P/REFERENCES OF DESIGN

NATURA ARTIS MAGISTRA: THE ENDOSYMBIOTIC DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN THE FUTURE ART ACADEMY.

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ABSTRACT | This paper focuses on the transformative potential of the Endosymbiotic Development Model in the context of evolving art and design education. Against a backdrop of a rapidly changing geopolitical, technological, social, and environmental landscape (and the increasing societal awareness thereof), this text critically examines current paradigms within the author's own (art-) academic structure and substance. The urgency for art academies to align with the dynamic terrain beyond traditional boundaries prompts the exploration of educational models that bridge disciplinary gaps yet do not discard the expertise that comes with the terrain, advocating for innovative educational approaches based on smooth but radical symbiotic inclusion rather than on striated fractionality and reactionary replacement. The authors introduce a bachelor program named "Try Out," which is in development at the "ArtEZ Academy for Art and Design Zwolle," as an application of the Endosymbiotic Development Model in art education, emphasizing social engagement, creative thinking, and question-making. The curriculum prioritizes students' motivation and urgency, fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment. The program's structure emphasizes ongoing 'exhibition performances,' minors focusing on specific issues, and real-world applications in the form of field projects or social internships, all based on the urgencies and social engagement of the students themselves.

1. Introduction

Against a backdrop of a rapidly changing geopolitical, technological, social, and environmental landscape—and the increasing societal awareness thereof—we have started to critically examine the current paradigms within our own art-academic structure and substance. Underneath this movement, a few assumptions have come to the forefront, some of which are not necessarily innovative but have been overruled by others or reduced to the status of a “paper tiger,” meaning that the basic idea is still there, yet in execution, it lacks the strength to make an impact.

One assumption is that there is an urgency for art academies to align with the dynamic terrain beyond traditional boundaries, prompting the exploration of educational models that bridge disciplinary gaps yet do not discard the expertise that comes with the terrain. Sadly, many reactions in academia to the fading boundaries of disciplines (and their historical professional hinterlands) have allowed a particular neo-liberalist agenda to enter the premises of the art school without much resistance. Many responses to the question of how to react to the excavation of vocational prerogatives have focused on filling supposed gaps rather than reframing the paradigm of education itself. We have witnessed waves of transformations in art education based on a supposed lack of theoretical components in the program, a lack of collaborative skills, a lack of social relevance, or a lack of generalist communication and presentation skills, and so on. Rather than succumbing to reactionary responses to the exigencies of the present, especially within the realm of art and design education, it is prudent to uphold certain traditional values. This does not imply an inherent value in tradition as a tool; on the contrary, change within the academic sphere is imperative to prevent a loss of relevance in ethical and political dialogues. Some traditions, which have long obscured our vision and hold no relevance to the contemporary, must inevitably fade away, including our submissive behavior vis-à-vis societal and political critique. In Holland, less than 4% of all bachelor education at this level is somehow related to the arts and design, and yet it is the segment that has been most scrutinized by political polemic and populist opinion-making. This will not cease by adapting to an agenda that is not part of our main purpose of existence. Moreover, the awareness that this world urgently needs a completely new agenda to somehow salvage what is left of it forces us to act in a far more radical and oppositional way.

A second assumption underlying all of this is the need to grapple with our ‘being in the world’ in a way that cannot be abstracted accountably. Similar to how major industries have escaped accountability for significant disruptions in our ecosystems due to intricate webs of legislation, economic priorities, and the availability of undervalued commodities, we – art and design educators ourselves – seek refuge in the proverbial ‘institutional curriculum’ to alleviate our burden of accountability. The institutional curriculum serves as shorthand for the entire complex of practicalities, legal and administrative demands, habits, automations, etc., that exert influence on us daily within the confines of the school system, resulting in the 'unavoidable average.' In other words, even when there is a specific desire for change, such as revolutionizing an educational program, accounting for all institutional values (work hours, study load, square meters, facilities, salaries, legal accreditation, company culture, etc.) leaves very few variables that can actually undergo substantial change. We colloquially refer to this as the 2% rule: irrespective of the starting point or the initiative, at most, only about 2% can be changed. Yet, the only constant is the expanding perspective of each generation, enabling a broader view of the world and thus heightening individual responsibilities. In this context, the contemporary is marked by perpetual change. The unceasing flux of today intensifies this dynamic; we possess the capacity to perceive more of the world and extend our gaze further into the future. However, the ability to see more does not necessarily equate to heightened insight. Changing the future is impossible as it has not been made yet; shaping it differently than its designated course directs requires drawing lessons from the past and opening ourselves to a radical review of all that we have been doing. This includes questioning the exchange of our individual accountability for institutional responsibility while simultaneously recognizing that some elements are unavoidable and contribute to the need for rethinking this equation. Therefore, the contrast with the old is perhaps not something new but something much older.

