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SCHOOL OF

FINE ARTS

Primer compiled by Frances Stark

on the occasion of
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"On the Future of Art School"
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with texts written by the participants:

Mai Abu ElDahab
Stuart Bailey
Howard Singerman
Jan Verwoert
Lane Relyea
and Robert Linsley

available as a printed book
or downloadable PDFs
(search "USC" or "art school")

The texts are reproduced from the following publications with kind permission from the participants:

'How to Fall with Grace or Fall Flat on Your Face':
Mai Abu ElDahab, Anton Vidokle and Florian Waldvogel (eds.), Notes for an Art School (International Foundation Manifesta, Amsterdam, 2006)

'Towards a Critical Faculty':
Forthcoming pamphlet for faculty at Parsons School of Design, The New School, New York City, 2007

'Excellence and Pluralism':
Emergences, vol. 12, no.1, 2002

'Your Art World, or The Limits of Connectivity':
Afterall, no.14, Autumn/Winter 2006

'School's Out!-?':
Mai Abu ElDahab, Anton Vidokle and Florian Waldvogel (eds.), Notes for an Art School (International Foundation Manifesta, Amsterdam, 2006)

'Creative Laboratories in the University':
Draft paper

'When Form Has Become Attitude—and Beyond':
Stephen Foster and Nicholas deVille (eds.), The Artist and the Academy: Issues in Fine Art Education and The Wider Cultural Context (John Hansard Gallery, Southampton, 1994), reproduced in Zoya Kocur and Simon Leung (eds.), Theory in Contemporary Art Since 1985, (Blackwell, Malden/Oxford/Carlton, 2005)

A note on the design of this publication:

Each piece in this Primer was scanned from the existing format listed here, maintaining the original (occasionally eccentric) typesetting and margins. This emphasizes the recycling and sharing of recent ideas on which both symposium and Primer are founded, but is also simply the most efficient and economic means of production—bypassing any extra time and money potentially wasted re-setting or re-proofing. This is in tune with its wider mode of production and distribution, Print-On-Demand (P-O-D), meaning the publication is produced within limited, standardized parameters and made freely available online to immediately order (as a book) or download (as PDF files) for a price which eliminates royalties and overheads, and rises exponentially. A near-instant speed of turnaround also accomodates its necessarily last-minute nature. As well as counteracting the generally overproduced, expensive tendencies of this sort of document, finally this Primer is intended as a gesture towards the sharing of such material and conversation beyond the confines of its founding and benefacting institution, USC, in search of an international audience concerned with both art and education. (Dexter Sinister)
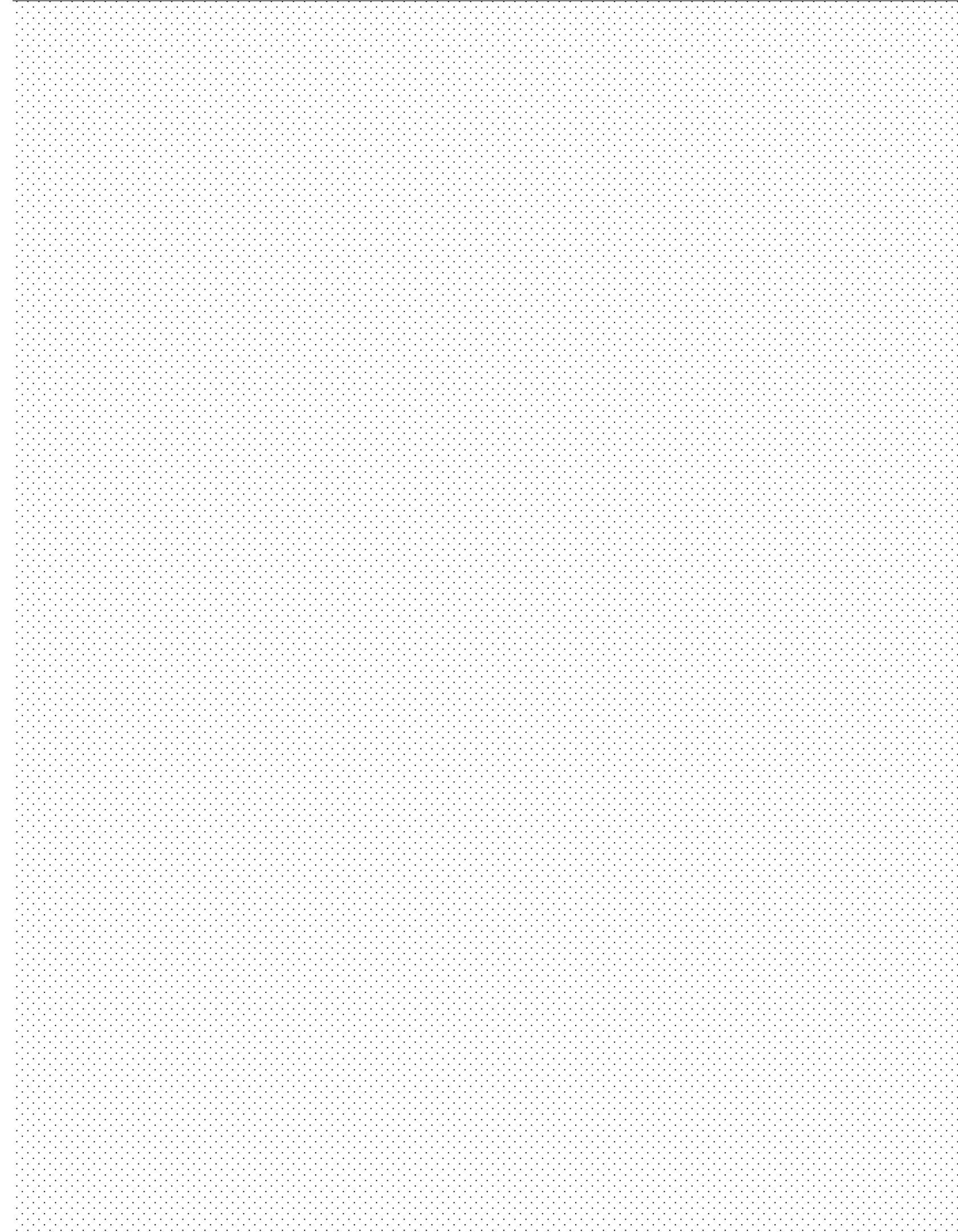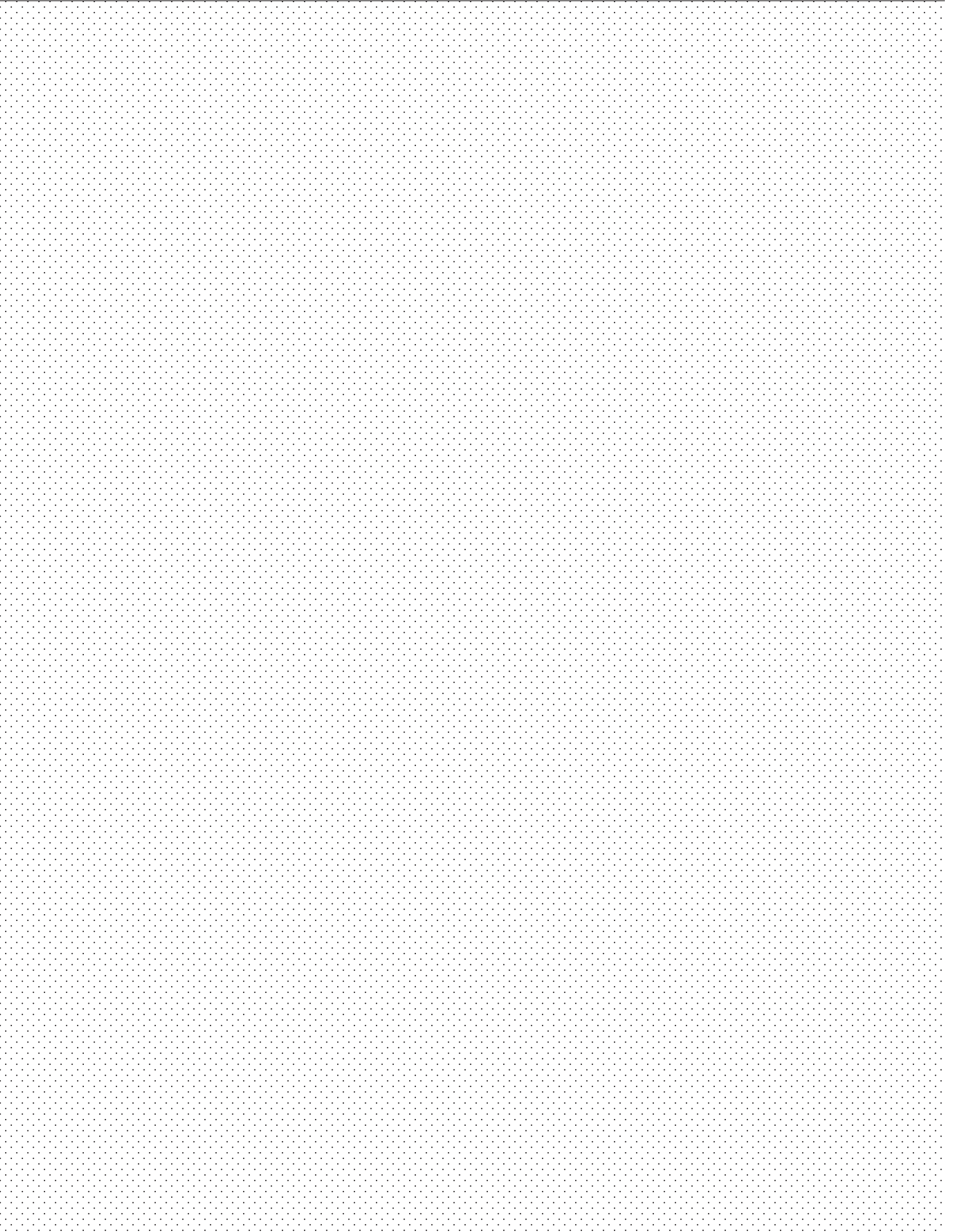
Introduction by FRANCES STARK

Introducing a symposium that I put together seems to call for an air of dignified, objective professionalism but inevitably I find myself employing the first-person, not merely because it seems necessary and efficient to simply be myself, so to speak, but because the ensuing discussion regarding the future of art school presupposes that what I am and what I do—whether by convention, conviction or circumstance —requires frank examination.

I am one of the many contemporary American artists who went into startling debt to earn an MFA from an institution of higher learning. After receiving the degree, I exhibited my artwork in both commercial and non-commercial venues in the US and abroad and have consistently given "artist talks" at various art schools where I would typically make studio visits with art students. On occasion, I would be invited to teach a class. Whenever I was asked to come "teach," detailed interest or concern was rarely exhibited for my pedagogical strengths or methods, neither before nor after the fact. Since I was often invited back and continued to receive invitations I figured I must've been doing something right. It feels impossible to say what that right something was or if it was even "right" at all. Perhaps openings just needed to be filled and I was there to fill them. Nevertheless I continued, as so many of us do, to teach, or rather, to engage with art students, from the short-haul perspective of a free-agent.

That changed two years ago when I decided to compete for the position of tenure track Assistant Professor of Painting and Drawing at the University of Southern California. When I mentioned having applied for the job to one of my former teachers (better known for his writing than his painting) he exclaimed, "now that's a long shot" and punctuated his apparently hilarious doubt with a brutal guffaw. I don't mention this to send an I-told-you-so message, but because his doubt—or rather, the unlikelihood of an artist who makes no claims to being an expert at painting or drawing filling the role of "Professor" of those things—reminds us how theory and practice often fail to align. Probing the many gaps between rhetoric and reality may be the first step in coming to terms—literally—with what we as teachers and students in art school say we do, what we actually do, and what we hope to do. Splitting hairs about one's own identity or practice within one's field could very well be a starting point for understanding one's possibilities and/or abilities to effectively engage that field, especially if one has the desire or responsibility to consciously steer the evolution of institutions that perpetuate that field.

Ever since being asked to plan a symposium, another remark of my aforementioned former teacher has been reverberating in my head. It was at the close of a panel discussion hosted by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, meant to address the status of theory in art school today. After each panelist had delivered his or her respective paper, he commented, rather drolly, "Not a single art theory has been referred to all evening." This cautionary last word underscores the slipperiness of "theory" and the way it doubles for "language," both of which have so often taken the blame

for an overly academic art. But such a public missing-the-mark about theory, (be it art- or any other kind) also suggests, paradoxically, that the act of theorizing itself is, if anything, under- rather than over-utilized in art school. And of course, my teacher's conclusion also warns of the potential for monumental misunderstandings to go unchecked because, *unfortunately we have just run out of time.*

Since the word symposium actually means *drinking together*, not *reading one after another*, papers written by the participants have been compiled here in this publication to essentially free up time so that our conversation can gain momentum on the day of the event. After reading their texts, I think it will become quite clear to you that the art professionals I invited here were chosen on the basis of the sincerity, depth and criticality of the concern they have exhibited for the future of the field of art, indeed for their explicit questioning of their own roles within that field. I brought together the artists and thinkers I did because they seem to register the fact that we appear on the verge of a paradigm shift (or at least a complicated overlap) but have yet to fully accommodate for this shift in our own teaching practices, or have struggled to achieve efficacy within institutions which often seem to be at dual purposes.

And so it seems imperative to look closely at the meaning and value of the degrees granted by art schools, and particularly the pedagogies appropriate to the shifting definitions of the field of art assumed by each level of degree. It also seems important to debate the need for defining and teaching the role of the market in the field of art and in school itself. And finally, in light of de-skilling as a legacy of the avant-garde, I want to consider the possibility of teaching and developing a "critical faculty," in terms of both mental ability—a transferable skill—and teaching staff—effective and reflective teachers.

While I am grateful that my position at USC affords me the opportunity to stage such an event, and make available this Primer, it also needs to be said how much I have allowed my newcomer status to contribute to its tone and shape. So without further ado let's take a look at who we have, so you can move on to what it is they are putting on the table.

MAI ABU ELDAHAB, an independent curator based in Cairo, is one of three co-curators of the international biennial Manifesta 6. Manifesta 6, now cancelled for ostensibly political reasons, was intending to set up an art school in Nicosia, Cyprus. I was hoping to pursue a dialogue with the Manifesta 6 School project long before it was cancelled. It seemed impossible to ignore that an international biennial would forgo the typical exhibition and launch in its stead a self-reflexive art school experiment. In preparation for the project Mai and her co-curators edited and produced a book called *Notes for An Art School*, meant to be the first in a series of ongoing research projects questioning the existing models for art education and exhibition making. Her essay for that book—'How to Fall With Grace or Fall Flat on Your Face'—is the first text reproduced here. The portentous title, which pre-dates the cancellation of Manifesta 6, foregrounds the personal and professional risk factor of any operation, wherein a critical experiment will potentially clash with, and/or be devoured by,

politics and bureaucracy. As Mai sees it: "Cultural production must maintain and defend its autonomy as a space where the freedom to experiment, to negotiate ideological positions and to fail are not only accepted, but defining."

STUART BAILEY was involved in the Manifesta 6 School, intending to set up a local print workshop with colleague David Reinfurt to design, publish and distribute all school-related material under the imprint Dexter Sinister. His participation in this symposium seemed inevitable once I learned that he was also involved in something loosely referred to as the Academic Workshop at Parsons at The New School in New York. He was brought in as an independent consultant to a small team established by Lisa Grocott, a communication designer, and Tim Marshall, now the Dean of Parsons. The purpose of the Workshop is to address the problem of initiating a major curricular change across the disciplines, in a way that could tap into the humanities strength and critical legacy of the New School. This was in response to the need to accommodate major growth, and the newfound popularity of the school perhaps fueled, in part, by the success and popularity of the reality TV show set in Parsons' fashion department, *Project Runway*. One of the tasks the group set themselves was to explore the notion of "design thinking" as a transferable skill across disciplines. What interests me about the Academic Workshop is that it was formed as a way for the school to allow itself the luxury to address curricular change from an exploratory and intellectual perspective, and welcomed outside views, which it collected through interviews with non-affiliated professionals in the field. Furthermore, it was also a design investigation to address the circulation of administrative memos—an attempt to streamline the school's communication with itself, a simple instance of a school attempting to practice what it preaches: good design.

Stuart's contribution here began as a document intended to be circulated among the faculty and administration at Parsons in order to initiate a dialogue about how to initiate both academic and bureaucratic changes in the school. Early on it became apparent that it should be incorporated into the inter-institutional dialogue at work here, and I began working closely with him on the text. In fact, the citation of Howard Singerman, which arises in his text, is actually taken from an email correspondence I had with Howard about this symposium.

As I began writing this document I was reminded of, or more accurately, influenced by, HOWARD SINGERMAN's memorable start to his scholarly research in his book *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*: "Although I hold a Master of Fine Arts degree in sculpture, I do not have the traditional skills of the sculptor; I cannot carve or cast or weld or model in clay." He admits he began writing the book in order to answer the question "why not?" The book asks "what constitutes training as an artist now, and what has determined its shape? What did my training mean, historically and ideologically, and what was it in6?" Most people interested enough to be holding this compilation in their hands will be familiar with this cornerstone scholarship by Howard, so I forgo any attempt at summary. Included here is a lesser-known text, 'Excellence and Pluralism,' originally published in the journal *Emergences* in 2002. The piece epitomizes his brilliant ability to simultaneously perform the equivalent of

an archeological dig on a school's art department and paint our contemporary conditions and attitudes with unforgiving precision.

My MFA has essentially trained me only to do "my work" yet, paradoxically, it is also the degree that certifies me to teach. Granted most university art departments have teaching assistant programs, but when I attended Art Center College of Design, being a teaching assistant meant making photocopies. This could suggest, if only metaphorically, that the ability to select and reproduce texts and images worth considering is sometimes enough. Furthermore, the ability to teach anyone how to read those texts and images closely is not required and tacitly assumed to be someone else's job, somewhere earlier in the process. And so, like the unsinkable suspicion that it's impossible to teach someone to be a good artist, it is probably also a widely held assumption—if not a widely acknowledged one—that you can't teach someone how to be a good teacher.

I cannot help but jump right into a quote from JAN VERWOERT's contribution to *Notes for An Art School*, which we've also reprinted here. "The fact that the academy offers a refuge from outside pressures, the critic will claim, is precisely the reason why liberal and conservative academies alike become safe havens for ageing professors who can indulge in the privileges of their power without ever having to check the premises of their teaching against the realities and criteria of contemporary art production …" His argument from the other side of the academic border is as frank and relentless as this. I was stunned and enlivened to read his line of questioning, and that particular charge of not having to check the premises of one's teaching struck me very hard. The idea of professors, of any rank or age, evaluating their teaching in light of contemporary conditions seems so obvious, so right, but I couldn't think of what that process might look like, or where and with whom it might actually take place.

Jumping ahead a bit, I want to point out why I have included here, as an appendix, a photocopied text by Thierry de Duve. I found it in my faculty mailbox, a welcome diversion from the relentless flow of memos and otherwise superfluous correspondence. It was delivered by a senior colleague. I assumed he put it there because I was working on this symposium, but discovered that many others received it as well. It proved an immensely useful text as well as an inspiring gesture, but—pardon my idealism— it made me yearn for a faculty meeting spent sharing insights about teaching strategies or hashing out things like: "When the culture that fosters invention starts to doubt, it ceases to oppose itself to the culture fostering imitation that it claimed to supplant." There is no time to think, we have to run the school; it is, after all, a business. One can only hope that it's not business as usual.

Offered up as a contemporary paradigm is "The MFA is the new MBA," suggesting that within the new economy "creativity" and "free agency" are ostensibly valued over traditional business administration skills and corporate loyalty. In a recent article published in *Afterall*, 'Your Art World: Or the Limits of Connectivity,' LANE RELYEA considers how certain conditions of globalization effect the production and reception

of contemporary art. Lane is currently Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Studies in the Department of Art Theory and Practice at Northwestern University. I will never forget a talk he gave while doing a gallery walk through of the MOCA exhibition *Public Offerings*—an exhibition premised on the metaphor of a good artist being an "initial public offering," a stock going public upon leaving school and entering the marketplace. The exhibition showcased work made at the moment when the artist was at the intersection of the academy and the market. As Lane helped a general audience to an understanding of the work, he simultaneously appeared to be publicly coming to terms with the fact that he, as an art critic, was an unnecessary part of a new art-historical equation, squeezed out both ideologically and economically. The works' stellar and exemplary status as investments that paid off (for both indebted students and collectors alike) would obscure anything he or anyone else had to say about the art objects or art practieces themselves.

ROBERT LINSLEY is an Assistant Professor of Fine Arts at the University of Waterloo in Toronto where he runs a post-graduate fellowship in studio art, focusing on new models of abstraction. Having heard I was planning a symposium, he expressed curiosity to some mutual friends who urged me to send him some information about what I was planning. He informed me that he quit his job. I was shocked and a bit excited to hear someone willing to walk away from what seemed to be an ideal refuge within a university. Robert invited himself to participate in the symposium, and I don't say that to make light of his contribution but rather to underscore the importance of his drive to enter the debate. Besides, it was perfectly in keeping with the serendipity at work throughout. Robert's participation and contribution further underscores that a discussion about the future of art school depends not primarily on new trends or technologies, but on an awareness of the artist's role within an institution. As Jan Verwoert points out with refreshing optimism:

the status of the single institution is no more than that of one hub among many that channel the discursive productivity generated by the field as a whole. And although the field of academia may often have to rely on individual institutions to host presentations and discussions, it is, in principle, not fully dependent on these institutions, as it can generate its discourse in personal exchanges and informal discussions just as well as in public symposia ... The basis for the open affiliation of different producers within the academy is, in turn, not so much an identification with the role model of the academic but, on the contrary, a sense that, within the academy, clear identity profiles are suspended.

Mai Abu ElDahab
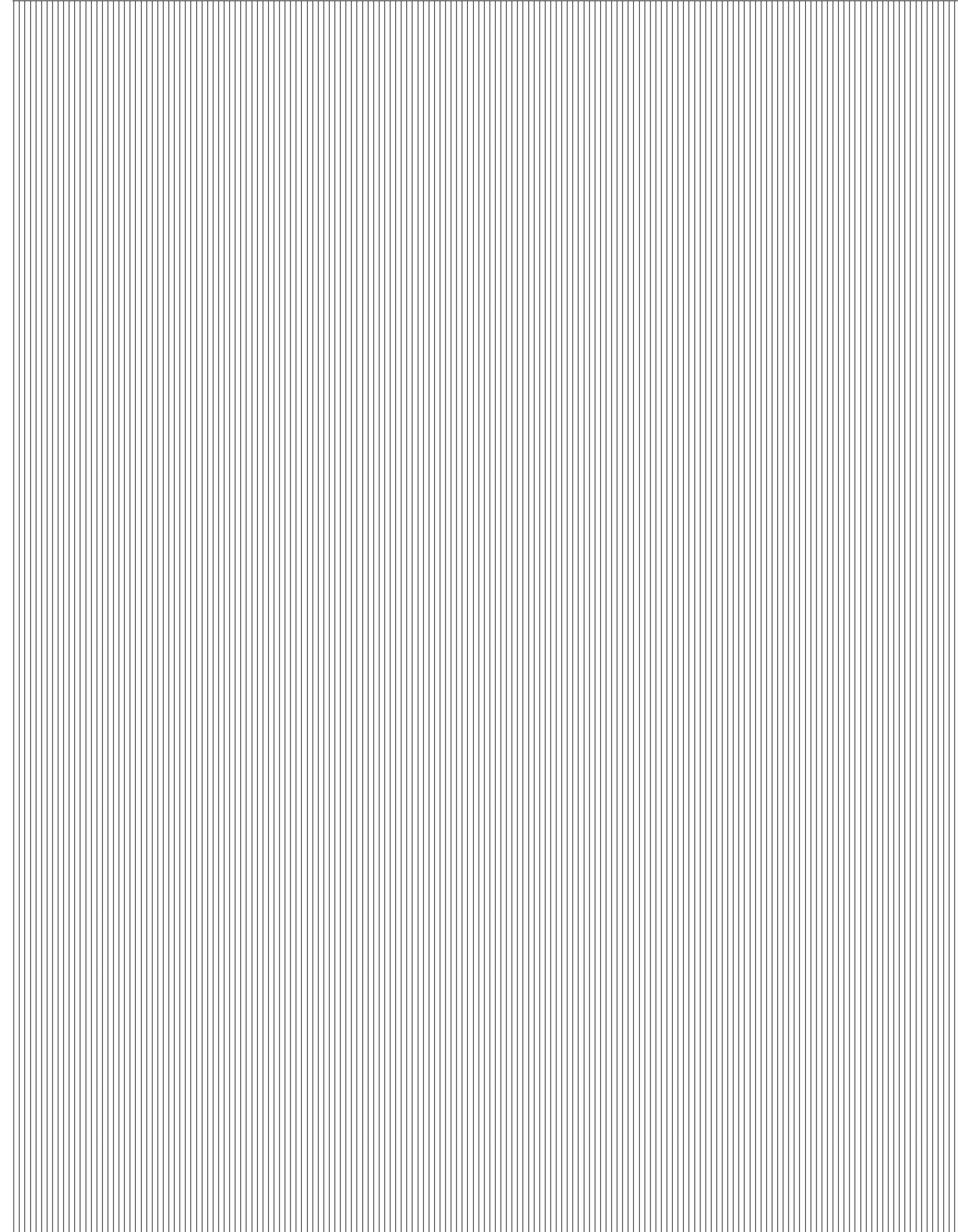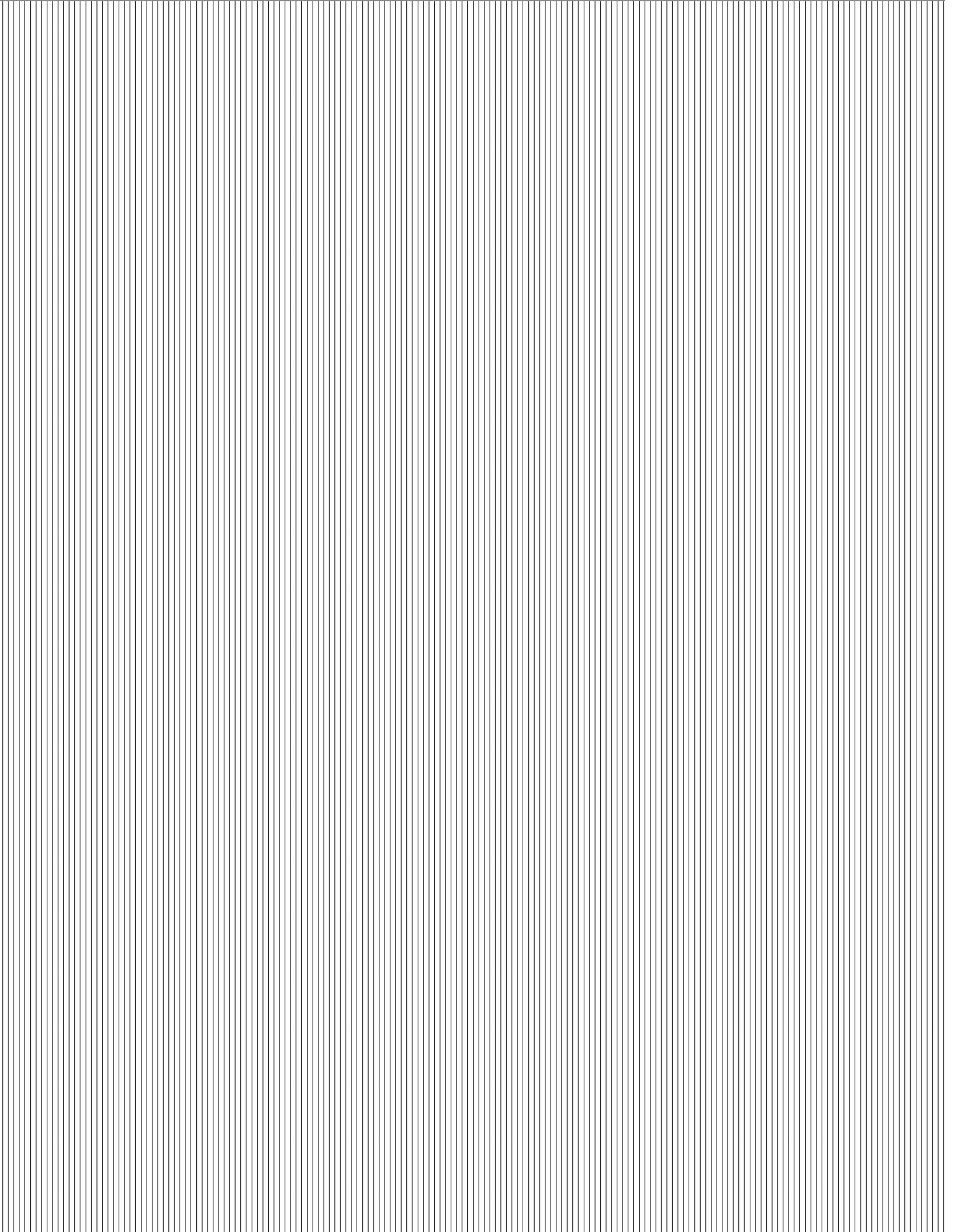
On How to Fall With Grace—or Fall Flat on Your Face

The Manifesta Biennial is not unique; its pitfalls are shared by most similar power-possessing institutions to varying degrees and in relation to their particular structures and aspirations. Although it engenders its own nuances and ambitions, for the purposes of the coming paragraphs, Manifesta simply serves as a testing ground for dissecting the processes of the art world into their different layers to illustrate the pressing need for a new socio-political consciousness in the artistic community, and to address the widespread paralysis of cultural production as a crucial socio-political force. As such, turning to education as the heart of what is to become the Manifesta 6 School represents an attempt to slap a patient out of a coma, and awaken a consciousness that is more far-reaching than individual art practices.

In its customary introversion, the arts community does not let well enough alone, but often extends itself just enough to instrumentalise the world around it as props for its own production. A prime example of this tokenism is the growing range of art projects based on a form of seemingly benevolent social science research. The research results (or works of art) are, more often than not, neither up to scratch academically nor do they imbue the information with any new artistic significance. They are forms of either pop information, inaccessible specialist data or, sadly, sensationalism. In contrast, a genuine form of awareness and constructive involvement necessitates commitment, erudition, confrontation and a recoiling from the superficiality of political correctness.

The Manifesta 6 School is a pretext, an excuse and an opportunity. It is a pretext for questioning and possibly challenging the methods of the institutionalised art world. It is an excuse to bring together inspiring thinkers and cultural producers to invigorate the position of art, and cultural production at large. It is a great opportunity for a wealth of critical endeavours: looking at the role of art institutions as participants in cultural policymaking; questioning the role of artists as defined by the institutional climate in which they practice and produce; revealing the power positions that legitimise the prevailing elitism; looking at culture's entanglement with the pressures and demands of corporate globalisation. And, finally, asking what kind of education do we as art professionals need today in order to play an effective role in the world?

The realisation of Manifesta 6 begins with a few set parameters: the Biennial, the team, the site. Let us start by taking a look at these givens before extrapolating the Manifesta 6 School's potential in depth.

The Biennial
Manifesta is the biennial of contemporary European art, although its geography-specific character is often underplayed. The general acceptance of this delineation

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implies that the debate around modes of representation is only crude when it refers to those outside of the West. Is that not just the other side of the same coin? The Venice Biennale, for example, is often branded as outdated because of its emphasis on national representation. But the Manifesta Biennial, similarly, is a project that focuses on a new united Europe and is funded by numerous national and trans-national agencies interested in promoting their own agendas. These agencies structurally reflect the policies of their states, be they conservative, moderate, liberal, right-wing, left-wing or middle-of-the-road. The bulk of the project's capital is provided by the host city, with the expected returns calculated in the form of short- and long-term benefits. The reality of these returns is quite evident in terms of tourism, new infrastructure, city promotion, salaries for local administrators, etc.

