



Teaching as a Work of Art

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Abstract

This article is based on our introspective joint study of the specific teaching philosophy and practices developed at the Pori unit of the former University of Art and Design, now known as the School of Art, Design and Architecture at Aalto University, between 2006 and 2014. Our goal is to verbalize and share our experience, which we call Pori pedagogy, or PoPeda. Was it just an accident or was there some logic to the formation of the staff and PoPeda? Was PoPeda due to the geographic distance, its isolated position and the small size of the unit – or was there something more substantial to it? Like the protagonist of Rancière's *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Joseph Jacotot, during our joint teaching processes and this study, we have learned in practice how to teach what we do not know, and also how to teach ourselves to learn more, including the way students on this kind of shared trip course bring in a lot of knowledge. To be fully appreciated, this skill should be shown to new protagonists of their own pedagogical life. The story can be told, and it is a beautiful one. We are all now more ready than ever to create a pedagogical revolution.

Keywords: Intellectual democracy, outsiderism, experimental pedagogy, teaching as an artistic practice

Introduction

Pori Pedagogy did not happen overnight, nor was it a product of conscious planning. It grew gradually, as did our realization of its existence. New people were recruited to the new department and program from 2004, and at first the turnover was relatively high but some people stayed on. Collaboration was sparked by fortuitous meetings, discoveries of common fields or objects of interest, or just a shared sense of humor; first between two individuals, then gradually it became a mode of operation. Part of the story has been recorded in the audio file in the online journal *Mustekala*, which contains a discussion between the then members of the Pori staff about how each of them came to Pori and how the collaboration began (Ryynänen, Rajanti, Laakso, Euro, Venäläinen & Rinne, 2014).

Similarly, only gradually did we begin to see something systematic and systemic in the situation. We were just enjoying a working environment we felt was inspiring and rewarding, worth the travel and expense (as none of us actually lived in Pori). The initial realization came when we started confronting the practices and atmospheres of other departments (and other art schools), such as the boards at which university-level issues were discussed and decided. What was very enlightening in this respect was also the university-wide evaluation processes, RAE (Research Evaluation Exercise) in 2009 and TEE (Teaching Evaluation Exercise) from 2010 to 2011 (reports on these processes have been written, but published only for internal use). The constant pressure and need to articulate our strategic focus points and choices by a university in a continuous process of change helped us to see our pedagogic philosophy and practices as systemic.

The moment we all truly realized for the first time that we didn't just have something special going on, but that it was not just a mere coincidence, was in early June 2010 when we were holding a teacher planning meeting ("oopenäivä"). We began the planning and discussion from our own artistic, academic and intellectual ambitions and interests, because we wanted to see our individual strengths as the foundation and the focus of the department/unit and its teaching (rather than the goals set by the university or impressive-sounding goals that were designed to please the university and our funding sources). So we asked each teacher the question: What is it you really love doing and would like to do?

As the stories started piling up, we realized there were common elements to which we had never given any systematic thought. We do not think alike – we share some background thinkers and concepts, but not all and not in a systematic way. We have very different backgrounds, fields of expertise, interests, and even values. But what we do have in common is insatiable curiosity and a will to put interesting exploration before established products that would advance a career. We care about the thing itself, not what we can get for it. In the academic or artistic field, Pori is peripheral and marginal – but we had not drifted there because we did not have the courage or the talent to do substantial work, or because we wanted to quietly vanish into nonentity. Rather, we were there precisely because we wanted to do

substantial work, and we preferred a place where that was possible to sacrificing it for a struggle for a place in the artistic/ academic sun.

Since then we have always been piqued by the insistence that what we had and were doing was merely the result of being a small unit far removed from the reaches of academic realities, a kind of happy bubble where we could do as we pleased. This article stems from our will to articulate and argue that something more substantial and systemic is at stake. We have approached the issue by trying to list specific features of our pedagogy, exploring the way our teaching is planned and organized, looking for shared characteristics of the very diverse teaching staff, and its teaching philosophy and methods.