The third assumption forming the foundation of our development efforts is to prioritize the logic of embracing the inevitable rather than resisting its consequences. For many decades, we have witnessed a rapidly changing professional field, and yet we have been expected to produce alumni capable of operating at the forefront of these changes. Given that the 'incubation time' of major changes in curricula—apart from the constraints of the institutional curriculum—is about seven years (one year for development, one year for accreditation, one year for implementation, and four years for the first students to graduate under this altered curriculum), this seems like an impossible task. On top of this comes the inevitability of reduction: there is no sustainable agenda that can mitigate the exploitation of our biosphere based on any existing economic model of growth. Less is not only more but also crucial and inevitable. So, the question becomes one of larger contrasts: how can we deliver more with far less, in a changing world that is hard, if not impossible, to keep pace with given the constraints induced by our own systems?

To find an answer, we have started advocating innovative educational approaches based on smooth but radical symbiotic inclusion rather than on striated fractionality and reactionary replacement. To this end, we are working on the development of a bachelor program named "Try Out" at the "ArtEZ Academy for Art and Design Zwolle" which can be seen as an application of the Endosymbiotic Development Model in art education, emphasizing social engagement, creative thinking, and question-making. This program will center Joseph Beuys's credo: "Our true capital is our creativity," at the core of its curriculum and engages with the existing academic structure in an endosymbiotic way. The curriculum prioritizes students' motivation and urgency, fostering a diverse and inclusive learning environment. The program's structure emphasizes ongoing 'exhibition performances,' minors focusing on specific issues, and real-world applications in the form of field projects or social internships, all based on the urgencies and social engagement of the students themselves.

The reviews of this paper, while expressing enthusiasm and appreciation for the work presented, also noted that outlining "a concrete curricular path, as a pilot exercise, duly evaluated, could facilitate the understanding of this new training proposal". We fully acknowledge this suggestion; however, as of the time of writing, this development is still very much in progress. Our goal is to launch the new program in September 2025 for students, and the content presented here represents the foundational elements from which we will build a coherent holistic system. Your feedback is invaluable to us, and therefore we invite you to be a part of this journey. In the next paragraphs, we will conceptualize the workings of endosymbiotics, forefront somaesthetics as a baseline for an unmediated and non-abstractable way of relating to the world, and finally, present our first draft of a curriculum that aspires to address our concerns, by exceeding disciplines and replace paradigms.

