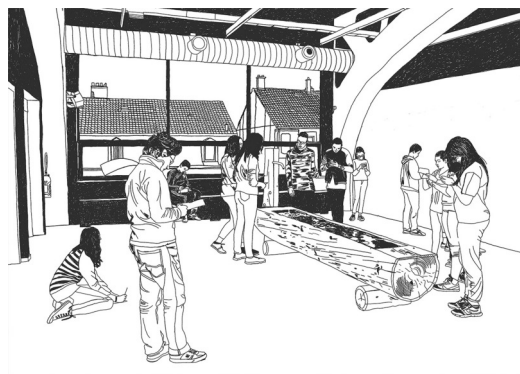


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## Editorial Pedagogical Trajectories



Lena Eriksson: Correspondence, project in collaboration with La Kunsthalle Mulhouse, 2020.

## Pedagogical Trajectories: What is sedimented through political engaged research in the field of art pedagogy

*Edited in English by Varsha Nair*

*Transformance* and *activism* are crucial terms currently describing the trajectories of research in art pedagogy as you will find in astonishingly utopian and fresh forms presented in this volume of the journal, Art Education Research. The goals are sharply addressed, either on a micropolitical level or on an educational level, in this collection of selected essays that are based on BA and MA Thesis in the field of Art Education and Art Teaching. The authors think about new ways of working and new forms of teaching settings in schools, in academia and in art mediation. Their strategies of transforming existing

structures are applied to digital dispositives, as well as to photography with digital devices, and drawing. We, the editors of this volume, have structured the contributing texts into two parts: addressed in the first part are questions of activism and self-empowerment and in a second, critical media practices.

What binds everything together is a radical idea of education based on different transnational backgrounds and trans local situations. This way of radical thinking on education first came up in modernism with the *Bauhaus* in Dessau, Germany. *Marion von Osten* and *Grant Watson* state in the catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Bauhaus Imaginista: Nimmt man das historische Bauhaus und seine Rezeption in den Blick, wird diese transnationale Geschichte radikaler Bildungsideen sichtbar*. (If you look at the history of Bauhaus and its reception, this transnational history of radical educational ideas becomes visible.) (von Osten/Watson 2018: 7). The crucial point in Bauhaus was, according to von Osten/Watson, „*Wissenstransfer von Praktiker\*innen für Praktiker\*innen*.“ (Knowledge transfer from practitioners for practitioners.) (von Ebd.: 10) This is the best way how „*Wissenskulturen entstehen, die in der materiellen Kultur eingeschrieben sind [...]*.“ (Cultures of knowledge arise that are inscribed in material culture [...]) (Ebd.: 10).

What is obviously new in the research positions on education in the field of art today is the search for new methodologies to reflect the existing practices in the field, in order to question existing power relations and subject constructions (see Butler 1993). In doing so, the authors attempt to establish emancipatory teaching conditions as well as knowledge productions that can lead to agency and emancipation in many ways. (see Hubin 2010: 1) Especially transcultural relations are in focus of these aims in academia (see Mbembe 2016); von Osten/Watson have shown during their curatorial research on the beginning of modern art pedagogy at Bauhaus how important „*das Studium vormoderner Artefakte nicht-europäischer Herkunft durch moderne Künstler\*innen für die Bauhaus-Pädagogik ist*.“ (the study of pre-modern artefacts of non-European origin by modern artists is for Bauhaus education.) (von Osten/Watson 2018: 10/ 11). The new positions go back in a way to the goals of an international

