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Academy Effects

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Just as inseparably as the demand for creativity has been linked with the idea of the artist since the early 19th century, its significance and function has become permanently unstable in postindustrial society. Takeovers on the part of economic production and management models have disrupted the exclusive claim to creativity formulated by art in processes of appropriation, which have also integrated autonomy, authenticity and liberation in new enterprise strategies, as Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello have demonstrated.[2] The requirement profiles of post-fordist working situations sound like an echo of criteria that were previously reserved primarily to artistic practice and the expectations associated with it, since they include techniques situated in the field of self-realization, self-management and freedom, as well as the ability, for instance, to make paradoxes productive.[3] Role model functions are accordingly attributed to artists.

Posing the question of the current social task of educative institutions in the art field necessarily includes taking the conditions of affirmative economic instrumentalization into consideration. Apart from the issue of whether art - or anything at all - can actually be taught, as it is raised by James Elkins in his discussion of the task of art academies [4], the functions of those

institutions that go beyond the further dissemination of a "norm of deviation"[5] are also a subject of debate. This is a debate that evolves its profile against the background of an artistic and cultural practice that insists on social relevance, and which owes its importance to the special enabling proximity to the production process, which is inherent to educational situations.

Expanding on the approaches of "institutional criticism" from the late 1960s and the 1970s, beyond the spatial, social or discursive functions of the institution "academy", it is primarily its effects that are important. This applies to a matrix of individualization with its symbolic and economic utilizations, which are produced and further disseminated in educational situations. Avoiding and eluding the naturalizations, hierarchizations and processes of inclusion and exclusion tied to these situations presupposes, according to the thesis that follows, a structure of agency that refuses institutionalization, which urges spatial, temporal and social contingency, and which comprehends itself as subject and object in its reflexive disposition.

The present considerations focusing on the critical potential of academy education center around a specific form of project work as practiced since 1994 at the "Kunstraum ("Art Space") of the University of Lüneburg" and since 2000 by the "/D/O/C/K Project Area" of the College of Graphic Art and Book Art in Leipzig. In both cases the project work, intended to be both transdisciplinary and spanning different professions, brings together artists, scholars and scientists of different disciplines - art history, cultural and visual studies, sociology, philosophy and media studies -, professionals in the art field and students from the respective institutions. The processual working form in the projects allows for varying demarcations between tasks, positions and fields in the different phases, making it possible to topicalize and reflect on

them. Beyond the possible processes of approximation, but also of rejection between the disciplines or between art and science, the roles of all participants are continuously available for disposition and change several times within a project.

In terms of content, the work of the KUNSTRAUM and the D/O/C/K Project Area so far has been organized around themes such as the definition, formalization and acknowledgement of project-oriented art, possibilities and situations of self-organized structures in the cultural field, the significance of "immaterial" labor in the art and cultural field, constitutions and transformations of cultural, professional and institutional identities, the relationship of art, ecology and sustainability, or opening up archivist practices beyond the discourse of memory.[6] What is determinant for the project work in both locations is a relational understanding of the social field "art" on the one hand and a relationship between theoretical and practical activities characterized by a "network of relationships and transfers" on the other.[7] As an experimental educational model with an emancipatory orientation it is intended for testing all contingencies. Gathering practical experience is not exhausted in recapitulating and rehearsing established skills and circumstances, but rather is focused specifically on their potential for change.[8]

The already latent risk that the model experiment could be transformed into an integrated component of the institution, that it could have more of a stabilizing effect on the institution's exercise of power, is increased in both Lüneburg and Leipzig by the fact that the project work being conducted with this conceptual orientation does not involve singular events or processes, but is instead meanwhile able to look back on several years of practice. In order to avoid the trap of an experiment mutating into a permanent establishment reinforcing the process of

the institutional appropriation of critical approaches and methods, KUNSTRAUM and /D/O/C/K Project Area concentrate primarily on hybrid, process-oriented, transitory, contingent and performative procedures. These are procedures that, in several respects, forestall institutional rules and the demands they impose, especially in their most recent efficiency-oriented, economicized manifestations as produced by modularization and continuous evaluation processes: the processuality, intersections and overlapping of roles and disciplines, abandoning the semester rhythm, ever new formations of discursive spaces, the transience of the respectively collaborating communities, and the performance character that is always included in the arrangement are some of the potentially resistive dimensions of the project work.[9] In the following, I would like to discuss three of them in particular, specifically those that deal with overlapping roles, with the transitory and with performativity.

I.

