

Counterspace
Classroom space as a pedagogic tool to share authority
and to empower (design) students.

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Thank you my dear daughter Alba, your spontaneity and happiness is contagious.

A note to the reader.

This thesis has two parts, **T (Theory)** and **P (Praxis)**. They were developed in parallel and influenced each other.

The images in this thesis are used as a way to document and visualise my practice.

I use them as research material for alternative and radical pedagogy approaches and their use of space.

In relation to text, there are different voices in the thesis. Students' voices, education project reports, theoretical texts and small notes and interjections with personal character interspersed through the document.

The conclusion spans both parts of the project and it goes from one back cover to the other.

Counterspace

Classroom space as a pedagogic tool to share authority and to empower (design) students.

For my daughter Alba♥ who has taught me
things I had forgotten.

T5

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The space

interstice *ɪnˈtɜːstɪs*

noun (usu. interstices)

(many, more than one, more possibilities: ACTIVE!)

an intervening space, especially a very small one:

sunshine filtered through the interstices of the arching trees.

How poetic

The interstitial space is very small, almost non-existing.

or neglected.

Nothing, a blank space, a mute mouth, yet full of vibrant possibilities.

Something that appears between two parts

In typography the counter space of letters is the white space between the black strokes – the matter. It can be seen as interstitial space. The white space aids to the strength of the black strokes of the letters. It is a space full of tension and the reason for the letters existence even though it is made of nothing.

It is also the space that connects letters to form words and words to form sentences. It is connecting space.



Helvetica Neue Bold



Lucida Grande Bold

to exist.

In typography, a counterspace is the space between the strokes of letters. The space reinforces the strength of the strokes of the letters; it creates the shapes. It is a space full of tension. There is also the space that connects letters to form words, letter space, and words to form sentences, word space. It is, in both cases, connecting space. If we continue exponentially, interline space is the space between lines. The sequence of lines forms a column, the text area. The text area lies on a page, and around the centre there are margins. On a page, we can move elements around and change their dynamics and hierarchy. Two pages make for a spread. Many spreads form a book.

The book sits on a table. Under the table, there is a chair. There are more books on a shelf to the left, and to the right more tables with chairs under them, organised orderly in conventional ways. These form the educational props inside the classroom. The classroom has windows and doors, and it is inside a building. The building represents the institution, and the institution is part of the global infrastructure of education.

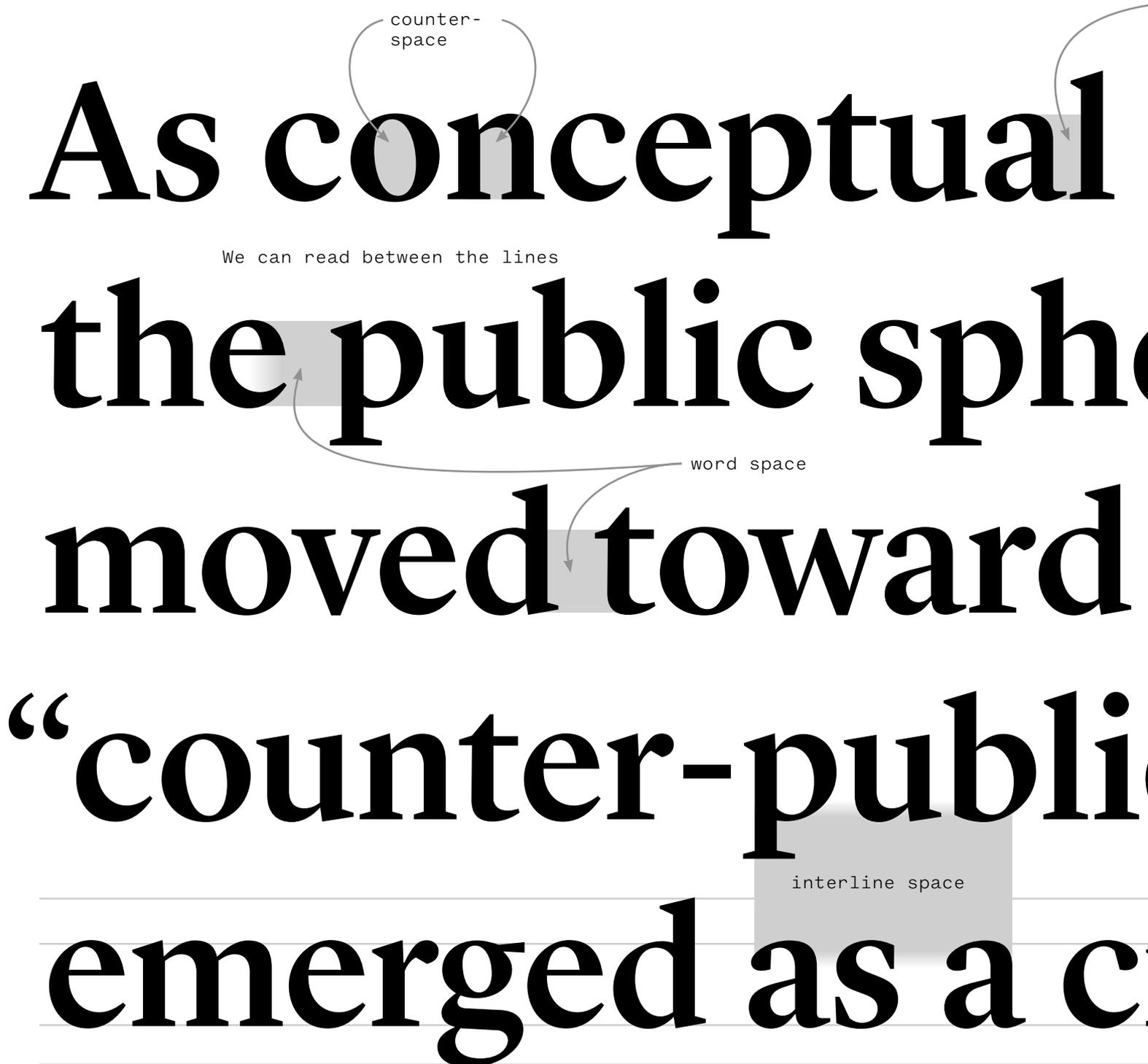
Students, teachers, directors and policies come and go. The buildings stay, and so do the histories, habits, routes and ways of doing and behaving. The same goes for all amassed and recorded data and hardware: the courses' syllabi; assessment records; meetings minutes; the collection of books that make the library; the machines in the workshops. They are gathered for decades, passed on from generation to generation, from teacher to students, from peers to peers, from student to teacher to students in perpetuity.

This space – the space of the art academy, from the figurative space of the abstract institution, to the potentiality of the concrete physical spaces of the classrooms, hallways, atria and cafeterias – is the space whose relevance and pedagogic potential this research project examines.

The space of the art academy is loaded with meaning and expectations: what does it mean to be in an art academy? What does it

mean to be a design student or a design teacher? How can I make the space more consciously part of the learning experience and how will that change that experience? How would an empowering space be organised? How can space shape the school community, and the learning experience? These were some of my initial questions. A broad definition and understanding of concepts, perception and potential qualities of space became therefore central to my research.

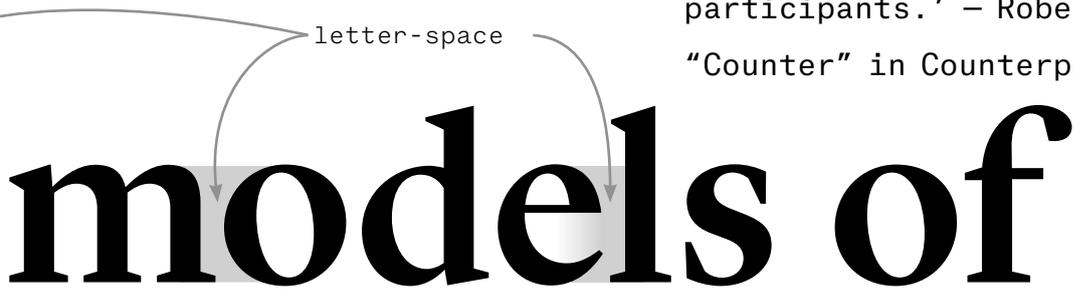
Let us pause on the concept of counter for a while.



Looking into different counters:

‘As conceptual models of the public sphere have moved toward multiplicity, “counterpublic” has emerged as a critical term to signify that some publics develop not simply as one among a constellation of discursive entities, but as explicitly articulated alternatives to wider publics that exclude the interests of potential participants.’ – Robert Asen, ‘Seeking the “Counter” in Counterpublics’.

letter-space



models of

ere have

We can also think between the lines

multiplicity,

c” has

critical term

ascender

x-height

baseline

descender

Introduction

I started teaching graphic design in 2012 at the Royal Academy of Arts (KABK) in The Hague, the Netherlands.¹ The catalyst for my engagement with the Master of Education in Arts at the Piet Zwart Institute was the desire to work with my students in a ‘different way’ from before: I wanted to find ways to interact with the students that defy and challenge the normative vertical axis of exchange, in order to increase their engagement, motivation and dialogue with each other and with me.

When I started teaching graphic design, I planned my syllabus according to my experiences as a student, my professional experience as a designer and my ideas about design. As a new teacher I was fortunate and free to decide what and how to teach my class. Most of my initial beliefs as a graphic design teacher are still present in the way I conduct my teaching practice. The desire I expressed above represented, in retrospect, the end of a cycle for me, or a shift in direction. In constant dialogue with my student self, myself the teacher and my students, and with the accumulation of experiences I went through or observed, I started to understand the full potential of education and the responsibility that comes with it.

The groups of students I teach are heterogeneous. I usually teach two groups of students in the first year, each group having around 24 students who are approximately 17 to 26 years old. The origins of the students are very diverse. In the current academic year, I have 12 different nationalities in one group, mostly from Europe, but there are also students from Asia, Africa, and South America. Their social and cultural background is quite varied, and I think it is a privilege for both me and the students to be exposed to so many different perspectives, experiences and points of view.

This makes the context of my classroom a fertile terrain in which to explore an aspect of the design practice that is becoming

¹ The class I teach, simply called Design, is part of the first year in the Graphic Design department.

unavoidable in current times: the necessary awareness of one's own privilege and context, of different histories and voices, different practices and aesthetics. The rich educational environment we encounter every week makes palpable the problematics with the still prevalent – and distorted – modernist idea that design is neutral, universal and unbiased.

Design education should play a considerable role in addressing the politics behind visual communication and should initiate a process of awareness of said politics. Graphic design is inherently political. Design practices, messages and artefacts can confirm and support biases, stereotypes, privileges and structures of power. I believe (future) designers must be aware of their responsibility, their privilege and of other voices, and must reflect critically on the work they are asked to do or initiate themselves.

Some of the references that became central to my research deeply resonated with my convictions and became productive resources and reflection material. I came across the early education philosophy, the Reggio Emilia Approach,² when I was frantically searching for a nursery for my daughter, one that would take small children seriously, that would offer more than care. I was immediately attracted to the principles of Reggio Emilia, for example, that it is the children who lead the day with the help of the 'pedagogisti' and 'atelieristi'. In 2015, I visited an exhibition about the Black Mountain College,³ the experimental college where the sciences and the arts were taught with equal importance, which was founded in 1933 by John Andrew Rice, Theodore Drier and others in Black Mountain, Montana. I was drawn to its pedagogic approach, rooted in the ideas of John Dewey, and the spirit of collaboration it fostered. Also in 2015, I learned about the designer, artist and educator Sheila Levrant de Bretteville. She created the first-ever women's design programme at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in 1971 and later on, together with Judy Chicago and Arlene Raven, founded

2 The Reggio Emilia Approach was developed after the Second World War by psychologist and pedagogue Loris Malaguzzi and parents in the villages around Reggio Emilia, Italy. It is an educational philosophy focused on early childhood (zero to seven years).

3 'Black Mountain. An Interdisciplinary Experiment 1933–1957'. Hamburger Bahnhof, Museum für Gegenwart in Berlin, Germany. Curated by Eugen Blume and Gabriele Knapstein.

the Woman's Building in downtown LA, an open space of collaboration and encounters for women.

It cannot be a coincidence in terms of the course of my research that these very different examples all share a special relationship with the spaces that contain(ed) them.

The Reggio Emilia Approach sees space as the *third* teacher.⁴ Many of its past students see Black Mountain College's isolation and location as the main contribution to the community spirit it fostered. The act of building the school infrastructure, by students and teachers working together, without doubt played a central role in the formation of the community. The Woman's Building was a hub for community exchange and learning for women artists and designers. The building created the space for the activities to take place, and it was central for this community to identify, meet, grow and develop.

In the examples above, the spaces shaped the learning environment and experience, and so does the space of the classroom for both me and the students. The space of the classroom is central to the interactions with the students. It became apparent to me that this space was not and could not be *neutral*. It is a space where rules are established, conventions and mannerisms take place and ways of behaving are repeated and perpetuated.

During my years of teaching in two academies I often came across feelings of inadequacy, vulnerability and insecurity in many students. I have tried to compensate or counteract these feelings, mostly by reflecting on the experiences of my younger self, the student, and by trying to understand why and how these behaviours came about.

Reflecting on these observations, I have come to the conclusion that expectations and ideas about 'the art academy' that are impressed on the students, and the 'idea' of education and how to behave within it, and among their peers and in their surroundings in general, often work contrary to the interest and benefit of the student.

4 This means the space of the learning environment and the whole school is an active space, a space that is alive and enables interaction between, not only the props of the learning environment, but also among children. The other teachers are the children and the 'pedagogisti'.

Learned behaviours and expectations in previous education settings and contexts are to blame, especially because some of these behaviours and expectations are no longer entirely welcome or desired within the higher education reality. The different social context and background of each student plays an even more important role. Often, students from less materially privileged backgrounds quickly realise their social contexts don't seem to fit in as easily as students from privileged backgrounds. Their general knowledge is often more limited, they might speak with an 'undesirable' accent, their vocabulary is probably less varied or varied in different ways, they have fewer resources to conduct their studies and consequently are under even more pressure to perform.

This realisation made it apparent to me that the politics behind education had to be considered in this research project. Assuming a position that I don't 'just' teach graphic design but that teaching is or can be a political act has liberated me and expanded the potential of the space I occupy in the classroom.

This responsibility goes hand in hand with my belief not only that education is a right and should be public and free, but also that education is more than learning a set of skills, acquiring knowledge or learning a profession – it is also about the formation of an empowered and responsible citizen.

Following the propositions of bell hooks in *Teaching to Transgress* (hooks, 1994), I am extending the definition and perception of the classroom space in order to diversify the interactions that are possible within its boundaries, and to subvert the normative power structures and hierarchies of the Western classroom.

I am looking at space from different physical and conceptual perspectives, informed by varied sources: from architecture to feminist pedagogy, from philosophy to geography, design to activism. My project lies within these various perspectives and takes on *space* and how these different ways of perceiving, experiencing and embodying space can help both me and the students to act differently.

I reflected and expanded upon an alternative definition of the classroom space: the classroom is an Open Space – space that expands or contracts with the experiences it carries, and the references it

brings about; it is an Informal Space⁵ – it is domestic, the space of community building, bonding and sharing; and finally, it is Other Space – the space that allows alternative⁶ and other ways. I will use these terms throughout this thesis; for a detailed definition please see page T111.

My proposition is the following: to change the dynamic of the classroom by sharing and/or subverting my position of authority; to create situations where a community can be formed; to extend and raise awareness of the boundaries and borders of the classroom; to explore the idea of the alternative and Other Space, in order to encourage different interaction and behaviour, and extend such behaviour to outside the classroom.

We currently see autonomy reduced, rights taken away every day. Democratic values are at stake. We need to take more care to prepare our students to be sensitive to, and stand up to, these tendencies. This requires us to embrace our shared responsibility for our students' trajectories in life beyond skill and knowledge acquisition. This is why I am looking to introduce feminist and critical pedagogies into my classroom – they share a strong political stance for social justice, and their pedagogic approaches, methods and practices, along with the student–teacher relationship they foster, are healthy and useful for the students' trajectory as responsible citizens.

In transforming both the perception and the experience of the physical space of the classroom, I hope to enable new ways of operating and behaving in the classroom that are contrary to the instituted normative ways. The goal is to create the opportunity for a multiplicity of alternative interactions between the students themselves, as well as between students and teacher.

5 The concept of *Informal Space* in this research project reflects the ideas on informal settings in education addressed by Pascal Gielen and Peter Kraftl (see pp. T112 – T113): informal in contrast, or as an alternative or complement, to instituted or mainstream education settings.

6 'Alternative' in this context relates to a concept tied to educational models developed by Peter Kraftl; it means in broad strokes: different from what the norm is in mainstream education (Kraftl, 2015, p. 31).

To sum up my proposal in one question: **How can we work with classroom space as a pedagogic tool to share authority and to empower (design) students?**

To further develop and explore the subject of my research question, I will also consider the following questions related to pedagogic practices: Which strategies and practices can expose the potential and condition of the classroom? How can the physical position of the teacher in space influence how the students perceive their respective authority? How does the rearrangement of the educational props and classroom space help the interchangeability of the student-teacher dichotomy?

In relation to perception and experience of the space of the classroom I will explore how experiencing the physical space from different perspectives can help students to see the space of education from a different standpoint, and subsequently how this can aid students in defining their own physical and social-political position. To take it a step further, how can this repositioning encourage students to break conventions and normative behaviours in the classroom?

In order to understand the relationship between empowerment of the body of students and learning processes, I will focus on the following questions: how will empowerment help students' engagement with their learning process? And, how can it lead to students' increased autonomy and motivation?

Pedagogic practices and strategies

Described and illustrated on the following pages are some strategies that I have developed to answer some of these questions, and to hopefully achieve a goal of an education that is more engaging and empowering.

Some of these strategies were developed when I first started teaching and have since been reformed and improved – many newly added – with the help of the theories and references that this thesis will describe from page T47.

Notes on assignments

What is an assignment? What can an assignment do?

An assignment is a catalyst.

An assignment is a conversation tool.

An assignment is a provocation for action and interaction.

An assignment is a second introduction to an educator.

An assignment is a set of instructions.

An assignment asks questions.

An assignment describes an exercise.

An assignment gives instructions.

An assignment initiates a process.

An assignment leads the process.

An assignment offers references.

An assignment presents problems.

An assignment proposes a game.

An assignment says something about the educator's intentions.

An assignment sets out restrictions.

An assignment transpires a set of clues to a given problem.

Susana Carvalho, November 2016



Assignments are a framework to invite the students to work and *interact with me and with each other*. I give them a structure, define a medium, a set of restrictions and a timeframe. They do the rest.



Assignments reflect one of the most valuable assets of the educational context: the emphasis on the *open-ended process*, where error and failure can be accepted as a successful result.

Ill. 03-04: Carvalho, S. (2017, 2016)
Student at work.



In the forms of lectures, presentations, group discussions, individual tutorials, working individually or in groups. So that learning and teaching can happen in the most varied circumstances.

CHANGE THE PACE OF CLASSES EVERY WEEK



Ill. 05: Carvalho, S. (2016)
Working without computers.

Ill. 06: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Lectures.



Ill. 07: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Discussing projects.



Ill. 08: Park, S. (2017)
Working in groups.



ENLARGE THE CLASSROOM

Take over the corridors

We do this to perceive and use space differently and extend the borders of the classroom, to facilitate random encounters.



Ill. 09: Scholten, J. (2017)
Students taking over the corridors.

Ill. 10: Carvalho, S. (2016)
Peer feedback, also in the corridors.

**Bring references to the classroom**

I bring many references, provocations and propositions to the classroom. I encourage every student to bring and share theirs.



Ill. 11: Carvalho, S. (2016) *Looking at publications: materials, structure, binding.*



CHANGE POSITIONS (TO PERCEIVE AND EXPERIENCE SPACE DIFFERENTLY):

Sit in a different spot every week.
I never sit at the head of the table.



Ill.12, 13: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Sitting in different places.



Ill. 14: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Sitting in different places.



Ill. 15: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Sitting in different places.



**(Let students) reshuffle
the classroom regularly**



I find it important to keep a dynamic environment so that no one gets too accustomed to our respective roles.

Ill. 16–18: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Students at work.



Ill. 19: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Meeting on the floor.



Ill. 20: Carvalho, S. (2017)
Individual work on desks.

**Allow students to take the lead**

I invite students from higher years to give presentations about the assignment we are currently working on in class.

Ill. 21: Carvalho, S. (2017) *Second Year student Clara presenting her project to the first year students.*

SUBVERT YOUR POSITION (OF AUTHORITY):



Be a participant sometimes

Ill. 22: Scaglia, V. (2018) { } or Space, Movement Workshop with Valentina Scaglia. Moving together, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.

Ill. 23: Scaglia, V. (2018) { } or Space, Listening Workshop with Viki Zioga. Sounds of collaboration, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.

I have learned

about Egyptians, cats and eyebrows

about Kate Nash

about music

about the development of graffiti

going for a walk is sometimes better than sitting on a chair

how to make Caipirinha

how to take care of orchids

how to make a trick with one elastic and a hand

how to make a paper hat

listening and encouraging is sometimes better than a formal
appraisal of your work

life is more important than design

misunderstandings can be very creative

one of your cousins drove the red touristic train in
Liechtenstein

that you are strong when you cry in front of others

that we make others happy when we speak about loved places
and people

that talking about what scares us helps us overcome it

that to keep on trying pays off

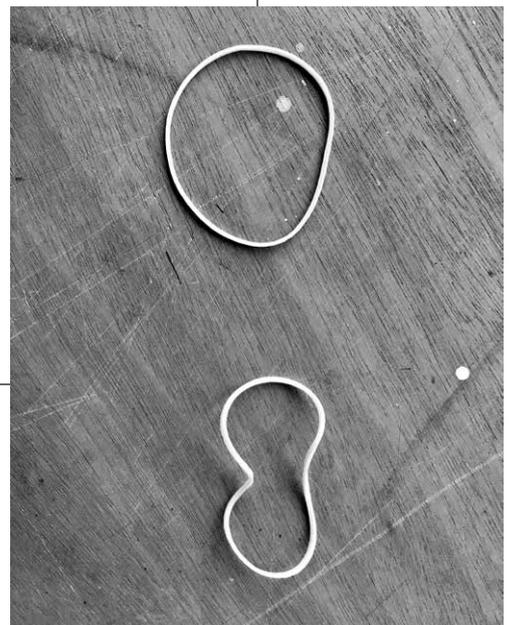
the difference between slab serifs and Egyptians

to let go

to make pizza

you can skateboard the entire Liechtenstein along the Rhine
in four hours on a windy day

...



Ask your students to teach you something

Ill. 24: Carvalho, S. (2017)

I have learned...



Turn your experience into examples

I show the students my working process as a designer. I select one of my projects – from concept, through design, to production – and describe the steps. In this way students understand why I ask questions, the remarks I make, what I understand as process. I emphasise, this is just one way of working; they should find their own way.

Ill. 25: Carvalho, S. (2017) *Presentation of process of own projects.*



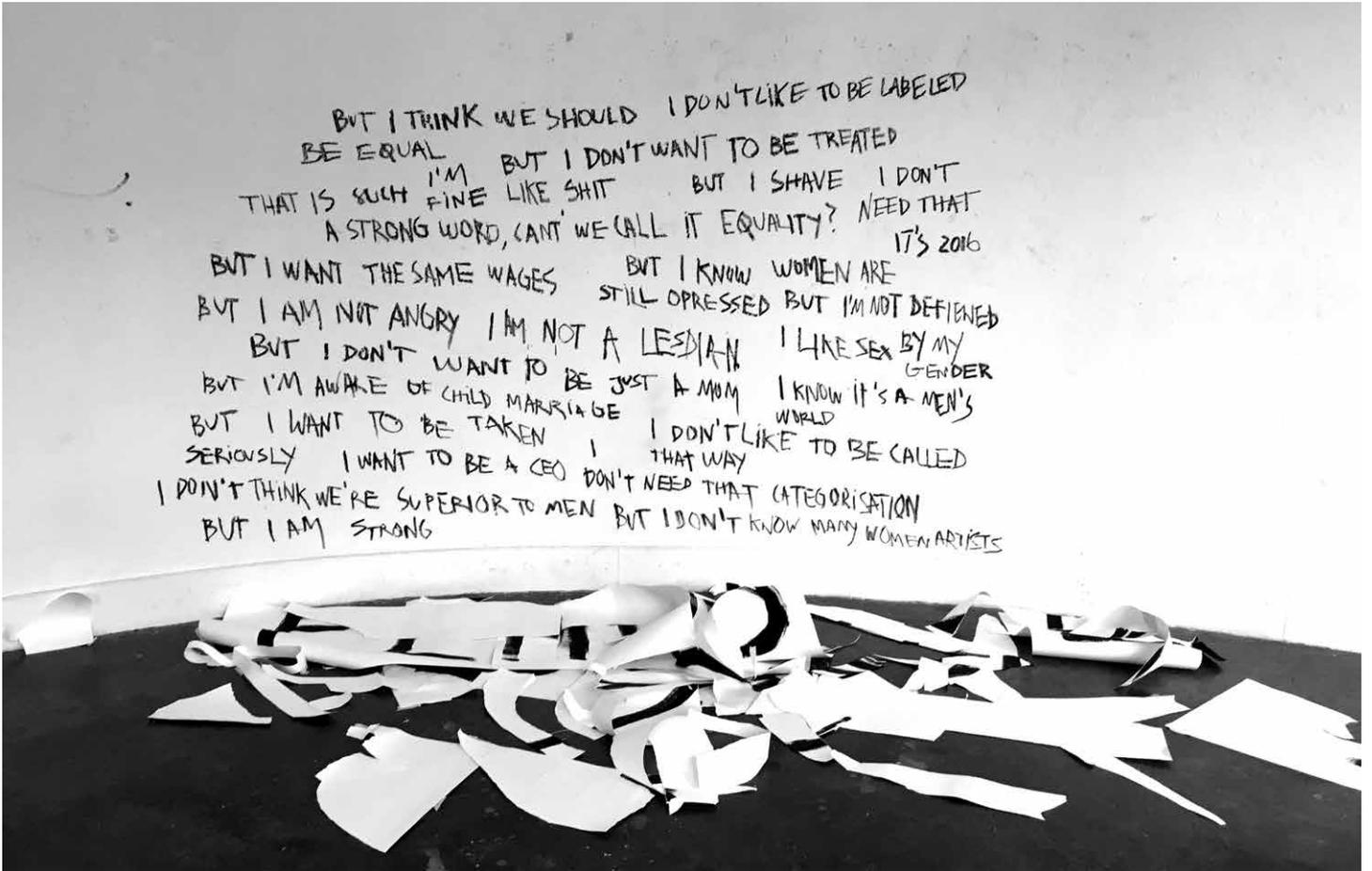
Turn your knowledge into lectures

I always give small lectures/demonstrations in order to teach skills in context. The specific knowledge they will be useful for working on the assignments. To avoid frustration. To avoid delays. To make the task at hand seem approachable. I always ask if it was enough, too much, or if there is more the students need to know at the moment.