       The Biennial is like a parasite landing on a host. It is an authoritative institution in the guise of a civic entity with a benign mandate. The deliberate ambiguity of its position leaves it prey to the doctrines of corporatism as dictated by the variety of interests it encompasses: the art market, funding agencies, sponsors, foreign policies, cultural policies, city governments, etc. And thus, as an institution that refrains from defining a position of its own on the basis of its ideas and institutional history, it is susceptible to the prescriptions of the external agents whose contributions empower its self-serving nature. One illustration of this dynamic is the way artists from the richer end of the European spectrum are often over-represented in biennial shows as a result of the strength of their local funding bodies. This kind of imbalance creates a false impression of the relative vitality of different cultural milieus, as dissemination becomes a reflection of a state's purchasing power. Preferably, concepts and ideas, rather than financing, should determine the role and activities of civic institutions. Therefore, if such institutions were to profess spe- cific agendas or positions, they might suffer economically but they would be far less accepting of, and vulnerable to, exploitation. The prevalent genre of insipid wishy-washiness is symptomatic of the ongoing corporatisation of cultural production.

The Team

To continue the theme of transparency, we should begin by looking at some history. The International Foundation Manifesta and the host city, Nicosia, began the search for the upcoming edition's curatorial team with a relatively open call for applications. As the dream team of political correctness, we made it through the first round: multi-denominational German-Russian/American-Arab; or North, South and centre; or Frankfurt style, New York glamour and Cairo mystique; or whatever. The first successful sales pitch.

For the next stage of the selection, a proposition about art education was presented by the team. The pros were immediately self-evident: a concrete idea that leaves behind the predictable pseudo-political reductive North versus South or centre/periphery jargon. Instead, the proposal put forth a precise and coherent idea about initiating a seemingly neutral entity with a charitable and highly popular motive and mandate—the Manifesta 6 School. Criticism from militant anti-education activists seemed rather unlikely. Coincidentally, the buzzword in the art world happens to be education. (Whether coincidence or copycat is irrelevant, as the Biennial has wider outreach, a bigger budget and an early press release to protect the concept's ownership). Sales pitch number two.

So the selection was made. Unfortunately, one cannot point to a conspiracy; we, the curators, are just compliantly savvy to the requirements of the industry. However, we are guilty of complacently marketing ourselves according to strategic geographical quotas to cater to the expectations of institutions that ironically thrive on (and appropriate funds by) claiming a philosophy of openness. In fact, such openness runs essentially counter to the demands of the standardisation machine and cannot be tolerated. The incongruity of the world's neo-liberal face is exemplified by these seemingly progressive cultural institutions that espouse an 'openness to all' without ideological predilections. Yet position yourself in relation to this openness and—lo and behold!—you are swiftly absorbed into it and reinforcing its inbuilt consumerist values. Same old, same old. This dynamic is bred by the economic system's aversion to any change that may disrupt its assembly-line production, in this instance production of ideas. On this assembly line, production has to self-perpetuate, legitimise and replicate itself, or the structure inexorably breaks down. Everything that is interesting happens on the margins, and no one is to know exactly where that is.

Of course, one question comes up again and again: Can you claim you are anti-institutional, and yet work for one of the pillars of the system? A little hypocritical perhaps? And here we can try to slip in some innocence: 'You can only change the system from within—participate and have your say, and gradually you can have some impact.' Or, 'The system is all-powerful, all-engulfing, and there is no room to manoeuvre.' Mere excuses used to protect one's position on the assembly line. A mask for laziness or apathy or, more often than not, for self-serving motives that cumulatively paralyse the endeavours of culture and strip them of their predisposition to question, influence and change.

I acknowledge that we are complicit, but the real issue is how we proceed from this point.

The Site

The divided capital of Nicosia is the location chosen for this European event: part European and part not, part Christian and part Muslim, part rich and part

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poor. A conflict that is metaphorically, or perhaps practically, a microcosm of the supposed East/West divide fed to us 24/7 by the world's free media. The choice of this location leaves the outsider wondering whether Cyprus is supposed to be a window on the fallacies of Eurocentrism or a wall to show where Europe ends—as the question of Turkish inclusion in the European Union surfaces on a daily basis. Moreover, the project is formulated as having a bi-communal character, a naive problem-solving strategy that ignores similar contrived attempts that have always fallen short as they repeatedly underestimate the complexity of this longstanding reality. Whatever the assumptions and implications, the answer depends on how we proceed from here.

Nicosia is not a capital of contemporary art, but this is certainly not to be regarded as an affliction to be remedied by Manifesta. Rather than stripping the Biennial of meaning, this reality simply indicates that the Biennial requires its own method and configuration if it is to be of significance to the local community with which it will cohabit. Here lies the most demanding aspect of the project: What kind of meanings that are vital, dynamic and requisite for Nicosia can the Biennial generate in this context? The difficulty in striking a balance between the needs of the Biennial and those of the city lies in the dichotomy between the immediate inclination to replicate existing models and the ability to have and generate confidence in the power of the local situation and constituency to breed their own valid frameworks.

In order to initiate meaningful interactions and relationships in Nicosia, Manifesta should communicate a climate desiring of active engagement in congruence with its place and time. Manifesting this desire concretely in the formation of the School is the only function the Biennial can profess as a humble guest rather than an arrogant intruder on the island. Otherwise, what will remain is patronage and ignorance cloaked in a pretence of inaccessible sophistication. Fortunately, in the aforementioned general atmosphere of indifference, Cyprus has the advantages of location, scale, provincialism and—regrettably—firsthand experience of living with conflict. In these circumstances, an empowering and influential event is possible.

The School

Regardless of the particulars, the fact now is that Manifesta has committed to forgoing the glamour of the conventional large-scale show and opening itself to transformation. Allowing the project to try sowing some fresh seeds, rather than just using generic vacuum-packed merchandise in conformity with the apparatus of corporate sustainability. Consequently, for this Biennial to be of any substance, we need to be able, as curators, organisers and institutions, to stop censoring ourselves, to give up our decorum, to dismiss our elitism, and perhaps even to undermine ourselves.

In order to be successful, this project must fail by the existing standards of the exhibition industry. It should propose a new articulation of the ways of assessment and not fall prey to the trap of proposing innovation yet using the same old criteria for its evaluation. These obsolete standards not only stifle creativity but also endorse a corporate paradigm of cultural production: How many tickets sold? How many new works produced? How many reviews? How many international guests? These questions are measures for a very superficial 'return-on-investment'

logic, and are standard tools for promoting the Biennial to applicant cities. This is the logic and language of bureaucrats, marketers and advertising executives, certainly not cultural producers. *Cultural production must maintain and defend its autonomy as a space where the freedom to experiment, to negotiate ideological positions and to fail are not only accepted, but defining.*

The Manifesta 6 School can be about creating conditions with a modesty and a desire to accept the possibility of failure. This is not referring to the relativist failure of the laboratory model, but a vocal acknowledgement that certain formulae do not work and should be refuted and new ones tested. One case in point is the proponents of superficial cultural exchange relentlessly orchestrating patronising situations where the didactics of their monologues deafen the audience. Not only are the discussions redundant, the repercussions are damaging as entire cultures and issues are packaged with labels of exchange endorsing the entire futile exercise. For example, museums seize the opportunity of easy public funding for a certain 'topic of the season' and package a complex and influential debate into one exhibition to boost their finances through a false show of engagement. These exhibitions reduce significant issues to consumable products, and strip them of their urgency by presenting them as yet another of many options of display. Such irresponsible methods should be rejected.

The Manifesta 6 School should not reiterate generic references. It should demonstrate its uncompromising eagerness to encounter and delve into conditions and realities as lived, and not simply exploit them as 'content' for production. This transcending of abstraction and stripping naked of convictions is not a painless exercise, but it is a gratifying one. Searching through diverse disciplines for new directions, whether academic or practical, along with meticulousness, indulgence and a readiness to admit shortcomings may prove to be the necessary approaches. Pursuing new questions requires unorthodox means and exploration in unexpected places. Learning-by-doing, be it reading, walking, filming, discussing, painting, etc., should be privileged over reproduction or didactic pedagogies. Repetition and re-investigation of exhausted theories whose inadequacies have been repeatedly exposed would be a tedious redundancy.

Moving beyond the current production-on-demand modus operandi of the art world, the School can advance site-specificity as a cerebral exercise rather than a delightful gimmick. This can be possible if great labour combined with flexibility in expectations becomes its dominant strategy. The structure of the School would be demanding, and involve over-information and in-depth analysis. A mind-expanding form of education can only become possible if different paradigms are allowed to confront our own, challenge them and maybe invade our confined and limiting hierarchy of knowledge. Moreover, alternative discourses need to be imposed on the mainstream, and new ideas embraced and voiced on their own terms.

All institutions represent an ideology, whether explicitly or by default. The Manifesta 6 School should be overt and confrontational about its position as a hub for a proactive, politically engaged community of cultural producers. The School should escape from the model of harvesting innate artistic talent, instead affording an environment of intellectual scholarship—this atmosphere being not merely an accumulation of individualist endeavours but rather a direct function of the institution. It should advocate the development of ideas as an ongoing process of investigation. Research should be encouraged as a route towards discovery and knowledge production in fierce opposition to product design and display. This framework should be carefully constructed and communicated, and the participants left with the independence to find and formulate their own methodologies, spaces and languages within it.

This project must be a call for the politicisation of art production, not for political art. It can make us dust off our Noam Chomsky, Arundhati Roy, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Antonio Negri, Jacques Derrida, Slavoj Žižek and listen, or even act. The politicians, the corporations and their professionals are steadfast in their motives, purposes and aspirations. The community of cultural producers is not. But in the face of current global conditions, for anything meaningful or effectual to be expressed or produced, positions must be articulated within the cultural sphere, their multitude explicitly representing a belief in the validity of multiple worldviews and positions, and rejecting monological indoctrinations.

The bipolarity of world affairs, as sanctioned by the media, necessitates urgent resistance. Horrific terrorism manifested in the form of a confused nineteen-year-old girl in her US army uniform in Iraq, and on the other hand, dogmatic ideologues empowered by this terror to manipulate a demoralised and terrified teenager into strapping explosives to his own chest. In the midst of this tragic reality, the detached silence of the cultural industry becomes a form of collaboration. Art and culture professionals and institutions must become the third voice with their creativity, inspiration and intellect. It is not a romanticism to be shunned by cynics, but a genuine alternative, when we assert an indiscriminate bias to compassion, and choose to become involved.

In the profound and irate words of Arundhati Roy (in *The Ordinary Person's Guide to Empire*): 'Our strategy should be not only to confront Empire but to lay siege to it. To deprive it of oxygen. To shame it. To mock it. With our art, our music, our literature, our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness—and our ability to tell our own stories.'

The Manifesta 6 School is a chance to fall gracefully, and then stand up and walk a new path. Perhaps this is in itself the education we need.
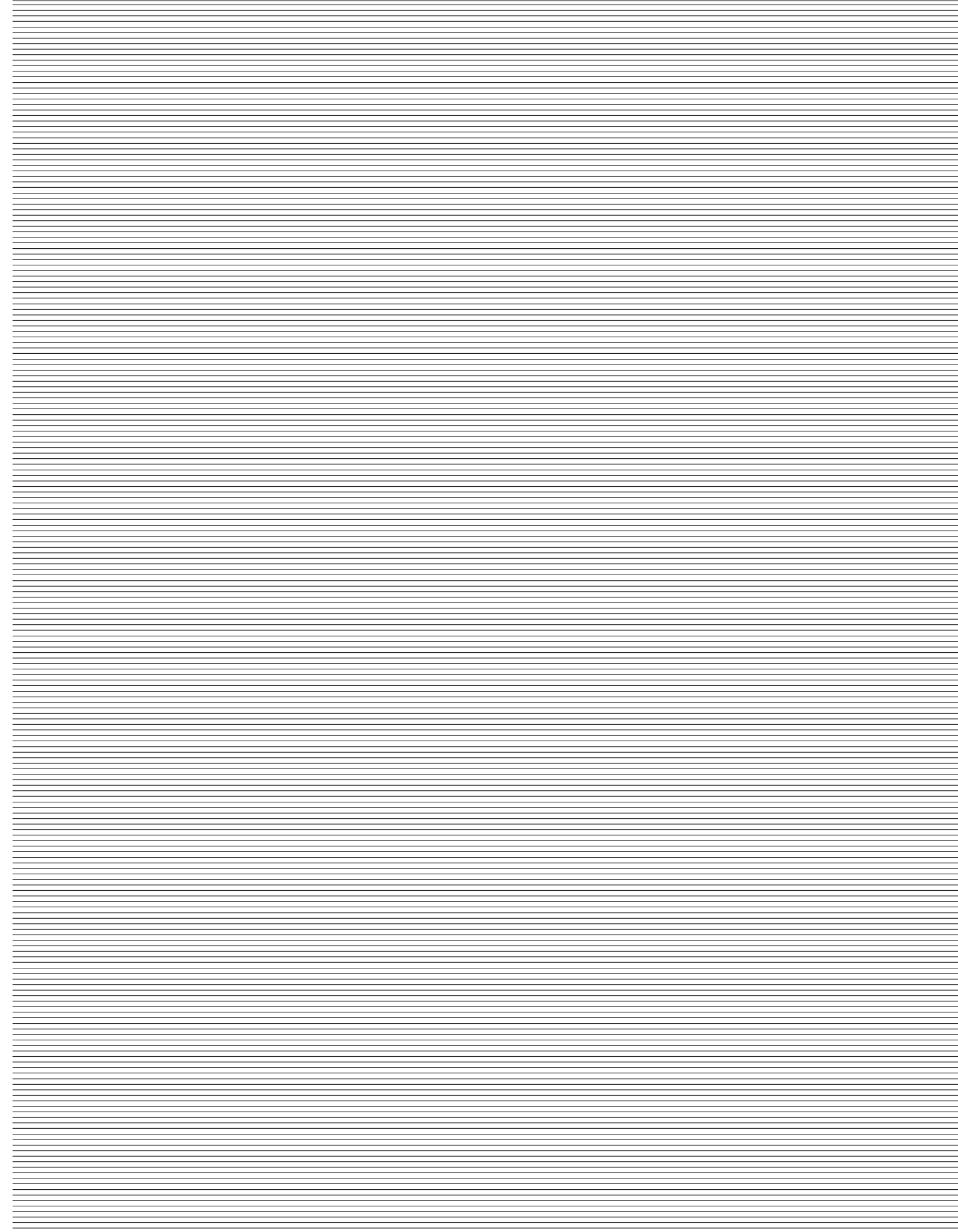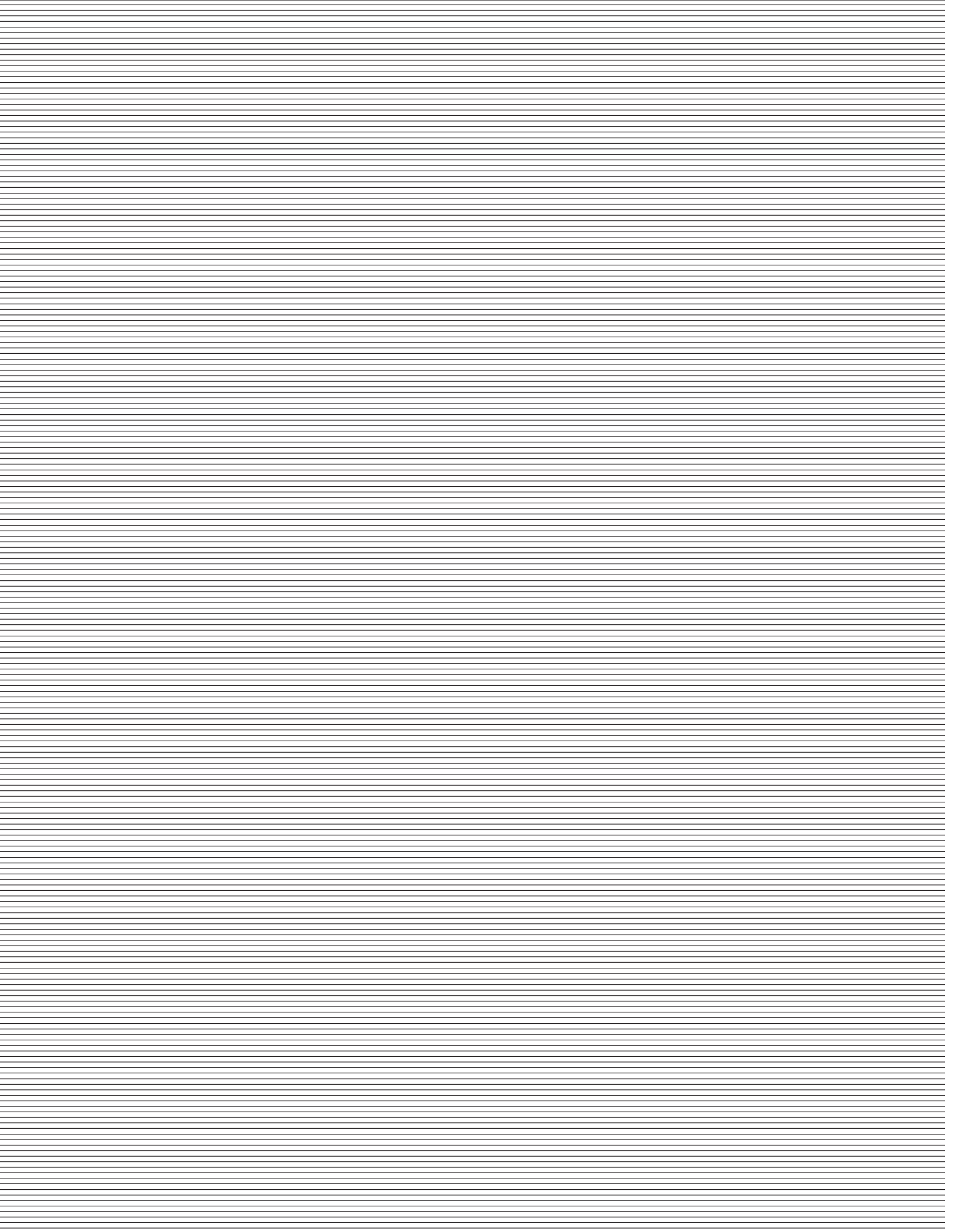
Towards a Critical Faculty

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A short reader concerned with art/design education
compiled by Stuart Bailey
for the Academic Workshop
at Parsons School of Design, The New School, New York
Winter 2006/7

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Let me open this slightly odd document by introducing
myself through my own art-educational background. I began
as an undergraduate student of Typography & Graphic
Communication in a rigorous but essentially maverick
department at the University of Reading in the UK, then later
as something between graduate and apprentice at the familial
Werkplaats Typografie [Typography Workshop] in the
provincial Netherlands. Since then I have worked across the
arts, mainly as a book designer, co-founded and edited a
design journal, *Dot Dot Dot*, which continues in an ever-
widening cultural vein, and simultaneously taught in the
undergraduate departments at both my old Reading course
and in graphic design at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam.
After a few years teaching, I recently came to a standstill
where I found myself so confused about what and why
I was teaching that it seemed better to stop and attempt
to readdress the purpose before trying again. Around this
time I also found myself involved in countless conversations
with friends and colleagues in similar situations with
similar feelings, marked less by disillusion and more by
confusion. Then I ended up as some kind of wild card at
Parsons' new-founded Academic Workshop, who were
interested in directly addressing exactly these concerns.
Which is how I come to be attempting to engage you in
the process.

A first disclaimer: This document is a loose, fragmented
reader designed to circle the area the Academic Workshop
intends to discuss in subsequent forums, both inside and
outside the context of The New School. Because the topic is so
broad and quickly overwhelming, it seems most useful by way
of introduction to simply collect my own reflex compilation of
others' viewpoints. This is a brief survey based on resources
within easy reach and the result of a few months' worth of
more or less focused conversations. As such it traces the
process of mapping the lay of the land as a work-in-progress
intended to be amended, added to, and refined through our
impending conversations. One advantage of this approach is
that it ought to remain timely.

A second disclaimer: The entire issue of art/design schooling is
infuriatingly elliptical, and constantly in danger of cancelling
itself out. This is, at least in part, because what we might
initially perceive as separable issues (such as the distinctions
between undergraduate and graduate, art and design, teaching
and learning, mentor and facilitator, etc.) are all inextricably
intertwined. Once one is addressed, one or more of the others
immediately come into play. This is why the present document
is not particularly subdivided—even its basic chronological
divisions barely hold.

Artists and designers (or good ones) are by nature reflexive
creatures—they simultaneously reflect on what they do while
doing it. As I understand it, this Workshop was set up simply
with an aim to harnessing this towards a practical end:
to engage its design faculty to actively design the institution,
a logic which seems as paradoxically absent as it is obvious
in contemporary art/design schools. So, cutting through
a few anticipated responses: this is not a rooting-out
exercise, nor a preamble to a series of job losses (probably

the opposite), nor a change for the sake of change, nor some
infant generation staking a claim, nor a gratuitous cosmetic
exercise in spending excess money, nor a hollow PR campaign.
It simply proposes the time, space and energy to ask the
sorts of questions that should be permanently addressed as
a matter of course, with the school set up to accommodate
them as and when necessary. In short, to engage our
"design thinking" towards consolidating the future curriculum.
If there is one principal obstruction to such constructive hopes
it lies in the disjunct between the academic and financial-
bureaucratic divisions of contemporary schools—between
projected/imagined ideas and reality. There is no good reason
why the two cannot be resolved together in a curriculum
plan at once transparent, open and clear.

There are, of course, countless routes into thinking about
teaching contemporary art/design students. Mine is to try
to get to the bottom of a term just mentioned above,
and which is constantly floating around the Workshop:
"design thinking." First by questioning the meaning of the
phrase itself—which is perhaps the first clue to my particular
background and approach: "design thinking," to my mind,
is a tautology, i.e. "designing" is synonymous with "thinking."
(According to the dictionary: "to conceive or fashion in
the mind.") At the same time, I understand the implication:
"design thinking"—and more or less interchangeably,
"intelligence" or "expertise"—is an attempt to define the
constituent parts of an abstract process distinct from those
of other fields such as "craft thinking," "scientific thinking"
or "philosophical thinking." The key characteristic of
"design thinking" might reasonably be defined as "reflection-
in-action," which Norman Potter further elucidates in his
statement:

> Design is a field of concern, response, and enquiry
> as often as decision and consequence.
> (Potter, 1989)

The perceived payoff of unpacking "design thinking" is that
its constituent qualities can be identified and extracted to
provide the new focus of a contemporary art/design
curriculum. This follows from what I believe is a common
intuition that the existing model no longer reasonably
accommodates contemporary requirements with regard to
the ever-blurring boundaries of art/design disciplines, of
specialism giving way to generalism, that "design thinking"
is transferable (or "exportable") across disciplines, and that
as such, students ought to be pushed accordingly towards
developing a general reflexive critical faculty rather than
discipline-specific skills.

Here I propose to consider the pedagogical application of
"design thinking" as a working hypothesis *through my own
form of design thinking* ("concern, response, and enquiry").
My method is to rewind, pause, then fast-forward: to map
the historical trajectory of art/design education in order
to identify how and why past models were set up in response
to prevailing social conditions, then to try and articulate
why, in the light of these legacies, combined with an overview
of descriptions of the contemporary paradigm, "design
thinking" might indeed be an appropriate foundation for
the future.

> Who really *can* face the future? All you can do is
> project from the past, even when the past shows
> that such projections are often wrong. And who
> really can forget the past? What else is there to
> know? What sort of future is coming up from behind
> I don't really know. But the past, spread out ahead,
> dominates everything in sight.
> (Pirsig, 1974)

Past

What are the key models of art/design schools? Let's try to compile a lineage, beginning around a hundred years ago from the point at which art and design schools began to be set up as distinct entities following the first industrial revolution, in a context of duality between the traditional master-apprentice model for craft-based professions (e.g. metallurgy, carpentry, etc.) and the academy-studio for fine art training (drawing, painting, etc.)

> The School of Arts and Crafts was set up in 1896 to fill "certain unoccupied spaces in the field of education." The foundation of the School represented an important extension of the design philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement which, largely inspired by William Morris, had raised the alarm against the lowering of standards as a result of the mechanization of design processes. Advocating a return to hand-production, this movement argued that the machine was a social evil. The School's first principal, believed that "science and modern industry have given the artist many new opportunities" and that "modern civilization rests on machinery and that no system for the encouragement or endowment of the arts can be sound that does not recognize this."

> The School proved to be innovatory in both its educational objectives and its teaching methods. "The special object of the School is to encourage the industrial application of decorative design, and it is intended that every opportunity should be given for pupils to study this in relation to their own particular craft. There is no intention that the school should supplant apprenticeship; it is rather intended that it should supplement it by enabling its students to learn design and those branches of their craft which, owing to the sub-division of the processes of production, they are unable to learn in the workshop."

> The majority of the staff of the school were not "certificated," full-time teachers; rather were they successful practitioners in their respective crafts, employed on a part-time basis, and providing the school with a great variety of practical skills and invaluable contacts with the professional world of the designer and craftsman. These pioneering innovations in objective and method proved to be crucial to a philosophy of art and design education which fashioned the establishment and development of many similar institutions in Britain and abroad, including the Weimar Bauhaus. (Central School prospectus, London, 1978)

In describing this office and project to other people, I invariably find myself back at the Bauhaus, simply because it remains the most explicit representation of a set of coherent principles and marker of a clear paradigm shift, namely, the change from the traditional master-apprentice to the group-workshop model; the introduction of the foundation course of general principles for all disciplines; the application of fine art to practical ends; and the synthesis of the arts around one particular vision. Whether these ideas were actually realized or even consistent is irrelevant here—again, they are listed because they are what the Bauhaus generally *represents*.

> Workshops, not studios, were to provide the basis for Bauhaus teaching. Workshop training was already an important element in the courses offered by several "reformed" schools of arts and crafts elsewhere in Germany, but what was to make the Bauhaus different from anything previously attempted was a tandem system of workshop-teaching. Apprentices were to be instructed not only by 'masters' of each particular craft but also by fine artists. The former would teach method and technique, while the latter, working in close cooperation with the craftsmen, would introduce the students to the mysteries of creativity and help them achieve a formal language of their own. (Whitford, 1984)

From here we might then ask: Are art schools in the 21st century still based on the Bauhaus model? If so, is this still relevant almost a century later? If not, on what other model(s) are they based, if at all? If not based on a model, how are they designed? and finally: Whether based on a model or not, should they be?

> The old art schools were unable to produce this unity; and how, indeed, should they have done so, since art cannot be taught? Schools must be absorbed by the workshop again.

> Our impoverished State has scarcely any funds for cultural purposes any more, and is unable to take care of those who only want to occupy themselves by indulging some minor talent. I foresee that a whole group of you will unfortunately soon be forced by necessity to take up jobs to earn money, and the only ones who will remain faithful to art will be those prepared to go hungry for it while material opportunities are being reduced, intellectual possibilities have already enormously multiplied. (Gropius, 1919)

And really, following the various incarnations of the Bauhaus (and the couple of postwar offshoots in Chicago and Ulm) any sense of an explicit, shared educational ideology tails off here, coinciding with the Second World War, and the end of what is generally regarded as the heroic phase of modernism.

> I also once dreamed of a school where it would be natural to expect such an intermix of professions, arts and trades. There was some attempt in Lethaby's early ideas for the Central School of Arts & Crafts in London, in Henry van de Velde's and Gropius's Weimar Bauhaus-Hochschule fur Gestaltung, and at the Ulm Hochschule fur Gestaltung. The two latter did not survive: the Central transformed itself into a School of Art & Design, only distinguishable from many others by some still-surviving tradition, and, as always, everywhere, by occasional concatenations of firing staff & students.

> All art schools, until some years ahead, have tried to teach what teachers taught, or else supplied an environment to expand. (And I can't think it very bad to give a human being three or four years of freedom to work out what consequence or nonsense his desires at eighteen/nineteen are; by "his" I include unisex "hers.") The question now is, not only the structure of art education, nor indeed the government reports, but, very strictly, what should we teach, what should they learn; also how can they be educated. There is no way to teach anything except through personal contact and conduct. There is no way to teach any person who lacks desire. There is no way to teach through excessive specialization in an "art" subject, with an iced-on gloss of general-liberal-complementary studies. Because the "subject" and its complement belong together. It should not prove impossible to give the "art" ones jobs ... (Froshaug, 1970)

Through the 1960s and 1970s—and on into postmodernity—the art/design school was increasingly characterized by the creation and popularization of its own image and social codes (bound up with the various facets of youth liberation, its

movements and nascent culture). This was school as liberal annex and breeding ground, but whose by-product was to accelerate the animosity towards the so-called Real World of business.

> The art school has evolved through a repeated series of attempts to gear its practice to trade and industry to which the schools themselves have responded with a dogged insistence on spontaneity, on artistic autonomy, on the need for independence, on the power of the arbitrary gesture. Art as free practice versus art as a response to external demand: the state and the art market define the problem, the art school modernizes, individualizes, adds nuance to the solution.
>
> Art school students are marginal, in class terms, because art, particularly fine art, is marginal in cultural terms. Constant attempts to reduce the marginality of art education, to make art and design more "responsive" and "vocational" by gearing them towards industry and commerce have confronted the ideology of "being an artist," the romantic vision which is deeply embedded in the art school experience. Even as pop stars, art students celebrate the critical edge marginality allows, turning it into a sales technique, a source of celebrity. (Frith/Horne, 1987)

The following account was written by a student towards the end of this era, a typically convoluted attempt to deal with the contradictions of lingering socialist art and design ideals in the context of the hand-in-hand burgeoning of social liberation and commercialization:

> I am trying to learn to be a designer. Designers are directly concerned with life. Designs are for living. Designing is just part of the process in which solar energy lives through the medium of hereditary information. Designers are concerned with information —information which furthers life. Being a designer is finding out ways of furthering life. Not thermo-dynamicsmechanics life, this is being a doctor, a servant purely. Emotion-communion life. How you check a design: does it make its user more alive? Or his children maybe? We have to work in time also.
>
> Here is a problem for the designer, one to beat his head against. Clients usually ask him to operate the other way—against life—the clients I have come across. They ask him usually to make a design for part of a system for making a profit. Making a profit is life, sure, but for the client only. And it may be the client the designer is working for, but it is people he is working on. The client doesn't sit down and read all his 50,000 leaflets, people do. The client pays, but the designer must be ready to tear up his cheques if he or other people he loves don't or won't get the money, and if the client is trying to use him to channel life away from other people. The designer is working on people: he is working for people.
>
> The designer may have to work for clients whose business is drainage of this kind. But not if he can survive without. If he has to, he must never forget what they are doing, and what they are doing to him, what they are asking him to do to other people. If he forgets this for a moment, they may start draining him. There must be people who are working for people. He can work for them. Then he will be a real designer, designing for life, not death.
>
> How? I don't know yet, that's why I go to school, to experience, to share experience with those to whom these problems are no longer new and with those to whom their very newness is an opportunity for living. (Bridgman, 1969)

Present

—and this is the same writer forty years later:

> We were wrong. That old article tells you why: rational design would only work for rational people, and such people do not exist. Real people have irrational needs, many of them to do with human tribalism. Though tribalism itself is rational—it increases your chances of survival—its totems are not. If you belong to the coal-effect tribe, you've got to have a coal-effect fire. There's no reason for wanting your heat source this shape, other than the fact that other tribe members do. There's no reason for having a modernist, post-modernist, minimalist or any other source of heat source, either, except as a similar totem. The reasons have to be tacked on later (but only if you are a member of the rationalist tribe—nobody else bothers).
>
> So designers can't rule the world, they can only make it more like it already is. Fortunately (or unfortunately if you're a hard-line rationalist) the world is not any kind of coherent entity, so "like it already is" can mean many different things—just choose your tribe and go for it. This can give a satisfying illusion of control , despite the strict limits imposed by tribal convention. Because many tribes have novelty as one of their totems, it is possible to change—"redesign"—some of the other totems at regular intervals. Once confined to the clothing industry, this kind of programmed totemic change now extends to goods of all kinds: "fashion designers" have become just "designers."
>
> Such designers—the ones who design "designer" goods—have apparently achieved a measure of control over the wider public. It seems, according to one TV commercial I have seen, that they can even make people ashamed to be seen with the wrong mobile phone—a kind of shame that can only have meaning within a designer-led tribal context. The old, Marxist-centralist kind of designer didn't care whether people felt shame or anything else. He or she simply knew what was "best" in some absolute sense, and strove to make industry apply this wisdom. But "designer" designers work the other way around. Far from wanting to control their commercial masters, they enthusiastically share their belief that the public, because of its irrepressible tribal vanities, is there to be milked. They have capitulated in a way that my [previous] article fervently hoped they would not, but for the reason that is pointed out: in visual matters there is no "one best way." Exploiting this uncertainty is what today's design business is all about. The old, idealistic modernism that I once espoused is on the scrap heap.
>
> So my naive idea of the 1960s—that designers were part of the solution to the world's chaotic uncontrollability—was precisely the wrong way round. Today's designers have emerged from the back room of purist, centralist control to the brightly lit stage of public totem-shaping. Seen from the self-same Marxist viewpoint that I espoused in those ancient days, they are now visible as part of the problem, not the solution. They have overtly accepted their role as part of capitalism. Designers are now exposed, not as saviours of the planet but as an essential part of the global machinery of production and consumption.
> (Bridgman, 2002)

29   In line with the beginning of this text, Thierry de Duve has identified and calibrated some specific qualities of three

fundamental paradigms which *underly* models on which art school principles are defined. The ACADEMY, the BAUHAUS, and what I propose to simply call CONTEMPORARY.

