How to Train Reflective Practitioners at the Time of the Anthropocene? A Cosmopolitical Proposal

The most innovative design and artistic practices today are agile and more entrepreneurial, less dependent on conventional patronage structures. Art and design practitioners are more mobile than ever, working all over the world and confronting new issues, such as global urbanism, migration and climate change. The scale of ecological crisis at the time of the Anthropocene made us realize that all modernist ideas of nature as passive backdrop of human experience, as mastered by engineers and scientists from outside, are irrelevant to the understanding of the current challenges of design and artistic practice. As many ecological issues are too intractable and too enmeshed in contradictory interests, architects, designers and artists embark in an active process of manipulating and reworking nature ‘from within.’ In their work designers gain new knowledge and make explicit the connection of humans to a variety of entities with different ontology: rivers, species, particles, materials and forces; they redefine political order by bringing together stars, prions and people. They engage in redesigning, instigating, and composing every single feature of our common experience; they become cosmopolitical practitioners.

Therefore, it is now crucial to re-examine the role of design and art education in the light of cosmopolitics. The lecture will argue for the importance to develop a pedagogy that will account for the complex ecology of design practice, will recognize the diversity of the world and see this pluralism as essential, will raise more awareness of the social, collective and heterogeneous nature of artistic production, will cultivate reflexivity and ‘activate thinking’ to detect the problems of the time, will develop rhetoric and pragmatic tools needed to address these problems, will test different ways of assembling the world.

Albena Yaneva is Professor of Architectural Theory and director of the Manchester Architecture Research Centre (MARC) at the University of Manchester, (UK). She has been Visiting Professor at Princeton School of Architecture and Parsons. Her research is intrinsically transdisciplinary and crosses the boundaries of science studies, cognitive anthropology, architectural theory and political philosophy. She is the author of several books: The Making of a Building (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009), Made by the OMA: An Ethnography of Design (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2009), Mapping Controversies in Architecture (Ashgate 2012) Five Ways to Make Architecture Political. An Introduction to the Politics of Design Practice (forthcoming with Bloomsbury Publishing, London), and editor (with Alejandro Zaera-Polo) of What is Cosmopolitical Design? (Routledge 2015). Her work has been translated into German, Italian, Spanish, French, Portuguese and Thai. Yaneva is the recipient of the RIBA President’s award for outstanding university-located research (2010).
Focusing on artistic practices is often accompanied by questioning practices of knowing in the arts. For the multilingual publishing platform transversal texts (feminist theory and postcolonial studies, feminist theory and postcolonial studies), Tyna Fritschy obtained her Master’s degree at the ETH Zurich, Switzerland. After her masters at the ETH Zurich and her PhD at the University of St.Gallen, she was a candidate at the graduate school Collegium Helveticum ETH Zurich, a research associate at the Office for History of Science and Technology at the UC Berkeley, a post doctoral researcher at the Program for Science Studies at the University of Basel, a fellow at the Harvard Kennedy Schools Program on Science, Technology & Society and a visiting professor at the University of Vienna’s Department of Science and Technology Studies. Her research focuses the intersection of science and technology studies (STS), urban studies and sociology of architecture.

Reports from the empirical studies: an aesthetic journey
Presentation of findings from the empirical study carried out in Switzerland in the fields of visual arts, design and architecture, focusing on the question of aesthetic practices meeting academic research within the context of higher education. This talk will take the form of a dialogue between three researchers involved in the project „Aesthetic Practices after Bologna‘. Reporting from the discussions and observations carried out at several architecture, design and art institutions of higher education in Switzerland, the speakers will present an aesthetic journey, which has tried to identify the epistemic cultures in the field of aesthetic practices. Three main topics will structure the conversation: a view on the structural aspects of the Bologna reform and the narratives around its implementation; a reflection on the practices that are shaping each discipline; and a discussion on the research cultures that are emerging.

Anna Flach, PhD candidate at ETH Wohnforum - ETH CASE. She studied at the University of Lucerne and graduated in May 2013 with a Master of Arts in Science of Culture (Major Sociology) with Prof. Dr. Marianne Sommer. Since June 2013, she is a PhD student at the ETH Wohnforum - ETH CASE in the SNF project "Aesthetic practices after Bologna: architecture, design and art as epidemic cultures ‘in the making’." Her doctoral thesis on "How to become an Architect: An analysis on the Swiss Higher Education in Architecture 15 years after the introduction of the Bologna System" is supervised by Prof. Dietmar Eberle and Dr. Monika Kurath.

