

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for making an effort to always include everybody in your classroom and listen. I know this is difficult in an institute that is built around white and eurocentric biases and although some mistakes are made I really appreciate what you are trying



A Pedagogy-in-Process

The artist teacher in the feminist classroom



Dear _____,

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Cover image: field note photograph from the guest lesson with
Flip Driest at Lecq project space KIOSK, Calling Cards designed
by Yara Veloso and Artists Stickers from respectively Lygia
Clark, Adrian Piper, Yoko Ono and on this page Audre Lorde.
On the back the Mottos from Valand Academy Sweden and an
Artist Sticker from Selja Kameric.



Introducing The Artist Teacher

This research project aims to reflect on my pedagogical approach and my role as an artist educator within my current position at the *Willem de Kooning Academy* in Rotterdam (The Netherlands). A position in which I teach from my own artistic perspective, bringing multiple experiences as a self-employed artist to the classroom. As artists we find ourselves performing our services anywhere: exhibiting in various contexts, (away) on artist in residencies, giving lectures and workshops, writing, curating, making work in situ, in public, alone, in collaboration, at the studio, with artisans, with interns, as part of art initiatives, at institutions, and most recently working in isolation, and quarantine. Due to this wide variety of professional activities our methodologies are regularly forced to adjust. Art education also expands itself beyond the limits of the classroom, I find myself teaching at the photography darkroom, at the copying machine, in open areas, stations but also in less formal settings like the canteen, in my studio, in exhibitions, at movie screenings, on the street, in lectures, on field trips, at the petanque track, in the hallway and most recently adding the online classroom in the forced contactless education to this repertoire. Going into education as an artist being the 'death nail' to your career (quoting Renee Turner in her introduction to *Critical Pedagogy*)¹ and dealing with the conflicting roles of the artist researcher and the material artist, on a small hours teaching contract alongside my own artistic practice, I can only commit to a pedagogy-in-process: one that is based on experimental but also experiential learning.

Reflecting on my work at several departments and within multiple disciplines at the academy (including my previous teaching experience at the *Royal Academy of Art* in The Hague) I noticed the continuously under- and misrepresentation of women artists, women artists of color, non-binary and genderqueer artists. This, in combination with the lack of exposure to fitting role models during my own artistic upbringing, made me wish to bring more diverse perspectives and references into my teaching. But it wasn't until I started working with interns in 2016 that I saw how this under-representation (which is deeply rooted in our educational system) is reflected in the young artists ideas about future ambitions and perspectives. In art school the classroom is mostly dominated by men: not in student bodies (with a significantly higher number of female students in each classroom we enter) but by the ideal values that are those attributed to men, and that are not attributed to womxn² or otherwise marginalised groups of students. "Although in recent decades the number of women majoring in art has surpassed that of men, women's work is still drastically under-represented in exhibitions, museums, galleries, grants awarded, art history surveys and monographs, art journals, and critical reviews." (Collins 1994, p.73) The de- and reconstruction of the art world will take time, because of its histories and

¹ field note from MEiA class on 25 January 2019 in Leiden
² the term womxn is an alternative term for the English language word women to explicitly include non-cisgender women (source: Wikipedia)

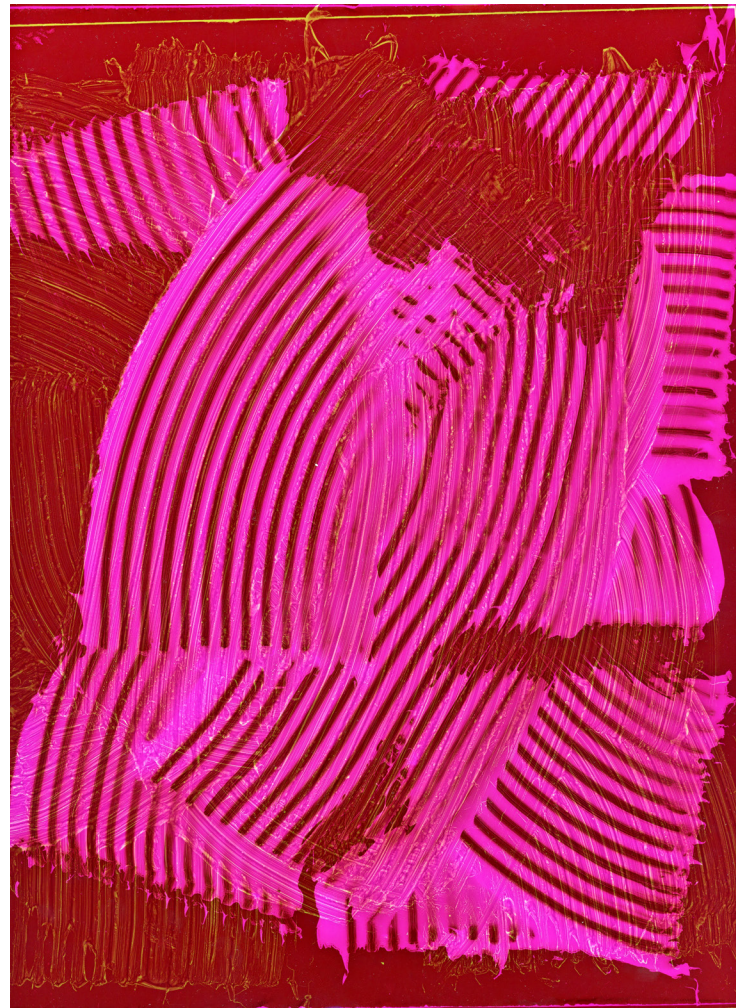


Image: photogram work by Marijke Appelman, January 2020.

its pedagogy. "We are calling for the education system to recognise and value women artists and photographers, and the role they play in society, in their curricula at every level of the system and to provide equal opportunities for female artists and photographers to take part and enrich their curricula."³

First and foremost art education should consist of experiential learning. "Learning-by-doing, be it reading, walking, filming, discussing, painting, etc., should be privileged over reproduction or didactic pedagogies." (Abu ElDahab 2006, p.5) Aside that I believe that representation-is-key because it is through representation that people organize the world. Myself being raised in systems of Western European viewpoints, my education was dominated by white, male, and west which left me with an inability to cite outside of this specific framework and which therefore makes me prone to continue to add to a discourse of exclusion. This realisation led me to approach my teaching as a form of counter teaching. Thinking the content of our teaching at (art) school should be approached otherwise, focusing more on womxn lives and experiences in the art world without it being solely about feminism or activism and without nullifying narratives or just simply adding 'names' to the curriculum. By looking beyond the eurocentric perspective in overall broader contexts. "It might be promising to think of this

³ source: <https://manifesto.fastforward.photography/>



Images: field note photograph from teaching second year fine art students in *Making (a) Public*, September 2017.

word womxn (or others like it), not as a means to include others in your 'we' but, rather, to include yourself in a broader, complicated and conflicted conversation of who 'we' could / might be."⁴ Looking at how we can empower young artists to become part of an art world, accepting our past of oppression and moving towards a more just and equal formation while working with archives that are not the repository of the truth. Like all education, art school studies should be liberating people, promoting care, concern and connection.

Through this research I explore what I have always wanted to do in the classroom but have been too afraid to try. To foster a progressive curriculum, one that is based on the students' interests, and allow my teaching to become personal. "Feminist education – the feminist classroom – is and should be a place where there is a sense of struggle, where there is visible acknowledgment of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university. Most importantly, feminist pedagogy should engage students in a learning process that makes the world more than less real." (hooks 1988, p.51) Through the visual vernacular of everyday life, in a personal perception of the world at large in relation to and in exchange with a generation that rightfully claims

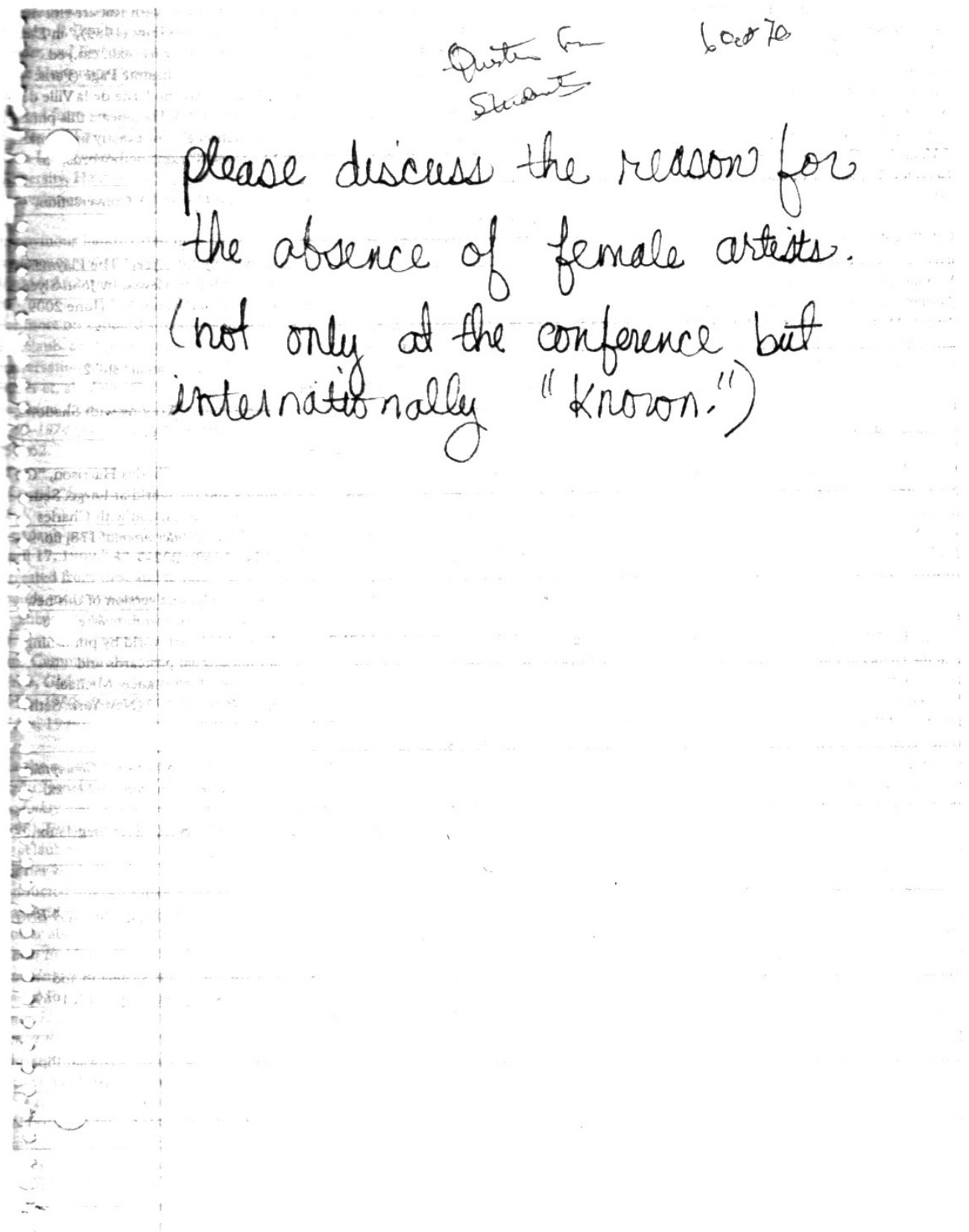
⁴ field note quote from Adam Patterson, 27 February 2020

to need *woke*-teachers and allies. We at art school need to challenge the notions of the artwork as a unique object as well as to question the market conditions in which it is presented. We need to continue to investigate the work and the viewer, spend time learning about these interactions while exploring new mediums and techniques, also in distant education. I believe "A mind-expanding form of education can only become possible if different paradigms are allowed to confront our own, challenge them and maybe invade our confined and limiting hierarchy of knowledge. Moreover, alternative discourses need to be imposed on the mainstream, and new ideas embraced and voiced on their own terms." (Abu ElDahab 2006, p.5)

Art school is a place where individuals come together for a common purpose, we explore and discover or research and question what art can be. An art school isn't a fully enclosed structure. "Unlike an exhibition, whose content can be unpacked and staged anywhere in the world, an art school does not function as an isolated system, and, in order for it to have a future, it needs to interact with the world around it, both at the local level and connecting to the wider art community. I believe a truly progressive art school needs to respond to what is lacking within institutional spaces of culture and seek to transform everyday life. Further, it would function as a matrix that opens up spaces for exploration, experimentation and growth beyond conventional expectations and time frames." (Pelapaisiotis 2006, pp.5-6) It is up to us as artists, teachers and students to continue to question art and its context.

