THE CRITICAL ATTITUDE IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPEAN ART EDUCATION

ON LEARNING TO PRODUCE CRITICAL VIRTUE FOR CONTEMPORARY ART

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates a current paradigm of contemporary European art education best summarised under the term *critical attitude*. At first sight, the critical attitude presents itself as an appealing cliché, functioning as a discursive promise of being able to reconcile social and political engagement with a way of living as an art worker inside the existing cultural field. Upon examination, however, the critical attitude turns out to be a contradiction that emerges from the interrogation of its allegedly critical potential. Within the critical attitude paradigm, the role of art education appears to be the upholding of the future art workers' identification with the subversive potential of art, an identification that is necessary to produce critical virtue. In turn, the key research question of this thesis is if art education—situated within the critical attitude paradigm—can equip its students with skills, tools, knowledge or dispositions that have any social or political traction. To examine this contradiction, firstly, the autonomy/heteronomy couple in art is problematised through the lens of a (social) art historical perspective. Secondly, the educational turn and advanced practices are explored as attempts to resist the progressive liberalisation of art education. Finally, the use of the critical attitude paradigm for the neoliberal art market is observed. Methodically, the reflections in this thesis are paired with close readings of presentational discourses of formal and informal art education programmes throughout contemporary Europe.

INTRODUCTION

Artists have had ideas about art education since its establishment as formal training for individual artists. From Leonardo da Vinci over Joseph Beuys to Tania Bruguera, the wish to shape art education in a way that is more appropriate to their respective social, political, or economic context is persistent. Da Vinci, amongst other Renaissance artists, started questioning the exclusive position guilds occupied in art education.[1] His success as individual artist, a recognition that was historically without precedent, and the deriving social position in intellectual circles of the time called for another model of art education. Guilds were organised in strong connection to local masters that could only teach the skills they possessed.[2] Even though the role of guilds in training artists in high levels of craftsmanship weren't contested, they came to be at odds with the humanistic learning, the emerging notion of the artist genius and the related idea of freely choosing a patron.

Several centuries later, Joseph Beuys claimed that everyone is an artist and that no specific skills were necessary to make art.[3] The first part of the claim is shared amongst different artists of the Modern period, going hand in hand with the increasing importance the notion of creativity came to enjoy. By stating that no special skills were needed to make art, Beuys pushed this idea one step further, rendering art education plainly superfluous. However, Beuys himself was the initiator and co-founder of the Free International University, a structure conceived as a space for interdisciplinary collaboration between the sciences and art. This project could still be seen as a form of art education, as it manifested a perception of art that aspired to invite everyone to participate in shaping everyday life in a creative way, in particular its politics and the economy.[4]

Such a stance is not dissimilar from the contemporary Cuban artist Tania Bruguera's project the Behavior Art School (Cátedra Arte de Conducta).[5] Focussing on the "discussion and analysis of sociopolitical behavior," Bruguera conceived art education as a tool to

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[1] Arthur D. Efland, *A History of Art Education: Intellectual and Social Currents in Teaching the Visual Arts* (New York: Teachers College Columbia University, 1990), 30.

[2] Efland, *A History of Art Education,* 31.

[3] Volker Harlan, *What is Art? Conversation with Joseph Beuys*, trans. Matthew Barton and Shelley Sacks (London: Clairview Books, 2004), 9.

[4] Harlan, *What is Art?*, ix.

[5] Tania Bruguera, "Cátedra Arte de Conducta (Behavior Art School)," *Tania Bruguera* (website), accessed 10 June 2022. https://www.taniabruguera.com/catedra-arte-de-conducta-behavior-art-school/.

transform ideology by stimulating civic action.[6] Proposing an alternative to formal art education in Cuba, her intention with this project was the establishment of a space where participants learn to understand art as actions that really engage with the shortfalls of their context and consequently cease being a metaphor or representation.[7] Behavior Art School is one example in a plethora of independent art education programs conceived and run by artists and art collectives since the 1960s.[8]

Concerning the contemporary situation, the wish to reshape art education could be read as a symptom of the contradiction emerging from the attempt to fulfil the discursive promise to teach art, or the making of art, that has a social and political impact and at the same time to provide the knowledge and skills necessary for subsisting as professional art worker. This contradiction—its existence, its different shapes, its condition, and its consequences—guided my thinking in this dissertation.

My preoccupation with this tension arose not only from tangible experiences during my art education, but also from the impression that it might be a core part of contemporary art itself. As such, contemporary art education seems to be contributing to the perpetuation of the entangled role art has played since the beginning of modernity.[9] To resort one more time to the simplest available terms, it is the tension produced between the wish of not being separate from life, of playing a social or political role and at the same time obfuscating the fact of being distant from reality, autonomous.[10]

Since the 1960s, with an accent after 1989, higher education in the Global North has undergone progressive reforms.[11] Critics diagnose these reforms as part of the neoliberal project, transforming the university into a site for production of individual capital and

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[6] Bruguera, "Cátedra Arte de Conducta."

[7] Bruguera, "Cátedra Arte de Conducta."

[8] Starting with the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, other important examples are the Independent Study Program in New York, Beta-Local's La Práctica in Puerto Rico, SOMA in Mexico City, ashkal alwan home workspace programme in Beiruth, Kem school in Warsaw and the recent School of Disobedience (this is a non-exhaustive list).

[9] Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde,* trans. Michael Shaw (Mineapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 35 - 41.

[10] Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "The Social History of Art: Models and Concepts" in *Art since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism*, edited by Hal Foster, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Benjamin H. D. Buchloh and David Joselit, (London: Thames & Hudson, 2012), 25; Daniel Spaulding and Nicole Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish," *Mute*, 28 March 2015. https://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/art-value-and-freedom-fetish-0

[11] Suhail Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism," *askal alwan* (website), (2014), https://ashkalalwan.org/program.php?category=4&id=223; Tyson E. Lewis, "The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference," *Signs* 39, no. 3 (2014): 817; Angela Harutyunyan, "Critical Pedagogy as a Practice of Cognitive Mapping," in *Potential Spaces: Research and Education in Art and Design,* edited by Daniel Irrgang and Siegfried Zielinski, (Karlsruhe: Staatliche Hochschule für Gestaltung (HfG) Karlsruhe / ZKM, 2019), 112.

instantiating an entrepreneurial logic of research and education.[12] At least since the beginning of the 21st century, art education has come to play a particular role inside this framework. The educational turn has not invented the role of art and education as a space of resistance, but it certainly has contributed to the popularisation of such an understanding.[13] This perception of art and education as somehow different from other education runs parallel with the perception of art as somehow different from other commodities. The relative autonomy art enjoys in the field of production has repeatedly been instrumentalised on a discursive level against the contested (capitalist) mode of production. Analogously, higher art education and in particular artistic research, has been imagined as a "critical trojan horse" that would lead to an overturn of academic research culture from the inside.[14] The preoccupation of this dissertation is, borrowing from the precedent crude metaphor, to consider if the soldiers hidden inside the horse might be Trojan soldiers themselves and if they will, once out of the horse, fall into the arms of their compatriots.

My research starts with the examination of the intertwinement of the education of art with the ideological conception of art that it is shaped and reshaped in connection to its historical context. The theoretical considerations, based on writings by Thierry de Duve and Beth Williamson, will be completed with an analysis of the existing discourse of three examples of art education, namely Atelier without a Leader in the Czech Republic, Goldsmiths University in the United Kingdom, and School of Disobedience without a fixed location.[15] This analysis allows the observation of two major paradigm shifts in art education throughout contemporary Europe. It further outlines and attempts to answer the question if the establishment of a *critical attitude* can be considered as the dominant paradigm in Western contemporary art education.[16]

The aim of the second chapter is to historically sketch out what so far has been called *the contradiction*. Four theoretical positions provide a historical arch of the discussion around

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[12] Paul Smith, "Birmingham – Urbana-Champaign 1964–1990; or, Cultural Studies" (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2007), 69; Harutyunyan, "Critical Pedagogy," 120.

[13] Janna Graham, Valeria Graziano, and Susan Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," *Performance Research*, 21, no. 6 (1 November 2016): 29. https://doi.org/10.1080/13528165.2016.1239912.

[14] Florian Cramer and Nienke Terpsma, "What Is Wrong with the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research?" *Open! Platform for Art, Culture & the Public Domain*, (21 January 2021): 4. www.onlineopen.org/what-is-wrong-with-the-vienna-declaration-on-artistic-research.

[15] Thierry de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form - and Beyond" in *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, edited by Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Beth Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education: Nothing Changes from Generation to Generation except the Thing Seen" (*Visual Culture in Britain*, 2013).

[16] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 29.

the notion of autonomy. Benjamin Buchloh introduces the concept of autonomy as strongly linked to the formation of a bourgeois individuality.[17] For him, autonomous art provides a space within which a subject could experience pleasure without interest (following Kant, this is aesthetic autonomy and disinterested contemplation), thus later allowing the formulation of artistic acts as open negation and refusal. Peter Bürger agrees with Buchloh on the characteristics of autonomous art, but critiques autonomous art for its tendency to project the "image of a better order in fiction," thus "reliev[ing] the existing society of the pressure of those forces that make for change."[18] Bürger sees the avant-garde's attempt to integrate art and everyday life as a solution to the disconnection of autonomous art from life.[19]

Two more recent so al art historical positions formulated by Stewart Martin, and by Daniel Spaulding and Nicole Demby illustrate a twist in the discussion of autonomy.[20] The three authors renegotiate autonomous art in relation to commodification. For Martin, autonomous art is still able to resist and critique capitalist culture, not because the autonomous artwork is an alternative to commodification, but rather because it is a contradiction produced by it.[21] Spaulding and Demby limit the idea that autonomous art is inherently subversive.[22] For them, the autonomy of art results from its unusual place in commodity relations, that shapes the artwork but does not preclude the existence of other relations. This historical overview attempts to lay the groundwork that should allow me to examine the autonomy/heteronomy couple at work in contemporary art education.