Bauhaus tradition and transform them into strategies of cultural analysis today. These strategies are explained by Sigrid Schade/Silke Wenk as follows, *„Die Frage nach der Art und Weise, wie Wiederholung und Abweichung in der Tradierung von Zeichen-Bedeutungen wirksam werden, und die Frage nach den Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Subjekten und Gemeinschaften innerhalb dieser Prozesse sind zentral für jede kulturwissenschaftliche Perspektive, [...]“* (The question of how repetition and deviation become effective in the transmission of meanings of signs, and the question of the inter-relationships between subjects and creatures within these processes, are central to any cultural studies perspective, [...]) (Schade/Wenk 2011: 122). Based on Michel Foucault's theory we can understand teaching conditions as signifying-processes too, because they follow patterns based on power-relations, discourses and material orderings. Foucault states: *„je suppose que dans toute société la production du discours est à la fois contrôlée, sélectionnée, organisée et redistribuée par un certain nombre de procédures qui ont pour rôle d'en conjurer les pouvoirs et les dangers, d'en maîtriser l'évènement aléatoire, d'en esquiver la lourde, la redoutable matérialité.“* (I suppose that in any society the production of the discourse is at the same time controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its possibilities and dangers, to control the random event, to dodge its heavy, fearsome materiality.) (Foucault 1971: 10/ 11). It is exactly this kind of materiality, with its fragility and its weight that is analyzed in the texts in this edition, looking in depth on montage, photographic action, film and relics of dust – as an index - in the public spheres.

If we assume that in pedagogical patterns and settings unspoken norms and discourses are always embedded, it is important to have a look on the specific implications of those discourses. As Foucault puts it, it is about *„Verhältnisse zwischen den diskursiven Formationen und den nicht-diskursiven Bereichen wie Institutionen, politische Ereignisse, ökonomische Praktiken und Prozessen“*. (Relationships between discursive formations and non-discursive areas such as institutions, political events, economic practices and processes). (Foucault 1969: 231)

If we look back, we see the mindset that Bauhaus worked against about a century ago. The American psychologist John B. Watson formulated the behaviour theory, which was important for school concepts for a long time. Central to his thoughts is the

behaviour of human beings. Humans were seen as products of their environment, an environment that was influenced by industrialization and change. This human being is designed as a kind of machine directed by external influences. (see Mietzel 1993: 86ff) Watson declared: "*Es ist eine Theorie, die Industriellen gefällt. Weil sie für sie bedeutet, dass sie jede beliebige Person für jede beliebige Aufgabe ausbilden können. Abschätzig betrachtet könnte man sagen, dass Menschen nur noch eine Funktion in einer Maschine erfüllen und man kann sie beliebig gegeneinander austauschen.*" (It is a theory that industrialists like. Because for them it means that they can train any person for any task. Looking at it disparagingly, one could say that people only fulfill one function as a machine and you can exchange them for each other at will.) (Watson 1930: 57). The human being was no longer an autonomous individual, because reflections and thoughts as well as free will are neglected by this theory in a way. This view on human beings is questionable today, nevertheless it was dominant in Western industrialized societies around 1900, with their dynamic changes in social relations (see Rosa 2005) and lasted - in one way or another - in those societies until the 1960s.

During the 1970s we witnessed a constructivist turn in educational concepts. In opposite to behavioural theories, constructivism does not focus on information, but on individual perception and interpretation of information. Knowledge production is not at the center anymore, but it is the human being that is able to construct a personal view on information, facts and environments. According to constructivism, each human being can create his own world view related to his experiences, his living conditions, and his social relations. There is no universal subject anymore, and no simple reality or universal knowledge content, but a broad variety of insights into a shared reality (see Siebert 2012). It is the time of neo liberalism that has changed the relation of human beings and machine production, and flexibilization, globalization and new technologies are the important terms that apply to the following decades. Until the 70s industrialization and the factory were the cornerstones of socio-economic values, the post Fordism turn in Western societies to postindustrial production and immaterial goods. The products now, in some Western countries, are knowledge and communication, feelings and relations, while other countries are still deeply based in Fordi-

stic industrialization processes. Following Negri/Hardt, about the multitude of wishes and needs of human beings and societies driven by capitalism, they speak of knowledge systems driven by creativity, feelings and liveliness of the multitude. (see Negri/Hardt 2002: 300-306)

