

**Christiana Galanopoulou & Max Ryyänen**

## **ART AND EDUCATION – OR THE DARK SIDE OF PEDAGOGY**

*A dialogue*

### **Christiana:**

In August 2010, during a programmer training at the Homo Alibi theatre festival in Riga, where I participated together with another 10 young programmers, my opinion that art is not always and without discrimination a suitable object for educational programs raised a big issue with passionate discussions and disagreements.

The doubts I expressed concerned an educational program on a theatre piece. The piece expressed a personal view of a young director on an important historical issue. I expressed my fear that in this case an educational program would make people think that the *personal interpretation of history* actually becomes *history*. I also expressed my suspicion towards a tendency curators often have: they consider audiences as people who do not even have a basic historical education and they believe the “audience” is completely ignorant about facts, and, most importantly, that they do not have a personal political view which can be sensitive when challenged, or that whatever their political view is, an educational program should be designed to make them believe that the curator is right about his/her view on history.

As I come from a country where in the recent past people have been killed fighting for their political ideas and the traces of the last civil war are still a reason for people to get involved in political disputes, I know that there are limits in believing that someone is ignorant, or that someone does not have political views, or that people would easily challenge their own views through an educational program. “Audience” for me is not an addition of average behaviors, it is made up of people, units who have their own ideas and these ideas can be sensitive.

In general I believe that there are limits in inventing educational programs about everything, especially when it comes to history and political ideas. During the Riga discussions I was trying to underline the state of power a curator has, and to make clear that in some cases they are completely ignorant of their power and their limits. That day I was the black sheep. My opinion had made me an object of everyone's aggression. That night, thinking about how people looked at me when I expressed my opinion against an educational program, I realized that there is something wrong with our concept of educational programs. People consider educational programs politically correct to the extent that whoever has an oppositional view is considered to be politically incorrect. I realized that there is a connection between the rise of the "political correctness" in the Clinton era and the educational wave in the museums. I realized there is a connection between the post-colonial guilt of the western world and the belief that educational programs make art accessible to all. I realized that there must have been a displacement between the "democratization" of art as it was conceived in the 1970s, when the Centre Pompidou was inaugurated, and the "accessibility" to art as it is conceived nowadays.

"Democracy" includes freedom, it includes the choice to learn or not to learn, the opportunity to have all you need in order to shape a personal opinion, the choice to doubt, the choice to have fun, and to feel alone in front of a masterpiece. What we have today in museums is a distortion of democracy, and it is based upon a nearly totalitarian view of what someone *should* know in order to have access to art and what someone *should* believe about specific works of art. Information has become more important than art itself. So, even when a person is alone in front of a masterpiece, the contact with art is intermediated. People tend to have the same opinion about different works of art and personal taste tends to disappear in an ocean of mainstream commonplace views about art. People are almost afraid to *not like* a work of art when educational texts comment how important it is.

I realized that my initial feeling of repulsion about the wave of educational programs when I was doing an MA in Museum and Gallery Studies in Britain in the 1990s was now finding arguments to support my idea that there is something wrong about this obsession. It has to do with implementing uniformity, and for me implementing uniformity of ideas instead of challenging people's minds to have more and more different opinions, more and more passionate loves and hates in art, is the most dangerous thing in the world. It goes to the direction of creating people who cannot think for themselves, who cannot judge anything, who want to believe what all the others believe, and who finally do not get any other relationship to a work of art than what is imposed to

them. I started wondering, how can one drive things back to where the thread of freedom was lost and take it over from there to a new direction? Is it possible? Can we do anything to reconstitute the unmediated contact with art without losing the positive aspects of education? It is very difficult of course, because it has to do with the policies of museums. Museum managers are in a race to increase the amount of visitors. So, what can we do for those who feel suppressed by all this “education” around them in museums?

The next day you, Max, came in as a lecturer to talk to us about your ideas about festivals. You started talking to us about your opposition to educational systems in museums. Your point of view was slightly different than mine: you were focusing on the aura of the work of art and on the possibility to have a personal “moment” in a museum in front of a work of art. But you mentioned the argument that there is no choice for the museum visitor to get out of this context. “I want my art without education” you said, and you claimed that museum walls have acquired the same characteristics as if they were the pages of a magazine. Whether you are in a museum in Greece, Finland or France, you said, the texts and the scenography are all the same, it is a repeated structure in which only the works change, but the way it is done is as if the works were not important enough in the first place.