Simply adding role models and womxn artists to our curriculum isn't enough and we have to acknowledge the danger of trying to name female Michelangelos, as discussed by Linda Nochlin in *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?* (already in 1988) because the criteria of 'greatness' are already male defined. "But in actuality, as we all know, things as they are and as they have been, in the arts as in a hundred other areas, are stultifying, oppressive, and discouraging to all those, women among them, who did not have the good fortune to be born white, preferably middle class, and, above all, male. The fault lies not in our stars, our hormones, our menstrual cycles, or our empty internal spaces, but in our institutions and our education – education understood to include everything that happens to us from the moment we enter this world of meaningful symbols, signs, and signals. The miracle is, in fact, that given the overwhelming odds against women, or blacks, that so many of both have managed to achieve so much sheer excellence, in those bailiwicks of white masculine prerogative like science, politics, or the arts." (Nochlin 1988, p.150) Womxn might not be seen as historical significant artists but there is an ongoing urge for diversification of the fields of art from within. Therefore we "will point out when men cite men about men as a learned social habit that is diminishing." (Ahmed 2013) This has already been addressed and criticised extensively by artists and educators alike, unapologetic, over the period of 50+ years. We have to continue this work and it is my intention to develop my teaching through studying and researching feminist pedagogy.

I know I am not the first one trying this:
notes from the past



1970 an anonymous handwritten note from the first conference on artists' books organised by Siegelau in Halifax. Published in the exhibition catalogue *Seth Siegelau: Beyond Conceptual Art* by Sara Martinetti & Leontine Coelewijn, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, 2016 (page 41).

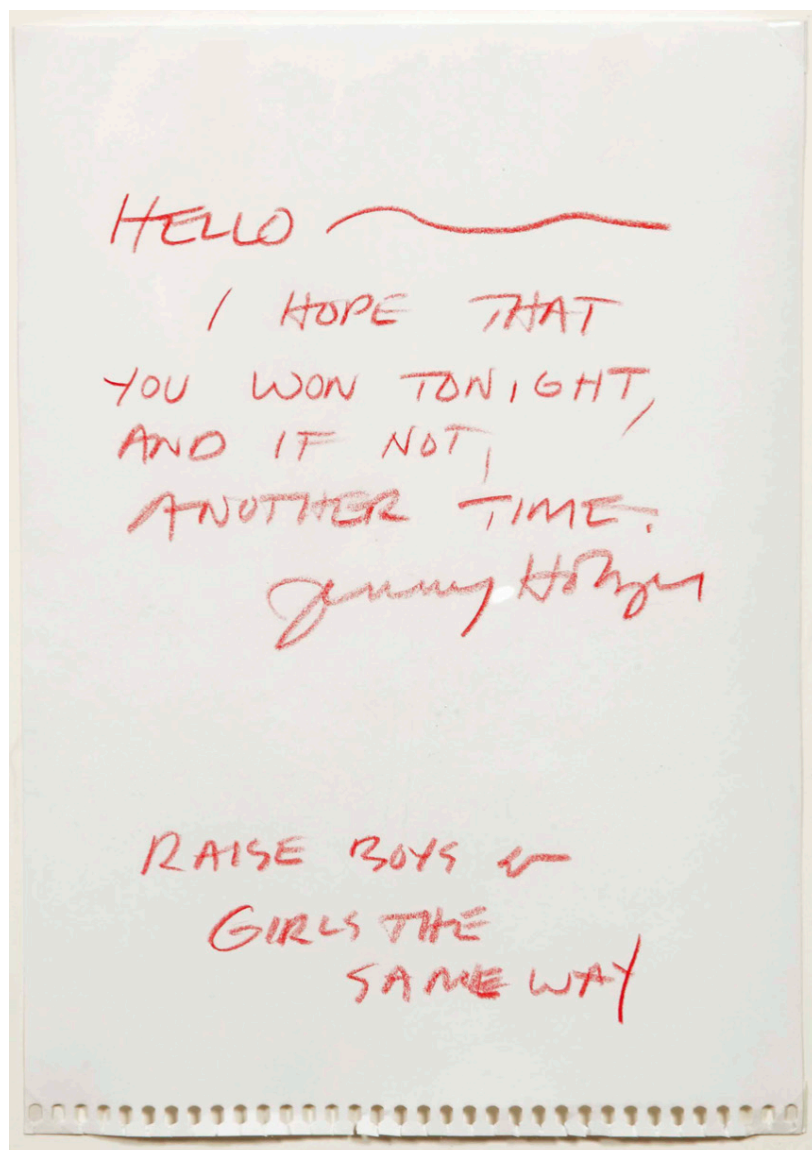
I have come to the conclusion that the "art world" has to join us, women artists, not we join it. When women take leadership and gain just rewards and recognition, then perhaps, "we" (women and men) can all work together in art world actions. Until the radical rights of women to determine such actions is won, all we can expect is tokenism.

When men follow feminist leadership to the extent that women have followed male leadership, then sexism is on its way out. Also, until we see women getting from 40 to 60% of the financial rewards, museum and gallery exhibitions, college jobs, etc., etc., etc., it is still tokenism. When women artists attain this, then we'll know the sexist system is over.

Hopefully women artists will not be satisfied with parity, but will continue to search for alternatives. Women's goals must be more than parity. The established patterns in the art world have proven frustrating and mostly non-rewarding to women artists since the ideal feminist stance of alternate structures is contradicted by the status quo. But such an ideal of non-elitist milieus will only prove itself over a long period. While we claim the right to search for alternatives, we don't intend to let the rewards of the system remain largely in male hands.

Women artists have only recently emerged from the underground (the real underground, not the slick storied underground of the 60's) waging concerted political actions. Our future is to maintain this political action and energy.

Nancy Spero
New York, Feb. 1976



1980 message by Jenny Holzer (b. 1950). Colour crayon on paper, 24 x 17 cm. Provenance Galerie A. in Amsterdam. Retrieved from <https://www.christies.com/> (lot #360).

**YOU'RE
SEEING
LESS
THAN
HALF
THE
PICTURE**

WITHOUT THE VISION OF WOMEN ARTISTS AND ARTISTS OF COLOR.

Please send \$ and comments to: **GUERRILLA GIRLS** CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD
Box 1056 Cooper Sta. NY, NY 10276

1989 poster from Talk Back by the Guerrilla Girls (est. 1984) a campaign that targeted museums, dealers, curators, critics and artists who they felt were actively responsible for, or complicit in, the exclusion of women and non-white artists from mainstream exhibitions and publications. Screenprint on paper, 43 × 56 cm. Collection: Tate, London.

Research through experimental exchanges

I started to explore the feminist classroom through what I call **experimental exchanges** in a qualitative and active research. I was able to set up meetings, organised field trips and workshops, curated exhibitions by womxn artists as part of my teaching, actively participating in classroom observations, interviews, working with open-ended questionnaires, verbal and written evaluations, and conversations at the academy, as well as in the work field. In the final stages of my research I was limited to contact and exchange through (snail) mail and conversations that took place by (video) calling or in my inner-circle while staying in quarantine. In feminist pedagogy we do not only critically look at what we teach, but also at how we teach and I decided to apply similar sensibilities to this research. The exchanges simultaneously seek and allow for transformative change, all linked together by critical reflection. Overall I kept various field notes based on the notion of 'self-archiving' as introduced to me in the research and the 2018 publication handbook *To Become Two: Propositions for Feminist Collective Practice* by artist Alex Martinis Roe. Journaling, an archive box, objects and material explorations, documented traces, transcriptions, video's, scans, and photographic documentation, were made in close relation to, and in dialogue with all participants and are kept to create recordings of the "crucial but often overlooked importance of relationships. (...) Through continuous collecting of these traces, and a regular practice of selecting from them and making them accessible, it is possible to create a living archive." (Roe 2018, p.164) First

of all these explorations are lessons in empathy, forcing me to be self-reflective and sceptical, reinventing myself while (un)learning with and from students, in lectures, literature, workshops, debates, and with colleagues. I see the **exchange** itself as the teaching experience/the dialogue, one that multiple parties have agency over, while the **experimental** refers to the possibility of failure to be part of my learning curve, giving room to work without having a clear end-result in mind and therefore being able to adjust exchanges when needed and allowing myself to transform with them. The four pillars I choose to focus my research on are **Voice, Collaboration, Positioning and Archive**.

Experimental exchange #1: Voice

Infinite Paper Meetings – A series of 'focus-group' meetings with students in conversation about the use of voice (and silence) in the classroom accompanied by a collective execution of the work *Caminhando (Walking)* by Lygia Clark. The development and equal distribution of voice being central themes in feminist pedagogy.

Experimental exchange #2: Collaboration

Let's go on feel trips – Inviting guest artists into the classroom creating a place (both physical and symbolic) for multiple viewpoints to come together. Feminist theory has inspired pedagogies that emphasise on collaborative and non-hierarchical teaching.

Experimental exchange #3: Positioning

Mottos to giggle about – Classroom observations and stimulated peer learning, (small) group learning and my feminist teaching kit. Researching how to activate the creative process as a teacher facilitator by leaving the expert mentality. Students are invited to actively influence the content for a shared learning experience that is a feminist pedagogy.

Experimental exchange #4: Archive

Voice in the Archive – Looking at the sources, categories and histories we work with. Investigating what research possibly leads you where and how you can add to and challenge the system at hand. Looking at references in art and possible counter-narratives.

By allowing for this research to become part of my teaching I am able to learn-by-doing. "It has been argued that in some forms of research, like in artistic and design research, emotions, values, purposes, preferences, etc. – contrary to what the traditional paradigm allows – are not the object of research but a full-fledged part of research. This type of research, which explicitly utilizes emotions as resources, favors plausibility over accuracy and aims to improve on practices that inspire and enrich experiences rather than inform and explain." (Janssens 2017, p.153) As an artist being invited to teach I developed my didactical skills by first mimicking my own educational upbringing as I got used to evaluating my teachings on a regular basis in virtue of successful endeavours, conflicts and confrontations with students as well as colleagues. Always critically questioning what it is we do in the classroom



Image: Flyer from the public presentation and talk with Carmen José Quintanilla facilitated by Lili Huston-Herterich, April 2019.

and in art school in general with the subject of art being inherent to change...

We have to acknowledge that one particular model for 'producing' a good artist does not exist. For each individual student needs to explore what school can offer, and investigate how they can benefit from their time at the academy moving towards a future art field by discovering possible attitudes instead of learning about a scripted position taking or position making from a generation of tutors whose pre-established careers we cannot anymore rely on. Although there is not one formula for being an artist, representation remains an important influence on the students perspective. There is a timeless need to be able to see yourself reflected in a possible field of work. "In 1839 the composer Clara Schumann wrote in her diary, 'I once thought that I possessed creative talent, but I have given up this idea; a woman must not desire to compose – no one has been able to do it, and why should I expect to?' The tragedy is, Schuman was wrong. Women before her had been able to do it, and they included some of the most successful, prolific and influential composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It's just that they did not have 'broad name recognition', because woman barely has to die before she is forgotten - or before we consign her work to the gender data gap by attributing it to a man." (Perez 2019, p.16) Today we still work on and with histories that exclude womxn by default. And when I took it upon myself to curate womxn only in the exhibition space I was invited to run I had trouble coming up with names too, because of my 'untrained eye' in regards to womxn artists. I think as teachers we need to learn to second guess our references, and not to settle for salvation in adding a few token examples but by challenging ourselves and each other to use more diverse references always.

Aside the histories we work with, teachers should continuously look beyond what goes on in the classroom and focus on the world and the work field that students are a part of during and after their studies. I propose multiple (small) transformative interventions/attitudes into the given structures we work with, while I am hoping to continue to explore this academic and practical project fuelled by my experience as a female artist and former art student at the *Willem de Kooning Academy*. "However, as most of us teachers have paradoxically grown up and been educated within the same institution we are now trying to renew and a person's perspective and knowledge is always limited and partial, it is impossible for us educators to thoroughly understand the problematic social norms of the schools we are working in. Therefore, the aim to change things cannot be solely teacher-driven, as without the involvement of the pupils and their perspectives, the change will be just a change, not an improvement in equity." (Haggrén 2018, p.147) In all these exchanges the perspective of students is considered unique and valuable and is included in knowledge co-creation. "Our point is that learners probably experience learning idiosyncratically, depending upon their inclinations and interests at the moment." (O'Barr & Wyer 1992, p.6) I am hoping to



Images: from curated exhibitions *My Broken Tongue* by Nash Caldera & Winnie Lê, December 2019 and *Read my lips: No New Taxes* by Amy Pickles, January 2019 (photos by Kamali van Bochove).

contribute to the upbringing of artists as part of a critical dialectic, while giving myself the room to continue to grow in an art education in which care and tenderness are equally important to craftsmanship and artist persona.

