preserve the lived experience as memories; as well as the fictitious and futuristic imaginative ones created out of fantasy. As part of how they make sense of their lived experience, these are contextualised from the past, within the present and projected into the future. This is similar to Julie and Kenneth Kendall’s turn to storytelling to develop a new
research method for information systems (IS) with the “aim to inspire IS researchers to realise the depth and richness found in organisational stories and to appreciate the use of stories in their own work”.16

The making (‘sinimakpakpa’ or ‘cinema-carving’) of *Music Across Borders* was as messy on my video editing computer, as any wood carver’s studio would be messy with many scattered wood chippings and filings represented by the many unused, clipped off video and audio files. It was also as rewarding an endeavour, as it was a challenging one of many hours of meticulous refining work. The process included ordering the mess of unordered footage of video files shot out of sequence on location in Ghana Scotland and Denmark. This meant previewing, reviewing, logging, selecting, analysing, and choosing portions to select and choose or discard from different sections of the video footage for the final story. It also included ordering the selected sections according to specific themes and placing them next to each other in a seemingly seamless sequence that constituted the various sections of the story. To make film-sense as a coherent story, editing and reediting all the selected moving image and audio files into a seamless flow narrative, presents the experience of different people and their stories coherently to the audience. And so, the takeaway is that creating a coherent South-South migration story on screen also means discarding portions of those stories. It is therefore, very important to involve the owners of the stories in deciding this selection and its ordering. The selection and the ordering are crucial to meaning making and its inequality and development implications.

The spaces of such meaning making decisions are transformative and interactive spaces where equality is negotiated and performed. This has implications on how MIDEQ Hub researchers become participant in these spaces. Cinematic storytelling requires specific and multiple skillsets that can pose challenges related to accelerated development and improvements in technology, its knowhow, and the budgetary implications of keeping up with the changes and improvements. The changing technologies immediately present inequality and development challenges in terms of adequate resource to the Global South migration researcher where there is the requirement for high-tech for broadcast quality productions. However, thankfully advanced mobile technologies and their user-friendly nature, makes it possible to a point, to create decent moving image stories with the personal mobile phone. This also means that when there is a technical hitch, a correction is possible without incurring considerable cost. For example, the shots of Nii Ayi Solomon in the film were all replacement shots of his interview in Ghana. The low-quality audio recording of his Ghana interviews were not suitable and needed to be reshot and replaced. The reshoot was filmed in my living room in Glasgow when Solomon visited Glasgow in January to play at the 2016 Celtic Connections Festival.

**Artistic Interaction as Method**

*Creative gifting and artistic playfulness*

The filming was interactive and playful with me introducing my ‘Odrugya’ flute and the ‘Trego’

gourd drum to him and just chatting on a wide range of topics. The concept of creative gifting and playfulness is exhibited in that section of the film. This is leading up to the interviewee’s storytelling. As a research device, creative gifting and playfulness eases the nerves involved in filming and storytelling. It creates a welcoming and safe space of exploration for impossible and difficult questions to be asked and stories to become easier to tell. These are important artistic research methodologies that generate conviviality, engender wellness and the ability to deploy creative resistance to what is considered the norm. These are examples of the concepts shaping WP11 ways of working.

Similarly, the social is described by symbolic interactionist thinkers as actively achieved through patterned and recurrent interactions. Schneider discuss how phenomenology elaborates on Kant’s ideas of perceiving the world through the human mind’s innate capacity to order and structure the unordered since we never have access to the ‘noumena’ – ‘things in and of themselves’. Film editing in this sense as method can be grounded on symbolic interaction where the researcher’s interaction with the migrant and their communities continues through the back-and-forth activity of returning to and from the footage. Tarkovsky also sees the human attempt to correlate the self with the world as inaccessible as the insatiable human longing to acquire and become one with the ideal which lies outside as a perpetual source of pain and dissatisfaction.

**Interactions, relationships, and the screen story**

For the South-South migration researcher, material for creating a good factual story on screen is located within the interactions that create relationships in which story events happen and are recorded and stitched together through audio-visual editing. This reflection on the documentary film ‘Music Across Borders’ therefore, traces how we gain, create, establish and nurture new relationships through interaction using language and meaning making. Across different cultures and societies, in the messiness of everyday life the storying process becomes the process of meaning making and where it is difficult to story in words, the arts become language that reduces such difficulty as an alternative through representation and expression in music, dance, painting, sculpture, poetry, fashion and textile, photography and others, all of which can be hosted and synthesised on screen in the cinematic language. Since such synthesising involves bodies, technology and physical as well as virtual spaces, filmmaking can be seen as truly interactional and collaborative a research space from which equalities and development can be observed conceptually and understood for the purposes of South-South migration. Other artistic research methodologies like community theatre devising also offer us inroads to such research interaction. It is important to note here then,

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17 See Tordzro 2016. *Music Across Borders* Documentary Film TC: 00:14:55 – 00:16:21; 00:28:53 – 00:30:34.
18 See Schneider et al. 2013: 143.
19 Noumena: ‘things in and of themselves’. Understanding the etymology of ‘noumena’ ‘nu’ ‘me’ ‘na’ reaffirms the value of Eʋegbe as the language to turn to into a deeper understanding of the term ‘phenomenon’. ‘Nu = thing’, ‘Me = in’ Na = give’ but also in ‘afii’ – here ‘na’ – to be, ‘me’ in ‘afiinomenon’ in Eʋegbe means being in the here and now and ‘nɔnɔme’ – means the ‘state of being in’. So, the concept of phenomenon corresponds etymologically as it occurs constructed in Eʋegbe.
that the values imbedded in the making process is where the intention of South-South migration researchers ought to be when considering artistic research as an approach.

