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3rd cycle Trajectory at a University of applied Arts in Germany: A model for Merz Akademie

Maren Schmohl and Prof. Dr. David Quigley,
Merz Akademie, Germany, October 2019

Introduction

This paper sets visions, opportunities and challenges of an artistic 3rd cycle provision at an institution not yet able to deliver 3rd cycle degrees with a view towards the larger context of the artistic 3rd cycle in Germany. This is done from the specific viewpoint of and plans for our own institution and our experiences. The thoughts laid out are based on the discussion with partners within the *Creator Doctus* Strategic Partnership and other actors in Europe currently engaged in similar endeavours.

The three cycles in German Higher Education

Institutions of Higher Education in Germany are classified in distinct categories¹:

Universities,
Art/Music Academies,
Universities of Applied Arts and Sciences [Fachhochschulen] and
Universities for Pedagogy.

In many states [Bundesland] Art/Music Academies have a comparable status to Universities in that they have the right to award 3rd cycle degrees. This right usually extends to doctorate degrees in the fields of art/music history as well as art/music pedagogy (teaching degrees for primary and secondary schools). These programs are set within the established framework of scientific PhDs in the Humanities. The degree titles are "Doktor" or "Ph.D" (subject specific additions for 3rd cycle degrees are not used except in Medicine). Universities of Applied Arts and Sciences may award Bachelor and Master degrees but not third cycle degrees². The divide of institutions is a long-standing tradition, which is not expected to change in a fundamental way in the foreseeable future, despite some cautious moves in some states towards opening Applied Universities for 3rd cycle degrees.

Fine Art studies [Freie Kunst] are offered at Art Academies, whereas Design and Media Design courses are offered both at Applied Universities and Art Academies. Applied Universities have shifted towards the two-tier B.A./M.A. system in the early 2000s while Art Academies often offer Diploma studies (4-5 years) - mostly for Fine Art courses but also for some Design courses. Diplomas are considered equivalent to M.A. degree level.

At the moment of writing this paper in the fall of 2019 a very small number of Art Academies in Germany (have the right to and do) offer 3rd level degrees in Fine Art as artistic or artistic-scientific degrees³. As far as can be ascertained there are no offers for artistic 3rd cycle degrees in Design.

Research, Artistic Development and Artistic Research

1 https://www.hrk.de/fileadmin/_migrated/content_uploads/GERMAN_HIGHER_EDUCATION_SYSTEM.pdf

2 They are encouraged to seek cooperations and partnerships with Universities to establish programmes with shared supervision and awards granted by the University.

3 Examples being Bauhaus Universität Weimar, Kunstakademie Hamburg and Filmuniversität Potsdam-Babelsberg.

Research and/or the development of artistic forms and means of expression are considered integral to Higher Education: to underpin teaching and learning and as basic research. All German Higher Education Institutions are required to undertake activities in this field in accordance to their respective tasks - albeit under different circumstances and with different goals⁴.

The highest academic advisory institution in Germany, the Wissenschaftsrat, is currently preparing a statement about the broader introduction of artistic 3rd cycle programmes, which is expected to offer detailed guidelines and routes to take for states and Institutions. Art Academies have been involved in this process and have strongly lobbied to allow for scientific, artistic-scientific and artistic degrees. It will be interesting to see whether the guidelines include thoughts on artistic subjects besides Fine Art (and comparable "free" subjects in Music) like design.

It is hoped that an artistic 3rd cycle will be regarded as providing a wider range of options and modes of expression for individuals and institutions and not as something that leads to an ever steeper and more exclusive ladder towards an academic career⁵. Along these lines, as is the case in other countries, the 3rd cycle will also provide an institutional space within which studies and further research can be supported both intellectually (through supervision and through creating research communities) and financially (through scholarships and funding applicable to 3rd cycle degrees).

The Research environment at Merz Akademie

The formal status of Merz Akademie is that of a University of Applied Arts, it offers B.A. and M.A. courses of study. As a state-funded but private institution, it is called upon even more than state-universities to develop a unique and identifiable profile as a 'USP'.

According to its mission statement Merz Akademie defines itself as an innovative place of learning, positioned somewhere between an Art Academy, a humanities faculty and an Applied University. This means that Merz Akademie incorporates elements of all three modes of education: a strong focus on experimentation, questioning, reasoning and making – in what we regard to be the *continuum* of art, design and media practice. Theory, research and critical investigation are an integral and important part of all aspects of teaching and learning. This has driven us to build a research culture and profile that sets us apart from a "traditional" Applied Arts University.

The school regularly initiates and supports many contributions to the varied field of (artistic) research. Our expertise lies in the areas of film, media art, crossmedia practices, academic humanities research, digital design and visual communication.

We understand artistic research as taking seriously the means of art, design and media to explore and investigate phenomena in order to produce new knowledge, or at least new insights, looking to expand the boundaries of current practice of both the arts and the humanities, to explore and define new genres and enhance our understanding of the world.

One of the main tendencies at the Merz Akademie is to explore and employ strategies of what in German is called *freie Kunst* (autonomous art practises) in the field of the applied arts. We regard such boundary crossings (or rather the negating of boundaries) to be stimulating and beneficial for all concerned: students, teachers/practitioners and stakeholders such as employers and collaborators, the media and culture industry etc.

Professors who teach in the theory department are scientifically trained and are expected to have a doctorate in the humanities. They may choose to

4 Universities and Art Academies are explicitly tasked with research or 'artistic development'. They have a wider range of staff categories, the teaching load of full time staff is considerably lower, there are more state funds for research and more options to apply for further 3rd party funding. Applied Universities are expected to do "applied research".

5 Currently the qualification for a full-time teaching position (Professorship) in the artistic subjects may be demonstrated by a 3rd cycle degree or "a special aptitude for artistic work" which is usually demonstrated by a successful artistic career.

do research in the 'traditional' format of the scientific mode of the humanities but also could pursue other formats. Other professors are practicing artists; some of them have a pronounced interest in pursuing and labelling their practice as artistic research, others, however, are less interested in this field. There also are activities of applied art (design) as well as 3rd mission (i.e. transfer and outreach). The school is open to all these endeavours, values them equally and is a supportive environment for staff and students to be active in this area and regularly initiates and supports contributions to the field at large: publications, lectures, symposia, projects with societal partners, art works, exhibitions etc.

