

Offside Effect

Academy as Exhibition

1<sup>st</sup> Tbilisi Triennial

In the world of visual art, many events have been featuring a strong focus on the academy's status in both the cultural and theoretical arena. Strikingly, these events all seemed to continuously draw attention to rigorous processes such as the introduction of the or meticulous attempts to describe artistic research and artistic knowledge production. Those often strict forms of quantifying and defining in turn necessitate a new investigation of what the academy is about. This time in multiple and fluid modes, where art academies can emerge as temporary, autonomous sanctuaries for artistic thinking; in fact the utmost and decisive factor in art education.

In order to achieve this goal, CCA Tbilisi initiated an idiosyncratic dissemination platform: a Triennial not only encompassing visual art, but also including a focus on art education and its related forms of research. The first edition of this Triennial, entitled, took place in 2012.

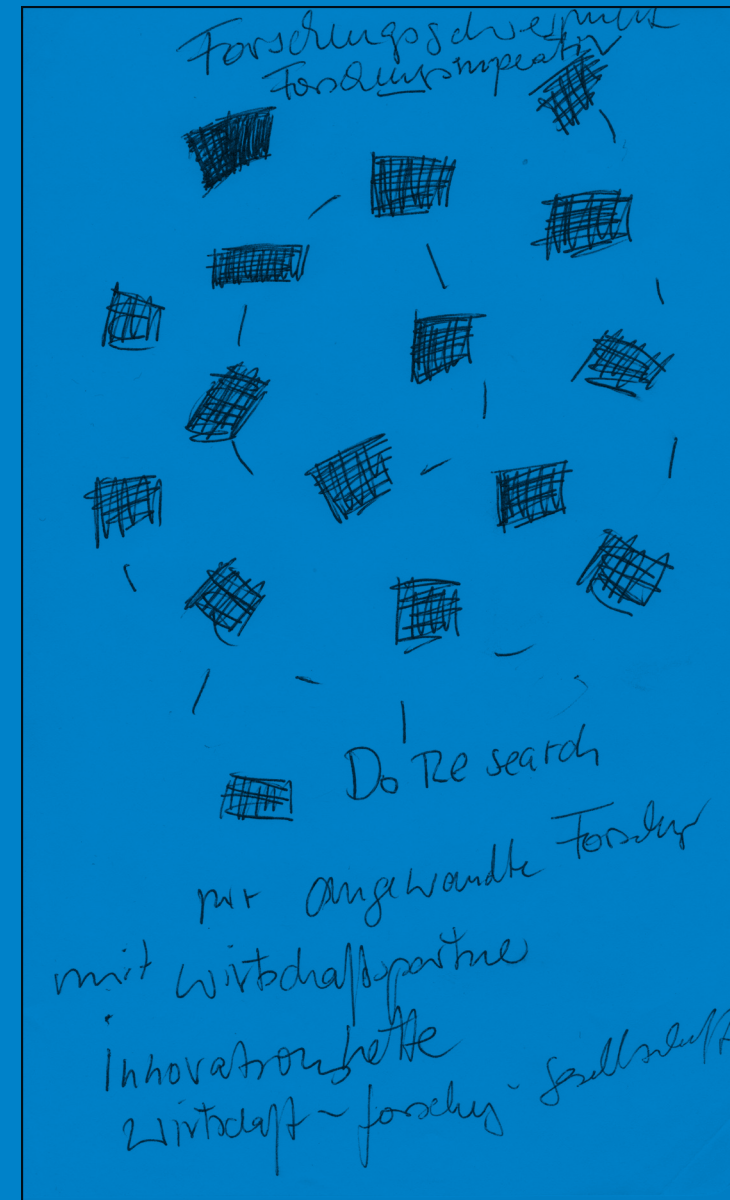
Participants: Tiong Ang (MaHKU), Jürgen Bock (Maumaus), Lucrezia Cippitelli (Addis Contemporary), Sarah Cowles (Ruderal Academy), Stephan Dillemath (keynote artist), Inci Eviner (Kadir Has University), Rene Francisco (ISA Habana), Rainer Ganahl (parallel project), Nikolaus Hirsch (Staedelschule), Jan Kaila (Finnish Academy of Fine Arts), Nazareth Karoyan (ICA Yerevan), Annette Krauss (MaHKU), Midred's Lane (New York), Young June Lee (Kaywon School of Art), Tara McDowell (Shindisi Academy Resident), Marion von Osten (keynote artist), Irena Popiashvili (critical referent), Henk Slager (co-curator Offside Effect), Nedko Solakov (project tutor), Katharina Staedler (CCA Tbilisi), Wato Tsereteli (co-curator Offside Effect), Anton Vidokle (keynote artist), Visual Culture Research Center (Kiev), Mick Wilson (critical referent).

