

# Holding Space

Self-Evaluation

# Master of Education in Arts

## Table of Content

	Introduction	5
1.	Fostering a transformative learning experience	8
2.	Assessments for (not of) learning	14
3.	'Preparations for Being Together in an Unknown Period of Time' – Mapping out an individual and collective learning trajectory	22
4.	Experimental and engaged research practices in art education	36
5.	Appendices	56

## Introduction

Our programme is called 'Education in Arts', but in essence it is multidisciplinary. We pay attention to contemporary developments in art and design education, considering it an expanded and interdisciplinary field. The programme covers education inside schools as well as outside of them; the curriculum is designed for educators in the fields of secondary, vocational and higher arts and design education, educators in museums and community arts, as well as artists and designers with an interest in pedagogical practices. Peer learning and being part of a learning community is a key feature of our programme. Our curriculum combines collective learning with individual tutorials and practice-based research with theoretical inquiry. The seminars are led by a team of tutors who combine their passion for education with professional grounding in the cultural scene. In our current and future society, transgressing boundaries and collaborating is key; therefore, we have founded a learning community in which – next to a robust programme offered by our staff – participants learn from each other, no matter whether they are teaching at a secondary school, working in museum education, engaged in activist workshops or affiliated with a design academy.

Our programme explicitly connects theory and practice, focusing on contemporary issues that span different practices and discourses: the artist as educator; critical pedagogy; interdisciplinarity in secondary and higher art education; decolonialization; embodiment; the ecological crisis; art, science and technology; et cetera. Unlike any other discipline, art education is bound to societal challenges, cultural urgencies and ethical questions. How do these play out on a micro and macro level within educational practices? Participants are encouraged to reflect upon their educational practice and teaching methodologies from an engaged and critical perspective.

We are a part-time programme, designed for students who combine their study with their working practice. The programme has a modular structure of seminars that take place every two weeks on Fridays and Saturdays. During the two-year study, participants develop a practice-based research project that deepens their already

existing educational, professional practice – or opens new directions within it – from a research-driven theoretical and pedagogical perspective. Work and study go hand-in-hand. Our course is a fully English-taught programme and admits students from the Netherlands as well as the EU at large. It is structured as a 60-credit, part-time course spread over two years.

### History, recent developments

The current Master of Education in Arts (MEiA) started in 2014 as an English-taught, part-time programme within the Piet Zwart Institute. Before this, it was a Dutch-taught programme connected to the BA teacher-training department of the Willem de Kooning Academy (WdKA). Integrating the programme in the international and research-driven setting of the Piet Zwart Institute was a decision that greatly benefitted the quality and profile of the programme. The first three years, roughly from 2014 until 2017, were marked by a period of developing a distinct new curriculum, settling into the framework, culture and organization of the Piet Zwart Institute, while also becoming attuned to the Dutch network of master programmes for education in art. In 2017 this newly founded master programme received a positive assessment from the NVAO accreditation committee. Their advice at the time: take stock of your accomplishments and consolidate and finetune the curriculum.

From 2017 until now, we have been working on further improving the curriculum, its cohesion and pedagogical scaffolding, our course ethics, assessment philosophy and team of tutors. We have strengthened the content of our main modules and the preparation of 2<sup>nd</sup> year graduate research in terms of teaching. Our team of tutors grew into a coherent team, collectively able to foster the required knowledge and skills that are needed within a master course covering a wide variety of disciplines and levels of education. Most recently, we have lifted the veil on our assessment policy, asking ourselves how we might be able to develop a truly student-centred assessment policy – a topic that lies at the heart of a Master of Education

in Arts study programme and that was brought up by the students themselves.

Looking back over the past years, we see that our graduates have assumed various teaching roles within secondary and higher art and design education in the Netherlands, as well as within museums and other extra-institutional frameworks, implementing the spin-offs of their research. Some foreign students took their graduate research back to their countries of origin, but others quite often decided to stay in Rotterdam. We have received frequent international requests from other Master of Education in Arts programmes outside the Netherlands to collaborate and exchange, to learn more about us. Our international profile has been firmly set. Therefore, this self-evaluation focusses on the micro-scale: the situatedness of education and the current urgency in higher education to challenge existing hierarchies in educational relationships, spaces, assessment structures, research methods and even in the competencies we work with.

There are a few dilemmas which would be interesting to tease out further. The first revolves around the course as a 'learning community'. This can easily become an empty vessel if one does not continuously question what learning together means, for staff as well as students. Our students have different levels of education and come from different disciplinary settings. How far can we stretch these boundaries, while still maintaining a balance and being able to attend to the students' individual needs? How do we ensure that the programme remains recognizable for Dutch students? Secondly, what does it mean to give students more agency in the process of assessment? Why is this sometimes counterintuitive to an institutional rationale, and how do we make sure we focused on listening to what the students say it means for them, rather than instrumentalizing self-reflection as part of the assessment? Writing skills vary among students; teaching writing and academic research is necessary, but how do we make sure that this is balanced out sufficiently with artistic research and art-based research in the context of a two-year part-time course?

1 Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR), Codarts Rotterdam and Willem de Kooning Academy Rotterdam have joined forces in the Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Lab (RASL). The goal of this collaboration is to advance the exchange of knowledge on education and interdisciplinary research.

## Looking towards the future

The Piet Zwart Institute is a centre for postgraduate study and research that currently offers four full-time two-year master programmes: Interior Architecture: Research + Design (MIARD), Fine Art (MFA), Lens-Based Media (LB) and Experimental Publishing (XPUB); and two part-time programmes: MEiA and Master of Design (MD). Some 50 practitioners/tutors and 150 students come together in the Piet Zwart Institute. As an alliance of makers and thinkers, the institute is deeply invested in questioning what constitutes practice and research in an art and design context at the graduate level today. The two-year programmes offer support structures for practical exploration and risk-taking, as well as rigorous and in-depth theoretical inquiry and actively support experimental practices in transition and/or transformation. The graduates form sustainable learning communities, enabling them to support each other in their future practice and careers.

Over the past two years, several important institutional changes and mergers have been announced. The Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences is planning for the Willem de Kooning Academy and the Piet Zwart Institute to establish a three-cycle system for higher education: bachelor, master, and doctoral programmes. In addition to the current six master programmes at the Piet Zwart Institute, four new programmes will be created: three masters will align with the WdKA's research domains: Social, Commercial and Autonomous. The fourth is a Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Lab (RASL) interdisciplinary master programme.<sup>1</sup> For the future, an institutional merger has been announced between the Willem de Kooning Academy, the Rotterdam University of Applied Sciences, and Codarts Rotterdam, University of the Arts (dance, music, circus performance), as well as a future move to a new Cultural Campus at Rotterdam-Zuid for the long-distance future, in which the Erasmus University in Rotterdam will also be involved. While the latter developments will still take considerable time to be effectuated, the prospective alignment of a new master programme with Social Practices at WdKA, as well as the merger with Codarts Rotterdam, create opportunities to be explored. The overlap in mutual interest and knowledge production within the Social Practices

department at the WdKA and RASL is interesting for our programme, as well as the related research professors: Michelle Teran (practice-oriented research professor, Social Practice) and Liesbeth Noordegraaf-Eelens (Transdisciplinary Education Innovation, Codarts).

But there are still some important issues to be worked out as well. What will be the institutional, financial and infrastructural implications of setting up a structure of new master programmes alongside the existing ones at the Piet Zwart Institute? What does the alignment of bachelor and master courses within the WdKA actually mean? How do we avoid becoming competitive with each other, given the reality of declining student numbers? Where does our programme overlap with Social Practices, but how are we also profoundly different? How do we make sure that BA students on a RASL dual-degree track, BA students at Codarts and BA students at the WdKA are aware of our master programme? In other words, strengthening our position within the larger institutional context remains an important priority – and as always within the context of larger educational reform, it's necessary to be sharp in identifying one's challenges, as well as possibilities. We have been innovative in fostering knowledge about critical pedagogy, horizontal educational structures, decolonial and embodied aspects of education. In that sense, we hold quite an interesting position between the Piet Zwart Institute, RASL and the merger with Codarts, while being small allows us to be 'flexible'.

## A Reading Guide

This self-evaluation has been written and conceived in close relation to two other key documents, the *MEiA Course Profile* and *MEiA Curriculum Overview*. Both documents are already in use within the programme, but have been substantively rewritten as part of this programme evaluation. The three documents belong together; when cross-references are made, this is clearly indicated in the text. The *MEiA Mapping of Learning Trajectory* (see pp.24–25) was specifically developed in preparation for writing this document as a helpful tool to evaluate the curriculum, but the intention is definitely to develop it further as a hands-on tool for both students and staff.

This self-evaluation could not have been written without the input of our students and the valuable insights they have given us during our frequently held collective evaluation sessions. Also invaluable was the input of our staff, particularly the frequent workgroup meetings we held this and last year.

Three 2<sup>nd</sup> year students read along as we put together the concept version of this document, as well as reading all other relevant material, and they have given their own responses. On pp.19–21, Ellis Bartholomeus, who was part of the *MEiA Assessment Workgroup*, gives her viewpoint on the programme's evaluation of the assessment policy and its use of course competencies (Chapter 1 and 2). On pp.34–35, Maaike van Papeveld and Jesse van Oosten collaborated in providing their personal viewpoint on, and experience of, what constitutes a transformative learning experience and how this interrelates with the learning environment provided by the programme. Their contributions were made independently, and are partly also inspired by their current graduate research. On pp.39–51, one can find a selection of our students' recent graduate research.

The content of this programme evaluation starts with two closely related chapters: a reflection on the course competencies and our assessment philosophy. These were both intensively discussed in the *Assessment Workgroup* in tandem with each other, and therefore these chapters have been kept together. In our view, the learning environment within the course, the graduate research of our students – and hence the so-called 'achieved learning outcomes' – are also inherently related to and intertwined with each other. Therefore, the evaluation of these aspects is presented in the two final chapters.

# 1 Fostering a transformative learning experience

## 2 Assessments for (not of) learning

## 3 Mapping of an individual & collective learning trajectory

## 4 Experimental & engaged research practices in art education

## 5 Appendices

<sup>1</sup> Opleidingsprofielen 2018, Kunstvakdocentenopleidingen, 'De Competenties van de Master Kunsteducatie', p. 29.

→ See *MEiA Course Profile*, pp. 24–26

→ See *MEiA Curriculum Overview*

### Competencies and attunement to the professional field

The Master of Education in Arts is part of a national network of Masters of Education in Arts (MKE) in the Netherlands. All programmes follow the set of competencies described by the Consultation Committee of Art Teachers (Kunstvakdocentenoverleg [KVDO]) in 2018.<sup>1</sup> This competency set was developed by the KVDO and the National Consultation Committee Master of Education in Arts in the Netherlands (Landelijk Overleg Master Kunsteducatie), in which all seven master programmes are represented. Members of the KVDO maintain close contact with the professional field and are represented in relevant national consultation bodies. The competencies came into being in close collaboration with, and validation by, the professional field. These five nationally defined competencies are Artistic Ability, Pedagogic and Didactical Ability, Cultural Entrepreneurship Ability, Researching Ability and Ability to Reflect Critically.

This set of competencies reflects the importance of educating students who will be working in a broad and dynamic field, providing them the ability to formulate their particular focus in practice-based research, in close relation with their own particular practice, opening up a life-long learning trajectory as researchers, artists/designers and pedagogues. The strength of this competency set lies in its strong alignment with the professional field and the support that was created through its validation in the work field, its concise formulations and internal cohesiveness, but also in the flexibility it allows individual courses in the Netherlands to align the competencies with the distinctive profiles of their programmes. The Master of Education in Arts programmes keep their profiles sharp by means of annual mutual peer reviews. In May 2022, the national network organized a joint public study day/symposium on the challenges that the field of art education faces. As a result of this study day, five common focus points were formulated: (1) a continuous search for development and the implementation of artistic-educational research; (2) the importance of representativeness and inclusion and acting towards achieving that – also within one's own study programme; (3) the notion of interdisciplinarity, and how this plays out in different disciplines and levels of education; (4) safeguarding and promoting the importance of both the intra- and exo-institutional nature of art education; (5) a focus on social involvement, with the desire to educate professionals who strive for change and can offer it. The study programmes also expressed the ambition to continue working on this, in consultation with study leaders, lecturers and the sector.

