

Chapter 25

The Integration of Art and Design, Creativity and Professionalization

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Abstract This chapter describes the importance and integration of innovation in today's art and design education, leading to radical changes in the curricula of the universities of fine arts. Modularization replaces not only the old system of master classes but opens the individual choices of subjects to a system of projects. Adding to this, the installation of nonconsecutive curricula integrating science and art as well as co-operative curricula between classical universities and art institutions offer new horizons in both creative as traditional industries and sciences. Another step is the installation of In- and At-House-Institutes acting as professional links between education, management and politics. All of these elements that have been developed within the past decade are described on the example of the Saar University of Fine Arts (HBKsaar) which was the first Fine Art University in Germany to be fully modularized. Creativity has, at last, gained high importance as a key issue of industrial and economic development, and the professional education in this field will acknowledge the creative entrepreneurship in both arts and design.

25.1 Introduction: Art and Design Education as a Lesson in Entrepreneurship

»Marry a teacher« was the common response given by German academy professors when asked how to survive as an artist. For two centuries, since the installation of art academies in the late eighteenth century, the academic professor had to run a class at the academy and introduce his students into the art world where they would either pursue a career or disappear into obscurity. Until the late twentieth century, this art world was a market visible at a glance, with fixed rules, a good dozen of dealers and a group of roughly two hundred collectors—worldwide.¹ This changed

¹De Marchi and Van Miegroet (2006).

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radically after World War II. When the art market opened into full globalization with the basic rules of a stock market but until recently there was nearly no reaction by the state-funded art education which caused for a twofold result: Private institutions grew into the educational business like mushrooms after rain, and the artist himself became the key model of the absolutely freelancing entrepreneur. Even though Renaissance and Baroque artists like Albrecht Durer, Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, and Peter Paul Rubens had run manufacture-like studios with great success for at least one decade each, they did not fulfil the role model of the mad but quiet, deadly addicted artist that romantic visions had focussed on.²

Today, artists have crashed all boundaries of the common presuppositions in their profession: They work in whatever field global circumstances will allow. Artists have to be non-specialized experts in any area of aesthetic practice, and they have to survive under economic pressure on both their person as on their radical propositions from which they have to start when becoming an artist, designer, musician, performer, etc. One of the smallest institutions of higher learning in Germany, the Saar University of Fine Arts has successfully expanded its Bauhaus-derived integrative approach to education and research to engage with these issues.

25.2 Against Specialization

The fields of Art, Design, and Media education have merged both from the epistemic background in their theories and practices as from the outcome in today's society: Artists are working as architects, designers, and create stage settings; designers have lost the emphasis of their work in anonymity but have become stars like artists and create installation in large museums or exhibition spaces. Aesthetic innovations have neither acknowledged nor respected the constraints of disciplinarity, since the twentieth century modernisms even less than before.³ Thus, it does not make much sense to differentiate between these fields of interest, especially not with young people at the start of their careers. There are basic terms of aesthetic questions to be taught, there are ethics of media and the arts to be taught, and there are individual fields of interest slowly emerging from a personal development within an educational process. Each education that promises to generate exactly the job scale proposed has to be closed down immediately: It is out of its time.

Rapid developments in technology and engineering have created a bulk of professional perspectives that cannot last longer than the existence of the ground formation—too short for one life. This is also true for the arts, design and especially for the media that change their perspectives in short periods. It is, e.g., not really

²Deresiewicz (2015).

³Lippard (1973).

necessary to teach display typography when you know that there will be no displays within the next twenty years. But there are basics in the arts that have not changed since the caves of Lascaux, 22.000 years ago: Aesthetic innovation must surprise as well as survive short periods of fashion and interest; then it can be named and canonized as Art (with a capital A).

25.2.1 Projects Instead of Classes or Curricula

Teaching Art is impossible. This banality was known to the first authors of curricula in art schools. Art means a full and free creativity without restrictions in any field except for the lives of other human beings. Thus, academies first of all have the task to let their students develop individually, to free their creativity and help them define the areas suitable to their personal vision of life and work. Design is a different field with similar ethic and aesthetic implications: Nobody can ask who designed the first wheel, chair, bed, box, or any other item of everyday life. At best, design disappears into its social use—and designers have to be happy being well paid for instigating these processes. Media is, by definition, a field in between; its production is to be consumed quickly but with a high recycling quote which might lead into the consideration of being art but not necessarily so when at production. All of these fields merge in what we call art education, and they should not be specified too much at the moment of individual formation.