We have to emphasise the value of the students presence in the classroom, not only by simply learning their names but also by allowing them to have voice as an empowerment tool for those who normally remain on the outskirts of the classroom. Informed by female voices like bell hooks, Audre Lorde and Sara Ahmed I ask myself what role do I as an educator play in the continuous development of inequality in art and its educational system? "What if Picasso had been born a girl. Would his art-professor Señor Ruiz stimulated her ambition for achievement as much or even pay an equal amount of attention to her?" (Nochlin 1988, p.155)

Exploring the feminist classroom

The theoretical foundation of feminist pedagogy is grounded in critical theories of learning and teaching such as Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970), in which the existence of oppression is acknowledged with a strong focus on the believe in the possibility to end it. I came across feminist pedagogy by reading the book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of*

Freedom first published in 1994 written by feminist and social activist Gloria Watkins under her writing name bell hooks. Unlike educational models that emphasise on competition, solitary study and teacher authority (the model I was brought up in) feminist pedagogy focuses on transformative learning, building a progressive curriculum in which the multidisciplinary is welcomed and which may give rise to new critical ways of seeing, thinking and making. Including all voices, and aiming to empower individuals as well as stimulating peer to peer exchange and group dynamics. Creating a consciousness that may lead to future change or a different approach to – in this particular case – the art (world). Feminist pedagogy allows womxn lives, experiences and methods to actively become part of the curriculum. With social transformation as a goal. “Feminism and feminist theory are not about girls’/women’s empowerment but a framework through which we aim to unlearn normativity and to collectively relearn a more humane ontology of being that is truly accepting of diversity and founded on social justice.” (Suominen & Pusa 2018, p.10) Feminist pedagogy aims to broaden and diversify all knowledge by using interdisciplinary approaches, promoting pluralistic rather than dualistic, equalitarian rather than hierarchical knowledge.

Although 70 percent of the intake in Dutch fine art courses between 2005–2013 were womxn, the art world continues to be for the most part male dominated. Institutional structures play a big role in maintaining these marginalised positions that influence these various groups of people, and therefore also the education we contribute to. “The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.” (hooks 1994, p.207) Unlike feminism (or for example Ahmed’s *Living a Feminist Life*) feminist pedagogy isn’t a specific toolbox or collection of strategies, not a list of practices, nor a specific classroom to begin with but an overarching philosophy. Actively working on themes like the acknowledgement of privilege, power and an ongoing consciousness of present and potential future processes of marginalisation. Turning teaching into making activities, with other(ed) materials to build praxis that acknowledge and value contribution, lives and histories and aims to create an emancipatory learning experience for students in a classroom as community and cooperation. It is non scripted and tries to look beyond binaries not only in gender but also the student/teacher binary, gay/straight, etc.

The feminist classroom is not a place where feminist art is promoted any more than other art or artists. It is a place where feminist art or womxn artists work is no longer being nullified or only categorically inserted within the historical white-male viewpoint. Feminist pedagogy is not limited to womxn teachers only: “Feminism is the name I give to my own brand of liberation theology: the musical soundtrack to my teaching, the sense of danger and hope

and love that helps keep it urgent.” (Taylor 2000, p.5) A feminist pedagogue wants to be able to work with what is there, and continuously show interest in who is in front of them (present or not). We need to always keep in mind that teaching students with diverse fields or interests and from diverse backgrounds means there is not one format applicable. “The school needs to be an *affirming* space, where Otherness (such as racial difference or queer sexuality) is embraced, where ‘normalcy’ (cultural or sexual) is not presumed, where students will have an audience for their Othered voice(s), and where the Other will have role models.” (Kumashiro 2000, p.28) The feminist classroom makes room for the needed flexibility which also suits the wide variety in subjects that come together in art and design. And ultimately it would like to bring about the opportunity for social change in society.

As described earlier I decided to approach this research based on four pillars; *Voice* meaning “the awakening of the students’ own responses, of their ability to speak for themselves, to bring their own questions and perspectives to the material.” (Maher & Thompson 2001, p.18);

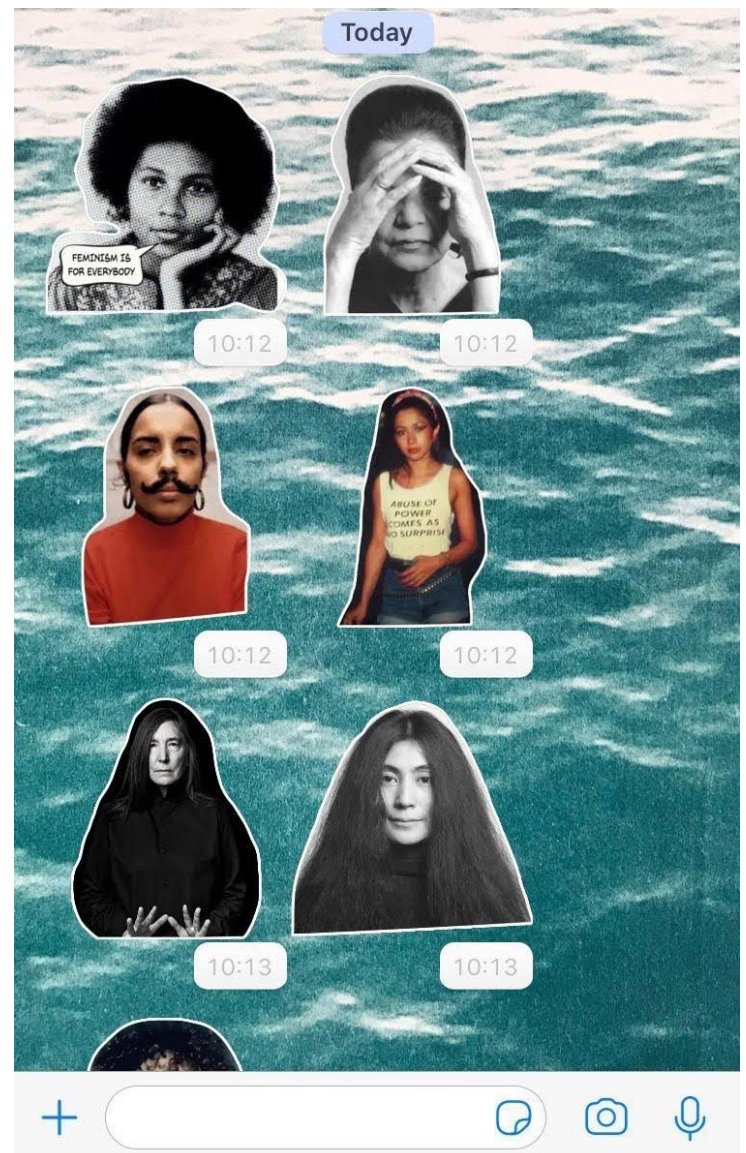


Image: field note screenshot by Jo Willoughby from the stickers I made for WhatsApp, November 2019. Featuring respectively bell hooks; Lygia Clark; Ana Mendieta; Lady Pink; Jenny Holzer; Yoko Ono.

Collaboration be it teaching together and using “the collaborative teaching model as transformative for students and faculty alike: a means to initiate a more integrated and inclusive curriculum and to foreground not only what we teach, but also how we teach.” (Colwill & Boyd 2008, p.219); *Positioning* as recognizing that “the situation of art teachers is very flexible: most, if not all of the teaching materials used are typically created by the art teachers themselves. (...) In turn, this power and freedom to choose brings responsibility as creating the teaching materials is also a political act.” (Haggrén 2018, p.142); *Archive* looking at “a process of generating new practices and approaches for intervention with existing archival material. Intervention methods are specifically concerned with access and interpretation.” (Digital Women’s Archive North [DWAN] 2017, p.156) These are notions grounded in feminist theory and feminist pedagogy, a pedagogy that is mostly applied and discussed in Women and Humanities studies. I took the liberty to translate its methods and theory into the art contexts where needed. “Feminism needs us; feminism needs us not only to survive but to dedicate our lives to the survival of feminism.” (Ahmed 2017, p.236) This research project became an expression of my willingness to make this dedication.

Although the politics of feminism is centred around the empowerment of womxn, feminist pedagogy tries to be free from the gender bias integrating perspectives from men and women, genderqueer and otherwise anywhere in between. There is no reason to think that the current morphology of our species into two main types of embodiment is a fixed state of affairs. With everybody being responsible for classroom dynamics it explicitly gives room to talk about responsibility and privilege, exclusions and biases. Finding new and different perspectives is a vulnerable practice and throughout my research I was confronted both with my internalised oppression and with the shameful history of feminism in which gender has been continuously abstracted from race and class (focusing on white middle class women). I do not want to identify as such nor do I want to be part of the continuation of an unjust feminism. I see ‘womxn liberation’ as liberation for all people. Focusing on how to acknowledge ‘difference’ without translating or vilifying it. This might seem obvious and even easy but is has proved to be very challenging.

Each of the following chapters starts with the theoretical context of each gesture in feminist pedagogy followed by its practical explorations. Allowing you, the reader, to looking at how the feminist classroom might or might not differ from other classrooms. We have to understand that the pillars I decided to use are intersectional because voice influences archives, collaborations show both positioning and voice etc. And for me theory and practice are not separate forms of research, just like everyone speaks and everyone listens. Also I am trying to not be afraid of being wrong, complex or problematic, while giving meaning to experiences I had within this research project. “The feminist classroom, it seems to me, is self-reflective, skeptical, reinventing itself. It rejects all manner of romantic



Image: archived potato peel from a cutting session based on Lygia Clark's work *Caminhando (Walking)* organised for MEiA's Learning from Others 15 December 2019.

mythology even my own. And I believe a feminist pedagogy is at best spontaneous, rather than tightly controlled and scripted. Spontaneity invites genuinely democratic participation, even at the terrible cost of throwing out the syllabus.” (Taylor 2000, p.13)

Experimental exchange #1: Voice Infinite Paper Meetings

The development and equal distribution of voice⁵ are central themes in feminist theory and feminist pedagogy. “I say that by voice I mean something like what people mean when they speak of the core of the self. Voice is natural and also cultural. It is composed of breath and sound, words, rhythm, and language. And voice is a powerful psychological instrument and channel, connecting inner and outer worlds.” (Gilligan 1993, p.xvi) The feminist focus on voice stems from a history of silencing and overpowering different groups of people based on sex, religion, origin, etc. which seems to be as old as speech itself. “Closing women’s mouth was the object of a complex array of legislation and convention in preclassical and classical Greece, of which the best documented examples are Solon’s sumptuary laws and the core concept of Sophokles’ blanket statement. Silence is the kosmos [good order] of women.” (Carson 1992, p.127) Personally I recognise the need for finding *voice* when looking back at my (art) school education over ten years ago, being spoken to

⁵ voice being a wish, choice, or opinion openly or formally expressed; as a right of expression, also; an influential power (source: Merriam-Webster dictionary)

mainly by and about men amplified by the overall absence or one sided representation of womxn voices (and stories) in the art world which left me feeling muted by default. Although this misrepresentation in art is something I can not fix, what I can do is to care for voice to have a prominent role in my classroom and to aim for a shift in (my) voice as to dismantle the authoritative voice that is part of education through the teacher authority. "One of the most empowering aspects of the new scholarship on woman is its grounding assumption that the absence of information about woman in the classroom tacitly reinforce rigid gender role norms that silence women students." (O'Barr & Wyer 1992, p.42)

In order to research how students experience voice in the classroom I organised two 'focus group' activities called the *Infinite Paper Meetings*. The first one took place on Wednesday 2 October 2019 followed by the second one on Tuesday 21 January 2020. Both meetings were organised at the academy as part of my research practice as a student at the *Master Education in Art*, they are conversations accompanied by an activity. Although for now I am going to reflect on these two meetings, I am hoping to continue activities and dialogues with students to talk about the education they are part of always.

For these *Infinite Paper Meetings* I invited a small group of female students to talk about the experience they have with using their voice in the classroom while also focusing on the way that they experience being listened to. The students are asked to join on personal invitation followed by an exchange of emails to set a date that suits everybody. It being a voluntary activity I depend on the trust and investment of students that I have had the pleasure of teaching. For the first meeting I decided to base my choice on classroom participation contacting a 'silent' and a 'loud' student and one that is the most 'outspokenly critical' and therefore maybe sits in the middle. While for

the second meeting I invited two students that participate in numerous outside-of-curriculum activities. These assumptions (or my readings of the students behaviour) I am willingly leaving behind during and after our *Infinite Paper Meeting*. I decided to openly communicate my reason of choice. Knowing this might pre-define their role in the conversation, a risk I was willing to take, in an attempt to keep all communication honest and open because I learned to recognise the danger of setting up conversations about and with marginalised students, being the inevitable teacher authority: "Whenever the need of some pretence of communication arises, those who profit from our oppression call upon us to share our knowledge with them. In other words, it is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistake." (Lorde 2017, p.95)

I decided to use the following questions to base the, furthermore fluid, conversations on:

- Are you aware of your contribution to classroom conversations?
- Are you aware of how often you are speaking?
- Do you make an effort for other people to speak, especially when you notice they haven't spoken much?
- Is it important to listen to others wholeheartedly?
- Do you feel you are learning to understand other people through the exchange that takes place in the classroom?
- Are there any topics that are off limits for you?