### Fostering a transformative learning experience

The title of this chapter, 'Fostering a transformative learning experience', was chosen for a specific reason. The students' learning experience at MEiA is more than a set of intended learning outcomes; it's a transformative learning experience. It is important to recognize that the competencies are intertwined, practiced from different perspectives throughout the course, both in the first and final year of graduation. Working with fixed learning outcomes and competen-



cies can lead to the replication of an inherent bias: the assumption that students’ learning processes result in stable outcomes can be predetermined and predictably reached by students, if given the appropriate support. In other words, it presupposes a conception of learning as a linear, scalable, and controllable process.<sup>2</sup>

It’s important to acknowledge that education always entails risk and is by nature a transformative experience that doesn’t resemble a linear process, but instead is circular in nature. As two scholars from the University of Bergen in Norway emphasized, “Although most educational endeavours start with teachers having a learning intention for their students, the outcome of students’ interaction with the material is, in essence, uncontrollable. However, this ‘weakness’ is also the very condition that enables knowledge to be reconstructed (not merely reproduced), opening for the meeting of various perspectives that can challenge and develop a field further.”<sup>3</sup> Where does that leave us with respect to working with the nationally defined competencies, making them relevant for staff and students, as well as regarding them as points of reference for the content of our curriculum? This process has developed in two directions: meticulously aligning the competencies to the course content, but also ‘activating’ them as part of the learning trajectory and asking ourselves what this means. With regard to the latter, we are at a moment of transition. The approach we take is to introduce small changes in our pedagogical approach, see how this ‘lands’ with the students, and gradually scale up these smaller iterations. This is a work-in-progress which we only started to implement this academic year (September 2022).

Learning competencies in line with course content and ethics

Because we use the five competencies (and the competency indicators we formulated alongside of them) to assess the students’ graduate research, we have developed a *MEiA Competencies & Grading Chart* (see *MEiA Course Profile*, pp.25–26). In order to make the five main competencies relevant for staff and students, we have translated the competencies into so-called ‘competency indicators’: a set of clear incentives, marked by keywords which are closely related to the curriculum and philosophy of the programme and which are formulated such that they are comprehensible and speak to a student’s evolving body of research. These incentives partly overlap with those determined on a national level, but have also been profoundly reformulated in adjustment to the content and ethics of the course.<sup>4</sup> Most recently, this evaluation was conducted within the context of the so-called *Assessment Workgroup*, consisting of a student, two course tutors and the course director, set up to evaluate and reformulate the course’s assessment policy.<sup>5</sup> One of the first questions we asked ourselves at the start of these meetings was: How are the different competencies distributed over the curriculum as a whole, and what can we learn from this? This resulted in a meticulous but very interesting process of ‘reading one thing through the other’: reviewing which competences and competency indicators could be attributed to each seminar. An overview of the result of this can be found in the *MEiA Curriculum Overview*, which provides a close insight into the relation between the course structure, the different seminars and the competencies and assessment/evaluation criteria related to each seminar.

Although we were prepared to be self-critical, we found out that the competencies and competency indicators appeared to be distributed remarkably

2 See: Egelandstad, K.; Riese, H., ‘Never mind the gap: Formative assessment confronted with Dewey’s and Gadamer’s concept of experience’, *European Journal of Education*, 2020, 55, pp.92. “This seems to assume learning as a linear process where it is possible (and desirable) to identify students’ current position and move them forward towards a predefined destination (a learning outcome). In other words, learning is viewed as the process of following a path when hiking in a mountain where both path and destination exist. The task of the mountain guide then, like a teacher, is to ensure that hikers follow the path and reach their destination.”

3 Ibid., p.97.

4 The reformulation of the competency indicators took place in two iteration cycles, respectively in 2018 and 2022.

5 This concerns the *MEiA Assessment Workgroup* (March 2022 – January 2023) and the *MEiA Research Practices Workgroup* (May 2022 – present), respectively evaluating and reformulating our assessment policy / philosophy and teaching of research methods and practices to students.

well over the curriculum as a whole, gradually building up in the complexity of interrelating with each other. We also had to correct one of our own preconceptions, namely that the programme would excel in critical reflection skills, rather than cultural entrepreneurial skills. By contrast, Ability to Act (‘Cultural Entrepreneurship Ability’) appeared to be well represented within the curriculum. During the visitation of the course in 2017 we were advised to give extra attention to artistic ability within the course, but this ability appeared to be interwoven throughout the programme and was actually never underrepresented. It is important, however, to pay extra attention to artistic ability as part of the research trajectory in the second year.<sup>6</sup>

Cross-examining the competencies through the content of the seminar appeared to be the ideal breeding ground for reformulating the competency indicators in close relation to the content and pedagogical grounding of our curriculum. Below you’ll find a summary of the most important considerations in this reformulation.

- We have added key words to indicate how each competency breaks down into a set of clear incentives, not only in order to make the competencies more comprehensible but also to foster a better connection with the student’s work.
- We changed the term ‘performance indicator’ to ‘competency indicator’. Language matters, and we felt that the former alluded too much to the idea of students having to perform, while we believe education is a journey in which students internalise new experiences and translate these into a continuous growth in professional behaviour. Rather than having to prove they can ‘perform’ or ‘demonstrate’ certain abilities, we evaluate and assess a process of growth that always holds a certain sense of contingency.
- With ‘Artistic Ability’, we put the emphasis on (1) forging an inherent connection between artistic and pedagogical practice, (2) the collaborative aspect of interdisciplinarity,<sup>7</sup> (3) the student’s positioning in the field and (4) how artistic practice materializes their chosen media and graduate research.
- We have changed ‘Entrepreneurial Ability’ into ‘Ability to Act’. Students and staff found the original term difficult to grasp, as it strongly suggested taking on a managerial position in education.<sup>8</sup> In practice, teachers are involved on the one hand in positioning themselves in a large multidisciplinary field, and on the other in navigating processes of change within often volatile and bureaucratic institutional environments. Our reformulated term ‘Ability to Act’ puts the emphasis on (1) the implementation of education within broader social and ethical dimensions, (2) the student’s agency to realise their ambitions within constraining circumstances, (3) their organisational skills and ability to reach out to relevant parties.
- ‘Researching Ability’ was reformulated to make sure that all the intricacies of practice-based educational research would be covered. We would rather not talk about ‘gathering data’, as this alludes to the kind of scientific educational research done in the social sciences.<sup>9</sup> In contrast we have emphasized (1) the practical aspect of research and theoretical contextualisation, (2) research as the act of observing different settings of pedagogical relationships through different means and media, and (3) that the relation between practice and theory is a key factor.

6 See Chapter 4.

7 The word ‘interdisciplinary’ appears everywhere in the nationally defined competencies as a kind of *ghost appearance*, without making specific what this would actually entail. We decided to make this specific.

8 The original nationally defined formulation uses words such as: leadership qualities, markets, stake holders, financial-economical aspect, sustainable, economic developments. Within the context of educating artists, educators and pedagogues, we found this description too confining.

9 Our students conduct practitioner research: they design and test educational projects in practice, observing and documenting them, often taking on the dual role of being teacher and researcher.

Dublin descriptors, international framework

In line with the Dublin Descriptors, we educate students to develop an independent, critical, ethically grounded, research-like attitude and a collaborative mindset. An important notion within the Master of Education in Arts is that of the ‘learning community’: a small community of professionals coming together from different disciplines. This learning community advocates the idea of peer learning and the ability to see things from different perspectives and disciplinary contexts (national/international; inside/outside school; public/private; formal/informal; art/design; digital/analogue). This ability to develop and master an interdisciplinary viewpoint is a distinctive master level qualification.

Two additional arguments may be stated:

- Students at the master level are able to contextualize and conceptualize their practice and to relate both to its specific institutional context *and* to its larger cultural, societal and ethical context.
- Students reflect on, and engage with, their teaching practice at an increasingly conceptual and theoretical level, by theorising their practical knowledge and experience and applying theoretical knowledge to their daily practice.

Competencies: static denominators or incentives to play with?

Within the *Assessment Workgroup*, 2<sup>nd</sup> year student Ellis Bartholomeus inspired the staff to consider the competencies as guidelines students can use and experiment with throughout their study.<sup>10</sup> The pedagogical foundations of the seminars are meaningful wholes that integrate the competencies in different kinds of mixtures (see *MEiA Curriculum Overview*). We introduce the formal descriptions of the competencies only at the point when students are further progressed in developing their own body of research and practice, during the second year. Students often perceive the description of the competencies as a kind of educational-policy ‘foreign language’, whereas there is also the possibility of looking at them in terms of: “Am I more interested in developing my ‘Artistic Ability’ further, or is my ‘Ability to Act’ the core focus of this trimester?”.

10 She was inspired in turn by the Pedagogies of Study Seminar in the second trimester of our programme, where the students discussed what the notion of ‘study’ actually means. How the student’s work in the seminar was going to be assessed was collectively negotiated.

Evaluation and reflection

The current, revised set of competencies is completely in line with the content and ethics of the course and is a useful tool for assessing the student’s graduate research. The challenge is to familiarize students with them early on in the course, and to keep discussing them with the staff as well. The tutors for the Practice and Research Seminar introduced the set of competencies to the 1<sup>st</sup> year students in their very first classes last year September, inviting them to formulate criteria themselves in order to evaluate their evolving body of work. This is a skill which needs to be guided carefully, in close collaboration with the students themselves. The 2<sup>nd</sup> year students used self-formulated criteria in the Graduation Project Seminar at the beginning of that year, which worked well.

Asking them to connect these self-formulated assessment criteria with the competencies made them frown their eyebrows. One can easily fall into the trap of instrumentalizing this process, making the students feel they are being given an extra task to complete, instead of gaining more agency in the process. In the end, transparency and including a process of negotiation with the students is important in the process of integrating the competencies and making them part of the course literacy.

# 1 Fostering a trans- formative learning experience

## 2 Assessments for (not of) learning

# 3 Mapping of an indi- vidual & collective learning trajectory

# 4 Experimental & engaged research practices in art education

# 5 Appendices

<sup>1</sup> bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Routledge: 1994, p. 11.

*“Teaching is a performative act. And it is that aspect of our work that offers the space for change, invention, spontaneous shifts, that can serve as a catalyst drawing out the unique elements in each classroom. To embrace the performative aspect of teaching we are compelled to engage ‘audiences,’ to consider issues of reciprocity. Teachers are not performers in the traditional sense of the word [...]. Yet it is meant to serve as a catalyst that calls everyone to become more and more engaged, to become active participants in learning.”<sup>1</sup>*

→ See *MEiA Course Profile*, pp. 22–26

→ See *MEiA Curriculum Overview*

The group of students who started in September 2021 (Cohort 2021–2023) is incredibly productive, agile and enthusiastic, as well as generous towards and supportive of each other. But when the end of the first trimester came in sight in December 2021, the group’s sense of security suddenly froze into a collective anxiousness: How will I/we be *assessed*? The programme uses a process-oriented model of assessment without numerical grades and with much attention for holistically written feedback. Nevertheless, the moment of assessment had a profound influence on the group’s spirit. This was an eye-opener for us. While we realize there will always be some kind of anxiousness when it comes to the idea of course work being evaluated and assessed in general (whether summative or formative), we did ask ourselves how we might formulate an assessment policy that is truly student-centred.

### Our vision of student-centred assessment

It’s important to emphasize that the advanced level of master programmes is already based on an assumption of maturity and self-assessment skills. In addition to the formal assessments made by tutors through the dialogue-based learning within each module, the students are also assessing and reflecting upon their work and research, together with their peers and tutors. Nevertheless, we have been working on a student-centred assessment model in which we try to balance out summative and formative assessment better, and in which we also pay more attention to a pedagogical approach that combines tutor assessment (individual or group-related) with self-assessment and peer assessment.