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Foreword Henk Slager p.xx

Academic Ambivalences Marion von Osten p.xx

Coaching as Academic Practice

Katharina Staedler p.xx

Opening and Closure Nikolaus Hirsch p.xx

USE (Unexpected Side Effect) F+F Zurich p.xx

Radical Pedagogy Mildred's Lane p.xx

Maumaus Residency Jürgen Bock p.xx

The Principle of a Crooked Prism

Young June Lee p.xx

Acting in the Library Inci Eviner p.xx

Urgent Flexibility Wato Tsereteli p.xx

Test-sites for Unlearning Annette Krauss p.xx

Addis Contemporary Lucrezia Cippitelli p.xx

On Research and Art Universities Jan Kaila p.xx

Pavilion of Distance Tiong Ang p.xx

The Fourth Pragmatic Rene Francisco p.xx

Bohemian Research Stephan Dillemath p.xx

Art without Education Anton Vidokle p.xx

From Mobility to Stability Nazareth Karoyan p.xx

Application Form Visual Culture Research Center Kiev p.xx

We Come in Peace Sarah Cowles p.xx

Manifesto for an education beyond the  
power grid Rainer Ganahl p.xx

Buying and Selling Nedko Solakov p.xx

Report from Tbilisi Tara McDowell p.xx

Transitory Times Irena Popiashvili p.xx

Come Promises From Teachers Mick Wilson p.xx

*Tales of the Crypt* (including a special Tbilisi Triennial edition), *The Crypt* is rather a 'thing' in Latourian sense: capable of gathering, activating, and displaying its own logics of visibility.

Constantly questioned are the cultural currencies of this almost implausible collective called the Städel-schule. It stands for an artistic and institutional practice that permanently reinvents its own knowledge and value system, its position toward the individual and the collective, while reflecting on the fragile process between knowing and owing. Or, as our most recent exhibition-school-project suggests: 'I knOw yoU.'

Nikolaus Hirsch, Rector Staedelschule, Frankfurt

USE  
(UNEXPECTED SIDE EFFECTS)

*F+F School of Art and Media  
Design Zurich*

*Exhibition contribution: USE as  
an installation*

USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*) is conceived as a video-installation. The space is furnished by a worktable – with video screens and folders on it – and by a hotel bed serving as a work place for tired entrepreneur souls. A fog machine hides underneath the bed. From time to time the machine produces a room-filling cloud that also serves as an unstable projection surface for two videos. A large group of unfolded A0-papers (including blueprints, maps, evaluation procedures, photos, drawings) is fixed on two walls.



USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*), CCA Tbilisi

Next to the bed loudspeakers installed in the corner produce the sound of recorded voices. Visitors sitting on the chair close to the loudspeakers can

listen to five preachers of neo-liberal ideology talking about how to lead a better life. In another corner, a filter coffee machine placed on a second worktable is non-stop brewing coffee-to-go and hot steam. The picture of the employee-of-the-month of October is on the wall next to the coffee machine. A stack of photos – a selection of possible employees of the month of November – is ready to be skimmed through. Other chairs are waiting for visitors interested in watching some of the videos or reading a folder with text materials – and for people who would like to work on their own stuff at the worktable or to just sit and enjoy some time-to-waste.

A cleaning cloth fixed to a car-windshield-wiper-machine is very slowly smearing the most popular word heard in institutions, art schools, and other places forced through quality checks: EVALUATION!