Four of the five areas of study at the HBKsaar have more or less the same, modularized curriculum fully according to the Bologna process⁴; the fifth area—teacher training in art education—has to follow specific legal constructions. The four areas—fine arts, communication design, product design, media arts and design—consist of a common core of aesthetic concepts and practices, established in the first term, and then of a number of projects run within each term and beyond.⁵ Projects can be commissioned by industries and administrations, competitions in arts, film, and design, or they can start from scratch by some kind of self-definition by either the students or the teachers. A large part of these projects consist of co-operations with other universities and there are a number of Master programs such as, e.g., Media Informatics run by the HBKsaar and the department of computer science at Saarland University hosting the German Institute of Artificial Intelligence. As the Bachelor program is scheduled for eight terms, students can change their areas of study within the first seven terms according to their own development. A number of nonconsecutive Master programs fulfil needs in theoretical approaches to the subjects of the studies such as, e.g., a Master in Net

⁴<http://www.ehea.info/> [2016-04-14].

⁵http://www.hbksaar.de/fileadmin/hbk/download/pdf/Modulare_Studiengaenge/gemeinsames_modulhandbuch2012.pdf [2016-04-14].

Culture or a Master in Public Design with a strong emphasis on the social relevance and interventionist registers of fine arts.

25.2.2 *Education and Innovation*

At the first glance, education and innovation are contradictions in adjectives: Either you teach something by conditioning and training or you produce innovations by the Schumpeterian trias of invention, adaptation and diffusion.⁶ In cultural theory, the process has been described by Roland Barthes with the distinction of »studium« and »punctum«, the latter being a shock of sudden recognition without prior warning, thus not being able to be taught.⁷ A University of Fine Arts like the HBKsaar has to meander through these oppositions and serve a form of fuzzy logic with open ends, mirroring Umberto Eco's semiotic definition of an art work as a set of signs open to any new interpretation at any new confrontation.⁸ Basically, an educational institution in this field has to create a situation that enables shocks to come, that offers reflections on any subject in human existence, and, of course, serves the needs of students with technical and practical workshops as well as specific trainings. Any new technology both in media and materialization has to be integrated into daily practices as the offerings of old and often forgotten crafts returning the students' minds into the origins of their professions.

These basic principles may sound trivial but have a number of consequences within the curricula formed from projects: When a project is introduced it has to be discussed from its ethic grounds up to aesthetic values, it may have to be turned over into its opposite or re-thought on a totally different level of perception. Pottery and ceramics, e.g., may be some of the oldest crafts of mankind but they are completely re-defined on the base of 3D printing with nanoceramic materials—these do not only enable totally different forms from those handed down by tradition but re-constitute the use of materials from both ecologic and economic assumptions. The HBKsaar runs a *Center of Digital Production* in conjunction with according institutes of the Saarland University where all forms of digital preparation to material production can be imagined and tested either on models or prototypes. Rapid prototyping as a method has consequently changed the old processes of sketch, study and modelling within all forms of industrial design and is offered not only as a part of education but as a services to the local industries as well.

A similar perspective can be found in Fine Arts as well when important issues are raised in politics and economics: At the Voelklingen branch of the HBKsaar, a preliminary living shelter for refugees was erected by the class in sculpture (Georg Winter) in co-operation with the architectural department of the Saar University of

⁶Mahdjoubi (1999).

⁷Barthes (1981).

⁸Eco (1989).

Applied Science (HTW Saar), completely made from recycled materials in wood, glass, and metal. As a test, this shelter houses one of the students himself being a migrant from Brasilia. This project was accompanied by a number of performances in the city of Voelklingen as well as by a theoretical symposium on terror and racism in conjunction with the Institute of Philosophy of the University of Bonn. In all of these cases—which are samples of typical projects at the HBKsaar—the innovation arises from a field of ideas and reflections prepared by both the teachers and the students. They show that innovation cannot be trained but be prepared by education.

25.3 Postgraduate Professionalisation

When academies of fine arts were founded, their aim was the aesthetic service to an emperor, king, or noble who financed the venue like a state theater, opera house, or museum.⁹ From the beginning of industrialization, the professionalization of artists developed in two directions: With the establishment of copyright acts the work of designers became an important part of economics,¹⁰ and the artists were subject of a market with dealers and collectors. Acting in these fields was supposed to be a form of free entrepreneurship, and roughly ten percent of the graduates were able to make a living from what they had learned. Thus, academies were accused of producing nothing but taxi drivers or bored housewives with a hand for furnituring beautiful homes. Thing had to change, and they have changed.