The ACADEMY describes the period roughly up until the first world war, and therefore also pre-modernist. It is based on the underlying notion of the student possessing unique *talent* specific to a discipline. It is taught through the education of *technique*, in terms of a historical chain of development. Its method of teaching is by *imitation*, involving the reproduction of sameness towards continuity of the particular discipline.

The BAUHAUS, in comparison, describes the period roughly from the First World War on, which can be described as modernist in terms of coherently breaking with existing romantic or classical ways of working and thinking, and which—"more or less amended, more or less debased," according to De Duve—has been the foundation of most art/design schools in existence today—"often subliminally, almost unconsciously." It is based on the underlying notion of the student possessing general *creativity*, which spans disciplines. It is taught through the education of a *medium* as an autonomous entity, without emphasizing its lineage and continuity. Its method of teaching is by *invention*, involving the production of otherness and novelty and which, as such, emphasizes formalism.

The CONTEMPORARY describes the prevailing condition which, although *underlying* the art/design world as a paradigm different to those described above, has yet to yield a widespread collective change in the way its schools are constructed. In short, while these ideas are poured into the existing Bauhaus container, they no longer fit. A reasonable comparison with the above models, then, would suggest an underlying notion of the student possessing general *attitude*, which spans disciplines. It is taught through the education of a *practice* through which this attitude is articulated. Its method of teaching is by *deconstruction*, involving the analysis of a work's constituent parts. Although this term seems particularly open to misinterpretation in light of its various common formal associations (particularly in Architecture) I propose to keep De Duve's chart intact, while emphasizing that his "deconstruction" refers to intellectually unpacking, dismantling, and reading work.

ACADEMY	BAUHAUS	CONTEMPORARY
talent	creativity	attitude
technique	medium	practice
imitation	invention	deconstruction

The back-end of this period—bringing us roughly up to date—has been further marked and marred, of course, by the propagation of school as business, student as customer, and its attendant bureaucracy. All of which generates the ever-increasing gap between actual pedagogy and its marketed image.

> Accreditation is an attempt to communicate to the world that we know and agree on what the truth is. But no school ever believes in the generic principles it must appear to endorse to be accredited. Those who draft these supposedly shared principles are not those known for their creativity or their knowledge of the history of the art they are trying to protect. Accreditation processes are universally discredited yet ever more intrusive. Kafka as the descendant of Vitruvius.
> (Wigley, 2005)

This fraying of any coherent consensus or ideology since the Bauhaus—further confused by the tendency towards decisions of school policy increasingly made by schools' financial/bureaucratic divisions rather than academic ones—has resulted in a largely part-time generation of teaching staff lacking the opportunities (time, energy, resources, community, *encouragement*) to engage in theoretical or philosophical grounding—while (as far as I can see, from my own and colleagues' experiences) *needing and wanting one*. Accepting all this as given, then, and zooming out of the specific focus on schools, how might we effectively summarize current social conditions directly related to art and design on which we might found a new protocol?

Alain Findeli outlines his take on the contemporary paradigm ("shared beliefs according to which our educational, political, technological, scientific, legal and social systems function") as comprising 3 main characteristics: Materialism, Positivism, and Agnosticism. He then proceeds to list those tendencies which characterize the nature of a design culture under those preconditions:

> The effect of product engineering and marketing on design, i.e., the determinism of instrumental reason, and central role of the economic factor as the almost exclusive evaluation criterion.
>
> An extremely narrow philosophical anthropology which leads one to consider the user as a mere customer or, at best, as a human being framed by ergonomics and cognitive psychology.
>
> An outdated implicit epistemology of design practice and intelligence, inherited from the nineteenth century.
>
> An overemphasis upon the material product; an aesthetics based almost exclusively on material shapes and qualities.
>
> A code of ethics originating in a culture of business contracts and agreements; a cosmology restricted to the marketplace.
>
> A sense of history conditioned by the concept of material progress.
>
> A sense of time limited to the cycles of fashion and technological innovations or obsolescence.

Having mapped these somewhat bleak circumstances, he then asks:

> What could be an adequate purpose for the coming generations? Obviously, the environmental issue should be a central concern. But the current emphasis on the degradation of our biophysical environment tends to push another degradation into the background, that of the social and cultural environments, i.e. of the human condition.
> (Findeli, 2001)

—and suggests that one key appropriate shift, already underway, is precisely that of *de*materialization, away from a "product-centered attitude." This would yield the end of the product-as-work-of-art, heroic gesture, genius mentality and fetishism of the artifact. It would be more interested in the human *context* of the design "problem" rather than the classical product description. It would emphasize the design of immaterial services (such as hospital or school bureaucracies) rather than material products. And finally, this "vanishing product" would be approbated on sustainable, ecological grounds, in reaction to current overproduction and planned obsolescence.

Let's counteract this material depression with the optimistic abstraction of Italo Calvino's set of lectures, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, a concise inventory of contemporary qualities and values which he proposed ought to be carried over the threshold of 2000 (written about 15 years in advance). These lectures directly referred to literature, specifically the continuing value of the novel, and as such consist primarily of examples drawn from a gamut of high-flown literary history from Lucretius to Perec. The qualities are, however, easily transferable across disciplines, and —significantly—the very gesture of transference to the context of this document is true to "design thinking" and at least three of Calvino's cherished qualities (lightness, quickness, and multiplicity).

To summarize, Calvino first cites LIGHTNESS, describing the necessity of the facility to "change my approach, look at the world from a different perspective, with a different logic and with fresh methods of cognition and verification." He cites Kundera's conception of *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* in desirable opposition to the reality of *the ineluctable weight of living*, and draws a parallel with the two industrial revolutions, between the lightness of "bits" of information travelling along circuits and the heaviness of wrought iron machinery. The second quality, QUICKNESS, summarizes economy of expression, agility, mobility and ease. He quotes Galileo's notion that "discoursing is like coursing"—reasoning is like racing—and that "For him good thinking means quickness, agility in reason, economy in argument and […] imaginative examples." The third is EXACTITUDE, painted in opposition to the "plague afflicting language, revealing itself as a loss of cognition and immediacy, an automatism that tends to level out all expression into the most generic, anonymous and abstract formulas, to dilute meanings, to blunt the edge of expressiveness …." While Calvino admits that precision and definition of intent are obvious qualities to propagate, he proposes that the contemporary ubiquity of language used in a random, approximate, careless manner, is extreme enough to warrant the reminder. Next comes VISIBILITY, in which the author tackles the slippery nature of imagination: particularly, the difference between image and word as the primary source of imagination, and whether it might be considered an "instrument of knowledge" or "identification with the world soul." These two definitions are quoted, but Calvino offers a third: "the imagination as a repertory of what is potential, what is hypothetical … the power of bringing visions into focus with our eyes shut, of bringing both forms and colors from the lines of black letters of a white page, and in fact *thinking* in terms of images." Finally, MULTIPLICITY refers to "the idea of an *open* encyclopedia, an adjective that certainly contradicts the noun *encyclopedia*, which etymologically implies an attempt to exhaust knowledge of the world by enclosing it in a circle, but today we can no longer think in terms of a totality that is not potential, conjectural, and manifold." This fifth memo promotes perhaps the most obvious of contemporary tropes: the network. The "sixth", CONSISTENCY, was unrealized at the time of Calvino's death.

Throughout his attempt to grasp his precise relationship to these contemporary and, ideally, future qualities, Calvino constantly invokes polar opposites. The most memorable and profound is the pairing of *syntony* and *focalization* —participation in the world versus constructive concentration—in which he depicts the struggle of balancing the two as prerequisite for the creation of culture. Brian Eno also refers to poles, or axes, in various writings which propose thinking in terms of continuums or greyscales, between concepts rather than traditional binaries (from Neat/Shaggy to Capitalism/Communism):

31

Let's start here: "culture" is everything we don't have to do. We have to eat, but we don't have to have "cuisines," Big Macs or Tournedos Rossini. We have to cover ourselves against the weather, but we don't have to be so concerned as to whether we put on Levi's or Yves Saint-Laurent. We have to move about the face of the globe, but we don't have to dance. These other things, we choose to do. We could survive if we chose not to.

I call the "have-to" activities functional and the "don't-have-to"s stylistic. By "stylistic" I mean that the main basis on which we make choices between them is in terms of their stylistic differences. Human activities distribute them on a long continuum from the functional (being born, eating, crapping and dying) to the stylistic (making abstract paintings, getting married, wearing elaborate lace underwear, melting silver foil onto our curries).

The first thing to note is that the whole bundle of stylistic activities is exactly what we would describe as "a culture": what we use to distinguish individuals and groups from each other. We do not say of cultures "They eat," but "They eat very spicy foods" or "They eat raw meat." A culture is the sum of all the things about which humanity can choose to differ—all the things by which people can recognize each other as being voluntarily distinguished from each other.

But there seem to be two words involved here: culture, the package of behaviors-about-which-we-have-a-choice, and Culture, which we usually take to mean art, and which we tend to separate as an activity. I think these are connectable concepts: big-C Culture is in fact the name we reserve for one end of the FUNCTIONAL/STYLISTIC continuum —for those parts of it that are particularly and conspicuously useless, specifically concerned with style. As the spectrum merges into usefulness, we are inclined to use the words "craft" or "design," and to accord them less status, and as it merges again into pure instinctual imperative we no longer use the word "culture" at all. From now onwards, when I use the word "culture" I am using it indiscriminately to cover the whole spectrum of activities excluding the "imperative" end. And perhaps that gives us a better name for the axes of this spectrum: "imperative" and "gratuitous"— things you have to do versus things you could choose not to do. (Eno, 1996)

I would assert that the main point of tension of a contem-porary art/design school, what ought to preoccupy its faculty as well as its individual teachers, is the question of defining where on this sliding scale they exist—and then where they *should* exist (if different) within the current paradigm. Should teaching be more towards small-c culture or big-C Culture? I do not mean to imply some straight-forward value judgement here, but consider these two inventories:

There are many roles for designers even within a given sector of professional work. a functional classification might be: *Impresarios*: those who get work, organize others to do it, and present the outcome. *Culture diffusers*: those who do competent work effectively over a broad field, usually from a stable background of dispersed interests. *Culture generators*: obsessive characters who work in back rooms and produce ideas, often more use to other designers than the public. *Assistants*: often beginners, but also a large group concerned with administration and draughtsmanship. *Parasites*: those who skim off the surface of other people's work and make a good living by it.
(Potter, 1969)

and:

> Every one of them does many things well but one best: Each represents an archetype who builds a culture of creativity in a specific way. There is *The Talent Scout*, who hires the über-best and screens ideas at warp speed. *The Feeder*, who stimulates people's minds with a constant supply of new trends and ideas. *The Mash-up Artist*, who tears down silos, mixes people up, and brings in outside change agents. *The Ethnographer*, who studies human behavior across cultures and searches for unspoken desires that can be met with new products. *The Venture Capitalist*, who generates a diversified portfolio of promising ideas that translate into new products and services. (Conlin, 2006)

While both seem to reasonably summarize the roles which might inform contemporary design (or "communication" or whatever) courses, and the sort of "specializations" that might replace traditional discipline streaming, I would say the rhetoric and attitude of the first is geared towards *accommodating* demand, concerned with some vestige of *imperative* needs while that of the second is geared towards *creating* demand, which doesn't pretend to fulfill anything other than *gratuitous* needs. It is not too difficult to interpret the former as an attempt to maintain (big-C) Constructive principles, while the latter is resolutely resigned to (small-c) commodification. Again: consider where on the axis we currently stand, and where might we reasonably slide to —on both ethical and practical terms.

Future

If students [teachers] feel blocked by society as it is, then they must help find constructive ways forward to a better one. In a personal way, the question must be answered by individual students [teachers] in their own terms, but as far as design goes, it is possible to see two slippery snakes in the snakes and ladders game. The first snake is to suppose that the future is best guaranteed by trying to live in it; and the second is an assumption that must never go unexamined—that the required tools of method and technique are more essential than spirit and attitude. This snake offers a sterility that reduces the most "correct" procedures to a pretentious emptiness, whether in education or in professional practice. The danger is reinforced by another consideration. There can be a certain hollowness of accomplishment known to a student [teacher] in his own heart, but which he is obliged to disown, and to mask with considerations of tomorrow, merely to keep up with the pressures surrounding him. Apart from the success-criteria against which his work may be judged, there is a more subtle and pervasive competitiveness from which it is difficult to be exempt, even by the most sophisticated exercises in detachment. Hence the importance of recognizing that education is a fluid and organic growth of understanding, or it is nothing. Similarly, when real participation is side-stepped, and education is accepted lovelessly as a handout, then reality can seem progressively more fraudulent.

Fortunately, the veriest beginner can draw confidence from the same source as a seasoned design specialist, once it is realized that the foundations of judgement in design, and indeed the very structure of decision, are rooted in ordinary life and in human concerns, not in some quack professionalism with a degree as a magic key to the

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> mysteries. From then on, to keep the faith, to keep open to the future, is to know the present as a commitment in depth, and to know the past where its spirit can still reach us. (Potter, 1969)

Is there a way to rethink a curriculum which addresses the conditions variously described above (in more or less overlapping ways), which is fully aware of past dystopias, avoids the easy slide into trite idealism or, equally, facile marketing rhetoric, and isn't necessarily crowd-pleasing?; a proposal which consolidates the new demands to provide a grounding for art/design teachers to understand and be able to articualte *why*, *how*, and *towards what end* they are teaching art/design; and which does so by dealing with the root of the current mis-alignment of models, from the core of the institution with long-term foresight rather than the more familiar sense of temporarily shoring up the problem.

I think this involves being able to answer the following questions honestly and explicitly, and with concrete justifications and examples:

Is an increasingly generalized, inherently cross-disciplinary art/design education necessary and desirable?
Why?

Is a broader encompassing of other social studies fields necessary and desirable for art/design education?
Why?

Should a curriculum be *predominantly* geared towards
1. questioning, 2. fulfilling, or 3. creating …
either a. social needs, or b. commercial demands?
Why?

> We no longer have any desire for design that is driven by need. Something less prestigious than a "designed" object can do the same thing for less money. The Porsche Cayenne brings you home, but any car will do the same thing, certainly less expensively and probably just as quickly. But who remembers the first book, the first table, the first house, the first airplane? All these inventions went through a prototype phase, to a more or less fully developed model, which subsequently became design. Invention and the design represent different stages of a technological development, but unfortunately, these concepts are being confused with one another. If the design is in fact the aesthetic refinement of an invention, then there is room for debate about what the "design problem" is. Many designers still use the term "problem-solving" as a non-defined description of their task. But what is in fact the problem? Is it scientific? Is it social? Is it aesthetic? Is the problem the list of prerequisites? Or is the problem the fact that there is no problem? (Van der Velden, 2006)

Perhaps contemporary art/design teaching indeed implies less obvious "problem solving" and more a kind of social philosophy as suggested here, with admittedly oversimplified polarity, by Emilio Ambasz (as quoted by Van der velden):

> The first attitude involves a commitment to design as a problem-solving activity, capable of formulating, in physical terms, solutions to problems encountered in the natural and socio-cultural milieu. The opposite attitude, which we may call one of counter-design, chooses instead to emphasize the need for a renewal of philosophical discourse and for social and political involvement as a way of bringing around structural changes in our society. (Ambasz, 1972)

—and more or less confirmed here:

> Education is all about trust. The teacher embraces the uncertain future by trusting the student, supporting the growth of something that cannot yet be seen, an emergent sensibility that cannot be judged by contemporary standards. A good school fosters a way of thinking that draws on everything that is known in order to jump energetically into the unknown, trusting the formulations of the next generation that by definition defy the logic of the present. Education is therefore a form of optimism that gives our field a future by trusting the students to see, think and do things we cannot.
>
> This optimism is crucial. The students arrive from around 55 different countries with an endless thirst for experimentation. It is not enough for us to give each of them expertise in the current state-of-the-art. We have to give them the capacity to change the discipline itself, to completely define the state-of-the-art. More than simply training the architects how to design we redesign the very figure of the architect. The goal is not a certain kind of architecture but a certain kind of evolution in architectural intelligence.
>
> The architect is, first and foremost, a public intellectual, crafting the material world to communicate ideas. Architecture is a way of thinking. By thinking differently, the architect allows others to see the world differently, and perhaps to live differently. This perhaps is crucial. For all the relentless determination of our loudest architects and their most spectacular projects, architecture dictates nothing in the end. The real gift of the best architects is to produce a kind of hesitation in the routines of contemporary life, an opening in which new potentials are offered, new patters, rhythms, moods, pleasures, connections, perceptions ... offered as a gift that may or may not be taken up. (Wigley, 2006)

Following the line of many conversations with people both inside and outside the institution, I suggest that a practical way of proceeding is to directly reconsider the relevance of Bauhaus-derived skill-based workshop/studio teaching, precisely because it *is* such a platitude. An obvious starting point is to contest the key conviction of the canon of modernist art/design pedagogy (Malevich, Gropius, Kandinsky, Klee, Itten, Moholy-Nagy, Albers, etc.) that teaching programs should be, in the words of De Duve, "based on the reduction of practice to the fundamental elements of a syntax immanent to the medium," the lingering notion of which is the systematic exploration of fundamentals such as shape, colour, texture, contrast, pattern, etc. through limited practical exercises; and the notion that the principles derived from this elemental experience could then be applied to any chosen medium.

Today, starting from zero, would our virgin curriculum —founded on the CONTEMPORARY paradigm circumscribed above by such as Findeli, De Duve and Eno—logically manifest itself in the same way? If the boundaries between disciplines are no longer watertight, with *attitude*, *practice* and *deconstruction* as the bedrock of our field, we need to reconsider the nature of the primary tools and skills offered to new students. As trite as it sounds, "thinking" covers both, as a more advanced Cultural version of "common sense."

> If the question of art is no longer one of producing or reproducing a certain kind of object (and if the medium no longer sets the terms of making—what "painting" demands, or sets out as a problem) then a responsible, medium-based training, which always says *how to make*, can't get to the question

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of *what to make*. How does one get from assignments that can be fulfilled—color charts, a litho stone that doesn't fill in after x-number of prints, a weld that holds—to something that one can claim as an artist, to something that hasn't been assigned?

> So there is a kind of gap or aporia that comes either in the middle of undergraduate art school or in between BFA and MFA, and that aporia marks a shift from the technical and teaching on the side of the teacher, to the psychological and teaching on the side of the student—working on the student rather than teaching him or her something. "He is saying this to me but what does he want?" as Lacan imagines the scene; or in the figure of the gift, "Is this what you want?" "Will you acknowledge this?"(Singerman, email 2006)

The idea of focusing on a more transferable "design thinking" implies not only easy communication and movement between disciplines (both physically and bureaucratically), but also the integration with broader social sciences: philosophy, sociology, aesthetics, etc.—towards what Potter described earlier as knowing "the present as a commitment in depth."

Further, it seems imperative to introduce "design thinking" at the very beginning of the undergraduate program, precisely to allow a more sophisticated understanding of culture and Culture to inform and infect subsequent practical work. There are a number of ways of practical implementation at different extremes. One would be to offer a course in "design thinking" prior to any other media-specific and/or practical teaching; a second is to offer it alongside other teaching as a regular counterpart throughout preliminary practical classes; a third is to make it the explicit focus of the whole department, with specialisms, workshops and other practical teaching offered as supplementary offshoots from this core.

Such a class, course or even department might effectively focus on an open discussion about the very nature of being a contemporary artist/designer (which immediately invokes the nature of this very duality); involve direct connections —lectures, seminars, etc.—to the wider humanities disciplines; and be supplemented by broader practical projects, for example, incorporating architecture, graphic and environmental disciplines in a single teaching project.

All of this leans towards the development of prioritizing general *thinking* about art and design rather than *making* in a single specific medium; an approach which might be defined as working towards developing and nurturing *critical faculty* as a formative skill.

> Artists are the subject of graduate school; they are both who and what is taught. In grammar school, to continue this play of subjects and objects, teachers teach art; in my undergraduate college, artists taught art. In the graduate school artists teach artists. Artists are both the subject of the graduate art department and its goal. The art historian Howard Risatti, who has written often on the difficulties of training contemporary artists, argued not long ago that "at the very heart of the problem of educating the artist lies the difficulty of defining what it means to be an artist today." The "problem" is not a practical one; the meaning of an artist cannot be solved by faculty or administration, although across this book a number of professors and administrators try. Rather, the problem of definition is at the heart of the artist's education because it is the formative and defining problem of recent art. Artists are made by troubling it over, by taking it seriously. (Singerman, 2001)

Finally—in summary—what would be the potential payoff of an art/design pedagogy founded on *critical faculty*? What kind of outcome are we after?

A provisional answer: to educate students primarily towards becoming informed thinkers, sensitive to both culture at large ("the world") *as well as* their specific Culture interests (e.g. "the art world," "the design world") and how both overlap and effect each other …

… by introducing a vocabulary relevant to describing both forms of c/Culture (for example, defining and discussing the intricacies of the terms in De Duve's table, from "talent" to "deconstruction") …

… in order to develop the skill of coherent articulation, fostering the ability to explain, justify, defend and argue for both self-made and others' work …

… towards an observable level of critical sophistication, where "critical" refers to engaged discussion as part of a historical and theoretical continuum rather than the regular ego-feeding value-judgments of the group or individual crit …

 … in short, to foster an environment of progressive reflexivity.

Educating reflexivity—teaching students to observe their practice from both inside and outside—offers students the facility to interrogate their potential roles and their effects. So upon entering the market, industry, commerce or whatever other distinction of post-school environment, they are at least equipped to ask whether they

want to / ought to / refuse to
enter into / challenge / reject (the)
existing art & design world / industry / academia / market

Alain Findeli proposes a similar model (which he expresses in terms of teaching an "intelligence of the invisible" through "basic design") in order to redirect design education from its current path towards "a branch of product development, marketing communication, and technological fetishism," stating "if it is not to remain a *reactive* attitude, it will have to become *proactive* …"

> If we accept the fact that the canonical, linear, causal, and instrumental model is no longer adequate to describe the complexity of the design process, we are invited to adopt a new model whose theoretical framework is inspired by systems science, complexity theory, and practical philosophy. In the new model, instead of science and technology, I would prefer perception and action, the first term referring to the concept of visual intelligence, and the second indicating that a technological act always is a moral act. As for the reflective relationship between perception and action, I consider it governed not by deductive logics, but by a logic based on aesthetics.
>
> I believe that visual intelligence, ethical sensibility and, and aesthetic intuition can be developed and strengthened through some kind of basic design education. However, instead of having this basic design taught in the first year as a preliminary course, as in the Bauhaus tradition, it would be taught in parallel with studio work through the entire course of study, from the first to last year. Moholy-Nagy used to say that design was not a profession, but an attitude.
>
> Didn't he claim that this course was perfectly fitted for any professional curriculum, i.e., not only for

designers, but also for lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc.? (Findeli, 2001)

This is not too far away from the recent "MFA is the new MBA" soundbite, which emphasizes another paradigm shift: the business world's recognition of original thinking over traditionally conservative managerial procedures.

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If all this were accepted, the next problem would be how to monitor and accredit such a curriculum, not to mention how to articulate and justify it to apprehensive parents, and their children rapidly becoming more parent-like than their parents in their hunger for the pacifying fiction of predictable job pathways. But this is jumping too far ahead for now: I want to end by emphasizing that *what should be done?* ought to take clear precedence over concerns over *how should we do it?*. Of course, again this is little more than simple, sturdy design-thinking-in-action (Step 1: *re-articulate the brief!*) which should be maintained not least because otherwise the usual brand of opinion-polled, market-driven decision-making will surely only end up destroying the industry it floods with its supposedly satisfied customers. I suspect that maintaining this simple *what?*—then—*how?* sequence may well be the most difficult part of the challenge.

Note:
I have slightly amended many of these texts in order to facilitate easier reading. Because the flow demanded many minor omissions, instead of marking them with the usual […], I have generally taken the liberty of re-composing regular sentences, but ensure that there is no loss or distortion of meaning. I strongly reccommed reference to the original complete texts listed below:

– Roger Bridgman, 'Statement' and 'Who Cares', both reprinted in *Dot Dot Dot* X, Summer 2005
– Michelle Conlin, 'Champions of innovation' in *Business Week*, June 8, 2006
– Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millennium* (Jonathan Cape, London, 1992)
– Thierry De Duve, 'When form has become attitude—and beyond' in *Theory in contemporary art since 1885* (Blackwell, Malden/Oxford/Carlton, 2005
– Brian Eno, *A Year (With Swollen Appendices)* (Faber & Faber, London, 1996)
– Howard Singerman, *Art Subjects: Making artists in the American university* (University of California Press, 1999)
– Howard Singerman, email to Frances Stark, 2006
– Alain Findeli, 'Rethinking design education for the 21st century: theoretical, methodological and ethical discussion' in *Design Issues*, vol.17 no.1, Winter 2001
– Robin Kinross, ed., *Anthony Froshaug: Documents of a Life / Typography & Texts* (Hyphen, London, 2000)
– Norman Potter, *What is a designer*, second edition (Hyphen, London, 1980)
– Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (William Morrow, 1974)
– Alex Seago, *Burning the box of beautiful things* (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995)
– Daniel van der Velden, 'Search and destroy' in *Metropolis M*, 2006/2
Frank Whitford, *Bauhaus* (Thames & Hudson, London, 1984)
– Mark Wigley, contribution to education issue of *AD* magazine, 2006
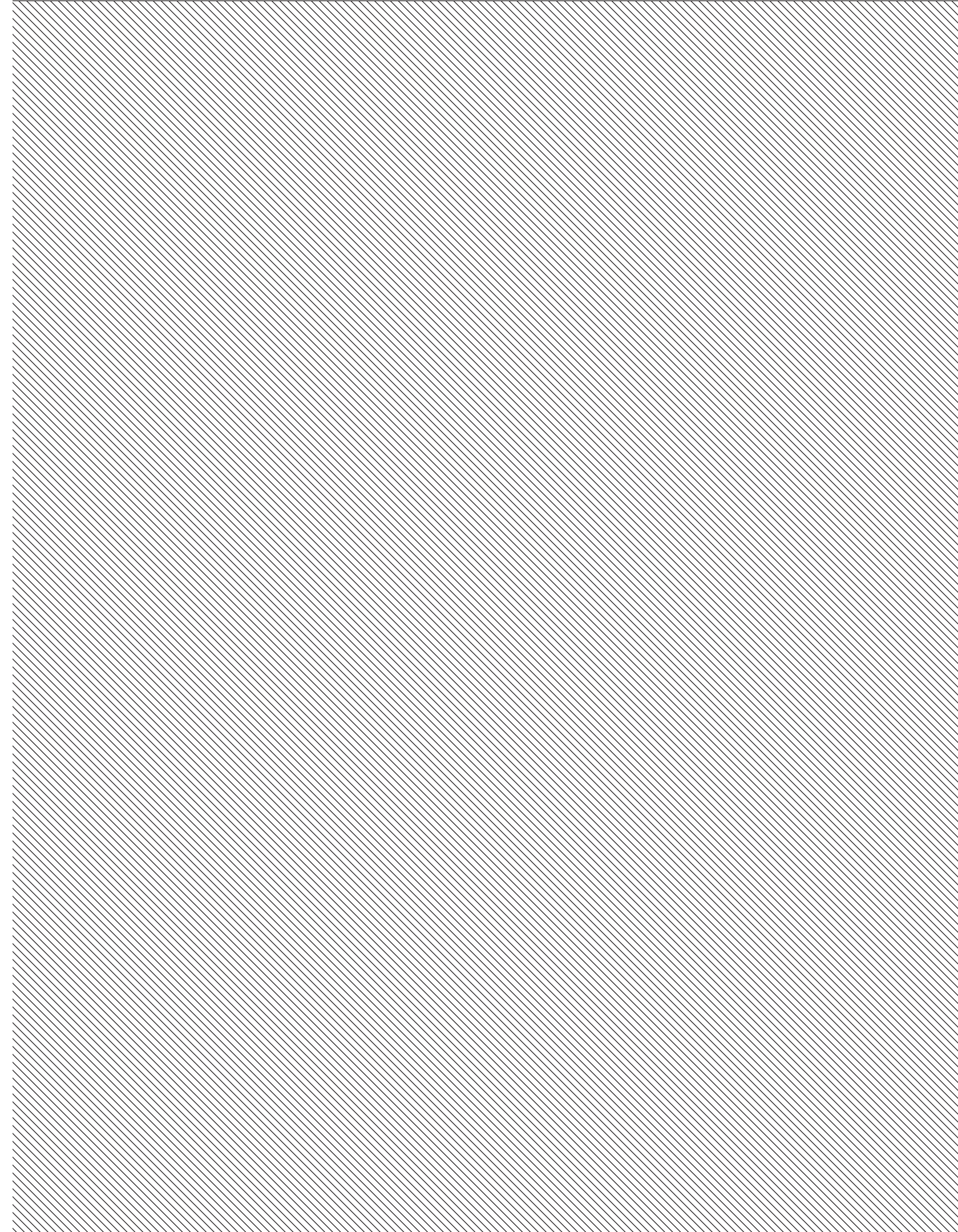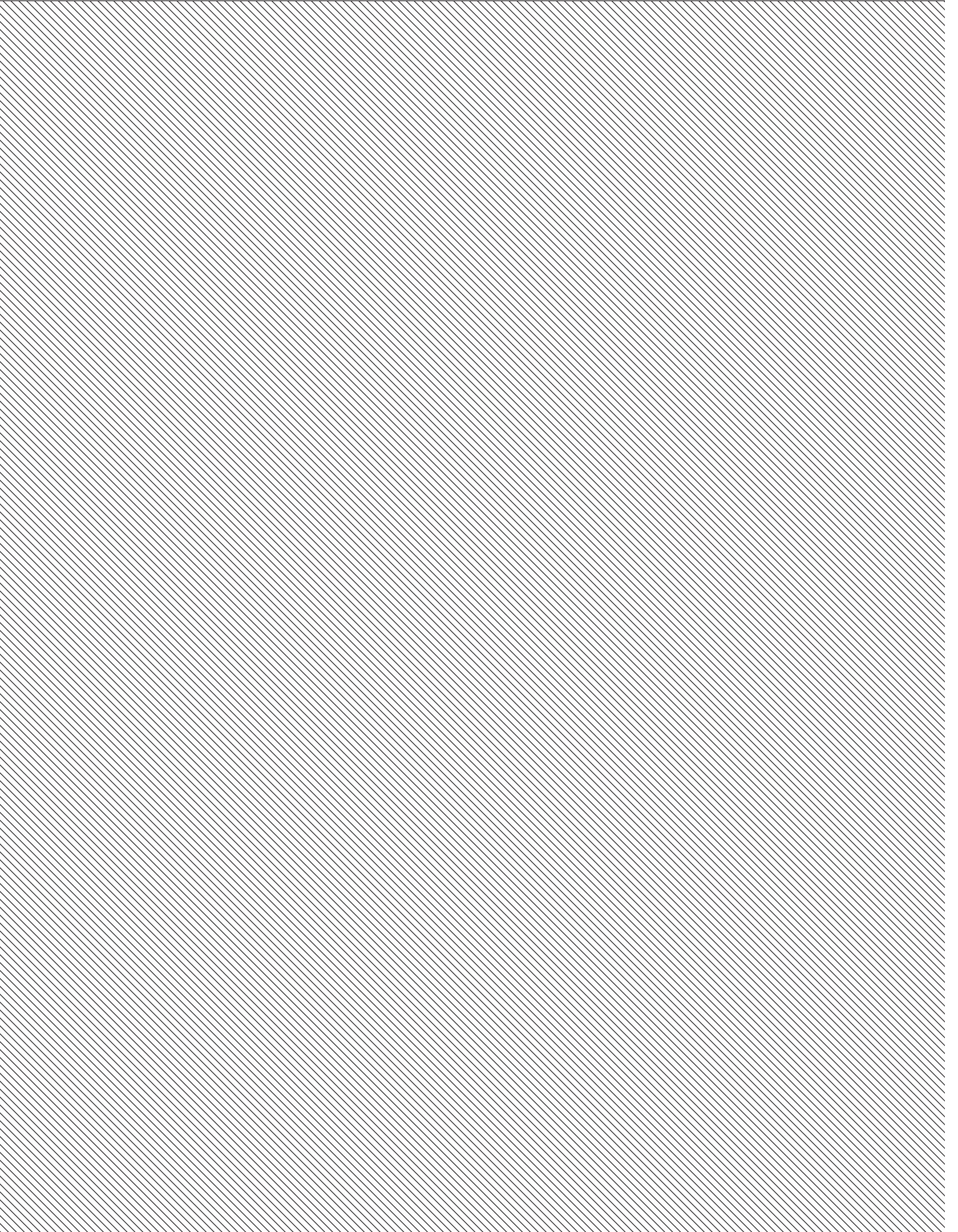
Excellence and Pluralism

HOWARD SINGERMAN
University of Virginia

My university's chief operating officer talks these days about the school's 'product lines.' It is, he argues, a useful way to think about what the university does, because it now operates on the scale of the modern corporation and it has to answer to clients, constituents, and taxpayer shareholders. As a major state university, mine has five product lines: teaching, research, health care, service to the state and to businesses and organizations (teacher certification, for example, or consulting), and entertainment. This last category includes not only the university's 19 different intercollegiate sports teams and their marketing paraphernalia, but also its concerts, theater productions, poetry readings, and art exhibitions. It's not clear, though, that the university's studio art department has caught up with the producer's role, or whether the product it imagines is the same as our vice president's. An undergraduate major housed alongside a graduate art history program, the studio here is devoted, at least on paper, in its departmental reviews and modest public relations, to the project of teaching art as a liberal art, in relation to language and history and the historical *métiers* of painting, sculpture, and printmaking. There is some small mention of community outreach, and little question, since it's not a graduate program, of benchmarking or national ranking (or at least not until recently when it began to raise money and profile for a new building). Rather, the project of studio art at the University of Virginia has been something very much like *Bildung* or the old ideal of general education; its imaginary product is the well-rounded citizen and humanist.