In the third chapter I will reflect on the relationship between art and education in order to understand two major initiatives, namely the educational turn and *advanced practices*, that continuously try to resist the progressive liberalisation of art education in Europe. To do this, I first introduce what has come to be known as the educational turn, based on the writings of Irit Rogoff.[23] I then concentrate on a position that critiques the autonomy of the educational turn.[24] Next, I will retrace the recent mobilisation around advanced practices and outline it as

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[17] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23.

[18] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 50.

[19] The term *avant-garde* is in this text used in the way Bürger makes sense of it, regrouping practices related to Dada, Futurism and specially collage, not taking into consideration the inherent problems of writing history in the way Bürger does. A clear overview of the problematics of this term can be found in Buchloh's introduction to "Art Since 1900."

[20] Stewart Martin, "The Absolute Artwork Meets the Absolute Commodity" (*Radical Philosophy*, 2007); Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish."

[21] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 23.

[22] Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish," 1.

[23] Irit Rogoff, "Turning" (*E-Flux Journal*, 2008).

[24] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art."

a parallel to the educational turn.[25] In the last section of this chapter, I interrogate the traction of this last position by showing its similarities to para-academic art projects and the problems related to such projects as Suhail Malik has outlined them.[26]

Finally, I'll turn to the position of the student as a (future) worker in the cultural field. Through the analysis of another set of discourses of art education programs, namely the Central Academy of Fine Arts in Beijing, Goldsmiths in London, the Syllabus in the United Kingdom, and Kem School in Warsaw, I attempt to point towards the position an art student occupies in contemporary art education. From this perspective the critical attitude appears to be an appealing cliché, functioning as a discursive promise of being able to reconcile social and political engagement with a way of living as an art worker inside the existing cultural field. Moving on from Marina Vishmidt's framing of the entrepreneurial artist, I interrogate the art students' interest in the critical attitude and how this relation plays out in the future art worker's pursuit of her ambitions.[27] Based on texts by Suhail Malik and Ghalya Saadawi, I conclude this research by retracing how the seducing promise offered by education shaped along the line of the critical attitude paradigm is linked to the production of critical virtue.[28]

The reflections in this dissertation are punctuated with close readings of presentational discourses of formal and informal art education programmes. The decision to consider both types of schools is based on my wish to sketch a larger picture of the current European paradigm of art education, one that is not restricted to the more obvious structural demands of formal training (the Bachelor-Master division, the credit points, the balance between lectures and seminars etc.). With one exception (the reason for this exception will be explained at the given time) I chose European art education programmes emerging out of different socio-political and economic situations. Despite their diversity, I have noticed one common characteristic, namely the central place a critical attitude occupies. This will be relevant for my reflections around the discursive promise made by such a framing of art education.

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[25] Jamie Allen, Serge von Arx, Koen Brams, Paul Goodwin, and Kai van Eikels et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices" (*European Forum for Advanced Practices)*.

[26] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[27] Marina Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated: Social Practice as Business Model" (*E-Flux Journal*, 2013), 5 - 6.

[28] Suhail Malik, "Critique as Alibi: Moral Differentiation in the Art Market" *Journal of Visual Arts Practice*, 7, no. 3 (2008): 284. https://doi.org/10.1386/jvap.7.3.283/1; Ghalya Saadawi, "Vapid Virtues, Real Stakes: Diagnosis for Left Art Protocols," in *Between the Material and the Possible: Infrastructural Re-Examination and Speculation in Art*, edited by Bassam El Baroni, (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2022), 76 - 77. (forthcoming)

A CRITICAL ATTITUDE

In this chapter, I reflect on the forms of teaching and learning of a critical attitude. I understand the term in the way Thierry de Duve employs it in his essay "When Form Has Become Attitude—And Beyond" and will consider it in the European context of contemporary art education.

From creativity to critical attitude

De Duve observes the teaching of art in parallel with the ideological conceptions of art that he establishes as triad notions.[29] The triad moves from "talent-métier-imitation" in the ancient academy style, to "creativity-medium-invention" in the wake of Bauhaus education, and towards the contemporary "attitude-practice-deconstruction."[30] Upon examining the two later models of art education and the respective historical conditions they had emanated from more closely, he states that the "creativity-medium-invention" triad had imploded, and art education in its aftermath was organised along the triad "attitude-practice-deconstruction." He considers this last model of teaching art to be similar to the preceding one, with the only difference that the latest induces less faith and more suspicion.[31] In the following, I concentrate on the shift from *talent* to *creativity* to *attitude* and complement my reading with the analysis of presentation discourses of three art education programs.

The first institutional and specific training in art in a Western context emerged alongside the humanist philosophy of education that was developed during the Renaissance period and materialised in the education offered by academies.[32] This form of education underwent several changes, but the basic structure of a group of students instructed over an extensive period of time by one master, persisted for around three centuries. Academies guaranteed a tradition of quality standards and trained artists as professionals based on observation and imitation. The technical know-how any student achieved during their education secured them a place in society and as such an income.[33]

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[29] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form."

[30] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 28 - 33.

[31] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 33.

[32] Efland, *A History of Art Education,* 26.

[33] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 21.

The first paradigm shift De Duve theorises is linked to the move of art away from traditional apprenticeship, a move that had been initiated by the avant-garde towards the end of the 19th century. In this situation, the teaching of art needed to find a new point of departure. Imitating this movement away from observing outside models towards an inside turn in the search of own means of expression, art education started focussing on the encouragement and training of the innate faculties of perception and imagination that were regrouped under the modern name creativity.[34] In comparison to talent, creativity was understood to be distributed universally, an ideology that went in pair with the ideas of democracy and egalitarianism.[35]

The role of art education in this context was to allow the growth of the creative potential. An institution of art education thus taught "students […] to tap their unspoilt creativity, guided by immediate feeling and emotion, and to read their medium, obeying its immanent syntax."[36] Subsequently, many educational programs were not based on talent anymore, but rather on creativity, an exemplary case of which is the Bauhaus model.[37] This form has set a number of suppositions about art education that have influenced the structure and curriculum of educational institutions around the world and remains one that still positions itself coherently against the old academic model.[38]

The second paradigm shift announced itself in the 1970s. For De Duve the most important problem with the creativity paradigm was that it could not be willed, and that this was not in line with the revolutionary rhetoric and critical position progressive art and art teaching started adopting.[39] Therefore, the notion of creativity was replaced by the notion of attitude as the most neutral concept amongst all ideological choices, "a volition without content."[40] To meet the intentions of progressive art and art teaching such an attitude had to be critical.[41]

What was understood as critical attitude was informed by the writings of Lukacs, Adorno and Althusser and allowed art and art education to position itself in relation to its

[34] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 22.
[35] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 24.
[36] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 23.
[37] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 23.
[38] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 23.
[39] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 28.
[40] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 29.
[41] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 29.

social and political status quo.[42] Moreover, it helped the formation of a new, strongly politicised discourse about art that also became a central part of the most fashionable art schools. Art education and particularly the studio practice taught in such institutions, were displaced, or replaced by the entrance of theory into the program of art education, renewing the critical and intellectual means to approach the production and valuation of art.[43]

In the following paragraphs, I compare De Duve's finding of a shift away from the creativity paradigm to the transformations Beth Williamson outlines in "Recent Developments in British Art Education." She observes two shifts in art education in the British context: the first one occurs in the mid-twentieth century as a reaction to the increasing specialisation of university education. At this moment, the study of art history and liberal studies was included in the curriculum of formal art education, meaning to "extend [art students'] general education to a level proper to the academic status of a degree."[44] Yet, engaged art teachers didn't see how such an approach would equip art students with tools to develop as artists after leaving school.[45] Therefore, they proposed courses that were more axed around intuition and the disruption of habitual practices in order to encourage creative production.

Following this first shift, Williamson traces a second shift, taking place the beginning of the 21st century. In this second shift, free schools, seen as education programmes that untie radical art education from the curriculum of formal art schools, play an emblematic role. She reads them as remaining in their negation tied to the mainstream methods of art teaching. Free schools challenge mainstream art education and use them as a model in the opposition of which they develop their own approach. Along this movement out of formal training, the focus of art education shifts from the individual artist towards "groups or communities of artists […] often trained in collaborative relationships with teachers. The focus is increasingly on co-creation and a socially engaged practice with public impact."[46] These initiatives have in common that they offer group settings that aim at facilitating a collaborative approach and the co-creation of work. Following an "ethics of shared and ameliorative spaces of participation" the previously valorised inward turn becomes an obstacle for the formation of discursive spaces that can engage with all its participants and

[42] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 29.

[43] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 29.

[44] Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education," 361.

[45] Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education," 362.

[46] Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education," 358.

react to its environment.[47] Williamson continues that to participate in such a space, the students need to bring tools of articulation, the right language and should feel comfortable enough to contribute to the discussion. From this perspective, the role of the teacher consists in creating a space where participants feel encouraged and generous enough to contribute to the group discussion.[48]

The similarity between the characteristics De Duve and Williamson introduce to seize this second shift in art education will be mapped out in the following. These characteristics will be tested at the presentation discourses of informal radical art education as well as in those of formal progressive art education.