Within the project work described here, the role of the teacher - distributed among several actors - is characterized by a reflective way of dealing with one's own position within the charged field that opens up between institutional responsibility and independent research, between a hierarchical transference of legitimized knowledge and collective experimental work. Not unlike the position of curators, which also involves transference,[10] teachers generally execute a balancing act seeking to bridge the differences that Pierre Bourdieu notes between priests and prophets in "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field" (1971). Priests, in this case, have "a socially acknowledged and institutionalized capital of religious authority", their duties consist in establishing order and

sometimes maintaining the symbolic power of the institution, meaning the church here. The prophets, on the other hand, are focused on questioning the "conventional order", producing and disseminating new salvation goods that can serve to discredit the old ones. In other words, they meet orthodoxy with heresy. Here too, there is a possibility of a movement of acceptance that turns from change into affirmation, as the development of the struggle for power between priests and church on the one hand and prophets and sects on the other can result in the sect becoming church, which is simultaneously fated to trigger a new reformation. [11]

Applied to the context of the academy, this applies, on the one hand, to the mediating role assumed by teachers, in which they pass on to the students the preconditions for entry into the field that they have fulfilled themselves, while assuring their position in this field at the same time by disregarding these same criteria in their artistic and/or research practice and questioning the established school of thought. Caught in this quandary between obligations to the institution that appoints them and the autonomy claims of the field, teachers in the art field organize their work in the intersecting area of administrative or economic and artistic demands.[12] In this way, they largely exemplify the problems of post-industrial working conditions as they are currently treated in the discourse revolving around the concept of "governmentality" introduced by Foucault. The self-technologies through which an "autonomous" subjectivity that has become a guiding model in society are linked with state economic objectives are deployed here.[13]

Based on and simultaneously deviating from Bourdieu's dichotomous model, a scope of action furnished with critical perspectives can be determined for teachers in attitudes and

procedures, with which they place themselves neither on the side of the priests nor of the prophets, but instead integrate the relationship between both roles in activities of researching and experimenting. Alternately assuming tasks, practices and attributions of both positions in a mode of critical reflection means locating oneself in a third - transitory, flexible and hybrid - position, of which the characteristics are respectively redefined in carrying out one's own practice.

II.

This third position of the teachers is supported by being embedded in collective working processes that are founded on the formation of temporary communities. Instead of forming fixed groups for working on one or even several projects, the association and cooperation takes place respectively because of changed questions and corresponding interests. Situations and discourses both internal and external to the academy can be the starting point for project-specific participation, for which formats, methods and goals first develop in the course of working together. Here the temporary character of the association guarantees both the continuation of an individual practice of the single participants and the projective "proposal" character that Miwon Kwon posits as criterion for a successful "community-based art" - a projective "proposal" character, through which the collective work develops its potential to shape existing social, economic or institutional relationships and thus also its critical potential.[14]

With these characteristics, both KUNSTRAUM and the D/O/C/K Project Area see themselves as socially and discursively constituted spaces without a necessarily fixed location. These are spaces, for

which Foucault's - in several respects relatively unspecific - definition of "heterotopia" has a certain relevance, although it is a relevance that is expanded by the strategy of the performative: by means of a shifting re-performance of circumstances and conditions in the cultural field, both spaces develop their potential as counter-placement and counterbalance, "in which the real places of culture are simultaneously represented, contested and turned".[15]

III.

Beyond the characteristics already mentioned, the performative qualities of the project work are ultimately rooted in the inclusion of a link to practicing and performing procedures. When themes such as self-organization, networking, self-positioning or a concept of artistic work were the focal point of this kind of project work, they were not only the subject matter of historical or theoretical investigation and treatment, but also developed into a part of the respectively individual practice as the work was conducted. In the course of the collaborative work, all the participants - students, teachers and invited guests - were equally integrated in processes such as that of networking as well as in procedures and strategies of a self-positioning in the field. On the basis of a critical analysis of the conditions and circumstances of these kinds of activities, they were staged using exhibitions, conferences or video in such a way that they were actuated and shifted in repetition, in Judith Butler's sense[16], by the participants themselves. The fact that they were capable of being performed demonstrated that the conditions and circumstances were not given, but contingent and capable of being shaped; the performance carried out the shaping. The political potential of the project work described is inherent in this interplay of imitative proximity and theatrical distance, which is an integral

component of it. Not least of all, this political potential spotlights the quandary of teaching, in order to break with its naturalizations.

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[1] This essay is an expanded version of the article entitled "Modellversuch Projektarbeit. Institutioneller Widerstand oder emanzipatorisches Praxis" published in *Kulturrisse*, No. 76, 1/2004, p. 14-16, and the essay "Performative Abweichung. Überlegungen zur Projektarbeit in Ausbildungssituationen" in *Texte zur Kunst*, No. 53, Vol. 14, March 2004, p. 70-74.

[2] Cf. Luc Boltanski/Eve Chiapello: "Die Arbeit der Kritik und der normative Wandel" in: Marion von Osten (Ed.): *Norm der Abweichung*, Zürich / New York 2003, p. 67-68. The essay by Boltanski and Chiapello, first published in "Berliner Journal für Soziologie", 4 (2002), summarizes the main theses of their investigation "Le nouvel esprit du capitalisme", Paris 1999.

[3] Cf. Thomas Lemke/Ulrich Bröckling/Susanne Krasmann: "Gouvernementalität, Liberalismus und Selbsttechnologien. Eine Einleitung", in: Ulrich Bröckling/Susanne Krasmann/Thomas Lemke (Ed.), *Gouvernementalität der Gegenwart. Studien zur Ökonomisierung des Sozialen*, Frankfurt am Main 2000, p. 30; cf. Siegfried J. Schmidt: "Kreativität – Innovation – Aufmerksamkeitsökonomie", unpublished lecture manuscript, p. 4-5. I would like to thank Siegfried J. Schmidt for making the manuscript available.