These questions are loosely based on a series of questions from the *Intersectional Feminist Discussion Toolkit* (Action Aid 2018, p.5)

Both meetings start with an activity based on the work *Caminhando (Walking)* by Brazilian painter, sculptor, and artist teacher Lygia Clark (1920-1988). *Caminhando (Walking)* is a work that needs to be experienced through direct action, the cutting of a Möbius strip with a pair

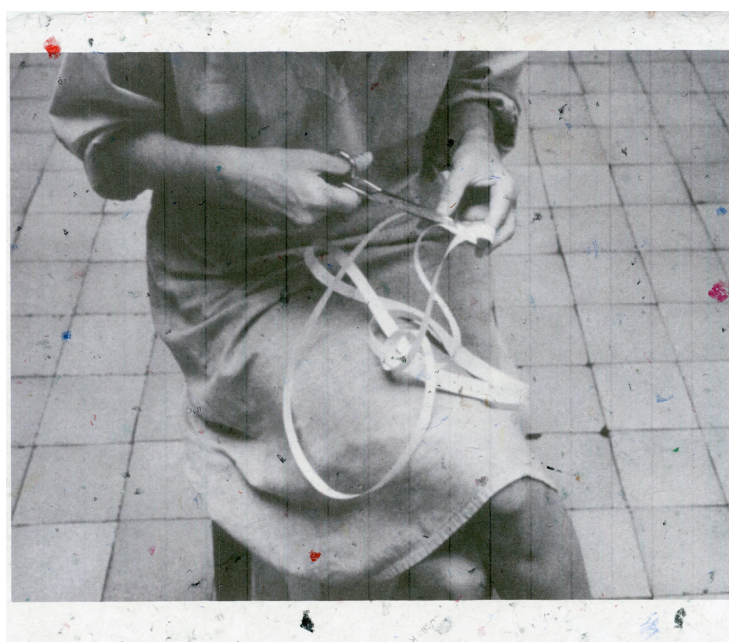


Image: Lygia Clark, *Infinite Paper* performance *Caminhando (Walking)* 1963 printed on hand made paper, from Elvira's fieldnotes for the *Class Running* in *Circles* publication, December 2019.



Image: field note photograph of the performance *Caminhando (Walking)* work by Lygia Clark here cut by Kamali van Bochove, April 2020.

of scissors, this (infinite) paper cutting being a simple task, or a 'mindless' activity to serve as a backdrop to our conversation, or as Clark puts it: "breaks our spatial habits: right-left, obverse-reverse, etc. It makes us live the experience of a limitless time and a continuous space." (Clark 1964, pp.2-3) By using this work I am adding to my wish to use strong female role models that have been overlooked in the European art discourse. Also it engages the participants in the process of 'making', the basis of all our educational endeavours within art school, and in feminist thinking. "It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories." (Haraway 2016, p.12) Feminist pedagogy is embodied and sensuous work and materialities are used to activate thoughts just as much as the other way around (thoughts activate materialities). By using our hands while talking we simultaneously self-express through the direct action of cutting the piece of paper as well as by using words.

Although there was a collective sense of urgency to share experiences during both meetings I get the feeling the participants sometimes talk about subjects for the sake of meeting my expectations. This is something I struggle with as a teacher. Students know me as being, and please me by trying to be 'politically correct' as well as that they know to annoy me by being not. "Again and again, it was necessary to remind everyone that no education is politically neutral." (hooks 1994, p.37) Aside from the fact that the predictability of answers proves we suffer similar ways of being muted and heard. "Coming to voice is not just the act of telling one's experience. It is using that telling strategically - to come to voice so that you can also speak freely about other subjects." (hooks 1994, p.148) The two questions *Are you aware of how often you are speaking?* and *Do you make an effort for other people to speak, especially when you notice they haven't spoken much?* evoke very different answers in both groups. In the first group of (photography) students not everybody is making a conscious effort for other people but they do agree it is important to give room for everyone to speak. The latter (fine art) students experience speaking as an active interest in the subject of art and the art work. They suggest that to-be-silent, when discussing work, equals to not-be-interested, and prefer a more 'aggressive' participation in feedback sessions not focusing on who is speaking but on what is being said. This maybe has to do with the competitive nature of art and the way we intend to give meaning to works through analysing them.

During both meetings the participating students move through subjects and anecdotes quickly. Leaving me with a transcription and recording that at first glance lacks any structure. Without me bringing up the subject the use of mobile phones in the classroom is discussed. Looking back at an assignment we did during one of our fieldtrips, in which we asked the students to hand in their phones and sit in the museums garden for an hour. "I am on my

phone often. I'm really addicted to my phone... Without my phone I took photos for an hour and wasn't distracted. I saw the darkness, a spider carcass and leaves on the tennis court... And I cried." ^b Grading systems come up and are criticised in both conversations. Grading being something I, as a teacher, value differently compared to now being a research student. I see the strong influence grades have on my self-esteem and motivation as a student but from the teacher perspective I see how grades influence and build power structures and seem to be opinionated voices of their own sometimes. The conversations linger and there is a moment where the participants switch in between education and a gym visit, going into a detailed encounter of mansplaining. I am happy to hold on to the questions I prepared but I also feel I should leave the conversation to evolve. "Listening encompasses unpredictability: to listen, to see, to experience, without making preconditioned judgments, interpretations, or analyses. We could say that the act of mutual listening directs us to that which we do not already know: to listen for the unexpected." (Bauer & Wiberg 2017, p.202) It is within the meetings that I am confronted with my blind focus on helping students find, awaken and uncover voice. "As artists and educators, we need to assume a much more

^b transcription from the *Infinite Paper Meeting*, October 2019



Image: field note photograph from participating students Denise and Suelae presenting the paper cuttings they made during our meeting, January 2020.



Image: scan from Meike's Leftovers from the Infinite Paper Meeting #1, October 2019.

activist stance and actively build spaces for the articulation of complex, partially unknowable, difficult, painful, deep, rich, felt, and embodied experiences of diverse perceptions of humanity.” (Suominen & Pusa 2018, p.19) Me acknowledging voice as a power (hooks, Lorde, Ahmed) I start to consciously manage all students equal access to that power through giving them equal opportunities to speak and therefore influence, and participate in the classroom. After starting this equal distribution of voice in my own classroom I soon found myself going even further and stressing its importance when working with guest tutors and in conversations about planning and evaluating lessons with colleagues. A fruitful progress in which I learned to stand up for myself (developing my own voice) and question existing structures, like why it is always womxn taking notes at our meetings? But it is hard for me now to reconstruct my shortsightedness. “I don’t think all students want to talk”⁷ was one of the most striking comments made during the *Infinite Paper Meetings*.

I realise this specific comment about and a general sense of not wanting to talk stands out to me most (in both conversations) because it is conflicting with my theoretical sources, and my new found believe: “I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood. That the

⁷ transcription from the Infinite Paper Meeting, January 2020

speaking profits me, beyond any other effect.” (Lorde 2009, p.56) I test ideas about speaking and possible silence in the classroom, on friends, colleagues, and strangers but I am so much part of this Western idea of ‘power through speech’ (Lorde), ‘the complaint and the complainer’ (Ahmed) that I have developed a brand new blind spot. I focus on equal distribution of voice but what if not talking is just as valid as talking? How do I distribute silence, or just give room to be still? Why do I assume people should talk? What about opacity? “The articulation between silence and powerlessness is almost common sense within Western culture, an assumption that is reified across literary, progressive academic, and activist contexts. Its equation presumes a political imperative: for an individual or group who is silenced to gain power, they must activate voice in order to resist and transform the conditions of their oppression.” (Rowe & Maltola 2013, p.18) The *Infinite Paper Meetings* help me realise my actions in distributing voice are not promoting the history and culture of the introvert students at all. Something that is just as urgent. “Staff/student ratios have progressively worsened. Introvert students are thus forced into large-scale, party-like, company-suffocating classrooms where their voices are often drowned out by loud-mouthed Extrovert-Supremacists. This is an ideological attack on the preference for small company by Introvert peoples in an attempt to disempower us.” (Ahsan 2017, p.72) In a way the equality of the quiet students is denied through my approach. Speaking is never without fear, but it may also be courageous to choose silence. “From the feminist concept of place, voice and silence must be seen as dynamic and relational. Voice and silence will emerge within the individual as a function of their historical and cultural place and their individual history of specific interactions with specific others.” (Fivush 2002, p.8)

This is where the *Infinite Paper Meetings* surpass the overall goal to facilitate a conversation that wouldn’t take place otherwise. I am forced to rediscover silence, and think about it carefully. Silence can be salvation, and teachers should take care of planning voiced participation carefully. “We should not force the pupils to participate in the discussions in our terms, but through ways they are comfortable with. Having personal experience of a certain issue does not mean that a pupil should be obligated to actively participate in discussing that issue, as, for example, marginalized pupils will certainly not reveal their experiences in the spirit of ‘sharing.’” (Haggrén 2018, p.149) This is very clearly phrased during one of our meetings: “I don’t want to say anything about racism in a room full of white people.”⁸ We, as teachers, should be aware of the constant (power) imbalance in our classroom and never force students to speak. Silence and voice are equally flexible in their use, in the space, in the room, as part of our teaching. A silent revolt, of not being seen, or not being as words is not to be confused with absence. That would be the same mistake as in looking art history and assuming that there are no womxn artists, they are there, they are not absent. To allow them, or maybe to trust they are there, in silence, is already a lot.

⁸ transcription from the Infinite Paper Meeting, October 2019

“Silence can be a plan
rigorously executed

the blueprint of a life

It is a presence
it has a history a form

Do not confuse it
with any kind of absence.” (Rich 1978, p.17)

I value how these exchanges allow me to test theory and question assumptions in a series of conversations that give everybody (including myself) room to wonder. Giving space for more quiet students to talk. “In discussions with people I don’t really have a loud voice. If I try to talk louder, it is still not loud enough for most people.”⁹ And from now on also to be silent together. “Silence allows us the space to breathe. It allows us the freedom of not having to exist constantly in reaction to what is said.” (Rowe & Maltola 2013, p.2)

Experimental exchange #2: Collaboration Let’s go on feel trips

Children stop and press their noses to the glass. They stare at the writer as they once stared at the artist. They stare at the sculptures as someone once stared at the sculptures. Their parents also pause, their eyes gleaming the materials, their information, perhaps their meaning, then press their children forward, so as not to miss their train. (Latimer 2017, p.159)

Unlike the *Infinite Paper Meetings* this experimental exchange is an exchange that takes place directly in the classroom I inhabit by inviting guest artists to teach with me. Collaborative teaching allows multiple viewpoints to come together for a nonhierarchical experience recognising multiple sources of authority. Feminist theory has inspired pedagogies that emphasise not only on voice but also on collaborative work. “Since the 1970s, adherents of feminist, anticolonial, and critical pedagogy had described the crossing of disciplinary boundaries and the disruption of traditional power relationships as central to the transformative potential of education, while feminist theorists linked progressive pedagogical practices to content that highlighted gender, race, and class as vectors of analysis.” (Colwill & Boyd 2008, p.216) Although most projects are team-taught at the academy the lessons itself are seldomly co-taught. Over a period of three months I was able to invite six different artists, and two current staff members to work in ‘my classroom’. These lessons took place in various locations and settings giving me room for (participatory) observations. “Imagining oneself as a different kind of art educator through exploring the other galaxies where learning in art takes place allows the possibility of valuing different kinds of learning and behaviour that might be marginalised within the system of performativity found in the panopticon of the school.” (Wild 2011, p.428) We need to actively explore and create

⁹ transcription from the *Infinite Paper Meeting*, October 2019



Image: field note photograph from the guest lesson with Flip Driest at Lecq project space KIOSK, September 2019.

a progressive curriculum by facilitating exposure to multiple fields of art, up and close and in connection to the artists who inhabit them. Although not all of these lessons took place in the shape of an actual field trip¹⁰ or as field work, I do look at them as such because they allow for a close interaction with the work of various intersectional artists from different backgrounds, and the way they talk about their work and teach. “Learning cooperatively can be read as a specifically feminist project, what may be most subversive about such productive praxis are the points of intersection with other minoritized approaches and indigenous practices within and beyond the academy.” (Nitis 2015, p.121)

Collaborative teaching with guest artists allows for experiential learning while exploring the direct impact, or application of art and its labor on and in a specific context. The guest artists give students (and me) a wider perspective on what art can be while simultaneously giving insight in the variety of (possible) contexts an artist can work with, opening up new perspectives by showing that there is not one art world while meeting the artist and looking at the practice, spending time together discussing, walking,

¹⁰ a visit (as to a factory, farm, or museum) made (as by students and a teacher) for purposes of firsthand observation (source: Merriam-Webster dictionary)

filming, photographing, designing, reading, etc. “Superficial teaching is not acceptable, the critic will agree, but this is because in general there is no excuse for bad education. And this is also why it is crucial to create open and dynamic structures, for instance, to bring younger professionals from the field into the academy as they may have valuable experiences to share and can play a crucial role of an intermediary generation between students and older professors.” (Verwoert 2006, p.2) I would like to underpin the importance of these exchanges taking place for, first of all, the student and, second, the current teaching staff.