The interest of the USE-team lies in a field beyond academism and dilettantism. USE has been conceived as a possible approach to non-institutional frameworks of art, education, and critical thinking. USE stands for questioning the inflationary increase of formalized, institutional representations of quality. USE as a set up is a spatial proposition to avoid any cannibalism by self-exploiting creative industries within the growing exclusion process due to satellizations by institutional and private power structures.



USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*), CCA Tbilisi

Therefore, USE as a collaborative spatial test-plant:

1. presents a basic re-lecture of standards and norms like (a) ISO standard and DIN formats; (b) Neufert as the normative architecture manual, its intended functions and the derived design of work and life conditions, where social and gender classifications are part of mind-sets; and (c) quality management as the new promising tool of any curriculum at art schools.
2. tries to draw a picture of the growing informal creative work sector, where new entrepreneurship and productivity are the perfect camouflage for the implementation of a tight time grid based on permanent interruption and dispersion. It attempts to outline the growing extraction of any values and resources, the forced mobilization of human labor, the liquefaction between work and life 24h/day, the increasing division in well-paid content management for the few and unpaid content production for the rest.
3. sets up a foggy and somewhat noisy space, where the blueprinted standards undulate and where sight might be blurred once a while. Any activity in this space – like walking, sitting, lying on the bed, talking, thinking or drinking a free coffee – will be inevitably linked to questions about the non-purified, the dirty, and the dysfunctional.

*No NUSE today? USE as a workshop*  
Except for a few preconceptions, the USE-team does not know much about Tbilisi and Georgia, about the people

and their everyday life. Together with experts USE takes a look at the daily problems that occur when defining content, developing the exhibition, printing the brochures at a printer's or in a copy-print shop – while shopping, cooking, partying, sleeping or running the symposium. Whereby what is available, what has been brought along, and what has been developed in common is mutually imparted and exchanged.

USE as a spatial proposition hosts a three-day workshop – October 14 through 16. On day one, USE opens the installation as a workshop space and discusses with CCA Tbilisi members, students and other workshop participants both the installation itself and several types of artistic (self) education – while all drink free coffee. On day two, USE invites the film student David Inashvili from Tbilisi University to talk with the team about former and actual censorship in the cinema production in Georgia during the Soviet period and about several modes of censorship today in both Georgia, Switzerland, and the EU.

On day three, artist and CCA member Koka Vashakidze introduces at the National Gallery the current exhibition *Reframing the 80s* showing a selection of works and artistic strategies realized by artists from Georgia in the 1980s during the last decade of the Soviet Union and the cold war.

The visit is followed by an introduction by author, curator and CCA member Mariam Natroshvili on issues such as the history of the City of Tbilisi and its urban development, the permanent shift of Georgia in historical, political, cultural, and economic context. Discussions take place during a dinner at the apartment of Mariam Natroshvili and architect Detu Jinchradze in the former Living Tower of Architects in the Soviet part at the northern periphery of the city.



USE Workshop at Mariams and Detus apartment in Tbilisi

One of the discussions brings up the unlearning process of the Russian language amongst the young Georgian generation born after 1991. Other widely discussed topics are: organic agriculture in Georgia and the preference for imported agricultural products from Turkey; the lack of labor in Georgia, and the (absence of) intention to re-develop (new) economic structures.

*20% versus 80%. USE contribution to the Forum*

For the symposium of the Tbilisi Triennial Forum (October 19 and 20), USE decided to share the microphone with three persons and start with a diagram.



The 20% versus 80% diagram

The diagram (picture entitled 20% versus 80%) is a representation based on our experience as art workers in the edu-context. Excerpts of the presentation: ‘... I’d like to share with you a 20% versus 80% statistic (on the

most quoted theorists and authors). The cultural context of this statistic is academies in Switzerland; art academies ... as we know, Switzerland is a place which is not in Europe politically speaking, but it wants to take all the advantages of Europe financially speaking ... it is a place where the Bologna reform (*edu-system allowing compatibility between universities*) was realized before Germany, France, Spain, Greece ... what you see (*pointing to the diagram picture*): I was invited to read ... 14 master theses in visual arts MFA (2011 and 2012). ... Most of the theses are written by artists with a francophone, cultural background ... thirteen papers written by female artists and one by a male artist. And as you can see Gilles Deleuze gets the palm ... then we have (*reading the names looking at the picture, up-down, on the right*) ... all quoted about four to five times ... in the 20% (*red in the diagram*) Judith Butler gets the palm ... the female theorists are quoted only one or two times and mostly in one paper (*from an artist focussing on cultural studies*) ... Judith Butler is applauded, I remember a few years ago it was Hannah Arendt.'