The decision to make the film on Katrine Suwalski brought me in contact with many other people apart from Katrine, including her band members, Marie, Morten and Nii Ayi. I have not only interviewed them, but also played music with them and interacted with them discussing various topics learning new things from them and telling them many different personal stories myself. In creating and making *Music Across Borders* those of us who participated in this collaborative work, were involved in many story events at different cultural locations ourselves. Through these story events we have gained new insights and ‘enrichments’ that are still on-going and continued activities of story in a manner that is equitable and developmental in their personal live and the lives of those involved in such collaborative work their own right. Thus, in the process of creating the screen story, the bodies which interact and generate stories also create relationships. Sometimes these become lasting relationships, that create further ongoing interaction, transformation, change and growth. And so, the understanding of methodologies of initiating development and of fostering equalities can be understood from such perspectives. Stories that excavate, constitute, reconstitute, present, or represent what we sense, how we sense, understand, and express what we sense through language, with our bodies and the bodies of others in whatever environments we exist and interact, are the stories with which we can navigate inequalities and discuss development emanating from migration in the Global South.

**Storying as active making and process**

Story and the storying activity are how we capture and stream our lived experience in ways which allow us to express, conduct human signification to communicate what we sense. Through the activity of story, we capture, retrieve, and organize our unordered messy out-of-control existence into a coherent expressive order to convey and coherently communicate what we sense with others. In practical terms what this means in the context of South-South migration is that the process of storying is potentially a challenging experience but at the same time a liberating opportunity for the researcher and the research participant alike. Documentory filmmaking processes do not simply resemble but can be utilised effectively and productively for this ordering of the messiness of everyday encounters into story; in how various moving image clips are edited together to make sense as a coherent story on screen. Through stories identities are negotiated, constructed, demolished, and reconstituted. This can be critically observed and understood from the symbolic interactionist perspective as a chaotic unordered dynamic of a “constantly evolving process of actions, reactions and interactions on the part of concrete individuals.”\(^\text{21}\)

As individuals we all grow and transform through change; meaning the communities we inhabit including those of migrants, invariably grow and are shaped by how and with whom we interact, in time and space, and the kind of stories and story events such interactions create or generate. Story then becomes the reactivation of silenced voices. Voices that may have fallen silent because they became displaced in migration. Reactivated voices become active to recreate and relive life experiences through story, and ripple over time and space. In these contexts of

\(^{21}\) Inglis and Thorpe 2012: 107.
creativity, ripples, time, and space within ‘story’, ‘selves’ are carved and shaped, troubled, shaken, affected positively and negatively at the same time. Academic, artistic, and social reshaping and reconstituting is created and harnessed largely within interaction through language, story, and creativity. This reshaping of the self and its impacts on me as a creative arts researcher and on those who were involved in the process of the making of the Music Across Borders video documentary film is also subject to academic inquiry. These are some of the factors to consider doing South-South migration research.

The idea of ‘making-process’, ‘process-making’ and ‘self-transformation’ directs my attention from the importance of the finished film (story) to the importance of the activity within the messy, emergent, not-determined nature of story as: a) ‘in-the-making’, b) processes, c) the ripple-over-time nature of sensing, meaning and experiencing not the finished film per se, but d) the interactions resulting in (not only from) the filmmaking ‘sinimakpakpa’ – and film-viewing – ‘sinikpɔkpɔ’ as composite of ‘storying’ on screen. Interactions are not limited to between the self and others but are also to be observed between the self and the environment, between the self and technology, between technology and the environment.  

In Sculpting in Time, Tarkovsky, gives an account on how he and the production team in the making of his film Mirror interacted on location. It is a personal account in which he describes how he and his production crew as a team, approached working within their production environment to sense and understand to create their screen story in a manner that truthfully represents and tells of the experiences, the story events, the environment and its lived experiences as sensed by those who lived there. Tarkovsky’s description of the making of Sculpting in Time is an excellent example of how inequality and development in the context of MIDEQ Hub’s research in the six migration corridors can be experienced in a documentary film making process by interrogating what is sensed integrating processes that replicate contexts in which the researcher can experience what is experienced by the migrants who inhabit the migration corridors even when they were briefly in transit. He vividly accounts for how they reached into the past to reconstruct the experience of others by placing themselves as screen storytellers within the physical environments where the life stories they were attempting to tell were relived.

When the set had been built up on the foundation of the ruined house, we all, as members of the team, used to go there in the early morning.

22 For story Interaction between the self, environment, and technology, see Diagram 1 on page 23 and Diagram 2 on page 27
23 Tarkovsky 1989.
24 Mirror was directed by Andrei Tarkovsky in 1975 as an unconventionally loosely structured autobiographical film. It incorporates poetry read by his father Arseny Tarkovsky and features Margarite Terekhova Ignat Daniltsev Alla Demidova Anatov Solanista Larista Tarkovsky Andrei’s wife and his mother Maria Vishnyakova. Mirror presents the memories of a dying poet showing key moments in of Soviet culture as part of his life combining childhood memories with dramas and newsreel. The style shifts between black and white sepia and colour cinematography which has been compare by some to the stream of consciousness technique in modernist literature. The film though initially considered by some as incomprehensible is now considered as one of the greatest films of all time.
to wait for the dawn, to experience for ourselves, what was special about the place, to study it in different weather conditions, to see it at different times of the day; we wanted to immense ourselves in the sensation of the people who have once lived there. 

When I filmed Katrine’s interview in Copenhagen and later Elivava and in Accra in their homes, the experience of being in their lived spaces, however briefly, accorded me an added understanding of both and the type of life they have at home outside their professional lives as musicians. In addition, their interviews presented a wider scope of who they are beyond being performers on tour. We can better understand the migrant research participant when we hear their migration stories beyond the context of their everyday migration experiences.

Interaction and transformation emerging from process

Making Music Across Borders, as in making any film is a process that fostered interaction, between various people at different times in various spaces using specific technologies. Crucial to the process of creating the 45-minute video documentary film as well as how it was viewed and discussed by audiences in Glasgow, Copenhagen, Accra and online was the type of interaction that went on and how it was transformational. My research interest is in how transformational this is as process, and how that translates into impact and outcomes for the researcher, the researched and their shared audiences. A typical example is illustrated by an audience member’s comment on the second day premiere screening of Music Across Borders at The Glad Cafe in Glasgow.

