

Willem de Kooning Academy / Piet Zwart Insititute

Master of Arts in Fine Art and Design

- + Fine Art
- + Media Design: Experimental Publishing
- + Media Design: Lens-Based

Bachelors Fine Art and Design

Development Dialogue November 5th, 2020

(Part of the NVAO Accreditation Process)

Participants:

Representatives of evaluation agency EQ Arts
Management of the master and bachelor programmes of Fine Art and Design
Dean of the Willem de Kooning Academy
Representatives of Quality Assurance

Changes due to Covid-19

- Masters students still have access to the buildings during the daytime until about 22:00 and they have access to their individual work spaces but most of the tutoring is offered online.
- Bachelor students have access to the stations and most of the courses are offered online. Except for 1st and 2nd years students who receive extra courses on site, in addition to technical instruction. The emphasis lies on 1st and 2nd year students to build on the relationships between them with the course and the building.
- WdKA and PZI are building up on the online facilities that have been created for the next phase and answer the questions on what to keep and how to improve the balance between on site and online. There is also a strong focus on discovering what the benefits of online education are.
 - EQ Arts: See where and how you can create virtual learning environments (VLE), these are tools that you will develop and use more in the future. Develop a living tool, that students use as much as teachers will.
 - Make sure that you have attention for *peer to peer learning* when developing VLE's and create a tool where they can share in that dialogue but also for students to share. You might even think of MA/PhD students to give lunchtime lectures for instance or mentoring BA student. Students gain so much more, as much, as through their teachers.
- Moving forward, we need to be careful not to confuse the tools we use, but to think about how to build our own tools. We're limited to zoom, the screen reality, this is one of our biggest challenges. I have not seen examples of successful alternative examples yet.
- The master Experimental Publishing has a relationship with technology and autonomy in infrastructure. When going into lockdown, the programme was therefore not so much affected on technological level, because they were already using mixed tools, including video, written video, running one video instances for chats, own textual communication. They already had their own communication system, which created trust with student and staff when going into lockdown. There was actually no transition because they were already using their own systems. This model is getting more and more witnessed by others (outside WdKA/PZI).

- We do face two fundamental problems that cannot be solved when working completely online:
 - The human crisis of not being in the same room with people is unbearable for most of us. Moving into a system with students who are not used to working together like this and having to go immediately into this system is difficult.
 - The other problem is a question of materiality of the practice. Will we be equally fluent in physical and digital. What does it mean for the future with the current emphasis on the digital | in other words: will publishing be only in the digital?

Third Cycle

- With the current position of WdKA being a 'massive BA institute' with a distinctive profile worked out in practices and PZI being part of WdKA as a small but high profile MA institute we seek ways for the 3rd cycle to fill the gap. We are thinking of building upon a sound and solid research profile to do so.

EQ Arts

- One of EQ Arts representatives is part of the project Creator Doctus at the Sandberg Institute that has been initiated to offer art school the ability to develop a 3rd cycle with the same quality and level as PhD. They are about 2/3 into the process, still looking at and working on criteria for examination and rigor to the process. EQ Arts has been involved as quality monitor for the process. This process is interesting to follow in the light of your own developments.
- In the UK, there are clearly defined rational in terms of the higher educational system. How institutions are able to award doctoral study is based on their own criteria, but have to lie in specific framework. In Europe, it is a much more diverse, broad range of organizations, accreditations, institutions validating each other. It has to be seen, coming from an institutional, ministerial level in order to see across Europe a defined, consistent application of awarding a phd.
- You have to make sure that BA, MA and doctoral level are really interwoven. You've got the foundations within WdKA and PZI. Research culture is made up of all the parties and how they are involved in the activity. I think the BA and MA research, the alignment/relationships of alumni and the professional bodies, they were strategic with the development of your research, the currency of your programs. We advise you to set up an advisory board for direction of research.
- Research is central to you, you need to define what it means to you. This allows the different departments to develop it the way they want. And you need good leadership and a good statement; make it your unique selling point. Based on the meaning, you build a structure to monitor and evaluate it.

Dilemma

Most of the research culture is in place: 15 years ago we started for the masters within PZI and built in from the ground up in the BA. The problem now is that the train to third cycle is running, we are not completely autonomous in defining that space, other schools are jumping on it. Our dilemma is that we would like to keep the quality we've built up, we don't want to compromise, we should have masters that are transition degrees, and not a third cycle that falls back from quality as we define it in the master. For example, the Creator Doctus is being developed and during this process we found out that we could increase the level of that what we have at the masters. If we want to develop the 3rd cycle with same care, we would probably need another 5 years, but at same time, we're losing the competition, being the last to introduce the 3rd cycle.

EQ Arts

- Making mistakes is important. Time is of the essence. Make a decision and keep monitoring it. You have to try and effect the change instead of reacting to the change. Always worth risks. You need to be able to present something.
- See if you can enter that stream of inward looking, instead of looking outward; meaning to look at your own region, your own area. It wasn't until the sharing and the collaboration and putting things out there to be scrutinized, to be challenged, it was frightening. We were adopting different paradigms and not challenging our own, producing our own. It's about confidence, sharing, interrogating it.
- But don't worry about what you are doing now; make sure you're doing your own thing right. You have a unique distinctive notion of what your BA and MA is. The doctoral level should be based on that same vision.
- And it's about impact and your impact statements and consequences of your work and that of your students. Challenge yourself in terms of those fundamentals, the professional progress of your (phd) students, it's about challenge and impact.
- We are happy to come back at any point to talk about the doctorate, outside of this process.

Impact: how to measure?

- EQ Arts: To measure impact is to question of the uniqueness of WdKA. The progression into the professional field and how it works in terms of community, the creative sectors, where is it having impact. It comes back to metrics, to the ministry.

The report is a summary of the Development Dialogue; written by
Anneke Seelen, Policy Advisor RUAS/WdKA