The latter also means guiding the students in the process of acquiring the skills to be engaged more frequently in self- and peer-assessment. Summative assessment has an important purpose in assuring institutional accountability, but its dominance has distorted the potential of assessment to promote learning (*assessment for learning*). It limits the use of assessment methods that have demonstrable value for learning, such as feedback of a continuing research process, group assessment and self-assessment. While the use of peer assessment may cause alarm in some external examiners and those focusing on academic standards, the ability to assess oneself and others is an essential graduate attribute. Assessment for learning is designed to be formative and diagnostic, which allows teaching and learning activities to respond to the needs of the learner and recognises the huge benefit that ongoing and dialogic feedback processes can have on learning.



Modes of assessment

We use two modes of assessment to monitor and reflect upon the student’s progress:

Seminar evaluations

These assessments are formative and summative and a mixture of tutor assessment (individual, group), self-assessment and peer assessment, conducted on the basis of assignments (collective and individual), presentations, workshops and research reports. The thematic seminars in the first year are concluded with a non-numerical summative assessment, using a set of criteria related to the content of the seminar and work/assignments produced. Students receive extensively written holistic feedback.

Given the fact that the Practice and Research Seminar (Trimester 1, 2, 3), runs through the whole first year and prepares the students for their graduate research, these assessments are formative in nature, except for Trimester 3. The Practice and Research Seminar uses pre-set assessment criteria, but peer- and self-evaluation are also a structural part of these seminars. As already discussed in Chapter 1, we have started a new trajectory/pilot in which students are guided step-by-step in formulating their own criteria for self-assessment. Initially, these criteria are formulated open and close to the student’s practice; gradually, they relate more to the course competencies.

Integrated evaluations

These assessments take place four times during the programme, in Trimesters 3, 4, 5 and 6. It is crucial that students are able to integrate their skills, experiences and knowledge into their developing practice. In other words, the focus is not on a set of separate skills and aspects of knowledge, but on the ability to use and integrate experiences and knowledge as a learner and practitioner. From Trimester 3 onwards, collective moments of presentation and integrated practice and research evaluations are built into the programme. In the Graduation Project Seminar in Trimester 4, the students present a pilot study of their graduation research and a peer observation. The assessment policy of this seminar is completely based on peer- and self-assessment. In Trimester 5, when the students present their research to peers and staff for the Mid-Term Evaluation, the process is completely led by peer feedback. The Preliminary Evaluation is clearly summative in nature. The Graduation Exam is summative in nature and still primarily based on a cross-referenced tutor/external examiner-assessment (Graduation Exam panel).

Assessment Philosophy

One of the texts which we read together within the *Assessment Workgroup*, and which proved to be influential in sharpening our own assessment policy, was *A Marked Improvement, Transforming Assessment in Higher Education*, published by The Higher Education Academy.<sup>2</sup> In the second section of this publication the authors present ‘A Manifesto for Change’, consisting of six key tenets to critically review assessment policy.<sup>3</sup> Inspired by this manifesto, we have formulated our own principles and points of focus in our assessment philosophy and policy as follows:

2 *A Marked Improvement. Transforming Assessment in Higher Education*, The Higher Education Academy, York: 2012.

3 Ibid, pp. 19–21. These six tenets are: 1. Assessment for learning; 2. Ensuring assessment is fit for purpose; 3. Recognize that assessment lacks precision; 4. Constructing standards in communities; 5. Integrating assessment literacy into course design; 6. Ensuring professional judgements are reliable.

Assessments are for (not of) learning

- Learning is a transformative experience that goes beyond the perimeters of assessment.
- Assessments are not just used to provide evidence that learning outcomes have been achieved; they are student-centred, placing the emphasis on student engagement and feedback.
- Formative assessment and summative assessment as well as different kinds of assessments (self, peer, group, staff) are carefully balanced out in an integrated assessment philosophy/policy.

Assessments are tailored to fit the situation

- Assessments are clearly aligned with the content and pedagogical foundation of each seminar and formulated in specific and transparent language.
- Students are informed about and invited to engage with the assessment criteria at the start of the modules.
- The validity of the assessment process can be promoted through effective collaboration between all those who teach in a programme, jointly oriented towards a cohesive assessment philosophy and programme learning outcomes.

Dialogue & integrating assessment literacy into the course design

- We try to foster a common atmosphere of mutual trust and learning and an active engagement with evaluation standards in order to allow students to develop their own, internalized concepts of standards and to supervise their own learning.
- Assessment and feedback processes should actively engage both staff and students in dialogue about the standards. A common understanding and sense of value and trust can be fostered through social and collaborative activity within the learning community as a whole.
- Assessment literacy is an iterative process, and therefore the design and implementation of the course should provide unhurried opportunities and time – within and across programmes – to develop complex knowledge and skills and create clear paths of progression.

Evaluation and reflection

Within the *Assessment Workgroup* we have worked on reformulating the course’s assessment philosophy/policy to improve its student-centeredness. Peer feedback and peer assessment were already integrated in the course and seminars, but self-assessment and guiding students in learning how to formulate learning goals and assessment criteria were less so. Also, there could be further improvement in terms of formulating an overarching, cohesive assessment philosophy that all course tutors emphasize. Front-loading has always been a regular aspect of the course, with the tutors beginning by explaining to the students its pedagogical foundations and assessment criteria, but describing and introducing them to the students is something different than engaging students in the process of assessment itself. We have started to make this more important, tipping the balance further from summative to formative assessment and pairing up tutor assessment with peer- and self-assessment.

The process of guiding students in assessment literacy and formulating criteria for them to assess themselves or peers is not something which can be seamlessly designed as a linear path from A to B, without taking the students’

feedback and experience on board. The idea is to gradually give students more agency. How this can best be implemented, should be developed in close dialogue. Students are not primarily interested in assessment criteria – they favour holistic feedback. This means that it is important to front-load assessment literacy early within the course. It remains interesting to look at how tutor-, self- and peer-assessment are positioned against each other, hierarchically, or horizontally and which relative weight they get in the final grade.

This year the Graduation Project Seminar was completely peer- and self-assessment led. We teach our 2<sup>nd</sup> year students how to self- or peer-assess, but our examinations of their graduate research work are still very hierarchical. How do we make sure students will make these exams and their self-assessment of it more their own? This will be an interesting challenge to take on as well.

My dear MEiA,

I am writing this letter because I want to tell you about my experience with regard to ‘mastery’ in this trajectory of the Master of Education in Arts at the Piet Zwart Institute. During many years of experience as a designer – creating playful tools to motivate people to learn and change their behaviour – I have developed a growing curiosity to discover how people navigate within a system or a set of (game) rules in different contexts and with different motivations. So, I became a game alchemist, searching for the holy grail of intrinsic motivation and asking myself: What makes us tick, makes us want to interact or learn? After being introduced to the programme, my classmates and tutors, I became fascinated by the diversity of emotions (including my own) aroused by our first assessment. I then decided to research the ambiguous role that assessment plays in art education. So, my dear MEiA, you are my inspiration.

Being assessed is a vulnerable moment, and certain levels of stress make a person fall into the trap of freeze, fight, flight or adapt. While these mechanisms are meant for survival, they block learning. Marshall B. Rosenberg wrote about this beautifully in his book *Nonviolent Communication*. Therefore, we need to guard against reaching that level of stress. However, stress also helps us to focus and learn, to get into a flow. It is a delicate balancing act for both teachers and students to know how to facilitate or communicate about finding this ‘sweet spot’. Sometimes borders need to be crossed, to learn how to balance things better. After all, judging or being judged is a sensitive matter.

Since I started with you, my dear MEiA, looking at all the complications, assumptions and biases related to this topic has been a great journey. The variety of experiences, backgrounds, expectations, needs, pains, visions, cultures and perspectives all play a specific role. In trying to unravel this complexity, I decided to research theories and discover what has been previously tried and thought about, and distil conditions and requirements out of that. I also designed and conducted experiments. And you, my dear MEiA, became my laboratory.

One of my early experiments was to familiarize myself in detail with the criteria that have been set as one of the assessment tools in the course: the MEiA Required Competencies and Grading Chart. I read and researched the descriptions of these competencies in detail, and played around with them in visual representations to lower the threshold of working with them for fellow students. I designed a workshop to invite my classmates to make the abstract language of the written competencies more tangible for them and to learn how they could relate differently to them by using them as an individual navigation tool. And last but not least, by joining the Assessment Workgroup as an ambassador for my fellow students and looking at the concept of assessment from the students’ perspective, I investigated the ‘other’ side of the criteria: the institute’s perspective. When researching the origin of these criteria I learned that you, MEiA, as an institute, also are a ‘victim’ within a bigger system and have guidelines and rules to obey. And the fact that I, as a learner, choose an institute with a good reputation, the quality of education being assured, to play a role in this visitation – taking place as we speak – is another experiment in my trajectory to learn about the bigger picture. Being a member of the Assessment Workgroup, talking about the programme and diving deep into the details of the descriptions of the learning outcomes and their different interpretations, showed me the Institute’s ability to be transparent and its carefulness about taking the learners, their research and work extremely seriously. About how criteria can be



## How to play

This island represents MEiA, an island full of adventures in the educational trajectory.

Each player chooses a character and places it near the start.

The youngest player starts the game by throwing the dice to move to the first spot of that colour, draws a card, reads the question out loud and has the option of answering it or not. All players are welcome to contribute an answer to the question. Every contribution is rewarded with a piece of Lego matching the colour of that card.

Next, the other players each take their turn (clockwise), repeating until one player reaches the end.

Please do suggest new questions that you wish to play + answer (have answered).

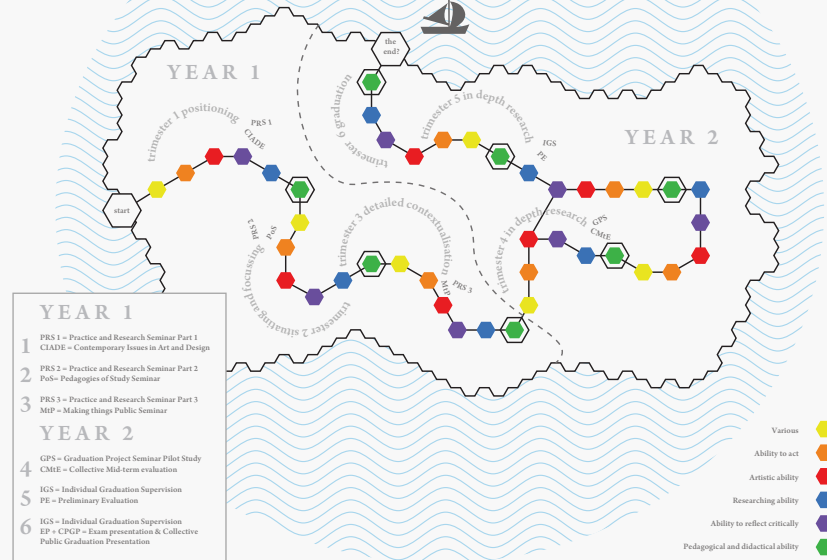
At the end of the game – build something with Lego to represent the journey in this game, share insights and new questions with each other.

The purpose of the game is to invite an open dialogue on topics in order to find a common language, plus to appreciate differences.



**BONUS or LEVEL UP alternative play:**  
At start choose to play ONE role in answering your questions: are you a teacher OR a student?

## a personal learning trajectory becoming a master Education in Arts at the Piet Zwart Institute



regarded as a tool and can function as a code of conduct. On one hand the criteria imply a promise to the students, while on the other hand they also request something from the students. It proved to me that learning and teaching should be regarded as a process of negotiation, that thresholds can and should be lowered to avoid distress, and that timing is relevant. It showed the Institute's ability to be vulnerable, agile and critically reflect on what should happen in the future and to allow openness and freedom for tutors and learners to grow; to be courageous to explore the set frames and allow rules to be bent (such as acknowledging the need to change 'Cultural Entrepreneurship Ability' to 'Ability to Act'). And most importantly, to recognize that students are equal in this non-hierarchical system, yet acknowledging the different roles everyone plays. Since we are all learners and our curiosity about education in art is shared. These are just some of my takeaways, my dear MEiA. To quote Paulo Freire: "Whoever teaches, learns while teaching. And whoever learns, teaches while learning."