I've drawn this a little baldly, but I'd like the voice of the university's chief operating officer and that of the studio program to represent two competing visions of the university, a difference I would like to plot with Bill Readings's *The University in Ruins* as the difference between the university of culture and the university of excellence. The university of culture, modeled as and after the 19th-century German university as it was imagined by Schiller and Humboldt, takes the ideal of a shared national culture as its referent and the citizen and the nation as its goal. Schiller's 'aesthetic education,' Humboldt's 'organic unity'; these would situate aesthetic experience, precisely as a cultural and enculturating practice, at the university's center. Drawn together in the ideal of culture, the university's coherence and its common goal mirrored the state's, and its divisions were structured by the order of knowledge itself. 'Reason … provides the *ratio* for all the disciplines; it is their organizing principle,' and along the university's hallways, the department was the bureaucratic image of the discipline.[1] Even as it became the research university, the

wissenschaftliche university, the university of culture took its possibilities and its knowledge from the past or nature construed as a past, as implanted with that which would be discovered in the future, as it was plumbed along or within the boundaries of the discipline for its central questions and meanings.

The university of excellence in Readings's construction — and in stark contrast — is the university without a coherent content, without a referent: 'The University of Excellence is the *simulacrum* of the idea of a University':

> The appeal to excellence marks the fact that there is no longer any idea of the University, or rather that the idea has now lost all content. As a non-referential unit of value entirely internal to the system, excellence marks nothing more than the moment of technology's self-reflection. All the system requires is for activity to take place, and the empty notion of excellence refers to nothing other than the optimal input/output ratio in matters of information.[2]

Here the student to be formed has been replaced by the client to be served, whether those customers are students, state legislators, or *US News and World Report*. Judgment rests with the satisfactions of individual arenas of consumers and constituents, with rankings and polls and customer satisfaction, as well as with accountability and accounting. Here, knowledge is new, or rather it must be cast as new, in the name of 'information' and along the model of science not as *Wissenschaft* but as technological progress. It's a model that strikes the arts and humanities harder than it does the sciences, since it is less easy to write press releases on recent scholarly research in, say, Spanish literature, or in one's own studio, than in might be in nuclear medico-imaging. No longer effectively structured by the conjunction of the department and the discipline, nor policed by its hierarchies, Readings's university of excellence is more open to the interdisciplinary or postdisciplinary, to cultural and visual studies, perhaps, or the various area studies, where budget and faculty lines are held by the dean or the provost rather than the department. The question raised by this issue of *Emergences* is what this university looks like now; my particular task is to address how art looks in such a university: it looks like a picture in a recent issue of the *New York Times Magazine*.

In the summer of 1999 the *New York Times Magazine* published a photograph of just some of the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles's (UCLA's) art department, arrayed along a whitewashed wall. It's a remarkable line up of artists: John Baldessari, Chris Burden, Mary Kelly, Barbara Kruger, Paul McCarthy, Charles Ray, Nancy Rubins, James Welling, all clad in black, save Charlie Ray's fleece pull-over and a couple of pairs of blue jeans, book-ended by the khaki of Henry Hopkin's slacks and Lari Pittman's jacket. There's much that could be said about the image, and about 'How to Succeed in Art,' the article by Deborah Solomon that it illustrates. In the opening decades of the 20th century art schools were decried for their failures and their uselessness: 'in no other profession is there such a woful [*sic*] waste of the raw material of human life as exists in certain phases of art education';[3] what Solomon decries is UCLA's success, its excellence: 'Visiting the campus is like attending an opening of the Whitney Biennial.'[4] Even before the article's

appearance and the hirings of James Welling, John Baldessari, and Barbara Kruger (who has since been hired away to the University of California, San Diego (UCSD)), the school was ranked in the top 10 graduate programs in sculpture and photography, and in the top 12 overall, by *US News*; according to Solomon's article, it's harder to get into than the Harvard Business School. These are just the sort of measures that define excellence in Readings's reading, markers of bureaucratic success that are purely relational and administrative, unhinged from the idea of the university or any specific disciplinary content, even, one could argue, from art as a coherent project. Clearly, there is much to be noticed in the picture beyond the fashion sense of those posed.[5] Still, it may be worth it to start with these fashions since if a photograph had been taken of UCLA's art faculty in 1953, they would have been clad not in black but in white lab coats, and had it been taken in 1927, the year the UCLA was named and ground broken for its move to Westwood, the image would have looked different yet again. All 14 members of the original department were women, as were the great majority of their students; they would most likely have been wearing dresses. In this fashion change a number of histories can be told, I think, about how art was imagined at UCLA and more broadly in the new university.

Old History

While a number of the original faculty exhibited as artists — prints, water-colors, paintings in oil — it is not at all clear that a picture of them would have constituted an art world, or even where an art world might have been for them or for any college art teacher or student in 1927. The project of the department at UCLA was not to train artists, to make and then to project artists onto a scene or into a world; it was distinctly more pragmatic: like most college- and university-based art departments in the United States, the department at UCLA began as a teacher training program for the primary and secondary grades. In 1919, the year the University of California Southern Branch absorbed the faculty and facilities of the old Los Angeles State Normal School, two-thirds of the nation's campus-based art programs offered a 'normal' or school arts course or specialized entirely in teacher training; across the next three decades, some 70% or more of the nation's art students were women training for classroom. Even after the establishment of a four-year liberal arts degree and the general College of Letters and Sciences in 1924, UCLA's courses in art remained firmly within the Teachers College. When, in 1930, its own four-year major was introduced, its courses — from art appreciation, to bookbinding, to costume design and freehand drawing — led to the degree of Bachelor of Education in secondary education; minors were available in kindergarten and elementary teaching and in home economics.

Like many art programs in the United States in the 1910s and 1920s, and like other studio art programs across the LA basin in those years, at Otis and Chouinard, the UCLA program was strongly influenced by the anti-Beaux Arts, craft- and design-based teaching of Arthur Wesley Dow, the most important art educator of his day.[6] While all of UCLA's core faculty had studied with Dow,

at Columbia Teachers College or in his studio at Ipswich, and all held the rank of assistant or associate professor, they and their students might easily have felt implicated by the charges leveled against art teaching in the state colleges by the Association of American Colleges in 1927, charges that linked the localness of the school classroom and the college studio to the gender of its students and teachers, and to craft:

> … the opportunist's sensitiveness seizes for the college certain elements [of art] which are convenient for public school education and in return for which certificates, fees, large enrollments, and some sense of progress may be available. The state universities and teachers' colleges offer such preparation; someone living in town may have the technique, or a teacher in the department of home economics or music who has taken some art courses lacks a full schedule. Such background … produces practical work in basketry, china painting, stenciling, leather … [That] this is contrary to the theories of the college and makes relatively slow process [is] indicated by the status of the teachers: of 126 persons, eighty-seven are women, eighty-four have no college degree, and about sixty are instructors in rank.[7]

For the mostly eastern liberal arts colleges that the Association of American Colleges represented, the femininity of the 'practical' art and art education faculty was both cause and proof of its standing in the college.

The issue of gender, the problem of the 'woman art student' and teacher, was a source of considerable stress from the first moments of art in the college and university; it drove the definitions and transformations of art and artist, and of the scope and project — even the names — of the arts on campus. In 1908, Dow had pronounced the goal of programs such as those at UCLA: 'the true purpose of art education is the education of the whole people for appreciation … This appreciation leads a certain number to produce actual works of art, greater or lesser, — perhaps a temple, perhaps only a cup — but it leads the majority to *desire* finer form and more harmony of tone and color in surroundings and things for daily use.'[8] By the turn of the 1930s, appreciation and 'art in everyday life,' along with the art teacher, and the consumer who desired fine forms and harmonies, were clearly gendered terms and roles. By 1939, UCLA's department of art had been moved out of the Teachers College into a newly organized and perhaps more productivist, if still not yet fully professionalized (or masculinized), College of Applied Arts, where it was joined to programs in home economics, mechanic arts, music, physical education, and the preprofessional degree in nursing. A decade later, the major track in 'appreciation and history of art' was renamed 'history and application of art,' and in 1953, the year artist and art historian Gibson Danes was hired as full professor and appointed chair of the department, 'history and practice.' Danes was only the third hire to full professor in the department, after the art historian Karl With and the art educator George James Cox, the first man on the art department faculty and a longtime colleague of Dow's and his successor at Columbia, who was appointed as full professor in 1932. UCLA would not hire a woman directly to the rank of full professor until 1997,

with the arrival of Mary Kelly; only one of the women who began the department would reach the rank of full professor: Louise Sooy, in 1952, two years before her retirement.

Trained as a painter at the Art Institute of Chicago before returning to complete a PhD in art history at Yale in the late 1940s, Danes had called for a reformation of art training in the university in the pages of the *College Art Journal* in 1943, writing then from the University of Texas. Against the figure of the modern artist 'carrying on an artificial and marginal existence in a world that has changed,' an artist whose 'single objective' was to produce 'something for Fifty-seventh Street, the Carnegie or Corcoran show,' Danes offered the possibility of the artist as an architect, a builder, 'ministering to the basic needs of the people … solving problems from the requirements of the region and the needs of the client.'[9] Artificial and marginal, Danes's modern artist was implicitly effeminate, marked and marred by his situation and his classmates in the university; in contrast, he insisted, 'artists in the Renaissance were men, craftsmen … Every institution offering professional training for the artist should realize the gravity of its responsibility, instead of ignoring the place of the artist in the world today.'[10] It was Danes's faculty in the early 1950s that would have worn white lab coats, modeling a new 'professional appearance in keeping with the expanded training of artists.'[11] David F. Jackey, the dean of the College of Applied Arts who hired Danes as chair, offered an expanded version of Danes's stuttering, prosthetic 'men, craftsmen' as he described a new sort of art teacher and set out a new set of goals for the school: 'The art teacher has to develop an ability to see himself and the whole field of art in broad social perspective. His concern must be with what art can do for MAN — who is the real focal point of all education. He must feel as well as know the importance of artistic experience, and then discover functional methods to make the classroom a creative laboratory.'[12] Jackey's pronouncement perhaps descends from Dow's 'education of the whole people,' but there is a retooling, a modernizing taking place in the reach of the dean's statement, in the 'whole field' and the 'broad social,' the 'functional' and the 'laboratory.' And given the hiring practices of the College of Applied Arts, Jackey's capitalized MAN should probably not be taken as a synonym for the 'whole people': between 1940 and 1960, the life of the College of Applied Arts, 58 men were hired as instructors or ladder faculty to 24 women, a trend that would continue and even accelerate into the 1980s. Training teachers would remain part of the department's 'great responsibility to the state, especially during [a] period of rapidly expanding population,' Jackey admitted, but increasingly for both him and Danes the stress would be on production and on producing artists.

At stake in this redressing was not only the place and gender of art in the university, but also, and quite particularly, the university's place within a system of education: Danes's lab-coated, problem-solving artists offered a prospect for university-based art teaching other than the classroom teacher. In 1935 California's normal colleges at Chico, Fresno, Humboldt, San Diego, San Jose, and Santa Barbara were renamed California State colleges and — against the protests of the regents of the University of California — granted the right

to admit students not sworn to teaching and to offer a Bachelor of Arts in at least some of the liberal arts, those applicable to secondary teaching. With the founding of the system's largest campuses at Los Angeles, Long Beach, and Sacramento just after the end of World War II, not only had the job of training teachers for the state been taken over almost exclusively by the California State College system; so too had a good deal of the undergraduate teaching — along with a significant portion of the University of California's political clout. In 1955, for the first time since before the founding of UCLA, enrollments at the Cal States exceeded that of the two UCs and four new campuses opened in 1957. From the end of the war on, its presidents pushed for a greater role in general undergraduate education as well as the right to grant degrees in the professions and at the Master of Arts (MA) level; it is 'a startling fact,' remarked a UC professor surveyed by regent Robert Sproul, 'that only a very small number of students graduating from the state colleges each June go into teaching. The state colleges are aiming rather to become liberal colleges, and eventually want to confer the MA degree.'[13] A 1947 law, again opposed by the UC regents, officially gave the state colleges some of what they wanted: 'courses appropriate for a general or liberal education and for responsible citizenship … vocational training in such fields as business, industry, public services, homemaking, and social service,'[14] but reserved the right to grant the MA, and to pursue research, and the doctorate to the UCs.

The project for administrators such as Jackey and Danes — and perhaps the purpose of the College of Applied Arts — was not only to separate art and the artist from the art teacher, but also to inoculate the university and university education against art, or at least against its classroom craft. At higher levels, the College of Applied Arts, which was formed from the leftovers of the old Teachers College, might have been an expedient way to separate education and the College of Education as a site for graduate level study and research from the training of classroom teachers, as well as from art and home economics. Engineering was rescued from the College of Applied Arts — and the name mechanical arts — in 1945, with the founding of the College of Engineering, but it would take until 1960 for art practice to reach that position, when the College of Applied Arts, or at least some of what was left within it, was finally reformed as the College of Fine Arts. However belated, the reorganization and rechristening were institutionally bound to happen; the applied arts were, after all, the province of the Cal States, as were increasingly the services of creden-tialing and certifying. As the 1948 Survey Commission report put it, 'the state colleges have developed into institutions responsive to the educational prob-lems and demands of the areas they serve. Although the student body of the state college will contain students from outside the local area, and although training will be offered which has general as well as local appeal, a state college is primarily concerned with the area or region it serves.'[15] Danes's masculine protest and his professionalized goals were intended to distance his new school from the old art teacher and the Teachers College, but while his call for the artist 'solving problems from the requirements of the region and the needs of the client' might have made sense at the University of Texas in the middle of World War II, and clearly it struck a chord with Dean Jackey in the early 1950s,

it would be too close — too local and too proximate — to the project of the new state colleges to fit the modern, and increasingly national, university that the University of California imagined itself to be, precisely in political difference from the Cal States. Danes's problem in 1944 was with 'Fifty-seventh Street, the Carnegie or Corcoran show'; by 1960 they would be the solution.[16]

Research

Danes left UCLA for Yale in 1958, where he succeeded Joseph Albers. He was replaced by Lester Longman, whose appointment, like Danes's, signaled a significant shift in what art might mean, where it might fit in the university. A Princeton-trained renaissance art historian, Longman was in many respects responsible for the national success of the Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree; hired by the University of Iowa in 1936, he built the program in Iowa City into the nation's largest art department, and the largest producer of MFAs in the years after World War II. His graduates included, among many others, Miriam Schapiro and Paul Brach, who would help to found the graduate programs at UCSD and Cal Arts. Like Danes, Longman assumed that the university had a role in training artists, maybe the primary role. He published a quite influential and controversial essay in the *College Art Journal* in 1945, entitled 'Why Not Educate Artists in College?' But the artist he offered was quite different than Danes's. Rather than the technician, the craftsman–professional that Danes would produce, Longman imagined a university scholar, schooled, as one commentator put it in the 1940s, in the 'anthropomorphic drama common to all phases of the humanistic tradition.'[17] Longman's university artist was a professional not on the model of the architect but of the professor of the academic humanities — and crucially one devoted to research, to production and publication, the humanities in the new university. Appropriately, he oversaw the realignment of art at UCLA from a College of Applied Arts aligned with home economics, mechanical arts, and physical education, to a College of Fine Arts that included art, art history, music, and theater. Announcing the new college, Franklin Murphy, UCLA's chancellor, promised a 'truly professional education of the highest quality for the creative and performing artist on the one hand, and the historian and critic of the arts on the other.'[18] The MFA in studio was introduced at UCLA in 1966.

At UCLA Longman was controversial not for his model of the MFA artist or his call to train artists in the university, but for his conservative and very public opposition to contemporary practice. Not long after his arrival he published a letter in the *New York Times* and a long article in the first issue of *Artforum* decrying the emptiness of an already old Abstract Expressionism as well as such recent practitioners as Robert Rauschenberg and Yves Klein. Like Danes, again, Longman wanted to protect the university artist from the market and the gallery. But by the opening years of the 1960s it was clear to some members of his faculty (and to those at UC Berkeley who responded to Longman's letter with their own letter to the *Times*) that such work was precisely where their professional field was, a knowledge they could teach, a place they could work. In fact, Longman had once imagined much the same

thing; in 1946 he wrote to the New York art critic Emily Genauer of his hope to institute at Iowa 'experimental work on a more advanced level so that we may contribute new ideas to the field of art as freely as New York or Paris … In the sciences it is generally expected that the universities will be in the vanguard of experimentation. I want to be the first to do this in the field of art.'[19] One could imagine the 'experimental work' Longman wrote of to be heir to the Bauhaus' experiments, to its laboratory work in vision, but given the sites of the existing laboratories, in Paris and New York, it is, I would argue, the art world, the field of contemporary practice, that becomes the university art department's research object, whether or not that was what he intended. It is this vision, this project — far from Iowa City or Westwood, precisely 'delocalized,' to borrow a word that the educational theorist Walter Metzger coined at the end of the 1960s to describe the research university that emerged after World War II[20] — that emerges triumphant after 1960, despite Longman's own attempts to stop it. The year Longman was hired at UCLA, Robert Kaufmann founded Forum Gallery in New York to exhibit work from the university graduate departments; reviewing the work of UC Berkeley students at Forum in 1954, Hilton Kramer remarked on a 'knowledgability of current abstract idioms [that] is breathtaking.'[21] In America, it seems, the building of an art world required not only New York but also the universities, a place — or rather an organization of places, of communities — that New York could be aspired to from, that could circulate its magazines and journals, and its visiting artists. The painter Ray Parker, one of Longman's MFA students at Iowa, noted just this relationship early on, in 1953, although his geometry is by now odd and off: 'In short, students and teachers believe in an art-world; artists don't. It is supposed that artists and teachers are active in this art-world. Students aren't. Students and artists are motivated by desire; teachers may enjoy the rewards of their profession.'[22]

By the end of the 1960s the project of the art department in the university — and where it hoped to situate both its faculty and its students — was coming into focus. While Eric Larrabee, a provost at the State University of New York, Buffalo, could still at least rhetorically pose an old university question, 'What is the artistic analogue to research?' and worry over the professionalizing tendencies of the modern university — 'The guidance offered students, and the machinery of regulations with which they must cope, offers them every encouragement to direct themselves toward narrow, utilitarian goals, and away from the pattern of humanistic "general education" in which the arts were at least tolerated' — he was quite clear that universities were where professional training in the arts belonged: 'the plague of amateurism is widespread … We need trained people. Universities are where people are trained. QED.'[23] On the new University of California campuses at Irvine, San Diego, and Santa Barbara, the questions of professionalism and artistic research were answered most strongly by statements of who was not a professional, of what research, or rather artistic practice, could no longer include. Like UCLA five decades earlier, UC Santa Barbara began as a teachers' college, given to the UC system against its will just after World War II. A 1967 report on its art department reads as though it were written in response to Lura Beam's 1927 report of the

Association of American Colleges, on teachers' colleges, their faculty of local women, and their handicrafts:

> By 1959 crafts had disappeared entirely and the present program of majors in painting, sculpture, printmaking, and art history had super-seded emphasis on teacher training … [By 1963] the faculty increased to 18, all but one a professional artist or art historian. In spring 1965 … the regents approved a new MFA program in studio subjects.[24]

A report that same year on the new program at the University of California at Irvine, a program with no house to clean, no earlier incarnation, completes the trajectory:

> Early in the academic planning, fine arts were separated from the humanities and established as a separate division including the depart-ments of art, drama, music, and dance … The division departed from the usual university fine arts program by emphasizing professional commit-ment, studio and performance centered. The objectives are to provide a superior liberal education for the creative and performing artist, as well as studio and workshop experiences for the non-major. To carry out this commitment a faculty was recruited with high qualifications as pro-fessional performers and artists.[25]

Shortly after moving to Los Angeles from New York at the end of the 1970s, the art critic Peter Frank suggested that the central difference between New York's art scene and southern California's was the 'presence of a widespread college and university system' that had 'rushed in where galleries and muse-ums have feared to tread.' UC Irvine, he noted, was 'cited by many as the single most outstanding and influential art school among those that have fed the current generations of southern California artists.' The language Frank used to describe the role of the schools, and the art and the practices they allowed, echoes not so much studio talk (or some older version of art world patois) but the language and project of the high university: 'The schools, both private and public, have proved remarkably receptive to the creation of whole new formats, new divisions in their curricula, devoted to essentially experimental art research.'[26] The project of art is the promise of the university — to advance knowledge, to further the disciplinary field and its questions.

An older, established department entrusted and encrusted with *métier*-based undergraduate teaching, UCLA wasn't included in Peter Frank's 1979 short list of the most experimental schools, Cal Arts, and the UCs at San Diego and Irvine. As it happens, a 1977 departmental review had already compared the UCLA program and its faculty with Irvine, and the program at UC Davis, and found it lacking. While the review committee praised the UCLA faculty's teaching and commitment — 'there seems to be no question that the PSGA [painting, sculpture, graphic arts] faculty as a group take their responsibilities as teachers with the greatest seriousness' — it was no longer clear how those should count:

> To the extent that the quality of the faculty is to be judged from its

reputation outside the university, the matter takes on a different light … Traditional scholarly departments, after all, are not exempt from this kind of criterion, based on the quality of journals and university presses that sponsor their publications and of the critical reception their books encounter … the criterion established by important gallery and museum exhibitions (one-man or group) cannot be entirely dismissed; and by this criterion the UCLA ladder faculty is not comparable to, say, that of Irvine or Davis.[27]

Conducted out of chronological turn and at a higher level than originally planned, the university's review of the department of art was in part a response by the administration to the resignation of Richard Diebenkorn, the department's failed attempt to establish a national reputation. Diebenkorn had been, quite calculatedly, a star hire; his appointment in 1966 coincided with the opening of the new Dickson Art Center, and was announced by the chancellor himself. Hired over the heads of the department by William Melnitz, the founding dean of the school of fine arts, and Frederick Wight, who succeeded Longman as chair, Diebenkorn requested the absolute minimum of committee assignments and administrative work, relief from scheduled undergraduate teaching, and to be allowed to teach graduates almost exclusively. Under collegial pressure, he didn't press the privileges he had negotiated with the dean's and chancellor's offices until the early 1970s, and resigned in 1973 over the department's animosity and mistrust; as the departmental review put it, 'the regular faculty [do] not treat … unusual distinction with particular generosity.' Still, 'however laudable its motives, the administration can be charged with inadequate consultation in a recent matter involving an appointment with the result that the PSGA faculty did not know the special terms of the appointment and both the individual involved and his colleagues were victims of a failure of communication.'[28]

Despite that nod toward civility and shared responsibility, the review was particularly harsh on the senior studio faculty, which was, by 1977, quite top heavy: 10 of the 11 total 'ladder' faculty were full professors; half of them had been hired by Gibson Danes. Its concerns throughout were with the image of the UCLA department and its faculty to the art world in Los Angeles and nationally: 'There is a widespread feeling in the art community that the senior faculty [are] hostile or indifferent to movements of the past 30 years and they are confidently waiting for the day when the clock will be turned back.' The older faculty consciously ignore 'recent developments in art, such as video and performance art, public art, minimal art, conceptual art, etc., and … the graduate students look to them [the department's 'temporary appointments'] more than to the senior staff to provide a fresh current of ideas. The philosophy of the tenure group is, as one observer put it, "expressive" rather than "analytical."'[29] The departmental report's list of what the senior faculty cannot teach is a curiously naive one; it's not in chronological order, it mixes genres, media, and historical styles or movements. But the fact that these movements and developments must be spoken to, that the university and its faculty must somehow address it, clearly posits the art world as its research object, or at the

very least, the present in which it should operate. (It also suggests that the university cannot refuse on the basis of content; its ideological debts are to the ideas of progress and time and a certain version of the enlightenment as professionalized self-awareness.) These are researches, part of what the UCLA faculty would themselves soon label 'new forms and concepts.' The non-tenured, visiting faculty, which would soon include Chris Burden, who was hired as a visiting lecturer in 1978, might not have looked like university scientists, but the report's distinction between the 'expressive' philosophy of the older faculty and the younger faculty's 'analytical' approach might have read with particular effect for the department's outside faculty reviewers. The difference between an older expressionism tied to the 1950s and the caricature of the artist unable to speak or unwilling to define, and the minimal or conceptual artist whose work, as Michael Fried put it, occupies a position that can be put into words, is a difference that was linked early on the project of art as university research. 'Can there be any doubt that training in the University has contributed to the cool, impersonal wave in the art of the sixties?' asked Harold Rosenberg in 1970. 'In the classroom … it is normal to formulate consciously what one is doing and to be able to explain it to others.'[30]

It's difficult to imagine any longer a case against 'national recognition' or 'visibility' or the teaching of the newest names and practices, but if this discussion of the weight and measure of the research university in the art department seems like so much ancient history, it is still possible to see its traces in maps of Los Angeles, or of the art world it projects internationally. Recently, Michael Ovitz's Los Angeles-based Creative Artists Agency announced a scholarship plan for promising and ambitious seniors graduating from the Los Angeles Unified School District in the following way:

> We set out to identify great work being created in Los Angeles by graduates and current students of Los Angeles-area art colleges. No one had paid sufficient homage to the role Southern California art schools had played in the growth of Los Angeles into an international art center. So we resolved to use CAA's [Creative Artists Agency's] headquarters in Beverly Hills to showcase a collection of work by emerging artists and teachers associated with those schools … These scholarships will commence for the upcoming 2000–2001 school year at the University of California at Los Angeles, Art Center College of Design, California Institute of the Arts, the University of California at Irvine and Otis College of Art and Design.

As laudable as the scholarship program is, its announcement is quite telling; it offers a remarkably clear map of the art world and where it is not. There are, for the record, currently 11 MFA programs from Santa Barbara to San Diego; 17 schools that offer a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Fine Arts degree; and 21 area community colleges that offer associate degrees in studio. Among the programs not targeted by the Creative Artists Agency scholarships — nor, one supposes, responsible for projecting Los Angeles internationally — are southern California's two largest MFA programs, at Cal State Long Beach and Cal State Fullerton. Cal State Los Angeles offers the MFA, as well, and it and Long

Beach have the area's only remaining art education programs. Success in the Creative Artists Agency's statement has a specific meaning; it doesn't include those art schools that train teachers for Los Angeles Unified, nor does it include returning to the neighborhood to teach or make work. That would be too local, and local has, I've argued, long been a troubling word — a code word — in the discourse that surrounds the professional training of artists. The Creative Artists Agency's scholarships are pointed toward a more visible target — visibility, perhaps — and the high research university and the professionalized art school, whose practices and purviews are national, even international, rather than local and particular. Bounded not by locale but by a field of visibility that spreads internationally, as it links scholars and researchers and curators and critics and artists, the research university art department situates its project and its products just where the Creative Artists Agency writers have pointed when they write of those art schools that have projected Los Angeles art internationally, made Los Angeles into an international center. As Kandinsky pronounced from the Bauhaus in 1926 — and already fully within the language of the research university — 'without any exaggeration it may be suggested that any broadly based science of art must have an international character.'[31]

Assignments

I have perhaps gone a long way around to make the case that the art world has become the research object of the art department of the high university, and that it has been for some time. I could have used a remark from Longman's student Ray Parker, writing around the time Gibson Danes was hired at UCLA, about the art world, and about the way names work within it. 'Schools can teach all about art,' he wrote in the *College Art Journal* in 1953, but 'art escapes the formulation of standards and methods … [it] matches neither preparation nor expectation.'[32] This is a commonplace, but also a particular historical marker; rather than meaning craft skills, art becomes over and over again across the 19th and 20th centuries the very name of what cannot be taught, what is not knowledge. In its place Parker offers the new university art departments an alternative knowledge, a discipline that can be taught and learned; in lieu of art, 'the art-world can be understood and taught as a subject.' But, he warned, 'the art-world idea, taken for granted in schools, inflates the value of the artist as a figure.'[33] That was Diebenkorn's problem at UCLA: he was a figure; but Parker's point is well taken since it is just such figures that are the content of teaching, the knowledge that needs to be transmitted. Figures, or I would want to say, *names* are the currency of the art world — what is current about you, especially if you are a curator or a critic, is your list of names. And for some time now names have been what we teach in art schools, they are what is passed back and forth in the crit or studio visit; they are what we talk about to each other, what we explain, judge, continue, teach.