First I could not believe my ears. But when I heard the phrase “I want my art without education”, I decided that I want to discuss the subject with this person, and let our common interest drive us to something good. So, after the lecture, I talked to you about my concerns and I proposed to write a collaborative article or essay on that subject. The funny thing was that on that day no one was as passionately opposed to your views as they were to my views. I suppose you were considered to be a specialist, or you really presented things in a way they could not find arguments to oppose.

So, could you explain a little bit more what kind of experience made you so keen to discuss this, and could you refer a bit what you talked about in that lecture?

**Max:**

It is interesting to hear more about the background. These are hard topics right now to discuss, and I am glad, if I, in a special role, could bring my heretic project into a fruitful context.

In my speech I was thinking of all the possible ways a work of art could need to stay non-simplified and non-disturbed, whether we are talking about political, abstract, or sensual art.

Like you, I believe that political art faces a threat from the side of museum education on a level which makes all efforts on that plane impotent. This is a broader problem. In universities we are all the time under pressure to work following a certain pedagogical matrix. It is a product of anglophile colonialism, and many people believe we should have as mechanical and rigid assessment systems as they have in the US, or in their European shadow state, Great Britain. Although we don't have really time for our own research we have to study pedagogy all the time and perform that we are good teachers, and we have to make our contents plain, give abstracts, take care that there can be no misunderstandings, and so on. Universities are becoming like TV's, making everything simple, and paving the way so that everyone could participate in every possible lecture under PhD level. The system bends towards a world where everything is done so that the least good student would learn, not that the bright ones who are in the right program would get fuel for their work and thinking.

I have studied pedagogy, and it interests me. It is great to think systematically about how to make some content easier to reach. The old art institution used to build walls against the people – but the situation in both the art world and at the university is becoming fascist, and people start to react. Museums and universities are becoming mass culture. I believe we live, in many countries – and in many international forums – a period of pedagogy and education, which is taking us to a crisis of substance: if we cannot have hardcore substance in the forums we used to be able to have it, where should we go to do the real work?

Politically correct speech is here the key ideology, which works as a façade. Behind it there is an ongoing work to destroy everything obscure and challenging in art.

And it is really not about helping people to understand art. It is about homogenizing art. It is a totalitarian movement we are talking about. There's a long tradition of democratization, as you said – although I'd say that it extends to the early 20th century: most classics of the so called mass culture debate (Ortega y Gasset, Adorno, etc.) are actually concerned with what happens with art if anyone can just walk in and be "an expert". Many who wrote aggressively about the new media and popular culture before the World War II were more concerned about art than mass culture. They wanted art to stay complex, and I believe this is a new stage in this series of threats. It is not popular

culture or kitsch which is endangering art. Institutional work is a real threat. The worst enemies of art are inside the system.

The man of the streets (in the 1920s women were not as central in the art institution) never killed art. But pedagogy, I believe, forms a serious threat right now, because it wants, through changing the frames and ways of doing / discussing, to change, actually, the possibility to do anything complex at all, or at least to simplify it, and to control how it should be interpreted. This would not pose a problem if pedagogy wouldn't be so very central and strong right now.

As you said, information has become more important than art itself, and it is about making interpretations uniform – at the same time cutting off the possibility to go beyond limits of understanding, boundaries of what is legitimate, and so on. Of course many will say that good pedagogy is not about this, but get real: there is a load of this that is the problem, although we would have great experimental and really fruitful pedagogy out there as well. The dark side of pedagogy is the problem for art. Everything is easy to reach, and it is politically correct – this is the new “fascism of controlling meaning”.

I believe many people share our thoughts. I have discussed with two curators of contemporary visual art, as well as with people from other arts, and it seems museum and art education has gone over a serious line lately. We are not the only ones expressing fears and anxiety when facing the flood of pedagogy, which has become non-sensitive to when to apply it, when not to apply it, and how to apply it. “Talk so that everyone understands, and do not present anything without explaining it so well that anyone can walk in and understand it.” We should maybe make a list of situations where we have reacted at to make it more concrete.

