



USSE

USE (Unexpected Side Effects)

Contribution to the 1st Tbilisi Triennale 2012 for the F+F School of Art and Media Design Zurich

USE-Team*

RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co)

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Miro Schawalder

Studio Action (Silvia Popp & Anja Moers)

Judith Weidmann

* The team is mostly based in Zurich. RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co) is an artists group which works on projects and shows internationally. Marie-Antoinette Chiarenza has been an artworker at F+F Zurich since 2001 and at Work. Master HEAD University of Art & Design Geneva since 2008. Daniel Hauser has headed the Art Studies at the F+F since 2000. René Fahrni is an artist and F+F-Alumnus. Chantal Romani is an artist and F+F-Alumna. She works on projects and shows internationally and has taught at F+F since 2005. Miro Schawalder is an artist and F+F alumnus, actually based in Vienna where he is a master student at Akademie der Bildenden Künste. He shares a collaborative practise with the artist Yeliz Palak, based in Berlin and Vienna, a former student of ZHDK Zurich and UdK Berlin. Studio Action (Silvia Popp & Anja Moers) is an artist duo. Silvia Popp is an F+F alumna, teaching at the F+F since 2011. Anja Moers is a former student at FHNW Aarau/Basel and at HSLU Lucerne. She has taught at F+F since 2009 and works as an assistant in the Art Department. Judith Weidmann is an artist and F+F Alumna. She is also a member of the artist group Sweeterland (with its other members Yvonne Good, Dominik His, Matthias Käser and Elena Könz, all F+F alumni). Supplementary contributions by Jérémie Baud, artist and HEAD Geneva-Alumnus and Karin Wiesendanger, artist and F+F-alumna.

Exhibition contribution: USE as an installation

USE (Unexpected side effects) has been conceived as a video-installation. The furniture in the room is a worktable - with video screens and folders on it - and a hotel bed serving as a work place for tired entrepreneur souls. A fog machine is hidden underneath the bed. From time to time it produces a

room-filling cloud that also serves as an unstable projection surface for two videos. Furthermore, there is a large group of folded-out A0-papers (containing blueprints, maps, evaluation procedures, fotos, drawings) fixed on two walls.

Moreover next to the bed, a sound system of recorded voices is installed in the corner. The visitors sitting on the chair close to the loudspeakers can hear five preachers of the neoliberal ideology talking about how to lead a better life.

In another corner a filter coffee machine is placed on a second worktable and produces non-stop coffee-to-go and hot steam. The picture of the employee of the month of October is fixed on the wall next to the coffee machine. A stack of photos stands ready for a selection of possible employees of the month of November to choose from.

Some chairs are arranged to host visitors interested in watching some of the videos, reading a folder with texts and accommodate those who would like to work on their own material at the worktable or sit and appreciate some time-to-waste.

Finally, a cleaning cloth is fixed on a windshield-wiping machine occupied in very slowly smearing the most popular word heard in institutions, art schools and other places forced to do all kind of quality checks: EVALUATION!

The interest of the USE-team lay in a field beyond academism and dilettantism. USE was conceived as a possible approach to non-institutional frameworks for art, education and critical thinking. USE stands for the questioning of the inflationary increase of formalized institutional representations of quality. USE as a set up is a spatial proposition to avoid any cannibalism by the self-exploiting creative industries within the growing exclusion process that results from satellization by institutional and private power structures.

Therefore USE as a collaborative spatial test plant...

1. ...presents a basic rereading of standards and norms like (a) ISO standard, DIN formats or (b) Neufert as the normative architecture manual, its intended functions and the derived design of work and life conditions where social and gender classifications are part of the mindset; (c) quality management as the new promising tool of any curriculum at art schools.

2. ...tries to draw a picture of the growing informal creative-work sector, where new entrepreneurship and productivity are the perfect camouflage for the implementation of a tight time grid based on permanent interruption and dispersion. It tries to outline the growing extraction of any values and resources, the forced mobilisation of human labor, the liquefaction between work and life's 24h/day, the increasing division between well paid content management for the few and unpaid content production -

3. ...sets up a foggy and somewhat noisy space, where the blueprinted standards undulate and where sight might be blurred at times. Any activity in this space - like walking, sitting, lying on the bed, talking, thinking or drinking a free coffee—will be inevitably linked to questions about the impure, the dirty and the malfunctional.