The restructuring of any kind of institution, when based on quality management, is bound to rules of efficiency and to bring in money. Are male thinkers bringing in more money? Do independent types of (self-) education do a better job? Or do they just reproduce on a small scale what universities do with more money on a big scale? And is critical thinking to be found only in theoretical texts? What kind of practices do artists use for empowerment and solidarity?

#### Statement

The title *Offside Effect* of the Tbilisi Triennial can be understood as an attempt to sketch a topology of autonomous art schools for which the concept of an ideal school<sup>1</sup> is a central

objective. Yet, what would such an ideal school look like? Here is an attempt to describe an ideal school in the form of a proposal: The prerequisite of the ideal school is eye-level cooperation between artists, art mediators, and organizers from within the art world and allied to both the art scene and the students.

The ideal constellation is alert to the number of students and challenging accomplices. The objectives of the students are of central importance. The ideal school is a critical associate of the art scene while offering a significant number of contacts with it.

How is the quality of an ideal school to be measured? The following criteria should be applied: people involved in the ideal school understand how to recognize and deploy the room-for-maneuver both inside and outside the school. They know how to create teams and temporary alliances. A mental, medial and skilled set of instruments is available for various uses and subject to constant renewal. The role people play inside and outside the school and within the art environs will be regularly questioned and tested. The role of all participants will, when necessary, be newly worked out and, at certain levels, replayed and tested semi-publicly. The energy expended relates to the energy generated by actions carried out.

USE (*Unexpected Side Effects*) relies on the claim that the ideal school creates and constitutes a potential that cannot be reduced to any simple logic such as 'before my studies I was not an artist, after my studies I am one', or 'a good art school produces successful artists'. Such a view of things would reduce art schools to the role of preparing artists for the art market reproducing merely classical role models, hierarchies, and conditions based on dependency. Therefore, it makes sense to weigh the difference between 'living from (art) work' in re-



lation to 'living for (art) work'. In other words, 'living from' enables to earn a living from the work – something few artists succeed in as is only too well known. 'Living for', on the other hand, conveys a histrionic (artist) understanding of a higher calling, emotional involvement, and an only-work-counts attitude that above all legitimizes (artistic) precariousness.<sup>2</sup>

If we study the working conditions of a freelance life in art (e.g. in view of an exhibition), we know of two common models: (...) 'A contract negotiated in a friendly and informal tone may [...] be the best guarantee for a hierarchy-free, self-defined working relationship. However such a contract can just as well end in a socially hierarchical and financially exploitable situation, since every possibility to challenge it or postulate demands has from the start been excluded by the *amicable* arrangement of the contract.'<sup>3</sup>

To clarify: what we see more and more is that those who work intellectually and culturally slowly slip down into low-paid or unpaid conditions. A wide gap separates increasingly those who are permanently employed and those who work freelance, which highlights the division between management and the production of content. Not only content lacks regular payment, but also the administration of knowledge and content. This is true for media enterprises, schools, libraries, museums and theatre. That division not only caused education and knowledge – which up till now have been considered a public good – to be produced under market conditions not guaranteeing financially sound arrangements.<sup>4</sup> Within this framework, artists are also increasingly considered content providers; research contexts already view them now as 'embedded artists'.<sup>5</sup>

Artists have expressed their concerns politically – not only in *The Thirteen Demands of the Art Workers Coalition* (New York, 1969).<sup>6</sup> Ever since,

and up till today, artists have focused on, among other things, political policies as distinguished from official policies; the rejection of identarian categorizations<sup>7</sup>; Post-Fordism and Multitudo; political economics and social creativity<sup>8</sup>; and always with the intention of developing new ethics for the common good. A growing number of artists and coalitions have evolved in a critical artistic praxis with the help of activist and participatory tactics. They try to make art political and to formulate their own discourses. A broad spectrum of artists' manifestos and manifesto-like projects have been published over the past years and can be seen as part of such a praxis.