As part of the premiere screening there was a question-and-answer session with myself as director producer, and Katrine Suwalski as the main interviewee of the documentary representing the other musicians. This formed an integral part of the experiential nature of the storytelling, like my traditional ‘Glitoto’ process, and as an interaction participation methodology of the research process. An audience member commented on how well Katrine Suwalski’s spoken Danish language worked alongside the jazz music tracks in the film. It relates to how I story on screen using music mainly for exploring the idea of music as language and the musicality of language. He started his comment with how he would not have connected spoken Danish with jazz music before. The film troubles the comfortability and convenience of English subtitles and uses multiple languages instead, alongside the devise of foregrounding music to tell the deeper emotional aspect of the story, instead of background music.

Here the action to deal with the dominance of English language is an example of tackling inequalities, with alternative devices that do not devalue the process and the story but rather through creative resistance, enhance the appeal and create new understanding. For example, it presents the interview to the viewer as a musical performance for any viewer who may not understand the language of the interviewee.

An audience member said, “The spoken language was combined with the music that was playing underneath it, I think that was cleverly done, I will never quite hear Danish the same way again …”

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Biggs and Karlsson’s description of how the self transforms continuously and reassembles elsewhere just as one thinks they have a grasp of it also points to Inglis’ process sociology idea that social reality is an on-going dynamic of transformation and mutation.

On the assumption that the quoted audience member arrived, to the film hearing Danish in a particular way, perhaps with little or no musical association to hearing – sensing spoken Danish, but after watching the film and hearing and sensing meaning in the way the story is told in Danish on film with the rhythm, melody and harmonies of, his perception of Danish language becomes transformed and modified to include an association of the inherent musicalities of the language. This is because of how he has interacted with, received, and sensed the telling of *Music Across Borders* as a screen story.

As an artistic research approach, documentary filmmaking thus is an operationalisation of aspects of the WP 11 perspective on the MIDEQ theory of change. It falls within the framework of Karlsson’s idea of continuous transformation in multiple localities and Inglis’ on-going dynamic of transformation and mutation. In this sense, audience engagement is an important part of the artistic research process and can reveal to South-South migration research the potential trajectories of change when we monitor inequalities.

The audience comment also relates to my decision to edit Katrine’s interview without seeking to translate and place English subtitles under her Danish language interview, as I decided to experiment and test Katrine’s own assertion that “a melody and music put together can go through to everybody”, that “as human beings we are much more connected than we normally think of”. Also, that one “can understand the language of music if we open our ears” we can understand “by intuition”. This is further elaborated upon by Ayi Solomon’s question about the ‘first language’; he asks rhetorically: “What does the baby speak?” and remarks: “Nothing! […] the first language is silence” and with Elivava’s conviction that when you sing,

[... it is not necessarily singing in another man’s language that will make them understand what you are talking about. But if you truly want to take the people along, into your world, then the way you feel, and what you imagine within yourself and the world you create around you, actually should help the person to come along with you.

Marie Schmidt’s view on the other hand is that “music is a good place to start from”, that musicians communicate with music even if they don’t speak the same language. They speak the language of music. I have explored music as translation and orchestrated the interview into the soundtrack thereby giving Katrine’s Danish interview a jazz performance communicative

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27. Inglis and Thorpe 2012.
28. See *Music Across Borders* at time code 00:03:27:05 - 00:03:44:12.
29. See *Music Across Borders* at time code 00:07:17:08 - 00:07:21:21.
30. See *Music Across Borders* at time code 00:03:51:05 - 00:04:03:16.
32. See *Music Across Borders* at time code 00:07:30:17 – 00:13:22:08.
value. The quality of the communicative affordance this experiment presented is imbedded in the impact of the film on audiences, but also on me as a music maker and a filmmaker. I am curious and want to understand how even though the music from Katrine’s album was recorded several years before the idea of shooting the interview, the values, and significations in what she said in the interview for *Music Across Borders* and the music track fit as if the music was specifically composed for those portions of the film. For future artistic research, I am interested in finding out whether our musical expression in one era can be imbedded in our life experience enough to become potentially identical and complimentary to what one senses and understands in another period in the same way as we deconstruct our past and with it, build the present through storytelling with music. If this is the case, then South-South migration artistic researchers can understand the historical connection between migrants’ experiences and their past by critically observing their musical and other artistic traditions.

The audience member’s comment is indicative of transformation in perception and sensing in how he can hear Danish language as musical, which is different from how he may have heard it as ‘plain’ language before. For this reason, it is uniquely possible for me to bring the musical dynamics of the spoken word and the communicative affordances of the musicians and their music into the film to work cohesively as a unique storying technique in *Music Across Border* centralising language and linguistic expression in research in such a manner is replicable in the context of MIDEQ Hub research. It offers important decolonising approach to South-South migration research when story is told and shaped by the languages it is sensed in. Each story’s individual uniqueness and authenticity is also achieved this way to hold and keep the attention and interest of its teller and hearer.

It is becoming increasingly and continuously important in a more globalised world to pursue multiple strategies of decolonisation; even much so in the Global South where majority of people are economically marginalised not for want of geographically located natural and cultural resource and potential wealth, but simply for want of personal and shared perspectives of the value of this wealth, its potentials, and the ability to harness and use it where it is located. The legacies of colonialism and the empire project persistently replicate inequalities and impinge on meaningful and sustainable development and the relative lack of perspective is part of the cultural legacy of slavery, colonisation, and neo-colonisation. *Music Across Borders* responds to this issue, exposing the connections in a non-abrasive way through music and storytelling.

My unique way of storying for the screen taps into the endless wealth of indigenous knowledge and practices of Aŋlɔ-Eʋe traditions. Equally, I incorporate the various arts disciplines within creative arts practice as a multilingual, multidisciplinary, and multi-genre artistic research. From producing the film, and other research documentary films like Gedzem Kutrikuku, Tordzro 2017, I have arrived at the conclusion that a story carver (the maker) – Glikpala’ – transforms alongside their story and story subject(s) growing together under the influence of story interaction opportunities. In storying, we witness ourselves grow as we interact with others and our environment, with technology and with language(s). We also witness the transformation resulting from interaction between language, technology, the environment. Therefore, we can understand the inequality and development implications of South-South migration in these contexts.
The screen story is a result of elaborate processes at various levels of this interaction. The multiplicity of interactive practice constitutes the process of filmmaking and is responsible for uniqueness in storying for screen, the screen story, and its storytelling techniques, how it affects audiences and the outcomes thereafter. Because filmmaking involves collaboration, coordination and integrating a wide range if disciplines, the process of producing a story for screen is primarily an interactive one.

