“Aesthetic Education“
in the Digital Age

Call for Papers
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"Aesthetic Education" in the Digital Age

Call for Papers

From 1793-1801, Friedrich Schiller wrote “On the Aesthetic Education of Man,” a treatise on art as an independent medium for improving the character. We question how topical an “aesthetic education” is today against the backdrop of globalization and digitalization as well as the financial and government debt crisis and the subsequent challenges for education and culture that have emerged from it. What food for thought has adult education received from this combination of aesthetics and ethics (see also Herbart 1804)?

Against the backdrop of the French Revolution, which he regarded as having failed, Schiller considered art to be a way to find freedom through beauty. Schiller had in mind not only personal freedom but also collective, political freedom. At the same time, he criticized the utilitarianism taking hold around him at a time when the industrial revolution was just beginning to pick up speed. Condemning the strict rationalism of the Enlightenment, Schiller saw in the concept of play an opportunity to realize the human being by bridging the gap between the subject and its environment.

Today we find ourselves in a phase of upheaval shaped by globalization and digitalization. The conditions for economic and social development are changing and thus new challenges are emerging for learners. EU policy papers call for a readiness for “lifelong learning.” Included are welcome demands such as that cultural expressiveness be seen as the basis for democratic participation. Yet there is essentially a wealth of demands that are strongly influenced by exploitation and use in the name of economic growth. Creative abilities are restricted to competence terms. People should be creative, flexible and communicative, but within the context of the existing system of values and social systems.

Against this backdrop, Schiller’s “aesthetic education” and the question of cultural education experience a new and ambivalent topicality. In the past 20 to 30 years, contemporary art has taken on a leading role in handling marginalized and critical topics, whether in the areas of gender and migration, labour, globalization or the way to deal with natural resources. Understood as a critical examination of the present, art can be a catalyst for personality development. However, the autonomy of art is threatened on several levels, whether by the general need to economize or the exploitation of the existing system of values and social systems.

of culture for the “creative industries” as a location factor and tourism magnet.

The digital age came with the promise of a knowledge-based society: networking and the new tools would promote democratic participation and the cultural development of the human being. In the meantime, this society has increasingly become a knowledge-based economy where knowledge and information only count as production factors, not as values in themselves (see Medosch 2011). Globalization, which could have been seen as a positive development, is limited to the flow of capital and data.

Is it necessary to “sabotage Schiller,” as postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak wrote (see Spivak 2012)? What Spivak probably means is a reinterpretation in the sense of a productive undoing: the ideals of the European Enlightenment and the high phase of bourgeois culture can no longer be endorsed unquestioningly. At the same time, there is an inspiring potential in the idea of general emancipation, which has been freed from the modern age's false claim to universalism. The many new protest movements, from Tahrir to indignados and Occupy, Gezi Park and Brazil, show that the need for an ethical plan for one's life is strong, whereby beauty as quality is applied to the form and character of human relationships (see also Weiss 1983).

What could „aesthetic education“ mean in the digital age?

What value does an “aesthetic education“ have in the context of the flood of information, 24 hour news reports, self-exploitation pressure and monetarization of every creative fiber, imposition of competences and pressure to network? Using theoretical texts as well as practical examples, we would like to learn:

• Which values and abilities can serve as educational goals in the sense of an “aesthetic education“ in the digital age?
• Which means and methods serve to reach these goals?
• Is it still possible and desirable to educate the subject to be more sensitive and imaginative?

• Can aesthetics be divorced from its instrumentalization?
• What happens to “content“ if everything is diluted to information?
• How is “aesthetic education“ connected with political education, an understanding of democracy and subjects such as bioethics, human rights and environmental protection?
• And which priorities of an updated “aesthetic education“ are in conflict with actually existing neoliberalism?

Submit!

We invite educational practitioners and researchers to submit contributions that critically discuss current practices and the aesthetics of what must be learned in connection with adult education and adult learning.

