

ART PEDAGOGY

AT EUROPEAN

UNIVERSITIES

Art Pedagogy at European Universities
Insights into art pedagogical (study) practices at universities in Europe

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AIMS AND CONTENTS

This series of publications aims at providing exemplary insights into different aspects of art pedagogical educational practices at universities.

This may include:

- Art projects within the framework of art pedagogical studies
- Projects/ envisaged projects dealing with issues of design, architecture, everyday life and their imparting
- Insights into exhibition practices and their imparting
- Art pedagogical aspects of students' theses
- Empirical research practices in the field of art pedagogy
- Art pedagogical surveys conducted by students
- Insights into seminars
- Perceptions of place, subject, biography, socialization, art, media within art pedagogical educational processes.

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KEEPSAKES AS STARTING POINT FOR ARTISTIC PROJECT WORK

A theme-oriented artistic project within the framework of the further teacher training course "Aesthetic Retracing of the Past" at the Christian University College of Teacher Education Graz, Austria.

AUTHOR OF THE PROJECT

Peter Angerer

ASSISTANCE

Prof. Dr. Franziska Pirstinger

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

In the sense of Life-Long-Learning, the Christian University College of Teacher Education Graz offers an artistic further training course for already serving teachers in order to introduce them to new specialist-didactic developments and findings of contemporary art. The further training course entitled "Aesthetic Retracing of the Past" aims at guiding the students towards the development of their own artistic ways of expression. Arts and artistic acting will be made apperceptive as a productive manner for the appropriation of the world and the shaping of one's life. Thus it is necessary to provide experimental and open learning situations for the students and to create atmospheres where creative problem solving strategies can unfold.

The starting point of this kind of artistic project work is a very individual keepsake which is "brought along" into the seminar by each of the students. The project work is characterized by initial intensive round table discussions and reflections as well as by experimental approaches to the keepsake. Thus each student can develop an individual artistic theme which will be worked on during a longer period of time. This intensive dealing with an impulse object paves the way to an independent artistic practice. Experimental and classical artistic approaches to the object, such as photography, copying, sketching, staging, playing etc. will unfold the creative potential of the participants. The seminar offers both highly structured but also very open instruction phases. There will be alternating learning situations focusing on playing and experimenting as well as process- or work-oriented phases of reception, production and reflection. We try to approach the theme in a multi-perspective and interdisciplinary way. Eventually the students will find their own artistic methods. Apart from the traditional techniques, they frequently choose options such as performance, installation or one of the new media technologies. The project work is developed with the aid of an aesthetic diary, a kind of sketchbook, where all ideas are written down and recorded. This results in highly differing ways of expression and a variety of problem solutions for a common leading

question. The artistic project work goes beyond the boundaries of a single subject, becomes an interdisciplinary method of meaningful holistic learning and may even become a model for school development.

COMMENTS BY THE TEACHER

From the perspective of the teacher I must admit that it is rather thrilling to enter the classroom “without anything” and to have to rely entirely on the students’ input. During their training, Austrian teachers are drilled to prepare all materials for their pupils. The principles of self-responsibility and participation of the learners are not adequately taken into consideration. Consequently pupils and later also students become passive consumers of the instruction process, who hardly feel responsible for the course of instruction or its results.

For teachers it is not easy to let go their own artistic ideas and their preferred design patterns and to get involved in something that comes from a third party. However, it is the trust in the students’ potential which is driving joint learning. Along with their students the teachers embark on a kind of discovery expedition where every group member learns how to ask good questions, to gain experience and insights and to get new ideas. The creative spark ignites during conversations between all persons involved. Open-minded teachers who are interested in the works of their students become travel companions in an artistic process.

The results of this project prove that students are able to work on a theme and approach of their choice in a work- and process-oriented way for a longer period of time. To overcome failures and to persevere, to leave one’s own comfort zone as well as frustrating moments count among the experiences made during this holistic learning process – but also creative “flow experiences”.

The central experience students can make in this process is to access their own creativity. They no longer wish to just get “good recipes” for their professional life and their practical work in schools. Instead they learn how to get to know their own personal strengths and fields of enthusiasm. This will help them later to identify the needs of their pupils. Consequently these pupils will also learn to pursue their own ways of expression and design. These abilities are of crucial importance for a self-determined lifestyle: All individuals in a complex society are constantly confronted with the need for a personal positioning in the face of an issue or an object.

COMMENTS BY THE STUDENT (FRITZI SCHERBAUM)

At first I felt overstrained and completely left alone with this task. I thought: “I cannot do that. I am no artist. Why doesn’t anybody tell us how this is supposed to work?”

As time went by I realized that I had acquired this “helplessness” in school. So far all I had learned in school was to imitate something, to learn something by heart and to obey orders. However, I am an individual human being and able to shape my own life. The teachers of this further training course succeeded in creating ideal seminar conditions which inspired us to a more intensive perception, to scrutinize the present and to engage in design. All of a sudden I wanted to approach my theme in an experimental way. I had a thousand



ideas in my mind. I felt that I could see things differently, more intensively. During my work I got new ideas all the time. The sketchbook where I wrote down or sketched my ideas, and the reflection with the teachers helped a lot to get to the point.

My starting point for my work on the theme „keepsake“ was one of the many collectibles I, Fritz Scherbaum, had received as a gift and could not deny: antlers.

During the project, this object was copied a number of times with the aid of papier mâché. It was dissected, multiplied and given different labels.

“My passion as a collector and my absentmindedness can really be a challenge for my environment and can result in hysterical fits of blank despair. During my day-long work with papier mâché, however, I experienced a state of total calmness and balance. Along with the arrangement of my antlers, my life was also rearranged and reoriented. With the aid of a performance in front of my installation I gave utterance to the “cuckolded society” and my state of mind. I have experienced this performance and the appreciation of my work as an act of complete relief.”

INFORMATION ON THE COLLEGE

Kompetenzzentrum Kunst Kreativität Kommunikation, Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Graz, Österreich (Competence Centre Arts Creativity Communication, Christian University College of Teacher Education Graz, Austria).

Study course: Further training course “Aesthetic Retracing of the Past”
4 semesters, 30 ECTS

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The contributions to the series “Art Pedagogy at European Universities” will as a rule be published monthly.

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