Atelier without a Leader (Ateliérem bez Vedoucího)

I will use the first example to illustrate the need students felt to move out of the structures that remained of the academic model of art education, originally based on the notion of talent. Moreover, their project results in a proposition that is characterised by a focus on a collaborative relationship between students and teachers similar to the one Williamson has observed in the case of the open schools in the British context and thus can be understood as appertaining to the critical attitude paradigm.

Atelier without a Leader (Ateliérem bez Vedoucího) was a self-organised atelier and non-degree program in the Czech Republic, that started in 2015 and run until 2018. The program has no official website anymore, therefore, I will concentrate in the following on an interview published in 2016, a recorded conference held at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague in 2017 and a conversation with David Přílučík, a former member of the Atelier without a Leader.[49] The voice of Atelier without a Leader is relevant here, because it gives a clear account of the problems the academic model, has come to face since the notion of creativity had gained importance. The over regional reputation Atelier without a Leader had,

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[47] Andrea Phillips, "Education Aesthetics," in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, edited by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, (United Kingdom: Open Editions, 2010), 85.

[48] Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education," 372.

[49] Dominik Forman, "Interview s Ateliérem Bez Vedoucího," *Solidarita* (website), 15 July 2016. https://solidarita.socsol.cz/2016/kultura/interview-s-atelierem-bez-vedouciho.; "What Can We Do?," *PAF Správce on youtube* (website), 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eONcEOeVl7I.

shows that their vision of incongruity between the structure of education and the predominant ideological conception of art was of interest in the Czech cultural and educational context.[50]

Both Czech academies teaching courses in Fine Art on a higher education level have been fundamentally restructured after the dissolution of the communist Czechoslovakia in 1989. However, the teaching remained studio based. This situation was contested by a group of students and alumni from both academies, and they founded Atelier without a Leader.[51] Atelier without a Leader clearly state, in how far studio-based instruction is insufficient for them: "If we manage to remove the hierarchy of the student-master relationship, we realize that many 'masters' lack deliberate teaching methods. […] [The] rejection of the mastery model left the supervisor positions in studios without a set agenda. As if one teaching methodology disappeared and left us only with an empty structure."[52] This empty structure was left to the supervisors to be filled with content. Sometimes, the supervisor's research was imposed as educational trajectory for the students of one studio and sometimes supervisors handed over the decisions concerning the content of the studio to students. The second way of doing might come from the intention to make the formal-personal relationship more equal but is inside this framework perceived as "buck passing."[53] As such, the structural superiority of the supervisor wasn't seen to be justifiable, especially in regard to their difficulty to provide educational content or training.

As such, Atelier without a Leader established a para-academic space that was free from the structure of the master studio education, in particular the content wise illegitimate hierarchical structure that this educational model seems to hold in place. However, Atelier without a Leader did not disavow pedagogy, on the contrary, they were interested in different forms of receiving and distributing information and knowledge. One member mentions during the interview: "[…] we attack the role of the leader, not the educator as such."[54] She further clearly pronounces the parti pris to take programmatic decisions for the atelier as a group: "I find it important that we do not criticise central education in such a way that we want to individualise it as much as possible. This tactic is chosen by different schools and corresponds more to neoliberal thinking: each student chooses a program, courses, basically

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[50] "Ateliér Bez Vedoucího – Cesta Do Kyjeva," *Czech Centres* (website), November 2017. https://kyiv.czechcentres.cz/o-nas.

[51] Forman, "Interview s Ateliérem Bez Vedoucího."

[52] "What Can We Do?."

[53] "What Can We Do?."

[54] Forman, "Interview s Ateliérem Bez Vedoucího."

training according to their own needs. It is certainly important that in the Atelier without a Leader we choose the program collectively."[55]

In sum, Atelier without a Leader tried on the one hand to get rid of the remaining hierarchical structure that was, regarding the content of education, considered to be illegitimate and on the other, refused the individualistic approach and structure known to be the foundation of large scale edu factories. What it wanted to offer instead was a form of education, in which the group decided their program, where pedagogical methods were discussed and where teaching was project based.

Goldsmiths University of London

In the second example, I concentrate on reading the contemporary discourse presenting a programme of art education that de Duve had considered to be exemplary of the critical attitude paradigm in 1994. In his words, in the mid-Eighties "Goldsmiths [University] was the place to be."[56] After a short contextualisation of the art education offered by Goldsmiths University of London, I will examine the presentation of its postgraduate programme in Fine Arts.

During the reorganisation of higher education in the wake of the Bologna Process, the UK coalition government cut and overhauled the funding for higher education in 2010.[57] This made UK universities dependent on inconsistent income from student tuition fees, the tripling of which lead to a series of mass student protests in 2010 and 2011.[58] In addition, since 2016 the restrained access to European research funding as well as constrained government spending under the conservative government have equally impacted the finances of UK universities.[59] As a consequence, competition amongst institutions of higher education has become ferocious, increasingly shaping them after commercial and administrative models run for profit.[60] In the case of Goldsmiths, a restructuration plan was put in place, including

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[55] Forman, "Interview s Ateliérem Bez Vedoucího."

[56] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 29.

[57] Jacob Mukherjee, "A Decade of Marketisation Has Left Lecturers with No Choice but to Strike," *The Guardian* (website), 4 December 2021. https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/dec/04/marketisation-lecturers-strike-universities.

[58] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 29.

[59] Ken Mayhew, "Brexit and UK Higher Education" *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 38, no. 1 (2022): 179.

[60] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

amongst others the centralisation of services and the cutting of staff costs. This situation led to a series of strikes by the staff and students in 2021 and 2022.[61]

With the slogan: "We make, curate and write about contemporary art in a dynamic, critical and interdisciplinary environment" the overall description of the Department of Art at Goldsmiths already indicates three focus points for art education.[62] It becomes apparent in the first paragraph, that the accent in the description of the Master of Fine Art program is put on the notion of critical. The programme presents itself as "subject[ing] art-making to critical scrutiny" and focusses on sharpening the student's consciousness about how they and their artworks are embedded in a history of art and a socio-cultural context.[63] Combining the requirement that students consciously position their art-practice in a wider socio-cultural context and that they should at the same time "look to shift prevalent expectations" translates in my head to the formulation of a critical attitude, that is assumed to have a transformative power.[64]

Finally, the supposition that art and not just its technical means can be taught remains unresolved from a methodological viewpoint.[65] The solution the discourse of the Master of Fine Art proposes, is to not focus on the production of art works but instead on the submission of artworks to artistic and critical examination. This implies that art can be learned through critical thinking and critical discourse about artworks.

School of Disobedience

The third example illustrates a case of contemporary intertwinement of the creativity and the attitude paradigm, where the priority of the critical attitude is clearly formulated, even stipulated. Moreover, a strong accent is put on collaborative practice amongst students and teachers. To speak in the words of Williamson, this observation equally indicates that the collaborative vision progressive art education shares, is "symptomatic of the Zeitgeist" of the beginning 21st century.[66]

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[61] "You Cannot Cut Your Way to Growth – Our Alternative to SMT's Austerity," *Goldsmiths University and College Union* (website), accessed 5 Mai 2022. https://goldsmithsucu.org/you-cannot-cut-your-way-to-growth-our-alternative-to-smts-austerity/.

[62] "Department of Art," *Goldsmiths* (website), accessed 18 April 2022. https://www.gold.ac.uk/art/.

[63] "MFA Fine Art," *Goldsmiths* (website), accessed 18 April 2022. https://www.gold.ac.uk/pg/mfa-fine-art/.

[64] "MFA Fine Art."

[65] de Duve, "When Attitude Has Become Form," 26.

[66] Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education," 361.

School of Disobedience has been operating since 2014, providing workshops and classes in various spaces, ranging from university over gallery to night club. The school frames itself as a "socially and politically engaged sustainable community art project" conceived of by the artist and choreographer Anna Ádám.[67] It doesn't have and won't have a fixed address and is financed through grants and donations.[68] Only recently, the School of Disobedience started proposing a more continuous education in radical performance art for women. The program proposes a selection of monthly classes, week-long thematic intensive workshops at the invitation of artistic and cultural venues and summer camps.[69] The context for the establishment of School of Disobedience as a more continuous education programme is the finding that women suffer more from "destructive economic and environmental practices and policies" and that governments don't take gender into consideration when producing responses to socio economic crises.[70] Following the school's argument, this is a result of the fact that women are underrepresented in decision-making processes, illustrated by the global percentage of female parliamentarians. School of disobedience sees it as an imperative to change this underrepresentation.[71]

The discourse of the School of Disobedience can be situated at the intersection of the creativity and the attitude paradigms. On the one hand, a particular attention is given to respecting the students as personalities and artists, where "teachers do not take advantage of the young age and the extreme sensitivity of the students to influence them."[72] This position is close to the idea that the creative energy everybody is naturally endowed with, and which is supposedly particularly pure and strong at a younger age, can only be enhanced through education if no formalisation or *boxing* of this individual expression is taking place.[73]

On the other hand, the program uses a vocabulary that renders its critical attitude and situates itself close to activist practices: "Through empowerment methods, guerilla tactics and community building, participants are encouraged to raise their voice, echo freely the

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[67] "School of Disobedience - About," *School of Disobedience* (website), accessed 2 April 2022. https://www.schoolofdisobedience.org/about.html.

