

The Aesthetic Diary as an Instrument for Further Education

Since the post-war period, positions in art education have been moving from a view of art to a view of the world, from an understanding of art to an understanding of the world. The subject is changing from recipient to actor. Following this movement, the basics for working on an aesthetic diary are described here. In this case, the aesthetic diary serves to reflect on one's own actions in the work with non-artists in the field of socially engaged art. It is a tool that enables learning through self-observation and reflection.

What does Aesthetic Experience mean?

To understand the endeavour, we first turn to the term aisthesis. In its original sense, this refers to sensual perception. "In aesthetic experience, sensory perception is transformed from a medium by which we otherwise take in information into a process for us that carries its purpose within itself." (Dietrich et al. 2012, p.16) In this process, perception itself and its relation to the ego becomes the subject. The philosopher Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten (1750) ascribed to it the same cognitive capacity as logic. His core thesis: cognition, made possible by aesthetic perception, is, in contrast to logic, open and indeterminate, it sets a questioning process in motion. It is not about recognising or registering what is already known, but about a pleasurable disquiet. Already in Baumgarten's work, scientific aesthetics is directed towards sensual perception as a mode of cognition or experience. (Cf. Dietrich et al. 2012, p. 16) It places the experience - and not what has triggered the experience - at the centre. Immanuel Kant describes it similarly. It is about perception in its relation to the subject, which also means that each person can perceive the same situation differently. (Cf. Dietrich et al. 2012. p.17.f.).

Aesthetic perception is not bound to specific objects. The aesthetic effect develops from it: it is a question of what happens between me and the object that stimulates the aesthetic perception. The process brings me into a conversation with myself. From this, the aesthetic experience unfolds, which means that the I knows about the effect of aesthetic perception and enters into conversation about it with others.

Perception-Effect-Experience

This three-step process - perception-effect-experience - only underpinned with other contemporary theories, can also be found in the work of art educator Andrea Sabisch, in her reflections on aesthetic experience. In 2009, she developed a model that also assumes that aesthetic experience is a fundamental form of encountering the world: "This is radical in that aesthetic experience is then not just one mode of experience alongside others, but underpins or motivates all experience" (Sabisch 2009, p. 15). She refers to the philosopher Bernhard Waldenfels, who starts from the conceptual dyad of pathos and response. In his approach, pathos means being struck by something alien: "Pathos is thereby a shock (Waldenfels, 2015, p.111) to one's own experience, which occurs "in the form of a sudden flash, an explosive bang" (Waldenfels, 2015, p.20)." (Quoted from Wendt, 2017) However, the foreign is not the completely other, but it still enables a response - response - of the self. Nevertheless: "Pathos and response are like two links in a chain that does not close. One cannot be

derived from the other" (Waldenfels, 2015, p.23). Waldenfels calls the in-between, the space between pathos and response, diastasis. The dyad thus becomes a conceptual triad pathos-diastasis-response. As Sabisch explains, this describes the "transformation of what we are hit by into something we respond to". (Sabisch 2009, p. 15) It is in the fault line between the two, the diastasis, which also has a temporal dimension, that the creative response work happens. New differentiations - corresponding to the order of the self - can emerge in the response to the foreign, and thus new ways of accessing realities, always in the knowledge that these can never be fully grasped and comprehended (see also Derrida 1976). This is the moment of aesthetic experience. One's own answers can be given in a wide variety of media (linguistic, situational-bodily, visual) and thus animate the creative but also the artistic research process. Understanding the responses of others then requires, in a further step, the process of interpretation and/or conversation, and thus the process becomes an intersubjective one.

Diastasis - the moment of irritation, reorientation and learning

The fault line, the diastasis, is the moment from which artistic or aesthetic research unfolds. The starting point of this rather young discipline is the thesis that artistic processes can also be places of knowledge production. The term artistic research refers to research in general, the term aesthetic research is used more in the field of art education and art pedagogy. The latter is associated in the German-speaking world, for example, with approaches by the pedagogue and artist Helga Kämpf--Jansen, who regards art education as aesthetic research and thus follows movements in the current artistic discussion (interweaving of art with other fields such as everyday life, science, "fringing" of the arts, dissolution of genre boundaries, etc.). The process is similar in both cases, the expected results are different. Both assume that the production of knowledge is related to the position of the researching subject, a perspective that has become generally accepted in research.

The following remarks now refer to the concept of artistic research. "Artistic research aims at a knowledge produced in and through artistic practices and aesthetic forms of representation, each of which is conveyed in its own modes of presentation and structures of reception that differ fundamentally from those of the other sciences." (Annemarie Matzke, 2012) Two forms of knowledge are applied: "knowing how" and "knowing that". The former refers to an everyday – and action knowledge that one has at one's disposal without having to know the corresponding rules. "Knowing that" refers to a primarily theoretical knowledge that can be named and expressed in rules. (Cf. Annemarie Matzke, 2012) According to Gilbert Ryle, both forms of knowledge are equal. The special potential of the arts now lies in the fact that both forms of knowledge meet and overlap here (Ryle 2002). New knowledge emerges from the interweaving, which proves to be subjective, relational and processual.

