

Offside Effect  
 Academy as Exhibition  
 1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial

In the world of visual art, many events have been featuring a strong focus on the academy's status in both the cultural and theoretical arena. Strikingly, these events all seemed to continuously draw attention to rigorous processes such as the introduction of the or meticulous attempts to describe artistic research and artistic knowledge production. Those often strict forms of quantifying and defining in turn necessitate a new investigation of what the academy is about. This time in multiple and fluid modes, where art academies can emerge as temporary, autonomous sanctuaries for artistic thinking; in fact the utmost and decisive factor in art education.

In order to achieve this goal, CCA Tbilisi initiated an idiosyncratic dissemination platform: a Triennial not only encompassing visual art, but also including a focus on art education and its related forms of research. The first edition of this Triennial, entitled, took place in 2012.

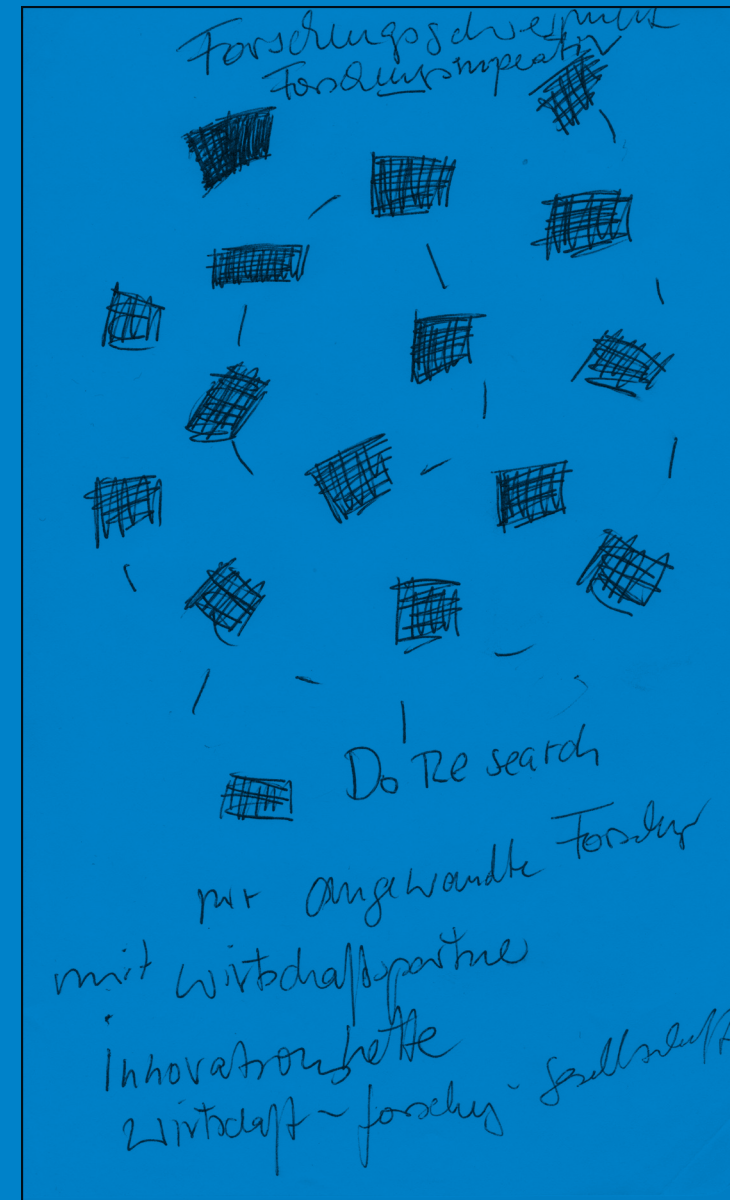
Participants: Tiong Ang (MaHKU), Jürgen Bock (Maumaus), Lucrezia Cippitelli (Addis Contemporary), Sarah Cowles (Ruderal Academy), Stephan Dillemath (keynote artist), Inci Eviner (Kadir Has University), Rene Francisco (ISA Habana), Rainer Ganahl (parallel project), Nikolaus Hirsch (Staedelschule), Jan Kaila (Finnish Academy of Fine Arts), Nazareth Karoyan (ICA Yerevan), Annette Krauss (MaHKU), Midred's Lane (New York), Young June Lee (Kaywon School of Art), Tara McDowell (Shindisi Academy Resident), Marion von Osten (keynote artist), Irena Popiashvili (critical referent), Henk Slager (co-curator Offside Effect), Nedko Solakov (project tutor), Katharina Staedler (CCA Tbilisi), Wato Tsereteli (co-curator Offside Effect), Anton Vidokle (keynote artist), Visual Culture Research Center (Kiev), Mick Wilson (critical referent).

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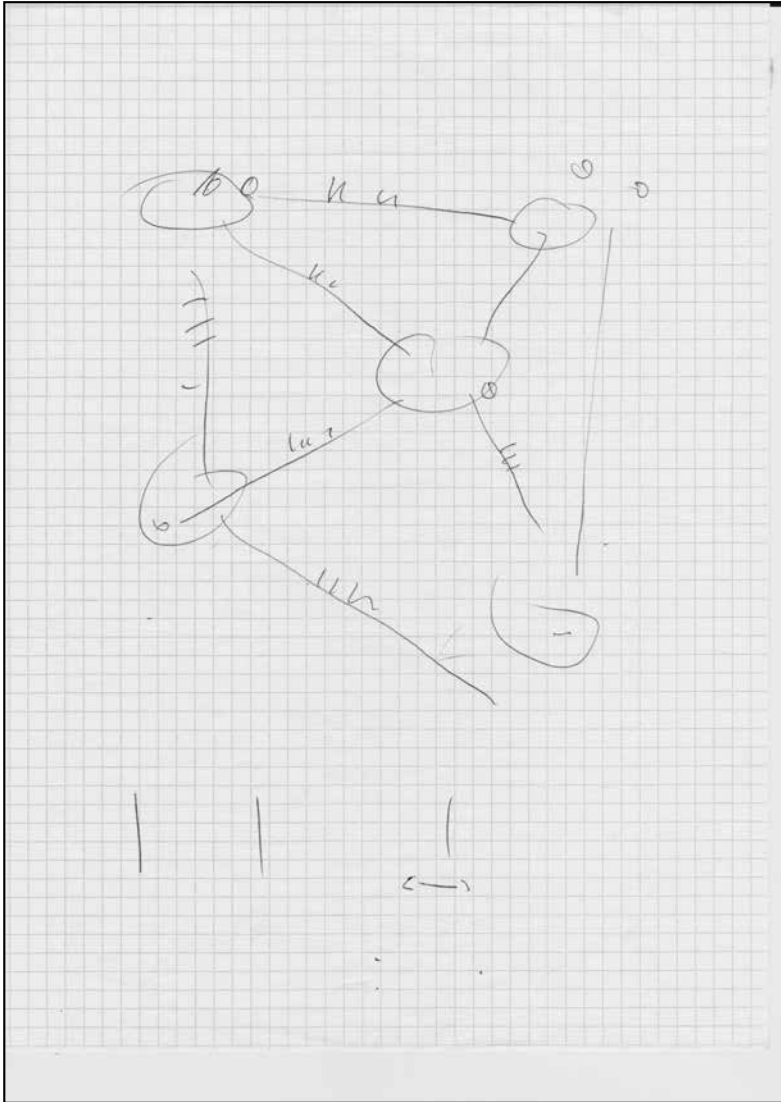
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## FOREWORD

Henk Slager

Over the last decade, art education has been confronted time and again with neo-liberal thought and attitudes. As a result, art education has turned slowly but surely into a distinct product, focused on quantifiable and verifiable end results manifested and legitimized by the rhetoric of marketing and efficiency. In most semester programs, only limited time and space slots - if any at all - are reserved for higher emancipatory values such as a critical process of self-enlightenment or experimental, speculative thinking and associating. Those withering emancipatory values, as well as the search for overcoming the advance of bureaucratization and instrumentalization, hovered in the background of a series of meaningful curatorial projects. For example, *Manifesta 6, Notes for an Art School*, 2006, and the *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* project (2006-2008) both departed from an approach that could be labeled 'educational turn'. That educational turn questioned discursive practices, conceptual frameworks and how these tend to be colored by an interaction of knowledge production, educational praxis, and artistic research.

In the discussion on research as a paragon of the capacity to generate a free, artistic space for thought, the conforming and homogenizing dangers of neo-liberal instrumentalization still necessitate to be alert and to also engage in the dialogue on the specificity

of art education with those academies and platforms that are *outside* the *Bologna Process* and its sphere of influence and rules. After all, in such a confrontation, the awareness of one's own institutional identity is not only accentuated, but also expanded in a continuous process of rethinking and reassessment.

In order to underscore the process of peripheral decentralization, the *1st Tbilisi Triennial* (Tbilisi 2012), curated by Henk Slager and Wato Tsereteli, concentrated on the signification of the figure of *Offside Effect*. How could educational platforms outside the influence of the Bologna Process articulate their 'exterior' awareness as a surplus value? In a forum-like display system, a number of keynote artists (among others Anton Vidokle, Stephan Dillemath, Marion von Osten) and lecturers in collaboration with their students from a dozen of experimental academies from all over the world presented their strategic way of working. A way of working inspired by the perspective of art academies reacting against the managerial turn and the increasing bureaucratization while searching for informal and experimental room in education. All presentations showed how, in unexpected and fascinating ways, forms of resistance emerge against the powers that discipline artistic knowledge. A deep desire to always escape fixed and fixing models of thought was prominently present in the presentations.

Center for Contemporary Art CCA Tbilisi served as the base for the 1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial. On the outside wall of the CCA building Marion von Osten created a mural representing a diagram of budgets that various authorities provide for education. In the building a meeting and information space designed by Katharina Staedler was accompanied by a variety of 'activated projects'. The Staedelschule (Frankfurt) realized the *Crypt-bar* for

screenings, readings, drinks and interdisciplinary relaxation. F+F (Zurich) developed the *Unexpected Sites Effect* project where a collaborative spatial test-plant transformed the neo-liberal 'living from art' into a free 'living for art' without any quantity-management. In Mildred's Lane's living room situation (Mark Dion and Morgan Puett, New York), visitors were invited to actively participate in a research project pointing to a revolutionary, rigorously rethinking of the contemporary art complex. In the apartment in the Vladimir Kurtishvili Memorial House across from the CCA building, the atmosphere was more contemplative: the Mauma program (Lisboa) reflected on a number of parameters significant for contemporary art practice.

The presentations in the Literature Museum were mainly discursive or even counter-discursive. Departing from notions such as radical periphery and the politics of non-effort, Kaywon College (Young June Lee, Seoul) focused on a reversed educational practice. In a performative and dynamic way, the Kadir Has University (Inci Eviner, Istanbul) project *Acting in the Library* revealed the discursive domain of archiving, descriptive knowledge. In collaboration with Shindisi Field Academy, CCA Tbilisi's *Informal Masters Program* engaged in an exploration of exporting creativity to non-art contexts. Annette Krauss (MaHKU Utrecht) organized a test-site in the form of a para-educational department directed towards the significance of 'unlearning' when engaged in artistic practices.

Two presentations of context-specific case studies were on the second floor of the Literature Museum. One presentation dealt with the situation of the colonial adoption of art education in Africa and the significance of informal institutes for developing an alternative discourse departing from Addis Contemporary. Another presentation

by the doctoral program of the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts demonstrated how an art university could give an idiosyncratic interpretation of artistic freedom by giving shelter to vulnerable image productions.

For another Tbilisi Triennial venue, the Georgian National Museum, a clean display system was based on the vernacular architecture and its inherent curatorial logic. Rene Francisco (ISA Habana) showed documentary work related to his *Pedagogia Pragmatica* workshops taking place outside the art academy in unexpected locations in Havana's urban landscape such as a deserted home or a posh swimming pool. Tiong Ang's *Pavilion of Distance* project (MaHKU, Utrecht) was initiated as an experimental platform to pursue a collective artistic production and to develop an educational methodology of co-creation. Stephan Dillemoth (Munich) translated the lecture *The Academy and the Corporate Public* in an installation drawing attention to issues such as bohemian research, self-organized research, problem zones, and squatted institutional spaces.

The venue Europe House mainly showed archiving presentations. Some presentations gave a survey of various experimental education platforms such as the documentation of Anton Vidokle's *unitednationsplaza* project, a display of the curricular structure of the experimental seminar program of ICA in Yerevan (Armenia), and the activities of Visual Culture Research Center (Kiev) shown in the logic of an application form. Other presentations showed documentation of the various Tbilisi Triennial workshops taking place on this location such as Sarah Cowles' *Ruderal Academy Project*, Nedko Solakov's *Selling& Buying*, and Rainer Ganahl's *Reading Lenin's Imperialism*. Also in Europe House, Tara McDowell (*Shindisi Field Academy Resident*) lectured weekly on the topical meaning of historical models of alternative academies.

Previous to the Triennial's opening, the above sketched ideas, perspectives, and strategies were presented and discussed in a two-day forum in Tbilisi's Goethe Institute. Critical referents in these discussions were Irena Popiashvili (State Academy of the Arts, Tbilisi) and Mick Wilson (Valand Academy, Gothenburg).

The editorial logic of this publication follows the line-up of presentations, workshops, and seminars. The publication's ultimate goal is to not only document the 1st Tbilisi Triennial, but to also incite further diagnoses and developments in the debate on current art academies and their contexts.

Henk Slager, Dean MaHKU, Utrecht

## ACADEMIC AMBIVALENCES

*Marion von Osten*



Marion von Osten, *Mural*, CCA Tbilisi, 2012

*Editor: The entrance of the Tbilisi Triennial was colored by a mural you installed on the outside wall of CCA Tbilisi. In what way did you intend that work to be embedded in the debate on education and research this Triennial aimed to develop?*

Marion von Osten: It is true, what you see is a mural, but it can also be viewed as a series of abstract dark blue and light red color paintings you pass by on an outside wall - as if in a white cube gallery space. From farther away, it can be read as a diagram or an amplification: figures that are represented in blue color seem to grow.

The hand-painted mural itself refers to political statements in the public sphere and, moreover, to the tradition of socialist murals that were very important in Georgia before 1989. But the mural does not say anything di-

rectly; it is too abstract; it seems to only speak about itself as nice, hand-made, color fields. The concrete shape and height might bring North American painting traditions to mind or even Sol LeWitt's murals based on algorithms. Finally, if read as a diagram, the mural refers to data visualization used in scientific surveys to explain complex relations in quantifiable measures. Diagrams like that are used in political rhetoric to argue for political intervention or as explanations for societal status/ biopolitics that need to be changed. They seem to make the complex readable and useable and have been part of governance politics since the early 19th century.

So, generally speaking, the work is about the question of how knowledge and public opinions are represented or, better put, abstracted. The fact that it was painted manually by Bessa K. and myself and had to be fitted somehow on the CCA wall also says something about the relation of knowledge, manual production, and labor duration. In times of cognitive capitalism, manual skills are not only highly undervalued but also poorly paid all over the globe. To me, the emphasis on production aesthetics in visual arts over the last decades has not changed anything with regards to the devaluation of manual skills. From the perspective of a research-based art practice, this devaluation is even more manifest and, thus, the devaluation of manual labor is partially an offside effect of the very debate on artistic research.

But a portion of the mural was also a black-and-white graphic hanging around the corner as a public sign in which different data taken from several public sources have been connected to the color field paintings – see image below. These data are not clandestine, but data that governments or organizations such as the World Bank put on their websites. Thus you could say the data do not point to any news or any

specificity, but I believe when you read them together they create an uncanny picture about education, migration, and debts. Moreover, the different sources I have chosen cannot be put together in a scientific work, as they would not 'speak', as they are not at all comparable. Thus the relation between the color fields and the data chosen does not make sense in a scientific or political context. I believe the core of artistic work is that you are putting things together that would not make sense in other contexts, i.e. you are able to create sense in very different ways, undermining disciplinary boundaries, for example.

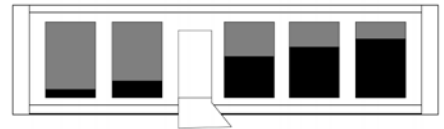


Diagram with figures

*Figure I*

In 2012 the Georgian Ministry for Education had 8,7% of the annual State budget to spend on public schools and universities, which was 0,7% less than in 2011. The budget for the Cultural Ministry was 1,2 % in 2012, which was 0,18% more than in 2011.

[www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=24904](http://www.civil.ge/geo/article.php?id=24904)

*Figure II*

A research paper from the Department for Business Innovation and Skills from 2011 called *Estimating the value to the UK of Education Exports* estimates that in 2008-09 tuition fee incomes to the UK were worth over £4 billion. That represents 18% of the UK's public spending allowance for tertiary education in the same year. More and more overseas students are propping up UK

universities' finances, with some students paying fees of more than £20,000 a year.

[www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/oct/14/international-students-pay-20000](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/oct/14/international-students-pay-20000)

### Figure III

Remittances, the money sent home by migrants, are three times the size of official development assistance and provide an important lifeline for millions of households. The top recipients of officially recorded remittances in 2011 were India (\$58 billion), China (\$57 billion), Mexico (\$24 billion), and the Philippines (\$23 billion). The top recipients in terms of the share of remittances in comparison to GDP included many smaller economies such as Tajikistan (45%), Moldova (38%), and Honduras (25%). As remittance receivers have a higher propensity to own a bank account, they often have access to financial services like loans and credits. Aside from investments in housing property and small-scale businesses, remittances are used to finance higher education for one or more family members.

[web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS](http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/TOPICS)

### Figure IV

Today 70% of world wide skilled workers aged over 25 emigrate mainly to six major receiving countries: USA, UK, Germany, France, Canada and Australia. Germany itself has a high number of skilled workers emigrating to the USA, Switzerland, Austria and Poland. Skilled workers are designated as holders of a post-secondary certificate. This *brain drain* is common amongst developing nations and particularly in contemporary economies, where university degrees are not longer respectively rewarded.

[www.oecd.org/social/povertyreductionandsocialdevelopment/migrationandthebraindrainphenomenon.htm](http://www.oecd.org/social/povertyreductionandsocialdevelopment/migrationandthebraindrainphenomenon.htm)

### Figure V

81% of US student veterans fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan accessed the Veterans' Affairs Office (VAO) to help process their education benefits from the 'Veterans' Student Loan Relief Fund'. 48 % used the VAO to obtain enrollment information for the 'Post-9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act'. With these programs study loans for veterans were released or study programs without tuition fees promoted.

[www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,44245--,00.html](http://www.military.com/Resources/ResourcesContent/0,13964,44245--,00.html)

Generally speaking, all three works for the Tbilisi Triennial are related to implicit ambivalences when we discuss issues of higher education in an art context, as that context is indeed marginal and quite elitist, but at the same time highly symbolic. An 'offside effect' of this discussion inside the art field is that inequalities and the politics of exclusion to higher education or education in general are usually kept outside of the debate. In the art academy in Vienna, this issue was first raised by students without a European passport, who addressed the inequality of their treatment as 'cash cows', as they are the only ones that have to pay study fees and face for sure many more problems than European citizens, due to structural racism. Increasing students debts and larger inequalities in the educational sector have to be faced.

*Question: In the meeting space inside the CCA building, you showed the video work The Glory of the Garden. How do you view the relationship between this work and the more abstracting, quantifying outside mural?*

MVO: *The Glory of the Garden* reflects the interrelations between economy, politics, and culture constituted due to neo-liberal politics. The video also relates to concepts established in classic pedagogy such as the 'hands on methods' for children that has been appropriated in today's business world. Meanwhile, the film might be aesthetically reminiscent of early modernist abstractions. For several years now, visualization and modeling techniques as well as strategy games have been introduced in the business world. With simple game tools such as Lego bricks, those programs try to transform insights and awareness of employees' commitment. Those business workshops are used when managers want to gather individuals and team as 'brain power to work on complex business issues such as developing strategy plans, resolving conflicts, forming and developing teams, and working with turnaround and restructuring'.

The Arnolfini Center for Contemporary Art in Bristol and the exhibition *Lapdogs of the Bourgeoisie* (2007) was the framework for this project and its reflections. Four members of the Arnolfini staff were invited to reflect on structural changes of the contemporary art institution related to the archive materials and asked to visualize structural changes for a public viewer. In the institution archives, one finds extremely interesting documents: how neo-liberal politics of the Thatcher era in the 1980s created a cultural crisis and how this formulated mutual reactions on the side of the institution in changing its profile, program, spatial arrangements, and the language used in communication.

I recorded the process of re-negotiating and visualizing these structural changes with a 'neutral' camera position pointing to the play table. What you hear is reflections on a new step for a next change of the institution calling for a more research-based

program in collaboration with universities, which, in the art institution's vision, would bring in new funds. And as an offside effect you see – what is funny and painful at the same time – how cultural workers are trying hard to adopt a neo-liberal language and transformation process. I thought that would be a good starter for the reflections at the Tbilisi Triennial.



*Scribblings*, Literature Museum

*Question: In another location, the Literature Museum, you exhibited more text-based work. The somewhat peripheral looking notations seem to relate to the Offside Effect consciousness. Is that a correct reading of this installation?*

MVO: I call them *scribblings* and would not see them as a text-based work, since they are just a collection of notations/scribbings: some done consciously, some unconsciously, in symposia or university meetings that were creating discourses on or new curricula for artistic research. When looking through my notebooks, I was struck by the fact that I could hardly find scribbings that would relate to something outside or offside of the given debate as I wished to find something that would not match the employees' performance in *The Glory of the Garden* video. These notations show that with them I mainly try to explain to myself how things are connected, what

belongs to something else, how discourses, curricula, office and research spaces are structured, etc. They are abstractly similar to how the processes themselves are acts of abstraction.

In Europe we have faced a change in the role and function of art education due to the Bologna and Lisbon strategy papers. That not only turned art schools into universities and thus required research and new curricula based on North-American BA/MA structures, but also created a ranking of universities and university teachers on a global scale. When working inside an art institution such as the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna the last six years you are at the heart of this dilemma. So you might publish critical texts about the neo-liberal university (see for example my text on *eurozine*) but in the institution itself you are trapped in the idea of 'developing' the institution in an alternative way. You believe that you and your colleagues are moving into a better direction. All of that might be possibly true, but in general you are participating in the frame of existing demands.

Thus, first I was a bit shocked about what I found in my notations, but then I saw the possibility that in exhibiting them I would turn them again into something else. Thus, not only referencing them to Dubuffet's *Telephone Drawings* but even more to Michel Foucault's concept of the *governmental* in which participation is a central foundation for today's form of governing, i.e. the creation of a new self-relation in the process of participating. My question was how I could turn that into an act of disobedience, into an art not to be governed as such. And if you would read the notations as intended in your question, than this is a proof that those turns are still and always will be possible.

Marion von Osten, Visual artist and cultural researcher, Berlin

## COACHING AS ARTISTIC PRACTICE

*Katharina Staedler*

[1] A gathering in the central seminar room of the Center of Contemporary Art – Tbilisi. One late morning in October 2012. Preparatory meeting as to discuss the first issue of the students' monthly newspaper. A new attempt in the curriculum of 2012/13 to guide and set students free both on content production and on working as a group. Hours later this first meeting has turned into a vicious riot which resembles a discussion between political rivals. The atmosphere is so tense that speakers don't even listen to their own words. Less anyone else talking. It seems that the best argument is the one shouted the loudest. Not the best, the most dominant.

The meeting is suspended with every single participant feeling drained and frustrated. The topics to be discussed are postponed. The idea seems to fail before even starting.

Out of the riot the first contributions for the newspaper accumulate. In the beginning mainly held together by a given theme, asking each student what art, contemporary art means to them. Different visual and text forms are chosen. Feedback triples in. And often out. Within a blink a set of contributions is laid out on the seminar room table. Not perfected. Sometimes out of focus. But after another storm of non-discussion about the newspaper's future title, the contributions' arrangement is done within minutes.

Amazement and non-understanding hits in. The impossibility to agree or even negotiate a title as well as the previous step to communicate the process of decision-making. Yet a collective agreement has been made autonomously by the students locating articles and visual works, well aware of the prominence of specific pages in a publication. The printed issue in their hands again the community spirit strikes as several students help one other, whose work has to be time consumingly added by hand to the 200 editions printed.



Meeting space CCA Tbilisi. Marion von Osten, *The Glory of the Garden* and Tiong Ang, *As the Academy Turns*

Puzzled by this experience the second issue of the newspaper poses the question of what students expect from art education. The process stays the same but becomes smoother. Still no title is agreed on, yet another set of contributions are presented, again the placing of the works triggers a group dynamics which contradicts the individualistic argumentations on the possible titling. The suggestions and expectations concerning art education and the students' needs are blurry.

Only the third issue makes a difference. Students work on their own, envisioning their first exhibition, a platform as to show their work and education in process. Guiding themselves through all the steps of exhibition making. Former student and now educational programs' assistant Mariam

Natroshevili curates the show and sets the starting point: a contextual network on dreaming. Then supervises the students through their project and sets them free. The outcome envisioned as to both exhibit their individual works and publish their third newspaper edition as part of the exhibition. The decision-making becomes easier. The group focuses. One direction. One goal.

Exhibition and newspaper fuse and become, for the first time, the students' own. Within this shift the title for all upcoming newspapers during their nine months of studies is chosen. And both the exhibition and the newspaper are proudly presented as their work, which they were reluctant to do with the previous two editions. *Mexute faza* [mexute faza]. The fifth phase. Dreams as a possible reality.

[2] I take my students dreams seriously. They have different motivations for being an artist. And the core for me as their teacher, as educational programs curator at the Center of Contemporary Art in Tbilisi is to see them as such. As artists. To realize that the non-labeling, the non-identifying and non-positioning is the essence to change art education into educating artists: no longer focusing on us as teachers and them as students. But to trigger the dialogue between us all. As artists. A moment to be taken seriously. When talking and working and educating together as artists.

The informal master programs at CCA-Tbilisi have at their foundation a focus on artistic practice, on exchange between artists and art-interested people from the region and all over the world as well as on the notion of community building. In a nine-month program young artists are guided and tutored by other, more experienced artists. Knowledge is shared as well as approaches and ideas. Cooperations are triggered. A community is built as to support one another.

Despite all plans the programs dealt with great challenges during the first two years after their inauguration in October 2010. During classes and projects we all faced a lack of structure and of time management, severe communication problems and our shared vision being blurred. We were wondering why.

Motivation and energy of students and teachers seemed to evaporate in front of our eyes. Without any significant reason. Frustration and low productivity hit in. Throughout the year the programs seemed to be fading out.

Therefore I started to curate the educational programs anew in December 2011, my vision taking its starting point in the given, thus working together with the artists surrounding me. By asking previous and future students regarding their expectations, needs and wants. As well as by discussing with artists which content and in which framework they could and would like to teach. With the ideas gathered I intended to frame the new curriculum from within.

[3] The excellence in coaching. To achieve on a common path. A person, in the case of the educational programs curating, me, who holds together the mutual vision. Who triggers the best, and sometimes also the worst, out of each in the *Gemeinschaft*. A person who takes the ambitions and concerns of each involved seriously and yet, on an individual as well as on the community basis advises with the clarity for the aimed educational paths and goals.

In our teaching position, as coaches, we need to provoke hierarchies to crumble and constantly shift. As advisers who continuously take a step out as to get and readjust the whole picture, the personal and the artistic ego need to step down. Tricky, when leading without the position as a leader. But coaching becomes artistic practice when advise is given and knowledge is shared without the notion of

knowing better, or even knowing all. The process of mutual exchange becomes valuable when respect for the other as an artist, not concerning their background, their age, their gender nor their experience, is the common ground.

When rethinking educational practices there is often not much new to discover, but to understand our roles as artists and to reflect on our ego within our artistic practice. To re-evaluate where we position ourselves as to open the discourse on transferring knowledge and inspiration into new works together with those we work with. We as artists have a privilege and therefore a responsibility. As Noam Chomsky puts it: 'the more privilege you have, the more opportunity you have. The more opportunity you have, the more responsibility you have.'<sup>1</sup>

Our responsibility is to share our knowledge and experience with young artists around us as well as with others. It is to regard our vis-à-vis as equal, a person who you can learn from and exchange with. Therefore our responsibility as coaches is to support, trust and challenge as to trigger the best, as individuals and also as a group.

Note

1. Noam Chomsky. *The responsibility of privilege*. 'Talk to Aljazeera' on 12.1.2013 <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/talktojazeera/2013/01/201311294541129427.html>

Katharina Staedler, Educational Programs Curator, CCA Tbilisi

## OPENING AND CLOSURE

Nikolaus Hirsch

The conditions of a 'school' and an 'exhibition space' are gravitating towards becoming similar: Museums behave more and more like academies and vice versa. While museums increasingly integrate education and research programs, art schools increasingly seek out exposure in terms of exhibition making.