Monico Gaspar (Lic. Phil), research associate at the Institute for Theory at the ZHdK Zurich. She is an art history and cultural studies scholar based in Zurich, working as a curator and author on design and art as critical practices. She has curated exhibitions for the Design Museum Barcelona, Pratt Manhattan Gallery New York, Landesgalerie Linz, and Museum Bellerive in Zurich, amongst others. She has collaborated as a lecturer, external examiner and mentor for artistic PhD with several higher education institutions such as the Gerrit Rietveld Art Academy, Bergen Academy of Art and Design, the University of Art and Design in Geneva or the Cranbrook Academy of Art in the USA.

Aline Seyfong-Mtaos (M.A), scientific assistant at the Department of Design and Fine Arts, HKB, Bern. She studied Art History, Philosophy, Graphic Design, Applied Studies of Culture and Society and Culture Management in Karlsruhe (D), Paris (FR) and Lucerne (CH). After her Masters degree, she worked for Pipilotti Rist in Zurich and for Kaserne Basel. In 2008 she joined Bern University of the Arts as a research scientist in the Department of Design and Fine Arts. The curriculum development and the coordination of courses are within her main area of responsibility.

Studying (in and outside) the Knowledge Factory
Our conversation is premised on the contention that studying is not that, which defines or constitutes the educational institution. On the contrary, in the context of neoliberal restructuring, studying is that whose status within the factory of knowledge got perhaps the most precarious and uncertain. Studying, in the way we want to explore and discuss it, is closer to informality, palaver, and nightlife than to curricula, learning objectives, and graduation programmes. It serves as the opportunity to embrace disobedient and incompliant intellectual life and to undo the regulative and exclusionary schemes of canonized knowledge.

Tyna Fritschi and Gerald Raunig are philosophers working at the Zürich University of the Arts / Specialization in Theory and in the editorial board of the journal Kamion. Tyna Fritschi obtained her Master’s degree in Philosophy, Art and Critical Thought from the European Graduate School in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, with a thesis developing on ecstatic agency. She investigates issues of dis/possession in employing political philosophy, queer-feminist theory and postcolonial studies. Gerald Raunig is co-founder of the eipcp (European Institute for Progressive Cultural Policies) and its multilingual publishing platform transversal texts (transversal.at). Recent books: Factories of Knowledge, Industries of Creativity (2012), DIVIDUUM: Machinic Capitalism and Molecular Revolution, Vol. I (2016), both translated by Aileen Derieg and published by Semiotext(e) / MIT Press.

Knowing in the arts: a praxeological perspective on artistic work
Focusing on artistic practices is often accompanied by questioning practices of knowing in the arts. For the
last five years I have investigated artistic practices in the field of visual/fine art from a sociological-ethnographic point of view embedded in a praxeological perspective. I have observed how artists work, how artistic works are developed and materialized in situ and how working as an artist is practiced at art academies and art universities. Based on my study, I will present different dimensions of knowing in the arts: 1) **incorporated knowing** in artistic working processes with a stabilizing potential. This dimension of knowing implies routinized practices like dealing with tools, materials, etc. 2) **knowing the field**, or to be able to relate to the works of others and to consider historical references. 3) **not-knowing**, or the necessity of searching for or questioning something as well as the requirement of working on something (different). 4) **knowing how to see**: In artistic processes, it is usual to show something. Hence, for artists it is relevant to know the importance of working on ways of seeing things. The study tries to follow the practitioners or, respectively, the artists, from a praxeological perspective which does not only mean to follow their (practical) knowing but also their different ways of seeing.


**Ethnography through Design?**

Design ethnography has for the last two decades become a “mantra” for corporate R&D departments and design firms. User-centered design has, amongst other disciplines, fostered the appropriation of ethnographical approaches that have now become so common and sometimes so loose that criticism now comes from the quarters of academic anthropologists and designers themselves. This situation also reflects how social sciences have often taken over the role played by the humanities in delivering scientific methods for design education. What do designers mean when they say they’re going to do “ethnography” and “field research”? What are the relationships between observing people and designing products or services? Is there such a thing as a “designerly” way of knowing people? I addressed such questions in the context of a research project conducted at HEAD – Genève. The presentation will describe some of the results of this exploration, with a focus on the status of designers’ ways of conducting ethnography, based on a series of project examples. It will also shed some light on the implications for design education.

**Dr. Nicolas Nova** is an ethnographer and design researcher, working both as a Professor at the Geneva School of Arts and Design (HEAD – Genève) and co-founder of The Near Future Laboratory, a research organization based in Europe and California. His work focuses on observing and documenting digital and new media practices, as well as creating design fictions, i.e. speculative designed objects exploring the experiences of near future. He holds a PhD in Human-Computer Interaction from the Swiss Institute of Technology (EPFL, Switzerland) and was previously a visiting researcher at Art Centre College of Design (Pasadena, CA).

