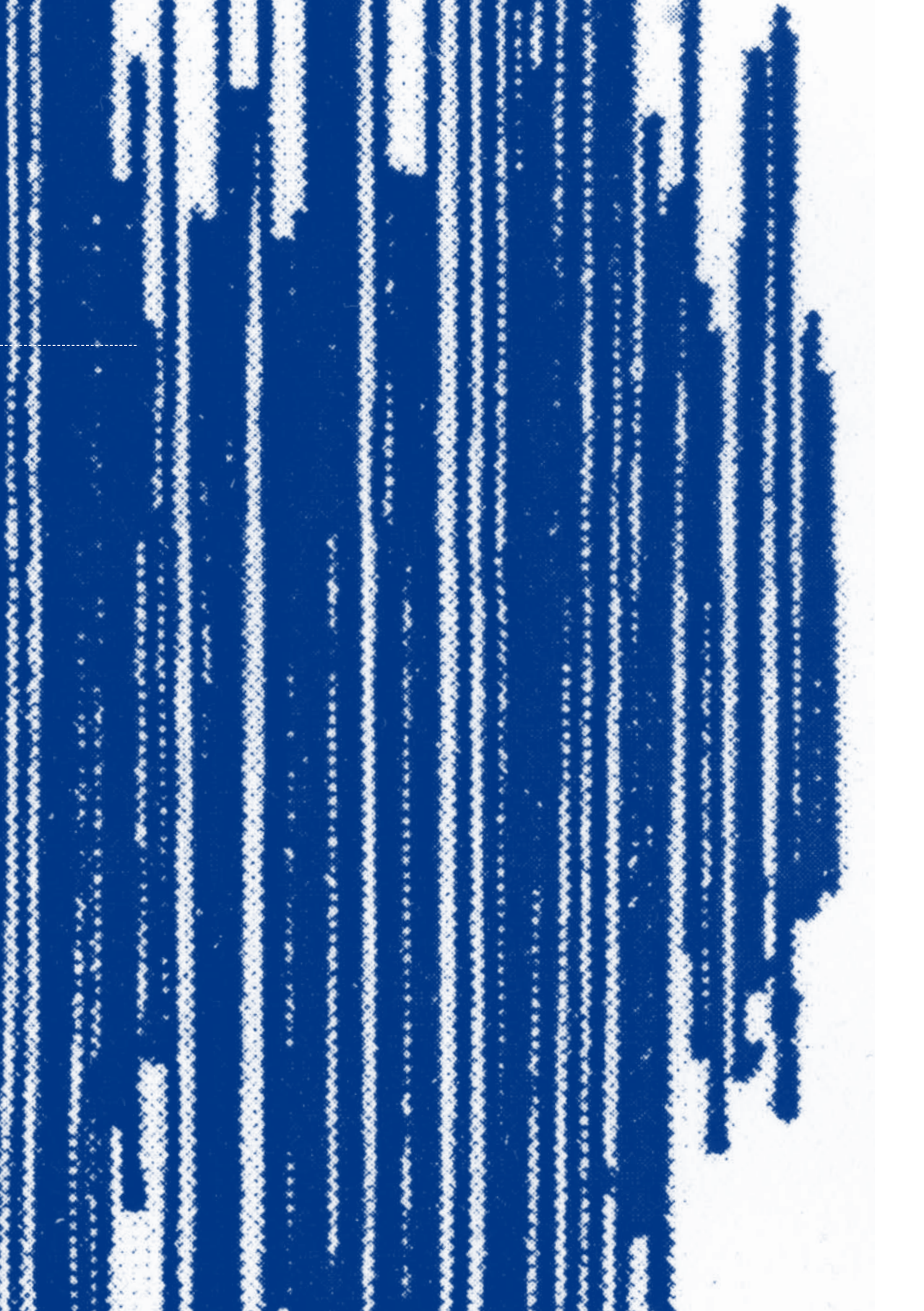


# ArtFutures

*Current issues*

**in higher arts education**



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**Kieran Corcoran**, ELIA President & **Carla Delfos**, ELIA Executive Director

## *ArtFutures*

**Current issues in higher arts education**



In 2008, the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) was awarded an operational grant for three years from the European Commission and decided to name all the activities made possible by the grant 'ArtFutures'. The grant supported the ongoing activities of ELIA and allowed the development of a whole range of new projects. This book features a selection of papers – some commissioned, some presented at ELIA conferences but all made possible by the ArtFutures grant. Together, they provide an insight into current debates in higher arts education and the role of ELIA within this field. They focus on a field in transformation, illustrate the many ways in which society and art schools interact, and show how art schools are engaged in preparing the ground for new artists and helping them face the challenges of contemporary life.

In this introduction we would like to give a general overview of the activities that have taken place in the three years of ArtFutures and how they reflect the issues addressed in this publication.

ArtFutures primarily supported the ongoing activities of ELIA: the Biennial Conferences, Teachers' Academies, the Leadership Symposium and the general programme of advocacy of the arts at a European level and the exchange of knowledge, expertise and information about current issues in higher arts education. The ELIA Biennial is the largest conference worldwide about higher arts education specifically, drawing around 500 participants from all over Europe and beyond. At the 2008 conference in Gothenburg, Sweden, crucial issues addressed included the development of research at art academies, the management of quality, the future direction and agenda for the art school, intercultural dialogue, and the impact of art schools on the creative economy. In his keynote speech, Peter Sellars addressed the challenges for artists in the wake of the present crisis and urged them, "to reconsider, to re-conceptualise, to re-imagine, to re-enter, to re-engage – and start again". The image of a stuffed polar bear presided over the conference as a reminder of our environmental predicament.

The theme of 'art in times of crisis' recurred in the Leadership Symposium "Value is Vulnerable" in Zurich a year later, while a symposium in Chicago reflected on the 'claim to creativity' in the arts. The ELIA Teachers' Academy in Sofia brought together arts teachers from all disciplines under the common theme of 'storytelling' to discuss new initiatives in creative arts pedagogy.

*ArtFutures: Current issues in higher arts education* continues the debate, and the keynote speech of Bernard Stiegler at the conference in Nantes, "The Deproletarianisation of Knowledge: Art and teaching art in post-consumerist culture" picks up where Peter Sellars left off. He considers the question of how to re-arm artists and the public in a digital age, and proposes strategies for getting the creative economy out of what he calls "the golden ghetto". Janet Ritterman,

in her article "Riding the Tiger", surveys the main challenges in leading institutions for higher education and the arts at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and asks: "Is the model of the Academy still the right one?" Mick Wilson asks a series of questions about the European project in Higher Arts Education and reminds us that "Education as a complex system requires some complicated thinking but also, on occasion, it requires just a simple challenge, a challenge to the conceit that education already knows itself and can know its own future." Corina Caduff's article "The Contentious Cooperation of Artistic Research" describes the current debate about artistic research and its place in the academy and in the public sphere. Anthony Dean discusses the *NEU/NOW* Festival, started by ELIA in 2009, in relation to the wider issue of life after the academy and the arts in European policy. The second part of this book explores current issues in higher arts education from the perspective of specific disciplines. Johan Verbeke and Adam Jakimowicz explore, in a paper that is both experimental and schematic, the impact of research on design. The impact of new technologies on music pedagogy and improvisation practice is the topic of Gérard Pape's plea for a 'polyagoric' approach to the use of the computer in music pedagogy in relation to the work of Xenakis, and also in Henrik Frisk's "Time and Reciprocity in Improvisation". Franziska Nyffenegger describes the problematic position of academic writing in the design curriculum, and how to make design students "Friends with the ABC". Kevin Henry re-evaluates the notion of 'craft', by emphasising the new social and even activist role designers could play as 'craftivists' with the help of new technologies. Finally, Klaas Tindemans describes a new development in the performing arts: the theatre as documentary practice. Together, these papers form a panorama of what is going in higher arts education at large, a panorama of new forms of art, new challenges, and new futures.

The ArtFutures grant was awarded at a significant point in time for ELIA, where the organisation reached a milestone twentieth year as the leading representative body for higher arts education in Europe. Clearly there have been many changes to the cultural and academic landscape in that time and in the organisation itself. The current portfolio of activities and projects of ELIA is varied and a recent focus has been the development of partnerships and knowledge transfer. The main stakeholders for ELIA are the members and potential members, but relationships with national and international authorities, cultural institutions, international networks and foundations continue to grow. This profile and the range of project based activity which has grown substantially over the past few years has seen ELIA evolve its function both as a membership and a network based organization.

During the three years of ArtFutures ELIA's overall specific focus has been on the future role of art schools, and it has concentrated on raising awareness of the impact of higher arts education on the social, cultural and economic developments of our societies and on overarching themes such as intercultural dialogue, sustainability and climate change.

ELIA has facilitated the need for 'balanced conversations' between the economic, artistic, cultural and educational spheres. This approach of balanced conversations has been extended to cities and creative industries at a local level with a focus on creative partnerships.

Equally ELIA embraced and focused on the growing interest and developments in research in the arts and the post Bologna agenda with particular reference to post graduate programmes.

The cultural, artistic and educational differences and qualities related to research in and through the arts across Europe were addressed in a Strategy Paper on Research *The Importance of Artistic Research and its Contribution to "New Knowledge" in a Creative Europe*. This paper served as the basis for follow up projects and activities that are intended to serve as a key contribution to further shaping a European Research Area in the arts. This field was mapped by the Erasmus network artesnetEurope, a project with 68 partners from 26 European countries. Currently the SHARE academic network, with 35 European partners, is furthering the development of a research culture by bringing together existing graduate schools to develop innovative, cross-disciplinary approaches and programmes. SHARE will concentrate on facilitating the development of new third-cycle programmes, and the creation of an international forum for doctoral researchers and supervisors. These follow up activities will work towards ensuring that the specific characteristics of arts based research are clearly articulated and are recognized as a unique contribution to new knowledge.

ArtFutures focused on four main objectives that served as the basis for all ELIA activities. The first objective was *'promoting artistic/creative mobility'*.

Under this heading ELIA has been organizing a series of student-centered activities which have helped create a high level of visibility for the contribution emerging artists are making to the richness of cultural diversity and cultural mobility in Europe.

The festival for young art graduates NEU/NOW is a good example of an activity developed as part of this objective. Thanks to the ArtFutures grant ELIA was able to develop the concept for an annual online festival followed by a live event featuring a selection of work by recent graduates. The festival was organised in its first year in partnership with Vilnius Cultural Capital of Europe 2009, and in 2010 the City of Nantes hosted the live festival. Over the coming years NEU/NOW will be a dynamic platform for the promotion of artistic excellence in an open and inclusive environment – where audiences, producers and curators can meet and experience innovative high quality projects emerging from art schools and universities across Europe.

In Anthony Dean's article you can read more about what motivated the festival: the perceived need for creating a platform for emerging artists, providing them not merely with a showcase but also a meeting-place, and a concern for the prospects of artists after art school, in an increasingly international arts arena.

The second objective of ArtFutures was *'raising awareness of cultural diversity'*. The aim was to raise awareness among emerging artists of the richness of cultural diversity and of the advantages of cultural mobility in Europe. One way in which this was realised was through engaging artists from different backgrounds in a shared artistic project ... *I see you – the language of the arts and intercultural dialogue*. In a variety of styles, from documentary to drama, stop-trick and cartoon animation to wordless art film, each contributed a short film that dealt with the theme of intercultural dialogue from their own artistic and personal

standpoint. As part of a learning process the project included two preparatory seminars during the Berlinale in Berlin and Documenta 12 in Kassel and one summing-up seminar, which addressed such issues as modernity in a multicultural world, the art of filmmaking, and the question: what is to be done? The project was documented in a book and DVD that were widely distributed, together with the film, to festivals, television companies and shown during various ELIA conferences and events. It formed the basis for discussion in a symposium 'The Arts as Dialogue? on the Place of the Arts in Multicultural Societies' that took place as part of the 10<sup>th</sup> ELIA Biennial.

The third ArtFutures objective was '*building a creative economy*'. Increasingly, there is a debate in the European arena about what professional skills artists need in order to perform new roles in the creative industries and other sectors of society. ELIA is in the process of developing a coherent European model of how art schools can contribute to this as active partners and cultural agents within a socially and geographically cohesive Europe, both preserving their independence and entering into meaningful partnerships with commercial and civil society organisations.

Expert think tank meetings have been organised and contributions were made during major events in Istanbul and Vilnius with representatives from the creative industries, art schools and scientific experts. During the *City and Art* conference in Istanbul, April 2009, the role of the art school as a cultural institution within its direct environment was emphasised; a topic that was again brought to the fore through the theme of the 2010 Biennial, *l'Art au coeur du territoire*. An expert meeting in Utrecht focused on the new approaches and possibilities offered through 'creative partnerships' in which innovative companies and the local community can profit from the creativity of art students. This affects the institutions as well; in the words of one ELIA expert, they are becoming "schools with doors open".

The fourth and final objective was '*contributing to the European Agenda for Culture*'. The European Agenda for Culture, first presented in 2007, marks an important breakthrough in cultural politics in that it signals clear recognition for the role of culture in creating Europe. ELIA is an active partner in the structured dialogue with the European Commission and was invited to participate in the European 'Creative Industries Platform and the Platform 'Access to Culture'. ELIA has also prepared a range of position papers on these issues, including a commentary on the EU Green Paper "Unlocking the potential of Cultural and Creative industries" and the "Recommendations for the Year of Creativity and Innovation". The latter paper was developed together with the European Association of Conservatoires (AEC), and presented to representatives of the European Parliament and Commission at the *Bloom!* hotel, Brussels – a place that is decorated with 300 murals by art students from ELIA member institutions from all around Europe.

In spite of current political developments in some of our countries, the arts are widely practiced and enjoy significant popularity, with audiences having greater access to a wider range of cultural experiences than ever before in Europe's history. The centrality of the arts in our lives and the necessity for a strong arts education

sector in any strategy for cultural and economic development and regeneration is a core objective of ELIA's policy.

This three year *ArtFutures* publication shows the 'stone in the water' effect that supporting network organizations like ELIA can have and we trust it confirms that it is public funding well used with many positive effects. Bringing so many people together, from so many European countries, from so many disciplines, with so many different backgrounds has resulted in a huge number of projects where people have had the opportunity to learn about new developments, share and compare good and bad practice and through new friendships and solidarity help build (or begin to build) the cultural identity of Europe.

On behalf of the editorial board,  
**Kieran Corcoran**, ELIA President  
**Carla Delfos**, ELIA Executive Director



**Bernard Stiegler** Ars Industrialis

# *The Age of De-proletarianisation*

Art and teaching art in post-consumerist culture

In the passage from *Nude Descending a Staircase* (1912) to *Fountain* (1917), Marcel Duchamp makes a leap from one type of technical reproducibility to another. It is a leap from the technical reproducibility of photography and chronophotography – that is, not only Muybridge and Marey but also cinema, a type of reproducibility that also makes possible the implementation of the Taylorist scientific organisation of labour and the assembly line – to another type of reproducibility that enables the mass production of “readymade” objects. Mass production that results in the establishment of consumerist society, the costs of which eventually reveal themselves as the accumulation of waste.

In the passage from *Nude Descending a Staircase* to *Fountain*, between 1912 and 1917, Duchamp inscribed the figure of his an-artistic becoming on the ground of general proletarianisation, that is, in the context of a general loss of knowledge which was then beginning to reveal itself. With general proletarianisation, human knowledge is short-circuited as a result of its technological reproduction and implementation, leading, after the Second World War (which is the time of Duchamp strictly speaking), to the globalisation of the consumerist model. In the consumerist model it is not only the know-how (*savoir-faire*) of workers that becomes obsolete, but also the knowledge of how to live (*savoir-vivre*) of citizens, who thus become as such mere consumers: a good consumer is both utterly passive and irresponsible, the complete opposite of what Kant and Enlightenment philosophy in general called maturity, that is, the citizen insofar as he or she attains rationality – in particular, according to Kant, through his or her knowledge of reading and writing.

The economic crisis of 2008 continues to reveal the global toxicity of a system that now extends across the entire planet. At the same time, a digital network is unfolding that engenders new processes of psychic and collective individuation, that is, new ways of being, new forms of knowledge, and new social relations. In this context, the question of a *post-consumerist art* and of a *new social connectivity*, regional as well as global, but de-territorialising as well as territorialising, becomes a crucial issue for the artistic world as well as for political economy. The issue raised by this enormous dissemination of digital cultural technologies is the need for a *far-reaching process of de-proletarianisation*, that is, the recovery of knowledge of all kinds.

There is currently much discussion about developing a “creative economy”, based on the model of “clusters” as first conceived in North America, especially in California, on the basis of analyses undertaken by John Howkins and Richard Florida. The notion of the creative economy, which rests above all on the idea that value and wealth are generated more than anything from ideas, may be incontestable as far as it goes. Be that as it may, this valorisation of ideas, the affirmation of this wealth that is the mind or spirit and its creativity *seems* to call for the de-proletarianisation referred to above. And yet this is not at all the case – and we must even conclude that the idea of the creative economy in reality derives from an opposing point of view: the creative economy model in fact further aggravates the calamitous situation to which general proletarianisation leads, because it aims to further entrench the situation established by consumerism when it created

the mass media – that is, when it created what is known as the “culture industry”. (It is thus worth remembering that John Howkins spent a large part of his career working for television, notably for Time Warner.)

Consumerism liquidates the desires of individuals: the development of consumerism depended upon short-circuiting the social systems that transform the drives into desire, that is, into fidelity. The transformation of the drives into desire constitutes what Lyotard called a “libidinal economy” – for example, the early mother/child relation as described by Donald Winnicott, within which the transitional object appears that, for Winnicott, is the matrix of all those adult forms of play that are the arts, sciences and all the activities of social sublimation and individual investment in the collective.<sup>1</sup> Consumerism has short-circuited the educative role of parents, through which the primary identification that constitutes the condition of the formation of the ego ideal of the ego and the superego is produced, and has, too, short-circuited national education, which enables secondary identification processes to be bound to idealised figures of knowledge and to the disciplines of the spirit.

It is in this way that consumerism, destroying the libido, becomes drive-based – the destruction of the libido means it is no longer capable of binding the drives. Consumerism tries to bind consumers and make them submit by producing dependence, that is, addiction – as was recently thematised at the Nantes CHU (*Centre hospitalier universitaire*) by Jean-Luc Vénisse and his team at the laboratory of addictology. And it was with the aim of fostering this dependence from the first months of life that Fox TV created the *Baby First* channel.

Approached from this angle, the creative economy appears to constitute a new ideological apparatus for producing cultural hegemony more than it promises some new age of the industrial world. What the creative economy model really proposes is a method for resuscitating the ever-weakening desire of consumers, by drawing together marketing and artistic creation to produce a kind of social Viagra. All this has little relation to the project of raising the general level of ideas, or of re-engaging the life of the spirit, which is the condition for any reconstitution of responsibility; this condition being itself, in turn, and according to all evidence, the necessary condition that would enable the world to forge for itself a new future.

In the end, this model is not only hyperconsumerist but also profoundly segregationist: it proposes in principle that, faced with a colossal mass of incurably herdish consumers, those few who remain “creative” must be penned together inside golden ghettos designed to encourage their mutual stimulation, as if such “creative” types can no longer be stimulated – in earlier days one would have said *inspired* – by the *everyday world of ordinary people*, this *everydayness* that creativity always trans-figures into something *improbable*, that is, into something *singular* and as such *extra-ordinary*. This creative trans-figuration departs from everydayness both because, on the one hand, it *arises* from everydayness (referring here to everydayness in the sense in which Deleuze also speaks of immanence), and because, on the other hand, it *rises up* from everydayness so that it is *above* the *everyday* yet *within the everyday*, that is, it places the everyday into relief: elevation not as a “transcendence

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<sup>1</sup> Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1971).

within immanence”, as we are tempted to say with phenomenology, but as a singularity that suddenly bursts forth as the infinity and salience of meaning and significance from within everything that seems level, flat and finite, that is, entropic, lacking perspective.

This trans-formation or trans-figuration of the ordinary into the extra-ordinary is not limited to the case of art: it is also found, for example, when Roland Barthes writes about the mythologies of what in his time (the 1950s) was still referred to as modernity. This elevation of the extraordinary from the ordinary is what Gilbert Simondon described as the tendency to ascend and the desire to climb to what he called a “key-point”:

*Ascent, exploration, and more generally all pioneering gestures, consist in adhering to key-points that nature presents. To climb a slope towards the summit is to head toward the privileged place that commands the entire massif, not in order to dominate or possess it, but in order to exchange with it a relation of friendship.<sup>2</sup>*

The creative economy is the opposite of this conception of the creativity of the ordinary (or the everyday) and *within* the ordinary as the accessing of its extra-ordinariness, a conception that I believe characterises the artistic experience, particularly since the advent of modernity. It is a conception that can be recognised both when Baudelaire views the paintings of Constantin Guys, and in Manet – that Manet who is thought to be the model for the character of Elstir in Proust’s *In Search of Lost Time* – a narrative that has plenty to say about the extraordinary becoming ordinary in a world that now belongs to the Verdurins, those whom Hölderlin or Nietzsche or Arendt would have called philistines; a narrative that is therefore a search, a search for other key-points, and a work that was composed during the precise period from Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase* to *Fountain*.

And yet, if the ideology of the creative economy has today become so successful, not only ideologically but in terms of economic and urban organisation, it is because it also rests on a systematic exploitation of that new digital network, both territorial and de-territorialising, that characterises our epoch – and of which Facebook is an outcome, both astonishing and poor. As such, plans to constitute *creative regions* are very interesting and important. And this is the most interesting aspect of the current project to create a “creativity quarter” on the Île de Nantes.<sup>3</sup> It seems this creativity quarter is to include some unusual architecture, architecture that to me seems somewhat to anticipate its own ruin, similar in a way to the ruin that Hubert Robert projected onto the Louvre.

Be that as it may, a project such as this, of turning a region (even if it begins with a city or indeed from an isle within this city) into a territory devoted to creativity, only makes sense on the condition that this territory becomes an *avant-garde* territory – on the condition that it rediscovers the question of the *avant-garde*. It is in this way, then, that I understand the potential of creative

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<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Simondon, *Du mode d'existence des objets techniques* (Paris: Aubier, 1958), p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.iledenantes.com/fr/projets/58-quartier-de-la-creation.html>

territories: as the possibility of an *avant-garde* territory, that is, an area capable of inventing a new cultural, social, economic and political model, of offering prefigurations of alternative “lines of flight”<sup>4</sup> to those of a consumerist society that has now reached exhaustion.

Ars Industrialis, the association that we created 5 years ago with friends and colleagues from many backgrounds, proposes that the new perspective for territories of creativity and hyperlearning should be that of an *economy of contribution*. What, then, is the economy of contribution? And what relations can it and must it maintain with the artistic world?

A new situation was established at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the appearance of those new tools and instruments of which cultural technologies and cognitive technologies consist, and that together shape the age of technologies of the spirit. These *technologies of the spirit* cause a struggle:

*either* the development of these technologies leads to the *reinforcement of the situation of symbolic misery or poverty* that was established over the last few decades, with the mass media being hegemonically submitted to marketing and essentially dedicated to the capturing and harnessing of attention, leading to drive-based and destructive consumerism, the calamitous effects of which were revealed in 2008;

*or* it results in a rupture that leads to a *renaissance of the symbolic*, grounded in a reconstruction of bidirectional social relations, that is, dialogue, or possibly “interactivity”, but that will not be realised without massive investment, and not through the creative economy.

In this *very new* context, there is clearly a role to be played by art, by cultural institutions, by universities and by public authorities: it is in fact the responsibility of artists, writers, thinkers, teachers, and cultural and educational institutions, together with the more clear-sighted actors in the economic world, to draw lines of flight in our complex and ambiguous world – that is, its future.

The constitution of creative territories depends upon the capacity to create relevant partnerships between artists, cultural institutions, their publics, and social, political, economic and academic actors – all of which requires a networking and acculturation policy not just for creators and researchers or for economic actors, but for inhabitants and associations as well.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit 1980)

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, perception took a mechanical turn – making it possible, for example, to repeatedly listen to music without knowing how to make music. Bartók drew attention to this in relation to the radio, when he recommended only listening to music while following along visually with the musical score. Bartók might thus appear reactionary, but he was in reality ahead of his time – in a way anticipating what Glenn Gould said in 1965 about what became the high fidelity channel of the digital age, namely, that it will enable the listener to simultaneously read the score, and to control the parameters of the performance, that is, to become the performer again.

Furthermore, Bartók maintained that Thomas Edison was the founder of musicology. Hence for example Bartók's work with gypsy tunes, which are so difficult to transcribe: he would first record this music onto the gramophone, and from this recording he made his transcription – by slowing down the turntable. Now, at exactly the same time, Charlie Parker taught himself music by listening to the performances of his teacher Lester Young on a phonograph, slowing down the turntable in order to learn to re-produce the sounds of Young's tenor saxophone, in this way transcribing them onto his own alto saxophone. The phonograph thereby became "his master's voice".