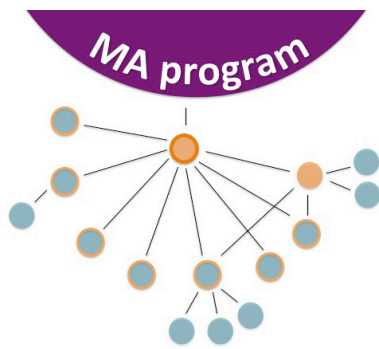
Shared characteristics

Intellectual democracy

Jacques Rancière's ideas of intellectual democracy have gained a lot of positive attention in recent years. After studying the letters of French workers of the 19th century to show that they knew what their life was about without the middle-class male philosopher Marx, Rancière went on in his book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (2007), in French *Le Maître ignorant: Cinq leçons sur l'émancipation intellectuelle* to discuss intellectual democracy in education. Rancière studied an example case, Jacques Jacotot, who, while teaching at the University of Louvain at the beginning of the 19th century, started mentoring students in disciplines he had not mastered, e.g. the Flemish language. The idea that you can teach things you haven't mastered yourself was exemplified in a very concrete way, as Jacotot provided his students with texts and tasks and showed how far they got without any other help from him. The key issue is not the lack of knowledge of the teacher, but the fact that one doesn't need authorities, and that one can learn by oneself. Jacotot tried to disseminate this message to the poor and to say that they could also help their children to learn, even if they couldn't afford school education for them, and, of course, a scandal broke out. Perhaps the idea of workers educating themselves was ultimately not that popular.

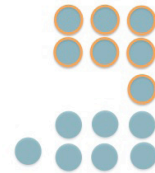
Although Rancière's work is mainstream in today's philosophy, it seems that its practical applications are rare. For us, though, a non-hierarchical community where knowledge was distributed evenly and freely, discussed and analyzed collectively, became a reality in Pori. A striking illustration of this fact can be made by applying Sari Kivimäki's visualization of communication and responsibility relations in the planning and realization of the teaching of an MA program.

1. An only too normal case



Teaching staff

- professor (represented by a large orange circle)
- lecturer (represented by a medium orange circle)
- Visiting course teachers (represented by a small blue circle)
- Assignment tutors (represented by a very small blue circle)



2. Pori programs



Teaching staff

- Professor (represented by a large orange circle)
- Lecturer, research manager (represented by a medium orange circle)
- Visiting course teachers (represented by a small blue circle)
- Visiting lecturers (represented by a very small blue circle)

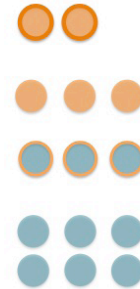


Figure 1. Communication and responsibility relations (Kivimäki, 2015).

What is clearly visible here is that the whole staff had equal say concerning the basic content of the program and its aims, and everybody's expertise and interests went equally into defining the content. The whole staff also communicated autonomously with each other rather than through the mediation of a professor or a director – and everyone took risks by learning together with the students, even more than Rancière's Jacotot did.

The mainstream model is inherently hierarchical, whereas our model by comparison is visibly democratic. In Pori, those outside the basic communication community were not teachers with the lowest position, but visiting teachers who for sheer practical reasons could not participate in the planning process, but engaged in the teaching when invited.

Within reasonable limits, this intellectual democracy existed not just between teachers, but also between teachers and students. By this we do not mean student representation in planning sessions or teacher meetings. We are not talking about some well-meant professed declaration of everybody participating in the construction of knowledge, an equality without qualities. We are talking about equality born out of equal interests and passions, curiosity, and commitment. Courses were often joint study projects, where the teacher just led the process, a bit like an Indian healer in Castaneda's books. It is because of shared commitment to a many-sided, experimental, transdisciplinary field of interests and expertise that we found it natural to consider ourselves equal partners with the students – like joint venturers.

We were not teaching an established body of knowledge in which the teachers would be the masters and the students the ignorant. This would be typical if we were teaching aesthetics or sociology, for example: every teacher would have been educated in these disciplines, and the task would have been to pass on the teaching to new generations. But in our case we had a photographer/photo theorist, an aesthetician, a sociologist, a contemporary artist and then, for shorter periods of the time of our flourishing, a media educator/philosopher and a cultural studies scholar, each teaching matters and issues that could be considered to fall within the sphere of “visual culture”. Thus, nobody could pretend to have deeper knowledge of the established body than the others – everybody had their own angle.