To continue on the content of the Riga talk: People in arts used to hate the Soviet Union because the State wanted Tarkovsky to do films with a clear message, and you hear all the time people talking critically about mainstream popular culture and how simple and stupefying it is. So why do we accept the way the dark side of pedagogy is taking over the territory of art? I like the idea of having it, but there is a need for art and art talk which is not for everyone.

And this is what I believe: The era of pedagogy and art education is not anymore just an issue of big museums. Even galleries, small performance venues, and festivals do it – for the good and for the bad (the latter being our issue).

Where will we go, we who want to have our art “raw”? And can we change the situation? If we can: how? It seems that contemporary visual art has suffered more than any other art has, lately, but there are more and more people in dance and film getting tired of the atmosphere as well. This is sad. I don’t read Dostojevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*, if every 10th page explains to me that Dostojevsky does not suggest that I go out and kill someone with an axe. And I don’t watch a Pasolini film if a voiceover explains to me every crooked turn of the film, and makes it plain, takes away the hard-to-explain issue which is so central for art. I suppose you could buy the formulation that pedagogy should not make art simple, and it should not disturb the mystery of art, which is an important experience?

But what is the historical background to this situation?

### **Christiana:**

The way Museums are made mostly reflects our relation to history. 1980s marked a boom of museums in Europe. The consequent boom in Museum Studies that marked the 1990s came as a normal turn. Scholars questioned why do we have these museums and what do we expect to do with them. The educational management of the collections was put on the table with the arguments about the democratization of public access to the collections.

However, at this point, only a few scholars dared to point out that this was a symptom of the collective post-colonial guilt Europe was denying to face. For someone who can read the whole picture, objects in a collection can be very eloquent on the historical circumstances that led to their acquisition. But as we all know, the one who has the power of putting things in order so as to produce history has the huge power of manipulating the scope in which history is being narrated. And in fact national museums have always been formed through practices of coining national identities. But historical, natural sciences, archeological and art museums are included in “museums” all the same. Thanks to the educational management of collections and the managerial ideas on budgets and visitor numbers, in a few decades’ time old natural science taxonomy museums became interesting “hands-on exhibit” Disneyland, providing spectacular cultural entertainment; museums with objects taken away from other cultures were baptised “ethnology” museums; memorabilia museums were devoured by the new type of museums with exhibits constructed on purpose to make the visit spectacular, and old archaeological or art museums became parts of commercial malls providing a whole concept of “entertainment” in which culture is the excuse for a consumerist day. A whole new industry was created on the basis of seeing a museum visitor as a tourist, and a tourist as a wallet ready to pay for entertainment wrapped up in culture.

The impact of this huge reform in the way our societies are related to their history has not been evaluated yet. We have to admit that there are some positive aspects of this change, like the fact that in specialized museums where explicatory text did not exist, now there is enough text to make a visitor a specialist if everything is read. And there are cases in which museums managed by important intellectuals, who knew how to deal with this new reality, became even better. But in most cases the outcome is a homogenization without a precedent. Museographic sets have become homogenized. They have a standard aesthetics in which collection objects are almost invisible or play the role of illustrations in magazine-like wall-long “pages”, as you said.

**Max:**

I agree with your contextualization of the problem – a historical one that is important to study. As a hobby I pretty lately studied Museology, and finished basic studies two years ago. It was actually nearly just about museum pedagogy and how to make museums accessible. There was nothing about saving some information or objects as belonging to certain worlds or discourses, it was all just about making them toothless, so that anyone could approach them, and that they could not anymore challenge norms in how to think and present issues. This made me shocked, and I suppose my interest to this theme started back then, partly. I organized a course with the title Museum and Gallery Philosophy, where we discussed with my students a lot of institutional questions, and besides the bureaucracy which artists nowadays have to do to survive – we started to talk about the new art world as partly being an office world – many students who had experience in festival and institutional work were really concerned about education policies.