[68] "School of Disobedience - About."

[69] "School of Disobedience," *Application Form* (website), accessed 2 April 2022. https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe_zkOA4uckuWs-3U7-PY-6_WzlyJSQbjuWJHK4kJDSxGE5Yg/viewform.

[70] "School of Disobedience - About."

[71] "School of Disobedience - About."

[72] "School of Disobedience - About."

[73] "School of Disobedience - Disobedience Is an Act of Courage," *School of Disobedience* (website), accessed 2 April 2022. https://www.schoolofdisobedience.org/school.html.

broader socio-political context, challenge hegemonic class, gender, normative behaviors, and dominant ideologies, develop their capacities to resist, protest, revolt, fight against oppression: achieve structural and sustainable changes."[74] The program takes (individual) discontent and different oppressive structures as a given and alludes that the first can be mobilised to fight the second.

The program implicitly names what they consider to be the most important oppressive structures when specifying the student target group. The critical attitude students will (continue to) learn and practice, is oriented along the social norms of "age, race, sexual orientation, religion, political leanings, professional and personal background."[75] It is important to keep in mind that this critical attitude should be practised in order to strengthen their identity as women and empower students to achieve sustainable structural change.

Finally, the methodology for learning and practicing this critical attitude is based on the free expression of students in a "non-hierarchical and judgment-free space" that allows them to question social norms.[76] In sum, this means that the School of Disobedience enhances the creative energy and discontent any woman brings naturally with her, so that she, through her critical attitude and collective practices becomes more confident and courageous and thus more easily has access to positions of decision making.

As conclusion of this chapter, I can affirm that the paradigm shift De Duve had suspected to be on the verge of occurring has indeed taken place and that contemporary European art education is situated within the critical attitude paradigm. Applying and testing the theoretical framework established by comparing De Duve and Williamson on three examples of contemporary European art education allowed me to show how the characteristics of a critical attitude are employed in their presentation discourses.

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[74] "School of Disobedience - Disobedience Is an Act of Courage."

[75] "School of Disobedience - Disobedience Is an Act of Courage."

[76] "School of Disobedience - About."

AUTONOMY

This chapter is dedicated to the concept of autonomy in art, proposing a short overview that retraces the critical (di)stance that the preoccupation with the concept has historically taken, before focussing on contemporary discussions of the autonomy of art. In a second part, I will elaborate why I think art education is concerned by the discussion of autonomy of art.

Autonomy in a (social) art historical context

In the introduction to *Art after 1900*, entitled "The Social History of Art: Models and Concepts," Benjamin Buchloh presents several key concepts that have been important for the interpretation and writing of (social) art history in the twentieth century, amongst them autonomy and antiaesthetic.[77]

Buchloh introduces autonomy as linked to appearance of a bourgeois public sphere and the configuration of a bourgeois individuality. The formation of an individual identity is accompanied by the subject's status as self-determining and self-governing.[78] The subject's ability to experience uninterested pleasure, or to perceive the aesthetic in its autonomy, was a condition of the bourgeois identity.[79]

In the field of cultural production, the concept of aesthetic autonomy became a foundational concept at the beginning of European modernism. Works of art came to be considered as self-sufficient and self-reflexive experiences.[80] However, the concept of aesthetic autonomy is not autonomous itself because it emerged from the philosophical framework of Enlightenment philosophy and was seen as an opposition to the way in which the ascending mercantile capitalist class tended to instrumentalise experience.[81] On the other hand, the concept of autonomy untied artistic practices from religious and mythical understandings as well as from political interests or necessary economic reliance on feudal patronage.[82] As he demonstrates:

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[77] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art."

[78] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23.

[79] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23.

[80] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23.

[81] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23.

[82] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23.

"The modernist aesthetic of autonomy thus constituted the social and subjective sphere from within which an opposition against the totality of interested activities and instrumentalized forms of experience could be articulated in artistic acts of open negation and refusal. Paradoxically, however, these acts served as opposition and—in their ineluctable condition as extreme exceptions from the universal rule—they confirmed the regime of total instrumentalization. One might have to formulate the paradox that an aesthetics of autonomy is thus the highly instrumentalized form of noninstumentalized experience under liberal bourgeois capitalism."[83]

Finally, through the concept of autonomy, artworks became commodities freely available as luxury goods on the bourgeois marketplace and "thus autonomy aesthetics was engendered by the capitalist logic of commodity production as much as it opposed that logic."[84]

Peter Bürger observes how the practice of the avant-garde movement after 1913 has transformed the (political, moral) engagement in the field of art.[85] His reflection starts from the diagnosis of the contradictory role of art in bourgeois society: "It projects the image of a better order and to that extent protests against the bad order that prevails. But by realising the image of a better order in fiction, which is semblance (*Schein*) only, it relieves the existing society of the pressure of those forces that make for change."[86] Bürger formulates his analysis as a contestation of autonomous art and sees the project of the avant-garde as an important shift away from this contradiction.

His argument is based on a consideration of the avant-garde's intention, read to be an attempt to destroy the institution of art as an autonomous aesthetic form, detached from the praxis of life.[87] In this sense, they aspired to integrate art with life. Concerning the avant-garde's work, Bürger underlines the way of revalorizing the parts of the work as independent signs and not anymore as constituents of a totality, extensively discussing this using the example of collage.[88]

Moreover, the avant-garde recognized the important influence of the institution of art on the value of art. Instead of a normative consideration of art, Bürger introduces the method

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[83] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 23 - 24.

[84] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 25.

[85] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*.

[86] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 50.

[87] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 56 - 57.

[88] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 70.

of a functional analysis, where the function of a work should be considered inside the given institutional framework and for a given public, because the institution contributes to the *functioning* of the work.[89]

Buchloh disagrees with Bürger's theory and interests in the integration of art and life and in the institutions of art, even though they agree on the emergence of new practices in 1913 and both authors see these new practices as contestations of autonomy aesthetics. Buchloh introduces the term antiaesthetic to refer to these new practices and concentrates in opposition to Bürger on the strategies of avant-garde practitioners that brought fundamental changes in the modes of acting of audiences and spectators, inverting the order of aesthetic exchange-value and use-value and the adjusting of cultural practices to the new international public sphere, shared among the leading industrial nation states.[90]

For Buchloh, like Walter Benjamin before him, the new aesthetic is linked to an aesthetic of technical reproduction and the mass-cultural public sphere (of totalitarian fascist, state-socialist or postwar regimes of culture industry and spectacle).[91] As such, the antiaesthetic challenges the aesthetic in its perceived autonomy: originality is exchanged against technical reproduction, communicative action and collective perception become more important than the contemplative aesthetic experience, thus dismounting an artwork's aura.[92] Antiaesthetic art is defined as momentary, participatory and specific of a geopolitical context.[93] It can also be a utilitarian aesthetic, functioning as "information and education or political enlightenment."[94]

The antiaesthetic could function as a perfect bridge towards prominent themes of current contemporary art production. I would like to grasp the hook thrown by *education* and *political enlightenment*, but first things first, we need to concentrate for a moment on the concept of autonomy in art in more recent discussions.

In the article "The Absolute Artwork Meets the Absolute Commodity," Stewart Martin problematizes the relation of autonomous art and commodity culture.[95] He thinks that autonomy—art is a commodity versus art is not a commodity—of autonomous art in

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[89] Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 87 - 90.

[90] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 25.

[91] Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit und weitere Dokumente* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2015).

[92] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 25.

[93] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 25.

[94] Buchloh, "The Social History of Art," 25.

[95] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork."

capitalist culture still needs philosophical and political reflection and refuses a teleological resolution. For Martin, the conflicts in contemporary art and culture arise from the fact of not fully grasping the essentially contradictory relation of autonomous art and commodification. He argues that autonomous art is not outmoded by its commodification and still sees it as a way to resist and criticise capitalist culture. Moreover, the autonomous artwork is not an alternative to commodification but is a product of it. Therefore, autonomous art is a contradiction produced by capitalism.[96]

The article closes in on Theodor Adorno's understanding of the autonomous artwork and reads it in close relation to the absolute commodity.[97] Martin's argument unfolds in three steps: first, he observes the relation of use- and exchange-value of the autonomous artwork and the absolute commodity, second, he concentrates on the objectivity of the commodity that is formed through abstraction, and third, on the objectivity of the commodity resulting from fetishization.

In the first part, concentrating on the nature of use-value and exchange-value, Martin establishes the autonomous artwork at the same time as an absolute commodity and as independent from use and without purpose outside of itself. The autonomous artwork therefore has no use-value.[98]

However, the idea of an absolute commodity "reveals an inherent limit of the commodity form" because the commodity form is characterised by an independence of exchange-value from use-value, an independence that can never be complete as it is always use that is exchanged.[99] An absolute commodity understood as a pure exchange-value is therefore a contradiction that points towards the limits of the self-valorisation of capital.[100] This means that at this point, that the appearance of value as something inherent of a commodity, hiding it's source of value that is human labour, can't be upheld.

According to Adorno, in advanced capitalism, increasingly exchange-value is produced/consumed.[101] Martin then shows that autonomous art can salvage use from value because it achieves a claim to what is not exchangeable (e.g., the useless) and therefore "uses

[96] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 23.

[97] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 17.

[98] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 18.

[99] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 19.

[100] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 19.

[101] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 18.

can be recovered from their exchangeable form."[102] In doing so, it becomes a source for "imagining and enacting an alternative form of use."[103] In the following, Adorno's understanding of the autonomy of the artwork is played out against the traditional concept of the autonomy of art as defined by Buchloh.