My dear MEiA, I am so excited about the fact that I am currently developing The MEiA Game as a dialogical tool within this research, which hopefully will also become a tool in the future for facilitating the dialogue at MEiA about learning competencies. The game brings an 'excuse' to situate a difficult question. Therefore, in preparation, while it is important to curate the right (set of) questions to be played, it is also important to invite all players to participate or practise 'the right to opacity', as Édouard Glissant would call it, in a safe way. The game can be played at the Open Day by curious students to become familiar with the program, or in class by students and tutors to reflect at the end of the first year, or at the start of the second year to recap and look ahead. It can also be played anytime in between by the team to question their expectations of the programme and to reveal possible gaps or differences of interpretation. The game, which is an open play, or so-called sandbox play without competition at stake, describes the adventure of the educational programme as a two-year stay on an island, with a chronological description of the programme and seminars. Players identify with an avatar on their quest. The learning curve is visually 'measured' by collecting Lego building blocks that players receive when answering questions on cards. The specific set of cards can be chosen in advance, depending on the specific needs, e.g. competencies, assessment literacy, doing research, pedagogy, artistic research, or a mixture of questions. The game ends when the last player reaches the end of the journey. This is the time to see what has been created with the Lego blocks, how the avatars relate to the dialogue and harvest the insights and questions that have not yet been addressed. The main goal of the game is to create a safe space to foster an open dialogue and see the different approaches and perspectives in and on education in arts, to construct standards in a community (or find a common language). My dear MEiA, would you like to play this game?

Ellis Bartholomeus

# 1 Fostering a trans- formative learning experience

## 2 Assessments for (not of) learning

## 3 Mapping of an indi- vidual & collective learning trajectory

## 4 Experimental & engaged research practices in art education

## 5 Appendices

<sup>1</sup> bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom*, Routledge: 1994, p. 21.

*“When education is the practice of freedom, students are not the only ones who are able to share, to confess. Engaged pedagogy does not seek to simply empower students. Any classroom that employs a holistic model of learning will also be a place where teachers grow, and are empowered by the process. The empowerment cannot happen if we refuse to be vulnerable while encouraging students to take risk.”<sup>1</sup>*

→ See *MEiA Curriculum Overview*

→ See *MEiA Course Profile*:

Chapter 2, Philosophy behind the programme, pp. 8–13

Chapter 3, Structure and content of the programme, pp. 14–20

### Design and content of the programme: summary of general principles

- The programme is designed for working professionals as a concentric, modular structure of intensive seminars. Self-direction is an important feature of the programme, but students receive intensive guidance through group lessons, individual tutorials, and peer feedback models.
- The expertise of the staff is a reflection of the interdisciplinary context of the master; additional expertise is taken in through guest tutors and speakers.
- The programme is set up as a *learning community* in which professionals from different disciplines share and exchange their knowledge, skills, and research on different levels. Peer reviews and tutorial feedback are essential learning tools within all modules. These evaluations take the form of an exchange in which the students partly develop their own criteria for their work, establish methodologies, and advance their thinking against a developing critical framework.
- Students have classes every two weeks on Fridays and Saturdays. The weeks in between are used for preparation, homework, studying, or conducting field research/educational experiments.
- Since its integration with the Piet Zwart Institute in 2014, the programme has been taught in English. We admit students from the Netherlands (also non-Dutch-speaking students) as well as from the rest of the EU. Although the majority of our students work in a Dutch context and at least 50% are Dutch, (higher) art education in the Netherlands has gradually become more international/taught in English. We consider the input of our non-Dutch-speaking students to be of great importance to the course. The assignments and graduate research within our course are written in English, but students developing an educational project/product specifically catered towards a Dutch context are able to write this part in Dutch. Students with dyslexia can also be exempted from the necessity of writing their graduate research in English.





Mapping of an individual and collective learning trajectory

To facilitate an in-depth reflection of our curriculum, we have developed a graphic overview of what a learning trajectory within MEiA looks like. This ‘drawing’ paints a picture of the curriculum as a journey to undertake, a path that will look different for each student in the end. The intention is that this graphic overview in the near future will offer a tool for students to get a better view of the internal cohesion of the learning trajectory, and for the staff to engage in further curricular development. All the seminars separately are well developed in terms of content, and mature in attuning this to their own pedagogical underpinnings. Given the programme’s seminar structure, in the first year, the relation in each trimester between the Practice and Research Seminar and our thematic seminars is important.<sup>2</sup> (See *MEiA Course Profile*, pp. 17–19.)

The Master of Education in Arts is a part-time study, which means there is a productive tension at play between what the programme offers and how this resonates with the student’s professional practice: work and study always inter-relate. There are two key movements in each trimester: ‘zooming in’ and ‘zooming out’. Students are invited to reflect on their practice and develop a growing body of research related to a topic with which they are concerned (*zooming in*). They are also becoming familiar with key topics/themes/theories in contemporary art education and are invited to engage in and partake of this knowledge production, finding points of connection with their own practice (*zooming out*). We have students in the course with many years of experience in education, and those who have only recently graduated, as well as artists and designers still grappling with their identity as pedagogues. How might we be able to tune in better on the interplay between practice and study, and thus between practice and theory?

Positioning, situating, contextualizing, observing

Trimester 1 – Positioning

As one can see on the *Mapping of a Learning Trajectory*, the first trimester of the course can be summarized with the key word ‘positioning’; students are invited to think about how they position themselves as a practitioner in the field at large, as well within the learning community they have just entered. Students highly value the opportunity to structurally reflect on educational practices and learn from each other in this part of the trajectory. While space for this is offered, it remains a challenge to pay enough attention to this due to the part-time nature of the course. The Contemporary Issues in Art and Design Education Seminar is both collaborative and experimental in nature, foregrounding the tension between education inside and outside institutional boundaries and the notion of situated and embodied, interdisciplinary knowledge production, while also introducing students to a topic like posthumanism and education through experience-based learning.<sup>3</sup> (See Appendix V: Essay ‘Learning with Others’ for a detailed evaluation of this seminar.) The seminar is an exercise in *unlearning*, as the student’s expectations of what education entails are intentionally challenged. To keep a balance in this process, building bridges with practical examples and case studies of education would help students to relate the content of the seminar with their existing practice.

2 In Trimester 1, this is the Contemporary Issues in Art and Design Education Seminar, in Trimester 2 the Pedagogies of Study Seminar and in Trimester 3 the Making Things Public Seminar.

3 This essay ‘Learning with Others’, jointly written by Ingrid Commandeur and Irina Shapiro was published in Michelle Teran (ed.), *Situationer Workbook/Cookbook*, Rotterdam: Research Centre WdKA and Publication Studio Rotterdam Publishers, 2021. A book in two volumes on transformative pedagogy and teaching in times of crisis. How can times of crisis – or of crises, in their many forms – inform and influence the pedagogies needed to situate ourselves in a troubled world? How can one tune in to the conditions, concerns and difficulties of these complex times, by cultivating new and necessary forms of humility, attentiveness and recognition toward other knowledges, other value systems, other frameworks of understanding?

Trimester 2 – Situating and Focusing

We often talk about ‘doing research’. This can be an open and enigmatic concept for students just starting the programme, not knowing exactly what is expected of them, even though the assignments in Trimester 2 are in fact clearly structured. It could help, therefore, to frame the study path and/or learning trajectory better for the students. The Pedagogies of Study Seminar in the second trimester was newly developed in 2021 by Çağlar Köseoğlu. Theoretical and practical pedagogical grounding being one of the core concepts of the programme, students are fond of this seminar and sometimes perceive it as being too short (in the positive sense of even wanting to proceed with it further). The seminar introduces students to core concepts like ‘Study’, ‘Critical Pedagogy’ and ‘Decoloniality’, relevant topics which take time to work out in depth, while at this stage of the student’s positioning it would also be relevant if they were to develop an initial frame of key pedagogical references and theories related to their topic of study. It could be helpful to try to build a more continuous line between CIADE and Pedagogies of Study with respect to thinking through and being introduced to pedagogical stances, theories and positions on the one hand, and on the other being introduced to a more attuned and clearly selected frame of literature references in the Practice and Research Seminar.

Trimester 3 – Contextualization

Within the Practice and Research Seminar, students develop their Graduation Project Proposal. The *Proposal Guide* helps students to conceptualize their research starting from their educational practice; at the same time, they are offered a lot of hands-on writing and reflection exercises. The steady but fast pace of this process works productively: students do not tend to overthink. The Making Things Public Seminar is perfectly attuned to this process, guiding the students in writing a plan for their educational project and reflecting on the research ethics of practice-based research. The content of the Making Things Public Seminar should open up another perspective within the three-part structured thematic seminars about pedagogical stances and positions, by paying specific attention to the areas of museum education, socially-engaged participatory practices and extra-institutional educational frameworks.

Trimester 4 – Pilot Study and Peer Observation

At the beginning of the second year, in Trimester 4, students have their graduating supervisors assigned to them and they start the initial stage of their graduate research. This trimester is still structured by the Graduation Project Seminar. This seminar was developed anew by Thijs Witty and Marek van de Watering, its first edition running from September to December 2022. Here, students develop a pilot study of their actual research and engage in observing each other’s educational practice. This proved to be a great improvement on the curricular programme in Trimester 4; students are invited to collaborate closely with their peers, are very well guided in starting up their graduate research and assess its feasibility, as well as learning how to observe and assess a pilot study done by a peer. The collaborative aspect of the assignments makes them dialogical and playful, while the fact that the students are also invited to peer-assess and self-assess the results grants them ownership and engagement within this first part of the research trajectory.<sup>4</sup>

4 Trimesters 5 and 6 of the programme are part of the graduation trajectory and will be discussed more in depth in the next chapter.



## Learning environment and facilities

Master students have access to all the facilities of the WdKA in the so-called Stations (workshops): central hubs which provide students with specific knowledge, as well as the necessary high-quality tools and instruments (the Stations include: interaction, image & sound, publication, material, fabric, drawing and research). Full-time students within the Piet Zwart Institute have individual studio spaces on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the WdKA (where the master programmes are located). Our part-time students, combining work and study, don't have individual workspaces but are able to make use of a project space designated for the Master of Education in Arts programme on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor. Students might be engaged in study, group work or projects outside regular classes from time to time, and the project space facilitates this. The course is also continuously adding to its own book collection/library, which relates to the contents of the course and can be used by students. The Piet Zwart Institute has an active student community association called *Archipelago*, which is run by master students themselves, and is organizationally and financially supported by the institute. From September 2023 onwards, there is also a student counsellor, exclusively for master students. The WdKA has several instruments in place to safeguard social safety. Amongst other things, WdKA instituted an Office for Inclusivity (O4i), which published an *Advisory Report* in 2022.

## Staff profile

The MEiA staff works together as a team in a warm and collegial working atmosphere. With 10 course tutors and an average of 12 to 14 students per cohort, the student-tutor ratio is high, but this is necessary in order to be sufficiently attuned to the diversity of research projects and educational contexts within our course. It is also connected with our aim of addressing students in a personal, individual and tailored manner. Our tutors have relatively small FTE's and combine teaching within the master with other educational responsibilities. It is therefore important to invest time in frequent staff meetings in order to inform each other about internal developments and student progress, and to grant tutors sufficient hours to invest in curricular developments. Two new course tutors were recently appointed to complete the team of graduation supervisors: Lisa Heinis, Curator of Education at the Boijmans van Beuningen Museum and Marek van de Watering, Head of the Orientation Course at the Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam. They offer valuable additional research expertise in the team of supervisors.