Ill. 26: Landis, S. (2016)
Lecture 'how to choose a typeface?'.



Ill. 27: Carvalho, S. (2016)
Project presentation.



ENCOURAGE AND CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR
CRITICAL THINKING



Facilitate students to work with their own interests and content.

The content of my assignments is always open, the students always work with their own interests. This will provoke the students to reflect on their choices and to find their position in relation to the topics they choose. Because we often discuss assignments in small groups, students will also here be exposed to a variety of topics, ideas and perceptions - leading to further reflection and positioning.

Ill. 28, 29: Carvalho, S. (2015)
Students choose the topic and content of their work. Carolina Pinto.

Ill. 30: Carvalho, S. (2016)
Students choose the topic and content of their work. Clara Lezla.



Present work to the group, give each other feedback.

We discuss assignments in small groups and individually, and make presentations in a big group. These are moments for reflection and interaction where peer to peer feedback is encouraged to emphasise *learning over teaching*.

Ill. 31: Carvalho, S. (2015)
Peer feedback.

Ill. 32: Carvalho, S. (2016)
Students choose the topic and content of their work.



Ask many questions, point at things.
 To set action in motion; so that answers
 reveal new directions or solutions.

Ill. 33: Carvalho, S. (2015) *Asking questions.*

Ill. 34: Landi, S. (2016) *Pointing.*

Looking through the lens of informality, authority and collectivity in pedagogic approaches: A cartography of influences

I am putting forward this chapter as a cartography of influences. It comprises a succession of experimental and alternative pedagogic projects throughout the 20th century – Black Mountain College, the Staatliches Bauhaus, the Ulm School, the Woman’s Building and the early education philosophy Reggio Emilia Approach. I am presenting their background, the context in which they operate(d) and the pedagogic programmes they developed.

I am also exposing visual documentation from these references that is relevant in shaping my thinking. I looked at the spaces of these education projects and at the way those spaces were inhabited and experienced by teachers and students, both in classroom or more informal settings. I also focused on the examples of collaborative practices mostly, but not exclusively, during informal moments outside the classroom.

These models and references are relevant to my research because of the way they incorporate informality, self-governance and horizontal structures of authority, and collectivity in their day-to-day activities. They reflect in broad strokes some of the ideas of John Dewey. Critical and feminist pedagogies became anchors to my project, from the feminist pedagogy experimental practices of Judy Chicago and Sheila de Bretteville, to the writings of bell hooks. Lastly, but not least, throughout the course of the research project the practice of the artist Annette Krauss was a productive resource to explore topics related to ‘learned behaviour’ in the classroom, with special emphasis on her ‘Hidden Curriculum’ project.

John Dewey (1859–1952) was an American philosopher, sociologist and educational reformer, a thinker whose ideas are key references and influences in many of the examples ahead. Dewey was the father of the American progressive education movement; he defended education as a complete process of formation of a responsible citizen and believed that it should not be separated from democracy. He saw education not as a simple way to learn skills or obtain information, but as a social process, as much about the settings and relationships, the process of learning, as it is about the specific content of education.

In broad strokes, some aspects of Dewey's theory that overlap in the most relevant references for my research are: the emphasis on learning-by-doing and experiential learning; focusing on problem solving and critical thinking; collaboration processes and cooperative learning (including peer-to-peer); community service integrated into the daily curriculum; student-centred programmes and, finally, education for social responsibility and democracy.

Another aspect of Dewey's ideas is the great value placed on art education, considered just as relevant as other disciplines. Art education is crucial to the development of human beings' ability to express themselves and communicate.

Black Mountain College (BMC) was located in North Carolina, in the forest of the Blue Ridge mountains, on the margins of Lake Eden between 1933 and 1957. The college was founded by John Andrew Rice, Theodore Drier and other colleagues with the intention of starting a new and revolutionary higher education project where the formation of a responsible citizen was of high importance. The most revolutionary aspect of Black Mountain College's pedagogic approach was the placement of the education of arts at the centre of the programme, in equal importance with (human) sciences. Art education was another way for students to communicate and express themselves; furthermore, complex social and political topics were often better approached and explored in art education: '[...] Art is a province in which one finds all the problems of life reflected – not only the problems of form (e.g. proportion and balance) but also spiritual problems (e.g. of philosophy, of religion, of sociology, of economy). For this reason art is an important and rich medium for general education and development' (Albers, J., 1934). Furthermore, artistic practice was seen as a form that could be used to produce knowledge, based on experience, activating one's own critical thinking: '[...] who knows that one's own experience and discovery and independent judgement are much more than repeated book knowledge' (Albers, J., 1935).

John Dewey was a board member at the college and his progressive education ideals were a major influence on the pedagogy practised there. He advocated the idea of a holistic approach to education, whereby the students' education was more than about acquiring knowledge or skills. Equally important was the formation of a responsible member of society (Blume, Knapstein, 2015, p. 13). A strong belief that this holistic approach should be integrated into everyday life fostered the formation of a strong community, in which everyone participated in its maintenance – from working in the fields that provided for the college, to theatre plays and evening concerts, administration work, and even the college's new building project.

Black Mountain also had a progressive stance: women were part of the student and faculty body from the start and several African-American students attended the college in spite of the racial segregation of the time (Blume, Knapstein, 2015, p. 13). The college also became a safe port for European refugees, fleeing from the atrocities of the dictatorial regimes in Europe; many artists, musicians and teachers joined the colleges during the entire span of its existence. Most notably, the first to arrive were Josef and Annie Albers. Josef Albers was appointed the art teacher of Black Mountain College in 1933, and Annie Albers led the weaving workshop. The Albers continued the educational project initiated in the Bauhaus (see below), and after them many more ex-students and faculty members of the Bauhaus joined the college.

I find the Work programme at BMC a remarkable strategy to make the community feel committed and invested in the school. One of the students – Gisela Kronenberg Herwitz – shares her thoughts:

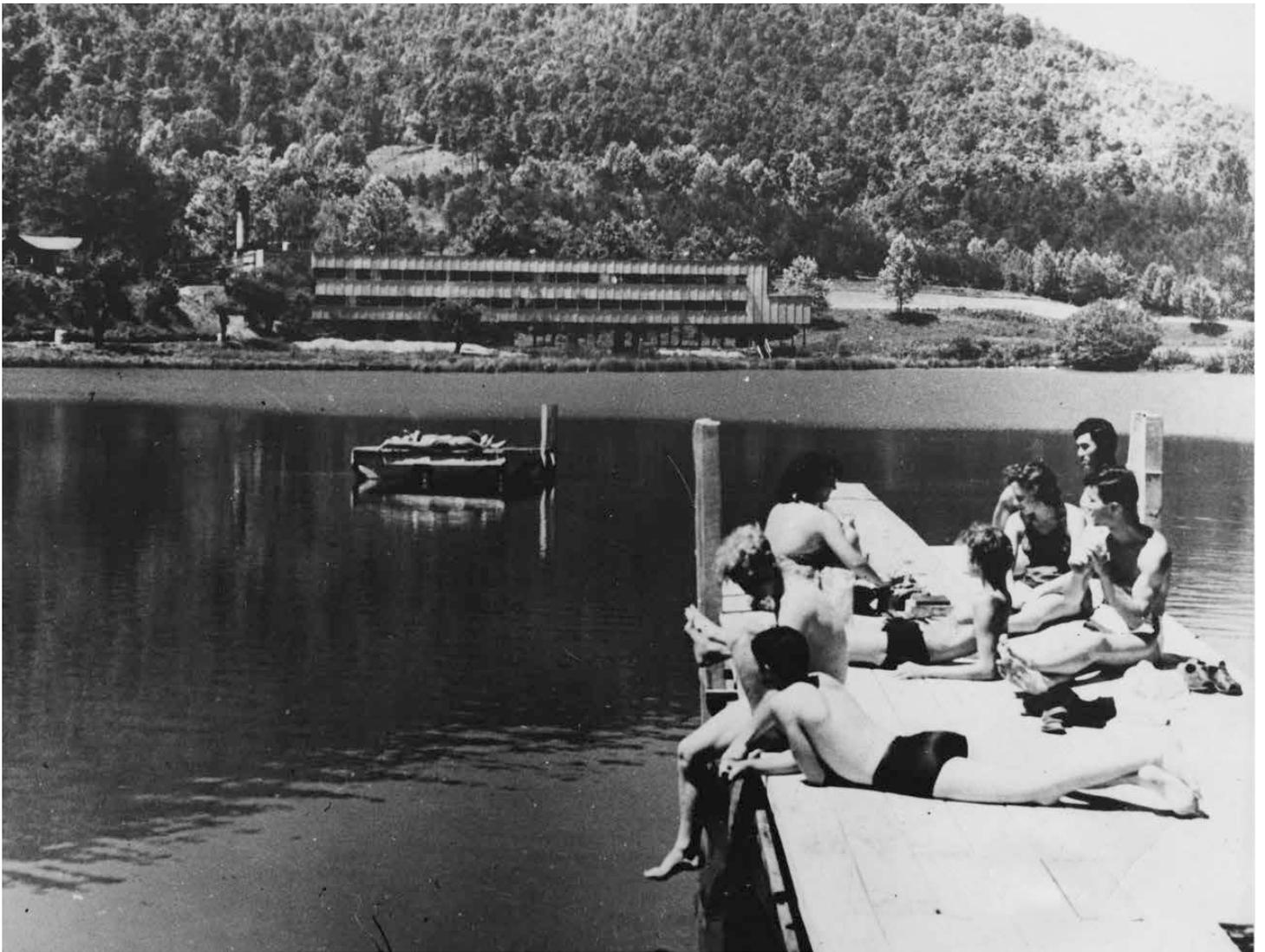
The work program was an important and exciting part of my life at BMC. I even enjoyed digging the ditches that became the foundations for the Study Building at Lake Eden.... Eventually I was put in charge of the tool shed and later worked with Bas Allen, the general maintenance man and an excellent teacher, learning to steam-fit the lodge and other existing buildings, wire them, put in street lights, etc. I learned to put in sub-flooring, to drive a nail straight, and to do some masonry work with field stones on the Study Building. These accomplishments gave me a lot of confidence and some useful skills that have lasted me a lifetime. (Harris, 2001–2010)

Even though the idea of a work programme is not easy to translate to high education realities today, it is important to retain that a way to engage the members of a community lies exactly in the simple act of 'doing things together', things that impact said community directly – as (re)organising the space of the classroom.



Ill. 35: Sue Spayth Riley (left) and students. (ca. 1938)



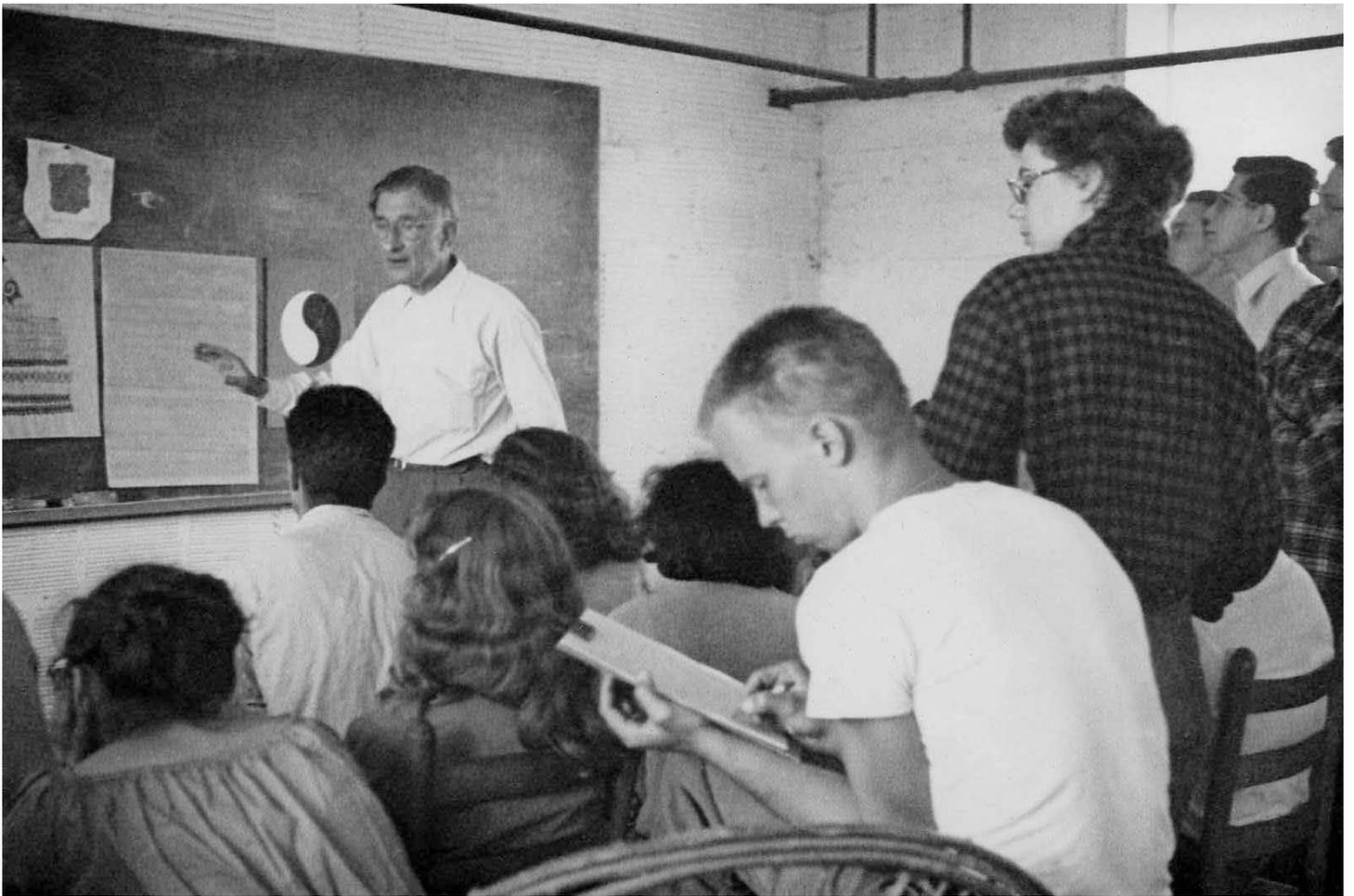


Ill. 36: Campbell, J. (1933-1957) *Students lounging on dock, Lake Eden.*



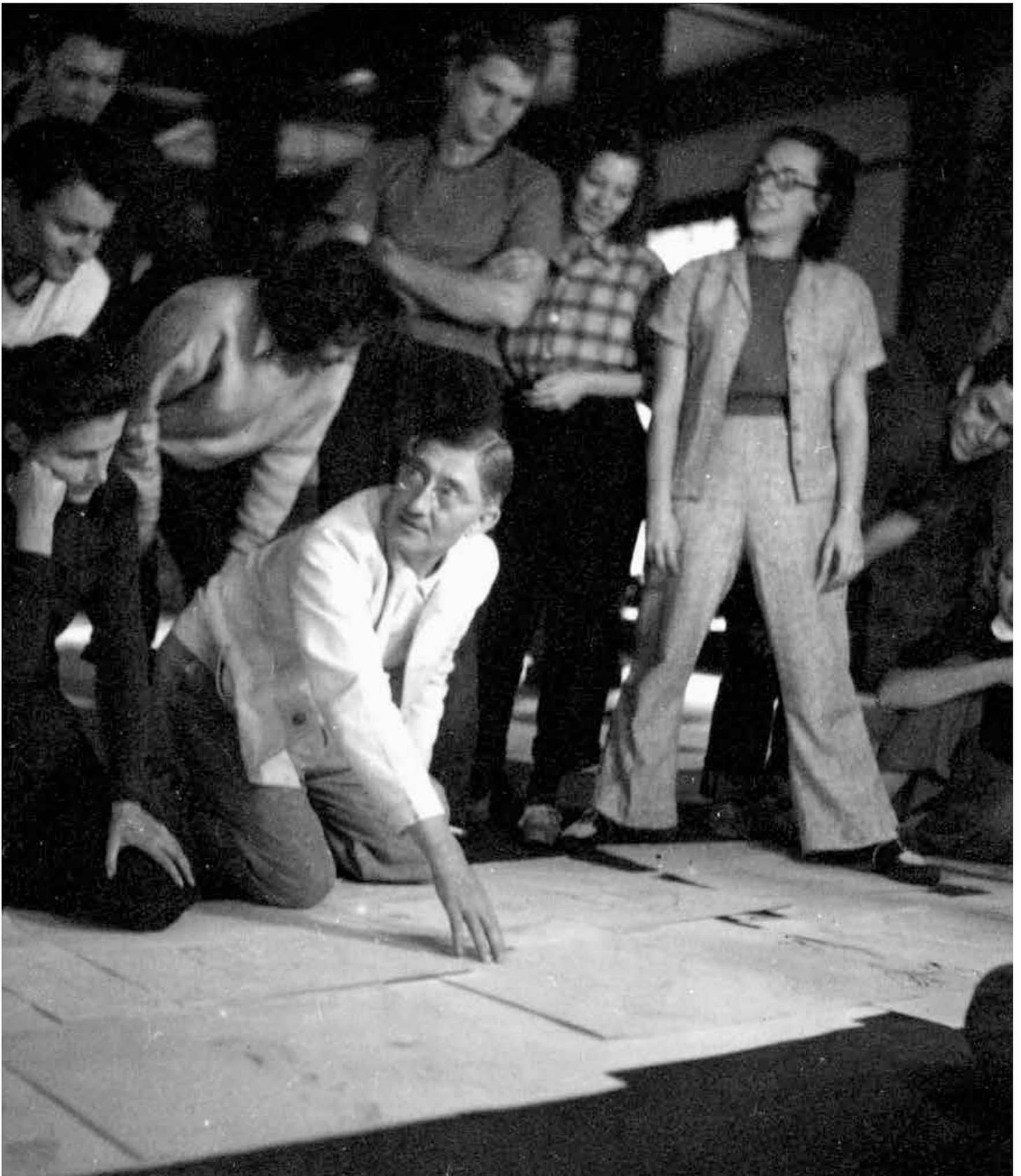
Ill. 37: Newhall, B. (1948) *Buckminster Fuller and students assemble a geodesic dome.*

Ill. 38: *Albers' class.* (1936)



Ill. 39: Archer, H. L. (ca. late 1940s) Josef Albers Teaching at BMC, with Ray Johnson in the foreground.

Ill. 40: Students at the Buckminster Fuller's architecture classroom, Black Mountain College, Summer Institute. (1949)



Ill. 41: *Albers Teaching.*



Ill. 42: Construction of the foundations building on the new Lake Eden Campus: the Studies Building. (ca. 1940)



Ill. 43: Albers, J. (ca. 1942) Students building the chimney of the new campus, Lake Eden.

Ill. 44: Construction of the main building on the new Lake Eden Campus: the Studies Building. (ca. 1940)



Ill. 45: Albers, J. (1941) *Both faculty and students maintained a farm and built the building on campus. In these early years, an egalitarian and communal environment thrived.*



Ill. 46: *Farm work.* (ca. 1940).



Ill. 47: Students relaxing on the porch:
Fernando Leon, Gisela Kronenberg, and teacher
Richard Gothe, who taught economics and
sociology at BMC. (1940-1941)



Ill. 48: *Black Mountain College students sitting on the porch behind Lee Hall.*

Ill. 49: *Performances and parties.*

One of the main influences of Black Mountain College and one of the first public schools where design disciplines were taught, was the **Staatliches Bauhaus** in Weimar, then in Dessau and finally in Berlin. It was a German public school that operated from 1919 to 1933 and was founded by the architect Walter Gropius. Influenced by modernism and its ideals, the school broke with past artistic tradition, the aesthetics of the elite, and was committed to a social democratic future facilitated by design. The school initiated a new way of looking at and teaching art, applied arts and design. It focused on the workshop model of education as a place of learning-by-doing and it paid particular attention to the integration of modern techniques of production. The workshop model also encouraged peer-to-peer learning, an idea rooted in a strong sense of community, which was at the centre of the learning process. The nurturing of the community was not confined to the workshops, but also permeated the daily life of the school.

The Bauhaus was one of the first public art schools to include women: its manifesto from 1919 stated that the school accepted 'any person of good repute, without regard to age or sex' – even if women were discouraged from pursuing any specialisation other than weaving (Rawsthorn, 2013).



Ill. 50: Bettenhausen, J. (after 1926)
Aerial view of the Bauhaus building, Dessau,
Germany.

Ill. 51 (inset): *This building housed the
first Bauhaus in Germany before it moved to
the famous building in Dessau. (ca. 1926)*

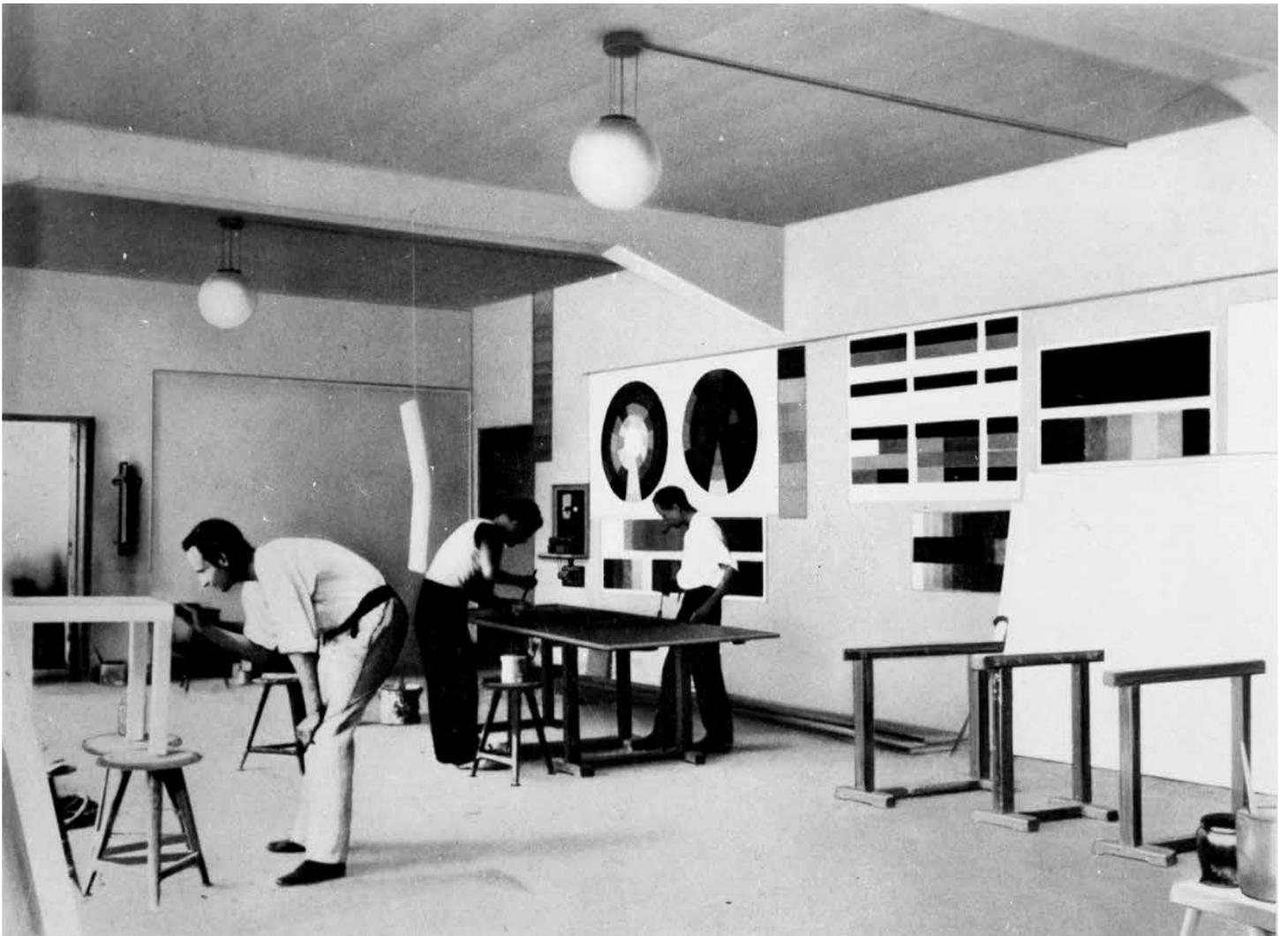




Ill. 52: Feininger, T. L. (1925-1932) *Class at the Bauhaus in Dessau.*



Ill. 53: *Unidentified Artist Corridor of the Bauhaus, Dessau. (ca. 1929)*



Ill. 54: *The Mural Workshop, Bauhaus Dessau.* (1926)

Ill. 55: Umbehr, O. (1928-1929) *Assessment of work from Albers' Preliminary Course.*



Ill. 56: Lotte Beese and Helmut Schulze at the Tracing Table. (ca. 1928)



Ill. 57: *Otti Berger, Weaving Workshop.*
(1920s)

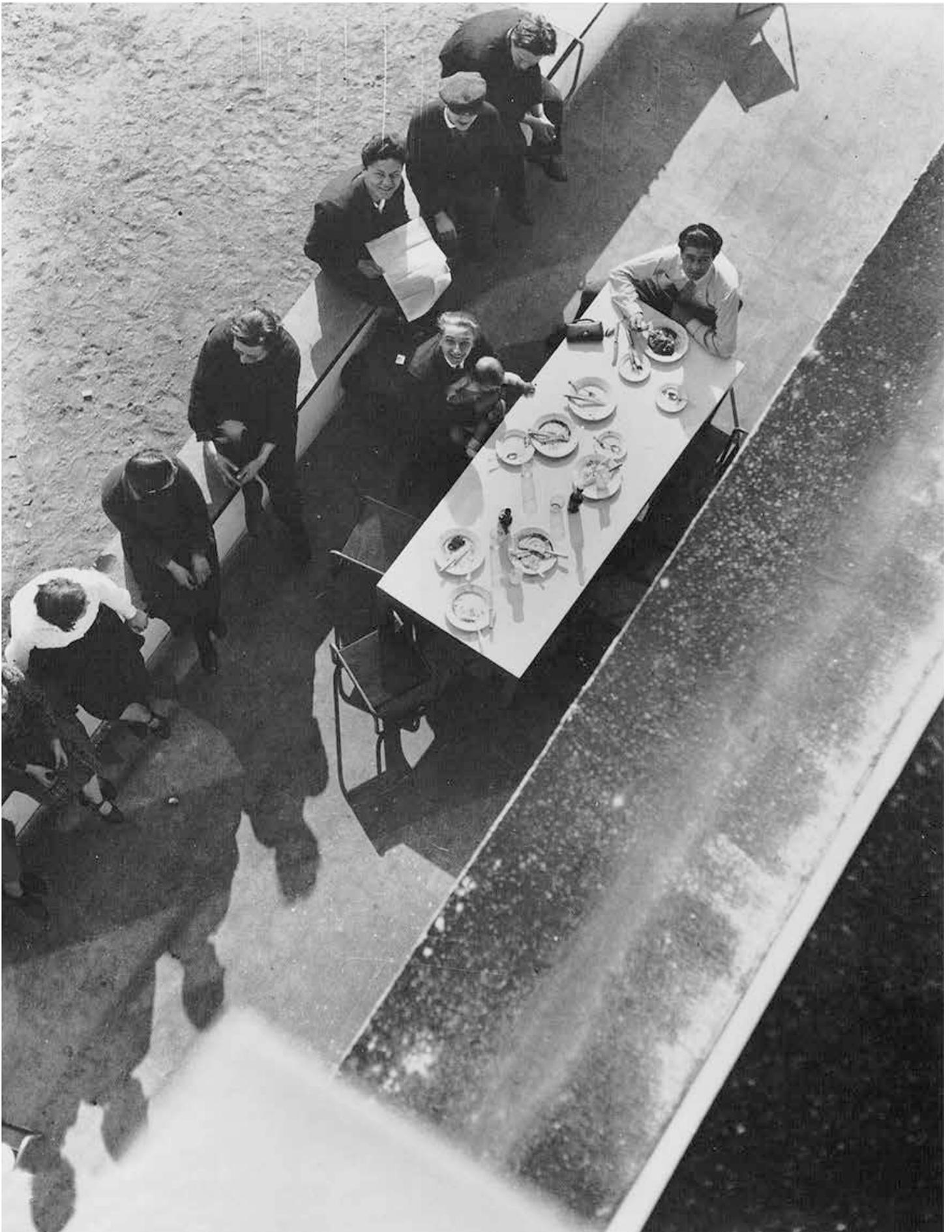


Ill. 58: Karla Grosch and students on the terrace of the Bauhaus canteen. (around 1929)

Ill. 59: Bauhaus costume from Oskar Schlemmer's costume parties. (1920s)



Ill. 60: Yamawaki, I. (1930-1932)
Cafeteria after lunch, Bauhaus, Dessau.