To come back to Rancière: as our students were more or less all experts in their own multiple fields, we could not feign to be their masters in everything. Importantly (and this is a topic we'll go deeper into later), as we were all urged on by a will to go deeper and deeper into things, to try out new methods, and to cross new borders into new fields, we were always working at the limits of our own expertise. This was a characteristic, a perspective and goal that we shared with most of our students, and that made us those joint venturers.

Outsiderism: inside outside upside down

Here we come to the issue of the unit being undeniably at a distance from the main university/school/department. As said, we refuted and continue to refute the idea that this would itself have created an exceptional community with a specific experimental teaching philosophy and practices. There may have been a few hundred kilometers between our department/unit and the main university, but the rules and demands concerning the planning and execution of teaching were the same.

Nor were the staff strictly speaking literal outsiders, in the sense that we would have “inhabited (our) own otherworldly cosmos”, being self-educated and unaware of the rules where the academic or artistic community is concerned (Chusid, 2000). Those employed for their academic merits had written a dissertation and published articles, participated in conferences and initiated and carried out research projects. Those employed for their artistic and professional merits held exhibitions and produced works – and initiated and carried out projects. Some did both.

But we may concede an outsiderish attitude towards teaching and towards each staff members' proper professional mainstream. None of us was driven by a will to stay within the confines of one's own field of expertise; we all were excited by crossing disciplines and working at the limits of our abilities, pushing further. This was one reason why collaboration when teaching a course began and continued so naturally – all of us were interested to introduce a different perspective and expertise to the topic being taught. Within our own fields we were also all interested in themes and angles that might be termed marginal or weird – for instance popular culture as an aesthetic phenomenon, ice hockey, fan fiction, football, wormholes as the new spatial paradigm, walking as an act of thinking or traveling in time, space and intensity, and so on. (See e.g. Laakso, 2011; Rajanti 2007, 2008; Wilenius & Rajanti, 2013; Ryyänen, 2012.)

The outsiderish attitude was intensified through the multi-disciplinarity and/or multiple artistic backgrounds of both the staff and the students in the program. What made it impossible to build a hierarchical expertise structure (as above), also demanded that everybody ventured outside their own expertise, faced new challenges, with an outsiderish daring and openness.

While there was no happy bubble away from normal academic realities and demands, the distance and this multi-disciplinarity did help to create a certain amount of freedom. We did have the freedom to decide many things according to our own values and choices – or maybe the distance made it possible to see we did have this freedom. A freedom that is not a freedom *not* to do this and that, but *a freedom to do*, a freedom to act and make. Not a freedom from planning courses in advance and following MA program structures or a freedom not to have structures – but a freedom to define the structure, and to define the content, criteria, and role of a structure within given structures.

In addition, we had time – a bubble of time if anything, created by the fact that we all traveled to Pori for part of the week, to teach, plan, initiate, and do projects, and to socialize. This kind of possibility to concentrate on the task at hand is becoming rarer with the growing amount of management tasks and often well-meant series of meetings and palavers in today's universities. The intensive use of time was accentuated by us having no other everyday demands on our time.

Also we did not have any stronghold of a mainstream present defining what should be considered important in teaching. We did not have to observe formalities – there was no need to use all the buzzwords or follow lines of command, just straight talk about what is really interesting and true when planning and evaluating courses or strategic goals or practical choices. We were free from the academic intrigues and mistrust caused by ever-accelerating competition for teaching posts and haunting academic practices on all fronts in universities nowadays. Competing with oneself is inherent to academic practices and is a useful pressure. Having to consider colleagues as rivals and to have to compete based on measurable achievements is in fact detrimental to academic and creative labor. (See for instance Kallio, 2014 or the classic Amabile, 1997.) So again: a freedom to do, and to concentrate on what is important.

Experimental ways of teaching

The equality of interest, passion, curiosity and commitment, the working at the limits of one's own expertise and abilities, pushing further, the freedom to do it all make it natural that all the staff shared an interest and a passion to experiment with ways of teaching.