No NUSE today? USE as a workshop

Except for a few preconceptions, the USE-Team had, no idea at all of Tbilisi and Georgia, of the people and their everyday life. Together with experts, USE took a look at the daily problems that occur when defining the contents, developing the exhibition, printing the brochures at a printer's or in a copy/print shop, while shopping, cooking, partying, sleeping or running the symposium. Whereby what was available, what was brought along and what was developed in common was mutually imparted and exchanged.

USE as a spatial proposition hosted a three day workshop (October 14 to 17). On day one, USE opened the installation as a workspace and with CCA Tbilisi members, students and other workshop participants discussed the installation itself and several types of artistic (self)education while drinking free coffee. On day two, USE invited the film student David Inashvili from Tbilisi University to talk with the team about former and actual censorship in the cinema production in Georgia during the soviet period and on the several modes of censorship today: in Georgia, Switzerland and the EU. Finally on day three, the artist and CCA member Koka Vashakidze introduced the current exhibition "Reframing the 80s" at the National Gallery, which presents a selection of works and artistic strategies realized by artists from Georgia in the 1980s during the last decade of the Soviet Union and the Cold War. The visit is followed by an introduction proposed by the author and curator and CCA member, Mariam Natroshvili, on issues like the history of the City of Tbilisi and its urban development, on Georgia's permanent shift of its historical, political, cultural and economic context. The discussions took place during a dinner at the flat of Ma-

riam Natroshvili and architect Detu Jincharadze in the former Living Tower Of Architects in the Soviet part on the northern periphery of the city. One of the discussions brought up the unlearning process of the Russian language among the young generation born after 1991. Other widely discussed topics were: organic agriculture in Georgia and the preference for imported agricultural products from Turkey; the lack of work available in Georgia and the (lack of) intention to redevelop (new) economic structures.

20% versus 80%. USE contribution to the Forum

For the symposium of the Triennial's Forum (October 19 to 20) we decided that three of us from the USE team would share the microphone and start with a diagram. The diagram



(picture titled: 20% versus 80%) is a representation of the edu-context based on our experience as artworkers. Excerpts of the presentation : "... I'd like to share with you a 20% versus 80% statistic (on the most quoted theorists and authors). The cultural context of this statistic is the academies in Switzerland, art academies ... As we know, Switzerland is a place which is not in Europe, politically speaking, but wants to share all the advantages of Europe, financially speaking ... is a place where the Bologna reform (edu-system allowing compatibility between universities) was realized before Germany France Spain Greece ... what you see (pointing to the diagram picture): I was invited to read ... 14 master theses in visual arts MFA (2011 and 2012). ... Most of the theses have been written by artists with a francophone cultural background ... thirteen papers written by female artists and one by a male artist. And as you can see Gilles Deleuze gets the palm ... then we

have (reading the names looking at the picture, up-down, on the right) ... all quoted about four to five times ... in the 20% (red in the diagram) Judith Butler gets the palm ... the women theorists are quoted only one or two times and mostly in one paper (from an artist focussing on cultural studies) ... Judith Butler gets the palm, I remember a few years ago it was Hannah Arendt... ". End of quotations. The restructuring of any kind of institutions, when based on quality management, is bound to the rules of efficiency and to bring money back home. Are male thinkers bringing more money back home? Do independant types of (self)education work better? or do they just reproduce in miniature what universities do on a big scale and with more money? and is critical thinking to be found only in theoretical texts? what kind of practices do artists use for empowerment and solidarity ?

Statement

The title of the Tbilisi-Triennale Offside Effect can be understood as an attempt to sketch a topology of autonomous art schools for which the concept of an ideal school is a central objective. Yet what would such an ideal school look like? Here an attempt to describe it in the form of a proposal: The prerequisite of the ideal school is an at-eye-level cooperation between artists, art mediators and organizers from within, and allied to, the art scene and with the students.

The ideal constellation is an alert opposite number and challenging accomplices. The objectives of the students are of central importance. And finally, the ideal school is a critical associate of the art scene and offers significant points of contact with it.

