

I USED TO DOUBT, BUT NOW I'M NOT SURE

Critically committed pedagogies: Possibilities of cartography

FWK

- If you use the terms ‘critical’, ‘project’, ‘intervention’, ‘subversive’, please be sure as to what you want them to mean.
- The idea behind making a cartography is that you move away from the tendency to think in terms of content first, in being unaware of the territories that you are in. Instead, the idea is to make yourself aware first of the territories that you are in, to then determine what kind of content might be urgent, of help, required etc.. Or to decide what kind of action on what kind of scale would be meaningful, effective etc..

Checklist cartography

The checklist is mean to give you tools as to be able to position where you find yourself in an incredibly complex network of forces. Being able to position yourself also allows you to define sharper where and how, and in what kind of restricted or expansive way you want to *act*. Acting is something else then ‘doing something’.

The ‘act’ is essential to the essay, and is indeed not just ‘doing something’. The meaning of the English essay is: to put to proof, to test or attempt.¹ In 1603 the title of Montaigne’s book ‘Essais’ (and the last book ‘Les Essais’) was translated into the English essay by Florio. The French *assai*, as well as the English essay and earlier *assay*, come from the late Latin word *exagium*. In Montaigne’s time *exagium* was known as “a kind of weight, piece of gold, a noble, a crowne”², a standard weight type of a $\frac{1}{72}$ of a pound.³ The word refers to the weighing of the coins to test their weight, and is used in a wider sense of “examination, trial, testing”⁴, and as “a balance”⁵. It is the balancing and testing of the weight of a coin, the testing of the value of a coin. The word *exagium* descends from the Latin *exigere*⁶. *Exigere* comes from *exigo*, defined in modern translation as: “to drive out, to thrust out, to take or to turn out”, and in a second meaning: “to demand, require, enforce, performance of duty”⁷. *Drive* refers to driving out, as in: driving cattle, or to be driven, to flea, to chase or to hunt.⁸ In a Latin to English

¹ “essay, v.”. OED Online. March 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/64471> (accessed March 19, 2016).

² http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18619:185.

³ <http://clt.brepolis.net/dld/pages/SingleArticle.aspx?dict=SO&id=8577>

⁴ “assay, n.”. OED Online. December 2015. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/entry/11756> (accessed February 20, 2016).

⁵ Lewis and Short, “Exagium,” <http://clt.brepolis.net.dld/pages/ImageProvider.aspx?name=LW0672> (accessed June 11, 2016).

⁶ However, the OED also refers to a possible link with *exagmen* or *examen*.

⁷ Lewis and Short, “Exigo,” <http://clt.brepolis.net.dld/pages/ImageProvider.aspx?name=LW0686> (accessed June 11, 2016).

⁸ “drive, v.”. OED Online. March 2016. Oxford University Press. <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/57788> (accessed March 24, 2016). *Drive* as a noun only entered the vocabulary in 1697.

dictionary from 1563 *exigo* is translated as: “to expell, shut, or draw out, to expresse, to prove, examine, to require, to exact, take away by force, to finish, to cast forth”.⁹ *Exigo* is a combination of the word *ex-* (meaning: *out*) and *agere* (meaning *act*).¹⁰ The root word of *agere* is *age* or *ago*, *ago* translated into: “to do, to make, to goe about, to labour, to accuse, to apply”¹¹. So in basic meaning: to act out.

The ‘Encyclopedia of the Essay’ mentions that Montaigne might have used the word *Essai* to refer to *coup d’essai* (trial run, dummy run or first try¹²) and describes the saying as: “the apprentice artisan’s work as distinct from the master’s.”¹³ A dictionary from 1697 describes it as: “a trial of ones workmanship that’s newly come out of his time”¹⁴. The word combination *coup d’essai* is linked to the sentence: “Faire son coup d’essai, son chef d’oeuvre, pour passer Maitre (to make a trial of his skill in order to be made free)”¹⁵, this might also give insight to the intention of the the word *essay*. Montaigne could have referred to a trial (or test) — to free one from its previous thoughts and the dominating thought from its master or teacher (freeing from consensus). This essayistic act is exactly what I aim practically deploy in my educational project of this master.