Full-time teaching staff (professors) time includes a guaranteed amount of time for research and/or artistic development (usually 25% of workload), which can be enlarged for specific projects

Resources beyond staff time and a budget for research (allotted both individually and communally) are scarce however, particularly as it concerns full-time teaching staff who are not professors ("Mittelbau", i.e. entry level and mid-range teaching staff categories). This is particularly detrimental in that these positions support research of professors and offer footholds for young academics to engage in a 3rd cycle project themselves.

In the drive to expand our activities in that area even further we have previously engaged in institutional partnerships to carry out artistic PhD programs with awards being given by university partners. These collaborations have been successful and fruitful stepping stones to help us consider what are important elements of an independent 3rd cycle program.

Artistic research at Merz Akademie

In terms of artistic research our goal is to conduct research in design, art and various media (not merely about them). This seems a necessary adjustment of (our) academic activities. The availability and the ease of producing and disseminating video, audio, photography, design especially when considered with respect to the near ubiquity of mobile screens have created a new situation for the exchange of art and knowledge. This new situation changes the way we interact with the world in general and in turn changes our way of conceiving our own practice. Research in design, art and media reflects this situation, implying that scholarly work can be explored and articulated in language and in other media, while at the same time making use of artistic and design-based strategies.

Not only have we come to expect new capabilities and expertise from artists and designers in subject areas once limited to scholarly research, we have also come to demand new design-oriented, multi-media skills from scholars. Within the context of art education and practice, artistic research implies a move away from concentrating on a specific discipline or medium towards a multi-disciplinary and non-medium specific practice that draws extensively from humanities-based traditions of research. Within the academic context, artistic research provides a space to explore other forms of research including other styles of writing (not strictly academic), the role that other media could play in producing knowledge (the digital humanities, design, film/video) with possible careers for humanities scholars outside of academia (filmmaking, curating, radio, television, etc.). While much of the interest in artistic research to date has been focused on art schools, we see developments in artistic research as indicative both of a crisis in the traditional image of the artist and the humanities scholar. We look to create a new institutional space that would support both projects that do not fit into the art world/market and those projects that challenge the limitations of conventional academic practice.

As a small but vibrant institution with an active and well-qualified full-time teaching staff, Merz Akademie has done a lot to establish Artistic Research as an area of academic activity. All study programmes encourage and demand to occupy oneself with experimental, inquisitive and border-moving practices, both as a topic of study and an individual practice. Such

practices are supported by regulatory frameworks for teaching, learning and assessment, that are flexible yet establish boundaries and offer points of orientation for teachers and learners.

Artistic Research has been on the institutional agenda since almost a decade and has taken the form of symposia, published work, lectures, exhibitions and performances supported by the institution, documented and published as contributions to an ongoing, international debate. Artistic Research is the main concern of the Master Program (called "Research in Art, Design and Media") which has been offered across the areas of Film, Crossmedia, New Media and Visual Communication for many years.

For institutions that are not (yet) legally able to give 3rd cycle awards, collaborative arrangements with University partners can be a helpful intermediary step. In our case such collaborations have resulted in several successful PhD projects which have demonstrated the school's ability to offer 3rd cycle education. The next step would be to continue to lobby nationally to grant award power for such programs to all capable institutions and to build an institutional framework for running a program with the option to either award a degree independently or consider a partnership to validate a program designed by and located at our institution.

A sustainable institutional effort to introduce a 3rd cycle in its portfolio of academic activities means find answers that are consistent with its institutional character, its particular expertise and strictures, its mission and vision and the particular context in which for which it exists.

The design and introduction of such a new program must be done with sufficient space for experimentation and openness (possibly taking further intermediary steps) while not compromising the trust participants and stakeholders place in Institutions to deliver meaningful educational outcomes that will enhance their careers. The work of the Creator Doctus Partnership provides important stimulus and support for these aims.

To build an institutional framework means to search for possibilities to enhance staff time and resources for research and supervision, to take steps to institute entry level teaching and research positions, as well as to make artistic research a strategic focus for hiring full-time teachers. It includes building tools for internal QA and review procedures consider ways for promotion to attract applicants to a new and unfamiliar degree program and last but certainly not least try to devise a sustainable financial scheme. To look for and hopefully find additional funding will be an essential step for us to take in the next phase of the CrD project. To further develop artistic research and enhance the research environment (and supportive infrastructure) is considered an important activity in order to better feature the research capabilities of artistic universities and an important activity as step a step towards building a 3rd cycle program.

What is needed from stakeholders is trust, support and access: trust that institutions who are now 'outside the loop' can be(come) serious actors in the field, able to deliver high-quality results (particularly if proven by a track record of artistic research and collaborative 3rd cycle provision). Financial and legal support is required to enter the field in order to develop independent 3rd cycle formats and deliver it on it on financially sustainable levels; it means inclusion in (national) debates and access to further financing tools. In short it means an understanding that diverse voices and actors will enhance the conversation and the field.

Relation to educational frameworks and existing forms of research

We regard a 3rd cycle in the Art, Design and Media to build upon the educational stages leading up to it and the program as being set within the existing framework of parameters to describe academic achievement: the

broadening, deepening and understanding of knowledge⁶, the use and transfer of knowledge, the ability to contribute to innovation, to communicate knowledge and cooperate within a community, to develop a professional self-image and demeanour.

Since its latest reiteration in 2017, the German Academic Qualification Framework (DQF) includes descriptors for 3rd cycle programs in [fine] art and music⁷. There are no specific descriptors for artistic subjects on Bachelor or Master level, yet the 3rd cycle descriptors follow and continue the trajectory set out for the previous educational cycles to describe a path towards full (scientific/)artistic autonomy, responsibility and integrity and the ability to make relevant contributions to the academic and artistic field by creating new knowledge. The 3rd cycle descriptors in the DQF relate to graduates from 'Meisterklassen' i.e. the format commonly used in Art Academies as a continuation of the initial course of studies (usually a 4-5 year Diploma course).

The DQF and similar frameworks do not describe how the skills and traits it sets out are acquired, it is up to universities to design programs and teaching and learning strategies. Merz Akademie's approach would similarly continue its specific trajectory of Higher Arts Education to foster critical analysis and reflection of phenomena and practices, experimentation with technology and materials, the independent formulation of research questions and areas of investigation, as well as the ability to offer creative and aesthetic solutions that are perceived as new and relevant contributions to the field by peers.

The DQF similarly does not answer the question how such new knowledge is demonstrated and communicated. To put it bluntly, the term "written part" does not occur. Graduates are expected to "present, discuss and defend research-based findings" "to make visible and public contributions" and "to reflect on the consequences of their (artistic) actions" just as are their colleagues from the scientific subjects. If readers are to infer from this statement that this requires a written body of work it is certainly very subtly put.