The artwork's autonomy (e.g., distance from reality or the ideology of its disinterestedness) is to be found in the abstraction of the commodity form itself. The "autonomy of art—from both usefulness and social subject matter—is derived from its internalisation of abstract labour."[104] This is a radical transformation of the idea of the autonomous artwork and indicates a number of displacements. For my purpose, the displacement from the semblance of freedom to one of value is notable.[105]

In the third part, Martin asks how far this abstraction can be an aesthetic one.[106] For Marx, to mistake value as a sensuous appearance is the illusion of fetishism. In that sense, the aesthetic account of the objectivity of the commodity is its fetishism—as sensuous appearance of abstraction. For Martin, Adorno does not elaborate on the objectivity in any explicit way and instead introduces the fetishism of autonomous art as one formed in distinction with two other fetishisms (the *magic* and the *commodity* fetishism).[107] In his account, the magic fetishism enters contemporary relation as noncontemporary element. The magic is a specific representation that reveals what is suppressed in the modern rationalism of enlightenment.[108] The commodity fetishism in autonomous art is related to two illusions: the mistake of value as sensuous quality and the inversion of subject and object or not seeing the dependence of capital from living labour.[109] Martin sees these two illusions playing out against each other in Adorno's understanding of the autonomous artwork (i.e., fetishism against autonomy of capital).[110] "It is the artwork's sensuousness – more precisely, its abstract or suprasensuous sensuousness – that singularizes it, generates its self-insistence and autonomy, and that thereby contradicts the universalizing logic of exchange-value."[111]

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[102] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 19.

[103] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 19.

[104] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 20.

[105] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 21.

[106] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 21.

[107] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 22.

[108] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 22.

[109] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 22 - 23.

[110] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 23.

[111] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 23.

Martin concludes that "autonomous art is an immanent contradiction of the commodity form" and that this shows art's actuality and unique position in a commodity culture.[112] In the fourth chapter, Martin's argument will be examined further. The inherently critical character of the autonomous artwork will be questioned, and I will outline how artworks produced inside the critical attitude paradigm are entangled with social capital, in Marina Vismidt's understanding of the term, as well as with critical virtue and as such can be seen to function as use value for capital and states.[113]

Daniel Spaulding and Nicole Demby state in the short essay "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish" their wish to continue the engagement in a non-binary discussion of art and value.[114] Spaulding for his part, sees art as a product of modern social relations, differing from other commodities in so far as artistic labour can't be subsumed to the concept of socially necessary labour time.[115] However, in opposition to Martin, he sees nothing inherently subversive in art's status under capitalism. At the same time, art seems to follow necessities that are not determined by commodity relations.[116] Spaulding doesn't elaborate on what these necessities might be.

Demby for her part, stresses that the existence of artwork within commodity relations does not prevent the existence of a diversity of relations.[117] Understanding art's autonomy in the historical sense of the term, she warns to carefully consider the power relations that establish and maintain art as a "sanctioned zone of freedom."[118]

Autonomy and contemporary art education

Following the presented positions, it becomes apparent that in the current context of contemporary art, the discussion of the autonomy of art is predominantly led along the line of the commodity relation of art. Based on the expectation that the transmission of knowledge and research is "objective, impartial and not subject to the pressures driven by partial interest," an expectation inherited from the Enlightened understanding of education and

[112] Martin, "The Absolute Artwork," 24.

[113] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 4.

[114] Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish."

[115] Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish," 2.

[116] Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish," 4.

[117] Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish," 4.

[118] Spaulding and Demby, "Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish," 5.

solidified as part of the Bourgeois class ideology, Angela Harutyunyan argues that education "has traditionally been considered as a semi-autonomous sphere apart from other social and economic institutions that are driven by profit and private interest."[119] Taking this perception serious for now, art education is only partially, if at all, entangled in the commodity relation of art. Inside the framework of the art education, artworks aren't in the first place treated as commodities, but rather as materialisations or discursive manifestations of a pedagogical process. Therefore, art education institutions as well as artistic research initiatives (for example advanced practices) voluntarily position themselves as antimarket or anti-capitalist.[120] However, the interpellation that already resonates in this last sentence is the following: If formal art education and artistic research becomes more and more shaped after an economic model run for profit, it is impossible to consider them to be independent from a capitalist mode of production.

[119] Harutyunyan, "Critical Pedagogy," 119.

[120] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

ART AND EDUCATION

In this chapter I will retrace opposing positions in the discussion around art and education. After a short summary of the educational turn and its critique, I will turn to "advanced practices," a term recently introduced by academics active across Europe, to understand this initiative as an attempt to revitalise the critical and radical quality the educational turn had meant to engage.[121] I then will contrast these ideas with the critique of para-academic structures brought forward by Suhail Malik.[122]

The educational turn

The term educational turn gained prominence through an e-flux article, entitled "Turning" by Irit Rogoff.[123] The argument for a turn in education away from knowledge economies that were seen to be influenced by the liberalising shift education underwent since 1999, moved towards the expansion of educational principles to other institutional activities and thus allowed them to be allegedly more speculative and reflexive. The projects engaging with educational and pedagogical formats that are connected to the educational turn, include curatorial and artistic praxes mobilising "educational formats, methods, programmes, models, terms, processes and procedures."[124] These initiatives emerge from different motivations and vary in "terms of scale, purpose, modus operandi, value, visibility, reputational status and degree of actualisation."[125] Even though the educational turn consists of a multiplicity on several levels, Rogoff sees its the potential in the first place is a shift away from "what needs to be opposed to what can be imagined."[126] Moreover, she thinks that this shift towards the valorisation of a process and a conversation, instead of critique, brought together subjectivities that were not gathered or reflected in the existing spaces of education and art. Finally, Rogoff sees the projects she regroups as part of the educational turn as an attempted

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[121] Jamie Allen, Serge von Arx, Koen Brams, Paul Goodwin, and Kai van Eikels et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices" *European Forum for Advanced Practices* (website), accessed 14 April 2022. https://advancedpractices.net/charter.

[122] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[123] Rogoff, "Turning."

[124] Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, "Introduction" in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, edited by Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson, (London: Open Editions / de Appel, 2010), 12.

[125] O'Neill and Wilson, "Introduction," 13.

[126] Rogoff, "Turning," 8.

to provide a new space for public speech and considers these spaces to be independent from academic and governmental authorities.[127]

Janna Graham, Valeria Graziano and Susan Kelly acknowledge in their article "The Educational Turn in Art" that the educational turn had brought forward many unconventional temporary educational projects and that it went hand in hand with the development of extensive public programming of art institutions since 1990.[128] The authors agree with Rogoff on the importance contemporary art institutions gained as sites of knowledge production through the staging of discursive activities when spaces for the public debate of intellectual concepts became sparse due to privatisation and individuation of many aspects of life.[129] However, it is around this very notion of a public sphere that the three authors formulate their critique of the educational turn. They observe that it was "structurally and politically cut off from both the everyday realities and situated imaginaries of art education."[130] For example, it left several initiatives by activist groups, that were equally contesting the changes produced by the liberalisation of education, completely out of consideration.

They further problematise the way art institutions manage to package radical ideas in the form of "content capitalism" that purposefully separates the discursively named politics from their immediate context.[131] Concretely, the authors wonder how the term public can be understood in the complicated public-private relation of art institutions, a relation that is framed by the institutions need to successfully fundraise and to exist within arrangements that are largely private financed.[132] From this perspective, the term public seems to be nothing more than an empty shell, inside which the practice of an alternative debate about political subjects won't entail any significant consequences because the passage from inside to its immediate context have been structurally disabled.[133]

Advanced practices

[127] Rogoff, "Turning," 9.

[128] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 29; 31.

[129] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 31.

[130] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 30.

[131] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 30.

[132] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 30.

[133] Graham, Graziano, and Kelly, "The Educational Turn in Art," 32.

I propose to consider the appearance and framing of advanced practices, an umbrella term conceived to assemble (artistic) research practices that are different from academic research, as a way to reclaim the critical and radical quality the educational turn originally had sprung from. The institutionalisation process at European art schools, starting with the reforms following the adoption of the Bologna Declaration, is seen as being continued with the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research.[134] The Vienna Declaration, published in 2020, is a policy document concerning artistic research, defining concepts and structures that will facilitate the integration of artistic research into European higher education.[135] It has three pronounced goals: First, providing a more precise "articulation of the concepts and impact of AR" by introducing it to the classification manual for traditional academic research.[136] Second, enable better funding of artistic research through a restructuring of funding policies on all levels, ranging from regional to global.[137] Third, strengthen a practice-based third cycle study in higher art education.[138]

I would like to consider advanced practices in a similar way as a continuation of the educational turn: Both initiatives are connected through their opposition to the respective policy paper (Bologna Declaration and Vienna Declaration). It would then be consequent to evaluate the effective critical and radical potential of advanced practices when it comes to opposing the further liberalisation and bureaucratisation of artistic research.

Florian Cramer and Nienke Terpsma discuss the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research in an essay published on Open!.[139] The authors state a need for a public debate of the document and provide a critical analysis of its content and language.[140] Besides seeing the declaration as a logical continuation of the Bologna Declaration they think it produces a (wrong) foundation myth of artistic research and functions as an "institutional power grab."[141] Even though Cramer and Terpsma argue that the institutionalisation of artistic research is important for the legitimacy of art education on an academic level, they critique the modalities in the way in which the Vienna Declaration proposes to institutionalise artistic

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[134] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong," 2.