![Diagram 1: The self, environment, and technology as interactive sites of story](image)

Thus, the art of screen story and its uniqueness is not only a result of how we interact within the story events but also how the various disciplines are harnessed and coordinated to express beyond the language of the text, and the verbal. Additionally, how the self is expressed through a wide range of creative arts and linguistic affordances expands the opportunities for enriching the dynamics of the self with the story and it’s telling. Story is generated within the interactive spaces of self, environment, and technology. Diagram 1 above illustrates the interactional dynamics of the self, the environment, and technologies.

The importance of storying on screen for me, and my practice, is in the opportunity for storying across arts. In many ways, I find my categorized ‘self’ becomes a major reference point of identification for the ‘other’. In my view, in relation to how I perceive my ‘self’, that reference point is not specialized in only one field but multiple related fields, it is dynamic, and driven by the opportunities I encounter personally, professionally, and socially especially within the context of modern communication and multimedia technologies. This is my personal self-decolonising move, in resistance to the idea of ‘specialisation’ However, the pressure to simplify and economize with the time we use to negotiate identity through specialization presents a dilemma to the relevance of the multiplicity and interdisciplinary nature of my artistic expression. When we research migration in the Global South, it is important to do so, with multiple competencies in mind, both researcher and the researched migrant communities.

Factual storying for the screen means positioning the storyteller in readiness to make use of planned or unplanned, emergent, and important story opportunities. The art of filmmaking means years of experience, great relationships, and interpersonal skills, with the ability to harness the communicative power of various art forms in a manner that is cohesive, captivating, and truthful.
I stress ‘truthful’ not to say that all stories are or ought to be truthful, but to point to the need to observe and maintain fidelity to the art of storytelling which is taken from the interaction between the ‘self’ and others, including the natural and virtual environments and technologies. Diagram 2 illustrates how interaction generate stories that in turn reconstruct each interaction agent in the form of ripples. These ripples become larger in size than the original agent as they travel over time and space, crossing borders.

![Diagram 2: Story Process of Action, Interaction and Transformative Ripples](image)

**The self and expression**

I express myself artistically in a multimodal manner cutting across the wide range of creative arts disciplines and in English, Aŋlɔ-Eʋe and other Ghanaian languages. As an Aŋlɔ-Eʋe tradition bearer and a multilingual Ghanaian, it is normal to do so, but that notion becomes troubled, challenged in predominant English language contexts and other settings where translation expectation is the norm instead of simply switching to another language. *Music Across Borders* attempts to offer a different perspective and ventures into the acceptance of untranslatability. The film introduces an absence of subtitled translations in text, where it is normally expected, given, and taken for granted. It challenges the viewer to tap into their personal extra-linguistic capabilities of intuition and sensing beyond text.

It is a deliberate harnessing of the linguistic affordances offered by music and multilingual practices, to integrate music, and the moving image as language. Each spoken language is thus presented by deliberately departing from the norm of subtitle translation text and English language voice over on top of other languages. *Music Across Borders* challenges its audience to ‘listen-and-sense’ and know by intuition, from musical expression. Musical expression is emotionally charged as human expression and communicates beyond the limitations of the spoken word any text. Like any language, the exposure to and usage of a range of musical types, leads to the ability to decode the emotional investments in various musical expressions. The question though is – are South-South migration researchers equipped to harness such linguistic capabilities for their research?

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34 See Diagrams 1 and 2.
The participating self in research through music making

Part of the music used in the film is incidental from performance and rehearsal shots, filmed as during the interviews. They form an active participatory engagement where I am involved in the music making with the interviewee: for example playing the Odrugya flute to drumming by Nii Ayi Solomon at time code 00:28:54 and playing the xylophone by improvisation to Katrine playing the saxophone which is edited and layered over Odamankoma Kyrema’s interview at time code 00:34:11 until 00:34:36 and cuts to the images of that musical interaction with Katrine on the saxophone with me playing her xylophone in her home studio on our first meeting. Part of the interaction not covered in the film is where I repair the xylophone for her earlier and playing it to test it.

The other musical parts include carefully selected tracks from Katrine’s albums and Ha Orchestra live performance audio recordings, specifically for an emotion charged storytelling in various portions of the film. It also includes music recorded designed for the last section of the film, leading to the end credits. This is also as an example of participatory musical interaction between Elivava Mensah and myself in Accra, at the post-production stage – the studio recording of me playing bells and the Atenteben flute to Elivava’s singing of ‘Oyi Samue’ introducing ‘Gakogui’ bells layered over Elivava and Katrine’s interviews. The bell reappears in the same rhythmic pattern to accompany Nii Ayi Solomon’s drumming supporting Katrine’s closing remarks and Solomon’s closing remarks when he reaffirms his understanding of music:

You can listen to instrumental music which has no words, but maybe the melody of that particular music has something which is resonating with something inside you and then you grasp it, just take it in, because it is speaking to you … in this sense, music crosses all boundaries.

In Music Across Borders, the self is expressed through narrative in Story and Music by exploring and transcending Language and geopolitical borders, with image and Music on Screen. Video film has the exceptional ability to explore Story and Storytelling in multiple layers to create a combined visual and audio screen experience.

Creative Production as Research

The tech in the making

Technologically, this nature of screen storytelling is captured visually by video editing software design which is presented and used as multiple tracks surfaces that can be layered and counted over a timeline. The layering is for purposes of multiple narrative interactivity and relativity. In Adobe

35 See Music Across Borders from time code: 00:36:48 to 00:37:55.
36 See Music Across Borders at time code: 00:39:57.
37 See Music Across Borders at time code: 00:40:06.
38 See Music Across Borders at time code: 00:40:24 – 00:40:56.
Premiere Pro video editing software for example, the film storyteller is offered a multiplicity of video and audio tracks in horizontal layers with a range of transition and effects tools for building a smooth effective movement through various stages of the story as it is being constructed played back and monitored on the timeline calibrated on time codes in 00:00:00:00 units that represent duration from left to right, in hours, minutes, seconds and milliseconds of video and audio footage on the editing timeline. Timecoding is a fragmentation process and a device to facilitate counting and recounting unfragmented real life events in the context utilising technology to story over time.