Quite naturally for art-related teaching, we were eager to take the courses outside academia. But this was not merely to take students to visit sites and places – we literally held courses in urban spaces (e.g. Welcome to Urban Space 2009, Creative Alternatives and “Metropolis” walking lecture 2012, Dialogues of Theory and Artistic Practice in Reposaaari 201 , 2011, 2012, 2013). We held courses that involved interventions in urban spaces (e.g. Interventions, Gaps, Classic/Situationists). There was a 24-hour lecture – night and day, testing the limits, with online streaming and chat for those who were not physically present. We created a course entitled “Experimental Theory Workshop” which had three different realizations in Pori and which has been carried on to the new MA program.

These experimental ways of teaching – courses as joint studies with the teacher leading the process – all stem from the passion and curiosity in one's own field and the world at large, in pushing one's own limits. We were not experimenting to be clever or to get pats on our heads – academic, financial, or otherwise. We were experimenting with teaching because we approached the subject matter in experimental ways. We perceived the courses basically as joint studies because that is our basic approach to the subject matter: We wanted to explore and share the exploration.

The kind of pedagogical experimentation and development we have created and had cannot only be achieved through exclusively pedagogical methods. It requires engagement and dedication in the subject matter that is being pedagogically transmitted, not just pedagogical skills. You need to share a trip to get somewhere, and no theory or cold organizational move at the university could have accomplished this. Our pedagogical skills and experimentation were born out of an interest not in pedagogy as such, but in studying and sharing a subject matter.

To return to Rancière and the rare applications of his non-hierarchical pedagogic philosophy: We think our practical attainment was due to rethinking the role of teaching rather than a planned organizational development. As teaching lost its role as a hierarchical distribution mechanism of facts and skills, and became experimental practice, and as courses lost their role as containers of these goods and became holistic events where everyone was adventuring, the community, while being very unanimous on this practice, pushed itself to new territories. We lost interest in predigesting information for students. We wanted to learn with them – without (and this might be the biggest paradox) any pedagogical motivation. We did it for us – ourselves and our tribe.

Courses as works of art – teaching as an artistic practice

In fact, we treated courses as if they were works of art – fueled by an interest to better understand the issue. The allegory/metaphor of a work of art or maybe even more a collectively curated exhibition – as we typically started to have more than one teacher from the staff and also visitors contributing to a course – has its advantages for pedagogical thinking. First of all, teaching is not usually thought of as experimental, but art is always about experimentality. Secondly, making courses autonomic wholes became dominant – wholes where the content of the course could be more than its elements, and where the motivation for putting together lectures, workshop methods, film screenings, and trips to interesting sites is not always the production of knowledge, but artistic, something anchored to the experiential whole, like making a good movie about an interesting philosophical subject.

This relates to something Joseph Kupfer (1983) describes in his *Experience as Art* as ‘teaching aesthetically’. When goal-centered ways of thinking are put aside, and aesthetics (here art) take over, once in a while this can have an immense impact on learning as well. By decentralizing learning, one may be able to make something more about it. This is also typical for art. You cannot have goals in mind all the time, but a lot of effort has to be made for the process, for art’s sake – not the end result in a gallery. It is art as an event, a performance and a living exhibition that here stands metaphorically for what the course is and could be for our teaching community. Art in museums was not the point – it was about art in grassroots galleries, street art and all kinds of events where people are after something else, or something more.

First summary

Considering these shared characteristics (intellectual democracy, outsiderish attitudes due to the multidisciplinary environment, experimental attitudes and ways of teaching), we felt they were not sufficiently exclusive, but were attributes that more often than not are seen (at least at the official and strategic level) as normal to academic teaching in general. Instead, the idea of regarding teaching as a work of art, as artistic practice, seemed more promising, and enabled us to include the above-mentioned characteristics and elaborate on them from novel perspectives.

We will study teaching as an artistic practice by first looking at three examples of actual courses realized by each of the authors, and then go on to analyze the common elements by using concepts referring to work of art, such as materiality, site specificity, *Gesamtkunstwerk* and transitivity.

Three examples of courses

Example I: Max and B-movie



Image 1. B-movie: the course poster.

It is hard to say at what point the thought of having a B-movie course came up in our tired brains, but with the help of mescaline, grass, acid and cocaine on the backseat we still, in the end, were able to find our way to Las Vegas. We saw its silhouette rising from the desert. That did not hinder the bats from disturbing the vision, and some of them were caught in the hungry mouth of our Ford Mustang.