At the HBKsaar, all students of the sixth to the eighth term are strongly advised (of course, everything is voluntary in an institution like this...) to take part in a three-term professionalisation program. The program is prepared by courses in rhetorics and by a wide ranging schedule in ethics of art, design and media. The curriculum starts with the introduction of all possible partners in the approached market, from gallerists to curators to marketing experts to creative directors in agencies and industry. The second term is concerned with legal aspects of the everyday life in business, from copyright questions over insurance and tax regulations to business contracts and their obligations. The HBKsaar seats a professorship in the philosophy of law and aesthetics which fulfils all the needs of this curriculum. The third term consists of project type tests of individual cases: What is needed to produce and finish a documentary movie? How is the conception and the realization of an advertising campaign classified? Where are the frontiers of viral marketing, where the borders of mockumentary? These areas of personal advice take a lot of energy and capacities from the board of teachers but they proved to be fruitful since the professionalization program was installed in 2010.

⁹Ryan (2008).

¹⁰Gronert (1989).

For those who have finished their studies, the move into free entrepreneurship can be fast—as is with all those who had the most brilliant ideas of their lives during study times—or comparatively slow but nonetheless bearing fruit by time. The students can take part in postgraduate programs named Deepening studies or Master classes, and when their interests reach move on to levels of theory and reflection, they can start to prepare a thesis for a PhD in philosophy or art, design, and media history or theory. For those who used the practical postgraduate programs for pursuing their career within their fields of interest, the universities of art in the Saar country (besides the HBKsaar, it is the University of Music HfM Saar), there was an institute founded hitherto unknown in Germany: K8.

25.3.1 K8 Institute for Strategic Aesthetics

The K8 Institute for Strategic Aesthetics was founded in October 2014 as a non-profit company. K8 was initiated by both universities of art and music in the Saar country, with a small amount of public funding (provided by the Ministry of Economics) to cover the costs of setting up the company as a legal entity combined with project-based funding for the co-organization of conferences and workshops. According to its managing directors Julia Hartnik and Soenke Zehle, K8 operates as transfer agency facilitating the internationalization of existing arts-and-research projects and seeks to involve new actors in multidisciplinary co-development processes. In accordance with the state's long-term strategies for creative industry development and innovation, K8 also offers a variety of professionalization, scenario development and project management services. These activities draw on the design-driven approaches of open innovation and speculative design to pursue a core theme—the collaborative exploration of co-development strategies in the digital society that are based on a comprehension of user (citizen, worker) agency broader than that of the “critical user” targeted, for example, by common media literacy programs. Locally, current activities include a variety of transfer projects for the two arts academies (trade fair representations, summer schools, international exhibition projects) as well as a workshop series with the state's innovation agency on themes related to the policy and technology development framework “Industry 4.0”, and the organization of practice-based workshops with local secondary schools around the framing concept of a “School of Things” developed by the academy's Center for Digital Production to facilitate the experimental exploration of processes of digitization and informatization. Already involved in European and international networks organized around multidisciplinary research and development, K8 is currently establishing a partner network in the so-called “Greater Region” around the Saarland, with a particular emphasis on digital culture organizations in France and Luxemburg.

25.3.2 *Theories of Art, Design, Media and Theoretical Innovation*

»Design Thinking« has become a recent hype in problem solving areas of economics and commerce.¹¹ Applying methods used in the preparation of design projects to other fields of concern does not necessarily form a new epistemology: Both in economic and social sciences as in information technology have thinkers like Otto Neurath or Emanuel Goldberg introduced non-verbal forms of developing ideas by design as practiced at the same time in art schools like the Bauhaus or at Stuttgart, Krefeld, and Hamburg.¹² At the same time, the former design practice of enhancing given models by a »good form« with even moral aspects of educating society as had been the rule of the »Deutscher Werkbund« (German Work Federation) when industrial production and form giving found their way to each other, had ceased to exist as the base of understanding both industry as business.¹³ This has led to a strong desire to understand design as a matter of shaping society, economics and post-heavy-industry's production. A number of design processes such as rapid prototyping or the use of game engines in developing architectural, urban, or transportation solutions have called for a reconsideration of all the elements involved, from the structure of the application of computer sciences to the socio-psychological implications of labour in the times of »Industry 4.0«.