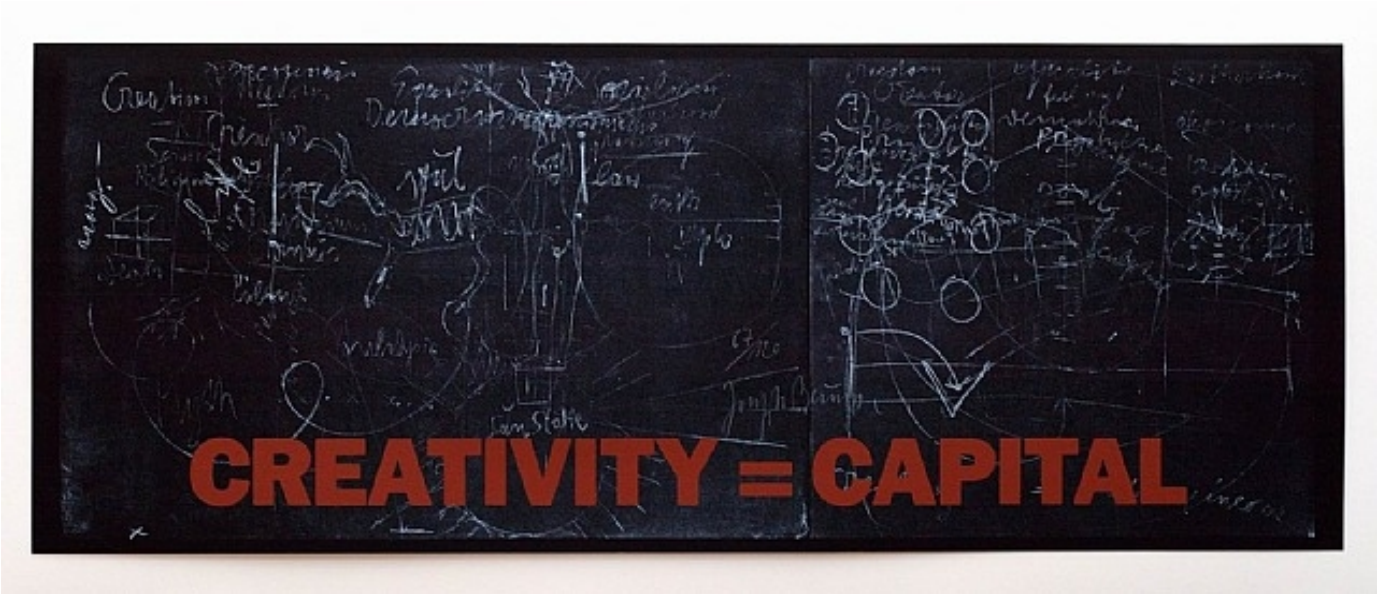

Figure 1. Joseph Beuys, New York Subway Poster "Creativity = Capital" (1983), Lithograph, edition of 120. This image of the work is used here under the fair use policy as stated in Section 107 of the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 for academic purposes.

2. Endosymbiotics

2.1 In Biology

The Endosymbiotic Development Model is a scientific hypothesis derived from biology, proposing an evolutionary mechanism for the origin of eukaryotic cells. Eukaryotic cells, characterized by a nucleus as a central control center containing genetic material, possess various organelles such as the endoplasmic reticulum and mitochondria, each with specific roles. Surrounded by a membrane that regulates the passage of substances, these cells are present in plants, animals, fungi, and other complex organisms, distinguishing them from simpler prokaryotic cells. An endosymbiont, or endobiont, refers to an organism that resides within the body or cells of another organism, often in a mutually beneficial relationship known as endosymbiosis. The term is derived from the Greek words meaning “within,” “together,” and “living”. Examples include bacteria aiding plants (like legumes) in obtaining nitrogen, single-cell algae living in corals, and bacteria providing essential nutrients to insects. The concept of endosymbiosis is articulated in the endosymbiotic theory, chiefly developed by Neo-Darwinist biologist Lynn Margulis. This theory suggests that certain bacteria began living inside other organisms after being engulfed by them. According to the Endosymbiotic Development Model, ancestral eukaryotic cells emerged through the engulfment and subsequent integration of free-living bacteria by a host archaeal or bacterial cell. This integration is believed to have established a mutually beneficial relationship between the host cell and the engulfed bacteria, leading to the formation of organelles within the eukaryotic cell, such as mitochondria for energy generation and chloroplasts for photosynthesis.

We find inspiration in this model, as it effectively describes several key elements that we are incorporating into our curriculum development and the development of our new academy building. It is crucial for us to view this model in its most abstract form yet retaining its literal concept. Abstract, because we are applying it outside its original context and transposing it to another domain, and literal because we are extrapolating several elements that function similarly in our educational development. Similar to the visual metaphor employed by evolutionary biologist and philosopher Conrad Waddington to depict his view on epigenetics, we use endosymbiosis as the metaphorical embodiment of our development. Waddington posited that the outcome of (evolutionary) *becoming* is not the product of logical necessity but contingently obligatory, which refers to something that is not necessarily predetermined or logically necessary but becomes obligatory or necessary based on certain circumstances or conditions. It implies that an outcome or requirement is not inherently dictated by a fixed rule or necessity but is instead contingent on specific factors or situations. This concept acknowledges the role of chance, context, and the dynamic nature of biological processes in shaping outcomes. This allows for the existence of 'multiple optima,' signifying the possibility of different yet equally important outcomes. Moreover, any outcome can only be established after its formation, never as a result of a predefined procedure.

Waddington's metaphorical landscape, termed the ‘epigenetic landscape’, illustrates how evolution progresses and ‘takes turns’. It portrays marbles rolling down a hill, each representing a mutation in time, competing for grooves on the slope, and eventually settling at the lowest point. The marbles denote the options available in the progress of evolution, with their competition affecting the distribution and the landscape itself. Waddington used the term “creode” to describe the pathway of the marbles, embodying the 'contingently obligatory' argument. In a manner as abstract *and* literal as Waddington's, we apply the major premises of the endosymbiotic model as well as the contingently obligatory argument to the foundation of our future art school.