After an hour, two doses of mescaline and a line of cocaine, we had settled in our room at the Holiday Inn and we got back to the topic.

We had been thinking about writing a film about two men that start to work on a B-movie course. Frank rolled the small globe that stood on the desk. When the globe quit turning, his finger was pointing at Pori.

-Pori?

-Pori, Finland.

(I have here been paraphrasing Hunter S. Thompson.)

B-movies have to start with some action, so why not apply this to a B-movie course – or to a presentation of the course?

-So, OK... the first picture is the beginning of the course. Two men walk in, in Po... Po...

-Pori.

-Pori.

-They start showing a video. It is actually Brian de Palma's *Blowout*, the cameraman films first person. You can see a hand, and a knife in the hand. And then you can hear the breathing. When the lights come on the two men pour out a load of transgressive philosophy on the students.

But let's get back to real beginning. Two men are sitting in a bar. There is some alcohol in their blood, though maybe just 1 or 2 drinks. They have just made friends with each other. It is 2006 and one of the first intellectual discussions between them becomes reality through discussing film. This leads to a B-movie course.

They do the course like a B-movie. With the help of an American resident artist (Keri Knowles), they produce a poster which shows the teachers standing side-by-side with an old American car, the very symbol of any road movie. The criteria for a well-formed course are made: It is more important that something starts to live its own life inside the heads of the students than that it is to provide information for them or make them find life easier in society.

It is typical for B-movies that in them chaos, risks and really bizarre or stupid parts are just one side of it all. In good B-movies it is exactly that there are great parts in the middle of the not-that-interesting or even stupid ones. But how do you make a course that works like a cult film? At least some of the filmic experiences of the course have to be something other than the usual experiences students have. And it would be great to have talks on the course that take risks in discussing films, hopefully sometimes flying high, and, then, sometimes it would be OK to just fail.

So the map was created, and we started putting in films, lectures and discussions. It became important to show our relationship to film. This Raphael-type of teaching could be tested in theoretical teaching as

well, not just old-fashioned crafts. Do as I do! I dig up these films, I watch them like this, I anchor them to these classics (and not to these), and so on. I think this film, I do not just watch it.

And, of course, after that week our own relationship to B-movies was no longer the same. And the students? They made B-movies. They wrote about B-movies. They shared their favorites. We watched John Waters, Sergio Leone, Brian de Palma... discussed the films, searched for ways of engaging with them, but never worked like cold surgeons in the manner of film studies. We were there, we were subjective.

Example II: Taina and the experimental theory workshop: Factory



Image 2. Factory: the course poster.

I fell in love with the Generator Gallery as a space on first sight, especially those two generators. Two enormous black masses of iron reeking of oil, surrounded by echoes of past industrial technology, and

forgotten pieces of some extant machinery. The whole place is like a fantastic ethnographic museum making me feel like a traveler who has arrived from outer space.

I immediately wanted to create something in that space – a work, an event. The idea haunted me. I believe I developed the course titled “Experimental Theory Workshop” to get an opportunity to try something there.

It so happens I have drifted into the role of a teacher (while actually employed as a research manager) in an MA program on creative economy, which strictly speaking is not my subject. I do not see “creative economy” as a valid concept, nor do the aims of the program really correspond to my understanding of what “creative economy” is all about. I have tried to introduce my critical view on what I’d rather term “cognitive capitalism” to the program contents. When I saw those generators, I also instantly knew that what I’d want to do there would be related to studying the new economy, the shift from Fordism to Post-fordism, studying the functioning of production in cognitive capitalism. (See e.g. Moulier-Boutang, 2011.) Experimental Theory: Factory was a course about the fundamental field of production in cognitive capitalism: the production of human beings by human beings (Boyer, 2004, p.120-134).

I wanted the students to dig into tough theory, stern theory, vertiginous theory. I wanted them to get their brains working, to form their own relation to thinking, to touch thinking with their own hands, to feel thinking as something tangible. And most of all I wanted the students, somebody, anybody, to build in this ethnographic museum a factory that produces people. Pia created a poster from the ingredients I gave her. The image tells the story of the course to anyone able to read it.