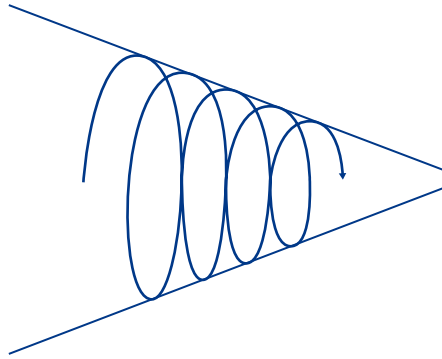
But this is true not only of music: at the Louvre, at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, just after the Revolution that made it the national site of pictorial patrimony, someone who viewed a painting *copied* it. This is also what Count Anne-Claude de Caylus, the royal art collector [*Amateur du Roi*] at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, successor to Roger de Piles at the Royal Academy of Painting, and Goethe, both say, affirming that it is possible neither to appreciate a painting nor speak about it until one has copied it. And they were in fact themselves copyists, as were all art-lovers [*amateurs d'art*] at the time (and this continued to be true even later, if we are to believe what Malraux said in 1947 in *The Imaginary Museum of World Sculpture*). One can neither understand nor see what one has not copied, according to these figures, and Cézanne will say the same thing to Emile Bernard: one can only see what one is capable of showing.

In other words, to listen, to look and – in general, when it is a matter of works of art – to feel and to experience, is to trigger or release a process such that the one who feels, who listens, who looks, is more or less put into motion, moved by what he or she feels.

A work is a potential that can pass more or less into the act of a *movement that it triggers within the one on whom it works*. This was magnificently expressed in relation to the theatre by Denis Guénoun:

*Today the only ones who can truly watch are players, in desiring to play. Watching [actors] play... is linked to those possible games or plays that we each articulate for ourselves...we who have seen children...just about ready to jump onto the stage to make an evaluation of the set and what occurs there, something that offers a glimpse of what is being pointed to here. The spectator who watches in the most powerful and affirmative way is the player who is about to take the place of what he or she sees...: in our time, in our world, there are spectators of theatre only as players in potential.*

This process of *acting out* is also a process of *e-motion*, that is, movement, a question of motion. There is a potential within the recipient of a work, a potential that this work, if it actually works, releases. I like to represent this potential (that I understand here in Aristotle's sense) in the following way:



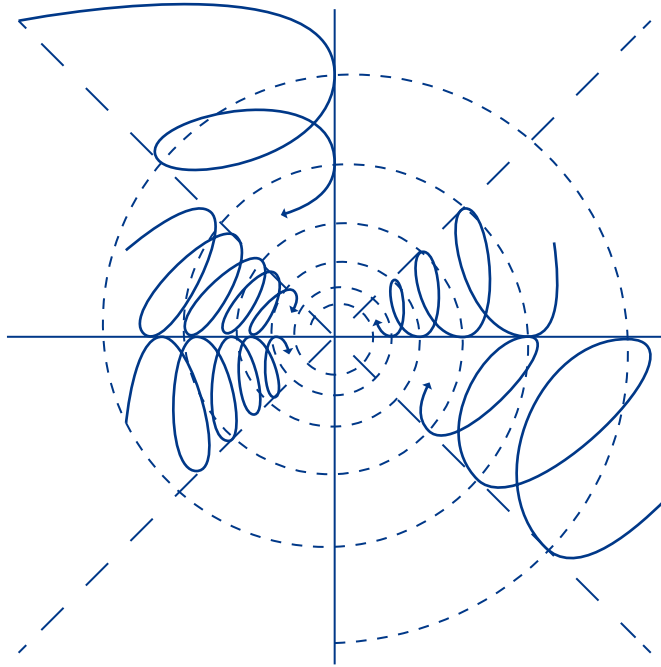
Joseph Beuys said the same thing when he said that the nurse and the baker are, like all of us, also artists.<sup>5</sup> How should this be understood? We should understand it as meaning that the nurse and the baker are artists in potential, if not always in the act – no more than artists themselves are constantly in the act of being artists, given that, according to Aristotle, only God can enjoy the privilege of being constantly in the act.

For the artist as a hyper-sensitive spectator (hyper-sensitive in the sense also that one speaks of the photosensitivity of paper covered with silver halides), what a work sets in action is that it affects him as a recipient in such a way that it engenders another work through which he becomes a sender.

To see *by showing* is to form a *circuit* – or rather it is to start a circuit – a circuit of what I have called *transindividuation*. We all more or less continuously individuate ourselves. To individuate oneself is to learn, to experiment, to become what one is by making the passage to the act of a potential that lies within every noetic soul. And, furthermore, individuation is co-individuation: one never individuates by oneself.

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<sup>5</sup> Jacqueline Burckhardt (ed.), *Ein Gespräch. Joseph Beuys, Jannis Kounellis, Anselm Kiefer, Enzo Cucchi* (Zurich: Parkett Verlag 1984)



Works work through a process of transindividuation: in the constitution of an *epoch*.

To see a work by showing *what it makes us do* – this is what “showing” means in this context, and this is what initiates a circuit of transindividuation (of the formation of an epoch), yet it must also be remembered that such circuits can take a very long time to develop. Daniel Arrasse, for example, views the Mona Lisa, but we will need to wait twenty years to see the circuit completed – when a short text by him is published in 2004. Arrasse also writes about Raphael’s *Sistine Madonna*, explaining that he had to wait a long time and make several journeys to Dresden before he finally “woke up”: it suddenly became clear.

Compared with this *patience* – that I write here with an “a”, nominalising a present participle, and in order perhaps to echo what Jean-François Lyotard called the “passability” of the recipient of a painting – visitors to the Louvre today spend on average forty-two seconds in front of each work (according to a 2005 statistic). Forty-two seconds amounts to a *short-circuit*, the short-circuit of that always very long circuit out of which an epoch is constituted. It is through such circuits that epochs of art and culture are formed, epochs that are, more generally, epochs of collective individuation.

The mechanical turn in perception, then, engendered a process of collective *disindividuation* – a process that destroys the collective and destroys culture. And this disindividuation is also a kind of *proletarianisation*, given that the proletariat in fact refers to those who have lost their knowledge – their *savoir-faire*, their *savoir-vivre*, and their theoretical knowledge.

In *our* epoch, and contrary to what occurred at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we are experiencing the *de-professionalisation* of instruments, their migration toward non-professionals, the re-instrumentation of the public, and the re-arming of *amateurs* – the ears of whom pass anew through the eyes, which pass anew through the hands. The *mechanical re-organisation of perception* taking place with the *digital* leads to the reconstitution of forms of knowledge held by audiences and publics. There thus comes to be formed a new *avant-garde*: one that constitutes *new publics*.

Digital technologies result in a massive transfer of professional competences toward larger and larger segments of the public. Today, a global population makes requests that are processed by search engines capable of trawling through all the databases worldwide that are interconnected through the TCP/IP norm and the World Wide Web, which in barely twenty years has resulted in some very specialised professions in the world of electronic documentation. Such requests have now become a basic tool for all age groups in every segment of the population.

Similarly, the audiovisual broadcasting possibilities now offered to everyone with access to the servers of Daily Motion and YouTube, along with the availability of videocameras and videorecorders that often perform better than professional equipment from a decade earlier, means that the competencies of these new audiences and new publics has profoundly changed – so that they are able to become suppliers of “content”. And by adjusting or acculturating to these new forms of *savoir-faire*, these audiences also become more demanding. They begin to take hold of what at the *Institut de recherche et d’innovation* we call the critical apparatus of systems of instrumentalised listening, or instrumentalised viewing. In more general terms, the functioning of the global network depends on the capacity of users to become practitioners, that is, capable themselves of producing accessible information and knowledge.

Finally and especially, the addressees of the Web (and who are then also, and at a structural level, addressers), participate – sometimes without knowing it – in the production of *metadata* about the data that they consult or produce, by indexing and annotating it. In so doing they form what is called the *social web*, further developing what is called *social engineering*.

This creates a situation that is without doubt completely unprecedented in human history. Metadata (that is, data that describes other data) have existed since the Mesopotamian era, and have become, since the invention of the printing press, the basis of those auxiliary sciences of knowledge (library science, archive science, documentary science, etc.) that ground the cognitive instruments of the humanities as well as the natural and experimental sciences. The production of metadata has, ever since, been guaranteed by central institutions controlled by academic, linguistic, artistic, scientific, philosophical and political powers and authorities, and has operated according to a descending model, that is, a *top-down* model.

Collaborative technologies, however, are on the contrary based on an ascending production of metadata, that is, according to a *bottom-up* model. This involves a major and unprecedented change in the history of the formation, formalisation and transmission of human knowledge. The novelty of this change is both historic and very recent. The transfer of professional knowledge toward the most quotidian activities of everyone results in contradictions and disruptions. Furthermore, the socialisation of digital technologies, as with every new technology, is initially perceived as a kind of *poison* (as Plato said about writing, even though it was the basis of law and rational thought). Thus it is possible for our dependence on the audiovisual screen to sometimes be transformed into genuine addiction, immeasurably intensifying the destruction of deep attention and its replacement by what Katherine Hayles calls hyper-attention (which is in reality a fragmentation of attention), a destruction of attention that had already been prompted by the capturing and harnessing of so-called “available brain time”, that is, the production of brains without consciousness or conscience.

The production, indexation, annotation and distribution of data *by anyone* (this is the meaning of ‘bottom-up’) seems then to lead to the reign of *n’importe quoi*. This is a situation that is at times incited and controlled by new industrialists, who exploit the traceability of data and metadata in order to analyse and control behaviour. It can reach the point of generating dependent and toxic situations that increase in an extreme way the already perverse effects of 20<sup>th</sup> century consumerism and its now obsolete industrial system – the pathological character of which was acknowledged anxiously and planet-wide at the Copenhagen Summit. Like writing, and according to Plato’s word, the digital is a *pharmakon*, that is, at once a poison, a remedy and a scapegoat. Only the digital itself, insofar as it can be a remedy, enables an effective struggle against the poison which it also is, and this is without doubt a key to the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## *Fundamental Questions of Vision:*

Higher Arts Public Education, Research and Citizenship

You believe in what you call freedom of thought. Then, fine. You believe in freedom-of-thought and a home, and, and prerogatives for your kid, and tenure. And I'm going to tell you. You believe not in "freedom of thought", but in an elitist, in, in a protected hierarchy which rewards you. And for whom you are the clown. And you mock and exploit the system which pays your rent. [...] But we worked to get to this school. And some of us. Overcame prejudices. Economic, sexual, you cannot begin to imagine. And endured humiliations I pray that you and those you love never will encounter. To gain admittance here. To pursue that same dream of security you pursue. We, who, who are, at any moment, in danger of being deprived of it. [...] By the administration. By the teachers. By you. By, say, one low grade, that keeps us out of graduate school; by one, say, one capricious or inventive answer on our parts, which, perhaps, you don't find amusing. Now you know, do you see? What it is to be subject to that power.<sup>1</sup>

These lines are cited from David Mamet's controversial play *Oleanna* which examines different aspects of power in higher education. These lines combine fragments of the student Carol's challenge to her Professor's self-understanding as critical educator. She challenges not simply his power, but his conceit that he can be the critic of his own power. These lines are cited here so that the reader and the writer might be mindful of the contradictions that are at work throughout the following text. These lines might remind us of the contradictions that plague an educator who tries to speak critically of higher education because s/he has gained some advantage by that education.

### Between a rock and a hard place

The European project has entered into the decade of what will be, most probably, its greatest challenge to date. It faces into an ongoing period of financial crisis and the extraordinary vulnerability of the Eurozone, as manifest most palpably in the national debt and banking crises of Portugal, Ireland, Greece, and Spain. This is also the time at which Europe's controversial higher educational reform initiative – the Bologna process – concludes its decade-long programme "to help diverse higher education systems converge towards more transparent systems, based on three cycles ... Bachelor – Master – Doctorate". The Bologna process proposed to introduce a system of academic degrees that: were "easily recognisable and comparable"; promoted "the mobility of students, teachers and researchers"; ensured "high quality teaching"; and incorporated "the European dimension into higher education".<sup>2</sup> The basic goal has been to establish a system of inter-operability and equivalence across a fully *Europeanised* higher education space.

The very high profile mobilisation of student protest in 2009 and 2010, particularly in the German-speaking world has demonstrated a significant line of dissent and opposition to "Bologna". This opposition is to be found elsewhere in the often understated refusals and the reluctant compliance of many higher arts educators and middle-managers across Europe in acceding to work practice changes and programme adjustments that attempt to implement the European higher education space. This critique of Bologna has also emerged as an important thematic within contemporary cultural debate beyond the academy. That a prominent organ of the globalised contemporary art world such as the *e-flux Journal* should carry a series of

<sup>1</sup> David Mamet (1993) [orig. 1992] *Oleanna*, Methuen Drama.

<sup>2</sup> [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/education\\_training\\_youth/lifelong\\_learning/c11088\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/education_training_youth/lifelong_learning/c11088_en.htm)

articles debating questions of art and research informed by recurrent reference to the Bologna process is significant.<sup>3</sup> It is indicative of the political vitality and critical urgency with which many practitioners currently engage questions of education and culture.

For contemporary cultural practice, the question of education is most often inflected by a critique of the state's formal apparatuses of education and social reproduction. Dissent is particularly focussed against the imposition of a bureaucratic 'managerialism'.<sup>4</sup> This managerialism is seen as characteristic of the instrumentalised technocratic programme for the state's role in education and culture. For the purposes of the contemporary state, at both national and European level, education and culture are increasingly apprehended primarily as matters of economic policy, human capital formation and market development.

There is however another tendency gaining ground across Europe. This is the re-animation of an older *Kulturkampf* paradigm which understands the state's role in education and culture as that of constructing and reproducing a communal vision of cultural identity, ethnic nationalist citizenship and chauvinistic social regulation. Thus we see the demise of the post-WWII North European social democracies as neoliberal centrist and right wing coalitions make pragmatic common cause with various extreme xenophobic and racist nationalistic factions. Within a context where public and media discourses appear evacuated of value constructs other than the reduced terms of economy, celebrity and security/threat, it is hard to estimate the longer term significance of this renewal of *Kulturkampf* rhetorics from the extreme right. For higher arts educators, there is clearly cause for concern when the work of culture seem set to be squashed between the rock of economic instrumentalism and the hard place of chauvinistic cultural nationalism.

### **Between Personal Transformation and Social Reproduction**

Inevitably, the situation is vastly more complicated than the foregoing summary outline allows. In the rhetoric of *crisis* we risk losing sight of the perennially contested nature of education. The state's educational apparatus (and the privatised market accretions upon that apparatus) constitute a system of social reproduction: the apparatus of education reproduces the social order and it reproduces itself. It is thus a site of intense ideological investment and energy. While educational sites produce a vast number of individual narratives of social, economic and cultural mobility and transformed life opportunities, at a systematic level, education operates as a conservative apparatus reproducing the polarities of wealth – economic wealth, social wealth, and cultural wealth. It is notable that the 'social reproduction' analysis of education is no longer a fashionable topic of intellectual discourse in an era where education is seen as engine of social mobility, enhanced life opportunities and smarter economies.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Irit Rogoff (2008) "Turning" [<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18>]; Dieter Lesage (2009) "The Academy is Back: On Education, the Bologna Process, and the Doctorate in the Arts" [<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/45>]; Dietrich Lemke (2010) "Mourning Bologna" [<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/123>]

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<sup>4</sup> For extensive discussions of these issues see Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (eds.) (2010) *Curating and the Educational Turn*, de Appel / Open Editions.

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<sup>5</sup> Raymond Allen Morrow, Carlos Alberto Torres (1995) *Social Theory and Education: A Critique of Theories of Social and Cultural Reproduction*, SUNY.

The conservative function of the educational apparatus as engine of social reproduction is countered by the alignment of education with certain progressivist societal narratives of technology change, economic growth, expanded new literacies, expanding social inclusion and personal growth. There has been a dramatic mass-ification of higher education in Europe over the last five decades and this is a major change process for the apparatus of education in general. (This has for example led to the credentialising of whole areas of work previously outside the quasi-professional coordination that academic awards and degrees construct – extending to such areas as for example child care, social leadership, cultural management, or business development.)

But the upheavals in education, the dramatic expansion of participation and its re-structuring do not entail a loss of function in terms of social reproduction. It is rather a matter of the functional reproduction of the dynamics and polarities of wealth and opportunity within a changed regime of global production, distribution and consumption. This systemic function of the apparatus does not exhaustively disclose the content, experience and potential of education – there are also the transformative moments. However, the transformative moments within our educational practices must be critically articulated with this over-arching systemic action. If we attend only to the systemic analysis this will obscure the lived world of education as often an occasion of enabling and emancipatory experience, and indeed of social transformation. Equally, in attending only to the local transformative agency that we have as educators and learners we dis-articulate one moment of the apparatus from another and produce an impoverished account of what is going on in education more generally. Education as a complex system requires some complicated thinking but also, on occasion, it requires just a simple challenge, a challenge to the conceit that education already knows itself and can know its own future.

### **Now is a good time to ask questions**

Over the next decade, the drama of reform and renewal of higher education in Europe will be played out against a backdrop of a radically intensified contest over the basic politico-economic rationale, socio-cultural vision and ideological content of the European project. We are asked to consider the question of a vision for arts education at a time when the cultural political project of Europe is at a pivotal moment in its larger development, at a time when fundamental reorientations are possible. This would seem to be a good time to ask questions.

The basic challenge for higher arts educators today then, I would propose, is to ask, and to attempt to respond to, fundamental questions of vision and purpose: What visions for the state's role in culture and education can be proposed that are capable of countering the tendency to reduce both education and culture to exclusively economic terms and at the same time attending to the growing appeal of various cultural chauvinism of various ethnic nationalisms in our societies? What compelling and persuasive visions can we formulate while attending to the real dynamics of social and economic brutality that are unfolding all around us as the trickle-down economics of the financial crisis becomes a flood of social exclusion and impoverishment? What visions can be formulated which attend to

the contradictions of education as system of social reproduction, on the one hand, and education as event of transformation, on the other hand? What visions can achieve an adequate level of criticism to temper the narcissism of both the educator and the learner? What visions can at the same time attend to the educator's and the learner's agency?

The asking of questions is already a production of meaning, of value and of an orientation or position on the issues that we choose to prioritise. The asking of questions is not innocent or un-situated. The questions we ask must be shaped and situated within the urgencies of our lived worlds or else they will not mobilise our passions or draw us out into the energetic encounter with each other as we try to build meaningful and compelling shared dialogues, projects and answers. The questions that we ask must also in some way place the habitual work-a-day assumptions of our lived world in question. This kind of questioning and enquiry is not easy. Perhaps, it is only possible within a community of dialogue where we find our claims about ourselves and our work subject to the responses, questions and challenges of others. But, even given that we can establish a community of dialogue to enable our questions, there is the need to work against the *group think* that can arise as an interest group mobilises itself in pursuit of its best advantage.

There is also a need to work against the reduction of collaborative and network dialogues to the overly polite, bland and inauthentic encounter of people afraid to disturb the social elegance of their exchanges by asking uncomfortable questions. The production of questions; the production of a community who share questions; and the production of shared projects and responses to those questions: these are each a matter of critical practice and of pragmatic co-ordination. We need to action ourselves in the world; to question our actions in the world; and to question the world we posit through our actions and our questions. The circularity of this kind of active enquiry is tricky but also enlivening. This kind of enquiry seems, in various different philosophical and pedagogical traditions, fundamental to the work of culture and to the work of education.

### **Research and Fundamental Questioning**

This theme of question and enquiry is central to the construction of the idea of research as a systematic attempt to know and understand what is not already known or already understood in some way. The proposal that higher education institutions should be a key site for the production of research and of researchers is a relatively new feature of the inherited European traditions of education. The push to establish the university as a centre of research activity is a 19<sup>th</sup> century innovation, and one that was contested at the time by those who wished to maintain a separation between teaching and research, between the university and the scientific societies and academies.

The elaboration of a new model of PhD in the Prussian universities (particularly associated with the disciplines of history and chemistry) became a paradigm for subsequent innovations in higher education in America and elsewhere. The initial

impulse to incorporate research into the university was presented in terms of accommodating the ferment of knowledge and enquiry that the scientific revolution had unleashed – largely in a world of social and professional relations beyond the university as such. Overtime it has come to appear that the university is the privileged bearer of the scientific revolutionary tradition. New disciplinary sub-systems emerged over time and the PhD construct was evolved and extended to new disciplines. Often the transfer of the PhD into a new discipline such as literary studies or area studies or linguistics or computer science was accompanied by a period of lively debate and controversy. Such moments of dissension were subsequently occluded through institutional amnesia as the new arrangements became normal and required to be presented with a certain sense of timelessness. The PhD developed and changed as it migrated from discipline to discipline, but it served a standard function in reproducing disciplines, reproducing discipline authority and transmitting the rights of ‘expertise’ from one generation to another.

One important development of the idea of research and enquiry took place as those areas of study not directly participating in the orbit of the natural and mathematical sciences began to formulate their own specificity as programmes of research and new knowledge production. A particularly important moment in this elaboration of historical studies and of the human sciences, is the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the work of a figure such as Dilthey who sought to construct a counter-narrative of legitimacy and methodological cogency for the study of human affairs – history, culture, society, economy, politics, literature, art.<sup>6</sup> The consequence of this work was the elaboration of models of enquiry that took account of the challenge presented by asking questions that directly implicate the questioner (in a way that at that time did not appear to apply in much of the natural sciences beyond evolutionary biology). The re-negotiation of the subject-object dichotomy in a variety of revised terminologies (hermeneutics, *verstehen*, facticity, *Lebenswelt*) established a range of conceptual and practical models for asking questions that implicated the questioner and that continue to provide orientation for research in the humanities today. At the same time, however, a certain institutional inertia and enervation became apparent in the German university system which has been brilliantly dissected by Fritz Ringer in his classic analysis of *The Decline of the German Mandarins: The German Academic Community 1890-1933* (1969). The problem that emerges is that the enquiries of the university professors do not make contact with the conditions of possibility of their professional careers. The situatedness of their own knowledge work within the state apparatus is simply naturalised and left as going without saying and not subject to critical interrogation.

Ringer is associated also with the work of the French sociologist and social theorist Pierre Bourdieu who also examined the ways in which the professional educators, academics and researchers embedded in the institutions of higher education often fail to interrogate their own institutional lived practices even as they produce elaborate claims for their own disciplines and the mission of their academic enquiries. In a memorable passage, describing the institutional un-reflectiveness of that most avowedly reflective of disciplines, philosophy, Bourdieu declared:

<sup>6</sup> Wilhelm Dilthey (1989) [orig. 1883] *Introduction to the Human Sciences: An Attempt to Lay a Foundation for the Study of Society and History*, Raymond J. Bantanos (trans.) Wayne State University Press.

*If I have opted to ask some questions that I would rather have left to philosophy, it is because it seemed to me that philosophy, for all its questioning, did not ask them ... avoiding asking itself about the reasons and above all the (often not very philosophical) causes of its questioning.<sup>7</sup>*

The significance of Ringer and Bourdieu's critiques, for my purposes here, is that they both point to the ways in which the self-description of the mission of higher education and research in the arts and humanities risks a rather self-congratulatory and uncritical self-appraisal. The risk arises from the vested interests of professional cadres in defining and managing the terms of their relationship with the state and public funding. Typically the claims for the humanities and the arts are made with reference to systems of value that professional educators within higher education themselves posit as already fully within their own possession and for which they are the privileged bearers. Indeed, in a somewhat tricky way, the very recognition of the value of these values is already a sign of one's privileged access and status within this system of elite and specialised knowledge.

A similar problematic is to be identified within creative art education. We in the creative arts make claims for ourselves as the privileged bearers of traditions of creative practice, of creative learning and teaching, and of creative enquiry. We declare the uniqueness, the specialness, and the radical alterity of our ways of knowing, ways of doing, ways of making, ways of researching and so forth. But how can our claims about ourselves be opened up for debate and dialogue beyond ourselves? Do we even accept that we should indeed be engaged in a conversation beyond ourselves that requires us to listen to questions, challenges, critiques that are often framed in the rhetorics and in the languages of other disciplines and other practices?

