Tuning Document: Participatiory Art Practice in Europe

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Introduction

This document about Participatory Art Practice and the respective graduate profile of a Creative Producer is intended as a reference document that reflects the diversity of the field of Participatory Art in Europe and at the same time as a benchmark for curriculum builders, teachers, employers and all those academics and practitioners that want to enhance educational offers and development of the professional field. It sets out to establish a Master level standard and contribute to enhancing pedagogy in this area of higher education.

The document is drafted in the framework of the EU funded ERASMUS+ Strategic Partnership European Academy of Participation (EAP). The partners come from both Education and Culture: Goethe-Institut, Munich, Germany; Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; ACERT, Tondela, Portugal; Avrupa Kultur Dernegi, Istanbul, Turkey; National University of the Arts Bucharest, Romania; Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London, UK; University of Marseille, France; ELIA The European League of Institutes of the Arts, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; and Create, Dublin, Ireland.

Purpose

With this document EAP wants to offer a broadly shared benchmark in the European Higher Education Area for all those educational providers that wish to extend their existing curricula with a specialisation or additional provision in the area of participatory art. In the framework of the EAP project both academia and the world of work are represented. EAP acknowledges that creative partnerships between Higher Education and cultural organisations offer significant potential for the students learning experience and the development of professional skills, capabilities and scholarship in the subject area.

Methodology

To develop this document the partners adopted the Tuning Methodology under the guidance of the Tuning Academy at the University of Deusto in Bilbao, Spain, a partner in this project. The TUNING Educational Structures in Europe started in 2000 as a project to link the political objectives of the Bologna Process and at a later stage the Lisbon Strategy to the higher educational sector. Over time Tuning has developed into a Process, an approach to (re-) design, develop, implement, evaluate and enhance quality of (first, second and third cycle) degree programmes. The Tuning outcomes as well as its tools are presented in a range of Tuning publications, which institutions and their academics are invited to adapt and use in their own setting. The Tuning approach has been developed by academics and is meant for higher education institutions.

The name Tuning is chosen for the Process to reflect the idea that universities who want to create a common higher education space do not and should not look for uniformity in their degree programmes or any sort of unified, prescriptive or definitive curricula but simply look for points of reference, convergence and common understanding.

Context

At present the Higher Education sector is working with the existing European Qualifications Frameworks. A Qualifications Framework is a common reference framework which links countries' qualifications systems, acting as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries and systems in Europe. This document has consulted the Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks for the Creative and Performing Disciplines and for the Humanities that bridges the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for Life Long Learning (LLL) and the Qualifications Framework (QF) for the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) at the level of academic sectors/domains. See *http://tuning-academy.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/SQF_for_the_Creative_and_Performing_Discilpines.pdf* (and/or *http://tuningacademy.org/sqfhumart/?lang=en*)

Process

In the period October 2015 – February 2016 all partners collaboratively developed the basic body of text. The partners then have gathered feedback through questionnaires and focus group meetings from their constituencies in their countries, from stakeholders and networks, in the period March – May 2016. This feedback was used to rework the first draft by an editorial group mandated by the partners and chaired by Lars Ebert (Castrum Peregrini): Pablo Beneitone (University Deusto, Bilbao), Irina Cios (National University of the Arts, Bucharest), Chrissie Tiller (Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London), Maria Yarosh (University Deusto, Bilbao), Katherine Atkinson (Create, Dublin). The first complete draft version was made freely accessible on the consortium website and the partners websites in June 2016. To validate the document a stakeholder conference was organised in Dublin 27-28 October 2016 with 90 participants from 12 EU countries that represented partner organisations and stakeholders from education, culture, policy and research. They were students of all disciplines of the arts, artists with long term experience in working collaboratively, teachers, and leaders of cultural organisations as well as curators and critics. All participants have received the document electronically beforehand. During the conference the document was presented and all delegates engaged in an active and lengthy discussion about the document using Open Space Technology. Notes have been taken and analysed and summarised by the partners. There was a clear consensus that the document as it stands is very useful and broadly represents European reality. Participants expressed their ideas and concerns about how the set benchmark will translate into actual educational offers. The Notes of the Open Space, as well as their summary are available on request.