[4] Cf. James Elkins: Why Art Cannot Be Taught. A Handbook for Art Students, Chicago 2001, especially p. 91-110.

[5] Explaining the title of her publication, Marion von Osten states: "If dissidence, criticism and subversion become the motor

for the modernization of the same circumstances that they were initially intended to undermine, abolish or at least denounce, then the relationship of norm and deviation is reversed." Marion von Osten (2003), op.cit., p. 7.

[6] Projects realized since 1994 at the "Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg", directed by Diethelm Stoller, Ulf Wuggenig and myself: Andrea Fraser/ Helmut Draxler: Services (1994); Clegg & Guttmann: The Transformation of Data into Portraiture (1994); Christian Philipp Müller: Touring Club (1994-95); Fabrice Hybert: Testoo (1995-96); Christian Boltanski: Les Archives des Grandparents (1996); Thomas Locher/ Peter Zimmermann: Öffentlich/ Privat (1996); Renée Green: The Digital Import/ Export Funk Office (1996-97); Christian Philipp Müller: Der Campus als Kunstwerk (1997-98); Hans-Peter Feldmann: Interarchiv (1998); Dan Peterman: Treibhaus (1999). Projects of the /D/O/C/K/-project area, under the direction of Alexander Koch and myself, dealing with the redefinition of the functions of the gallery at the Hochschule für Grafik und Buchkunst, Leipzig: Drei Tage: Herstellen von Öffentlichkeit: Künstlerische Selbstorganisation (2000); Selbstpositionierungsstrategien im Kunstfeld/ work in progress. A video production in collaboration with Christian Jankowski (2001); In welcher Haltung arbeiten Sie bevorzugt? Kunst im Verhältnis zur Konstruktion von Arbeit, in collaboration with Andreas Siekmann (2001); be creative! Der kreative Imperativ, in cooperation with Marion von Osten (2002).

[7] Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the "field" comes into effect here, a network or a configuration of objective relations between positions. Within this, the individual actors – in the art field, for instance, that means artists, curators, art critics, gallerists, etc. - find themselves in a continuous process of positioning themselves in relation to the others, cf. Pierre Bourdieu, Loïc J. Wacquaint:

Reflexive Anthropologie, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, p. 127. On the one hand this mode of working takes recourse to the relation of theory and practice propagated by Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, cf. "Gespräch zwischen Michel Foucault und Gilles Deleuze. Die Intellektuellen und die Macht", in: Michel Foucault: *Von der Subversion des Wissens*, Frankfurt am Main 1993 (1974), p. 106-108.

[8] On the objectives of the work in "Kunstraum der Universität Lüneburg" see Beatrice von Bismarck, Diethelm Stoller, Ulf Wuggenig: *Games Fights Collaborations. Das Spiel von Grenze und Überschreitung, Kunst und Cultural Studies in den 90er Jahren*, Ostfildern-Ruit 1996, p. 7-9.

[9] A more extensive treatment of the political perspectives of the project work would go beyond the scope available here. A publication on the work of the D/O/C/K Project Area will be published in June 2004.

[10] For a more detailed discussion of this, see: Beatrice von Bismarck: "Kuratorisches handeln: Immaterielle Arbeit zwischen Kunst und Managementmodellen", in: Marion von Osten (2003), op.cit., p. 81-98.

[11] Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, "Genese und Struktur des religiösen Feldes", in: ibid., *Das religöse Feld: Texte zur Ökonomie des Heilsgeschehens*, Konstanz 2000, p. 77, 79, 81, 86 (English translation: Bourdieu, Pierre, "Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field", *Comparative Social Research*, Vol. 13, 1991, p. 1-44)

[12] Cf. also Beatrice von Bismarck, "Kuratorisches Handeln. Immaterielle Arbeit zwischen Kunst und Managementmodellen", in: Marion von Osten, op.cit., p. 81-98.

[13] Cf. Thomas Lemke/Susanne Krasmann/Ulrich Bröckling, "Gouvernementalität, Neoliberalismus und Selbsttechnologien. Eine Einleitung", in ibid. (Ed.): *Gouvernementalität der Gegenwart. Studien zur Ökonomisierung des Sozialen*, Frankfurt am Main, 2000, p. 29-30.

[14] On the projective character of collective work, cf. Miwon Kwon's reflections on community formation in community-based art in reference to Linda Singer, Miwon Kwon: Ortungen und Entortungen der Community, in: Christian Meyer / Mathias Poledna (Eds.), *Sharawadgi*, Köln 1999, p. 214, and ibid.: *One Place After Another. Site-specific Art and Locational Identity*, Cambridge, Mass./London 2002, p. 154-155

[15] Cf. Michel Foucault: "Andere Räume" (1967), in: Michael Wentz (Ed.): *Stadt-Räume*, Frankfurt am Main/New York 1991, p. 68. [English translation: http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html]

[16] Cf. Judith Butler: *Das Unbehagen der Geschlechter*, Frankfurt am Main 1991, p. 202-208 [Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, Routledge, 1990]