

F O U R T H O U S A N D w o r d s a n s w e r i n g

The definition of my practice in relation to newer technologies

In the thousand words I wrote a couple of weeks ago I told that there wasn't a real definition of my practice in relation to newer technologies yet. You can imagine saying that it was quite hard for me to get myself started with the Tools Of The Trade Project. I started realizing that the conclusion and definition of the article actually happened to be the starting point for this next project. And because I didn't made a real conclusion I kind of started empty handed. In those weeks until now I've had quite some struggles but lucky also had some insights. I felt like not having developed a specific 'craft' for my own. Even though I'm already four years at the Willem de Kooning academy now. Or maybe it was there but I simply didn't notice it. It wasn't possible for me to tell people this is what I do. When people asked me, I just chattered a little around without giving a clear answer. It was like responding to the - 'What kind of music do you like?' - question with 'Oh I just like a lot, sort of everything'. I noticed it but never changed it. So off course this has to do with myself but I think it also had to do with the field of study I choose. Teacher in arts isn't really specific in terms of the artistic practice. They give you a lot of freedom; it's all up to you how much you want to get out of it. They allow you to flow to whatever you want and to do the thing you want to do without the need of linking it to specific disciplines or give yourself a good reflecting look on the things you happen to do. With this not knowing what my craft is, you can imagine it's hard to define it to anything at all. So, second article, second chances. I give myself a good new try to define *my* practice in relation to newer technologies.

I incline to forget I'm studying teacher in arts and this is also where I'm graduating in, even though I sometimes think don't want to... I came to the conclusion that in this point of my live being a teacher isn't where I would shine at my best. Thinking about educative design is more heading in the direction I want to be so my last internship will be at a educative design agency. Educative design can be seen in many ways that's why I'll enlighten the alignments I'll be using and heading in to make my practice more clear. First of all education itself and how it's been giving in schools (primary-, middle- and high schools) I have my idea's about how it can be completely redesigned from a creative point of view so the way children and students are learning will be way more natural and logical. I don't have my ideas yet how this will come together using newer technologies. It probably will be using less technology because in many ways it makes people even more stupid. It's now for the first time in human history our brains seem to be stagnating in size or even growing smaller... From a Human reproduction point of view this is good because with those never stopping growing heads it was getting harder and eventually impossible for women to squeeze out babies at parturition because the female hips weren't evolving to a bigger size to fit those heads again. Some people say this shrink has to do with our brain getting more efficient. I'm not so sure about that. We all carry our mobile phones with us all day, all week, all year long. We always have immediate access to any kind of information we want. So the need of storing information in your head becomes less necessary. You can look it up at any possible time again. It makes our brains lazy. And the continuous looking at screens makes our eyes tired and

at the same time keeps us up longer because of the blue light which awakens our brains and can cause trouble with falling asleep. And getting less sleep makes you even more stupid. You can almost see it as a vicious circle.

Knowing the fact that our brain is even more active when we sleep than by watching television already says a lot. All this plain watching does nothing for your brain, for learning and for being creative. We lost touch with reality and our consciousness. Don't get me wrong, I'm happy technology is here and it also does a lot of good things, scientifically seen. But my main concern is it should help us becoming smarter and more aware but it seems to be it only helps us getting the opposite. The society relies on Internet and technology; take everything they see and find there as true. I think we became using technology in the wrong ways. It doesn't make us happier, smarter or more aware of our surroundings. It does make some things easier, which is nice but too much easiness leads to a decrease in learning. Students who get an overload of technical 'comfort' or a constant possibility to direct feedback seem to be insufficient challenged to develop own reason, intellect and critical reflection. Students who overuse technology think they get the curriculum and understand it completely but eventually this understanding appears very superficial. It's the same thing as with the digital craft minor. You think you can do it all with technology, but you end up only knowing and working with the tools been given. Actually the statement made with this digital craft minor is pretty clever and reliable on everything, our whole society. You only learn what the system wants you to learn. Any other explanation of our being *here* and how we *evolved* are out of the question. And this is why I'm making my tool!

For quite some time I wrote down my figments, thoughts and ideas. Until eventually I came to the insight of what I wanted to do. My ideas ended up going in something organically growing thing. Something that seems to be, but not is. I thought i found a way to visualize my ideas. Unfortunately for me the idea was whipped away out of sight pretty quick. I was asked, ' what is your tool? ' And, mostly, ' why? ' I couldn't come up with some real answers. In my head it all came some sort of magically together without clear reasons. No one understood what I was trying to tell so I realized I had to do it differently. In my search to some roots to hang my ideas on and hold on to I red something that reminded me to a philosophy lesson I've had three years ago. French philosopher: Jean Baudrillard. Suddenly it all fell and came together. In one of his theories, the simulacrum theory (in Dutch: schijnbeelden theorie) he discusses the reality from the images we know and presume to be true. Hereby he mostly means our ever-growing world of digital culture and media and the spot it claims within our society and everyday life. You think you know something because you saw something on television, the Internet or a different kind of source outside of yourself. We lost the affiliation to the real world. Take a volcanic eruption and imagine it, how does it look? I see a mushroom shaped explosion in my head which reaches up miles in the sky, and even can produce lighting in itself and whereof descend toxic gasses return to the earth again. I think of the rain of ashes and the swirling lava rivers that devastate everything on its path. In history, some of these eruptions where so big they whipped out almost the entire populations living on the planet. Like what most likely happened to dinosaurs. This knowledge didn't came to me by standing next to a erupting volcano. Like most of us I know this from the images I've seen on television, photos, the Internet, etc. I presume it's true and think my idea of its representation lies quite close to reality. But is that the case? Exactly this is what I find so interesting about it. I see so many

connections to my own figments and finally can explain myself in a way that, I think, people understand me.