During the conference 5 representatives from Higher Arts Education in 5 different EU countries have expressed interest (and confirmed this later in writing), to build course modules based on the Tuning Document.

The current version is considered the valid final document. It will be published on the project website, the partner's websites and at the Tuning Academy website.

The partners plan to return to the document in 2018 after the first exemplary pilot course has been implemented and evaluated. In that sense this document can be seen as a life document that will be updated if developments in the sector so demand.

How to read the document

The chapter proposition seeks to distinguish participatory practice from the broad field of artistic practice set out in Annex 2. Employment Opportunities looks at the context in which artists/creative producers will work. The chapter competences lists knowledge, skills and attitudes on postgraduate/MA level that are not covered by the Sectoral Qualifications Framework for the Creative and Performing Disciplines (level 7), in other words, it assumes that a more generic set of knowledge, skills and attitudes is covered already either at BA level (level 6 SQF), by the general provision of a MA course (in which a Continuous Professional Development offer or an optional module for creative producer's could be embedded), or by the portfolio of an artistic career. The chapter Educational Offers and Pathways offers an overview of the existing provision of the subject territory identified by the project partners. Like the chapter Employment it is a selective picture that needs to be complemented by comparable profiles from other countries not represented in the project consortium.

The Annexes of this document present the context of the paper (Annex 2) and a reference text written by one of the partners to fuel the debates within the project (Annex 1).

Lars Ebert and Joachim Umlauf
Amsterdam and Lyon, January 2017

Proposition

Participatory Art Practice has been used to denote a range of artistic practices of co-production, collaboration, community practice and public engagement.

EAP identifies Participatory Art Practice as t*he creative practice and dialogic interactions of artists and communities working towards social change*

Participatory Art Practice enables
• community empowerment through collaboration and engagement in the creative process
• convergence of, and interaction between community and creative practices
• transformation through developing insights that challenge perspectives and assumptions with the aim to
• question the status quo
• bring together diverse knowledges
• co-create through innovative forms of practice.

Participatory Art Practice adopts the following approaches:
• creative and critical enquiry
• mutual exchange and reciprocity
• responsiveness to complex social environmental and political issues.

Employment opportunities in the EU and Turkey

Artists/creative producers who have the knowledge, skills and attitudes in participatory arts listed below are able to pursue their own practice and/or development initiatives through self-employment, by setting up their own small independent companies, accessing funding supports through government agencies, often working in freelance and/or collectives in a range of different environments.

Having experience in initiating, generating and exploring ideas, propositions, challenges and provocations artists/creative producers are enabled to work in dynamic, ideas driven organisations that place the creative process as a priority within the workplace. This experience also enables the creation of employment that may not yet exist.

Gaining skills in creative processes and strategies for working in diverse contexts enable artists/creative producers to work in diverse contexts for example:
• Arts projects/programmes in communities of place and/or interest
• Cultural leadership roles
• Cultural institutions offer employment in outreach/audience development departments in art centres, galleries, theatres and museums
• Culture/arts departments of municipalities have cultural leadership roles, programming roles, education and social inclusion roles
• Consultancy role in the design and consultation process for town/city planning in urban and rural environments

- Independent citizen initiatives (Cafés participatifs/cafés solidaires)
- Social enterprises and creative hubs
- Through public services there is employment in a range of settings such as community support agencies and planning departments
- Arts and health care settings (where applicable) with specialised training
- Arts and disability contexts (where applicable) with specialised training
- In educational settings, employment opportunities exist in organisations that use both formal and informal learning methodologies
- The business and commercial sector offer work place opportunities in areas like cultural leadership, innovative methods of communication and design
- NGO's such as environmental agencies often work with artists around campaign issues, innovation methods of research, communication and consultation
- Organisations that work on a project basis and require people that have a range of skills enabling development, creativity, learning and productivity
- Organisations that employ artists/creative producers as an intervenors to enable developmental outcomes from working with people

Employment opportunities for artists/creative producers happen in both formal and informal settings. For example, in some countries there is no formal employment however informal projects/events/programmes offer a broad scope for those with this knowledge and range of skills.