In practice the course was very simple, elementary, self-evident:

- One can only become acquainted with thinking by meeting it. What is needed are thinkers and their thinking: Text. Original texts, not any explained or flattened versions.
- One can form one’s own relation to thinking only by discussing it with others, contemplating it, arguing for and against it. What is needed is discussion.
- Thinking can only become tangible if one literally digs into it with one’s hands, starts doing something with it, with the help of it. What is needed is activity, a doing, a making.

The last item was the “experimental” one. And it was pretty presumptuous: I am no artist. What do I know about teaching arts, about art as an element of teaching? How could I make students do works of art instead of writing academic texts? Fortunately I had been thrown into the practicalities of teaching art the previous spring, when Pia and I had realized a joint course. (Inexpressed: from concept to work of art.) (As a matter of fact this course was a joint course for all the staff, as the other half consisted of a visit by a Lacanian school from Helsinki ideated by Max and Harri.) I was of course supposed to answer for the conceptual part and Pia the art – but then it happened that on the art-making day Pia had a fever of 38

degrees and there I was ... and it was not impossible! I have really learned a lot from Pia – how to discuss works, especially about the relation of works of art and concepts. And of course the Experimental Theory Workshop included Pia being present one day to comment on the students’ plans for the artworks.

Factory was more or less the last course in spring 2012, and was held as an intensive course. Therefore, I felt it had to be light and fun – despite the stern theory. The structure of the course was as I said simple and self-evident: in the mornings we went through texts. Four days, four texts – Foucault, Lazzarato, Negri, Foucault. For the afternoons I had planned discussions and assignments to trigger the shift to artworks. And by and by the students were supposed to start planning their projects for works of art, and finally move to the Generator Gallery to realize them.

I can’t quite recall how the course actually went, but I recall perfectly well it did not go quite as I had planned it. To my recollection the students progressed more quickly to their ideas of works of art, and that was OK. To my slight disappointment they did not start building one big factory – that remains to be done – but disparate and very diverse machines with which humans are produced. Some were brilliant, all were OK. The students *did* have fun, though the theory *was* stern and tough. I had fun. What harm is there in that?

Since then I have realized a couple of other experimental theory workshops: “The Event of Dasein” and “The Art of Writing”. Both had the same simple structure – and a realization that differed somewhat from what was planned. The Dasein was realized in collaboration with another teacher (Reijo Kupiainen), Art of Writing had a contribution by Max Ryyänen who did a two day set of text – discussion – assignment. Beyond the simple, basic idea, it is fundamental that the topic is one that I too am interested in studying – not something I would merely be teaching to somebody. The overall combination has been meaningful and effective. Students who are focused on artistic practice are lured into conceptual thinking, the theoretically-oriented pushed to overcome their limits. And every time I learn something new.

Example III: Pia and dialogue of art and theory or so called “Reposaari-kurssi”/ “Reposaari course”



Image 3. Walking on the beach. Picture from Reposaari. Photo: Pia Euro.

Since 2011, the Dialogue of Art and Theory has been four-day course and workshop that takes place every fall on Reposaari, an island that lies some 34 km from the department building. As I was planning the structure of this four-day workshop, I wanted to create a parallelism between the course structure and a work of art, to find a way to experience it as a study of a *gesamtkunstwerk* – where each component is an essential part of a whole. The course consisted of assignments, creating quick artwork-like works, and of presentations and discussions of each work.

The artworks, or what we could call fragments, were supposed to reflect on the context, site and situation of each course, as well as on the works of the other students. Sharing and discussing the works was as important as producing the works. Therefore, both production and discussion were allotted the same amount of time daily, three hours for each. In addition, there were short inserts by the teaching staff. The produced assignments/fragments and shared discussions started to form an entity of their own – including

the moments outside of the seminar rooms. Cooking, eating, sauna, weather and time all became part of this entity. Every course gave birth to a community that started to develop its own language.



Image 4. Kitchen philosophy. Picture from Reposaari. Photo: Pia Euro.

The assignments:

Tuesday: Choose a place, site, or situation on Reposaari. Create an artwork related to the place, site, or situation, consisting of (at least) two elements. Reflect on the work's limits: the tensions between the two elements and what remains outside the work.

Wednesday: Choose an element from somebody else's work and create an artwork that includes the new element. The relationship between your work and the included element can be inclusive, commenting, deconstructing.