Yet, crucial questions remain unanswered: How can one critically assess the particular tension between the condition of a 'school' and an 'exhibition space'? Has it become necessary to develop new strategies of visibility that recalibrate the relation between the current pressure for transparency and publicity, on the one hand, and the right to opacity, on the other?

The Städelshule with its Portikus gallery can serve as a model for this conflicting yet productive relation; the institutional coupling of Städelshule/Portikus is not a victim of a broader evolution but an intentional decision, a carefully developed institutional practice that seeks to creatively use the field between a learning environment for art and a space for exhibition making. As much as this institution might be one of the most visible art academies on a global scale, its *raison d'être* concerns a particular approach to the problems and potentials of visibility. This specific visual culture is both about closure and opening, about insisting on spaces

that offer both protection and exposure.

Beyond the logic of the over-regulated, modular Bologna system and sundry MFA programs, the work within the master classes offers protected zones for experimentation, or testing grounds for mistakes and dead ends, that nevertheless eventually lead to an artistic position. These processes tend to be rather invisible from the outside. Nothing is more difficult than responding to the question of visitors, curators and critics: 'Can you show us the Städelshule?' There is not much to show. In the studios you see old sofas, or maybe a barely working coffee machine, empty bottles, chairs, tables, laptops and the beginnings or relics of art works. In other words: very little evidence of the practices of exhibition making and far from museal conditions. 'Exhibition' happens elsewhere. Visibility is delayed. A posteriori, in a sometimes desperate attempt of post-rationalization, the trajectory becomes visible: a meandering path through off-spaces, gallery shows, and, maybe two or three years later, Documenta, the Venice Biennale, or other biennials in the international exhibition sprawl.

Yet, in a global context of ever more exhibition and exposure possibilities, the process towards an increasing visibility (not to forget its effect on the question of value) should be carefully developed and critically assessed. Not only the artwork as an object but – as investigated in the Städelshule conference *The Return of the Human Figure in Semiocapitalism* (2011) – also the figure of the artist, willingly or not, becomes part of the economy of exposure.

Indeed, the most 'exposed' part of Städelshule is the Portikus. In 1987 Kasper König wrote to Dieter Roth, who became the artist whose show opened the doors of Portikus (now showing its 182<sup>nd</sup> exhibition): 'Dear Mr. Roth, to-

day we are beginning construction of an art space behind the Portikus, at the crossing of Obermainbrücke and Schöne Aussicht in Frankfurt. (...) Since I will be going to the Städelschule for the autumn semester to become its rector next year, I have asked for this exhibition space as my morning gift.'

The Portikus became more than a morning gift – it is a crucial and complementary element of the Städelschule. It is – and this is one of the innovations of Kasper König – a micro-institution with its own location and identity, yet it is fully integrated in the school, creating an almost unlikely balance between the autonomy of exhibition making and the integration into an educational environment.

The Portikus with its ambitious program of five exhibitions a year is not a showcase for students. Yet it allows these young artists access to extremely diverse ways of prolific artistic practices and approaches to exhibition making, and to share time (whether as part of the installation team or in studio visits at the Städelschule) with artists from different generations such as Nora Schultz, Michael Stevenson, Lutz Bacher, or John Knight – just to name the Portikus artists of the past 10 months.

Beyond the exhibition and studio lies a third category, the one that at first seems unspectacular, but, in fact, crucial for the coherence of institutional practice: kitchens, canteens, guesthouses, collaborative initiatives. This is where sharing and differentiating, gatherings and distinctions happen. This is where all sorts of collective models are being practiced, whether they are called friends, peers, classes, cliques, or communities.

These ever-shifting (and sometimes rather loose) constellations develop out of situations or projects that often speculate on possible currencies and collectives within an educational environment. They question how and

where meetings and modes of exchange can be developed that lead from disposable commodities in artworks and ideas towards forms of common ground. They test out an artistic space in which opening and closure are tightly intertwined: accessible enough to create a social environment, confined enough to develop an artistic position.

Based on the Städelschule's tradition of Peter Kubelka's legendary kitchen and the *Gasthaus* (2003), we have developed diverse collective projects: *Guesthouse* at ArtBasel (a cooperation with e-flux, shortly after they turned the Portikus into a temporary 'time/bank'), 'Can It' in Douglas Gordon's kitchen-classroom, or the Hamlet *mise-en-scène*/performance by Mark von Schlegell's Pure Fiction Seminar.



*Crypt project, CCA Tbilisi*

Following this line of thought, the approach for the Tbilisi Triennial (2012) was not to 'represent' the school and fall into trap of false transparency or representational politics but to present a self-organized initiative: *The Crypt*. Developed as a 'left over' space in the basement of the Städelschule, it is more than a mere infrastructure, more than a service or an empty shell in which creative people fill 'empty' space, endlessly replicating the split between objects and subjects. In its hybrid format of displaying artworks, memorabilia, concerts, readings, bar, and the connection with the magazine

*Tales of the Crypt* (including a special Tbilisi Triennial edition), *The Crypt* is rather a 'thing' in Latourian sense: capable of gathering, activating, and displaying its own logics of visibility.

Constantly questioned are the cultural currencies of this almost implausible collective called the Städel-schule. It stands for an artistic and institutional practice that permanently reinvents its own knowledge and value system, its position toward the individual and the collective, while reflecting on the fragile process between knowing and owing. Or, as our most recent exhibition-school-project suggests: 'I knOw yoU.'

Nikolaus Hirsch, Rector Staedelschule, Frankfurt

USE  
(UNEXPECTED SIDE EFFECTS)

*F+F School of Art and Media  
Design Zurich*

*Exhibition contribution: USE as  
an installation*

USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*) is conceived as a video-installation. The space is furnished by a worktable – with video screens and folders on it – and by a hotel bed serving as a work place for tired entrepreneur souls. A fog machine hides underneath the bed. From time to time the machine produces a room-filling cloud that also serves as an unstable projection surface for two videos. A large group of unfolded A0-papers (including blueprints, maps, evaluation procedures, photos, drawings) is fixed on two walls.



USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*), CCA Tbilisi

Next to the bed loudspeakers installed in the corner produce the sound of recorded voices. Visitors sitting on the chair close to the loudspeakers can

listen to five preachers of neo-liberal ideology talking about how to lead a better life. In another corner, a filter coffee machine placed on a second worktable is non-stop brewing coffee-to-go and hot steam. The picture of the employee-of-the-month of October is on the wall next to the coffee machine. A stack of photos – a selection of possible employees of the month of November – is ready to be skimmed through. Other chairs are waiting for visitors interested in watching some of the videos or reading a folder with text materials – and for people who would like to work on their own stuff at the worktable or to just sit and enjoy some time-to-waste.

A cleaning cloth fixed to a car-windshield-wiper-machine is very slowly smearing the most popular word heard in institutions, art schools, and other places forced through quality checks: EVALUATION!

The interest of the USE-team lies in a field beyond academism and dilettantism. USE has been conceived as a possible approach to non-institutional frameworks of art, education, and critical thinking. USE stands for questioning the inflationary increase of formalized, institutional representations of quality. USE as a set up is a spatial proposition to avoid any cannibalism by self-exploiting creative industries within the growing exclusion process due to satellizations by institutional and private power structures.



USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*), CCA Tbilisi

Therefore, USE as a collaborative spatial test-plant:

1. presents a basic re-lecture of standards and norms like (a) ISO standard and DIN formats; (b) Neufert as the normative architecture manual, its intended functions and the derived design of work and life conditions, where social and gender classifications are part of mind-sets; and (c) quality management as the new promising tool of any curriculum at art schools.
2. tries to draw a picture of the growing informal creative work sector, where new entrepreneurship and productivity are the perfect camouflage for the implementation of a tight time grid based on permanent interruption and dispersion. It attempts to outline the growing extraction of any values and resources, the forced mobilization of human labor, the liquefaction between work and life 24h/day, the increasing division in well-paid content management for the few and unpaid content production for the rest.
3. sets up a foggy and somewhat noisy space, where the blueprinted standards undulate and where sight might be blurred once a while. Any activity in this space – like walking, sitting, lying on the bed, talking, thinking or drinking a free coffee – will be inevitably linked to questions about the non-purified, the dirty, and the dysfunctional.

*No NUSE today? USE as a workshop*  
Except for a few preconceptions, the USE-team does not know much about Tbilisi and Georgia, about the people

and their everyday life. Together with experts USE takes a look at the daily problems that occur when defining content, developing the exhibition, printing the brochures at a printer's or in a copy-print shop – while shopping, cooking, partying, sleeping or running the symposium. Whereby what is available, what has been brought along, and what has been developed in common is mutually imparted and exchanged.

USE as a spatial proposition hosts a three-day workshop – October 14 through 16. On day one, USE opens the installation as a workshop space and discusses with CCA Tbilisi members, students and other workshop participants both the installation itself and several types of artistic (self) education – while all drink free coffee. On day two, USE invites the film student David Inashvili from Tbilisi University to talk with the team about former and actual censorship in the cinema production in Georgia during the Soviet period and about several modes of censorship today in both Georgia, Switzerland, and the EU.

On day three, artist and CCA member Koka Vashakidze introduces at the National Gallery the current exhibition *Reframing the 80s* showing a selection of works and artistic strategies realized by artists from Georgia in the 1980s during the last decade of the Soviet Union and the cold war.

The visit is followed by an introduction by author, curator and CCA member Mariam Natroshvili on issues such as the history of the City of Tbilisi and its urban development, the permanent shift of Georgia in historical, political, cultural, and economic context. Discussions take place during a dinner at the apartment of Mariam Natroshvili and architect Detu Jinchradze in the former Living Tower of Architects in the Soviet part at the northern periphery of the city.

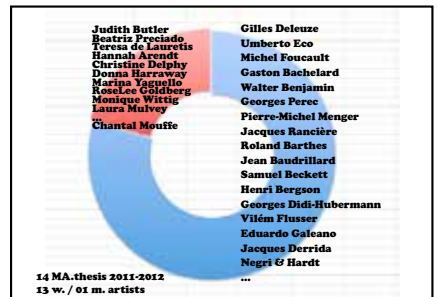


USE Workshop at Mariams and Detus apartment in Tbilisi

One of the discussions brings up the unlearning process of the Russian language amongst the young Georgian generation born after 1991. Other widely discussed topics are: organic agriculture in Georgia and the preference for imported agricultural products from Turkey; the lack of labor in Georgia, and the (absence of) intention to re-develop (new) economic structures.

*20% versus 80%. USE contribution to the Forum*

For the symposium of the Tbilisi Triennial Forum (October 19 and 20), USE decided to share the microphone with three persons and start with a diagram.



The 20% versus 80% diagram

The diagram (picture entitled 20% versus 80%) is a representation based on our experience as art workers in the edu-context. Excerpts of the presentation: ‘... I’d like to share with you a 20% versus 80% statistic (on the

most quoted theorists and authors). The cultural context of this statistic is academies in Switzerland; art academies ... as we know, Switzerland is a place which is not in Europe politically speaking, but it wants to take all the advantages of Europe financially speaking ... it is a place where the Bologna reform (*edu-system allowing compatibility between universities*) was realized before Germany, France, Spain, Greece ... what you see (*pointing to the diagram picture*): I was invited to read ... 14 master theses in visual arts MFA (2011 and 2012). ... Most of the theses are written by artists with a francophone, cultural background ... thirteen papers written by female artists and one by a male artist. And as you can see Gilles Deleuze gets the palm ... then we have (*reading the names looking at the picture, up-down, on the right*) ... all quoted about four to five times ... in the 20% (*red in the diagram*) Judith Butler gets the palm ... the female theorists are quoted only one or two times and mostly in one paper (*from an artist focussing on cultural studies*) ... Judith Butler is applauded, I remember a few years ago it was Hannah Arendt.'

The restructuring of any kind of institution, when based on quality management, is bound to rules of efficiency and to bring in money. Are male thinkers bringing in more money? Do independent types of (self-) education do a better job? Or do they just reproduce on a small scale what universities do with more money on a big scale? And is critical thinking to be found only in theoretical texts? What kind of practices do artists use for empowerment and solidarity?

#### Statement

The title *Offside Effect* of the Tbilisi Triennial can be understood as an attempt to sketch a topology of autonomous art schools for which the concept of an ideal school<sup>1</sup> is a central

objective. Yet, what would such an ideal school look like? Here is an attempt to describe an ideal school in the form of a proposal: The prerequisite of the ideal school is eye-level cooperation between artists, art mediators, and organizers from within the art world and allied to both the art scene and the students.

The ideal constellation is alert to the number of students and challenging accomplices. The objectives of the students are of central importance. The ideal school is a critical associate of the art scene while offering a significant number of contacts with it.

How is the quality of an ideal school to be measured? The following criteria should be applied: people involved in the ideal school understand how to recognize and deploy the room-for-maneuver both inside and outside the school. They know how to create teams and temporary alliances. A mental, medial and skilled set of instruments is available for various uses and subject to constant renewal. The role people play inside and outside the school and within the art environs will be regularly questioned and tested. The role of all participants will, when necessary, be newly worked out and, at certain levels, replayed and tested semi-publicly. The energy expended relates to the energy generated by actions carried out.

USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*) relies on the claim that the ideal school creates and constitutes a potential that cannot be reduced to any simple logic such as 'before my studies I was not an artist, after my studies I am one', or 'a good art school produces successful artists'. Such a view of things would reduce art schools to the role of preparing artists for the art market reproducing merely classical role models, hierarchies, and conditions based on dependency. Therefore, it makes sense to weigh the difference between 'living from (art) work' in re-

lation to 'living for (art) work'. In other words, 'living from' enables to earn a living from the work – something few artists succeed in as is only too well known. 'Living for', on the other hand, conveys a histrionic (artist) understanding of a higher calling, emotional involvement, and an only-work-counts attitude that above all legitimizes (artistic) precariousness.<sup>2</sup>

If we study the working conditions of a freelance life in art (e.g. in view of an exhibition), we know of two common models: (...) 'A contract negotiated in a friendly and informal tone may [...] be the best guarantee for a hierarchy-free, self-defined working relationship. However such a contract can just as well end in a socially hierarchical and financially exploitable situation, since every possibility to challenge it or postulate demands has from the start been excluded by the *amicable* arrangement of the contract.'<sup>3</sup>

To clarify: what we see more and more is that those who work intellectually and culturally slowly slip down into low-paid or unpaid conditions. A wide gap separates increasingly those who are permanently employed and those who work freelance, which highlights the division between management and the production of content. Not only content lacks regular payment, but also the administration of knowledge and content. This is true for media enterprises, schools, libraries, museums and theatre. That division not only caused education and knowledge – which up till now have been considered a public good – to be produced under market conditions not guaranteeing financially sound arrangements.<sup>4</sup> Within this framework, artists are also increasingly considered content providers; research contexts already view them now as 'embedded artists'.<sup>5</sup>

Artists have expressed their concerns politically – not only in *The Thirteen Demands of the Art Workers Coalition* (New York, 1969).<sup>6</sup> Ever since,

and up till today, artists have focused on, among other things, political policies as distinguished from official policies; the rejection of identarian categorizations<sup>7</sup>; Post-Fordism and Multitudo; political economics and social creativity<sup>8</sup>; and always with the intention of developing new ethics for the common good. A growing number of artists and coalitions have evolved in a critical artistic praxis with the help of activist and participatory tactics. They try to make art political and to formulate their own discourses. A broad spectrum of artists' manifestos and manifesto-like projects have been published over the past years and can be seen as part of such a praxis.

Since autumn 2011, many artists have participated in *Occupy Wall Street* and tried not simply to claim a specific space, but also to stimulate the social and political imagination.<sup>9</sup> The development of hierarchy-free social and cultural (infra-) structures<sup>10</sup>, of constitutional drafts<sup>11</sup> and of generosity in dealing with wealth<sup>12</sup> and its waste<sup>13</sup> can just as much represent an artistic practice as the demand for developing applied societal arts<sup>14</sup> as well as discussions on the same.<sup>15</sup>

USE has, therefore, focused on the study of art as a platform and a tool to which artistic praxis, critical thinking, and self-organization can be directly and mutually linked. The critical engagement with a school's framework and conditions, with the curriculum and social facilities and processes bring about an exhibition of artistic solo and team contributions that can be merged into an installation. What is thereby thematized is, among others, in/visible work, the appropriation of the public/private, instant production, value formulation, practical values, as well as social conflicts and revolts.

USE-Team\*:

RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co)  
René Fahrni  
Chantal Romani  
Miro Schawalder  
Studio Action (Slivia Popp & Anja Moers)  
Judith Weidmann

The team is mostly based in Zurich.

- RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co) is an artist group that works on projects and shows internationally.
- Marie-Antoinette Chiarenza is an artworker at F+F Zurich since 2001 and at Work.Master. HEAD University of Art & Design Geneva since 2008.
- Daniel Hauser has been leading the Art Studies at the F+F since 2000.
- René Fahrni is an artist and F+F alumnus.
- Chantal Romani is an artist and F+F alumna. She works on projects and shows internationally and has been teaching at F+F since 2005.
- Miro Schawalder is an artist and F+F alumnus, actually based in Vienna where he is a master student at Akademie der Bildenden Künste. He shares a collaborative practice with artist Yeliz Palak, based in Berlin and Vienna, former student at ZHdK Zurich and UdK Berlin.
- Studio Action (Silvia Popp & Anja Moers) is an artist duo.
- Silvia Popp is a F+F alumna, teaching at the F+F since 2011.
- Anja Moers is a former student at FHNW Aarau/Basel and at HSLU Lucerne. She has been teaching at F+F since 2009 and works as an assistant in the Art Department.
- Judith Weidmann is an artist and F+F alumna. She is also a member of the artist group Sweeterland (together with Yvonne Good, Dominik His, Matthias Käser and Elena Könz, all F+F alumni).
- Supplementary contributions by Jérémié Baud, artist and HEAD Geneva Alumnus and Karin Wiesendanger, artist and F+F alumna.

Notes

0. The F+F School was founded in Zurich in 1971 and has since played a pioneering role in art education in Switzerland. The school experimented early on with performance, video and new media and became increasingly well-established as a professional educational venue for art and design.

Today, the F+F School of Art and Media Design is supported by a foundation co-founded by the City of Zurich. About 220 full-time students currently attend the school, which receives a subsidy from the city of Zurich. Apart from the 3-year diploma education in art studies, photography, graphic design, and film studies, the F+F School offers a preliminary course in design (full-time or in tandem with work), and a vocational course in design. To complete the picture, there is a comprehensive program of advanced study courses. Art studies at F+F have the status of a degree in higher professional qualification (Art Diploma) recognized by the Swiss Confederation.

The teaching team at F+F includes acknowledged professionals from the worlds of art, design, photography and film. One of the main traits of F+F is its close ties to the art and design scene. Projects, seminars, presentations and lectures given by local and international guest speakers make the F+F School a pivotal point in the art and design scene attracting attention far beyond the confines of the school.

As an autonomous school, F+F advocates an open-minded approach to art and design and cultivates a spirit of partnership between faculty and students. Thanks to the small size of the school, students can be certain of receiving intensive and individual supervision. For further information see [www.ffzh.ch](http://www.ffzh.ch)

1. The appellation *ideal school* (orig.: Wunschschule) comes from texts by Sønke Gau and Katharina Schlieben *Sprung ins Kalte Wasser* (jump into cold water), exhibitions, workshops and a summer academy (on questions of art education, knowledge production) that developed in a dialogue with students and teachers of the F+F school of art and media design, Zurich. Shedhalle Zurich, 3 June to 30 July 2006, *Shedhalle Zeitung* 2006, p. 30-31.

2. Robert Pfaller, *Doing Nothing. Über materielles Nichtstun und immaterielle Arbeit* in: *Das schmutzige Heilige und die reine Vernunft*, Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
3. Jan Verwoert, *Tätig sein. Weiß ich wirklich, was ich tue?* in: *Tätig sein*, Publikation NGBK Berlin, 2004
4. Andrea Roedig, *Die Wissensgesellschaften und ihre freien Idioten*, WOZ, 8 Mar 2012 [www.woz.ch/1210/prekaere-arbeit/die-wissensgesellschaft-und-ihre-freien-idioten](http://www.woz.ch/1210/prekaere-arbeit/die-wissensgesellschaft-und-ihre-freien-idioten)
5. Jörg Scheller, *Nicht schön, aber klug. Viele Künstler studieren neuerdings nach den Regeln der Bologna-Reform. Was bedeutet das für die Kunst?*, Zeit-Online, 25.11.2010, [www.zeit.de/2010/48/Bologna-Kuenstler-Studium](http://www.zeit.de/2010/48/Bologna-Kuenstler-Studium).
6. 13 demands by Art Workers Coalition, 1969, [http://artsandlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/AWC\\_letter\\_MOMA\\_1969.pdf](http://artsandlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/AWC_letter_MOMA_1969.pdf)
7. Cf. *Queer & Moustache. De-ghettoize gender studies!*, Master-Symposium HES. SO Geneva, 14-16 November 2011, [www.workmaster.ch/noise/uploads/media/QM1.pdf](http://www.workmaster.ch/noise/uploads/media/QM1.pdf) and <http://queerandmoustache.tumblr.com/About>
8. Cf. *The labor of the multitude? The political economy of social creativity*" International Conference of the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, October 20 to 22, 2011, [www.wuw2009.pl/index.php?lang=eng&page=wypdarzenia&id=110&mod=opis](http://www.wuw2009.pl/index.php?lang=eng&page=wypdarzenia&id=110&mod=opis)
9. Martha Rosler, *The Artistic Mode of Revolution: From Gentrification to Occupation*, E-flux Journal, No.33, 3/2012, <http://www.e-flux.com/issues/33-march>
10. Cf. Celine Condorelli und Gavin Wade, *Support Structure*, [www.supportstructure.org](http://www.supportstructure.org)
11. Cf. The Yes! Association, Artists Group, Stockholm, [www.foreningenja.org/en/om-oss](http://www.foreningenja.org/en/om-oss)
12. Cf. RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), *The Wealth Manifesto*, ed. by Cornerhouse Publications Manchester and Gavin Wade, "Strategic Questions", 2010
13. Cf. RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), *Waste-Manifesto*, in: *Work to do! Selbstorganisation in prekären Arbeitsbedingungen*. ed. by Sönke Gau and Katharina Schlieben for Verein Shedhalle Zürich, Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2009, pp. 160-169.
14. Cf. Artur Zmijewski, *Angewandte soziale Kunst* in: *Körper in Aufruhr*, Daad-Verlag, 2010, pp.25-33 / Artur Zmijewski, *Applied Social Arts* in: *Krytyka Polityczna*, Warsaw, 3 Jan 2007, [www.krytykapolityczna.pl/English/Applied-Social-Arts/menu-id-113.html](http://www.krytykapolityczna.pl/English/Applied-Social-Arts/menu-id-113.html)
15. Cf. Theory Tuesday, *Each One, Teach One*, Corner College, Zurich, from 13 Mar 2012, Session with Stefan Wagner on *Applied Social Arts* by Artur Zmijewski, <http://corner-college.com/Veranstaltungen/1331593200/529>

RADICAL PEDAGOGY:  
WHOLESCHOOLING

Mildred's Lane and  
The Mildred Complex(ity)

J. Morgan Puett

*Being is the great explainer*

—Henry David Thoreau from his Journals

I am interested in new modes of being in the world – this evokes a social and political entanglement that incorporates questions such as: 1) our relations to people and to the environment, 2) systems of labor, 3) forms of dwelling, 4) inventive domesticating, and 5) clothing apparatuses – all of which compose an ethics of comportment. This is embodied in The Mildred's Lane and The Mildred Complex(ity) Project, which encompasses a working-living-researching-making strategy and is co-evolving a rigorous engagement with every aspect of life that we call work styles... being is the practice.

I have been engaged in the conceptually and materially complex field of installation art – my whole life – in varying forms and disciplines. Most recently founding and operating a vernacular architecture and landscape project (*Mildred's Lane*) encompassing site-sensitive, event-based, collaborative and emergent art practices – *experimental living*. Before this and concurrent to these ongoing projects, I have created a series of large scale museum research projects and installations that are

mostly investigations into histories of the needle trades thru deep autobiographical stories which intersect histories that emerge in the form of art installation; and earlier in my career, I created a series of experimental storefront projects that led to those installations; all stemming from project practices in graduate art and film-making school, where research projects morphed into a small forward thinking international clothing label existing in those storefronts – experiments that I *lived and worked* for almost two decades.

But it is the Mildred's Lane Project that I mean to speak of here. At Mildred's Lane, I take on all these concerns dodging the ideological posturing of any singular discipline. It is here I called myself an *Ambassador of Entanglement*, putting aside questions of Art (or artist) – high or low in order to generate new questions of where to situate space for praxis and action; is it in a storefront, is it in a museum? ...In a factory or home? In such *work stylings*, one moves through time and experiences transitioning between spaces and landscapes, not what galleries, thus getting away from what we recognize as traditional tableaux.

*Mildred's Lane*

*Curiosity is a new vice that has been stigmatized in turn by Christianity, by philosophy, and even by a certain conception of science. Curiosity, futility. The word, however, pleases me. To me it suggests something altogether different: it evokes "concern"; it evokes the care one takes for what exists and could exist; a readiness to find strange and singular what surrounds us; a certain relentlessness to break up our familiarities and to regard otherwise the same things; a fervor to grasp what is happening and what passes; a casualness in regard to the traditional hierarchies of the important and the essential.*

*I dream of a new age of curiosity. We have the technical means for it; the desire is there; the things to be known are infinite; the people who can employ themselves at this task exist. Why do we suffer? From too little: from channels that are too narrow, skimpy, quasi-monopolistic, insufficient. There is no point in adopting a protectionist attitude, to prevent "bad" information from invading and suffocating the "good." Rather, we must multiply the paths and the possibilities of comings and goings.*

—Michel Foucault, in *The Masked Philosopher*

Mildred's Lane is a 96 acre, wild-ish site deep in the woods of rural northeastern Pennsylvania on the border of New York. It is an ongoing collaborative involvement with my fellow artist and friend, Mark Dion, our son Grey Rabbit Puett, our friends and colleagues in the world who convene there annually. We are co-evolving pedagogical strategies by practicing a generous and rigorous engagement with every aspect of life. It is a working-living-researching experiment. The entire site has become a living museum, or rather—a new contemporary art complex(ity). Importantly, it is about people.

The place itself inspired all these musings. A remarkable woman farmer, Mildred Steffens (1902–1987), grew up and lived her entire life here during the 20th century — much of the time alone. We call her old 1830's homestead building The Mildred's Lane Historical Society and Museum, and it is now a preservation project, an archive and one of the dozens of site-sensitive experiments and discreet landscape interventions smattered across a portion of this wild and magical acreage. But much of Mildred's Lane, the land, is a future preserve becoming.

What is different about Mildred's Lane is that it functions as a school as well as a home. Reassembling the connections between working, living, and researching, centered on specific con-

cepts and projects sensitive to these concerns. This unusual program affords people the ability to participate in the production of research-driven projects within a truly transdisciplinary and collaborative environment. The practitioner, the student and the institution collapse as we attempt to co-evolve to develop a curriculum for new and emergent practices. This means to exist in the everyday with a revolutionary rigorous rethinking (the 3 Rs) of the contemporary art complex. These rare and valuable conditions of exchange, collaboration and generosity have shaped into shared experiences that have transformative and lifelong effects on how we think of ourselves as creative practitioners functioning in the social sphere.

At the core of this new curriculum are two principles: (1) that for students, research-based and project-based learning practices are best pursued in the context of the actual site and (2) education should be principally involved in the development of new modes of life — what we call work styles.

Work styles is a term we use for any practitioner's experiential working-thinking-doing process (active systems-thinking) through a highly stylized and conceptual arrangement or hooshing the everyday environment of things, particularly with a sensitivity of community involvement in mind. Hooshing is another rigorous, aspect of the event and is encompassed in the core philosophy of Mildred's Lane — work styles.

This unique program does not strive to duplicate other studio residency models. Students do not get studio spaces — the site itself is the studio. Life itself is the studio. A day at Mildred's Lane requires negotiating a leave no trace policy similar to that of the National Park Service. This sensitivity applies not only to the landscape but also to people, animals, out-buildings, and objects — things. One is asked to seek new balance and relation-

ships through the ongoing activation of work styles.