How is the quality of an ideal school to be measured? By the following criteria: Those involved in the school understand how to recognize and utilize the room-for-manuever both inside and outside the school to create teams and temporary alliances. A mental, medial and handicraft set of tools is on hand and subject to constant renewal for diverse use. The role that all the persons in and outside the school and within the art environs should play will be regularly questioned and tested. The role of the participants will, when necessary, be newly worked out and, at certain intervals, replayed and tested semi-publicly. The energy expended for this stands in a fruitful relationship to the energy that is generated by the actions carried out.

USE (unexpected side effects) relies on this claim that the ideal school makes and constitutes a potential that cannot be reduced to any simple logic, such as: "before my studies I was not an artist, after my studies I am one," or: "a good art school produces successful artists." Such a view of

things would reduce art schools to the role of preparing artists for the art market, reproducing only classical role models, hierarchies and conditions based on dependency. It therefore makes sense to weigh the difference between "living from (art) work" in relation to "living for (art) work". I.e., "living from" enables you to earn a living from the work, something few artists succeed in, as is only too well known. "Living for", on the other hand, conveys a histrionic (artist) understanding of a higher calling, emotional involvement and an only-work-counts attitude that above all legitimizes (artistic) precariousness.

If we study the working conditions of a freelance life in art (e.g., in view of an exhibition), we know of 2 usual models: (...) "A contract negotiated in a friendly and informal tone may [...] be the best guarantee for a hierarchy-free, self-defined working relationship. However such a contract can just as well end in a socially hierarchical and financially exploitable situation, since every possibility to challenge this or postulate demands has from the start been excluded by the "amicable" arrangement of the contract."³

To clarify: In the meantime, what we see more and more is that those who work intellectually and culturally slowly slip lower into low-paid or unpaid conditions. A wide gap increasingly separates those who are permanently employed from freelancers, highlighting the rift in management, on the one hand, from the production of content, on the other. Not only content lacks fixed payment, but also the administration of knowledge and content. This is likewise true for media enterprises, schools, libraries, museums and theatre. This split has first made possible the fact that education and knowledge, which have up to now been considered a public good, are now produced under market conditions without payment of a realistic price⁴. Within this framework, artists are increasingly given the role of content providers; research already sees them today as "embedded artists"⁵.

Artists have also expressed their concerns politically and not only since the 13 Demands of the Art Workers Coalition (New York, 1969).⁶ Ever since, and up to today, they have, among other things, focused on: political as distinguished from official policies, the rejection of identitarian categorizations,⁷ Post-Fordism and Multitudo, political economics and social creativity,⁸ always with the intention of developing new ethics for the common good. Since then, a growing number of artists and coalitions have evolved a critical artistic praxis with the help of activist and participatory tactics. They try to make art political and to formulate their own discourses. A broad spectrum of artists' manifestos and manifesto-like projects has been published over the past years and can be seen as a part of such a praxis.

Since autumn 2011, many artists have participated in Occupy Wall Street and tried not simply to claim a specific space, but also to stimulate the social and political imagination.⁹ The development of hierarchy-free social and cultural

(infra)structures,¹⁰ of constitutional drafts¹¹ and of generosity in dealing with wealth¹² and its waste,¹³ can just as much represent an artistic practice as the demand for developing applied societal arts,¹⁴ as well as discussions on the same.¹⁵

USE has therefore focused on the study of art as a platform and tool by which artistic praxis, critical thinking and self-organization can be directly and mutually linked. The critical engagement with a school's framework conditions, with the curriculum and with social facilities and processes bring about an exhibition of artistic solo and team contributions that can be merged into an installation. What is thereby thematized is, among others, in/visible work, the appropriation of the public/private, instant production, value formulation, practical values, as well as social conflicts and revolts.

1 The appellation "ideal school" (orig.: Wunschschule) comes from texts by Sönke Gau and Katharina Schlieben "Sprung ins Kalte Wasser" (jump into cold water), exhibitions, workshops and a summer academy (on questions of art education, knowledge production) that developed in a dialogue with students and teachers of the F+F school of art and media design, Zürich. Shedhalle Zürich, 3 Jun to 30 Jul 2006, Shedhalle Zeitung 2006, p. 30-31.