Thursday: Create an artwork in the concrete or conceptual space or tension between the two previous works. Reflect on the extension of your work. How far can its limits and influence reach? What else besides visible elements does your work contain?

The course could be seen as a site-specific performative artwork. The small community and village of Reposaari and its special atmosphere emphasizes the site's specificity. The place is an interesting mixture of a fishing village and a very specific community of houses built for the Holiday Housing Fair that took place on Reposaari in 2008. This community or village is filled with dreams: freedom and pleasure – far away from exhausting life of work. How could we realize a workshop in these conditions? How could we create works that are intertwined into place and time – as the reality around us is already so much, as such.

As an example I'll describe one artwork that was realized on Reposaaari in 2011 by Hanne Salonen. This is an attempt to describe what the course is about, to give these thoughts some flesh and blood through an artwork.

A woman walks down a village road pushing a white ice cream cube in front of her. The village road is very quiet – no one is around, but one can hear children from the schoolyard without seeing them. Her long hair waves in the wind, partly covering her face from time to time. The ice cream cube is relatively small in comparison to the volume of a human body. The situation seems to be quite heavy and even painful. A double image is constructed in my head – Hanne's action dissolving into Francis Alÿs' artwork *Paradox of Praxis* (1997), which happened in Mexico City almost 15 years before this moment, and again – on a clear fall day on Reposaaari, here and now. I have never been to Mexico City and I have only seen Francis Alÿs' work as a video recording, based on documentation. However, on Reposaaari I am very present and I am documenting Hanne's action with a video camera.

As she is moving forwards on the village road, the ice cream is leaving a white trail behind, which attracts a flock of crows and some seagulls. These flying creatures, white and grey in color, are following the trail for a while, flying around and eating the ice cream. The scene is baffling and beautiful in a weird way.

Symmetry in producing or making, and sharing and displaying, is parallel to installation art, where the relations between the artwork, the viewer and the situation around (and in) the artwork is in constant negotiation. The work does not exist without it being encountered. To display and discuss becomes production in this course. The work achieves the form in between people, not inside the mind of an individual.

It is interesting to think of the course as a multi-perspective artwork, filled with dreams, fiction, perceptions, assumptions, beliefs, fears, images, and objects. A fascinating thought for an almost impossible artwork – *gesamtkunswerk* – gestures and acts become elements of this figure, thoughts and words get materialized to be part of the construction. The imaginative artwork takes place at a moment when the produced elements – folded together with elements *not meant to be art* materials – are unfolded and presented.

PS. For the readers: Ice and ice cream behave completely differently in relation to the human body. The coldness of ice evaporates from the human skin, but the fat in ice cream creates a film that blocks the coldness from fading away from the skin as water does. Hanne spent the last days of the workshop with her hands bandaged.

Final summary: the elements of artistic practice in PoPeda

Gesamtkunstwerk

Fundamentally, the courses take form as sc. *Gesamtkunstwerk*, total works of art, which make use of a plurality of art forms to create a whole. (The concept originated with Wagner, but has been embraced by several other genres and movements such as the Ists and Bauhaus, etc.) The courses cannot be reduced or concentrated around some content that is about to be taught (B-movies, cognitive capitalism, the way artworks exist), but the whole mode of operation, the content and the way it is taught together form an experiential whole. It is also all about imitation, mimesis, and mimicry – of providing the model of being a scholar and an artist in close contact with the students, of being us.

Pedagogic solutions are not separate pedagogic tools, just as different elements of a contemporary work of art are not separate from the work itself, but are part of an experiential whole too. Thus the B-movie course is also realized like a B-movie, a theoretical experiment is constructed both conceptually and concretely. On Reposaaari, we have a really multi-faceted total work of art, when also activities outside teaching sessions – preparing food, eating it, cleaning, having sauna – become integral parts of the course, where topics and works are discussed and a community with its own language takes form.