Food and dining are at the heart of our work styles, and are constantly emergent collaborations. After all, food is a collective event. These food projects have been most memorable for our participants and guests. We often make meals using an algorithmic process of collaboration that forces the participants to allow for dinner surprises. The algorithm is a set of steps or instructions to create new problems, while at the same time, making a democratic arrangement of events rather than a singularly authored or predetermined outcome. Quite simply, algorithms allow for energetic and socially engaged events. By creating a playful game inventing algorithms, a guest may quietly emerge as a dish, or may have indirectly informed a particular arrangement, or as we say, hoosh. Again, Being is the practice. This presents a social and politically charged entanglement that embodies relations to people, relations to the environment, systems of labor, forms of dwelling, clothing apparatuses and importantly, inventive and creative domesticating – all of which, compose an ethics of comportment – work styles.

*The Mildred Complex(ity)*

*We invoke one dualism only in order to challenge another. We employ a dualism of models only in order to arrive at a process that challenges all models. Each time mental correctives are necessary to undo the dualism we had no wish to construct but through which we pass. Arriving at the magic formula we all seek—pluralism = monism— via all the dualisms that are the enemy. The furniture we are forever rearranging.* (Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari)

By hosting and supporting international cultural producers, organizing informal residencies, developing site sensitive projects, seminars, dinners, research think tanks and more – we have

made Mildred's Lane a significant but invisible center for these new forms of creative practice. We welcome this 'new age of curiosity' -- activating connections that situate themselves at the nexus of science, methods of living and critical artistic practices, thus engaging in, of and with the world. Now, Mildred's Lane has come out of the woods and onto Main Street, USA in the form of a series of public collaborative projects with the Upper Delaware River Valley community.

This new project began with the Retail 21<sup>st</sup> Century (R21c.) Sessions that have been research-based think tanks convening at Mildred's Lane since 2007. R21c. topics include: contemporary, post-recession economic strategies, changing Art World dynamics, and new roles for the creative practitioner. We have been exploring emerging spaces of cultural production and social practice, which most importantly include the creative and inventive domestic environment – clothing-feeding-dwelling. It was collectively decided that Mildred's Lane would establish an off-site space for broader community discourse and experimentation on the future of exchange, thus co-evolved The Mildred Complex(ity). Mildred's Lane and The Mildred Complex(ity) are now a studio, office, experimental storefront and project space in Narrowsburg, NY, a hundred miles northwest of New York City. This environment positions many emergent projects by Mildred's Lane's International Artists, many you can see posted at our website [www.mildredslane.com](http://www.mildredslane.com). The aims of these projects, having 'City and Country' potency, concern the dynamics of people and production in the spirit of exchange. Projects with Resident Artists in Complex(ity) may manifest in installations, performances, workshops and more; always as community collaborations and with particular geography to food. In this small town, our colleagues are building renewable social-

ity, charged with environmental activism. Our most significant and ongoing project is resisting the atrocities of hydraulic gas fracturing of the Marcellus Shale reef that sweeps deep under much of the northeast as well as all over the world, the gas and oil corporations have quietly and toxically put our water at risk, our soil and food... endangered. Our involvements with the greater community are with this dialog at hand and our collective resistance is in our town work stylings.

An 'ethics of comportment' offers us a way to navigate everyday experience. The term comportment is conceptualized here as our behaviors belonging to or affecting a whole community, or rather, a commons; and, with consideration of behavior as a constant negotiation with the environment—things and space, human and non-human, it is rethinking our involvement with our everyday habits – fooding, shopping, making, cleaning, gaming, sleeping, reading, thinking, and doing – we attempt to make each gesture a sensitive and sustainable one. This attitude demands attention to what and who is before you, and after you, making way for the next gesture requires generosity and sharing at all times. Such work stylings have no beginning and no end—they are the eventful actions that make up our lives, offering a democracy of possibilities for new types of exchange as shared experiences.



Mildred's Lane Camp, CCA Tbilisi

### *Radical Pedagogy: Wholeschooling*

*Wholeschooling* is a project that has erupted out of Mildred's Lane and the Mildred Complex(ity). It is a project with many layers, some of which reach back into my own personal history. But more, it is a project addressing women's work in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. There are still omnipresent prejudices and conundrums in living and working and living as both a mother and an artist. I have found that the last several years, as my son, Grey Rabbit Puett, gets older (b.2000) there is more demand to address his needs, which are importantly, to make sure that he learns how to take care of himself, to care for himself, to care for others, most of all being open to and caring for the earth. It is a project that transports an ethics of comportment into the realm of education of my child.

My son and I have been collaborating and co-curating a series of nomadic trips-in-study through experience – researching, writing, conversing and *workstyling* with friends in the world. This most unusual adventure is about relearning to grow, as an emergent event without the constraints of predetermined institutional curriculums.

I have boldly taken Rabbit out of the American middle school system and we are on a journey of curiosity. We are inviting our colleagues and friends around the world, to inspire and realize new and emergent curriculums, putting forth several questions to this affect: *What do you think is important for us to know in this age of political unrest, environmental turbulence and changing world histories of labor? What lessons would we/could we/should we learn/teach/create? What conceptual tools do we need? What is important information we need to know in the 21st century?*

We (Rabbit and I) are installing a series of provisional Mildred's Lane camps in each location we visit, offering creative domesticating experienc-

es and events in exchange for lessons. These exchanges may take form as a conversation, a tour, an assignment, for rearranging your home, sewing, mending, a picnic, cooking or other domesticating possibilities. We invite proposals for a date and a lesson exchange. Please send your proposal or invitation to [mildredslane@gmail.com](mailto:mildredslane@gmail.com) and follow the calendar of events at [www.mildredslane.com](http://www.mildredslane.com).

So, nested in the discourses of my home at Mildred's Lane and The Mildred Complex(ity) is the fact that I am a single parent, solving old problems as well as inventing new ones within new waves of feminism—and motherhood. This project puts to practice a shift from the isolated authorities of public schooling and home schooling, and forces us to address the potentiality of new work styles, new sociality, a *whole* engagement inclusive of the conflicted introspections of our domestic concerns in our everyday lives as creative practitioners. Work is our life; therefore, we weave our lifestyle through it.

**Midred's Lane, Contemporary art complexity (collaboration between Mark Dion and J. Morgan Puett), New York**

## MAUMAUS RESIDENCY

*Jürgen Bock*

The core activity of the Maumaus School comprises an Independent Study Program (ISP) that offers artists an intellectually intense and practically demanding environment after their studies and first experiences in the field. The program seeks to instigate discussions on contemporary philosophies concerning phenomenological issues from artistic, (art) historical, political and sociological perspectives.

The ISP was invited to develop its activities during the run of the Triennial in Tbilisi at the Vladimir Kurtishvili Memorial House on 2 Mardjanishvili Street, a flat in downtown Tbilisi, in which the Georgian architect lived and worked. The architect's studio was turned into a seminar room as well as a public space for the Maumaus lecture series. When there were no classes or lectures, the studio became an exhibition space featuring Jimmie Durham's film *Cowboys and the São Paulo Biennale* (2008, color, sound, 35 min.) Jimmie Durham has been involved in Maumaus' activities as a lecturer in both Lisbon and São Paulo since 1994.

During the Triennial the Independent Study Program developed a public Maumaus Lecture Series alongside activities reserved for the enrolled participants. The non-public part consisted of an introduction to Maumaus and three seminars.

The group comprised people from the art world, such as artists, architects and curators with previous experience in their fields of practice. The participants were chosen by the organizer of the Triennial, the CCA Tbilisi, in close collaboration with Maumaus, and they included: Beatriz Veliz Argueta, Lasha Babuadze, Teona Burkiashvili, Ana Chaduneli, Tamuna Chaduneli, Ruth Mariet Trueba Castro, Khatia Chokhonelidze, Mari Kalkhitashvili, Sopo Kiviladze, Giorgi Maghradze, Maja Malinovska, Tamuna Mchedlishvili, Mari Nakani, Tatia Shavgulidze, Tornike Toradze, Gulmira Ulakova and Vato Uru-shadze.

The Swedish artist Henning Lundkvist, who has studied at Maumaus and participated in the ISP residency at the 29th São Paulo Biennale in 2010, organized and ran the Maumaus Program during the time of the Triennial.



Maumaus' Seminar/Screening Room, Jimmie Durham Screening, Vladimir Kurtishvili Memorial House

## Program

16.10

### Arrival of Maumaus.

Installation of the Maumaus Seminar/Screening room in the studio of the Georgian architect Vladimir Kurtishvili.

17.10

11 am – 1 pm

### Constitution of the Maumaus ISP at the Tbilisi Triennial.

Introduction by Jürgen Bock, Dean of the Program.

2.30 pm – 5 pm

### Seminar with Jürgen Bock: *On Art, around Art and beyond Art*

The seminar evolved through discussion between the course leader and participants. For two days, the participants worked together, thinking about how significance was created in art in the past and today. Texts were read and discussed, films were watched. A Foucauldian deconstruction of art-related practice shaped the discussions, scrutinizing art systems as invented by man and constituted via artists' participation. The group considered non-conformist behavior, addressing fields of cognitive processes, psychoanalysis and *passion*, analyzing artists who work against the grain.

18.10

2.30 pm – 5 pm

### Seminar with Jürgen Bock: *On Art, around Art and beyond Art*

Jürgen Bock works as a curator, publisher and art theorist. He is the Director of the Maumaus School of Visual Arts in Lisbon, Portugal, the Maumaus residency programme, and the exhibition space Lumiar Cité. His curatorial positions have included the Project Room at the Centro Cultural de Belém in Lisbon, 2000/2001 (including exhibitions with Eleanor Antin, Harun Farocki, and Renée Green), the 2003 Maia Biennial, and the German participation in the 2005 Triennial of India in New Delhi (with Andreas Siekmann). In 2007 Bock curated the Portuguese Pavilion at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Venice Biennial (with Ângela Ferreira). In 2012 he was the curator of Allan Sekula's *The Dockers* Museum at La Criée, Rennes and the exhibition *Heimo Zobernig* at the Museu Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía in Madrid. He organised the international conferences 'Contemporary Moments' (Lisbon, 2001) and 'The Next Revolution will not be funded' (Ber-

lin, 2011) and co-organised 'Modernities in the Making' (Dakar, 2011) and 'Rethinking Cosmopolitanism' (Berlin, 2013). His publications include *From Work to Text - Dialogues on Practice and Criticism in Contemporary Art* (2002) and the Portuguese version of the artist's book *TITANIC's wake* by Allan Sekula (2003). In 2008 he produced Manthia Diawara's film *Maison Tropicale*.

04.11

11 am – 2 pm

**Seminar with Manuela Ribeiro Sanches: *Violence, Power and Citizenship. (Post)Colonial Perspectives***

The seminar intended to stimulate debate on the issue of representation as delegation or exercise of power/violence as a means to oppression or liberation. Departing from Edward W. Said's *Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutor* (1989) the group analyzed a set of theories and approaches involved in the representation of power and violence in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Hannah Arendt's reading (1968) of Fanon's *Wretched of the World* (1961) constituted a point of departure to consider the role of violence and subalternity in order to consider the ways in which history and geography have catalyzed different readings of these 'travelling theories' (Said, 1994).

The group further explored the question of representation as substitution or delegation, connected to issues of citizenship and human rights from a contemporary perspective, namely through Jacques Rancière's readings (2004) of Arendt's notion of the 'right to have rights' (1951).

Parallel to the analysis of these texts, they addressed the way in which these issues have been translated into filmic language (Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers* [1966], Octavio Gettino and Fernando Solana, *La hora de los hornos* [1968] and Abderrahmane Sissako, *Bamako* [2006]).

The challenge was the following: how to make sense of texts and images produced in other times and places in our contemporary 'global' world, from a 'local' point of view? How (far) do such theories and images travel in 'time' and 'space'?

7 pm – 9 pm

**Maumaus Lecture Series. Manuela Ribeiro Sanches: *Difference, Citizenship and the Power of Re-presentation***

The lecture proposed a reflection on representations of difference across disciplines and on the way in which

these representations have been addressing questions of culture and citizenship – or particulars and universals – exploring the tension between cultural anthropology's classical approach (cultural relativism) and the claim to citizenship grounded in universal human rights. This tension was set in a historical context, tracing the way in which cultural anthropology has contributed to the defense and the reification/production of difference, as well as providing a critique of the latter in the context of the crisis of ethnographic representation. Manuela Ribeiro Sanches also considered the ways in which notions of representation and citizenship, universals and human rights have been subject to critical scrutiny in recent decades by means of a complex appropriation of the Enlightenment tradition from a post-colonial perspective.

05.11

11 am – 2 pm

**Seminar with Manuela Ribeiro Sanches. Second part: *Violence, Power and Citizenship. (Post)Colonial Perspectives***

06.11

11 am – 2 pm

**Seminar with Manuela Ribeiro Sanches. Third part: *Violence, Power and Citizenship. (Post)Colonial Perspectives***

Manuela Ribeiro Sanches is a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Letters, University of Lisbon, where she teaches a diverse range of subjects through a cultural studies approach. She has also held lecturing appointments at Indiana University, Bloomington; Institut für Europäische Ethnologie, Humboldt-University in Berlin; and the Maumaus Visual Arts School, Lisbon. She has been a resident scholar at the Center for Cultural Studies, University of California, Santa Cruz, and at the Institut für Europäische Ethnologie, Humboldt University in Berlin. She is also a researcher at the Centre for Comparative Studies at the same institution where she coordinates the project 'Dislocating Europe. Post-Colonial Perspectives in Literary, Anthropological and Historical Studies'. She edited a collection of essays entitled *Europe in Black and White: Immigration, Race, and Identity in the 'Old Continent'* (Intellect, 2010) and *Malhas que os impérios tecem. Textos anti-coloniais, contextos pós-coloniais* (Edições 70, 2011).



*Maumaus' Seminar, Vladimir Kurtishvili Memorial House*

12.11

11 am – 2 pm

Seminar with Marcel Stötzler:  
*Adorno and Benjamin on Commitment, Culture and modern civilization*

The series of three seminars were dedicated to a close reading and discussion of three key Critical Theory texts, Adorno's *Commitment* ('Engagement', 1962, in *Noten zur Literatur III*) and *Cultural Criticism and Society* ('Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft', 1951, in *Prismen*), and Walter Benjamin's *On the Concept of History* (also known as '*Theses on the Philosophy of History*', in the original '*Über den Begriff der Geschichte*', written in 1940, first published in 1942). '*Commitment*' discusses the dialectic between the 'committed' (to be distinguished from 'propagandist') and the 'autonomous' artwork, commenting on Sartre, Brecht and Benjamin; *Cultural Criticism and Society* plays on the double meaning of 'Kulturkritik' as critique of culture (or of civilization) or/and the criticism of cultural artifacts, and their relationship. Adorno points to a criticism of cultural artifacts that is committed to the progress of culture/civilization while refusing to be happy and at ease with its actuality. Benjamin's text entirely resists summing up, but needs no introduction; at its core it contains, among other things, a critique of the optimism of the labor movement.

7 pm – 9 pm

Maumaus Lecture Series. Marcel Stötzler: *Memory, Commemoration, Education* The lecture discussed *Memory, Commemoration, Education*.

Adorno recommends the hard work of education in the sense of 'working through' as the appropriate mode of remembering and remains highly skeptical of 'com-

memoration', especially when organized by states and similarly dubious institutions.

13.11

11 am – 2 pm

Seminar with Marcel Stötzler:  
*Adorno and Benjamin on Commitment, Culture and modern civilization* (second part)

14.11

11 am – 2 pm

Seminar with Marcel Stötzler:  
*Adorno and Benjamin on Commitment, Culture and modern civilization* (third part)

Marcel Stötzler is a lecturer in Sociology at Bangor University, UK. He works on social and political theory, intellectual history and historical sociology, and has lately concentrated on various aspects of modern anti-Semitism, especially its interconnections with liberalism and nationalism and the emergence of the discipline of sociology. He has also published on feminist theory, Critical Theory (Frankfurt School), Hannah Arendt, and Marx. His first book, *The State, the Nation and the Jews. Liberalism and the Anti-Semitism Dispute in Bismarck's Germany*, was published in 2008 by the University of Nebraska Press. He serves on the editorial board of *Patterns of Prejudice*, of which he has edited a special issue (May 2010) on *Modern Anti-Semitism and the Emergence of Sociology*.

Jürgen Bock, Director Maumaus School of Visual Arts, Lisbon

THE PRINCIPLE OF  
A CROOKED PRISM

Educational Philosophy  
Kaywon School of Art and Design

*Young June Lee*

In Korea, art education is facing multiple problems. First of all, the post-industrial, Samsung-dominated society is afraid of the alien gaze of art and tries to tame it. The plethora of museums, galleries, awards and residencies did set out to nurture art, but ended up withering the essence of art by pouring in too much nutrition. The nutrition ingredients such as money, attention, and the lure of promotion are a direct threat to young artists in that they tend to lure them to a hasty stardom. The case of Bahc-yiso, who was the best artist in Korea and who died at the age of 47, should always be remembered. He died of the negative pressure of the over-abundant Korean society. Bahc-yiso, who always sought after the aesthetics of the periphery, died after being fatigued by the pressure of capitalist society – he used to teach at Kaywon School. Bahc-yiso showed the polarity in which artists' lives take place, i.e. either they remain pure artists dying untimely and improperly or become artists-entrepreneurs enjoying money, power, and fame. There seems to be no in-between. In either instance, society does not properly harbor the artist. The glittering golden seat of fame is not the apex an artist can reach, but rather the ruin of art – in Walter Benjamin's sense of the ruin of history. The art

people still enjoying affluent lives after Bahc-yiso are the accomplices that have killed him, since we did not do our best to prevent his death, or the death of art. Thus, we all carry a sense of guilt. The only way to overcome it is to recognize the position of art in an over-abundant society.

Art will remain a permanent 'other' to society. It refuses to be identified and subsumed under the rubrics that the society employs to digest it. Art resembles the position and structure of the sacrificial anode used in a steel structure such as a ship's hull in order to prevent its corrosion. A sacrificial anode is a small piece of metal alloy such as magnesium, aluminum and zinc with a more 'active' voltage (more negative electrochemical potential) than the metal of the structure. When a metal piece corrodes, two reactions occur: oxidation where electrons leave the metal which results in the actual loss of metal, and reduction where the electrons are used to convert water or oxygen to hydroxide. The hydroxide ions and ferrous ions combine to form ferrous hydroxide, which eventually becomes the familiar brown rust. Cathodic protection works by introducing another metal (the galvanic anode) with a much more anodic surface, so that all the current will flow from the introduced anode and the metal to be protected becomes cathodic in comparison to the anode. This effectively stops the oxidation reactions on the metal surface by transferring them to the galvanic anode, which will be sacrificed in favor of the structure under protection.

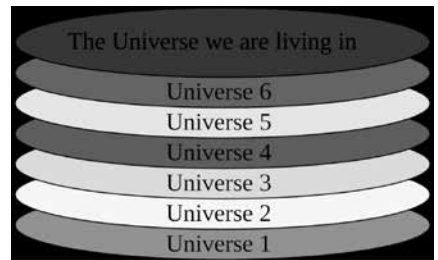


The difference in potential between the two metals causes the galvanic anode to corrode and the anode material is consumed in preference to the structure. (wikipedia) Like the sacrificial anode that is corroded to protect the main structure, art in society is corroded instead of being digested by it. However, society tries to assimilate art. Therefore, the co-failure of Kwangju Biennale and Pusan Biennale this year should have been expected well ahead. It marks the implosions of the art world which can no longer stay the 'other' for society. The curators of both Biennales should have known the principle of the sacrificial anode.

Another problem art education faces is the injection of stereotypes into the domain of art. Society kills art by pouring in all kinds of stereotypes. Korea is the society of stereotypes where each social class and group has their own. Even the language is imprisoned by stereotypes. The stereotype used to be the domain of people such as entertainers and sports players. Now that the stereotype has crept into the domain of art, one can observe more and more 'expression of the artist's dark side', 'expression of the national, cultural identity', the stereotypical 'attention to social issues such as migrant workers and demonstrations' and the shallow concept of 'the archival work'. A stereotype is a wide and comfortable road to travel. But it has no destination, since it is an empty signifier. Art must either refuse it or actively appropriate it. However, for art students whose artistic muscle is not yet fully strong, the battle with stereotypes cannot be won.

The third problem for art education is a more real and practical one. Korea is an aging society. The birth rate in Korea is the lowest in the world – it ranks 184th of 186 countries. This means that the number of high school graduates entering colleges is falling dramatically. By the year 2020, the

birth rate will have decreased so severely that several colleges will have to close down permanently. In order to prevent this disaster, the Ministry of Education requires colleges and universities to undergo a severe restructuring, including shutting down of unpopular departments and majors and an increase of the employment rate of students after graduation. These measures are very hostile to art education. Already several art colleges went through cuts of governmental subsidies and fear the threat of being shut down permanently. The onslaught of neo-liberalism in the current government has worsened the situation. The government stresses the importance of employment, but what company would hire an artist for doing artwork except for minor, ornamental jobs? Right now, there is no answer to this problem.



The Kaywon School of Art and Design is struggling against all odds. Rather than finding a direct answer, the professors and students of Kaywon try to build what can be called the Kaywon intellect or multiverse. The concept of *multiverse* comes from the theory of physics. In physics, it is believed that there are infinite dimensions of the universe in which heterogeneous principles reside. Each universe is a totally different cosmos than the others. Thus the universe is not one, it is many. The concept of multiverse has been hypothesized in diverse disciplines such as cosmology, physics, astronomy, philosophy, science fiction and fantasy. The multiverse also refers to parallel uni-

verses where different dimensions of the universe coexist.

The Kaywon School of Art and Design is a parallel universe of its own not only in that the School is distinct from other colleges and universities, but also from other art colleges in Korea. From its inception, the Kaywon School of Art and Design started off as a 'non-classificatory' school in governmental terms, which means that the school system falls outside of the existing government regulation. This feature has enabled the Kaywon School to install any program it wanted. From the start, the Kaywon School has taken to becoming a different kind of universe. Following the Bauhaus spirit, the Kaywon School focuses on the creative relationship between art and technology. Since 1993, the Kaywon School has worked to build an imaginary territory in which all kinds of disciplines of visual art and technology intermingle with each other.

In this process, what can be called 'the Kaywon intellect' has been born. It is a very peculiar sense of intellect that defies any definition in normal terms. Being askew, this intellect twists existing knowledge and tries to build a new territory. Quite distinctively, the Kaywon people deny the value of effort. This is a passive resistance to a trend of the Korean society that stresses immensely the importance of taking effort and doing your best. This motto has been effective for the last three decades in Korea. By 'worshipping' the monumental value of diligence - the power of religion is very strong in Korea; to challenge the authority of religions in Korea means death, actual death - Korea has overcome the ruin of the Korean War (1950-53), hosted the Olympic Games in 1988 and the FIFA Soccer World Cup in 2002, and has become strong in IT and automobile industry. But the ongoing heavy stress on the value of effort has resulted in the lack of creativity. Art

has been promoted in Korea only because it is thought to be one of the crucial items to make a country obtain the status of developed country. The participation of Korean artists in international biennales has been considered in the same vein as the participation of athletes in international competition. In this context, art is the triple game of power x money x fame. To Kaywon people, this game is no fun at all. They want to play a different game or no game at all.

The name of the game for Kaywon is called non-effort. This is different from just being lazy. Instead, it can be called 'productive laziness'. Kaywon people do things that are useless and senseless: raising a lamb on campus to observe whether a college campus is suitable for animal ecology, playing a ping pong game as part of a philosophical reflection, walking on a mountain carrying a torch at night to see how it reads the contour of the mountain terrain, pretending to be president of design and getting ready for the upcoming presidential election in December.... These activities do not come from any supreme ideology of avant-garde art or social change.

Unfortunately and fortunately, most of the Kaywon students are social residues. They come to Kaywon not because they gingerly want to attend this school, but simply because they lack the average score to go to better art colleges. In Korean society where school scores are stressed for every aspect of life, the Kaywon students belong to the lowest stratum of school ranking - there are three strata of four-year colleges and then there are two-year colleges, which means Kaywon belongs to the fourth and lowest stratum. However, there are things you can see only when you are at the bottom. That is the virtue of being residual. For this reason, for some Kaywon students, the social super-ego does not work. They do not consciously resist

it. Their creatively deformed ego (or id) simply does not fit to it. So they can't be ordered to do something in the name of education. The motto is, 'if you don't like it, don't do it', which is contrary to the motto 'do your best and overcome every impossibility' of Korean society in general. The activities of Kaywon students result in the value of the non-value, which is socially peripheral, unrecognizable, and meaningless. One can say this is the typical character of contemporary art in general, but what is notable in Kaywon students is that their works form endless dimensions of the periphery. The ontological status of contemporary art in society is peripheral and this very positionality is transformed into a stardom, which is well demonstrated in the cases of YBA - Young British Artists. Thus, in contemporary art, the relationship between the center and the periphery is always dynamically fluctuating. However, that is not the dream of the Kaywon students. They don't want to be a Korean version of YBA. Unlike a conventional two-term structure composed of the center and the periphery, Kaywon students keep on pushing themselves to the n-th dimension of the periphery. Mental aberrations including schizophrenia, hysteria and paranoia (depression is too common to mention) have helped many of the Kaywon students to build this dimension.

Instead of making all kinds of efforts for self-promotion in an anxiety to be recognized, (which is the trait of the students of the prominent art colleges like the Korean National University of Arts), the Kaywon students push themselves to the radical periphery where nothing is guaranteed. Sometimes this dynamic takes the form of a negative direction such as praising vice and looking awry. As a result, the universe that is Kaywon School of Art and Design is a contorted prism. It will be useless in traditional optics, but it will give us a spectrum we never have imagined. If

you doubt the value of a deformed prism, the Kaywon students would ask you what the right shaped prism has achieved in this society. Looking back at all the distorted shapes of the Korean society (the wrong president Lee Myung Bac doing all the wrong things, turning back history to the 1970s, spending a few hundred billion dollars of tax money for useless construction works, the wrong, seemingly right scholars and intellectuals who supported him with sly discourses of academic truth, the wrong ideology of neo-liberalism that appears to be true), what is really needed is a crooked vision, or awry vision. This is where the non-value of the Kaywon School will work.



Kim Jisun, *Well Stealing the Forbidden Places* (video still, 2012), Literature Museum.

Therefore, Kaywon students cannot be taught to be creative. The strategy to deal with these students is a reversed education. Instead of teaching them certain contents according to certain curricula, they are simply told 'the school is not out there'. They are simply encouraged to find a school inside themselves. The class curriculum does not dictate what should be learned. Instead, it encourages the students to find fragments of the school in themselves. In my 'teaching', students are encouraged to write their own essay about any topic they want. The motto is: 'write like an expert. If you

behave like an expert, you can become one.' What is needed is a creative mimetic faculty. The students are told that fiction is a part of truth. The purpose of this practice is not to turn the students into experts, but to equip them with humor to mimic experts and in parodying them achieve another dimension of expertise in art (e.g. the illegal demonstration Kim Jisun organized in *Gwanghwamun Square*, Seoul, 2012).

However, not all the students of Kaywon are independent and idiosyncratic enough to defy the symbolic order of this world. It is only less than 10% of the whole population of the Kaywon School that is that distinct. To deal with the other 90% is a big problem, since they tend to be passive, reactive and lack the will to build their own world. In these cases, the strategy of encouragement is crucial in Kaywon as the students are not coming from the strata of students full of confidence. They have been deprived of confidence, and hence, of their voice. Indeed, many Kaywon students have pathetically low voices. They don't seem to want to be addressed and thereby recognized by their teachers. I say 'pathetic' because the voices are low not due to a natural reason but due to the oppressed mental condition. Therefore, it is very important to give those students a voice.

The strategy for this was the wholesale innovation of the school system that almost amounted to a revolution. The motto was 'integration'. The professors who dreamt of innovation tried to practice diverse methods and levels of intermingling of majors and areas. They dreamt of the mixture of fashion design and product design, of photography and performance and, of course, of theory and studio practice. In this process, the department system was replaced by a track system, which meant the students could freely criss-cross from field to field. The purpose of this measure was to jump

from the closed boundary of the department system to a wide open field of visual culture and technology. Students were expected to create their own peculiar field out of this mixture so that they could be the masters of their own world.

However, the intensity of the progress itself was an obstacle to its successful implementation. The conservative professors feared they might lose their position. What they really feared was the speed of the innovation. Or, the radical nature of the innovation. Right now, after the onslaught of the conservative professors the innovation has failed. The system of the Kaywon School is stuck between the past and the future. A small section of the students and professors who still support the innovation now look like the previously mentioned sacrificial anode, or a parallel universe within the Kaywon School. As this situation is a miniature of the Korean society on the whole, the art education philosophy of the Kaywon School will work as an Ouija board for society.