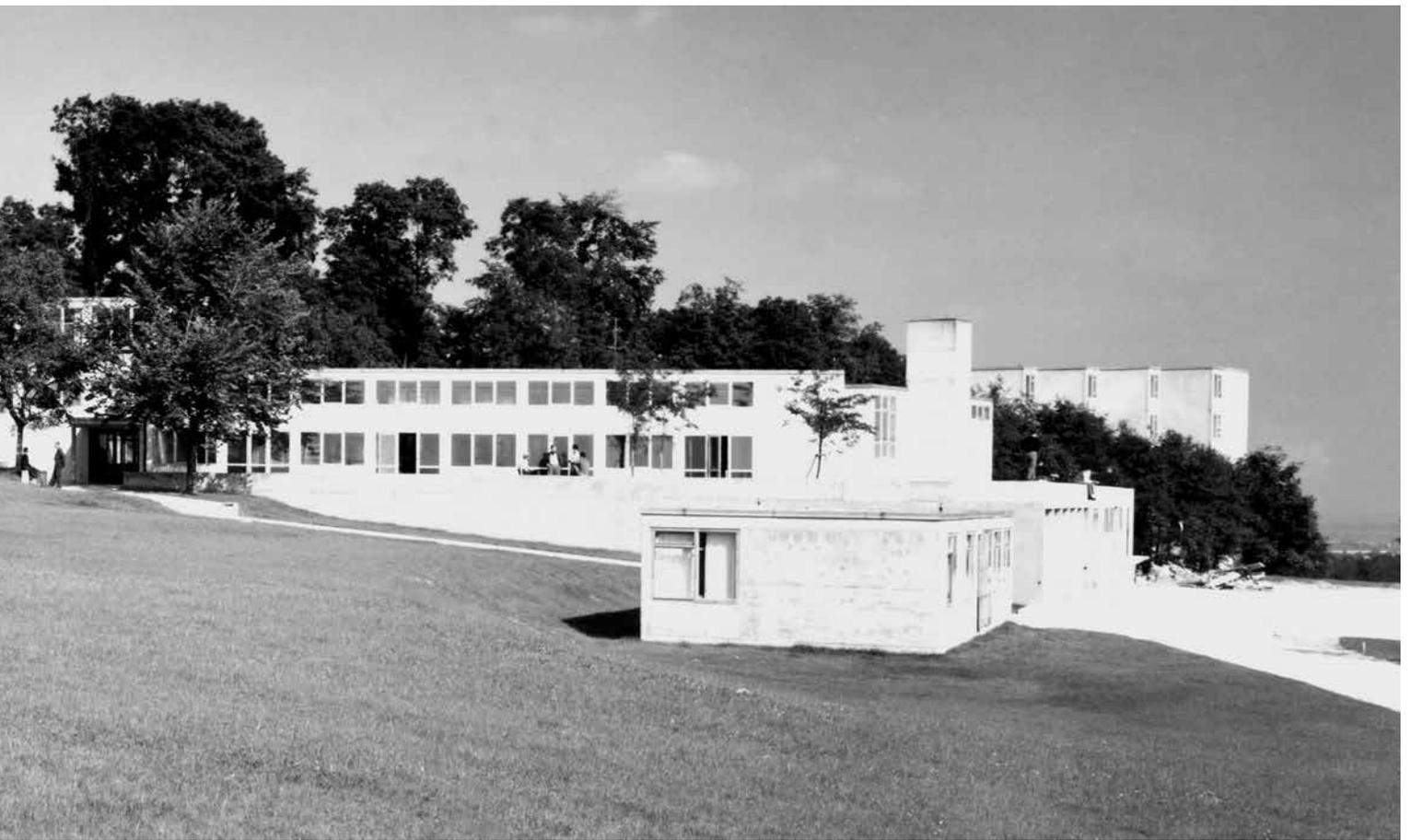
Ill. 61: Bayer, I. (ca. 1927) *View onto the terrace of the Bauhaus canteen, Dessau.*

The Ulm School (Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm) was founded in 1953 by Inge Aicher-Scholl (a member of the resistance group 'White Rose' with her siblings, Sophie and Hans Scholl, who were executed in 1943 by the Nazis), Otl Aicher and Max Bill (a former Bauhaus student). In 1946 Inge Scholl, Otl Aicher and a group of young intellectuals created a teaching and research institution to foster the humanistic education ideal and to link creative activity to everyday life, strengthening democratic ideals within society. The Ulm School was the attempt to materialise this ideal. The school was defined by its emphasis on the holistic, multidisciplinary context of design. The subjects of sociology, psychology, politics, economics, philosophy and systems-thinking were integrated with aesthetics and technology.

The aspects that I find interesting to retain from the Ulm School's pedagogic approach in the context of my research project is the education of design in terms of social responsibility and the emphasis on the process of education itself as integral to a strong democratic society and to social change.



Ill. 62: *Building Ulm HfG designed by Max Bill and completed in 1955.*



Ill. 63: Scheidegger, E. (1950-1955)
Hochschule für Gestaltung Ulm.

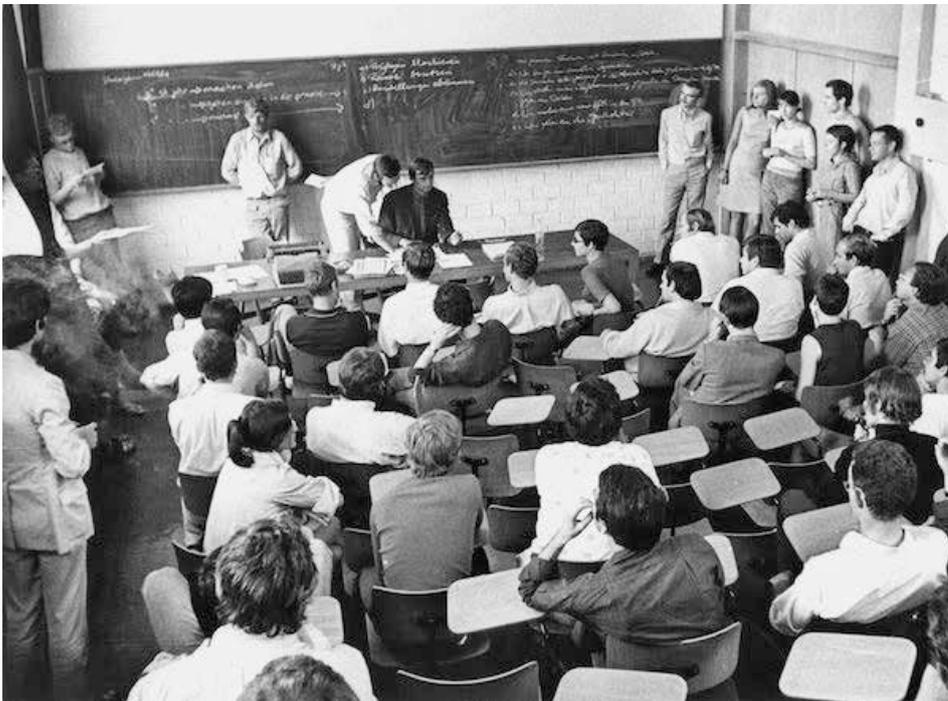


Ill. 64: *Classroom.*

Ill. 65: Conrad, Hans G. (1955) *Central atrium.*



Ill. 66: Hahn, Ernst (1956) *Foundation course with lecturer Tomás Maldonado.*



Ill. 67: Max Bill in the architecture studio of the hfg Ulm. (1956)

Ill. 68: Kleiner Hörsaal (small auditorium) at HfG Ulm. (1968)



Ill. 69: Scheidegger, E. (1955) *Class on the HfG Ulm terrace.*



Ill. 70: Conrad, H. G. (1955) Josef Albers, Interaction with students (second from right: Margit Staber) in his second foundation course at HfG Ulm/Ulm School of Design.

Ill. 71: Design writing class.



Ill. 72: Siol, W. (ca. 1960s) *Students at the Ulm School of Design.*



Ill. 73: *Cafeteria.* (c.1960s)

Ill. 74: von Schweinitz, S. (1954-1964) *Early years of the Ulm College of Design.*



Ill. 75: Conrad, H. G. (1955) *HfG Ulm students* (from left: Margit Staber, Walter Faigle, Max Graf, and Colette Thienhaus) during an outdoor lesson

Another seminal example of an alternative pedagogic approach is the **Woman's Building** founded by Judy Chicago, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Arlene Raven in 1973, in Los Angeles, initially under the name Feminist Studio Workshop (FSW). The project developed and became independent from both the Feminist Art Program, run by Chicago and Miriam Shapiro, and the Women's Design Program, which had been run by de Bretteville, at CalArts, since 1971. These were some of the first art and design programmes to employ a feminist perspective in pedagogy. The programme at The Woman's Building had a strong participative community stance, whereby all participants, including teachers, worked together not only to develop their artistic voices but also to 'become a fully formed person' (Berenson, Honeth, 2016). Furthermore the programme focused on Consciousness-Raising (C-R)⁷ techniques in order to encourage the leaderless sharing of experiences, and to develop awareness of various issues, in both teachers and students. The idea of a strong participative community that meets in a specific space for a joint exploration, to develop artistic and personal voices, had a big impact upon my research.

De Bretteville's contribution to design education is enormous. She pointed to the problematics of 1970s interpretation of modernist design and its detachment from content in favour of form. She (re)politicised the design profession by advocating for a 'feminist design': 'graphic strategies that will enable us to listen to people who have not been heard from before. Feminism is about enabling those voices to be heard' (Berenson, Honeth, 2016).

Her pedagogy was inclusive and focused on giving voice to all students, on a horizontal exchange of information (after the critical pedagogy of Paulo Freire) and on the 'capitalisation [of] the different experiences, knowledge, and skills which students brought to school' (Berenson, Honeth, 2016). Finally, one other aspect that makes de Bretteville relevant for my project is her focus on care and domesticity as a powerful asset to teaching and learning (Lupton, De Bretteville, 1993).

Both the FSW and the art and design women's programmes at CalArts were inspired by the project Judy Chicago started in Fresno in 1970: the Fresno Feminist Art Program. Chicago started the programme as a reaction to a male-centred and -dominated faculty and artistic body, and even historic and subject matter.

There are a few aspects of Chicago's pedagogy that I would like to single out and that are extremely relevant for my research. Firstly, all students participated in the building of the off-campus studio. This was a process that enabled the formation of a tight community. Secondly, the way Chicago defines feminist art education as 'empowerment education' – personal empowerment, and not only for women – as a tool that can potentially lead to social change. In the article 'Made in California: Feminist Art Education', she explains: 'feminist values are rooted in an alternative to the prevailing view of relations of power, (...) feminism promotes *personal empowerment*, something that, when connected with education, becomes a potent tool for individual and social change' (Chicago, 2001). This process of empowerment was practised in a specific exercise that Chicago called 'going around the circle'. A process where, one by one, students and teacher talk about themselves, their interests and goals: 'Everyone speaks and everyone listens' (Chicago, 2001).

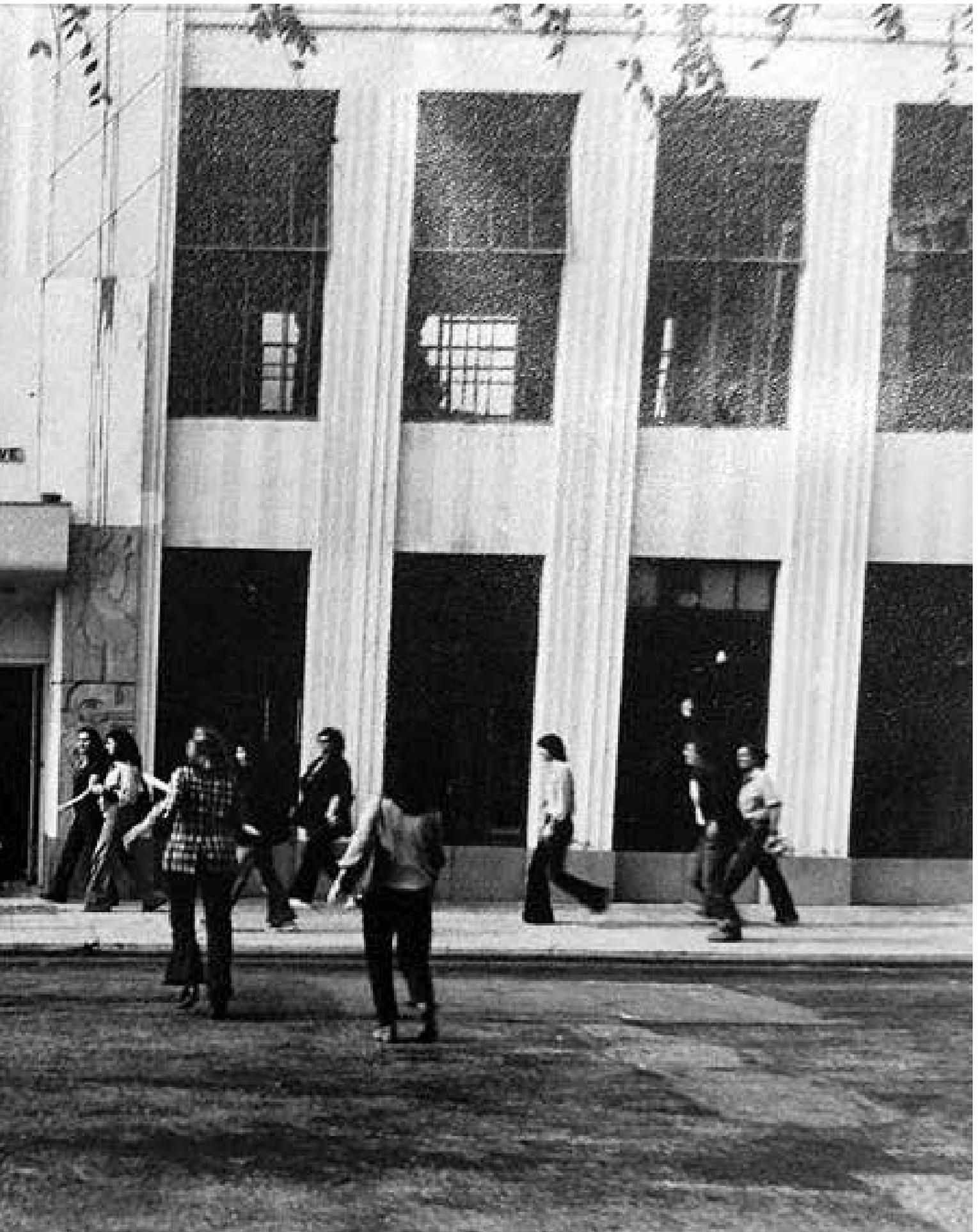
Chicago emphasises that such empowerment is only possible when teachers make a 'real connection with [their] students', only possible through a 'humanised interaction that dissolves the distance conventionally maintained between teacher and student' (Chicago, 2001).

'Going around the circle' is one of Judy Chicago's pedagogic strategies that I find particularly inspiring and that differs from the feminist C-R sessions at the FSW – Chicago does not abandon the role of the teacher [even if she names her role 'facilitator' (Chicago, 2001)]. Instead she interjects comments to make appropriate observations and suggestions, not removing herself from the role of the teacher but instead offering a different approach to teaching (Chicago, 2001).

7 Consciousness-raising groups is a form of activism initiated by New York Radical Women in New York City in 1967. It consisted initially of meetings with a small group of women, often in the domestic space of one of the members. Meetings were women-only, and usually involved going around the room for each woman to talk about a predetermined topic (for example, abortion, abuse, housework, domestic work). The goal was for all participants to become more aware of the problems or situations discussed from a personal point of view, this because most problems seemingly 'personal' played a role in the lives of most women.



Ill. 76: *Courtyard of the Grandview Woman's Building.* (1973)





Ill. 77: *The Woman's Building*. (1970s)



Ill. 78: Photograph of the entry hall of the Woman's Building. (1976)



Ill. 79: (no year) *Floor Meeting: People sit in a circle on the floor for a meeting inside the Woman's Building on North Spring Street.*



Ill. 80: Karras, M. (ca.1973) *Judy Chicago and students at an evening Feminist Studio Workshop lecture by Berkeley political scientist Isabel Marcus Pitchard.*

Ill. 81: *Feminist Studio Workshop at Sheila's house. (1973)*



Ill. 82: Sheila de Bretteville hanging up her 'Pink' poster in the streets. (1975)



Ill. 83: *Feminist Studio Workshop and Woman's Building. Judy Chicago, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville and Arlene Raven are pictured.* (1973)

It was very refreshing for me, at the outset of my research, to look at early childhood education approaches and philosophies. I chose to focus on the **Reggio Emilia Approach** because of its intriguing and inspiring socio-political context and also because, instead of focusing on teaching and strict pedagogic models and curricula, the strong emphasis is mostly on learning: the child and group interaction. Two further aspects that have drawn me to Reggio, in relation to my research, were everyday life context and the attention and dedication put on the spaces where learning and interaction happens.

The Reggio Emilia Approach is a holistic approach between a 'set of philosophical and pedagogic assumptions, methods of school organisation, and principles of environmental design' (Edwards, Gandini, Forman 2012, p. 6). Loris Malaguzzi recalls the moment of the beginning of Reggio as a mixing of 'molecules and thoughts' (Edwards, Gandini, Forman 2012, p. 35) on his part, and the idealistic drive of a small community outside Reggio Emilia. Just a few days after the liberation and the end of the Second World War, the citizens of Villa Cella, mostly farmers and factory workers, started building a school⁸ from the rubble of the war with their own hands. This was the initiative of a stubborn and enthusiastic group of parents who wanted a different school for their children, one where the focus is on the child and their potential, where children were to be taken seriously: a school that fostered 'a human, dignified, civil meaning to existence; to be able to make choices with clarity of mind and purpose; and to yearn for the future of mankind' (Edwards, Gandini, Forman 2012, p. 36). It is not surprising that the Reggio Emilia Approach started in this region of Italy, with a long tradition of participatory democracy, where 'citizens bond together by horizontal relations of social solidarity, reciprocity, and cooperation' (Edwards, Gandini, Forman 2012, p. 6).

Creating opportunities for children to share their meaning is crucial in the Reggio Emilia Approach, Malaguzzi developed the concept of the '100 languages of children' that refers to the many ways in which children communicate and express themselves, using drawing, sculpture, dance, drama, speech, writing, singing and so on. The goal is 'to give the children a number of ways to make their own thinking visible' (Edwards, Gandini, Forman 2012, p. 7).

Here too, the philosophy of education of Dewey was one of the core references and influences of Malaguzzi together with the theories of Jean Piaget, Maria Montessori, Friedrich Fröbel and Célestin Freinet.

8 This was the 'People's Nursery School' of Villa Cella, the origins of the Reggio Emilia Approach and the spark that led Loris Malaguzzi to dedicate his life to early childhood education.



Ill. 84: View of the central Plaza in a Reggio Emilia School



The spaces of Perron 07 reflect the pedagogy of Traces/Sporen, inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach.

Ill. 85: Roebbers, D. (2016) *Toddler group classroom.*



Ill. 87: Roebers, D. (2016) *Drawing together*Ill. 88: Roebers, D. (2016) *Drawing together*



Ill. 89: Roebers, D. (2016) *Cooking together.*

Ill. 90: Roebers, D. (2016) *Creating together.*



Ill. 91: Roebbers, D. (2016) *Central building block atelier.*



Ill. 92: Roebers, D. (2016) *Moving together*





Ill. 93-95: Carvalho, S. (2017) *Parents' holiday cooking club (community activity: a parent cooking with some of the children)*



Reading **bell hooks'** *Teaching to Transgress* was a reminder and a reassurance of the responsibility we all have in our classrooms. Inspired by her life experience, feminist theories and critical pedagogy, she focuses on education as a means for social justice – a way to fight inequality. She addresses the problems in education that reproduce white-supremacist, capitalist, patriarchal structures, which become internalised behaviour and perceived as 'normal'.

As a young student, hooks became acquainted with Paulo Freire's work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Freire condemns what he calls the 'banking model' of education, where the student is a receptor of information emanating from a knowledgeable and authoritarian figure (the teacher), rendering other knowledge (the student's) unimportant and inciting a passive, non-critical attitude in students. This model reproduces and perpetuates the colonial, patriarchal and authoritarian systems we live in, keeping power with the already powerful. Both hooks and Freire posit that politics and education cannot be dissociated from each other; they see the act of teaching and learning as a political act in itself.

bell hooks also addresses some of the problems she sees with higher education and academics. Some of these arise from ideas about how to behave in the classroom, how to speak, or which subjects to address. She advocates for the idea of pleasure in the classroom, for the creation of meaningful relationships between teacher and student and also, one still very urgent idea, the idea of well-being (of teachers and students) as central to the concept of 'engaged pedagogy'.

Last but not least, the project '**Hidden Curriculum**' (2007–2015) by artist Annette Krauss has been a reassurance and a valuable reference in the reflection of the processes that lie behind our behaviour in the classroom. Krauss initiated her artistic research project around the concept of a hidden curriculum, a concept that emerged in the late 1960s and pertains to everything that is learned in education settings outside of the official curriculum – a set of norms, values, beliefs and behaviours. Krauss' project focuses on 'hierarchies of knowledge' (Krauss, 2015, Part 1, p. 3) and the 'physicality of education', both of which were relevant to me. The first one pointed to relations of hierarchy and authority settings inside the classroom, how these relations influence engagement levels, and the relationships between teacher and student, and between students themselves. The second, 'physicality of education', which was particularly interesting to my research, explored the role of space, and bodies in space, in educational settings: what these relationships entail, which power structures they reproduce and which things are excluded or rendered (in)visible.

The 'Hidden Curriculum' project mainly focused on secondary/high school students and educational environments, although the phenomenon occurs throughout the educational path, from early education to university. I believe every stage of education and each context brings new hidden curricula. This is where I feel my project ties in with the investigation conducted by Krauss in 'Hidden Curriculum': I am trying to raise awareness of the power structures and hierarchies of my classroom and education in general by using space as a mechanism to explore and expose them. I also address a new set of assumptions and expectations that come with the new setting (the art academy and the design classroom): competition, collaboration and the difficulties with it, pressure to perform and precarity.

It is no accident that these alternative pedagogic projects and these thinkers and artists, and their ideals for education form my frame of reference. They share ideals of self-governance within horizontal structures of hierarchy; of sharing responsibility; valuing learning; the experience-based acquisition of knowledge that enables the formation of critical thinking; of inclusion of 'other kinds of knowledge' in the curriculum; of doing things together; and finally, the idea of education beyond the premise of learning a set of skills or a profession, but instead focusing on a holistic approach to education through the everyday life development and interaction within the community.

These resonate deeply with what I believe is necessary for education that helps foster socially aware, empowered and happy students and responsible citizens.

Furthermore many of the examples included in my cartography of influences share concerns about the spatial conditions of education. These concerns are either central to their pedagogic approach, like in Reggio Emilia's 'space as third teacher', or play an indisputable role in the daily life interaction of the community, as in Black Mountain College. Krauss investigates the 'physicality of education' the space where our bodies interact with each other and with education props – how our bodies learn to behave in a certain way, the unspoken rules and norms.

Exploring and reflecting on the role infrastructure plays in education, I initiated an investigation through different concepts and properties of space – for example, interstitial (or in-between) space; the aesthetics of space or contrast in space – which allowed me to break free from a rigid idea of the classroom.

The characters are three different Space's alter ego: Open Space, Informal Space and Other Space.

The spaces of the classroom

In the context of education, 'space' as a concept can take many forms and present many different propositions, and within the scope of this research it is to be understood in a broad sense. I am looking at 'space' in the physical, philosophical, social and political sense. These vantage points help create pedagogic approaches with which we can aim to empower students within and through such spaces.

Additionally, I would like to define the classroom as Open Space – as a multi-layered, always welcoming space that expands with the experiences it carries and the references it brings about; it allows for many 'windows' and 'doors' to open. Its boundaries are elastic, as pedagogy should be, and allow for constant action. As Informal Space – it is domestic, the space of community building, bonding and sharing. It is the prime space for exchange at an equal level, a space where time slows down, for reflection and in which to take risks. Yet Informal Space is also the space where adversities can be found. Finally, I want to consider it Other Space – the space that allows alternative ways. It is the space of Foucault's heterotopia, where things have the potential to change. It is the space of revolution.

Before defining these terms in detail, I want to briefly introduce the different theories and authors that helped shaping these definitions.

At the outset of my journey I encountered an interview with Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, in which she describes the Woman's

ACT I

Looking in the mirror

Open Space: I am the place where everyone is welcome, I am not closed or blocked. My boundaries expand and the tension that resides on my boundaries' threshold is one of my best traits. Anyone can leave but I allow many windows, doors, rooms and extensions...

Informal Space: I don't follow rules or conventions. I am casual. I am domestic or tend to linger in unassigned corners. I love to eat and speak about food all the time. I have been around for some time now but I am still ignored pretty much everywhere. I seem unimportant to most policy and decision makers!

Other Space: I am additional. I am further than. I am different or distinct. I am anti. I am not. I am else. I am the other way, alternative, the counterpart. I am a dreamer. I am the space where heterotopia exists.