Since autumn 2011, many artists have participated in *Occupy Wall Street* and tried not simply to claim a specific space, but also to stimulate the social and political imagination.<sup>9</sup> The development of hierarchy-free social and cultural (infra-) structures<sup>10</sup>, of constitutional drafts<sup>11</sup> and of generosity in dealing with wealth<sup>12</sup> and its waste<sup>13</sup> can just as much represent an artistic practice as the demand for developing applied societal arts<sup>14</sup> as well as discussions on the same.<sup>15</sup>

USE has, therefore, focused on the study of art as a platform and a tool to which artistic praxis, critical thinking, and self-organization can be directly and mutually linked. The critical engagement with a school's framework and conditions, with the curriculum and social facilities and processes bring about an exhibition of artistic solo and team contributions that can be merged into an installation. What is thereby thematized is, among others, in/visible work, the appropriation of the public/private, instant production, value formulation, practical values, as well as social conflicts and revolts.

USE-Team\*:

RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co)  
René Fahrni  
Chantal Romani  
Miro Schawalder  
Studio Action (Slivia Popp & Anja Moers)  
Judith Weidmann

The team is mostly based in Zurich.

- RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co) is an artist group that works on projects and shows internationally.
- Marie-Antoinette Chiarenza is an artworker at F+F Zurich since 2001 and at Work.Master. HEAD University of Art & Design Geneva since 2008.
- Daniel Hauser has been leading the Art Studies at the F+F since 2000.
- René Fahrni is an artist and F+F alumnus.
- Chantal Romani is an artist and F+F alumna. She works on projects and shows internationally and has been teaching at F+F since 2005.
- Miro Schawalder is an artist and F+F alumnus, actually based in Vienna where he is a master student at Akademie der Bildenden Künste. He shares a collaborative practice with artist Yeliz Palak, based in Berlin and Vienna, former student at ZHdK Zurich and UdK Berlin.
- Studio Action (Silvia Popp & Anja Moers) is an artist duo.
- Silvia Popp is a F+F alumna, teaching at the F+F since 2011.
- Anja Moers is a former student at FHNW Aarau/Basel and at HSLU Lucerne. She has been teaching at F+F since 2009 and works as an assistant in the Art Department.
- Judith Weidmann is an artist and F+F alumna. She is also a member of the artist group Sweeterland (together with Yvonne Good, Dominik His, Matthias Käser and Elena Könz, all F+F alumni).
- Supplementary contributions by Jérémié Baud, artist and HEAD Geneva Alumnus and Karin Wiesendanger, artist and F+F alumna.

Notes

0. The F+F School was founded in Zurich in 1971 and has since played a pioneering role in art education in Switzerland. The school experimented early on with performance, video and new media and became increasingly well-established as a professional educational venue for art and design.

Today, the F+F School of Art and Media Design is supported by a foundation co-founded by the City of Zurich. About 220 full-time students currently attend the school, which receives a subsidy from the city of Zurich. Apart from the 3-year diploma education in art studies, photography, graphic design, and film studies, the F+F School offers a preliminary course in design (full-time or in tandem with work), and a vocational course in design. To complete the picture, there is a comprehensive program of advanced study courses. Art studies at F+F have the status of a degree in higher professional qualification (Art Diploma) recognized by the Swiss Confederation.

The teaching team at F+F includes acknowledged professionals from the worlds of art, design, photography and film. One of the main traits of F+F is its close ties to the art and design scene. Projects, seminars, presentations and lectures given by local and international guest speakers make the F+F School a pivotal point in the art and design scene attracting attention far beyond the confines of the school.

As an autonomous school, F+F advocates an open-minded approach to art and design and cultivates a spirit of partnership between faculty and students. Thanks to the small size of the school, students can be certain of receiving intensive and individual supervision. For further information see [www.ffzh.ch](http://www.ffzh.ch)

1. The appellation *ideal school* (orig.: Wunschschule) comes from texts by Sønke Gau and Katharina Schlieben *Sprung ins Kalte Wasser* (jump into cold water), exhibitions, workshops and a summer academy (on questions of art education, knowledge production) that developed in a dialogue with students and teachers of the F+F school of art and media design, Zurich. Shedhalle Zurich, 3 June to 30 July 2006, *Shedhalle Zeitung* 2006, p. 30-31.