Young June Lee, Professor Kaywon School of Art,  
Seoul

viding my life into two professional parts such as an artist and a professor, could I bring both the art production and artistic research areas together and transform an in-between area into an exciting experience? Could we deploy a performative research method for education? Rather than adjusting theory to practice, could we have practice make theory come to life and internalize it? Rather than having classrooms in the universities, could we turn Istanbul into a workshop?

## ACTING IN THE LIBRARY

*İnci Eviner*

*Acting in the Library* started on a meeting and working platform, which I named 'the working-space'. Next we decided to transform this space into a stage. We began to invite concepts and norms to this stage. About six or seven months ago, a group of young artists and the students of Kadir Has University collaborated in an open call: they wanted to search and experience the idea and the space of the library through performative practices. They were also in search of a different education method, i.e. to form a space beyond the restrictive curriculums of art education. I thought the Tbilisi Triennial invitation a good opportunity for developing such an education project. The question I had about art education is 'How could one break the student-instructor hierarchy?' I was open to surprises and, in my view, even a veterinarian could participate in the open call.

In Turkey, public universities are free of tuition, but for some of them the education curriculums are determined by the ideology of the party in power. Students are selected through aptitude tests and central examination systems. On the other side, Foundation Universities tend to back off from open art departments, since those departments do not make any profits. To overcome this duality, could I form mobile, in-between, unsteady, independent, experimental, open spaces? Instead of di-



*Acting in the Library, Display/Stage, Literature Museum*

At the first meeting, before deciding where we should start, we pointed out the traps: we should stay away from a research method that is descriptive, didactic, declarative; we should avoid artificially fitting theory into art; and we should try to find an action area rather than methods based on qualitative and quantitative, logical thinking. We should not consider production as our target; the emerging works should be like by-products to us. So we created a stage and explored what art has contributed to the world and how these contributions have been put into action. Certainly archive research, literature, and artistic production were actors on the stage - just like us.

Initially, we were a group of twenty people, but some people left and a few months later we were nine people. Meeting once a week, from time to

time we invited guests, such as a dramaturge, dancer, or sociologist, to the stage and join in their plays. The chaotic atmosphere at the beginning became clearer when everyone discovered their own research method. While acting together, small groups were created, individual disengagements happened, but finally we all felt again 'action is like an operation'.

Emre Saglam: There was too much motivation and information. Therefore I had been offended by the library and had to get re-acquainted with it. I ran to the nearest library and at the reference desk I asked information about 'the library itself'. Also I asked to be shown all the resources which included the name 'library'.

Rather than having theory reflect on practice, is it possible to search for new potentials practice could offer theory? Could a library be a center of an operation?

Ceren Acun: We are drowning in information but starving for knowledge.

Act (choir): Find the girl with the glasses in the scanned picture.

Ceren Acun: Could I approach the library as a sort of operation center that interacts our bodies with the texts?

Act (choir): Move on darling, move on darling.

Ceren Acun: Bringing intellect and order to the world is a pathetic effort.

Act (choir): Turn the antenna on, turn the antenna on, turn the antenna on.

Aslı Narin: 'A library is an ever-growing entity; it multiples seemingly unaided, it reproduces itself by purchase, theft, borrowings, gifts, by suggesting gaps through association, by demanding completion of sorts.' (A. Manguel)

Act (choir): Record the dots from zero to forty two.

Aslı Narin: The Tower of Babel remained standing as an evidence of our belief in the oneness of the universe.

Act (choir): Hear the scratchy sound, hear the scratchy sound.

Emre Saglam: First of all, memory is like a library that hasn't been put in alphabetical order, featuring no one's complete works.

Act (choir): Find the distance between the dots.

Didem Erk: 'Ordered by subject, by importance, ordered according to whether the book was penned by God or by one of God's creatures, ordered alphabetically or by numbers or by the language in which the text is written, every library translates the chaos of discovery and creation into a structured system of hierarchies or a rampage of free associations.' (A. Manguel)

Act (choir): Turn yourself around three times and jump and turn around again and again... and gain... gain... repeat eat eat eat peat...

Müjde

Bayraktar: Every choice casts the other out. The act of reading is an everlasting act of censorship.

Act (choir): You look ugly in every picture – dead pan shaky head don't be sad.

Şafak Catalbaş: 'Every library, by definition, is a result of choice and has to limit its realm. So with every choice, it excludes the other. What is, can not be done / what is undone becomes the choice. The act of reading goes parallel with an everlasting act of censorship.' (Archibald MacLeish)

Act (choir): Because you are incomplete, because you are incomplete.

Şafak Catalbaş: Is reading dangerous?

'Absolute power should require all the readings only to be official. Whatever the form, the censorship is the derivative of

power and throughout the history of reading, from papyruses until today's books, the fire of the censorship burns... The delusion of the book-burners is the belief of being able to initialize history and destroying the past...'

-Voltaire

Act (choir): Erase your face and be a shadow and move through history.

Emre Saglam: This whole search that I am in from the very beginning, the information I've saved, the images I've collected indicated me a mental library within itself. And that has led me to an idea of spatial digital structuring by making it possible for me to face this matter. 'He runs after facts like a beginner, learning to skate, who furthermore practices somewhere where it is forbidden'.

Emre Saglam: First I went into the school library, I realized the space between my personal experience and knowledge, I thought that space might have been a stage.

Act (choir): Somebody, you'll be a star in somebody else's sky.

Emre Saglam: What is the meaning of experiencing a space? Realizing yourself in a place or defining myself with the place? I stand alone in the middle of the library, I must move and rip off the relation that I have built within my daily practices and my ordinary approaches to the library. I wanted to lie down on the floor- from here where I look the library could have swallowed me-

And all together we became lost in the books -The Library at Night, The History of Reading and Dreaming by the Book. Everything was so interesting, we were driven away among all those texts. The only way to get away with that was to enact the quotes- Judith Butler *Greetings and Salutations!*

Act (choir): The whole process is a 'modus of being'.

Aslı Narin: We tried to sample the texts and quotes we have read - that was a mistake - we were imprisoned by the limits that sampling brought - as we realized this was a trap - we transposed our organs (transposed the senses). We thought with our feelings and felt, acted/moved with our minds - we reversed it - we realized the impossibility of the expression - all the things we have tried in transforming knowledge to expression was a trap and we tossed them out - 'I have an idea' - and that was trash!

Ceren Acun: And we invited guests: A dramaturge; Drama in the Ancient Greece to state the state of the acting text etc. etc...-

A performance artist; a book was invited to the stage as an object and enacted - different reading positions were experienced.

Emre Saglam: What is the meaning of moving on the text? A library where the words turn into sculpture - is it possible to think of a book? Could the books within the books be a strategy to expose the relations between the texts (mapping)? We started with the performative readings by following Elaine Scarry. We decided to actualize our library in a structure by going ahead with mapping. In this structure, everybody had a cell on his own and thus from the collective act to individual act and from individual to collective we began to work on a dynamic form of relation. In order to not get lost we invited *The Trial* by Kafka to the stage. And started reading the trial from our backs. And when we came back from there we decided to give ourselves in this process.

Act (choir): There is no doer, I'm doer,  
I'm not doer.

Ceren Acun: We are drowning in information  
but starving for knowledge.  
Perplexity is the beginning  
of knowledge.

And to hell with the censors!  
Give me knowledge or give me death!

'The outer and the inner clock  
relentlessly go their different ways.  
Outer time functions as usual.  
Inner time accelerates savagely,  
devilishly, demonically. It is driven  
by forces such as a relentless self-scrutiny  
that reflects on reflections of reflections  
endlessly, with terrifying swiftness.'

—Franz Kafka



Didem Erk, *Acting in the Library*, Literature Museum

Didem Erk

*Some Passages Are Deleted By The  
Author / Kimi Pasajlar Yazar Tarafından  
Silinmiştir*

What kind of an act is to lend  
books to the library instead of borrowing  
ones? How would an unregistered one  
leak to the system and would it provide  
a possibility of an encounter? I wrote

my own poem between the lines and  
consigned it to the library.

Could the library operate as a  
working space where one writes but not  
reads or produces but not consumes? Is  
it possible to see a library as an atelier?

And I sat by a desk — sat and  
wrote letters to a person unknown and  
I wrote them for days. I left the dated  
letters on the desk — in the library —  
to the library.

What sort of meaning gaps would  
translations of a book create? If each  
translation is an interpretation, is the  
book a continually changing meaning?  
— Would translations act continually —  
could they create a space of act — I  
erased, spoiled, excluded and erased by  
acting in the realm of the book — and  
formed a new space — words that were  
said, leave its verbal existence to  
written images and they turn into actors.

It proposes a form of physical  
reading — transformation of a surface  
to a book — Lines are interrupted — I  
suggest an impossible form of literal  
comprehension — these are the remaining  
spaces of the six e-books of different  
translations on Franz Kafka's *The Trial*  
which are accessible on the Internet.  
I deleted some passages which do not  
include the word 'trial' in English,  
French, Italian, Spanish, Turkish and  
German.

the doors of law are —  
recalling the doors of the library —  
which gives the sense of being neither  
inside nor outside, it is there —  
the threshold —

afak Catalbaş

*Remains Of The Road*

I started with my sitting meditation  
experience in the library, sitting and  
mental traveling — I have searched for  
the conflict between sitting and the  
acting of the mind — I have pondered how

I could visualize this.

Failure errorrrrrrrrr

When setting out in literal terms  
both visual and verbal expression

...Word on the road

Remains of the road  
Wrong has the right  
to be old...

*For the performance: 'as a scanner'*

Body in the mind embodied mind,  
law, and justice - for the laws made  
with reason, an offer as an answer in  
case of not stepping out of the dual-  
ity of the mind and the body complete-  
ly: a territory between enact and act  
- the laws that are made in the mind,  
processed in the body and then printed  
out, (body as a scanner) - it is pro-  
cessed in other minds-bodies - mind a  
scanner -

Heads under the cloth, limbs re-  
main uncovered - we went down under the  
table, the cloth covered our heads we  
were in semi-darkness, we lit our torch-  
es to be able to see the texts before  
us, there were texts of law, they were  
passed from hand to hand, it released  
what is kept by the silently reading  
memory, it screamed and shouted. The  
typewriter on the table wrote the new  
ones when recording the revealed.

Laws are enacted and minds are  
acting the traces of memory, process  
always triggers others in the oth-  
er minds in the other bodies... PRO-  
CESS continues with losses, constantly  
changing new processes in other minds  
- movement and transformation -

Aslı Narin

*Another Library*

In my cell, I came out with an  
idea of disposition of the images in  
the space that would generate a visual  
labyrinth. Following Borges - the li-  
brary is unlimited and cyclical. If an

eternal traveler were to cross it in  
any direction, after centuries he would  
see that the same volumes were repeated  
in the same disorder - which thus re-  
peated would be an order: the Order - I  
placed myself as a voyeur in that eter-  
nal cycle and I formed a transparent  
tunnel with the photographs I took. The  
transparency of the images accompanies  
the infinity of the knowledge. I trans-  
formed myself into a hidden eye in the  
library. I developed my research around  
using transparent layers to give depth  
and eternity to an image or a sentence.

Emre Saglam

*Sollicitare In The Library*

When experiencing the proposals  
of Elaine Scarry considering dream-  
ing by the book, the literary example  
she gives as a reference which I figured  
it would be as effective as *The Trial*  
by Kafka, I thought of this novel as  
a space I could act on. And I tried to  
catch the gestural movements. The refer-  
ences that were led by these movements  
opened in various texts and drew me into  
a different process of dreaming, these  
concussions and gestural approaches,  
my search in the library, basically oc-  
curred in two different acts. These two  
videos are interactive and simultaneous  
documentations of my research process  
relating to cinematic fictionalization.  
In the second video I directly tried to  
reach for the trial by getting at the  
center of all the map-like, imaginary  
and gestural approaches and I went ex-  
ploring the reference acts in the trial.  
This attempt is an inner reply to the  
concussions in the first video.

Müjde Bayraktar / Ayşenil Şenkul

*Cultivated Books*

Our first research was about a  
modular book system. The results of  
this work required the library as a

perception of architectural structure. In time we moved away from this idea and proceeded to an organic solution. When we turned our faces to the nature, we saw that to obtain knowledge, to wonder, to search, to reach for relative conclusions, to make new beginnings from these conclusions are processes that flow parallel to the natural cycle of life. As an expression of this cycle the plant has become a metaphor. The knowledge which spewed out of the books forms an organic relation with the celluloid environment of book leaves by its nature. Old encyclopedias, categorized knowledge suddenly turn into a living - alive garden. The book reunites with the nature as a substance and serves a living, an organic system.



Müjde Bayraktar / Ayşenil Şenkul, *Acting in the Library*, Literature Museum

Orkun Aziz Aksoy  
*Worldshelves*

In this work, I took 'the text' as the subject. I tried to demonstrate that the only thing which takes text and structure together is a library, based on the suggestion that a library resembles the structure of a piece of text which consists of letters, words and sentences whereas a library consists of letters, words, sentences, books and bookshelves.

My work consists of two different parts - as structure and text - which can be related to each other by inter-

rogating text-structure connection. Instead of creating a new text, I chose the words from fundamental rights and freedoms chapter in the constitution randomly, then as if constructing a building, I brought these words together in a form looking like poetry which is difficult to define if it is meaningful or not. A chapter in the Constitution is about prohibited books and this reminded me of bookshelves resembling cells which stand disconnected across each other.

As a structure this is a bookcase I built into my construction, by mounting box shelves which could contain a single book horizontally to the wall. As meant before, by changing its structure, this bookcase offers a reversal of the order of letter, word, sentence, text, book and bookcase. The structural similarity between the structure and text is stressed by placing each box shelf on the projection of a word of the text written on the wall in front.

...Liberties loyal to personalities / non to be divided to be removed / nobody's guiltier as the crimes other than deaths

Ceren Acun  
*The Silence Epidemic*

During our research, we almost performed a surgery on the library - we laid it on the table, started cutting and opened it - tried to understand how each organ functioned with the system. When confusion made us stuck, we called for some authors - dead and living - to lead this vague way.

Personally what attracted me was all the major obstacles while trying to reach for Knowledge itself. Using Censorship as a fear mechanism, throughout the history all the authorities, local or federal, oppressed the people, slaughtered their books and libraries and condemned them to silence. They desired absolute obedience.

While reading *The Library at Night* by Manguel and *The Trial* by Kafka at the same time, I found traces of all those sabotaged roads to knowledge and let myself visualize the combination of these two different sources. Silence became more and more concrete, shadows spread everywhere in my imagination. A world that is surrounded by the shadows of censorship; ban-ning or a-ban-doning ... All the guilty pleasures of the censorship caged the 'questions' in an unvoiced territory. So my work has become the depiction of this epidemic with some parts covered with overlapping of the same texts which made reading difficult by forming an illusion-like appearance. All the obstacles diseased, crippled and deaf-muted. Systems have created criminals looking for their crimes, the court is everywhere, it casts its shadow on every space.

Görkem Ergün

*Class P and Guard of the Library*

If you want to act  
you have to be  
chaotic and weird  
unidentified  
spooky  
and here is the library.

Act (choir): SO, LET'S ACT IN THE LIBRARY!

Inci Eviner, Aslı Narin, Didem Erk, Şafak Catalbaş, Orkun Aziz Aksoy, Ceren Acun, Mujde Bayraktar, Ayşenil Şenkul, Görkem Ergün, Emre Sağlam

Inci Eviner, Visual artist, Associate Professor  
Kadir Has University, Istanbul

## URGENT FLEXIBILITY

*Wato Tsereteli*

At CCA Tbilisi, we have discussed education from many perspectives and many – what I would like to call – forms of dramaturgy. Together with the State Academy here in Tbilisi, we have also reflected on how education can be more adequate and relevant today. What I would like to relate now is the alternative course we have developed at CCA called the *Informal Masters Program* – a program designed for nine months. Why only nine months? In Georgia, you need a license when you have an educational platform for more than nine months. But we do not want a license; we want to be free and independent. The nine-month time period was one of the niches we found in the legal system.

That independence is also connected to the notion of flexibility. Flexibility is relevant in both our historical period and in its application in our *Informal Masters Program*. Artistic practice and education are both related to the future rather than to the past. Obviously, artistic practice creates something, which does not exist yet; it is something new and still unknown pointing to the future, whereas education, evidently, is always oriented towards the future. Art education could even be called a tautology of the future.

We live in a very fast, changing world and in a rapidly changing reality. For large university structures and other large institutions, it takes some time to adapt to new perspectives. But

when you operate outside – or offside – these systems, you can just very simply implement things. You do not have to work on accreditation, you do not have to deal with governmental agencies, you can basically rethink programs and even be visionary. So, you are not just implementing in real time, but also in future time, which might eventually result in something such as new profiles, new professions, or new study programs.

For the *Informal Masters Program*, we developed two courses one year ago. One of the courses is called *Mediation*, or *Context Production*, and it is basically the broader understanding of curatorial praxis. We assume that a context where creativity meets audience can produce new forms, new interactions, and new meanings. The mediation group is basically an ongoing project during a nine-month period, where the output is not just student works or sketches, but a real project initiated in different places in the city. I would like to mention one project by Gala Eristavi, who is also part of CCA's exhibition at this 1st Tbilisi Triennial. He went to a house called *Katharsis*, a house where homeless people can go and have food for free. Gala talked to different people and found five persons who would like to work with him. Then he asked five young artists to collaborate with these five homeless people from different age groups. In these collaborative groups, it turned out that one of the homeless persons used to be a photographer. So in the collaborative project with Gala he started to photograph again, and the young artists working with him reacted to these photographs. Another striking moment was when another homeless person, an author, wrote a novel about one of the young artists, who subsequently staged the novel. The result of this was that the mediator or context-producer Gala not only managed in the end to create a conceptual platform, but also to arrange and produce an entire exhibition.



Organic Farming Project (Mamuka Japharidze, Katharina Staedler). Back: Gala Eristavi, *Katharsis*. Literature Museum

Besides the *Mediation* or *Context Production* course, we developed a second course addressing the issue of how to export creativity from the art context and implement it into other spheres of life. Everybody is creative, but artists are creative professionals, so artists generate a very specific creative perspective; often irrational, often intuitive, through different lines of thinking, not always continuous, sometimes even contradictory or paradoxical, but all of that is why that creativity has a different value.

One of the projects in exporting creativity is conducted by Mamuka Japharidze in Shindisi. It is called *Organic Farming* and relates to art praxis.

Once a week the students go to Shindisi, one of the venues of the Tbilisi Triennial, seven kilometers from Tbilisi. Here the students learn basic knowledge about nature such as planting trees, how to grow vegetables, and so on. Thus, students are out of the city, they learn the basics of botany, after work they do some 'experimental cooking' and have a party, and all of that creates a great team feeling. The *Farming* course was possible to develop thanks to the flexibility in the *Informal Masters Program* and the initial support of the Swiss embassy in Tbilisi.



Informal Masters Program: Ketí Nadibaidze (Chairs), Mariam Natroshvili (Game) Back space: *Test-Site for Unlearning* (Annette Krauss), Literature Museum

The two examples described above illustrate the advantages and privileges of flexibility in independent educational platforms – and the lack of it in non-flexible institutions like the academy. There is an urgent need to focus on transformations of issues relevant to artists such as what is a curator after the present economic crisis, how to rearrange economy, how to rethink production. Should we implement and develop different programs? In Georgia, there is no curatorial study program, which means we produce many artists without being able to put their work in context. That is why we have to find new profiles and new possibilities in the legal system to proceed further. If we do not connect to ‘actual time’ then we will be further removed from art education itself. Art education has to relate to the future, to the experiment and to the laboratory.

Wato Tsereteli, Visual artist, director CCA Tbilisi

## TEST-SITES FOR UNLEARNING

*Annette Krauss in collaboration with Hyunju Chung, Sofia Montenegro, Laura Pardo and Maiko Tanaka*

Annette Krauss – In 2012, I accepted the invitation for the Tbilisi Triennial for Art, Research and Education as a chance to work with artists, researchers and cultural practitioners on intensifying the phenomena of *unlearning* physically, intellectually and collaboratively. Through my long-term research into informal knowledge, (non-) institutional learning processes and hierarchical knowledge systems, I have come to consider unlearning as an active critical interrogation into normative structures. A process of awareness that accounts for taken-for-granted ‘truths’ of theory and practice through getting rid of habits of thought and behavior. But how to approach this process?

One initial step was to establish temporal, long-term and irregular *sites for unlearning* in designated activity spaces or institutional settings. The first site was held in a boxing-and-wrestling gym in Utrecht, the Netherlands. With a group of researchers from different fields we dedicated ourselves practically and theoretically to the endeavor of *unlearning to ride a bike*. It was a springboard for approaching the persistence of bodily knowledge: once you have learned how to ride a bike, it is almost impossible to forget it. Through physical try-outs, discussions, mapping and image-making, we posed and tested out questions such as,

How do we imagine learning? What prevents us from *unlearning*? What role do bodies and institutional settings play? How do we understand a biking activity in a country such as the Netherlands, where 'people are born on bikes'?

We continued this material-discursive exercise at *Site for Unlearning #2* in Tbilisi, where terms and visions established in Utrecht were counter-read by the urgencies and politics of the Tbilisi location. *Unlearning to ride a bike* here translated to *walking backwards* in the city, there.

In the text below, a number of artists, art historians, curators, students, and theoreticians expand on questions and issues emerging during the workshops. What images, exercises and vocabularies have been generated for imagining unlearning? What implications and entanglements occurred? And how are accumulative processes unlearned when certain hierarchies of (bodily) knowledge remain in tact?

Gianmaria Colpani

*Unlearning to ride a bike* is a mapping device. It maps our bodies, their capacities, and incapability to take on new shapes in relation to the world. This is also a map of the bodily working of learning processes, for however much our language may articulate the possibility of unlearning to ride a bike, our body fails to respond. While doing these mappings, *unlearning to ride a bike* has also acquired a life of its own on the broader map of the world. In the Netherlands, it managed to stir anger. In a country where people are said to have been born on bikes, *unlearning to ride a bike* may emerge as a form of literal anti-nationalist cultural politics. But in Tbilisi, where *unlearning to ride a bike* was transposed to a new environment, people and bikes do not go together so well: might the metaphor lose much of its strength through its roaming?



This need not be the case. *Unlearning to ride a bike* is quintessentially political not because of the cultural meanings it may question as much as its mapping of bodies and learning processes as collective matters. The reshaping of *unlearning to ride a bike* into a map of national differences is liable to override its most essential mappings. The cultural landscapes it encounters throughout its journeys should not crystallize such a lively metaphor into this or that form of literal cultural politics. Those landscapes, the worlds in which anybody unfolds, must perhaps temporarily interrupt yet ultimately reactivate our efforts to interrogate the bodily dimension of learning processes.

Tara McDowell I heard about the *unlearning* workshop at four o'clock in the morning, in a shared taxi from the airport to downtown Tbilisi. I thought that I grasped the concept immediately as both historical and produced by conditions of the present. I understood unlearning first as a Dadaist, nonsensical procedure, tinged with absurdity and impossibility. Clearly the point was not to unlearn, but to think critically about methods of learning: a slightly Derridean engagement with a pair of binaries by which giving full attention to one (unlearning) inadvertently reveals much about the other (learning). My next art historical reflex was to imagine unlearning as the heir to deskillling 1960s tactics linked with conceptualism and leading away from traditional skills of art making to art as information, instruction, or idea. Finally, I read unlearning as a form of social but also political resistance to the present's glut

of information, epitomized by the twenty-four hour news cycle, and the related shift from criticism to publicity, and from action to passive consumption. Unlearning as resistance has a historical precedent in the writings of the Situationists, who believed that *dérive* and *détournement* were important tools with which to resist social control perpetuated by spectacle. Yet the more I thought about unlearning, practiced unlearning, and debated unlearning with the group in the daily workshops in Tbilisi, the more the concept of unlearning slipped away. It grew unruly and evasive, a shape-shifter that refused to remain a bounded object within my view.

At the Bauhaus and later at Black Mountain, Josef Albers taught a preliminary course where students engaged in a number of rudimentary tasks meant to challenge perception. Recently, James Elkins has argued that although the Bauhausian rudiments are outdated, they are still frequently used in art pedagogy. Could we devise a new set of rudiments for today's art students, a set that would respond to and interrogate conditions of the present and current art making? If so, would unlearning be among them?

HyunJu Chung One of the participants of the *unlearning* workshop wrote down 'learn' and 'un-learn' in Georgian and then 'Un-learned-man'. He explained that the term 'unlearned man' actually means 'wise man' in Georgian. 'Crossing the street in Tbilisi' was also considered as a related phenomenon, since crossing the street in Tbilisi was a daily experience of unlearning how we crossed the streets in Utrecht. Together with

Tbilisi locals we crossed the street in their pace, which our bodies immediately understood and acted upon. And an idea for a new exercise emerged – walking backwards. Not as a fast and easily digestible intervention, but as a longtime, bodily and conceptual practice. Can we imagine to walk backwards for a day? What would walking backwards for a week entail – and for a lifetime? How would our environment look like, if walking backwards would be our normalized, everyday standard?

Vato Urushadze The idea to walk backwards for a few hours was suggested by Mamuka Samkharadze, who tried it out once on his own. Our experience was somehow different, because we were a large group. During the walk we experienced uncertainty, but felt secure because of strong group engagement and mutual care. The person walking backwards behind us, would give some directions. This helped to develop trust between us.

Simone

van Hulst

Imagining the unimaginable. To me unlearning entails demanding a different mode of relating to the new, the other, the different. In order to work with the notion of unlearning, we need a different method of thinking. I propose to turn to approximation as an alternative mode of relating to what is not imaginable yet, a method not aiming at grasping, and controlling but at delaying. A mode of approximation needs to acknowledge that we cannot ever reach a state of certainty or mastery over objects, notions or concepts we investigate. I believe that approximation as a mode of thinking and relating outside any form of

linearity can help to reconfigure what knowledge is and what we want from it.

Maja Malinoska So what did we want from 'unlearning' in 'walking backwards'? Unlike all that is obvious in everyday encounters for forward-walking, going backwards required full focus and attention. We became highly conscious of the ground surface beneath our feet and cautiously controlled every step. At least for a little while, we became aware of our stressful and hurried lifestyles and opened our eyes in the back of our heads.

Koka

Vashakidze

For me walking backwards was about the participation in the communicative processes with our surroundings. I remembered people observing us, some openly criticizing or laughing at us. Others – only a few – joined us for a little while. I wonder if these reactions are due to the fears of a society still very sensitive to the novel or different?

Sofia

Montenegro

Could we say that how we learn prevents us from unlearning? I am intrigued by the idea of relating to knowledge in a different way since actions ingrained in our bodies seem difficult to counteract. I wondered if unlearning is just another way of learning, and I was curious to know the reason why it is ignored (or unrecognized). Does the act of unlearning involve replacing the hierarchies of knowledge and reshaping its boundaries? I realized during the workshop that it is the adherence to our habits and traditions, added to the fear of the unknown that prevents us from unlearning.

Laura Pardo The question of 'What prevents us from unlearning?' I understood as relating to expectations or anticipations of something without reproducing what is already known or familiar. But when driving away from Tbilisi airport, I became suddenly aware that my expectations had been biased. At that moment, I already knew that the *unlearning to ride a bike* workshop was going to expand its sessions and also take place outside of the workshop framework. So, Spivak's notion of 'unlearning one's privilege' has been a key reference accompanying me from the first test site session onwards. It implies that assumptions and contexts we carry with us prevent us from learning. When we engage in all that we have overlooked due to our preconceptions and histories, we will come closer to others and maybe also to unlearning.

#### *Future Questions*

Maiko Tanaka In our attempt to move our practice of unlearning from Utrecht to Tbilisi, we asked participants at the Triennial: What would you want to unlearn? Instead of answers, we were confronted with the counter-question: *Why* do you want to unlearn? Or, what is so negative about accumulating knowledge? One Georgian participant suggested that 'we', coming from the Netherlands may be in a situation of abundant knowledge and are compelled to unlearn, whereas in Georgia, 'they' still have some 'catching up' to do. We hadn't grappled yet with such a response—how is our project culturally, politically and economically specific? Yet such a claim is problematic to the extent that it affirms a progressive linear de-

velopment of knowledge that places certain cultures (rich) ahead and others (poor) behind.