### **Fundamental Questions and Public Culture**

If the questions of vision that I have claimed as the primary challenge facing the creative arts in this decade are to be taken seriously then it would seem that they must be considered within a process of fundamental questioning that requires a movement beyond our own circuits of self-appraisal. However, this does not mean to say that we simply embrace a pre-existing external frame of rhetoric, value and authority and submit ourselves to the master discourse and oversight of another discipline (management science, economics, engineering, philosophy or the sociology of knowledge). Rather, it means that we necessarily proceed with a firm rootedness in our own practices, traditions, and self-understandings but, and herein lies the rub, that we address ourselves also to conversations beyond our comfort zones, beyond our practices, beyond our self-understanding.

For whom, and how, do we open up such lines of dialogue? For some time the rhetoric of 'stakeholders' has been mobilised as the term with which to point to those constituencies who have an interest in what we do but who are not quite the same as ourselves. Unfortunately, the term "stakeholder" has too often been used as a cover for various vested interests and has not addressed itself to, again, fundamental questions of the public interest, the public good and what public culture might really mean in an age characterised by the erosion of public-ness.

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<sup>7</sup> Pierre Bourdieu (2000) [orig. 1997] *Pascalian Meditations*, Polity.

We have seen, especially in the English-speaking world (but this is a tendency that is much more pervasive) the subsuming of civil society initiatives under the soft-repression of the state apparatus through strings-attached funding and other inhibitors of critical action. This is just one dimension of the erosion of public culture. Another, is the simple conceptual evacuation of public-ness of any content other than the simple idea of public visibility and the reduction of public-ness to mere publicity. Institutions of higher arts education are active participants in this process of reducing public culture to publicity.

Again and again, our address to the public however ambivalently and uncertainly construed, has tended to entail a dissemination of publicity messages that celebrate our achievements: how good we are at what we do, how brilliant and dynamic our students and researchers are, how well-known and important our professors are, how many people have come to see our shows, and so forth. Such 'publics' are addressed as targets of our positive spin – they are not comprised of the clever, knowing, reflective, free thinking, culturally literate beings that we are, and so we need only address them in the uncritical rhetorics of the established media and public relations.

In our practices of public communication we demonstrate a commitment to the positive story as the only one that we can risk telling. We demonstrate that while we celebrate how intellectually curious and questioning our culture and practices are, that fundamental questioning itself is not and cannot be the stuff of the public sphere.

The challenge is to enter into processes of fundamental questioning that participate in multiple conversations and that actively seek to construct public spheres where our claims about ourselves can be subject to contestation and disagreement in multiple languages and multiple value frames. It is only in this way that we can even begin the serious work of vision for something other than a superficial managerialisms or chauvinistic ethno-nationalisms.

Finally, and this is most crucial, we must turn to this question of the European project and its current moment of greatest challenge. Is there something retrievable from the European project which is not 'Fortress Europe', which is not the Europe of the dying hegemonies of past empires, and which is not the Europe of the 'former West'? Is there a compelling vision of European societies as complex, dynamic, contested worlds where the millennial interchanges of Jewish, Islamic, Christian, secular, tribal, national, cosmopolitan, imperial, colonial, revolutionary, genocidal and diasporic histories are constitutive of the flux that is Europe?

The challenge is to make the 21<sup>st</sup> century European vision the antithesis of that of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The challenge is for us to seek a sustainable alternative to the devastating military, economic and cultural assaults on European and non-European citizenries waged by European powers and vested interests and their global allies in the last century.

Is the emergent European state apparatus to be wielded in the interests of a few at the price of the great many? Or is it to become the means for the redress of the sedimented inequities of the past in the interest of all our futures? Or is it to become an end in itself evacuated of meaning and committed only to the pursuit of its own power?

Such questions of Europe may seem far beyond the scale of our educational, cultural and social imaginations. It may simply be seen as the narcissism and conceit of an art educator to imagine such a significance for culture and education and to even dream that these play a role in constructing and contesting such grand world historical categories as 'Europe'. But, we might also wish to claim that we cannot afford a poverty of vision at this time. We cannot afford to protect our self-image as creative educators at the expense of our agency and responsibility as creative citizens. We might need to see – right here and now – that the critical creative imagination is the very condition of possibility of our agency as citizens.





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## *Riding the Tiger:*

Leading institutions for higher education and the arts  
at the beginning of the twenty-first century

In December 1970, in his report to the institution's governing body, Sir Keith Falkner, then Director of the Royal College of Music in London, offered a view on the state of the institution which for many in similar roles in arts institutions, even forty years on, will have a familiar ring. While standards "remained high and students and staff were of the best quality", it was, he confessed,

*depressing ... to find short and long term plans constantly changing because of the chronic uncertainty of the Economy. It was hoped that security for the Future would emerge from the present talks with the Department of Education and Science. Meanwhile, so much time was taken up with immediate crises that artistic and musical matters were often forgotten. The next Director might well have to be a combination of Psychiatrist, Public Relations Officer and Civil Servant.<sup>1</sup>*

When one turns to the comments of the founders or early leaders of art colleges, conservatoires, theatre schools and similar arts-based institutions, it is clear that, from their various perspectives, the establishment and running of such organisations has never felt particularly easy. Challenges have always abounded for those who have undertaken these roles – whether these were challenges in obtaining the initial funding to establish an institution, in clarifying and communicating its purpose, in maintaining its operation, enhancing its physical resources, caring for its students, recruiting and supporting its staff. In 1884, Sir George Grove, founder Director of the Royal College of Music London, observing that while he "felt like the father of a large family", one who tried "to rule by kindness and confidence, and to know each of the pupils personally, and enter into their successes and difficulties", he was also aware that he needed to devote time to securing for the institution "fifty more open scholarships, which means £100,000 more from the public ... a much better building, with concert room and lecture rooms within our own walls; and ... houses near at hand to lodge our country scholars and students."<sup>2</sup> Because of internal and external pressures, the workload felt daunting – "From the moment I wake till the moment I close my eyes it is one fight to do what it is impossible to get through," was how he characterised it in a private letter<sup>3</sup> – although there were, as he recognised, "compensating advantages". Other institutions, particularly those established in less auspicious times, have provided their leaders with even more unremitting problems. Throughout its relatively short history, the running of the now legendary Bauhaus provided a constant series of challenges – artistic, educational, political, financial – both from within and without.<sup>4</sup>

It is unlikely that those responsible for the running of today's higher education institutions will have accepted their roles in the expectation that battles fought by their predecessors have finally been won. Rather there appear to be some other

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Director to RCM Council, 14 December 1970, quoted in part in H.C. Colles and J. Cruft, *The Royal College of Music: a Centenary Record, 1883-1983* (London: Prince Consort Foundation, 1982), 73.

<sup>2</sup> "Half an hour at the College of Music. An Interview with Sir George Grove", *The Pall Mall Gazette* (1 November 1884), 4, quoted in Charles L. Graves, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Grove, C.B.* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd, 1903), 300.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 293, 301.

<sup>4</sup> See Elaine S. Hofman, *Bauhaus* (New York: Fromm International Publishing Corporation, 1994), which documents in detail the difficulties experienced throughout the institution's existence. A complementary account can be found in Anja Baumhoff, *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus. The Politics of Power at the Weimar Republic's Premier Art Institute, 1919-1932* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001), 11-17 passim.

trends which have gained strength in recent times which combine to make the leadership of higher arts education institutions seem ever more demanding. It is the purpose of this article to consider what these may be, and to suggest some of the directions in which these developments may be leading and the threats that these could pose to the character and distinctiveness of higher arts education. The observations on recent trends with which this article begins, relate to developments during the last twenty years (that is, the last decade of the twentieth century and the first of the twenty-first).

During the preparation of this piece I have consulted colleagues who hold or have recently held a variety of institutional roles in leading arts institutions in a number of different developed countries – mainly countries in Europe but (for comparative purposes) to a lesser extent also in other parts of the world. The purpose of these enquiries was to compare my perceptions and interpretation of the challenges which institutions dedicated to higher education in the arts are now facing, with the views of those now responsible for helping to lead such institutions. I am grateful to these colleagues, who range in age from those in mid-career to others approaching or recently having reached retirement, for their willingness to share their thoughts with me. It has been both instructive and thought-provoking to sense where – irrespective of nationality, specific location, or disciplinary focus – the views are broadly similar, and where they tend to diverge. The themes which emerge in this article have been informed by these views; here I am attempting to draw them together in a way that can help to suggest where some of the principal challenges and possibilities may lie in the coming decade or so for European higher education specialist arts institutions. A number of these points – such as those relating to finance and to accountability – will have greater resonance in certain countries than in others. In various parts of mainland Europe it is the impact of new demands by governments or government agencies – demands which threaten to disrupt the established order – that appear most unsettling for many arts institutions; in other places, such as the UK, it is reductions in levels of public funding which present major areas of concern. Although these considerations do not exclude arts faculties within multi-faculty universities, the focus is here on free-standing specialist arts institutions, since it is in these institutions that the particular pressures to which I refer are likely to be felt most acutely.

To attempt to offer thoughts that will have some resonance for specialist institutions dedicated to different art forms (individually or in combination), based in different countries, with different histories and aspirations, may seem to some a pointless or foolhardy exercise.<sup>5</sup> As David Watson observes in his recent book, *The Question of Morale*, each institution “is an entire society on its own”.<sup>6</sup> But, as he continues, nowadays every institution also lives “in a series of alternative macrocosms: its host society; the rest of the HE business; and an increasingly interdependent global sector.”

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<sup>5</sup> The diversity of national responses reported in the European Universities Association *Trends 2010* publication in answer to the question, “Beside the Bologna Process, what have been the three most important reforms that have been implemented in your country [in the past decade]?” demonstrates something of the difficulty. For details, see A. Sursock & H. Smidt, *Trends 2010: A decade of change in European Higher Education* (EUA Publications 2010), Table 1, 16-17. (Report available online – <http://www.eua.be/publications.aspx#c399>)

<sup>6</sup> David Watson, *The Question of Morale* (Maidenhead, UK: Open University Press, 2009), 46.

It is on the impact of these 'alternative macrocosms' rather than on the distinctive characteristics of any of the individual microcosms – the arts institutions themselves – that this article attempts to focus. Although the aim is to offer observations that have some relevance to the situations facing higher education arts institutions in various parts of Western Europe, I recognise that because my personal experience during the period in question has been gained principally in the United Kingdom, despite the input of colleagues based in institutions elsewhere in the world, it is through this particular British lens that the current situation is inevitably being viewed and against this background that it is being interpreted. There are, however, certain features shared by the institutions to which the various colleagues who have contributed to my thinking on this topic belong – whether they work outside or within the United Kingdom. Arguably the most important of these would appear to be the direct accountability to government (whether national or regional, or both) as a result of reliance on significant levels of public funding – funding to support not only individual students but also the core operation of the institution. It is on the challenges that have been faced by publicly-funded higher education arts institutions in recent decades, and the likely forms that future challenges may take, that this article therefore seeks to focus, although advice that I have received would suggest that many of the themes that emerge in what follows may prove to be as relevant to private institutions as to public ones.

So what has particularly characterised the past two decades, in terms of the lived experience of those working in higher education arts institutions? For those who have served in leadership roles in higher education arts institutions during one or more of these decades – irrespective of where they are based – it seems incontrovertible that the pressures that they experience in their professional lives are perceived as having increased exponentially. While some of these are regarded as pressures that are in essence internal to the institution (those relating to student and staff expectations, for example), it is largely the accumulation of externally-imposed demands that has weighed most heavily on the day-to-day experience of higher arts institutions and their leaders and that feels to those involved to have most affected the capacity of institutions to remain true to themselves and to devote sufficient time and energy to what they regard as their 'core business'. Some of these (which have proved particularly onerous for certain arts institutions) reflect changes in European legislation (employment and health and safety, for example), others from the increasing involvement of, and expectations of, governing bodies. But in terms of the core purposes of institutions, most of these newer demands can be attributed to changes in the relationship with one or more of the 'alternative macrocosms' to which David Watson refers – the immediate environments in which institutions operate, the higher education mainstream, and the global network of higher education – in this case, the global network of higher education arts institutions.

One acknowledgement of the scale of these changes can be observed in the expansion in the size of leadership teams in specialist higher education arts institutions. Where twenty years ago a leadership team of three (or fewer) would have been the norm, it is now not unusual for senior teams (in higher education arts institutions, just as in multi-faculty universities) to extend to five or more members – with areas such

as research, enterprise, international affairs and external relations sometimes incorporated into job titles to indicate areas now regarded as requiring ongoing attention at the most senior level of the institution.<sup>7</sup> In acknowledging the need for such appointments, the tensions are often considerable: necessary though such roles are now felt to be to cope with workloads, and to ensure that opportunities for new initiatives are not overlooked, their creation can be easily perceived by members of teaching staff as a profligate draining of resources from the artistic work that lies at the heart of the institutional endeavour.

Developments such as this have come about in response to the changing pressures experienced most explicitly in the last two decades. Although most art institutions would not have identified themselves as 'ivory towers' and would by and large have resisted any attempt to characterise them in this way, until about twenty years ago the majority saw themselves – and were perceived by others – as relatively detached from all three of the 'alternative macrocosms' mentioned earlier. Because of their distinctive character, specialist arts institutions regarded themselves as able, by and large, to engage with any of these three essentially on terms (and at times) of their own choosing. And while the mantra 'think globally and act locally' often suited the purposes of arts institutions and both local and global connections therefore shaped some of their earliest endeavours, the active pursuit and nurturing of relationships with the rest of 'the higher education business', whether in the form of other institutions or the administrative machinery which surrounds it (government departments and other public bodies), were in general of less interest. Some specialist institutions were never entirely convinced that the higher education sector was a sector to which they naturally belonged – that 'their business' had much to do with the 'higher education business'. The fact that it was commonplace, particularly (although not exclusively) in music institutions, to provide specialist tuition for talented youngsters from early childhood and, in some cases, to admit to full-time study (at whatever level seemed appropriate) gifted students of almost any age and academic standing; the typical student population of the specialist arts institution and what was often regarded as the characteristic school trajectory of aspiring entrants; the strongly practical orientation of the work and the assessment of the individual development of the student against levels of achievement commensurate with successful professional careers – all these were aspects which tended to distinguish these institutions in purpose and in operation from universities and most other higher education colleges and helped to reinforce the sense of separateness. In some cases it was not unknown for specialist arts institutions to seek to promote their attractions through reference to an 'anti-academic' approach.

Arguably the greatest reorientation experienced by higher education arts institutions in the past twenty years has come as a result of the extent to which, and the force with which each of the three 'alternative macrocosms' mentioned above has come to impact on the day to day activities of arts institutions – whether by invitation, by agreement or, more often, by a mixture of compulsion and stealth. Of the three,

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<sup>7</sup> For an account of the changing character and operation of senior management teams in higher education, see S. Woodfield and T. Kennie, "Top Team Structures in UK Higher Education Institutions: Composition, Challenges, and Changes", *Tertiary Education and Management*, 13/4 (2007), 331-348.

it is perhaps the relationship to 'the rest of the higher education business' that has produced the greatest change and has, in its turn, helped to bring about further changes in the other two. Even for those higher education arts institutions that have remained independent 'stand-alone' institutions, and that have not come under the umbrella of a multi-faculty university, the past twenty years have seen a definite positioning of specialist arts institutions within the mainstream of higher education. The sense of separateness that higher arts institutions once regarded as their prerogative is no longer so evident as before and, at least in some cases, seems no longer to be desired in the way that it once was. Higher arts institutions have found themselves – admittedly, along with universities and other providers – increasingly the subject of scrutiny by national bodies or departments responsible for the oversight of higher education and its funding and quality – scrutiny in which deviations from what have come to be regarded as norms for higher education have been viewed as signs of inefficiency and therefore as invitations to simplification, rather than indications of a desirable diversity and breadth of provision. As awareness of the importance of post-secondary education to national prosperity and well-being as well as to international competitiveness has increased, and national targets for the percentage of the population which has achieved a degree-level qualification have become objects of international comparison, specialist arts institutions, as recipients of public funding, have found themselves ineluctably drawn into reviews and reconfigurations of national systems overall.

In some countries, such as parts of Scandinavia and the Netherlands, this has led to realignments, mergers or alternative forms of inter-institutional agreement, as efforts have been made to rationalise and modernise national systems that have in large measure grown up in a relatively opportunistic and unplanned manner. In others, among them Austria, the redesignation of higher education arts institutions as universities – a change that in some cases seems to have been actively sought, and in others, largely welcomed rather than resisted by those closest to these developments – has in another way aligned these institutions equally firmly with the university sector, and helped to make explicit the expectations of how they – and therefore by extension, institutions of similar character – should operate.<sup>8</sup> Whereas twenty years ago, arts institutions were more likely to try to distance themselves from the university sector than to identify themselves with it, this is now no longer necessarily the case. Some of the voluntary institutional affiliations that have taken place in recent years have arisen in order to achieve the 'critical mass' (either of students or of disciplines, or both) necessary to incorporate the term 'university' as part of an institutional title or description. Others have come about because of institutions' inability to remain operational in an ever-more testing resource climate – a climate in which students' expectations have at the same time steadily increased.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> For a critique of some of the effects of these changes in the Australian situation, see the introduction by Brad Buckley and John Conomos (eds.) to *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School* (Halifax, Canada: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 2009), 3-13.

<sup>9</sup> For a detailed account of such changes in an American context, see James Gandre, "And then there were seven: An historical case study of the seven independent American conservatories of music that survived the twentieth century", (January 1, 2001), *ETD collection for University of Nebraska – Lincoln. Paper AAI3028657*. For a summary, see <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/dissertations/AAI3028657>

Whether this type of alignment with ‘the rest of the higher education business’ has been helpful or not for higher education in the arts would appear to depend on the size of the higher education sector in which the specialist arts provision finds itself and the manner in which strategic discussions are conducted and funding agreements established. Greater autonomy has proved for many a two-edged sword: where governments have given institutions greater scope for self-determination, they have tended at the same time to tighten their grip through ever more detailed scrutiny and reporting requirements, requirements that sometimes seem disproportionate to the level of risk involved.

In England, the higher education arts institutions that remain as free-standing institutions now (in autumn 2010) constitute a diverse group of eighteen institutions within a higher education sector of 130 institutions, almost all of which are multi-faculty universities. Funding negotiations with Government – conducted on the ‘arm’s length’ principle – generally take place through an intermediary – a Funding Council which is responsible for the sector as a whole.<sup>10</sup> In a system of this size, under this type of arrangement, smaller institutions such as higher education arts institutions tend to regard it as difficult to ensure that their individual voices are heard or to make common cause in any effective way. In those higher education systems (national or regional) where there are fewer institutions in total, it is commonplace for institutions to expect that they will have the opportunity to represent themselves more directly in their negotiations with government over strategic development and funding and in presenting their views on issues of national higher education policy. Specialist institutions able to operate in this way tend to display greater confidence in the scope that exists for their contribution to the whole to be understood and explicitly valued. In most such situations, there seems to be a greater sense of conviction that alignment with ‘the rest of the higher education business’ has not necessarily been disadvantageous in terms of the acknowledgement of distinctive features of the operation of individual arts institutions, and the demonstration of this in funding agreements, provided that the case for retention can be effectively substantiated.

However the fact that in most European countries, as in many other parts of the developed world, higher education is now seen as a global concern, has inevitably meant that even where individual European higher education arts institutions have felt that their distinctive contributions are acknowledged as something to be preserved, they have recognised the need to respond to the impetus towards closer alignment with the higher education sector across the European Union. Although the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, which unveiled the concept of an ‘open European area for higher learning’, laid emphasis on the preservation of ‘national diversities’,<sup>11</sup> for many arts institutions the processes that have followed at national level have led not only to significant changes to their structure and

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<sup>10</sup> For the formal responsibilities of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), see HEFCE *Annual report and accounts 2009-10*, 3 (which summarises the duties of the Funding Council as set out in the 1992 Further & Higher Education Act). Report available online – <http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/hc1011/hc00/0002/0002.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> Joint declaration on harmonisation of the architecture of the European higher education system (Paris, 1998). See [http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne\\_declaration.pdf](http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/Sorbonne_declaration.pdf)

operation but also, in some cases, are seen as having impacted adversely on their sense of identity. Where once arts institutions offered awards that were recognisably their own, subject in many cases to only limited degrees of external scrutiny – diplomas which often differed significantly one from the other (even within the same discipline or sub-discipline) in terms of nomenclature, content and demands – the past twenty years has seen the move to introduce degrees as the standard taught qualification in higher education arts institutions – first, bachelor's degrees and subsequently master's degrees – and to entirely new demands in terms of accreditation and quality assurance. Although not an inevitable outcome, these processes have tended to create increasing homogeneity not only in terms of structure and approaches to student learning but also in terms of content and style.

For some countries in mainland Europe which are part of the European Higher Education Area, national directives intended to implement the ambitions of the Bologna Agreement<sup>12</sup> have not always appeared to work in the best interests of arts institutions and their students – not, at least, in terms of curriculum design, content and delivery. While the implementation of Bologna has meant that arts institutions in some countries have been encouraged to introduce new kinds of awards (including doctoral programmes), not all national or regional developments have sufficiently acknowledged the distinctive dimensions of arts disciplines or ensured that the corresponding quality assurance and accreditation processes also respect these. The introduction of Bologna-compliant course structures, while effectively implemented in some arts disciplines and some countries, has caused profound upheaval in others – particularly where there has appeared to be government inflexibility about the length of the first degree programme. In some cases, what was previously offered within five-year diploma programmes has been shoehorned into three-year degree courses, partly to accommodate the demands of staff and partly on the grounds that a student successfully completing a bachelor's course is expected to be 'employable'.<sup>13</sup> This is one of several areas where careful thought and further work in terms of curriculum development will be needed in the coming decade to ensure that the benefits that are envisaged by the Bologna Declaration are available to (and are accessed by) arts students and the staff who teach and guide them. The concomitant emphasis on modularisation – reinforced by a focus on the achievement of credit points (ECTS points) – has produced in some places a fragmentation of the student experience – a fragmentation that was not necessarily characteristic of earlier (admittedly often less-structured) approaches, but a type of fragmentation that is unlikely to support 'deep learning'<sup>14</sup> in disciplines where much of the depth of understanding and quality of individual achievement tend to come from a curriculum designed to encourage the personal synthesising of experience.

For quite a number of the colleagues contacted in the course of the preparation of this article, the burden caused by the introduction of quality assurance and quality

<sup>12</sup> The Bologna Declaration (<http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/bologna.bologna/pdf>) was formalised in 1999. For observations on national implementation of Bologna objectives, see *Trends 2010*, 25 (cf. 5)

<sup>13</sup> The Bologna Declaration (1999) stated that "The degree awarded after the first cycle shall also be relevant to the European labour market as an appropriate level of qualification."

<sup>14</sup> For a description of characteristics of 'deep learning', see "Approaches to Study: 'Deep' and 'Surface'", <http://www.learningandteaching.info/learning/deepsurf.htm>

enhancement regimes, connected in many places with the demands of national accreditation, represents one of the major increases in workload and administrative effort in the past two decades. While there is a general recognition that such exercises can produce benefits for students, staff and the institution as a whole – benefits such as the clearer documentation of what is available within and beyond the curriculum, greater consistency and transparency in terms of recruitment and assessment procedures and decisions, and the more timely evaluation and return of student work were often mentioned – it seems indisputable that where quality assurance and accreditation mechanisms begin to develop as self-serving industries all of their own, the quality of the very thing that these systems seek to assure and enhance can be under threat. Exactly what type of ‘quality’ is being assured or enhanced – and whether the benefit is proportionate to the effort and the cost (including the ‘opportunity cost’) – seems sometimes in doubt. Although research has demonstrated that the elements that determine quality tend to be process-related, and differ according to institutional context, quality regimes introduced at national levels have frequently tended to rely on quantitative indicators that do not necessarily demonstrate quality in educational provision in a reliable way, or are unlikely to do so consistently in individual arts environments.<sup>15</sup> In arts institutions, while the functioning of administrative systems has at times seemed somewhat capricious, the quality of student work – one of the most significant indicators of quality in terms of the educational experience – has always been at the heart of the endeavour.

It is clear that new quality regimes have encouraged greater consistency and equity in terms of student support. But there remains a need for a sense of proportion, and for an awareness of the risks as well as the benefits that come with such arrangements. Unless these are imaginatively and perceptively interpreted and genuinely allow for diversity of institutional contexts, missions and value systems, the establishment of national – or European – systems and guidelines could simply lead to the promotion of a spurious conformity. For the specialist arts institution, there is a real risk of stifling the very aspects that make it what it is – that give it its distinctiveness, its quirkiness. Arts institutions need to remain ‘creative hotspots’, and creative hotspots do not fit easily into predetermined moulds. To take one simple example: areas such as ‘employer engagement’ – a core element of many such evaluation exercises, reflecting national concerns about student employability – demonstrate one of the ways in which institutions have found their involvement in the first of the three ‘alternative macrocosms’ steered by policies which are at times more appropriate for ‘the rest of the higher education business’ than they are for work in the arts. There are aspects of the priorities and value systems which underpin current higher education policy that work in directions that arts institutions need to continue to question and to challenge.