When looking at the genealogy of the figure of the artist: as a profession, as a cultural profile, as a skill set, as an image that points beyond itself, we know we need to expose students to a wide variety of approaches and modes of production, accepting that one artist teacher cannot give an ‘overview’ of what art can be. I am fully aware of the limitations of my own knowledge: my limited voice, my race and background, speaking from specific margins and privileges, representing specific ties into the art world. By opening up ‘my classroom’ I am able to give room to other narratives and stories to be told. Adding to the current teaching staff for better representation, for all students. “Art school gave me access to peers & other

Resources:

1. Antigua Panorama clip (video)
2. Various works (“Lookalook”, “Rammelaar”). (video)
3. RoadKopje - the space.
4. Green squares of fabric, scissors
5. Peter Marshall on squares of cloth (video)
6. Tech: Laptop, projector.
7. Keying Software (OBS + Adobe Premiere)
8. Students' resources (smartphone cameras).
9. Public Space (the city).
10. Tea



Image: field notes by guest artist Adam Patterson on the back of their questionnaire, December 2019.

artists and it also forced me to constantly deal with the white gaze and how this affects me as an artist.”¹¹ Students can, and should, not imagine futures that do not reflect similar beliefs, qualities and features as manifested in themselves or their endeavours. “But to think of this: those of us who arrive in an academy that was not shaped by or for us bring knowledges, as well as worlds, that otherwise would not be there. Think of this: how we learn about worlds when they do not accommodate us. Think of the kinds of experiences you have when you are not expected to be there. These experiences are a source to generate knowledge.” (Ahmed 2017, p.10)

Inviting other ‘experts’ undermines my authorial status quo as an artist teacher. “The last twenty years have seen an enormous shift in the role and potential of educational environments in relation to visual culture. Shifts in the status of art education within the broader pedagogical context have been taking place. These changes in emphasis have refocused our perception of how things should proceed towards a position that is potentially away from the role of the artist as the prime parallel functionary in relation to younger artists/students. This has moved us towards a situation where the artist-teacher is merely one element within a matrix of expectations and institutional aims within established educational models. This perceived shift is, paradoxically, demanded by both university art schools—which must create neo-academic justification for all their departments—and by some independent-minded artists who are increasingly unsure that it is relevant to insert themselves as the sole providers of ideas within schools.” (Gillick 2006, p.1) To move beyond the often applied concept of ‘disqualifying practices’ in which “the other is only included as a form of ‘impression management’. For example, the ‘other’ might be invited to play in the cricket match, but he will either be a reserve or if he does play and plays well, this will be down to those who invited him and never because of his talent alone.” (McMillan 2015 p.93) We should foster a more open classroom that gives room for multiple viewpoints and ideas.

All invited artists are involved in (ideologic) artistic formations, lifestyles and/or programs and although I have a personal connection to each of them (as a former teacher, curator, colleague and/or friend) their practices are far removed from mine as they explore different mediums, methods and fields. All of them graduated from their BA in either 2015 (3) or 2017 (3), two of which graduated from an MA in 2017 & 2018, and three guests are still studying at an MA planning to graduate in 2020 & 2021. All of us have our own embodied approach to art and therefore bring our own way of embodied teaching to the ‘classroom’. Although ‘embodied teaching’ might take place at the academy at large (with a teacher team composed of people that also maintain an artistic practice and work in the field) this embodiment, of a younger generation, allows for the use of prior knowledge that is closer to the identities and lives of the students. “We are invited to teach information as though it does not emerge from bodies. Significantly, those of us who are trying to critique

¹¹ questionnaire field note from guest Taronia Leonora, 11-2019



biases in the classroom have been compelled to return to the body to speak about ourselves as subjects in history. We are all subjects in history. We must return ourselves to a state of embodiment in order to deconstruct the way power has traditionally orchestrated in the classroom, denying subjectivity to some groups and according to others.” (hooks 1994, p.139) In (private) conversations with the invited artists we look at what happened both good and bad. “When teaching, we project, whether consciously or not, an image of ourselves that we hope to see mirrored in the attitudes and responses of our students. In contrast to the solitary professor’s experience of classroom authority and disciplinary expertise, when team teaching, each of us confronts our own reflection through two additional pairs of eyes also invested with authority.” (Colwill & Boyd 2008, p.224)

Working on location with artist Flip Driest, first in 2018 at Lecq project space where we set up KIOSK¹² and again in 2019 at the Pension Almonde project¹³ I see students struggle and face it, I also see students struggle and distant themselves. When teaching on location we depend on the ambition of the student to-be-a-student and the willingness to explore the context in which the teaching takes place. Artistic practices that focus on surroundings or commons prove to be far removed from the second year fine art students view points each time. They learn to look beyond the studio but still refer to its presence always. “Buren¹⁴ may have physically left his studio, yet in his head he never truly vacated its space. The studio still represents the private process of creation and the highly individual production of meaning that he never ceased to cherish. In this respect, the studio may be regarded as one of the most essential and yet most frail aspects of Buren’s practice: his true point of departure yet ever-denied point of reference.” (Davidts & Paice 2009, p.80) I see this

¹² KIOSK Rotterdam is a place for discussion, story-telling and process: www.kioskrotterdam.com

¹³ Pension Almonde is a temporary home for modern city nomads, adventurous sleep-over guests and orphaned neighbourhood initiatives: www.pension-almonde.nl

¹⁴ Daniel Buren (born in 1938) is a French conceptual artist



Image: field note photographs from the guest lesson with Flip Driest at Almondestraat documented by Denise Hirtenfelder, 2019.

approach to the artistic practice reflected in our education still. Therefore our work on location needs a longer introduction than anticipated, something that does not fit the limited teaching hours that are given. This can be solved by selecting articles for required reading beforehand. Because it is up to the guest to introduce their practice and familiarise the students with other modes of production. “Today, it may not be necessary to be a citizen in order to be an artist, and we are all familiar with the phenomenon of the genius artist who removes himself or herself from society in order to concentrate on the purity of their calling, but it could be said that it is urgently necessary to be an artist in order to be a citizen.” (Raqs Media Collective 2012, p.111)

“Most important thing to learn in art-school is other peoples practice, methods, background and exchange knowledge in exercises.”¹⁵ I remember as an art student that I was able to learn most when I ‘felt’ (rather than merely being intellectual) and when I was able to not only experience but also connect what I experienced to the personal. Different introductions and (performative) exercises challenge the students and also dismantle this narrative about the great artists, who works and even looks a certain way. “Education is valuable when it teaches us to be curious, re-evaluate our perception, assumptions (on topics, people etc.) and creates a feeling of community.”¹⁶ But working in these ‘unknown’ fields and on location proofs to be difficult sometimes. On field trips and on location we often have to decide to start without missing students or later they sometimes slip away. “Beer is opened (it is 10:30).”¹⁷ If anything teaching isn’t me policing you. Although it sometimes leaves me with a knot in my stomach... seeing those students run away that you would love to see participate and grow. “An effective teacher is one who can help students to find joy

¹⁵ questionnaire field note from guest Flip Driest, 11-2019

¹⁶ questionnaire field note from guest Gabriel Fontana, 12-2019

¹⁷ field note from my teaching journal, 11-2019

in places/processes they didn't expect to find it. Learning is not limited to results/solutions/right or wrong (...) At art school I learned about the minimal, white-cube, clean Modern aesthetic and then I learned to walk away from it into a world of color, vibrancy, joy etc.!"¹⁸

Looking not only at what we teach but focussing on how we teach together as a feminist practice forces me to leave my ideal classroom to allow for us entering a new one: suffice to say this is both goal and vulnerable. "To experience the methodologies of many artists who are not afraid of asking difficult questions, and who have been able to answer them successfully for themselves, helps students to imagine their own future courageously without being immobilized by contradictions in society. They need to learn that consciousness can lead to action, that there are artists who experiment in form and content and take their inspiration from their interaction with the world." (Becker 1999, p.71)

In these collaborative teaching experiences two things stand out to me. First of all the importance of having an active attitude reflected in active body postures. Although we do end up sitting in a circle around a table most of the time, the guest lessons all have in common that they are active exchanges, full of energy brought by both the guest artists and the curiosity of all learners involved (including me). It's the performative methodologies I start to value most and I realise that although my teaching involves experiential learning I do not actively encourage students to use their body as a research tool. Being exposed to interactions inspires me to think about ways to warm-up or restart the class with performative gestures, and to incorporate more movement in my teaching. We will remember walking around individually taking photographs or working in small groups, shooting video's, making popcorn or bringing the ball into play...

¹⁸ questionnaire field note from guest Adam Patterson, 12-2019

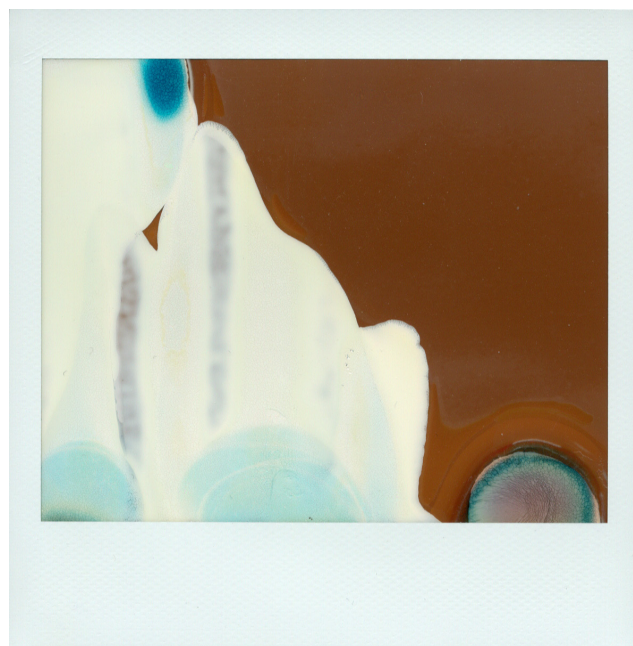


Image: failed polaroid from the guest lesson by Zhou Junsheng with the first year fine art students at the Spijkenisse Library, November 2019.

The second thing I notice is the importance of the space for learning. The space as a place where students find materials: Empowering spaces "where the Other can find resources and tools to challenge oppression themselves." (Kumashiro 2000, p.28) We (as teachers) should create this space either inside the institution and classrooms we work in or as a way of leaving the institution and looking beyond its context on field trips. Art work is precarious work, and collaborative teaching allows us to directly reflect on this in exchanges that are everybody's to have, and to influence while being part of a community. "We need to think about what it is to be undone, Emancipation is not something we are prepared any longer to defer to a forever postponed tomorrow or reduce to a mere echo of yesterday. (...) What we desire, instead, is to act in the present, to experience emancipation in all its fullness, in all its joy, here and now." (Raqs Media Collective 2012, p.107)

Experimental exchange #3: Positioning Mottos to giggle about

The feminist classroom openly questions its classroom hierarchy in which the teachers 'have' knowledge and students 'do not' and although the intentions are clear this rejection of hierarchy is not easily turned into practical teaching. "But as education is a reproductive activity, it concerns not simply the transfer of knowledge between generations, but the active production of persons and relations in the here and now. If we want different futures, we will need modes of education to produce them, modes that are open to alteration by those participating. Feminist pedagogy has particular qualities when it comes to collective learning and how groups work and learn together." (Trogal 2017, p.239) Feminist thinker (and pedagogue) bell hooks describes her classroom as not intended to be comfortable, but being a place that allows us to get what is real, honest and authentic. In art education in general we have to seek similar values when we actively encourage self representation and authentication. "Students who learn to teach themselves, to organise their own studies within the subjects on offer, and to be responsible for themselves will possess the core artistic skill of researching, working and thinking in transdisciplinary terms. These students are then able to develop their own fields of action within different societies. It is always learners who actively acquire knowledge. This knowledge is primarily their knowledge, for it is the result of a personal and individual learning process. Artistic knowledge is social knowledge." (Waldvogel 2006, p.10)

In experimental exchange #3 I look at how to stimulate peer learning in the non-hierarchical classroom, while focusing on possible practical procedures with found or self made tools as part of my feminist survival kit.

