

AIR Artist in Residence programma

Atelier
Cornelis Hoogenboom



AIR

The Artist in Residence (AIR) programme is run by the Art Practice and Development research group in collaboration with the various faculties making up the Amsterdam School of the Arts. The AIR programme fosters innovation in arts education by initiating confrontations with ongoing artistic developments and offers the school's programmes and departments the opportunity to introduce outstanding forms of practice and to invite artists and to revitalise and inspire educational and artistic policy in the school. All this is possible on the condition that the guest artist is of proven quality, there is a shared interest in a highly topical issue, and that the residency will encourage exchange with the international state of the art. With each new residency, the AIR programme seeks to create an energising field of tension between the artist's input as an independent 'outside' force and the school's willingness and capacity to respond to the dynamics of the artistic practice concerned.

Marijke Hoogenboom

The cross-faculty Artist in Residence (AIR) programme is led by Marijke Hoogenboom in her role as head of the Art Practice and Development research group at the Amsterdam School of the Arts. In 2012 she took up the additional position of professor at de Theaterschool, where she runs the Performing Arts in Transition research group. Hoogenboom was previously involved in the founding of DasArts with Ritsaert ten Cate, and was until 2001 part of the artistic team running this international Masters programme for theatre makers. Besides her activities in the school, she is a freelance dramaturge, curator and adviser in the international field of arts and education.

Skills of the 21st century

Marijke Hoogenboom

Unemployment in the Netherlands is on the rise, and the number of skilled workers is in decline. The Dutch Social and Economic Council recently highlighted the alarming shortfall in this area of the labour market.¹ Cultural economics professor of Arjo Klamer attributes this phenomenon to what he describes as the, 'gross neglect of craftsmanship,' in the Netherlands. He is a strong advocate of raising the development of a creative craft culture high on the political agenda.² Renewed attention for traditional crafts and a re-evaluation of working with 'hand and head', as Richard Sennett put it, would be good news for the arts given the sector's keenness for its vocational training to be acknowledged as contemporary craft schools whose didactic cornerstones are social interaction, learning in practice, and an active community of stakeholders.

From the inter-
view 'Collabora-
tion is a craft'

Richard Sennett: 'We need to work towards a training model through which people can acquire this craftsmanship. So in the future I'd prefer to see fewer people walking around the universities and more at technical colleges.'

These specific characteristics harbour a particular quality, believes sociologist Pascal Gielen. He sees the art academy as being one few places that operate an 'educational excellence model' and provide space for nurturing an artisan ethos,³ one that is entirely unconnected with nostalgia or a yearning for a pre-modern world. Labour sociologist Richard Sennett believes

that craftsmanship and the workplace provides a communal atmosphere and social structure that guide the development of skill, and binds people together as it forms a community of masters and apprentices. Labour sociologist Richard Sennett believes this provided a communal atmosphere and social structure that guided the skill development. The workshop binds people together as it forms a community of masters and apprentices, preserving an, 'an enduring, basic human impulse, the desire to do a job well for its own sake.'⁴ And this intrinsic need to strive for quality is indeed propagated within the arts. In the 21st century, physical materials, the tangible production processes and perfected knowledge are no longer perceived as an obstacle to autonomy and innovation.⁵ Quite the reverse in fact, because as Cornel Bierens writes, 'Artists are once again fully recognising the power of the fundamental making process, and their armoury of techniques is bigger than ever.'⁶

Pascal Gielen: 'The unidentifiable nature of the visual art – coupled with the slump in craftsmanship – is the downside to the boundless freedom of the artist to define his or her own work.'

From *De hybride kunstenaar*
(The hybrid artist)

But in other areas of society too, we can observe a resurgent demand for skilled makers, accompanied by the return of specialist trades. When the philosopher Henk Oosterling introduced his Rotterdam Vakmanstad/SkillCity programme into the educational system in 2007, he championed the development of craftsmanship in parallel with the profound social and economic changes that were necessary. Oosterling sees the notion of 'skills' as creating the possibility within just such a period of transition for placing a broad spectrum of skills on the agenda, be they professional, social, cultural or mental: 'We must learn to live together

From Platform Ambachtseconomie (Skill economy platform)

Henk Oosterling: 'In the future we'll need to shift to a different form of economy. That economy will have to be much more material-oriented. And it will have to be far more deeply rooted in ecological principles, with the effect that we'll have to increasingly make do with what we have and develop things within that. I believe craftsmanship could well take up a very important position within that larger context.'

qualitatively rather than to survive speculatively.⁷ For Oosterling, 'skills' are not rigid, unchanging categories. Rather, they represent indispensable and continually updated values that help us to stay on track in what art critic Cornel Bierens describes as 'this flashing world', and to take responsibility for the future, be it as an artist, teacher, or other citizen.

From lecture at CBK Amsterdam

Cornel Bierens: 'Craftsmanship does not presuppose doing everything oneself from start to finish. What's important is that, whatever we do and whatever tools media we use, we regain a sense of those fundamental things that we have looked down upon for so long.'