[135] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong," 1.

[136] "Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research," *Culture Action Europe* (website), accessed 15 April 2022. https://cultureactioneurope.org/news/vienna-declaration-on-artistic-research/.

[137] "Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research."

[138] "Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research."

[139] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong."

[140] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong," 1.

[141] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong," 2.

research.[142] In their eyes, the declaration misses the opportunity to bring "artistic research into academia as a critical trojan horse in order to rethink and revise the standards and research culture of academic disciplines."[143] Their essay explicitly states that artistic research is somehow different from traditional academia and attributes an inherent potential of critique to artistic research that springs out of a different concept and imagination of research, that can be mobilised as resistance against the subsumption of artistic research into, and maybe even the liberation of traditional academia from, the logic of the neoliberal edu factory.

The collective "European Forum for Advanced Practices" formulates in the charter for advanced practices a quite precise vision of the difference of artistic research from other academic research.[144] Advanced practices are framed as a non-elitist way of knowledge production that consists of multi-positional knowledge, where more people have access to knowledge and are valued as producers of knowledge.[145] It functions as a proposition to rethink the value of artistic research as advanced practice.[146] The European Forum for Advanced Practices sees their initiative as a necessary response to a set of challenges, the origin or context of which I was unable to find in their communication available at this moment (except for it to be situated in contemporary "Europe and beyond").[147] The most important challenge for our purpose is that in "Europe and elsewhere, educational and cultural institutions are currently subject to previously unimaginable levels of evaluation, monitoring, homogenization and financializing."[148] In the eyes of the authors, this leads to a situation where the practical consequences of hard-fought cultural battles (concerning race, gender, migration, sexuality, impoverishment, welfare, decolonization of knowledge and social justice) structurally or institutionally can't be realised.[149] Consequently, the unsuccessful relation between practices, institutions and terms "does nothing to actually advance the framework beyond display and certification."[150]

Even though advanced practices are positioned in opposition to advanced studies in a way that questions the ideas of "mastery, progressive knowledge accumulation and global

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[142] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong," 4.

[143] Cramer and Terpsma, "What Is Wrong," 4.

[144] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices."

[145] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 3.

[146] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 4.

[147] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 1.

[148] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 1.

[149] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 1.

[150] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 1.

research acquisition" and instead asserts that "knowledge is not held in one place or by one group of people but is instead collaborative, granular," their intent is not to claim a critical outside viewpoint.[151] Rather the opposite is the case. In the charter for advanced practices one can read that advanced practice is complex and inclusive and that no "external viewing position" can exist.[152] In so far, they don't see artistic research as different or inherently critical, but as a way of proposing a new set of research modalities that differ from those employed by traditional advanced studies.

I think it is pertinent to mention here, how my own research moved from the essay on Open! to the reading of the charter for advanced practices. Trying to find the public debate that Cramer and Terpsma have been advocating for in their essay, I found a publication on Issue. Issue is a journal that is published by an education institution itself, entitled Journal of art & design HEAD. The publication was indeed understood as a response to Cramer and Terpsma's essay, following the intention of engaging in a public debate about the Vienna Declaration. While reading the publication, I wondered what was at stake for the two authors that signed the post. Both are heads of a research(-based) program of the HEAD, and they provide a statement as such, knowing that the HEAD is part of one of the umbrella institutions that have already signed the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research.

Anthony Masure criticises the attempt of the Declaration to frame and standardise artistic research and warns us to not underestimate the concrete consequences of such a declaration.[153] He sees that, as soon as it is transformed into governing policy, the programmatic consequences of it will be an immediate danger for institutions that do not recognize themselves in it.[154]

Doreen Mende, who is one of the initiators of the European Forum for Advanced Practices, equally recognizes "art's unique potency of experimentation as value-process itself without any guarantee for a measurable outcome (data, statistics, object)."[155] Her conception of artistic research is equally at odds with the accent the Vienna Declaration puts on the production of statistical research data and quantifiable output.[156] Mende qualifies the

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[151] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 2 - 3.

[152] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 3.

[153] Doreen Mende, Anthony Masure and Sylvain Menétry, "Principles for an Open-Ended Artistic Research, Statements by Anthony Masure and Doreen Mende" *Issue Journal of art & design HEAD - Genève*, October 2021. https://issue-journal.ch/focus-posts/principles-for-an-open-ended-artistic-research/.

[154] Mende, Masure, and Menétry, "Principles for an Open-Ended Artistic Research."

[155] Mende, Masure, and Menétry, "Principles for an Open-Ended Artistic Research."

[156] "Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research."

Declaration as "missing out" and "dangerously prepar[ing] the conditions for funding-conform and evaluation-oriented research practices in art and design."[157]

Then again, I wondered, what is the goal of this publication on Issue? As the journal of an institution, it probably has a quite specific readership. Is this publication addressed to a policy making institution of Switzerland? If the Swiss government would adopt the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research as it is, the HEAD would find itself in a contradiction with some of its own commitments to open science and open access and also with (at least) two members of its own staff in rather important positions. However, as the Vienna Declaration on Artistic Research is not an official legal document, would a national policy making institution take the risk to shape it to fit their own (local, or for better or worse: national) convictions and needs? This is nearly a rhetorical question because we know that the answer, even in a direct democratic country as Switzerland where people potentially politically contest such a decision, is: No.

The para-academic art complex

In the following I will briefly introduce what Suhail Malik means with the para-academic and indicate in how far advanced practices are part of the para-academic art complex.

Suhail Malik considers the progressive agenda higher education was engaged in between 1970 -1990 to be in retreat since universities have become shaped in similar ways as commercial and administrative models that run for profit.[158] The structures that have recuperated the critical-social virtues of such former progressive education now run in parallel to university systems para-academically.

He further observes a parallel between contemporary arts' socio-political claims and para-academic institutions or claims. These mainly concern the wish to become more engaged, critical, progressive and welcoming for social-activists.[159] Similarly to the restructuring of universities, the art market became increasingly influential in all aspects of art since the mid-2000's and an artistic countermovement has formed focusing on research and development. It has materialised in the educational turn and the expansion of discursive practices.[160] A shared anti-market morality has led contemporary art institutions to become a

[157] Mende, Masure, and Menétry, "Principles for an Open-Ended Artistic Research."

[158] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[159] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[160] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

generative place for para-academic initiatives.[161] Malik names the affiliation between para-academic structures and contemporary art the para-academic art complex.[162] This association seemingly solves two problems at once: it frees education from the bureaucratic and commercial conditions it was subjected to in the model of the contemporary university and it affirms or recalls the vocation of art as a critical and transformative value.[163]

Turning to Jacques Rancière's "Ignorant School Master," accounted as an important reference in the para-academic art complex, Malik sees two limitations to the political stance the para-academic art complex takes: First, emancipation in education can only be achieved through a separation of will and intelligence, or a separation of method and content, where the student's will is linked to the teacher's will and intelligence is produced through the student's individual rationality.[164] In the context of the para-academic art complex this leads to the truism that "one can't teach art."[165] This form of emancipation is bound to indeterminacy because only the will can be controlled by the teacher, whereas the intelligence, or content, of education remains indeterminate. This situation performs as a structure of contentless obedience. Second, this reading of Rancière sees emancipation to be possible through individual reason, a method that can't be a social one. A social teaching method would need to articulate a general identifiable notion of emancipation, which can only be negotiated based on content. This means that emancipation in the present case is achieved to the detriment of a "contentful collectivity" or society that is identifiable.[166]

As a conclusion, Malik proposes to read Rancière in the negative and to consider the relation "intelligence directing will" instead of only focussing on "will directing intelligence."[167] In this new reading, will is reason and intelligence is used to realise reason.[168] This new relation mobilises the difference in knowledge to provide "a contentful instruction of those who know less to deploy their new knowledge with their own rational wills."[169] He sees such a shift as transformative for contemporary art as well as for education,

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[161] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[162] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[163] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[164] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[165] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[166] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[167] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[168] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."
[169] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

endowing both with a heightened socio-political traction.[170] Such a transformation would bear a concrete socio-political endeavour that is fundamentally different from the attempt to attain the chimaera of individual freedom the para-academic art complex might promise.[171]

Advanced practices take a similar stance considering the place of the individual in the social context of knowledge production.[172] However, the solution they propose is quite different from the one outlined just above. In their aspiration to overcome individual epistemological research, advanced practices refer to the notion of *singularisation*, that they understand as a "coming together in time and space of different situated knowledges in specific and uncategorizable alliances."[173] This way of conceiving education based on the subjective experience of individuals is contested through Malik's first (mainstream) reading of Rancière, where emancipation is thought to occur through individual reason and is bound to be indeterminate. Moreover, one of the few indications the charter for advanced practices furnishes concerning content, is the consideration of value.[174] They consider value to be "established contextually (and operat[ing] collectively)" and therefore wish to leave established forms of valorisation behind them by establishing "alternative models of research evaluation."[175] However, aiming at changing an existing structure by providing an alternative follows the normal production of capital and therefore follows the established form of value production. This mechanism will be further discussed in the fourth chapter considering Vishmidt's finding that capital's tendency to absorb new terrain to guarantee constant growth is not only linked to common commodities.[176]

Finally, the attempt of advanced practices to transform formal education into a practice impregnated with social justice activism can equally be situated within the para-academic structure Malik outlines. I'm aware of the inaccuracies such an early evaluation of the effective critical potential of advanced practices might entail. However, the application of the core aspects of Malik's critique point to the difficulties advanced practices might come to face, when leading their offensive against a further liberalisation and bureaucratisation of, amongst others, artistic research.