So what do developments to date suggest will be the principal challenges that higher education arts institutions face in the coming decade or so? Clearly the task of maintaining the current level of activity and diverse range of responsibilities is set to continue. There is nothing that suggests that these will be alleviated in any

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<sup>15</sup> Graham Gibbs, *Dimensions of Quality* (Higher Education Academy, 2010), 44-46. Report available online – [http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/evidence\\_informed\\_practice/Dimensions\\_of\\_Quality.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/ourwork/evidence_informed_practice/Dimensions_of_Quality.pdf)

way, and much, in the pressures that the financial crisis being experienced world-wide is creating, that would indicate that even maintaining the current position will require considerable effort and intense focus – and, as is often said, to stand still is, in effect, to fall behind. In a recent British publication which focuses on ways in which all higher education institutions may need to respond to increasing financial pressures, the author, Professor Geoffrey Crossick, emphasises the importance of maintaining one's trajectory in what may prove to be rather stormy times and of holding firm to the core of the endeavour. As the title of his paper stresses, "The future is more than just tomorrow".<sup>16</sup>

Most institutions have already learnt that, in order to provide the additional resources that help to give distinctiveness, colour and richness to what their institution can offer, they need to devote time and effort to the raising of additional funding from private sources. This is, of course, an intensely competitive area. And competition, in terms of the raising of funds, is no longer characteristic only of private sponsorship. In some cases, even public sources of funding – previously allocated with a minimum of administrative formality – are now awarded mainly on the basis of competitive bids, with documentation – rarely of a minimal kind – subsequently required to demonstrate that the funds have been applied appropriately. While it is clearly important that higher education arts institutions have well-developed fundraising skills, and can demonstrate to students – students who, if working as freelance arts practitioners, will in many cases be reliant on similar sources of funding for their own professional careers – how such funding can be accessed, the assessment of the effort required (and the costs involved) in proportion to the amounts of money raised – and a clear-eyed view of what may need to be relinquished in the process, in terms of time and focus – means that, for arts institutions, this is likely to remain a contentious area. For specialist arts institutions, even the largest of which are still smaller than a faculty in many multi-faculty universities, the establishment and maintenance of an effective team to spearhead regular fundraising is no small task.

Yet the need is unquestionably there and, at a time of what in most European countries will feel like financial austerity, if not worse, one of the clearest challenges of higher education arts institutions and their leaders will be to hone those skills of advocacy and communication necessary to secure funding for the tasks that they know are necessary to ensure that their institution is able to survive and thrive – and for which core funding is rarely sufficient. Important among these is the quality of the working and living environments which students and staff experience. There seems to be general agreement among those leading higher education arts institutions that both students and staff are becoming ever more demanding in terms of their need for individual attention, their expectation of financial and other forms of support during (and after) their studies, as well as their requirement for exceptional arrangements to accommodate their particular requirements.

Often these demands are not, in and of themselves, inherently unreasonable. In higher education arts institutions, the achievement of a steady stream of high quality work relies to a considerable extent on the congeniality of the internal

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<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey Crossick, *The Future is more than tomorrow* (London: HEFCE/UUK, 2009). Available online at "<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/Publications/Pages/FromRecessionToRecovery2010.aspx>"

environment (nowadays both real and virtual) – on those elements that help to ensure undistracted student engagement. Creative individuals often flourish in environments which may appear on the surface rather less than ordered but which – in relation to the day-to-day needs of those involved – operates in a way that is perceived by them as stable and relatively secure. So the resources needed to maintain such equilibrium are frequently as desirable from the perspective of the institution as from that of the individual concerned (such as arrangements to assist the emotional well-being of a particular student or staff member or to enable the undertaking of other professional work during term time). However the effort that can be required to put in place appropriate arrangements to ensure that this causes no disruption to others can often prove to be no mean task.

The last twenty years have seen in most places a significant improvement in the range and level of student services: there has been a growing acceptance that institutions need to share responsibility for ensuring that the conditions in which both students and staff live and work are conducive to the achievement of the type of quality to which the institution aspires overall, and does not inadvertently undermine it. Thus the availability of effective accommodation, career, health, welfare, psychological and other services is now seen as an obligation, rather than a desirable option, and the costs involved in its provision can prove a further – albeit necessary – diversion of funds from institutions' core activities. It is another of the areas where the costs fall disproportionately highly on small specialist institutions which need to be able to access services little different in range and availability from those offered by large, multi-faculty universities, though admittedly sometimes of a more specialist nature, because of the need for intimate knowledge of the demands of the art forms concerned. It seems unlikely that such demands will decrease in the coming years, or that institutions will find that they are able to economise on such provision. Instead there are signs already, in the increasing diversity of individual students' programmes, that this will be an area that will grow in importance, as students' study patterns become ever more personalised. For higher arts education, the experience of the peer group is a key ingredient of the experience: finding new ways (some of which will rely increasingly on new uses of technology) of ensuring that this contact is not weakened is likely to prove a challenge in both the conception and the delivery of study programmes.

Demographic patterns in Western Europe for the coming decade or so have been frequently analysed and discussed. A report published in December 2008 by the English Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) predicted a steady fall from 2010 in the potential 18 to 20 year-old home student population, reaching a low point in 2020 before the numbers are likely to rise again to approximately their 2010 levels.<sup>17</sup> Although it would be inappropriate to assume a direct correspondence between the rate of decline of the number of 18-year olds in the coming decade and the extent of a fall in the number of applicants for admission to specialist arts study in higher education, such projections suggest that institutions will need to be alert to this change and to tailor their course portfolios, curriculum development plans, recruitment policies (for both students and staff) and capital programmes accordingly. But the

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<sup>17</sup> Bahram Bekhradnia and Nick Bailey, *Demand for Higher Education to 2029* (HEPI, 2008), 2-3. (Available online – "<http://www.hepi.ac.uk/466-1366/Demand-for-Higher-Education-to-2029.html>")

picture is far from clear. Some commentators have discerned signs of a turn in the vocationally-oriented emphasis that has permeated higher education policy in recent times – in some countries student choices suggest that a liberal approach seems to be reasserting itself, while in others it may never have really been lost.

From the perspective of specialist higher education in the arts, this could well mean that – despite declining higher education intakes overall – sufficient numbers of students will continue to value a specialist higher education in the arts for the sense of personal fulfilment and the promise of life enhancement that it offers, to provide continuing demand for levels of specialist higher education in the arts broadly similar to those that have existed in the period that could be regarded as the most recent peak in terms of demand from applicants of school leaving age. However other possibilities for maintaining levels of activity also exist: in those fields generally described as professional development or as continuing education there is both need and opportunity for more systematic engagement by institutes of higher arts education with an older and more experienced age group. Despite constant exhortation by think-tanks and other policy advisory bodies such activity seems generally under-developed in most Western European countries because of a lack of incentives in the form of systematic funding and recognition arrangements. While there are some sterling exceptions,<sup>18</sup> most of these are evident at local or regional level. It seems likely that those institutions that are able to diversify their student base in ways such as this will be well-positioned to maintain the type of critical mass necessary to support continuing activity as a dynamic higher education enterprise. Continuing reliance on the recruitment of so-called ‘international students’, however, may prove in time to be a less secure means of bolstering overall student recruitment, of ensuring high quality student output, or of ensuring institutional financial stability. While there is plenty to suggest that international student recruitment will continue to be a significant factor in ensuring the vibrancy of leading Western European higher arts institutions, some parts of the world which have traditionally been seen as net exporters of students are themselves rapidly expanding their own provision and creating world-class resources, and in a changing world, may in time offer significant challenge to longer-established institutions as institutional destinations of choice.<sup>19</sup> There will be need for continued awareness on the part of the ‘Old World’ to what such developments may mean, in terms of student opportunities and expectations. Traditional attractions for international students – those features of a European higher education in the arts that have ranked high in influencing students’ choices – will need to be continually assessed and their relevance critically re-examined. In an ever-shrinking world, where global strength is far from constant, the value of particular elements of the European higher education experience should not be taken for granted. Higher education arts institutions in Europe will need to continue to rethink the most appropriate ways of providing these. From this, it seems likely that new forms of partnership and institutional relationships will emerge. Continuing developments in the field of video-conferencing, for example, provide

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<sup>18</sup> For an account of one such national development, see Jeremy Welsh, “Transitions, Dialogues, Interruptions, Pregnant Pauses, and Leaps into the Void: Recent Experiences in Norwegian Higher Art Education”, in *Rethinking the Contemporary Art School*, ed. Brad Buckley and John Conomos (Halifax, Canada: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design), 207-208.

<sup>19</sup> The plan recently announced (autumn 2010) by the Chinese Ministry of Education for the doubling within the next decade of its annual intake of international students is one indication of this trend.

just one instance of the way in which new technology is already changing student perceptions and aspirations, in terms of study opportunities.

It is clear that the coming decades will be times of real challenge for all higher education institutions, and perhaps particularly for specialist arts institutions. While the familiar internal challenges are unlikely to disappear – and only some of these have been mentioned above – it is likely to be the developments in the external environment that prove the most demanding, and that require most careful thought, if the higher education arts institutions of today are to remain forces in the educational landscape of tomorrow. One of the most complex issues is likely to be that of institutional positioning. This is a multi-faceted issue, with aspects that relate to each of the three macrocosms mentioned earlier – the host society, the rest of the HE business and the increasingly interdependent global sector. Each of these has numerous facets: for the moment, a few examples must suffice.

In terms of the host society, the positioning of higher education arts institutions in relation to professional arts organisations, something which has grown in significance in recent decades, is likely to become more pressing. Higher education arts institutions are now a much more established part of the arts ecology than was the case twenty years ago: many are now acknowledged as major contributors to the cultural life of the communities in which they are based. But as the involvement of higher education arts institutions in local and regional arts activity has increased, and the quality of their contribution has been recognised, new challenges have begun to present themselves – challenges in terms of institutional role, responsibilities and priorities. At a time when in quite a number of European countries the arts budgets which fund professional arts organisations are being cut in response to the need to control levels of public debt,<sup>20</sup> higher education arts institutions will need to be alert to the ways in which cuts of this kind impact on the attitudes and expectations of their students, staff, professional partners and communities. The negotiation of this territory will demand keen antennae and great sensitivity.

Arts institutions will also need to be alert in their handling of relationships with the university sector as a whole, for there is much to suggest that this sector may itself fragment. In those countries which currently regard themselves as having a unified higher education sector, there are forces at work which are encouraging these sectors to divide according to institutional type, with new partnerships and alliances emerging – partnerships based more on institutional mission than on sectoral membership, partnerships that operate less on a national and more on a European and a global scale. In such a situation, arts institutions will need to be well-networked not only at home but also well beyond their immediate home territory, in order to remain strong and influential, with connections that do not rely simply on projects or exchanges. The role of organisations such as ELIA, which has helped to create awareness of the benefits that can come from close structural relationships across the Europe-wide network of higher education arts institutions, will be increasingly evident.

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<sup>20</sup> For examples of reductions in arts provision, see “Don’t bring the house down, artists cry, as Europe cuts culture budgets”, *The Times*, 17 July 2010, 17.

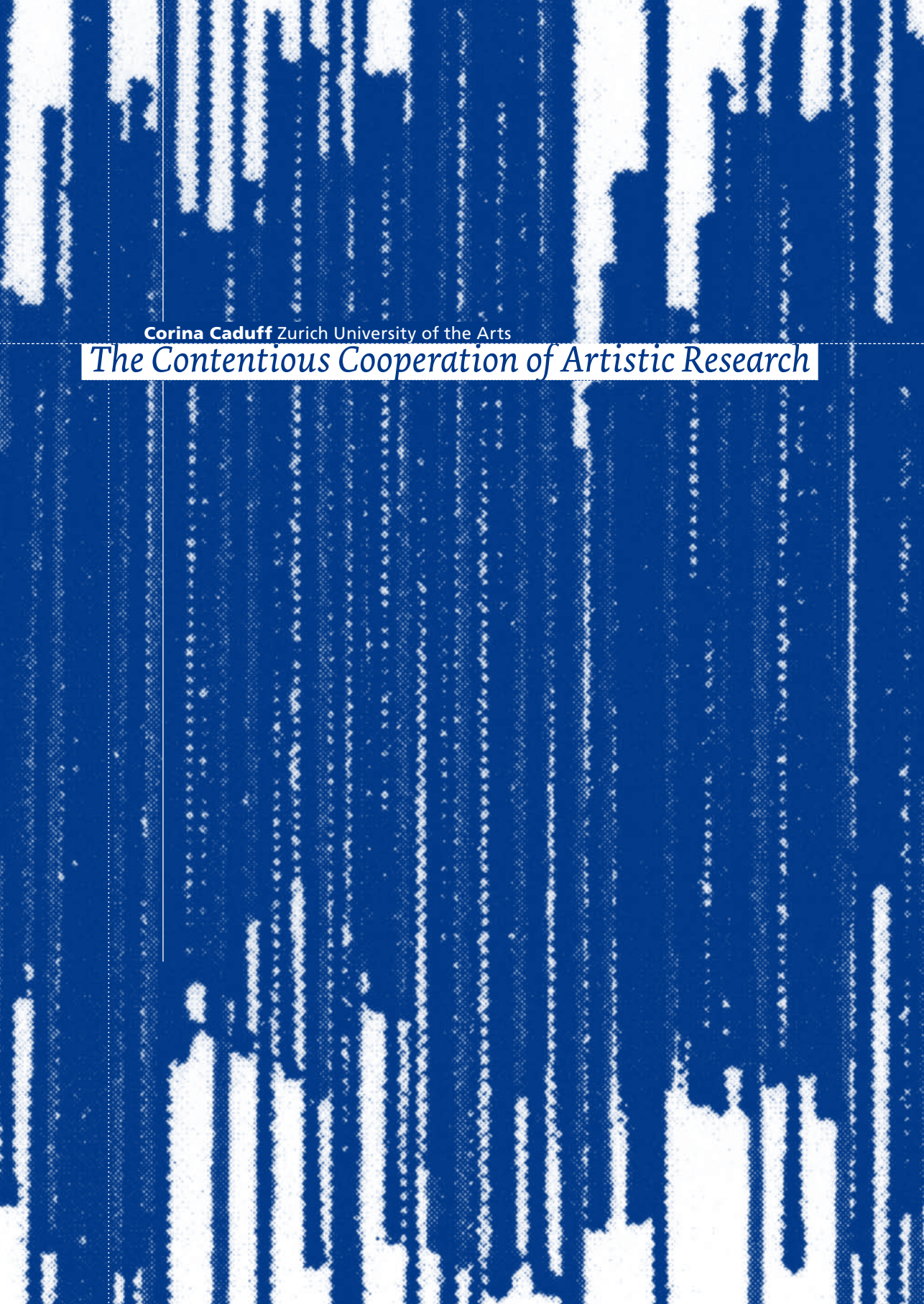
All institutions, but perhaps especially specialist institutions, will need to be clear about their mission and purpose, and about those aspects of the experience that they offer that must be preserved if they are to remain true to themselves and to the purposes for which they exist. However this does not mean clinging to past practices without subjecting these to rigorous, clear-eyed scrutiny. Successful arts institutions have always come into existence with an agenda that was for its time somewhat radical. Keeping this fire alive means facing up to questions about the model of the Academy: Is the model of the Academy still the right one? Are there new imperatives? What is the institution's social and cultural role? Whatever the emphases within the institution, there needs to be a dynamic relationship between the social and cultural conditions of the times, in terms of the challenges that these throw up, and the work of the institution itself. Higher education arts institutions, while not losing touch with their roots, need continually to find ways – ways appropriate to their mission – of being firmly future-oriented. It is this relationship that will nourish the arts and the artists of the future.

Above all, higher education arts institutions will need outstanding leaders, if they are to continue to survive and to thrive in what are likely to be ever more complex and challenging environments. As now, these leaders will need to be versatile and capable – able to handle a wide-ranging work load, and to take responsibility for matters that in larger institutions would not necessarily require their specific attention. There is a paradox here: the smaller the institution, the greater the challenge for those who undertake its leadership. 'Succession planning' – the development of future leaders, through the timely nurturing and developing of promising individuals from early career onwards – is an area in which higher education arts institutions have not traditionally been strong. If it were evident that professional development of this kind were commonplace, the outlook for specialist arts institutions would certainly be brighter. The fact that such institutions are small by comparison with multi-faculty universities does not reduce the extent of the challenge, and is unlikely to do so in the future.

Is small still beautiful in the world of higher education in the arts? And will it continue to be so, as the demands of higher education leadership grow ever greater? It is unlikely that anyone would seek to lead a specialist higher education arts institution in the hope of a quiet or an easy life: if so, first-hand experience would quickly demonstrate to them their error of judgement. It is because of other forms of professional satisfaction and feelings of professional obligation that individuals take on leadership roles within what are extremely demanding environments, but which – through the nature of the relationships that can evolve with colleagues (students as well as staff) who are engaged in a shared endeavour – offers at times the feeling that the struggle (and it is likely to remain a struggle) is ultimately worthwhile. The constant need to balance conflicting demands in a rapidly changing environment makes the image evoked by the Italian philosopher, Julius Evola – that of 'riding the tiger' – feel an appropriate description of the nature of the task. But ultimately, as Evola suggested, succeeding in 'riding the tiger' is a surer way to preserve one's sense of true identity, than abandoning the chase.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Julius Evola, *Ride the Tiger: a Survival Manual for the Aristocrats of the Soul* (1961, transl. Joscelyn Godwin & Constance Fontana (2003).



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# *The Contentious Cooperation of Artistic Research*

Since the 1990s, the discourse of 'artistic research' has expanded geographically from the Anglophone countries through Scandinavia and the Netherlands and recently into the German-speaking and Eastern European countries.<sup>1</sup> The discursive field first took shape in art academies, primarily under the heading Visual Arts, but has since come to encompass other arts as well: similar programs of study exist today in the areas of design, theatre, film, music, and dance.<sup>2</sup> The diversity of disciplines in which artistic research is being discussed necessarily entails a diversity of methods and objects of investigation. A clear definition of artistic research, applicable beyond individual disciplines, appears today all the harder to obtain.

Despite persistent attempts,<sup>3</sup> artistic research is hitherto barely defined in a generally accepted manner, let alone unproblematically recognised as a discipline. The fact is that the discussions of recent years have yielded neither a clear and lasting separation of artistic research from art nor a generally recognised conception of research. But another formulation is possible: the field is still open. In any case, the concept remains in motion and in process; this can be gleaned from the fact that new approaches continue to be tested, as recently evidenced in the conference theme "Artistic Research as Science of Aesthetics?"<sup>4</sup>

On the whole, then, the discourse of artistic research is marked by broad heterogeneity. To this day it progresses by way of a 'contentious cooperation', between attempts to hold it open and to pin it down. Whether and how the observer of a finished project perceives it as 'artistic research' or simply as 'art' remains correspondingly open; and it is unclear whether identifiability of that kind would be desirable in the first place.

<sup>1</sup> For the historical and geographical development of this discourse, see Sarah Schmidt, "Künstlerische Forschung", in *Kritische Berichte* 35, no. 3 (2007): 50–53.

<sup>2</sup> For music, see among others Bruce Brubaker: "Questions Not Answers: The Performer as Researcher", in *Dutch Journal of Music Theory* 12, no. 1 (2007): 66–87; Huib Schippers: "The Marriage of Art and Academia: Challenges and Opportunities for Music Research in Practice-based Environments", in *ibid.*, 34–40; Huib Schippers and Liam Flenady, "Beauty or Brains?" in Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler, and Tan Wälchli (eds.), *Art and Artistic Research (Kunst und Künstlerische Forschung)*, Zurich, (2010), 80–87. For dance, see among others Sabine Gehm, Pirkko Husemann, and Katharina von Wilcke (eds.), *Wissen in Bewegung: Perspektiven der künstlerischen und wissenschaftlichen Forschung im Tanz* (Bielefeld, 2007); Efva Lilja, "Throw the Stones Really Hard at your Target or Rest in Peace", in Caduff, Siegenthaler, and Wälchli, 122–131. For theatre, see W.B. Worthen, "Acting, Singing, Dancing and So Forth: Theater (Research) in the Universities", in *Theater Survey* 45, no. 2 (2004): 263–269; Maaike Bleeker, Lucia van Heteren, Chiel Kattenbelt, and Kees Vuyk (eds.), *De theatermaker als onderzoeker* (Amsterdam, 2006); Alfred Nordmann, "Experiment Zukunft – Die Künste im Zeitalter der Technowissenschaften", in Anton Rey and Stefan Schöbi (eds.), *Künstlerische Forschung: Positionen und Perspektiven*, Subtexte 03 (Zürich, 2009), 8–22. For film see among others the chapters "Visual Knowing" and "Practice as Theory", in Graeme Sullivan, *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts* (London, 2005); Diane Read, "Cutting Choreography: Back and Forth Between 12 Stages and 27 Seconds", in Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (eds.), *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry* (London, 2007), 47–63.

<sup>3</sup> See, among others, Henk Slager, "Nameless Science", in *Art & Research* 2, no. 2 (2009); Kathrin Busch and Dieter Lesage (eds.), *Portrait of the Artist as a Researcher: The Academy and the Bologna Process* (Antwerp 2007); Henk Borgdorff, *The Debate on Research in the Arts* (Bergen, 2006); Florian Dombos and Philip Ursprung, "Kunst und Forschung: Ein Kriterienkatalog und eine Replik dazu", in *Kunst-Bulletin* 4 (2006): 30–35; Annette W. Balkema and Henk Slager (eds.), *Artistic Research* (Amsterdam, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> "Artistic Research als Ästhetische Wissenschaft": this was the title of a conference held September 24–25, 2010 at the Akademie Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart.

## A Challenge for Theory-Formation

The volume *Art and Artistic Research* (2010) documents a conference held by the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK) in 2009, under the auspices of ELIA.<sup>5</sup> It can be considered an exemplary measure of the current situation, giving voice to the aforementioned heterogeneity of positions. The individual contributions take thoroughly different approaches to the task of defining artistic research: the view that art is always already research is represented side by side with the view of research as an additional, supplementary function which may or may not join with art. In between are found conceptions according to which a continuum of mixed forms today extends between the arts on the one side and research on the other.<sup>6</sup> A good overview of the ongoing debate is also provided by the articles on artistic research in the online journal *Art & Research*.<sup>7</sup> In general, the existing edited collections and essays on this topic attempt to redefine artistic research again and again; yet few of these attempts are widely discussed, many indeed petering out with no discussion.

In the spring of 2010, a conference took place at the ZHdK on the theme *Evaluation and Canon Formation*, with which we attempted to react to a certain flaw in the discussions in recent years, namely the lack of common references and of a shared knowledge of projects, that is, the lack of paradigmatic works, the lack of a canonical body of artistic research projects. The absence of common references has consistently held back discussion. Hence we submitted for debate at this conference both the formation of criteria for determining the quality of relevant projects and the formation of a canon.<sup>8</sup> This choice of theme also proceeded from the assumption that common agreement on a canon entails a more specific form of communication, which in turn sharpens the profile of the scientific community. The conference presentations on this question were likewise heterogeneous and at times contradictory: a majority of artists, in fact, rejected the formation of a canon, while at the same time they articulated the desirability of a portfolio of works as an aide to orientation – less a selection of ‘masterpieces’ of artistic research than a set of case studies.

At times it seems the discourse of artistic research has reached an impasse. With this comes the fact that an unstable relationship makes itself felt in this field between the formation of theories and the projects of artistic research. Methodological and theoretical contextualisations generally function as permanent

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<sup>5</sup> Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler, and Tan Wälchli (eds.), *Art and Artistic Research (Kunst und Künstlerische Forschung)*, Zurich, 2010). The ZHdK has held conferences in cooperation with ELIA regularly since 2007 (Kickoff-Meeting, ZHdK, September 20–21, 2007; ELIA Art Research Meeting, ZHdK, April 24–26, 2008; The Difference of Art and Art Research across the Disciplines, ZHdK, April 3–24, 2009); Artistic Research: Evaluation and Canon Formation, ZHdK, April 29–30, 2010; upcoming: Modes of Collaborations between Arts and Sciences, ZHdK, April 29, 2011).

<sup>6</sup> For the first view, see the contributions in Caduff, Siegenthaler, and Wälchli (note 5) by Nina Malterud (“Can you Make Art without Research?”, 24–28) and Marcel Cobussen (“The Intruder”, 46–55). For the opposing view, see the contribution by Michael Schwab (“First, the Second. The Supplemental Function of Research in Art”, 56–65). For the ‘continuum’ view, see the contribution by Johan Öberg (“Difference or Différance?”, 40–45).