Building in LA; I found it suggestive and inspiring, and it became central to my research:

I wanted it to be open, I wanted that openness. (...) I don't want to be at the centre, I want it to be this field in which we all have a part, we all have something good. That is the way I thought about it [Woman's Building]. I only used the word collaborative or collective for it but it is really more about creating a location for participation. Where people feel comfort and feel accepted and can therefore be the best of who they are and also talk about what isn't so great, and try to work out their differences. [Decade of Dissent – Sheila Levrant de Bretteville (2012, 10 mins)].

This eloquent description led me to the idea of the classroom as Open Space. I sent the above-transcribed excerpt to some of my past and current students, to see if they could identify the place being described. Most of them were longing for a place like the one de Bretteville describes and at the same time none of them mentioned a classroom as a possible actualisation of this place (see p. P7).

Central to my development of the idea of Informal Space was the concept of the *artistic biotope* as proposed by the sociologist Pascal Gielen.⁹ In the article 'Artistic Praxis and the Neoliberalization of the Educational Space', he articulates this idea of the *artistic biotope* as the space that contains the practice of an artist.

According to Gielen, an artist (and, I suggest, a designer, or an art and design student) moves between four domains that form the

ACT II

Wandering through the classroom

Informal Space: I have all the time in the world. Communities grow inside me in the most natural and organic way. I allow reflection moments. Pause. Breaks. Sharing. Meals...

Open Space: I allow many possibilities. I change when I am experienced, therefore many layers can coexist inside me. I can wear many masks simultaneously.

Other Space: I inspire, to break the norms. I trigger alternative interaction and behaviour. I am not there, but my agency is and it vibrates with energy. Feel my pulse...

ACT III

Looking at an Atlas.

Other Space: I exist where I am wanted. I am in the casualty and the circumstance. I am everywhere especially in the small shifts of everyday life. I inspired revolutions!

Informal Space: You can find me in the cracks, the interstices, the gatherings and the small corners. The kitchen, the living room, the canteen, restaurants and cafés. When it seems I am nowhere to be found I will live through improvisation.

Open Space: I am everywhere... We are many and also one and the same. *★

Susana Carvalho February 2017

artistic biotope: the domestic domain, the place where the artist is safest and where she creates; the peer or communal field, where artists are challenged, where ideas are confronted and develop; the market where the work of the artist is put to the test or is under pressure to be a certain way; and finally, the public domain, where the work just is and enters public spaces such as the museum or the bookstore, as well as the critical discourse of art and design practices. Gielen places the classroom in the communal space, the space for interaction, exchange of ideas and community, but also of disagreement and confrontation (Gielen, 2015, p. 19).

Even though Gielen places the classroom in the communal space, I see the ideal classroom as somewhere between the domestic and the communal domains: in between the comfort of the domestic and the challenge and negotiation of the communal.

Further, in the article, Gielen states that informality is important not only for the autonomous growth of the artist with the inclusion of time to reflect (Gielen, 2015, p. 22), but also to create conditions for organic interaction between teachers and students. Organic interaction is, according to Gielen, necessary for the integration of theory and practice (Gielen, 2015, p. 30).

Another perspective on informality that became crucial to my research at a later point was drawn from the geographer Peter Kraftl in his book *Geographies of Alternative Education*: the idea of informality or *informal learning spaces*, embedded in the context of everyday life. The acceptance and inclusion of Informal Spaces in education open up not only the opportunity for the formation of community ties but also of *other kinds of knowledge* (Kraftl, 2015, p. 31).

Kraftl also explores the opportunities that alternative education spaces offer in relation to mainstream education spaces, how they open possibilities and other ways: a hopeful and active proposition (Kraftl, 2015, p. 37). This concept was the starting point for the development of the idea of Other Space, further informed by Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia (Foucault, 1986, p. 4): spaces that function within non-hegemonic conditions.

Finally, *Human Space* by philosopher Otto Friedrich Bollnow (1963)¹⁰ became a useful resource for the analysis of ‘space as medium of human life’ (Bollnow, 1963, p. 19). Bollnow understood the relevance of the ‘spatial condition of human existence, [...] the concrete space experienced and lived by humans’ (Bollnow, 1963, p. 15). Bollnow’s approach to the study of space was highly influenced by phenomenology; he looks at space from many perspectives, approaches and themes. He also extensively refers to previous studies of space, citing works from Heidegger (his former teacher) to Dürckheim, Minkowsky, Binswanger, Merleau-Ponty, Cassirer and Bachelard, and from literary references such as Petrarca, Goethe and Rilke.

The aspects that became very productive for this research were Bollnow’s definition of human space as an ‘actual concrete space in which our life takes place’ (Bollnow, 1963, p. 20), what he calls ‘experienced space’. This space is not homogeneous or rigid like abstract mathematical space. Its perception and experience have the potential to change according to the different human centres that inhabit it.

The core ideas of *Human Space* were pertinent to expanding the concept of Open Space: space that expands when experienced, when lived in.

10 It is inevitable that I acknowledge here Bollnow’s involvement with National Socialism. Given the circumstances of Bollnow’s life and the nature of his work, I decided to include elements of his biography and contextualise the contribution of *Human Space* to my research project; I will briefly expose the reasoning behind the engagement with the book *Human Space*, and the concept of ‘experienced space’, in this research project.

Otto Friedrich Bollnow (1903–1991) was a German philosopher and pedagogue. He studied philosophy and pedagogy with Georg Misch and Herman Nohl in Göttingen. Between 1928 and 1929 he moved to Marburg and Freiburg for three semesters to study with Martin Heidegger. He signed the Loyalty Oath of German Professors to Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist State in 1933. He became a member of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party in 1940. Between 1953 and his retirement in 1970 he held a chair in contemporary philosophy, philosophical anthropology and ethics at Tübingen.

Human Space is relatively unknown outside German-speaking countries and the field of architectural theory. The book became very important for my research because it offers a thorough study of space from a phenomenological perspective. Bollnow exhaustively and extensively describes space in relation to the hu-

man being in its personal, social and historical contexts. The human being is thus an active player in the definition of space. One other aspect of great relevance to this research project is how space is described by Bollnow as non-homogenous, diverse and in constant transformation according to different contexts and centres. The concept of ‘experienced space’ [gelebter Raum] is particularly productive for me because it sees space as the medium of human life. It refers to the concrete or actual space that humans live in. It is not homogeneous or rigid like mathematical space. It is heterogeneous; its perception and actual experience have the potential to change according to the different human centres that inhabit it.

Human Space was first published in 1963, almost twenty years after the end of the Second World War. There are two passages in the book where Bollnow distances himself from his past. In the introduction of the book, in the section about the concept of ‘experienced space’, he explains how the word ‘Lebensraum’ [living space] could also be a good word to refer to what he calls ‘experienced space’. He hints at the problematic use of the expression in German history before: “‘Lebensraum’ as the space available for the expansion of life, if this word had not entered the German language in another, narrower sense’ (2015, p. 19). Bollnow is referring to the Nazi Party’s expansion policy rooted

Open Space

The idea of the openness¹¹ put forward by Sheila Levrant de Bretteville (2008) when describing the Woman's Building is central to my research. The idea of an open field, where everybody takes part on an equal plane, was inspiring and visually palpable. I saw the 'ideal' classroom in this description, mainly because, more than enforcing a fixed definition, it was open to change and to adapting. It made it possible to see the classroom transform and develop or compress.

The concept of experienced space in Bollnow's book *Human Space* provoked me to expand on the initial interpretation: space that expands when experienced, lived in, as a starting point towards my understanding of Open Space.

Bollnow further reflects on space as a 'possibility of development' and as 'resistance', 'not a neutral, unchanging medium' (Bollnow, 1963, p. 21). I see this as a permutability of the experiences in space. Relationships within space can change, and the human is at

in colonial settlement policies and practices from the 1890s. In my opinion, Bollnow could have been more explicitly critical and missed the opportunity to firmly distance himself from National Socialism ideals. In the chapter 'The space of human coexistence', on the section about 'The struggle for living space', Bollnow extrapolates on the inevitability of rivalry for space between humans in our daily life. He further points out the biggest problem of the manifestation of this struggle, 'the coexistence of nations, because here it has led to the outbreak of more and more wars. The formula, "a nation without space" [Volk ohne Raum], was so dangerous because it seemed to justify the extension by force of living space at the expense of other nations' (2015, p. 241). Bollnow is again referring to and distancing himself from a political slogan used in the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany to justify the colonial expansion policy they defended.

On the other hand, the alternatives Bollnow proposes to the said problematics of space might say much more about Bollnow's relationship to his past. In chapter 6, 'The space of loving togetherness', Bollnow introduces Ludwig Binswanger's propositions (from the book *The Foundations and Cognition of Human Existence*), of other possibilities for the common experience of space in total opposition to rivalry, as 'the spatiality

(See transcription of the interview on p. T112.)

of loving togetherness' Bollnow also expresses that 'Love and power or force are mutually exclusive' (Bollnow, 2015, pp. 242–243), his proposition being that the power of love and friendship overcomes all adversities and differences.

To finish my long note, I would like to point to an underlying conservative tone of the book that I also deem problematic. I think Bollnow introduces some limited ideas about the creation of space; a few examples include: 'orderly and familiar' situations as the only way to gain space; the idea of 'expansion' of space as superior to 'narrowness' (clearly rooted in the European colonial past), as well as 'traditions and rituals', as safe and secure ways. These are passages in the book where I can perceive the nationalist impulses that created and still create so much hatred and conflict. It is a patriarchal, Western and imperial way of looking at the world. These concepts are where his work has seen the most criticism, from both Theodor Adorno (see Adorno, T. (1964). *The Jargon of Authenticity*. Evanston: 1973, p. 10) and Henri Lefebvre (see Lefebvre, H. (1974). *The Production of Space*. (1st ed.). Oxford: Blackwell publishing, p. 25), criticism with which I concur.

the centre of the possibility for change. The human can, therefore, create or alter her own space.

In the article ‘Making Creative Spaces: The Art and Design Classroom as a Site of Performativity’, Carol Wild (2011) emphasises the importance of expanding the borders of the classroom by exploring outside the centre. ‘Boundary practices’, described by Wenger in Wild’s text, further expand on this concept:

Boundaries are like fault lines: they are the locus of volcanic activity. They allow movement, they release tension; they create new mountains; they shake existing structures. They are where the unexpected can be expected, where innovative or unorthodox solutions are found, where serendipity is likely, and where old ideas find new life and new ideas propagate (Wenger, 1998, p. 255 cited in Wild, 2011, p. 428).

Wild proposes that, ‘leaving the school to explore other galaxies where learning in art takes place, teachers encounter alien species and, in the negotiation required to collaborate, open themselves up to new practices’ (2011, p. 428); in this they open up the possibility of acting, thinking and doing something different.

I see the construction of a library, the amalgamation of references brought by the students and me, as one way to expand the space of the classroom, to open ‘windows’ to the world: going outside but also bringing the outside in, and enlarging the classroom in this way. Here, not only is the classroom library an essential point of interaction, but so are the assignments – with all their propositions and references.

One other way to expand the classroom and create Open Space is to make use (or to claim) the unused spaces around the classroom, such as corridors and halls. If we see the academy as the civil domain of the *artistic biotope* (Gielen, 2015, p. 18) and the classroom situated towards the domestic domain, these spaces are the threshold areas that the Dutch architect Herman Hertzberger (2013) singled out as crucial to the formation of the collective.

The threshold areas in Hertzberger’s work are transitional and binding ones, such as the space outside the front door of the house,

the typical central hall or corridors in a school building, or the square in the city. These areas are meant to allow certain ‘domesticity principles’ – control (accessibility) and care (upkeep) (Van den Driessche, 2007, p. 76) – into the public space, and reinforce the sense of community (Hertzberger, 2007, p. 20). These apparently passive or circulation spaces are filled with energy and potential.

Space of possibility and potentiality in the classroom

Regarding the classroom as a space of possibility and potentiality has allowed me to investigate alternative ways to interact with the students. Inspired by de Bretteville’s description of the Woman’s Building, I imagined what the classroom could be or signify as an Open Space. How could I enable a sense of possibility that counteracts feelings of disengagement and disempowerment in the classroom?

I focused on bell hooks’ concept of ‘classroom as space of possibility’ (1994) and on Irit Rogoff’s concept of ‘potentiality’ (2006). Both authors position these concepts as crucial not only for the formation of collectivities and communities (hooks, 2003, p. xv; Rogoff, 2006, p. 4) but also as conducive to exposing the political bearing of education (hooks, 2003, p. xii; Rogoff, 2006, p. 4).

The concept of ‘potentiality’ proposed by Irit Rogoff in ‘Academy as Potentiality’ was productive in defining and imagining Open Space. The potentiality of education allows for a space where everything is possible; it allows for knowing and not knowing, for the open-ended process of education, of learning, where failure is also accepted as a valid outcome, even as knowledge production. It enlarges the space of the classroom because it focuses on the journey – and the journey can be indefinite – not on the destination. This idea of the pedagogy of trying (Rogoff, 2006, p. 6), not aiming at success, emphasises the freedom to speculate and imagine alternatives – to existing knowledge, structures, etc. – exposing the political potential of education.

Another aspect put forward by Rogoff and productive for this research project is how education forms collectivities, collectivities arising from a shared desire and curiosity to learn (Rogoff, 2006, p. 4)

– this notion empowers students – and again enables the collective (Rogoff, 2004, p. 2).

In *Teaching to Transgress*, bell hooks speaks about the classroom as ‘the most radical space of possibility in the academy’ (hooks, 1994, p. 12). hooks’ radical space of possibility is where education for freedom happens. In the tradition of progressive education and of feminist and critical pedagogy, bell hooks is advocating for an education that is dialogic and that liberates, that encourages and forms critical thinkers, that empowers students and promotes social justice. bell hooks is talking about the need to resist and find counter pedagogic practices and strategies to an education that perpetuates systems of oppression and domination (racism, sexism, sexual orientation, classism, nationality and so on) – what she calls pedagogy of hope. Hope sustains the space of possibility in the classroom (hooks, 2003, p. xiv) and in this respect hope in the classroom is to bell hooks what potentiality is to Rogoff. This sense of hope in the classroom is for bell hooks what brings about a sense of connectedness that activates the community.

Particularly pertinent to this research is the idea that this possibility lies in pedagogic practices and strategies, not necessarily in the syllabus of the classes. This goes hand in hand with my belief that education is more than acquiring information and learning a set of skills. hooks exposes how teachers’ practices and strategies can also in themselves be a catalyst for change in behaviour in the classroom – counteracting the norm instituted by a predominantly white, middle-class centre, by allowing different voices, ways of doing and including other kinds of knowledge in the classroom.

Informal Space

The importance of informal learning spaces has been seen as especially relevant – if not crucial – since the work of philosopher and education theorist John Dewey. At Black Mountain College, the informal atmosphere cultivated by the faculty created an environment where teaching and learning could happen everywhere. The same happened in Ulm and at the Bauhaus.

Both Gielen (2015) and Kraftl (2015) defend informal spaces in the learning environment as one of the strongest, most empowered and creative spaces of the classroom, school or academy.

Informality resides in the domestic domain of the ‘artistic biotope’. It is here that the artist develops: ‘where they are raised in all intimacy or where they educate themselves’ (Gielen, 2015, p. 18). It is the space for tranquillity and concentration, and also the space for ‘slowability’. Gielen argues that time is crucial for reflection and imagination to take place and to bring theory and practice together.

Further in his text, he also asserts that organic interaction is necessary for the integration of theory and practice:

A sufficient integration of theory and practice presupposes not only that theoretical subjects are programmed but also that organic interaction can take place. The informal spaces (such as the cafeteria) and informal moments (such as between and after courses, at night) are precisely what stimulate such ‘natural’ incorporation, for in those spaces and instances endless discussions are possible, and students and teachers can win each other’s trust, exchanging daring ideas in a necessarily intimate atmosphere. In these spaces, difficult questions with regard to both a person, his or her art, and his or her relation with society may be addressed (Gielen, 2015, p. 30).

For Kraftl, ‘informal kinds of learning are both imminent and immanent to everyday life’ (2015, p. 15). Accepting this proposition enlarges the space of the classroom to let in other kinds of knowledge, knowledge not necessarily enclosed in the boundaries of the classroom or the academy. I think this opens the student to accept their knowledge as authoritative, as they perceive mine to be, and break down another barrier of the roles we both play.

The ‘ideal’ classroom sits in between the domestic and the communal domain in Gielen’s artistic biotope (2015). Informal areas and moments should exist in the classroom as an integral part of the (graphic design) classroom. Students will most probably feel the need and ask for or create Informal Spaces and informal moments in the classroom when they are invited to ‘experience’ the space of the classroom. They are vital assets in the building of a community and the first step for fruitful collaboration. The communal domain is integral to creation and innovation (Gielen, 2015, p. 30).

The collective and individual expressed in the community

The space of the classroom and the duration of the classes in our course create the conditions for the formation of a temporary alliance between the people involved in the activities that occur in this space-time moment. A group of students, randomly bundled into a group, will inevitably form a small collective; they have the same purpose and intention – to learn.

I capitalised on the idea described above with the pedagogic intention to activate the community that the students and I form in the classroom – one of the main propositions of my project. I wanted to emphasise the advantages of a learning community, one that can learn from and include every individual set of expertise and interest but that also functions as a support structure. After all, knowledge is produced by a collective process of interrelations (Rogoff, 2006, p. 6).

What, then, breaks this ‘performative collectivity’ (Rogoff, 2004, p. 1) that is shaped by circumstance (a fixed set of students and

a teacher who meet weekly in the design classroom) and purpose (to interact with each other with the purpose to learn) every week?

The student–teacher dichotomy sets the teacher apart from the rest. In mainstream education settings, the teacher is by default in the position of authority and the one that holds and transmits knowledge. She is therefore always placed on a different plane than the students. The competitiveness of education environments, accentuated by an increasing pressure to perform, breaks the collective that we naturally form, emphasising feelings of rivalry and lack of generosity. Graphic design education is no exception and yet graphic design is collaborative by nature (see p. T133).

The history of the Western classroom and the top-down hierarchical model of education conceals the collective spirit of the classroom. Throughout the project I devised a set of mechanisms and strategies in order to enact this collectivity. We started by acknowledging and reflecting on the collective we form in the classroom, with the assembly (see p. T121 and p. P21). Later on, it proved necessary and productive to experience the collective with a set of exercises during the listening and movement workshops (see p. P53 – P63).

The sense of collectivity was strengthened when individual expertise and interests were included and valued; the third iteration of the education project – { } or *Space* (see pp. P47 – P82) – was the most successful, not least because it incorporated a significant component of individual work, included in a greater collective effort. This helped the students to become invested in the project and to share the responsibility for the collective work.

The assembly

*To assemble is to gather (people) together in one place for a common purpose.*¹²

The assembly is a format of political organisation that has in the last decades, with the emergence of spontaneous manifestations of protest and discontent, gained new relevance. The Arab Spring, the

Occupy movement, the student protests in Amsterdam, the anti-austerity protests in Southern Europe, and many others, all used the assembly as a form of self-governance.

The assembly format has since the early 2000s entered the realm of the art world where its morphology and mechanism has been thoroughly explored and recreated.¹³

The aspects of the assembly, or of the act of assembling, that became especially relevant to my research were the morphology of the assembly – the circle – and its implication in the experience of the classroom; as well as the performative character of the assembly – for the embodiment of new collectivities – informed by Judith Butler’s book *Towards a Theory of Performative Assembly* (2015).

A resourceful example for the reflection on the assembly format within the education project was the article *Assemblism*¹⁴ by Jonas Staal (2017), which emphasises not only Butler’s proposition of the performative character of the assembly but also the emergence of the assembly as a new morphology of collective power.

I will briefly focus on the ‘circle’ and explore two equally important references for my research. Circle meetings in early childhood education are key moments in the daily routine – it brings the children together. The children acknowledge each other’s presence, and pursue some short activity collectively, affirming community spirit. In the Reggio Emilia Approach, circle time is also an instigation for or a reflection on the daily main activities.¹⁵ The children are encouraged to bring their observations and experiences to the circle and they are explored collectively in various activities throughout the day.

In the early 1970s Judy Chicago used the circle as a structure in her classes in Fresno. Even though there was a political implication behind the feminist pedagogy strategies Chicago was employing (the act of giving voice to all students and the levelling of hierarchy between teacher and student), Chicago was more focused on the

13 A few examples: Bergen Assembly 2009–present; New World Summit Berlin by Jonas Staal, 2012; Common Assembly, Nottingham Contemporary, 2012.

14 Assemblism is a term coined by Jonas Staal as ‘a practice of performative assembly – a practice that links the domains of art, theater, performance, activism and politics’.

15 As an example: [Teachers] encourage the children to draw what they observe and to share those observations and drawings during class circle time. To be sure, the teachers already have an activity planned for the daily circle time; they set it aside to pursue knowledge on a subject that has sparked the children’s imaginations. (Biermeier, 2015, Vol. 70 (5))

personal empowerment of the students. ‘Going around the circle’ was the pedagogic strategy Chicago used in order to empower her students. Chicago described the process: ‘Each person speaks, beginning by telling the class about themselves, then moving on to discuss interests and goals. Everyone speaks and everyone listens’ (Chicago, 2001). It was a strategy that led to engaged discussions because it gave all voices equal opportunities to participate. ‘The strategies of “going around the circle” and interpreting the teacher’s role as a facilitator proved to be an effective way of combining education and empowerment which I see as the most desirable goal for teaching’ (Chicago, 2001).

It is pertinent to my research how the bodies form the circle that shapes the assembly (Staal, 2017, p. 8). Not only can we experience the space of the classroom from a different perspective, but the assembly format can also be productive for a reflection on the forms and structures of the classroom and its implied hierarchies. It can create a form to reflect on the role that props and their respective arrangements play for the people in the classroom space and how they can influence our behaviour and our expectations.

Staal points to similar problematics in the morphology of the assembly:

We have learned that using chairs maintains the liberal order that emphasises the sovereign individual above the collective, whereas benches maintain the principle of negotiating and sharing collective space. We have learned that using digital projections can turn a gathering of people into a gathering of observers rather than a gathering of potential actors. (Staal, 2017, p. 10)

It is important to be aware that the assembly format can be exclusive. Staal acknowledges the problematics of exclusion with the circle form:

We have learned that the form of the circle can be inclusive, but it can also be exclusive; sometimes, differential privileges develop between the ‘inner circle’ of people who have been there from the beginning, and the ‘outer circle’ of people who joined at a later stage. (Staal, 2017, p. 10)

No classroom and no circle is always inclusive; it is important to be aware of this and try to reverse exclusive situations and turn them into positive learning moments for everyone.

As well as the morphology of the assembly, it has also been very valuable to explore the performative character of the assembly to form collectivities. As with Irit Rogoff's proposition in 'We – Collectivities, Mutualities, Participations', Butler also sees the formation of collectivities as an act of gathering together in the same place with the same pursuit (Rogoff, 2004, p. 1). Butler puts forward a hopeful proposition, that the performative character of the assembly is the embodiment of new collectivities, collectivities formed by various precarious conditions, with people who do not otherwise have much in common (Butler 2015, p. 27).

Our assembly is not an urgent call; it is organised and announced. It is an enactment of collectivity, where we all take part, to find convergent points and become consciously collective. We share our experiences, and our wishes and desires for the classroom; we negotiate our claims for the classroom and we implement them.

For me, the format of the assembly was a risky proposition because I had to surrender control, listen to the students and implement their wishes and requests, in order to enable the group and to have an actual impact in the course of the project and classes.

Can this gathering of bodies in the classroom (a specific and planned moment) be an act of resistance against the restrictive and disabling perspective of the Western classroom? This is a question that my research might not fully answer, but is to be explored by future projects with the students in the classroom.

Other Space

The concept of heterotopia formulated by the philosopher Michel Foucault was central to the development of the idea of the Other Space of the classroom. The aspect that is productive to this research project is the idea of heterotopia as a counter-site to reality, where utopias are effectively enacted, allowing divergence from societal norms, presenting other possibilities. Foucault also describes these other spaces as opposition to the spaces in which we live (Foucault, 1987 p. 24).

The educator Carol Wild puts forward the idea of *performativity* in the classroom, framing it from the perspective of Michel Foucault: classroom as heterotopia. This expands the boundaries of the classroom and challenges its normative powers (Wild, 2011, p. 424).

This concept relates back to Bollnow's (1963) *experienced space*, a space that enlarges or changes according to the history of its experiences. It also connects with another idea Bollnow explores, the concept of space in opposition, never presenting itself in one way. Later, he continues reflecting on the spatiality of human life and binds the human being to his space: 'the human being is always and necessarily conditioned in his life by his behaviour in relation to a surrounding space' (Bollnow, 1963, p. 23). Changing the nature of the relationships inside an *experienced space* leads to different behaviour.

If we allow ourselves to look at the classroom as something other than what it usually is, we encourage the students and teachers to experience the space in a different way. This provokes a different interaction between the parts and makes alternative behaviours possible.

According to Kraftl (2015) in *Geographies of Alternative Education*, schools are spaces distinct but embedded in the context of everyday life; they function as a mirror of society. Every classroom should then include heterotopian spaces as counter-sites for positive change.

At Black Mountain College the idea of education as life was embedded in the syllabus, the governance and the spatial condition of the college. In the Black Mountain College Bulletin n. 8 (Kurtz, 1944), the aim of the college is clearly delineated: ‘to educate a student as a person and as a citizen’. The pedagogic programme was applied in order to achieve such goals, whereby the placement of art at the centre of the programme was intended to develop the expression and the students’ ability to communicate. The inclusion of a work programme enabled the formation of a collaborative community, and a relationship of equality between faculty, students and other workers at the college. Furthermore, the self-governance of the college allowed it to operate independently without external control. Finally, both faculty and students ran the college and the community via boards and committees with actual decision-making power.

One of the powerful benefits of doing things in an alternative way is that a connection can be made between what happens in the classroom, what happens outside the classroom and the education context (the formation of a citizen, not just a student). Breaking the circle of power and expectations in the classroom will open up the possibility to translate this rupture from an education context to other contexts.

(Shared) Authority

Students’ lack of engagement and motivation are very often a consequence of the feelings of disempowerment they feel in their condition. This disempowerment creates detachment from the process of education but education should always empower.

I think many first-year students in our department are shaped by previous education practices, practices that follow a top-down structure of information delivery. I also observe that many students are trying to guess and fulfil a teacher’s (my) expectations instead of freely exploring the possibilities of an assignment.

I begin to question this dependency on the teacher, the interaction we all have with each other and how we behave in the classroom, as well as my own position of authority. A position that I (the teacher) have and that will have an immediate effect on the teacher's relationship with the students, emphasising the teacher-student dichotomy.

In order to relate with my students differently, to bridge the dichotomy – I and them, she and we – and to perceive 'us' as a collective in the classroom, I initiated an investigation and exploration of how to level authority.