- Evolution; from macro to micro, or from overview to detail in A en B:

- A. It is a large field, the largest, and as such it poses an almost impossible question that I have to pose anyway: what are human beings doing on this planet; are they headed for something; is their existence a coincidence, an absurdity; something that moves etc.?

What we are doing on this planet is exchanging and influencing. (I am my influences, therefore I included quotes that are dear to me and have influenced me). We act and react on and with our environment. So yes, perhaps it’s movement. Reacting can be a flower turing its reproductive organs towards the sun, or ... We act in order to relate or dissociate, to position ourselves in our environment. This act is based on a perceiving, on a perception, which is gathered by the senses. (“constantly talking isn’t necessary communicating” *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*)

⁹ http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:19777:130 and http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18619:192.

¹⁰ “act, n.” Etymology Online. <http://etymonline.com/index.php?term=act> (accessed June 11, 2016).

¹¹ http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:18619:27.

¹² <http://www.wordreference.com/fren/essai>

¹³ Snyder, *Prospects Of Power*, 1202.

¹⁴ Dictionary 1697 French to English. http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:52626:128

¹⁵ Ibid.

To perceive a position is to accept a subjective disconnection of what one perceives from and with his/her own perspective, and what it actually is that is perceived. The connection is in the shared observation, and the positioning is in the differences in those connections. Perhaps the difference is not a separation but rather a connection, an intimate sharing of your personal perspective in stead of forcing to align it with your own. ("History is a whore", Anno Dijkstra) With environment I mean embodied environment (DNA and genes, bodily condition, sexual orientation etc.) historical environment (cultural history, natural history, national history) contemporary environment (time, technology, location in the world, culture, landscape etc.) and the environment that influences a subject (parental upbringing, friends, school system etc.). We are an accumulation of memory memory of the body, memory of the culture and memory of experiences. Not understanding is just a dis-alignment experiences. ("I,m not saying you don't know what your talking about, but I don't know what your talking about" Waling lives, Linklater) All these things together create a vast variety of experiences, an eclectic accumulation of factors which inform actions, creates fascinations and intuitions. Because we move, thing change. We act based on pervious experiences and new experiences that challenge the previous actions. In reflection, it desires a constant re-trying. ("a teacher needs to know how not to know (..) to recall Bollas' "Unthought known") of a person skilled and knowing not to know, is and eminently fertile situation for the combination of creativity and interaction" Mieke Ball)

B. As for your own life, what drives it, what allows you to vectorize what you do and what allows you to persist in actions, even when things are working against you?

Memory of experiences. What does it mean when you say that something works against you? It implies that things are either for or against you. I think things just are as they are, and your perception decides wether it is against you of for you. ("It's not about how hard you get hit.. It's about how hard you can get hit and still get up" Rocky VI) It's our perception that thinks in the binary for and against. I think it's a manner of perception. ("I have been down so very damn long, that it looks like up to me" The Doors) Things just are, I'm a skeptical realist, which makes me okay with misery and perhaps even more optimistic the an idealist in a paradoxical way. ("Starded out with nothing, and I still got most of it left" Seasick Steve). Things are not bad or good, you go through the motions like a bumper-car constantly bouncing of the sides of the track, an I like to feel the sides, scope my spectrum of movement. I'm not afraid to hit walls. ("Success consists of going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm." Winston Churchill) Perhaps the next lap the sides have expanded. When you thought there was a wall, there might not be one, or it slowly moved, or even disappeared the next time around. Or perhaps they were indeed concrete boundaries. I love it when my premonition turned out to be wrong, intuition is just an accumulation of the experiences, the "same"