Within the feminist classroom the teacher is a facilitator, ideally approaching all subjects with equal engagement, not by straight lecturing but by giving aid and providing tools and materials for students to find their own information. Teaching can take place without necessarily

knowing the subject at hand but by moderating questions and thus without creating the content but by being a guide, while getting things done in a timely manner. This is an active form of learning with the students, in an exchange in which all members depend on each other instead of on one (hierarchical) figure, while gathering different feminist sensibilities like allowing for open endedness, in a personalised, embodied learning environment. Challenge learning to engage, to investigate, and to act. The role of the facilitator does not abandon the role of the teacher. Instead it makes comments to make appropriate observations and suggestions, offering a different approach to teaching.

Students positioning in art pedagogy has never merely been about rehearsal but more about action, reaction and interaction. This is stimulated in co-creation and when learning is allowed to be a dialogical/performative process. Teaching art (and its history) is to question conventions and allow the emancipation of not-knowing to play an important role. Giving room to students to be able to self initiate by being in dialogue with each other: "A basic notion for a dialogue would be for people to sit in a circle. Such a geometric arrangement doesn't favor anybody; it allows for direct communication. In principle, the dialogue should work without any leader and without any agenda. Of course, we are used to leaders and agendas, so if we were to start a meeting without a leader – start talking and have no agenda, no purpose – I think we would find a great deal of anxiety in not knowing what to do. Thus, one of the things would be to work through that anxiety, to face it. In fact, we know by experience that if people do this for an hour or two they do get through it and start to talk more freely." (Bohm 1996, p.17) By inviting everybody to bring their own subjects of interest to their study no one is solely depending on what-is-being-taught. "Learning and knowledge need to be certified and simultaneously devaluated in order to prolong educational careers that feed knowledge economies. Radical pedagogies propose a modest, seemingly irrelevant, shift in order to intervene in this logic. A group of people find out and determine together what is important to learn and unlearn; and how." (Krauss 2018, p.95-96) Students can be stimulated to share and find knowledge with peers as well as with teachers. In our classroom tables become obstacles and ways to hide from participation.

"This class is a dance.
We learn by joining the circle
even when we don't know the steps. You should expect
to slip
to fall
to bump into each other.
That's how you learn, after all."¹⁹

Teaching is learning. Learning about the students starts with learning the students names, one of the most important starting points in every teachers practice, investing time to introduction rounds and for example in 19 from the poem *Teaching Philosophy (or First Day of Class)* by Ramona Beltrán

an active ball throwing exercise were students stand in a circle and throw a ball to a different student each time. Each next student having to recite all previous names in order of appearance. With the list growing and the teacher being last in line.²⁰ We also invest in getting to know each other by handing each other imaginary gifts to unpack, giving room to the students to reveal personal anecdotes of choice.²¹ And because these introduction rounds and stories sometimes take up (too) much time from our limited contact hours, we may want to practically limit time by using matches, with each student and the teacher talking for the duration of a match burning.²²

The formation of groups takes place through various structured and well thought out intermezzos. Group work increases the sense of authority and aids the individual mastery as well as it is giving shy members room to participate with ease. Students write down their name + two or three keywords that explain what it is they want to investigate/deepen. This can also be done in an online group chat setting. While looking at overlaps in themes or subjects groups are formed. These new formed groups (of max. 5 students each) find each other at different tables in the room, or digitally in a separate formations.

²⁰ field note from my teaching journal observing Social Practice colleague Teana Boston-Mammah, 02-2020

²¹ field note from Practice and Research Seminar, 2019

²² field note observation from the lesson with guest Flip Driest



Image: Leftovers from talking for the duration of a match burning with Floor, Lila, Kelsey, Sabine, Vera, Tessa, Eli, Julie, Luke, Mirthe, Tiffany, Niki, Ferris, Lean, Bert, Sojenka, Doran, Vincent, Elio, Elody and Rebecca, January 2020.

After which they question why it is they are together (to open up the first conversation) but also to just sit down with each other. The students collectively come up with a name for their group and book time-slots in the teachers schedule but more importantly, alongside meeting with the teacher team, they make plans for meeting each other as a group wherever they feel suitable for peer to peer learning. If needed they are guided by thinking of ways, by booking space and setting up group communication tools. "The classroom represents a learning community in which students should be able to develop autonomy and support one another." (Onufer & Munoz Rojas 2019, p.2) This is a vulnerable practice that is always considered scary at first and fruitful in hindsight.

Without the authority of the teacher figure – or the superior knowledge of a discipline – students need sufficient access to feedback to grow and learn. Feedback that is information specific, issue focused and based on observations. With the teacher not being an expert per se, it is the teachers responsibility to help the students to find knowledge on their own terms in relating to others. Teaching students how to observe and help each other is crucial and they should be(come) comfortable with their peers to exchange helpful ideas for improvements or changes in the work. We should not differentiate between victory and failure while allowing for constructive conflicts to take place. "I also ask students to respect each other's learning in class discussions, and to think about the boundary between talking for the sake of airing a thought, and trying to move our understanding forward. I also remind them that in a classroom, although we do ask everyone to be respectful of each other, there is ultimately no confidentiality and that what is said in class may not remain private." (Borshuk 2017, p.82) When we are physically together in the room we can look at active structures for having a conversation. Students are regularly asked to share vulnerable experiences and stimulating them to think about the way they want to set up the room can be empowering. The way you communicate something contributes to what makes you feel safe. They can be conscious about setting up the space between them and the other, to share their stories, the best way possible. Whether you prefer to sit opposite or next to the person or even back to back to avoid all eye contact. There is no such thing as a permanent safe space, but we can create safe moments. In the new direct way of on-screen communication in our digital classroom, we are reducing the body to a face-in-a-frame. I found myself hiding behind *Snapchat* filters in the first weeks, and making masks with students to wear in the online classroom.²³ Because the face-to-face communication (the face being the frame of reference in video calls) is making participants highly self-aware.

To help with small group learning I started using values from the online collective writing session, published in the 2016 publication *Let's Mobilize: What is feminist pedagogy?* by the Valand Academy in Sweden, by printing the original pages from the publication and cutting the

²³ field note from teaching, March 2020

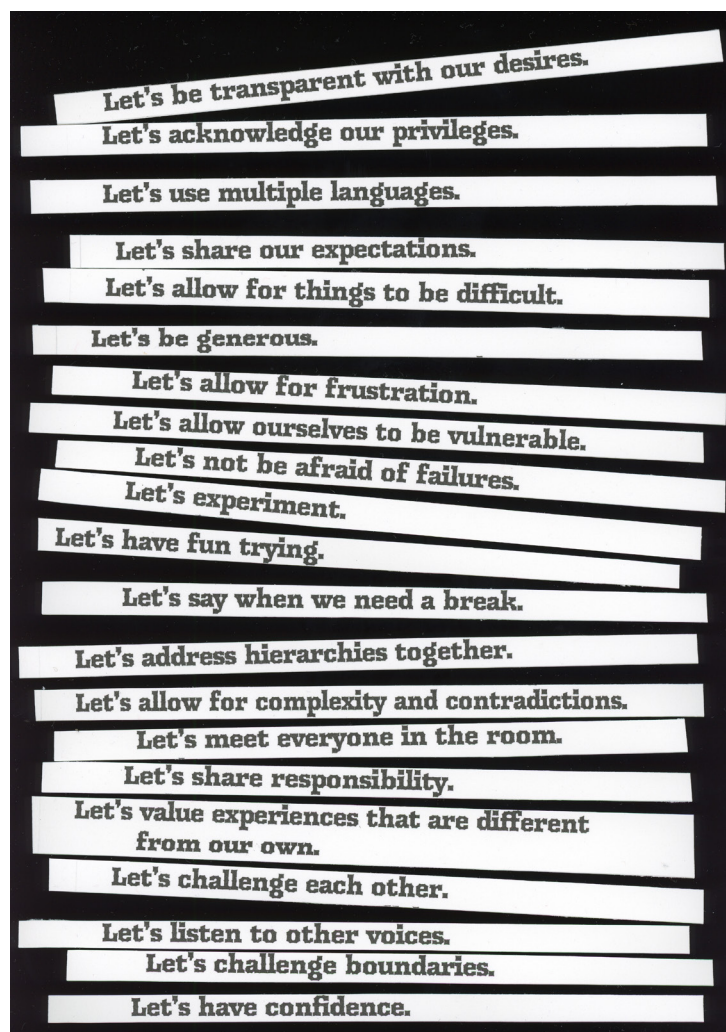


Image: scan from the cut-out motto's taken from *Let's Mobilize: What is feminist pedagogy?* (2016) Valand Academy Sweden.

mottos into individual slips of paper. These little pieces of paper became part of my *feminist teaching survival kit* described by Sara Ahmed as a "container for activities that are ongoing; projects that are projects insofar as they have yet to be realized (...)

We are our own survival kits." (Ahmed 2017, p.249)

The mottos are part of my kit, because each one reminds me of values I want to bring to the classroom. I use them by inviting student groups to blind pick one. The mottos trigger many giggles... As I was being laughed at for being "that teacher that always comes-up-with-these-kind-of-things." I do remember how its absence was more painful. "Whenever we speak, eyes seem to roll, as if to say, well, you would say that. From these experiences we can condense a formula:

Rolling eyes = feminist pedagogy.

Eyes seem to roll wherever you go, whatever you say."

(Ahmed 2017, p.38) The mottos give the group a collective notion to fall back on and they prove to be very good reflection tools: (Let's say when we need a break:) "Words to live by" (Let's experiment:) "I notice I am still stuck in my creative process, but it's improving!!! Feeling more comfortable." (Let's allow for complexity and contradiction:) "It's okay that things don't always work out the way you want them to, even though the thing working out was your goal from the start." (Let's share our expectations:)

“Fuck this motto! Let’s share our feelings instead!!!”²⁴
This tool is grounded in feminist pedagogy not only because of the mottos stem from feminist writing but also because they hand over the authority to the students.

PAINTING TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN YOUR HEAD

Observe three paintings carefully.
Mix them well in your head. (Ono 2000, 1962 spring)

Working with artists instructions proved to be an effective way to help students focus on artistic methods and voice. “Ideas are not necessarily used up just because they have entered the art historical canon (and many good projects remain unfamiliar to most audiences). This older soil remains fertile for new plantings.” (Fischer 2014, p.4) For this I decided to use the book *Grapefruit A book of Instructions and Drawings* by Yoko Ono (first published in 1964) as a teaching tool. Yoko Ono (b. 1933) was one of few womxn, and even fewer non-Western artists, active in the *Fluxus* movement. “Ono thought of herself as a grapefruit, a cross between a lemon and an orange, a metaphorical statement on her international identity.” (Yi Hsuan Lu 2013, p.7) The instructions in this book give the students (the much needed) room to temporarily let go of the pressure of generating (good) ideas and shift their focus to executing ideas, the actual making of work, based on Ono’s poetics give room to multiple interpretations and artistic freedom for the students to work with. “Unlike a traditional musical score, which comes with the understanding that the performer is to

²⁴ field notes from the students in a written feedback on working with the mottos made by various students, January 2020

realize the score faithfully and only interpret within the score’s scope of allowance (e.g. within a specific section in which improvisation is acceptable or, more commonly, to play slightly with the magnitude and duration of the written notes), one of the most essential characteristics of the instruction paintings is that they are unfinished and open to mutability. As an unfinished work others were not only allowed but expected to add to it. Of course, the paintings still exerted some measure of guidance, with varying degrees of strictness.” (Yi Hsuan Lu 2013, p.10) This way of working is particularly helpful when students are stuck or in panic about the constant pressure to perform, it builds community and shows original ideas aren’t a constant necessity.

Because, among many other tools, we need a syllabus that includes all genders I decided to make *Artists Stickers* to accompany my (future) teaching. Based on both the contemporary use of stickers in digital communication (see image page 11) and my own memories of receiving a sticker for well done homework and chores. I am hoping the stickers will evoke conversations around the visibility of womxn artists as part of our history and also introduce students to their work. In this (first) version the stickers are from respectively Jenny Holzer, Valie Export, Adrian Piper, Ana Mendieta, Francesca Woodman, Hito Steyerl, Yoko Ono, Nan Goldin, Lygia Clark, Eva Hesse, Sonia Khurana, Zanele Muholi, Šelja Kamerić, Sanja Iveković, Claude Cahun, Shirin Aliabad, Guerrilla Girls, and Jae Jarrel. These *Artist Stickers* are also easy to paste into our history books, that excel in exclusion. Each sticker carries the artists name on the back, and therefore even when they are cut out inform of (new) practices and work.