(track 3: The cosmopolitics of aesthetic education)


**In search of an institution’s history of emancipatory educational structures/moments. A research report.**

The records of the art school I work for have been dispersed to three cities’ archives. During my research leave, I travelled from city to city in an attempt to understand the art school’s complex institutional history, which is particularly confusing with regard to a historically documented and still proudly championed practice of interdisciplinarity. I am particularly driven by a wish to research traces of emancipatory educational ideas in order to confront the present institutional organisation with its own radical history. As a functionary of a contemporary institution of art education, I am involved in current attempts to claim ‘research’ as part of an art school’s legitimate and legitimizing vocabulary. This involvement, however, has heightened my attentiveness towards practice-based conflicts between argumentations grounded in
design, art or academic text production. I will not be focussing on how different disciplinary demands shape different arenas of practice and their subjects, because I am much more concerned these days with how, where and why these differences are ignorantly levelled out or authoritatively folded back into predefined common interests.

Johanna Schaffer has set up and teaches ‘Theory and Practice of Visual Communication’ as an academic and theorist, together with Mareike Bernien, filmmaker and artist, at Kunsthochschule Kassel. ‘Theory and Practice of Visual Communication’ is dedicated to an interrogation of the methodological and habitual tensions between theoretical/analytical and arts-based material practices, in order to utilize, emphasize, and undermine the boundaries between ‘theory’ and ‘practice’.

The social conditions of aesthetic education – or how to address social inequalities in accessing art schools
This contribution looks into how inequality spells out within art schools and thereby addresses institutionalized proceedings of discriminating processes and practices. We will point out how inclusion and exclusion through selection during the admissions process are a) inherently linked to aesthetic self-understandings of institutions and b) how they work under the current politico-educational regime of Bologna. Indeed, described as a “preserve of the privileged” (Malik Okon 2005) in international research, a complex and differentiated picture of inclusivity and exclusivity can be found in tertiary art education. The basis of our analysis is the research of Art.School.Differences, a cooperation project between three Swiss art schools with a trans-disciplinary approach (http://blog.zhdk.ch/artschooldifferences/). In particular, we rely on our observations of the admissions process, subsequent interviews with candidates applying and jury members, as well as strategies brought forward by art school students dealing with the process of selection. The thorough analysis of this very intricate process of (e)valuation, which also incorporates the performative dimension and multifaceted embodiment of habitus, enables us to assess complicated and fragile processes of inclusion and exclusion at work. Our considerations around the selection process actually reveal an ultimate re-instatement of a normative – and potentially discriminatory – assessment from a Eurocentric point of view.

Philippe Saner and Sophie Vögele hold the leadership of ‘Art.School.Differences. Researching Inequalities and Normativities in Higher Art at the Institute for Art Education at Zurich University of the Arts. After pursuing studies in Sociology, Political Science and Media Studies, Philippe graduated in 2014 with a thesis on the reproduction of social inequalities by and through the Swiss field of higher education. He teaches qualitative research methods in the Master Art Education at Zurich University of the Arts. Together with Catrin Seefranz he co-authored “Making Differences: Schweizer Kunst Hochschulen” in 2012, a preliminary and founding study to Art.School.Differences. His research interests and publications include sociology of education, culture and art as well as research about (global) social inequalities, financial markets and political theory. Anthropologist and Gender Studies scholar with a degree from the University of Basel, Sophie is pursuing a PhD degree in Sociology from the York University in Toronto on social inequality, processes of Othering and theories of critique grounded in the field of Higher Art Education. A first publication with Philippe Saner is entitled “Eine kunstimmanente Exklusion? Verwobenheiten von Geschlecht und Migration mit sozialer Klasse als Strukturierung des Kunsthochschulfeldes” and is forthcoming in the anthology Gender und Migration in der tertiären Berufs- und Hochschulbildung with Verlag Westfälisches Dampfboot.

A Dimmer Switch on the Enlightenment - Problematising the introduction of text as means for knowledge within the fields of art and design education.
There is no influential tradition of developing and communicating knowledge and theory in the form of text within the fields of interior and furniture design. If one can speak of theory at all in connection with these fields of knowledge this has seldom been expressed in writing and, frequently, not even in oral form but has, instead, been embedded in the practice itself: in furniture and rooms, in the technologies used for processing and producing the design. Throughout the ages design professions have developed in precisely this way and it is difficult to see that there are any obstacles preventing this being successful in the future too. Up to the present, no new circumstances have presented themselves that would motivate one throwing out the tried and tested existing structures and methods in the design professions in favour of untried text-based knowledge production. Yet this is happening today, and often enough, paradoxically, in the name of knowledge and research within art and design education. This is a contra productive development. I argue that an increasing focus on theory in text tends to reduce our ability to understand and develop other forms of theories that are not developed and communicated using written language.