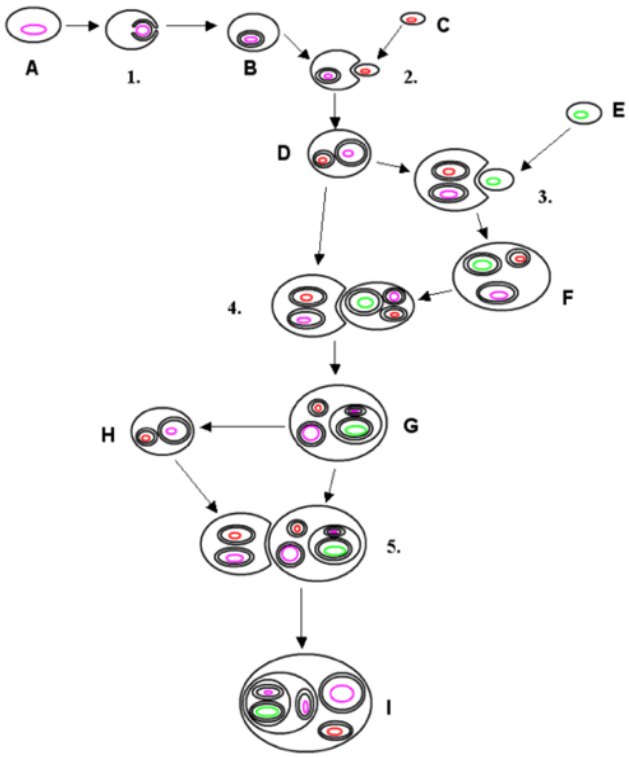

Figure 2. Endosymbiosis graph, Image source Wikipedia, permission is granted to copy, distribute and/or modify this document under the terms of the GNU Free Documentation License.

2.2 As Basis of Our Development

The Endosymbiotic Development Model is proposed here as a transformative approach in the context of evolving art and design education. It envisions a symbiotic relationship between diverse artistic disciplines, fostering collaboration, interconnected learning, and a holistic understanding of the broader societal potential of arts education. Challenging dualities such as 'specialization versus generalization' and 'theory versus practice', the model encourages a multidisciplinary learning environment where students from diverse backgrounds collaborate, disconnecting the building of creativity from artistic development per se.

The main 'learning' that we draw from this model has three components. Firstly, the model doesn't propose a complete renewal as a characteristic element in development. Rather, the developing structure absorbs other bodies for the mutual benefit of both elements. This gives right and tribute to the existing, as opposed to an idea of demolition and starting from scratch. Secondly, the absorbed entity retains a certain level of sovereignty; it is only assimilated to the extent that it becomes part of a larger system, with the added benefit of protection by the bigger body. Its functions are kept operational, as they are the main reason for the collaboration to begin with. Thirdly, it demonstrates the conditionality of use and perception. Many endobionts are classified as bacteria, which can do great good or harm to others, depending on the conditions (contingently obligatory). Yet when encapsulated, symbiosis regulates these effects and produces only positive qualities. In fact, the qualities of the endobiont can start to steer and determine the functioning of the entire cell. The consequent engulfment of new elements builds a holistic outlook on the concept of development itself; it fosters and shelters older developments and insights without being rigid or dogmatic.

A holistic approach as a pedagogical concept is not a new idea. A well-known example is the Humboldtian model, named after philosopher and linguist Wilhelm von Humboldt, which advocates for an education

system that fosters individuality, critical thinking, and the integration of research and teaching. It emphasizes the idea that education should not only impart knowledge and skills but also cultivate students' intellectual and moral character. The model promotes the notion that education should encourage students to become autonomous thinkers and lifelong learners rather than mere recipients of information. In a Humboldtian education system, there is an emphasis on academic freedom, the unity of research and teaching, and the belief that education should contribute to the development of well-rounded individuals capable of meaningfully contributing to society. It centers around the German term “Bildung” (Von Humboldt, 1794), encompassing the concept of self-cultivation, education, and personal development. Bildung is a complex and multifaceted idea that goes beyond the mere acquisition of knowledge and skills, akin to what any good school system should aspire to be. It is often associated with the holistic development of an individual's intellectual, moral, and aesthetic capacities. The term implies a lifelong process of self-formation and self-realization, emphasizing not only cognitive aspects but also personal growth and ethical considerations.