Transitivity

“Transitivity... it is a tangible property of the artwork. Without it the work is nothing other than a dead object, crushed by contemplation.” (Bourriaud, 2002, p. 26). According to Nicolas Bourriaud, a contemporary work of art in particular, but in fact all works of art, are inherently *transitive*. Transitivity here does not refer to the ephemeral and temporary, but the grammatical sense referring to a verb: an action necessarily having an object. Someone who is the object of the action, who receives the action, is a fundamental part of the action itself. The inherent transitivity is what makes art relational, makes it something that happens only and necessarily in relation, and creates a relation. Like Bourriaud said, borrowing from Godard: “It takes two to make an image”. An image (a work of art) is made in a relation, in a process of unfinished discursiveness, not by one subject to another and then communicated, but created in an open space and in the relation between the two.

Similarly, our teaching and courses were not planned as a whole before they were realized. Teaching happens in the event of teaching. Students are not separate receivers, beholders of teaching that preceded them; they are a fundamental active element of the teaching event. The Reposaaari course is the most radical case here, since the course itself happened in the communication processes of all the participants, with the communication process being the true content of the course. But no matter how well planned in advance, each course contained a necessary and structural element of improvisation. Any course, even dry academic basics like “Research Methodology” or “Academic Writing” take their form only in the event of their unfolding.

Materiality

Teaching, like a work of art, also happens in the space between the makers and the material. All who participate in the event of making mold the space in between, even material elements like air, movement, and spatial order. During the B-movie course, lights are turned off and this creates an atmosphere that is part of the content of the course. The dust and the quality of the light, the smell of oil and the pieces of extant machines – all these participate in the discussion about the production of human beings during the Factory course. On Reposaari, a breakfast or a dinner is not a break from teaching – these sessions of “kitchen-philosophy” are equally important elements in the communication process, the creation of the community and the total work of art, along with the discussions about assignments in the classroom.

Site specificity

All of the above naturally pave the way to seeing teaching as site-specific. Teaching does not take place in a separate world of teaching – which does not even exist. Teaching is always site-specific, it is affected by the surrounding reality. One can take the idea of a course to another place, apply a method or concentrate on content – but every course is singular. This is a property of teaching that we consciously employed, instead of trying to overcome it. The site was used as an active element of teaching – hence those experiments to take a course out of the university space, to stretch a lecture for 24 hours, or confine it within seven minutes. The surrounding reality is not something to be eliminated, but something to be embraced. Teaching consciously takes place in a concrete context.

Conclusions: What can be learned from this?

Like the protagonist of Rancière’s *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, Joseph Jacotot, we have learned in practice how to teach what we do not know, and also how to teach ourselves to learn more, including the way students on this kind of shared trip course bring in a lot of knowledge. To be fully appreciated, this skill should be shown to new protagonists of their own pedagogical life. The story can be told, and it is a beautiful one. We are all now more ready than ever to create a pedagogical revolution. Should we start teaching PoPeda? Or just spread the news? What can be learned about our journey by others? How can we bring about the revolution?

1. It is evident that it all stems from a motivated and committed teaching community. One very fundamental lesson from our experience is that it is a necessary step to consider the staff as a resource, not a cost. To see the individual strengths and expertise of each member of staff as the foundation of what is being taught. True, when the individual members come and go, the content has to change and adjust – but this is not a weakness; it is an opportunity for developing the content of the teaching. When people are engaged as teachers to concentrate on themes and topics they

themselves regard with passion and curiosity, this approach reflects on the quality of teaching and introduces the element of experimentation.

2. This of course also requires intellectual democracy and openness of communication in the management of teaching. Intellectual democracy sustains experimentation by bringing people together – it helps to spark new combinations and to explore new ways of doing. Intellectual democracy is in turn sustained by regarding the individual strength and expertise of everybody as a resource.

3. It is also highly recommended that a university community that strives to reach the kind of results we did should pay attention to giving time to its teaching staff to concentrate on the content of their work – art, study, teaching. One thing is for sure – a community like this cannot flourish if everyone is leaving for another course or another task all the time. PoPeda is based on the possibility to focus on the task at hand, and not being distracted by a wealth of managerial duties.

4. Intellectual democracy, outsiderish daring, and concentration on the fundamental task cannot flourish if one's attention is focused on gathering points and credits and fighting with colleagues for diminishing resources and posts.

And the final conclusion: PoPeda cannot be applied elsewhere without reacting to the changed context – that is essential to PoPeda itself. To start a revolution we must go on as we started.

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