### General principles:

- The tutors involved in the programme are specialists in their field and professional teachers, and combine their educational career with an artistic, design or research practice, and express a profound identity and signature in their practice and teaching. The composition of the staff as a whole needs to be diverse enough to cover the different kinds of disciplinary knowledge and education levels represented in the programme by the students.
- The department aims at a 70–30% ratio of internal and external lecturers.
- Tutors/lecturers must hold a Master's degree. A PhD degree is not obligatory; three course tutors have a PhD degree and two course tutors are con-









ducting PhD research at present. All course tutors are engaged in ongoing research projects.

- Given the part-time nature of the programme (with consequently relatively small FTEs), it is important to safeguard the continuity within the staff and to invest in long-term commitments.

## Knowledge production: collaboration and international exchange

We foster an exchange with the Social Practices department of the WdKA to explore overlapping interests in practiced-based research and theoretical knowledge production. Michelle Teran, practice-oriented research Professor of Social Practice at the WdKA, frequently visits the programme as guest lecturer.

A large symposium that had been scheduled to take place in 2021 had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Instead, we developed two smaller scale projects: a one-day event at an allotment garden complex, Streven naar Verbetering, called *Learning with the Garden. Learning from the Land* and an online reading group called *Co-respond: Bodies, Voices, Spaces in Art Education*. The latter was organized in collaboration with Jules Sturm and the MA Art Education at the Zurich University of the Arts, with which we ran an exchange in 2022. This reading group, hosted by Irina Shapiro (PZI) and Jules Sturm (ZdHK), comprised a series of hybrid physical and screen-based encounters in which participants (students from both master programmes, as well participants from the outside) discussed themes like embodied learning, material sense-making, hybrid corporeal-digital practices, social-ecological issues and transformative pedagogies. In the context of *Learning with the Garden. Learning from the Land*, gardeners, students, artists, designers and educators were invited to join in imagining a non-disciplinary practice of meaning-making and learning which relies on embodied and intuitive experiences as tools.

Given the fact that staff members (and a 2<sup>nd</sup> year student) of MEiA also teach within the Rotterdam Arts and Sciences Lab (RASL) programme, there is also an exchange of knowledge with respect to interdisciplinary education, wicked problems and cross-curricular education. We also offer our students access to relevant, international conferences of the European network ELIA, or national initiatives like for instance CASE (Centre for Arts & Sciences Education, Amsterdam).

## Evaluation and reflection

In terms of curricular development, room for further improvement could perhaps best be found in operationalizing the productive relation between the students' professional practice and the content of the course, and in trying to forge a clearer continuing line of learning content-wise between the three thematic seminars, with respect to offering pedagogical positions, practices and theories.

Not much attention has been paid thus far to the consequences for the programme of the several lockdowns and the COVID19-pandemic. Recently, the so-called 'affective turn in education' has been experiencing an upsurge and the same can be said about embodied and sensorial practices in artistic and

design research and education. These developments have also come to the fore within our course as a result of the COVID19-pandemic. Staff and students experienced social distancing and isolation. Perhaps more than ever, we realized that our senses, bodies and the ability to touch and be touched affectively (in the broadest sense of the word: literally, politically and intellectually) matter, in that 'affect' and pedagogy are inextricably inseparable. How do we emphasize learning and pedagogy as an embodied, material and situated practice, whether it is conducted off or on line; inside or outside the classroom; in solitude or collectively? There is much to say about how we tried to adapt to the crisis that overtook us, but this became our central concern and philosophy. By trial and error, we tried to be attentive to the students' needs and respond to them. Although we became very resourceful in experimenting with online education, we have learned that experience-based learning is a core asset of our programme, something to be cherished and developed further.

One of the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic was that more students than usual decided to choose an extended study trajectory of 6 months. Offering this kind of flexibility was very helpful for the students. They graduated with satisfaction, but the pandemic's impact on education is not yet over. Our current 1<sup>st</sup> year group of students is smaller than previously, generating a different kind of group dynamics. What constitutes an engaging learning environment? Apart from the content of the curriculum, the composition of the staff and the availability of learning spaces, this is also related to the communal aspect and atmosphere within a programme, in other words, the overall ethics of the course. A shared sense of values and trust can be fostered through social and collaborative activities, as well as staying attuned to group dynamics, since this influences the students' perception of a learning environment just as much. Within the Piet Zwart Institute we don't work with an institutional-wide 'code of conduct', because we believe it is better to co-write it together with the students on a yearly basis. During our introductory event we pay attention to it by means of a workshop. 'Holding space for each other', safeguarding a sense of safety, as well as room for discussion in the classroom, requires continuous attention, and this is something we can still improve on.

Over the past two years we have organized two alternative events: a symposium on location, and a collaborative online reading group. In addition to that, we frequently invite guest teachers. But it would be interesting to organize a series of lectures again, concentrating on exemplary educational practices, and flesh out a selection of themes and practices that are an essential part of the course.

Dear reader,

In the conversation below, we, Jesse van Oosten and Maaïke van Papeveld, expand the notion of 'transformative learning' used by Ingrid in this critical reflection. We do this based on our experiences of the programme. We chose a chat-format for this contribution, because we see the 'chat' or 'small talk' as an important aspect of our transformative learning experiences at MEiA. Learning doesn't only happen in the classroom, but also often in the time and space in between. Reflecting together is, in our opinion, an important (and very enriching!) part of navigating our learning journeys. We hope you find this conversation insightful.

Best,  
Jesse & Maaïke



Hi Maaïke, how are you? Shall we talk about transformative learning, and how we can understand it in the context of MEiA seminars?

Hi Jesse! I'm doing pretty good, and you? Yes! Great idea. I am quite intrigued by this quote I found in Ingrid's critical reflection:  
*The students' learning experience at MEiA is more than a set of intended learning outcomes, it's a transformative experience.*  
How do you read this quote?



Great. Yes, it immediately made me wonder what 'transformative' actually means here. When does it happen? Can we feel it in the moment, or is it something that you know afterwards? I remember a class during the seminar Critically Committed Pedagogy (CCP), that felt as a transformative space that occurred when we collectively discussed a fragment from Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's text on 'Study'. It felt like a very concentrated moment in the classroom that we created together. I think you agree that this particular class accomplished this, can you reflect on it? How did that happen?

Absolutely! I think the CCP seminars were a great example of transformative learning. To me, the transformative aspect was in the way in which we interacted as a small 'community', including Caglar (the seminar teacher) and even our special guest Stefano Harney. I remember we were encouraged to engage with new knowledge as something 'in the making', which allowed us to take on temporary positions and think out loud together about complex (sometimes ethical) matters and texts. This was really freeing to me, and simultaneously it gave me the confidence to experiment and take risks.



I agree. I like what you say about a knowledge 'in the making', as it welcomes the unpredictable and unknowingness in the classroom. It is something that I try to accomplish in my own classroom and reading sessions as well: to create an atmosphere for others to feel comfortable enough to think out loud, and to create a deeper understanding of new knowledge by providing conditions for entering into an intimate relationship with it together. How would you define the relationship between the transformative and time?



Great question Jesse! I think there is a strong relationship between the two. Transformative learning, in my view, is something that needs time, or slowing down. You cannot force it, because it happens through critical reflection (as suggested in the work of Mezirow). I also don't see this as a linear process: something we learn today can sometimes connect in unexpected ways to experiences, affects, memories, desires, sensations, etc. belonging to another time. I strongly agree with this quote from Ingrid's reflection:

*Working with fixed learning outcomes and competencies can result in replicating an inherent bias: the assumption that students' learning processes result in stable outcomes, can be predetermined and reached by students predictably, given the appropriate support and information.*

Maybe the most intriguing to me is that most of this process happens outside the classroom, making learning even more unpredictable. I think Renée and Irina's seminar Contemporary Issues in Art and Design Education (CIADE) was a good example of this. How do you see that?



Nice that you bring that seminar up. I think that the proposition that Renée and Irina made in what I remember as 'The Garden Curriculum, was to learn with others by listening to nonhumans, by slowing-down, zooming in, and permitting other forms of knowledge. For me this course instigated a 'slow' transformative process of gaining an understanding of the relationality of the act of learning. In the CIADE course, I think that relationality is an important aspect to the transformative potential of education, and the unpredictability of it. When we see learning as relational, it means that it does not happen in isolation, but always in touch with other perspectives and with the world. The learning community at MEiA is also a good example of a condition that allows transformative learning, that is relational and in a sense 'out of control' of our tutors. For me the learning community supports a kind of learning that does not begin or end at the classroom door. I think that our relationship and how we collaborate and reflect on each others graduation projects as peers is also a good example of this.



Well said, I really appreciate the way in which we work and learn together as a community. The small size of the group allowed us to follow each others processes from the beginning, and I feel like everyone is really engaged in each others work. We know where each person comes from, and this made the regular feedback sessions during the Practice and Research Seminars more meaningful. I truly appreciate working more insively with you as my peer; following each others processes, visiting each others workplace, and working together in the MEiA space or at your kitchen table. To me, this intimate way of collaborating and exchanging ideas was maybe equally valuable as all the skills I've gained through the seminars.



I love that you mention my kitchen table! What I take from our conversation is that the times and spaces of transformative learning are not constrained to the classroom, and that it happens even more so in the relationships that are nurtured by the programme.

I think that's a great conclusion. Thanks Jesse!



- 1 Fostering a transformative learning experience
- 2 Assessments for (not of) learning
- 3 Mapping of an individual & collective learning trajectory
- 4 Experimental & engaged research practices in art education
- 5 Appendices

*Standard 4: The programme demonstrates that the intended learning outcomes are achieved.*

- See *MEiA Course Profile*, ‘Research within the Master’, p. 11
- See *MEiA Curriculum Overview*, ‘Preliminary Evaluation’ and ‘Graduation Project and Public Graduation’
- See *MEiA Graduation Archive*, <http://meia.pzwart.nl>

### Graduate Research within MEiA

The MEiA Graduation Project is a partly guided, partly self-directed graduate project done over the course of a year. We have developed an overarching research methodology of practice-based research, in which the reciprocal relationship between theory and practice is a key feature. Students are instructed in the basic method of a practice-based research cycle. This means that they learn the different stages and steps involved in this cycle – from defining a research topic, contextualizing it, reflecting on the appropriate research method and developing a theoretical framework to designing, testing and evaluating an education project in practice. Additionally, students are encouraged to choose their own research method(s) at hand. This might vary from action research, interviews, artistic research, to a comparative case study, et cetera. An important precondition is that the education project needs to be pedagogically designed and didactically grounded, at least partially tested in practice and evaluated as part of an actual professional framework.

Our overarching philosophy on research is that it is insufficient to only refer back to the ‘traditional’ research methods derived from the educational social sciences (empirical research with an emphasis on collecting objective, qualitative research data). Art education is a combination of two words: art and education – two disciplines with different histories, ontologies and research areas. We find it important to stress the fact that what we are fundamentally dealing with is the reciprocity of a pedagogical relationship. Research practices in art education can be considered an *art of inquiry* (Ingold, 2013) where knowledge grows from the multiple practices and interconnected ways of ‘thinking-making-doing’ (Springgay & Truman, 2017). Learning how to observe, document and reflect on educational praxis is just as important as critical reflective and writing skills. Within the *Research Practices Workgroup* we have been discussing what we would like to offer our students with respect to introducing them to research methods and research practices in art education. One of our alumni, Mark Shillitoe, developed a hands-on didactical tool – a website/digital platform – to be used by staff and students, offering a wealth of information and links to sources that discuss different research practices in art education.

As preparation for their graduate research, the students are asked to write an elaborate Graduation Project Proposal in Trimester 3 and conduct a pilot research and peer observation in Trimester 4. The latter is particularly important for keeping the research project manageable and concise, given the part-time nature of the programme. Students are also challenged to creatively use different (visual or digital) media to document the results of their field research and/or education project. Apart from the written component (which is obligatory), students are encouraged to present the outcome of their graduation project in different media as well. The graduation project is the



accumulation of the two-year educational trajectory and is geared towards achieving the learning outcomes set by the programme.