As a school priding itself in considering theory and critical enquiry as foundations for artistic creation however, we cannot but answer the *Gretch-enfrage*⁸, the crucial question, "Does there have to be a written part?" with an unwavering Yes! This is what we demand of Bachelor and Master students, so it would not be consistent with our academic M.O. to veer off into a totally different direction on the 3rd level. The aim, however, is not be to demonstrate that one has mastered the skills of a traditional academic researcher but rather that of an artistic researcher, which allows for greater formal and stylistic freedom than is common in the humanities. Rules for academic good practice shall be observed as is the aim to present a debatable argument concerning the research question that has been set out.

To explore more deeply the nature of the written part, its difference from existing models, its purpose and its relation to the artistic work will be a focus of the next phase of our school's involvement in the Creator Doctus project. A group of students, young lecturers and professors will explore different strategies of artistic research; some results will be shared with our partners in the form of small publication.

The position of our school is not to be understood as paradigmatic for the situation in Germany on the whole. Other institutions and actors certainly

6 The term 'knowledge' in this context describes not only "theoretic" knowledge about artistic/design/media practices but also the ability to execute such practices oneself: i.e. to make, to design, to create. It is therefore not necessary to amend this term with references to artistic/design practices while writing.

7 https://www.kmk.org/fileadmin/Dateien/veroeffentlichungen/_beschluesse/2017/2017_02_16-Qualifikationsrahmen.pdf

8 A German idiom relating to Goethe's *Faust* which Wikipedia describes as "an unpleasant, sometimes embarrassing and at the same time essential question which is asked in a difficult situation, demanding an all-deciding yes or no answer."

may come to different conclusions and solutions. There are many different ways to achieve B.A. or M.A. level skills and there will be different routes to achieve and demonstrate research-based artistic autonomy and integrity. These decisions should rise organically from a student-centred approach of Institutions (and stakeholders): what kind of skills and competencies are considered to be most advantageous for successful creative and academic careers, what are the best methods and settings to develop them and what are the formal signifiers of achievement that will be most helpful to graduates.

Collaboration with a community partner

The collaboration with a societal or community partner is an exciting option debated and developed within the *Creator Doctus* Partnership. It obviously offers many opportunities to participants by rooting their work within a specific and concrete setting, connecting them to relevant actors and their concerns outside of academia and fostering a practice that is aware of its social and cultural ties. Merz Akademie has a long tradition of students and staff collaborating with community partners. There are strong ties to cultural and artistic actors which could function as partners in terms of providing input and feedback to formulate the research question and realize the project, to provide further resources and support and to have an advisory role in the team of supervisors.

During the next phase of the Creator Doctus project we will work with external partners to define more clearly how such a collaboration would work: what is the contribution, the role and responsibility of and the desired benefit for an external partner.

Programme Accreditation

There is very little experience in Germany in the field of accrediting 3rd cycle provision. The common forms of accreditation cover teaching and learning (i.e. B.A. and M.A. courses of studies), not 3rd cycle provision. The Wissenschaftsrat evaluates private universities if they apply for the right to award 3rd cycle degrees. These procedures are deeply rooted in scientific conventions and so far do not extend to artistic subjects.

External evaluation (or accreditation) is an important element of a functioning Quality Culture and needs to be performed by agencies who are fluent in art and design teaching and research practices and international standards.

Programme title

Academic titles are set within an existing framework of titles which is linked to a mesh of qualifications, professional routes and career stepping stones. We think a title must be easily understood by all stakeholders and clearly positioned within the existing structure. It must be understood internationally and with a view to the future – it must also be understood in 20 or 30 years. We would thus opt for a title along established forms: PhD in Artistic Research, Dr. or Dr. art. (Doktor Artium in relation to Magister Artium, a M.A. equivalent title used in Germany).

Aims of the programme

The aim of a 3rd cycle program in Art, Design and Media is to prepare for top-level positions or enhance participants' careers in particularly in contexts such as academia, cultural institutions (often state-funded), the wider context of the 'cultural industries' as well as for independent artists, designers and media content and design specialists.

We have come to expect new capabilities and expertise from artists and designers in subject areas once limited to scholarly research, as well as we

come to demand new design-oriented, multi-media skills from scholars.

A creative practice at the cutting edge of today's aesthetic and technological practices and a deep understanding of critical inquiry as well as the theory and critical discourse which underpins such practice thus makes graduates particularly well suited for many tasks expected of them: communicating, curating (in the widest sense), collaboration, advising and consulting as well as defining new modes of expression and adding to the canon with innovative art/design on their own.

Mode and length of study

We support and endorse a minimum length of study for a full-time student is 3 years and 6 years for part-time study.

Programme structure

At a small institution like ours, a 3rd cycle would be located in a graduate school, closely linked to the Master Program and similarly work across the subjects covered at the school. This is to ensure that the output and impact of the research produced can impact on the curriculum and learning and teaching strategies for all three cycles of study.

A 3rd cycle programme in our setting should include modules on Research methods, particularly in methods of artistic research but also other accepted modes of research, particularly in the humanities).

As digital communication and curatorship increasingly play an important role in academia, museums and other cultural institutions, it becomes necessary for the parties working on projects to possess both in-depth knowledge about the subject matter AND practical skills of how to realize it. A project-based learning environment that forces students and faculty members to come to terms with the multiple problems together will also play a role in the 3rd cycle.

A minimum number of tutorials/contact hours by the supervisory team must be provided. Colloquia for 3rd cycle students to present their research to their peers, teachers and students from the other study levels and a lecture programme introducing key international artists, presenting research theories, practices will be regular elements.

We aim to define more clearly the necessary elements of a 3rd cycle programme and test some them during the next CrD phase.

Programme learning outcomes and benchmark statement

Several international points of reference have been developed and are used as frames of reference at Merz Akademie as well, particularly the national Qualification Framework, the Tuning Documents as well as relevant material produced by networks such as ELIA.

The German Qualification Frameworks focuses on Fine Art programs at Art Academies; it does not mention a yet-to-be-established 3rd cycle for Design or Media Design courses. However, there is nothing in these descriptors to prohibit us to use them for such an exercise. These descriptors can function as provisional "hypothesis" to be tested in the ongoing work to define a 3rd cycle program.

Graduates will be able to define, initiate and produce works of artistic research (artistic work and thesis) with the greatest amount of autonomy and a high-level command of aesthetic and technological skills and methods based on a comprehensive knowledge of relevant bodies of work.