Competences of the creative producer

Student on Masters level specialising in participatory practices will have to demonstrate knowledge of:
- the historical and contextual perspective of participatory practice and understand contemporary examples incl. current debates such as authorship and ownership in collaborative practice
- practical and theoretical research tools and methods to enable them to reflect critically on their own practice
- creative processes and strategies for working in diverse contexts
- the ethics and principles of participatory practice including working with different stakeholders
- how teams work and different leadership models
- social entrepreneurial strategies[1]
- risk management including health and safety issues
- relevant ecological and sustainability issues

[1] in some countries a basic entrepreneurial module might not be part of the undergraduate training so particular institutions may want to include it here also.

Student on Masters level specialising in participatory practices will have to demonstrate skills in:
- initiating, generating and exploring relevant ideas, propositions, challenges and provocations
- devising the appropriate strategies and/or methodologies for a particular participatory project
- applying collaborative processes and working with co-creation methodologies
- communicating professionally, internally and externally, with diverse groups of people,
- working with organisations and individuals in different cultural contexts
- enabling and/or empowering others

Student on Masters level specialising in participatory practices will have to demonstrate the attitudes of
- self-reflection and critical engagement with their own practice and that of others
- resilience and openness to uncertainty
- empathy (not excluding professional distance)
- responding responsibly and ethically to complex situations

Educational offers and pathways

The information provided by European Academy of Participation partners regarding the educational offer in the respective countries of Europe, outline that, although participation is acknowledged as an important approach, there is no common strategy at European level in integrating participatory practice in art education. From this perspective EAP is challenged to accommodate both common features and specificities for each country.

The existing offer in HE in the arts is mainly developed in the final year of a BA, at MA level as a specialised training or as complementary training to already existing specialisations.

Offers can be part of non-art education such as cultural studies, social sciences or development studies, where educational offers are directed mainly towards participatory democracy. Arts education in museums, art therapy and cultural mediation can also overlap with participatory practice.

At the level of HE, post graduate and life long learning provisions in the 8 countries involved in the project four main situations can be identified:
1. Specialized training (master degree) or educational modules (courses, workshops, lectures) implemented in Universities mainly at postgraduate level (UK, NL, IE, FR, DE)
2. Experimental courses applied in the frame of already existing departments (RO, TR)
3. Educational workshops, lectures, peer-to-peer, conferences led by guest lecturers (artists, art historians, philosophers, architects, sociologists etc.) in a higher educational context (UK, DE, FR, IE, RO, NL, TR, PT).

4. Informal formation led by independent initiatives like NGOs, art centres, individual artists or artists groups, supported by local authorities, community centres, European funding programs etc. not associated with any educational framework applying participatory methods in projects addressing communities with an educational component (UK, DE, FR, IR, RO, NL, TR, PT).

5. Creative partnerships able to bridge education, employment & community 'involve cultural institutions and other sectors (such as education, training, business, management, research, agriculture, social sector, public sector, etc.), and help transfer creative skills from culture into other sectors. They contain a huge potential for students learning experience and the development of the subject area.

Countries that have experience in democracy seem to be more concerned with participatory practices than younger democracies in Europe.

There is an equal balance between performative and visual participatory practices that usually involve all the fields of creative research and cultural studies, including trans-disciplinary information.

Many researchers and theoreticians are interested in participatory practice as explored in master or PhD projects.

The information provided by each partner has shown a heterogeneous, rich variety of offers and a general wish to join forces for a transnational curriculum and/or divers, flexible creative partnerships as high quality, accountable and accessible learning environments.