In the 90s a lot of thinkers took a critical stance against the "banking system of education" as coined by *Bell Hooks*. The aspects of this education are: "*based on the assumption that memorizing information and regurgitating it, represented gaining knowledge that could be deposited, stored and used at a later date*" (Hooks 1994:5). Hooks wants to create a strategy for "teaching as the practice of freedom" (Hooks 1994: 4). Even in art pedagogy, during the *educational turn*, ways for *deconstruction* and *transformation* have been searched. And what happens now? What correspondences can be made between educational practices and economics, as well as societal practices today? Let's start with the later. Neoliberalism is still ruling today; in this mindset human competences are understood as capital, which can be increased and used in the market. The paradox that the subject is an entrepreneur of itself and at the same time human capital is only a paradox at first sight. Both concepts complete each other: the human being as its own entrepreneur has the goal to capitalize himself. (Foucault 2011: S. 238) And similar to an enterprise everybody has to be specialized. The very best what turbo capitalism can imagine are authentic subjects with specific interests, curated biographies and unexchangeable goods. Wherever we look, we expect not the average but the special. According to Reckwitz those subjects perform an artificial being constantly in front of others, both in private and in professional contexts. The creative entrepreneurial self is in constant conflict and, without break, obsessed by his own employability and experiences no distinct borders between labour and leisure time. Loosing this performance means invisibility, doing boring repetitive work with weak intrinsic motivation, and a nearly indistinct personality. (see Reckwitz 2017) All labour seems, from the 1980s onwards, more and more similar to work in the so-called *creative economy*, in which "*an singulären Gütern für kulturelle Märkte gearbeitet wird, und die Arbeitskraft ihrerseits zu einem Singularitätsgut auf einem kulturellen Markt wird.*" (work on singular goods for cultural

markets, and the labour force in turn becomes a singular good in a cultural market.) (see Reckwitz 2017, S.182.)

What does it mean then to conceive self-empowering didactical strategies today, especially those that aim for “teaching as the practice for freedom”? (Hooks: 1994) This is made apparent in detail by the following contributions. Those didactical strategies are very important and have to be build up on a wide range. Because if human beings can experience their importance, their freedom, active interventions, social recognition and empowerment, processes of social justice can evolve. And, this always means to have in mind the antagonistic and recolonizing power relations too, as formulated by Chandra Taplade Mohanty already: *„I ask what would it mean to be attentive to micropolitics of everyday life as well as to the larger process that recolonize the culture and identities of people across the globe“* (cited after Dimitrakaki 2013 :6).

This volume includes contributions by Charlotte Friedli, Pamela Gardi, Bettina Gassmann, Tiziana Halbheer, Zoé Hall, Nicole Heri, Julia Marti, Flurina Stuppan, Malin Widén; as well as 3 *Fragen an* Bernhard Chiquet, a drawing by Lena Eriksson and a film as *cahier d’artiste* by Lena-Lucie Weber, which is situated in the field Art Teaching.

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## CV

**Sabine Gebhardt Fink** Since 2011 Sabine Gebhardt Fink holds a professorship in contemporary art and is head of the MFA, including Art Teaching at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Lucerne; she realized the practice based project *Camp#* in cooperation with Kunstmuseum Luzern - addressing the field of artistic education. 2004-2011 she was a researcher at the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts ZHdK and involved in several SNF-projects as well as a lecturer

in the Master Art Education. She wrote her PhD thesis on *Transformation der Aktion* at Basel University and lectures as a guest at international Universities and art school. Her research topics are: *artistic education, Networking Histories of Performance Art* and *Feminist Pedagogy*. Sabine Gebhardt Fink is a curator and co-founder of Performance Art Projects like *Performance Chronik Basel*, she is in the board of the SFKP/ SSPA (Aktuarin) and initiated the *Praxisforum Kunstpädagogik* in Luzern.

**Elisabeth Nold Schwartz** Elisabeth Nold Schwartz (\*1974) completed a classical dance education at a young age, before studying Theater and Dance Studies at the University of Berne (graduation in 2011). In June 2020 she graduated with a Master of Arts in Fine Arts with a specialization in Art in Public Spheres at the Lucerne School of Art. She lives in Glarus and is interested in art in the alpine region, a subject she would like to explore in depth.

**Lena Eriksson** Lena Eriksson, born 1971, is an artist and lecturer at the Master of Arts in Fine Arts at the Lucerne School of Art and Design. In her artistic work she examines everyday life for its poetic, absurd and utopian potential. Her media are performance, video and drawing.