experience in a different setting might feel the same to your body, but it needs to be questioned and reflected upon constantly. ("When you doubt and ask, things get a little harder.. you see, one thing is, I can live with doubt and uncertainty and not knowing. I think its much more interesting to live with not-knowing then to have an answer which might wrong" Richard Feynman) It is searching for something to uncover or looking further to where it is covered. The contrast is erotic. ("The pleasure of the text is not the pleasure of the corporal striptease or narrative suspense. Is it not the most erotic portion where the garment grapes? in perversion (which is the realm of textual pleasure) there are no „erogenous zones": it is the intermittence which is erotic, the intermittence of akin slashing between two articles of clothing, between two edges it is this flash itself which seduces, or rather: the staging of an appearance-as-disappearance." Roland Bartes) To dis-cover and to hot the limit and to push the limit of what I experience, think, and believe, that's what drives me. Discovering new perceptions of (my)self, discovering perceptions of others and discovering the perspective of the world around me. And what else can we do but to share, to exchange, connect. To try to perceive, or at least perceive our own perceptions. ("The ones who can call themselves contemporary are only those who do not allow themselves to be blinded by the lights of the century. and manage to get a glimpse of the shadows in those lights, of there intimate obscurity.(...) What we perceive as the darkness of the heavens is this light that, though traveling toward us, cannot reach us, since the galaxies from which the light originates moves away from us at a velocity greater than the speed of light" Giorgio Agamben) I doubt that we can truly understand each other, though we are all compiled of each other by inevitable influence. To reflect on those influences and know that you can influence those influences, event just by perceiving them. Not necessarily with change in mind, but with dis-covering in mind. I value the attempt. ("It's not that I am so smart, it's that I stay with problems longer." Einstein)

- The political, religious, economic, cultural and technological context; your position in the current historical circumstances

NB the following C en D are clearly the most dense and complex subdivision, that need to be unpacked since it concerns most of the things that you are involved in.

- C. How do you relate to the *political; *economic; *religious; *cultural; *economic; *social force field as it has developed over the last centuries, in the last decades, in the last years, in the foreseeable future?

This is indeed quite a big question and complex question, and I think I touched upon the economical, cultural, social, and religious aspects in the previous writing. The thing that I am missing is the technological force field. I think my interest for the essay has a lot to do with the current of digital technology, the re-editing, re-trying, the different perspectives, the intertwinement of the subjective (personal) and objective (factual), the process oriented attitude, the iteration, the

sensitivity of form in relation to content. I see this digitally mediated time as a time for collective individualism, we define our identity in relation to our environment by connecting, liking, or dis-liking. Almost compulsive connections. ("There are nearly thirteen million people in the world. None of those people is an extra. They're all the leads of their own stories. They have to be given their due" Synecdoche New York, C. Kauffman) The individual is composed of many individuals and formed by it's environment. The fact that I see it as relational and influential is perhaps because of the digital realm, in which connections are easily made, where facts roam in multiplicity. But also where connections and different perspectives are avoided, providing a safe haven for dogma, and consolidation of belief-systems. ("All religion is a foolish answer to a foolish question" Peaky blinders) But where/what is the reality? Where/what is the direct responsibility? I think that it is very important to accept and discover different perspectives, to doubt, to be uncertain. ("hoe troostrijk is het dus, onder de hoede van de hemelse bescherming voort te gaan, hoe onbehagelijk en troosteloos, zich, zonder beschutting, zoals de ongelovige, aan de onbarmhartige meteorstenen, hagelbuien, regenstormen en zonnesteken van de natuur bloot te stellen." Feuerbach, vertaling Störig) Especially in these times, and the essay provides a perfect way of reflecting an dealing with these times. As Emma Cummins wrote in 2013: "In today's hyper-mediated world — where the Internet and digital devices have transformed our experience of reading — it seems salient that there is renewed interest in the contemplative form of the essay."¹⁶

- D. Modern education cannot be thought without the formation of the nation state. So how do you consider state education, or public education as opposed to private education. Do you think in terms of diversity in education or disparity in education? Do you have data?

Isn't disparity a great difference and diversity allowing (a great) difference? The first attempt to separate itself, the other attempts to allow separations within itself. This is a fine line, and perhaps nothing is truly inclusive because true diversity needs to allow opposites. I highly regard the free choice of education in the Netherlands and the possibility of starting a new school. So yes, I believe in diversity of education, but not to divert into a different group, but keep the relation with the other perspectives. That's why I organize Café Chercher¹⁷ as an inter-institutional event, and I would like it to actively include different levels of education and different ages, from bachelor to phd, and from professors to practitioners. **(act 2)** My educational field is that of

¹⁶ Cummins, "City analysis of urban trends," 414.