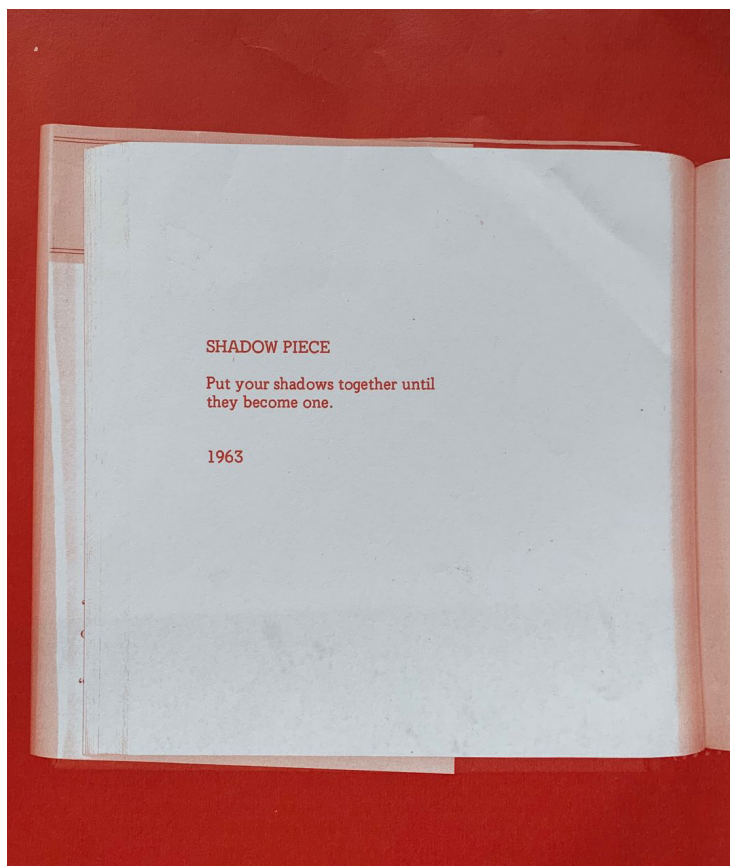


Image: copy from the Grapefruit instruction book, September 2019.



Image: scan from the Artist Stickers made for teaching (size: A5).



Image: the original Calling Cards #1 & #2 by Adrian Piper, 1986.

The *Calling Cards* are based on the 1986 work by Adrian Piper (b. 1948). Just like the *Artist Stickers* the *Calling Cards* are a direct result of my research. But where the stickers focus on the issue of representation, the *Calling Cards* deal with the notion of the complaint. Students complaints are not easily communicated with teachers, and sometimes even end up in bureaucratic structures. I understand the hesitation to approach teachers about delicate subject matters directly and based on conversations with students and graduates I decided to appropriate Adrian Piper's work and make Dear Teacher, *Calling Cards*. The people that make up the academy community face chauvinism, LGBTIphobia, ableism, classism, racism etc. and the feminist classroom is by no means free from exclusions, still. "In a world of possibility for us all, our personal visions help lay groundwork for political action. The failure of academic feminists to recognise difference as a crucial strength is a failure to reach beyond the first patriarchal lesson. In our world, divide and conquer must become define and empower." (Lorde 1984, p.105) The *Calling Cards* are for students to hand to the teacher (or leave it in their pigeonhole/mailbox) whenever they know it is needed. Handing out a card on behalf of a peer is also possible. A blank card is included for students to fill in because not all subjects are covered in the printed ones. And one of the cards is devoted to 'give' to Adrian Piper for context:

"Dear Adrian Piper,

This card is intended as part of an extended appreciation of your work.

Although it is policy to assume teachers are

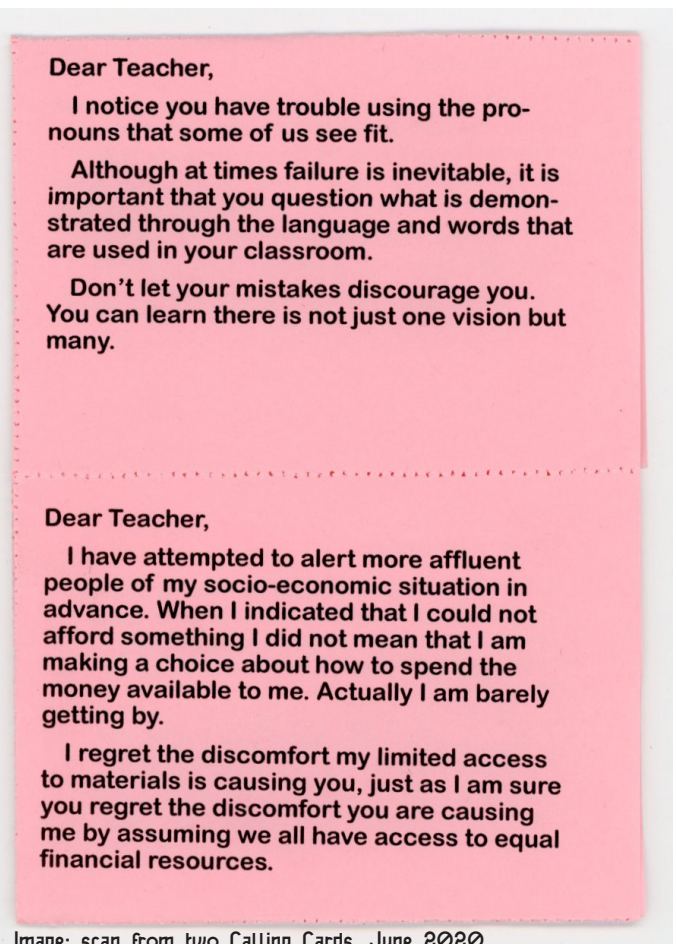


Image: scan from two Calling Cards, June 2020.

trying their best to make the art school a good place for everybody, I made this set of cards to distribute if we, as teachers, fail to do so.

I can't remember being taught about you in art school. But now that I found you, I want to thank you for your work."

See page 27 for an overview of all the *Calling Cards*. The *Calling Cards* are designed by Yara Veloso.

Aside from a feminist teaching survival kit we need a classroom as a place both physical, digital and most of all symbolic. We need students, sometimes tables and chairs, very flexible teaching materials, a teacher who will facilitate learning, some homework, a time schedule, and a location within a building or online where we meet (in and outside of school hours). And because the authority is with the students I found it helpful to keep focus on what happens in the margins of the classroom through diary/field note entries.

Experimental exchange #4: Archive Voice in the Archive

"The rastaman thinks, draw me a map of what you see then I will draw a map of what you never see and guess me whose map will be bigger than whose? Guess me whose map will tell the larger truth?" (Miller 2014, p.19) It is apparent that womxn have faced extensive societal and institutional roadblocks in becoming artists and gaining recognition in the art world as such. Knowing it is not just a matter of (re)writing art history through a

feminist lens, I believe awareness creates transformation. Awareness when looking at the sources and materials we use in our education. “The first notion is actually really simple: What matters is the way we present our materials, not the materials themselves. For example, demonstrating the proportions of the human body only through an example picture with the characteristics of an able-bodied white male is not automatically a disastrous mistake, as long as we do not present it as the only acceptable and ‘normal’ version of the human body. To avoid this misconception, it might be necessary to point out how the idea of the human body should not be limited to this particular example (that the shape, proportions, and color of people vary) as well as the reasons behind choosing this precise picture (perhaps the proportions in it are illustrated particularly well, perhaps it was difficult to find an example other than an able-bodied white male or female because of the fact that the traditions of Western art are racist and ableist). For me, it has been a real relief to realize how an anti-oppressive approach to teaching does not depend on flawless materials. Understanding this has liberated me from the unnecessary pressure and endless failure of not being able to create perfectly unproblematic teaching materials.” (Haggrén 2018 p.144) To have a conversation about one of our sources of teaching materials, we turn to the archive we work with at the academy: the library. In our case, at the *Willem de Kooning Academy*, the *Kunst-kelder (Art Basement)* at the *Research Station*.

In experimental exchange #4 we visit the library in an attempt to activate critical thinking when looking at representation. “Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own

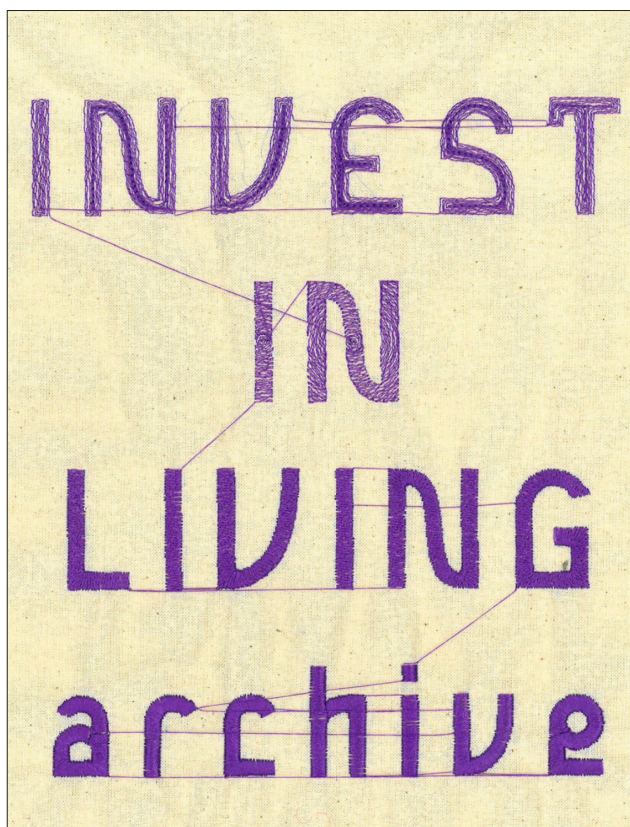


Image: scan from the embroidery made with Carmen José Quintanilla, March 2019.

point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth.” (Beauvoir 2011, p.196) Because we live within patriarchy our archives are male-dominated, male centred and male identified. “Whiteness and maleness are implicit. They are unquestioned. They are default. And this reality is inescapable for anyone whose identity does not go without saying, for anyone whose needs and perspective are routinely forgotten. For anyone who is used to jarring up against a world that has not been designed around them and their needs.” (Perez 2019, p.23) It is up to us, as teachers, to help disrupt this common knowledge. “Students need to learn that what is being learned can never tell the whole story, that there is always more to be sought out, and in particular, that there is always diversity in a group, and that one story, lesson, or voice can never be representative of all. (...) Teachers need to get students to always ask, what has not been said (by the student, by the teacher, by the text, by society).” (Kumashiro 2000, p.34) For both students and teachers it is hard to see our blind spots because our ignorance is invisible to us, and we might feel that our perception of the world is truth.

For this last experimental exchange I was able to work as a guest tutor in *The Archive of the Future* project, taught by colleague Elke van Eeden. *The Archive of the Future* is a project focusing on and looking at (counter)archives and (counter)narratives together with – in this case – the second year photography students, whom I have taught before. I invited the students to meet me at our library. “Our collection is a tool to get inspired, as well it is a source to get informed, as well it is a memory, and finally a system.”²⁵ After collectively reading a text (see appendix on page 32) we start to explore the library and her books. “The art library is an ideal place for action research to take place in that it can provide resources to stimulate and inspire practice (e.g. reference books, images, artefacts, artists’ books, artists’ biographies, poetry, etc.). This use of action research or enquiry-based learning sits neatly with the visual and sensory ‘object’ oriented teaching and learning which dominates art and design institutions.” (Appleton et al. 2017, p.151) Through looking we question what we encounter in our attempt to ‘find kin in books’. The students are limited to choosing one set of bookshelves to focus on because otherwise the frame of reference might be too overwhelming. They spend time there with that limited amount of books, looking at books, smelling books, staring at books. To let thoughts wonder, after which each student takes out three or four books. This small *family* is collected based on their own view point: content, color, size, material, typography, title, weight, an authors name... assuming how it is aligned with existence based on fascinations, sex or ethnicity, everything is valid, the only limit being it had to come from the designated shelves. “The material nature of the archive – at least before digitalisation – means that it is inscribed in the universe of the senses: a tactile universe because the document can be touched, a visual universe because it can be seen, a cognitive universe because it can be read and decoded. Consequently, because of its being there, the archive becomes something that does away

25 field note route by Wilma Krol, 10-2019

with doubt, exerting a debilitating power over such doubt. It then acquires the status of proof. It is proof that a life truly existed, that something actually happened, an account of which can be put together. The final destination of the archive is therefore always situated outside its own materiality, in the story that it makes possible.” (Mbembe 2002, p.20-21)

We meet with all the piles of books in hand at a table to talk about what we’ve encountered, and each student presents their chosen-family of books. This allows us to talk about personal interest (through books they are drawn to for whatever reason) as well as to look at what is there, raising awareness to the fact that this is the archive we work with. Because the space was limited to the one set of shelves it is possible to look at the library in detail, not the library at large. Reasons of choice vary greatly and were based on shape, size, colour, texture as well as subject of interest, identity, names, or words. Most students are able to create their own storyline while elaborating on kinship and even the students who say they choose on basis of intuition or formal principles still strongly relate to the choices they made as soon as they start talking about them. We are collectively reading a lot into it, as we listen and look at each selection. Students will make small or big statements about the limitations they experienced while choosing their books, statements that my colleague and I do not further elaborate on in comments because I want to stimulate an experience that is not controlled by me as the teacher/facilitator.