• Social movements and art projects, participative and emancipatory group projects, cultures of protest
• Practical examples, project reports on methodologically innovative art and culture projects: art in public space, political theatre work, writing and art workshops, democracy forums, environmental projects
• Reflections on aesthetic education in the sense of an open process of what Spivak calls “Erwanderung“ (finding one's way to learning) in contrast to simply goal-oriented qualification
• The “encyclopedic impulse“ in the digital age: what significance do open learning resources such as Wikipedia or Europeana have?
• Playful and creative ways of handling new media, role plays, connections between open learning processes and network media
• Museum education, museums as places for learning, virtual museums and exhibitions on the Internet, connection between exhibition practice and new media
• Participative and critical art projects, community art and community education

The editorial staff reserve the right to select or reject contributions after a review process. We recommend contacting the editors of the issue, Armin Medosch, Ina Zwerger and Stefan Vater, before making a submission.
Criteria

The editorial staff reviews all submissions in an internal review process and selects those worthy of consideration for publication from among the contributions received. Decisive criteria are the topicality of the content and the correctness of the work, reference to the call for papers, relevance to Austria or the transferability of international findings to the situation in Austria, formal standards (above all length and citations), timely submission and readiness to cooperate with the editorial staff.

Manuscript and editorial process

Information about the formal criteria, copy editing and the editorial process can be found online at http://erwachsenenbildung.at/magazin/hinweise_fuer_autorinnen ("Information for authors").

The submission deadline for issue 22, which will appear in June 2014, is 3 February 2014. Contributions received after this date cannot be considered for this issue. Authors will receive a verbal and/or written evaluation and the opportunity to revise or expand the work around four to six weeks after the submission deadline. Finally, all contributions must be copy edited based on the editorial evaluation and formal standards. The copy editing includes formal correction and spell checking and makes sure that the requirements have been met.

When the article is published, the rights of use of your article are transferred to the magazine, which may publish it on the Internet, via Books on Demand and as an eBook as well as enter it into database systems – in each case under the Creative Commons license, which allows readers limited use of a work if the source is cited. All contributions that are accepted will receive EUR 100 to 250 depending on the length and category of the contribution. By submitting a manuscript, you confirm your acceptance of these conditions.

Please send your contribution including an abstract, any illustrations, tables and diagrams (in workable form), portrait photo (at least 300 dpi) and a short biography (including educational information, focus and areas of emphasis of your work) to the online editorial staff.

Categories

To live up to the mission expressed in the title “The Austrian Open Access Journal for Adult Education” (Magazin erwachsenenbildung.at in German), the journal is divided into different categories. They pursue different goals in their arrangement, design, focus and manner of dealing with questions. When writing your article, please do your best to ensure that it meets the requirements of one of the categories described below and does not exceed the given length.

Subject (15,000-25,000 characters)

This category features academic discussions and theoretical papers as well as critical and personal points of view that deal with the questions included in the call for papers. Great emphasis is placed on clear structure and argumentation, well-supported and practice-related processing of the content and – in the case of theoretical papers – exact citation and naming of sources. The main questions are:

- What new approaches to research, theories and studies are there in this subject?
- What impact do the theories and findings from studies described have on practice?
- What basic and specialized knowledge of the subject is relevant to practice and in which form?
- What critical ideas, areas of discussion, issues, opinions and points of view are there on this subject?

Practice (15,000-20,000 characters)

This category is directed towards those active in adult education and related fields. In freely structured reports on their own experiences and project reports, they can describe and reflect on their observations, concerns, challenges and problems regarding the subject outlined in the call for papers. The main questions are:

- What are the goals and content of your project or educational offering?
- Which tools, instruments, methods, and theories have you tested in it?
- What experiences have you had while carrying it out or implementing it?
• What can others learn from your project or educational offering?
• Based on your experience, where do you see a need for action, points of criticism and limits?

Portrait (5,000-10,000 characters)

This category presents people whose work and thoughts are fundamental to adult education or who provide answers to the questions outlined in the call for papers. The main questions are:
• Who is/was the person that is the subject of the portrait?
• What are/were the particular achievements of the person in relation to the subject?

Introduction in brief (5,000-10,000 characters)

In this category, institutions or associations whose offerings, target groups, procedures or methods are directly connected with the call for papers have the opportunity to introduce themselves and their courses and projects. The main questions are:
• What institution is profiled?
• What are its fields of work and methods?
• Which ideas, achievements, etc. of the profiled institution are relevant to the subject and its questions?

Review (5,000-10,000 characters)

This category describes, classifies and discusses new publications or “classical” literature dealing with the subject outlined in the current call for papers. The main questions are:
• What is the content of the publication?
• How can the content be classified in the discourse on the subject?
• To what extent and in what way is the content of the publication relevant for practice?
• How is the publication to be evaluated and why?

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