It seems to me worth noting — to use an example I have used before — that the 'teasers' on the front covers of *Art in America* or (since March of 1997) *Artforum* are short lists of names, most often only surnames: 'Whitman,

Kandinsky, Heizer, Jonas, Whiteread' read the cover of the July 1995 *Art in America*. In contrast the September 1995 issue of *American Artist*, a magazine for which the MFA is not required, led with 'Interior & Landscapes in Oil,' 'Getting the Most from Gouache,' and "'Painting" with Fabric.'[34] Artists (as opposed quite specifically to art understood as any particular separable skill or technique) are both the subject and the object of graduate teaching, they are both what is taught, and who is taught to — the object of the art school is to make artists, to make more artists. When I used this example in *Art Subjects*, I understood that it pointed toward a professional field, a field of practice where proper names occupied positions, but I also imagined it pointed to history and a historicized practice, a thickened or deep field. I used a combination, admittedly odd, of Pierre Bourdieu and Thierry de Duve, to make this point, to both situate a field and to thicken it: 'In the present stage of the artistic field there is no room for naivety,' I quoted Bourdieu. 'Never has the very structure of the field been present so practically in every act of production.'[35] The strong work of art understands and recasts that field, de Duve suggested; it is, he wrote, 'an "interpretant," filled with all the historical meanings of the field of conditions in which the fact of its existence resonates.'[36] Bourdieu turns out to be righter than de Duve, but unfortunately naivety works now too. The field of names is increasingly thin and its teaching a mode of amnesia rather than history.

An acquaintance of mine, an artist and critic and now an administrator, told me of an assignment he gave to his first-year MFA students. He asked them to go to the library and seek out an art magazine from the month and year they were born, write down the names of 25 artists from the advertisements and reviews and to bring them back to the seminar. One could take this as an opening, I suppose, a generous, and perhaps fruitful, way of opening up a more closely focused history than that of the standard undergraduate survey, of offering more images and approaches, more material to be worked on and with, something beyond the names of artists and artworks they already knew. As it happens, this wasn't quite what its author intended. His project wasn't one of affirmative history — a making fuller of the past; his intention was rather more negative and critical: to disenchant the present, to put his students on warning that most of them 20 years out would be, at best, a name in an advertisement in a very old art magazine. The present always seems full, as much as two or three monthly art magazines can hold, a present of possibilities; the past that the assignment points back to is always closing, always dwindling. History in this sense always has a point, a kind of vanishing point. It's very probably true, but it's not clear to me — and I didn't think to ask how or whether he cushions that blow — what to do with that information, that prognostication. Three choices come to mind as I think about it from a distance; I'd be curious what his students came up with. Quitting seems an obvious choice, as does insisting that this lesson is meant for someone else in the class, someone less talented, less good, less ambitious or aggressive. The third choice might be to take the assignment and its lesson almost as innocently as I had done, as a chance to figure out how and where one is an artist. How, or even whether, those artists whose names were unknown continue to make work,

to have exhibitions, to be artists? It raises perhaps the question of living as an artist, of a daily life, maybe of what Gerhardt Richter called the 'daily practice of painting.'

Whichever choice one takes — whether one imagines its point is to make it clear to art students that the art world is where they work, and indeed what they work with, or to disabuse them of its enchantments — the lesson quite clearly points toward and works to delimit and reproduce the art world that is named on the covers of art magazines and visible in the photograph in the *New York Times Magazine*, an art world strung together as and by a system of names. The art world is, as Ray Parker noted some pages ago, a curious place; it's easy enough to say that it is fictional, imaginary, that it runs on belief. But that doesn't make it empty nor can one imagine any longer that artists don't believe in it. As a network of discourse and institutions, an accretion of beliefs, a field of positions, an amalgam of historical effects, it is fully ideological in that it orders and effects real relations, it hovers above and around them, determining, forecasting. It seems fully adequate, after all, it includes the names and work you already know, those names you can call to mind, can compare yourself to, have an opinion about, someone or something you need to learn and teach. Indeed, teaching it and learning it are crucial, how it is transmitted, how it is continued. Students are, once again, both its most important product and its target audience, its believers. One could say, to use a little psychoanalytic theory, a theory that might suggest the sort of geometry of desire, aggressivity, and misrecognition that Parker attempted to plot, that the art world is always as Freud described the unconscious, *ein andere Schauplatz* —that other show place or the place of the Other's show.

If the art world is in some sense always elsewhere, that does not mean that its boundaries, its inclusions and exclusions are not felt. Michael Ovitz's map might be one quite material, palpable version of how its borders are drawn, but its effects are felt on both sides of the divide; faculty at Cal State Long Beach have to know and teach the names that figure in the *New York Times Magazine*. Indeed, the vast majority of art schools are situated curiously in relation to those boundaries, at once at the border and across it. There is a sense in which most art schools are too local to be fully held inside the art world; they are where the art world is seen from, where its borders are first mapped as though from the outside. Students learn how to be artists, how to act and talk and even live like an artist, if they're lucky, from their teachers. At the same time, students in a curious and insistently ambitious way — in both those ways — continually look over the heads of their teachers: because their teachers are here, they are precisely not there, in that other scene, or most of them are not. Students spend a lot of time imagining the space where they won't be teachers, where they won't be in the Midwest — at the University of Iowa perhaps, where Ray Parker got his MFA in 1947 before moving to New York. Parker noticed just this only a couple of years out from Iowa that 'teachers demonstrate how they participate in the art world, or discuss how others do it … The teacher distinguishes himself from the student by the authority with which he acts as a part of the art-world.'[37] I felt something similar in the halls at Cal Arts some three decades later, but it seemed more aggressive, more present. A lot

of animosity can be held in Parker's *or*, in the difference between demonstrating how one participates, and discussing how others do. At Cal Arts, I wrote, 'the faculty ranges from involved to detached and bitter, and their proportionate influence over students is hinged to their careers outside.' Those careers, or the stock they represent, 'leave their traces on student sign up sheets and advancement committees.'[38]

Parker's description early on, and even mine from the late 1980s, suggests a space between the school and the art world, a buffer or barrier whose form might be spatial — the distance of Texas or Illinois or the Cal State system — or temporal, the 'five years behind the times' time-lag that schools were given, or lambasted for, not long ago. For students at UCLA when the *New York Times Magazine* article came out, or Andrew Hultkrans's *Artforum* piece, the distance between the art world and the art school had evaporated almost completely; one was mapped directly over the other: 'I feel like the walls are transparent here. I feel lucky that there's a lot of buzz and I hope good things will come to me.'[39] The stories of curators and dealers at final reviews and in the studio halls at UCLA or Art Center are both legendary and true. The art world makes its presence felt in the schools not only as desire, as ambition and possibility and knowledge, but also economically and temporally, as a demand. This was in part the story that Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA's) exhibition 'Public Offerings' was intended to tell; it argued not only the increased role and profile of the school as a networking or switching station in an increasingly globalized art world, but also the increased parade and performance of the market in the school. Perhaps art schools have replaced art movements, as the photographer Collier Shorr remarked at a panel at Artists Space not long ago.[40] But if they have begun to work as movements have, as interpretive categories of likeness and enclosure, ways of seeing together, what is joined and held together is not work by 'style' — 'a promise in every work of art' and the record of its 'confrontation with tradition … the hope that it will be reconciled thus with the idea of true generality'[41] — but careers by institutions or, if that seems too harsh, by administrations. In that replacement what art schools have displaced is a kind of discipline, a project of history or a projection of the historical; legitimation now is left directly to the market, to being grabbed up precisely when, as one UCLA student remarked in the pages of *Artforum*, 'we're not all going to get grabbed.'[42]

Visiting at Colorado Boulder in 1955, Rothko complained in a letter back to New York, the students 'want me to teach them how to paint abstract expressionism.'[43] However suspect the Colorado students' demand, or maybe Rothko's letter, it's not clear now that any proper name — John Currin, Ann Hamilton, Matthew Barney, Renee Greene, Rikrit Tiravanija, Inka Essenhigh, Jason Rhoades: the list is both sheerly metonymical and potentially endless; Paul McCarthy, Chris Burden, James Welling, Barbara Kruger, Mary Kelly, John Baldessari, Nancy Rubins, Charles Ray, Lari Pittman — can fill the name of a movement or style, be absorbed or buffered by it, or its claims for historical priority. There is, in this list of names, or beyond it, no middle term of movement or medium or project, of something that can be felt to matter or count between individual interest and its administration; it's in that empty

space that *October* has issued its recent, post-Friedian calls for a return to the medium, and that Stephen Melville has attempted to spread the category 'painting' as a discipline of theory over a broad array of disparate practices, to make them thinkable and even necessary together, in order to suggest that there is something shared after school and before gallery affiliation. In the line-up of names, and along the whitewashed wall of the *New York Times Magazine* image, though, theory and medium no longer function; Mary Kelly's value is not critical or theoretico-historical (the 'hero of knowledge,' as Lyotard would say). What is important and functional there is not the content of her work and her commitments, but her 'national visibility,' how well her name fits with, and compares to, others: 'Most of all,' Bill Readings reminds us, 'excellence serves as the unit of currency within a closed field,'[44] a field without reference, a field with only professionals and only peers.

Perhaps I'm just describing the same tired old thing, the broad breakdown of the grand legitimating narratives of modernism, or, more locally, what Alan Sondheim called 'post-movement art' in 1977 and, not long after, most people called 'pluralism.' Hal Foster once argued that pluralism in the 1980s art world was marked by 'two important indices. One is an art market confident in contemporary art as an investment … The other index is the profusion of art schools.'[45] The market's involved acquisitiveness needs an array of styles and names, and the far-flung schools, too 'numerous and isolate,' in Foster's words, to hold together a narrative of the most important art of the recent past, of a shared artistic stake, cannot help but provide it. It's interesting how well his description of the alignment of an increasingly involved and consolidated art market with a broad profusion of art schools and, in them, of individualizing and idiosyncratic practices matches Readings's university of excellence. It may be that they are only standard images of dissolution, of breakdown, but they read together quite nicely: 'Excellence responds very well to the needs of technological capitalism in the production and processing of information, in that it allows for the increasing integration of all activities into a generalized market, while permitting a large degree of flexibility and innovation at the local level.'[46] The narrative projects offered by a historically construed medium and the questions structured by a disciplinary and departmentalized knowledge were ways of imagining a site and a stake between individual practice and its administration (and behind that, capital); that space, at least in the present, seems simply gone.

And I cannot decide how to think about that, about whether or not — to pose this with all the idiocy that I feel — cultural pluralism and the university of excellence stand for. The story I've just recounted need not have been cast as a jeremiad; it could have been written as the opening out of difference and the emergence of other voices in a space without insides and outsides, without the exclusionary coercions of disciplinary consensus or aesthetic mainstream. Pluralism and excellence might name the temporary openings, the alliances and possibilities of interdisciplinary and critical and cultural studies, or the opportunity to make one's own work, and to allow and value the work of Others in a field marked out not by coercive consensus or narratives of progress, but by contestation and circulation. But I keep coming back to the

intensification of capital within that field, the presence and arbitrariness of the market written in the individuating and mystifying terms of valuation: the art world's reinscription of beauty, the university's excellence. In the art world, or at least in its academic wing, there are stakes, both intellectual and professional, in arguing against pluralism, against the dissolution of medium and its historical or theoretical purchase: we would like to be able to speak and publish critically, to imagine that art practice can, through its intentionality and self-knowledge, open out onto historical forces and shifts beyond fashion. Maybe. The best I can muster now is to think of pluralism and excellence as Walter Benjamin did of film: 'its social significance, particularly in its most positive form, is inconceivable without its destructive, cathartic aspect, that is, the liquidation of the traditional value of the cultural heritage.'[47]

Notes

1. Readings, Bill (1996) *The University in Ruins*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 15.
2. *Ibid.*, 54, 39.
3. Pickard, John (1917) 'President's Address (April 6, 1917),' *Art Bulletin*, 1(3): 43.
4. Solomon, Deborah (1999) 'How to Succeed in Art,' *New York Times Magazine*, June 27, 39–40.
5. Among the things that might be noted, and asked after, are the names and faces that are missing: the ceramist Adrian Saxe and painters Roger Herman, Barbara Drucker, and Patti Wickman, as well as longtime instructors such as Don Suggs, there since the early 1980s, and the adjunct and temporary faculty that teach undergraduate introductory courses, and indeed half of the courses listed from quarter to quarter; perhaps they had other appointments, or their names do different things.
6. Nellie Huntington Gere had studied with Dow early on, at Ipswich; Helen Clark Chandler, Louise Pinkney Sooy, Clara Humphreys, and Bessie Hazen had worked with him at Columbia. Cal Art's distant founder, Nelbert Chouinard, who taught at Otis and founded the Chouinard Art Institute in 1921, too, was a student of Dow's, at Pratt. For Dow's broad influence, see Moffatt, Frederick C. (1977) *Arthur Wesley Dow (1857–1922)*,Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, and Joseph Masheck's (1997) introduction to a new edition of Dow's *Composition: A Series of Exercises in Art Structure for the Use of Students and Teachers*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. For Dow's impact at UCLA, see Boime, Albert with Paul Arden (1994) *The Odyssey of Jan Stussy in Black and White: Anxious Visions and Uncharted Dreams*, Los Angeles, CA: Jan Stussy Foundation, 55–59. Boime's text has been an invaluable source throughout. For a brief biography on Chouinard, see Paul, Stella (1987) 'Papers from the Chouinard Art Institute,' *Archives of American Art Journal*, 27(2): 39–40.

7. Beam, Lura (1927) 'The Place of Art in the Liberal College,' *Association of American Colleges Bulletin*, 13(3): 266.

8. Dow, Arthur Wesley (1908) 'Training in the Theory and Practice of Teaching Art,' *Teachers College Record*, 9(3): 133.

9. Danes, Gibson (1943) 'The Education of the Artist,' *College Art Journal*, 2(3): 70–71.

10. *Ibid.*, 71.

11. Boime, *Odyssey of Jan Stussy*, 60.

12. David F. Jackey, Dean of the College, *Report of the College of Applied Arts*, University of California, Los Angeles, 1953. Cited in *ibid.*, 59.

13. Cited in Douglass, John Aubrey (2000) *The California Idea and American Higher Education: 1850 to the 1960 Master Plan,* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 183.

14. 'Laws of 1946 and 1947 Relating to the California Public School System,' *Bulletin of the California State Department of Education* 16, November 1947, cited in *ibid.*, 188.

15. Deutsch, Monroe E., Aubrey A. Douglass and George D. Strayer, 'A Report of a Survey of the Needs of California in Higher Education,' March 1, 1948, cited in *ibid.*, 388, note 58.

16. Danes, 'Education of Artists,' 70.

17. Alford, John (1940) 'Practice Courses in College Art Departments: A Survey,' *Parnassus*, 12(7): 13.

18. Franklin D. Murphy, cited in Melnitz, William L. (1967) 'University of California at Los Angeles, Colleges and Schools: College of Fine Arts,' in *The Centennial Record of the University of California*, compiled and edited by Verne A. Stadtman and staff, Berkeley, CA: Regents of the University of California, 345.

19. Lester Longman, cited in Fitzpatrick, Virginia Le Noir Van Duzer (1989) 'Changes in Curricula, Students, Faculty, and Teaching Styles in the Art Departments of the University of Iowa and Indiana University, 1940 to 1949,' PhD dissertation, School of Education, Indiana University, 136.

20. On the concept of academic delocalization, see Metzger, Walter (1969) 'Academic Freedom in Delocalized Institutions,' in John H. McCord (ed.) *Dimensions of Academic Freedom*, Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1–33.

21. Kramer, Hilton (1954) 'California Students,' *Art Digest*, 29(4): 27.

22. Parker, Raymond (1953) 'Student, Teacher, Artist,' *College Art Journal*, 13(1): 28.

23. Larrabee, Eric (1970) 'Artist and University,' in Margaret Mahoney (ed.) *The Arts on Campus: The Necessity for Change*, Greenwich, CT: New York Graphic Society, 49–50.

24. Moir, Alfred, 'University of California at Santa Barbara, Departments of Instruction: Art,' in *Centennial Record*, 491.

25. Clark, Wayne A., 'University of California at Irvine, Divisions: Fine Arts,' in *Centennial Record*, 318.

26. Frank, Peter (1978) 'Patterns in the Support Structure for California Art,' *LAICA Journal*, 19: 42.

27. Blake Nevius, chair, 'Report and Recommendations of the Committee to Review the Department of Art,' to executive vice chancellor William P. Gerberding, June 24, 1977, 25–26.

28. *Ibid.*, 24, 7. On the circumstances surrounding Diebenkorn's hiring and departure and the impact of the departmental review, see Boime, *Odyssey of Jan Stussy*, 64–74.
29. *Ibid.*, 24.
30. Rosenberg, Harold (1973) 'Educating Artists,' in Gregory Battcock (ed.) *New Ideas in Art Education*, New York: E.P. Dutton, 93.
31. Kandinsky, Wassily (1982) 'Point and Line to Plane,' in Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (eds) *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, Boston, MA: G.K. Hall, 2: 593.
32. Parker, 'Student, Teacher, Artist,' 29.
33. *Ibid.*, 29–30.
34. See my discussion (1999) in *Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 207–213.
35. Bourdieu, Pierre (1980) 'The Production of Belief: Contribution to an Economy of Symbolic Goods,' *Media, Culture, and Society*, 2(3): 291.
36. Duve, Thierry de (1991) *Pictorial Nominalism: On Marcel Duchamp's Passage from Painting to the Readymade*, translated by Dana Polan with the author, Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 186.
37. Parker, 'Student, Teacher, Artist,' 27.
38. Singerman, Howard (1987) 'Jeremiad,' in *CalArts: Skeptical Belief(s)* [exhibition catalogue], Chicago, IL: Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago/Newport Beach, CA: Newport Harbor Art Museum, 9.
39. Karin Gulbran in Hultkrans, Andrew (1998) 'Surf and Turf,' *Artforum*, 36(10): 108.
40. My thanks to Ronald Jones, who moderated the April 2000 Artists Space panel, for his account.
41. Horkheimer, Max and Theodor W. Adorno (1989) 'The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception,' in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, translated by John Cumming, New York: Continuum, 130–131.
42. Evan Holloway in Cooper, Dennis (1997) 'Too Cool for School,' *Spin*, July, 94. For a closer reading of Cooper's article, along with Andrew Hultkrans's, Deborah Solomon's, and Ralph Rugoff's 1989 piece on Cal Arts, 'Liberal Arts,' published in *Vogue*, see my 'From My Institution to Yours,' in *Public Offerings* (2001), Los Angeles, CA: Museum of Contemporary Art/London: Thames and Hudson, 276–287.
43. Letter to Herbert Ferber, cited in Breslin, James E.B. (1993) *Mark Rothko: A Biography*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 351.
44. Readings, *University in Ruins*, 27.
45. Foster, Hal (1985) 'Against Pluralism,' in *Recodings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics*, Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 14–15.
46. Readings, *University in Ruins*, 32.
47. Benjamin, Walter (1969) 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' in Hannah Arendt (ed.) *Illuminations*, New York: Schocken Books, 221.
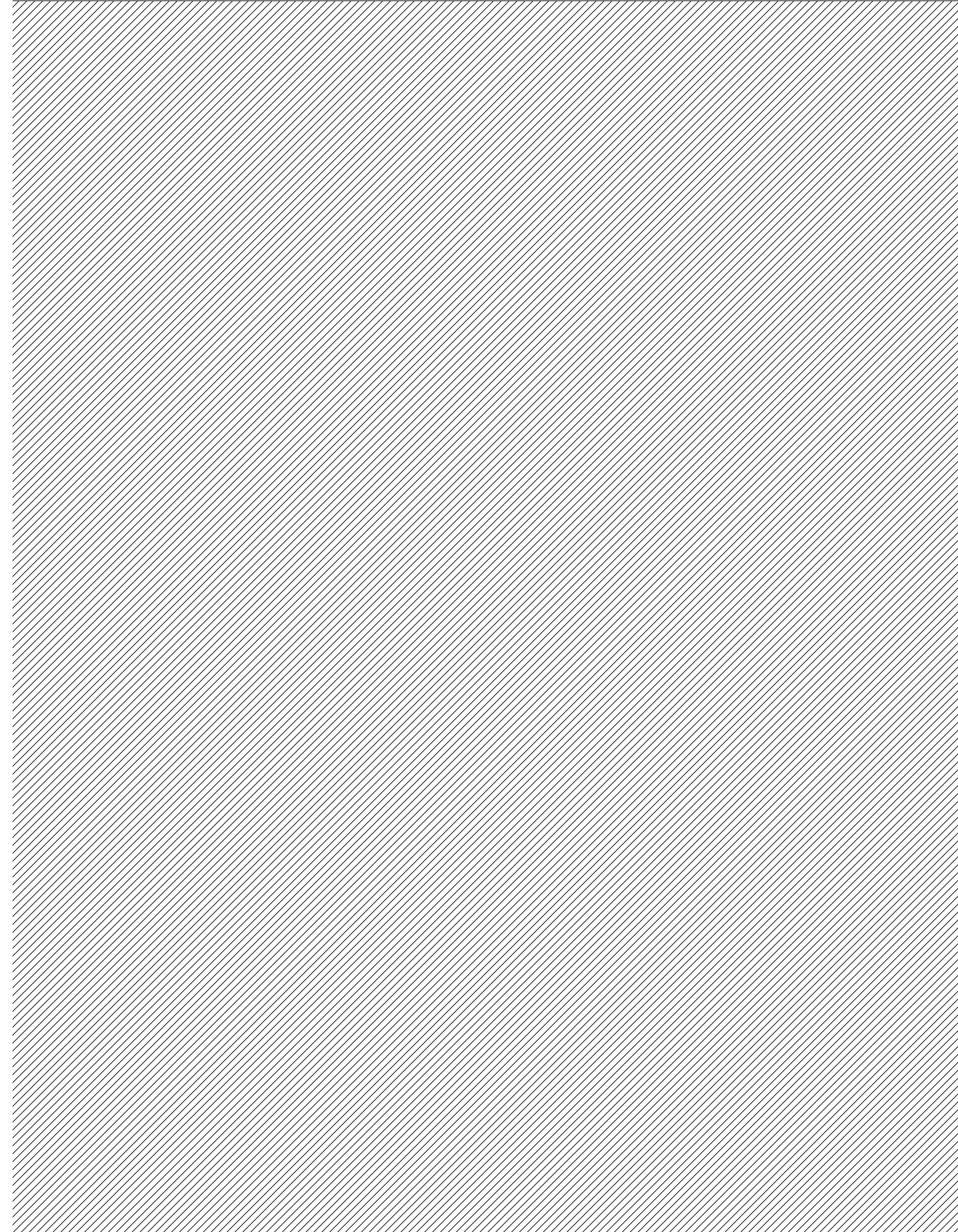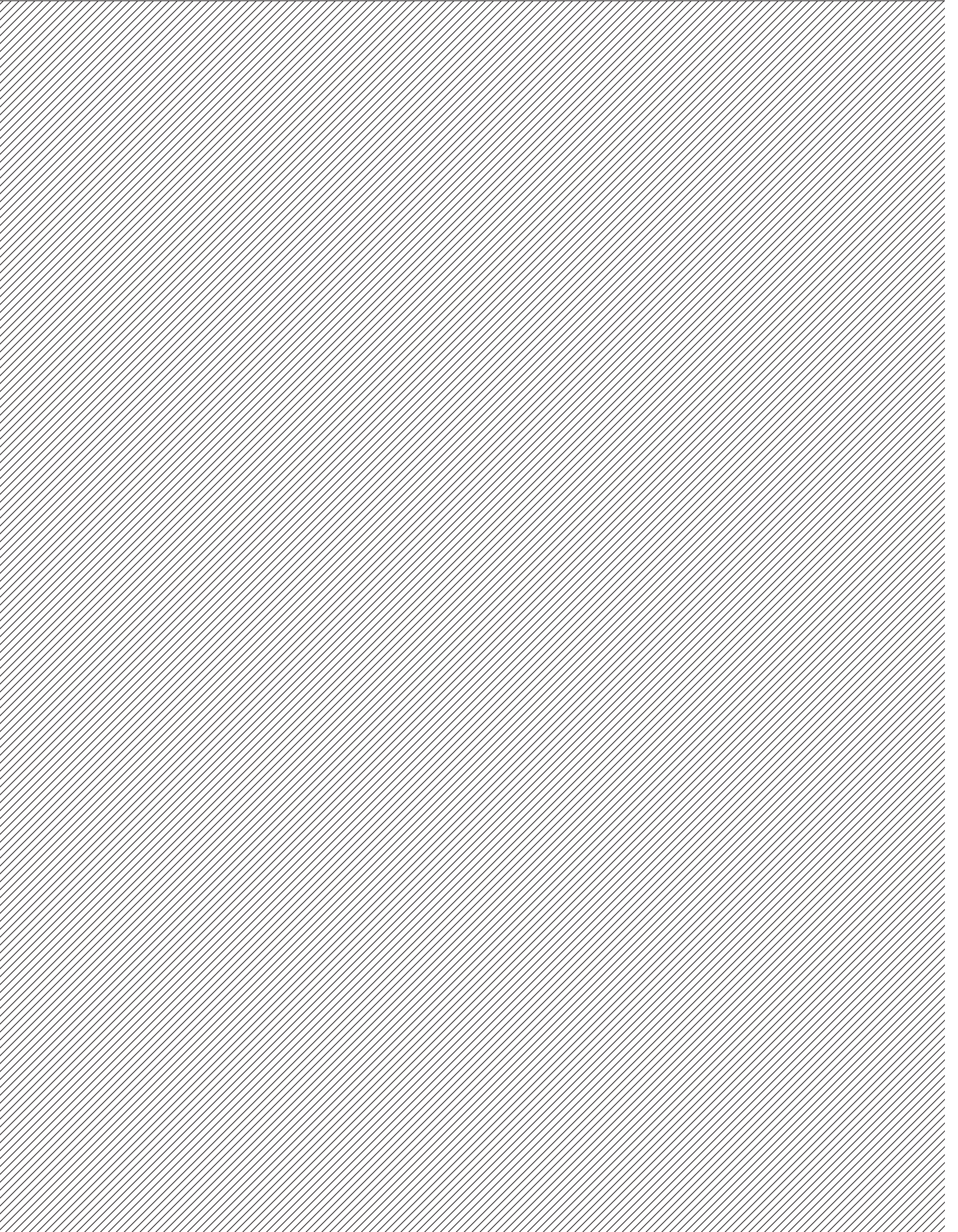
Jan Verwoert

School's Out!-?

Arguments to challenge or defend the institutional boundaries of the academy

The relation of the academy to the field of art production is difficult to assess. First of all the academy is defined by the symbolic boundary that designates the inside of the institution as a place of education by distinguishing it from the outside world of uneducated amateurs and mature professionals. Is there any sense in guarding this symbolic boundary today or is it high time to abolish it?

The critic of the academy will argue that, as art students produce art just like any other artists, the dividing line between the inside and outside of the academy appears to be little more than a virtual boundary. Its only evident function is the establishment and enforcement of the distinction between those who have received the legitimation to call themselves artists (now and in the future) and those

who are barred from this right. To call this boundary into question means to challenge the institutional power of the academy to monopolise the right to legitimise art—and is therefore quite simply the right thing to do. Against this argument the defender of the academy will hold that the symbolic boundary between the academy and the outside should indeed be guarded as it in fact continues to be one of the few untouched barriers that, ideally at least, protects art production from the competitive logic of the art market, and gives students the right and freedom to develop their practice in experimental ways that are not yet constrained by the pressure to serve their work up to the public as a finished, recognisably branded product. From this point of view, the right political move would not be to tear down the boundaries that preserve the freedom to experiment, but rather to defend them. Both positions have a point. So the academy can today be understood equally as a monopolist institution of power and as one of the few remaining strongholds against the art market.

This contradiction manifests itself in many different forms. The fact that the academy offers a refuge from outside pressures, the critic will claim, is precisely the reason why liberal and conservative academies alike become safe havens for ageing professors who can indulge in the privileges of their power without ever having to check the premises of their teaching against the realities and criteria of contemporary art production. What then is the academy but a machine for the reproduction of ignorance that warps the minds of emerging artists by feeding them with all the cynicism and defensive narcissism that flourishes in the brains of stagnated professors? Even if this may be true in some cases, the defender of the academy will respond, the strength of the academy still lies in the fact that it is only here that different generations of artists can coexist, learning from and confronting each other, while the outside art world either ignores the importance of the generational contract for the sustained development of art production or reduces it to the market logic of promoting new generations like new product ranges. In the age of the biennials, the generation gap actually seems to have narrowed to two years, as each new show is expected to introduce the next set of freshly emerging artists. This is why the academy has to be preserved as a place where generations are given the space and time to emerge and age at a pace that is not dictated by the speed of the market.

Fair enough, the critic will answer, but in the end the very assumption that the atmosphere and understanding of art production inside the academy is substantially different from the world outside is flawed. Instead of providing a genuine alternative to the market, the ideas about making art and being an artist entertained by people inside the academy are very often just a distorted version of the dominant principles of the outside art world, with the effect that much of the art made in academies only reflects the desperate desire to approximate the standards which students believe to be the current status quo of gallery art. By the same token, it is at the academy that all the competitive strategies that are later put into practice in the market are learned and exercised in the shark-pit of the classroom under conditions that might actually be even more severe than those prevailing in the real world. If that should be so, the defender will retort, then this is precisely the reason why academies should first and foremost teach an awareness of the difference between the academy and the market, and of the potentials that this implies. And it is precisely this difference that especially the

outwardly more progressive institutions fail to recognise as they invite active professionals from the field of contemporary art to familiarise students with its current status quo. The questionable outcome is that these students then emerge from their courses equipped with a ready-made knowledge of the latest aesthetics and terminologies of critical discourse, but nothing to contribute that would make a substantial difference within the field—since to make a difference is something you only learn when you take the time to grasp and confront the traditions and conventions of art practice and discourse.

Superficial teaching is not acceptable, the critic will agree, but this is because in general there is no excuse for bad education. And this is also why it is crucial to create open and dynamic structures, for instance, to bring younger professionals from the field into the academy as they may have valuable experiences to share and can play the crucial role of an intermediary generation between students and older professors. Having said all this, I still wonder: Haven't we only been discussing political commonplaces so far? To create the conditions for a good art education has always been the primary task of the people who run institutions, just as the struggle for better conditions has always also been the cause of student protests. These conflicts cannot be solved theoretically, they have to be fought out practically.

The Academy as a Site of Production Within
the Expanded Field of Academia …

Instead of pedagogical agendas, the critic continues, we should rather discuss the more basic question of what the function of the academy could or should be today! Can we really take it for granted that *education* is still the one and only purpose that the academy is to serve? According to the logic by which the function of the institutions within the field of art is conventionally defined and administered, each institution has a different role to play, of course. Art education is supposed to take place in the academy, art production in the studio, art presentation and circulation in the gallery, art collection in the museum and private home, and so on. If we assume, however, that the assignment of distinct roles to different institutions—following the maxim of 'divide and rule'—is, in fact, a strategy to consolidate existing power structures within the art world, should it not be a primary political goal to question such authoritative definitions of what an institution is supposed to be and do?