![Adobe Premiere Pro CC 2017 Video Editing Software Timeline and Monitor Window](image)

This is how in real life we make sense of the stream of everyday events; by fragmenting them and reconstructing them according to comprehensible image sequencing – the basis of cinematic language. The multi-layered nature of screen story construction at the editing stage, resonates with the nature of traditional Aŋlo storytelling – Ghitoto – that weaves multiple narratives into one plot and integrates interjected commentary, musical reactions, and mini-narratives from participating ‘Gliselawo’ with the Gliota’s story as a composite part of the telling.

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39 ‘Gliselawo’ – ‘the listeners to the story’ or audience. This terminology does not fully describe the participatory engagement of the audience which is nothing close to even the notion of active listening or passive listening for that matter. The Gisela is actively engaged in the narrative process with responses, and reactive interjections with questions, comments, song and movement.

40 Glitola: The storyteller or narrator.
I edited *Music Across Borders*, positioning Katrine Suwalski in conversation with herself in Danish and English, using music from her albums not only as background track but in concert with her interview as an orchestrated performance. For example, at the beginning of the film, she is positioned on the left of frame looking to the right of frame. She speaks in Danish and presents ‘her-self’ as:

Mit navn er Katrine Suwalski, Jeg er en komponist, saxofonist og jeg er født i Danmark. Jeg har et band det kaldes Another World, […]

Cut to MCU of Katrine in her home studio Right of frame looking to the left of frame speaking English

My name is Katrine Suwalski, and er, saxophone player, composer, and I have a band that I call Another World, and I have had for twenty years,
and I live in Denmark, [...] 41

In traditional Aŋb-Eʋe glitoto-storytelling, the glitola-storyteller uses imaginative and vivid language to transport the gliselawo from one location to the other, through song rhythm and movement. On screen, a simple cut can mean a story is moving from Copenhagen to Accra to meet Elivava42 who introduces herself with a proverbial song ‘Kosi bopu lenyio’ that says, “Don’t be afraid of the dark because the dark is only for a moment.”43 Through Screen Storytelling, with a ‘cut’ on the editing bench, one can visually move the story scene from an indoor environment of Copenhagen to an outdoor sunny and breezy Accra under mango trees. The experience of the melody and rhythmic claps of Elivava as she sings in Buem language and translates into English introduces Elivava’s ‘self’ using song, singing and a proverb instead of her name and what she does. We sense the nature of the two contrasting environments: as Elivava sings, we hear leaves rustle in the wind and birds chirping in the background. This is an example of how through story we can experience migration from one context to another. The distance and cultural disparities are bridged by song, in the same way as different emotions and multiple discourses can be bridged to create a seamless stream of story events, thereby creating understanding and a representation of the actual life event.

Elivava’s song and singing interacts with the leaves rustling, the birds chirping overlaid with her clapping both visual and auditory interactions with us and we are challenged to figure out or depart from our expectations of the ‘normal’ initial introductory information Elivava would give on her ‘Self’ as the way of self-introduction. Katrine, Elivava and Ayi Solomon’s introduction and how they express themselves on screen in their various environments reflects the layered nature of the Adobe Premier Pro timeline digital technology environment where multiple video and audio tracks are laid and made to interact for specific visual and auditory impacts.

Figure 4 — Elivava: sings “Kosi bopu lenyio ambo, kosi bopu lenyio” at time code 00:01:43:06

41 See Music Across Borders at time code: 00:57:00 - 01:46:00.
42 See figure 3 and figure 4.
43 See Music Across Borders film at time code: 00:01:43:06 – 00:02:10:04.
Nii Ayi Solomon also introduces himself with humour:

My name is Ayi Solomon, I come from Ghana, Accra. I was born in the year 1956, - that was a long time ago - (chuckles) erm I … I am a professional percussionist, a musician, which I do for a living. Er … I started off playing in the suburb of Accra, Err … A small suburb called Mamprobi.44

Storytelling especially in the context of folktales ‘lightens the atmosphere’ and makes it possible to deconstruct power relations with humour, proverbs and metaphors through creativity, performance, and representation. When we use screen story process as research, it is possible to get access to South-South migration experience through such approaches to storytelling where real life experience can be metaphorically represented in folktale.

The creative production processes

44 See Music Across Borders film at tome code: 00:02:10:05 – 00:02:30:08
The film production process is also a dynamic and transformational process from which we can learn for the purposes of South-South migration research. There are several stages of the process of creating a screen story - categorised broadly as four main stages: 1) pre-production; 2) production; 3) post-production and 4) distribution stages. However, in relation to Music Across Borders, I will discuss 5) impact and 6) outcome as additional stages and an integral part of the making of the creative production process that can also be observed as part of process in creative arts research. The dynamics of the process of creating Music Across Borders was an experiential one that developed cordial relationships of both a professional and friendship nature that have lasted beyond the production and the research project. This is a result of being exposed to new ideas and alternative methods and techniques of shooting, reviewing, and logging the footage for editing, creating new music for the end titles, and premiering the finished film. This sheds important light on the relevance of good relationships in making music life-story documentaries like Music Across Borders, and how such a project has the potential of fostering those relationships, in the process of making the screen story. Process in creative arts research may not be entirely a linear or logical one but rather a messy and emergent one full of improvisation and surprises with unexpected but important outcomes.

This is not to say that every factual screen story should or ought to be full of surprises and unexpected outcomes. It is just to reiterate the importance of the need to be open and be in the position to recognize, engage with and use these opportunities as they occur as part of process in storying for the screen. As a researcher I have witnessed my relationship with Katrine, and my interest as a researcher in a factual story for a screen research project, evolve from that of a filmmaker/researcher meeting a unique story bearer, to that of two composers of entirely different cultural traditions meeting many new collaborators and building new relationships and networks with new and important collaboration in performance and composition as the film project progressed. A very strong bond of trust and understanding began, through material common grounds that emerged from our first meeting, from unlikely coincidences but also based on shared and common musical ideas. Our dispositions and views on migration and borders, was reaffirmed repeatedly as we moved and followed our evolving story from Ghana to Denmark to Scotland and back to Ghana again.