My premise was that sharing my authority, by giving more control over the classroom and the assignments, to the students, would empower them and therefore have a direct impact on engagement and motivation levels. The method I chose to share authority – that is, by subverting my position – may help them to re-examine and change their relationship with authority, not only in the classroom but also elsewhere.

Sharing authority with the students is not always easy or successful. My first attempts to do so, in the course of my research, proved difficult and mostly had the exact opposite effect I was looking for. Students felt disoriented and lost, some backed away from the project completely – not only were they disengaged but they also felt disempowered.

I did not expect this outcome: In the first steps of the project, the students and I discussed my propositions for the project extensively, and talked at great lengths about the role and potential of education and how it mirrors society. I realised that acknowledging the structures and processes of authority is not enough; speaking and thinking about it is not enough. We had to really experience this different way of relating to authority. I began to reflect on the classroom, its own structures and conditions in order to find ruptures and ways of working that could be more productive to both me and the students.

It was perceivable that previously learned behaviour within educational settings had a clear influence on how the students behaved in the classroom and on how said behaviour was emphasised by the limitations of the classroom. It was also noticeable how the infrastructure of the classroom can reinforce these limitations and my position of authority.

Instead of deleting my role as a teacher, I started to look for ways to implement mechanisms that could potentially dismantle the fixed notion of authority.

A teacher must introduce this sharing of authority gradually to new groups of students. It gives the students additional responsibility that they might initially not want. Paulo Freire's answer to a similar situation on a recording in the late 1980s has been helpful during the project.

If we consider that in the beginning of activities to a new group of students we cannot give them the impression they lost their parents. We must give them the security of our presence, our leadership, that we are here, we are teaching, we are teachers, we have to teach. But it should not mean that we have to be authoritarian, but it means that they have to recognise our authority, that we have things to say and that is why we are here. We can tell something more – they come to school and they have an expectation, they want to listen to the teacher speaking to them. We cannot frustrate them, we have to speak to them. In a progressive perspective, in being realistic, we have to begin to change, to reorient the way of teaching. For example, we can start by teaching them, by speaking to them and little by little we begin to speak with them. We have to make clear to them that we should not exclusively speak to or with. Speaking with also implies speaking to, and speaking to should progressively move to speaking with. (sic) (In Shor, I., *A dialogue with Paulo Freire*. [Online video]. 1988. Available from: <<http://brechtforum.org/dialogue-paulo-freire>> [Accessed: 28 September 2016])

It was reassuring that I did not need to relinquish my role as the teacher, but that I had to find other ways to teach. Freire advocated for *generosity* and engagement towards the students, for *sharing* our knowledge. He recommended to maintain a constant conversation with the students, always listening to and challenging them. Lastly he proposed that the teaching/learning process should be flexible and should constantly adjust to situations.

In the article 'Power, Authority, and Critical Pedagogy', Patricia Bizzell introduces the idea of a three-part model of power, not to

perceive it as always oppressive but to show legitimate forms of this power – ‘authority’ (Bizzell, 1991, p. 54). Bizzell is referring to authority that is granted, not just authority that emanates from a specific position. In order for a teacher to share authority and for that authority (and consequent responsibility) to be accepted by the students, the teacher must have been granted authority by the same students. Bizzell argues that in order for the teacher to be granted authority, it is important not only to be generous but also transparent in intentions and context (Bizzell, 1991, p. 58).

Addressing the issue of authority and disempowerment through the lens of the space of the classroom and how it influences our behaviour was productive and let me investigate learned behaviours and expectations that are attached to our bodies.

While in the art academy, spaces are more informal and used more informally than in other educational settings, yet I noticed how, at the beginning of each class, the head of the table was always unoccupied; it was reserved for the teacher. The head of the table is normally where the projection screen is, the place where students turn to for instruction.

During the course of this research I started to shift my position in space each week: I never sat in the same spot. This created some confusion and discomfort sometimes, but it has been productive for myself and the students to experience this constant shift in space, because it exemplifies how spatial dimensions are intertwined with issues of authority.

The assembly was another strategy I used to share authority (and responsibility) with the students. As mentioned previously, it showed me that thinking and speaking about the power structures inside the classroom is not necessarily sufficient to change behaviour that is so ingrained in our bodies. It did prove to be effective at unravelling an awareness process that some students shared in their reflections and feedback. Furthermore, the assembly also served as a mechanism for me to prove my intentions as I relinquished control over the classroom, implementing some requests and suggestions that resulted from negotiation with the students in the course of the project.

Teaching for a better design practice

Encouraging critical thinking

Even though the scope of graphic design,¹⁶ and therefore design education, is broadening and developing, most graphic design education is still very much focused on vocational training, and on learning about form in abstraction, without the specific context of each project. This is especially true in the first years of the curricula. Vocational training is important for the graphic design curriculum, but it should not be the sole focus of its attention. More important is the ability to work with content and context with awareness and criticality. Graphic design is the communication of content, and content is always attached to a specific context. In the graphic design classroom, the act of gathering content (or the students' generating their own content) for projects implies a reflective process. This helps the students to define their position within the field of design, in education and even in society. Students have the opportunity not only to explain their choices and better understand their values, but also to discuss and engage with the choices of peers. This is a valuable way to bring a variety of issues, perspectives and points of view to the classroom. It exposes the students and teachers to topics they have not addressed, new ways of thinking and approaching subjects, and fosters critical thinking through discussions and question and answers sessions. According to bell hooks, 'critical thinking is an interactive process, one that demands participation on the part of the teacher and students alike' (hooks, 2009, p. 9).

Graphic design education has modernist originated roots, such as the Arts and Crafts movement, and it underwent a further development and strengthening of its foundations with the Bauhaus. The modernist heritage is still very present in design education today,

but mainly in the fetishisation of these modernist schools' artefacts and aesthetics. Their ideological foundations were often overlooked, leading to a perception of the objective 'passive mediator of the client's message' who believes that 'modernism is merely style' (Bell, 2004). This image of the graphic designer is problematic because it depoliticises the profession – yet design and education are never neutral. Catherine McCoy describes her work environment in the late 1960s like a metaphor for the apolitical designer: 'We were encouraged to wear white lab coats, perhaps so the messy external environment would not contaminate our surgically clean detachment' (McCoy, 1993, p. 3).

It is crucial for students to consciously take a position within the socio-political context in which they operate and to be given the opportunity to do so in a safe(r) environment such as a classroom or a school. Education should trigger this process of cultivating awareness, because a position is always assumed even if not consciously. This is particularly important as the role of the graphic designer expands, so that she can be a protagonist in all aspects of producing, organising and distributing content. It is important to '(...) see design as an integrative field that bridges many subjects that deal with communication, expression, interaction, and cognition' (Swanson, 1994, p. 2).

Learning to learn, a fundamental concept

Learning to learn is a crucial aspect of the education process; it helps students to become autonomous (from the teacher) and empowers them (to continue learning). In art education in general and in graphic design in particular, learning skills is a process that can be replicated and adapted to different circumstances.

Assignments are opportunities to present skill acquisition in context, and students respond more positively to a learning effort when they see that they can immediately apply what they have learned, and that it supports their tasks. The importance of learning foundation skills allows students to translate their ideas into form in more interesting and accurate ways (Albers, 1934, p. 5). This leads to a better formal approach in the translation of concepts related to, for example, complex contemporary issues, be they artistic, political

or social. Another relevant aspect of skill acquisition is the fact that design is constantly influenced by technology or a socio-political context. Therefore, it is a discipline that changes at a rapid pace, asking for constant updates.

Steering the education of the discipline away from skill learning entirely and focusing solely on theoretical reflections and on a critical approach to projects is, in my opinion, not only detached from the practical circumstances in which design happens; it also takes a valuable and empowering asset away from the students: the ability to learn how to learn.

Graphic design is a collaborative practice

Graphic design is a collaborative practice, never a solitary process. Designers almost never work alone; they work in a constant dialogue. They work with other designers but also with programmers, photographers, printers, binders, authors, clients – the list could go on at some length. The inclusion of group assignments, where the focus is on the students and their negotiation processes, is critical to design education. It shows the students that peer-to-peer learning is significant, and each student can experience other ways of working, or looking at the world. I also believe learning from peers has an enabling and empowering charge because it shifts the focus from the teacher – exemplifying that knowledge has many different sources and forms. Be aware of group dynamics, the community, and its different voices through the process of an assignment; embrace the responsibility and accountability of the designer and the position she occupies in society.

Be aware of your responsibility

It is crucial for the graphic design student to become aware of her position. Understanding that design operates in context and that its creation is attached to values and assumptions, and respective ideologies (Pater, 2016, p. 2), is halfway to becoming aware that our perception of the world is not *neutral*, *objective* or *universal*.

I have previously spoken about and tested exercises, together with Viki Zioga, on the implications and politics of ‘listening’ within graphic design (see page P53). We developed those exercises with an

inclusive classroom in mind and with the assumption that the example set in the classroom can always extend to the outside of the classroom. A constant emphasis on the inclusion of the voices of others, be they those of your classmates, or the public of your design project, is the first step for awareness raising — becoming aware of different voices and positions invites the students to see themselves as part of a community, rather than in isolation.

This awareness helps us to accept the responsibility and accountability that come with the profession – to the client, to the reader or consumer, to the environment, to the community. These responsibilities are often set aside or forgotten, in favour of the image of the impartial designer¹⁷ (McCoy, 1993, p. 4). That mindset is very agreeable to the market and the neo-liberal condition in which we live. I do not agree with this detached attitude towards the profession, but I also do not want to steer my own practice or my students towards the dangerous and opposite short-sighted idea of the designer as the ultimate saviour of the world. Nevertheless, it is wise to acknowledge that almost everything is designed, from systems, to structures, to objects, interfaces and messages.

Once again, the current framing of the designer as *universal* and *objective* designer depoliticises the profession. Maintaining this image gives the designer an excuse to reject her larger responsibility. Most people, even design professionals, still see the surface of design, its aesthetics, as the end product. From this point of view, design exists only as a commodity, conveniently detached from its impact.

The role of the graphic designer has expanded in the last 20 years. The way we access, record and transmit information has dramatically changed over this period, and graphic design changed with it. Designers hold the knowledge and power to communicate within these new ways, and they are also uniquely qualified to understand and work with this new way to disseminate (dis)information. The graphic designer is a mediator with editing power in the communication process.

I believe future designers must be aware of their responsibility, of their privilege, of other voices, and must reflect critically on the work they are asked to do or initiate themselves. However, designers must also be aware of the power they have and of the reach and impact the discipline already takes.

When we are aware of the (societal, environmental, political, etc.) impact of our work, we can take responsibility for it – and choose more wisely with whom we want to work, how we want to work with them, what kind of assignments we are happy to take on, and how to treat each other in the design community. We need to show students that to some extent they have those choices too.

As a community of designers, we must support one another, lift each other up. We must create and defend sustainable working conditions instead of undermining and driving each other to the edge of precarity.

Precarity

The neo-liberal realm in which we live today has pushed creative professions into a state of recursive precariousness. Students in art academies know they will probably be (unpaid) interns for a few years before they get their first ‘real’ job. This prospective job will happen only if they make it through the highly demanding working schedules, responsibilities and consequences of years of low wages.

As teachers, we have the responsibility to pass on healthy habits and act as role models to our students. We should not glorify our sleepless nights to make impossible deadlines. We should not romanticise our work and made it sound like a hobby, because believing that myth is the first step towards self-exploitation. It is an excuse for bad or uneducated clients to follow their basest tendencies and devalue our efforts. Instead, we must teach the next generation of designers to insist on fair and healthy practices within our professional realm.

Daniel van der Velden has alluded to the precarity in graphic design in his 2006 essay, ‘Research and Destroy’. Van der Velden wrote from the perspective of the *value of design*, or *what design is, or can be*. He discusses the decrease in appreciation between client and

designer and the decline of the *value* of design: ‘Is a designer someone who thinks up ideas, designs, produces and sells, or someone who holds a mouse and drags objects across a computer screen? If designers are labourers, then their labour can be purchased at the lowest possible price’ (Van der Velden, 2006).

The solution is, according to Daniel van der Velden, ‘investment in design itself, as a discipline that conducts research and generates knowledge – knowledge that makes it possible to participate in discussions that are not about design seriously’ (Van der Velden, 2006). Perhaps he sees the profession more in the scope of a liberal art discipline, but he is also suggesting that designers take responsibility in generating their research projects. This can be slightly problematic, as is seen by the neo-liberal glorification of the entrepreneurship of individual workers, which has led to an exponential increase in precarity.

More recently, Silvio Lorusso has continued and developed this quest within contemporary circumstances in his article, ‘What Design Can’t Do – Graphic Design between Automation, Relativism, Élite and Cognitariat’. He interestingly links design education with competition, the idea of a passionate job ahead and unhealthy lifestyle:

Although the field of design is often characterised by teamwork, competition is part of its educational imprint. An attitude that not only involves the relationship with others, but also with oneself, as students are immersed in an ocean of late nights, insomnia and self-sacrifice. An attitude that capitalises on passion and on the idea that design is not a job but a lifestyle. (Lorusso, 2018)

He continues by problematising the ideals of graphic design as a socially and politically engaged profession, developed by part-time freelancers with two jobs, who seem to forget to address their precarious condition.

As a teacher, I take great comfort, reassurance and inspiration in bell hooks’ concept of ‘engaged pedagogy’. According to hooks’ more than critical and feminist pedagogy, ‘engaged pedagogy’ ‘emphasises well-being. That means that teachers must be actively committed to a process of self-actualisation that promotes their

well-being if they are to teach in a manner that empowers students' (hooks, 1994, p. 15).

Politics in the classroom? The personal is political. Everything is political. Focusing on the (micro)politics of the classroom.

Acknowledging the (graphic design) classroom as a political space will help teachers and students to embody all the considerations exposed in the previous points. *The way in which* one teaches and learns is a political act: one can reproduce and perpetuate existing power structures by teaching 'top-down', or you can expose and break with this behaviour, fostering awareness about the discrimination, inequality of opportunities, and disempowerment these structures create.

Returning to the pedagogy of Dewey and incorporating the ideas of Black Mountain College and feminist pedagogy, institutions and teachers that understand their societal responsibilities must offer more than skill and knowledge acquisition. The education process is powerful and shapes us; therefore, we must give our students an empowering education, one that goes beyond the vertical exchange of information. An education that emphasises the value of community, starting with the community of the classroom.

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Ill. 93–95: Carvalho, S. (2017) *Parents' holiday cooking club (community activity: a parent cooking with some of the children)*. The Hague: Susana Carvalho personal archive.

Epilogue (not a conclusion or to be continued on P88)

I started this research with the intention to reduce the space I occupy in the classroom. I had been noticing how often students seem disempowered and how that creates detachment from the process of education – a process which I believe should always engage and empower. It was also noticeable, how so many students, in the first year of the curriculum, had been shaped by education practices that rely on dependency and on top-down structures of information delivery, and how often students spend most of their time trying to guess what the teacher wants, instead of diving into the assignments fearlessly. I began to question this relation of dependency, the interactions we all have with each other – how we behave in the classroom.

I focused on the classroom, the space we have in common, our common ground. Very quickly space itself became the central aspect of my project in its most varied forms: the geographical, architectural, pedagogical, social and political space of the physical classroom.

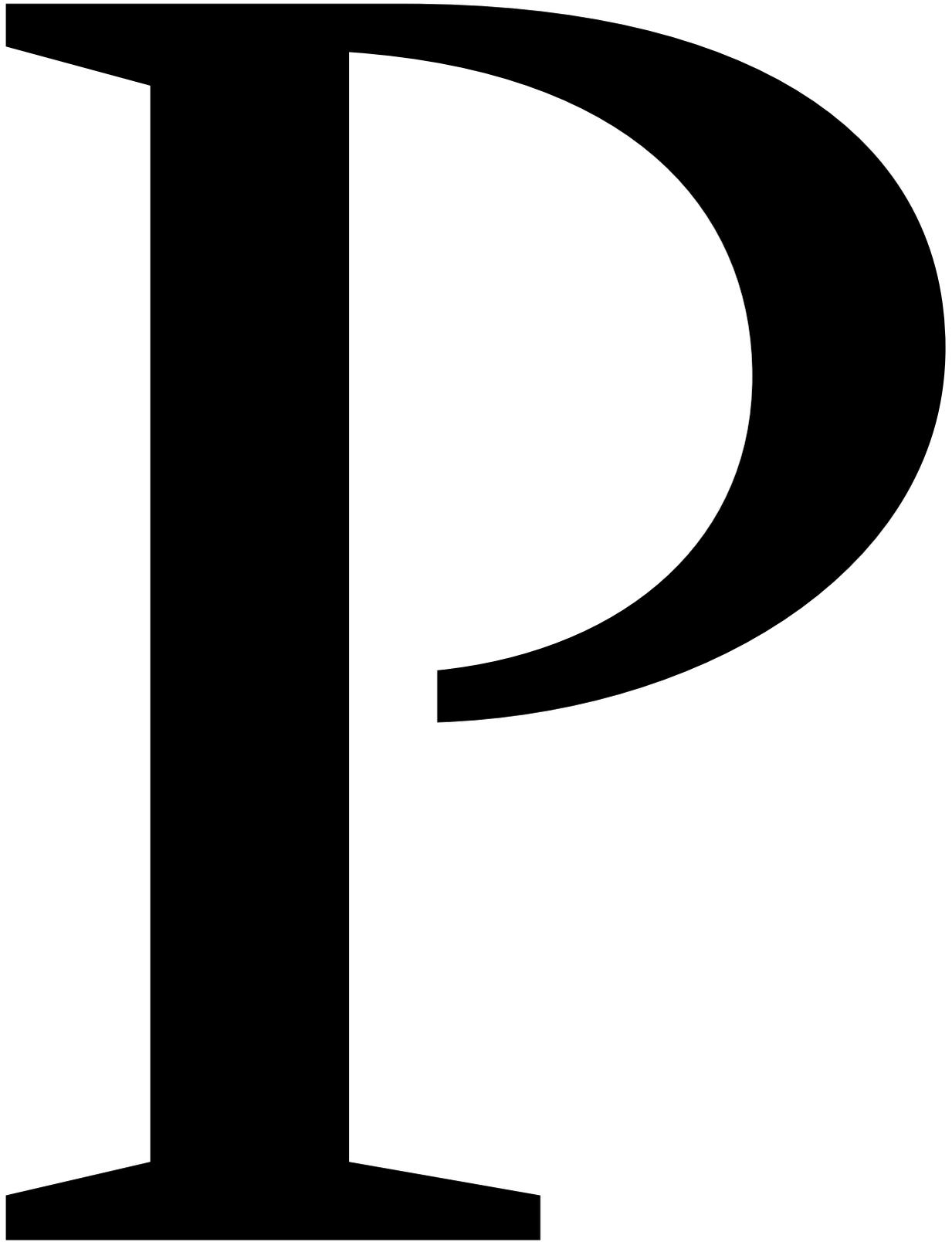
I initiated a set of strategies to share my authority, to share my space with the students. I became subversive. I never sit at the head of the table, although it is always free for me. I created confusion by asking the students what to do. My space was returned to me, I was sent back to the centre. There must be some elasticity in pedagogic strategies, every group of students and every individual needs special and specific attention. Teaching and learning need time.

It was productive to draw from critical and feminist pedagogies, where horizontal exchange is predominant, and yet the teacher is welcome to be a teacher. A teacher is necessary – it was made clear to me when I increased my presence in the assignment brief but remained physically in the background. It was only a slight improvement: my presence was still valued and desired. It is about the way of teaching. What is this space I occupy?

Learning from Paulo Freire and from bell hooks, I asserted my role. In this way, teaching and learning can be political acts.

At the same time I started to create situations to activate the collective we form in the classroom. It seems the classroom hinders our intentions – we are here to learn and teach. We have the same goal and yet we break apart. I decided to enact the collective with an assembly. The form of the circle brought us together in the space it created.

The assembly proved to be invaluable, its impact was palpable. I was impressed with students' insights and their (re)positioning. The students' feedback was clear in its appreciation for the moments of collective exchange. The more they became aware, the more they managed to see the potential and the benefits of relying on the collective. Giving voice to the students was decisive for my project.



Counterspace
Classroom space as a pedagogic tool to share authority
and to empower (design) students.

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My partner Kai for all your encouragement your endless help and support. For being so patient and full of love. For knowing me so well and for being able to read between the lines. For everything really.

Thank you my dear daughter Alba, your spontaneity and happiness is contagious.

A note to the reader.

This thesis has two parts, **T (Theory)** and **P (Praxis)**. They were developed in parallel and influenced each other.

The images in this thesis are used as a way to document and visualise my practice.

I use them as research material for alternative and radical pedagogy approaches and their use of space.

In relation to text, there are different voices in the thesis. Students' voices, education project reports, theoretical texts and small notes and interjections with personal character interspersed through the document.

The conclusion spans both parts of the project and it goes from one back cover to the other.

Counterspace

Classroom space as a pedagogic tool to share authority and to empower (design) students.

For my daughter Alba ♥ who has taught me
things I had forgotten.

P5

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I wanted it to be open, I wanted that openness. (...) I don't want to be at the centre, I want it to be this field in which we all have a part, we all have something good. That is the way I thought about it [Woman's Building]. I only used the word collaborative or collective for it but it is really more about creating a location for participation. Where people feel comfort and feel accepted and can therefore be the best of who they are and also talk about what isn't so great, and try to work out their differences.
—Sheila Levrant de Bretteville: *Decade of Dissent* (2012, 10 mins.)

Introduction

Very early in the process of researching and developing my project, I initiated an ongoing conversation with my past and present students. This conversation influenced the direction of my research and very often changed its direction, or different topics were added. It was a happily messy process of questioning my assumptions and looking for answers or possible ways to address many of the situations that we encountered in the classroom. The research project lasted three semesters, during which I worked with three different groups of students, with each group participating in one iteration.

Right at the outset of the project I turned to my students and asked what they thought de Bretteville was describing in the sound clip about the space of the Woman's Building, which I transcribe on page P6. Only one out of 30 students thought it was referring to a classroom. What is my responsibility as a teacher? – was my immediate question. Most of the students wanted to be in a place like that. Longed for a place, or places, like the one described, but there was no association between this place and formal education.

(...) a space where individuals can meet and create a discourse, engage in conversation, resolve issues, raise questions, and so on (...)
Rebecca

A space that has a really positive aim. Rully

A place where you can get the best out of yourself and collaborate. A place where you can be yourself and be creative together among others. The recording let's me fantasise about a great location to work. A place where you share ideas and collaborate. Peter

One

By the time I decided to bring the theory into practice with the education project, I had come to the conclusion that both the cultivation of a (learning) community (by doing things together) and the levelling of authority (by doing things more informally than in a mainstream institutional setting) would be good guidelines to follow. I assumed that I could increase my students' engagement and autonomy by sharing my authority with them, contributing to their empowerment in their education process. I delineated a project whereby I could build the course with the students collectively by embarking on a journey of discovery about design education and education at large. My hope was that this journey would be a catalyst in the process of making them more aware of our position in relation to design education and hopefully in relation to society. I also became more aware of my own process of observing, assessing my way of teaching and the way in which things happen in the classroom.

Education Project, iteration one

An ongoing conversation on (design) education

This first iteration of the pedagogic project consisted of a series of assemblies and workshops in which a list of topics¹ was discussed. From these conversations the students and I had to write a syllabus for the first-year graphic design course and imagine different classroom spaces. The form in which these would be presented in an exhibition format, as the final result of the project, was to be entirely negotiated and organised by the students.

The first iteration proved very productive as a mechanism but the process did not culminate in a product. In the next pages a full description of the project will clarify it.

Description

An ongoing conversation on (design) education was developed as a collective project where the students were invited to reflect on the role of education, on learning environments and on what they wanted to learn. Based on these considerations we would collectively form an outline of what education means for this group of students, by imagining different classroom spaces, sharing our references by inviting ideas and people in, and by writing a syllabus for the first year graphic design class: a syllabus we would follow in the second part of the semester. The students had to collectively decide on the most appropriate shape of the syllabus and the spatial considerations in terms of how it should be presented. The students were to organise ways to produce and present their findings. The process of arriving at the syllabus and the spatial considerations for the classroom was part of the assignment itself.

I devised a structure for the project that would give the students the time and space to collectively think, discuss and negotiate the said spaces and syllabus. My role was to mediate and support the students through the process and function as an initial catalyst in the development of the project.

Session one (6 hours) The assembly and workshop

We started with a collective meeting, an assembly, where everyone could share their experiences and impressions about (design) education. This was a moment in which to gather everyone close together, on the same level. I proposed that we sat in a circle on the floor to make this levelling more palpable. This also let us experience the space of the classroom differently. All voices were heard and converging points were discovered. I directed the conversation by introducing five main points to discuss: Do you think space influences your learning process?; What do you want to learn?; Have a nice relaxed conversation; What is the role of education/learning?; Share a publication you find very important here (in the

1 Do you think space influences your learning process?; What do you want to learn?; Have a nice relaxed conversation; What is the role of education/learning?; Share a publication you find very important here (in the design classroom)?

design classroom)? I answered those questions myself, using the opportunity to share my own experiences and references with the students.

After the initial assembly, I organised a workshop. The students gathered in small groups around five clusters of tables, each with image and text material to instigate conversations. They had to spend 45 minutes per cluster discussing the topics (Do you think space influences your learning process?; What do you want to learn?; Have a nice relaxed conversation.; What is the role of education/learning?; Share a publication you find very important here (in the design classroom) and now?) once again. Every group worked through the five questions/propositions and left reflections, comments and references for the following group. These would form the starting point of the propositions for different learning environments and content of the syllabus.

Session two (6 hours)

Collective working day.

The students self-organise to discuss the content, the format/design and the production/implementation of the syllabus and their considerations about learning environments. Distribution of work groups and respective tasks.

Session three (6 hours)

Collective group work and discussions.

Session four (6 hours)

Assembly to discuss the state of the project and collective presentation.

Sessions five and six (6 hours)

Workshop. Collective working day.

Session seven (6 hours)

Finalise production of materials and public presentation of considerations about learning environment and syllabus.

Session eight (6 hours)

Exhibition opening. Celebration of our collective effort.

Documentation

Conversations about education and learning

Assembly discussions on education

This will be a group assignment.

We will informally and collectively exchange ideas and impressions on education, culminating in part of an exhibition on the topic. It is about asking, answering, showing and telling.

The format and content is open and will be defined collectively by the community that our class is.

We will be reflecting on the following:

- **Do you think space influences your learning process?**
- **What do you want to learn?**
- **Have a nice relaxed conversation...**
- **What is the role of education?**
- **Share a publication you find very important here (the design classroom) and now?**

Individual interviews on learning

This will be an individual (or duo/ small groups) assignment.

Interview someone you would like to learn something from.

Who? Let's stick to the academy: interview a peer from a different department, Gerard from the silk-screen workshop, Marcel the librarian, a teacher from any department or from Graphic Design...

How? Use the interview format to get the information you (think) you need. Maybe it is not necessary that the person you are interviewing knows exactly what you want to learn: in this way you will avoid instructions and short, direct answers.