¹⁷ Café Chercher (<http://cafechercher.org>) is a monthly event that I co-initiated and organize. It is a platform to present unfinished projects that typically exist in-between the realms of art and science and have a transdisciplinary character. The aim is to provide a platform for artistic researchers from different disciplines and institutions. Currently we have a team of three first year Artistic Research UvA students and two external people on the team, one from ArtEZ Conservatory and one from HKU Fine Art. It is a flat organization structure and we work with freely dividable tasks. We are just starting our third season at VOX-POP creative space of the University of Amsterdam (<http://www.voxpop.uva.nl>).

Artistic Research, mainly masters in Netherlands. There is one Artistic Research masters in research University (UvA) but iArts seems to be developing one as well (UM collaboration, aiming to launch in 2017). There is one University of Applied Science, KABK who has a two year master (not officially a two year master) MAR and the MaHKU has a two year master with an emphasis on Artistic Research. The Dutch Film Academy HvA has a regular master aimed at Artistic Research. I want to contact these masters and gather information and data. My context will be an educational project aimed at introducing Bachelor and Master students to a possible method for doing artistic research. I want to investigate Artistic Research Masters and the PhD's in Artistic Research in other countries, and investigate the politics and economics of the field.

- **Direct working environment; situations and choices:**

- E. What is the institutional force field that you are in? This can be ministries, schools, museums, churches, municipal departments etc. Mind: families are also institutions.

My personal context: historically from an aristocratic family, brought up in a single parent household, bisexual and queer. My institutional background: early school deserter, ("you don't know bout falling, till you can't get up" Herman Brood) adult education, commercial management, researcher at public debate team Sphinx Maastricht, Fine Art at University of Applied Science in Utrecht, Artistic Research at University of Amsterdam, high school intern teacher at a progressive school in Amsterdam, art school intern-teacher. My current institutional context: Student of the master education in art at the Piet Zwart Institute, student of Biohack Academy at Waag Society, organizer of Café Chercher. This background gives me the profession of an artist and teacher. (**Act 1** of Declaration of acts: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/294903/341131> and elaboration in Diary Entries: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/294903/351757>)

I always earned my income with my hobbies: wines and cars. I have a small wine import company and give wine tastings every now and then, mostly highly eccentric wines. This is how I spend my vacations, going to vineyards. I worked at a garage for Volvo's and classic cars called auto&emotie, and I currently work at Stayfast Racing, where they build their own racecars. But it should be the difference between a profession and a hobby is that with the first you make money and the second is for leisure, my leisure time pays me and my profession does not.

Café Chercher has a bit of a different entanglement, its location is at VOX-POP Creative Space of the UvA, but it's being sponsored by the Rietveld Research Group. I have Artistic Research alumni and students

on the team, and presenting and performing, but I am not part of the institution in any way (apart from being an alumni myself).

- F. Who are the people you are working with, in different parts of the organization, from the most well-paid to the less well paid; from those who are temporary to those who have tenure etc. With whom are working, against whom; who is working with you, who against you, etc.?

I work for myself, I don't have a salary, I don't have a contract, my time is my freedom to choose, I just live from debt, the debt in exchange for the temporary freedom to choose where I spend my time on. To choose for trying to build my own position in the field of art and art education. I organize my own event, my own time tasting and choose my own internship. In education I always worked with art students, with teachers, and with everyone in the school (in one project, both the cleaning lady and the assistant got involved in the project, we worked with a modus of inclusion based on influence) Funny thing is, that I realized that my profession (artist and art teacher) have ever earned any salary, at most my expenses were covered. While on the other hand, the things I am not educated in (car-mechanics, vinology, and sales) are things that pay my bills. In the field of art I feel empowered by not being dependent on sales, also my work is mostly in video and performance with unfortunately equals a very small chance of getting paid except by funds. In the field of art education you could say that not getting paid (organizing Café Chercher and being an intern) dis-empowers my position, other other hand, it gives me the freedom and empowerment to take risks, as nothing is at stake.

In my paid jobs I have always worked for small, starting, high end quality businesses. So an intimate working environment. My employees have been experts and my job was always to translate the back end work to the front end, to represent the product and the business. So I worked with both the mechanics, the boss and the customers directly. I worked as a mechanic and let the mechanics teach me the techniques, so I could explain it to the customer. I have always worked in a male dominated environment. As a woman this sometimes works against me, but mostly works for me. Fortunately a woman that likes and understands car-mechanics, is still unusual and therefore an advantage. Perhaps in both work environments I'm usually considered to be the underdog, which is a good position to depart from, but I do need to prove myself and fight my way in.