While valuable, we acknowledge that “Bildung” as a verb can act as “condescending and demanding,” as pointed out by Varkøy (2015, p.20). It favors a particular outlook rooted in the Humanistic paradigm, prompting us to question its validity in times that necessitate decentralizing the human in favor of sustainable placement in an ecology that includes the rights and urgencies of all things, not just human. Furthermore, its major premise underlines the necessity of contributing to society, at a time when there is growing unrest about what this society has produced in areas such as equity, inclusion, social injustice, imperialism, environmental and human exploitation, and more. For us, fitting into society is not enough; we need to change it. Hence, we have been exploring radically different ways of thinking about education. We feel the need to challenge the 2% rule and still build on the strengths of what we have. Instead of assimilating different entities into one (purposely constructed and monitored) holistic learning environment, the Endosymbiotic Development Model ensures the sovereignty of its participants in an environment that reciprocally depends on those very autonomies, again a contingently obligatory relationship. For us, this is an intriguing definition of inclusion. The engulfed becomes the *engulfer*, forming new alliances time and time again that are always to the mutual benefit of all involved.

3. Curriculum

3.1 Structure

Our overarching objective is the individual development and cultivation of the capacity for creativity, emphasizing its unrestrained and freely applicable nature as a key competency. The topic of their learning program will be based on the urgencies that students (V/X/M) themselves bring to the table. Therefore, a subsidiary aim is to equip students for sustainable income opportunities within the dynamic realm of supply and demand for creativity and imagination by addressing issues they care about. The program's structure is built on three major focal points.

Firstly, direct participation through individual thematic minors and the “free” selection of domains, meaning that from the first day, students will work on real projects and with real concerns rather than engaging in “sandboxed learning”. Secondly, students will produce a permanent output through the exhibition performance and the field projects, ensuring that their messages will be heard from the beginning and will only increase in strength throughout the years. Thirdly, diversification by stepping away from the traditional entrance exam. The program's structure is designed to attract students with diverse backgrounds. Many potential students have a gift for creation, but not all have had the opportunity to develop specific proficiencies in the arts. Therefore, in contrast to the typical entrance exam, candidates undergo an interview where their motivation and urgency take center stage, rather than an assessment of previous work or proof of artistic talent. These three structural pillars of the program will help shorten the time of addressing the urgencies considerably compared to more traditional structures.

The first year of the program revolves around a continuous “exhibition performance”, allowing students to choose a curriculum based on their passion and expressive abilities, spanning various disciplines from theater and music to graphic design and philosophy, and everything in between. Consistently working on their “exhibition performance” throughout the first year helps clarify which creative processes students need for further development. The classes are organized in several domains from which a selection can be made (more about the domains in the next section). In the second year, students choose so-called “minors,” engaging in intensive individual and collective work on specific issues. This promotes their collective problem-solving skills and individual capacity to ask questions. By the end of the second year, students have reached a conscious level of competence (according to Maslow's model), not primarily based on the use of specific media but rather on their creativity, analytical abilities, and reflective skills.

In the third year, students can apply these skills in their own “field project” or in a societal “internship” that aligns with their personal urgency and theme. Here, the focus shifts outward: the first two years are dedicated to self-development, while the last two years emphasize application and self-realization. This structure resembles the shape of a “diabolo,” setting itself apart from other art programs by not focusing on refining artistic skills but rather on broad societal engagement. During the final year, students create an intervention and regenerate their “exhibition performance” from the first year, this time incorporating all the experiences and knowledge gained during their studies as part of their graduation exam. This includes the applicability of what they have learned in the context of their societal engagement.