This exchange is about creating space for critical awareness and dialogue. I debate with Elke van Eeden afterwards about how explicit we need to be while I recognise how eager we are to control the classroom situation, especially when political motives are revealed. In this case the experience of the student and their storytelling is the tool to raise awareness/to learn from and with each other, and we have to refrain from dictating politics from the top down. “Our nuanced conversations aiming to bypass and dislodge this gaze often only reaffirmed the orientalist, colonial, and imperial imaginaries and fantasies of these students, and much time is spent in attempts to undo these with discussions, arguments, and exchanges on gender, sexuality, and race. While (un)learning racist colonial ideas/lenses is very much a feminist pedagogy, in a classroom where multiple conversations are on-going and necessary, often a singular conversation begins to dominate.” (Mehta 2019, p.27)

With the materials at hand and by interacting with what is there while being together in the library the research explores (and trusts) the change is in what we contribute and focus on as users. It’s about entertaining the possibility that you may be wrong and being open to learning from the experience of others. “I argue that we are not trying to move to a better place; rather, we are just trying to move. The aspect of oppression that we need to work against is the repetition of sameness, the ongoing citation of the same harmful histories that have traditionally been cited.” (Kumashiro 2000, p.46) This exchange is a starting point

to begin analysing inequality. The books that are there expose hidden hierarchies and acknowledge marginalisation, it is up to the students to now further investigate in their own pace by returning to the original point of entering the library but with a renewed understanding. “To organize information, librarians create structures. These structures grow from a logic that goes back at least as far as Aristotle. It is the basis of classification as we practice it, and thesauri and subject headings have developed from it. Feminist critiques of logic suggest that logic is gendered in nature.” (Olson 2007, p.509) This exchange questions with the materials at hand...

“Create your own categories from scribbled notes
conversations
noise
love
experience
feeling

REJECT standardised cohesion,
rationality,
definitions,
types

Delete chronology; ACTIVATE randomised
jumble ... tumble ... mix ... irregularity
threads
CHAOS (is good)
Beautiful Anarchy

Inclusion
self-directed learning
user-led
DELETE”
(Digital Women’s Archive North [DWAN] 2017, p.157)



Image: scan from Merve's hand documenting the Invest In Living Archive talk, April 2019.



Dear Teacher,

All teaching must be anti-racist.

I am sure you did not realise this when you made/laughed/agreed with that racist remark in your classroom. Exclusions are internalised in you and exclusions will be internalised in the students you work with.

I am leaving you this card to remind you to end this cycle.

Dear Teacher,

I noticed the one-sided references you use in your classroom and demand equal representation in art and its future history. It is through representation that people organise and place themselves in the world. Choosing and creating teaching materials is your responsibility.

I am leaving you this card to evoke critical self-reflection and change.

Dear Teacher,

I have a disability.

It is not my responsibility to inform everybody about my disability but it is your task to make sure everyone is able to equally access and participate in the activities in your classroom.

Please be aware students may or may not feel comfortable discussing this with you.

Dear Teacher,

Thank you for making an effort to always include everybody in your classroom and listen. I know this is difficult in an institute that is built around white and eurocentric biases and although some mistakes are made I really appreciate what you are trying to do.

You are part of the world and a shared community.

Dear Adrian Piper,

This card is intended as part of an extended appreciation of your work.

Although it is policy to assume teachers are trying their best to make the art school a good place for everybody, I made this set of cards to distribute if we, as teachers, fail to do so.

I can't remember being taught about you in art school. But now that I found you, I want to thank you for your work.

Dear Teacher,

I notice you have trouble using the pronouns that some of us see fit.

Although at times failure is inevitable, it is important that you question what is demonstrated through the language and words that are used in your classroom.

Don't let your mistakes discourage you. You can learn there is not just one vision but many.

Dear Teacher,

I have attempted to alert more affluent people of my socio-economic situation in advance. When I indicated that I could not afford something I did not mean that I am making a choice about how to spend the money available to me. Actually I am barely getting by.

I regret the discomfort my limited access to materials is causing you, just as I am sure you regret the discomfort you are causing me by assuming we all have access to equal financial resources.

Dear _____,

Concluding with a Pedagogy-in-Process, feminist pedagogy is for everyone

Because when feelings change, so should our syllabus: Over the past two years my research became my resistance. It, not only, gave me room to question given structures it also became a form of reflective accountability. With the Corona crisis starting near the end of my research I was forced into contactless education both as a teacher and as a research student. Abruptly abandoning the many interactions, exchanges and encounters I so regularly have within the academy building and whatever I had planned to do. Now we find ourselves adjusting and re-inventing art education for a longer period of time. Not knowing what a future looks like I reflect on feminist pedagogy through my experiences of the past two years and can only speculate about a future world. A future world in which BLACK LIVES MATTER. Putting an end to the prevailing institutional whiteness.

I found myself picking up a hopeful attitude to counteract the inconvenient and sometimes depressing truths that kept unveiling itself through theory and practice. Being a critical engaged student for the past two years has helped me become a better teacher. It allowed me to see, and work through, my blind spots and actively ask: what are we missing here, at art school today? In an increasingly interconnected and complicated world we need to be intellectually humble and curious people. I believe education can be a vehicle for social change and through and within feminist pedagogy and feminist theory I was able to start building on the political nature of the interactions I have with both students and staff, developing new habits and sensitivities. It is within the feminist classroom that I found an anti-oppressive approach for art education, one in which failure is inevitable. “We cannot free ourselves from the limitations of our gaze, so we have to find a way to tolerate these limitations and accept the failures in our process. Change takes time, and it might be quite painful to realize the amount of our own mistakes, but we cannot let that discourage us.” (Haggrén 2018, p.151) And although I realise again and again that my artistic practise doesn’t always align with my teaching (and combining the two seems impossible at times) the interactions with students make it valuable each year.

Because of the small and mostly temporary contracts I have been working under, I underestimated my influence on the curriculum. It has proven to be satisfying to focus on what can actually be done which is also more challenging, because it means you will actually have to start doing something. Representation of womxn in art education was revealed as an essential form of social equity. I can’t pretend that good intentions make inherently good acts, but I now know better to not underestimate what it is we do in our classroom. We have to stop creating inferior artists, move away from all the Eurocentric, white biases that are so much part of our institutions and although I am aware that my research is only a faint whisper in a long history of exclusion I trust our powers and work on a better future in art education.

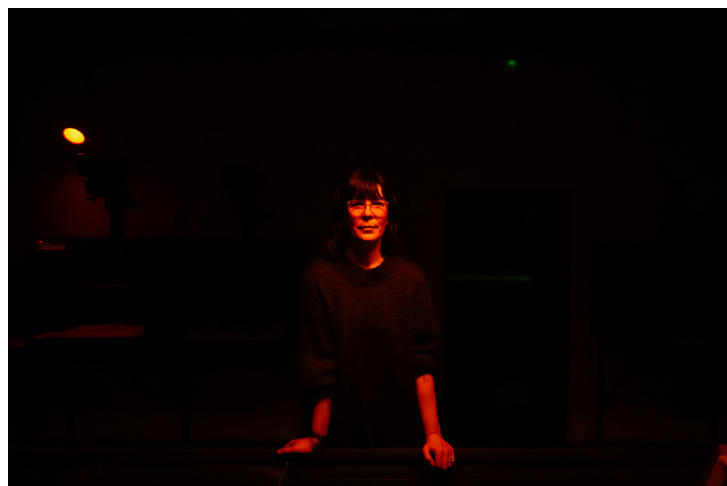


Image: Marijke Appelman at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam, photograph by Jan Bijl, April 2019.

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xx

Marijke Appelman (Haarlem, 1979) is a visual artist, occasionally working as a curator/project facilitator, she is one of the founders of *The Young Petanque Club Rotterdam* (est. 2013) and an art educator. With a degree in fashion (*Vogue Academy*, Amsterdam) and a propeuse in design (*Design Academy*, Eindhoven) she studied Fine Art at the *Willem de Kooning Academy* in Rotterdam from 2004 until 2008 after which she shortly studied at *Piet Zwart Institute's* Media Design. Exhibiting her work all over the world and participating in various Artist in Residency programs in Europe, she started regularly teaching alongside her artistic practice in 2012. First at the part-time Fine Art department of the *Royal Academy of Art (KABK)* in The Hague (until 2018) followed by both the Fine Art and Photography departments of the *Willem de Kooning Academie Hogeschool Rotterdam (WdKA)* in 2014. This research is part of the *Piet Zwart Institute: Master Education in Arts* (class of 2018-2020). Focusing on her practice as an art educator, forcing her artistic practice to a semi hold for over the course of her studies.

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<https://awarewomenartists.com/>

“Restoring the presence of 20th-century women artists in the history of art.”

<https://feministsearchtool.nl>

“The digital interface invites users to critically engage with a library system”

<http://heresiesfilmproject.org/archive/>

“A treasure trove of feminist art endeavours with all its glorious intersections.”

<http://typequality.com> “A platform by Kimberly Ihres for discovering and sharing typefaces designed by women.”

The typefaces used for this document are the VTF Gulax by Morgan Gilbert for the chapter titles and footnotes, and Karmina designed by Veronika Burian and José Scaglione for the content (which was built to withstand the worst printing conditions).

February 10 2020: Positioning yourself in the Library together with Marijke Appelman (short version)

Collective reading:

This is an active inventory of the books and materials at hand in our library, open to any kind of outcome and approached from a personal point of view. We are at the so-called *Art Basement* in the Wijnhaven 61 building, this building and its basement became part of the academy in September 2007. While the roots of the art academy in Rotterdam go back to 1773. I am assuming the library accumulated over all these years.

The *Art Basement* is part of the *Research Station*: "The Research Station aspires to be an interface where research in art and design becomes education. In 2024 the Research Station will be the inevitable go-to-place for teachers and students for all questions regarding research. We are working hard to get there." (mywdka.nl)

Maybe you've visited this place before, maybe you are familiar with the books and their content, if not, that's okay.

This is the archive we work with and...

"Borrowing materials is a fully automated, DIY-procedure, using your HR student-card. In case you do not have an HR-student card yet, please refer to Front Desk staff. They are available each morning from 08.30 till 10.30, Tuesdays & Friday's till 13.00."

On Friday April 12th 2019 I received an alarming email from this place: "Due a change of the library system The Hogeschool Rotterdam currently uses, it's discovered that a lot of people didn't return their borrowed books in time. More than 150 books (from our collection of art books) haven't been returned since their expiration date six months, or even (!!) more time, ago."

I am sure I returned whatever I borrowed. Have you? They come and go:

The most recent information about new books goes back June 2019 when *Advanced Imagineering : designing innovation as collective creation* by Diane Nijs was added to the collection. As well as *Art, No-Art & Anti-Art : a collection of relics* by Harry Ruhé and *Art & Queer culture* by Catherine Lord and Richard Meyer. This is me looking through the online catalog, searching for nothing in particular. Honestly, I do not know where this will lead us.

Individual and active research:

Now that we are here, lets take a look...

- Choose your lane, limit yourself to one set of bookshelves, and spent some time here...

Look at the books... or just smell... stare, let your thoughts wonder... inspect the system of categorisation.

YOU ARE HERE

- Take out one book. The one you are drawn to / most curious about.

Examine it. Look inside. Why is this here?

YOU WILL FORM A PILE OF BOOKS, THIS CAN BE THE FIRST ONE.

- Next up is searching for people you relate to or people you know of, for whatever reason. We are talking kinship, families, relationships, seeing yourself reflected. This can take shape in many different ways and forms... find content you relate to or limit yourself to a color, a smell, the size of the book, a name, its subject, assume how it is aligned with your existence based on sex or ethnicity, everything is valid.

LIMIT YOURSELF TO THE MAXIMUM OF 4 BOOKS.

Return to me when you are ready. To talk about what we've encountered.

Dear reader.

THANK YOU!

Any questions or comments can be
directed to my email at
marijkeappelman@gmail.com



Let's address hierarchies together.

**Let's share our
expectations.**