This ON AIR publication *Skills of the 21st Century* takes as its central theme the ongoing re-evaluation of craftsmanship and its associated ethics, asking what its implications are for individual art and design disciplines. How is arts education responding to impulses from society and professional practice, both at home and abroad? What traditional or new skills are necessary for professions undergoing such fundamental upheaval? How do artists and designers view the future of their profession and the role of culture and the arts in a globalised arena? Are we dealing here with a flexible, hybrid artist, a cultural entrepreneur who is equally at

ease on any of ‘a thousand stages’?⁸ And have we at the Amsterdam School of the Arts already embarked on our quest for diversification in the arts and for connection with other sectors?

For the institutes making up the Amsterdam School of the Arts, it is particularly their annual guest Artists in Residence that initiate confrontations with shifts in our culture, with our view of the world, and with changes in the relationship between ourselves and our surroundings. Rather than using this publication to present portraits of individual AIRs, we have therefore chosen to share stories about the new era now taking shape in the arts, in education and in society.

One of the most conspicuous themes running through many of the stories included here is the central importance of dynamism and interaction, coupled with an aversion to closed-mindedness. Processual artist Martijn Engelbregt, for example, demands the freedom to shape his medium in his own way and to lay new connections with sectors beyond the art world. Internationalisation is also a crucial component of arts education nowadays. Joël Bons from the Atlas Academy and Barbara Van Lindt from DasArts see encounters with other cultures as a crucial confrontation that broadens students’ horizons, allowing them to reflect on similarities and differences and to choose a personal and new path.

Another recurring subject is the idea that changes in arts and culture are a response to changes in society. Suzanne Wallinga characterises AIR Franz Rodenkirchen’s affinity with ‘slow cinema’ as an act of resistance to our rapid-fire culture and has a passion for its minimalist narrative approach. But how can the audience’s contemplative experience be reflected in a professional film scenario? Wallingfa observes that the

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time has passed for ‘applying a standard’ within the scenarist’s profession. Is it coincidence, then, that the Theaterschool students and teachers who came into contact with a discipline other than their own during a collaborative project with Ugo Dehaes are now asking for exchange, independence and renewal?

And lastly, the most strongly held views relate to the need for arts and culture to be taking a far more powerfully autonomous role in contributing to social processes – initiating them, even. Jappe Groenendijk takes the view that the approach to arts education exemplified by the interdisciplinary practice of artists’ collective Authentic Boys holds the key to skills for students and other citizens in the 21st century. AIR Michiel Schwarz in particular is striving for a ‘true cultural shift’ to place centre stage new qualities such as sharing, connectedness, sustainability and the human scale, saying that this ‘century of transitions’ is demanding new professional ethics from the designers and heritage experts who help shape our surroundings.

I see arts education as the ideal arena for negotiating changing demands from the professional field and the significance of a new cultural awareness. In this context, the AIR-programme has an almost seismographic function, offering to various departments of the AHK the opportunity to update themselves, initiate new collaborations, and engage with developments that will define the future for young professionals.

The title says it all, because I believe the *Skills of the 21st Century* hold the key to the innovative forces that question the world and come together to build a sustainable society.

- 1 SER preliminary recommendations (2013). *Handmade in Holland: skills and entrepreneurship in a craft-based economy*. The Hague.
- 2 Klamer, R. (2013) *Creatief vakmanschap in internationaal perspectief (An international perspective on creative skills) and Herwaardering ambachtscultuur hoofdzaak (Prioritising the reappraisal of craft culture)*. Rotterdam: Erasmus University Rotterdam, Stichting Economie en Cultuur.
- 3 Gielen, P. (2012) *Artistieke praxis en de neoliberalisering van de onderwijsruimte (Artistic praxis and the neo-liberalisation of the educational domain)*. *Denken in kunst (Art thinking)* (p. 97). Leiden: Leiden University Press.
- 4 Sennett, R. (2008) *De ambachtsman (The Craftsman)* (p. 63 and 167). Amsterdam: Meulenhoff.
- 5 Vanhaesebrouck, K. (2011). *Ambacht en traagheid (Craft and slowness)*. In: *Rekto: verso* (nr 47). Gent.
- 6 Bierens, C. (2010). *Liederlijk geklodder (Brutish daubing)* in: *De Groene Amsterdammer* (7 April). See also: Bierens, C. (2013) *the essay Handgezaagde ziel (Hand-sawn soul)*. Amsterdam: Mondriaan Fund.
- 7 Velsen, van, V. (2013). *Rotterdam Vakmanstad* (p. 82) in: *Metropolis M*, (No.1, February-March). See also: Oosterling, H. (2009). *Woorden als daden (Words as deeds)*. Rotterdam: Japsam Books.
- 8 Dijkgraaf Commissions recommendations. (2010) *Onderscheiden, verbinden, vernieuwen: de toekomst van het kunstonderwijs, in opdracht van de HBO-raad (Differentiate, connect and innovate: the future of art education’s for a sector plan for arts education, commissioned by the council for HBO vocational colleges* (p.4). The Hague.