But we do have to acknowledge that the Unlearning project was developed in the Netherlands in proximity with art academies, access to numerous cultural discourses, and an international art market. If you compare this to Tbilisi, the cultivation of Georgian contemporary art culture might be viewed as 'behind'. And how could learning be thought in relation to soviet and post-soviet society? Would the desire 'to learn' (catch up) in this context be due to pressures to conform to western contemporary art standards? Or rather, is it more simply a desire to encounter and gain knowledge from different places? But in either scenario, learning as a progressive, disembodied and individualised endeavour is affirmed.

Perhaps in workshoping images, vocabularies and impossibilities of *unlearning*, we need to be more explicit in addressing *learning* itself. Perhaps then the question to start with is not, 'What do you want to unlearn?' but 'What do you want to learn, and why?'

*Unlearning* so far: Ana Chaduneli, Anja Groten, Annette Krauss, Bessa Kartlelishvili, Chris Lee, Christian Nyampeta, Elene Gabrichidze, Gianmaria Colpani, Giorgi Magradze, HyunJu Chung, Khatia Tchokhonelidze, Koka Vashakidze, Lasha Babuadze, Laura Pardo, Levan Skhirtladze, Maiko Tanaka, Maja Malinovska, Mamuka Samkharadze, Mari Nakanimasakhlishi, Miya Yoshida, Ruth Trueba Castro, Simone van Hulst, Sofia Montenegro, Tamar Chaduneli, Tamuna Dadalisa Mchedlishvili, Tara MacDowell, Tatia Shavgulidze, Vato Urushadze.

Annette Krauss, Visual artist, Lecturer MA Fine Art, MaHKU, Utrecht

## ADDIS CONTEMPORARY

*Lucrezia Cippitelli*

The history of art education in Africa is still – on an institutional level – remarkably linked to the tradition of the Fine Arts Schools imported and established by European Empires at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, following the *Scramble for Africa* and the colonization of the continent. In general, art schools are mostly informed with medium-based specializations – Painting, Sculpture, Design – which do not give space to the growth of a theoretical approach and do not consider late developments in visual arts and culture at large as possible models of reconsideration and re-mediation of contemporary creativity.

Over the last decade, across the entire African continent, new, independent structures in the field of arts have emerged, mostly initiated by artists or artist's collectives. To name a few: ACAF in Alexandria, Egypt; CCA Lagos, Nigeria; the Centre for Contemporary Art of East Africa, CCAEA, in Nairobi, Kenya. Those informal institutes – born with the intention to fill an existing gap between predominantly traditional art education and the global contemporary art system – constitute a very important platform providing an informal education based on workshops, residencies, and international exchanges. As a consequence, recent generations of artists from almost the entire continent (or at least in its main metropolises) had the opportunity to

expand their practices. They often grow up with perhaps a lack of a structured educational trajectory, but at the same time they are being granted the opportunity to widen the conception of art itself and even sometimes to participate in international programs.

The same did not happen in Ethiopia, where the dictatorship of Mengistu<sup>1</sup> represented a real turning point for a country until then marked by a strong sense of identity and cultural leadership in the continent. The School of Fine Arts and Design of Addis Ababa University, established in 1957, was, until the 1974s socialist putsch, one of the leading institutes of African Modernism, along with the University of Khartoum in Sudan and Makerere University in Uganda. The School has produced many internationally acclaimed Ethiopian artists like Skunder Boghossian who played an important role in the anti-colonial and independence struggles of the African Continent through visual arts. During the 1950s and 1960s, Addis Ababa was politically significant for African activism and attained great notoriety as a distinct hallmark of Pan-Africanism. The movement of African decolonization had its locus in Addis Ababa – the home for the Organization of African Unity. With and after the regime of Mengistu, the city (and Ethiopia in general) lost its position as a vibrant hub of cultural intersection and became gradually isolated from the African context and from the international scene.

Only in the very last years, the country progressively and cautiously evolved into a more receptive and accessible position, indeed systematically exposed to globalism. In a balance between quick structural and urban metamorphosis and isolation, Addis is nowadays the international interface of one of the fastest growing economies in Africa and an emerging international city where the latest generations of artists are shaping their

own vision of the visual arts and of the globalization of culture in general. The traditional languages of art as they are transmitted through institutional education contemplate Christian traditional painting and monumental painting and sculpture, mostly according to the generic idea that the country needs to instruct 'studio artist' (practitioners who will work mainly on public commissions for public spaces or buildings) or art pedagogues who will teach in the Art Academy.

Addis Contemporary is the initiative of an independent local organization of artists, scholars, and arts professionals establishing and supervising both a postgraduate program in partnership with the Addis Ababa University School of Art and a project space in a network with the few independent art organizations of the city. Its main ambition is to train a new generation of artists, educators, thinkers, writers and curators, connecting at the same time a blooming local art system to international platforms of display, research and education in art. The program also promotes an avant-garde educational model: scholars, artists, curators and thinkers are invited to teach and produce in Addis Ababa following a workshop and lab model. Most of the invitees originate from (or have a strong relation or practice in) the Global South: Africa, Latin America, the Arab world. The south-to-south critical perspective is a central element of the program aimed at building up a comparative approach to Contemporary Art and to discuss the Western centralism of the global art system. Furthermore, from a local Ethiopian perspective, the program aims to support the growth of the future generations of artists and thinkers, who will guide the coming cultural development of the country. From a Pan-African perspective, the program is prospected as a future resource for the East-African region

(and/or the African continent at large): a recognized educational institution that will provide a postgraduate degree to Ethiopian and African students and overturn the conventional displacement of students to the West. The platform furthermore focuses on writing an Ethiopian history of Modernism with the aim to train a generation of art historians and professionals who are able to link current practices to the global context with a conscious perspective.

Since a few years, Contemporary Art has filtered into Ethiopia from the international scene through the activities of some cultural centers linked with international diplomacies. In between their programs, they currently promote a series of workshops for local practitioners and art students lead by international artists. Among them, the Goethe Institute and the Alliance Ethio-Française hold the most significant role, also providing both workshop-based education and exhibition spaces for local artists. A few private galleries such as Asni Gallery have for more than a decade fulfilled the same function of supporting a growing local market of contemporary non-institutional art. Another relevant key factor in the dissemination of new ways to practice creativity is embodied by the Ethiopian Diaspora people who, after moving back to the country in the last decade, are mostly engaged in supporting the growth of a local art scene informed by recent developments in international visual arts. A symbolic example is the practice of Ethiopian-born, Canada- and US-educated photographer Aida Muluneh and the creation of the Addis Photofest – second edition in December 2012.

The offside effects of liberalist globalization, with its flattened capitalistic production models of consumption and the obliterating process of construction and circulation of a one-dimensional historical truth, is one of the main interests of new generations

of artists and producers from all over the Global South – and Ethiopia is not an exception. The works of the five artists invited to participate in *Offside Effects* fit into the quest of digging into the transformations of their country – from a strong contemporary, urban perspective, and exploring the inherent interconnection with the outside world.



Berhanu Ashagrie, *Morning Glory*. Literature Museum

Conceptual artist Berhanu Ashagrie, one of the participants in the presentation and installation of the Ethiopian project at the Tbilisi Triennial *Offside Effects*, is part of Addis Contemporary as the young director of the newly reshaped Alle School of Arts of Addis Ababa University. As an art practitioner, he is engaged in exploring the urban reconfiguration of Addis Ababa, questioning daily life experiences and the radical transformation of city spaces. In his performance and video work *Morning Beauty*, Ashagrie intervenes in a plot of land filled with broken stones: it is the landscape of a former neighborhood which now has been demolished. Involving the community of the area in the action, he installs a pipe which brings pure water to the district that has been without accessible water due to the ongoing demolitions.



Michael Tsegaye, *Chasms of the Soul*. Literature Museum

Michael Tsegaye's *Chasms of the Soul* depicts the changes of the city through a very conceptual and specific point of view: the destruction of part of the Kidus Yosef Cemetery by the administration of the city to make space for the expansion of a road. Visiting the cemetery and its remaining grave-stones, he noticed that most of them were broken, not because of the works but because of vandalism. His photographic installation is conceived to invert the normal proportions of the subject matter. Large-sized pictures show a tiny detail of the tombs: the little frame containing picture of the buried, with the broken glass and the image barely recognizable. With *Memory Back to Forth*, Helen Zeru questions the notion of the 'modernization' that the city of Addis is facing through the immense transfigurations of its landmarks. In a staged performance, a mummy moves through the ruins of an abandoned field. Workers are demolishing fragments of stones with hammers and something that – at a closer look – appears to be a graveyard which is being slowly demolished in order to make room for the newly built city.



Helen Zuru, *Memory Back to Forth*. Literature

Museum

Note

1. After Emperor Haile Selassie I was removed from his position, on September 12, 1974, a council of soldiers known as the Derg ('committee') took the power and installed a military government socialist in name. The Derg executed 59 members of the former government. When emperor Haile Selassie died on August 22, 1975 allegedly strangled in the basement of his palace or smothered with a wet pillow.

Lucrezia Cippitelli, MA Fine Art Director Addis Contemporary, Addis Ababa

## ON RESEARCH AND ART UNIVERSITIES

*Jan Kaila*

When the *Offside Effect* curators gave me the exciting possibility of selecting a doctoral student from the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts to exhibit at the Tbilisi Triennial, my choice was Sami van Ingen. Why? Sami van Ingen's art is pedagogical, political, and beautiful and he will soon defend his doctoral thesis. What else can you expect from an interesting process of artistic research? The curators also asked me to exhibit something from my own production in relation to my choice of 'the student's work'. That was much more complicated and I will come back to how I reacted later.

Sami van Ingen's film *Just One Kiss –The Fall of Ned Kelly* is part of his doctoral thesis *Moving Shadows: Experimental Film Practice in a Landscape of Change* at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. The disputation of the thesis took place at the beginning of November 2012. This is what Van Ingen has written about the Ned Kelly film in his press release for the Tbilisi Triennial:

'In 1906, the Australian brothers John Tait (1871–1955) and Nevin Tait (1876–1961) co-directed the first feature-length narrative film *The Story of the Kelly Gang*. The Taites departed from the idea of adding footage to their film periodically, filming completely new scenes and gluing these to their screening print as a way to attract au-

diences to view the film more than once, and also to gain publicity. When *The Story of the Kelly Gang* was first released, the film reel was 4000 feet long. In its final state it reached over 6000 feet. As the film was a great financial success, other people began to make films about the Kelly Gang and the Taits' version gradually disappeared into historical oblivion. Indeed, only fragments of the film remained.

*The Story of the Kelly Gang* appeared to me like a fossil, a cast of something that once had been, but since had disappeared. I saw a possibility to re-create it using the available production information, just as paleontologists reconstruct creatures from fragments of fossilized bone and other information gathered over the years.

If one accepts that the self-standardizing story line of the narrative feature film has become a language in itself, then it can be argued that every narrative feature film has been essentially the same since 1906. In *Just One Kiss-The Fall of Ned Kelly*, I have attempted to exploit our interpretive faculties and familiarity with classical, narrative film structure to construct a meta-story out of unrelated found footage material.

Like the Taits, I began with a 4000 foot long 35mm screening print, to which I added a new shot or scene for each screening. *Just One Kiss-The Fall of Ned Kelly* is accompanied by live music – a different musical collaboration for each screening. Slowly the story gets more diverse and epic, with no final, definitive version. Instead, the work takes the form of a series of projection events each presenting different interpretations of an ever-expanding cinematic narrative.'



Sami van Ingen, *Just one Kiss*, Literature Museum

What, then, is Sami van Ingen's dissertation about? This is how he describes his research in the summary of his thesis:

'The research examines the praxis of analogue film art making in the context of experimental film at the historical moment when this entire medium is becoming obsolete. As film is rapidly becoming a historical process, this has sprung up a new round of discourse among artists about the unique characteristics of films. The aim of this text is to illuminate where this concern springs from by following some topics that are an integral part of experimental film practices, such as hand processing, camera-less filmmaking and optical printing.'

The research has developed through the inquiry involved in the practice of making the artworks: the medium Van Ingen worked with, the analogue film, has been on a fast track to oblivion, not only historically but also

as a culture and as a practical technology for art making. Van Ingen's research question has two parts. Firstly, what defines or at least characterizes the practical field of experimental film? Secondly, why are artists still interested in using film as their medium and what are the indications for the future of experimental film practice given the decline of film technology? The specific area of investigation is the lineage of structuralist experimental film. Van Ingen links the 1960s/1970s structuralist film with some threads to contemporary fine art filmmaking.

Now about my own piece that connects to Van Ingen's input. I find Van Ingen's work extremely melancholic – his structuralist gestures reveal the vulnerability of analogue film. Even small, small (and in Van Ingen's case big, big) material or contextual changes within handling or treating film will make the meaning of the medium collapse or at least alter dramatically. This is something I wanted to refer to in the referential piece I decided to show in Tbilisi. I do not work with analogue film within the context of moving images, but I have a long experience of dealing with traditional, analogue photography. For a long time, one of my interests has been photography's controversial 'double structure' as pure materiality (it is only plastic and silver etc.) and as 'truth carrier' (the indexical).

In 1998, as a part of my then ongoing practice-based doctoral studies in art, I did a piece in which I was trying to deal with this double structure metaphorically by using mixed media but not photography. To make the piece I carried big amounts of snow to my studio and sculpted out of it creatures that resembled both traditional snowmen and the famous moomin character *The Groke*. Next I let powerful electrical heaters blow warm air on the creatures and documented on video the melting collapse of the figures. Later

I solarized and slowed down the video-images and added the sound 'GRRRRRR' which I 'sang' myself trying to copy *The Groke's* – according to my children – extremely scary sound from the famous Japanese animated Moomin series.



Jan Kaila, *The Solarized*, Literature Museum

For me the outcome, the piece called *The Solarized*, is about the vulnerability of images, especially the vulnerability of images of analogue film and photography, although at the same time the piece is disguised or distanced into something strange and even funny.

Then a jump into higher education in the arts. My context is being Professor in Artistic Research at the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. This institution with a 160-year-long history became a university on its own in 1998. It was and still is with its approximately 300 students the smallest university in Finland.

The same change of status, becoming a university, also happened to other higher art institutions in Finland. Theatre Academy (performing arts), Sibelius Academy (music) and University of Art Design became as well autonomous universities, actually before the Finnish Academy of Fine Arts. During the last couple of years the situation concerning art universities in Finland has changed: the University of Art and Design has merged into a new institution called Aalto University, and the Theatre Academy, Sibelius Academy, and

Finnish Academy of Fine Arts are merging into the Art University Helsinki in 2013. The idea of an art university is of course not invented by the Finns. There are quite a few institutions of this kind around including the ones in London and Zurich.

In 2003, Tuomas Nevanlinna, a colleague of mine, and I spoke at the Amsterdam symposium *Artistic Research* related to possible doctoral education in fine art. We both take an extremely positive stand when it comes to universities and their relations to art academies and to art education in general. The audience consisting of mainly artists and art teachers from Belgium and the Netherlands was not at all happy, and to our surprise we were even blamed for some kind of Stalinism. What we at that time were not fully aware of was that the university in general was, and still is often experienced as, a big threat to art schools, at least in Central Europe. This attitude is obviously grounded in fears that the university puts an end to artistic freedom in art schools and replaces it (the freedom) with tight curriculums including a merciless credit system and scientific criteria in general.

Is this kind of fear of the university system justified? My answer is YES and NO. There obviously are numerous examples of former art academies which have become badly functioning faculties or schools or departments within science universities. Places where a creative and progressive atmosphere has disappeared (if it ever existed) and a bureaucratic and theorized culture has taken over.

But there are also many examples where the situation is the opposite – places where the university context has not only secured the academy's economy but also helped to develop its creativity from an overly internalized conservative, classical professor-driven 'hierarchy-machine' to a sensitive, more open-minded environment. In other

words, a university context is not a given or a natural environment, it is malleable like any other institution organized around human activities.

And the same goes for the so-called art world including traditionally formed academies or the gallery/museum display system. In other words, the art world is not a natural given either; it is relative and shapeable. I am taking up this fundamentally simple political/sociological fact because of being surprised and even disappointed by the research-related discussions at DOCUMENTA 13 in Kassel in September this year at a seminar dealing with artistic research. Here the cliché about the art world's believed high status of freedom in relation to the university/academic world's lack of freedom was stated by a surprisingly large number of well-respected intellectuals. Personally I do consider the Western art world to be too nontransparent and, as a consequence of this, often too hierarchical.

As a simplification one can say that art universities differ from traditional universities in the sense that they often are an outcome of a fusion between a great number of art schools. Art universities should, therefore, not follow or obey automatically the rules of the traditional university system, they should instead pick up the best parts of both the academy system and the university system. I know this is slightly naive thinking because the state tends to evaluate all universities according to, at least partly, the same standards and then fund them according to their achievements within these same standards. But, on the other hand, things can be changed and times are a-changing. The university system is part of the ongoing deconstruction of Western knowledge-systems and disciplines within which artistic research might play a small but simultaneously decisive roll.

Jan Kaila, Visual artist, Professor Finnish Academy of Fine Arts, Helsinki

PAVILION OF DISTANCE:  
A GREEK TRAGEDY

Tiong Ang

In the spring of 2012, *Pavilion of Distance* was initiated as an experimental platform to pursue collective artistic production and to develop a methodology of co-creation as a form of education. Trying to reach beyond existing methods, I imagined something rather peculiar, something that I could call my subjective take on the hazardous and polluted road of artistic collaboration. I suspected to find a new balance of expression and diplomacy and a fresh approach to define sources and goals in the process of making things together. In my own practice, I have always been creatively confused by and interested in a multitude of subjective strategies.

*Pavilion of Distance (PoD)* embodies the idea of the 'academy as exhibition'. The academy is explored as a productive platform beyond its institutional knowledge-based framework. It offers a perspective on the academy's function to be a discontinuation of sorts, providing a shelter for experiment, a conceptual hub of converging ambitions within a sense of shared learning, organic cultural distance and performative mediation.

The possibility of educational progress and the occasion to meet new challenges to change our routines within this process were fuelled by my own observations as an artist who also teaches. Being aware of tendencies of

'educational turns' in art practices, I considered that the time had come to gear up the position and experience in which I had now been involved for a number of years and activate a dynamic where both teacher and pupil were allowed to transgress boundaries in an equal way, beyond the official curriculum of the art school.

In my personal trajectory, the social, political and economic dimensions in a globalized art world include an enhanced understanding of collaborative work and discourse. When addressing students, it seemed necessary and inevitable to further expand on the theoretical notion, but also to get on with it in a practical way. The platform incites questions about the instrumentalized status of autonomy and authenticity in contemporary art practice. There is no excuse for not sharing knowledge and experiences that deal with these issues. How can we avoid the commodification of the educational turn in the very production and presentation of a collectively made art piece? How do we participate within the speculative dilution of national representation, being replaced by the (evenly) problematic presentation of a particular yet undefined group of collectively operating international artists? How do we relate to someone else's points of reference, even if we haven't witnessed the reality in which these perceptions were acquired, including personal feelings and memories?

Eight young artists, former art students and MaHKU alumni, were invited to participate and contribute in the creative process of the *PoD*-platform. They represented seven different nationalities. Some artists were living in the Netherlands, others had moved on to other commitments in other countries, and again others had moved back to their countries of origin. They were chosen on the basis of their recent graduate work from MaHKU (Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art and De-

sign), in which each individual had conveyed his or her own artistic research and thinking. Each artist was then personally assigned to contribute a specific working detail in the production process of the making of a singular film, such as a music soundtrack, a voice over, a light design or second unit photography. These individually produced components were to be used in the shooting and editing process of the final film, but also as objects (photographic, auditory, based on lighting, textual or otherwise) in the forthcoming 'pavilion' – a built structure in which a mobile group exhibition would take place.



*Pavilion of Distance* (installation), Georgian National Museum

*A Greek Tragedy* is the first collectively produced film in the context of *POD*. It was clearly urgent to address a sense of actuality in the summer of 2012, when we all perceived graduations of change and alteration through the grand narrative of the financial crisis of that time.

As a collaborative project our orientation was initially charged by the current social unrest in contemporary Greece. Expressed as 'a tragedy' in the media, the economic downfall and governmental austerity programs had resulted in dramatic disruptions in all layers of Greek society. These developments seemed to have swept away an overall belief in the nation's place within the unification process of Eu-

rope and its proclaimed leading role in the history of democratization and liberal mechanisms in the world. Furthermore, the crisis caused enormous social turbulence. Two participating artists were from Greece and gave me a very personal account of what was actually happening in Greek society, in their own lives and their families' and friends' circles. Their particular and emotional accounts convinced me to steer away from a documentary, realistic approach, but to outline a more ritualistic gathering.

Classical Greek tragedy, as a form of ancient theatre and collective ritual, combines myth and performance within a particular set of rules and traditions. Being at the root of Western traditional narrative, its historical scheme is to marry raw sensitivity and impulses with strategy and reason; a conflict that drives concepts of mimesis and catharsis. I wanted our filmic work to contain similar expressions on the source of artistic creation, to expand into a physical presence of collectivity and as a sequence of events that manifests ideas of multiplicity and simultaneity. The notorious film *Medea* (1969) by Italian director Pier Paolo Pasolini is based on the original play by Euripides and functions as a visual and narrative anchor point in our new film production. It is a characteristic sample of the distant voice of European leadership, intellectualism and romantic endeavor in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, leading up to more radical aspirations, expressions and movements in the present times of collapsing hierarchies.

In July 2012, the eight artists were invited to join a four-day acting workshop in a large empty studio space in Amsterdam. A professional actor was present as a mentor in acting. The recording of these workshops formed the foundation of the film. A combination of scripted and intuitive enactments of 'teaching', 'learning', 'thinking' and 'creating' was the scenic content

of the film. The artists' contributions are therefore participatory at many different levels. They are actors (as themselves learning to play and as characters in the play) and producing/exhibiting artists at the same time.

In a performative process we aimed at a specific balance between documentary realism and mediatized, enacted fantasy. Artistic knowledge, creative thinking and the convergence of imagery and structure were at the core of the filmic exploration. There was a shooting script, but it was constantly revised, changed and rewritten during the making process that was intended to be open, intuitive and playful but at the same time orchestrated, focused and nuanced. Actual information and literal reference to the economic and social crisis were kept at a distance in the film production.



*Pavilion of Distance. A Greek Tragedy, Film Still*

Instead, the film focuses on this small group of young artists (two of them being Greek) who retreat in a dark studio in what seems to be a therapeutic session of physical play-acting and performative experimentation. Still further on, scenes from classical Greek tragedy are enacted by the participants as if to personify current states of numbness, despair, rage or collapse. The film explores a multitude of emotive postures and speculative gestures in staged, repetitive and 'educated' enactments. The film becomes a compound of different perspectives and levels of engagement by allowing differentiated voices and narrative styles into the

production process. The film's expression and mood, born from this organized complexity, is a distinct exercise on how to navigate between pathos and apathy, between engagement and distance, and how to relocate creativity into collective and critical environments. Finally, the film was presented as an installation in a large staging – a built environment – featured amidst a range of sculptural or image-based objects. The *Pavilion of Distance* was also a curated spatial area constructed out of mobile elements. Its architecture and construction resembled a mobile cinematic or theatrical set. The lighting elements provided an aura of nocturnal and dramatic scenography. It was essentially a group exhibition – designed, conceived and articulated as one single piece. The pillars were independently placed in the given exhibition venue to specifically mark the spatial relationships between them and the architectonic context in which these relationships were being outlined. The placement of the pillars created a sense of nomadic togetherness, a slightly tribal kind of connectivity, yet the artificiality of the Pavilion remained ambiguous, cinematic and theatrical.

A collaborative project by Tiong Ang with Alejandro Ramirez, Despoina Demertzi, Marina Stavrou, Ryan de Haan, Wang Shihui, Zeynep Kayan, Pedro Kok and Natalia Calderon for *Off-side Effect*, The 1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial, CCA Tbilisi/Georgian National Museum, Tbilisi.

#### Credits

Alejandro Ramirez – acting, director of photography, production design, editing, photos; Despoina Demertzi – acting, sound tracks, music tracks, voices, photos; Marina Stavrou – disciplines acting, script analysis and development, photos, films; Pedro Kok – acting, second unit camera, landscape photography; Wang Shihui – acting, pavilion design, light design; Ryan de Haan – acting, voice-over

monologue, text pieces; Zeynep Kayan – acting, photo portraits; Natalia Calderon – acting, objects, spatial mapping; Tiong Ang – concept, curation, direction, production, editing; Elvira Out – lead actress, camera acting and workshop coach.

With thanks to: Dani Joss, Tolis Deligiannis, Thanassis Dzingovic, Loredana Secci, Cristina Salazar, Zwaan Kraijer, Ting Ang.

**Tiong Ang, Visual Artist, Core lecturer MA Fine Art, MaHKU, Utrecht**

THE FOURTH PRAGMATIC  
ISA HAVANA

*Rene Francisco*

Toward the end of 1989, like many artists of my generation, I was censored because of an exhibition ironically handling and criticizing the vertical status and the dominant image that the representative power in Cuba had adopted with the passing of years. Of all the obscure and disturbing experiences I went through in that period, the most surprising was not losing my post of professor at the prestigious Higher Institute of Art of Havana – where I had graduated only two years before. A sense of being in the middle of a Herculean crossroads was provoked by the conciliatory struggle with the confusing and deceptive context of trying to keep myself in the teaching profession. With my group of students, I particularly wanted to be able to continue the initial exploration of fields never explored before in teaching art. So there were two options, I could continue building a political, parodic art of resistance – and therefore self-destructing art – or I could, as my students demanded, enter an entirely novel road deprived of the frustrating romanticism of my generation; a road that would jump over that moment toward non-contaminated routes in teaching and art.

In those days, I came across a peculiar dictionary written by Jorge Luis Borges, a forbidden writer whom we

secretly read at the Art Institute. In that dictionary I read with surprise about the meaning Borges granted to the word 'censure'. 'Being censured is one of the most gratifying things that can happen to writers, since it gives them impulses to create new metaphors', Borges said. And literary critic Harold Bloom once claimed that 'one reads to usurp'. Not only Borges had been influential in my underground education, also Joseph Beuys' pedagogy and several theoretical fragments such as Habermas' theory of knowledge, Pessoa's heteronyms, Foucault's decentering of the character, and Lacan's 'absent being' had been aids in my training. None of these authors had been included in the official study program. And my students had no interest in considering them.

As a teacher, the Herculean crossroads was like an equation I could only solve by giving up theoretical servitude and draw out theory and start interacting with my students in the presence of spectators, in the neighborhoods, in the street, inside the homes, shops, turning the city into a big classroom, altering the frequencies and class hours, diluting my time of creation with the time of transmission.

In January 1990, after completing the first semester, I gave some thought to the idea of meeting daily with my students, working as a group, attracting others who were interested. Thus, we started 'from a pedagogic pragmatism' because of the instrumental and practical emphasis we were to employ in the process of creation and discussion of projects. The new strategy of what had previously been a class exercise turned into long working hours that lasted days. In La Casa Nacional (The National House) my students and I lived for a month among the neighbors of an old building in need of repair in the old city of Havana, repairing and covering the immediate needs: carpentry, plumbing, inner decoration, pictures by commission, furniture. Every afternoon

we met to write down and reflect on our personal experiences.

Ever since, as a professor I have tried to create a community of actions where the participants interrogate the levels of authorship, question the nature of the work of art, reflect on the direction of the message. As Nicolas Bourriaud says, 'in aesthetic terms the form of acquiring the work is replaced by a practice of access to experience; the work is nothing but a means'. The projects revived an imagination reorganizing the relations between doing, seeing, and saying. Although the professor was addressed by the individual student, the field of actions created as a group produced a multiple, educational effect in showing behaviors, forms of life, and symbolical production. The borders between author, artist, spectator and also those of professor-student diluted, because of similitudes to be acknowledged, novel forms of knowledge to come into being. There is a practice where abstract intellect interacts with concrete experience.

A year after these communities of actions, Professor of Aesthetics Lupe Alvarez reflected on them. She said:

- 1) Understand culture through experience without discursive mediations. Be inserted through experience in the relationships ruling each cultural phenomenon.
- 2) Select as an environment practical contexts, i.e. contexts rich in active traditional wealth in today's consciousness.
- 3) Transform vital space into pedagogic space. Thus, the experience area becomes the transmission space of new knowledge.
- 4) Establish horizontal relationships guaranteeing the existential communication of the agents of practice of communication

who are sustained in the duality originator-receiver.