Annex 1
Participation – A Critical Reflection

Everyone demands participation these days: in politics, in corporate culture, in the arts. Some call for tangible participation rights, others demand a more active stance on the part of players whom circumstance has merged into communities. In general, the term 'participation' evokes consistently positive associations. There seems to be a general consensus that the anticipated results of participatory work forms are positive in any context. A closer look, however, reveals that participation works very differently in different areas. Therefore, this paper will attempt to critically explore the term 'participation' in the arts. Based on this analysis, it will elaborate a concept to a) refute common criticisms of participatory art , and b) define a precise range of forms to be addressed in the EAP project. A systematization of the issue at hand will also help develop the formal framework of the study module. Students are to acquire a rather broad knowledge of existing forms in order to then elaborate some specific forms (using examples).

The Basics: Criticism of the Viewer

Demands for participation in artistic contexts are nothing new, and they fundamentally stem from a criticism of passive viewing, as Jacques Rancière explains in "The emancipated viewer". While mere viewing actually does constitute a sort of participation in itself, this passive act has long been debated as problematic, in theater, in particular. To cite the most popular reform approach of the 20th century, passivity must be overcome by creating a new distance between stage and auditorium, thus generating a certain discomfort. In Brecht's model of the 'Epic Theater', this is about politically liberating or intellectually emancipating the viewer by changing his mental participation in the sense of "interfering thinking". The gap between stage and auditorium, however, is not questioned, reception remains essentially passive. Nonetheless, Brecht does, of course, anticipate that his art will trigger thought processes that will translate into concrete action outside of the arts, in the political realm.

Effect

Therefore, in order to demand participation and criticize the act of mere viewing, one must depart from the assumption that art has an effect beyond its own sphere, i.e. that there is a correlation between the world of art and the real world.

- je participe
- tu participes
- il participe
- nous participons
- vous participez
- ils profitent

(Atelier Populaire 1968, Bishop 2012: 76)

Now, we do know that such a correlation is problematic, as it questions the fundamental autonomous character of art. It was Immanuel Kant's enlightening-critical concept of philosophy that liberated art from political and moral attacks (at least in theory, by differentiating between "pure" and "practical" reason as well as the power of judgement) – even though this notion was not implemented in practice until the 20th century.

Materialism has questioned this liberation; in Socialist Realism it was reversed altogether. Here, art was clearly harnessed for political ideals and objectives. Mass parades in German and Italian Fascism were part of an aesthetic spectacle. Will demands for participatory art not fall into the same trap? Could participatory art, evolved in the context of the protest movement, degenerate into propaganda –

especially as this art form is explicitly promoted and funded in the context of neoliberal strategies (think of key words like urban development and social work)?

Historical Precedents

From the 1950s, the Fine Arts have made attempts to incorporate the viewer into the artistic object, even though the viewer is actually only "instrumentalized and takes no independent action", as Stella Rollig points out:

"At the Black Mountain College in North Carolina, USA, painter Robert Rauschenberg, musician John Cage and choreographer/dancer Merce Cunningham and others came together. Partly as a team, partly in their own individual work, they developed works with participatory elements. In 1952, for example, Cage composed '4' 33''', a piece that consists only of noise in a concert hall. In the same year, Rauschenberg created his 'White Paintings', an integral part of which are outlines of viewers." (Rollig)

Nonetheless, at this point the wall between the active artist and the passive viewer had already begun to crumble. Yet these two examples also show that apparently, it is impossible to identify one specific art form that can be defined as the quintessential participatory art. Or, to put it differently: As long as it can be viewed, any art is potentially participatory.