After all, there is ample evidence that the redefinition of the role of the academy is already in full swing. Ever since the conceptual turn in the art production of the late 1960s, the academy, apart from being a place of education, has been claimed more and more as a site of art production, presentation, circulation and collection. The Fluxus performance festivals staged in academies in the 1960s are an obvious example. Similarly today, seminar settings provide a forum for the screening and discussion of video art and alternative films. As their works come to be collected in and circulated through university and academy libraries, the academic field has become a primary audience for at least some alternative film and video makers. In general, the definition of conceptually-based art practices as interventions into critical discourse have brought the field of practice much closer to the academic field. When, as Brian O'Doherty has elaborated, the conceptual work is reduced to an ephemeral gesture, project or

proposition that challenges and renegotiates conventional definitions of art, the primary mode of existence of such a dematerialised work may in fact be its discussion and documentation in a contemporary academic discourse.[1] Consequently (as shown, for instance, in the intense exchange of ideas between the producers of the new wave of institutional critique and the critics of the American magazine *October*), the symbolic distance between the artistic production and academic reception of conceptual works can (for better or worse) shrink to an intimate circle as artists respond to the theoretical views proposed by academic writers, whereupon these writers, in turn, update their premises by reviewing the works the artists have produced in relation to their theories, and so forth. In the light of these developments, the academy today must be understood not only as an institution for education, but always also as a site for the production, discussion, circulation, collection and documentation of contemporary conceptual art practices.

To open up the academy to these new tasks also means to break down the boundaries of the institution. As the range of those who become affiliated with the academy by joining the academic discourse is expanded to include all kinds of artists, writers and cultural producers, individual academies become immersed in the general field of academia. Ideally then, the status of the single institution is no more than that of one hub among many that channel the discursive productivity generated by the field as a whole. And although the field of academia may often have to rely on individual institutions to host presentations and discussions, it is, in principle, not fully dependent on these institutions, as it can generate its discourse in personal exchanges and informal discussions just as well as in public symposia or exhibitions. The basis for the open affiliation of different producers with the academy is, in turn, not so much an identification with the role model of the academic but, on the contrary, a sense that, within the academy, clear identity profiles are suspended. In the expanded field the academy thus attracts, especially, those cultural producers who are marginalised within the field of art production because their professional identity (which may oscillate between that of an artist, writer, researcher, project maker, etc.), when measured in conventional categories, is as much in limbo as that of an art student of whom no

one can say yet if he or she is a future artist or not. In general, work produced in the academy is a preparation for future art. The uncertainty of the status of work done in the academy (which notoriously prompts debates over the question whether student work should be judged by different criteria than the work of 'mature' artists) implies a huge potential, as it allows for experimentation with working models and forms of production that are not sanctioned by conventional standards. The academy can, therefore, become a site for unsanctioned forms of production when it is activated as a local support structure for an international discourse between marginal cultural producers and intellectuals. In this spirit, the academy must be transformed into an open platform that offers a viable alternative to the museum and gallery system through the integration and redefinition of the functions of art education, production, presentation, circulation and documentation.

… Or as a Site of Resistance to the Depreciation of Skills
When you formulate the concept of an expanded field of academia with that much utopian vigour, the defender of the academy's boundaries will respond, it may sound like a good idea. Yet, if you look at the standards of work and discourse this expanded field has established so far, things appear in a different light. It still remains to be discussed whether much of the conceptually-based work that passes as an intervention into open critical discourse can, at the end of the day, really count as a substantial contribution. Often enough, those producers who participate in the international circuit of marginal artists and academy members have so little time left to do work as they travel from project to project and tackle issue after issue that all they can possibly do when they are invited to contribute to a show or conference is to hastily gather some available information and stitch it together around some more or less witty ideas. This has little or nothing to do with the in-depth analysis and sustained debate that only becomes possible when people take the time to develop their skills and positions within the context of a specific academic discipline or artistic medium. What we see, instead, is the rise of a new culture of art project-making that is superficial in its content, and in its form deeply entangled in the power play of competitive curating, as these projects are

primarily commissioned to fuel the machine of the global exhibition industry and simulate a constant productivity, which purposefully prevents everyone involved from ever reflecting on what it is that they really produce.

The submersion of conceptually-based practices in the global exhibition industry we see today, the defender of the academy's boundaries will continue, is in fact the outcome of a tendency Benjamin Buchloh diagnosed early on as an inherent danger of the dematerialization of art production and deskilling of art producers pushed through by the Conceptual art of the late 1960s. The radical dissociation of art from all aspects of a skilled practice within a conventional medium, Buchloh warned, would in fact make Conceptual art all the more vulnerable to outside forces that seek to determine the shape and meaning of the work: 'In the absence of any specifically visual qualities and due to the manifest lack of any (artistic) manual competence as a criterion of distinction, all the traditional criteria of aesthetic judgement—of taste and of connoisseurship—have been programmatically voided. The result of this is that the definition of the aesthetic becomes on the one hand a matter of linguistic convention and on the other the function of both a legal contract and an institutional discourse (a discourse of power rather than taste).'[2] Buchloh concluded that the only form of art that could withstand co-option was a Conceptual art that engaged itself in institutional critique and criticised the exhibition industry from the vantage point of a distanced observer. You could, however, also come to a different conclusion. When the working model of the flexible but deskilled conceptual producer has been established as a global norm, a new strategy of resistance can be to reclaim traditional criteria of medium-specific art practice and defend the academy as a site where skills can be acquired that may strengthen the autonomy of the artist in the face of the new set of dependencies created through the hasty culture of project-making.

Can the Academy be a Place of Initiation
Into Practices of Resistance?

But what then, the critic will hold against this, is the difference between the strategic evaluation of the skills acquired through an academic education which

you propose and the neoconservative call for a return to traditional standards? Can you really distinguish one from the other? Or are you not inadvertently playing into the hands of retrograde traditionalists when you praise the potentials of a skilled, medium-specific practice and deny the revolutionary character and liberating effects of the conceptual turn in the late 1960s? Yes, the defender will agree, it is indeed essential to make it clear that the strategic re-evaluation of the notion of skilled practice and academic education in no way betrays the spirit of the initial liberation of art from its confinement to academic disciplines achieved by Conceptual art. Still, it should be possible to renegotiate the concept of skills *in the spirit* of the critical break with disciplinary power. In fact, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak seeks to do precisely this in her book 'Death of a Discipline'.[3] In a discussion of the fate and future of the academic discipline of comparative literature, Spivak confirms her belief in the political necessity of an undisciplined form of teaching that challenges the literary canon of colonial modernity. At the same time, she articulates her discomfort with the deskilling of students who receive their literary training only on the basis of the advanced interdisciplinary approach of cultural studies and, as a result, often lack the basic skills of closely reading texts which students enrolled in traditional courses do acquire. 'We have forgotten how to read with care,' she writes.[4] To rehabilitate the ideology of a disciplinary academic education is not an option. Instead, the question Spivak raises is on the basis of what method or model the skills of a discipline could be taught in a different spirit within the horizon of the critical philosophy of interdisciplinary education that cultural studies stands for.

To learn the skill of reading literary texts, Spivak argues, means to be initiated into the secrets of a cultural practice that can be a source of resistance against the administration and commodification of knowledge production if this process of initiation is carried out under the right conditions. One condition is that the skill of reading is not taught as a technique of mastering the language of literature, but rather as a sensitive practice of 'entering into the idiom',[5] dedicated to the disclosure and protection of precisely those aspects of literature that remain resistant to any form of mastery, due to the sheer specificity of their language. In this sense, Spivak writes that, 'in this era of global capital triumphant, to keep

responsibility alive in the reading and teaching of the textual' is a practice of resistance as it defends those moments within culture that cannot be commodified and made commensurable.[6] Moreover, Spivak stresses, it matters *in whose name* the ceremony of initiation into the idioms of literature is performed. So, the second condition Spivak formulates is that academic education should be dedicated to a justified political and ethical cause. As a model for this moment of political and ethical dedication, Spivak draws on a proposition Virginia Woolf makes at the end of *A Room of One's Own*. Woolf asks her fellow women writers to dedicate their work to the evocation of the ghost of Shakespeare's sister, which is to say that they should write for a future audience of emancipated women writers and readers and thereby call it into existence. To 'work for her' is the formula Woolf suggests for this moment of dedication. The distinctive quality of this formula of dedication is that it is specific enough to give a clear political perspective to the project of a feminist literary practice, while at the same time sufficiently open to avoid dogmatism. In the context of Spivak's argument, this formula of dedication becomes a model to describe the general importance and specific character of the attitude with which the initiation of prospective intellectuals into the skills of literary practice is to be carried out. It should take place in the name of a different future and be dedicated to the cause of making that future possible.

So, the critic will ask, the argument is that the dedication of the process of initiation into academic skills to a justified cause will transform the nature of the procedure of teaching and learning those skills from a tedious disciplinary ordeal to a progressive project? Is this not what also Nietzsche meant when he said that the right way to go through with a classical disciplinary education was to 'learn how to dance in chains'? The reply this idea must provoke from anybody with a free mind is the question of why chains should be necessary in the first place. Why should anybody submit themselves to a procedure of initiation when it is clear that such procedures by definition imply the forceful internalisation of the laws of tradition, a violence that can never be justified by the principles of the Enlightenment? No matter what cause you dedicate the procedure of initiation to, the means can never be redeemed by idealistic ends because they are inherently brutal. The only true alternative is to reject outright the academy and the form of disciplinary education it represents. Here we have got to the bottom of the matter, the defender of the academy will concede to the critic, because, in the end, the question we will have to continue to discuss is whether you can dismantle the disciplinary power of the academy and put its potentials to a different use, or whether the power structures of the institution remain too inflexible to allow for such a process of transformation. I believe that it is possible, but in the end we will have to see if works out or not.

Notes:

1. On the intimate relation of the conceptual gesture to the intellectual context of its realisation O'Doherty writes: 'It [The gesture] dispatches the bull of history with a single thrust. Yet it needs that bull, for it shifts perspective suddenly on a body of assumptions and ideas. […] A gesture wises you up. It depends for its effect on the context of ideas it changes and joins.' Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (San Francisco: The Lapis Press, 1986), p. 70.
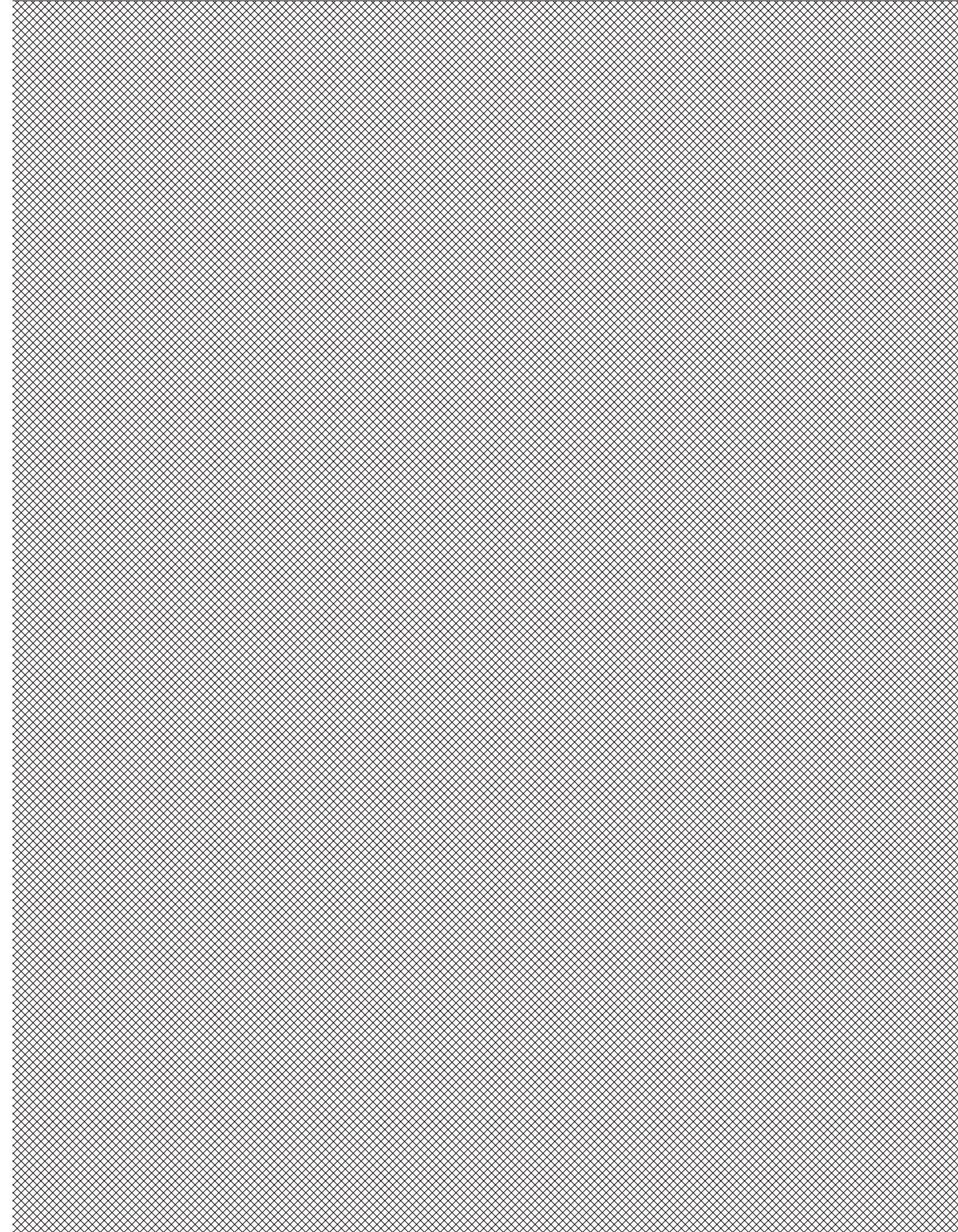
2. Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, 'Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions' in Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, eds., *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology* (Cambridge, Mass., and London: The MIT Press, 1999), p. 519.
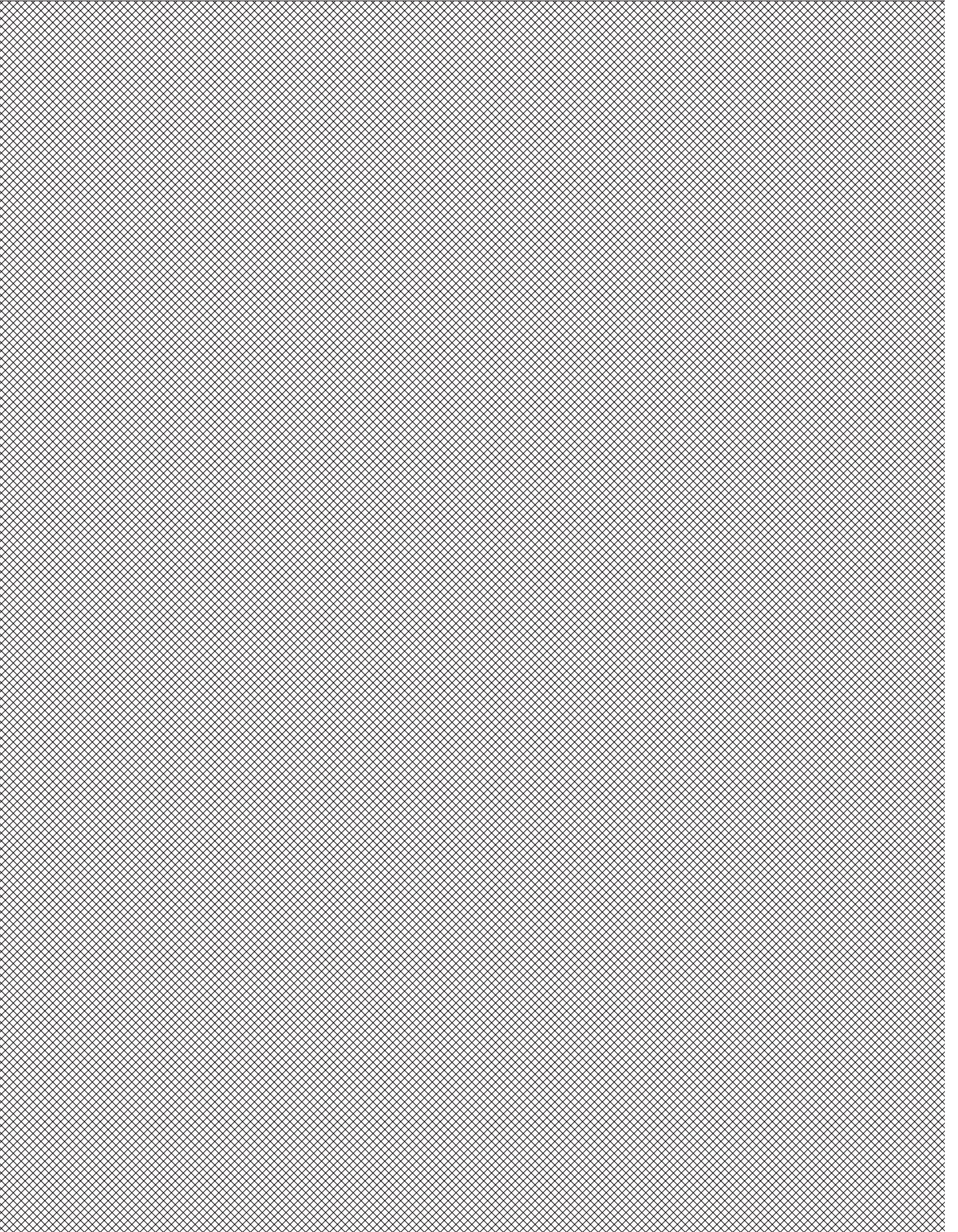
3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Death of a Discipline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

4. Ibid., p. 42.

5. Ibid., p. 50.

6. Ibid., p. 101.

1
Marion von Osten,
'Be Creative! Der
kreative Imperativ:
Project Summary',
www.k3000.ch/
becreative/summary.
html. Last accessed
2 July 2006

2
Quoted in Stuart
Elliott, 'Advertising:
Nowadays, It's All
Yours, Mine or Ours',
The New York Times,
2 May 2006

3
Bennett Simpson,
'Make Your Own Life',
Make Your Own Life:
Artists In & Out of
Cologne (exh. cat.),
Philadelphia:
Institute of
Contemporary Art,
2006, p.11

4 Gary McWilliams
and Steven Gray,
'Slimming Down
Stores', The Wall Street
Journal, 29 April
2005; Jane J. Kim,
'A Latte with Your
Loan?', The Wall Street
Journal, 17 May 2006

For starters, consider the lounge. What exhibition today is complete without one? A good example was provided by 'Be Creative! *Der kreative Imperativ*', a show that opened at Zürich's Design Museum in late 2002. Participating artists, designers, architects and theorists contributed projects devoted to the themes of neo-liberal economic policy, flexible business management and immaterial labour. To get a sense of the show's layout, think hip dot-com startup. Or, in the words of its curator, the Swiss artist Marion von Osten, 'a modern space for living and working, ranging from the loft to the open-plan office, alternating production and regeneration, and using game tables, advisory literature and chill out zones'.[1]

Now compare this to the more recent 'Make Your Own Life: Artists In & Out of Cologne' at the Philadelphia ICA, a show with a similar sounding title, also phrased in the imperative — only, rather than 'be creative', its command, following the marketing trend ignited by the popularity of websites such as MySpace and YouTube, was to customise and personalise, to be *self*-creative. ('"Our", "my" and "your" are consumer empowerment words', notes Manning Field, Senior Vice President for brand management at Chase Card Services.[2]) Whereas the Zürich show openly worried over the post-Fordist production protocols it critically mimed, the Philadelphia show stressed the liberating promise the creative personality holds out to society. Rather than flexibility, it talked about autonomy; rather than fret over neo-liberal appropriations of the artist as an idealisation of entrepreneurial subjectivity, it pondered 'the possibilities of artistic agency... artists creating themselves'.[3] It, too, featured a lounge.

Who relaxes in these things? Who instead doesn't feel a strong ambivalence, if not irritation, when happening upon the lounge? Of course, the irritation is the best part. Contradictions bottleneck here. Typically the lounge is meant to signify a progressive artistic or curatorial approach to exhibitions, one that privileges context and process over discrete objects, that turns away from static commodity display in favour of a more dynamic environment of ongoing, interactive meaning production. The lounge demonstrates how 'meaning is fugitive ... beyond the object or image as such ... complexly wound up with social dynamics', to quote curator Bennett Simpson from the *Make Your Own Life* catalogue.

But the lounge as organic social oasis sprouting in the middle of the staid institution answers other agendas as well. With the spread of instrumentalised and instrumentalising communications technology, social exchange is increasingly ensnared within the logic of commodity exchange. The lounge descends from that hybrid architectural offspring of the New Economy, what Starbucks founder and chairman Howard Schultz famously calls 'the third place', a casual multi-use site mixing home and office, business and leisure, private and public, production and consumption, a space equally amenable to group brainstorming, web-surfing and poetry readings. Ample couches, errant reading material, choice tunes and palpable ambiance now come standard in not only the new project-oriented office configurations but also in what is called 'community-centric retailing' — from the small lounge-ish satellites of big-box outlets such as Best Buy to redesigned bank branches that serve espresso drinks and offer yoga classes.[4]

This isn't just a matter of conjuring 'parallels' between superstructure and base. As surplus value grows frothier around such intangible and instantly obsolete commodities as events, services, affective experiences and word-of-mouth buzz,

and as business practice increasingly relies on networking, on the accumulating and maintaining of contacts and the ability to access and move nimbly between myriad social circles, art institutions as well scramble to find ways, in the words of Anthony Davies and Simon Ford, 'to formalise informality … [to] provide what are essentially convergence zones for corporate and creative networks to interact, overlap with one another and form "weak" ties. The prominence that events such as charity auctions, exhibition openings, talk programmes and award dinners have attained demonstrates how central face-to-face social interaction is to the functional capacity of these new alliances.'[5]

No question the lounge is part of a trend — but toward what? More creative social spontaneity, or more chronically intermittent employment with longer 'immaterial' work hours and no benefits? Are we witnessing the fulfillment of that long-sought avant-garde dream of merging art and life, or is this merger more corporate than utopian, more the implementation of neo-liberal strategic goals for a fully freelance economy, one staffed by highly motivated, underpaid, short-term and subcontracted creative types for whom, in Osten's words, 'artists and designers are taken as the model'?[6] Is the public sphere being refashioned in the image of intense and intimate artistic collaboration, or is it being further fragmented by the privatisations and nepotisms of ego-casting and controlled-access cyber-socialising? Given the business class's new mantra of 'network or perish', is the lounge a glorious expansion of freedom or the new key to capitalist survival?

As the Zürich and Philadelphia shows illustrate, discussion of this topic appears to have unfurled somewhat asymmetrically on the two sides of the Atlantic. Many artists and critics, especially in Europe, do in fact pay heed to the emerging characteristics of what the Blair government pithily calls 'The Talent Economy', although little analysis has been devoted to how such macro-trends specifically interact with developments internal to art practice.[7] On the other hand, when focus stays trained on such art innovations as service-oriented projects and relational aesthetics, or the re-emergence of collectives and fictive identities, these developments tend to get talked about as if they were transpiring under the Old Economy. Despite vague references to the 'chaos of global culture in the information age', artists still garner applause for the sheer feat of avoiding categorisation and not making objects.[8] But given the contemporary art world's complex realities, with its vast institutionalisation, its more diverse, 'collaborative' forms of patronage, its mixed public, private and corporate revenue streams, and its decisive influence on the global jockeying of municipal and even regional economies, critical reckoning has more on its hands than just finger-wagging at the cash purchase of stretched canvas. Mobility, fluidity, flux and unpredictability have been catechisms of corporate managers for at least the past decade. And yet these very same words were used repeatedly not only to pitch this year's Whitney Biennial but to vouch for its 'criticality'. Curators Chrissie Iles and Philippe Vergne likened the show to a big 'cabaret', as if to suggest a kind of mega-lounge, the 'third place' writ spectacularly — but of course their intended point of reference was instead Cabaret Voltaire and the avant-garde interventions of nearly a hundred years ago. The other Biennial theme, about collectives and pseudo-identities, was described by the curators as 'a way of creating a space outside the market: a space where things can't be pinned down so easily and exchanged … so that the artist isn't directly accessible.'[9] Tell that to John Kelsey, a critic for *Artforum* and, as co-founder of the Bernadette Corporation and director of Reena Spaulings gallery, a Biennial participant twice over. 'In part because of "this mystique around the collective"', *The Wall Street Journal* quotes Kelsey in an article on his gallery's part in the pseudonyms fad, 'at a recent show, works sold quickly.'[10]

Staking a position outside and opposed to 'the system' is definitely no cinch these days — especially when the system feeds off segmentation and diversification (if not diversity). Nor is mounting some purge of all forms of art-world complicity a solution — if only because not much of interest would be left. What would help, though, is a thorough transvaluing of critical art discourse and its objects, starting with a reassessment and reproblematising of the current situation and its determinants from a more up-to-date perspective. This at least would overcome the hypocrisy of basing claims for the superiority of relational and performative

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Anthony Davies and Simon Ford, 'Culture Clubs', Mute, vol.18, September 2000, pp.23—24. See also Carol Kino, 'It's Time For Artists To Give Till It Hurts', The New York Times, 28 May 2006; and Eric Wilson, 'Using a White Shirt As Their Canvas', The New York Times, 11 May 2006

6

M.v. Osten, op. cit. See also Andrew Ross, No-Collar: The Humane Workplace and Its Hidden Costs, New York: Basic Books, 2003

7

Besides the projects and writings of Osten and others involved in the 'temporary coalition' k3000 (www.k3000.ch), see Jan Verwoert, Die Ich-Ressource: zur Kultur der Selbst-Verwertung, Munich: Kunstverein München, 2003; Angela McRobbie, 'Everyone is Creative: Artists as New Economy Pioneers?', open-Democracy, 30 August 2001; and Aleksandra Mir (ed.), Corporate Mentality: An Archive Documenting the Emergence of Recent Practices Within a Cultural Sphere Occupied by Both Business and Art, New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2001

8

Nicolas Bourriaud, Postproduction, New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002, p.7

9
Quoted in Tim Griffin,
'Cabaret License',
Artforum, January
2006, pp.94—96

10
Jacob Hale Russell,
'The Invisible Artist',
The Wall Street
Journal, 31 December
2005 — 1 January
2006

art forms on a static, reified caricature of their conditions. At the same time, analysis needs to go beyond general social processes, beyond even such art-world infrastructure as *Kunsthallen* and galleries and their mixed economic support, and engage art practice itself, its material, structural and genealogical specificities, so as to avoid the kind mechanistic account of cultural forms as pre-destined by causes firmly planted elsewhere. The point is to not reduce art but hopefully to lay some necessary groundwork for elaborating whatever options it may still have available.

Only the briefest attempt at such a genealogy is possible here. To wit: much art practice today can be seen as developing from an apparent reconciliation of two separate but related trends that dominated the 1980s. On the one hand, there was the prevalence of art rooted in the street cultures of hip-hop, punk and new wave, as well as in DIY and activist politics, all of which conformed to the sociologically grounded, Gramscian arguments about signifying practices and *bricolage* put forward by people like Stuart Hall, Dick Hebdige and Michel de Certeau. At the same time, much art production and reception was also framed within a more philosophically-minded, totalising Frankfurt School portrayal of culture as monolithic, dictatorial and pacifying, according to which floating signifiers colonised and privatised social relations within an industrially-produced mass spectacle.

By the end of the 1980s, this latter trend seemed to recede behind the Cultural Studies paradigm and its focus on everyday practice, as well as what Hal Foster has called 'the return of the real' — the re-emergence, that is, of the situated and material body. But interest in the body didn't so much reject as make more material the previous notion of media, thickening it and making it more local. Media came to reference as much fanzines, protest flyers and other empowerments of the corner copy shop as it did multi-million-dollar Madison Avenue propaganda campaigns. Appropriation was folded into *bricolage*, or what Claude Levi-Strauss called 'the science of the concrete'; it entailed handling, adapting and piecing together *things*. Heterogeneity, which signaled channel-surfing schizophrenia in David Salle's paintings, stood for a healthy and welcoming capaciousness a decade later in Laura Owens's canvases — as if she undertook painting the way one might collect records, as a (sub?)cultural practice. Or compare Richard Prince's early 1980s media appropriations with Elizabeth Peyton's later renderings of celebrities, or Barbara Kruger's media scripts with the handwritten pedestrian communiqués facilitated by Gillian Wearing. Or, more simply, juxtapose Peter Halley quoting Baudrillard in 1983 with Halley publishing *Index* magazine in 1996. In the work of Mike Kelley and Jim Shaw, shopping segued into thrifting; with Wolfgang Tillmans, thrifting turned fashion into street fashion. What seemed at the beginning of the 1990s an opposition between the apparitions of spectacle and the opacities of embodiment and trauma soon disappeared as artists embraced a middle ground between the two — the realm of everyday life and common cultural exchange. Not superstar celebrities or abject flesh but people wearing clothes, eating food and hanging out with friends.

Such a synopsis hews closely to several accounts already written of the 1990s, especially the one canonised by Nicolas Bourriaud in his books *Relational Aesthetics* (1998) and *Postproduction* (2001). The notion of artistic practice that comes to the fore here has supposedly little to do with the stereotype of the lone genius who transmutes raw matter in the isolation of the studio. Rather, it's about intervening in everyday materials that are themselves continuous and interwoven with larger communities and cultures; and it's also about identity as an ongoing construction, always inclusive of and open to larger systems of exchange. At the same time, 'artists who insert their work into that of others', as Bourriaud explains, 'contribute to the eradication of the traditional distinction between production and consumption, creation and copy, readymade and original work.'[11] The antithesis pitting creative hero against conformist consumer is thus transcended in Bourriaud's favoured figures of the DJ, programmer and web surfer, all '"semionauts" who produce original pathways through signs'.[12] With the appearance of such *bricoleurs*, consumption is no longer seen as such an evil, or even much of a problem. Indeed, it suddenly becomes redemptive, not just a part of practice but a special, providential skill, a form of artistic know-how that encompasses the whole of daily activity, the cobbling together of the information bits that temporarily constitute one's

11
N. Bourriaud,
op. cit., p.7

12
Ibid., p.12

'self' and one's 'community'. Signature style gives way to signature code.

As described by Bourriaud, signifying practices grow more general and abstract during the course of the 1990s, less anchored to the specific politics of local semiotic skirmishes. Instead, 'the market become[s] the omnipresent referent for contemporary artistic practices'.[13] In Bourriaud's christening of the market as master paradigm, it's possible to recognise the return from exile of forces that had formerly gone under the names of spectacle and culture industry. Sign production now back peddles away from Levi-Strauss's *bricolage* to approximate more closely than ever Baudrillard's simulation. The 'homologies' artists string together are less about the coherence of subcultural politics than about the aesthetics of integrated end-to-end product design. And while practice remains beholden to an additive rather than subtractive mode, it's less about reckoning with sculptural materiality than about sequencing articulated differences so as to manipulate and exploit signification. 'Artists today program forms more than they compose them,' exclaims Bourriaud, 'they remix available forms and make use of *data* ... [they] surf on a network of signs.'[14]

This is where activity in the arena of art begins to produce certain unquestioned analogies with developments in other spheres, to affirm and be affirmed by, say, official economic and political policy. During the 1980s, Thatcher and Reagan provided art with plenty of handy tropes about the tyranny of the all-powerful image, while Evil Empire foreign policy and culture-wars domestic policy were met with what many worried was an over-politicisation of culture. In the 1990s, however, as much post-Cold War politics encouraged the economisation of culture, an oppositional art becomes harder to discern. Or at least as portrayed by Bourriaud, 1990s practices — in which resourceful DIY artists nurture myriad forms of convivial exchange — can be seen to complement the euphemisms of entrepreneurial initiative and individual responsibility used to sell the agendas of the Clinton and Blair regimes, namely their placating of business and financial markets by rolling back state assistance programs and 'ending welfare as we know it'. The recent 'social turn' in art has had as part of its context neo-liberal policies that are at base anti-social.