- 5) Liberate artists of the historical attribute of 'exceptional subjectivity' so they become art workers connecting to vital practice and replacing any subjectivity of human activity.
- 6) Exclude conditions generating teacher overestimation on the part of the students. The designed pedagogic situation will transform the pedagogic project into a collective strategy. The teacher becomes a skilled speaker intervening in the modeling of the practice as a career adviser and a promoter of ideas.
- 7) The theoretical formation should be articulated from a practice that claims conceptual perspectives to be approached. Pedagogic project and project of socio-cultural insertion arise from pedagogic pragmatics. The insertion of art in the vital practice, an intention that prevails in the Cuban Vanguard, is carried out in the same pedagogic action. It is not the discourse about the social functions of art and its cultural dimension that shapes a mentality responsible for the action and destination of the symbolic production. It is the experience of the operation of the cultural values what tunes the sensibility and opens unusual perspectives of activation of the role of production.

It is the double role of pedagogic action and artistic act from which a proposal of great complexity is articulated that sets in motion the diversity of processing components of the artistic activity.



*Fourth Pragmatic, Georgian National Museum*

*Ruth Mariet Trueba Castro*

At the First Tbilisi Triennial, the collective experience of four years working together of twelve ISA (Havana University of the Arts) students and Rene Francisco as their professor was presented. The group reported on three projects we engaged in: At the beginning of our group, founded on the interest in collective working on a project called *The Fourth Pragmatic*, we entered a new phase when Rene Francisco invited us to a place where we should talk about the aims of the recently formed group. So, he gave us the address, and that morning, he was already waiting for us dressed up formally like a traditional teacher. The place you can see in the pictures emanated importance, because it was a swimming pool in a private house in New Vedado, a luxurious neighborhood of Havana. What Rene Francisco wanted to achieve with the pool, and also with the unusual place, was a fusion between master and disciples sharing creation with us as if he were an apprentice. At the same time that other students were taking art classes in traditional classrooms, we were in the swimming pool as if in our first day of classes. So we called it *ClassPool*.



*ClassPool, Georgian National Museum*



*Planne Calle, Georgian National Museum*

*Plan Calle* (Street Plan) was the next project we did while we were waiting for permission to work in another place called the Royal Bank of Canada, located in Old Havana City. So, we found this street, destroyed, dirty and with potholes, and we tried to restore it with the metaphors of art. It was the first group project we worked on with spectators. *Plan Calle* is a phrase used in Cuba to refer to activities planned for children in a neighborhood, mostly recreation activities, and it involves many people, since it is a community event. Our main idea was to restore the street, thus, we all chose a hole to work on. But finally, after many visits to the street taking notes and measures, and talking with the neighbors, we decided to cover the entire block during a labor of eight hours – the same amount of time professional workers would use. The key was the pavement as a common surface to stop the traffic of cars down the street and to give total freedom to creation. As you can see in the images we worked with stickers as if the floor were a street, and walking on it we found many things. Protuberances interpreted as cartography, a map constructed from humid ground from several places, a reconstructed videotape from a digital image of a black hole, there are serums with artificial blood, and nylons with balloons inside, a performance with honey and also, at the end, you can see liquid milk pouring through a hopper into the street.

We found *Banca Rota* (Bankruptcy) in the city loaded with beauty, but unhappily abandoned and, of course, also in ruins. As a coincidence we discovered the same number of columns as students working in the group. And we said, let's make something big, and talk about power, economic context, and all the topics related to money, architecture, and society. In this project, students explored economic problems and used money and metallic decorations like golden surfaces and objects. A student downloaded pictures of the ten richest people in the world from the Internet. And, a column was produced: what does it mean not to have any money in your pockets. Is it a poor condition? An icon of both power and empty pockets?

**Rene Francisco, Visual artist, Professor ISA  
(Instituto Superior de Artes), Havana**

## BOHEMIAN RESEARCH

*Stephan Dillemuth*

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen! Thank you for inviting me to come to Tbilisi and to contribute to this program. I work as an artist and as a professor at the Art Academy of Munich, Germany. I am a protagonist of self-organization in the arts and self-organized art education, which have been – in my eyes – always the central idea of what we call 'Academy'. In the last five years I have worked on a talk, as a kind of summary of my research about the relationship between 'The Academy and the Corporate Public'. Giving this lecture, however, with the places where it was given (Academia!) and the people it addressed (Academics!) became boring, however. This is why I decided to get the talk back into the mouth of 'The Artist' and I made a video that is on view here at the Tbilisi Triennial.



Installation *The Academy and the Corporate Public*, Georgian National Museum

This 'Artist' talks, among others, about the effects of the so-called *Bologna Process*, which has implemented neo-liberal ideology into higher education. In the last decade, Central Europe has started to copy the Anglo-American educational system and institutions of higher learning have taken leave of the Humboldtian idea of the university as a self-educative process where the mediation of knowledge enables self-formation.

The Bologna process changed the institutional landscape on various levels, and the self-proclaimed knowledge factories of the 1970s are also gone... But today, through the introduction of student fees, universities have turned into moneymaking corporations. They are tapping into new markets all over the world, they establish networks and subsidiaries, they assert their knowledge brands.

Once they were self-administrated entities, committed to the autonomy of decision. But these new institutions have abandoned their relative autonomy, they have reorganized and given themselves powerful managerial structures and freshly installed university councils function as supervisory boards. Unnecessarily, managers of big corporations and other players from the field of economy are given a voice in the leadership of art schools and universities. For example, the board of the university in Munich has implemented managers from BMW and Siemens and even business consultant Roland Berger himself.

Examining the contemporary trends in the field of education, the notion of 'research' plays an important role when it comes to funding and control of academic ventures. Research has been made obligatory, also in the field of fine arts. But it becomes more and more obvious that research merely has become an institutional method of control. Credit points and assessment criteria turn into a control mechanism,

where students and researchers, institutions and flows of money are all under surveillance. Some research projects get money, others get nothing; which is a way to only support projects promising profitable outcomes. So, once the logic of profit and measuring outcomes is introduced in institutions, research itself loses its original idea of an open-ended process with often surprising and unpredictable results. By and large a research-application-lingo has been created, meaning that basically everything you want to do in an institution has to be coined beforehand in certain phrases of predictability. But what might be seen as a strategy has already deeply penetrated and altered our thinking.

On the other hand, one could say that research has always been a journey into the unknown, that it is something improvised, that it reacts on the previous kinds of experiments, and that it can always use many methods and methodologies that are unconventional. Also, any good research reflects the framework in which it happens; it has to recognize these defining parameters and sometimes attack them as limitations. Thus, protest, obstruction, and demonstration can be effective experiments as we have noticed already in university strikes and squatting, for example, in Vienna and Munich in 2010. There we have seen how these actions replicated themselves, when the abstraction of squatting in theory turned into doing it, and students discovered how easy it is to take over an institution. That almost came as a shock. For me – educated once in that very same institution and now a professor there – another shock was to see how the dead building, where routinely dreary forms of creativity and self-expression are anticipated, suddenly came to life. The institution turned into a lively hub for different scenes; graffiti sprayers passed by, bands played improvised sessions, there was cooking for everyone. The building

obtained an amazingly new function. Finally it was accepted as a place where something new could happen!

Within the debate of what is happening with education today, the rector of the university in Innsbruck said that squatting the university is 'the university in its best sense'. Squatting shows that the institution is no longer a top-down provision of education, but a bottom-up format, where students can take the institution over and shape it and themselves.

Of course, we could see those events from the perspective of failure; as a short rupture lasting for a couple of months. Politicians promised all kinds of things, but nothing really happened. Basically the squatters' scene was divided into a larger reformist block that was willing to accept the Bologna Process if there was less pressure exerted alongside with it. The other, smaller block, but more revolutionary perhaps, considered the disaster of the universities rather as a result of general politics.

If research wants to be a revolutionary process we have to follow the latter group and imagine research to be part of a larger struggle that leaves protected laboratories and traditional methods behind. Research has never been neutral, and that is why the old questions have to be asked again: what can a better society be and how would a new university work towards it and within it?

There are three ways to approach research that I do not consider obligatory but that spring from my own experience of becoming an artist. The first I call pubescent research; because it uses boldness, ignorance, curiosity, cheekiness and transgression to its advantage. Second would be bohemian research. It is located in a bohemian context, people find each other by elective affinities; they share similar problems, but bring along different knowledge and a variety of cultural

backgrounds. So that a mutual attraction can lead to an increasingly differentiated discourse, the participants must be sufficiently different yet similar enough.

This research would be a collective process. It is work that is self-commissioned, without institutional back-up, and mostly it takes place under precarious circumstances, all too often without any monetary funding! To a large extent this research is determined by the interests and problems of the group itself. It is usually about investigating problems at hand, arising from the daily practice of life. This is researching life by living it. The efforts to tackle these problems become a condensation point for a social and critical and research-like activity.

Almost every 20th-century avant-garde group (the Surrealists, Situationists, Kommune 1, etc.) practiced such collective methods. In this research, there are critical tools for self-observation and analysis (e.g. keeping archives, logs and diaries), planning strategies and methods for staging experiments. There are processes and criteria of evaluation that may well lead to more experiments. Here we find the awareness necessary for research.

The last category in my short overview here is institutional research. It is necessary, but it has its limits. As I have pointed out before, institutional research can be easily seen as a tool for control. And that comes as no surprise. Institutions are nothing more than legal and administrative organs of the dominant system, made for us in order to participate and to internalize their values. They claim to be built on an exchange between free, equal and committed citizens, to be representative of the society we live in, to promote democracy.

We know that this had never been the case, however, now, within the context of neoliberalism, institutions

have become even more obscure, more unreliable and more exclusive than ever before. The state and its institutional bodies now share aims and objectives closely intertwined with corporate and neo-liberal agendas. This intensification and expansion of free market ideology into all aspects of our lives has been accompanied by a systematic dismantling of all forms of social organization and imagination. If we see the institution as an instrument of state interest or corporate interest then institutional research is clearly a limited one, subservient and a constituting element of its rule.

That is why I still see the best chances for improving our living and thinking coming from this process that I call 'bohemian research' – they come from within and not from top-down, they come as a need of real people and not from the greed of corporations.

But here again, it seems as if we cannot escape the radar of the big corporations, who control and accumulate the wealth of the people. The Siemens Arts Program for example no longer sponsors but initiates activities, such as exhibitions and a discursive event about the notion of the 'Art Academy' and its future. And one or two years later the same Corporation tried to focus on so-called 'non-aligned' research, which in my eyes resembles the idea of bohemian, i.e. self-organized research.

In the end we have to ask ourselves, what is knowledge, what is the stuff they are after? And what is knowledge production today? Allegedly, knowledge is the oil of the 21st century and we are witnessing the fights for knowledge distribution and privatization. Seizing the universities, patenting even living beings, the extension of copyright to all fields of knowledge production, are privatization strategies aimed at profiting from scarcity.

But knowledge is a very unique resource. Andre Gorz writes: 'Knowledge

is not an ordinary commodity.' Knowledge increases miraculously when shared with others. The more knowledge one uses, the more knowledge one produces. Its dissemination increases its effectiveness. Its money equivalent cannot be defined. Its privatization reduces it and contradicts its essence.

How is this idea of knowledge different from an elitist and technocratic, self-acclaimed 'knowledge society' that installs its private claims on the backs of those many billions who still do the dirty work?

How can we lay down solid foundations upon which we can construct sustainable knowledge together with others and make it accessible to all?

Research has to get out of the safe institutions and onto the street. It has to take sides and protect its most important resource – knowledge – against privatization: no patents, no copyright and no access restrictions!

We have to fight against increasing privatization and create commons, learn how to share, for in order to grow, knowledge must be made accessible to all.

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**Stephan Dilleuth, Visual artist, Professor  
Academy of Fine Arts, Munich**

## ART WITHOUT EDUCATION

*Anton Vidokle*



*unitednationsplaza* archive (Anton Vidokle et al.), Europe House

I never finished college. I did attend graduate school and did all of the coursework, the final exhibition, wrote the dissertation and submitted it. I thought I was all done, but then suddenly I found out that in order to get the degree itself, I needed to package this dissertation and photographs in a very specific type of a black plastic folder, which could only be purchased at one stationary store located in Manhattan near Canal Street. The secretary at the art department told me that the Chairman kept the folders in a closet in his office, and that the folders had to conform exactly to the dimensions of its irregular shelves. No other folders would be accepted. I was idealistic and thought that the Master of Fine Arts degree meant something in terms of knowledge... but it came down to a surreal formalism. I never got the folder or the degree!



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These days it is becoming more and more difficult to imagine production of significant art without an art market and a certain type of a training system that prepares future producers of art, its administrators and, to some extent, its consumers. However it is very important to keep in mind that much of important modern and contemporary art was produced without the artist ever entering the market place, either because it was just not there – as in the former socialist countries for example, or because artistic culture was militantly opposed to the art market, as was the case with the artist run and alternative spaces movement. Furthermore, until only a couple of decades ago, many, if not most of art's practitioners, curators and critics, never attended a MFA program or studied curatorship and critical writing in specialized training programs.

The field of art is becoming professionalized in a very, very narrow way. There is still the old Marxist problem that professionalization is really about a division of labor and division of labor is about alienation. It is kind of a contradiction that a lot of people go into arts because they want to be a little bit less alienated from what they do in life, but more and more what is imposed on artists, curators, writers—and it comes both from market sector and public sector—is the increasing professionalization and precarity of their activity.

It interesting to note that this emphasis on professionalization occurs simultaneously with the disappearance of bohemia, which is usually described as a shared creative space that allowed for a fluid communication between poets, artists, dancers, writers, musicians and so forth. The notion of bohemia as something to aspire to went out the window a few decades ago; it vanished and the visual art sphere became much more segregated from other fields of art. Although lately 'bohemia' is primarily a derogatory term that seems to imply a kind of an uncommitted, naive dilettantism; within the history of art it has a greater political significance: for example, according to TJ Clark, it refers to a movement by certain artists, writers and poets, who apparently renounced the normative bourgeois society, a move that unlike the gestures of the avant-garde, was not a calculated temporary tactic intended only so that one could return to the salon of art in a more advantageous position, but a more permanent type of a departure. Artist as a bohemian would absolutely reject the notion of professionalism in the arts -- this was something for lawyers, accountants, bankers, not artists.

Furthermore, the problem of professionalization also has to do with the proliferation of MFA programs, which became a prerequisite for young people entering the arts: while being largely a marketing ploy by universities to create additional source of income, they had become a tool of indoctrination that has had an unprecedented homogenizing effect on artistic practices worldwide, an effect that is now being replicated with curatorial and critical writing programs. It seems to me that at the center of the problem is the black plastic folder that I mentioned in the beginning of this talk: at the school I went to, the folder itself became the goal of the program: both the framing and the ul-

timate content of graduate studies in art. A folder, identical to hundreds of other folders arranged on a shelf, became a tool to value and legitimize artistic practice through a certain type of forced standardization. I think that my school was not unique insofar that this is not very different from how most museums, art centers, and galleries operate: the folder replaces art itself.



One can speculate about why standardization came to dominate an area of activity that supposedly prizes subjectivity and innovation more highly than other spheres of life. To me it seems that this has a lot to do with the fact that standardization makes commerce easier. The market of art is not merely a bunch of dealers and cigar smoking connoisseurs trading exquisite objects for money behind closed doors, rather it is a vast and complex international industry of overlapping institutions who jointly produce value of art and support a wide range of activities and carriers including training, research, development, production, display, documentation, criticism, marketing, promotion, financing, historicizing, publishing, and so forth; and standardization of art greatly simplifies all these transactions. I have been wondering for a few years about a certain sense of déjà vu that I have been experiencing while walking through art fairs or biennials, this feeling that many other people have also been com-

menting on: that we have already seen all these works that are supposedly brand new. I suspect that what we are experiencing is the impact of contemporary art having become a standardized, globally traded commodity, something that is made specifically to fit into a particular portfolio or folder, and which is produced, displayed and circulated by an industry of specially trained professionals.

This is not a new observation: I think Marcel Duchamp already fully realized this danger a hundred year ago. There are of course so many aspects of his work, from the *Standard Stoppages* to the peculiar refusal to make a living by selling his art works, which could be mentioned in this context of this paper. In a way one can understand much of Duchamp's work as a repeated act of offering the folder back to the art establishment: whether in a shape of a valise, a box, a collection of notes and photographs, literally a folder, or even as an elaborate *gesamkunstwerk*, like the *Etant donne*, containing all the indexical references to his work. However the folders he provided contained a bomb: they were capable of bringing down the shelf they were housed on.



Image from catalog *Marcel Duchamp Graphics*, Kyoto Shoin, 1991

Some people find it upsetting that e-flux does not function merely as a business, others are often frustrated

by a certain ambiguity of whether it is an artwork or not, while yet others are disappointed that it does not conform to the traditional model of an artist run or an alternative art organization. However it was started precisely in opposition to the kind of narrowness and professionalization that an art world, shaped by the art market and the educational establishment, created in New York by the 1990s. E-flux began through a one-night exhibition called *The Best Surprise Is No Surprise* at the Holiday Inn hotel in Chinatown, self-organized with a group of friends. We had absolutely no money for this, just an interest to insert ourselves into the Holiday Inn culture and without knowing the effects of e-mail yet, sent one announcement around for the event via e-mail to a few friends... 500 people showed up. Shortly thereafter I thought that it would be useful to develop this into a kind of a resource that others could use, and together with a group of artists friends started e-flux.

What e-flux does by way of e-mail announcements, is that it offers the industry of art: i.e. museums, art fairs, galleries, academies, biennials, and so forth, a folder to place itself in: a folder that contains chronologically organized one page documents with a picture, 500 words of text and some hyperlinks, and in this sense it turns the system on itself. It does this by making this content impossible to organize hierarchically by location, medium or style: the sheer volume and a relentless succession of announcements make something taking place in an art space in India or Turkey as important as any exhibition in New York or London, within the logic of this folder. In a sense this closely approximates the condition of contemporary art, when there are no longer any artistic movements, and it seems that we are all working under the auspices of this singularism that is deliberately (and literally) not one at all.

Some people joke that e-flux is like cocaine for art institutions. I think this may be because the offer of a folder is irresistible for the system that for more than a century proliferated the logic of folders. Now, thanks to the advent of computers and the Internet, nearly the totality of the art world can be filed neatly and chronologically in your e-mail inbox folder. And all this information, and the power it supposedly brings, is free.



A Hundred of Andy Warhol's 610 Time Capsules shelved. Courtesy of The Andy Warhol Museum

Why do this? Because I think that it would be rather futile to try to reconstitute bohemia – the free flowing, organic creative space; because it never really existed within the constellation of institutions of art, the art market and the art academy, from early modernity and industrialized society onwards. Just to be clear: I am not advocating that artists should remain amateurs, and e-flux clearly makes use of a certain mobilized dissident of young people who have done specialized study of art structures. What I mean is that if one is really looking to produce a different kind of art, it is necessary to step through the folder and the kind of a standardization and professionalization that it implies, to whatever may be on the other side of it, even if what one finds does not resemble art in our current understanding of it.

What is at the center of e-flux, is a concern with circulation and distribution. The dramatic image of production of art, often embodied in such cinematic clichés as the agony and ecstasy of a genius creating in his studio; or the spectacle of consumption which instantly brings to mind lives of the rich and the powerful, auctions, fairs, high prices, deals, bargains, fortunes, crimes and so forth -- most of the time these two parts of the classical economic equation displace and hide the third crucial element that brings art and its discourse in contact with people: circulation. While nearly invisible, in the way that street cleaning sometimes is, it can be argued that the ethics and aesthetic of circulation largely determine what is produced, how it is consumed and by who. In this sense, most of the projects and activities enabled by e-flux have to do with thinking of different and hopefully less unfair and alienated ways to circulate and distribute art and ideas it generates. One of the peculiar things about e-flux is that after working on it for more than a decade, we (e-flux is run jointly with Julieta Aranda and Brian Kuan Wood) still do not have a clear definition of what it is. It is not an art space, a publisher, a web site, because e-flux has many different dimensions and evolving interests: artistic, organizational, educational, critical, collective, economic, political and so forth.



Natascha Sadr Haghighian, *What I Do For A Living/What I Really Do?*, 2007 (e-flux Pawnshop)

This kind of an open, undefined quality is something very difficult to develop and maintain these days both in art and other areas life, because there is so much pressure in the market-driven economy to divide labor, to professionalize. As artists, curators, writers - we are more and more forced to market ourselves by developing a consistent product, a concise presentation, a statement that one can communicate in 30 seconds or less - oftentimes this alone passes for professionalism. For emerging artists and curators there is an ever-increasing number of well-intentioned programs which essentially indoctrinate them into becoming content providers for the art system, and whose values and welfare are then completely defined by that system's supply and demand, while at the same time often putting them in debt because of the astronomical tuition fees.

It is also interesting to look at artists' run and alternative spaces, like the original White Columns, which was started by Gordon Matta-Clark as a garage on Greene Street in New York in the late 60's. Basically any artist could have the space for a day to do whatever she wanted: use it as a studio or a social space or whatever else. It is almost impossible to imagine this type of an artists' space in our time: it would not be taken seriously and probably it would not even register as a contemporary art space at all. If you compare this to what White Columns is now: a hyper-professional white cube - a white folder in a sense, the difference is visceral. I don't mean to single out White Columns, since I think it goes across the spectrum. It seems that what happened is that artists decided that to legitimize themselves, they needed to mimic museums and commercial galleries, and become more institutionalized (which is like getting trapped in a folder I think...).

This also has to do with funding: most alternative spaces these days

receive funding from the same sources as commercial and state institutions. Through their grant applications, fund raising benefits, auctions, sales of artists' editions and largess of rich individuals or corporations, they have no choice, but to assume a certain vocabulary that looks and feels professional by corporate standards. It would be naïve to think that this does not affect their programming, mandate, criteria or any other aspect of their activities.

In my opinion, one of viable ways to resist this tendency in art is through developing a more sustainable economy. The original meaning of the word economy had to do with managing a household, as well as a certain sense of thrift or conservation necessary for a long-term wellbeing. For me the key notion here is long-term: the field of art urgently needs an economy capable of creating conditions enabling one to reclaim her time from demands of the market, from narrow professionalization and the kind of alienation it brings. I think that it is possible to develop such an economy and share it with others, as we have tried to do with e-flux through focusing on re-distribution. There are probably many other ways to do this: through collective approaches, through looking at other historical and social models, and so forth. What is of utmost importance is not to just take the current state of things for granted and assume that one can produce new or different art, while simultaneously trying to make sure it fits into one folder or another.

Anton Vidokle, Visual artist and founder of e-flux

FROM MOBILITY TO STABILITY  
ICA YEREVAN

*Nazareth Karoyan*

I am a curator and art critic from Armenia – a country neighboring Georgia for more than 2000 years with a similar history; medieval culture, churches, and Soviet heritage. However, the art worlds in both countries are very different. Armenia has a relatively strong theoretical base, advanced art criticism, and critical art practices, whereas in Georgia art production is much more important. The reason for those differences could be clarified with a short historical detour.

In Soviet Armenia, fine art and its painting school in particular was considered one of the most advanced in the USSR. During Khrushov's reforms in the late 1950s and 1960s, we witnessed radical changes in the aesthetic agenda, experiments and studies in the arts. In 1972, the Museum of Modern Art was established in Yerevan – the only institution of its kind in the Soviet Union. It served as an opportunity for generations of artists to be included in the alternative art scene until the end of the Soviet era. The perestroika years gave rise to a new artistic movement called *The 3rd Floor*.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia became independent. The new government reformed the economy with market-driven rules and production. While the country was suffering from economic, political and social crises – due to the collapse of

the common Soviet economy – the situation was complicated by the conflict with another country in the Caucasus, Azerbaijan. Up to the mid 1990s, all industry was privatized and land was given to the farmers. Culture was the only domain where reforms did not take place and the Soviet infrastructure was maintained. In some sense art was considered an entrepreneurial activity, though individual initiatives could benefit from the general liberal attitude towards economy. In the absence of relevant policies, artists and art critics started building an alternative system of private exhibition halls, art centers, art journals, and art periodicals. So, there were many initiatives, but most of them did not last long due to the unfavorable economic, political and cultural conditions at the time. The discussions that began in the mid 1990s gained a critical dimension in the following decade when the artistic discourse became clear and articulated. Questions not only addressed the cultural environment and public authorities, but also art critics who were blamed for art's low influence and its low public visibility.

That can be considered a starting point for the art critics association, the AICA Armenia, which later became a member of the National Section of AICA international. From the very beginning AICA's activities were not directed towards educational or research goals. The association's first conference was devoted to theoretical issues and the public sphere as a precondition for critical activity and criticality in society. The next project resulted from criticism on Armenia's unequal status in a Western context. The Art Criticism and Curatorial Training Summer School program was launched and eventually became the turning point for AICA to dive into educational and research activities. The establishment of the Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) summarized as it were all these events.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the crisis in contemporary art reflected how the exhibition industry started to dominate other areas of art. Think of the hundreds if not thousands of biennials spread all over the world. With the development of technology and its emerging role in visual art, other domains of art – education, production, distribution, storage or archiving – gained new opportunities for development. But because of the structural disproportion in the art market of the 2000s, some of those areas (specifically education and archiving) entered the representation formats (exhibitions, biennials). That challenged art's inherent qualities and necessitated sharing of knowledge and communication.

In 2006, AICA Armenia launched the summer school of curators as a new approach to education and art education in particular. Although the project started to solve local problems, it also reacted to a time where representational arts turned into communicational arts. In short, the school needed to raise some theoretical and methodological issues. The 2008 transition of the school from a pure educational format to a research and seminar format was based on a number of questions. What and how to represent? How should curating as a context-sensitive activity be changed in order to be able to confront challenges such as political, media, and cultural changes, and novel developments in contemporary art? The need arose to create a long-term program.



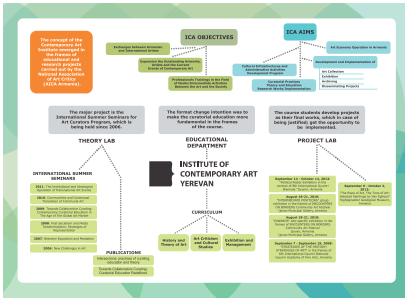
Presentation ICA Yerevan, Europe House

The experience with an annual two-week curator summer school, the transformation of the initial educational program into theory seminars, and then the return to the starting point of a long-term educational program taught us that project mobility gives flexibility to confront such challenges. But in the long run, stability is needed for long-term projects. The common framework of the ICA pointed to the strength of modern art as a whole, rather than in terms of individual domains. The ICA, once established to face the challenges of the transition from representative to communicative functions, showed that the power of contemporary art must be sought in both social and educational domains. Contemporary art is not possible without social participation of artists as well as the public. At the same time, both need lifelong education.

But if art is not possible without social involvement, can society be possible without art? Could a community exist without using art as symbolic activity or object? Hans-Ulrich Obrist once commented with a beautiful metaphor on this question: 'Art is a communal toy.'

tion, often a teacher is in a situation to have to teach what he or she doesn't know. Jacques Rancière once described this as the 'Ignorant Schoolmaster'. How could this position of ignorance be overcome if not by art? Art increasingly adopts an ontological status directed towards overcoming social, economic, and political situations which sometimes seem to have exhausted all of their resources.

Nazareth Karoyan, Head of ICA, Yerevan



Curriculum ICA, Yerevan

If art is not possible without education, can education be possible without art? What can we teach our children and all those who seek knowledge if there is no art? In a reality with changing knowledge and informa-

## APPLICATION FORM

### *Visual Culture Research Center*

Communication through application forms is a lingua franca of today's education. Application skills have become the basic capability necessary to function both in academic and artistic circuits. Rather than being a neutral tool for the evaluation of the creative potential, application procedures impose a web of criteria for inclusion and exclusion, a *dispositif* for the production of knowledge and non-knowledge. This *dispositif* does not limit itself to the artistic and academic fields: it is projected onto the social matrix, producing social relations as well as relations between societies. Scholars, artists, institutions, bodies of civil society and state apparatuses are all subject to the ever-lasting process of applying for a better chance, better funding, a better world. For the so-called 'developing societies' of the Second World (like Ukraine or Georgia), application procedures effectively provide a cognitive mapping of a contemporary global society rigged with totalizing managerial control.

Since no application procedure was devised for the 1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial, the activists of Visual Culture Research Center contributed a self-designed, self-filled and self-evaluated application form, a response to the current triumph of self-organization, self-employment and self-management in the field of artistic education and beyond.



Presentation Visual Culture Research Center,  
Europe House

#### *Name*

Visual Culture Research Center  
(VCRC)

#### *Background*

*Visual Culture Research Center* was founded in 2008 as a platform for collaboration between academics, artists, and activists in Kyiv-Mohyla Academy (Ukraine). Since then, VCRC has organized over 100 debates, research seminars and conferences, 15 artistic exhibitions and a number of actions in public space. In 2012, VCRC was ousted from Kyiv-Mohyla Academy by its scientific council, which deemed the center's activities 'non-scientific' after an artistic exhibition organized by VCRC was censored and shut down due to its presumably sensitive content. VCRC now operates as an independent, non-academic, educational, artistic, and political initiative.