2 Robert Pfaller, "Doing Nothing. Über materielles Nichtstun und immaterielle Arbeit" in: Das schmutzige Heilige und die reine Vernunft, Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2008

3 Jan Verwoert, "Tätig sein. Weiß ich wirklich, was ich tue?" in: Tätig sein, Publikation NGBK Berlin, 2004

4 Andrea Roedig, "Die Wissensgesellschaften und ihre freien Idioten", WOZ, 8 Mar 2012

www.woz.ch/1210/prekaere-arbeit/die-wissensgesellschaft-und-ihre-freien-idioten

5 Jörg Scheller, "Nicht schön, aber klug. Viele Künstler studieren neuerdings nachden Regeln der Bologna-Reform. Was bedeutet das für die Kunst?", Zeit-Online, 25.11.2010, www.zeit.de/2010/48/Bologna-Kuenstler-Studium.

6 13 demands by Art Workers Coalition, 1969, http://artsandlabor.org/wp-content/upload/2011/12/AWC_letter_MOMA_1969.pdf

7 See e.g.: Queer & Moustache. De-ghettoize gender studies!, Master-Symposium HES.SO Geneva, 14 -16 November 2011, www.workmaster.ch/noise/uploads/media/QM1.pdf and <http://queerandmoustache.tumblr.com/About>

8 See e.g.: "The labor of the multitude? The political economy of social creativity." International Conference of the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, October 20 to 22, 2011, www.wuw2009.pl/index.php?lang=eng&page=wydarzenia&id=110&mod=opis

9 Martha Rosler, "The Artistic Mode of Revolution: From Gentrification to Occupation," e-flux-magazine, No.33, 3/2012, www.com/issues/33-march

10 See e.g.: Celine Condorelli und Gavin Wade, "Support Structure," www.supportstructure.org

11 See e.g.: The Yes! Association, Artists Group, Stockholm, www.foreningenja.org/en/om-oss

12 See e.g.: RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), The Wealth Manifesto, ed. by Cornerhouse Publications Manchester and Gavin Wade, "Strategic Questions", 2010

13 See e.g.: RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), "Waste-Manifesto" in: Work to do! Selbstorganisation in prekären Arbeitsbedingungen. ed. by Sönke Gau and Katharina Schlieben for Verein Shedhalle Zürich, Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2009, pp. 160-169.

14 See e.g.: Artur Zmijewski, "Angewandte soziale Kunst" in: Körper in Aufruhr, Daad-Verlag, 2010, pp.25-33 / Artur Zmijewski, "Applied Social Arts" in: Krytyka Polityczna, Warsaw, 3 Jan 2007, www.krytykapolityczna.pl/English/Applied-Social-Arts/menu-id-113.html

15 See e.g.: Theory Tuesday, "Each One, Teach One", Corner College, Zurich, from 13 Mar 2012, Session with Stefan Wagner on "Applied Social Arts" by Artur Zmijewski, <http://corner-college.com/Veranstaltungen/1331593200/529>

About

The F+F School was founded in Zurich in 1971 and has since played a pioneering role in art education in Switzerland. The school experimented early on with performance, video and the new media and became increasingly well-established as a professional educational venue for art and design.

Today, the F+F School of Art and Media Design is supported by a foundation co-founded by the City of Zurich. About 220 full-time students currently attend the school, which receives a subsidy from the city of Zurich.

Apart from the 3-year diploma education in art studies, photography, graphic design and film studies, the F+F School offers a preliminary course in design (full-time or in tandem with work) and a vocational course in design. To complete the picture, there is a comprehensive program of advanced study courses. Art studies at F+F have the status of a degree in higher professional qualification (Art Diploma) recognized by the Swiss Confederation.

The teaching team at F+F includes acknowledged personalities from the worlds of art, design, photography and film. One of the main traits of F+F is its close ties to the art and design scene. Projects, seminars, presentations and lectures given by local and international guest speakers make the F+F School a pivotal point of the art and design scene and attract attention far beyond the confines of the school.

As an autonomous school, F+F advocates an open-minded approach to art and design and cultivates a spirit of partnership between faculty and students. Thanks to the small size of the school, students can be sure of receiving intensive and individual supervision.

Further informations:

F+F Zurich:

www.ffzh.ch

1. Tbilisi Triennial:

<http://cca.ge/sites/default/files/program.pdf>

e-artnow:

www.e-artnow.org/announcement/article/ACTION/7859

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