Andreas Nobel MFA, PhD, is a lecturer at Beckmans college of Design, Stockholm, Sweden. He is an interior- and furniture designer and co-founder of the Swedish design group Uglycute (www.uglycute.com). Nobels work within Uglycute as well as his individual projects, revolves around practical, as well as theoretical issues within the fields of art, architecture and design. The projects are often a mix between theory and practice as well as of education and actual making of furniture and gestaltung of interiors.
Savour as Aesthetic Practice – Seduction, Distraction and Awareness

The Talk gives an overview on the artistic approach and attitude of the artist collective ‘dilettantin produktionsbüro’ as well as its role in the research project ‘Cooking and Eating as Aesthetic Practice’ initiated in 2015 mby the I AeP Institute Aesthetic Practice and Theory, Academy of Arts and Design HGK, Basel. The practice of this collective explores the question of what defines art in peripheral areas of e.g. economic, every-day social settings. Their main medium is savour to stimulate both body and mind and create situations that invite dialogue, based on the idea that art is something you experience and think rather than becoming physically manifest in material. The aesthetic knowledge embedded in the experiences of tasting has been underexplored. Therefore, the research project aims to investigate the overlap between the fields of art and cookery, of aesthetic culinary practices and conviviality culture, the question of how the idea of savour is being created and where the performative aspects of spatial orchestration begin.

Anneli Käsmayr, conceptual artist, works collaboratively as part of the artist collectives dilettantin produktionsbüro (est 2003), artist-cum-music collective sex (est 2005) and the DJ collective sexsoundsystem. dilettantin produktionsbüro realize projects at the interface of art and everyday life through the use of gustatory elements and produce temporary site-specific hospitality formats and interventions. Anneli Käsmayr gives workshops and seminars on savour and performative hospitality, works in food consulting specializing in schools and devises workshops for leadership development by perception and taste. She develops culinary products and hospitality formats for companies and brands and hosts supper clubs. Her PhD focuses on the question in what way culinary stimulation might disclose emotional touch exploring the fields of intuition, memories of taste, creation and scenography both in contemporary aesthetic and culinary practices. www.dilettantin.de

Really Useful Knowledge

The talk will discuss the exhibition Really Useful Knowledge, curated by WHW at MNCARS Museum (Madrid 2014). It will convey a sense of a curatorial strategy conceived as a balancing act between educational, pedagogical, and didactic intentions that endeavoured to enlist critical pedagogy as a crucial element in collective struggles, and a wish to allow for poetry, to reach beyond soft vigilantism of much of the socially engaged art, and to rely on art’s political and intellectual ability to visualize abstract economic and social dynamics, while offering aesthetic, sensory, sensual and participatory experience generous to its audiences. Through analysis of tension between art’s utilitarian and aesthetic impulses, allusions to iconoclasm, inclusion of crafts and popular forms of art, the talk will discuss the exhibition as a proposition of the processes of inquiry and sight involved in the endeavour to understand the world, exposing its inner contradictions played out between the limits of denunciation and representational clichés, through which we typify capitalism, and that which stays unrepresented, or that is unrepresentable in its totality. The talk will question possibilities of enlisting art into a collective emancipatory, theoretical, emotional, cognitive and practical quest for today’s ‘really useful knowledge’, starting with acknowledging what we don’t know yet.

Nataša Ilić is an independent curator, a member of What, How & for Whom / WHW, curatorial collective established in 1999 and based in Zagreb and Berlin. Its members are Ivet Ćurlin, Ana Dević, Nataša Ilić and Sabina Sabolović, and designer and publicist Dejan Kršić. WHW organises a range of production, exhibition and publishing projects and directs Gallery Nova in Zagreb. Since its first exhibition titled What, How & for Whom, on the occasion of 152nd anniversary of the Communist Manifesto (Zagreb, 2000), WHW curated numerous international projects, among which more recent ones are festival Meeting Points 7 that took place in Zagreb, Antwerp, Cairo, Hong-Kong, Beirut, Vienna and Moscow under title Ten thousand miles and a hundred thousand tricks (2013 – 2014), the exhibition Really Useful Knowledge in Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia (Madrid, 2014) and, So You Want To See at e-flux gallery (New York, 2015).

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