<sup>7</sup> [www.artandresearch.org.uk](http://www.artandresearch.org.uk)

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.zhdk.ch/fileadmin/data\\_zhdk/hochschule/Rektorat/Transdisziplinaeres\\_Atelier/Programm\\_Artistic\\_Research.pdf](http://www.zhdk.ch/fileadmin/data_zhdk/hochschule/Rektorat/Transdisziplinaeres_Atelier/Programm_Artistic_Research.pdf)

elements of a discourse; thus the oft-criticised impermanence of artistic research projects is also connected to the fact that theory is still seldom referenced in this field. If a genuine canon is hardly able to emerge, it is not least for this reason. This manifests itself for one thing in the scarcity of citations in the field, as well as in the archival inaccessibility of projects, especially across regions. Here we can hope that the newly founded online *Journal for Artistic Research* affords assistance as a platform for publications.<sup>9</sup> The great and perhaps near-insuperable challenge for the formation of theory consists in the double demand that it do justice to the heterogeneous, transdisciplinary point of departure and, in order to be perceived and effective as theory, that it take steps in a normative direction.

### On the Freeing of the Discourse from the Institution of the Art Academy

The discourse of artistic research has been and remains closely bound to the institution of the art academy. It arose in the course of the Bologna process, whereby the task of research was assigned to art academies, and it likewise stands in close connection with the gradual establishment of PhD programs, first in Anglophone countries and then increasingly in northern, western, and central Europe as well (in this regard, the German-speaking countries are at this moment in the initial phase).<sup>10</sup>

In many places, the institutionalising impulse preceded artistic research itself. In Switzerland for example, a research role was assigned to art academies *before* an artistic research milieu worthy of the name existed.<sup>11</sup> In 1999 the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) instituted a specific program called DORE for the promotion of practice-oriented research at specialised tertiary institutions (so-called *Fachhochschulen*, including art academies).<sup>12</sup> DORE has its own fixed budget and sponsors the realization of practice-oriented projects in art, music, theatre, film, performance, and design. These projects most often last between one and three years, and the financial contribution ranges from 100,000 to 250,000 Swiss Francs (75,000–185,000 Euros) per project.<sup>13</sup> Over the last decade more than one hundred projects in studio art have received this support.

The evaluation of project submissions takes place via an international peer review in which members of research communities at art academies as well as representatives of universities and occasionally practising experts (curators or theatre directors) are involved. By the fall of 2011, DORE will be turned over to the general project-sponsoring division of the SNSF (division of Humanities and Social Sciences); as of then there will no longer be a specific support program for specialised tertiary

<sup>9</sup> [www.jar-online.net](http://www.jar-online.net)

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Dieter Lesage, "The Academy is Back: On Education, the Bologna Process, and the Doctorate in the Arts", in *e-flux* 4 (2009); James Elkins (ed.), *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art* (Washington, D.C., 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the contribution by Arne Scheuermann and Yeboaa Ofofu ("On the Situation of Artistic Research") in Caduff, Siegenthaler, and Wälchli (note 5), 200–208.

<sup>12</sup> The SNSF and DORE work in close contact with the sponsoring agency KTI (Commission for Technology and Innovation), another federal agency that supports projects in the area of application and/or market-oriented research and development, and which is of interest to art academies for projects in the field of design especially.

<sup>13</sup> With regard to the SNSF, DORE, and the sponsored projects, see [www.snf.ch/E/current/Dossiers/Pages/DORE.aspx](http://www.snf.ch/E/current/Dossiers/Pages/DORE.aspx).

institutions, but only a single, common source of funds out of which projects at universities as well as specialised institutions will be supported. For the evaluation of requests from the field of art, the SNSF plans to institute, as of Fall 2011, a special evaluation panel composed of representatives of both art academies and universities and charged with judging traditional requests from universities as well as practice-oriented requests from art academies. This means that the various forms of research in the arts – artistic research; research at art academies; university departments of music, theatre studies, etc. – will grow closer together; it means moreover increasingly close relations between traditional humanities research and the still-emerging artistic research in art academies.

The case for such a tightening of relations – conceived in this case in the programmatic context of a sponsoring institution – is also being made to some extent in the debate over artistic research. As Henk Borgdorff points out, the range of artistic research is restricted to art and music academies, and this restricted extent carries the danger of marginalization: “Artistic research is in danger of becoming isolated from the settings in which society has institutionalised thinking”.<sup>14</sup> He thus calls for artistic research to move toward the humanities.<sup>15</sup> At the same time it must be noted that there is resistance to such a move in the artistic research community. Yet if the theory and practice of artistic research is to move forward and the marginalisation Borgdorff diagnoses to be opposed, it would seem indispensable both to engage actively and explicitly with art research in the universities and to bring artistic research more strongly into that context – perhaps by discussing it in university publications or, as is widely occurring already, through concrete institutional cooperation. This could contribute to bringing the practice of research into sharper focus – and thereby also, and not least, to a renewed effort to combat the ‘fundamental deficiency’ Borgdorff sees in the exchange between the arts and the university.<sup>16</sup>

### Artistic Research in the Public Sphere

The social relevance of artistic research is repeatedly emphasised, although it can take effect only if there exists a corresponding public awareness. In light of this it seems desirable to secure for artistic research a wider public attention beyond the context of universities and art academies. Such a promotion of artistic research is thinkable through the media or alternatively through cultural institutions such as theatres, museums, etc. This type of promotion is directed at individual, concrete projects.

A noteworthy Swiss example would be the research project *eMotion*, collaboratively realised by academics and artists and presented at the St. Gallen Museum of Art in the summer of 2009.<sup>17</sup> This project concerns visitors’ experience of museums: prior to entering the exhibition spaces, participants were fitted with an electronic glove

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<sup>14</sup> Henk Borgdorff, “Artistic Research and Academia: an Uneasy Relationship”, in Torbjorn Lind (ed.), *Autonomi och egenart: konstnärlig forskning söker identitet* (Yearbook for Artistic Research, Stockholm, 2008), 85.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 86ff. See also Henk Borgdorff, “Artistic Research as Boundary Work”, in Caduff, Siegenthaler, and Wälchli (note 5), 72–79.

<sup>16</sup> Borgdorff, “Artistic Research and Academia” (note 13), 87.

<sup>17</sup> *eMotion*: a project of the University of Applied Sciences, Northwestern Switzerland. Directed by Martin Tröndle. [www.mapping-museum-experience.com/en](http://www.mapping-museum-experience.com/en)

that precisely tracked their movements, providing information about where a person walked, which pictures she looked at and which not, how long she spent in front of a given picture, whether she read the accompanying text or not, etc. Other sensors measured pulse and skin surface conductivity as indicators of emotional excitation. The technological data collection was flanked by detailed interviews before and after the museum visit. Furthermore, the data collection was translated into sound in real time by a media artist.

The project aroused unusual public interest; a series of articles and reports appeared in print, on the radio, and on television as well as online.<sup>18</sup> Yet despite the fact that project leader Martin Tröndle consistently used the term 'artistic research' in all his interviews, it was not taken up in the media, which is hardly surprising in light of the vague content of the term. The heterogeneous debate over artistic research playing out largely within art academy communities is difficult to convey to the public. It would seem simpler, more concrete, and in the end more substantive as well – and this is also evidenced in the media coverage of *eMotion* – to use concrete projects as the occasion for discussing the mode of collaboration between academics and artists, which can serve as a possible way of specifying artistic research.

### **The Heart of Research at the Art Academy**

At art academies, the peculiarities of both art and science, and their mutual relation, are often being probed in collaborative projects. The specialised capacities of each contribute, on the one hand, to a synergistic collaboration; on the other hand, collaboration brings to light similarities and differences in research mentalities and their respective methods, procedures, and epistemes. But the inquiries have hardly appeared which, with regard to the arts, would systematically present and reflect upon the various modes of this collaboration, at the same time profiling and comparing the corresponding modes of knowledge-gathering.<sup>19</sup>

Hence it seems advisable to give a central place to these collaborations and their developments, and to spend some time considering them, without letting ourselves be taken in by the need to endorse a general definition of artistic research and without being distracted by the question of whether some artistic research is left out in such collaborations – because it would be carried out, say, by artists alone, with no academics on board. For this collaboration,<sup>20</sup> whose substance and productivity remains to be fully explored, is truly the heart of art academy research.

*Translated by Stephen Haswell Todd*

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<sup>18</sup> [www.mapping-museum-experience.com/medienspiegel](http://www.mapping-museum-experience.com/medienspiegel)

<sup>19</sup> For the presentation of such collaborations see, for instance, the contributions by Hans-Peter Schwarz ("From Undisciplined to Transdisciplinary", 170–179) and Kirsten Langkilde and Stefan Winter ("New Morphologies", 180–189) in Caduff, Siegenthaler, and Wälichli (note 5); or Elke Bippus (ed.), *Kunst des Forschens. Praxis eines ästhetischen Denkens* (Berlin and Zurich, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the upcoming conference on Modes of Collaborations between Arts and Sciences, ZHdK, April 29, 2011.

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**NEU/NOW**

The NEU/NOW Festival is a pan-European platform for the promotion of artistic excellence, representing the foremost graduating artists in a range of arts disciplines. Talented artists, emerging from higher arts education institutions and universities across Europe are selected – by international panels of judges with expertise in each of the discipline areas – to present themselves, and their work, to an international audience in both in an online ‘virtual’ Festival and – for a highly selected number of artists – a live Festival.



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The Sorbonne Declaration identified the central role of universities in developing European cultural dimensions and the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) as a key means of promoting both mobility and employability. The Bologna Declaration amplified this agenda, setting out in greater detail how the EHEA would be established, placing an emphasis on the ‘necessary’ European dimension of higher education to be achieved through –among other things – inter-institutional co-operation and mobility schemes. The idea for NEU/NOW emerged from the conviction that international co-operation and mobility achieved through ERASMUS student mobility programmes are not, in themselves, sufficient to provide arts graduates with a truly international profile. Ambitious young artists need the inspiration from European meeting places to enter into new worlds and to advance their artistic and intercultural competence in the turbulent context of current creative/artistic practice in Europe, with new technologies and new issues, such as climate change and globalisation, influencing artistic expression. In light of this, the NEU/NOW project responds directly to the European Agenda for Culture in promoting “the mobility of artists and professionals in the cultural field and the circulation of all artistic expression beyond national borders”.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World (Brussels 10.5.2007)

Although the first 'edition' of the NEU/NOW Festival only took place as relatively recently as 2009, it would be fair to say that the 'dream' of establishing such a Festival really dates back to the days around 1990 when the art academies and schools founded their European network. So why did it take so long?

One could say that *luck* had a big part to play in its genesis of what we now know as NEU/NOW, that is, if we accept Seneca's assertion that "luck is what happens when preparation meets opportunity".

In this case, the preparation was virtually everything that ELIA had achieved up to that point; the strong support network of higher education arts institutions, the expertise of its staff, its success in both agency and advocacy for higher arts education, its standing within the wider European cultural landscape and its active links with the panoply of other organisations and networks that permeate the wider arts and education sector. In short, ELIA has established itself as the 'go to' organisation for any significant project concerned with higher arts education on a pan-European scale. Opportunity presented itself when an invitation came from the organisers of *Vilnius European Capital of Culture 2009* for ELIA to contribute to the *European School of Arts and Cinema* strand of their programme, a year-round programme of 13 large-scale educational art projects. So, preparation met opportunity and the NEU/NOW project was born, becoming one of the "concluding highlights" of this programme, according to Programme Manager Ieva Skarzinakaite. But of course, NEU/NOW wasn't simply born out of luck – however one might choose to define it – it was also a very timely development, responding both to the aspirations of the Bologna agenda, a growing EU concern regarding youth employability and an increasing realisation of the significance of the creative industries as a driver of the EU economy and as a key contributor to social innovation and well-being. 2009 was designated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation through education and culture, and NEU/NOW was certainly designed to respond to the aims of this initiative – in fostering creativity, innovation and intercultural competence.

### **The Context for NEU/NOW: Bologna, Employability and the Creative Industries**

The Bologna Declaration re-affirmed the EU commitment to the construction of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) through the achievement of comparability of awards, a common system of credits, increased staff and student mobility, a harmonization of quality assurance systems and promotion of European dimensions in higher education. The Bologna process and the establishing of the European Higher Education Area, has had significant implications for our curricula as well as for our graduates. The restructuring of the curriculum into two or three cycles and the rephrasing of learning outcomes, in terms of competencies also meant a deep rethinking of the entire educational process. Colleagues of the former Eastern European art schools often saw it as an opportunity to opening up higher arts education to Europe. To all arts institutions it brought a new focus on the need to ensure that the processes and outcomes of higher education across Europe are broadly comparable. The 'Tuning On Our Terms' approach in the thematic network Inter}artes<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. Inter}artes, *Tapping into the Potential of Higher Arts Education in Europe*, Amsterdam/Warsaw: ELIA/Alexander Zelwerowicz State Theatre Academy 2007

helped to find joint solutions for changing the curriculum/programmes and initiating quality assurance, with the help and support of colleagues from different countries; many of these colleagues met each other and collaborated again during the NEU/NOW LIVE Festival.

Opening up to Europe is not to say that programmes should not be distinctive or reflect the particular needs of each region. As art educators we are closely involved in the cultural and social world around us and many initiatives in which our institutions are involved help to make surrounding neighbourhoods better places to live and work. However, the Bologna process and more generally the process of collaboration between art schools and universities actively enhances the possibility of student mobility – offering students the opportunity to get the best of what Europe has to offer them in the development of their individual talents and abilities. The NEU/NOW Festival has a great role to play here, ensuring that the work selected for the festival is drawn as broadly as possible from all across Europe. In addition, it builds a unique archive of examples of creative excellence produced by a range of arts academies and universities across Europe – so that students are able to contextualise their own work within that produced by their European peers. In that sense NEU/NOW is artistic mobility in optima forma.

A recent communication from the European Commission, *Youth on the Move: An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union* (September 2010), emphasises the importance of both learning and employment mobility as well as the importance of supporting graduates from vocational pathways to move as swiftly as possible into their first paid employment. Employability, including graduate employability is becoming an increasing focus for national governments across Europe as well as for the EU itself. The NEU/NOW project encourages the mobility of vocational higher education students at the point of graduation, enabling them to show their work in a professional context and use this as a means of moving forward into professional arts practice within the dynamic field of the creative industries sector.

The European Commission has recently published the Green Paper *Unlocking the potential of cultural and creative industries* (2010).<sup>3</sup> The Green Paper (GP) recognises the increasing economic and social importance of creativity and innovation as dynamic enablers of a flourishing entrepreneurial culture – recognising the importance of creative talent as a spur to innovation. The GP characterises the cultural and creative industries as one of Europe's most dynamic sectors, one with great economic potential that currently contributes around 2.6% to the EU GDP and provides jobs for around 5 million people, and attaches an equal importance to the contribution that the sector makes to social innovation. These observations are also reflected in a report recently published by Universities UK, *Creating Prosperity: the role of higher education in driving the UK's creative economy* (December 2010).

The European Commission's Green Paper recognises that "the EU still has to develop a strategic approach to make its strong and attractive cultural assets the basis

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<sup>3</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/GreenPaper\\_creative\\_industries\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc/GreenPaper_creative_industries_en.pdf) (accessed 31 January 2011)



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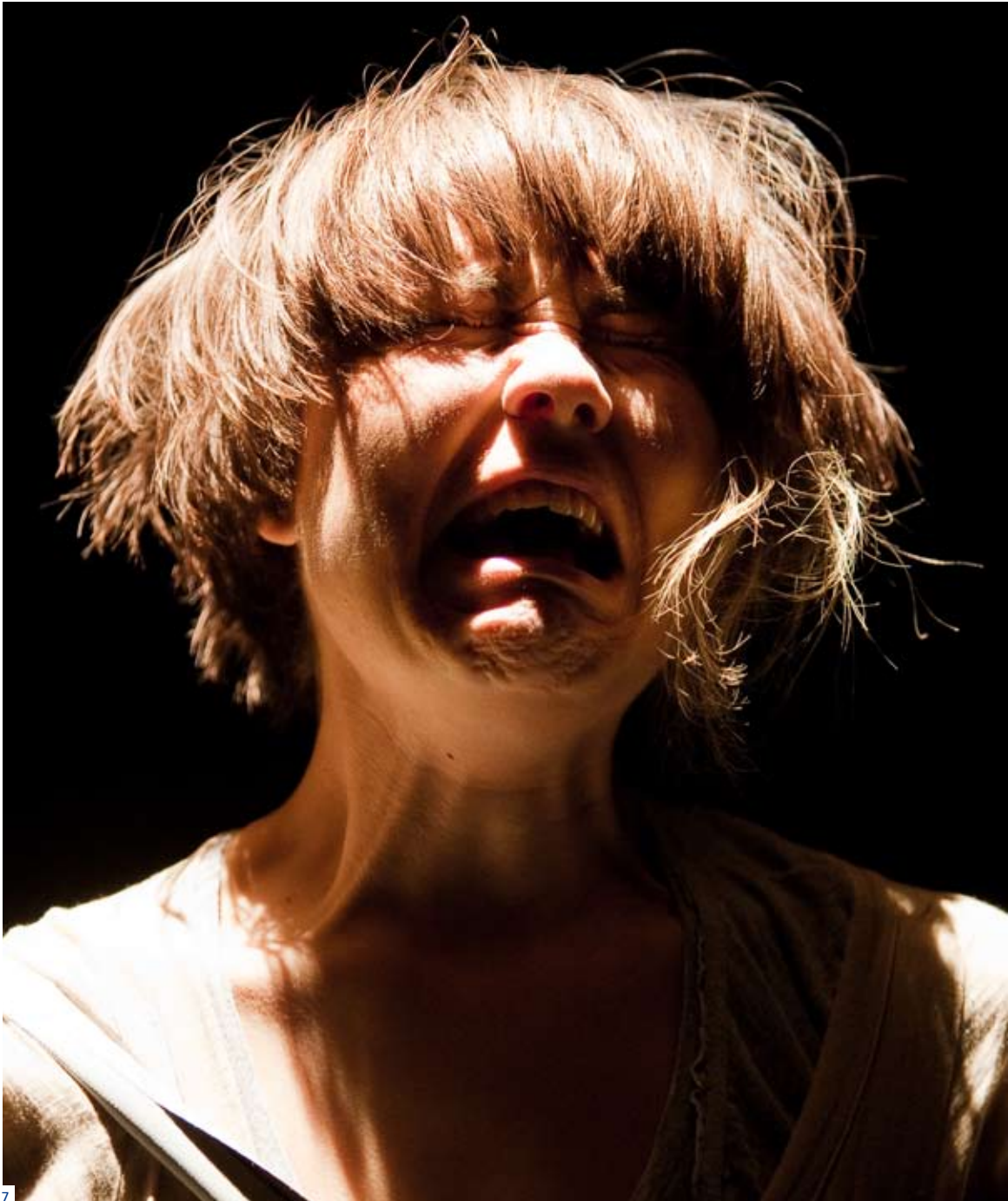
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of a powerful creative economy and a cohesive society” and goes on to identify that “partnerships between art and design schools and universities and businesses can contribute to this aim” and that there is need to “bridge the gap between professional training and professional practice”. The GP goes on to underline the importance of promoting the mobility of artists and cultural practitioners and the significant contribution that this makes to their professional and artistic development, in particular through their participation in international festivals and exhibitions. There can be little doubt that the creative industries are set to be a significant economic and social driver across Europe for the near future.

The Green Paper sparks a debate on the requirements of such a stimulating environment on the way to a ‘common European space for culture’, but largely forgets about the dynamisms within and across the cultural and creative industries and the growing interconnections with sectors such as education, research, health, social innovation and social inclusion. Unfortunately, the undervaluation within the GP of the artistic drive, skills, imagination and inventiveness of the artist resulted in a rather functional approach. Questions such as ‘what the CCI sector can learn from artists’, ‘how to find better ways to value the artist’s approach’ and how artists play a decisive role in innovation could provide a deeper insight in the dynamics of the sector and the role of creative professionals. The fact that the GP recognises the role of higher arts education in the development of “a truly stimulating creative environment” in the EU was a pleasant surprise.

The NEU/NOW Festival has an important, if not vital, contribution to make to this agenda. It provides a showcase in which the work of the most talented graduating arts students, drawn from across Europe, can be compared and a means by which these graduates can begin to establish their careers as professional artists in an international context. This platform has the purpose of stimulating the creation of pan-European networks of emerging artists whilst also presenting cutting edge arts demonstrations and activities to a wider public. ELIA’s intention is to support and encourage a vibrant festival atmosphere where differences of artistic approach can be discussed, where individual and collective art practices can be both presented and strengthened in a creative and cultural meeting place where difference and diversity can be celebrated, and where the creation of new international partnerships may be realised.

In summary, the NEU/NOW Festival seeks to offer:

- an opportunity for selected young emergent artists to show their work, meet each other within the context of a live and vibrant Festival and create new international partnerships;
- a place where audiences, producers and curators can see the most excellent artists and innovative creative projects emerging from the art schools and universities across Europe;
- a forum where emerging artists, producers, curators, cultural operators and policy makers can discuss future developments for the arts and share views on the cultural role of higher arts education institutions;
- a means of presenting an emerging generation of professional artists, drawn from across Europe, to the attention of a wide audience via the world wide web.

In addition to the above, NEU/NOW also seeks to create a nucleus of attention on the new generation of emergent artists from across Europe and bridge the gap between higher arts education and professional practice – ensuring that high quality work from all over Europe interacts with a Europe-wide audience. As previously stated, the NEU/NOW project offers a unique set of opportunities for European arts graduates that go far beyond the scope of the ERASMUS programme. It actively supports the ambitions of the European agenda for culture through assisting emergent artists in developing their managerial competences and entrepreneurship, and their knowledge of the European dimension and market activities. Evidence of the demand for the unique opportunity that NEU/NOW was designed to offer was evidenced by the response to the first call for nominations for NEU/NOW '09, with many hundreds of applications to participate from across 30 countries.

### **The How, the Why and the Who of NEU/NOW**

The NEU/NOW Festival is open to graduating arts students and recent graduates (within one year of graduation) of higher arts institutions and universities, associated to ELIA Networks or Partner Networks of ELIA. Applications are sought from eligible students from across the 27 European Union Member States plus Norway, Iceland, Turkey and Liechtenstein. Students (as individuals or groups) must be nominated by their institution within one the following five categories:

- Design
- Film
- Music/Sound
- Theatre/Dance
- Visual Arts

However, these categories are not rigidly defined and it is up to the nominating institution to decide which of these broad categories the work that they are submitting best fits into.

Each institution may nominate up to 2 student/graduate entries in each of the five discipline categories. A judging panel of experts, one for each of the five arts disciplines, is appointed from across Europe (through an open application process) and each panel engages in an online selection procedure of the nominated works in their discipline category. Each panel works according to the same overarching criteria, which, in summary, ask them to select work which:

- represents a bold contribution to leading edge practice in the discipline;
- demonstrates its potential to achieve a good professional standard of presentation;
- is likely to stimulate the interest of an international and professional audience;
- contributes to the diversity within the category.

In making their selections, each judging panel is asked to be mindful of the need to ensure that the overall profile of work selected should be broadly representative of the diversity of entries and that the final selection should offer as wide a representation of European regions as possible.

Each of the judging panels makes an initial selection of projects for admission to the online Festival, resulting in the selection of up to 150 projects in total across

all the discipline categories. These projects are presented online for a period of three months from the opening of the virtual NEU/NOW Festival ([www.neunow.eu](http://www.neunow.eu)). After this period, this collection of works continues to be available as part of an online archive and, therefore, a valuable reference resource in terms of drawing comparisons of standards between the graduates of diverse educational systems. In making their selection of work for the online Festival, each judging panel also provides a short-list of works, from within their overall selection, that they feel are worthy of inclusion in the live Festival programme. The two Artistic Directors of the NEU/NOW Festival, myself and Paula Crabtree (Rector of the Bergen National Academy of the Arts, Norway), together with the help of a Steering Group, then select a number of works in each of the five discipline categories to be presented within the live Festival.

Our selection takes into account the particular nature of the venues that the work will be viewed in, aspects of the work that may be of specific interest to the general public or specific communities within the host city and the potential for critical dialogical relationships between individual works – whether within or across the borders of discipline categories. We also try to ensure that the individual pieces selected for the live festival within each discipline category are broadly representative of the range of work within that category selected for the online Festival. Of course, in making our selection, we are also mindful of quality as well as the need to include work representing the widest possible range of nationalities. It's a complex process.