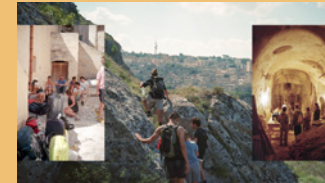
The graduation projects are supervised by a team of graduation supervisors composed of seven MEiA core staff members. Each student is assigned two graduation supervisors who are closely aligned to the content of their graduate project. At MEiA we find it important that students are offered a diversity of voices, viewpoints and feedback for the development of their graduation projects. The supervisors are familiar with the students' previous work and have built a relationship of trust, having previously guided the students in their studies as their seminar tutors. Students meet with the supervisors every 3 to 4 weeks and collective presentations are scheduled (during Trimesters 4 and 5) with all students, the complete team of supervisors and the course director. The integration of different tasks for the staff (i.e. teaching in the course and being involved in graduation supervision) fosters an atmosphere of close collaboration within the team of supervisors.

Students present the outcome of their Graduation Project to a general public of professionals and peers during a two-day Public Graduation Presentation, a symposium/event which is developed together with an educator/curator. This event (which is part of the larger constellation of WdKA and PZI graduation events and exhibitions) is held and collaboratively organised on a yearly basis at 'TENT. Platform for Contemporary Art' in Rotterdam. Students are challenged to develop a suitable format for presenting their research to the public. The graduation projects are also available online through an archival website, thus making the graduate research accessible to the general public.

### A closer look at the graduation projects

To give an impression of our students' graduate research, we present six examples of graduation projects by students who graduated recently (from June 2021 to February 2023).

## Lisanne Janssen *What I Have Been Meaning to Tell You*



## Diogo Rinaldi *Offence. An Exploration of Horizontality and Co-Responsibility*

## Lorenzo Gerbi *Indisciplined by Learning*



## Jeroen van der Heijden *Disappearance of a Drama Teacher. A Whodunnit?*

## Xica Negra *Experiencing Nature: How to Connect with Nature while Living in the City*



## Elina Charinti *Holding Moments. Understanding and Engaging Affective Pedagogies with Emergent Multilingual Children*

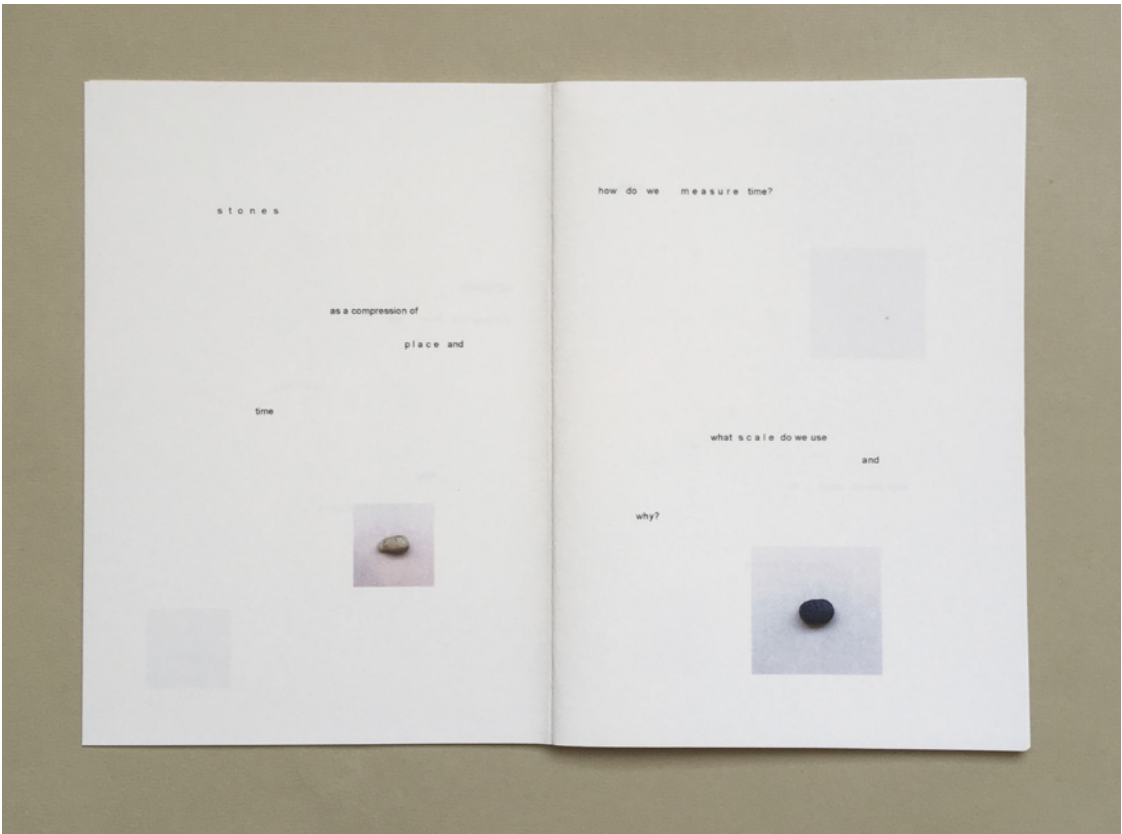


*What I Have Been Meaning to Tell You* is a collection of short texts, essays and letters in which I try to articulate a working educational ethos that is ‘lived’ rather than ‘fossilized’. I inquire if and how being attentive, tending to, can be a ‘gripping tale’ to tell. How can I honour and articulate what often goes unnoticed? The answer may not be found in big concepts or theories. What lies in the margins, things such as small gestures or my commitment to the process, tells just as much, maybe even more. Everything I do, I approach with *empathy*, a feeling of curiosity about who other people are in themselves, and *radical openness*: the will to explore different perspectives and change one’s mind as new information is presented.

As a designer engaged in education, I have become increasingly intrigued by the way individuals consider and make connections. Especially, how humans experience their place, impact and agency within space, time and its interconnections. In my practice, I therefore pay close attention to human engagement with physical material, form and function. I provide mindful tools and activities that help mend the space between us. A slow and careful process, which requires close attention and care. With *What I Have Been Meaning to Tell You*, I attempt to voice my pedagogical approaches and to articulate meaningful aspects of my practice. I invite the reader to slow down and contemplate their own practice, just as I have done: not to examine or to study, but to look with love and to be *radically open*. We are always in the process of becoming.



Lisanne Janssen  
*What I Have Been Meaning to Tell You*





Offence' was a collaborative experiment with the objective of creating an alternative educational programme in Matera, Italy, as part of the Collective Minor semester of the bachelor's curriculum at the Design Academy Eindhoven. Students reacted to the unaddressed conflicts and often-unhealthy hierarchies at the academy by engaging in a horizontal alternative for an educational process. Having taken part in this experiment both as a mentor and as a participant, I analyse it in hindsight by taking a comprehensive look at the project's archive, publications, my personal notes and informal

conversations with former participants. The focal points of this research are horizontality and co-responsibility as core qualities in engaging in a shared creation of meaning. I pay special attention to defining a structure, questioning the boundaries between individuality and collectivism, and promoting a transparent approach to communication, responsibilities and trust. Along with these elements, I argue that a constant shifting of perspectives is essential for fostering horizontal and co-responsible relationships in a group of students.



Diogo Rinaldi  
*Offence. An Exploration of  
Horizontality and Co-Responsibility*





In this graduation project, I propose a rupture in the broad discourse around inter-, trans-, and multi-disciplinarity by disengaging from the methodological trap of the self-referential academic discussion around disciplinarity. The latter is too detached, in my opinion, from concrete experiences and existing non-disciplinary practices. Therefore, starting from my personal practice and struggles inside an interdisciplinary cultural institution, I decided to sketch an alternative approach that relies on temporarily removing disciplines to help develop a better collaboration attitude between them, not in an interdisciplinary project but by having people from different disciplines learning together.

In this way, learners become aware of how people with different backgrounds think and grasp reality, challenging the assumptions and hierarchies that normally originate from stereotyped images of specific characters (the nerd scientist, the greedy economist, the eccentric artist...). I call this approach indisciplinaryity, a concept already briefly introduced by French

philosopher Jacques Rancière, which he expanded to distinguish between the specific discipline that students learn within a traditional teaching environment and disciplines, the way they divide knowledge and separate those who can contribute to it from those who cannot.

For this graduation project, I co-designed an indisciplinary online learning community, called *Make Economy Yours Again* (MEYA), whose aim was to co-create a new knowledge base for developing alternative economic narratives. Participants were diverse in age, nationality, background and level of education, united only by their interest in economic activism. Through two editions of MEYA, I tested different pedagogical devices and de-disciplinizing strategies to translate the approach of indisciplinaryity into a concrete case study. The learning community became a space to practice economic change, a weekly 3-hour training session to exercise other ways of being in the current economic system, while questioning some of the assumptions and ideologies that dominate our understanding and action in our complex world.



Lorenzo Gerbi  
*Indisciplined by Learning*





This research is an attempt to base my teaching as a theatre teacher at the PABO Leiden on the undercurrents more than on governmental guidelines. By doing this, I am trying to connect the students in the part-time programme at PABO to the content of teaching drama in primary schools on a more personal level, so that their feeling of competence and urgency will increase, and drama and art will play a bigger role in their practice. I'm trying to accomplish this by experimenting with different ways of questioning both my role as a teacher and the content of my teaching through play, scripted classes and making assignments.

I used the book *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (2013) by Stefano Harney

and Fred Moten as a framework to re-evaluate my current practice, and I use their term 'study' to describe learning as a social activity, in which we define what we find important at that particular moment despite the demands the programme might have for us. I am trying to use theatre to liberate both teacher and student from the constraints of an educational system in which result-based learning leads to result-based teachers. Instead, I'm trying to foster a way of working in which we can speculate on what it means to teach. My research project is a personal reflection of my repositioning as a theatre teacher in an institutionalized environment, but I hope others recognize the struggle of 'how to play the game of teaching' and find some comfort in it.



## Jeroen van der Heijden *Disappearance of a Drama Teacher.* *A Whodunnit?*





Looking back, I understand the urgency of this research. I had just moved from Brazil, from the small town of Paraty where I had been immersed in and connected to nature, to Rotterdam in the Netherlands. In this new context, I could not recognize nature in the way I knew it, not only because of the change in the biome, but also because I had moved to a big city. In this new context I had to expand the concept of what nature is, find ways to connect with it and acknowledge its benefits and importance for people's health and the health of the planet. For that, I re-examined my background as a Caiçara from a traditional community in Brazil to find ways of understanding how the values of community and place are the basis of cultural identity and the feeling of belonging.

As part of a practice-based research focused on awareness of nature, I developed, applied and analysed educational artistic activities with respect to nature around the city of Rotterdam, specific to those who live in cities and/or have little access to nature. The activities were in the form of workshops inspired by Joseph Cornell's book *Sharing Nature*, in which he presents a four-step theme for learning about nature, and

also by my own expertise. The ensuing reports on activities, interviews and a bibliography served as a basis for the theoretical body of the text. On top of that, my position as a member of a traditional community, an immigrant, and artist-educator helped me to form critical thinking.

The research has shown that for those who have little access to nature, or who live in cities, connecting with it requires a state of mind of appreciation and awe. In this context, the educator is a facilitator who guides the experience in order to provide the tools and means necessary for that state of mind to arise. The results of the educational practices show that the connection with nature happens at a subtle level – that is, it is fragile, almost immeasurable and ephemeral. It needs to be nurtured, re-linked, and constantly revised to be active. Taking this into account, the goal of these educational practices is to make people aware of the presence of nature everywhere and its indisputable importance and connection with human beings and life on Earth. However, this work proved to be both arduous and constant in terms of accessing the necessary state of mind and environment for this.