Graduates will be able to develop and synthesize new, complex artistic ideas and designs within the framework of a critical analysis, produce work that extends the boundaries of artistic development and stands up to review by

experts and is regarded as innovation extending artistic research practice.

Many works of Artistic Research depend on collaboration and include teams of people, be it as collaborators or contractors. Graduates must be able to helm such teams and take full and final responsibility for all creative decisions of what will be considered their work, their project or initiative.

Graduates will be able to present, discuss, defend and communicate their ideas and work to an audience of experts and “lay” persons. They will make their work public and available as contribution to the sector, open for further debate.

They will develop professional skills and traits to reflect their professional practice; to further develop their professional and technical knowledge; to evaluate the professional practice of others and support their further development; and finally to reflect critically on artistic practice with regard to social expectations and consequences and to develop and implement sustainable cultural innovations.

Teaching & Learning strategy

Participants of a (future) PhD programme will be supervised by a team of two Professors. One Professor may be from another institution of higher education. Supervisors must have knowledge and expertise in the field of artistic research. At least one supervisor must have previous experience of working with research students and completing 3rd cycle awards. A representative of a community partner may be an advisor in the supervising team. The supervisors should meet with the student at least once a month for full-time students or every six weeks 6 years for part-time students. There is a vibrant discussion in Europe at the moment about alternative modes of supervision (group supervision etc.) which we follow closely and are open to employ and experiment with.

Students will acquire a general overview of the philosophy and methods of artistic research and understand how this informs their work. They will be guided in fully exploring their research question aesthetically, critically and technologically to produce boundary extending work.

An important emphasis for the curriculum is to bring methods associated with 20th century art practice into direct contact with humanities research—with art practices not merely considered as OBJECTS of research but rather as methodologies in themselves. This might involve, for example, using video art, essay films, installation art and experimental design to present and develop research.

There will be regular colloquia for Doctorate students to meet and share their work and progress with each other and the supervising teams as well as instances for doctorate students to present their practice to each other and the general student/staff body.

There will be support for them to participate in relevant national and international conferences/exhibitions as well as to be actively involved in the institution’s events like conferences, lecture series etc.

Assessment

After approval by the supervisors, the final work is presented to a committee for a defence (viva) and assessment. The assessment team consists of the student, the supervisors and invited external expert(s), such as the representative of the community partner. The presentation of the final work (written part and artistic work) may take any form that is consistent with the work and allows for the critical assessment of the aesthetic, epistemological, ethical, political or social dimensions of the work.

Selection of candidates

Prospective students will normally hold a Masters degree and be able to demonstrate their ability to do artistic research at this level. They will be expected to present during an interview a draft research proposal related to the area of research as defined by the Akademie, a portfolio of their work and their relation to a community partner. The interview panel comprises of representatives of Merz Akademie (and the community partner).

Quality development and quality assurance

The 3rd cycle programme will operate within Merz Akademie's Quality Assurance policy and processes. The Akademie will build relevant tools and metrics by which the programme can demonstrate it is achieving the required standards. A community partner must be aware of and contribute/collaborate in these processes and standards as required.



The Future PhD Program

Introduction

The following pamphlet describes a future PhD program at the Merz Akademie in Stuttgart. It is intended to serve both as the basis for a discussion about the further development of the program and, we hope, might also be included in a broader discussion about third cycle degrees in the arts and about artistic research in general.

Research in Design, Art and Media

The PhD program at the Merz Akademie in Stuttgart takes the long history of the interaction between the humanities, visual arts, experimental film and literature as its starting point. Over the past 50 years, but arguably as early as the beginning of the past century, these disciplines have often shared a mutual institutional and intellectual space, influencing each other and working through common aesthetic, philosophical and political questions and issues. While this tradition of transdisciplinary exchange has often eluded formal institutionalization, today's art world (including most art schools, large exhibitions and certain smaller art spaces) has increasingly become a place where these various practices have come to be developed, presented and institutionally supported.

Working from examples of historical paradigms of interaction between disciplines, the PhD research projects should both situate themselves with respect to these traditions while at the same time attempting to make new ground—taking risks that might lead to new undiscovered or underrepresented territories (in both a literal and metaphorical sense).

The institution should provide a space for PhD candidates interested in pursuing projects that challenge or go beyond the norms and expectations of academic and artistic practice. Rather than making the claim that we hope to be both academics and artists, we take the polemic goal of pursuing NEITHER specifically academic research NOR artistic practice, in the hope of finding new constellations of both.

The program in a nutshell:

Students from a humanities, film, art and design background are encouraged to apply who are interested in working in various media as writers, curators, artists, filmmakers and designers active in contemporary art and cultural institutions. The program is transdisciplinary but also encourages different levels of specialization working both in diverse groups and with professors in more specific fields.

All PhD candidates must find a partner non-academic institution in cooperation with which at least part of their project will be realized.

The PhD will be offered together with a partner institution in a different European country where the student must attend at least one year of classes.

Classes will be taught in English and German. Final projects can be submitted in German, English and French.

Merz Akademie
Hochschule für Gestaltung,
Kunst und Medien, Stuttgart
staatlich anerkannt

Responsible for the content of this issue:
David Quigley, Merz Akademie, Teckstraße 58, 70190 Stuttgart, Germany.
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Preliminary Notes for a Curriculum

The following notes and chart are an initial attempt at situating our program within a historical tradition which we argue has developed in a field of interaction between art, design, film, literature and the humanities. The notes and corresponding chart are intended as an introductory guidebook and operational manual, both as a kind of potential curriculum and as point of departure or inspiration for future works and research. While such attempts at painting a broad historical picture often fall short, reminding us more of what is missing than what we have found, we hope that it can nonetheless serve to situate our program and our understanding of artistic research within a specific, albeit extremely broad intellectual and aesthetic context. May the many faults and lacunae be an invitation to devise new “canons” and historical traditions upon which we can base our future research!

Artists’ Magazines

Artistic research grows out of communities of practice that often have met on the printed page, in photographic documentation, in woodcut, offset and Xerox print. We begin with the artist magazine as “alternative space for art,”²¹ bringing together a constellation of forces that cannot be reduced to a single medium, discipline or institution. As media of communication and as works in their own right, artists’ magazines are the space where a large part of artistic research has been developed, presented and disseminated.

Our historical trajectory begins with the German Expressionist art magazines *Der Sturm* and *Die Aktion* and the corresponding institutions these magazines supported that included local galleries in Berlin, publishing houses, as well as international organization of exhibitions (esp. *Der Sturm*). In many ways, these magazines could be seen as the forerunners of contemporary art institutions, combining critical hermeneutics, literature and visual arts in the same institutional space.