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[170] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[171] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[172] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices."

[173] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 4.

[174] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 4.

[175] Allen et all., "Charter for Advanced Practices," 5.

[176] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 4.

From attitude to virtue

This chapter focuses on the student artist as future worker of the cultural field. As I have argued in the first chapter, the tools and skills taught in art education can currently predominantly be understood as critical attitude. I want to ask if this critical attitude can, as it is claimed when art education positions itself as anti-capitalist, resist the production of art workers from which profit can be easily extracted? Or, to formulate the question differently: is the aim of teaching along the critical attitude paradigm in the first place to produce successful students that easily integrate in a professional art market, or can it effectively be used on a personal, social or critical level to resist the capitalist structure of the art market? If progressive art education wants to position itself against a range of relations of domination the answer to the second half of the above question should be a yes.

I will attempt to answer this question in two steps. First, I will situate the art student inside the socio-political and economic context of art education and outline how this position influences the desires that leads students to engage in art education. To do so, I look at three new examples of discourses of art education programs and complement one that has already been analysed in the first chapter. Second, the entanglement of the critical attitude with critical virtue will be examined, as an attempt to understand the important role contemporary art education plays in the production of the later.

Art education as professional training

The Central Academy of Fine Arts Beijing is exceptional in the Europe centred selection of art education programs. However, it is useful to look at it here because it illustrates the expectation, or discursive justification, that art can play a role in society. The case of the Central Academy of Fine Arts Beijing is interesting because it discursively upholds parts of a socialist perception of art in society, fusing them with an excellence and competition-oriented discourse predominant in the Western context.

The Central Academy of Fine Arts Beijing was the first art college established after the founding of the People's Republic of China.[177] Up to today the department of Fine Art has been the core part of the school, "cultivat[ing] high-end art talents" and guaranteeing the

[177] "About CAFA," *Central Academy of Fine Arts* (website), accessed 11 Mai 2022. https://www.cafa.edu.cn/st/2019/10119704.htm.

production of artists with "profound knowledge and exquisite skills."[178] It is known to be one of the most selective schools of the country and is managed by the Ministry of Education of China. The academy is organised in a traditional academy structure and at the same time offers a Master's and Doctoral degree course. In the English presentation, the school positions itself explicitly as a social actor, as having "consistently adhered to the principle of focusing on reality and serving the people," promoting local consciousness of Chinese culture, and thus "delivering great contributions and impact to the society."[179] This discourse seems to be a remnant of a socialist discourse and organisation of culture and at the same time it doesn't exclude the previously stated simultaneous affirmation of a highly competitive individualist structure. Talented students as individuals are positioned at the centre of cultural production, creating "world-class high-quality" artworks that shape a "national aesthetic consciousness."[180]

Differing from discourses that will be analysed later, is the statement that the Central Academy of Fine Arts Beijing clearly relates social concerns to one local national context, not taking into consideration the different positionalities students might bring with them or go to after studying. However, such a thing would be irrelevant, given that the explicit social contribution of the students is achieved in their aspiration to become excellent artists and their success in producing high quality aesthetic content. In this sense, the evaluation criteria of the art education programme seem to be formulated around individual talent and to prepare the floor for an understanding of excellence in skill as indicator for artistic as well as social value. This discourse provides a social legitimation of a pedagogical structure that coincides with the highly competitive structure of the local, as well as the global, art market students will find themselves in after graduation.

The next example is a brief return to an art education programme that has already been introduced. In the discourse of the postgraduate programme of Goldsmiths the position of the student as a future artworker is very explicit. Students are expected to "to understand that the production of contemporary art takes place in a demanding and testing environment."[181] Therefore, the programme wants to offer artists a training that corresponds with the current experience of practising as an artist outside of art education.[182] This

178 "About CAFA."

179 "About CAFA."

180 "About CAFA."

181 "MFA Fine Art."

182 "MFA Fine Art."

preparation for and promise of a professional existence after graduation might be important for students that have to pay high tuition fees or that need to repay the money they have invested in their education. Moreover, the programme focusses on a "student-centred learning" during which artists learn to "strengthen the motivation, self-reflection and ambition of their practice and its leading ideas."[183] In this sense, the program seems to provide a highly individual approach to education, inside which students choose the parts that suit them best and are invited to formulate an individual response when encountering "divergent views […] in relation to [their] practice."[184] In sum, this discourse positions art students, not despite but thanks to their critical attitude, as becoming entrepreneurs and simultaneously establishes this role as the one an artist will inhabit in the field of contemporary art.

One can argue that formal art education needs to offer their students a professional perspective, on one hand to allow them to repay their student debt and on the other, to maintain the idea of the formal degree as a proof of ability necessary for entering the professional market. Therefore, I'm interested to look at the way students can be positioned in informal art education.

Kem school and The Syllabus

The Syllabus is a "peer-led alternative learning programme" run by a partnership of six English non-profit visual arts organisations and supported with public funding from the Arts Council England.[185] During a period of ten-month, ten artists meet in different locations and engage with each other, with the partnering institutions and visiting artists.

Kem school is a "collective study programme" in Warsaw organised by the Kem collective and financed by the Capital City of Warsaw in cooperation with Allianz Kulturstiftung.[186] During two-month in summer, a maximum number of 15 participants engage in queer-feminist strategies and performative actions.[187] Considering the socio-political context of Poland the objective of Kem school appears in an activist light. Since the

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183 "MFA Fine Art."

184 "MFA Fine Art."

185 "The Syllabus," *Wysing Arts Centre* (website), accessed 28 April 2022. http://www.wysingartscentre.org/about/consultancy.

186 "Kem School 2022: Open Call," *Kem* (website), accessed 20 April 2022. https://www.kemwarsaw.com/en/about.

187 "Kem School 2022."

Christian conservative government was elected in 2015, Poland has progressively introduced social conservative measures concerning family politics, reproductive and LGBTQ+ rights, culminating in the passing of resolutions about "LGBT ideology free zones" by several local governments in 2020.[188] The Kem collective positions as queer feminist and intersects performative practices with social practice and underline community-making, community and collaboration as characteristic aspects of their projects.[189]

Both schools are informal art education programmes that to a certain extent shape their trajectory after the wishes and needs of their students.[190] They enrol only a small number of students during different recruitment processes.

The Syllabus launches an open call through their partnering institutions that is followed by a selection process. In this case, "experienced people who were comparing us and imagining how we'd work together in a group" were selecting the artists that were going to participate.[191] In the case of Kem, an open call addresses only people residing or working in Warsaw and is followed by a two-stage selection process. Access to the school is not limited to artists, everyone interested in "developing their artistic practices using choreographic, performative and collective methods," regardless of their levels of experience, is invited to apply.[192]

It could be, that these selection processes are in place to facilitate the formation of a group that is able to work together, consisting of artists who share interests, to create "a much needed common ground" because in both cases the work inside a collective seems central to the program.[193] Even if these to programmes are financially and bureaucratically accessible to more people than usual, they also reproduces the rather opaque selection process of open calls that is needed to choose the small group of people that will be enrolled.

The educational program of the two schools is a different one, but in both cases the critical attitude as well as the method of knowledge exchange seem to be priorities. The Syllabus aspires to establish an environment where each selected artist can "develop[…]

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188 "Poland Events of 2021," *Human Rights Watch World Report 2022* (website), accessed 26 June 2022. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/poland.

189 "Kem About," *Kem* (website), accessed 20 April 2022. https://www.kemwarsaw.com/en/about.

190 "Kem School 2022;" Chris Sharratt, "The Syllabus: A Peer-Led, Non-Prescriptive Postgraduate Alternative," *Art & Education* (website), April 2017. https://www.artandeducation.net/schoolwatch/129372/the-syllabus-a-peer-led-non-prescriptive-postgraduate-alternative.

191 Sharratt, "The Syllabus."

192 "Kem School 2022."

193 "Kem School 2022."

one's art practice in a community that encourages by way of critique."[194] The educational content of the Syllabus is not communicated in advance and is shaped in collaboration with the participating artists, partners and the artists who engage as tutors in the programme throughout the year.[195] However, the network of renown arts organisations that stands behind the programme makes it "robust and credible" to the point that it might function as a "challenge to the presumption that to be an artist one must have studied at an art school."[196] As such, the programme offers practical guidance for a professional life as an artist and offers networking opportunities, not last with the curators and staff of the partnering institutions.[197] The intention of the Syllabus seems to be to provide professional training outside of formal art education, transmitting the students a critical attitude and providing them with practical strategies to "surviv[e] as an artist."[198] In sum, the Syllabus proposes a cheaper and more selective alternative to formal art education.

In the case of Kem school the stated aim is to "facilitate the development of individual and collective practices" through meetings with artists and activist groups.[199] These might result in the "development and rehearsal of reparative strategies against oppressive, patriarchal, heteronormative, racist systems of power."[200] Thus, Kem school seems to provide an in-depth collective and embodied practice that they see closely related to activist practices. This can be seen as an example of the shift, away from the focus on the individual artist towards more collaborative learning strategies, that Williamson has observed in informal art education (or free schools) the 21st century.[201] Kem school is in so far exceptional amongst the four here presented examples that it doesn't try to fuse the critical attitude with a professional training of individual artists and instead focusses on collective practices. The public outcome of the school is guaranteed by a series of events, presentation, and a sonic archive.[202] This publicness stays strongly connected to the local art environment.