Our knowing of the world is no longer based on our own experiences. The reality stands directly opposite against the illusion created by our visual culture. Baudrillard calls it *hyperreality*, whereby he declares we start living in an aimless world. So said, reality and hyperreality are opposites. The lie of the image becomes so absolute it creates a 'homicide on reality': by taking what is happening onscreen and making it a part of your real life by for example watching television, you are doing your job of supporting the matrix' desire to confuse us about the nature of reality. Proving that something doesn't have to happen to feel real to people.

Please notice; it is not this black and white, as it now appears to be. The simulacrum theory divides images in four different categories. These four categories represent each a phase in the evolution of the image.

1. The image is a representation of a fundamental reality.
2. The image masks and prevents a fundamental reality.
3. The image masks the absence of a fundamental reality.
4. The image has no relation with any kind of reality; it's a pure simulacrum on its own.

Baudrillard connects the first two phases to a notion of good and bad. He says: ' In the first case the image is a good appearance, the representation is of the sacramental order. In the second, it's an evil appearance; it is the order of the maleficence ' .

He says an image is good when it represents the reality as close as possible. This follows in the second; an image is bad when it doesn't. The third phase is characterized with a transition to the world of manifestation and simulacra. A judgment about the veracity it in this phase no longer possible. The reality, and there by or ability to judge about this reality misses. The fourth, and last phase of the image is it's own simulacrum. This one is the most important for Baudrillard's theory. In this phase the simulacrum became an image outside the order of appearances. The simulacrum no longer has a reality it refers to. The image is only a manifestation of its own, a pure simulacrum. ' It is no longer part of the order of appearance, but of simulation ' . At the same time it is impossible to distinguish the simulacrum of reality because reality (so seems from the third phase) no longer exists. The reality is replaced by simulacrum. This last phase is also known as hyperreality.

Baudrillard speaks of hyperreality when the physical reality is replaced by a reality of simulacra. We sort of live in a copy of the physical reality. Images who used to refer to a real reality now take the place of this reality. The simulacra which builds this reality refers only to itself, whereby in this reality the simulacrum is the only thing giving meaning. Reality and simulation became impossible to distinguish from each other; reality is replaced by hyperreality. This hyperreality simply said has been giving form by us experiencing the real world only by media. The thing we watch in our living room or on our mobile phones replaces the physical reality. We don't know any other world than the one served up by the media.

Obviously we all have our own interpretation about what this 'reality' I keep talking about. Everyone sees everything differently but for this project I'll focus on the theory of Baudrillard. In this way I'm able in keeping it small, understandable and manageable for myself and to others.

So for now, my tool isn't a physical one you can touch. It is an idea, a call for consciousness, it is something to make people wonder and ask questions about this reality we live in and take as true. I want to give the viewer a new pair of eyes, help them see the world from a different point of view. Is what you think you see, really what you see? This can affiliate in many shapes and forms; I'll use the moon and his phases for visualization. This way of using the 'tool' matches nicely with my field of study, teacher in arts.

I'm happy to see that a lot of things I came up with in the thousand words essay fit within this new project. At that point it where more lose figments in my head than something crystal clear visible. It still isn't a 100% clear to me but at last the fog is diminishing.

Some quotes out of the thousand words essay:

' Things I already do know about it:

1. It has to be a call for consciousness, (which is in my opinion, the main thing missing in the world we live in) by creating a feeling and playing with the known- and unknown. This can be a micro cosmos, a wonder room, an illusion or a object which evolves → the performance is the product, or an combination of all the above mentioned.

With consciousness I mean (shortly):

- The state of being conscious; awareness of one's own existence, sensations, thoughts, surroundings etc.

- Being- and the realization of being aware about the 'reality' we live in;

- Full activity of the mind and senses.

2. But at the same time, how real is real? We've all heard this simple question quite often, maybe to the point of boredom, but I find it an interesting one because there isn't a real answer and I like to think about possibilities.

3. It goes about the world, the cosmos of the everything and the bigness of the emptiness. '

And: ' You end op looking at something familiar, and at the same time it's not '.

This already does in my opinion, in one sort of way, refer to the simulacrum theory.

THIS IS A WORK IN PROGRESS, NOT NEAR FINISHED YET

THANK YOU FOR READING,

I WISH YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS AND A GREAT NEW YEAR,

LOTTE