2. Robert Pfaller, *Doing Nothing. Über materielles Nichtstun und immaterielle Arbeit* in: *Das schmutzige Heilige und die reine Vernunft*, Fischer-Verlag, Frankfurt am Main, 2008
3. Jan Verwoert, *Tätig sein. Weiß ich wirklich, was ich tue?* in: *Tätig sein*, Publikation NGBK Berlin, 2004
4. Andrea Roedig, *Die Wissensgesellschaften und ihre freien Idioten*, WOZ, 8 Mar 2012 [www.woz.ch/1210/prekaere-arbeit/die-wissensgesellschaft-und-ihre-freien-idioten](http://www.woz.ch/1210/prekaere-arbeit/die-wissensgesellschaft-und-ihre-freien-idioten)
5. Jörg Scheller, *Nicht schön, aber klug. Viele Künstler studieren neuerdings nach den Regeln der Bologna-Reform. Was bedeutet das für die Kunst?*, Zeit-Online, 25.11.2010, [www.zeit.de/2010/48/Bologna-Kuenstler-Studium](http://www.zeit.de/2010/48/Bologna-Kuenstler-Studium).
6. 13 demands by Art Workers Coalition, 1969, [http://artsandlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/AWC\\_letter\\_MOMA\\_1969.pdf](http://artsandlabor.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/AWC_letter_MOMA_1969.pdf)
7. Cf. *Queer & Moustache. De-ghettoize gender studies!*, Master-Symposium HES. SO Geneva, 14-16 November 2011, [www.workmaster.ch/noise/uploads/media/QM1.pdf](http://www.workmaster.ch/noise/uploads/media/QM1.pdf) and <http://queerandmoustache.tumblr.com/About>
8. Cf. *The labor of the multitude? The political economy of social creativity*" International Conference of the Free/Slow University of Warsaw, October 20 to 22, 2011, [www.wuw2009.pl/index.php?lang=eng&page=wypdarzenia&id=110&mod=opis](http://www.wuw2009.pl/index.php?lang=eng&page=wypdarzenia&id=110&mod=opis)
9. Martha Rosler, *The Artistic Mode of Revolution: From Gentrification to Occupation*, E-flux Journal, No.33, 3/2012, <http://www.e-flux.com/issues/33-march>
10. Cf. Celine Condorelli und Gavin Wade, *Support Structure*, [www.supportstructure.org](http://www.supportstructure.org)
11. Cf. The Yes! Association, Artists Group, Stockholm, [www.foreningenja.org/en/om-oss](http://www.foreningenja.org/en/om-oss)
12. Cf. RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), *The Wealth Manifesto*, ed. by Cornerhouse Publications Manchester and Gavin Wade, "Strategic Questions", 2010
13. Cf. RELAX (chiarenza & hauser & co), *Waste-Manifesto*, in: *Work to do! Selbstorganisation in prekären Arbeitsbedingungen*. ed. by Sönke Gau and Katharina Schlieben for Verein Shedhalle Zürich, Verlag für moderne Kunst Nürnberg, 2009, pp. 160-169.
14. Cf. Artur Zmijewski, *Angewandte soziale Kunst* in: *Körper in Aufruhr*, Daad-Verlag, 2010, pp.25-33 / Artur Zmijewski, *Applied Social Arts* in: *Krytyka Polityczna*, Warsaw, 3 Jan 2007, [www.krytykapolityczna.pl/English/Applied-Social-Arts/menu-id-113.html](http://www.krytykapolityczna.pl/English/Applied-Social-Arts/menu-id-113.html)
15. Cf. Theory Tuesday, *Each One, Teach One*, Corner College, Zurich, from 13 Mar 2012, Session with Stefan Wagner on *Applied Social Arts* by Artur Zmijewski, <http://corner-college.com/Veranstaltungen/1331593200/529>