NEU/NOW 2010





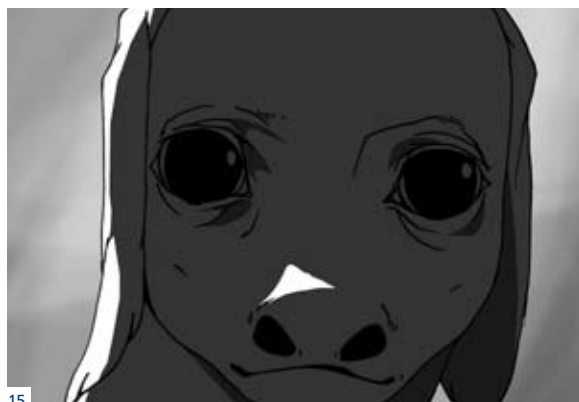
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The NEU/NOW LIVE Festival provides a context where a carefully curated selection of the works admitted to the online festival is presented to a 'real life' public audience in established professional arts venues; galleries, theatres, concert halls and cinemas in the host city. To date there have been two iterations of the *live* festival, the first taking place in Vilnius (November 2009) the second in Nantes (October 2010) and the third iteration is currently being planned to take place in Tallinn, Estonia, as part of its programme as a European Capital of Culture 2011. As with nearly all its activities, ELIA works closely with its member institutions local to the city, region or country in which the activity is taking place. For the Live Festival in Vilnius, ELIA worked in close partnership with the *Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre* and *Vilnius Academy of Art*, and for the edition in Nantes, with the *École Supérieure des beaux-arts de Nantes Métropole*. ELIA also works closely with national or civic authorities, and local and regional cultural agencies. The Live Festival also depends upon the willing participation of established venues across the host city, as it is important that the work of the graduate artists is seen in the professional 'frame' of recognised galleries, theatres, concert halls and cinemas rather than in educational settings. For all those involved with the NEU/NOW Live Festivals, whether organisers or participating artists, it has been gratifying to witness the strong public interest in the work shown, both in Vilnius and Nantes the public flocked to showings of work in their thousands; galleries were constantly busy with visitors and theatres often had queues of people waiting for returned tickets in the hope of finding a spare seat in crowded auditoriums.

It is clear to us, as the organisers of NEU/NOW, that there is a strong public interest in the work of these emergent professional artists. The NEU/NOW LIVE Festival in Vilnius in 2009 attracted in excess of 3500 visitors over the four days of the Festival and we estimate that for the 2010 event in Nantes there were some 4200 visitors over a similar period. The public, as well as critics, curators, producers and festival directors, are clearly keen to see the work of young emerging artists as they transfer their practice, developed within the arts academy, into the wider international arts arena. NEU/NOW is arguably unique in providing an opportunity, for emerging artistic talent (from all arts disciplines) across Europe, to showcase their work to critical, professional and public audiences in an international context with the opportunity to foster a constructive and dynamic critical 'dialogue'. However, it's not just the dialogue between the emergent artist and the public that is important here – NEU/NOW provides a space for a very important dialogue between these emerging artists both within and across the different artistic disciplines. In the lively and vibrant context of the Festival, creative strategies and artistic techniques (honed in different cultural, educational and training contexts) are compared, evaluated and exchanged, new artistic collaborations are formed and international networks established.

## In Summary

In producing the NEU/NOW Festival, we have sought to establish a space – an open and inclusive one – where audiences, producers and curators can experience some of the most excellent artists and innovative projects emerging from art schools and universities across Europe. We recognise that it is difficult enough for emerging artists to bring their work to the attention of the wider professional communities in these creative fields on a national level, let alone to international audiences (or markets). We intend for NEU/NOW to be a significant new channel of communication and form of creative exchange – where emerging artists, producers, curators, cultural operators and arts policy makers can discuss future developments for the arts and share views on the vital cultural role of higher arts education institutions.

As members of the European academic community with a responsibility for the education and development of student artists, we have a concern for ensuring that arts graduates are given every opportunity to demonstrate their talents to the communities of professional practice that they aspire to join and, thereby, begin to establish a vital career foothold within contemporary arts landscapes. As the endgame of the Bologna Process begins to consolidate the European Higher Education Area and the enlargement of the European Union continues, these landscapes increase significantly, both in scale and variety. This growth, in turn, presents arts graduates with new possibilities – possibilities that weren't available to previous generations – to develop their artistic careers in a truly European context.

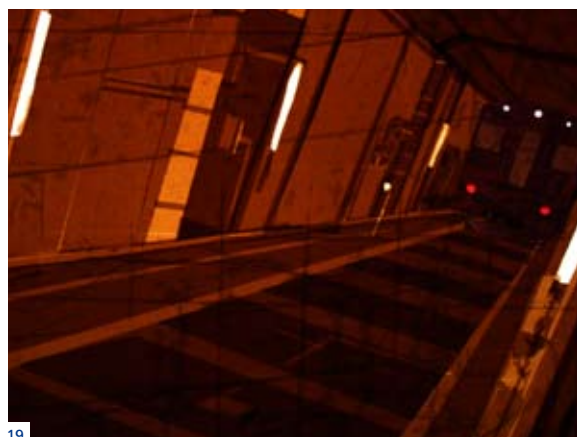
*Professor Anthony Dean is the Joint Artistic Director, with Paula Crabtree, of NEU/NOW and Chair of the NEU/NOW Steering Committee.*



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ELIA Biennial Conference 2010



23

NEU/NOW 2009 (page 51, 54, 55)

2. Noha Ramadan, *Once more with feeling*
3. Šymon Kliman, *Gypsies – Beautiful people*
4. Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, *Ego & ID*
5. Koji Wakayama, *Robot Garden*
6. Karen Skog, *And she was talking about this orchestra*
7. Eliisa Erävalo, *This is about somebody else*
9. Alexandru-Coral Popescu, *A vehicle for disabled people*
10. Livestock, *Riding a dead horse*

NEU/NOW 2010 (page 58, 59, 62, 63)

12. Jane Fogarty, *Twenty-Four Hours*
13. Stockholm Academy of Dramatic Arts, *Eaten by Men*
14. Karin Luuk, *Estonian Forest*
15. Tünde Molnár, *I am Simon*
16. Angelo Wellens & Karel van de Peer, *Sex & Bytes & Rock 'n' Roll*
17. Martin Rille, *Coded Sensation*
18. Les Filles Föllén, *Entrance with charge: Two girls smoke a cigarette in 30 seconds*
19. Jonas Wellens, *Tape*
20. Arnaud Caquelard, *in-close*
21. William Collins, *An exclamation of surprise or incredulity*
22. Irad Lee, *Sonomateria*

Photos 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10 by Migle Narbutaitė

11, 13, 14, 16, 23 by Adina Lunčan

Adam Jakimowicz, Johan Verbeke Sint-Lucas School of Architecture, Brussels / Gent

$4^2 + 2^4 + - 1$ : *Designing a Prime*

This paper introduces a variety of concepts and anecdotes which help to discuss and explore research by designing and artistic research. We prefer the term ‘research by designing’ over ‘research by design’ as this puts some more focus and attention to the activity of designing and the associated process as a research method. Although there was not enough space to fully cover each theme, the concepts and anecdotes are intended to help and stimulate exploring and formulating new directions of research.

The activity of designing is at the core of the field of architecture and design, as is the creative act in the field of arts. It is clear that there is currently a growing focus on research where the core competence of the field plays a crucial role as a research method. Many conferences have been organised and activities undertaken to explore this area. All of them develop and at the same time question how research in relation to the process of designing and creating (art) objects can be developed and interpreted; how insight, experience and the specific type of knowledge in the field can be captured and communicated; how art objects and designs can be created and can play a role in research. It seems new values and entities are on their way to emerge.

**Themes**

1. Serendipity	Surprising	Novelty	Creating
2. Associative thinking			
3. Delight as Knowing	Beauty		
4. Poetics			
5. Designing is a laboratory	Shaping	Studio	
6. The object as knowledge			
7. Research as a design activity	Projecting		
8. From “what is” towards “what can be”			
9. Peer-review	Sharing	Understanding	Communicating
10. Interaction			
11. Language	Two - way		
12. Listening			
13. Mountains (limit to see more)	Perspective	Interpreting	
14. Being Inside – Being Outside			
15. Not knowing	Meaning		

*I shut my eyes in order to see.* [P. Gauguin]

### **Creating – Novelty – Surprising – Serendipity**

Sir Alexander Fleming (1881-1955) was a Scottish pharmacologist. In 1928, he was studying staphylococci and returned from holidays. On 3 September, before leaving, he had stacked all his cultures of bacteria in the corner of his laboratory. Returning, he noticed that one of these was contaminated by a fungus and that the bacteria immediately surrounding it had been destroyed. After studying the situation he discovered penicillin, the biggest **novelty** of that time for which he obtained the Nobel Prize in Medicine in 1945.

The Cambridge online dictionary defines serendipity as “the lucky tendency to find interesting or valuable things by chance”. It is the process by which one accidentally stumbles upon some novelty, surprising or valuable while looking or searching for something completely different (e.g. as Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin).

When creating projects architects and urban designers carefully study the local culture, context and people. At such moments they look for interesting details which could trigger their inspiration. Following the famous citation of Louis Pasteur “Dans les champs de l’observation le hasard ne favorise que les esprits préparés” (“In the fields of observation chance favors only the prepared mind”), they are open and absorbing information and clues.

*The concept of dog does not bark. The concept of space is not space.* [B. Tschumi]

### **Creating – Novelty – Surprising – Associative Thinking**

When problem solving, most people will connect to the familiar rational mental activities of collecting data, analysing information and the use of analytical, logical and conceptual ways of thinking. However, since the earliest references to creativity, researchers have reported that this can involve a wide range of different mental processes which are very much different from the rational approach. Many names have been used for these processes which help creating novelty and surprising solutions: intuition, inspiration, unconscious processes, right-brain thinking, ...

Associative thinking is the ability of developing free associations between subjects and concepts. It is the thinking process of making associations between a given subject and other pertinent factors without drawing on past or given experience. Associations and diversity help in creating novelty and unexpected solutions. Where the left part of our brain is connected to linear and logical thinking, the right side thinks holistic and poetic. It handles ambiguity and confusion. It handles music and is non-linear and connects multiple images.

The strength of a good design lies in ourselves and in our ability to perceive the world with both emotion and reason. [P. Zumthor]

### **Creating – Novelty – Beauty – Delight As Knowing**

Within the context of knowledge development it is important to note that the process of discovery often triggers delight. As Isaac Asimov once said: “The true delight is in the finding out rather than in the knowing.” The finding out forces us to explore, think, reconsider and at one moment, all aspects fit together (as in a puzzle) and at that moment we know we have reached a fundamental understanding.

In a very similar way, visiting the Chapel of Nôtre Dame du Haut of Le Corbusier or the Bruder Klaus Field Chapel by Peter Zumthor one gets delighted and knows that some kind of God must exist. The beauty of these buildings is creating inspiration and knowing of a different kind. It is the type of knowing created by novelty, by feelings, by experience. Once seen and understood, it stays in our mind for the rest of our life, influencing all our future feelings and actions.

I knock at the stone's front door.

“It's only me.

Let me come in”.

“I don't have a door”, says the stone. [W. Szymborska]

### **Creating – Novelty – Beauty – Poetics**

It is not intended here to give an explanation of possible interpretations of beauty, nor its relation to knowledge generation processes. It would require a deep terminological study to set the context of meaning of each of the key terms, and further analyses. This kind of research would be an activity of thinking **OF**. For a designer, for an architect it is an impossible position. For designers it is an everyday reality that researching is not limited to the analytical knowing, but includes the development of novelty and beauty.

This means that poetics, which brings the level of wonder and delight, by creating the new ‘experiential’ values and states, becomes the carrier of knowledge **FOR**.

Entities must not be multiplied beyond necessity. [W. Ockham]

### **Creating – Studio – Shaping – Designing is a Laboratory**

1. For a designer to become a reflective one, four things are required:
  - make own designs;
  - know the work of others;
  - position ones own work in an appropriate context;
  - reflect by continuing to design.
2. It is a recursive process. Its main node or spine is designing. The whole process of knowledge creation begins with, concludes and starts again with designing.
3. The designer's work takes place in the studio, but in fact the designer's laboratory is both the studio and designing. It involves iterations of experimentation, failures, risk, shaping and defining.
4. The scheme and the process it circumscribes shows a rich potential for where designerly knowledge can be generated:
  - in the 'content' of designs – specific solutions, concepts applied or derived;
  - in the ways by which solutions are developed – methods, the use of media, ordering or dis-ordering of thinking;
  - Content and methods are interrelated, but getting into research requires both flexibility and rigour.
5. The starting point to generate designerly knowledge is designing. The indispensable condition to develop research in design is TO DESIGN. It is also the simplest conclusion for this issue.

From the point of view of classical thought transdisciplinarity appears absurd because it has no object. [H. Dunin-Woyseth]

### **Creating – Studio – Shaping – The Object as Knowledge**

The relation between the design(ing) and object cannot be steadily established. In the act of creating, this relation is challenging. Ambiguity of the object, however, can be an advantage. One of the most radical examples of this are Duchamp's ready-made objects. They were used as such, taken as they were, and the design of the new mental shaping emerges as a result of their existence and through a close encounter with an artist.

A process in which an object interrelates with designing, through mutual influence, stimulates reflection and knowledge generation. Thus, design(ing) brings knowledge to understand the object, and the object itself, through its influencing power, inspires the development of the process. Such a relation assumes both openness and circularity, where generative cycles begin and conclude, but each time on a different level. It is indeed interesting that this kind of doing goes far beyond mere professional studio work, but becomes a deeper attitude towards reality.

Humans are crucial. [ J. Verbeke]

### **Creating – Studio – Projecting – Research as a Design Activity**

Ranulph Glanville (Glanville, 1999)<sup>1</sup> wrote an interesting paper “Researching Design and Designing Research”. After some elaborations on the role of theory in research, Glanville concludes on page 87 that the process he described “is design and is design at many levels. And, therefore, (scientific) research is a form of design – a specifically restricted form. If this is so, it is inappropriate to require design to be ‘scientific’: for scientific research is a subset (a restricted form) of design.”

It is well known that designing is not so much related to the past, but is related to creating possibilities for the future. It is about projecting ideas into the future, exploring possibilities and developing spatial qualities.

In arts, architectural and design curricula, the main teaching takes place in the studio. It is here that out of a context, and through processes of exploring different settings and expected outcomes, through associative thinking and through the understanding of special behavior of humans, ideas are envisioned and projected towards the future.

The designer in the studio continues to explore and search until the design performs as is desired, expected or required. If sufficient quality of space is not obtained, the project is redesigned, possibly some constraints are changed and a new coherent whole is created. Finally, the designer may reframe all understanding in a theory. The understanding of one design may change the initial position and question and may lead to a repeated design effort improving the previous insight, integrating previous understanding and experience. This circular process of searching and developing is crucial to design.

The core characteristic of knowledge is the ability to recognize new elements of what is named via the name. [G. de Zeeuw]

### **Creating – Studio – Projecting – From “what is” towards “what can be”**

Design professionals defined design in a variety of ways as (Jones, 1970):

- A goal-directed problem-solving activity;
- Decision-making, in the face of uncertainty, with high penalties for error;
- The performing of a very complicated act of faith;
- The optimum solution to the sum of the true needs of a particular set of circumstances;
- The imaginative jump from present facts to future possibilities;
- A creative activity – it involves bringing into being something new and useful that has not existed previously.

This clearly refers to exploring possibilities and projecting future realities. It is this process of mapping conditions and constraints into a vision of future developments that is the dominant activity in design studio education. It forms the core of the field. It is about inventing and creating truths, less about the facts and conditions, more about possibilities and change processes in a long term perspective. It is creating new and interesting possibilities for humans and envisioning their future and developments.

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<sup>1</sup> Glanville, R. (1999), “Researching Design and Designing Research”, *Design Issues* 15:2, pp. 80-91

*Truths are to be invented not just discovered.* [A. Jakimowicz]

### **Communicating – Understanding – Sharing – Peer review**

The nature of the designer's or artist's work lies somewhere between the work's singularity and the author's autonomy. Designing itself, however is a form of sharing, it is expressing ideas and concepts in a form of both – the project and the designed object.

In art and design we deal with the planes of interpretations, dynamic and "fluid", which can constitute the shared understanding(s). Is then, the shared opinion of competent peers a reliable evaluation of the creative work?

These formal or informal bodies of evaluation in creative disciplines represent both strength and weakness. The main challenge is the multitude of the systems of values. This makes the research in creative disciplines motivated and justified. Therefore, the focus point in this landscape is to make these creative systems understandable and communicable, probably by following the path of formulating – reflecting – communicating and continuous peer review.

Design competitions do show this richness as a positive value – not as a decisive and validating power, but as the 'environments' of intellectual disagreement, where the different arguments can be set up and represented and can compete.

*Creative work is a play. It is a free speculation using materials of one's chosen form.* [S. Nachmanovich]

### **Communicating – Understanding – Sharing – Interaction**

Interaction starts when action begins between at least two actors, or within the actor him/herself. It is interesting that both words "action" and "actor" have the same root. To "act" – seems to be at the center of discussing an issue of interaction. To act is to take action of becoming, becoming of something or someone. Understanding is not a condition to acting, but it usually appears as a result.

According to de Zeeuw (explained by Glanville), action taken by the actor brings improvement. There is no action when there is no improvement. Therefore acting is a form of intervention. "Intervention suggests positive change and active involvement. This does not come about through the inevitability of some internal dynamic. It occurs because actors become involved: it is a willful choice by which actors can create changes in the quality of the conditions on which they base their observations. When we intervene in something, we act. We also change that something."<sup>2</sup>

However action is one of the stages in the sequence of phases, which all together constitute the procedure of constructive involvement – of both the actor and situation. The sequence is as follows: observation – action (based on observation) – improvement (resulting from action) – support.

Here high quality observation inspires action, which, in turn, by involvement and intervention in what was observed, generates improvement. Improvement then changes both what was observed, the actor who takes action, and those who are helped, by helping them help themselves. Support, then indispensably involves sharing and communicating.

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<sup>2</sup> Glanville, R. (2001), "*Doing the Right Thing: the Problems of... Gerard de Zeeuw, Academic Guerilla*", <http://www.cict.demon.co.uk/Glanville.pdf>

*Art has never been made while thinking of art.* [N. Stumpo]

### **Communicating – Understanding – Two-way – Language**

Languages (verbal and non-verbal) are crucial for our communication processes. They are usually rooted very deeply in history and our local culture.

When communicating and trying to understand the messages we capture, it is important to notice that communication is a two-way process (Pask 1975).<sup>3</sup> In Information and Communication Theory, a sender transmits a message to a receiver. The receiver not always receives the full message, there probably is some noise on the transmitting channel which causes part of the message not to be fully captured by the receiver. Hence, some redundancy is useful.

In daily life however, it is clear that non-verbal communication and sensuous understanding also carry important messages. They complement our more formal verbal communication and guarantee a continuous flow of non-verbal information and understanding.

These complement the verbal messages and ensure some kind of cross-checking on the quality of the two-way communication. Especially in design communication, the graphical and visual communication is dominant. Plans and sections but also the aesthetics of the project and the material used is of utmost importance. Even acoustics have a say in a wonderful place or a dreadful environment to be.

*If we knew what it was we were doing, it would not be called research, would it?* [A. Einstein]

### **Communicating – Understanding – Two-way – Listening**

Communicating processes belong to the most fundamental processes determining both – personal development and a very wide, collective understanding of the world, the development of a given civilization.

Not attempting to explore the whole field (which involves psychology, linguistics, learning, thinking, etc – see also the previous chapter, which mentions Pask's conversation theory), let us try to understand what makes communication possible on a general level.

In 1995, a short manifesto concerning understanding media in architecture was written (Jakimowicz & Kadysz 1995).<sup>4</sup> It stated that:

- transmitting – receiving is a basic communication pattern;
- the transmitted content does not always occur the same when it is received;
- there is NO message without receiving;
- there is a mediation sphere between the sender and the receiver.

From this point then, we can say that there is no communication without listening – and that it is the process that determines communication taking place at all. Listening is crucial for understanding.

<sup>3</sup> Pask, G. (1975), *Conversation Theory*, London: Hutchinson

<sup>4</sup> Jakimowicz, A. & A. Kadysz (1995). "Architecture of Many Media", in B. Collajanni & G. Pellitteri (eds.), *Multimedia and Architectural Disciplines*, Selected Proceedings of the 13th European Conference on Multimedia and Architectural Disciplines, University of Palermo

*Research is the process of going up alleys to see if they are blind.* [M. Bates]

**Communicating – Interpreting – Perspective – Mountains (limit to see more)**

Perspective beautifully represents one of the basic secrets of cognition. One has to enlarge the distance between an observer and an object to see more.

Consequently, approaching limits the field of view, increasing the focus. We are so used to this that quite often we cannot 'translate' the zooming procedure of coming closer and taking distance into other activities. Perhaps it is one of the most powerful procedures for interpreting the creative activities into knowing, designing into research.

There always is and will be something to know, something to be discovered or to be invented. So both creative and critical activities, through the processes of communicating (constant conversation with the world, sensitive listening, the use of languages, zooming, framing, defining) are deeply complementary in the cognition of the (non-) objective world.

*Basic research is what I am doing when I don't know what I am doing.* [W. von Braun]

**Communicating – Interpreting – Perspective – Being Inside – Being Outside**

"We cannot both experience and think that we experience" (Tschumi, 1975).

Art and creative activities are about interpreting and experiencing. Research is about understanding, knowing and communicating. Can experiencing be somehow translated into knowing? Is it a task for the artist or researcher? Or is it an issue for them of becoming a hybrid 'creator – knower'?

Traditional research, with its aim of knowing the objective truth, very clearly states the position of the researcher. He is the observer, armed with observation tools and rigorous methods to analyze and examine the results of observation. As an investigator of truth, he has to be outside, he cannot be involved in the observed object. But quantum physics proves that at a certain level the process of observation cannot be separated from the natural and deep involvement. We cannot state the basic nature of matter, because the observation tools are of the quantum nature themselves. By exploring the perspectives, the creation of new worlds becomes equivalent to the process of getting to know things.

The outcome of any serious research can only be to make two questions grow when only one grew before. [T. Veblen]

### **Communicating – Interpreting – Meaning – Not knowing**

Henk Borgdorff states: "For one thing, much artistic research is conducted not with the aim of producing knowledge, but in order to enhance what could be called the artistic universe; as we know, this involves producing new images, narratives, sounds or experiences, and not primarily the production of formal knowledge or validated insights. Although knowledge and understanding may well emerge as byproducts of artistic projects, this is not usually intended from the beginning".<sup>5</sup>

The above citation indicates that different and many types of knowing, meaning, methods and understanding are present in different domains. Poetics and art require a different way of knowing and interpreting of results and outcomes. They require a deep understanding of the field and imply the reader can capture a specific way of communicating.

On the other hand, also the way of developing research and knowledge in poetics and art seems to be very different. Instead of analytical processes and the collection of data, the processes are more steered through processes of holistic attitudes, associative thinking and creative processes. It is well known that a blank sheet of paper (or not-knowing and blocking all explicit knowledge) can be very stimulating during designing. The development process, the process of making plays a crucial role in the development of ideas and in searching for the appropriate solution. During the 'By Design – For Design' session of RTS, objects sometimes communicate a sharper vision than the accompanying text. The object transcends the usual understanding and knowledge and nicely complements written ideas and verbal discussions.

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<sup>5</sup> Borgdorff, H. (2009): "Artistic Research within the Fields of Science", in *Sensuous Knowledge* No. 6, Kunsthøgskolen i Bergen, p. 7.

G rard Pape [dlsi.krash.net](http://dlsi.krash.net)

*A ‘polyagodic’ approach to the use of the computer  
in music pedagogy*

This paper deals with the use of electronics, that is, in effect, the use of the computer, in the pedagogy of the arts. More specifically I will speak of the use of the computer with regard to music pedagogy. I want to take as a case in point the standpoint of the composer Iannis Xenakis. Where does the use of the computer fit in with regard to Xenakis' approach to teaching music in general and, in particular, to the pedagogy of music composition? First, let us see how Xenakis himself was educated.

Xenakis had an education not in music, but as an engineer. He studied as a young man at the Polytechnic School in Athens. He had little formal education in music beyond some basic music lessons in Greece, although once in France, he tried to study musical composition with Honegger, Milhaud, Nadia Boulanger and Messiaen. It was Messiaen who advised him that he did not need the usual education of the music conservatory, but that his would be a different musical path. Xenakis, once he entered France, found employment working with the great architect, Le Corbusier. He was initially hired for his engineering skills. He learned to be an architect while working for Le Corbusier, not by going to architecture school.