In terms of economics, another change in the surrounding context of art production is the revamping of business models in response to the impact of new information technologies on marketplace dynamics. That consumers have grown less passive with the replacement of television's few big networks by desktop interface and the web is certainly not headline news anymore. Marketers have long turned their gunsites on their own version of the *bricoleur*, what they call the 'prosumer': customers who no longer feel hostage to standardised commodities, who instead customise the design specifications of online merchandise, who subscribe to cable rather than watch ad-based broadcast television, who download and sort through MP3s and personalise TV programming using TiVo, who publish writing, photography and more on blogs and personal websites. 'The market today,' writes Douglas B. Holt, Professor of Marketing at Oxford's School of Business, 'thrives on ... unruly *bricoleurs* who engage in nonconformist producerly consumption practices.'[15] Product differentiation is no longer purely a manufacturing and retailing strategy, a staple of planned obsolescence and the staving off of overproduction — rather than forced on consumers, it's now demanded and implemented by them. Increasingly, value is encoded in not objects but practices, which take over much of the value-adding for the market. That this is very much still a matter of highly structured markets, not some romantic form of off-the-books subcultural barter, gets harder to deny everyday. Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, for example, has redrawn its entire corporate strategy around its recent acquisition of MySpace, while such music behemoths as EMI and Universal now debut CDs that include software encouraging customers to remix tracks (the recent Billy Joel $60 box set comes encoded with a programme called UmixIt).[16] It's as if the pronouns Barbara Kruger assigned to authoritarian media images in the 1980s had switched sides. Give credit, then, to Sony BMG Music Entertainment for 'challenging authorship'.

As with every other form of labour under the New Economy, so too has value production in the consumer marketplace become relational, dialogical, networked. The commodity, like the postmodern artwork, has relaxed its former pretenses to autonomy. The *bricoleur*, or what Bourriaud fancies the 'programmer', encounters

13
Ibid., p.22

14
Ibid., pp.11 and 13

15
Douglas B. Holt, 'Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and Branding', Journal of Consumer Research, vol.29 no.1, June 2002, p.88. See also D. Holt, How Brands Become Icons: The Principles of Cultural Branding, Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2004. For a history of the decline of authoritarian mass-marketing practices starting in the 1960s, see Thomas Frank, The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism, University of Chicago Press, 1997

16
John Jurgensen, 'Record Labels Say: Mess with Us', The Wall Street Journal, 31 December 2005 — 1 January 2006. Even Charles Saatchi has caught the wave, 'subverting' the dealer system by launching the website YourGallery.com.

a landscape of ever more responsive, yielding, programmable commodities. No longer are mass audiences dictated mass-produced, prepackaged meanings; now the meeting between product and customer happens as if directly and individually, one-to-one, with each side demanding immediate interface and feedback. Outright acceptance or rejection may have been options appropriate for the closed object; what's required now is constant negotiation, vigilant involvement. In other words: consumption as a more dynamic environment of ongoing, interactive meaning production. In this way, contemporary market transactions find a quite suitable counterpart in those art-world forms that are said to supercede the studio and museum — namely, all those laboratory-like *Kunstverein*, those project rooms and, yes, ubiquitous lounges, as well as all the prosumer art that appoints them.

If the studio and museum stood for the lamentable division between the spheres of production and consumption, the lounge counters this with a space of fluid interchange between objects, activities and people, a connectivity to mend the split. What the lounge 'exhibits' is networking itself. And yet this too can be seen as a conciliation to the New Economy. The network is, after all, the exemplary figure of post-Fordism, compared to which all the former static, box-like arenas — the factories and unions, disciplines and vocations, parties and ideologies, all the bounded forms that had mediated the space between subjects and objects, securing the sense of stable interiority required for the projecting and investing of meaning from the one onto the other — have proven not nearly flexible enough. Such former 'molds' of enclosure now give way to what Gilles Deleuze has called '*modulation*, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point.'[17] Ergo the network, with its one-to-one connections and additive, combinatory logic replacing the organisation's former pyramidal hierarchy and hard external shell. The network privileges casual, weak ties over formal commitments so as to heighten the possibility of chanced-upon associational link-ups that lead outward from any one communicational nexus or group. As dot-com startups were among the first to prove, this is the new formula for success, in business as in culture: namely, a loose collection of intimates whose cryptic projects attain global buzz, thus optimising the structural capacities of constelled, overlapping networks, where production of authentic intensity is always already exteriorised as signification within the sprawling exchange system that motivates it. Or, put another way, practice as no longer isolated but always inclusive of and open to larger systems of exchange. Think of the YBAs and the 'Swinging London' phenomenon, or LA's fabled Chinatown art scene, or the Cologne milieu adored by 'Make Your Own Life', all examples of how the production of localness that such place-names imply is dependent upon its exportation for international consumption, and thus upon the abolition of the local as such. The same with fictive identities or other alluring logos — all gain definition only as functions within a larger, comprehensive set, as values emanating from a system.[18]

Here again the rage for conviviality in art gets expressed in the face of a larger crisis concerning social cohesion. As network connectivity obliges that objects lose their set boundaries to become more responsive, so too do subjects shed long-term loyalties and identifications to become better operators who mesh transparently with the system's mobile operations. With the rise of the network, the labour market fills with its own version of responsive commodities, as across-the-board pay scales are replaced by more personalised jobs — that is, by differentiated contracts laden with incentive clauses and bonuses based on individual performance expectations. One competes against oneself. To work at home and be your own boss means setting not only your own work hours and dress codes (like an artist!) but also performance criteria and production levels. The result is that the definition and value of labour becomes less social and more private, more abstract and intransitive. The goal of work is now to bulk-up one's resume and gather more contacts in anticipation of the inevitable layoff and the need to once again find new employment.

Given this context, it's hard to see how the networked forms of recent art, from relational aesthetics to multiple and fictive artist-identities, can be taken as inherently oppositional. On the contrary, at least on the level of form, they seem to not oppose the dominant system but 'surf' its leading edge, where they romanticise and idealise

17
Gilles Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', October, vol.59, Winter 1992, p.4

18
A single-functioning social network, excluding the other various networks it links to, supposedly includes on the average 125 members; the maximum is around 155. The introduction to the novel Reena Spaulings reports that '150 writers, professional and amateur … contributed to' its writing. See Bernadette Corporation, Reena Spaulings, New York: Semiotext(e), 2004; R.A. Hill and R.I.M. Dunbar, 'Social Network Size in Humans', Human Nature, vol.14, no.1, pp.53—72; and Mark S. Gronovetter, 'The Strength of Weak Ties', American Journal of Sociology, vol.78, no.6, May 1973, pp.1360—80

19
John Kotter quoted in Richard Sennett, The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1998, p.25

current conditions and thus serve as an ideological asset rather than a critique. Indeed, to claim the authenticity of a position 'outside' no longer automatically translates into resistance. As with subjects and objects, so too does the distinction between inside and outside get voided by the network structure. To be 'inside' the network already means being outside — or, as Harvard management guru John Kotter advises his students, it's now better 'to be on the outside rather than the inside' of organisations and institutions.[19] It's better, that is, to be a business consultant, or perhaps an 'infomediary' like Martha Stewart or Oprah Winfrey. Likewise, Anthony Davies and Simon Ford note the emergence of the 'culturepreneur' — 'a new "artist" ... that claims professional status as a "broker"; a mediator rather than producer.'[20]

Is this what's become of the *bricoleur*? Has that old 'jack of all trades' matured into a fragmented, maneuverable subject able to flit from one job or social circle to another, adopting whatever called-upon behaviour the situation requires, the self as diversified portfolio, as corporate enterprise? Is the *bricoleur* now merely a euphemism for today's 'flexible personality', the name Brian Holmes has coined for the form of subjectivation mandated by the New Economy — 'a new form of social control ... a distorted form of the artistic revolt against authoritarianism and standardisation'?[21] Holmes quotes Paolo Virno on the cynicism and 'unbounded opportunism' that characterise this new subject, 'who confronts a flux of interchangeable possibilities, keeping open as many as possible'. An ornithologist among birds, the flexible personality is 'into' many things, but refuses to say exactly what he or she 'is' or 'does'. Identity itself is approached opportunistically. Calculation becomes the practice of everyday life, and social life becomes yet one more object of practice, a constantly recoded network of potentially valuable contacts and associates, so many articulated differences to exploit for signification. One vigilantly works the scene. 'The true opportunist,' Holmes concludes, 'consents to a fresh advantage within any new language game, even if it is political. Politics collapses into the flexibility and rapid turnover times of market relations.'

In a recent interview, the New York-based artist Aleksandra Mir, who has tracked aspects of the New Economy in her own work, summed up many of the practical issues confronting artists today. 'I still use the basic entrepreneurial skills I learned from earlier practices,' Mir says, 'how to do something from nothing, how to drum up resources on sheer enthusiasm, how to find exchange values in everything from favours, swaps to corporate sponsorships, how to execute a ton of various tasks single-handedly. [...] There is no clear-cut formula ever of what will happen, but there is a steady continuum in this incoherence.'[22] What I've tried to add to such a description is simply a vantage from which to problematise this terrain to a degree appropriate to the aims of art. That recent expressions of those aims — fluidity and indeterminacy, shared creativity, freedom within community, utopia — often get phrased in the transactional terms and figures of market relations proves just how boundless the current reach of economic reasoning is. Once we've completely disabused ourselves of the fiction of artistic autonomy, is the market really the only arena imaginable in which to enact 'free' subjectivity? Does the entrepreneur only model subjects who 'freely' instrumentalise themselves? If so, which artistic acts are still able to ground themselves in a recognition of such conditions?

If, as many argue, what most characterises our historical moment is nothing less than the end of the social, this itself could open certain opportunities — specifically, a chance to rethink the possibilities of community over society.[23] Here the role of art, especially certain developments associated with relational aesthetics, could be incalculable. But given that such work has hardly gotten off the ground, and that, until it does, the grip of the market continues to tighten, many of the values promoted by today's art world — spectacular but hollow identity, loose and numerous affiliations, hyper-mobility and circulation, opportunistic interventions as if in any situation or ensemble anywhere, the recombining of 'data' indefinitely — all these risk romanticising the reigning logic of exchangeability and the very real dangers of our increasing vulnerability to the moment-to-moment fluctuations of global capital. 'Do you have a corporate mission for the company "Aleksandra Mir"?,' interviewer Kimberly Lloyd asks at one point. A bit baldly put, perhaps, but not a bad question. And questions like that are not a bad place to start.

20
Anthony Davies and
Simon Ford, 'Art
Capital', Art Monthly
vol.213, February 1998,
pp.1 — 4

21
Brian Holmes, 'The
Flexible Personality',
Hieroglyphs of the
Future, Zagreb: Arkzin,
2003

22
Kimberly Lloyd,
'Interview: Aleksandra
Mir', M Publication,
vol.3, 2004, p.166

23
'The End of the Social'
is famously the name
of a chapter in Jean
Baudrillard, In the
Shadow of the Silent
Majorities, New York:
Semiotext(e), 1983. For
more upbeat formula-
tions, see Jacques
Donzelot, 'The Promo-
tion of the Social',
Economy and Society,
vol.17, no.3, August
1998, pp.395 — 427;
Nikolas Rose, 'The
Death of the Social?
Re-figuring the
Territory of Govern-
ment', Economy and
Society, vol.25, no.3,
August 1996, pp.327 —
56; Miami Theory
Collective, ed.,
Community at Loose
Ends, Minneapolis:
University of
Minnesota Press, 1991;
and Bill Readings, The
University in Ruins,
Cambridge and London:
Harvard University
Press, 1996, especially
chapters 10 and 12
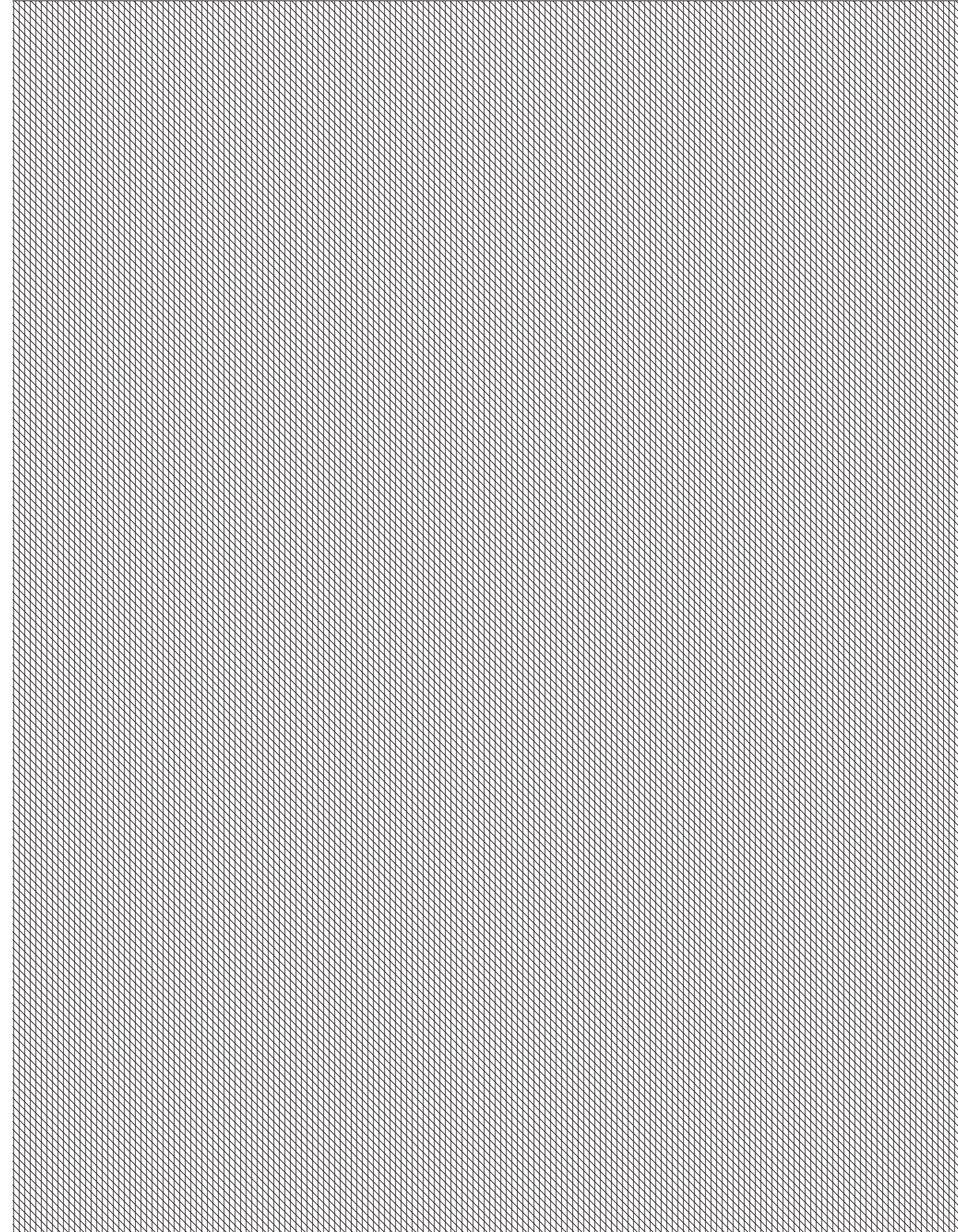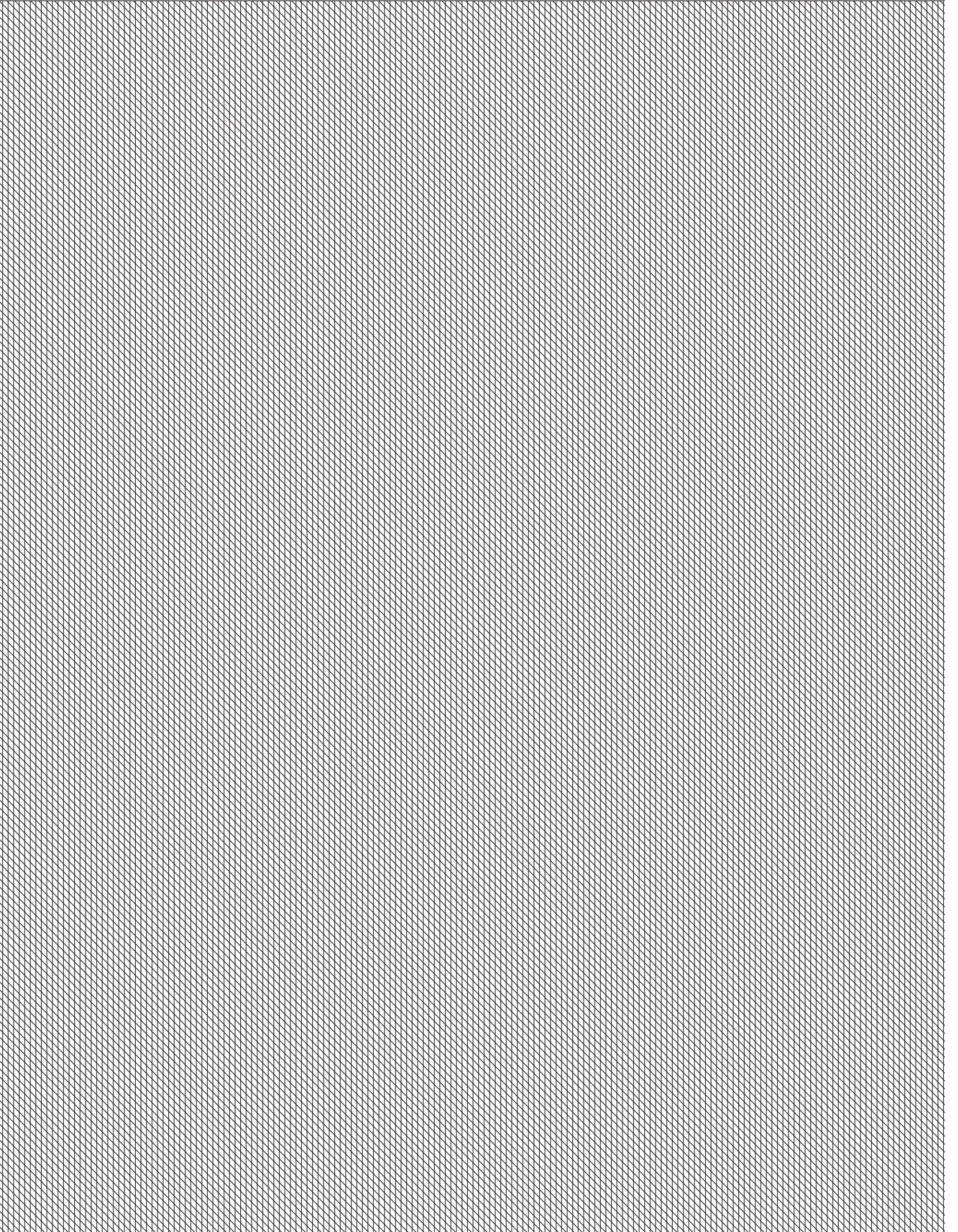
Creative Laboratories in the University
Robert Linsley

It should be obvious that the institutions we work in deform the work that we do; obvious but very hard to see in practice. Perhaps the most critically astute have the hardest time, simply because success always marks the blind spot.

Howard Singerman has discussed very well the lack of fit between university art departments and their framing institutions. As he points out, there is a long established tradition that claims that art cannot be taught, and many university art teachers have managed to assent to this and still build their departments. Ideally, the art department is a kind of free space that exists on sufferance within the academy. But the pressure of accountability, the rationalization of teaching results and methods, the professionalization of the art world and daily submission to bureaucratic forms all break down the tenured walls that protect that space. We become academics despite our best intentions, and academics become service workers despite all the beautiful rhetoric about the humanizing role of education. Naturally, everyone wants to succeed in their profession, but academic success is in some profound way antithetical to art, or at least what many of us went into art for.

Lately I have found it helpful to take a more openly and deliberately instrumental approach in my dealings with the university. If I can initiate a new way for an artist to function within the institution then perhaps I can maintain the creative space both I and my students need. Instead of meeting the demands of the system, of just trying to survive within the conditions that exist, maybe I can influence those conditions. Of course my new way is not absolutely new, it is only new within the context of the art department.

My employer, the University of Waterloo, is very strong in math, computers, science and engineering. The math department is routinely ranked as one of the top in North America, even in the world, in the same league as MIT for example. Computer science started as branch of math, but has gradually become even bigger than the entire math department. In recent years Microsoft has often hired more graduates from Waterloo than any other university. Oddly, the university does not understand the need for a strong art department.

My strategy is to learn from the scientists. I have opened a lab. Just as a scientist hires post-doctoral students to work in their labs, producing collaborative results and jointly authored papers, so I set the direction of the research, hire post graduate students, artists with an MFA, and set them free to develop their work. Naturally I don't direct my researchers as closely as a scientist would, because the goal of course is to produce independent artists. But that is not the only goal. I also want to develop my own work and my own ideas, and I want to learn from my colleagues. I want to be part of a larger aesthetic enterprise, not a collaboration exactly but some kind of larger project that would give my own work a space to grow into. Because I have a vision of

what I want I have been able to raise a lot of research money to do this, even from peer committees composed of scientists.

What follows is a description of the research program, taken in large part from the main grant application. In academic terms I am succeeding. I raise research funds, I am building a community, I have results in the form of exhibitions and publications by myself and my fellows; the higher levels of the university are happy, but a bit surprised that this is happening in Fine Arts. But when I read over my grant application the language itself tells me how much I've been bent by it all.

New Research in Abstraction

The goal of the research program is to renew the practice and discourse of abstraction. For the purpose of the research, abstraction can be defined as art that avoids representation or narrative, and instead works with fundamental properties of time and space.

Since the early eighties at least, the most conservative definition of painting has prevailed, and many painters see themselves not as innovators capable of affecting the course of art in general, but as defenders of an historic and specialized tradition. But the traditional craft of applying coloured material to a flat surface is only one of the possible technologies of painting. Paintings can fill space, or move through time. They may also shed their materiality to a greater or lesser degree.

The research will consist of creative work that will explore an expanded conception of painting, not limited to traditional craft. In practical terms it may mean work with a sculptural or installation aspect, or that uses new materials and technologies, but the research is not concerned with style or medium but with whether painting can still teach us fundamental truths about ourselves and the world. Young artists who have recently completed their education but are not yet established in their careers will be invited to take up a postgraduate fellowship at the University of Waterloo. They will set their own direction and work independently within the parameters of the research. Artists chosen for the fellowship will have a demonstrated familiarity with the history of abstract painting, and with the major theoretical debates in the field. I will continue my own work alongside the research fellows in a shared studio. In concert with myself and in dialogue with a regular series of visiting artists and scholars, they will constitute a research community dedicated to the investigation of shared topics and the pursuit of shared ambitions. The fellows will not be required to make any particular kind of art; they will be encouraged to produce original work within a shared discourse and to open new and original possibilities in both practice and theory.

The goals of classic modernism have been rendered definitively historical by over twenty years of post-modernist practice and criticism. The proposed research is not a return to outmoded positions or practices of the past. It will recapture the speculative

and forward looking spirit of abstraction without adopting any already canonized modernist approach.

During the late sixties and early seventies the visual arts went through an enormous convulsion. Painting was relegated to a secondary, even minor position, and new practices took centre stage in contemporary art. For centuries visual art meant twodimensional pictures that required a contemplative mode of perception. Today it is often an installation of elements that cannot be contemplated from a distance but asks the viewer to physically enter the space of the work. This new work breaks down the distinction between art and everyday experience, and contemplation gives way to the normal perceptions of daily life, or to more conceptual kinds of knowing, such as the acquisition of information or the analysis of abstract ideas.

But it has recently become clear that what seemed to be a break with painting was in many cases a development and extension of it. Painters asked themselves what minimum gesture would be needed to constitute a painting, and this investigation opened up fundamental questions of perception and knowledge. Those questions are now presented in the forms of sculpture, installation and conceptual art, but rarely, if ever, as painting.

The proposed research will investigate how the formal analysis of painting has become the analysis of fundamental properties of knowledge, perception and representation, and why the pursuit of those topics, for many artists, necessarily entails the abandonment of traditional painting. Further, the research will investigate how an experimental and open-ended practice concerned with the elements of time and space relates to scientific theories and discourses. This research will take the form of creative work produced by the artist/researchers.

Sculptural, installation and conceptual modes that reference painting are newly vital areas of activity in contemporary art, and there are many artists now working in the zone between sculpture and installation on the one hand, and traditional painting on the other. The research program aims to move beyond this already accepted area of practice by proposing that painting in the expanded field is an investigation into the limits of knowledge. It will have two aspects: one investigates two dimensional work, the other takes up three dimensional strategies.

When scientists conceptualize a universe of many dimensions, they necessarily have recourse to two dimensional diagrams and illustrations. That such diagrams are meant to point to a more complex reality that can't actually be represented is one parallel with the art of painting, which also seeks to describe a three dimensional universe on a flat surface. Abstraction is explicitly concerned with the conditions of such representation, and with the properties and limits of the plane. In this view, the celebrated flatness of classic modernism is both an acknowledgment of a fundamental feature of any picture, and an obstacle to painting's further development. In fact, we can never know that a picture is flat, only that it looks flat; flatness is just as much a matter of illusion as deep pictorial space. It is axiomatic to this proposal that flatness

and pictorial space can be perceived simultaneously, and one of its goals is to determine through experiment, namely through creative practice, how much information about space—about the positions and movements of objects—any plane can bear. This is a genuinely new development in painting because it breaks with the famously influential theory of flatness developed by Clement Greenberg without returning to older ideas about pictorial space. This is something that post-modernist painting, for all its rejection of Greenberg's influence, has not been able to do. It also brings art into proximity with discussions in theoretical physics.

Physicists have found that the amount of information inside a black hole, that is to say the number of particles and their positions and speeds, is not proportional to its volume, but to its surface area. This discovery, called the Bekenstein Bound, suggests that the surface of a black hole, the so-called "event horizon," is analogous to the picture plane, a surface that also carries limited information about the space behind it. It has led to a number of theories in which two dimensional surfaces play a central role. This means that the surface on which scientists work out their ideas, the flat piece of paper or chalkboard, is in an important way equivalent to the cosmic structures they try to analyze. Such unity of material and concept is a fundamental principle of abstract painting. This proposal marks the first time that these parallels between scientific thinking and art have been noticed. It is important because it does not put the artist in a secondary position to the scientist, as an illustrator of scientific ideas. The intention is not to raid the popular scientific literature for ideas to use in art, but to find a common conceptual ground between the two activities. As such, the research can take the relation between art and science to a new level of sophistication.

The flatness of classic modernist painting is an aspect of a movement toward literalness which reached one culmination in the sixties in minimalist sculpture. The current research is concerned with how painterly features of transparency, colour and illusion persist even in sculpture influenced by minimalism, and how attention to these properties can challenge existing dogmas about both painting and sculpture. Some of my own recent work explores ways of projecting illusionistic forms into real space, and so deals with these ideas.
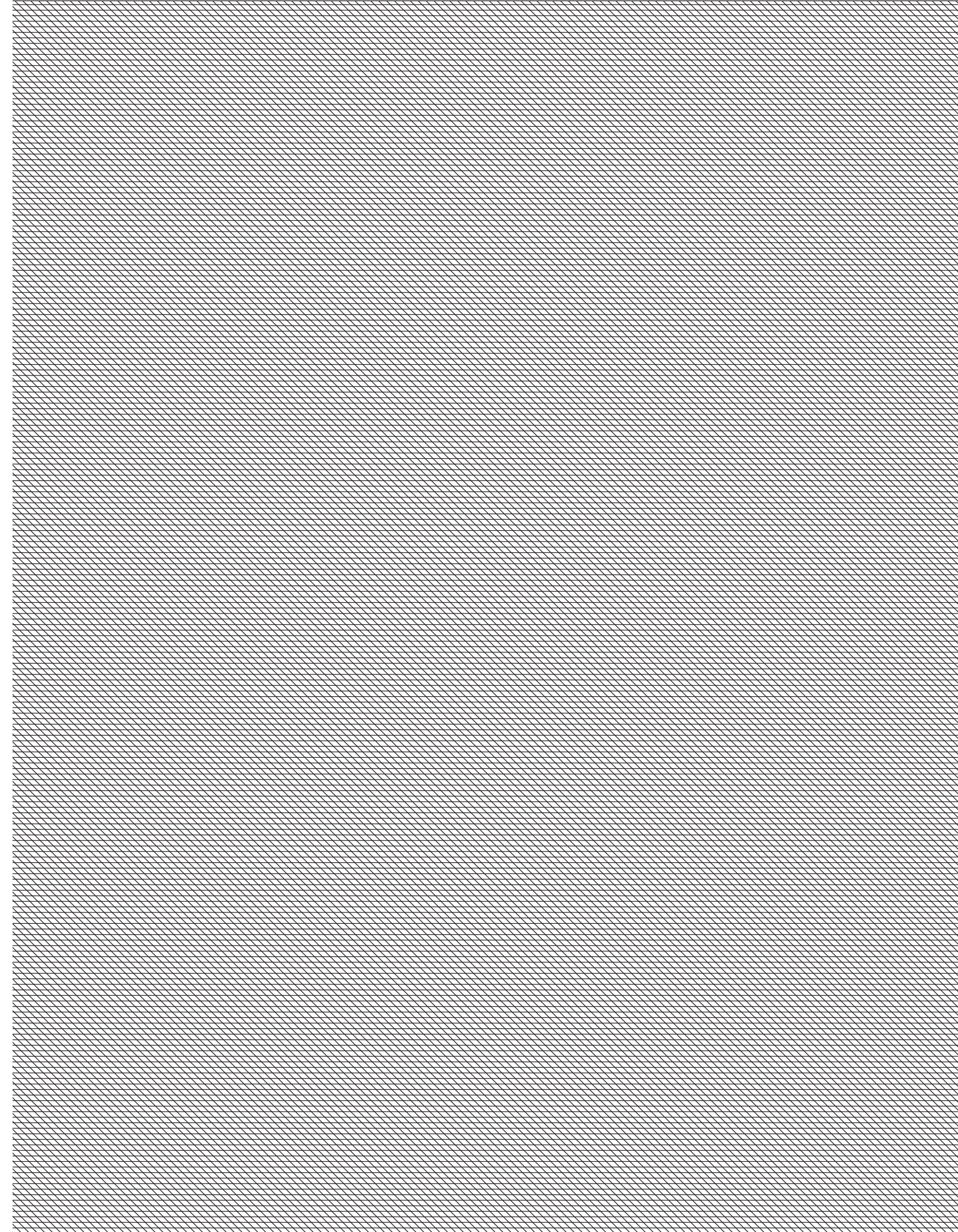
It is a critical convention that the traditional functions of painting, such as portraiture and narrative, have been taken over by new media such as photography, film and video. Further, in the last two decades there has been intense research into the science and mechanics of perception with the goal of teaching computers how to see and render. It is as if the technologies invented in the Renaissance to serve painting—sciences of perspective and of lighting and shadows, anatomical research, theories of colour, studies of the geometry of complex shapes—have found their ultimate development in the new industries of photo-digitizing and computer animation. Today, artists with the manual skills of a Michelangelo can be found applying their talents in animation and comic books, but rarely in the realm of advanced contemporary art. Meanwhile, art has been utterly transformed by the developments of the sixties, and many artists are involved in an open-ended exploration of concrete experience. The proposed program is basic research, and is not directly concerned with

applications. It is not concerned with new media, digital media, or new technologies, but with the relationship between science and art on a conceptual level. Scientific theories are images of the universe; in a complementary way, abstract artists explore the conditions that enable and limit the formation of any kind of image. Precisely because it is not directly concerned with existing applications, this program of research has the potential to mark the beginning of a new cycle in the relationship between technology and art. It is the furthest explorations of artists that will open up the future of technology, not narrow, application based projects. Further, art is not a "soft" humanistic counterbalance to a hard technological world, but an open-ended field of research with the ability to create future needs. The applications that will meet those needs are yet to be imagined.