## Xica Negra *Experiencing Nature: How to Connect with Nature while Living in the City*



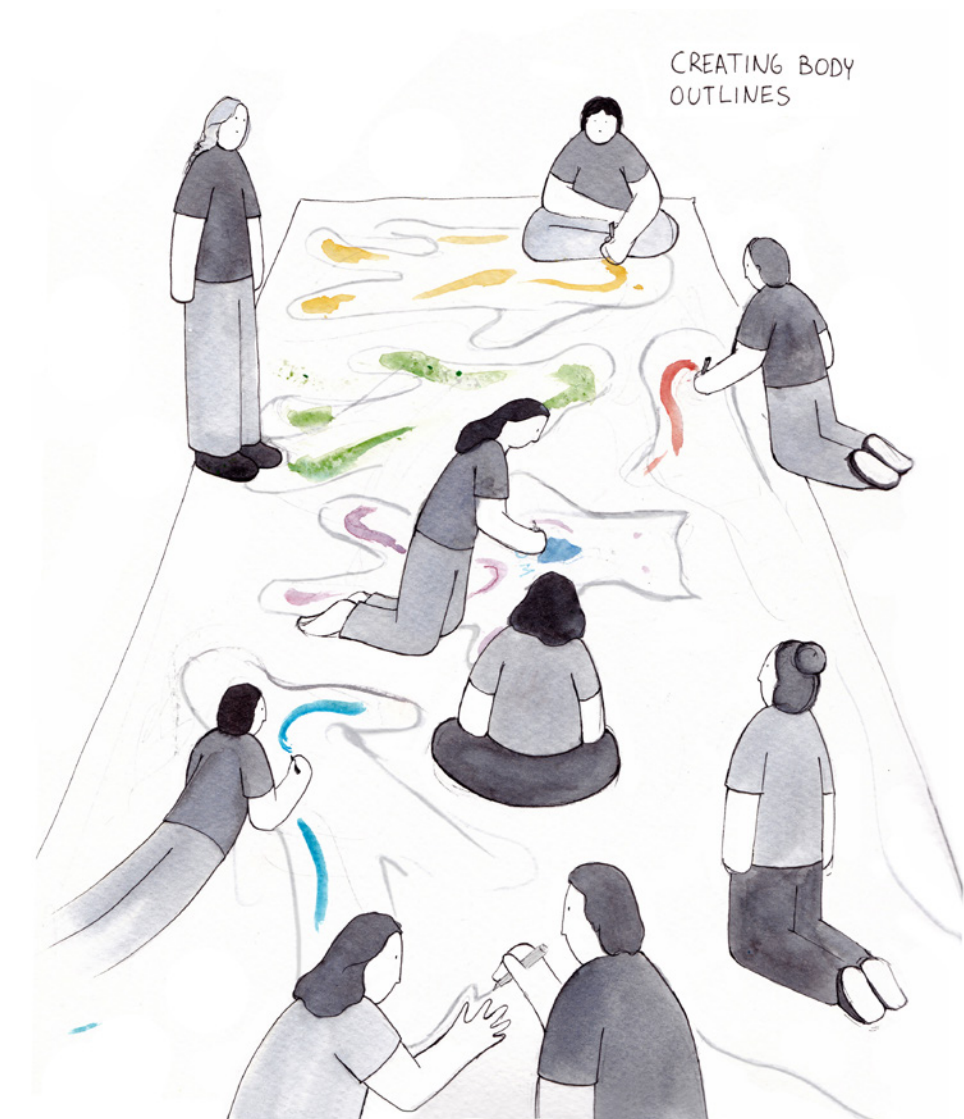


This research is an attempt to learn how to build more respectful interactions and relationships while working with emergent multilingual children at the asylum seeker's centre in Rijswijk. My interest in this research started with the will to investigate ways to overcome language barriers when working in spaces with children where a multiplicity of languages is spoken and where we many times were lacking a common language to communicate in. I felt that language was often an issue, a boundary, causing a lack of engagement, miscommunication, frustration, limited connection, disempowerment. Observing these effects made me willing to develop practices which are beneficial for situations when we may be experiencing linguistic limitations and overcome language challenges and other boundaries.

Through this research I primarily tried to learn from the children and the moments shared with them, by mainly using the 'affect theory' approach. In this research, affect took the form of my having the intention to be affected, asking myself 'How I can prime myself to be affected?' and 'How can I create more opportunities to learn from the children?'. Grappling with these questions made me pay attention to and affirm gestures and moments of exchange that I felt affected me and the other participants, moments when I felt that relational exchanges were either weakened or lifted. Such a focus made this research not about presenting a finished result, a discovery or a success but a process in itself. Through this process I explored different strategies, such as play and multilingualism, and principles such as pedagogical love, trust and vulnerability.



**Elina Charinti**  
*Holding Moments. Understanding and Engaging Affective Pedagogies with Emergent Multilingual Children*







## Professional and reliable assessment of Graduation Projects

The aim of the Graduation Project is to have students demonstrate their ability to operate as an independent and critically reflective educational practitioner, able to develop their own practice in teaching and supportive work, and to encourage innovation in learning and teaching in the context they work in.

All five competencies need to be passed with a minimum grade of 6 (a Pass, see *MEiA Required Competencies & Grading Chart*), but students may excel and/or put the emphasis on a different set or combination of these competencies. As one can read in the *MEiA Curriculum Overview*, the graduate research is evaluated according to the full set of competencies and competency indicators, which are closely aligned to the course content and formulated as such that they correspond to assessing the student's graduate work.

As part of the process of the assessment during the Preliminary Evaluation, and in preparation for the final exam, all competency indicators have been translated into hands-on questions, which make it easy for students and staff to relate the competencies to different aspects of graduate research. The Preliminary Evaluations are conducted by at least three examiners (Course Director, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Graduation Supervisors). In line with our assessment philosophy, the student is also equally involved and engaged in this process, by presenting a self-assessment related to the five competencies.

During the Graduation Exam, an external examiner is added to this team. In accordance with the institutional policy for master's programmes at PZI, an external examiner ensures that Graduation Project assessment procedures are carried out in accordance with academic guidelines. By monitoring assessment procedures, the external examiner also offers feedback on whether the graduation projects are of an appropriate professional standard and comparable to other master's programmes in the field. Nominated by the Course Director, external examiners are professionals within the discipline and knowledgeable of the research they assessed. The external examiner receives all the graduation work of the students and attends the presentations during the exams. Final grades are decided in a process of negotiation between the graduation supervisors of each student, the external examiner (as an objective standard outside the programme) and the complete team of supervisors. At the end of the meeting, all results are calibrated. The Chair (Course Director) monitors this process.

Students receive a grading form with an elaborated, integrated assessment written by two graduation supervisors, based on the discussion within the Graduation Exam panel. In following this procedure, we pay tribute to the fact that ensuring the reliability of professional judgements is based on the acknowledgement that highly complex learning is largely dependent on holistic judgement (within a layered academic, disciplinary and professional community) rather than standardized procedures. Supervisors determine the final assessment of a graduation project in dialogue with each other, the external examiner and the team of supervisors as a community of experts.



## Our graduates

MEiA graduates embody a broad definition of educational practice. Students who enrol in the master's programme come from different directions and professional levels. Participants in our programme often already have a career in education, art or design and/or aspire to develop one or develop new perspectives within it. Our graduates work in the field of primary, secondary or vocational art education, higher art and design education (BA and MA level), museum education and public programming or more local cultural institutional settings, but also maker education spaces or socially-engaged participatory practices with a clear educational incentive. In our present-day society, learning takes place both *inside* and *outside* of institutional learning environments. In order to stay up to par with societal changes and the particular knowledge and theoretical frameworks connected with each discipline, it is important to develop the ability to renew one's educational practice and pedagogical skills through research and a critically reflective attitude. What stands out as general thread within the graduate research is the critically reflective attitude behind them and the newly informed and engaged directions that our graduates propose to take their practices in, thereby also transforming/innovating the institutional environments they work in as they go.

## Evaluation and reflection

Thijs Witty joined the team of tutors for the Practice and Research Seminar in 2020, and developed a systematic in-depth programme for teaching students critical reading and writing skills and practice-based research methods. Together with the development of an informative website to be consulted by staff and students for Research Practices in Art Education, this has improved the teaching of practice-based research methods within the course. Alumni of the course increasingly play an important role in this process; they are frequently invited as guest tutors, thus passing on their knowledge to fellow students and contributing to the general knowledge base within the programme.

It was inevitable that the COVID crisis would have an effect on the students' graduation projects. Particularly the students' practice-based research proved to be challenging during the periods of strict lockdowns, with schools and cultural institutions being closed. More students than usual opted for an extended study trajectory of 6 months. At the same time, we were impressed by the resilience of our graduates in adapting to the situation, responding to it and even thematizing it as part of their graduate research. They also turned the crisis into an opportunity to reflect on ethical standards and the fundamental reciprocal and embodied nature of education, while also experimenting with online education. The graduate students in the 2019–2021 cohort developed a beautiful online graduation presentation called *Preparations for Being Together in an Unknown Period of Time* (<https://meia-graduation2021.pzwart.nl>).

We have improved the preparatory stage of the graduation trajectory in the first year by making sure the students write a concise Graduation Project Proposal, which they present at the end of the first year. The newly developed Graduation Project Seminar has greatly improved the learning trajectory in Trimester 4, guiding the students much more closely during the initial stage of their graduation projects. As mentioned, we are working on the further development of a *Research Practices in Art Education* website as a shared repository

and didactical tool to be used by both students and staff to improve literacy in methods of research. Additionally, teaching documentation practices and making use of other (visual) media could be further improved as a continuing line of learning. Some students tend to fall back on the standard format of 'writing a thesis', to present their graduate research, whereas storytelling, documenting and 'thinking through making' are just as important.

It can be challenging at times to prepare students for a practice-based, educational research trajectory that leaves room for experimentation and conceptual rigor while also living up to the reality that students enter the programme with different levels of experience in academic research and writing skills. It remains important to monitor this well during student admission procedures, but also to acknowledge the importance of offering a clear overall pedagogical structure of the course.

1 Fostering a trans-  
formative learning  
experience

2 Assessments for  
(not of) learning

3 Mapping of an indi-  
vidual & collective  
learning trajectory

4 Experimental  
& engaged research  
practices in art  
education

# 5 Appendices

## APPENDICES

Attached as a separate documents

I: *MEiA Course Profile*

II: *MEiA Curriculum Overview*

III: *Proposal Guide*

IV: *Graduation Project Guide*

V: *Essay ‘Learning with Others’*

### Staff Profile

Kate Brehme

Kate Brehme is an independent curator and arts educator with a disability based in Berlin. Kate trained as an artist and in museum studies, and completed her doctorate at the Center for Metropolitan Studies at Berlin’s Technical University where she undertook research into the contemporary art biennial and urban space. Kate has worked in Australia, Scotland and Germany on a variety of independent projects, exhibitions and events, and as an arts educator for organizations such as The Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh and The National Galleries of Scotland. Since 2008, she has led Contemporary Art Exchange, a curatorial platform for international projects, exhibitions and events that provides professional development opportunities for emerging, young and marginalized artists. In 2017, Kate co-founded Berlinklusion, Berlin’s Network for Accessibility in Art and Culture, a collective of artists and arts mediators with and without disabilities who create inclusive arts projects and provide communities and arts organizations with advice on accessibility.

Function: Course tutor Seminar Making Things Public

Level: MA, PhD

Expertise: Museum/gallery education, public programming, museum studies, inclusivity & disability studies in relation to education, art mediation, socially engaged and participatory practices, public outreach

FTE: 0.1 FTE

Ingrid Commandeur

Ingrid Commandeur is Course Director, tutor and senior researcher. She holds an MA in Art History from the VU University in Amsterdam. Prior to her position at the Piet Zwart Institute, Commandeur was senior editor at *METROPOLIS M, Magazine of Contemporary Art*, lecturer in art theory at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam and independent art critic and researcher. Ingrid Commandeur has published extensively on contemporary art. Among her book publications are: *Robert Smithson: Art in Continual Movement* (2012) and ‘The Beautiful Risk of Criticality’ in: *Spaces for Criticism. Shifts in Contemporary Art Discourses* (2015). In 2017 she curated the symposium *Agents in the Anthropocene. Trans/disciplinary Practices in Art and Design Education Today*. She takes a special interest in post-humanist and new materialist education theories and the transgression of boundaries between arts, technology & sciences.