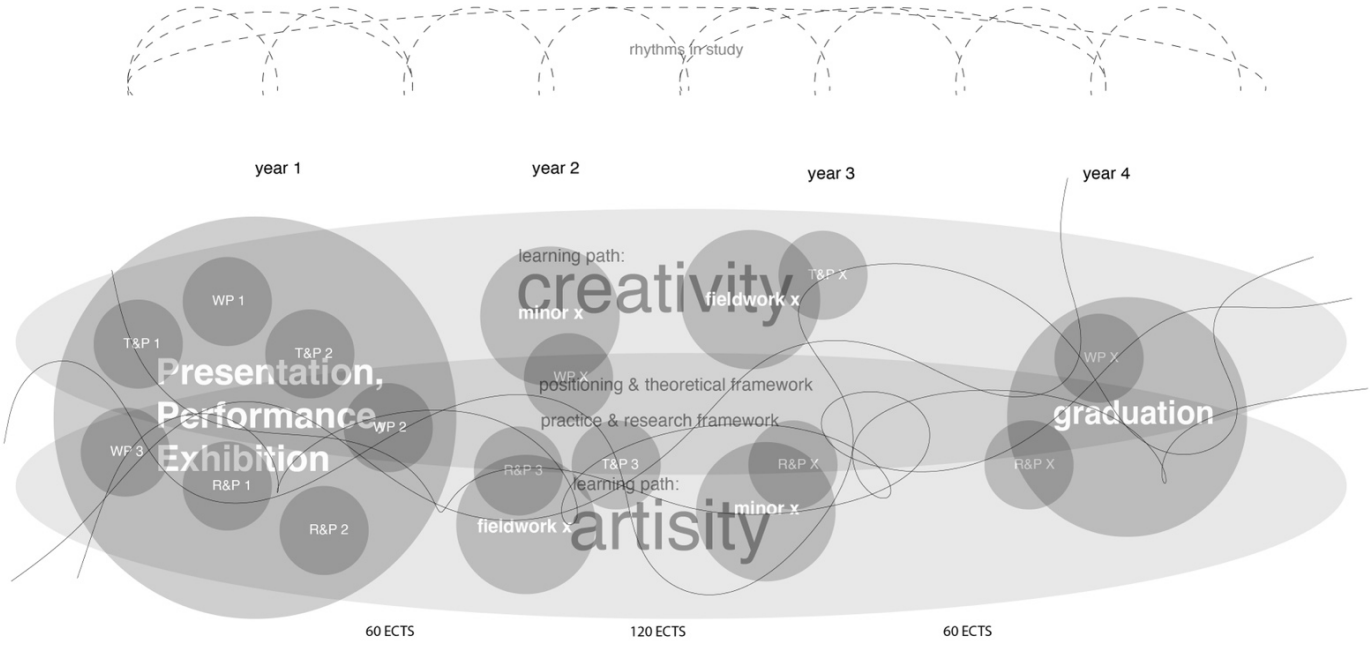

Figure 3. Organizational graph of the bachelor program “Try Out”.

3.2 Content Try Out

The development of the program was initially started by a team consisting of several heads of other departments, the director, and program manager of the “ArtEZ Academy for Art and Design” in Zwolle, The Netherlands. However, to ensure that we would not overlook any aspects (including our own perception biases), we implemented a structured development process with several phases or “Tiers”. Each Tier involves meetings with different groups of people, serving as temporary critics and advisors, ranging from external experts to students and everyone in between. After every session, the plan was elevated to a new level, a higher Tier, implying that the meetings were not inconsequential: every Tier has shaped the plan, incorporating and/or depending on the input provided by the participants.

The “Try Out” program is designed for students who want to express their commitment to social issues through creative thinking and practices. Throughout this program, students acquire valuable skills and insights that enable them to utilize their creative and artistic talents to contribute to addressing social inequality and complex problems in our society. They achieve this by continually developing their creative abilities and employing the creative production processes characteristic of art academies as methods to solve problems. The outcomes of their efforts are guided by the passion that both requires and inspires engagement. The program is committed to addressing the poly-crisis, which is producing pressing societal issues, such as the climate crisis, socioeconomic injustice, and the energy transition stagnation. Notably, our emphasis is on navigating transitions from profession to role, industry to movement, task to goal, ambition to urgency, method to serendipity, and identity to option. In pursuit of these goals, the department presents itself as a collective with an inquisitive spirit, eschewing a rigidly defined identity. It explicitly positions itself as inclusive, postcolonial, and pro-collectivist, evident even in its admission criteria.

At the start of this process, the fundamental question was whether we can continue to fulfill our mission within these premises by departing from media typologies and thinking in terms of disciplines. Even more important perhaps is the question of whether, in response, we should modify our existing departments to the point of diluting their character. We choose not to because we know that all our departments offer a high degree of specialization and high-quality, sought-after profiles that are crucial to the professional field. And still, there is a need for another. Thwartwise thinking is a valuable, unbounded competence that holds significant value across various market domains. By embracing these skills, this department distinguishes itself from others, partially entering a field predominantly served by non-art universities. The protective nature of art academies has allowed the emergence of a variety of programs in other types of universities and colleges operating under the banner of “creation,” even though the development of such competence is (or should be) a main prerogative of our sector.