One must also note, however, that historically speaking, the level of participation has increased and that the political protest movements of the 1960s have spawned new forms, such as Vito Acconci's

"participatory actions, which contained hidden political themes. In the spring of 1971, for instance, he spent each night on an abandoned pier on the Hudson for about four weeks, publicly inviting people to visit him between one and two in the morning and have him tell them a secret. The visitor thus became a collaborator, to whom the artist delivered himself." (Rollig)

A further look at Rollig's descriptions heightens a sense that the participatory art forms of the 1960s and 1970s offered a sort of artistic playground on which all kinds of possible forms were exhaustively aesthetically explored. The number of projects skyrocketed in the 1990s, art experienced a veritable participatory boom (Feldhoff 2009: 8), while strategies remained mostly unchanged. Claire Bishop therefore proposes to abandon the term social turn:

[...] this development should be positioned more accurately as a return to the social part of an ongoing history of attempts to rethink art collectively. (Bishop 2012: 3)

Art versus Life

Interestingly, these movements never questioned whether all this was art in the first place. On the contrary, according to Joseph Beuys, everyone is an artist – or has the potential to be one. On the other hand, this openness also created a new problem. In the 1990s, it eventually culminated in a notion of art that was stretched beyond all limits; "where everything

can be labeled as art, from a charity event to a party, a lecture or an interview." The question is whether such an expansion really makes sense and what it entails.

Let's be reminded of the three most important principles of European art:
- Art as the realm of possibility: In the first attempt at an aesthetic theory, Aristotle's "Poetics", art is separated from reality as the realm of the possible, which also gives it a potentially utopian character. With Schiller, art becomes possible through man's play drive, in contrast to his material drive and his form drive. Playing with the beautiful is what sets humans apart from other creatures, it's what makes him human. In this sense, life is characterized by reality, directness and authenticity, whereas art is the possible, the indirect, the artificial. According to Benjamin, the loss of directness in culture is man's "original sin"; according to Freud, it is the cause of the famous "unease."
- Art as imitation, mimesis
- The artist as a creator. In the Renaissance, anonymous art was personalized by indicating its creator.

The mimetic principle, perhaps the most important feature of art over the centuries, has been questioned in various ways since the 19th century, by turning to the abstract and by abandoning the principle of mastery (in the sense of securing continuity by imitation) as a result of a autonomization of art and the development of a disruptive avant-garde.

Participatory art forms now also question the other two principles: Art is clearly assigned to reality, the social sphere. The notion of the creator is vanishing, even more so than was the case, for example, in the collective art forms of the 1960s.

Yet the loss of creatorship leaves a vacuum of responsibility; at the same time, the degree of responsibility rises as the level of reality increases on the stage. Art transforms itself, from a space that once was outside of human jurisdiction into reality: There are no actual onstage deaths in classical theater, yet during performances of Viennese Actionism - there might well be. In social spheres, the level of responsibility increases dramatically, as well. What happens after an artist successfully completes a project at a senior residence and then leaves the tenants behind?

Aren't those two developments in participatory art contradictory, and can this contradiction be resolved? Besides, the question is if the actors involved in a collective are truly volunteers and how they perceive themselves. What do artists stand to gain when they breach this barrier?

One problem that left-wing artists and cultural workers have to deal with today is culturalization — the infusion of virulent conflicts into artistic events. For example: What is the effect and significance of events such as 'Film day against racism' or 'Clubbing against xenophobia'? (Rollig)

Is such blending really desirable? Doesn't the very value of art lie in its utopian character? In the fact that it opens up spaces by musing about possibilities, even when it is actually rendering reality?

Consumerism and Entertainment

One of the main accusations towards the viewer in the 1960s was his passivity in the sense of a (capitalistic) consumer attitude. The pointed criticism of Theodor W. Adorno therefore condemns any form of mass art. Adorno believes that in the age of mass media and industrial culture (…) art is divided into a culture that is mass-accessible, plausible and hence popular, and a cumbersome, coded, inaccessible avant-garde, whose aloofness and elitist nature he defends as a reservoir of resistance. (Rollig)

According to Adorno, however, this makes mass "participation" in avant-garde movements impossible. How do we figure out this paradox?

Negatively speaking: The autonomous artist in his ivory tower, who (in contrast to other professions) is answerable to no one but himself, becomes a social worker, or (as French theater of the 1960s and 1970s called it, initially in a positive, then in a derogatory way) an animator who must compromise his art to satisfy social realities and needs.