In different historical contexts and constellations, artists’ magazines throughout the century have been the home to transdisciplinary research. The following magazines, journals and books could all be used to understand the various forms this has taken on:

Der Sturm (1910-1932) *Die Aktion* (1911-1932)
De Stijl (1917-1932) *L’Esprit Nouveau* (1920-1925) *Merz* (1923-1932) *LEF* (1923-1925) *Novy LEF* (1927-1929) *La Révolution Surréaliste* (1924-1929) *Documents : doctrines, archéologie, beaux-arts, ethnographie* (1929-1930) *Le Surréalisme au Service de la Révolution* (1930-1933) *Minotaure* (1933-1939) *Aérophane* (1936-1939) *Bauhausbücher* (1925-1930) *Film Culture* (1955-1999) *Internationale Situationniste* (1958-1969) *Artforum* (esp. during the 1960s and 1970s) *Archigram* (1961-1964) *Aspen* (1965-1971) *BIT International* (1968-1972) *Interfunktionen* (1968-1975) *Art-Language* (1969-1985) *Radical Software* (1970-1974) *Avantgarde* (1970-1976) *File* (1972-1989) *Art-Rite* (1973-1978) *Semiotext(e)* (1974-1984) *Heresies* (1977-1993) *Real Life* (1979-1994) *October* (1976-) *Third Text* (1987-) *Texte zur Kunst* (1990-) *Afterall* (1998-)

Paradigmatic Example of Artistic Research: Surrealist Journals

Building upon Rosalind Krauss’s polemic claim that the Surrealist magazines “more than anything else are the true objects produced by surrealism,”²² we take these magazines as a key example of art practices explicitly based on philosophical, anthropological, psychoanalytic, (art) historical and political considerations—which we see at the core of our understanding of artistic research.

Breton’s famous programmatic slogan from 1935 helps us to understand how the Surrealist project might play an integral role in this history: “‘Transform the world,’ said Marx, ‘change life,’ said Rimbaud: These two mottos are for us but one.”²³ In 1924, Surrealist research (as it was explicitly referred to) looked (ecstatically!) to establish a new, more comprehensive and egalitarian declaration of human rights through developing new practices of art and research. As the cover of the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* reads: “Il faut aboutir à une nouvelle déclaration des droits de l’homme.” The Surrealists called into question the given order of society on many different levels—not merely economic or political—questioning given models of sexuality, identity and morality, criticizing and even playing with the discourses of madness, illness, and criminality—which led to their investigations into the relationship between consciousness and institutions (especially prisons and mental hospitals).

Many of the defining characteristics of artistic research can be seen here:

- * Challenging social norms and linking these challenges to art practice: art is seen together with the politics of everyday experience

- * Visual and textual hermeneutics: Exploring the relationship between text and image (including photography, drawing, painting, film stills)

- * Linking the visual arts to experimental and traditional academic approaches to knowledge and writing

- * Anthropology of distant societies also turned towards one’s own society

Experimental humanities

Why do we read Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Warburg, Gramsci, Adorno, Saussure, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, Rancière, Kristeva, Mouffe, Butler, Spivak, etc. at art school? (Authors one might refer to as part of a tradition of “experimental humanities”). Why does a working knowledge of these (and other similar) authors represent for many practicing artists today not merely a passing interest—but rather a central and constitutive aspect of their practice?

Of central importance here is the triad “Marx-Nietzsche-Freud” that we will be meeting throughout the course, with variations on the “hermeneutics of suspicion”²⁴ (Paul Ricoeur) at the heart of artistic practice throughout the century. How do these new possibilities of interpretation, these new demands made upon hermeneutics, change art practice? As Foucault in a discussion in 1964 stated, “Marx, Nietzsche and Freud have confronted us with a new possibility of interpretation, they have founded a

new possibility for hermeneutics.” The works of Marx-Nietzsche-Freud represent not only a new approach to knowledge but also “techniques of interpretation that concerned ourselves.”²⁵ These new possibilities of interpretation, this new kind of radical hermeneutics of suspicion stands at the beginning of a new appreciation of our relationship to representation—“representation” here understood as the difficult to delineate common ground of consciousness, images and representative political order. Throughout the program, we will look to show how these new experimental interpretative practices were translated into different forms of art practice—where exploring the self, social reality, our relationship to other persons and objects has continued to take place in the yet-to-be-defined space between reading, experience and the production of images and works of art.