The weird thing is that talking about it seems to produce aggression. And this is something I cannot understand. That is why I call this the era of pedagogical fascism. I had a heavy debate in a seminar on the future of the Kunsthallen last year in Oslo, where I spoke a bit in the same fashion, with one director of an important Central-European Kunsthalle, who said that I am wrong, that the basic viewer needs help. My point was just that I’d like at least something to stay outside, but here the totalitarianism hit me: he, and some others plainly stated that *everything* should be thoroughly pedagogized, that nothing in museums, nor even Kunsthallen could stay outside of it, because that would be against the people, the audience. Could not my taste group be considered one part of the audience as well? Later on one curator came to say that she needed my speech. She talked about a museum where she had worked where it became tough following too much pedagogy. So

people quit jobs because of pedagogy, and they get attacked by these pedagogy-bullies when they criticize its wrong use. This must tell us that there is something else going on here, and I am sure you can see it better from your position as the director of MIR, and maybe all and all with a broader view on the arts scene (you are so in the dance scene as well). To who's advantage is it that everything becomes "packaged" in the same way? And talking about your experiences: what are the most shocking problems with this that you have encountered?

**Christiana:**

Let me explain why I believe that we, in the Western World, are in a situation of war. As Thucydides first pointed out in the 5th Century BC, war is a necessary process when power has been accumulated by one of the players in a bipolar system, to reboot it. After the fall of Soviet Socialist regimes in the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, Capitalist Western World accumulated so much power, that a war was inevitable. New enemies, like Islam, were invented. The sooner we accept that in the decade of 2000 world has undergone a war or several wars, the better we will understand our situation. After all war times, huge financial disasters follow, and times of development as well. The end of the decade of 2000 was marked by huge financial disasters. But I believe that the future of arts is not really dependent of the development period that might follow this time.

During my postgraduate studies in Museum and Gallery Studies I happened to read a book by Carol Duncan, entitled *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. This book was published in 1995, exactly the year I was doing my MA and it is one of the most enlightening books I have ever read. Carol Duncan, a pioneer of the social-political approach to art history and criticism, explains in the best way how the State invested in the symbolism offered to it by arts in order to establish its regime. In fact art museums are one of the media used by the ideology in power to form citizen minds so that it remains in power. This is not new. It has been going on for centuries.

Analyzing the content of collections and exhibitions, Duncan states that Art Museums are a species of ritual space, in which a structured and organized narrative of art history is being reproduced, including notions of progress and achievement. "The art objects provide both the content and structure of the ritual performance. Through them, viewers enact a drama of enlightenment in which spiritual freedom is won by repeatedly overcoming and moving beyond the visible material world." Going back to the inherent relationship between art and advertisement, Carol Duncan argues that within the context



of the Cold War, art museum rituals worked closely together with the implementation of the advertisement in the 1950s and later “to implant in Americans a new kind of self, one with greater consumer needs and less ability to defer gratification than earlier models. (...) The museums ritual program and mass advertising imply each other. Together they construct a new individualist self, one that exists in the center of a boundless, a-social universe that is both spiritual and material” (underlining is mine).

Does this remind us of the way museums and commerce got finally linked together in huge commercial centers where a visit to the Museum is part of the consumerist shopping visit? Have we ever realized that our civilizations’ addition to the world’s greatest museum, the Louvre, is a commercial center at its entrance? Have we ever realized that *The Society of the Spectacle*, this book by Guy Debord published in 1957 is now more than ever the most truthful description of the way our society treats culture that is as a spectacle to be consumed? Have we ever thought if this is what we imagined about our art as a society?

So, if the goal of the power in earlier decades was to create the perfect consumerist, the perfect individualist, what is it now, when this earlier goal has been achieved? Let’s make a scenario, an Orwellish one: Seeing how all collective movements are completely broken wherever they appear, let us think that we are deeply in the New Middle Ages Umberto Eco was arguing for a few years ago, and the purpose is now to construct the perfect powerless all-accepting citizen (the robot-man). Someone who considers normal working 24 hours a day, consumes when he is dragged to do so, or does not consume when he is not supposed to, performs loads of work without ever asking for social benefits and never doubts those in power. If this was the case, what would be the goal of those in power concerning arts? Of course abolishing the critical power of it. Power has now different, cheaper and more efficient ways to implant things in people’s minds – rituals are not necessary anymore. Those in power have started to present art as a useless luxury, as something empty of any meaning, make them look as complete loss of time and money. Because art, like education and research, makes people think, gives them hope, gives them the power to doubt and contradict authority, to get out of the limits of their imagination and see reality in a creative and constructing way. And, the most important, art can give people the ability to have a vision.