Production as a story creation process-of-making

Thus, within the making of the Screen Story of Music Across Borders, a new story, which can also be told, emerges as the ‘story of the making’ which is sometimes presented by screen projects as behind the scenes but mostly remain untold and silent but potent stories. South-South migration research should take note and have a considerable focus on such untold silent stories. Artistic research on its part concerns this process and story of the making. When I walked into Katrine’s home studio for example, I saw a set of three Aŋlɔ-Eʋe Agbadza drums - a set of Sogo, Kididi and Kagan drums - that looked exactly like my set of Eʋe drums in Glasgow. On one hand, even though I was surprised to see the drums in her home, on the other hand, I was not surprised when she told me that she bought her drums from the same person I bought mine from – Johnson Keme – in the School of Performing Arts at the University of Ghana. Katrine had taken private drumming classes from Johnson who was also my drumming instructor and friend when I was
a theatre directing student at the school in the mid to late 1980s. I had ordered my Aŋlɔ drums from him when I was preparing to travel to Scotland and was buying musical instruments for Pan African Arts Scotland in 2003. We both have Jonson’s handmade drums that we use in Europe! Such a common unexpected experience of coincidence is a powerful basis for friendship.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 7** — Katrine picked up her saxophone and a tune emerged.

I have had a similar identical experience in Northern Ireland where I was invited to collaborate with three sisters ‘The Henry Girls’ in 2004. Karen McLochlin, one of the sisters had been in Ghana and studied under Johnson. She also brought back three of Johnson’s drums and when I first arrives in their home, I encountered the drums and the stories she had of them in relation to our common teacher Johnson. As I narrated this encounter to Katrine it enlarged the narrative of coincidence. The importance of connecting objects and the connection human stories they generate have the powerful ability to bring people together or send them apart depending on the experience carried within the encounters with those connecting objects and stories. Mutuality and familiarity in settings which are highly unfamiliar can be re-familiarised by a single ‘mutual object’ or mutual ‘connecting’ stories. It means that it is possible to fall on the concepts of mutuality, to negotiate familiarity in the South-South migration research context where it is possible to encounter or create stories of multiple coincidences.

Katrine also had a Lobi Gyle xylophone that she believed was out of tune. I offered to look and quickly repaired it for her, as the issue was just a slack in the leather ropes holding the notes together. It only needed a little stretch to lift the notes off the frame and to correspond over the resonators to be able to vibrate well into the gourd resonators. As I tried out the notes after the quick repair, Katrine picked up her saxophone and a little tune emerged.\(^{45}\) Within one hour of meeting for the first time, I took the decision to film the improvisation purposely for the possibility of using the audio track if necessary. But in editing, this clip became handy as an example and explanation of Odomankoma Pra’s idea about how to continue maintaining “what we have traditionally” whilst also being able to add from other traditions. We were creating a tune

\(^{45}\) See *Music Across Borders* at time code 00:34:34:06 – 00:35:12:06 for the first improvised music with Katrine Suwalski in Denmark
together drawing on two music traditions that involved the Lobi Gyle Xylophone and the Jazz Saxophone. We had established a rapport, ‘across the borders’ of trust, confidence and consent in a manner that is not easily crossed between a researcher and research participant within the hour of meeting for the first time. We achieved this in collaboration using music and the making of it as the foundation, drawing on the African traditions and adding on to that as Okyerema Pra says, “We should maintain what we have traditionally, so that we can also add something to it. But if we lose what we have then we are like chaff before the wind.”

Pra sees the tradition on which one is brought up and steeped in as the anchor of the ‘self’. Our traditions are what we enrich our environment and other’s ‘self’ with, and so that is where story starts for the individual. The story of my knowledge of the xylophone – its playing, repair, and use as a collaborating instrument – became a part of negotiating access, gifting, and sharing with Katrine, in a manner that allowed us to discuss how music crosses borders later in her interview. It represents an important backstory that even though is not fully featured in the film, lends a quality of ‘knowing-the-self’ involved, in how the story is eventually shaped and told from the preproduction, through to during the production and postproduction stages.

When people meet and interact, they act with, and are acted upon as themselves and their environments, the spaces they inhabit within a specific time frame and the experience generated from such interaction. The screen story relies on what is placed within this space to tell a moving image story that is not necessarily text based. On screen, characters are placed and framed in relation to each other and in relation to all objects within the frame. Mise-en-scene - placed in the scene is what is placed to occupy the core of screen storytelling and form an important part of the craft of the screen storyteller. In Film Art, David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, elaborate with examples on how crucial mise-en-scene is in the screen story Mise-en-scene can operate as part of narration, the unfolding of story information; but the question is how does it achieve this? Do the settings, lighting, costume, staging and performance create curiosity, or suspense, or surprise?

![Figure 8 — Odomankoma Okyerema Pra interview in Cape coast Ghana](image-url)

46 See Music Across Borders at time code 00:34:07:22 - 00:34:21:21
47 Bordwell and Thompson 2013.
Do they become motifs that weave their ways through the entire film? To convey Katrine’s musical personality, we discussed how important it is for her to speak from the comfort of her home studio instead of her living room. Making use of the daylight, the saxophone, the Sogo drums, and the xylophone’s positions in the studio were a way of telling the audience about Katrine’s musical ‘self’.

As you would expect, mise-en-scene includes all those aspects of film that overlap with the art of theatre: setting, lighting, costume, and makeup and staging and performance. […] mise-en-scene usually involves planning in advance. But filmmakers may seize on unplanned events as well.48

![Katrine looking right of frame with her saxophone in Ghana, her hair is held back.](image)

The positioning of Katrine speaking Danish in relation to her speaking English in Figure 9, puts her in conversation with herself in a manner that allows us to cross two language borders with her through mise-en-scene – how we position her. On the other hand, with alternate positioning again and in the frame but also from indoors to outdoor we reveal and cross physical borders from her home studio to the tropical green of Ghana in Figure 9 with the green forest in the background in the relatively warmer climate. In the earlier Figure 3, the xylophone is background, giving prominence of presence to the saxophone. When Katrine tells her story, the saxophone is placed to accompany her almost as a silent but potent co-storyteller.