Urgeschichte: Some 19th Century Origins

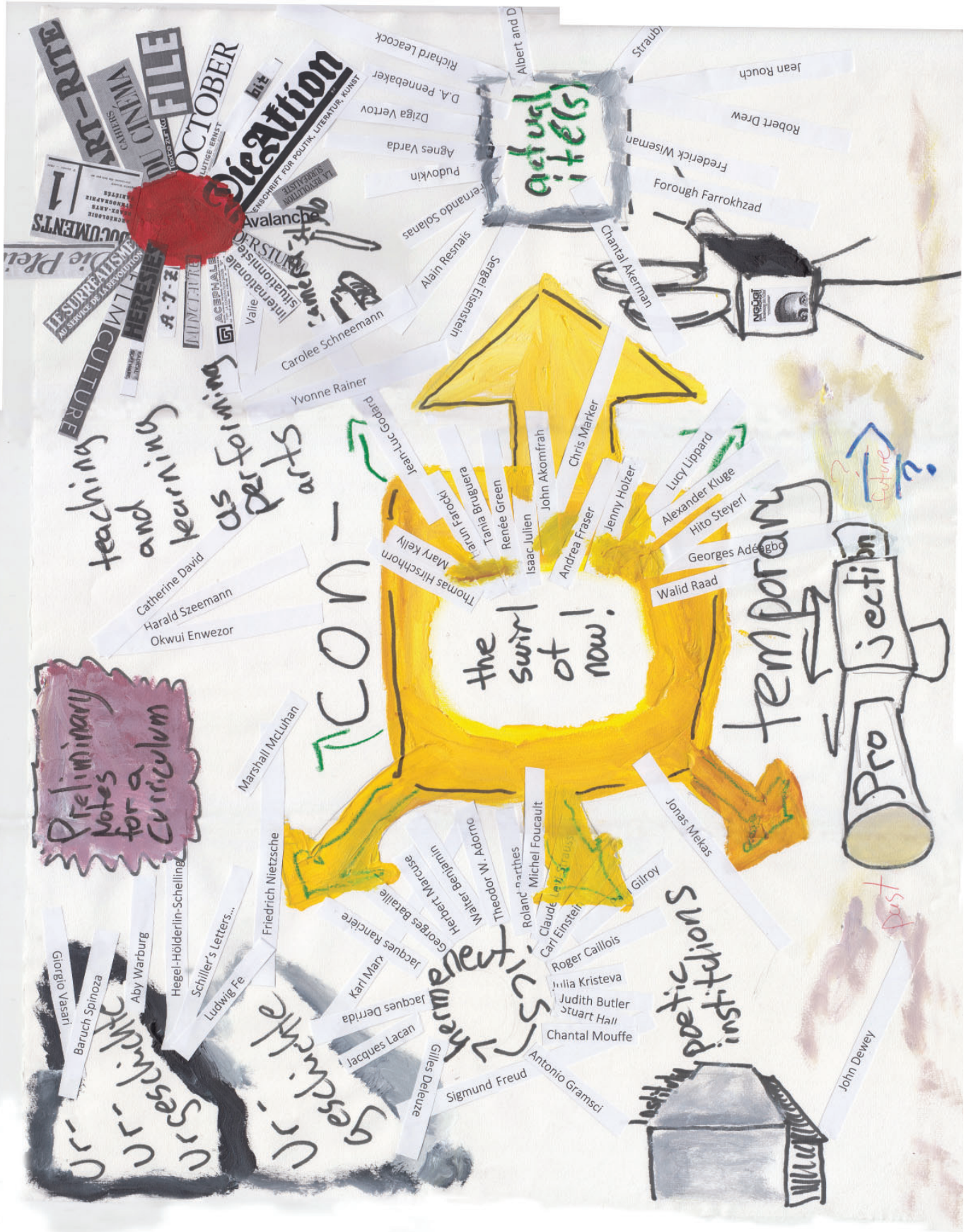
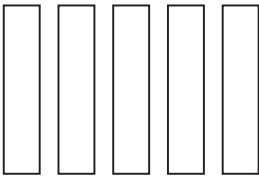
A. Living and Expressing the Contemporary: Charles Baudelaire (as poet and theorist)

In a conscious turn away from given religious, mythological and historical themes, new ways to express the “eternal and immutable” are sought after in the present constellation of the moment, with the explicit goal of extracting “mysterious beauty” from everyday life to create an art that perhaps at some future time will be worthy of being thought of as a new antiquity (the eternal).⁶ With Baudelaire we might see how historical shifts based on creating new artistic styles in art could be seen with respect to contemporary life (rather than merely as innovations with respect to the history of art). What is at stake here is to understand “originality” in Baudelaire’s words as the “stamp that time imprints upon our sensations”—not merely as a transformation of a given style. Baudelaire’s understanding of the “stamp of time,” we would argue, is based on an ontological theory of originality—with art expressing a very specific kind of being in historical time.

What is important from the outset is to stress this understanding of the direct relationship between artistic practice and a critical experience of contemporary everyday life—a theme that will recur throughout the history of artistic research and represents one of its distinguishing characteristics. Finding a unique relationship in and through art to social constructs of time, space and practice.

B. The Untimely Science

With Nietzsche we are able to see an outline of the coming “war” between traditional, academic hermeneutic practice and more experimental approaches to knowledge. As Nietzsche wrote in a later preface to his first book *Die Geburt der Tragödie* thinking critically about his own project as “something fearful and dangerous (...) a problem with horns (not necessarily a bull exactly, but in any event a new problem). Today I would state that it was the problem of science [Wissenschaft] itself for the first time grasped as problematic, as dubious.”²⁷ In order to come to terms with this problematization of knowledge, it would be necessary to dare to approach research from a different perspective: “to look at science [Wissenschaft] from the perspective of the artist, and at the same time to look at art from the perspective of life.”²⁸



The Nietzschean trajectory occupies a special place in the history of 20th century thought. It is in this unique relationship to knowledge, time, experience (the Dionysian!) that we see art and experimental research in philosophy meet throughout the century.

In much the same way that Nietzsche's work was born in the academic context of the University in Basel but was very soon only possible outside of it, artistic research might also be seen as at once an affirmation and a challenge to given norms and expectations of both university and art school education.

C. Die Welt. . . es kommt darauf an sie zu verändern!

Many late 19th century artists and writers Richard Wagner, William Morris, Walt Whitman, Leo Tolstoy . . . explored the conditions under which it would be possible to imagine and/ or bring about a fundamental change in the world through creating a different kind of art. During the early 20th century, similar real-world revolutionary claims made by artists increasingly crystallized around Marxism—no doubt due to the success of the Communist Revolution but also, I would argue, due to many of the philosophical claims of Marxism that corresponded with a new kind of critical and practical-transformative “hermeneutic” of history and culture.

Especially during the first half of the century, many artists were directly associated with or drawn to the ideals of Marxism: André Breton, Bertolt Brecht, Sergei Eisenstein, Guy Debord, George Grosz, John Heartfield, El Lissitzky, Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Rodchenko, Vladimir Tatlin, Dsiga Vertov along with philosophers and theorists important for the arts Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and even early Clement Greenberg and Harold Rosenberg.

While during the second half of the century, especially after the crimes of totalitarian communism and the injustice of Stalinist regimes that lasted into the late 1980s and early 1990s became more and more evident, communism began to lose its millenarianist aspirations, Marx's critique of a political economy remains central to an understanding of the constitution of contemporary culture.

The link between Marxism and art is precisely the speculative, critical, even militant side of “artistic research”—with the goal to determine in what way art might not merely interpret but also transform (or subvert) “the world.”

Aby Warburg and the Bilderatlas Mnemosyne: The Birth of Artistic Research out of the Spirit of Kulturwissenschaft?

We begin with the given “symbolic forms” (myths, language, society at large...) within which we navigate reality, but also perhaps thinking about ways of using and at the same time undermining the Kantian and humanist side (Cassirer) of this philosophical project (with Warburg's *Denkraum der Besonnenheit* as forever elusive goal rather than starting point...). What is interesting here is Warburg's (personal and theoretical) understanding of all human culture as schizophrenic: That the “cosmic, worldly and genealogical” structures into which one is born are also perhaps random, repressive and pathological.

This “deep history” of artistic research might begin, following Warburg, with a priestly cast deciding the fate of the world through studies of sacrificial animals' innards and their relationship to the stars

and planets! Art establishes and provides order to a cosmos (explaining and making the grand scheme explicit). Consciousness develops in the “*Zwischenraum*” of symbolic forms—which is where we must find or create our sense of place, our own cosmologies.