Have a look at the policies Sarkozy and Berlusconi have followed up to now, in countries where culture was an industry. Right after his election, Sarkozy practically dismantled the CNRS, the most important research institution in France, by huge budgetary cuts, he announced that humanities studies will no longer be funded by the State, he dramatically

changed the status of people working in the performing arts (*intermittants du spectacle*) and recently 30.000 people working in French education were fired. Another 20 000 most recently in Italy. In Britain, Universities are about to cease offering free education. Free access to education is about to be abolished in the whole of Europe, together with the social benefits that faint. Plus: The Greek Minister of Education announced a few months ago that they are thinking about abolishing the history class in the 2 final grades of school!

Whether we accept that there are wars around us, we have to understand that those in power will fight arts, education and research more and more. I have mentioned above examples in order to support my theory, which is that all the work which should be done in schools, opening children's minds and making them love art, has been shifted to the museums. Museum education is something very good in general, but the way it is done in our days is completely wrong. The way it is wrong is not because there is a misunderstanding of what its role is, but because those in power have long ago decided that education should lead people to homogenization and complete lack of free will and ability to doubt.

**Max:**

I agree on Debord, and I think critical Marxism and critical theory all and all has too little been applied to the world of arts and culture, like that sphere would be free from capitalism and schizophrenia – although the idea of creative industries is at the same time everywhere, together with other problems we have discussed. The scheme Duncan's book offers sounds reasonable. And talking about right-wing populism, we have entered that phase of European neo-culture two nights ago, when our party of "True Finns" won loads of places in our parliament (okay, they are pretty schizoid, one part being right wing, another some strange form of national-bolshevism). One of their objectives was, actually, to not anymore give money to "postmodern art"!

I did not, however, see this as much as a threat than what happens inside the art institution. To understand this point one must remember that Finland is a silent welfare country where we haven't had political collisions for a long time... I find it weird that so many threats to the freedom of art come nowadays from the inside, the institution. Sometimes it is clearly the Stockholm syndrome we talk about (the syndrome to fall in love with your kidnapper): people want to please their kidnappers (politicians, people who give them funding, etc.), but a lot that happens has other reasons behind it as well. It is pure conservatism from the inside, a will to make art and discussions concerning it

easy, and so on. Here, maybe actually Northern Europe might be more corrupted than south. As art is funded well, and there is less economic and political stress, I could guess that the system of arts has become careful to not lose its position in the society.

Like you I believe that we are touching upon a broader problem, and I “buy” the sketch you just wrote. But how do you think things will evolve? What will happen next? Will museum workers wake up? Will those who want to talk find new institutional spaces to continue their work?

I am one of those who believe in the power of institutions, and I often feel that many people are only playing a bourgeois trendy game while they show off that they are not institutionalized. One can change more and do more inside institutions, and now I am really thinking: what are the next platforms for it? Festivals have been good platforms, but for how long? They are increasingly stable, permanent, and their funding is complex (i.e. they have to compromise content more and more), at the same time as pedagogy is already knocking even on the backdoor of small events.

And getting back to classics, it is not just Debord, who needs to be read here, I believe. I think already Theodor Adorno, in his *Culture Industry* (1944, with Max Horkheimer), was criticizing more the world of art than mass culture, although the text was conceived of as being a critique of mass culture (actually Adorno has a text on art and administration as well, where he touches upon the topic of arts education, but he is more concerned with issues of categorization than the ones we debate.) Homogenization, false individualization, crap talk with aspirations to reconcile everything falsely – this is our cultural world today, museums at the heart of it. This was partly abducted by Debord.

This is maybe, though, a war with a long history, and together with postmodernist overtly ironical art working solely on mass media imagery, commercial art journalism hailed as something everybody should read, and a series of institutional practices from the everywhere-the-same museum shops to ideologically homogenizing museum pedagogy, the whole idea of the creative industries is just one more Trojan horse, I think, penetrating the heart of a world, where there is and should be a possibility for hard talk and hardcore artistry with no political boundaries. Idiotism has been successful lately, so we need this talk. It is a war, but a long, sometimes cold and sometimes hot one, maybe? How long has it lasted in different forms? And do we need new ways of resistance and development?