- Commitment, individual choices and actions

- G. Where and how do you act openly and where or how do you act undercover?

I am an artist, as an artist I have the freedom and responsibility to make my own artworks. Visual language is more accessible than the textual because it has the potential to go beyond individual languages. But perhaps an artwork is to some degree also a visual cover of what you want to say. In my case the content is rarely direct, it can be ambiguous and equivocating.

Being silenced is countered with speaking out your mind. The agency to transmit and the power to be received is my motive in an educational and work context. I think in some contexts I do speak differently than I normally would in order to get granted the position to speak freely and be heard in the "same language". This is actually a bit of a paradox, it implies that by adapting (or translating) to a certain "language" you can be heard in your own. When I'm with my father's family I speak in a different manner, on the work floor I speak in a different manner to customers and mechanics, and even talking with young people I do try to level in language. I notice that sometimes I say the same thing in many different ways and with many different metaphors. Perhaps this is my essayism. But I also physically cover at work, I cover all my tattoos, but, I do keep my ear piercings. I cover my nipples by wearing a bra (strangely this act makes me feel more neutral, covering my female characteristics, but on the other hand one might say it's accentuating my female characteristics.) I'm very conscious of what I'm wearing in my job and in front of the classroom.

H. What forms of empowerment do you seek, for whom. How do your actions relate to that?

To empower Café Chercher and the students of Artistic Research

I do think it is time to empower Café Chercher by entering an institution. By getting paid to empower students of the Research Master Artistic Research of the UvA. Because when the continuation of the event is secured and supported by an institution, this will give power to stand up for the students and provide a platform for them on the same level as professors and PhD researchers. To transfer this power to the students. To make space for disagreement and different perspectives, to create a safe space for doubt and uncertainty. To create a space for the essayistic act. And I need to act in order to provide that space.

The reason for this step is that the two artistic research students that are currently contributing to Café Chercher, expressed the lack of practice tutorials in their master. They also expressed their concern about the lack of a studio space and interaction with other artistic researchers (it is a very select master program). For them I will formulate a practice tutorial of 6 ECTS (in retrospect) for this year, and I will propose a practice tutorial for next year that will provide the elements that they are currently missing. More information in my declaration of acts: <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/294903/341131>

NB

As the very term cartography indicates, this is not just about personal assessments. You need *data*. You have to inform yourself. Your maps need to be based on something. They are the representations of sometimes considerable sets of data.

Data:

36 total individual contributions divided over 3 seasons (15 repeated contributions of Artistic Research UvA students)

Previous presenters and performers:

UvA AR (2 alumni, 5 students) UvA (2 alumni, 2 students) AHK (3 alumni, 1 student) Rietveld Academy (3 students) Sandberg Institute (2 alumni), professors (3) PhD researchers (3) KABK (7 students) other (3)

Academic Research (BA, MA and PhD)	6
Artistic Research (MA and PhD)	16
Practice led research (BA and MA)	14

Disciplines: Art (14), Music (13), Literature (5), Dance (2), Design (1)
Other (1)

Locations:

VOX-POP UvA Creative Space (6)
Steim (4)
Gerrit Rietveld Academy (1)
Other (1)

Promotion statistics:

visitors	: 15 to 20 people
Facebook	: 126 followers (158 friends)
e-maillist	: 212 subscriptions

Supports:

Sher Doruff (Prof. PhD and Rietveld Research group) soup and drinks
Marte Rijswijk (VOX-POP UvA Creative Space) location
Christa-Maria Lerm-Hayes (Prof. UvA and Rietveld)
Miriam van Rijsingen (Prof. UvA Art Studies ReMA)

I also made an extended workplan with an extended version of the list with presenter and performer, a budget calculation, relevance of the event, and action points. I already talked with the supporter mentioned above and will propose the plans on Monday the 3rd of April to Jeroen Boomgaard (the head of UvA Artistic research Master and the coordinator of ARIAS)

I always end with my favorite quote:

"What I cannot express, I point at with my finger" Montaigne