#### *Mission*

VCRC aims to create a *productive environment* for the interaction between engaged knowledge, critical art, and grassroots politics. The idea of *engaged knowledge* is based upon the practice of humanities as a tool for social change, particularly within the tradition of Eastern European engaged intellectuals. The concept of *critical art* presupposes abandoning the autonomous field of artistic expression and undertaking an active artistic intru-

sion into current social antagonisms. *Grassroots politics* means politics aimed at reconstructing and reconfiguring the social ties that have been degraded, falsified or erased by the dominant neo-capitalist order. In order to construct anew the social ties between the atomized individuals in the current post-political society, VCRC contributes to the development of modes of education (and, primarily, *self-education*) that provide alternatives to the current commodification and utilization of the Academia. These alternatives rely upon the formula of an *informal open cooperation*, that is, an activity based on (1) informal, non-disciplinary social ties based on *friendships and alliances* between individuals and groups; (2) open, expansive, non-hierarchical mode of practice that accepts the *multiplicity of varying positions* within the common, loosely defined ideological platform; and (3) cooperation, a practice implying *collective action, mutual enforcement and trust*.

#### Motivation

The emergence of Visual Culture Research Center was inspired by an urge to abandon the existing disciplinary boundaries between the fields of *art, humanities, and politics*. In the context of Eastern Europe, subversion of these borders is rooted in the tradition of late-Soviet academic dissidents who were breaking paths for scientific creativity in non-democratic conditions by *blurring the borders between disciplines* such as philosophy, sociology, philology, art theory, and so on. Under the conditions of *post-Soviet neo-capitalism*, this tradition proves to be useful in undermining the established discourses that isolate art, humanities and politics from each other, thus ascribing them to narrow professionalized fields that support the social status quo. Current art is diminished by this status quo to the production of objects and discourses that, despite

all their criticality and radicalism, contribute little or nothing to *practical social change*. Humanities nowadays face the challenges of quantification and *bureaucratization of education and research*, accompanied by the ongoing proliferation and professionalization of disciplines. Politics is, in turn, increasingly isolated in professionalized *undemocratic structures* devoid of any real citizen participation. However, art, science and politics are all *cognitive tools* that provide varied opportunities for reflection and action. Overlapping of these fields is the necessary precondition of social transformation.

#### Operation

VCRC is a self-organized initiative that operates on the basis of *collective voluntary work*. The center does not have any permanent funding and its participants are not paid for their work. VCRC raises funds for its activities occasionally, but its overall operation takes place on a *non-budget basis*. VCRC is an open community that consists of a loose group of occasional collaborators and a core group of long-term activists. The activities of Visual Culture Research Center are based upon *regular assemblies* open for the wider circles of collaborators. VCRC works as a platform for collaboration between various groups and initiatives that share a transformative approach towards social reality, *based on common backgrounds, ideals and goals*: commitment to social change based on the principles of egaliberte; action against social, economical and cultural exclusion; discrimination of discriminators, etc.

#### Activities

Among the main focuses of Visual Culture Research Center's activities are *politics of education, artistic activism and critique, political film theory and practice, current develop-*

ments in urbanism. Research seminars and conferences held by VCRC include *Post-Soviet Urbanism* (2008), *What Is Anti-Semitism the Name Of?* (2009), *Art and Knowledge* (2009), *Ideology of Difference* (2010), *Feminism: Assemblage Point* (2011), and *Politics of Education* (2011). Together with the student union *Direct Action*, VCRC has organized protests and debates concerning the implementation of the Bologna Accord in Ukraine and the attempts to introduce a neo-liberal law on higher education. In collaboration with curatorial group Hudrada, VCRC held exhibitions dealing with *criminal prosecution of political activists* (*Court Experiment*, 2010) and *labor politics* (*Labor Show*, 2011). In 2012, VCRC organized an exhibition *Ukrainian Body* in Kyiv-Mohyla Academy that was censored by its rector, and the center was subsequently expelled from the Academy. VCRC's ongoing exhibition project *Unrendered Spaces* deals with the strategies of perception of urban environment. VCRC is publishing *Political Critique* magazine, the Ukrainian edition of a network of Eastern European leftist magazines.

### *Experience*

On various occasions the activities of Visual Culture Research Center have caused sharp controversies and debates. Its actions and seminars have been attacked several times by Ukrainian neo-nazis and football hooligans. In February 2012, the exhibition *Ukrainian Body* organized by VCRC was censored and shut down by the President of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy where VCRC operated at that time. An exhibition that studied Ukrainian society through the prism of various bodily practices was deemed immoral and pornographic. As a result, a large-scale debate on critical art and the limits of its freedom was launched in the Ukrainian public sphere.

Visual Culture Research Center initiates a cross-border platform for cooperation between related ini-

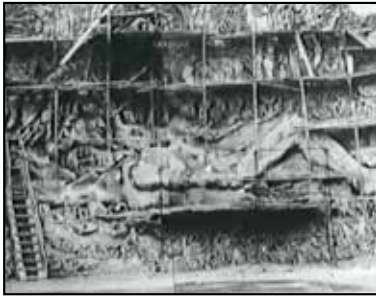
tiatives, groups and institutions in Eastern Europe and beyond, aiming to face the challenges that originate at a global level but are usually dealt with locally – and therefore with no or little result. This platform is conceived to create a grassroots level exchange of activists, artists, and academics based on ideological commitments and common ideas rather than institutionalized practices.

### *Annex 1: Post/Soviet Urbanism*

Since its inception in 2008, Visual Culture Research Center has been undertaking an in-depth research into post-war Soviet architecture and urbanism and its transformations in post-Soviet conditions. In the course of its research, the working group of VCRC focused on the story of the creation and subsequent destruction of *Park of Memory in Kyiv*, one of the boldest neo-modernist projects in Soviet history. In 1967, Kyiv-based monumental artists Vladimir Melnychenko and Ada Rybachuk engaged in a project of a municipal crematorium. Their task was to radically transform the burial practice in the Soviet Union by encouraging the Soviet citizens to switch from traditional burial to cremation. While working on this project, Melnychenko and Rybachuk developed the idea of *therapeutic architecture*. Its crucial element in the case of *Park of Memory* was a 200 meter-long concrete wall covered with high reliefs depicting various liminal situations in the history of mankind. These reliefs were supposed to prepare the visitors psychologically for the ceremony of cremation. In early 1982, just before the completion of the work, local party officials made a decision to cover the wall with a layer of concrete, thus putting an end to this artistic intervention in the social field. The story of *Park of Memory* is documented in an ongoing video project produced by Visual Culture Research Center, based on the interviews conducted with late

Vladimir Melnichenko, archive materials from Israel Goldstein's documentary *The Wall* (1988), and a documentation of the current use of the site of Park of Memory. Materials collected by the activists of VCRC were contributed to the exhibition *Soviet Modernism: Unknown Stories, 1955-1991* (Architekturzentrum Wien, 2012).

Stills 1.1 – 1.3:



*The Wall*, director Israel Goldstein, 1988

## Annex 2: Ukrainian Body

In February 2012, Visual Culture Research Center organized the exhibition *Ukrainian Body* (curated by Oksana Briukhovetska, Serhiy Klymko and Lesia Kulchynska). Various *corporal practices* imposed by the state on its citizens or emerging as a result of a social crisis and atomization were put into focus in an artistic investigation. Issues such as *poverty, social inequality, biopolitical control, social and sexual discrimination, and exploitation* were addressed. A few days after the opening, Serhiy Kvit, rector of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, where VCRC operated since its inception, visited the exhibition and shut it down immediately, famously exclaiming: *'This is not an exhibition, this is shit!'*. This censorship of an artistic project by the head of an academic institution fostered debates on the social function of critical art in the public sphere. Mainstream media, including TV news programs, have been discussing issues of artistic freedom and its limits, while protest actions have been staged in public spaces both for and against the exhibition. Among the most active supporters of censoring the exhibition were the neo-nazis linked to the far-right *Freedom* party. The rector of the Academy has never publicly renounced their support, whereas in one of the TV shows discussing the exhibition he answered to the accusation of taking advantage from the support of racists as follows: *'When you call someone a racist, prepare yourself to be called a degenerate.'*

A few days before the opening of the 1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial the printing of the catalogue of *Ukrainian Body* project, due to be exhibited at the Triennial, was suspended by the publishing house because of its presumably sensitive content. The only available copy of the catalogue was printed in Tbilisi specifically for exposition at the 1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial.

Stills 2.1 – 2.3:



*If You Call Someone a Racist, Prepare Yourself To Be Called a Degenerate*, video loop, 2012. Camera & editing: Oleksiy Radynski

**Annex 3: Eurotrash**

Since early 2011, activists of Visual Culture Research Center have been following and documenting the developments in social, urban, and political spheres that came about due to the *2012 European Football Championship in Poland and Ukraine*. This event led to considerable transformations in various fields of social life in Ukraine, from *vast budget cuts and public property de-*

*molitions* to the *founding of an art biennial* in Kyiv. In addition to the traditional reporting, these processes were covered by a number of Ukrainian and Polish critical artists invited by Visual Culture Research Center to collaborate on a special issue of *Political Critique* magazine. They were encouraged to apply their thinking and skills in the format of *artistic journalism*, to cover this event in a way that would counter the propaganda machine of the state. As a result, a number of visual essays were included into this issue under the overall title *Eurotrash*.

Within this framework, a video was made one day before the opening of the championship, when a group of activists entered the barracks where the *workers of the Olympic stadium in Kyiv* lived. These barracks, heavily guarded from the journalists, were notorious for their unbearable living conditions, while the workers living there were *underpaid on a regular basis or not paid at all for their work*. During their stay in the barracks, activists undertook an exercise in radical education, based on an aggressive intrusion into the workers' leisure routine and aiming to raise their *political awareness*.

Stills 3.1 – 3.3:





*We Are Waiting for Euro*, video loop, 2012

Camera & editing: Oleksiy Radynski

Visual Culture Research Center, Kiev

## WE COME IN PEACE

Ruderal Academy 007:  
Chiatura Georgia

*Sarah Cowles*

Ruderal Academy is an itinerant school of landscape interpretation and ecological design. Sarah Cowles founded Ruderal Academy in 2008. The academy is educational, productive, and projective, where participants utilize both fine art and design research techniques to analyze current landscape conditions and speculate on possible futures. Sarah Cowles partners with educational and cultural institutions to locate a specific site of study and develops a semester-long curriculum for it. The selected site serves as both the campus and the primary text. She has co-lead Ruderal Academy programs with professors of design, fine arts, and curatorial practice. Learning at Ruderal Academy has both horizontal and vertical implications; participants gain both transferable skills in landscape analysis and an in-depth knowledge of site and situation enhancing subsequent projects in the region.

In the fall of 2012, Ruderal Academy 007 was based in the city of Chiatura, Republic of Georgia. Chiatura is a center of manganese mining in the foothills of the Caucasus mountains. Previous sites of Ruderal Academy investigation include: *hypersaline lagoons* in the San Francisco Bay, a *reservoir breach* in a state park in the Missouri Ozarks, a channelized *industrial river*

in the Berkshire region of Massachusetts, and the landscape of the *US-Mexico border* in El Paso, Texas and Juarez, Mexico.

*Ruderal* is an ecological term that refers to species that are adapted to thrive in conditions of scarcity and disturbance. Ruderal species are often called pioneer species in that they hold territory in advance of more stable species. The ruderal suggests a form of practice that begins with the given; to work from the ground up, to work fast, iteratively and with minimal means.

As such, Ruderal Academy lands in sites of transition and disturbance, places with rich political, historical, social, industrial and ecological contexts. The school is open to students, professionals and local citizens from all disciplines who are interested in both gaining analytical skills and creating interpretive works in an intensive collaborative setting. Participants in Ruderal Academy programs address a particular place at a particular time, and establish a temporary community of learning, exchange and dwelling. Lectures and tours are provided by local professionals and scholars, and participants receive feedback in critiques from designers, artists, and professionals.

Ruderal Academy programs are comprised of three phases:

- Site inventory, archival research and documentation
- Analysis and interpretation of research
- Development and execution of site-specific interventions, design proposals, or studio artwork

#### *Ruderal Academy 007: Chiatura*

Chiatura is the site and subject of a series of workshops introducing techniques of landscape research, analysis, interpretation, and design through intensive site exploration and artistic production.

Chiatura is a working landscape dominated by mining operations and facilities. Manganese is mined at upper elevations of the Kvirila gorge. The ore is processed, and then transferred to railcars at the river bottom. Black sediments from mining operations foul the Krivila River from Chiatura southward. Half of the riverside operations are in ruin – a linear landscape of black drifts of ore and piles of crumbling concrete. One system of rope ways conveys ore from the mines to processing facilities on each side of the river. A second set transports people from the river bottom to the upper levels of the gorge and from village to village.

The first phase of the workshop focused on exploration of the region and resulted in a series of artworks interpreting how land use and social spaces are stratified in relation to elevation. These works were exhibited at the 1st Tbilisi Triennial. The second phase focused on materials of the site; the ore and grit – the physical, material, and textural elements that define the aesthetic character of Chiatura. The third phase, to be developed over winter 2013, will synthesize the two previous analytical phases into a design proposal and into a remediation program for the city and the Kvirila gorge.

On the first day of the first phase, each participant was assigned to a different sabagiro or gondola, to travel from the bottom of the river to the upper elevations. They spent the day sketching, slowly returning to the guesthouse in a Situationist 'derive'. Each participant returned and shared stories and vignettes about the landscape of the gorge. This exercise helped build the group's collective knowledge of the site. The next day, participants were assigned a series of landscape terms to define both verbally and with illustrations or photographs from Chiatura, creating a common, site specific language to discuss and evolve the project. After a few days some par-

ticipants had to return to Tbilisi and a core group of 4 students remained. The following days participants revisited certain sites for further sketching and study, including the terminus of the mine train, an ore processing plant, and the village of Darkveti at the upper plateau.



*We Come In Peace, Europe House*

The installation at Europe House – entitled *We Come in Peace* – is an interpretation of a series of ‘social and ecological incidents’ that occurred during the workshop, and at different elevations within the gorge. A large section-elevation drawing orients viewers to the topography of the gorge, and each installation carries an elevation notation that corresponds to the section drawing. In these works, the participants sought to capture how spatial, social and psychological implications of how *sabagiro* travel within the topography of the city create an idiosyncratic vertical urbanism.

Mshvidoba, or ‘Peace’ is the name of a miner’s *sabagiro*. It rises 1000 meters from the center of the city at a 42-degree pitch. *We Come in Peace* refers to a pop culture meme; a message to humans from friendly aliens arriving on planet earth.

#### *Rainbow Geyser*

Coming back down from Ithkvisi through the big black ore puddles past the mill. At the river, a geyser of water, 12 meters high, bright white

against the black dust. A second break nearby, a softer arc. Under the bridge, a weeping, pulsing rainbow. A system fails, and produces absurd beauty.

#### *The Jackals*

At dusk, up the canyon to Sarkvelotubani, howling from the cliffs, a chorus, a crescendo. Didn’t know they were there, did we, and not this many. I stop, a dog ahead, and a drunken hermit is descending, talking talking talking. He speaks of his daughter. I choose him over the angry dog below, together we walk for 5 minutes, he peels off up the stone path, talking talking talking. When the canyon opens, a grind, a whine, a water pump starts. They say they never saw or heard this man, but the jackals, they did.

#### *Entry*

Coming into Darkveti from Sachkhere, into the gorge, the first mill site grown over with grass. A green passenger car on a siding. At the turn where the tributary meets confluence is exoskeleton of a cafe, cantilevered over the river. In shadows, the monument reads ‘Chiatura’. The cliffs rise, undercuts hung with ferns, weeping water. The Kvirila river runs black from here to Zestaponi.

#### *Waiting for the Ore Train*

At night we rode Peace up, walked past the blocks. At the tunnel entrance a hydraulic sound, a pump, air perhaps, and boys and a grandmother are sawing logs together for firewood. The boys sit on the log pile, some wrestling. Green light reflected off the trees. After a half hour the mine train comes, the catenary arcing. We follow it to the tipple, watch as the ore is unloaded into cable-drawn hoppers that traverse the gorge to the mill on the south side.

#### *The Busy Man*

Searching for the Darkveti-Sareki rope way, driving up the cobble road

laid by German POWs, past the ruin of the chemistry laboratory, we ask a man sitting alone on a bench for directions. He looks about, and informs us he is busy at this moment, but can tell us. Look behind you, bavshebo.

As outsiders to the city, the workshops participants were seen as aliens; treated with equal parts hostility and hospitality. The stories depicted represented the sublime and elusive *genus loci* of Chiatura; a place where rocks fly and the river runs black.

In the second phase, participants investigated three sites in Chiatura: a concrete plant in Darkveti near the start of the gorge, an abandoned ore washing plant, and the Itkhvisi-Zodi rope way. The resilience of the land and people of Chiatura was witnessed, and ideas of physical and metaphoric grit filtration, catchment, and processing were explored. The second day, they created drawings interpreting the sites. Soils, mining surplus, vegetation, architectural and industrial artifacts, and water are represented in this visual vocabulary, as reference points to guide aesthetic and material decision making for continued projects in Chiatura.

Institutional partners and sponsors of Ruderal Academy include *The Knowlton School of Architecture*, *The Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts* at Washington University in Saint Louis, *Robert Reich School of Landscape Architecture* at Louisiana State University, *The Rubin Center* at University of Texas at El Paso, *The Center for Land Use Interpretation*, *Tbilisi State Academy of the Arts*, *The Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art*, *The Center of Contemporary Art*, Tbilisi, and *Bureau for Open Culture*.

**Sarah Cowles, Visual artist, Founder of Ruderal Academy, Nomadic Project**

## MANIFESTO FOR AN EDUCATION BEYOND THE POWER GRID

*Rainer Ganahl*

We are all aware that social and economic privileges are passed on by the systems that educate and train young people for their roles in life. Education is, therefore, not only a set of keys to many doors of society, but also a medium that allows privileges to move from one generation to the other. The class mobility of the American dream seems to have become a European reality, since in Europe education is – still – mainly regulated by governments. In the United States, however, large parts of the relevant educational programs are privatized, market-oriented, and controlled through a system of tuitions and selections. Thus, both class privileges and ethnic and racial differences play a central role in the North American system of education, whereas the educational debt burden is skyrocketing and distorts the playing field even further. Symptomatically enough, the talk of the day in the United States is the downward mobility of the middle classes.

Due to the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial and information-driven society, the reproduction of class advantages and disadvantages through education and cultural capital is larger today than it has ever been before. Education no longer acts as a machine producing social and economic equality as was the case until the 1970s. Today, education rather accel-

erates and cements class differences. Even if we no longer subscribe to any (Marxist) economic determinism, a person's educational, cultural, and behavioral versatility is increasingly defined by access and proximity to elite educational and cultural institutions.

I am appalled to see how education turns into a business, how it is addressed as investment, how its results are treated as cultural capital to be monetized. I am annoyed to see art education being recycled as ultimate chic, as a powerful accessory instrumentalized for all possible aims except for the creation of art. While in my view art should act as critical counter model for aesthetic and performing practices directed to those models society has validated and marketed. Thus I get very suspicious when art academies are invited to play a role in the celebrity culture, to become trending topics, to play a role in a system where the winning spectacular takes it all.

In the United States of America and also in large parts of Asia, status and power are communicated and defined by educational access through fundamentally unfair and biased entry points. Not *what* is studied but *where* you studied is the question. Celebrity culture – the crystallization of our society of spectacle – and marketing and branding strategies are penetrating the realm of education. Obviously, education as the most fundamental instrument for a democratic society should be accessible to everyone. But even in the art world, we can already observe a turn to a spectacular, fabulous court system where kings and king makers, courtiers and mandarins all uphold the rule of proximity to the art world power grid. That power grid equals a glamorous, hierarchical order, a collective superego formation resembling the magic powers encountered in childhood fairytales where local kings, princes and princesses may fly without wings.

Since educational market-driven models started gaining a foothold in many parts of the world, we have seen a well-capitalized global corporate education industry emerging, trying to transform the multiple worlds of learning into prosperous business worlds. But what do they really teach us? What are their programs about? Highly selective admission policies for excellence programs, wealth and privilege creation, lucrative alumni politics, and VIP channeling of students into prosperous positions. All of this constitutes a power grid seemingly different for each operational field but always characterized by tight, exclusive networks of hegemonic relationships, good access to information, and funding and admission rituals that are partially open and partially opaque as if hidden in ether – ether used to be understood as the stratum high in the upper skies, removed from earthly sight, where gods and goddesses ruled and defined life and light.



Rainer Ganahl, *Reading Lenin's Imperialism*, Europe House

In the currently ongoing worldwide trend to modularize education into a bachelor and master format, I also see the danger of rendering education into a global product for marketing and trading, for mergers and acquisitions with dire consequences for handling our histories and negotiating our differences. I advocate free and efficient education with public, autonomous, need-

oriented teachings that treat things, people, animals and nature with respect and allow each and everything its own timing and rhythms. Any curriculum should be oriented along democratic, liberal, openminded, inclusive and collaborating ideas, addressing real needs of students and connecting to a balanced, fair and just society as a whole. Education should stand for critical thinking and resistance to commercially propagated and market-driven corporate identities and success stories. The reality principle resulting from good education should not replicate the unsustainable status quo of our corporate consumer culture, but create space for self-assertion, alternative and ludic subjectivities open to responsible and fair political, social and economic participation.

Today, many privileged people run through the most exclusive, educational institutions, ending up as professors in the very best academies, writing about blue chip artists who give nothing more to our epoch than capital accumulation and globalized market strength assisted by mutated, trading mega-power grids in which they all want to be decisive players. The price for breeding in the power grid is: identify with it, narcissistically refer to it, and reaffirm it. Again, I call education successful when people are able to define their own demands, add differences and resistances to our preimagined, pre-drawn, pre-cooked regime of status quo. I even advocate moderate failure in a dosage that does not crush us completely. What is often perceived as failure by the standards of a currently dominating power grid protects us partially from active complicity and forces us to rethink and reposition ourselves in regard to neo-liberal, consumerist superego monstrosities.

It is essential that proper education develops models, strategies, and even machines opposing and redefining our corporate, neo-liberal, de-

bilitating power grids constituted by big money, (celebrity) spectacle, and (pure) force extending into all spheres of life. Education, as well as any other form of cultural work – including art making, should open up possibilities for everybody to develop their own criteria of success and create their own flexible, multi-dimensional, alternative grids as frameworks of viable and sustainable references to operate and communicate with.

Rainer Ganahl, Visual artist, New York

BUYING AND SELLING

*Nedko Solakov*

This was a new experience for me – to have a Skype workshop/seminar. I am scared flying and within Europe we – with my wife – drive. Three years ago I had to go to Shanghai and we took a train. The journey (which was an essential part of the artwork presented in a Shanghai museum) lasted two weeks. I couldn't do the same for Tbilisi, so here we were – me in my so-called 'dirty' studio where I was working on the new 'Paintings with No Texts' series of twenty relatively big paintings and the bright Georgian people on the other side of the Black Sea taking part in the *Selling & Buying* project. I have always been in the position to be the Easterner, all the time the important art guys were/are Westerners for me. Now, for the first time in my life, I was the Westerner for the Tbilisi people. It was a nice feeling and I have tried to be as human as possible. We had a great time for some hours (in two sessions) and now at the moment the time has come to produce this book I am not so sure what to include in it. At my suggestion Katharina Staedler, the local organizer, made a selection of my initial emails, her notes during the session and the written post-seminar reactions of some of the young artists who took part. Frankly, their response during the Skype exchange was much more free and vivid which means one thing only – that they have learned meanwhile

to respect the Westerner and they are a bit afraid what they should write about their encounter with him/her. Unfortunately, this was not what I was aiming for, but after all this was just a game, wasn't it. (written in Brussels, at Le Meridien Hotel, on Valentine's Day. The reason to be here for a couple of days – to take part in a show called 'Cultural Freedom in Europe' in one of these Gotham City like buildings of the European Union where I am presenting a new series of drawings called 'Political Stories' and this afternoon I will take part in a panel discussion on the same subject. In two words – I am again in my usual role of Easterner).

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dear nedko,

so far i have only received four short statements by participants, nevertheless i am sending the material i have to you, just that you have an insight on the material so far. i used two of your emails (please let me know if you think they should be with dates), my notes and then the four texts with reflections. interesting is that it is visible in the text that they are scared to say or do something wrong. when i talked with some of the participants about their experience and reflection they were a lot more open and detailed about what they experienced... i will remind the others to still write a few lines and then send the text like this to the editor/designer...

hope you are well,  
kat

[email on 14.2.2013]

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Dear Kat,

Why don't the participants try to 'sell' their art to me? In the way I worked

trying to 'sell' it to Westerners back in the 1990s. When I say 'sell' I mean how they will be able to attract the other, the other side - either being a curator, or a gallerist, fellow artist (with more experience), the general audience, etc. They should go one by one (in front of the others) and try to 'seduce' me with their art, then we can discuss the approach and how successful it was. Needless to say that such 'selling' is a very important part of education even though usually there is not paid enough attention to the subject. Let's call the whole thing 'Selling & Buying', shall we?  
Please forward this to the curators. I am curious what they think.

Best,  
Nedko

[email on 8.11.2012]

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*nedko solakov - selling art*

how to present your work... selling metaphorically speaking; 'all in order'; (publication on all production); (top secret piece, documenta 12); flash art directory on galleries/institutions...; he [nedko] sent brochures; when 'selling', not only one piece of art, show concepts and approaches; only one piece narrows down your work; imagine the other point of view knows NOTHING about your context (i.e. about georgian contemporary art); describe the work, catcher of the work/title; caption: size (height then width then depth), medium, year; who are the artists you like?; portfolio can be personal and honest - should be!; also failure...; public art always needs to be site specific!; finding location OR one has location, find best work/project for that place; 'sell' ideas: details (who does what where...) - essence of work/concept; acc/weimar-program for artists; even if something is very personal (very skillfully done),

it will mean something to someone, people will believe. honesty; linking students/'young artists' websites via Cca... [notes by katharina staedler made during the Skype sessions]

*Reactions of participants:*

Briefly about Skype seminar with Nedko Solakov. First of all, I want to say that that was the first time I had to deal with an online seminar and in the beginning it was hard to understand everything, but by the time I got used to it the process became more interesting and productive. Personally for me, during this seminar I received some important advices, about how to present my kind of artworks, so it may be interesting for some curators or galleries, depending on where I am presenting this, it can be just some friends as well. Apart from presenting in a right way, a close thing to this was description of artworks, not forgetting all the small details that should be written in description of the artwork. I don't exactly remember but I have a sense that there were some other interesting advices as well, but my mind just remembers what I wrote about, maybe that's because it was more important for me than other things that were said:) [Lasha Babuadze]

One of the very best lecture/dialogues was the skype-conversation with Nedko Solakov. Although he was miles away, the discussion about 'Selling art' was quite vitalizing. Responding to each participant's artworks, all of us were encouraged in our work and got direct correction and leads by Solakov, sharing his experiences as a successful artist. These questions made us basically think about our ideas of art and gave a useful exchange about realizing artworks. [Carlotta-Marie Romano]

The first Tbilisi Triennial entitled *Offside Effect* took place from 19 October to 20 November 2012. Art school representatives from European

countries were giving workshops for a month during this exhibition. There was a Skype meeting with Nedko Solakov within the Triennial workshops. The workshop, that took place in the Center of Contemporary Art's gallery looked like an exhibition presentation, where each student could present his own work to Nedko Solakov and listen to his thoughts and appraisal. It was so interesting for me to 'listen and realize' his mind. Communication like that between artists is supportive and necessary. [CCA-T student Tamar Mchedlishvili]

The workshop 'Selling Your Art' delivered by Nedko Solakov through Skype was one of the most impressive and also challenging at same time throughout the whole Triennial. He created a self-reflective tension between us and him to provoke our critical thinking. The outcome of the workshop was a much wider self-awareness and cleared up vision of ourselves. He reached this by interacting with us in a very intense/demanding way, squeezing all the information from us to face our actual knowledge and value. [Vato Urushadze]

**Nedko Solakov, Visual artist, Sofia**

## REPORT FROM TBILISI

Tara McDowell



*Poster Tbilisi Triennial*

I want to begin with a picture. It shows the poster for the 1st Tbilisi Triennial pasted onto a wall that also bears advertisements for Caucasian mountain mineral water, Red Bull, and Sulguni, a briny, tart cheese. This particular text and image served not only as the triennial's promotional poster, but also as the massive banner attached to the facade of each triennial venue and as a smaller, portable brochure whose verso listed the project's program of events. In other words, this was the triennial's sole printed matter - its single visual statement that circulated in the public sphere. The 1st Tbilisi Triennial invited art schools, rather than individual artists, to participate. Yet the photograph in the poster is a curious emblem

for an event devoted to experimental education, as this triennial was. It is, first of all, clearly and emphatically an institutional space: a lecture hall or auditorium, fairly large, as the many rows of seats imply. It is fiercely centered, perfectly symmetrical, the orthogonals of the seating converging at the center of the blackboard. Look *here*. Eyes *forward*. The blackboard is a symbolic site of knowledge dissemination - Joseph Beuys famously played on this - but it is also a vehicle for visible and performative punishment, as for instance John Baldessari demonstrated via a group of art students at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in 1971. 'I will not make any more boring art', they wrote again and again, in what must have been a tedious and hand-cramping process. This blackboard has been erased except for a bit of residual information at the top left: 'Start 10:10; Ende 12:10.' Most likely the start and stop of a class meeting, this notation reminds us that education structures our time: our day, our week, our semester, our year.