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48 Bordwell and Thompson 2013, 112 - 117.
Editing plays a major role in the making-of-process as a systematic decision making of choosing a sequential placement of images for a particular effect. The idea of crossing borders for example, is presented in many ways as it is here in Figure 10, filming Elivava in her home in Accra. The footage from this shoot is used as a cut from Katrine indoors in Copenhagen to Elivava outdoor in Accra. The picture also illustrates the interaction between technology, in this case the video and audio recorder, the environment and the ‘self’ within the story. Here, typically the camera and audio recorder interface between the co-storytellers – the filmmaker and the interviewee. Eventually even the camera and the audio recorder are obscured in the same manner as the filmmaker is obscured in this picture. On the screen the storyteller is a disappeared ‘ghost’ or ‘magician’. The obvious part of the storytelling for the audience, (the ‘glisela’ and ‘sinimakpola’ by the cinema storyteller – ‘sinimaglitola’) is what was captured and manipulated by the filmmaker.

By the time we sat down to film Katrine’s interview in Danish and in English, I had been on a little musical journey with Katrine already, she in return had crossed and overcome her anxiety over her xylophone which she thought was going to need a major repair work. We both felt comfortable in each other’s presence. I was not interviewing a participant I did not know; the Sogo drum, the xylophone, and the music we created together established a connection that felt timeless and carried the value of years of acquaintance. Through our brief musical interaction, we began to establish an important relationship of musical collaboration and in the true sense ‘Music Across Borders’ that would go on to shape the nature of the story of documentary film as Music Across Borders on screen.

In a sense, reflecting on this initial encounter with Katrine; I arrived in her house presenting myself as filmmaker, but my filmmaker identity came under the influence of the environment of her home music studio, which instantly assumed the character of a powerful memory in the presence of Ewe drums at first, then the Lobi Gyle xylophone⁴⁹ which has very strong connections to my traditional Ghanaian storyteller identity. Everything that happened in Katrine’s home studio was not part of an elaborate film production plan, and yet it all contributed to an enrichment of

⁴⁹ The Lobi Gyle xylophone has very strong connections to my traditional Ghanaian storyteller identity. The Gyle xylophone was my storytelling instrument on the Ghana Television GTV storytelling programme ‘By The Fireside’. In the drums, lived the memory of Johnson Kehm the drumming instructor.
the experience of creating.

The messiness of disruption of my filmmaker identity is a part of the creative process of the film. This is carried on through to the post-production and screening events in Glasgow, Copenhagen, and Accra as part of the idea to present a concert at the premiere screening events in the three cities. The story of *Music Across Borders*, therefore, is a multi-story of people meeting each other at various places across the world and resulting from their involvement with each other; is different musical encounters and many endless stories. For example, the initial idea of creating and producing a documentary film with Katrine and her band about her return to Ghana is initially from my professional interest and practice as a musicologist, and my connection to my homeland – Ghana – and the fact that I am conducting an Autoethnographic research on my artistic practice, but also as result Katrine has met other people who she continues to collaborate with, event in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, through virtual online connections.

**Conclusion**

*Story interaction, development and transformation*

The Making-Of-Process in artistic research inherently produces equality, negotiated, created, and performed through interaction between people as they create stories together. This is an important point for developing theories in conceptualising change emerging from what we learn from interaction between researchers of the MIDEQ Hub as much as we learn from interaction between researchers and the stories generated within the migration corridors where we research between researchers and their research partners, including policy makers and the general public. The decision to create a story on screen is normally a joint one between collaborating individuals and communities with specialised skills in different areas of filmmaking.

The step-by-step progression of making a documentary film like *Music Across Borders* as discussed above, from pre-production to post-production as well as the screening and sharing of the film is dynamic and interactive at various levels. These interactions which themselves are generative of new stories, between the collaborating individuals as they contribute to developing and making the screen story, telling it, and sharing it with an audience can inform South-South migration research. The various interactions at every stage of the filmmaking process constitute a series of events that carry their own story values. This is the story of what I call the ‘making-of-process’ within which everyday stories emerge. We create and make stories for the screen in the context of artistic research, and each story making process is unique to the storytellers in collaboration – the film crew, the subjects of the screen story, audience, all the places and material objects in the story and the technology that is applied to the telling and sharing of the story are equally implicated in multiple processes that constitute the single story process.

Additionally, how the telling affects the teller, the subjects and all who partake in the making and sharing of the story and the resulting decisions and actions are in turn, many stories. Many traceable and/or illusive new stories that are lived, can be told, and retold as they emerge from one initial ‘process-of-making’ a single story. In thinking of negotiation equality, this interaction to create, on a conceptual level can become how we critically conceptualise, observe and perform processes of generating a culture of ‘equality’ where each component of the interaction process
and each interacting individual is valued as an important and critical part of the making, the expression and the sharing of stories of migration.

Development fractals of process – awakening old memories creating new ones

Making one story is the making of one process of awakening old memories and birthing new ones of many other stories with the potential of a fractal process of interacting new and old memories in an ongoing manner. I conceptualise development in such a fractal manner and effect that conceptualisation in the MIDEQ Hub artistic research I conduct through music, story and film within the framework of the Multilingual Arts, Creative Resistance and Wellbeing work package of the Hub. Thus, the making-of-process and the ‘process-of-making’ of ‘Music Across Borders’, its impacts and outcomes are the many stories and new experiences for everyone who was a part of the making, the screening and viewing.

