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Research-based communal responsiveness - re-conceptualizing artistic research competences

This presentation situates itself in the middle of our current artistic decade that is filled with an excess of rhetorics dealing with crisis, precariousness, change, but most of all with challenges of co-existence: does community always require a certain given reality? Is there a communicative goal? In academic research a certain level of communal responsiveness is assumedly posited as a starting point. Also topical visual art should most of all be “research-based” and “context responsive”. At the core of the current discourse are artistic constructions and interdisciplinary activities that seem to be able to occur anywhere if they can adequately connect or respond to a given or required context. This renders art the freedom to deploy a range of contexts and such a clear-cut focus has given possibility to afflict the concept of artistic research in academic community.

I am working on a dissertation work *Artistic Work and Visual Thinking* where I discuss what does the current academization of artistic work in terms of research competencies mean for the student in research of art education. Utilizing critical concept-analytical methods I trace these research competencies through different discourses on visual practices such as visual culture, artistic work, perception, imagination, pre-theoretical superstition, philosophy of tool, aesthetic experience and wisdom of flesh. The analysis brings forth many additional questions: what form of research may the domain of visual art produce? Do the rhetorics of research include novel practices or do they have to exclude and/marginalize certain practices to gain recognition? Is the current debate creating some novel mechanism of exclusion? Does a research discourse and its vocabulary point to an already existing practice that could be accommodated in an academic architecture focused on knowledge production through a process of transposing?

One of the outcomes of my investigation is to introduce a possible genealogy of critical discourse around the question: what kind of politics an artist chooses to speak about the research competencies of his/her practice? I use interviews gathered from selected artists who have also strong background in academic community. The chosen politics seem to imply a strong belief in a research competences founded in the form of a deregulated multitude of practices that cannot be formulated and legitimized beforehand. Research competencies in artistic work seem to refer the ability to condition the practice so that something becomes recognized as research competence. “Openness” to research competencies is not the same as saying “anything goes” because research competencies are always limited and situated and they considered open only insofar as they are found to be worth pursuing.