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So there it is. I can't even begin to express my ambivalence. The grayness of academic language, the constant need to build in the answers to the anticipated obvious questions, the forced self submission—I made the plan, I did the paperwork, I added up the money, I channeled the language, I pushed myself into the mold so that my fellows could be free.

But now that's been done and the program is running. And in practice it's really a lot of fun, in fact it is what the university is supposed to be. I've surrounded myself with very smart young people, and I can bring the best visitors to work with them and myself. I don't push my own ideas but I can see in the work produced that on some subterranean level we all influence each other. Now, if only I had the time to enjoy it.

Appendix

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When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond

Thierry de Duve

I t used to be that the teaching of art was academic and proud of it. Rooted in the observation of nature and the imitation of previous art, the long apprenticeship of a would-be painter or sculptor was primarily an acquisition of skills put under specific cultural constraints. Life-drawing and its underlying discourse, anatomy, provided the basic skill ennobled with humanistic knowledge. Never, though, was art equated with skill. What deserved admiration in the accomplished artist was talent, not craftsmanship. Skill could be acquired, talent could not, since talent was thought of as a gift of nature – a gift, however, which could neither develop nor express itself outside the rules, conventions, and codes provided by the tradition. Tradition set the standards against which the production of art students was measured. Academic teaching had great ambitions as regards the maintenance of tradition and the passing on of quality standards; it had little vanity as regards its ability to "turn out" individual artists. All it could hope to do was nurture and discipline its students' gifts within the limits of nature's generosity, and to grant even the most ungifted students a technical know-how capable of securing them a recognised, if humble, place in society and a plausible, if modest, source of income. Between the work of the artisan and that of the genius the Academy recognised a leap in quality, but also the cultural continuity of one and the same trade in which everybody held his (or her) rank.

When Form Has Become Attitude – And Beyond

All this was destroyed in less than a century. Reynolds was probably the last great academic pedagogue; a century after him, the Academy had withered into academicism. As industrialisation and the social upheaval, scientific progress and ideological transformations that went with it decomposed the hitherto stable social fabric and, on the whole, more or less destroyed all craftsmanship, the examples of the past lost their credibility, in art and elsewhere, and the chain of tradition was eventually broken. To the sensitive artist, academic art and training became just that, academic, and the new art began to look toward the future for its legitimation, with fear and hope alike. The avant-garde was launched. Painting and sculpture, progressively turning away from observation and imitation of outside models, turned inwards and started to observe and imitate their very means of expression. Instead of exerting their talent within relatively fixed conventions, the modernist artists put those conventions themselves to an aesthetic test and, one by one, discarded those by which they no longer felt constrained. Excellence in art came to be measured against the resistance of the medium, with, as yardstick, the honesty with which the artist yields to it. All tradition rejected, painting came to be seen as a sort of essence, present in all painting, past, present or future, as if the medium in its purity could set the rules by itself, command over skill, and provide a vessel for talent. Sculpture, architecture, photography, even cinema became similar essences.

Soon, art schooling was affected by the avant-garde. As the examples and standards of the past could no longer be trusted, as imitation and observation could no longer provide the basics for the apprenticeship of art, the teaching of art had to look elsewhere for roots in both nature and culture. This it achieved in two ways. The figure of Man – the universal measure of all things in nature – was relinquished as outer model for observation, but was recouped as inner subjective principle. Psychology replaced anatomy in its function as foundational discourse for a new artistic humanism. The new doctrine stated that all men are endowed with innate faculties which it is the function of education to allow to grow. Thus, specialisation in the visual arts meant the specific training and growth of the faculties of visual perception and imagination. How to train them became the pedagogical issue. Again, psychology – not the introspective kind but perception psychology, *Gestalt* theory, and so on – provided the idea that the ability to perceive is, by nature, already cultural, that perception is, so to speak, a basic reading skill. It followed from there that imagination was a basic writing skill of sorts. "Creativity" is the name, the modern name, given to the combined innate faculties of perception and imagination. Everybody is endowed with it, and the closer it remains to sheer, blank endowment, the greater is its potential. A child, a primitive, has more creativity than a cultivated adult. The ideal art student, the artist of the future, came to be dreamt of as an infant whose natural ability to read and write the visual world needs only to be properly tutored. The problem became to find the appropriate means. If only the practice of painting and sculpture could be broken into semantic "atoms", if only some elementary visual alphabet and syntax could be set up, then art – art itself, not merely skill – could be taught and taught without resorting to a now obsolete tradition. Talent, as such, no longer exists. It lies in a raw state in everyone's creativity, and skill lies, so to

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speak, ready-made in the properties of the medium: in the linearity of drawing, in the two-dimensionality of the picture plane, in the volumetric properties of sculpture. In principle, if not in fact, the learning of art became simple: students should learn how to tap their unspoilt creativity, guided by immediate feeling and emotion, and to read their medium, obeying its immanent syntax. As their aesthetic sensibility and artistic literacy progressed, their ability to feel and to read would translate into the ability to express and to articulate. Nurtured perception and imagination would produce artworks of a new kind.

This pedagogical programme proved to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. All progressive pedagogues of this century, from Froebel to Montessori to Decroly; all school reformers and philosophers of education, from Rudolf Steiner to John Dewey, have based their projects and programmes on creativity, or rather, on the belief in creativity, on the conviction that creativity – not tradition, not rules and conventions – is the best starting point for education. Moreover, all great modern theorists of art, from Herbert Read to E. H. Gombrich to Rudolph Arnheim, have entertained similar convictions and devoted considerable energy to breaking up the "visual language" into its basic components and demonstrating the universality of its perceptive and psychological "laws". And finally, needless to say, there is not one pioneer of Modernist art, from Malevich to Kandinsky and Klee, or from Itten and Moholy-Nagy to Albers and Hofmann, who has not been actively involved in the creation of art schools and teaching programmes based on the reduction of practice to the fundamental elements of a syntax immanent to the medium. Kandinsky wrote *Von Punkt zur Linie zur Fläche* in 1924, and since then every art school in the world has a 2-D and a 3-D studio to prepare its students for painting and sculpture. If they had been strictly faithful to Kandinsky, if they had also taken their cue from Cubism, they would have a 1-D and a 4-D studio as well.

My point is not just to be ironic, and certainly not to dismiss this philosophy without further trial, but merely to stress that a philosophy it is, a biased one and a dated one. Let's call it the Bauhaus model. It was never carried out with the radical purity of my description, not even at the Bauhaus itself, which died under the pressure of its own contradictions as much as it did under the hand of the Nazis. But the Bauhaus model, more or less amended, more or less debased, has set a series of assumptions about art teaching upon which dozens of art and architecture schools around the world have been built, and which are, as of today, still underlying, often subliminally, almost unconsciously, most art curriculums, including (if I'm well informed) a great number of foundation courses across the UK. Moreover, it is seemingly the only model that pits itself coherently against the old academic model, such as it also survives, equally amended and often degenerated beyond recognition, not just in the very few Ecoles de Beaux-Arts that still defend it (actually, I don't know of any that still do), but also in the immense majority of art schools and academies around the world that seek to find a compromise between traditionalism and modernism.

I have sketched out an oversimplified picture, a caricature, even, of the postulates underlying the teaching of art up to recent years. But a caricature is all the more

truthful in that it is exaggerated, and I will not hesitate in exaggerating it even more forcibly, in order to make those postulates appear as postulates – that is, as mere postulates. Two models, even though in reality they contaminate each other, divide up the teaching of art conceptually. On the one hand, there is the academic model; on the other, there is the Bauhaus model. The former believes in talent, the latter in creativity. The former classifies the arts according to techniques, what I would call the *métier*; the latter according to the medium. The former fosters imitation; the latter invention. Both models are obsolete. The academic model entered a deep crisis as soon as it began to deserve the derogative label of academicism. Its decadence was accomplished under the pressure of modern art, which is why no return to the past is thinkable lest the blackout is pronounced on all the art and all the artists of modernity. The Bauhaus model also entered an open crisis. That phenomenon is more recent but it isn't new, dating from the Sixties, I would say. It, too, goes hand in hand with the art of its time, and it is contemporaneous with the deep loss of confidence that modernism has undergone since those years. Now, it is dramatic to have to teach according to postulates one doesn't believe in anymore. But in order to change them, one has to see them clearly. Let's review the evidence: do we have to choose between talent and creativity, between *métier* and medium?

Talent vs Creativity

The difference between talent and creativity is that the former is unequally distributed and the latter universally. In the passage from one word to the other, there is of course a complete reversal of ideologies, and it is not difficult to see that, historically, the progress of the ideology of creativity went hand in hand with that of the idea of democracy and of egalitarianism. The use of the word creativity in this elevated sense itself is relatively recent, but its germs were already present in the Romantic notion of the genius. Creativity is grounded in a utopian belief summarised by a slogan that repeats itself with clockwork regularity throughout the history of modernity, from Rimbaud to Beuys: everyone is an artist. Of course, it always meant: everyone is potentially an artist. Talent is also a potential but, on the one hand, it does not depend on some psychology of the faculties, and on the other, it is inseparable from the specific terrain where it is exerted, which in the last resort is always technical. One has talent for music, for carpentry or for cookery, but not talent in general. Creativity, by contrast, is conceived as an absolute and unformalised potential, a supply of energy prior to any division of labour. One has creativity, without qualification; one is creative, period.

Three major consequences derive from this for any art-educational project based on creativity. The first is that nothing should, in principle, restrict access to the study of art. The second is that art itself, and not just the technical means of art, can be taught. And the third is that initiation to art in general should precede every specialisation (that was the role of the *Grundkurs*, or foundation course, at the Bauhaus). The

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contradiction between these principles is blatant: many art schools yield to the particularly perverse illusion (which, moreover, frequently backfires) that they produce or fabricate artists, while at the same time considering that their incoming students are artists already, even though only potentially. In fact, all teachers know by experience that talent exists and that creativity is a myth. On this point, the Academy saw things a lot more clearly than modernity. The myth is generous, and this is not a negligible quality when it comes to teaching. And as long as the myth functions, why denounce it? The problem is that it doesn't function anymore.

Métier vs Medium

The difference between *métier* and medium is that the former has a historical existence and the latter a transhistorical existence. The Academy classified the fine arts according to the *métier* and everything the notion entails: specialised skills, artisan habits, sleights of hand, rules of composition, canons of beauty, in short, a specific tradition. Modernism classifies the arts according to the medium and everything this notion entails: particular materials, supports, tools, gestures, technical procedures, and conventions of specificity. That an artist practised the *métier* of painter meant that he belonged to the guild of painters and had a place in a given affiliation. His definition of painting would have been, simply: what painters do. That an artist works in the medium of painting means that he questions painting for what it has to say about itself and hasn't said yet. His definition of painting might be: what no painter has done yet. The *métier* gets practised, the medium gets questioned; the *métier* gets transmitted, the medium communicates or gets communicated; the *métier* gets learnt, the medium gets discovered; the *métier* is a tradition, the medium is a language; the *métier* rests on experience, the medium relies on experimentation. From the former to the latter, a reversal occurred in the conception of history. The *métier* is always received from the past; even when regulated by ideals that are supposedly eternal, those ideals are situated upstream in history (like the antique). The medium is received from nowhere; it purports to actualise transcendentals, that is, *a priori* conditions of possibility, which, regulating the work, should lead to the revelation of the medium's essence, paradoxically situated downstream in history. Thus, for the academic model, to teach painting means to transmit its legacy and to allow the apprentice to find a place in a chain of affiliation of which he has a strong awareness and which he will have to pursue. For the Bauhaus model, to teach painting is to open access to a being called painting, supposedly immanent to all paintings from all times, but whose ultimate revelation is yet to come; it is to invite the student to subtract from the medium and thereby to subtract himself from the chain of affiliation.

Three major consequences derive from this. First, teaching the arts according to the medium cultivates distrust of technical skill because mastering the medium gets in the way of questioning the medium; what matters is not technical apprenticeship

but the discovery of those qualities that can be deduced from the medium itself. Second, in cutting off the arts from their specific affiliations and reorganising them according to the specificity of their perceptive properties, this teaching denies itself the possibility of conceiving that there is art in between the mediums. And third, it seeks to teach the future, which is of course impossible. The verdict should be more severe, even, for the myth of the medium than it was for the myth of creativity, with which, moreover, it is contradictory under certain aspects. It has had considerable pedagogical efficiency, but its perverse effects now outrun its benefits.

Imitation vs Invention

The difference between imitation and invention goes without saying. Whereas imitation reproduces, invention produces; whereas imitation generates sameness, invention generates otherness; whereas imitation seeks continuity, invention seeks novelty. The Academy was aware that artists worthy of the name invent. However, even though academic teaching spotted a sign of a student's talent in his capacity to invent, it was not on his capacity to invent that it judged him, nor was it through stimulating invention that it claimed to educate him. Quite the contrary. It was through imposing on him imitation, invention's antithesis: the imitation of nature, of the Ancients, of the master. The Bauhaus model, by contrast, fosters invention, because every progress in its expression indicates a liberation of the student's creativity, an actualisation of his artistic potential. The abandonment of naturalism, the break with the Ancients, the rejection of the master are the predictable results. Now, that a teaching system should systematically encourage the rejection of the master isn't without contradiction. Creativity being the source of invention, the medium its target, the teacher – who is no longer a master – owes his authority to the very constraints of the medium while he invites the student to transgress the medium's limits in order to prove his creativity. He sees it as his task to detect the student's invention and to value it for its own sake, while referring it to the medium and interpreting it within the limits of the medium's specificity.

Again, three major consequences derive from this. First, the kind of teaching that seeks to provoke invention tends to judge its students on a quasi-quantitative basis, on the basis of the frequency of invention as such, of its novelty, of its discontinuous and randomlike character, of its unforeseen freshness: all qualities that are real in an accomplished work of art but quite unsuitable when it comes to recording the students' progress. Second, such teaching systematically encourages the students to experiment with the medium, while containing their experimentation within boundaries that are seen not just as a terrain for apprenticeship, but as the limits of the field of practice itself. Finally, such teaching is loath to discuss the content of the students' work and cultivates formalism. These are the cumulative effects of the generosity of the ideology of creativity, and of a conception of the history of art that banks on the future for its legitimation. The trouble is that the myth of creativity is suspicious, and

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that the future, from which the Bauhaus model expected its legitimation, belongs to our past.

In view of this cursory analysis, it may seem that I promote some return to the academic model of teaching. Not so, of course. In fact, I don't promote anything, not in this paper, anyway. My only intention is to gain a clearer view of the decline of the Bauhaus model, which is far more important for the proper understanding of the present crisis than the long-accomplished demise of the Academy. It is because the paradigm underlying the Bauhaus model, the creativity-medium-invention paradigm, still operates in most art schools, even in those – especially in those, I should say – that consciously bathe in its critique; it is because its three postulates are either inscribed in the structure of the institution, or linger more or less consciously in the heads of the teachers and of the students, that its perverse effects are so pervasive. Whether creativity exists or whether it is merely a useful illusion is for all practical purposes irrelevant as long as it works. Whether there is such a thing as a "visual language" specific to the medium or whether it is merely a pedagogical strategy is equally irrelevant as long as it works. The question is: does the Bauhaus model still work? Is it still useful?

We, who teach in art schools, all have mitigated answers to this, I'm sure. Who among us hears the word creativity without wearing an ironic smile? Who among us still dreams of a utopian visual language à la Kandinsky, some Esperanto composed of red squares, yellow triangles and blue circles? Who still believes in the purity or the specificity of the medium, in the manner of Greenberg? Who, perhaps with Warhol in mind, or Toroni, or Richter, or Steve Reich, will deny that as much contemporary art of quality has been produced through repetition as through invention? If the Bauhaus model still works, perhaps it is in spite of itself. Many of us have grown to value the perverse effects of a teaching method organised, if only nominally, in terms of the purity of the media and the separateness of the disciplines. Many of us have grown to praise the subversive students who do not behave as if they tapped the unspoilt creativity with which they are supposedly endowed, but who, instead, tap the pop culture with which they come equipped. Those of us who teach the "basic" courses know all too well that they can communicate only rules and conventions, and that significant art is art that overthrows, displaces, abandons or subverts rules and conventions. Who has not dreamt, if only secretly, of having students – the best students – forcing the teacher to give them an A+ because they transgressed the rules of the assignment so intelligently that they displayed a perfect awareness of what art-making is about? Those of us who teach "mixed media", "intermedia", "multi-media", or "experimental media" – whatever the name is of the no man's land that most art schools have ended up institutionalising as if it were a medium of its own – know all too well that if they did not assign subject matter or set technical constraints, formal limits, severe deadlines or whatever rules or conventions, they would not achieve much more than organised escapism. The fruits that the Bauhaus tree yielded and still yields are strange hybrids. We all know that. We have come to expect it, even foster it. The last art school with a strict Bauhaus ideology (though already considerably amended) was the Black Mountain

College, and its best "fruit" was Rauschenberg. Meanwhile, the Bauhaus itself, with all those great artists teaching there, did not produce a single student of a stature equal to that of the masters. Meanwhile, the most "advanced" art schools are those that, consciously entertaining this grim and disillusioned view of the Bauhaus legacy, openly bank on the perversions – they say the subversion – of this modernist model. The artists they produce – for they produce artists indeed – are people whose criterion is the derision of all the notions derived from that of creativity, such as originality and authenticity, without, for all that, necessarily displaying more talent; people who have pushed the rejection of both the *métier* and the medium to the point where their only technique is the appropriation of ready-mades or people who, through simulation, succeed in denying imitation and invention at the same time.

Such is the present situation. A paradigm has imploded, and though it might be that we are in the midst of a "paradigm shift" (if so, it will be for our successors to see it), what I believe is apparently organising the most advanced art schools is in fact the disenchanted, perhaps nihilistic, after-image of the old Bauhaus paradigm. Let me quickly review the evidence in relation to both the postulates of the academic model, talent-*métier*-imitation, and those of the Bauhaus model, creativity-medium-invention. What seems to have taken their place is a new triad of notions: attitude-practice-deconstruction.

Talent and Creativity vs Attitude

In the wake of the student upheaval of the late Sixties no one was ready to admit the inequality of talent, out of fear of seeming irredeemably reactionary. But the May '68 slogan, "all power to the imagination", didn't last very long, and soon creativity lost its aura, too. Philosophically speaking, the times were very suspicious of anything more or less resembling the old psychology of the faculties, and creativity, which is a neo-Romantic amalgam of the Kantian faculties of sensibility and imagination, became old hat. It had everything against itself: being universal, it could only be "bourgeois"; being transcendental, it could only be "metaphysical"; being natural, it could only be "ideological". But its greatest sin was that it could not be willed, and the most progressive art and art teaching of the Seventies thought that art had to be willed, whether it aligned itself with some political programme bathed in revolutionary rhetorics, or whether it saw itself as the relentless critique of the dominant ideology. Anyway, it had become hard to suppose that creativity was the potential of mankind in general, and equally hard to hope that it could be instilled through propaganda or education (think of Joseph Beuys, in this context: he certainly represents the last great and tragic hero of the modern myth of creativity, immolating himself on the altar of both pedagogy and "social sculpture"). Thus another concept took the place of creativity, that of "attitude". A concept that is a blank, actually: a sort of zero degree of psychology, a neutral point amidst ideological choices, a volition without content.

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Of course, in order to be progressive – and how could art of any significance not be progressive? – attitude had to be critical. Lukács, Adorno, Althusser and others were called in to tell would-be artists that neither talent nor creativity were needed to make art but, instead, that "critical attitude" was mandatory. And the fact that not just artists but all "cultural workers" were thought to be in need of a critical attitude of course helped to shape a new, strongly politicised discourse about art and its relation to society, a discourse that, throughout the Seventies and part of the Eighties, became the dominant discourse, not in all art schools, admittedly, but certainly in the most progressive, the most avant-gardistic or – why not say it? – the most fashionable ones. Even if you turn to less politicised aspects of the dominant discourse about art in those years you will see the central position of the notion of attitude confirmed. It is towards the end of the Sixties that the concept of "aesthetic attitude" surfaced in art theory, thanks to Jerome Stolnitz in particular, but also, I should say, thanks to Duchamp's growing reputation as the first conceptual artist, a combination of influences that greatly helped in pushing aside aesthetics while retaining the notion of attitude. Finally – and this, I believe, clinches it, if only symbolically – it was in 1969 that Harald Szeemann organised the famous exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form*, at the Kunsthalle in Bern. Both the date and the title coined for this exhibition are symptomatic, for it was then and there that conceptual art was acknowledged for the first time by a major art institution (MoMA was to follow before long with the *Information* show, in 1970), providing a new model for advanced art soon to be emulated and disseminated by most art schools.

Everybody here, I'm sure, is familiar with what happened next. Linguistics, semiotics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, Marxism, feminism, structuralism and post-structuralism, in short, "theory" (or so-called "French theory") entered art schools and succeeded in displacing – sometimes replacing – studio practice while renewing the critical vocabulary and intellectual tools with which to approach the making and the appreciating of art. With considerable differences depending on national and local circumstances (the Anglo-Saxon world having the lead), this shift – whose first aspect is the shift from creativity to attitude – occurred in the mid- to late Seventies and was a *fait accompli* by the mid-Eighties. By then, to take just a few prominent examples, the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax had its most prolific period behind itself, Cal Arts was launching a generation of successful alumni, and Goldsmiths' was the place to be. In those days attitude still had to be critical, which basically meant: critical of the social and political status quo. But soon the very success of these art schools began attracting students who went there because of the instant rewards they were seemingly able to promise them. For these students (with or without the conscious or unconscious complicity of their teachers, I can't tell), what had started as an ideological alternative to both talent and creativity, called "critical attitude", became just that, an attitude, a stance, a pose, a contrivance. This phenomenon, of course, widely exceeds the few art schools I just named; it even exceeds art schools in general, for it is rampant throughout the whole academic world, especially in the humanities. It can be summarised by saying that political commitment sank into political correctness. Meanwhile, what remains of the old

postulates – the academic postulate called talent and the modernist postulate called creativity – on which to ground a plausible art curriculum is the poorest, the most tautological notion of all: that of an artist's attitude.

Métier and Medium vs Practice

Dividing the arts according to the medium rather than to the *métier*; reading art history in terms of "a progressive surrender to the resistance of its medium" (Clement Greenberg); fostering the purity of the medium as a value in itself are the three strong points of formalist criticism and modernist doctrine in art. As is well known, formalism and modernism have been under heavy fire since the mid-Sixties, first in America, soon after in England, and then in the rest of the Western world. Just as with Harald Szeemann's show, *When Attitudes Become Form*, let me choose a symbolic event to pinpoint this, an event all the more symbolic in that it happened in 1966 at an art school. John Latham was a part-time instructor at St Martin's, in London, when he borrowed Clement Greenberg's *Art and Culture* from the school's library and, with the complicity of Barry Flanagan, then a student at St Martin's, organised an event entitled *Still & Chew*, when a number of pages of the book were chewed by the participants and spat into a jar, then submitted to a complex chemical treatment. You know the aftermath of this performance (or was it a happening?): a year or so later, when asked to return the book to the library, John Latham returned it indeed, but in the shape of a jar containing the unspeakable, let alone unreadable, mixture. He was fired the next day.

Today, needless to say, he could do the same performance with the principal's blessing, and the librarian wouldn't even bother to reorder *Art and Culture*. Events, happenings, and performances have long been absorbed into art schools, and even though most schools keep a painting studio, a sculpture studio, a printmaking studio, and so on, they have added to the list a "mixed media", an "interdisciplinary", or a "free-for-all" studio – whatever the name – which definitely indicates that the teaching of art no longer rests on an aesthetic commitment to the specificity or the purity of the medium. By 1970 Clement Greenberg and Michael Fried were already the last art critics to uphold the idea that no art of significance could be done that sits in between media, and that if something is neither painting nor sculpture, then it is not art. Against them, a whole generation of conceptual artists were relying on Duchamp in order to maintain that the art was in the concept, that it was dematerialised, that it did not cling to any medium, above all not to painting. They fought against the medium but, of course, didn't rehabilitate the *métier* for all that. Just as with the word "attitude", what was soon to replace both the *métier* and the medium was another magical word, "practice".

By 1975, the word "practice" was widely in use among all the people who had been in touch with "French theory", and since "French theory", after all, originated in France, it is there, in the writings of the Tel Quel people, in particular, that it

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acquired a cluster of interesting meanings in the context of literature and art. One of its benefits was that it was charged with prestigious political connotations, Marxist, of course, and Althusserian. More important is that it is a general word not a specific one, or, to say this differently, that it puts the emphasis on the social, not on the technical, division of labour. Applied to painting, for example, it allowed us to conceive of painting not in terms of a specific skill (such as entailed by the notion of *métier*), nor in terms of a specific medium (such as the Greenbergian flatness), but in terms of a specific historical institution called "pictorial practice". This is the way both the painters belonging to the Support-Surface group, and their arch-enemy, Daniel Buren, used the word in defence of painting. Other artists, who were defending interdisciplinarity against specificity, began speaking of "artistic practice" or "practices", depending on whether the generic was thought of as being one or plural. But the most interesting – i.e. symptomatic – phenomenon is that the word art itself (simply, art) became taboo. It was guilty of conveying some faith in the "essence" of art, I mean, in the existence of some transhistorical and transcultural common denominator among all artistic practices. Our epoch being radically relativistic, it wouldn't allow such unorthodox belief. The orthodoxy of the times prescribed – and still prescribe – conceiving of art as being just one "signifying practice" (that expression was coined by Julia Kristeva) among others.

I have just said: "prescribed – and still prescribe". In fact, I'm not so sure. One of the things I expect from this conference is that it may help me understand to what extent the orthodoxy of discourse (what I nastily referred to as political correctness) fails to hide the reality of anxieties, disappointments, shattered beliefs, which, I suspect, have a hard time expressing themselves without giving the impression (as I most probably do) of wanting to go backwards and resorting to nostalgia. I hope that the discussion will bring these difficulties into the open, but meanwhile I would like to stress that what was in the Seventies an avant-gardistic discourse has, by now, been largely institutionalised. I know of at least one art school where the students have the choice of enrolling either in "Communication" or in "Artistic Practice". As always, the magic of changing names is a symptom: the expression "artistic practice" has become a ritual formula, conveying the vague suspicion that has come to surround the word art, while failing to designate referents in the world (that is, actual works) of which one could be sure that the word art has ceased to apply to them significantly.

Imitation and Invention vs Deconstruction

When the culture that fosters invention starts to doubt, it ceases to oppose itself to the culture fostering imitation that it claimed to supplant. Conversely, when the absence of models to be imitated begins to be felt as a loss and no longer as a liberation, this can only mean that this culture's capacity to invent without looking back has dried up. Once this point is reached (and God knows it has been reached:

look at all the neo- and all the post-movements; look at the endemic practices of quotation, second- or third-degree self-referentiality, replicas, and the like), then it is no longer enough to say that imitation repeats and that invention makes the difference. The very concepts of repetition and difference ought to be thought anew, transversally, so to speak. Towards the end of the Sixties, again, and sitting on the uneasy boundary between literature and philosophy, Jacques Derrida, but also Gilles Deleuze and others, began thinking about difference and repetition together. Between the live voice creating newness and the trace that supplants and supplements the missing origin, they showed the link dismantling their expected opposition. Derrida sought *écriture* in creation and *différance* in reproduction, while Deleuze showed that the eternal return of sameness inhabited the production of difference. Traditional concepts such as presence versus absence, immediacy versus mediation, originality versus secondary, were no longer secure oppositions, and had to be deconstructed.

The success of deconstruction is not simply explained – let alone explained away – by the quality of the philosophical work done under its name, and even less so by the mere influence of Derrida – and of Paul de Man on the other side of the Atlantic – on literary criticism. If it had not resonated at a very precise stage in the crisis of modernity, it would not have achieved success at all. But, as we all know, it has, to the point where deconstructionism – and that's the last straw, really – became the banner under which an architecture movement developed, after having invaded art criticism and, more recently, the teaching of art itself. Rather misunderstood and badly assimilated, deconstruction has apparently become, in the Eighties, a method by which to produce art and to teach it. As such, however, rather misunderstood and badly assimilated, deconstruction is merely the symptom of the disarray of a generation of art teachers who have lived through the crisis of invention and have never themselves been submitted to the discipline of imitation. The result is that students who haven't had the time to construct an artistic culture of any kind are being tutored in the deconstructive suspicion proper to our time. I have seen one art school (not that long ago) where the first year course (what used to be the foundation course) had been transformed into a seminar in which the point was to "deconstruct" anything entering the classroom. One week it was an advertisement, another week it was the policy of this or that public art institution, and yet another week it was a student's work – a work done at home, that is, as if no assignment had been given to her beside the unspoken injunction to produce material to be deconstructed in the classroom. The ensuing paralysis was not just sad, it was revolting.

Of course, as I warned you at the beginning of my talk, I have simplified matters, and I have turned the world of present-day art schools into a caricature, just as I did with the old Academy and with the somewhat younger Bauhaus model. In the everyday reality of art schools things are a lot more complex, more subtle, more ambiguous. But since all of us, here, are gathered around the problematic and general issues of "perspectives in fine art education", I hope you understand that it is not on the level of our everyday endeavours that I have situated my remarks but on that of the historical ideological paradigms that we inherit from our institutions or with which, willy-nilly, we have to work. It is thus my contention, which I really

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want to offer as an open basis for discussion, that the triad of notions, "attitude-practice-deconstruction", is not the post-modern paradigm that supposedly substituted for the modern paradigm, "creativity-medium-invention". It is the same one, minus faith, plus suspicion. I tend to see it as a mere after-image, as the negative symptom of a historical transition whose positivity is not clear yet. As such it is quite interesting, and it can yield strong works of art. But for the teaching of art it is sterile. Once it is possible to put it down on paper, as I have just done, this means that its potential for negation has already become conventional (deconstruction is today's good taste), that its anguish is no longer of the kind that nourishes true artists (it is fake, because it is reconciled with the present); and that its suspicion is, unlike Descartes's doubt, not fruitful (it is aimed at the other and not at oneself).

I shall stop here, rather abruptly, on purpose. Having offered a diagnosis, I refuse to suggest a cure – which is not to say that the cure interests me less than the diagnosis. Quite the contrary. As some of you might know, I spent the past three years conceiving the project of a new art school on behalf of the City of Paris, until it was abandoned by the very same City of Paris for financial reasons. In the process I had dozens of meetings with artists, teachers, critics, intellectuals, technicians; I wrote a book on the issue of art schools, of which you have just heard the first fifteen pages; and I was lucky enough to be able to organise a one-month summer school for thirty-two students, as a sort of "dry-run" test of the future school, just before the project went down the drain. In the process I also learnt that there is no ready-made solution to the crisis in art schools; that the first thing to do was patiently to reconstitute a community of good artists who love art, who respect each other and their students, and who take their task as transmitters seriously; and that the last thing to do was to want to unite them around a banner, a programme or an ideology. I hope you will pardon me for refusing even to suggest that I might hold such a banner.

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