Apart from the permanent “exhibition performance,” first-year students elect two of eight domains per semester to work in: ambiguity, scenario, dialogue, image, sound, craftsmanship, cartography, movement, and public space, all in the service of their function to address the specific urgency the student wants to tackle. Each domain has a designated ‘domain keeper’ who oversees providing a variety of learning prospects within their specific domain. In each domain there will be a variety of disciplines involved, coming for art, design, dance, music, and theater, which makes this program unique in its kind. By shifting to the level of domains, rather than disciplines, we render the discussion of inter, cross, or trans disciplinarity useless, as this is not adding anything to the development of the department. We actively promote a clear and integral combination of theory and praxis, a proper balance between conveyance and participation, and an unmediated learning environment, yet in terms of form, didactics and activities all is possible.

3.3 Somaesthetics

The new bachelor program will introduce several innovations, revisit older concepts, and incorporate foundational principles. One driving factor behind these choices stems from the observation that most prospective students have experienced a lifelong interconnectedness through the internet, particularly through the use of smartphones, significantly shaping their worldview. The continuous exposure to a stream of global issues can lead to information overload and, in some instances, desensitization. Students may find themselves overwhelmed by the volume and scale of problems portrayed in the media. Many “world problems” may seem insurmountable, potentially leading to a sense of helplessness or apathy. The resolution of the problem (how to stop climate change for instance), does not match the resolution of the student (I can take care of my plant) which leads to a level of abstraction that can be both paralyzing and useless. Additionally, media outlets may carry biases, influencing individual (and group) perception as they select and frame stories, thereby shaping the public's understanding of what constitutes a “world problem”. Without the ability to form a direct and unmediated opinion on the nature of the problem or its impact, one's thinking might shift to realms that are out of reach or non-sensible—for example, advocating to fix the rainforest while continuing to consume meat. To bridge this gap between feeling responsible for

certain world problems and the inability to address their sheer magnitude, an effective instrument involves scaling down the problem to the level of *direct* perception. Associating aesthetics with immediate perception requires finding a middle ground, specifically acknowledging the excluded middle – the inherent agency of the event itself, rather than the combined agency of interacting forces or any mediated extension thereof (Boumeester, 2022). This approach involves surpassing the individual level without reducing individuals to mere components of a group. The process encompasses a highly intertwined theoretical, analytical, and pragmatic aspect. We can only detect what is needed if we recognize the need to detect it, yet we cannot understand what is needed until we detect it. This necessitates engaging the entire spectrum of our bodily senses in the appreciation of our 'milieu.' Philosopher Richard Shusterman proposed somaesthetics as:

> "[T]he critical, meliorative study of the experience and the use of one's body as a locus of sensory-aesthetic appreciation (aisthesis) and creative self-fashioning [...], devoted [also] to the knowledge, discourses and disciplines that structure such somatic care or can improve it." (Shusterman, 2004, p.267)

This model expands the boundaries of "our reflective awareness and assessment of our own sensory appreciation" (Shusterman, 2004, p.268), also known as 'experimental somaesthetics', by extending the body to the level of a symbiotic whole. Sensory organs play a crucial role in sensing and converting stimuli, contributing to various human sensory systems such as vision, audition (hearing), tactition (touch), olfaction (smell), and gustation (taste). Interoception (internal sensations) involves detecting stimuli from internal organs and tissues, including systems like the vestibular system (balance and spatial awareness), proprioception (perception of position, movement, and orientation of the body parts in space), and nociception (perception of stimuli in the form of pain). Humans also experience internal chemoreception (perception of chemical changes) and osmoreception (perception of osmosis change) based sensory systems, influencing perceptions like hunger, thirst, suffocation, and nausea.

One goal of working with this approach is to (re)develop a sort of sense for one's own relation to the extended milieu, a type of "socioception" if you like, that registers and evaluates both the literal and metaphorical proximity and capacity of the mind/body and the socius/world. Essential to comprehending this approach is the perpetual preparedness to engage with any situation, whether actualized or virtual, *within its context*, including the context of one's own ability to engage. This involves approaching each scenario by considering its interrelations with others (its exteriority), rather than solely emphasizing its finite attributes. It fosters a continuous awareness of the assemblage in which one participates, explicitly acknowledging the role of the 'observer.' This entire constellation goes under the name intensive thinking and encompasses a broad spectrum of sensory information, facilitating heightened somaesthetic awareness (Boumeester, 2024).