Ideally you make three interview sessions.

What? Form is open. Video, audio piece, publication...

Timetable

18 April (Tuesday)

Assembly discussion & workshop.

25 April (Tuesday)

Conduct and transcribe interviews (hopefully the second one). Send it to me in text format.

Group assignment: Each small group collects and summarises every part of the workshop.

28 April (Friday)

Small group talks. Presentation of group work.

Defined format for the interview and first sketches.

02 May (Tuesday)

Workshop or

Assembly

+

Sketches for interview assignment.

09 May (Tuesday)

Assembly

+

Sketches for interview assignment.

or Workshop

16 May (Tuesday)

Final sketches for interview project.

+

Assembly

24 May (Wednesday)

Preparation for exhibition opening.

26 May (Friday)

Exhibition opening.

Warhol was distrustful of interviewers because he was wise to their ways. He understood how the form, seemingly true-to-life, was in reality a fictional construct that could be edited to suit the interviewer's ends. "I've found that almost all interviews are preordained," he says in *The Philosophy of Andy Warhol* (which was not written but spoken into a tape recorder), "They know what they want to write about you and they know what they think about you before they even talk to you." Warhol used sly humor and seeming naiveté to skillfully evade and confuse. He would even purposefully give out different autobiographical information to various outlets and watch with amusement as it circulated through the media landscape. He took delight in figuring out what newspapers and magazines a person read by what they repeated back to him. "It was like putting a tracer on where people get their information."

In a 1963 interview Warhol had famously said, "I think everybody should be a machine." But he was no machine when it came to being interviewed, quite the opposite. He was a cunning manipulator of the form, playing with it as self-consciously as he did other aspects of popular culture. A few years after *Index* (book) was published, he would take the reins into his own hands by publishing a new magazine, *Interview*. in http://designobserver.com/feature/pop_art_is/39295

"There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

Richard Shaull, drawing on Paulo Freire

"Education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing—of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't"

Paulo Freire, 2004

Seeing the classroom always as a communal place enhances the likelihood of collective effort in creating and sustaining a learning community.

The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 1994

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Ill. 3-4: Carvalho, S. (2016) Day one, workshop students class 1B 2015/16, KABK.

DO YOU THINK SPACE INFLUENCES YOUR LEARNING PROCESS?

Edward: OF COURSE!

environment influences your ideas unconsciously.
trust worthy place: it is 'cleanish...'
no windows → makes you go crazy. no sense of time.
Rule in holland. you need!! to have a window in a working space. (and a living place.)

all windows!! such a luxury!
in paland → 'classic' class rooms!

WHAT WOULD YOU CHANGE!!

- more tables.
- needs more space.
- your own space more a studio work-space. → not practical for classes
- clean that shit up.
- diff. placement of tables / chairs. is nice so you can sit next to anyone!

I WANT TO 'TEACH' THE GUYS @ THE WORK-SHOPS TO WORK FASTER!
 how to focus
 how to communicate
 how to express thoughts/opinions

Stages

because you could learn many self anything, but you can learn your self.

"HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS / PANIC ATTACKS"

"Nothing" "HAAAAA"

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO LEARN?

Learn how to express how to communicate
diff approaches to processes design! → diff history

Ill. 5: Student work (2016) Day one, workshop students class 1B 2015/16, KABK.

People become the way they are and the way they are raised. One of the biggest thing in our surrounding is School.

Parents put you in in the school that they choose for you. So They have the first choice about you school education.

Who decide what your lean or your don't learn, know and what you don't know?

Going to school makes you aware of living in society

Why we would learn critical thinking if it is help you to go against the system and the system teach you.

Time is a problem

I was talking to my parent about history because they learnt lie when they were at school. So I was at 10years old teaching to my parents history.

In our classroom there is no space for teacher and for student.
It is A space!

We think more about what we need to know instead of what we want to know



Ill. 7-8: Scholten, J. (2016) Day two, assembly two students class 1B 2015/16, KABK.



Reflections on Education

I believe it is important to give students an opportunity at some point in their education to look upon education subjectively: analysing their own educational experience (past, present and future) and exploring what an ideal educational system would be to them/to the world. Exercises like this one serve the purpose of acknowledging one's privilege and enabling students to learn in a way what is most appropriate for them and their classmates.

(...) The fear of failure caused by the French educational system. It teaches you that you are not allowed to make mistakes, thus causing enthusiasm and self-esteem to drop in addition to instilling a fear of going to school into students at a young age.

Despite my efforts, my grades weren't particularly exceptional so I didn't have much time to socialise with my friends because I was busy trying to catch up on work. It took me to a point where I didn't really know who I was or what my purpose was and where I felt like my existence was unnecessary because I felt that I wasn't good at anything and because I didn't have any kind of life outside of school.

(...) School should be there to teach you all about the world and how to navigate society and in some way, the working world.

(...) It can't teach you everything, and that is also something worth keeping in mind.

Emily

The academy and our space in the department looks really fresh, open and friendly and this is also the atmosphere I perceive around me, also the more time I spend in the building the more I feel that the space belongs to us, and the more familiar we get the more we know what our limits and possibilities are, and try to make space for new ones.

For me the role of education is showing me how to learn, how to look at things and see what is behind and inside them, how to analyse something and dive deeper into it, allowing me to see more sides of it. Basically gaining interest and understanding.

Selina

Education teaches people how to function within a society.

(...) How your surroundings can influ-

ence your life by their own way of educating you. What kind of role does family, friends, strangers, colleagues, bosses, teachers and other educators play in your life and how does that shape you as a person.

For me, the basis of education lays on trust that comes from two sides.

Isabella

Primary school was always easy and fun for me. Except for when we had exams. Children in primary school already start to compete somehow against each other's grades. You just checked or wanted to know what the others had to compare yourself. I usually always stuffed it directly in my bag without looking at it. I didn't care about it and I knew anyway that I failed.

Therefore my father send me always after school to my neighbour. Her name was Melita. (...) She became somehow my second grandmother. She tutored me almost everyday after school and when I had an exam she would pray for me. (...) She didn't care at all how much time it would take until I would understand something. I would stay for one, two hours or sometimes the whole afternoon.

In my preparatory year at the art school in Liechtenstein, later in Zurich at the art academy and today at the art academy in The Hague people started the first time in my life to appreciate what I do.

Vincent

Education usually opens a lot of possibilities. I say 'usually' because sometimes unsuccessful methods of teaching lead to a change of thinking, an ominous variant of brainwashing.

If people in school start acting differently, if teachers start reacting adequately to what students need, then everybody will be happier. It works like the Domino effect. Just one teacher acting 'differently' in a school, could capsize the 'ship of ignorance' that has been sailing for the past 90 years.

Ned

Talking about education in class was really interesting because most of the people never really thought about it before the last few weeks. I had the feeling that I had to question

myself and analyse what I lived and what are my feelings about the past and the present. It was like making a break to think about who you are, and what were the things that shaped you. In fact we passed most of our life in school, and it is in our life our first experience of 'living in community'.

I can say that talking about education and school made me think a lot about people, about inequalities and difference that I met and maybe not about what I learn in class. It is really a human experience I would say. School unfortunately creates codes and rules that can put you in a box.

It should be a place of trust and which makes you grow in a good way. School looks like the society outside: there is hierarchy, there are inequalities, there are stereotypes and there is conflict. I think the first problem in education is the relation with teachers. I think education is based too much on discipline and power.

The person who holds power is the one who has the knowledge and it is the teacher. So, in a pyramidal hierarchy the teacher is on the top, and the student is below. School is too established as an institution. People who have problems with authority or not conform to the system have problems with school. That is why so many children don't like school because they don't see the help, the share in education, the magic of understanding things. 'Teaching' and 'sharing' are not the same or they are too far from each other nowadays and that is provoking failure in the education system.

I think we missed 'life' in our lessons when we were young. We missed our common interests; or we missed our open ideals. We didn't learn basic things, for example gardening class, or knowledge about earth, ecology. Why not giving the best positive education to our children when they are more able to listen? Why not taking advantage of the big impact of education to create a better society or at least sharing good values for the world?

Clara

Education is such a vast and enormous structure, a machine with great responsibility. In our modern society it has become institutionalised and schools are companies that need to make money and provide set criteria and competences. What do we do now, with our dreams of free, meaningful and personal education?

What influence can we have on our society and structure of millions of students? (...) Are we powerless?

Pepijn

(Talking about Graphic Design education) We have to be aware and have knowledge about global, cultural, environmental and political issues. I think because we have this relationship with art and these issues, it makes us very powerful. It's not easy at all.

Every time we design something we gather knowledge.

In some way we also learn about equality. We learn how to work together, accept each other. We learn about different languages and traditions. This is one of the big reasons why I enjoy KABK so much. Everyone is very respectful to each other. And this is very important in education. To feel safe in some way in the building and your surroundings.

I did not know what education meant or what power it had. But now I've learned and realise it's a weapon you can use. I am loving what I am learning and I am excited by having ideas and being inspired. And I think this is the most important thing in education.

Mahtab

(...) Being able to trust and believe in each other, if this happens then what comes next is a system without hierarchy and friendship relations between student and teacher.

Emma

Evaluation

Collaboration in the classroom: the collective and individual responsibility.

In the classroom it is often challenging to work as a group. We risk some students engaging less while others engage more. The amount of time and effort each member puts into the project has a direct impact on the engagement of the group as a whole. I don't blame the students for wanting to channel their energy into their own work, which they can control in its entirety; it goes hand in hand with the crescent pressure to perform in education. Hopefully the experience of working collectively will show other ways of working, the importance of working together, of the community, of being in constant dialogue. There is the risk, however, that a negative experience will reinforce what I am trying to challenge.

After the initial momentum with the assembly and workshop, engagement decreased noticeably. Some students completely rejected the assignment by not participating or not doing any of the homework we agreed in advance. The single result I was trying to achieve – shared authority and responsibility in the classroom – was the one that brought disempowerment to the classroom.

If we had a factual thing to show about our talks, I think it would be interesting to present it. We didn't go to the end, and as a collective group I might think that we didn't bring it as far as it could have been done. Clara

I would say it would have been nice if we did the collective assignment because working in groups is never easy and it would have been a nice experience to see such a big assignment happen. Ned

In retrospect, I can see the lack of a figure of authority undermined the expected course of classes and work. There was a sense of loss. Most students are clearly not accustomed to mobilising and taking initiative in a collective effort. There was an imbalance between the individual and the group work, which affected their willingness to take responsibility and be accountable for the group. The informality of my action (levelling my authority with that of the students) not only disabled the collective – previously enacted with the assembly – but also reinforced individuality: the students did not work on the assignment together nor did they take responsibility together.

The effect of my strategy used in the course of the assignment made me more aware of the role of previously learned behaviour in the classroom and the expectations associated with said behaviour. The classroom makes students (and teachers!) conform to certain norms, makes us obedient. No classroom is a classroom of only possibilities, but we can always work on trying to expose the mechanisms behind said expectations, in order to make our classroom a better one.

Maybe as a group we didn't have enough maturity to take this assembly seriously, and maybe because it was done in class we always had this view that 'this is an assignment' so it is not for me but a bit for the teacher. Clara

We were all so tuned in on 'what do these teachers want from me?!' so shifting to 'what do I want and what is a school anyway?' was very liberating and changed my perspective when I really needed it. Olga

Even if the group project did not come to fruition, the 'Reflections on Education' the students handed in and the moments of discussion were brilliant. This specific iteration of the education project was the one where I allocated more time for exchange in the form of two assemblies and a workshop. We spent a total of two days exchanging impressions, sharing ideas about education, education environments and graphic design. It was also the iteration where the impact of said exchange seems to have been the most fruitful. The 'Reflections

on Education' the students produced were extremely personal, insightful and captivating. Most of them also showed awareness of the education systems they are (or were) part of. The group did not deliver a product but the experience we shared was very powerful and beneficial – this was a moment where the collective clearly enabled possibilities, for constructive exchange and mutual understanding.

We didn't learn basic things, for example gardening, or (...) ecology. Why not give the best positive education to our children when they are more eager to listen? Why not take advantage of the big impact of education to create a better society or at least share good values for the world? Clara

Exercises like this one serve the purpose of acknowledging one's privilege. Emily

For me the role of education is showing me how to learn. Selina

I did not know what education meant or what power it had. But now I've learned and realise it's a weapon you can use. I am loving what I am learning and I am excited by having ideas and being inspired. And I think this is the most important thing in education. Mahtab

School looks like the society outside: there is hierarchy, there are inequalities, there are stereotypes and there is conflict. Clara

Assembly

The assembly was a particularly productive moment for the group in the first iteration. The students and I discussed education in general, the art academy, our class, design, our respective home countries, our families, our neighbours. The impact the assembly had in creating space for meaningful and engaged conversations was enormous and the 'Reflections on Education' the students wrote attested to the positive experience we shared.

When I started to design the education project, I always knew the beginning had to be a collective experience: a dialogue, where we exchanged and shared informally; an ice-breaker and a moment to find common ground. I also wanted this moment to be a place where everyone's voice could be heard.

I think this collective discussion and topics were a good step towards the development of critical thinking. Clara

In some way, we also learn about equality. We learn how to work together, accept each other. We learn about different languages and traditions. To feel safe in some way in the building and your surroundings. Mahtab

The circle seemed to be a natural shape to bring us together. No one is at the centre; no one is at the head. I also thought about a name for this first moment: it is a gathering, a coming-together, a sharing circle, a collective conversation, a group, a meeting, an assembly... The assembly format is politically charged and although I did not consciously consider this at the time, it seemed a natural and urgent format, a way of leading to action. The assembly, and the collective experience it fostered, became crucial to my project because of the way it instigated the project.

The assembly of the project helped me to look at the space within the department in a different light, and listening to others share their perspectives on education brought my attention to opinions and whole issues that I would have not thought about myself. Also tea and cookies were great! Radek

The discussions we had in class (especially the assembly) made me realise how fortunate we all are to be studying in an international environment. (...) We find out about a totally different approach to the subject that you would never think of. Edward

Later on, I drew from the concept of 'Assemblism' by Jonas Staal (Staal, 2017, p. 1) and on Judy Chicago's 'Going Around the Circle' (Chicago, 2001, p. 4) sessions in Fresno, to further consider the morphology of the assembly, the circle, its implications and the possible parallels with classroom props and behaviour. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* by Judith Butler has been productive in shedding more light on the potential of the assembly to form collectivities and its performative character. (see page T121)

Scope of the students' assignment

Another reason for the difficulty in developing the project was its scope. The project was too difficult for first-year students. The students' natural inexperience made it hard for them to answer some of the questions and challenges that came with the project, namely: 'What would they want from design education?' Most of them were only beginning to understand the potential and scope of (graphic) design.

I had to take responsibility for my lack of overview and my misconceptions about what it means to share my authority as a teacher. I cancelled the group assignment and proposed a written reflection instead. It would be quick, it would be a good way of evaluating the dialogue and exchange the group went through and it would not feel like a waste of time for the students or me.

It was clear to me that, contrary to what I imagined, first year students are not so open to taking on the responsibility that comes with more power in the classroom. They need more generosity and guidance from the teacher. The fact they felt 'left alone' created feelings of disappointment and disengagement.

How can I expose the proposition I am putting forward? Too much information defeats the purpose, too little blocks the students – they feel lost. A question to investigate in the next iterations.

I think this assignment was really destabilising for lots of people: because it wasn't an assignment. (...) It was much you giving us the possibility to think about our environment. Even though what you tried to teach us, was that you were not giving us anything, because

we can think, act, react whenever we want and not only when someone give us the opportunity. Suddenly, it wasn't about designing a book: it was about understanding our position in the world. Clara

The informal space inside the classroom

One aspect that was mentioned several times by students was the lack of a place to rest inside the classroom – a couch, a place to take a break, a place to relax.

The possibility of permanently transforming the physical space of the classroom was never presented. Nor was it the goal of this project to present solutions to classroom design. From the beginning I was always aware that we have to deal with what is physically and architecturally presented to us every week in the classroom – ceiling, floor, three glassed walls, two narrow white walls, metal shelves against one of the glassed walls, air conditioning, bright lights on the ceiling, two thick felt curtains, a sink, a big screen, 36 power plugs, 18 tables, 40 chairs, random things left behind by students. I was also aware that there was much we could do even with the restrictions we had: many things we can move around and restructure or unstructured inside the classroom. We can extend to the corridor and we can make excursions. Furthermore, there is much more to space than just physical space.

The wish for an area in the classroom to do something other than work goes hand in hand with my idea of bringing 'domesticity' into the classroom. The comfort and support, the possibility to take risks associated with this sense of security home brings, are all aspects essential in an education environment. The wish to take breaks, to be able to stop, directly resonates with the concept of 'slow-

bility' of Pascal Gielen, so crucial for reflection and imagination to take place and for bringing theory and practice together (Gielen, 2015, p. 18).

The reason for this wish to be so present is, in my opinion, a reflection of the increased pressure to perform and the workload in education at large, including art and design education. Education is in general so geared to efficiency and success that the students feel the need to find escapes. It is inevitable that parallels will be found with the increased precarity brought about by neo-liberalism and deregulation in the job market.

I enter here and I don't feel like it's my class (...) it doesn't have to belong to someone but I don't really connect (...) I don't feel like it's my workspace. Rafael

(...) in this classroom, I don't feel like there is a place for the teacher or space for students, it's just like space for working...
Edward

Two

Working in groups, in accordance with my decision to distance myself from my position of authority in the classroom (in order to give the students more control and decision-making power), proved to be a big obstacle to the design and production part of the collective work. Nevertheless, the conversations and exchange facilitated by the assembly, and the 'Reflection on education' the students handed in individually were so expressive and productive that the initial moment of exchange became central to the project. The students were not only very positive about the assembly, but they also delivered very personal and insightful experiences and analyses of their own education trajectory and of the role of education at large.

I decided to keep the general organisation of the project: working in groups, the exchange of experiences component, and the general focus - (design) education. I reduced the scope and time frame of the project, to see if the momentum of the assembly would drive the group work, and to make the project more manageable. The students would only have to produce one collective statement in space, related to education. As a strategy to further facilitate working in groups I added structure to the project by devising smaller groups responsible for specific tasks. These groups were directly related to the design process: conception and editing, design, documentation and production. I also introduced one group that is normally disregarded in the process: the informal group was responsible for the care and well-being of the other groups.

Education Project, iteration two

School*

***from Greek *skholē*, 'leisure, philosophy, lecture place, freetime'**

Iteration two, School*, in line with the first iteration, consisted of one assembly and workshop where a list of topics was discussed.¹ From these conversations the students had to write and design a collective statement about (design) education. The statement had to be presented in space and scale was important. Both the development of the ideas from the first day (during the initial assembly and workshop), the design of the collective statement and the collective production and presentation day were all developed in during class hours (no homework assignment) where all groups and me worked together.

Description

The goal of the project was to collectively (re)define our learning environment: the space of the classroom. We should express it with a collective statement in space using mainly typography.

I divided the project into three days (over non-consecutive weeks).

Day one (6 hours)

Following the first iteration, we started the project again with a collective meeting, an assembly (see page P21). As with the first iteration (see page P9), we reflected on the role of education and on the learning environment as well as on the interactions that occur inside this space. My intention was to encourage the students to be more aware of the roles both teachers and students play in educational settings. The five propositions were: Do you think space influences your learning process?; Which kind of interactions occur in the learning environment?; Have a nice relaxed conversation.; What is the role of education/learning?; Let's build a library of resources together. I answered those questions myself, using the opportunity to share my own experiences and references with the students.

After the initial assembly, I organised a workshop. The students gathered in small groups around five clusters of tables. They had to spend 45 minutes per cluster discussing the topics once again. Every group worked through the five questions/propositions and left reflections, comments, references behind, for the following group. These would become the starting point for an exchange of ideas about the above mentioned topics and to develop, edit and design them in a collective statement in space.

Day two (6 hours)

Based on the exchange of day one, on day two all the groups worked together to conceive and design the collective statement in space. As a strategy to facilitate

¹ Do you think space influences your learning process?; Which kind of interactions occur in the learning environment?; Have a nice relaxed conversation.; What is the role of education/learning?; Let's build a library of resources together.

group work, I divided the big group of students into four smaller groups. These groups represented (in an abstract and somewhat fragmented way) the parts of the work of a graphic designer – a designer normally develops all or at least some of these parts simultaneously. I presented the groups to the students in terms of who these groups are and what they do in relation to each other and to the design process.

Who? and What?

The **editorial group** will work in close collaboration with the design group. The editorial group will compile, edit and write the final collective statement in close collaboration with the design group and in ongoing conversation with all participants.

The **design group** will work in close collaboration with the editorial and documentation group. The design group will design the final statement in the familiar space in close collaboration with the editorial group and with the help of the documentation and reproduction teams and the informal group.

The **documentation/reproduction group** will work in close collaboration with the design group but also be independent and initiate its own work. The documentation/reproduction team will hand in their documentation material to the editorial and design team simultaneously. It will gather more material when specified and assist the design group when necessary.

The **informal group** is independent from all groups but it is in close dialogue and observation with the groups. It can be subversive, but particularly helpful in creating escapes, comfort, distraction moments and breaks. It should pay close attention to the space and change it when necessary. It should not work against or boycott the work of the other groups. The informal group will change the environment when it sees fits. It will inform the documentation group in advance. It will also design the space of the collective statement in a close relationship with the design team and the editorial team. It will take care of the well-being of the community.

To support the exchange of information, each group will have a voluntary representative that will also work as an initiator and be responsible for the organisation of each group.

Day three (6 hours)

Day three was the day to not only produce and build the collective statement in space but also to collectively reflect on the project's process. We finalised the day with a small celebration of our collective effort.

Documentation

School*

*from Greek *skholē* 'leisure, philosophy, lecture place, freetime'

Starting from bell hooks' proposition in *Teaching to Transgress* that "the classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy", we will work together on the (re)definition of our learning environment: the space of the classroom.

Assembly discussions on education

This will be a group assignment.

We will informally and collectively exchange ideas and impressions on education, culminating in part of an exhibition on the topic. It is about asking, answering, showing and telling.

The spacial format and content is open and will be defined collectively by the community that our class is.*

We will be reflecting on the following:

- Do you think space influences your learning process?
- Which kind of interactions occur in the learning environment?
- Have a nice relaxed conversation...
- What is the role of education/ learning?
- Let's build a library of resources together?

*Collective statement in space

We will exchange ideas about the above mentioned topics and develop, edit and design them in a collective statement in space.

References

School days, 2011 by Rob Giampietro
<http://blog.linedandunlined.com/post/36674032078/school-days>

What Design can't do, 2017 by Silvio Lorusso
 in <http://networkcultures.org/entrepacariat/what-design-cant-do/>



from the top: Josef Albers teaching at Black Mountain School; Children at Delf Montessori School projected by Herman Hertzberger.

Timetable

- 23 October
 Assembly discussion & workshop.
- 31 October
 Work in groups: Editorial; Design; Documentary; Informal; ...
- 21 November
 Build collective statement
 Presentation

"There is no such thing as a neutral education process. Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate the integration of generations into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity to it, or it becomes the 'practice of freedom', the means by which men and women deal critically with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world."

Richard Shaull, drawing on Paulo Freire

"Education makes sense because women and men learn that through learning they can make and remake themselves, because women and men are able to take responsibility for themselves as beings capable of knowing-of knowing that they know and knowing that they don't"

Paulo Freire, 2004

Seeing the classroom always as a communal place enhances the likelihood of collective effort in creating and sustaining a learning community.

The classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy.
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress*, 1994

Space within the scope of this project is to be understood in a broad sense. Think of a large and layered definition of physical and philosophical space (the classroom being the representation of the physical space) as our source of ideas, inspiration and pedagogic approaches. I am proposing three main definitions of space as a starting point:

Open space is a multi-layered always welcoming space that expands with the experiences it carries; it allows for many windows and doors to open. Its boundaries are elastic as pedagogy should be and allow for constant action.

Informal space is the space of community building, bounding and sharing. The prime space for exchange at an equal level. A space where time slows down, for reflection and to take risks.

Other space is the space that allows alternative ways. It is the space for heterotopia, where things have the potential to change. It is the space of revolution.

Space in Graphic design

Space inside letter (counterspace)
Space between letters
Space between words
Space between lines
Space around text
Space of the page
Space of the spread
Space of the surface

School* PART 2

*from Greek *skholē* 'leisure, philosophy, lecture place, freetime'

Day two

(Please read the collected content/ ideas gathered in advance of day two, it is not much and it will be helpful for the second session).

My plan is to work in groups in preparation for the last day: collective work day. We can discuss details and strategy at the start of the day. We can change plans.

There are four groups that you should join in advance (see the document in the shared folder I sent). The editorial group (up to 6 students); the design group (up to 6 students); the documentation/reproduction group (up to 6 students) and the informal group (up to 5 students).

Who?

The editorial group will work in close collaboration with the design group.

The design group will work in close collaboration with the editorial and documentation group.

The documentation/reproduction group will work in close collaboration with the design group but also be independent and initiate its own work.

The informal group is independent from all groups but it is in close dialogue with and observation of the groups. It can be subversive but specially helpful in creating escapes, comfort, distraction moments, breaks. It should pay close attention to the space and change it when necessary. It should not work against or boycott the work of the other groups.

Each group will have a voluntary representative that will also work as an initiator and organise its each group.

What?

The editorial group will compile, edit and write the final collective statement in close collaboration with the design group and in ongoing conversation with all participants.

The design group will design the final statement in the familiar space in close collaboration with the editorial group and the help of the documentation and reproduction teams and the informal group.

The documentation/reproduction team will hand in their documentation material to the editorial and design team simultaneously. It will gather more material and assist the design group when necessary.

The informal group will change the environment when it see fits. It will inform the documentation group in advance. It will also design the space of the collective statement in close relationship with the design team and te editorial team. It will take care of the well being of the community.

Day three

The spacial format and content is open and will be defined collectively by the community that our class is.#

#Collective statement in space

We will exchange ideas about the above mentioned topics and develop, edit and design them in a collective statement. We will work with physical space as a medium. (Installation format)

Drinks and final reflection.

References (again)

School days, 2011 by Rob Giampietro
<http://blog.linedandunlined.com/post/36674032078/school-days>

What Design can't do, 2017 by Silvio Lorusso
in <http://networkcultures.org/entreprenariat/what-design-cant-do/>

Timetable

- 23 October
Assembly discussion & workshop.
- 21 November
Work in groups: Editorial; Design;
Documentary; Informal; ...
- 5 December
Build collective statement
Presentation

Space within the scope of this project is to be understood in a broad sense. Think of a large and layered definition of physical and philosophical space (the classroom being the representation of the physical space) as our source of ideas, inspiration and pedagogic approaches. I am proposing three main definitions of space as a starting point:

Open space is a multi-layered always welcoming space that expands with the experiences it carries; it allows for many windows and doors to open. Its boundaries are elastic as pedagogy should be and allow for constant action.

Informal space is the space of community building, bounding and sharing. The prime space for exchange at an equal level. A space where time slows down, for reflection and to take risks.