Perhaps because of Xenakis' own singular path towards becoming a composer and architect Xenakis developed a strong antipathy towards conventional academic approaches of teaching the arts. He believed that the academic way of teaching music, for example, which focused on traditional disciplines such as solfège, counterpoint, harmony, music analysis, etc. tended to create conservative composers more directed towards recreating the past in their musical works rather than being openly creative and original with regard to the future of music.

Consequently, Iannis Xenakis proposed that young composers, in general, should not limit their education to traditional musical disciplines as taught in the conservatory. He even questioned whether such a traditional approach was useful at all for stimulating original creativity in a young composer. To the contrary, he felt that young composers should study form and transformation in nature (morphology, palaeontology), form and transformation in science (biology, physics, chemistry) and form and transformation in architecture. In addition, he considered it important that young composers should also study mathematics, acoustics, philosophy, psychology... In short, in order that young composers should discover new approaches to musical form and to the transformation of sound, they should have at their disposal a large extra-musical education to supplement or even to replace the traditional music conservatory approach.

Xenakis went one step further in his reflections on the musical pedagogy of young composers.

He came up with the idea of developing a computer music system that would be at once a pedagogical as well as compositional tool. In the mid to late 1950s, Xenakis began to compose, perhaps under the influence of his architectural work with Le Corbusier, by first drawing his music as continuously evolving graphic forms. Such orchestra pieces as *Metastasis* and *Pithoprakta* started as graphic scores which were later transcribed into quasi-traditional notation so as to be playable by a symphony orchestra. Already in the 1950s Xenakis dreamed of a tool

that would allow him to enter graphics directly into a machine and to hear the result. It wasn't until the 1970s when computer technology had evolved sufficiently and when Xenakis had at his disposition a computer music research centre which he called CEMAMu (Centre for the Study of Mathematics and Musical Automatics) that he was able to start to work on this compositional and pedagogical tool which he called UPIC (Polyagogic Computer Unit of the CEMAMu).

The UPIC system embodied many of Xenakis' basic ideas about music pedagogy and music composition. First, the name UPIC itself contains the neologism 'polyagogic' which has the same root as pedagogic. "Agogos" in Greek has the meaning of a path towards knowledge.

Pedagogy is the teaching of a path towards knowledge for children, or for the young more generally, while 'polyagogic' implies many paths towards knowledge. The UPIC system was to be a 'polyagogic' tool for pedagogy, that is, instead of the 'one way' for all approach of academic musical pedagogy, Xenakis wanted a pedagogic music tool that could work just as well for composers as for adult musical amateurs and also for children. The idea was to develop a system much more general with regard to working with musical sound than traditional musical instruments could be. The use of the computer and of the UPIC system itself was to provide an open space for musical sound. First of all, Xenakis had the idea that in drawing sound one might work directly with sonic events in an open musical space as opposed to those events being pre-constrained by a too rigid pre-existing notational system. He was, of course, thinking of notes written in tempered scales in traditional musical staff notation. On the contrary, in the UPIC system, one draws first the geometric macro-form of the music 'out of time' and then one decides which frequencies, intensities and timbres to assign to the musical drawings (or arcs as they are called) when played by the computer 'in time'. One must decide what duration to assign to the musical page that is drawn. Changing the duration of the page did not change the frequency or pitch of the individual arcs. The frequencies or pitches of the arcs were independent of the duration of the musical page.

The original UPIC system of 1978 was not a real time system, that is, one had to wait a long time for the computer to calculate the sound of the page. In 1987, the first real time version of UPIC was developed which meant that one could draw and then hear the result of the drawing right away. It was at this moment that UPIC could become not just a composition tool for composers, but also a 'polyagogic' teaching tool for adults and children alike who wanted to learn something not just about music, but about sound more generally.

Xenakis' idea was that drawing was a more direct way of seeing and hearing what sound was. The idea was to draw everything. When you drew a waveform, you could see and hear the timbre it produced. When you drew a curve of intensity, you could see and hear graphically what the traditional music terms of crescendo and decrescendo really meant. If you drew a straight line or arc, you could see and hear a steady pitch or frequency with a certain duration depending on the length of the line drawn. If you drew a slanted line, you heard a sliding tone called a glissando which passed through all intermediate pitches from the start to the end point of the arc.

Depending on how long the glissando was and at what angle you drew it, you could also see and hear the speed of the glissando.

Learning the relation between the graphic representation of a different musical parameter and its sonic result was a veritable pedagogy of musical acoustics and psychoacoustics. With UPIC, one was astonished to hear the very tight relation between frequency and rhythm, for example. Playing a short sample of 1/10<sup>th</sup> of a second of sound as a waveform at a very low frequency, for example, 3 hertz, that is 3 repetitions of the waveform per second, was the same for the ear as hearing the rhythm of a triplet: 3 iterations in the time of 1 second. There was also the tight relation between intensity and rhythm to discover as well. Drawing an intensity curve and applying it to a very short duration produced a rhythm while the same curve applied to a very long sound duration resulted in an intensity variation of loud and soft. I could give many other examples, but the point is that Xenakis wanted to open musical pedagogy via his 'polyagogic' UPIC system to a new way of introducing, not just composers, but non-musicians, children and adults both, to the acoustics and psychoacoustics of sound first and foremost without prejudicing what was music or not by the introduction of traditional notation and traditional instruments, both already associated with a certain historical musical practice.

It is interesting to note, from my experience introducing UPIC to children in the 1990s, that children of 5 to 7 years of age could draw and listen to what they had drawn with UPIC without deciding or seeming to care whether their result was 'music' or not. On the other hand, 10 to 12 year olds were already concerned if what they had drawn was 'music' or not and asked me how to draw Mozart with the UPIC system. It seems that despite all attempts by Xenakis to make the UPIC system as open and neutral as possible, even the rudimentary musical education at grade school level had already made children afraid of 'making a mistake' while drawing. It was difficult to convince some of these children that there was not just one way to draw with UPIC, not one 'right way', but many ways and that the idea of UPIC was that each person should find his unique way with the system, that each should find what was interesting and original for him or her.

Of course, Xenakis was not so naïve as to think that his UPIC system was going to turn all amateur children and adults into 'composers', but he did have the idea that a 'polyagogic' computer music approach to musical pedagogy was much more likely to stimulate the individual curiosity and creativity of composers and amateurs alike, much more than a traditional conservatory approach. UPIC was a unique and original use of the computer as a pedagogic music tool that allowed composers and amateurs alike to learn about how to represent music graphically as an abstract structure drawn in an open geometric space 'out of time'. Hearing a drawing 'in time' after drawing it 'out of time' effectively separated the 'out of time' operation of creating an abstract geometrical structure from the 'in time' operation of hearing the resulting musical form as sound. The drawing approach to musical form also allowed gesture coming from the body of the composer to be incorporated into the result by creating a connection between the hand drawing of the arc and the sound heard by the ear when the page was played.

The last version of the UPIC system for the Windows system was complete by 1993. What future was there for Xenakian 'polyagogic' pedagogy after that? From 1993 to 2007, while directing the Ateliers UPIC, renamed CCMIX in 2000, I developed an eight-month course in "Computer Music and Composition" for young composers who were in residency attending lectures and composing new works. The content of these lectures included not only many subjects directly relevant to computer music education as taught by such experts in the field as Curtis Roads ("Computer Music Tutorial"), Trevor Wishart ("CDP system") and Carla Scaletti ("Kyma System"), but there was also a course I taught where Xenakis' own book *Formalized Music* was a major starting off text and that was followed, later in the year, by lectures that focused on the contemporary mathematics and physics of "Chaos Theory" as well as the philosophy, psychology and physics of different approaches to space and time. In all of these courses, mine as well as those of the other professors, the use of the computer as pedagogic tool was primordial. Every professor's theoretical teaching in their lectures was accompanied by a computer application that allowed the ideas taught in the lectures to be tested and applied by the student composers in their individual studio time in CCMIX's pedagogy studio.

Therefore, the approach in these courses was highly multi-disciplinary and students were often introduced to subjects rather far from music, so as to stimulate their individual creativity in the domains of computer music and composition, more generally speaking. A very important part of these courses was the application of theoretical and technical course work to individual composition. Individual studio time was ample so that students could compose new works without prejudicing which computer tools they used (many besides Xenakis' UPIC system were introduced) and which theoretical/aesthetical approaches to music composition were to be favored by students.

Xenakis did not want to have disciples, that is, he did not want imitators; on the contrary he valued that each composer should find their own path. As a consequence, my Xenakian 'polyagogic' pedagogy was not oriented towards making students follow the compositional approach of Xenakis, but rather to having the students ask penetrating questions of themselves as to 'what is music' and 'what is composition' for them. In this sense, Xenakian 'polyagogic' pedagogy is a method of self-questioning for the composer about the 'what of music' and the 'why of composition', a path towards finding an individual and unique compositional voice as opposed to being giving a specific set of answers or technical methods as to how to compose or how to approach music theory by a 'master'. Just as with the UPIC system, the idea of such a musical pedagogy is that there are many paths to musical composition and to musical (self)knowledge, not just one. The uniqueness of each young composer's musical voice to be found is altogether another type of 'oneness' than the 'oneness' of the unique 'truth' sometimes taught in certain rigid academies of music that pretend that there is only one way to learn how to be a composer or even that there is only one correct way to compose.

The broad and open education used in the CCMIX eight-month course was meant to stimulate composers' imaginations and thinking without proposing a definite

method of composition or definite answers to questions that finally each composer must answer only for themselves. Stimulation of mind and imagination without influencing the musical result was the approach chosen. Educating and opening minds of young composers to new approaches to composition that might come from domains out of music was done only to give composers the maximum chance to find their own path as composers, to write no one else's music but their own.

It is clear that in Xenakis' approach to musical pedagogy with the UPIC system and also with my own approach in the "Computer Music and Composition" courses at the CCMIX the use of the computer as a pedagogical tool was crucial. The computer which is our modern tool *par excellence*, is the most general and most open for the teaching of music and other arts because, as nothing more than a calculating machine of great speed and flexibility, it does not carry with it a specific aesthetical approach or prejudice that comes from past musical tradition or practice. That is not to say that computers do not have their limitations.

I don't believe, for example, that it is possible to have a computer-based compositional system for music that is completely neutral or fully open as to its musical approach and sonic capability (the UPIC system was quite limited in its own way too). All computer tools, musical ones included, bear the imprint of their programmer. There is no computer tool for the pedagogy and composition of music today that is, or that can be, no matter how well done, ideal for all composers and for all musical applications. Xenakis developed his own composing tools and, even if he hoped that UPIC could also be useful for others, he did not insist (and neither did I while directing CCMIX) that this one tool, as 'polyagogic' as it was, could render all other computer music tools useless.

Therefore, my conclusion as to the application of electronics, viz. the computer, to musical pedagogy and creation is that having many students/many creators using the computer always implies the need for many computer tools. It is, of course, one of the reasons that young composers are taught how to program their own applications today in such open graphical environments such as Max MSP and Super Collider.

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# *Time and reciprocity in improvisation:*

On the aspect of in-time systems in improvisation with  
and on machines

One term which I often come across is the concept of real-time composition. Even though I use it myself sometimes I believe it is a bit misleading, because there is an inherent contradiction between the reflective act of composition and the concept of real-time, but the dynamic between these two modes of operation is central to much of my artistic practice. Another reason why the term real-time composition is problematic is simply because the term 'real-time' in the context of artistic practices may not be so informative. After all, few art forms are unambiguously non-real time or real-time.

A related distinction, one that I find more useful, and one that moves beyond the limitations of the real vs. non real-time, is that between artistic practices that are embedded in time (in-time processes) and those that are contained in time (over-time processes). For an action to be embedded in time means that the time it takes to perform it matters; that time is a factor whose value is decisive. Musical performance and improvisation (and also listening) are typical in-time operations and composition is an example of a typical over-time activity.

Resistance, physical or gravitational resistance, furthermore, is an integral part of in-time operations. The weight and size of my leg when I walk are part of the walking activity and the resistance of my body and my instrument are factors that shape my musical output in a performance. And, in the case of the virtual world of computers, the lack of a physical component in is a significant aspect of my interactions with it.

A patch, a small computer program such as the ones I commonly use when I improvise with and on computers, is in essence something which is contained in time rather than embedded in it. In general we may see it as a preconceived definition of a finite set of responses to a finite set of input patterns. And as such, it is different in nature from the act of improvisation that is used to interact with it. It has no real resistances and it performs almost always the same regardless of time. Hence, it has more in common with a composition and musical notation than with performance and improvisation. This difference between the logic of the computer program and the logic of the performance can be challenging and there is always a risk that the over-time aspects of the digital technology destabilises the in-time aspect of the performance.

## 1

What then is the significance of interaction in a music that makes use of interactive computers in musical performance? What is the significance of the fact that my activities as an improviser are embedded in time in this interaction? In what sense can the machine respond to me and in what sense can I respond to it? Are our interactions at all to be considered as communication?

The aspect of interaction in the field of interactive art and media is problematic as the term 'interactive' to some extent has been hijacked by computer interface designers. Though one of its lexicographic meanings is "reciprocally active" (The Oxford English Dictionary, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1989; OED Online) its meaning in the context of

computer interface design is geared more towards a methodology of control than one of sharing or reciprocity. In the reduced meaning of computer interaction the actions of one part, 'the user', are used to control the reactions of the other, 'the machine', often in a one-to-one relation: one action, one reaction. In this kind of interaction, a reaction to any given action is commonly ignorant to any prior actions or reactions. A mouse click on a given icon on a computer desktop typically results in the same machine response, regardless of the user's preceding activities. Musical interaction, on the other hand, is all about reciprocity, particularly in improvised music. (Well investigated by Ingrid Monson in her important contribution *Saying Something: Jazz Improvisation and Interaction* (Monson, 1996))

A successful interplay between musicians involved in an improvisation rests on a mutual sensitivity for taking, and responding to, musical initiatives. Musicians induce differences rather than alter states; they induce differences that 'make a difference' and according to Gregory Bateson, such a difference that makes a difference is the definition of a bit of information (Bateson, 1979). In other words, new information and knowledge is constructed by changes over time. It is my experience and my understanding that there is a coupling between the dynamics of an in-time system and the dynamics of the cybernetic concept of differences that make a difference. Taking this one step further, perhaps it is possible to understand the logical and temporal difference between the human improviser and the interactive technology in terms of a difference that makes a difference. In other words, as a difference that produces information rather than one that displaces the temporal embeddedness of the performance.

## 2

Building on the cybernetics of Bateson, in my PhD dissertation (Frisk, 2008) I coined the two modes of interaction interaction-as-control and interaction-as-difference. The control paradigm influences much of the interaction design we encounter but may become problematic if it is transferred to the domain of musical practice. When I play, I do not want to only control the technology I engage with, be it a computer or a saxophone. I want to exploit both the constraints and allowances of the instruments I use and let these aspects influence the conditions for my interactions with them. In this reciprocal relation with the technologies I use, it is not the similarities that are interesting but the differences and the deviations. My vision of a dynamic human-technology reciprocity has its origin in an aesthetic choice, intimately linked to my improvisational attitude towards musical organization.

Just as in-time and over-time are not unambiguous categories, however, interaction-as-control and interaction-as-difference are not clear cut definitions in binary opposition. We are dealing with a continuum of interactive potential ranging from the most reduced form of interaction-as-control to the infinitely complex interaction-as-difference.

The challenge as I see it is to build interactive systems for musical improvisation that are able to adapt and move back and forth along the continuum of interactive potential. Rather than trying to make technology behave like a reduced human

performer my interest is to find out what the inherent constraints and allowances of the technology are (the hardware as well as the software) and to more fully understand the nature of the difference between the human and the technological.

### 3

Time in the arts in general and in music in particular is in itself a complex issue. A number of composers and theorists have stressed that music simultaneously encompasses a number of temporal modes and different timescales. After all, that music is able to disrupt our notion of time and temporal flow is easily experienced by anyone engaging in music listening.

The American electronic music composer Curtis Roads makes the interesting remark that the discontinuities that appear in the boundaries between different (concurrent) time scales give rise to perceptual differences in sonic events. (Roads, 2001:4) A note terribly out of tune in one temporal order may have just the right intonation in another, and a beat out of sync in one time scale may swing in another. In other words, depending on our temporal zoom level we may appreciate different qualities in the music. This also suggests that the differences depend on the perspective; the note out of tune, in isolation, is an error but an emotional infliction when heard in context.

To the Greek composer and architect Iannis Xenakis the discontinuity of musical time was of pivotal importance. Not only the interruptions that occur when moving across the boundaries between different temporal scales, but also the separability of events occurring within the flux of one particular time scale. Xenakis, with his background as an architect, had a great interest in the spatial properties of music in general and musical time in particular. The idea that musical time may be rendered in space, however, is common to several descriptions and in essence, this is what musical notation does.

Music has had an out-of-time spatial representation ever since musical notation was introduced; and with the advent of recording technology, not only the representation of sound in scores, but also sound itself has been transformed into space: "We might say that recording is a reflux, or distillation in which time is boiled off, for time must be added back in to get sound, in the form of a steady motion of the turntable or tape heads or the crystal clock in digital recording." (Evens, 2005:54) In the engravings on an LP, or through the holes on the surface of a CD, the elusive nature of sound as embedded in time is captured and spatialised. The digital representation of sound in a computer is similarly spatialised; in other words, to even begin to think about using interactive computer technology in performance involves a transformation of the in-time embedded sound to an over-time representation.

Even though time-to-space transformations are clearly common and important in art and music I believe it to be important, however, to embrace the infinite interactive possibilities of in-time performance and to resist the out-of-time (spatially rendered) representations of music. This is without a doubt difficult

and the addition of technology can make it even more so in the way that technology lacks the multiple temporal possibilities inherent to musical listening and performance: the interaction may disrupt the musical flow.

#### 4


In his book *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation* Steve Dixon discusses the problematic issue of 'liveness' in performance. There is a common sense that technology have "transformed or destabilised notions of liveness, presence, and the 'real'", (Dixon, 2007:127) suggesting that the real-time arts somehow becomes less 'live' when technology is made use of. Even though a performer (and an audience) simultaneously employs a number of different temporalities, the addition of the computer appears to sometimes disrupt the in-time process in various ways. As if the over-time operations of the computer, however lightning fast these may be, are sometimes too much for the performance to carry, making it impossible for the interactive interface to inform the digital system in a useful way.

Dixon's description of the lack of 'liveness' in performances involving digital technologies is very similar to my own experience of trying to combine improvisation and interactive computer programs that I described in the beginning of this paper. Whether the use of technology disrupts the liveness or not, due to the over-time aspect of computers and computer programs it may disrupt the in-time aspect of the improvisation. I believe interaction design may benefit from a deepened understanding of the temporalities of musical improvisation and how these differ from the potential temporalities of the machine.

The issue at stake here is not to merely accept these differences as assets or as bits of information, but neither is it to regard them as problems that should be balanced or evened out. The issue, I believe, is to use these differences, to play with them and to more fully understand them. If this is done successfully I am certain that new knowledge will be produced; knowledge about both humans and computers as well as their interactions and I believe that this knowledge will be of interest also outside the field of music and artistic research.

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## *Becoming friends with the ABC*

Reflections on writing across the design curriculum

## Introduction

This paper reflects experiences made with teaching writing in a recently installed master's programme in design. First, it outlines the educational context in Switzerland and specifically the historical background of the Lucerne School of Art and Design. It then sums up important findings regarding writing in design and academic writing. Finally, a case study based on ongoing teaching practice is presented. The crucial question discussed concerns design students' reluctance to writing and the role of blog writing in this context.

How students may become friends with the ABC has been widely studied in the last years. In the UK, the teaching of writing skills in art and design disciplines even has become a distinct research field (see <http://www.writing-pad.ac.uk> and *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*). All the same, most European design faculties – except for the UK, Ireland and Norway – ignore these experiences and lack a systematic, research-based debate about writing in and across design curricula. In Switzerland as well as in other countries, academic writing in design only became a topic some years ago when new bachelor and master programmes were installed.

From a practice-based perspective, this paper examines how findings obtained in writing research can be transferred into the class-room. In a first paragraph, the educational and historical context is outlined. Then, important topics discussed in research on teaching (academic) writing are summed up. Finally, the case study is presented and discussed.

## Context

In 1784, the locally well-known painter Johann Melchior Wyrsh founded the Lucerne draughtsmen school, the first Swiss institution of its kind. Like many others, it changed to an arts and craft school in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and then to a design school in the 1970s. In 1997, seven regional, public-funded Swiss universities of applied sciences were created by merging former vocational schools, art and design schools included. The Federal Department of Economic Affairs approved their degree programmes according to Bologna regulations. In Lucerne, the bachelor programme in design started in 2005, the master's programme in 2008. Still, Lucerne School of Art and Design stands out due to its strong propensity to craftwork. In the meantime, however, research-based MA programmes in art and design have been introduced and PhD-programmes installed. This reorientation conflicts in some respects with traditional attitudes. Merited long-time staff often lacks (academic) writing experience and is, at least in parts, openly reluctant to ongoing educational changes. Moreover, both design lecturers and students frequently reject writing as something opposed to their artistic and creative work. This antagonism is increased by a curricular division of so-called theoretical courses and studio-based design practice.

Writing workshops developed for the Lucerne MA programme consider the context briefly outlined above. The teaching takes into account findings obtained in writing research regarding both (academic) writing in design and (academic) writing in general.

## Writing in Design

In a paper for the Engineering & Product Design Education Conference 2010, I analysed experiences obtained along the first two runs of the Lucerne MA programme in design (Nyffenegger 2010b). To identify writing problems more specifically starting the third run, I asked first semester students in fall 2010 to answer a series of questions. The questionnaire replicates in parts an investigation entitled "Designing Your Writing / Writing Your Design" (Orr, Blythman & Mullin 2006) In the frame of a joint research project, the referenced authors talked with design students about their perception of the writing and of the design process.

A preliminary evaluation of the answers obtained in Lucerne indicates issues similar to those identified in the UK:

- students perceive writing as static and coercive;
- they are not aware of social and collaborative aspects in the writing process; and
- they hardly use creative design methods while working on texts.

Metaphors given as well for the design as for the writing process illustrate their unequal perception of both. One student, for example, describes the design process as "an expedition" while the writing process is "a must". Another student claims writing to be "heavy and difficult"; design, in contrary, is "my own life". A very strong metaphor relates design to "breath" and writing to "throwing out".

In fact, writing and design share many qualities and do not necessarily have to be opposed (Orr & Blythman 2002). Teaching writing in design has therefore to focus on similarities between the writing and the design process and to encourage students in applying common design methods when writing:

"Using the discourse and experience of students' design practices, we can support student writing effectively." (Orr & Blythman 2002: 50)

## Academic writing

Writing in an academic context and for academic purposes can be defined as a specific subspecies of writing in general. It includes both certain formalities such as the inclusion of footnotes, quotes, and bibliographies, and, especially in German, specific habits such as the use of an unpersonal style, complex sentence structure, and technical terms. These specific conventions, however, do not constitute students' main writing problem. The challenge lies within the academic genre, not on its surface.

According to Pohl (Pohl 2010: 100) academic texts include various perspectives and dimensions. To master such polyphony is a major challenge even for experienced writers. Therefore, academic writing has to be understood and adopted in several steps (Pohl 2010: 109 ff). First, the writer has to learn how to describe a subject precisely. This step includes text genres like protocol or memorandum. Secondly, the ability to digest disciplinary discourse has to be trained, for example by writing excerpts or literature reviews. Finally, a writer's skill to develop her own rationales and arguments is required. Students will achieve this by composing essays and degree dissertations.

When entering university, students of all disciplines face similar problems since they all lack experience in dealing with academic text genres (Kruse & Ruhmann, 2006):

- Students conceive of writing primarily as knowledge-telling not as knowledge-generating; thereby, they misunderstand academic writing processes and the various dimensions of academic texts.
- They experience written text as a product of individual authorship rather than as one of socially embedded action; they hardly use peer-feedback and learning groups while working on writing assignments.
- Especially in German-speaking countries, writing competence is perceived as a question of talent and genius and not as something to be coached and exercised.

Teaching academic writing in higher education should take into account the specific situation students encounter when changing from grammar school to university. Students' difficulties in writing – whether in art and design or in any other discipline – do not necessarily have to be perceived as problems; they may as well be seen as regular part of ongoing learning processes.

### Case study

The Lucerne MA programme in design includes major specific project and skills modules as well as courses compulsory for all students integrated in a so-called transfer module (table 1).

1st term (total 30 ECTS)		
project module (18 ECTS)	skills module (3 ECTS)	transfer module (9 ECTS)
2nd term (total 30 ECTS)		
project module (18 ECTS)	skills module (3 ECTS)	transfer module (9 ECTS)
3rd term (total 30 ECTS)		
master thesis		

The transfer module encompasses inputs in business and project management, design theory, research methodology and academic writing. The overall learning goal aims at enhancing discourse competence. The module also intends to facilitate transfer between so-called 'theory' and 'practice'. A blog (<http://blog.hslu.ch/madesign10/>) serves as a medium of transfer, as discourse platform and as learning tool.