Given that experiences reach us through various sensory channels, including those that are non-actualized, this comprehensive perspective is integral. This serves not only as a catalyst for innovative approaches in artistic and design processes but also as a potentially 'sterile' exercise where a tangible outcome is neither pursued nor essential. As all bodies behave distinctively in various assemblages, and these assemblages are in perpetual flux, the constancy of a body's capacity to interact with others yields varied effects contingent upon the specific assemblage. We posit that a genuine understanding of even the most elementary bodies necessitates an understanding of the entire universe.

Mastering the finer workings of somaesthetics can be achieved through exercises, while intensive thinking demands a theoretical and philosophical context to be efficacious. The designation of intensive thinking as a 'method' is inappropriate due to its inherent logic: every process constitutes a unique assemblage. Consequently, any observed linearity and causality in previous assemblages may or may not recur. Hence, we prefer to characterize it as a heuristic instrument rather than a method. The interconnected networks of capacities, actualizations, and flows link bodies across different strata and locations (non-local causality), and their precise mechanisms and effects remain inherently unpredictable (heuristics).

Despite its intricate meaning and background, the implementation of this concept in a classroom setting is straightforward. One example is of this is the “six-minute workshop”. The initial requirement is a reasonably sized space that accommodates all participants comfortably. Additionally, participants need some paper and a pencil for notetaking. In this environment, the exploration begins with an intensive approach, utilizing the “six-minute workshop” as a starting point. This involves physically investigating the site, focusing on one sense at a time for one minute each. Observations are recorded on paper and collectively discussed afterwards. The sixth sense is also explored literally, justifying the workshop's title. Though actions like literally licking, touching, and smelling the public space may attract attention, the valuable information gathered outweighs potential embarrassment.

Soma-aesthetic perception often yields entirely different insights than anticipated, proving crucial in subsequent design processes. Assumptions can subconsciously pre-format a solution, whereas affective empirical data raises different questions. This unique perception serves as a purification of general perception, unaffected by overflow and (mis)interpretation through sensory replacement. This refers to the tendency to extrapolate information gained from one sense to be universally valid for all senses. For instance, if something looks disgusting, there is an automatic assumption that it also smells or tastes unpleasant. The experience generates numerous new insights, importantly challenging existing assumptions held by both participants and tutors. The initial impressions based on soma-aesthetic cartography become the focal point of discussions.

4. Conclusion

The exploration into the Endosymbiotic Development Model has been a catalyst for transformative changes in the thinking about our education development, navigating through the complex terrain of redefining art education in response to the dynamic challenges posed by the contemporary world. By critically examining (our) existing paradigms and advocating for a departure from reactionary responses, we have proposed the Endosymbiotic Development Model as an innovative approach. Inspired by biological concepts, we envision a symbiotic relationship between diverse artistic disciplines, emphasizing collaboration, interconnected learning, and a holistic understanding of societal potential.

The “Try Out” program, born out of this model, prioritizes individual creativity, addresses urgent social issues, and fosters a diverse and inclusive learning environment. The incorporation of somaesthetics, emphasizing sensory appreciation and engagement with the environment, adds a unique dimension to the program, as it scales down global issues to the level of direct perception, the program aims to bridge the gap between responsibility and the seemingly overwhelming challenges of the world. Somaesthetics, as a key instrument in our pedagogical toolbox, will play a vital role in maintaining a connection to the self, amidst the complexities of the educational and worldly environment. This approach, characterized by continuous preparedness to engage with any situation, will enrich the understanding of the interplay between the mind/body and the socius/world as a powerful tool for students to engage with their urgencies in a way that is helpful and doable.

Drawing inspiration from the biological concepts of endosymbiosis and epigenetics, we have embarked on the journey of building a new curriculum that prioritizes the individual development of students while fostering a symbiotic relationship between diverse artistic disciplines, ensuring a mutual benefit for both the established and the innovative. This approach rejects the notion of complete renewal in favor of a continuous evolution that honors the sovereignty of each participant while contributing to a larger, interconnected system. The rejection of traditional entrance exams, inclusion of diverse domains, and a holistic approach to education challenge existing paradigms. The emphasis on creativity, urgency, societal engagement distinguishes the shift from discipline to domain, and the involvement of all arts (fine art, design, music and dance) in the formation of its content makes this program unique in its type. And we are happy to share our insights with you and expand our interconnectedness.

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Dr. Marc Boumeester, a scholar and education developer, has held leadership roles in cinema, television, and academia. His research focuses on non-anthropocentric desire, architectural conditions, and media, particularly cinema, emphasizing the concept of “Image by Proxy”. Boumeester's publications include “The Desire of the Medium”.

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