First we must not forget that Warburg's exhibitions took place in the most hermetic of libraries (the library as Kiva!) And that the path of artistic research might pass through distant lands (Arizona-New Mexico) or through distant epochs (Florentine Renaissance, Mesopotamia-Rome-Hanseatic Hamburg...) before it can realize the implications of its symbolic practice. In Aby Warburg's *Reisebericht* (which was written together with Fritz Saxl while Warburg was still hospitalized under the supervision of Ludwig Binswanger), we see how an aesthetic of intensification and also control of affects (in particular the control of fear) can be translated from the *Schlangeuritual* in Arizona and New Mexico to Renaissance Florence. Warburg's study of pagan demons and Kachinas reminds of us of the cosmological and ritual intensity that might surround our own work and our own movements.

Warburg's collection and organization of images (religious, art, newspaper etc.) is to be seen as the basis of artistic and existential practice. The importance of Warburg's exhibitions and slide show lectures must be stressed: imagining Warburg “performing” the *Bilderatlas*. Here: cosmology, philosophy, art history, etc. as a performing art. We could link Robert Fillou's ideal of “teaching and learning as performing arts” to Warburg's largely lost iconological lectures, emphasizing the central role of teaching and learning as a kind of accompanying oral history of art. Ekphrasis as existential practice.

Histoire(s) du cinéma: An Archeology of the 20th Century in Moving Images

Continuing the Warburgian project of rhizomatic analysis of the symbolic world, we look to Godard's *Histoire(s) du cinéma* as a “Kinobilderatlas.” Formal, cinematographic and dramaturgical questions can be posed as they relate to the (re)production of the real—trying to grasp (however fleetingly) the accompanying transcendental-virtual historical conditions of our collective experience of the world (again thinking about the difficulties of differentiating between thought, images and collective memory—which we spoke about before and which we met in Warburg and Ernst Cassirer's notion of the symbolic form, but also in Walter Benjamin, in Wilhelm Dilthey, etc.): actualité de l'histoire. . . histoire de l'actualité. . . histoire du cinéma. . . here we begin to retell the history of cinema (and literature and philosophy and painting and photography...) as the history of the 20th century—both affecting (emotionally) and effecting (bringing about) reality.

Critical Urban Studies: Situationism and La Société du Spectacle, Provo

The “painter of modern life” might celebrate the contingency of the present moment in phenomenological analysis (here thinking of the painters Manet, Monet, Cézanne etc. but also Pollock, Rothko, . . .) leaving traces of their perceptions and sensations of the moment on tableaux, with lines and colors creating an image of the external world that at the same time maps a “field of forces” related to the specific time or intensity of the moment. But the “researcher of modern life” would try to tie these traces of sensations into a broader historical or hermeneutic

context. One could think here, for example, of Benjaminian urban-hermeneutics or Marxist-Situationist flâneurism (the *dérive* as socially critical research of psycho-social landscapes). Beginning with various forms of politically inspired *dérive*, *détournement* serving as a starting point for artistic practice, but also necessarily looking at how this tradition of art as a critique of spectacular deception or structurally determined ideology itself could be critiqued or rethought (beyond Debord and Althusser to the more complex critiques of Deleuze and Rancière).

After (and Against) the World Wars: A New Sense of Reality

Art in the aftermath of war: Artists and filmmakers try to come to terms with the new sense of ethical answerability of art. Revelations about the extent of the killing under totalitarianism and the invention of the atomic bomb created demands and problems for representation that were fundamentally new. First one might look at problems of representation with respect to the Shoah and Hiroshima/Nagasaki as new challenge for representation. Beginning with, for example, Alain Renais's *Nacht und Nebel* and with Marguerite Duras *Hiroshima mon amour*, then in contrast to Lanzmann's *Shoah* and later exploring the controversy with Godard about the representability of the holocaust, we would begin to look at the limits of representation.

We would also look at Italian Neo-Realism and the *caméra-stylo* (Astruc) of post-war cinema, the filmmaker as writer/historian/critic comments on the world and on the history of film with the filmmakers around La Cinémathèque Française and *Cahiers du Cinéma* as paradigmatic for looking for new narratives and new forms of representation to come to terms with the historical situation.

Making Documents of the Real

Where to begin the history of the documentary? Already with Lumière? With Vertov? With Esther Shub!? With Grierson or Flaherty?

We look at the first post-war documentary filmmakers Jean Rouch, Robert Drew, Richard Leacock, Frederick Wiseman, D.A. Pennebaker, Albert and David Maysles, and try to formulate our own theory of the documentary—both in terms of moving pictures and in terms of a general theory of images. How are we to think the relationship between documentary film and documentary photography? What role do these historical examples play in our current conceptualization of non-fiction film-making?

Art schools as institutions of research

Beginning with Bauhaus and following Albers to Black Mountain College and Moholy-Nagy to Chicago (the Chicago Institute of Design that grew out of the New Bauhaus in Chicago was the first institution in the US to offer a PhD in design), then looking at the role other institutions played like CalArts, The Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT, Yale, Goldsmiths, etc. as well as some examples of important teachers including Hans Hofmann, Franz Erhard Walther and Bernd and Hilla Becher, we open the question of the central significance of art schools and education for early 21st century art. With these specific historical institutions in mind, it would be important to reopen the debate about the goals, methods and content of art and humanities education in society at large—especially as these could be used to redefine our concept of public life.

The curator as auteur: three documentas and their curators

A. 1972, the Szeemann documenta, *documenta V, Befragung der Realität – Bildwelten heute* plays a central role in our studies. The previous documenta in 1968 was the last one curated by Arnold Bode who was unable to react directly to the changing times. . . something new was demanded of the exhibition. Something new had been demanded of art. . .

Following Szeemann's *When Attitudes Become Form* (1969), this marks one of the important moments in the history of art exhibitions in the 20th century. This documenta takes place during the historical period where the curator becomes a kind of auteur, not a mere metteur-en-scène. But what does it mean to speak of authorship in this context? [We are continually confronted with a similar question in film history (although Truffaut and Co might make one believe they had solved the issue definitively). The author of the script, the cameraman or the actor even the producer might all have claims to some kind of authorship. Certainly, their part in the creation of the work is unique enough to merit considering their work in this way. If all of these people are involved with the production of the film, who in the end can be given the credit as author?]