Other space is the space that allows alternative ways. It is the space for heterotopia, where things have the potential to change. It is the space of revolution.

Space in Graphic design

Space inside a letter (counterspace)
Space between letters
Space between words
Space between lines
Space around text
Space of the page
Space of the spread
Space of the surface



Ill. 13-14: Park, S. (2016) *Day one, assembly students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*



Ill. 15: Pärnänen, K. (2016) Day one, assembly students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.

Ill. 16: Park, S. (2016) Day one, workshop students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.



Ill. 17-18: Park, S. (2016) Day one, workshop students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.



Ill. 19: Park, S. (2016) *Day one, workshop students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*



Ill. 20: Pärnänen, K. (2016)
Day two, Editorial group,
students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.

Ill. 21: Pärnänen, K. (2016)
Day two, Design group,
students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.



Ill. 23: Heinlein, K. (2016)
Day two, Editorial group,
students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.

Ill. 24: Heinlein, K. (2016) Day two,
Informal group,
students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.

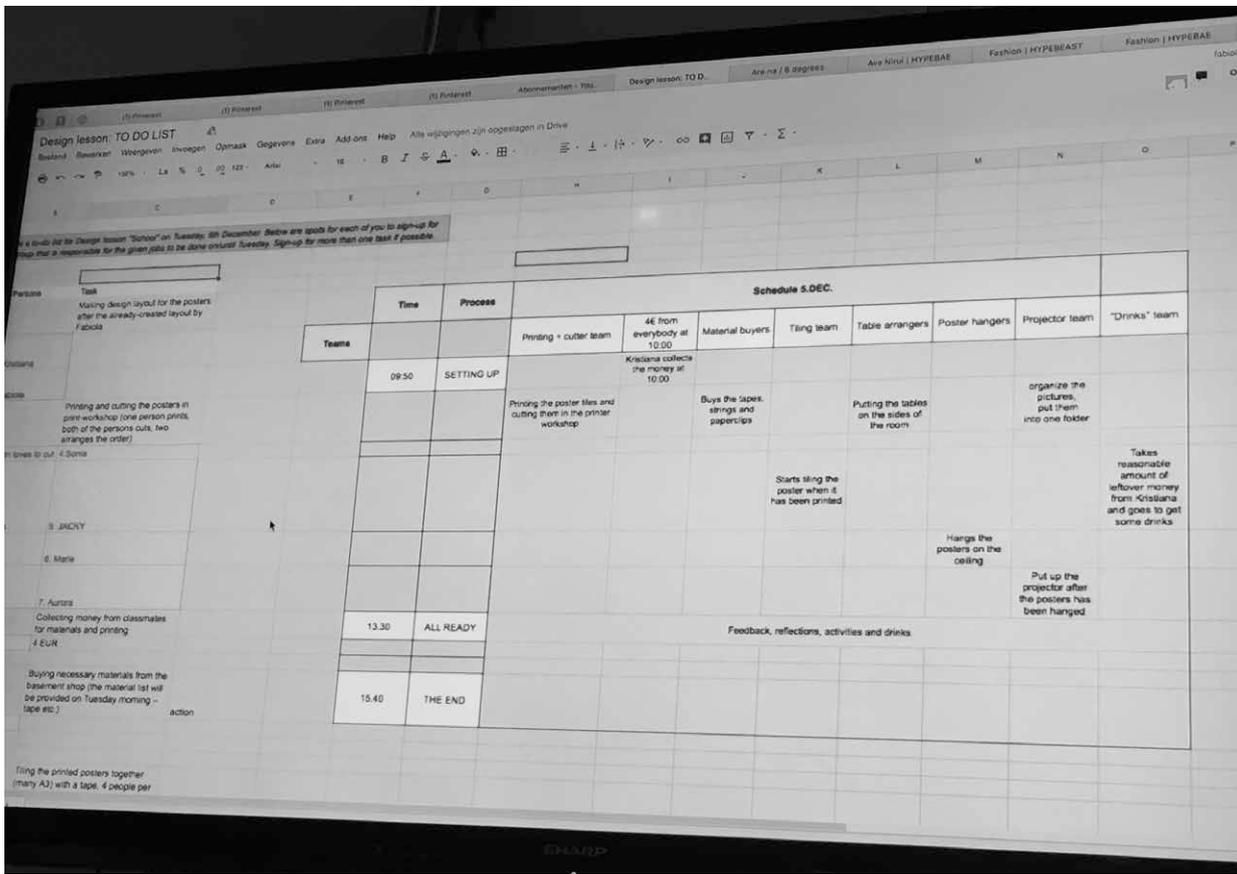


Ill. 25: Heinlein, K. (2016) *Day two, editorial and informal group meeting, students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*

Ill. 26: Heinlein, K. (2016) *Day two, editorial and design groups working together, students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*



Ill. 27: Pärnänen, K. (2017) *Day two, informal group: take a break and go for a walk* initiatives students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.



Ill. 28: Carvalho, S. (2016) Day three, schedule for the day, design group students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.

Ill. 29: Carvalho, S. (2016) Day three, all students working together students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.



Ill. 30: Carvalho, S. (2016) *Day three,*
all students working together
students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.



Ill. 31: Carvalho, S. (2016) *Day three, students in 'chill corner' students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*



Ill. 32: Carvalho, S. (2016) *Day three, communal lunch in 'chill corner' students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*

Ill. 33: Carvalho, S. (2016) *Day three, all students working together students class 1A 2016/17, KABK.*

Evaluation

Collective voice

The expression of the collective voice is dependent on the spirit of the community. The group (students and teacher) should form a community. The assembly on the first day of the workshop is an attempt, through dialogue, sharing of views and experiences and through enactment, to find common ground within the group, thus expressing the collective effort of the project.

In order to try and tackle some of the issues with the group engagement and dynamic, I added further structure and organisation to this iteration of the project. I managed the overall schedule and devised manageable tasks for every group of students. My strategy was to do this within the project brief, rather than personally in the collective work sessions, so that I would not become the director of the project. I was surprised and taken back when I encountered similar results in the group dynamic, even with the small scope, short time span and well-structured and defined tasks. My choice of remaining in the background, of sharing my authority extensively, was not working and I had to redefine my position for the following iteration.

The challenges of working in and with a group are encountered not only on the part of the student; it is also a challenge for the teacher to engage with the group as a whole, with all its dynamics and fluctuations. During the course of the project, I realised – I actually verbalised – the fact that it is difficult for me as a teacher to work on a group project. As a teacher I try not to hide that I also struggle, that I don't know everything, and that it is common to feel vulnerable.

For the students it is also challenging; they mentioned the imbalance in engagement levels between the group, the inability to delegate and the flaws in communication as the main problems. Yet the majority also simultaneously indicated that the collective effort was the best thing about the project: the interaction, working more closely with each other, learning from each other and exchanging experiences, as well as being able to assume leading positions, facilitate the development of the project and take initiatives that trigger the action of others.

The students struggled but they appreciated the challenge and some even realised how impactful it was as a learning moment.

It was also a valuable exercise on working in groups, which we haven't done that much yet due to the focus on our own personal progress.

Karoliina

I think this exercise helped me realise what kind of person I become when I work in bigger groups. I feel good being the facilitator and I can get stressed if I don't know what everyone else is doing. It was really good for me to be in the 'informal' group because on a bigger project I like having an overview before participat-

ing in whatever conflicts/decisions/productions are being made. Olga

Another learning challenge was that I felt like I had this leading role. I don't normally choose that role but I do think it is something that I need to learn; but in the school project I maybe did too much and I could have asked more people to help. If more people had helped from the beginning, the project would have turned out better. Fabiola

The fragile relationship between sharing authority and framing the project

The issue of sharing authority was at the core of my project. It was one of the central strategies I used to empower the students. More than sharing authority,¹

1 In the section 'Pedagogic Strategies' an overview of the activities and gestures I did, in order to accomplish my intention to share authority with the students. (see p.T17)

I intended to subvert my position in order to uncover alternative ways to relate to authority.

This question or quest is not new and it has been extensively explored by critical pedagogy, democratic pedagogy and dialogic pedagogy. Nevertheless, the mainstream education systems across the Western world still mostly emphasise the learning process as a passive process, based on listening to experts (teachers), memorising and reproducing. I am aware I am generalising, and being somewhat negative, but this is for the sake of keeping my argument concise.

There is often a sense of ambiguity and disorientation when a group of students is given full control of the class. It can feel overwhelming and disempowering to the students to initially have so much freedom and consequent responsibility. The teacher might seem like a fraud, the teacher is not teaching, the teacher is not telling students what to do. For the balance and accomplishment of such a proposition, the position of the teacher is not and probably cannot be abandoned but instead should be reinvented and subverted.

During the first iteration I proposed that the first group of students wrote a syllabus together with me; this seemed like a great proposition, but as I removed myself from my normal position and waited for the students to take over, many students became increasingly disengaged and the project fell apart.

Paulo Freire adds useful insights in respect of a similar situation on a recording from the late 1980s – it has been helpful and reassuring during the project (see page T128). Freire mentions the expectations the students have in educational environments, how they expect the teacher to teach. He proposes that the teacher surrenders authority in steps: to first acknowledge the position of teacher, to speak *to* the students and, with time, start speaking *with* the students. He concludes that the role of the teacher should always be speaking *to* and *with* according to circumstance (Shor, 1988).

Freire is advocating for the teacher to take a position of generosity and furthermore to engage with the students in order to be aware of the students' needs and understand when they should speak *to* and when they should speak *with* the students.

The hard part is to find a balance between freedom and locking the assignment with restrictions, as too much freedom makes everyone uncertain or a bit lazy and too much would ruin the assignment. Pepijn

For me, the basis of education lies on trust that comes from two sides. Isabella

I think education is based too much on discipline and power. The person who holds power is the one who has the knowledge and it is the teacher. So, in a pyramidal hierarchy the teacher is on the top, and the student is below. School is too established as an institution.

Clara

Sharing authority, how? Keep it casual, change the pace and listen

For the second iteration of the education project my instruction was more present but it remained hidden in the form of a more detailed brief, structure and schedule. During classes I functioned as the instigator for the project by, once again, putting forward the propositions for the assignment and initiating the assembly, but I remained more in the background, observing and scarcely interfering during the course of the project. I intended to share control over the classroom with the students, but the mechanism was again not as effective as I had desired. It became clear to me, during the second iteration, that my presence was absolutely needed and desired, sometimes in ways I thought were too directive.

In the course of the assignment, my apparent lack of a plan or of refusing the leading role undermined my position (and definitely made many students drift from the project), but some students realised, sometimes after the fact, that it was actually encouraging and was pushing them forward. Nevertheless, this bal-

ance is difficult to achieve, and it needs to be readjusted with every group of students, even fine-tuned with every student. On the other hand, my interventions should not become an instruction because that defeats the purpose of my intentions. I keep returning to Paulo Freire and thinking of strategies to make this process reach *most* of the students and not just *some*.

Informality played a crucial role in the processes of sharing my authority to empower students, in the form of the assembly, in the open negotiation processes and the final collective evaluation of the projects.

When nobody wants to be ‘bossy’ and no clear roles are determined in advance to ensure that the time-schedule etc. are being kept, it’s easy

to lose focus, and the School project kinda drifted off in the beginning of the process. Olga

The informal space inside the classroom

I introduced the idea of an informal group as integral to the design process.

Design is a challenging field; it is very competitive, it is a profession that demands constant development – in craft and technique. It is also a field with often tight deadlines and demanding, often precarious, working conditions, especially for young designers.

This is why I find it very important to pass ethical and healthy working practices on to the students, especially with the rise of precarious conditions in the job market. This is not only because these conditions are even worse for young designers (and other young creative workers), but also because young professionals are expected to excel and work long hours and weekends at minimum wage or, even worse, are pushed into an internship after graduating. It was essential for my project to make the informal group as important as all the other groups that formed the design process. It could not be perceived as an afterthought; it had to feel actionable.

It was reassuring to see the students taking the challenge seriously, negotiating what their role should be and what their group could bring to the project. They tested their ideas and involved the other students in their process. The informal group became a productive and crucial asset in the project. Their close examination of the development of the project and group dynamic, as well as their interventions in important points of the process, made the project develop.

They created a ‘chill zone’, in a usually empty corner of the classroom, which became the area where the other groups would go to discuss their ideas when they needed a change or were stuck in their process. It also became the area where all the groups gathered to discuss their ideas for the project, or where a couple of students would lie down for a few minutes to chat. The informal group also organised a ‘let’s go for a walk’ activity, and a ‘relaxation session’ in the ‘chill zone’, all of which were productive for the development of the project and the general atmosphere of the classroom.

If it wasn’t for this group’s interventions and a few students who took charge later in the process, I think that without my strong intervention – and that was something I was not ready to give into easily – the project would probably have drifted away and we would not have achieved the result of our collective work.

For an example the informal group did a great job in creating a physical space for collective, informal discussion at the back of the classroom. Their initiative ended up being a vital part of facilitating discussions between groups and the whole progress of the assignment in general. Fabiola

The casual, comfortable space at the back of the classroom ended up being the place where most conclusions were drawn and where everybody was led to the same page in the project. This probably would not have happened if we’d stuck to the more conventional table group arrangements. Karoliina

Working with students' own interests and content

One other aspect I had to evaluate was the nature of the topic and content of the project: (design) education. During the second iteration of the project, faced once again with the struggle that both me and the students went through, I started to think that I had to reintroduce one of my most precious and early pedagogic strategies – the students working with their own interests and content. I know, from my experience as a student, that this would increase engagement levels and autonomy, and deliver more expressive and idiosyncratic work.

This strategy is also productive because it encourages the students to position themselves in relation to the topics they choose, eliciting critical thinking. Additionally, it increases the landscape of references in the classroom, enlarging its boundaries.

Three

For the last iteration of the project - within the course of this master's - I returned to one of my pedagogic strategies: allowing the students to choose the content of their work, based on their interests and experiences. I believe this openness and freedom had direct implications for the students' engagement levels. Nevertheless, to foster the process of awareness I wanted to instigate, I decided to devise a framework for the students to create their own content. Instead of speaking about education and its implications directly, I turned to space and what it can be or how it is perceived. Space became the umbrella topic for the assignment. Space is also a crucial visual component both in typography and graphic design, and therefore very relatable to my graphic design students. I gave the students a selection of texts² to choose from, and the selection by the students formed small reading groups in which they could discuss the texts together. This proved to be a rather productive and enthusiastic session. The texts were all related, closely or peripherally, to (political, social or educational) space, typography and graphic design.

I reassessed my position and the processes in which I wanted to share my authority. I allowed myself to become more of a teacher again. I saw it as an act of generosity, not tyranny. I tried to be helpful, and insightful without being directive. I tried to engage with the students more closely, to understand when it was time to back off or to step in, keeping elasticity in this dynamic. I structured the project and tasks

2 Species of Spaces and Other Pieces by Georges Perec; Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness by bell hooks; Clearing the Haze: Prologue to Postmodern Graphic Design Education through Sheila de Bretteville by Izzy Berenson & Sarah Honeth; What Design Can't Do - Graphic Design between Automation, Relativism, Élite and Cognitariat by Silvio Lorusso; Responsible Objects, Utopian Desires: A Two-Sided Monologue on the Future of Design by Marjanne van Helvert; *The Elements of Typographic Style* by Robert Bringhurst

with more detail, I helped the students to manage their time. I intervened more in the group discussions, but made sure I was not dominant. I kept on asking many questions so that their answers would help the steady progress of the project. I intervened when the group dynamic was becoming problematic. We spoke about accountability and responsibility to the learning process and to the collective effort.

Finally, I introduced informal moments, even days, to the project. I organised a one-day 'Movement Workshop' with Valentina Scaglia, a movement teacher and professional dancer, as well as a half-day 'Listening Workshop', with one of my peers on the master's programme, Viki Zioga. Those were days where doing something else, other than what we normally do in the classroom, was the primary focus of our interaction. I became a co-learner in these workshops, which helped to level the student-teacher hierarchy. In both workshops, collective experiences and awareness of each and every one of us was an underlying concern.

Education Project, iteration three { } or space

Description

The main goal was for the students to collectively design a publication³ and to organise and hold a public publication launch in the form of a small exhibition. The content of the publication was the individual work of all students – each student had to conceive and design two reactions to two texts of a selection of six⁴ that I had proposed. The texts all fell within the scope of (political, social, educational) space and graphic design. The material for the exhibition was developed during the course of the assignment. The project's duration was nine weeks from introduction to publication launch.

The project was developed as a group assignment that would also include specific individual contributions. I devised the project in this way to counter-balance the emphasis between the collective effort and the individual contribution and engagement.

Introduction day

We started with a 'Listening Workshop' organised together with Viki Zioga. The goal for this workshop was to experience listening (to each other) and to become aware of its processes and implications.

Zioga and I wrote a simple script to present the workshop. The performance of the script was part of the workshop itself; every co-learner, including me and Zioga, took part in the reading and presentation of the workshop, in an attempt to level hierarchy from the beginning. After a series of collective exercises, involving the sonic meditation 'Zina's Circle' by Pauline Oliveros or 'echo' and 'vibration' exercises inspired by Brandon LaBelle's 'Lecture on an Acoustics of Sharing', the participants gathered in four smaller groups to create a collage of the sound of collaboration in the classroom. Each group started with a listening session (of each member's sound and explanation prepared in advance), proceeded to a negotiation process, and finalised with a collaborative sound collage that responded to the question: 'What is the sound of collaboration in the classroom?'. We finished with a communal lunch and a group presentation and discussion of each group's soundscapes.

After lunch I gave a small presentation about space in the context of the classroom and graphic design, and what space could be, mean, represent or suggest, to set a tone and get the students acquainted with the project.

- 3 It is probably important to mention that this education project was the second assignment of the semester. The first assignment was to individually conceive, edit and design a publication. All students had, therefore, previous experience with designing publications.
- 4 Species of Spaces and Other Pieces by Georges Perec; Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness by bell hooks; Clearing the Haze: Prologue to Postmodern Graphic Design Education through Sheila de Bretteville by Izzy Berenson & Sarah Honeth; What Design Can't Do – Graphic Design between Automation, Relativism, Élite and Cognitariat by Silvio Lorusso; Responsible Objects, Utopian Desires: A Two-Sided Monologue on the Future of Design by Marjanne van Helvert; *The Elements of Typographic Style* by Robert Bringhurst

The next step was to introduce the texts. Out of six given texts, each student could choose two they found interesting. The choice would automatically place each student in a small reading group: a minimum of three students would choose the same text.

Day two

We started the day with small reading groups. All students had to prepare a short summary of the texts they chose and join two reading groups separately to discuss their texts.

In the afternoon I introduced the second part of the assignment.

As in the previous iteration of the education project (see page P25), I adopted a strategy to facilitate group work. I divided the big group of students into five smaller groups. The **publication group**, formed by an **editorial** (two students) and a **design group** (three students), was to conceive, edit and design the publication. The **exhibition group** (five students) was to conceive, edit and design the exhibition. This included signage, information flyers, props and displays. The **poster group** (three students) was to design the poster that announced the exhibition and publication launch. The **operations group** was responsible for overseeing the overall schedule of the project as well as managing finances, booking facilities, and collaborating with each group's production.

After the introduction, the selection of groups by each student and a discussion of the process, the newly formed poster, design, exhibition and logistics groups had their first working session.

Day three

The discussion of the previous session was to end with a small presentation related to the texts. What was it about? What was productive? What interested the group? What did they agree or disagree with? Each text would then be informally discussed collectively.

The groups proceeded with collective work in the classroom.

Day four

The 'Movement Workshop' was a way for the students to, first and foremost, experience, and to think about and reflect on the movement of collaboration in the classroom, focusing on the bodies that occupy and experience this space. The brief was simple: after a day of movement and interaction with both the space of the classroom and with each other, the students would form small, random groups to answer the question: 'What is the movement of collaboration in the classroom?'. This movement or choreography had to be recorded on video, with or without sound, and it was to be less than three minutes long. We organised the workshop in a freer and more organic manner than the other planned activities. I asked Valentina Scaglia to take complete lead of the workshop because I wanted to fully engage with the students and be a co-learner and participant.

Day five to day eight

Work individually and collectively on the various parts of the project.

Day nine

I planned a collective work day with a communal lunch in the garden.

We all had to collate and assemble the publication, install the exhibition and prepare for the public launch from 3pm. A celebration of our collective effort.

Documentation

{ }
or space from different perspectives
(part one)

We start with a reading list
comprising of 6 texts.
Each of you selects two texts to work
with.

For each text you have to:
reflect on,
think about,
act on,
formulate,
sketch,
produce,
design,
a personal view or reaction to the
texts.

Separately. One reaction per text.

It can be an editorial/formal reaction
or a purely written one.
You can have 2 formal reactions, or 1
formal and one written reaction.

The format will be a publication that
we will design, produce and launch
together. The general theme is
{ }, but as you could
deduce from my presentation, space can
be/represent/portray/morph into many
things.

Timetable

- 03 April
Listening Together workshop.
Selection of texts.
- 10 April
Morning: Reading {temporary} groups
Afternoon: 2 work sessions
(publication + exhibition teams)
- 17 April
Morning: Reading {temporary} groups:
presentation of texts to the whole
class.
Afternoon: First concrete sketches
(analogue!) for the publication
content.
- 24 April
Movement Workshop
- 01 May
!!May break!!
- 8 May
Final sketches of publication
content.
- 15 May
Production: publication and
exhibition materials.
Delivery of all content.
- 22 May
Production: publication and
exhibition materials.
- 29 May (or 1 June)
Publication launch!
Party!

+
**Before the individual feedback
sessions** a 300 word reflection on
the entire project (more details
later in the semester).

Space within the scope of this project is to be understood in a broad sense. Think of a large and layered definition of physical and philosophical space (the classroom being the representation of the physical space) as our source of ideas, inspiration and pedagogic approaches. I am proposing three main definitions of space as a starting point:

Open space is a multi-layered always welcoming space that expands with the experiences it carries; it allows for many windows and doors to open. Its boundaries are elastic as pedagogy should be and allow for constant action.

Informal space is the space of community building, bounding and sharing. The prime space for exchange at an equal level. A space where time slows down, for reflection and to take risks.

Other space is the space that allows alternative ways. It is the space for heterotopia, where things have the potential to change. It is the space of revolution.

Space in Graphic design (a metaphor)
Space inside a letter (counterspace)
Space between letters
Space between words
Space between lines
Space around text
Space of the page
Space of the spread
Space of the surface

*
LISTENING TOGETHER

A workshop on the
politics of listening

*

The scene

The classroom (a circle; working stations)

Characters

ALL CO-LEARNERS

15 min

ACT 1
General Intro

Scene 1. *The classroom. A circle.*
[Sitting in a circle]

VIKI and SUSANA
[Viki introduces herself]
Improvisation

Hendi Pauline Oliveros, an experimental composer and pioneer of electronic music, once said, that “*we can’t train our ears, we can’t train how we hear, but we can train the way we listen.*”

Ada Why do we need a listening literacy? The way we listen, how we filter and interpret the different voices and their respective sources, can have an enabling or disabling potential for individuals and communities. What reaches our ears and how it reaches our ears is highly manipulated by those in power.

Merei Certain narratives are amplified, and others are silenced, voices are only heard under certain conditions. The way our brains process the auditory information is also full of stereotypical filters that have found their ways sneaking in little by little since childhood.

Eunji Let us consider an imaginary example of two different voices, two different narratives for a Muslim woman living in a European country. One that would speak about abuse and oppression from the men with the same religious beliefs. The other would speak about strong family bonds, love, respect and support in her community. Which voice would be amplified, and which would be silenced?

Auke Learning about the importance of listening, and training how we listen is crucial in challenging unequal terms of audibility. Change is possible, but it needs to start bottom up. We need to first re-examine the ways we interact and relate to our immediate environments, we need to build strong alliances,

to then make claims to more powerful structures. Everyday we are part of numerous different social contexts, willingly or unwillingly. Each context represents parts of our identity. We relate to friends with whom we share common lived experiences, comrades with similar goals and ideologies, families with whom we share care and affection, strangers with whom we share the same nationality or citizenship, and so on.

Emma The classroom is a context that is and will be prevalent in our lives for a few years. Is the classroom a space, a community where each of us actually listens and is being listened to? What does actually listening mean in that context? What potential could it have?

Eva Listening is not about the sound itself, but it is about attentiveness, care and sharing. It is about understanding how we come together, how we interact, what are the force fields that influence and direct our existence in society, and what are the urgencies for change, the possibilities for transformation. This listening is an essential element towards a solidary and egalitarian society.

Sasha Through engaging our voices, our bodies and our minds in short exercises, these collective experiences will hopefully become triggers for reflection and discussion around the theme of audibility in this small temporary alliance, that we form in the classroom.

ACT 2

Zina’s circle – Pauline Oliveros

20 min

Scene 1. *The classroom. A circle.*
[Warm up exercise,
standing in a circle]

Valentina We will perform Zina’s circle together. Stand together in a circle, with eyes closed facing the center. SUSANA is the transmitter.

[Slowly]

Start by observing your breathing cycle, individually.

[Pause]

Now join hands.

Slowly move back so that all arms are stretched out and the size of the circle increased.

Stretch the arms towards the center and move in slowly.

Finally move back to the normal sized circle, with hands still joined, standing so that arms are relaxed at sides.

Return attention to breathing.

[Pause]

When the time seems right, the transmitter starts a pulse that travels around the circle, by using the right hand to squeeze the left hand of the person next to her.

[*The transmitter starts a pulse*]

The squeeze should be quickly and sharply made, to resemble a light jolt of electricity. The squeeze must be passed from left hand to right hand and on to the next person as quickly as possible.

The action should become so quick that it happens as a reflex, before the person has time to consciously direct the squeeze.

[*Pause*]

Simultaneously with the squeezes, each person must shout *hah*. This shout must come up from the center of the body (somewhere a little below the navel) before passing through the throat. There must be complete abdominal support for the voice.

[*Remain in the circle*]

5 min

Interlude

Viki Brandon LaBelle is an artist, theorist and writer who is working with sound culture, voice, and questions of agency. In "Lecture of an Acoustics of Sharing" LaBelle suggests three auditory figures as an interpretation of the ways we come together; the echo, the vibration and the rhythm are used as metaphors to describe how we form communities. With the echo, we form our individual and collective identity. The moment that exists between two iterations, entails an opportunity to differentiate ourselves, to subvert any given identities. Vibration manifests when we come together, and unite our individual strengths, our individual voices and bodies. Vibrating means creating a common skin, shaking, oscillating and moving together. The rhythm is about recognizing the design of our environment, the structures in which we operate. By becoming aware of that, we can map our own trajectory, we can design our own tactics to move within the existing order. By experiencing the affect of the energetic field, that surrounds these three terms, we will question and rethink the ways we come and move together within the classroom.

15 min

ACT 3 Experiments on the acoustics of sharing

Scene 1. *The classroom. A circle.
Echo.*

[*Prepare for workshop exercise
based on Brandon LaBelle's
"Lecture of an Acoustics of Sharing"*]

Iana Remain in the circle. Let's hold hands and stretch our arms to enlarge the circle. Sit on the floor at roughly the position you have now.