There's one thing more. You said that museums are about our relation to history. I agree, mostly. But for me it is actually most bothering that when art is at its newest, in its contemporary mode, that its contents are shallowed by the museum institution.

And, by the way, when I was younger I used to hate Louvre type of dry museums with no "interesting" ways of putting the paintings out, but nowadays even dry approaches are interesting. Still we cannot turn back, or can we? If it is hard in every country, could we circulate whole critical events in some way? How to make it under pressure?

**Christiana:**

We are doing this enormous effort to remain connected to History through our Museums. But – how funny – History will eventually forget everything about us in just a moment of Eternity.

I couldn't agree more and it goes to all you just mentioned. The total manque of ideology is one of the most important problems of our time: the total merge and confusion of everything in a big ideological marmelade.

I do not know if we can circulate critical events under pressure. As you implied, we do need new ways of resistance and development. I don't have any magical recipes. The new ways of resistance will appear through collective processes. But I think that for the moment our only hope is to continue transmitting our thoughts and fears. We have to keep discussing this. Some will agree, some will foster our ideas. And some will finally change things.

We have now accomplished a big circle. In different moments of this dialogue we have both asked ourselves "can we go back?" I am not a pessimist, but I think museums cannot go back. I also think that whatever happens in museums, it happens as part of the general context of the historical situations we are going through. I think that this, as well as many other phenomena in our civilization, are just symptoms of the fact that the western world civilization is completely confused and has absolutely lost its humanist fundamentals.

It has probably been seen so many times in history. From an optimist point of view we could wait for the world to go towards the worst in order to reach the bottom and start getting towards humanism again, like a pendulum axiom would guarantee. But as far as it concerns contemporary art and its appropriation by the system (the system consists of museums, galleries, art fairs, biennales and so on), my personal view is that it is a kind of

“destiny” for institutions to gradually miss the point of the freshness of contemporary art – whatever it is left to it, of course.

I think that in this context of complete confusion of our civilization, the meaning of “education” has been completely lost. In my country, I remember listening to stories from grand-mothers during my childhood about children who didn't have the opportunity to study because of poverty, but also about people who were very poor but still insisted in sending their children to the school “in order to become good people”. About children who should walk for hours to get to school and again to get back, just because the society they lived in believed in the power of education. The revolts against the dictatorship in 1973 which led to its fall in 1974 started from university students who were claiming “bread, education and freedom”. They were already students, but they were fighting for real education, in a democratic society.

In our contemporary superficially rich and totally overwhelmed society, this humanist aspect of education has been completely lost. I could not express an opinion about all educational programs in all museums, but I have the impression that they are being taught just because they should be part of what a museum offers and not because anybody expects a real impact of them to the participants.

I would be very curious to learn from some real and cutting edge statistics facts like: How many of the people who have participated in museums educational programs have become real art lovers? How many of those who participated in such programs of contemporary art museums have become collectors or sponsors? How many of them read literature? How many of them have become artists? How many of them really love art? When I think about it, this old Chinese saying always comes to my mind: “Wisdom is what remains after you have forgotten all you have learned”.

**Max:**

I have never thought of this, but although I am not sure whether you meant this or no: our system and values of education and pedagogy is something that is impossible to separate from the crisis of Western civilization. The machinery has taken over, assessments, statistic and world rankings of universities, and arts education as a performance to make institutions “okay” in the eyes of the people who for political or brand reasons support them.

You said in your speech in Birmingham<sup>1</sup> somewhat the following: the art world has to look in the mirror. It has been selling itself as entertainment to the funders. I agree: As

“edutainment”, arts education in museums and public art institutions has become a form of mass culture, or rather a kitschifying machine, which does not put art in danger for any other than economic reasons. It is about showing that people attend museums, creating numbers. I feel that many who are into pedagogy have noticed that it is a territory where there is more money than in making art or doing scholarly work on it, and for artists and theorists it is easier to slip into that practice than ordinary administration and museum leadership.