The working process for the diary

Knowledge production through artistic research also determines the working process for the Aesthetic Diary. The starting point in the work can be both an open research process and questions that have been discussed and developed in advance. In this case, it is about questions connected with processes in socially engaged art. It is important that the questions are formulated in such an open way that there is room for unexpected moments of insight.

How can you think of this in concrete terms? In the process of aesthetic experience, one first perceives the situation holistically, sensually. The next step is about the effect this situation has on the perceiving person, the diastasis. It is the moment that makes new insights possible. The effect, which can also trigger a moment of not knowing, of irritation, of searching, is enlarged with the help of artistic procedures and material-aesthetic means, stretched in time and viewed from different sides. The artistic procedures that are used can be manifold. They are used to collect, document, reflect and research. From this point, the process can continue and repeat itself. New perceptions are always possible. Further questions can arise. This also means that it is more productive if the work on the aesthetic diary accompanies the entire working process in a project.

At the end, the resulting material is processed and structured. An artistic form of presentation is sought, as a response. It is also possible to work with means of alienation, collage and dismantling. It is important to talk about the results, which, as experience has shown, leads to further insights. In any case, insights are formulated verbally or in writing, i.e. also linguistically.

The work on the aesthetic diary and its connection to action research

In the present case, the issues of the aesthetic diary are linked to action research. Action research is not a new invention, but another word for systematically reflected practice,...(Posch, lecture) Action research has gained importance in view of the rapid processes of change in society and the resulting new demands - also in artistic participatory work in the context of socially engaged art. It also helps to deal with the complex demands and to present one's own work competently. (Posch, lecture) She distinguishes between developmental and cognitive interest. This is about the question: What do I want to achieve, or what is the case? As in action research, it is about self-directed professional development through exploring and reflecting on one's own work as an artist:in in the field of socially engaged art. The questions are linked to practice, developing along the concrete work experience of individuals. In this case, the social processes and artistic strategies are being researched. Specifically, it is about one's own motivation to work, the motivation of the participants, special needs of the participants, group processes, which artistic strategies initiate which processes, etc. The research is also concerned with the social processes of the participants.

There is another connection between artistic research and action research: it is about irritating perceptions, about the foreign in the former case or the consideration of observations beyond one's own expectations in the latter case. (Posch, lecture) They are an important starting point for the examination of one's own work.

Both approaches want the findings to be made public. Thus, for the work on the Aesthetic Diary, it is essential that conversations take place during the process, and also about the final results with other people working professionally. Group work has proven to be particularly productive.

As an example, a conversation about an aesthetic diary is described below. Director Anja Wohlfahrt worked with 14 young people on an evening of theatre that focused on the young people's attitude to life: "Cafe Depresso". It was a touching evening that showed the pressure young people are under, the problematic relationship they have with their bodies, how lonely they feel.

In the conversation with the director about her aesthetic diary, the first topic was her ability to form a group with 14 very different people and to work on a result with which everyone can identify. She succeeded extraordinarily well. When asked what made this possible, she mentioned good communication with all participants as a relevant moment and described how she had established this. Furthermore, it was about trust in each other and finally about the artist's trust in herself. Her realisation at the end of the work with the diary: she has to work more on her self-confidence.



Szenebild: Café Depresso @Rappel

Der Link zum Film zum Gespräch, das Edith Draxl mit Anja Wohlfahrt führte.

https://www.kunstlabor-graz.at/projekte/projekt_detail?projekt_id=1648544192548

All the results were created in the Artwork project.

Bibliography

Cornelie Dietrich, Dominik Krininger, Volker Schubert (2012): Einführung in die Ästhetische Bildung

Blohm, Manfred et al. (Hrsg.) (2006): Über ästhetische Forschung. Lektüre zu Texten von Helga Kämpf-Jansen. München: kopaed.

Sabisch, Andrea (2009): Aufzeichnung und Ästhetische Erfahrung. In: Pazzini, Karl-Josef (Hrsg.): Kunstpädagogische Positionen, Bd. 20.

Hamburg. Online im Internet: http://hup.sub.uni-hamburg.de/volltexte/2009/90/pdf/HamburgUP_KPP20_Sabisch.pdf [Stand: 2014-03-25].

Derrida, Jacques (1976): Die Schrift und die Differenz. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Matzke, Annemarie: <https://www.kubi-online.de/artikel/kuenstlerische-praktiken-wissensproduktion-kuenstlerische-forschung>

Eingesehen am 10.4. 2023

Ryle, Gilbert (2002): Der Begriff des Geistes. Stuttgart: Reclam.



Posch, Peter:

https://kphvie.ac.at/fileadmin/Dateien_KPH/Forschung_Entwicklung/Service_Downloads/Archiv_Veranstaltungen/Vortrag_Aktionsforschung-KPH.pdf

Waldenfels, Bernhard (2015): Sozialität und Alterität, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp

Wendt, Alexander N. (2017): Bernhard Waldenfels: Sozialität und Alterität. Modi sozialer Erfahrung. Suhrkamp Verlag (Berlin) 2015. ISBN 978-3-518-29737-7. In: socialnet Rezensionen, ISSN 2190-9245, <https://www.socialnet.de/rezensionen/22756.php>, Datum des Zugriffs 16.04.2023.

The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



Creative Commons License: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, please visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>