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[194] Sharratt, "The Syllabus."

[195] "The Syllabus."

[196] Sharratt, "The Syllabus."

[197] "The Syllabus."

[198] "The Syllabus."

[199] "Kem School 2022."

[200] "Kem School 2022."

[201] Williamson, "Recent Developments in British Art Education," 370.

[202] "Kem School 2022."

Critical virtue

In the first part of this chapter, I have examined the position of the art student in a few different economic and political settings of formal or informal art education. What has become apparent is that the economic and political settings influence the reason for, goal and politics of art education. However, the critical attitude remains a priority in all European examples of art education. I would like to think of the critical attitude as a variable, an empty placeholder and part of a general equation. As soon as the equation is removed from the general realm and one variable replaced with a concrete value, meaning art education is situated in its specific local or regional context, the value of the other variables can be determined. Obviously, I'm not saying that the institutional framework of art education and the content of art education is such a linear relation as the previous phrase might make us think. What I want to say is, that I don't think it necessary to define the critical attitude content wise, because it can't, but that it functions as a container that can be filled with the content adapted to the socio-political demands of the current situation.

Therefore, I'm more interested in the critical attitude as an empty variable, as a fashionable entrance to an agreement concerning the "vocation [of art] as a critically-led transformation of ideas, people, communities, doing so without the commercial impositions that now dominate the artsystem."[203]

In the last part of this chapter, I examine how the critical attitude can be seen to fulfil a structural function through its entanglement in and entangling of the position of art students inside the institution of art education, as well as their mutual relation to the art market.

Marina Vishmidt states in the article "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated: Social Practice as Business Mode," that contemporary artists participate, particularly by producing socially engaged art, in "a semantically frictionless […] fusion between the social and capital."[204] This thought unfolds through an observation of the entrepreneurial artist. Vishmidt draws a parallel between the constant absorption of new terrain into the capitalist mode of production as a guarantee for constant growth and the way contemporary art absorbs and re-presents what has not yet been considered as art.[205] In this way, different artistic praxes allow to generate "'added value' to activities that function only partially and

[203] Malik, "Vindicating Didacticism."

[204] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 10.

[205] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 4.

strategically as art."[206] An intact institutional framework allows the entrepreneurial artist on one hand to drive this way of generating value through the absorption and re-presentation of new fields and on the other to uphold the institutional (infra-)structure simply "by reproducing herself as an artist."[207] Vishmidt continues: "She is thus mimetic of the 'automatic subject' of value, which is self-reproducing as a social form once the presuppositions (for capital, private property and wage labor; for art, the institution of art) are in place."[208] This absorption of the *ready-made artist* into the institutions of art means that the artist, in her being the institution, adds value to any social situation she participates in as an artist and bridges the potential ideological gap between economic and political positions.[209]

For contemporary European art education, the perception of the artist as such a ready-made artist doesn't sound attractive because it immediately robs the critical attitude of its foundation that, as we have seen in the first chapter, consist of the promise to teach art students how to position themselves critically towards the alleged social and political status quo of their works and their context. This positioning most often happens on a discursive level, circling around what a given artwork represents, what it does and what it tells us through the content it displays. The conversation rarely moves beyond this discursive level towards a positioning of structural value of an artwork or an artist inside a given social and political context.

If art students would increasingly perceive this supposedly critical stance as a form of value subsumed to the capitalist mode of production, learning a critical attitude necessarily would appear less appealing. Or, to frame it differently, as soon as education inside the critical attitude paradigm conspicuously falls short of the claim to teach students ways to resist the structure that compounds a range of undesired relations of domination, art students can't uphold their belief that they produce something that exceeds the market forces.

Fortunately, contemporary art and, intertwined with it, contemporary art education have developed mechanisms that support the spontaneous perception of art as something that exceeds the market and its mechanisms of valorisation. Malik outlines this situation in "Critique as Alibi: Moral Differentiation in the Art Market," where he observes the process

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[206] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 4.

[207] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 5.

[208] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 5.

[209] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 5 - 6.

of valorisation as operating on two distinct market levels, the primary and a secondary.[210] As long as the two are distinct, critique can be maintained as a moral good, as a way to provide substance for the primary market.[211] At the same time, it is important for the legitimation of its critical ambitions, that the primary market "decontaminates [the artwork] from its commodity status."[212] In this way, contemporary art provides critical value for the secondary market exactly because it positions itself as opposed to the market.

Tying in with Malik's reflections, Ghalya Saadawi further develops the notion of critical virtue in "Vapid Virtues, Real Stakes: Diagnosis for Left Art Protocols." She writes: "The question of critical virtue (one of art's forms of gaining value) includes the way art sees itself as free—not the institution, not the market, not power—all the while being about those things on the level of claims, while acknowledging being acted upon, or threatened by these bad objects, and only marginally constituted by them."[213]

In this sense, art education inside the critical attitude paradigm plays an important role in shaping and strengthening art students' belief that their critical attitude has traction. As Malik states, this identification is crucial for production of critical virtue: "[capitalist] accumulation-techniques must be socially warranted and justified if those who are integral to capitalism yet are not 'its privileged beneficiaries' are to not only withstand it but to acquiesce in sustaining it by working in and for it, and even identifying themselves with it in pursuing their ambitions through it."[214]

Vishmidt shows that for the entrepreneurial artist creativity functions as a productive norm and at the same time a way to overcome the constraints of labour. As such, it "marks the joint between self-management and self-exploitation, autonomy and heteronomy" on an individual level.[215]

I'm proposing a small kitchen receipt for the end of this dissertation: Translate creativity to critical attitude and fuse it with the above citation and a similar constatation results: Art education inside the critical attitude paradigm teaches art students ways to tie self-fulfilment through critical engagement to self-exploitation in order to produce critical virtue. By doing so, it allows them to reconcile heteronomy and autonomy, or to stay

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[210] Malik, "Critique as Alibi," 284 - 285.

[211] Malik, "Critique as Alibi," 283.

[212] Malik, "Critique as Alibi," 286.

[213] Saadawi, "Vapid Virtues, Real Stakes," 76.

[214] Malik, "Critique as Alibi," 291.

[215] Vishmidt, "Mimesis of the Hardened and Alienated," 8.

entangled in "a disjointed autonomy."[216] Such a legitimation is necessary because, as Malik clarifies, critical virtue doesn't valorise capital despite its critique but because of it.[217]

The critical attitude in contemporary European art education can be seen as intrinsically linked to the capitalist structure, as it caters to art students' impression that they can produce something that (morally) exceeds the market forces and thus teaches art students how to produce critical virtue for the contemporary art market.

This lets me conclude that a critical attitude can be used as a tool to position oneself ideologically against a range of relations of domination on a discursive level. However, a critical attitude can't realistically be used as a tool to resist the structure that compounds this range of relations of domination. Even more importantly, art education inside the critical attitude paradigm facilitates the production of critical virtue that in turn valorises the structure that produces this range of relations of domination. Therefore, contemporary European art education can claim to transmit a critical attitude and at the same time equip future art workers with the knowledge to obtain a (professional) position inside the very same structure this critical attitude claims to resist.

[216] Saadawi, "Vapid Virtues, Real Stakes," 88.

[217] Malik, "Critique as Alibi," 294.

CONCLUSION

The research and reflections feeding into the writing of this dissertation evolved around my suspicion towards the discursive critical attitude and its social and political traction. Extrapolating casual observations, I found the critical attitude to be increasingly present in European contemporary art (education) institutions. The work on this dissertation allowed me to start shaping a more reflected understanding of my assumption. I was able to lay out a theoretical framework for what had so far been a loose and affective consideration, a consideration that had been central for my artistic work in the last years.

Art education offered itself as a suitable entry point to articulate the tension I felt being at work. Focussing on the space of production of a critical attitude, the main axis of this dissertation was to examine the inconsistency of the discursive promise made by contemporary European art education. This inconsistency is found in supposedly allowing an art student to reconcile social and political engagement with a way of living as an art worker inside the existing art market or larger cultural field.

To articulate this contradiction, the autonomy/heteronomy couple was first problematised through the lens of a (social) art historical perspective. Then, the resulting framework has been put into perspective on two levels of art education. The subject of the third chapter was the position of higher art education in relation to higher education in general. I was looking at the overarching structure within which art education is situated in the contemporary European context. The educational turn and advanced practices were explored as an attempt to resist the progressive liberalisation of art education, a situation in which the challenges of the autonomy/heteronomy couple played out. These considerations were revelatory for my understanding of the way the critical attitude paradigm works in the personal-institutional relation of art education.

In the fourth chapter, the critical attitude itself was studied more closely on the level of the relation between the student and art education, namely the conflict of pleasing the socially aware or engaged art students and at the same time not disturbing the structure guaranteeing the production of capital. It has been demonstrated that artists learn to use the critical attitude as a tool to position themselves inside a socio-political context. Moreover, it allows them to resist a range of relations of dominations on a discursive level. Yet, I have tried to show, that art education inside the critical attitude paradigm suits the neoliberal art market, particularly by strengthening the future art workers' identification with art as a

possibility to resist, as a subversive force, thus favouring the production of critical virtue and its irrevocable valorisation of capital.

To go further in this research, the critical attitude would still need to be examined more closely, for example through an analysis of a larger range of art education programmes. Such research would need to question my claim that the content of the critical attitude is negligible and that the main function of the critical attitude is that of a vessel, holding content that is related to the economic, social and political conditions of art education and the art market.

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