As in commercial mainstream entertainment art, which entirely serves the viewers and their tastes, the artist must no longer deal with the object, the form or the topic, but first and foremost with finding an adequate audience to receive and participate in his work.

Organizing Reception and Participation

This begs the central question of how the groups that are supposed to participate are selected and eventually asked to participate. Is this a voluntary act? How do you ensure that it is voluntary? Are the members perhaps bullied, swayed, or talked into participating?

Or, to put the question differently: What prerequisites must audience members meet in order to participate in art? In this we must consider differences from one nation to another, which stem from current or historical political backgrounds and, most importantly, the guiding notions of the respective educational system. In addition, one must consider differences in regard to the participants' age group or social background.

Objectives, Effects and Boundaries

It seems obvious that a central element of the project is framing its desired effects and objectives. On the theoretical level, they can hardly be distinguished from the objectives of the project per se. Yet in each case, even back in Brecht's time, the point was to liberate the viewers from their passivity and convince them of the importance of their personal political and intellectual reflection of the topic at hand, to inspire them to get involved in society beyond the artistic event – ultimately, to keep them from being mere bystanders. Yet isn't this process of emancipation primarily a reflective process that the individual must choose for him- or herself (in the sense of enlightenment) and that cannot be handed to him or her on an artificial silver platter?

The ultimate question is whether – even if everything is supposedly art – it makes sense or even is necessary to clearly distinguish our project from other cultural areas (sports, travel) as well as from politics and society.

Nicole Colin
January 2016

Annex 2
EAP Project Summary

European Academy of Participation – Creative producers and the communities of tomorrow

A Strategic Partnership supported by the ERASMUS+ programme of the European Commission.

September 2015 – August 2018. More info at *www.academyofparticipation.org*

The European Academy of Participation (EAP) brings together 10 partners from all over Europe, including higher education institutions and arts and culture organisations. The project aims to make a contribution to a more inclusive Europe, in which people live together in mutual respect of their differences. The EAP partners consider participatory practice in art and culture as a central tool to involve communities in a positive process of constructing a shared cultural space.

Participation is a key priority for funders, fostering social cohesion and exposing ethical questions around responsibility and authorship, **participatory practice can provide compelling means to communicate through art and culture.** It also embraces the dissolving of boundaries between academic and artistic disciplines and those between the policymaker, the artist, the curator and the audience. This increasing flexibility brings about a new practice profile: the creative producer. EAP wants to develop:

- **A shared understanding of a graduate profile for practitioners working in participatory settings,** based on the dialogue between higher education, lifelong learning and the creative field.
- **A benchmark document** that adopts the Tuning Educational Structures in Europe methodology that will be validated and published for the use of educators and practitioners. This includes a qualifications framework and acknowledges the already existing variety of participatory approaches in the humanities and the arts.
- **An intensive 2 month, low-residency module/unit jointly offered by universities and cultural organisations**. This post graduate lifelong learning education module/unit targets postgraduate students - from the arts, humanities and social sciences - as well as practitioners including artists, trainers, teachers, curators and others from third sector cultural organizations.

The ambition of EAP is to tap into the existing potential of higher education and the unique and hard won endeavours of creative projects and organizations scattered across Europe that are engaging the public as active agents in their work. Through interaction both sectors impact on the diversifying societies of Europe, valuing participatory practice in the arts.

EAP will organise 3 public conferences

2016, October, Dublin, Ireland: *Towards a European Benchmark.*
2017, May, Amsterdam, The Netherlands: *Bringing education and practice together.*
2018, May, Lyon, France: *New Communities, New Jobs, New Policies.*

Partners

Goethe-Institut, Munich, Germany; Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; ACERT, Tondela, Portugal; Avrupa Kultur Dernegi, Istanbul, Turkey; National University of the Arts Bucharest, Romania; Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts, London, UK; University of Marseille, France; Universidad de la Iglesia de Deusto, Bilbao, Spain; ELIA The European League of Institutes of the Arts, Amsterdam, The Netherlands; Create, Dublin, Ireland.