As exhibitions themselves begin to take on the character of a work, the curator appears as a combination of a film director and a producer. There is first a general conception (the choosing of the script if you will), the administrative task of consolidating funding, bringing together a team, schmoozing with municipal, state, national bureaucrats and bureaucracies, finding allies, avoiding enemies. . . then eventually staging and hanging the works, dealing with artists, defending against inevitable (and always justified) critique, some more schmoozing. . . etc. But curators and producers stand apart from the actual wrestling match with the material. Unlike the artists, they are not immediately involved in the ex nihilo moment (romanticism alert!) of creation but rather work with understanding the work's broader significance, its refinement and packaging—hinting at a problem of the transdisciplinary in general, in Adorno's words: "Wer Kultur sagt, sagt auch Verwaltung.."

B. 1997, the Catherine David documenta, *documenta X, Politics-Poetics*. The catalogue for the documenta X could be read as a guidebook for so much of what has happened in the art world since then. The constellation of cultural studies, political discourse, film history with contemporary art. Many large-scale exhibitions since then have in some way dealt with this kind of contextualization either in the exhibition itself or in the publications surrounding it.

One of the difficulties facing art educators today is where to begin with respect to the history of art and theory that is so important for contemporary practice. . . but at the same time is so extensive and complex that it is difficult to negotiate without having to overly simplify. . . Not only what artists and works should students know but also what methods of using this information should we teach? How are we to integrate this information into a form of practice?

We could take the catalogue of documenta X and use it as a kind of introductory textbook for the

study of experimental and critical humanities and art. The table of contents shows some of the contexts and traditions that could be covered and used as a starting point for further exploration: the history of film (with for example Italian Neorealism, Santiago Álvarez, Godard), urban studies, the problems of representation with respect to the Shoah and Hiroshima/Nagasaki, post-colonial studies, the "political potential of art," concentrating on such authors as Artaud, Gramsci, Rancière, Deleuze, Foucault, Spivak along with a host of artists both contemporary and of historical significance. Also looking for past artists or historical contexts in need of renewed consideration: at the time Hélio Oiticica and Lygia Clark, for example, were not nearly as well-known as now.

C. Art and the incomplete process of democracy (on a world-scale). documenta XI in many ways continued where documenta X had left off. Okwui Enwezor expanded the scope of the theoretical and political objectives. This was also the first documenta to move to different locations with four platforms in Vienna/Berlin, Neu-Delhi, St. Lucia, Lagos leading to the final fifth platform in Kassel.

From the documenta website:

"Okwui Enwezor, a native of Nigeria, was the first non-European art director of documenta—and the first documenta of the new millennium was the first truly global, postcolonial documenta exhibition. "Documenta 11 rests on five platforms which aim to describe the present location of culture and its interfaces with other complex, global knowledge systems."

The names of the platforms are indicative both of the broad scope and expectations of art institutions in society: Art is based on the premise that "Democracy [is yet] Unrealized" (Platform 1) and explores "Experiments with Truth: Transitional Justice and the Processes of Truth and Reconciliation" (Platform 2) with "Créolité and Creolization" (platform 3) producing new forms of identity, while at the same time acknowledging the situation of peoples placed de jure outside of the universal bourgeois order in cities "Under Siege" (Platform 4). This must remain at the center of our considerations documenting new forms of urban life being produced under the conditions of postcolonial economies. The documenta XI took place in the shadow of the September 11 attacks, the resulting invasion of Afghanistan and the beginnings of a new global war. The catalogue begins with a series of images documenting this change in our world.

The hermeneutic circle (and its discontents)

Finally we conclude with returning to the beginning, asking... why is a profound knowledge not only of the "experimental humanities" but also the history of film, painting, sculpture and architecture a central part of contemporary art education? Or to be more specific: Why is it that a good grasp of these histories has become something so closely tied not only to the interpretation but also to the production of art?

Our studies might begin with the examples we are discussing here, but it is always important to stress that this historical research can only be the beginning of the task.

Here it is important to emphasize the dangers of a new kind of normative humanism developing (however critical, revolutionary or hip this new form of historicism might seem!). While we maintain that a thorough knowledge of this extremely broad but we argue interrelated field of knowledge represents an important part of the education of artists, designers, and filmmakers as researchers, there must also be a point where our historicist and hermeneutic academic excesses can be turned against themselves...lonely, nostalgic, drunk, poor, deranged, in love, or charged with political rage, the artistic researcher might at the right moment just as easily forget all that he/she has thus far learned...using these many examples as an inspiration to create new works, research and perhaps develop new poetic institutions.

1 Gwen Allen, *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art*. Cambridge (USA): MIT Press, 2011.

2 Rosalind Krauss, "The Photographic Conditions of Surrealism." In: *October*, Winter 1981.

3 "'Transformer le monde,' a dit Marx ; 'changer la vie,' a dit Rimbaud: ces deux mots d'ordre nous n'en font qu'un." (André Breton, "Discours au Congrès des écrivains." (*Œuvres complètes*, Vol. II, p. 459).

4 See the chapter "L'interprétation comme exercice de soupçon" in: Paul Ricœur, *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1965.

5 Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud Marx." In: *Dits et Écrits I*. Paris: Gallimard, 2001, pp. 594-595. [my translation]

6 Walter Benjamin, *Passagen-Werk* (J6 84); Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life." In: *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*. Jonathan Mayne (ed.). London: Phaidon Press, p. 13.

7 "... etwas Furchtbares und Gefährliches, ein Problem mit Hörnern, nicht notwendig gerade ein Stier, jedenfalls ein neues Problem: heute würde ich sagen, daß es das Problem der Wissenschaft selbst war – Wissenschaft zum ersten Male als problematisch, als fragwürdig gefaßt." (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*. KSA I, p.13).

8 "... die Wissenschaft unter der Optik des Künstlers zu sehen, die Kunst aber unter der des Lebens..." (Ibid., p.14).



Old Manuscript

Paul Gilroy

There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack

WATFORD RISE

JONAS MEKAS

ALEXANDRE KOJÈVE

Marshall McLuhan Understanding Media: THE EXTENSIONS OF MAN

THOMAS MANN DER ZAUBERBERG

Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s

Goldstein and Rorimer MOCA

RECONSIDERING THE OBJECT OF ART: 1975-1976

Empire

MONADOLOGIE ET SOCIOLOGIE

FILM CULTURE

No. 67-68-69

1979

2ND HAND READING WILLIAM KENTRIDGE



Changing Channels Art and Television 1963-1987



Katalog Documenta 11 Platform 5: Ausstellung

Hatje Cantz

CREATOR DOCTUS

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