Everyone’s experience is a unique and important one of transformative development through interacting at multiple levels. The levers of development for each individual are sited at the intersections of their experience and those of others, the spaces and technologies involved and within the several and varied stories that are generating and regenerating ongoingly. The common themes when observed through the lenses of South-South migration research can reveal different characteristics of ‘development’ both on individual and community levels for research and policy development as well as for community transformation as a composite part of ongoing research. The creative ‘process’ is a process-in-creation and production, each production being an addition to the cultural wealth through the technology, information, education, employment, research knowledge and experience, new understanding, development action, entertainment and news story values that can be sustained beyond the duration of a research project. That is transformative development. The creative process can thus be said to be self-generative, but also can be seen as very unstable and cannot be expected to be in a definite constancy and fixed state. It is messy, shapeshifting dynamic and transformative and developmental; it is tasking, it transforms and is transformed endlessly by those engaged in it alongside the technologies they wield.

Indigenous knowledge and development

The dynamic and transformative nature of story is what allows migration stories to be shared endlessly from generation to generation, with modifications that respond to the knowledge, cultures and traditions of the times, geopolitical environments, and locations. It is presumed by anyone making and storying on screen that there is a sense in which a particular final product is made; of course the film is an end-product, but when one embarks of making a film and the film is made, one doesn’t rest, because when a story is birthed, the story does not rest, the process does not end. This is how ‘development’ is perceived in all Ghanaian languages I speak. In Eʋe as ‘ngɔyiyi’ or ‘forward-moving’ in Twi, ‘nkɔsoɔ’ as in ‘on-going’ and in Dangbe it is ‘nɔyam’ as in ‘onward moving’. Interrogating my understanding of development in these languages reveals how sustainability is inbuilt and not separate from its conceptualisation as an ongoing fractal process. Therefore, to understand and perform development in contexts of the global-south, researchers would benefit from embracing indigenous knowledge and understanding accessible only in the languages local
to the research sites of the migration corridors we study. If development would be understood by researchers in these contexts, it would only be successful from how it is conceptualised within the indigenous knowledge and linguistic locations.

In that sense, the completion of the screen storying experience is endlessly deferred every time another screening event happens; the process continues. Therefore, when a participant asks at the Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh “… where is this story going?” I had no definite answer because I did not know. It is not possible to know where and how far a ‘good’ story is going - suffice to just say a good story moves and traverse horizons of time and space.

The interaction involved in filming Katrine’s interview in Copenhagen for instance was part of the process of telling Katrine’s story. It immediately initiated a new and separate process of friendships, musical explorations, travels across and between countries for many musical encounters that resulted in interpersonal and intercultural musical experiences. These are examples of what we can learn from reflecting on *Music Across Borders* to inform how we think about artistic research and how it is related to understanding inequality and development. The experience is equally ongoing for me for example, in the process of this reflection on the production in relation to understanding inequalities and development in the context of my MIDEQ Hub research; for Katrine Suwalski in her ongoing musical journeys with Elivava and Odomankoma Okyerema Pra; and for Alfred Tamakloe who was instrumental in negotiation the initial collaboration as he continues to be involved in witnessing this in real time. It continues for my two sons Sedem Tordzro and Eli Tordzro who helped me 50 volunteering their time and skills as cinematographers and editors, through twenty-first century computer technology, during the post-production video and audio editing stages and online where the film continues to be hosted and accessed. This experience continues in how it is a new experience uniquely starting from this point for the readers of this reflection and connects them to the film online, transporting them to the past to a story that was told in 2015.

Furthermore, interactions, experiences and the new stories emerging and adding up to what has been generated and shared at the screening events. The comments, questions and answers, recommendations and criticisms that characterized the premiere screening events in Glasgow, Copenhagen and Accra, have added to the story of the making and the sharing, its impacts, and outcomes as they continue to unfold in what I call ‘story ripples’. The limitations encountered in technology, time, and the budget and the decisions I made to work around those limitations have become interesting parts of the story of my way of working today. The new insights I have gained about how I can work with my limited production kit, the new people I have met, new places I have been because of the making of the film have all become my lived experience which have transformed me and changed my perceptions and sense of story as the maker of *Music Across Borders*. All of this, and the new connections Katrine has formed with other musicians from the Ha Orchestra for example, have also become a part of the story I tell of the process-of-making, of its sharing, impacts and outcomes. Through the many stories coming out of the story of *Music Across

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50 Budget constraints meant that I was unable to travel on short notice when I heard that Katrine was returning to Ghana with her band for the first time since she was there twenty years before. My two older sons Sedem Tordzro and Eli Tordzro who live in Ghana volunteered and shot the footage of Katrine Suwalski’s and her Another World Band’s 2015 Ghana tour for the Documentary film.
Borders, my own unique process is made. This story is my (Gameli’s) ‘making-of-process’ story. It is a story of interactions, relationships, process, development, transformation, and new discoveries.

I touched on the idea of the ‘self’ as a site for story, relationships, and the process of storying for screen recounting the importance of how story is at the nexus of sense-making and everyday life and how in reflecting on the process of storying, an additional layer of the process of storying creates new stories about the experience of story storying and storytelling is added. If storying is the process or reflecting on experience, then this is also applicable to the process of ‘reflecting on reflection’ where the fractal nature of development can be in critical view for South-South migration researchers interested in artistic research methodologies. We generate new stories when we reflect as essentially, the process is an interaction with the self to create a sense-making process of a lived experience: the reflexive space offers me the academic interrogative examination of my own position in artistic practice, as a research endeavour. The process is engaging and as transformational as outlined above about the process of storying on screen.

The importance of relationships in artistic research is at the centre of obtaining and building on access and trust from an approach of ‘developing together’ where through shared ownerships of the stories we create together as a part of doing arts and the making of process in research. The instantaneous nature of how creative arts research produces outputs and outcomes as part of process while research is still on-going opens many opportunities to how research communities could review the importance of researching in and with creative arts. The transformational dynamics of impacts and outcomes created through the making and experiencing of Music Across Borders is traceable in how it has repositioned my artistic practice and reskilled me as a film maker, a creative arts researcher as much as it has created on-going interests among those who have participated in this research to continue to work together crossing many more borders through the music they make but also with the story we have jointly created and told on screen – Music Across Borders and other examples of how artistic research is capable of creating impacts and outcomes thus, are part of process that continues beyond the research project in the same way as a story leaves ripples into the future.

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51 Bryman 2012.
References