Scene 2. *The classroom.*

A circle. Echo.

[*Sitting on the ground.*]

Susana [*Echo*] As a mythological figure in ancient Greek mythology, the Echo was a nymph with a melodic voice. She was forced by Zeus to distract his wife Hera by chattering constantly, while he was being unfaithful. When Hera realized she was deceived, she cursed Echo so that she can no longer speak her own words, but instead being able only to repeat what she was hearing.

There are several different stories about the life of Echo and how she ended up able only to reflect and repeat the sounds of her surroundings. They all portray this ability of echoing as something disempowering, a loss of the unique individual voice, the fading of subjectivity.

Brandon LaBelle, as we mentioned before, uses the echo as a metaphor to interpret how we form our individual identity and in extent how we come together and relate to each other and our surroundings. With the help of the echo, we orientate ourselves and learn the dimensions of our environment. By quoting and repeating we form our identity. And in the moment of repeating, he argues, that we have a chance to differentiate ourselves.

Ian Could the moment of repeating, of quoting, of iterating, be an opportunity to deviate from a prescribed identity, to choose who we want to be? Could the punishment of Hera be a gift after all? Could echoing be an opportunity to actually listen?

[*Echo exercise*]

Katla We should find a pair in the circle. RALPH turn to your left, the person to your left turns to you. After Ralph's pair we all repeat the procedure until we all have a pair. Sitting on the floor, facing each other. All the pairs form a circle. One person of each couple, has a written text in their hands. The person holding the text starts reading. Their pair listens and with a small delay repeats, what the other person says. The second person becomes the echo of the first. Record the exercise.

Scene 3. *The classroom. A circle.
Vibration.*

[*Sitting on the ground.*]

Adriana [*Vibration*] Inside a factory machines move back and forth; their little components oscillate to make production possible. Sometimes this

15 min

vibration is needed, it is a sign that everything works well, the machine operates 'as it should', and plays its necessary part to the well-orchestrated composition. Within limits, vibration is acceptable. It is normal. It is controlled. But most of the times machines are not supposed to vibrate. Vibration for an industrial machine means dysfunction, deterioration, damage. Vibration for the factory means a fault in the production line.

Ivi In Thessaloniki, a city in Northern Greece, there is a factory that emits unusual vibrations. In the past, "VIO.ME" was one of the most profitable factories in Northern Greece. From 2010 with the effect of the economic crisis profits started to decrease. In 2011 the management of the factory started delaying and postponing the payments of its employees; it ended up owing them salaries for many months. When the factory filed for bankruptcy, the workers decided to take matters in their own hands. Their chant was "If you can't do it, we can". They took control over the factory and the industrial equipment. Immediately their struggle inspired thousands of people and they were supported by a huge solidarity movement. Since 2012 the factory is managed by the workers themselves. They take the decisions collectively through a horizontal, non-hierarchical structure, the assembly. The workers' collective energy and power became their vibration. This vibration is a fault for the larger capitalist machine, but a hope for all the other individual parts that oscillate within that machine.

[*Vibration exercise*]

Sjors Turn around and sit with your backs touching. You need to support each other by leaning on each other's back. You both hold some of the stories you shared with us in your hands. In turns each person reads their story, and the other one with eyes closed listens to the story absorbing the bodily vibrations.

10 m [ALL PARTICIPANTS take a break!]

1.10 m Scene 4. *The classroom. A working station. Rhythmn.*

Dana [*Rhythmn*] Rhythm is the repetition of diverse elements and conditions across a period of time. It reveals a regularity, a repetition, a habit, a flow. The first thing that comes to mind when we talk about rhythm, is music. But rhythm exists everywhere. Apart from the inherent rhythm of nature, everything that surrounds us is designed to produce a specific rhythm. The material and immaterial elements and conditions that constitute a space or an event, are put together to produce a specific outcome. This outcome

is a specific set of movements and behaviors of people within that space or event.

John Let us consider for example the rhythm of the neighborhood. The architectural elements, the way the houses are aligned, the shops that exist, the design of the streets and the pavements, the infrastructure, but also the ways that the neighborhood is regulated, for example with specific opening hours, laws about assembling on the streets, the property value, even the light intensity of the street lamps, all these elements dictate the rhythm of the neighborhood and encourage specific itineraries or prevent others within that area.

[*Rhythm exercise*]

Mika *What is the rhythm of the classroom? How can we (or how do we want to) move together within that rhythm?

Terez Form groups of four, gather with the people that are the closest to you in the classroom at this moment.

Petra In groups of four listen to each of your sounds together. Explain what is it and why you chose it. Together make a sound collage that tries to answer the questions above*.

ACT 4
Lunch & presentations

60 m

Scene 1. *The classroom. Common central table.*

[*We have lunch together, discuss the workshop and show our sound collages informally. Reflection on the exercise, open conversation*]

ALL PARTICIPANTS Improvisation

[*Wrap up and goodbyes*]

THE END.



Ill. 39-40: Scaglia, V. (2018) *Listening Workshop with Viki Zioga. Zena's Circle, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.*



Ill. 41-42: Scaglia, V. (2018) *Listening Workshop with Viki Zioga. Vibration exercise, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.*



Ill. 43: Scaglia, V. (2018) *Listening Workshop with Viki Zioga. Vibration exercise, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.*





Ill. 44-45: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Movement Workshop with Valentina Scaglia. Free movement, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.*



Ill. 46: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Movement Workshop with Valentina Scaglia. Moving together shoulder to shoulder in one line, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.*

Ill. 47: Scaglia, V. (2018) *Movement Workshop with Valentina Scaglia. Four students rehearsing movement of collaboration, students class 1B 2017/18, KABK.*



Ill. 48: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Movement Workshop with Valentina Scaglia*. Collaboration in the classroom by Emma, Katla and Tereza.





Ill. 49: Carvalho, S. (2018) Day six.
Exhibition group working in the gallery.

Ill. 50: Carvalho, S. (2018) Day six. Design
Group silkscreening the covers.



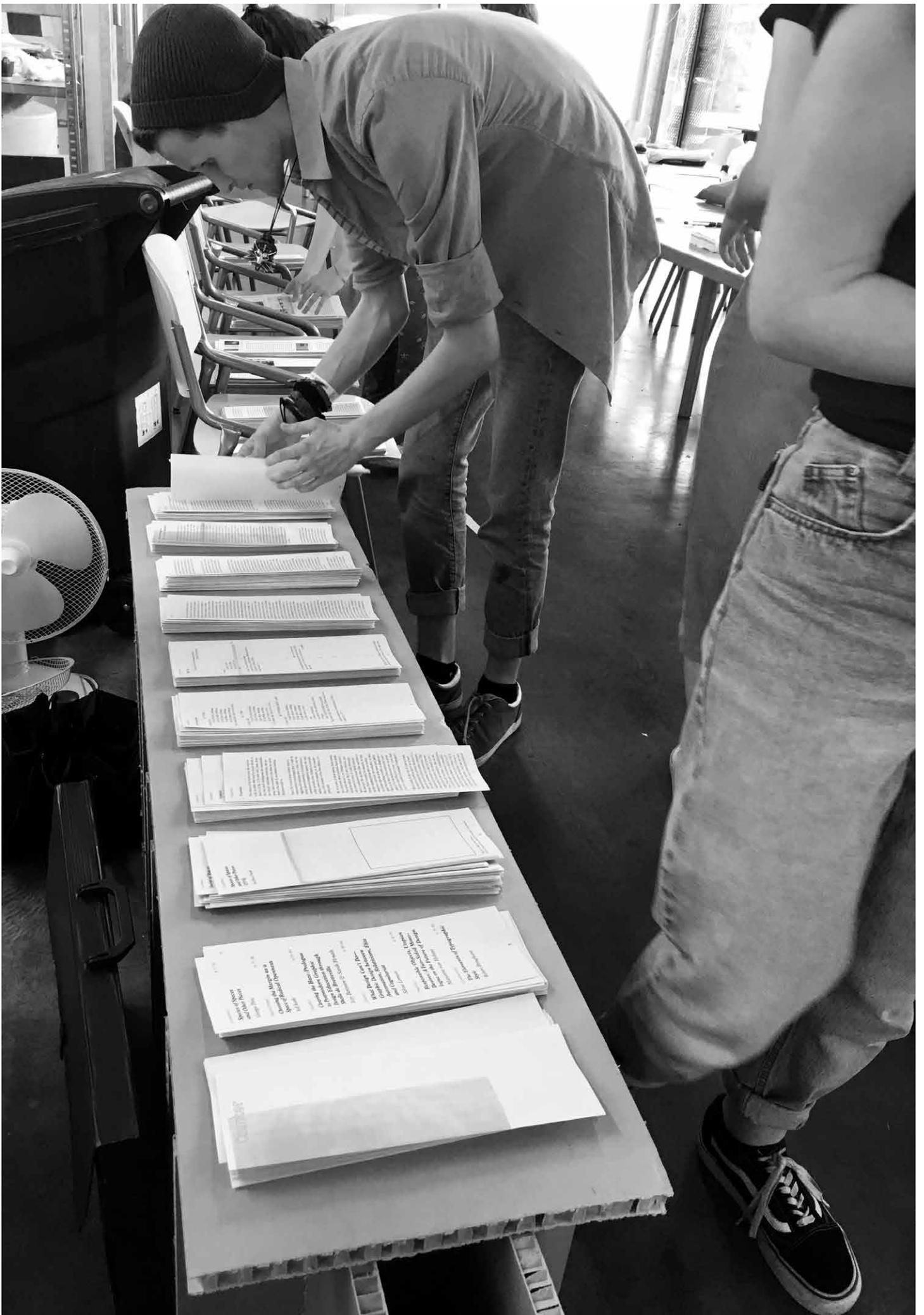
Ill. 51: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day six. Design*
Group working on the publication, testing
paper and typography.



Ill. 52: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine. Design Group folding the covers.*

Ill. 53: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine. Collective lunch.*

Ill. 54: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine. Collating the publication.*





Ill. 55-58: Carvalho, S. (2018) Day nine. Exhibition view.





Ill. 59: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine*.
Exhibition view.



Experience

Radical Change

Equality

January 1, 1995

6 AM. A small girl was born.
 The baby girl had very pure blood.
 The father, who loves children so much, was happy.
 Even though the baby was not a boy, the grandmother was delighted for the father who finally had a child at a rather old age.
 The child's mother, who had only eaten apricots (salgu) during her morning sickness, wanted to name her child 'Apricot' (Salgu).
 However, she followed the wills of the elders in the family and decided to name her daughter with a common name used by most girls, which meant something along the lines of 'live wisely.'

In this way, she was documented in this world through a birth registry.

February 15, 1996

Her father did not have a job and her mother was uneasy.
 Her mother was 22 years old, and her father's side of the family kept saying that her mother would run away. When she was barely two-years-old, her mother would set her in a stroller, and take long walks along the cold road to go work in a small nursery. The elders of the family were shocked that a woman went out to work.
 Her mother took care of her, nursed her, and made money.

~~However, this was not documented.~~

May 1, 1998

She visited the house of her father's acquaintance from work.
 The acquaintance's wife had a pregnant belly that was quite big.
 With a huge pregnant belly, the wife took care of her little son.
 When she approached the acquaintance's wife who had been lying down to rest her tired, heavily pregnant body, the wife handed her a single raw grain of rice and told her with a faint smile that it would taste sweet if she chewed it thoroughly.
 She chewed for a long time, but the rice did not taste sweet.
 She remembered the hard taste,

92

~~but this was not documented.~~

Position

Construction

Vision

May 2, 1998

She was sitting in the back seat of a taxi. In her hands was a blue, small piano-shaped xylophone which she had received as a gift. Only the red traffic light was blinking outside in the dark. Her mother's sister was in the front seat. Her aunt is the first person from her mother's side of the family she remembers since she was born. The vaguely silvery voice of her aunt remains in her ear,

~~but this was not documented.~~

That day, she received a xylophone and a younger sibling. It was a boy who looked exactly like her father and did not resemble her mother at all. Her grandmother sat her mother in the middle of a feast, and praised her, saying that she did well, very well. Her father's brother's wife, who gave birth to two girls, prepared a feast for the girl's mother. For the first time, her mother did not cook, and waited for the meal to be served. Her mother was happy but felt uncomfortable about being served.

~~However, this was not documented.~~

February, 1999

Japanese encephalitis swept across the country. Her brother contracted the virus. A syringe pierced the baby's body, and the baby cried as if he were about to die. She watched everything through a crack in the door. Her mother cried her eyes out in the arms of her father.

This was documented in hospital examination records.

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Experience

elected governments, shapes the future.

If we allow ourselves to imagine a world, where solutionism ended world famine, poverty, inequality, oppression and war, what is left for the socially aware designer? To criticise the weakness of mankind who generated a superpower to eradicate failure from the dictionary? Failure is one of the most prominent feature in the process of becoming a designer?

Even Elon Musk, one of the progenitors of technological advancement warns us in the documentary “Do you trust this computer?” with the following words:

“At least when there’s an evil dictator, we know, he is going to die. But for an AI there would be no death. It would live forever and then you have a moral dictator of which we can never escape.”

Radical Change

Equality

My work is rarely about me, but derived from an inner fascination and personal engagement towards redefining, challenging, questioning - or destroying - the cornerstones of social and political constructions.

Sagittarius born people believe that they would make the world a better place, and a career that will do that is well suited for them.

Position

Construction

David Carson once said that “Graphic design will save the world, right after rock’n’roll does.”

Vision

Looking back at the different aspects of graphic design throughout this essay helped me discover a whole new perspective on how I should look at myself as a designer - instead of keeping a safe distance, approaching my education and future profession by taking the position of an outsider.

Commitment is key - even though I am truly struggling with committing myself to the most insignificant things in life. It is beyond challenging to wake up every morning facing the unknown, and working towards the uncertain, which in itself contains a great deal of failure. Nevertheless, each and every opportunity I get - and I am so blessed that I can get them! - are giving me the essential liberty to shape the future tailored on my own vision as well as to advocate them towards the public. I have no doubt that we are actually designing the future, and standing right in the heart of such an intriguing design scene located in the Netherlands, I dare to think everything is possible. Preserving working methods from great design predecessors, but at the same time being curious and open to new possibilities what technology has to offer will provide us a bright future, where we will keep graphic design as it fundamentally is: an utterly humanistic field.

Experience

Radical Change

Equality

There is an ongoing struggle I run into when it comes to art practice and the role of an artist or designer; The relation between **art** and **politics**. Everything that we choose to do in our lives affects the society we live in in one way or another, by either replicating and reinforcing it or by disrupting and going against it. This makes everything that we do a political act because even if it isn't inherently political, it positions

Position

Construction

Vision

itself in some way in relation to or against the system.

As a women and one from Cameroon. It's often being expected of my work to be political, but I feel conflicted with the idea of making art for the sake of being political. I want my artworks to be recognise for what they are and not just in relation to my origins and gender. Georgia O'Keeffe notoriously refused to lend her work

Position

Construction

Vision

I am currently involved in a project in which me and my class are creating a publication and exhibition by working together with the topic of exploring and locating space in our design practice and our routine as students at the KABK.

In the context of this project our design teacher gave us texts to use as references and inspirations. I deeply relate to one of the texts: Choosing the margin as a place for radical openness by American author, feminist and social activist Bell Hooks, in terms of my reasoning towards my peers, university and the role

that we would have as young designers in the future. The text deals with issues of a different period in time (the 1950's–1960's), different social

problems (racial segregation in the United States of America) it addresses the problems of colonization, deprivation of civil rights, dehumanization and turning people into object. In it the writer also discusses the ways by which to sustain yourself as an individual where this is possible. I believe that if the text is interpreted with the right perspective in mind it very much relates to the polemics of a perfect classroom and social aspects of life. With this text I tried to write down in a cohesive way the reaction and sentiments that occurred while I read the text of Bell Hooks.

Experience

Radical Change

Equality

I always find it really hard to structure my thoughts and omit all examples from theory and practice that i have on a given topic when writing a text about it, so that I don't ruin the concise flow of thoughts that we learn throughout our academic years. It is a coincidence that exactly in this text I finally find the simple sentence that perfectly illustrates the feelings of frustratio that I experience.

1. *Bell Hooks states: "I find so many gaps, absences in this written text. To cite them all is to let the reader know something has been missed or remains here at by words – there deep in the structure."*

1.

I guess this is one the skills I miss when it comes to writing – to be able to subtract to the most essential trait of a story and to stick with it. In the end the rest of it the details that are most distracting should most probably be mentioned in the margin. Further on in the text she starts discussing the concept of home.

2.

In the current political and social situation that aroused in 2011 with the Syrian war, many people lost their homes in the most literal way there could be. While fleeing their country in the process of searching for refuge in the borders of Europe many scandals considering these people's motivation started showing in the press, tv, governments of countries etc.

2. *"At times home is nowhere. At times one knows only estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just one place. It is loca-*

78 *tions. Home is that place which creates and promotes and ever changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference."*

Evaluation

Informal moments as integral part of projects

Creating a learning community, one that supports each member in its learning process, has always been one of my core intentions for the project. During the course of the previous iterations, my pedagogic strategies to try and encourage the idea of the collective group formed by students and teacher felt insufficient. I was relying on the informal and organic interactions that occur in the classroom and the spaces around it, and created space in the project for them to occur. These interactions always felt insufficient; they were too close to our regular interactions, and normative behaviour mostly prevailed.

I learned that I should have not underestimated the capacity of my group, and the burden and hardship of working in a group. Also I should not have overestimated myself. (...) I should've asked earlier for help from my group when I was stuck. (...) I learned that there is always something that I can learn from others. Eunji

I really enjoyed the ones in which we had to discuss all the texts with our classmates. Yana

The interesting part of the assignment for me was the discussion of the texts. Sjors

The enactment of the collective brought about by the assembly moment was always effective and productive yet other informal moments did not maintain or sustain the group work per se; they were valued but not expressive enough.

Informality moments organised by me or the students sometimes turned inadvertently into exclusion moments. A couple of examples: one student did not want to sit on the floor during the assembly; the 'chill out' corner communal lunch, when both me and a few students could not join the circle any longer and were left awkwardly outside; two students that were not invited to be part of any group in the 'Listening Workshop', and were left confused, looking at each other.

The constant request for relaxation and pauses, and the friction I perceived within the group work, led me to focus somewhere else. I turned my focus to the body and its experience of the collective group that we form in the classroom. More than thinking and talking, we should also listen and feel. More than sitting and discussing, we should also move and experience. I included *doing different things* in the classroom with the 'Listening' and the 'Movement Workshops'. I decided to plan activities with a more informal character as part of the education project, where we could all *do different things*, experiencing the space from different angles and perspectives and at different paces, thus interacting differently in the classroom. I planned these activities in key moments of the project to divert attention from the process, to introduce a moment of disruption, to create pauses, interrupting the usual rhythm of the days in the academy.

We are so stressed sometimes we forget to breathe. Adriana

I'm also glad for the workshops, I felt then more connected to the subject, and other classmates as a group. Tereza

I enjoyed them [the workshops] because it was a way to do something different than our usual courses. It was really nice to see everybody going along with it and it felt like our class had a good harmony. Anke

It was a great moment! I think the timing was best. We could not feel stressed, and experienced diverse things. Handi

One last aspect to pinpoint was the effort that Viki Zioga, Valentina Scaglia and I put into levelling the hierarchy in the workshops we initiated. We participated in the 'Listening Workshop' as co-learners. I also took part in the 'Movement

Workshop' as a participant. I found that inviting external teachers to carry out projects was very productive in levelling hierarchy, as I didn't need to struggle with the dynamic of sharing my authority: I could just participate. It allowed me to more easily 'refuse' or give up my authority in a 'believable' and visible way. It was effective, because it was only temporary.

Experiencing the collective

The workshops we participated in were very useful in helping us to not only experience the space of the classroom differently but also to experience collectivity through our senses and body.

The 'Listening Workshop' was particularly productive in terms of questioning aspects of the community, by examining the micro-politics within that community – how we listen to each other, how we collaborate, how we form our individual and collective identities. The community was also reinforced through the moments of sharing personal stories and the collective listening session. Furthermore, there was a concern to keep all the students' voices in the final sound collage, expressing their desires to include silence and relaxation or intensity and dynamics in the rhythm of the classroom. Finally, the script format, used as a mechanism for sharing responsibility, helped to reduce an element of the hierarchy of roles and to make everyone feel a more equal member of the classroom; everyone was accountable for how the workshop developed.

I had to concentrate on what they were saying and not on what I was saying. Daniella

At first it is a little hard to follow, because you also need to repeat the words. At one point you just stop thinking about what you are saying and you start listening. Adriana and Mika

The 'Movement Workshop' shifted the attention from the brain to the body. Valentina Scaglia developed the workshop using an organic structure that did not require preparation or complicated instructions. The focus was on gaining awareness of our body, of the space inside our body and of the space our body occupies, in relation to the walls, floor and ceiling of the classroom, as well as in relation to the education props around and in between us, and the space between all of us. We performed exercises to bring awareness to the relationships between bodies in space and their interactions in space. We finished the day working in four small groups, performing these relationships in short successions of movements and choreographies.

I particularly enjoyed the movement workshop because we finally were doing a class that was not sitting still. I am a person who enjoys exercising and often miss movement. This was both different and entertaining. It was fun because everyone participated actively in it. Adriana

I especially enjoyed the Movement workshop. It was a very refreshing experience to jump around in the department, and interact with classmates using bodies. Everything was so new and inspiring. Eunji

Both workshops were productive in creating possibilities to experience the collective through bodies and senses. In the same manner as the assembly, the exercises we performed helped us to enact collectivity ('Zina's Circle' exercises and the 'moving shoulder to shoulder in one line' exercise) and to focus and concentrate on each other by listening carefully (echo and vibration exercises), or look attentively by reacting to each other in kinetic movements (mirror movement exercises).

I specially liked the part where everyone in class had to move in one line – it was interesting to experience and feel the atmosphere

in class. This workshop actually inspired me to work with movement and the individual for another assignment as well. Eva

Lastly, the final result of our collaboration, unveiled in the exhibition on the last day of the assignment, was a crucial moment for the students to experience the results of their collaborative work. The students were impressed and happy with the quality of the publication and the exhibition they produced. It was an admirable collective effort that definitely exposed many of the benefits of collaboration and reinforced the feeling of the collective.

I think we have created together a really impressive book and I'm proud that I can be part of it and have my own reflection on texts there. Tereza

I really love the book and the presentation! At one point, I thought the assignment was too much. There were too many aspects in the process. It took a lot of time for everybody. But then I saw everything together – the book, poster and exhibition and was very proud. Now I can see that the hard work paid off. Merel

I learned how much people need to communicate if it is a group project. I'm relieved and happy that our book and exhibition turned out so nice! Handi

Listening in graphic design

To design is never a solitary practice. Design is collaborative by nature. Sensible and meaningful design can only be achieved by a good exchange and understanding between all parts. There is the commissioner, there is the designer, there is the printer, or programmer... there is the reader, the consumer. The commissioner is not always the author; the designer is sometimes the editor and the producer. The reader can be anyone and is normally defined in broad strokes at the beginning of the design process. Listening in this context is crucial as only a well-informed and sensible designer can deliver meaningful work.

The awareness that resulted from the listening exercises in the workshop is as valuable to the designer as it is to the reader. It is important for the designer to be aware of her position in the field of design, but also to be aware of her cultural and socio-political position, of her client's positions and of her potential reader's positions. I think this so-close and physical experience of awareness aids students, and teachers, to be consciously aware of the differences in social, cultural and socio-political backgrounds.

This brief introduction to *The Politics of Design* by Ruben Pater summarises the bias I am talking about: 'You are privileged. Just reading this sentence makes you part of the 85% of the world population that is literate, the 20% that understands English, and the 40% that has access to the internet. Visual communication is not an even playing field, but is dominated by the urban regions, primarily in the Northern hemisphere. The design of visual communication is shaped by the designers' cultural and political bias. Designers themselves are often unaware of this.' (Pater, 2016, p. 4)

At the editorial group I felt that coming to a specific idea was a challenging task to do since everyone wanted to give ideas but at no point we were listening to each other's ideas but just giving ideas all the time, leading nowhere. Kilia

class. It also made me think that I should question more any form of authority and I should have a critical view on how institutions work. I think graphic design and education are linked because graphic design brings a message to people, and a visual message shapes the minds of the collectivity, such as education shapes the mind of a person. Clara

The assignment made me realise how I should be more in control of my life. (...) I am much more aware of what I want to do, or not, in

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Ill. 49: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day six. Exhibition group working in the gallery.*

Ill. 50: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day six. Design Group silkscreening the covers.*

Ill. 51: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day six. Design Group working on the publication, testing paper and typography.*

Ill. 52: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine. Design Group silkscreening the covers.*

Ill. 53: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine. Collective lunch.*

Ill. 54: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine*.
Collating the publication.

Ill. 55-58: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine*.
Exhibition view.

Ill. 59: Carvalho, S. (2018) *Day nine*.
Exhibition view.

Ill. 60: Handi (2018) *Collective publication*:
Gaps, margins and fillers.

Ill. 61: Adriana (2018) *Collective*
publication: Gaps, margins and fillers.

Ill. 62: Petra (2018) *Collective publication*:
Gaps, margins and fillers.

Ill. 63: Anke (2018) *Collective publication*:
Gaps, margins and fillers.

Ill. 64: Yana (2018) *Collective publication*:
Gaps, margins and fillers.

Epilogue (not a conclusion or to be continued from T148)

But I was still pushed to head of the table. What is this space we occupy?

Speaking about the role of education, identifying reproduced behaviour seemed not to be enough. Therefore I replaced the enactment of the assembly by a moving and a listening exercise, in the last iteration of the education project: We experienced collaboration with our bodies. I introduced informal moments, when we did something else than we normally do. Listening to each other, not just with our senses but also with our bodies made us more aware of each other. Moving in one line, shoulder to shoulder, at the same time, showed us the power of the group. Space therefore came up in multifold ways – as Open, Informal and Other Space.

What are the specificities of this space where graphic design is at its centre?

I turned to space and what it can be or how it is perceived. Space became the umbrella topic for one of the iterations of the education project. Space is also a fundamental element is the visual grammar of typography and graphic design, and therefore very relatable to my graphic design students. I explored space in the classroom in all its different articulations.

Pressure to perform in education and related precarity were discussed by the students and had to be addressed. I instated an 'informal group', as part as the design process in one of the iterations of the education project, with the sole purpose of being helpful in creating escapes, comfort, distraction moments, breaks – to take care of the well-being of the community.

Graphic design is inherently political. Design education should play a more conscious and directed role in addressing the politics behind visual communication and should initiate a process of developing an awareness of said politics. Design practices, messages and artefacts can confirm and support biases, stereotypes, privileges and structures of power. If one is to teach graphic design as a political subject with political implications, she needs to give space to the acts of teaching and learning as political acts in themselves.