Despite this basic institutional educational setting, however, no teacher and no students are present. There are no people in this picture, an absence that becomes all the more odd when we consider the preponderance of images of contemporary pedagogical projects that rely solely on groups of people for their visual idiom and legitimacy.<sup>1</sup> Whereas the single most circulated image of the Tbilisi Triennial, its self-promotional image, shows an empty space whose institutional, regulatory, standardizing tendencies are so obvious that we don't even need Foucault to recognize them.<sup>2</sup> This image stages a series of contradictions that were structurally built into the triennial, and which also emerged in unexpected and unruly ways over its month-long duration. The photograph, as it turns out, is by the Berlin-based artist and writer Hito Steyerl (who

had been scheduled to attend) and depicts the auditorium of the Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt.<sup>3</sup> It belongs to a larger project by Steyerl, *Adorno's Grey*, exhibited last fall at e-flux's New York space. According to legend, Adorno painted this auditorium a particular shade of grey in order to keep his students alert while he lectured. In contrast to this environmental conditioning, however mythic and elusive, the triennial proved that not only is the right shade of grey not necessary, but neither is the auditorium.

In some ways the image was anticipatory, in the sense that there could be no picture of the Tbilisi Triennial community because it had not yet come together. But it reinforces that the impact of the triennial registered most in its non-institutional spaces, its temporary and shifting alliances of individuals. It also reveals the triennial as a deeply aspirational event - specifically aspirational of Western models and histories of education. As Irena Popiashvili, director of the Tbilisi State Art Academy, bluntly put it during the two-day symposium that opened the triennial: 'Georgia wants to be West, but it is closer to the Global South.'

What emerged over the course of the opening symposium was a profound gap between the aims and methods of educational programs in Western countries, especially Western Europe, and those in non-Western countries such as Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Ethiopia. Attendees from art schools in the latter group reported that one of the most difficult yet most pervasive transitions currently underway there is from fine arts to contemporary art, which is essentially like learning an entirely new language as fast as possible - a language that programs in Western Europe such as MaHKU, the Masters Program at the Utrecht Graduate School of Visual Art and Design, assume fluency. And Nikolaus Hirsch, director

of the highly regarded Städelschule in Frankfurt, a triennial participant, spoke openly during the symposium of his desire to remove himself entirely from the Städelschule program, and let the students teach themselves. On the other hand Lucrezia Cippitelli from Addis Contemporary in Addis Ababa commented that she struggles to avoid importing Western contemporary art practices into Africa, but still awards students an MA degree and plans to organize a triennial. Katharina Staedler, from CCA Tbilisi's informal master's degree program, explained that one of her signal achievements had been the implementation of a communal calendar.

These wildly divergent accounts of challenges faced and methodologies enacted can be mapped onto two of the most frequently cited theoretical models for experimental education, Jacques Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1981) and Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968).<sup>4</sup> The former is Rancière's account of Joseph Jacotot, a French schoolteacher who in 1818 found himself teaching a class that only understood Flemish. In order to communicate, Jacotot evolved a non-hierarchical exchange between himself and the students that he called 'intellectual emancipation'. For Rancière the lesson here is about a fundamental equality of intelligence, a position he takes in pointed opposition to traditional models of knowledge transmission. Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, which was first published in Portuguese and later translated into English, is a landmark of critical pedagogy. Freire argues for the emancipatory possibility of education, but would disagree that authority can be dispensed with wholesale in favor of the non-hierarchical transmission of knowledge and experience.<sup>5</sup> For Freire, authority is always present, in tension with liberty, and dialogue always takes place within a structure.

By ensuring that attendees were art schools, and by foregrounding ex-

perimental art education since the implementation of the Bologna Process (the agreement by 47 countries to standardize higher education, which is transitioning Europe to a privatized student-as-consumer model of education that has been underway in the United States for several decades), the 1st Tbilisi Triennial tapped into a knotty tangle of issues that are pervasive in contemporary art, and are some of the most defining features of our cultural moment. Some threads to tease out from this knot include the so-called 'educational turn' in curating, which has followed close on the heels of the 'curatorial turn' and the attendant rise of the curator. A brief history of this educational turn would include the many pedagogical artworks that have appeared in recent years, as well as the many instances in which art institutions have invited schools into their spaces, from *unitednationsplaza's* reincarnation as Night School at the New Museum in 2008-2009 to the Wide Open School at the Hayward Gallery in London in 2012. It would include the many informal and experimental art schools that have appeared just in the past few years, such as the cancelled and subsequently mythologized *Manifesta 6* in 2006. The organizers had proposed to run an art school for the duration of the exhibition, which was to take place on Cyprus, but communications between the curators and the host institution broke down. A version of the school was later organized by Anton Vidokle, one of the curators of *Manifesta 6*, as *unitednationsplaza* in Berlin in 2007.<sup>6</sup> There is also Irit Rogoff's frequently cited essay *Turning* from 2008; Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson's edited volume *Curating and the Educational Turn*, which was preceded by conferences in London, Dublin, and Venice; and the special issue of *e-flux journal* on the Bologna Process guest edited by Rogoff in 2010, in which contributors laid out a historical and theoretical framework for current de-

velopments, of both the standardizing and emancipatory varieties.<sup>7</sup>



Seminar *Art after Empire*. Anton Vidokle and Keti Chukrov, Europe House

The question that crops up repeatedly in the growing body of literature on this subject is: Has the academy annexed the curatorial, or has the curatorial annexed the academy? Are we witnessing academia in the expanded field, or curating in the expanded field? To return to the example at hand, did the Tbilisi Triennial present an exhibition-as-school, or a school-as-exhibition? This recurrent rhetoric of expansion and annexation arises from the simple fact that both the art academy and the curatorial are so successful today, although both are similarly under siege by what is variously called cognitive or academic capitalism. To a lesser degree, the art academy and the curatorial are linked because more and more contemporary art curators are educated in art schools, while artists temporarily slide into roles such as archivist, producer, ethnographer, curator, community organizer, teacher, and so on. As the curator and writer Simon Sheikh has noted, most artists operating in the international contemporary art world are academy-trained, which was not the case even twenty years ago.<sup>8</sup> Art schools are profoundly influential in today's art world - a significant departure from modernist avant-gardes, who often positioned themselves in op-

position to academies. Another thread to follow is the emergence and formalization of two related but different terms: artistic research and knowledge production. True enough, artists have always engaged in research, but artistic research only began to move from background to foreground, both formally and discursively, in the 1960s. Today it is pervasive, and symptomatic of a resistance to procedures of forgetting in an amnesiac society. Perhaps it is also a touch resistant to the slicker formal seductions of art-fair art. Biennials, museums, and *kunsthallen* show contemporary artists who in turn show archival photographs, films, and ephemera. And artists, who are called upon with increasing frequency to speak publicly about their practices, explain research rather than works of art to preserve self and sanity. Knowledge production in contemporary art (the most fraught symbol of which is the PhD in artistic practice) has been linked to emancipatory politics but also to liberalizing education policies aimed at outcome-based education.<sup>9</sup> To paraphrase the artist Stephan Dillemath, who participated in the Tbilisi Triennial, today people in the South do the dirty work, and people in the North produce knowledge.

In several respects, the Tbilisi Triennial replicated the large-scale international biennial form with which we are all familiar, and which has proliferated across the globe. Indeed, one of the most striking things about the biennial format is how little variation occurs. By and large, biennials and triennials happen in cities, bring in new curators for each iteration, take place in multiple venues, are accompanied by programs of events, and, with varying degrees of success, put forward an organizing framework by which we might newly understand art's relation to the world in which we live. There are only a scant few deviations from this structure. Manifesta, the European

Biennial of Contemporary Art, changes host cities each time it occurs. The Venice Biennale clings to its national pavilions, however antiquated and problematic, in part because they separate it from the pack. The most recent Berlin Biennale at long last took the logical next step for biennials, one anticipated by the 2004 publication *The Next Documenta Should Be Curated By an Artist*, and invited the artist Artur Żmijewski to act as chief curator. Which resulted in an insistently political, but also deeply divisive, project.

The Tbilisi Triennial took place in a city, involved a curatorial team brought together specifically for the undertaking, was installed in multiple venues throughout the city, included an extensive program of events, and offered experimental art education in the wake of Bologna as its conceptual framework. But because the organizers invited art schools rather than individual artists, the result was something quite different. The *form* of the triennial was familiar, notably so, but this one structural change led to very different outcomes. First and foremost, exhibition spaces were used as much for promotion, reportage, temporary workshops, and sites of exchange as for the display of finished artworks. Relational aesthetics, social practice, and participatory art may be relatively new terms for contemporary art, but this modality of exhibition (unlike what the contemporary art biennial has inherited from Venice) dates back to the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park in London in 1851, which functioned as an active site not only of display, but also of use and demonstration.

In Tbilisi this shift in how the exhibition spaces were used meant a shift away from the aesthetic and qualitative judgments that attend most biennials. Even in instances in which finished artworks appeared on walls and floors, they were always either student works or the results of collaborations

among students and/or teachers. That so much student work was on view cut against the reputational economy of the art world that so often drives the publicity machines of biennials . . . even as the triennial's emphasis on its four keynote artists reinscribed that reputational economy. The keynote artists - Stephan Dillemath, Marion von Osten, Hito Steyerl, and Anton Vidokle - all live in Germany or New York. Three are affiliated with e-flux, all have a rigorous writing practice and a political and critical art practice, and all are well-known, established figures. This is one of the many contradictions that structured the triennial, whose exhibition spaces quite forcefully imaged the extreme range in the invited schools' methodologies, resources, modes of self-presentation, and levels of engagement.

Inside the Literature Museum, one of the venues, the venerable Georgian artist Mamuka Japaridze had installed his untitled collaborative work with Katharina Staedler as part of the presentation by CCA Tbilisi, the organizer and host school. The work was simple: a table covered with dried, pressed Saperavi grapes. This varietal is the most formidable and revered in Georgian culture. The wine it makes is described as black, not red. During the fall harvest, which coincided with the triennial, Georgians make wine, which is shared and gifted for weeks and months to come. Japaridze simply unloaded pressed grapes onto a table, where they were so fragrant and insistently tactile that one couldn't help but run one's fingers through them. Nature had invaded culture, and institutional critique was never so nonchalant and playful. The work was also specific to site, region, culture, nationality, time of year, and the ethos of making and sharing that structures Georgian culture - and art production, too.

The pressed Saperavi grapes in the gallery were also a non-site. Rob-

ert Smithson coined this term to name works in which he placed materials such as rocks or slate from industrial or peripheral regions like Franklin, New Jersey, into containers on a gallery floor. By doing this he meant to engender in the viewer a mental shuttling from the current non-site (at the center, in the gallery) to the original source of that material, the site (at the periphery, elsewhere). Thus the material metonymically stands in for the site. Although located within the confines of the gallery, the non-site constantly refers to something outside the gallery, the site. So too did Japaridze's offering to the triennial insistently refer to something beyond the gallery: not just the process of winemaking (from which the grapes were excerpted), nor the place (the village of Shindisi, at which only hours earlier they had lain on the ground), but rather the range of activities that took place throughout the triennial, which engendered a spontaneous and temporary community that did function at times like a school.

In other words, the works installed in the various venues were the *non-sites* of the Tbilisi Triennial, while the *site* became the program of lectures, workshops, screenings, performances, parties, dinners, and walking tours that ran parallel to the exhibition. I coined a neologism for such auxiliary programming in the fourth issue of *The Exhibitionist*, a journal on curatorial practice of which I was the founding senior editor. I call this phenomenon, which is linked to a growing interest in discursive exhibitions, the 'paracuratorial'.<sup>10</sup> This practice defines curating not as bound solely to exhibition making, but rather as encompassing, and sometimes even making primary, a range of activities that have traditionally been parenthetical or supplementary to the exhibition proper. The paracuratorial is linked to, and takes advantage of, temporary and

mobile models of coming-together that are themselves the result of emphasis placed on the distribution of knowledge rather than its production. And yet, in an age when we are all more or less drowning in events (to paraphrase Livia Páldi), the paracuratorial runs the risk of simply adding to the problem.



*Shindisi Field Academy*

CCA Tbilisi partly sidestepped this issue by substituting the triennial programming for its normal schedule of classes during the run of the exhibition. Attendance at each event was mandatory for the sixteen art students enrolled in CCA's informal master's degree program. They were joined by art students from the local fine arts academy, triennial participants who stayed on past the opening weekend, and a handful of Georgian artists and teachers. These roughly forty people formed a temporary community for one month. Thus, not only did every event have a readymade, albeit small, audience, but that audience was often the same from one event to the next, and thus increasingly familiar and increasingly able to draw upon a shared vocabulary. All of this enabled an extended critical but also experiential engagement with the issues at hand.

This was certainly the case with the series of lectures I delivered during the triennial took as its subject historical models of alternative art schools. First among these was the Peo-

ple's Art School in Vitebsk, which was founded by Marc Chagall after the Bolshevik Revolution and soon taken over by Kazimir Malevich and his Unovis group. Next, Black Mountain College in North Carolina, where Josef and Anni Albers taught after the forced closing of the Bauhaus, and which also counted Buckminster Fuller, John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, Merce Cunningham, Charles Olson, and Robert Duncan among its students and faculty. Last, Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, whose close alignment with Conceptualism in the 1960s and 1970s produced an ideal forum for radical experiments in art-as-instruction. Though wildly divergent, all three schools were artist-run, all are now finished (or at least the incarnation I discussed is now over), all occurred in peripheral places like Tbilisi, and all have been mythologized. Moreover, they represent different moments of Modernism - the 1920s, 1950s, and 1970s - as well as Modernism taking an extreme, experimental, and collective form, however fraught. Extreme, experimental, collective, and fraught are all apt descriptors of the Tbilisi Triennial as well.

Not surprisingly, the triennial's paracuratorial programming was as uneven as its exhibition venues. The most successful projects - Stephan Dillemoth's weeklong workshop *the/ruins/the future*, conducted with a group of former students from the Art Academy in Munich; the *Unlearning Workshop* organized by Annette Krauss and her MaH-KU students; the Maumaus programming - were *processual*, which, as Irit Rogoff and others have noted, is the defining feature of education. 'Involving a low-key transformative process', Rogoff writes, the processual 'embodies duration and the development of a contested common ground'.<sup>11</sup> This is the opposite of how we experience most large-scale art events today, which we attend, if we have the privilege of attending at all,

for the briefest period of time allowable.



Stephan Dillemoth, Workshop *the/ruins/the future*

This was one of the most pervasive and productive structural tensions of the Tbilisi Triennial: It appropriated a form - the triennial - for its legibility and legitimacy, but it operated as a school, even though the biennial/triennial is usually a vehicle for a quick and massive digestion of contemporary art, and a school, at its best, involves a low-key transformative process. The sometimes-awkward collision of these two forms was not always successful, but sometimes it was, and so it is worthy of our attention as a model for how to reimagine the forms we use and encounter, especially at a moment in which their boundaries are eroding even further. Moreover, it is at the peripheries, in places like Tbilisi, where experimentation, hospitality, and failure are permitted, where we can best reconfigure and reimagine given forms rather than simply reproduce them.

#### Notes

1. I am thinking, for example, of images of *unitednationsplaza* in Berlin, the Mountain School in Los Angeles, and the Free University in Copenhagen that turn up in a quick Google image search.

2. Because he exposed and interrogated the links between institutions, power, and knowledge, Foucault is an oft-cited touchstone

in debates about alternative education or institutional critique.

3. I never met Hito Steyerl, although I had hoped to, as I admire her work and writing. She withdrew from the triennial and left Tbilisi before the opening, but deputized Vidokle to read a statement at the forum that explained her reasons for leaving, which boiled down to a lack of resources to realize her installation, which was due to a funding shortage resulting from the post-election transition of power. The primary image of the triennial, then, which we all saw every day for a month, was by an artist who was as absent as the individuals are from this space.

4. Jacques Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, trans. Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991); and Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Continuum, 1970).

5. Claire Bishop, in a chapter on pedagogical artworks from her recent books, also draws a comparison between Rancière and Freire. See Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012): 266–7.

6. Anton Vidokle compiled an *Incomplete Chronology of Experimental Art Schools* in *Notes for an Art School* (Amsterdam: International Foundation Manifesta. 2006), but many more can be added to this list, including, for example, the Academy of the Arts of the World, the Experimental Art School, the Occupational Art School, the Institut für Raumexperimente, Playshop, The Momentary Academy, The School of Panamerican Unrest, Ashkal Alwan's Home Workspace Program, Bruce High Quality Foundation's self-run university, The Kurt Schwitters DIY School, The Public School, The Silent University, The School of Global Art, The External Program, MASS Alexandria, SOMA, Islington Mill Art Academy, and The Critique Program.

7. See Irit Rogoff, *Turning*, in *e-flux journal* #0 (November 2008); Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, eds., *Curating and the Educational*

*Turn* (Amsterdam & London, de Appel/ Open Editions: 2010); *e-flux journal* #14 (March 2010); and also Dieter Roelstraete, *Critical Mess: On the Ruins of the Museum's Research Departments*, *Mousse Magazine* 26. <http://mousemagazine.it/articolo.mm?id=620#photoGallery>; accessed February 12, 2013.

8. Simon Sheikh, *Spaces for Thinking: Perspectives on the Art Academy*, *Texte zur Kunst* 62 (June 2006).

9. See, for example, Stephan Dilleth's well-known essay *The Academy and The Corporate Public*, accessible at <http://www.societyofcontrol.com>; Tom Holert, *Art in the Knowledge-based Polis*, *e-flux journal* #3 (February 2009) and the June 2011 special issue of *Texte zur Kunst* on *Artistic Research*.

10. Tara McDowell with Jens Hoffmann, *Reflection, The Exhibitionist* 4 (June 2011): 4.

11. Irit Rogoff, *Turning*. <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/turning/>; accessed February 12, 2013.

**Tara McDowell, Senior Editor The Exhibitionist, San Francisco**

## TRANSITORY TIMES

*Irena Popiashvili*

*Offside Effect*, the first Tbilisi Triennial, coincided with a peculiar and transitional time for Georgia. In the national elections on 1 October, power had been transferred peacefully through an election for the first time in Georgia's post-Soviet history. The shift of power from one party to another was followed by the change of the cabinet of ministers, so the previous Minister of Culture that funded the Triennial was obliged to leave the office and the new minister had little interest in projects of his predecessor. The Triennial was conceived and planned before the elections. The new Ministry stopped transferring the promised funds to the Triennial office, as they did not consider it a priority at that point in time. To Triennial participants and visitors who came from stable, democratic countries, the above described situation had to be explained and clarified.

Art education in Georgia has unquestionably been dominated by the State Academy of Arts for almost a century. CCA experimental art school was established in 2010 and for now it is the only alternative place in Georgia to study art, specifically contemporary art. It is no coincidence that Wato Tsereteli and Henk Slager, curators of the 1st Triennial, chose experimental forms of art education as a central topic of the Triennial. For CCA's Tsereteli, who has been an outsider in

Georgian arts education, it was important to bring international alternative schools to the forefront of the public eye and consciousness. The small community of CCA and its graduates had a need to exchange information and experience with their colleagues. Apart from the forum and panel discussions, the Triennial also organized exhibitions at different venues throughout the city and workshops with visiting artists and educators.

After having lived in the United States for the past twenty years, I was invited back to Georgia in the spring of 2012 to head the Tbilisi State Art Academy. The Academy was founded in 1922 and had its heyday in the late 1960s and early 1970s when it expanded under the directorship of Apolon Kutateladze whose name the academy still proudly bears. Today the Academy is an outdated hybrid of a post-Soviet institution and the Bologna Rules it has imposed on itself in order to fulfill the state education requirement to become a university. The school is in dire need of change or some sort of reform. Parallel to CCA, Wato Tsereteli is also head of the photography department at the Academy. I believe that the rigidity of the system and the artificial application of the Bologna Rules to the Academy and its programs served as a source of inspiration for *Offside Effect*.

My interest in the Triennial was clear: I wanted to learn from my colleagues' experience. There seemed to be a constant flux and change on the other side, while at the Academy I needed approval of either or both Ministries of Culture and Education to even make the slightest alteration. Parents want to send their kids to accredited schools. Would it be possible to apply part of the experimental education practice to the Academy?

In Georgia, where art education is divided between the Academy and CCA experimental art school, the presentations were eye openers for many at-

tendeeds. The forum demonstrated the multitude and versatility of the international art schools and educators. I had the honor to be one of the referees for the Forum taking place at the Goethe Institute in Tbilisi in the format of a panel discussion. The forum served as a platform where representatives of different schools could discuss their views on art education systems in their respective countries. Within the format of the forum each participant gave a visual presentation describing the history of their school, their involvement, and explained the audience specific programs and ideas their school was built on. From affluent Korea to strictly regulated Ukraine, from Mildred Lane in PA, USA, to ISA, Havana, all showed an unheard flexibility and openness to change. Stephan Dillemath, professor at the Munich Art Academy, reacting to the 'sanitarily cleanliness of the academy premises' described how his students squatted the academy in order to make it 'dirty' again. Was this an illustration that state-controlled art education would create a stifling atmosphere in schools? Did the existence of alternative schools and their success question the necessity of such rules? These were the questions that emerged listening to these presentations.

individuals in the global art world. The activists of Kiev's Visual Culture Research Center showed their initiative by participating in the Triennial with 'a self-designed, self-filled and self-evaluated application form, a response to the current triumph of self-organization, self-employment and self-management in the field of artistic education and beyond.' Rene Francisco of ISA (Havana) gave an additional presentation at the Academy, where our professors and students could hear about the collaborative workshops Francisco developed with his students – a type of interaction absolutely foreign to the Academy's traditional staff.

The 1st Tbilisi Triennial has been a very ambitious project and, in spite of some flaws in organization and presentation, it definitely had an immense impact on the city, on the arts community and on the participants. We all have shared and learned from each other's valuable experiences and knowledge.

Irena Popiashvili, Rector State Academy of Arts, Tbilisi



Forum *Offside Effect*, Goethe Institut, Tbilisi

No conclusions were reached at the forum, but the forum showed that we need more initiatives coming from

COME PROMISES FROM  
TEACHERS

*Mick Wilson*

In formal educational structures and processes, there is a recurrent formulation that often appears in the rhetoric of teachers and of ignorant schoolmasters. It is the avowal of student agency, and a declared prioritization of the students as already radical potentialities, if not yet radical agents, and of student positions as already constituted variously as critical engines of autonomy, counter-institutional insurgencies, and counter-hegemonic desires. The rhetorical image used to set these themes in play is the student protest, the 'students taking to the streets', and the 'student occupation'. The grounding of these images is in part the historical precedent of 1960s and 1970s anti-war mobilizations, the May events of 1968, the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989, and the primary role of student activism and mass mobilizations in key 20<sup>th</sup> century episodes of mass political resistance and protest. In recent years the mobilization of students against various national educational reforms, against the increased expense of education, and in response to the new systems of indebtedness elaborated around higher education in particular, has renewed the rhetorical force and energy of these formulas. The quickly deflated hope of the 'Arab Spring' has nonetheless also energized the rhetoric of the student-

position-as-intrinsically-politically-critical. But these recurrent appeals by the teacher to the critical agency of the student body must be considered carefully for the way in which they often (though not always) engender a questionable displacement of agency and responsibility away from the teacher role.

Students are posited as the authentic counter-hegemony to the 'institution'. The teacher may be in the pay of the institution, may not identify with the institution, may be critical of the institution, but because of the wage-labor relationship with the institution, the teacher role is not posited in the same degree as a potentiality of emancipation or of freedom or of political agency or of *turning* the institution into something other, something different, something better, more equitable, or something downright emancipatory. The teacher position is not typically imagined today – particularly not in the discourses of art – as a place from which mass mobilization or collective political struggle could be or should be launched. This is striking, in as much as that the teacher role has arguably been a key one in the historical mobilization of students but also in the founding of broader social and political movements. The teacher role, as a form of public intellectual work, has built into it an important potential for political work, immediately recognizable in the various resistance movements of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. (But, just as with student politics, so too with the politics of teachers, there is an aptitude for mobilization to authoritarian as well as emancipatory ends. One need only consider the role of teachers and students in the rise of various fascisms in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

Within the dominant 'investment' paradigms of education policy and educational management practice there is an evacuation of the teacher role

so that the teacher is construed as a teaching input, as a standardized unit of standardized labor, as a factor of production in the generation of student completions, and so forth. The teacher role is not seen then as a passionate lived human propensity with flows of affect and tendrils of social binding, but as a flexible, plastic and transferable delivery platform – eminently substitutable. Against this backdrop, there is a particular way in which this rhetoric of the-students-as-the-‘real’-agents is of special concern. It indicates a convergence between the rhetoric of the ostensibly critical educator – championing the criticality, the autonomy and the agency of the students – and the neo-liberal paradigms of education as skills delivery system and as human capital formation process. In both we see an evacuation of the teacher role, a displacement of agency from the act of teaching. It is notable the degree to which the teacher role has become denigrated within the discourses of self-declared cultural dissidents and arts radicals.

The argument here is not to reinstate a romantic image of mastery for the teacher role, nor to appeal to Platonic rhetoric of educational birthing and love. The argument here is to challenge the ease with which the wage-laboring and institutionally ensconced teacher might seek to disavow the contradictions in this role by positing a greater purity elsewhere in the potentials or the intrinsic radicalities of the student position. This rhetorical transfer of agency and responsibility is questionable on three key grounds.

Firstly, as indicated there is a strange convergence with the destructive tendencies of the neoliberal agenda in education which reduces the teacher role to that of a relay between educational content and educational subjects-in-process. Secondly, there is a problematic evasion of the way in which the student role is al-

ready – as the teacher role – embedded and produced and enacted within a system of political, social, economic and cultural relations that produce potentialities of many valencies: to the authoritarian and to the emancipatory; to the right and to the left; to atomized narcissism and to collectivized narcissism... This is not to sound a note of despair or hopelessness, but it is to underline that the student, as much as the teacher she might become, is already in some degree caught within the nexus of political economy and of the cultural dominant. This is why the intellectual and cultural and political work of students and teachers matters. The argument here is not then that the teacher and the student roles are to be collapsed into a flat equivalence – as always already part of the ‘system’. The argument is rather that the openings to something better, something else, something other, within any systemic dispensation are available – with difficulty, with critical labor, and with often painful re-positionings to our self-images – to both the student and the teacher roles. These fragile temporary fugitive openings are blocked most immediately in the disavowal of our contradictory inhabitation of these systemic dispensations, these regimes of waged and unwaged labor, these institutions that we are affectively constituted in, around, through, about, with and against... Thirdly, there is a question of reproducing life strategies that propose a deferred moment of revolution, the time to come, the time when real political mobilization will be again possible. Such life strategies assemble and dispose themselves within the perpetual present of unhappy consciousness and make-do with this shoddy institution of education that is here today: ‘I know it’s fucked but...I think at least if you can reach some of the students and let them find their own way through...’ (And I might pay my mortgage, or might raise my child, or might

write my book, or might make my work...) But what if political praxis was what we did today, not as the production of radical identities – neither as radical teachers nor as radical students nor as radical voices – but prosaically as the critical negotiation we live here today within these shoddy institutions, among our compromised colleagues, and with our own compromised identities – bringing our teaching bodies, coming as promised, to the knotted work of the present?

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## Colophon

### *Offside Effect*

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