Function: Course Director, course tutor Graduation Project Seminar

Level: MA

Expertise: Secondary and higher art and design education, research practices



in art education, artistic research, transdisciplinary education, affect theory, critical/feminist pedagogy, post-humanist and new materialist education theories, writing practices, art criticism  
FTE: 0.8 FTE

Elizabeth Graham

Elizabeth Graham is a curator and educator working in London and the Netherlands. She is currently the Civic Associate Curator at the Serpentine Galleries, connecting artists, communities, self-organised groups and campaigns through long term residency programmes in the city. Through this work she has built relationships with people including; artists, activists, those seeking asylum, organisers, schools, early years practitioners, playworkers, architects, designers, students, social workers, teachers and many more. Prior to this, Elizabeth has worked at a variety of arts organisations including; Arnolfini, Tate Britain and Modern and as a researcher for the South London Gallery. Her work is grounded in an ongoing study of radical pedagogy, learning from Brazilian educator Paulo Freire’s and bell hooks’ teachings, to advocate for and create practices that challenge neoliberal and colonial models of education that are still found in museums, arts organisations and institutions today. Her work is also underpinned through an engagement with group dynamics theory, abolitionist and transformative justice movements, cooperative work, decolonised approaches to non-violent communication, embodiment, somatic work and trauma-informed practices.

Function: Course tutor Practice and Research Seminar, graduation supervisor  
Level: MA  
Expertise: museum/gallery education, public programming in- outside museums, neighbourhood and community projects, radical pedagogy, group dynamics, cooperative work, embodiment in education, trauma-informed practices, self-organised groups, collective practice, the artist-as-educator  
FTE: 0.1 FTE

Lisa Heinis

Lisa Heinis is a Belgian art historian working within the field of art education. Currently, she is a curator of Education at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam where she is responsible for setting up education projects and programming at both the Depot and Zuid. Lisa Heinis wrote a PhD in Art History at the University of Brussels (VUB) called ‘A Cacophony of Intersecting Stories’ (2020). Before moving to the Netherlands, Lisa worked as a Visiting Student Scholar from UC Berkeley and as a Research Fellow at the Wattis Institute of Contemporary Art in San Francisco (US). Here she worked on four research programs whereby one artist is ‘on our mind’ for (at least) one year.

Function: Graduation supervisor  
Level: MA, PhD  
Expertise: Museum education, public programming, art mediation, feminist art history, collective learning, institutional critique, public outreach, secondary and higher education, research practices in education, practicing decoloniality in museums  
FTE: 0.06 FTE

Çağlar Köseoğlu

Çağlar Köseoğlu studied philosophy and literature in the Netherlands, Turkey and the US. He received his second MA in Aesthetics and Politics at California Institute of the Arts on a Fulbright scholarship. He is a Lecturer at Erasmus University College, where he teaches literature, politics and postcolonial theory, and a core tutor of the transdisciplinary minor Re-Imagining Tomorrow through Arts and Sciences, offered jointly by EUC, WdKA and Codarts. For his PhD, he focuses on critical, affective and compositionist pedagogies in the context of race, colonialism and decolonization. He is editor of literary journal *nY* and member of the poetry advisory commission of the Flemish Foundation for Literature. His poems have appeared among others in *Samplekanon*, *nY*, *Cabaret Wittgenstein*, *De Internet Gids* and *Kunsttijdschrift Vlaanderen*. His poetry (chap) book publications are *34* (2015) with Stanza Press and *Nasleep* (2020) with het balanseer.

Function: Course tutor Pedagogy of Study, graduation supervisor  
Level: MA, PhD-candidate  
Expertise: transdisciplinary education, artistic research, secondary and higher art and design educationn, university education, critical pedagogy, post-colonial theory, decolonial pedagogy, affect studies, poetry, research practices in art education  
FTE: 0.1 FTE

Sjoerd Westbroek

Sjoerd Westbroek is an educator and artist with a practice that involves drawing, writing, teaching, studying and collaborating. He holds a BA in Fine Art in Education from ArtEZ Arnhem, a BA in Philosophy from Erasmus University Rotterdam and an MA Fine Art from the Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam and the University of Plymouth. In 2013/2014 he was a resident artist at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. Between 2008 and 2013 he was a founding member of artist-initiative ADA Rotterdam, which mainly focused on creating a support structure for recently graduated artists through providing studio spaces and organising a public program. He was also a board member of various art initiatives, most recently Hotel Maria Kapel in Hoorn. Westbroek is lecturer at the Teacher Training Programme of the Willem de Kooning Academie Rotterdam, where he tutors courses in artistic practice.

Function: Course tutor Practice and Research Seminar, graduation supervisor  
Level: MA  
Expertise: primary/secondary/vocational education, artist-led pedagogy, artistic research, education philosophy, drawing, collaborative practice, artist initiatives  
FTE: 1.5 FTE

Irina Shapiro

Irina Shapiro is a designer, educator and curator. Her practice combines investigative artistic projects with educational events and research programmes that are often developed in collaboration with communities and organisations. Trained as a designer and scenographer, she sees pedagogy as her current dominant medium of practice and as a space for public engagement. Her educational work explores situational, participatory and sensorial qualities of applied arts. Shapiro’s research themes focus on pedagogical, artistic and storytelling approaches that act within multiscale, multi-species environments

and open up inter-relational forms of knowing. Shapiro is a co-initiator of Open Set, an alternative platform for art/design research and development; a tutor of the New Earth Course, Social Practices at the Willem de Kooning Academy; and a researcher at the RASL (Rotterdam Arts & Sciences Lab).

Function: Course tutor Contemporary Issues in Art and Design Education Seminar, graduation supervisor  
Level: MA  
Expertise: RASL (Rotterdam Arts & Sciences Lab), transdisciplinary education, design/maker education, higher art education, design methodologies, design practice in a multidisciplinary context, self-organized and para-academic education, participatory and socially engaged design, artistic research, experimental pedagogy  
FTE: 0.2 FTE

**Renée Turner**  
Renée Turner is an artist, educator and writer whose practice engages with inter-disciplinary forms of study. Whether working collaboratively or on her own, her research is informed by feminist perspectives and the entanglement of sites, histories, and embodied encounters with various human and non-human agents animating our world and everyday life. She has been an artist in residence at Skowhegan, the Rijksakademie, and the Jan van Eyck Academy and awarded grants from the Mondriaan Foundation, the Creative Industries Fund NL, and The Institute of Creative Technologies. Currently, she is a Senior Lecturer at the Willem de Kooning Academy, a Fellow at V2 and a member of the Promiscuous Care Research Group, and a researcher within the RASL, a transdisciplinary consortium between the Willem de Kooning Academy, Erasmus University, and Codarts. Next to these activities, she is a doctoral candidate at LUCA’s Intermedia Research Unit: *Deep Histories Fragile Memories*.

Function: Course tutor Contemporary Issues in Art and Design Education Seminar  
Level: MA, PhD-candidate  
Expertise: interdisciplinary education, RASL (Rotterdam Arts & Sciences Lab), higher art and design education; digital cultures & education; feminist, decolonial, critical pedagogies; artistic research, community-based practices, narrative/environmental ecologies, slow reading  
FTE: 0.1 FTE

**Marek van de Watering**  
Marek van de Watering is an artist, writer, educator, organizer and researcher, and uncle of Roef and Kees. The recurring theme in all of these roles is how working together works, and more specifically how ideals and realities of working together relate to each other, especially in art and its education. He is currently the Head of the Orientation Course at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and has been teaching at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie since 2013, after having graduated in Fine Arts there. Next to that, he is part of the Lectoraat Art & Public Space (LAPS) research group, where he looks into radical historical educational methods in the arts in Eastern Europe and is coining the term “educational critique” – art that reflects critically on its educational environment – as an artistic research topic. Before venturing into art and art education, Marek was a junior researcher and lecturer in (amongst others) the Multimedia curriculum of the Computer Science Department at

the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, having obtained his Bachelor and Master (cum laude) degrees there.

Function: Course tutor Graduation Project Seminar, graduation supervisor  
Level: MA  
Expertise: secondary and higher art education, history of radical education, research methods in education, multi-media, computer science, artistic research, socially engaged art and education, learning together, transdisciplinary education, writing as research  
FTE: 0.1 FTE

**Thijs Witty**  
Thijs Witty is a researcher and educator based in Amsterdam. Thijs studied cultural theory and analysis at the Amsterdam School for Cultural Analysis, University of Amsterdam, and obtained his PhD there in 2019. Thijs was core tutor at the MA Artistic Research at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Den Haag, where he supervised reading groups, writing and research workshops and thesis projects. He is a regular guest lecturer at a number of art academies and universities in the Netherlands, including the University of Amsterdam, DAI, Sandberg Institute and DAS Graduate School. Currently he is university lecturer in film and literary studies at Leiden University. His main research interest is the history and present of popular education in Europe, including non-institutional variants such as video essayism, informal study groups, and worker’s organisation. He is also a proud member of the Amsterdam Marionettes Theatre, the only ensemble in the Netherlands that still practices classical Austrian puppet technique.

Function: Course tutor Practice and Research Seminar and Graduation Project Seminar, graduation supervisor  
Level: MA, PhD  
Expertise: vocational, secondary and higher art education, education philosophy and theory, research methods in art education, writing practices, informal/extra-institutional education  
FTE: 0.2 FTE

**Susana Pedrosa**  
Susana Pedrosa is the course coordinator of the Master Education in Arts. In parallel to her work at Piet Zwart, she is also a somatic coach working with conscious movement and embodiment. Based in Rotterdam since 2009, for many years she worked as a cultural producer working mainly in educational platforms and projects operating within the public sphere. She initiated and took part in projects like *Oblique International*, *m/other voices*, and Open Set, among others. She holds a bachelor in Fine Arts by the University of Porto, Portugal, attended the Maumaus Independent Study Program in Lisbon, and graduated from the Master Fine Art at Piet Zwart Institute in 2011.

Function: Course coordinator  
Level: MA  
Expertise: Project management, cultural production, (dance) coaching  
FTE: 0.4 FTE



IMAGE CREDITS

- p.29, top: Event *Learning with the Garden; Learning from the Land*, June 2022, Volkstuinvereniging Streven na Verbetering (SNV), Rotterdam. Photo: Aad Hoogendoorn
- p.29, bottom: Graduation Event *Rehearsal: Emerging Learning Sites*, July 2022, TENT., Rotterdam. Photo: Aad Hoogendoorn
- p.30: Event *Learning with the Garden; Learning from the Land*, June 2022, Volkstuinvereniging Streven na Verbetering (SNV), Rotterdam. Photo: Aad Hoogendoorn
- p.31, top: Event *Affective Pedagogies*, Workshop, dancer and performer Raoni Muzho Saleh, March 2023, TENT. Rotterdam. Photo: Urtè Baranauskaitė
- p.31, bottom: Event *Affective Pedagogies*, Lecture/Workshop *Visible Mending and/as Reparative Pedagogy*, Sanne Koevoets, March 2023, TENT. Rotterdam. Photo: Urtè Baranauskaitė
- p.40: Lisanne Janssen, *standing still while at the same time moving on*, 2021
- p.41, top left and right: Photos by Lisanne Janssen
- p.41, bottom: Spread from *Time Zine* by Lisanne Janssen
- pp.42–43: All photos by Lucas de Ruiter
- p.44: Visual for MEYA #1 by Gabriela Baka
- p.45, top: Participants during the attunement exercise
- p.45, middle: MEYA #2 session: *Where Physically the Learning Happens*
- p.45, bottom: Video manifesto (film still) by Alexandra Zhasminova and Aušra Česnauskytė
- pp.46–47: All photos by Jeroen van de Heijden and Mireille Wieggers
- pp.48–49: All photos by Xica Negra and Urtè Baranauskaitė
- pp.50–51: All drawings by Elina Charinti
- p.52: top and bottom: Graduation Event *Rehearsal: Emerging Learning Sites*, July 2022, TENT., Rotterdam. Photo: Aad Hoogendoorn

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