In 2010/11, over the first and second study term, four all-day writing workshops take place. They introduce basic creative writing methods as well as academic text genres and conventions. The writing workshops also offer the possibility to discuss writing assignments received in other transfer module courses. Both teaching and assigning consider the following assumptions based on the above briefly resumed results of writing research:

- writing is basically a craft > you can learn it and you can train it;
- writing is a process > to succeed, you need time to revise and redo your writing;
- writing and especially academic writing is discursive > you need exchange and feedback to develop a convincing written argument;
- writing is design > as a design student, you have the essential means at your disposal.

These assumptions help to loosen students' reluctance to writing and to push the learning process. A few selected examples illustrate how the mentioned topics may be integrated in tuition. Most of the presented exercises originate from the lecture of publications on creative academic writing (mainly Bean 2001, Francis 2009, Pyerin 2003).

The aspect of writing as a craft, for instance, may be enhanced by encouraging handwriting. An assignment demanding several rewritings of a draft demonstrates the processual character of writing. The task to comment on other students' texts points to the social side of writing. Group writing also strengthens the understanding of writing as social action. Design aspects of writing can be explored in a simple test where students are asked to question a collection of common design methods with regard to the writing process. Such a test will show how much they can benefit from their designerly background when writing.

In the discussed case here, in-class tuition is closely linked with blog writing. As a permanently accessible platform, the blog guarantees continuity parallel to the infrequent writing workshops (for details on blog writing as learning tool see Nyffenegger 2010a). Moreover, it enables different narrative trails along the study course: narratives connecting given lessons and writing assignments published on the blog; narratives engaging the class through intense commenting of each others writing; and narratives telling each student's development in mastering more and more difficult tasks.

Experiences with the combination of analogue teaching and blog writing in a design master programme are promising (Nyffenegger 2009; 2010b). Blogs help students to develop a more casual attitude towards writing. They also enhance writing as a social act. Students are virtually forced to leave the scriptorium and to expose their texts to a common readership. Nevertheless, writing remains enforced and somehow irksome. It is not done at free will but as part of course assessment and under certain constraints. Undefined tasks in terms of "just write what you like to" may foster a more pleasurable access to writing but resulting texts will be hard to compare or even grade. Lecturers will not be able to control learning outcomes. Furthermore, the relationships between blog writing and academic writing need to be explored. Blogs are convenient for short text formats while academic text genres often require more length. Blog writing exercises targeted on specific aspects of academic writing need to be developed and tested.

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## *Craftivism:*

Reconnecting art and design education through the  
social act of making

## Full disclosure

I am an industrial designer with a background in fine arts and craft (furniture making) interested in exploring the intersections of all those disciplines. Two factors in particular shape the ideas of this essay: Richard Sennett's recent book *The Craftsman* and my own experience as a 'maker' and now an industrial designer. During my own apprenticeship, I came to the realisation that the best craftspeople are open to sharing information, secure in the knowledge that mastery comes through doing – a process amplified by personal reflection and social engagement. Openness and social sharing have sustained craft culture over millennia and now represent, in my opinion, a good model for art and design education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century where open source, open access, peer production, crowdsourcing, etc. are reshaping the broader culture. Given the space restrictions of the essay, I will concentrate on design rather than studio art looking specifically at the social aspects of knowledge creation as opposed to the technical implications of craft. I begin with a brief overview of some of the historical dynamics that drove art and craft apart; describe the economic model that helped launch passive consumption; and finally explore how a re-definition of craft and activism could help reshape education and regenerate our cities.

## The historic split

The issue of craft may seem like a very distant one in discussions of art and design curriculum but as recently as 1919 Walter Gropius had positioned it prominently in the first Bauhaus manifesto: "Architects, painters, sculptors, we must all return to crafts! For there is no such thing as 'professional art'. There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman... a base in handicrafts is essential to every artist. It is there that the original source of creativity lies." It's easy to argue about the context and intended meaning of Gropius' words, but it's clear that the debate over craft and art was still a central concern less than a century ago. The power and politics of design reformers in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century made craft a highly contested issue. This was, however, not enough to keep Gropius on point. Within four years he changed his rhetoric under political and economic pressures: "We aim to create a clear, organic architecture whose inner logic will be radiant and naked, unencumbered by lying facings and trickery; we want an architecture adapted to our world of machines, radios and fast cars..." The original manifesto embracing craft however informed the Bauhaus *Vorkurs* or foundation which in turn shaped the development of most art and design curriculums throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many institutions are only now re-thinking their foundation program in light of the changing nature of art, design, and digital technology (which some believe represents a new type of craft knowledge). To really understand craft it is important to go further back.

The original split between craft and art can be traced back to the fifteenth century and Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Painters*. His cohesive narrative elevated art above craft despite the fact that many of the artists described in the text had apprenticed as artisans. Brunelleschi for example trained as a goldsmith and applied workshop methods to problem solve everything from cathedral domes to the re-invention of perspective. As Oxford professor and Leonardo scholar Martin

Kemp puts it: “When we look into the implicit ‘boxes’ of space behind the screens of our televisions or computers, we are distant legatees of Brunelleschi’s vision.” Craft knowledge in this context is perhaps more comparable to patented or trademarked technology today. It was an asset guarded and controlled by guilds interested in shaping and protecting it like a cartel, trade union, or corporation today. As author Malcolm McCullough writes: “Towns created guilds – and guilds made towns – in order to instigate commerce.”<sup>1</sup> While it was the artisan’s skill and innovation that propelled commerce forward helping create a rich class of merchants, it was the artists who innovatively told the visual stories merchants valued.

Economic historian Richard Goldthwaite writes that Vasari was amongst the first to use the word competition (*concorrenza*) in the economic sense to describe the intense struggle amongst individual artists for commissions.<sup>2</sup> Artistic and artisanal production continued to diverge: the first towards visual/technical innovation and the second towards material/technical innovation. However, as commissions increased artists and artisans often hired and trained assistants to help realize their ambitions. History however rarely recorded the supporting staff focusing instead on the individual artist’s name and their stylistic innovations – a phenomenon that persists today in the studios of many artists, star designers, and ‘starchitects’.

### **Art/craft/industry**

This historic split eventually created three distinct trajectories: art, craft, and industry (which emerged fully in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries). For any student of design history the 60-year period beginning with the establishment of the Victoria and Albert museum (1851) and ending with the founding of the Deutsche Werkbund (1907) is an especially contentious time. The V&A, which was established with funds from the Great Exhibition, was meant to serve as a repository for the best examples of applied art from which Victorian manufacturers were encouraged to model their production. This, however, did not happen – instead, within five years, manufacturers in Germany realising that their production capacities far outweighed consumer demand embraced the fashion model with its seasonal changes intended to stoke desire in a consumer interested in change for change’s sake. In his book *The Werkbund: Design Theory and Mass Culture Before the First World War*, Frederic Schwartz quotes an economist (Walter Troeltsch) of the time: “Fashion undermines the habit of moderate consumption based on individual need; it stimulates the passion for constant change even when this is not objectively necessary; it directs demand toward objects whose often dubious merit consists in being modern; it seduces and trains people to apply an entirely new standard to commodities.”<sup>3</sup>

Here lies the origin of our passive consumption model (roughly a century old). The main difference is that, in the meantime, capitalist production has been hyper-accelerated by the exploitation of cheap foreign labor; containerisation made economically feasible by cheap foreign oil; and global capital that moves

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm McCullough, *Abstracting Craft: The practiced digital hand*, Cambridge (Mass): MIT Press 1998 p. 12

<sup>2</sup> Richard A. Goldthwaite, *The Economy of Renaissance Florence*, Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009 p. 390

<sup>3</sup> Frederic J. Schwartz, *The Werkbund: Design theory and mass culture before the First World War*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1996 p. 34

at the speed of fiber optics. The result is a world challenged by climate change, overpopulation, global terrorism, diminishing energy and material resources, etc. – issues for the most part that won't go away but instead comprise the world our students will manage. The question of whether we are adequately preparing them for that challenge can be partially addressed with a new definition of craft.

### **Recalibrating “Craft”**

To begin with craft has too many conflicting definitions: hand production, non-industrialized production, traditional skills passed from generation to generation, expensive and precious artifacts, cheap products from developing countries, and so on. Richard Sennett in his 2008 book *The Craftsman* provides a simple and direct definition: “the desire to do a job well for its own sake,”<sup>4</sup> which he believes also happens in domains not historically associated with traditional craft knowledge: “Craftsmanship cuts a far wider swath than skilled manual labor; it serves the computer programmer, the doctor, and the artist; parenting improves when it is practiced as a skilled craft, as does citizenship.”<sup>5</sup> Crucial also to his definition is the social aspect: the inalienable capital created (and shared) through networked relationships based on trust and reciprocity and shaped by norms established by the group. Of course this type of knowledge cannot be accomplished by social sharing alone but relies on the transformational power of time. The acquisition of any ‘skilled’ activity needs repeated and meaningful exchanges between a person (the craftsperson) and the task/material he is learning. Provided there is enough time (Sennett cites 10,000 hours as a good benchmark) a person can achieve mastery over a material, process, or activity. For a doctor or a nurse practitioner, the daily interactions with patient and colleagues, and the repetition of procedures over a concentrated period of time can lead to a more holistic understanding of the healing craft. Such interactions are difficult to codify in book form because they are cumulative – acquired through practice, social interaction, and the free exchange of knowledge.

### **Applying the lessons of craft to contemporary education**

Applying Sennett’s expanded definition of craft to real world problems creates a ‘craftivist’ approach that leverages the power of socially motivated peer production, open source initiatives, and the wisdom of the crowd, to solve specific problems in a localised context (although the model could be scaled up for global issues as well). It moves away from the current emphasis on generalised one-size-fits-all education to focus on knowledge communities united by the goals of ‘problem-finding’ and problem solving. Contextualised learning can also provide greater motivation for directed skill acquisition – a process that could also benefit from social sharing/learning. While such an approach might initially be a single component in a broader educational offering, it could also help focus other aspects of the education. The initial challenges to creating a craftivist approach are establishing the optimum environment to foster and nurture socially motivated peer production so that it grows outside of an educational setting and spawns new initiatives, and finding the correct balance between the power and responsibility of the

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008 p. 9

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*, p. 9

network and that of the individual. Networks have to find their own dynamics over time through trial-and-error; they also need to be self-sustaining.

In many ways this brings us back to manifestoes like the 1919 Bauhaus example or its revised version only four years later. Craft had lost its true meaning at that particular historical moment: it was challenged by the much larger force of mass production, and lost. The result was prosperity for a significant portion of the population; however, some of that prosperity has vanished with the exportation of manufacturing overseas. We are also finally acknowledging the external costs of diminishing natural resources, increasing landfills, and the real spectre of climate change. These realities will force us into a much larger re-invention of the economy and the culture based on a different radically different model. The open architecture, design, and engineering initiatives that have emerged in the past decade (architecture for humanity and engineers without borders for example) represent part of a new approach even while these organisations have focused on more fundamental problems in the developing world. Nevertheless they remain a kind of case study in rethinking the way forward. It may now be time to reverse engineer the ways in which these organisations work, grow, thrive and ultimately coalesce around a common cause and plant those seeds in to our academic institutions so that we are at least prepared for change.



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# *The Document as Performance / The Performance as a Document*

notes on a research project

Some statements about the relationship between performance and reality to start with. These statements serve as provocations, as eye-openers for the research project I will describe. Art historian Hal Foster observes, in his influential study *The Return of the Real. The Avant-garde at the End of the Century*, that contemporary visual art, from the eighties on, shifts its focus from reality as an effect of representation – e.g. pop art – to reality as a thing of trauma. He notes that artists like Cindy Sherman present their subjects in such a way that the gaze of the spectator cannot but ‘objectify’ the artwork, as if there is no frame of representation anymore, no scene to stage it. The real, both in its common and in its psychoanalytical sense, has returned. Some artists, not satisfied with this gaze on the so-called ‘abject’, like Jimmy Durham or Dan Graham, start to explore another gaze, the ethnographic gaze. In identifying themselves ambiguously with real situations of repression or dispossession, they problematise the representational value of our anthropological data, exposing them as projections of the observer. This time, the real, the referent of the artwork is pointing at the spectator; it becomes a (blurred) theme.

Second statement. In an interview, together with director Max Stafford-Clark, the playwright David Hare talks about their collaboration in so-called ‘verbatim’ theatre, drama about the ‘real facts’ in big societal and political issues, ranging from the privatization of British Rail to the war in Iraq. Asked after the function of this drama, Hare says: “It does what journalism fails to do”. Hare has repeated this position on other occasions, even in front of high representatives of the British press. Although he often takes his liberties about what real people might have said privately in a known situation – e.g. the private conversations between Tony Blair and George W. Bush in the play *Stuff Happens* – the claim for representativity, the idea that an artwork is open for judgment on journalistic criteria is remarkable. Especially when you assert that journalism itself doesn’t meet its own standards anymore.

The statements of Foster and Hare, even when they deal with radically different artistic genres, seem to contradict each other. Foster confronts the contemporary artist, in his object as well in his discourse, with his impossible neutrality. Strategies of the real, like the exposure of the abject or the use of anthropological data, should be unmasked or at least criticized as performative devices. Hare on the contrary, exactly wants to hide these performative devices behind the authority of theatrical illusion in order to create maximum veracity on the political issue.

RITS is the school for audiovisual and performing arts of the Erasmus University College in Brussels. For almost ten years, academic research projects have been funded by the school itself and by the VUB, the Brussels university we are associated with. *The Document as Performance – The Performance as a Document* is a representative example of the ‘academic’ policy within our school for several reasons. In the first place, the project unites, conceptually and practically, different media, documentary and theatre in the first place. Secondly, it is a collective research project, in which practitioners in radio, visual media and drama collaborate, each from their own point of view but with more than usual curiosity to transgress their idiosyncratic attitudes, with theoreticians, equally ready to leave their ivory towers

of abstract reflection. Thirdly, it is practice-based research, where the main goal of our school – i.e. to provide pedagogic trajectories to the next generation of artists and media professionals – is fully integrated in the research program. The research project, now reaching its – always provisional – conclusion, focused on two main research questions:

1. What is the relationship between document – both in the sense of ‘documentation’ and in the sense of ‘performative paper’ – and theatricality in contemporary performance practices? Questions about this relationship dealt with the ‘truth claim’ of this genre – the dramaturgical issue – and with the consequences of the nature of this material on acting attitudes – the performance issue. This could be called the ‘David Hare question’.
2. Does an artist’s desire to observe and, in a later stadium, to integrate artistically attitudes which are at least partly foreign to his own social identity, result in different forms of performance or even in a different kind of ‘performativity’? This is the anthropological question or the ‘Hal Foster question’.

Apart from that, we were concerned about archiving preliminary research results. The elaboration of an archive, with our own work as its primary basis, could eventually clarify more general questions about the ‘memory of performance’, a theme several artists approach in the form of reconstructions and re-enactments.

The basic methodology or, if you will, ‘laboratory configuration’, was the workshop. The organization of workshops, separated from the regular curriculum, allowed both students and researchers to meet, in intensive confrontations of four or five consecutive days, modes of artistic work difficultly to provide for in a normal school trajectory. In 2009 we organised parallel sessions led by Berlin theatre maker Hans-Werner Kroesinger, Dutch theatre and film maker Carina Molier and Brussels based documentary filmmaker Sarah Vanagt. In 2010 the Mexican-American performance artist Guillermo Gomez-Peña and Slovenian theatre maker Janez Janša were invited. There were also separate workshops by the German collective Rimini Protokoll and the Lebanese theatre maker Rabih Mroué. These workshops were open to our own students of drama, film and radio, and to applicants from outside. So these ‘laboratories’ showed a good mix of known and unknown participants, thus apt to deal with many contingencies – exactly the reason why they form the cornerstone of our artistic research.

More details about this research practice, mainly illustrated by two of these workshops, make it possible to formulate some preliminary conclusions.

Hans-Werner Kroesinger has creates, for more than 15 years, theatre performances about important global issues: the Eichmann trial, the Armenian genocide, suicide terrorists, the Truth Commission in South-Africa, etc. His work is based on extensive research of the subject matter, often by revealing obscure documents or hidden versions of the facts. With this material he creates a narrative, he translates bureaucratic or pathetic language into dramatic voices, thus causing curiosity with

the spectator. Curiosity not based on pure empathy or pure distanciation, but on the idea that a certain voice, heard in a theatrical context, could generate a-typical reflection on fundamental societal issues. These reflections are, as an experience, very different from the regular consumption of news from the mass media. The 'liveness' of the theatre adds to the veracity of the narrative, but the spectator stays, in Kroesingers performances, conscious of the theatrical construction. In his workshop, Kroesinger used a text which was the core of his production about the Rwandese genocide in 1994, *Ruanda Revisited*. This text was a transcription of an interview with general Roméo Dallaire, head of peacekeeping forces of the UN, who dramatically failed to stop the murderous escalations of violence. Dallaire fell victim to severe depression after the departure of the UN, he attempted suicide, but five years after the facts he analysed mercilessly the cowardice of the international community. A group of students, most of them studying theatre, read the text of this broadcast interview with Dallaire, reorganised it as the libretto for an oratorio and combined it with excerpts from the report by a Belgian parliamentary committee on the murder of Belgian soldiers during the Rwandese genocide. The result was a rough sketch of theatrical possibilities, with effects ranging from sentimentality, over cynicism, to genuine anger. From a research point of view, it was interesting to see how the status of the documents themselves – a long interview about personal moral indignation, or officialised one-sidedness in a parliamentary report – affected the acting attitudes. The question of the plus-value in veracity, by live performance, was put straightforward, but the answer was further blurred.

Another workshop was led by Janez Janša, formerly known as Emil Hrvatin. Emil and two artistic accomplices changed their names in 'Janez Janša', then the prime minister of Slovenia. They became members of his political party, not to engage in real politics, but as an experiment about the notion of personal, political and national identity. They documented their identity change, obtained new passports and other official documents and briefed the art world and the general public regularly about the incidents their metamorphosis caused. The passport is of course the central object in this operation, since a passport is the most 'performative' document imaginable: it literally opens and closes the door of 'Fortress Europe'. The three Janez Janšas manipulated their identity by using bureaucratic strategies. In the workshop, we made an attempt to manipulate history more generally by forging documents, performative or not, and creating a performative environment to show them. We should present documentation about two artistic events: one in the past and one in the future. A future event has all the properties of illusion and imagination – you can invent whatever you want, it stays fantasy –, but the status of a forged past event is different. A maximum of authenticity can be obtained by documenting a context that refers to known and proven narratives. In this workshop: it refers to the theatrical neo-avantgarde of the seventies, combined with the anti-psychiatric movement. The result created a sense of uneasiness, also due to the difference in skills of the participants. The combination of actors, documentarians, sound designers and theoreticians, resulted in a disconcerting communication, especially when inserting personal biographies of the participants. It felt like the re-invention of theatrical illusion, a strange feeling after post-modern irony.

Both experiments suggest that the relationship between document and performance could result in a sort of 'thinking machine'. Lebanese theatre maker Rabih Mroué assumes that artistic performances should have the ambition to stimulate the mechanisms of human thinking. Mroué uses videos of suicide bombers and giant posters of these 'martyrs' (now worshipped as popular heroes) as theatrical objects. Not to create empathy or abhorrence, but to force a reflection on the blurred veracity of these documents. He proposes personal readings; he links these icons with – real or fictitious – events from his own biography. A comparable thing happened during perhaps the most successful experiment of the whole research project. Carina Molier took actors, directors and cameramen to a parking garage where asylum seekers held a hunger strike, eventually to last more than sixty days. The film makers created a visual essay on the ethics of documentary: how far can you go in observing a dying witness of injustice? The theatre makers dressed the healthiest activists in tuxedos and made them sing, in the center of Brussels, the national anthem. This performance was not exactly a 'thinking machine', but it forced its onlookers to reconsider their official identities, to reflect on life and death, literally, if only for a minute. It forced them to reconsider the intellectual challenges contemporary theatre is faced with, even when the ability to create basic empathy continues to be an elementary performative skill. The methodology of intensive workshops proved to be fruitful. Although student participation in research projects is contrary to traditional academic criteria, we believe that this is the only way to develop productive and reliable research tools for artists, especially for artists of the future. We can do without white mice, but we need a laboratory filled with human beings, aware of their artistic sensibilities.

We are not ready yet to reach the conclusion of our research project. *The Document as Performance – The Performance as a Document* has officially ended, the laboratory is transformed, but the methodology will be continued. In the forthcoming months we will try to formulate subtle answers to both the Hal Foster and the David Hare questions. Perhaps we will talk about performative truth, or about thinking bodies, or about the impossibility to represent real death and suffering. But we have a lot of documentation to view and to analyse, and gathered an archive which is both artistically and intellectually extremely rich.



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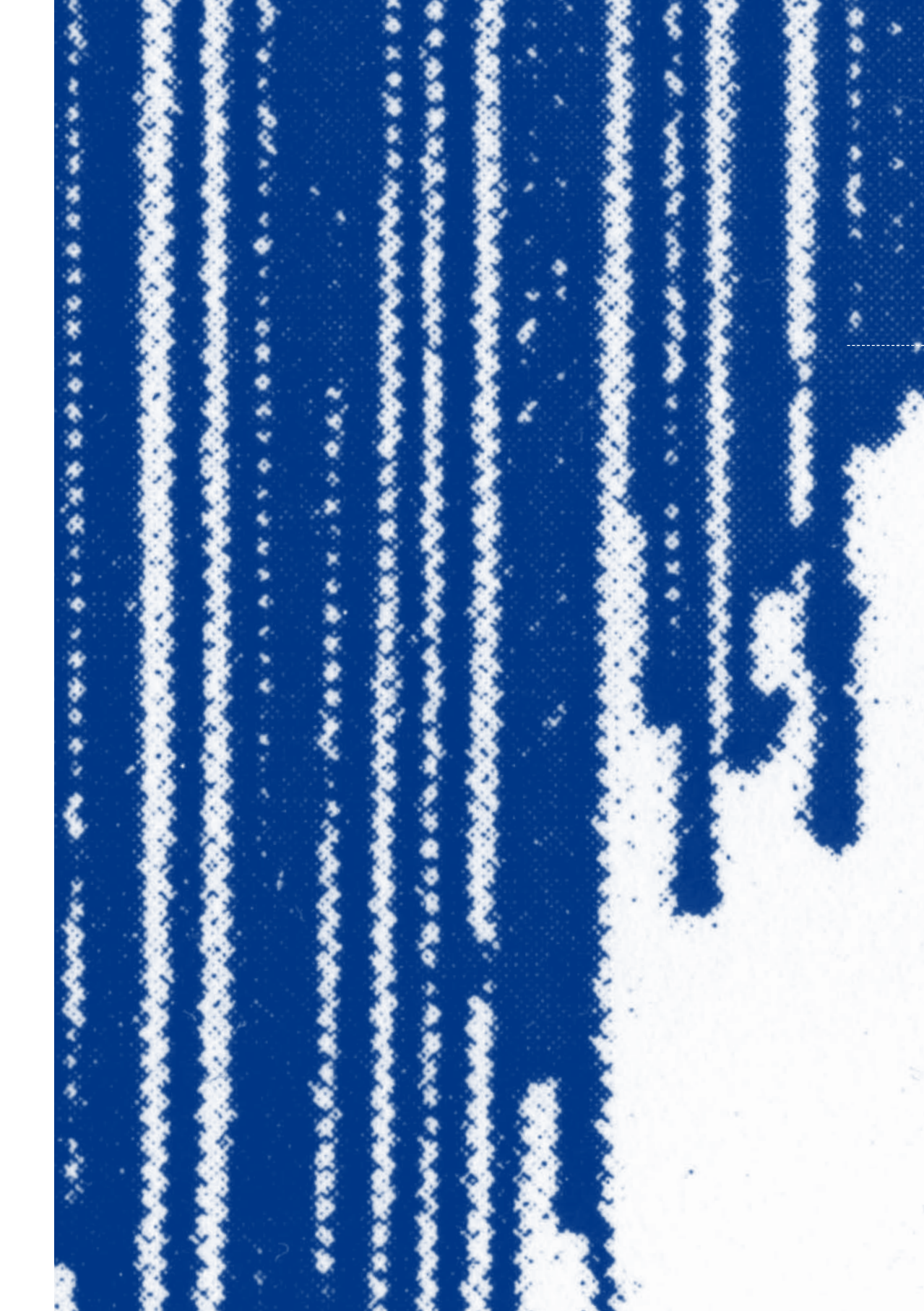
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