The crisis lies in the overwhelming size of this education machine, its performing aspect – showing for funding systems that art and its institution is okay, the way many people have their only possibility to make a living through it, and in the way this machine, like all machines which get distanced from ‘real’ ideals, is not anymore good in listening to what we need. What do we need? I liked your question concerning its effect on people. How many art lovers have we produced? I don’t believe many... Who are we making education for? Funding systems and statistics – politics and economy. In the end, in this period where we lack ideology, one thing I’d really love to get back to is this thirst for education. We had it here, too, and I believe poor people were so happy when they got their education – as a result of democracy. Many people fought for it. I am sure the thirst will come back, and some thirst for art will grow also when art faces crisis. Maybe even our talk is about the owl of Minerva spreading its wings, and the era of the dictatorship of arts education and pedagogy is coming to its end...

You were right also in another point in your Birmingham speech: most really good art is not very expensive to do. Rethinking art’s needs of economy might be as important as rethinking art’s relation to education. And so, the way we now imagine the utopia again, as they have imagined it so many times before us when times have been hard, is maybe telling to us that art will find new ways of making a living – and that we are again witnessing one death of art. What is the historical version of “art” which now dies? The death of art as a blind belief in educational institutions, funding systems which flirt too much with capitalism and populist politics, and, maybe, we are as well witnessing the death of a way of thinking about art which has been anti-political. In visual arts big events like *Dokumenta 2002* and then later many other international power-exhibitions have been on politic themes, but the everyday world of art has been anti-politicized, though, even in the making of these exhibitions. While politics has been raised as a multi-national ethical theme, at the same time career games, funding systems, compromising cancers which have hidden in the institution (‘art is okay, and it does not threaten the society’), have really been powerful for the whole first decade of the new millennium. Ethics has even been a power-concept in funding art (and its research). And the same can

be said of politics. I believe that although your country is now suffering really heavily because of the economic crisis, the main contours of the same process can still be seen everywhere. It is also an institutional crisis of art we face, and we'll have to go back to the 'poor artist', maybe not the pathetic myth of it, created by the romanticists, but something else: a lot can be made with small money, and rethinking this after a period where art has been a growing market, labeled with hype terms like 'cultural industry' and the violently pseudo-democratic 'art is for everyone', is maybe our destiny now. And, for a change, it is maybe in the end not only negative.

My subjective summary of what we have discussed, or what I have learned, could be the following: We can't think of art museum education as anything distinct from the crisis of the Western world no more than as an outsider of the economic crisis. Economy has maybe, as well, been too central in arts, for a while, and we have to live with less – and this does not necessarily lead to worse art, maybe even the contrary. It is maybe, anyway, and all and all, history, which will once again take care of us. We can't change anything very easily, but our attitude has maybe already witnessed historical change during this discussion. Thinking about what Hegel thought on artists, and other impact makers of civilization: what has to be done is already in the air and someone who has his/her (here I am feministicizing Hegel, of course), finger on where we are at, just has to do the right thing. It will soon become clear what we should do, but I think we started with the most obvious. We started discussing, and this led us to many new thoughts, which have already shed light on the way. Another thing about Hegel, before I finish: he was nabbing about the way art does not anymore make us (the people in his time) kneel, that the great period of art is over – but as this critical wave grows over pedagogy, will we get pedagogy which makes us kneel, so good, maybe even a practice close to art, a new art in some sense? During this year when we have written this I have seen a lot of new thinking and experimentality arrive to pedagogy, and I have had chats with people who fanatically try to take that practice to new heights.

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*Christiana Galanopoulou is an art historian. She works as an independent curator, a festival programmer and a text author. She holds an MA in Gallery Studies from Essex University and a DEA in Art History from Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne. She is currently the artistic director of MIRfestival ([www.mirfestival.gr](http://www.mirfestival.gr)). Her work focuses on the intersection between contemporary audiovisual culture and the performing arts.*

*Max Rynnänen is a Helsinki-based aesthetician with a history in gallery management, art critique – and, for example, pedagogical studies. He works currently as the lecturer for theory of visual culture at the Aalto University's School of Art and Design, at the Pori Department of Art and Media.*

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<sup>i</sup> Symposium Biting Back: Creativity and collaboration in times of austerity, organized by Birmingham City Council, mac and Sampad. Birmingham, March 21, 2011. (<http://biteback.org.uk/>)