The PhD program at the HBKsaar reflects, at least in parts, the role of these design evolutions and revolutions. Besides classical monographs on important artists and subjects like fashion, besides the implementation of classical methods like semiotics to new fields of interest, there are a number of theses prepared that contemplate immediate results of design thinking or its criticism to the understanding of innovation. There is a thesis on the juxtaposition of anonymous versus star design and its impact on society; there are studies on »disruptive innovation as design theory« and on the language of Facebook marketing as well as on the optimization of self-marketing under net conditions. Other studies work on surveys of marketing instruments and their use of communication design in certain businesses or on the impact of retro-designs on the automotive industries; some studies aim at epistemic understandings of digital imagery and psychoanalytical relations between dreaming and drawing. All of these theses are products of cooperations between several and distinctive sciences, be it computer science, economics or fields of engineering. To strengthen the impact of these debates on the quality of innovation within the fields of art, design and media, the theses have to be strictly philosophical dissertations under the conditions of the good practice of German sciences as formulated by the Deutsche Forschungs-Gemeinschaft (DFG). At first glance, one might consider a huge difference between the freedom of arts and the

¹¹Brown and Katz (2009).

¹²Hartmann (2015) and Buckland (2006).

¹³Schwartz (1996).

discipline of scientific work but in these cases they simply form the two sides of the same medal.

25.3.3 Places and Spaces for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

As there should be an open brief for all methods of education within the arts, design, and media, another question rises to recognition: the question of space. This is not only the design of offices and workspaces; first of all there is a lot of emphasis on the metaphorical space in allowing students to become free in their ideas and disciplined in the realization of them. As art today is more about making objects to be exhibited and sold, there are different needs for workshops, tools and workspaces than the average studio of the past two centuries. The same goes for designers, and media people can only work in large teams including a multitude of professions and their needs. But creativity—especially when it will be expanded to any form of entrepreneurship—asks for places to start of and for spaces to extinct from. They have to be kept at hand in any community that wants to incorporate creativity as a definitive part of its economy and social environment. Providing places and spaces therefore is an important in art, design and media education—without context there will never be a ground for creative innovations. Places include areas where unexpected meetings can happen, without any organization before. In the 1960s and 1970s, the British »Artist Placement Group« (APG) had prepared contracts for artists and the industry or civil services where—after a feasibility study of 6 months—artists joined companies and administrations for one or two years with a >carte blanche< and no obligation to produce anything that could be considered a work of art.¹⁴ In the roughly one dozen cases when contracts and placements happened they changed the contractors substantially—and art, too.

With APG's founder and theoretician John Latham, the relation of creativity, time and space can be described as an eventstructure, an extinction of time in space and vice versa.¹⁵ And, as he had borrowed his terms from theoretical physics, these extinctions cannot be described by a program—they are simply unforeseeable. This is exactly what all education in art, design and media has to face: The progression of the creative ground goes in all directions which includes success but extremely high risks as well. Preparing places and setting up spaces in which things happen in time has the indefiniteness of all thermodynamic processes but is the only ground for creativity to go, and there is no innovation without invention—this is the end of any prepared, scheduled, modularized or curricular education.

¹⁴Berry and van Mourik Broekman (2003) and Sachsse (1991).

¹⁵Hudek and Velios (2010).

25.4 Conclusion

Once again: Art cannot be taught. Providing studio corners with occasional suggestions in style and techniques are not enough instigation for a personal future in creativity and innovation—art schools have to offer a certain amount of professional foundation for a successful life in arts, design or media. The subjects of art and design have changed so much that the old class system cannot cope with that—imitation is no longer the right way to invention, especially not in matters of aesthetics. The ethics of art, design and media clearly define today's values: Besides the art market, besides the film and entertainment industry, there are a lot more fields to plough for creative minds. The result is a twofold situation: By the introduction of professional skills within the politically shaped and given economics the curricula in art, design and media shape themselves into the educational normativity as financed by the state, but by doing so they help the students and graduates to find their role in this given society. On the other hand, economics, industry and civil services can learn a lot from what art schools do: They prepare the ground from which creative innovations can arise, and by proposing open briefs for them in their form of education, society can help them set up a class of really creative young human beings that are able to offer our society innovative solutions to the many problems we currently have on earth.

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