The Possible Perspective for Future Education
– The A/R/Tography perspective

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Abstract

The perspective for future education which on I would like to shed on light with a/r/t ography is about a democratic approach to art education and the postmodern paradigm where different voices can be heard. That means that the pluralism of different acceptable and equally important points of view provide quality of research, thanks to the rich discourse. This a reflection on art education in a boarder perspective as an internal part of varied educational activities. The main aim is to describe how the a/r/t ography -the practice of art which merged with practice of teaching and of conducting research- could look in particular milieus. I will describe collective projects where those three fields become one. These practices are additionally enriched by the design-based research approach. The a/r/t/ ography interventions presented in the paper are dedicated specifically to media and information literacy. The concept of media and information literacy defined by UNESCO highlights one of the articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which is concerned with human's right to freedom of opinion and expression. What is important is that it states one's freedom to 'hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas though any media and regardless of frontiers.' With the a/r/t ography interventions I seek to fulfill this right and to try and describe the role of art in being media and information literates. I especially focus on the role of co-researchers and set it together with the role of co-authors and users.

Introduction

Maria Anna Angelica Catharina Kauffmann, better known as Angelica Kauffmann, or maybe not better neither known because actually it would be rather difficult to find her in official art education discourses. "Why haven't you taught us about her art work?", I asked my teacher who lent me the book in which i first came across her. She is not considered as important? There are others who had more impact on art in that age. Maybe. But not particularly for me. I felt that the information I get from official discourse really differs from my needs and that I am supposed, as an art student, to be fulfilled with some facts which don't necessarily support me in the opinions I hold. I found that the art education or education in general should focus on fostering people as reflective thinkers with an emphasis on freedom of expression. The art education in which the different voices can be listened to equally and with a careful look-out. Whether 'it's a voice of a women or a child. I remember the clash between my considerations about children art with one of my teachers. For him children create but don't do art. However I respect his opinion, to justify my opinion I brought him a brochure from the Museum of Greek Children's Art, which really impressed me by its fresh view. He humorously agreed that Greek children do art, but only Greek.

Not only do these two situations from the past of my studies force Me to reflect on who decides what art is and who can do art and what kind of art we can experience in official discourse and in nonofficial discourse. These reflections are also present in what can be considered as research, who can be a researcher and what kind of outcomes occur by the status of researcher and our understandings of research? I found these questions crucially important for the perspectives which were rather hidden in the past but can be more and more visible in the present and can reveal an innovative view of the future.

What is about a/r/togrpahy?

"...a/r/tographers are committed to seeking artful ways to mobilize knowledge for wide audiences. A/r/tographers are always engaging in inquiry as a process, as a verb, and they are open and flexible, ready to embrace new questions, and revisit their research plans, and pursue other directions with creative disposition that fires their research as well as their art-making and teaching. We are enthused about a/r/tography as methodology because it recognizes how our art-making and research and teaching are all best understood as life-long and living commitments to practice. We are always in process. Even when we produce poems and art and essays, we know these products are not final and complete."[4]

It is obvious that if we look at something from more than one side we see more. A/r/togrpahy is not only about seeing at least three sides of art-making, research conducting and teaching. Artist/researcher/teacher is merged into one and practices which belong to these roles are functioning like one living inquiry. As it is always in process - a never-ending change; it is on a continuous strand spreading to the future.

The starting point for a/r/tography I designed as a storytelling platform. I was interested in what kind of milieus would be chosen by students which I invited for seeking together for media and information literacy. I consider them as representative for being media and information literates because of the chosen field of study – audiovisual art. The concept of media and information literacy is taken from UNESCO [6]. It is really interesting that UNESCO has created a first model of curriculum which merges two areas into one holistic idea of media and information literacy with all linkages between particular literacies. The umbrella term covers such a wide spectrum of literacies that my aim is to be open to all of them in the research process. A/r/tography enables such an approach thanks to its rhizomatic structure of spread. The project platform can be then not only multidimensional but also each dimension created by any participant can be multilayered. I understand a layer as being any new question, direction or inquiry one can meet during the process. Let's say then that our (mine and all the people involved in it) project is composed like a mosaic. Somebody's project is an element. Each of the elements can be overwritten many times as well as the whole mosaic. what is more it can be overwritten by anyone who wants to be involved, has been inspired somehow or even didn't have the intention to do anything but somehow did.

For the moment I am it is even inevitably difficult to specify if it is still two projects which I am conducting or could I say that it becomes one project since they Overlap. What is common for two milieus where I have started the inquiries is that they geographically belong to the great historic region of Silesia. This region has always been "on the borders"; that means it has been always a multicultural region, situated in the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland.

My own milieu, where I live is in Poland but used to be in Germany before the second war. It is difficult then to describe what that means to be a Silesian and it is something which appears in our project. The one project I have started is in my son's bilingual kindergarten and school based on Maria Montessori's concept. Together with teachers and children we do interventions which have aim to describe how media and information literacy can look like as playful and engaging one. We don't focus on technology as much as we focus on human potential, on particular approach to the right of freedom of expression and artful way of knowing things. The activities are designed in such a way that involves parallel old and new media, what UNESCO highlights as an important issue [6].

Eyes wide, open-ended

There are many overlaps with the other project which started in the framework of my Erasmus practice at Silesian University in Opava and for sure there will be more. One of my students has chosen as a milieu the kindergarten close to his house, where his mother works. When I came to this place not only me, the student and his mother were involved but also his sister, who enriched the project with a new layer. Her engagement and her remarks have the same value as my student's and mine. It applies also for the student's mother and children from kindergarten. Last time we hung out with this

student he shared that he was reflecting on how he should move on with the project, whether it should be finished or not. It is difficult to just let things be and try to open to what can happen if we give a voice to children. It is difficult because we get used to be in more narrow discourse. In what I am interested is to take that risk and make a discourse as flexible as we can for particular milieus we do the a/r/togrpahy. In my opinion that wide perspective can provide a future perspective. **"**The a/r/togrpaher is abundantly agnostic, always sure that are more questions, more insights, more possibilities to pursue. As a/r/togprahers we address questions like the following: How might a/r/togrpahy promote practices and policies of pedagogy as transformative, integral, holistic, ecological, spiritual, radical, and critical?"[4]

The open-ended character of a/r/togrpahy makes it living inquiry. Unsureness or being unpredictable also occurs, but these definitions exactly fit The future. Being an a/r/tographer is about taking a risk with focusing on the benefits it can bring. It is a risky play if you invite participants to be a co-researchers who have equal voice but I would say that something similar what we can experience somehow in the virtual world. If we look on the chaos of internet as a place where everybody can exhibit his/her outcomes and Share them with others we will see a space which has the potential to be democratic.

One of the students has told us a story from his routine train travels. The other student about his meetings in the cafeteria and the other one about the girls he likes. Almost all of students' stories were filmed as they were sharing their ideas or impressions about what can be done for the project. The action of filming depended on what they wanted. In each group it has been enrolled differently according to their wishes. One group was particularly focused on the formal and aesthetical side of the image whereas other group were focus on just telling the story. The movie of the group which has worked more on aesthetics issues can be considered not only as a documenting data but also the media and information literacy narration. Everybody has the same opportunity to influence the produced image. As I underlined the equal status of everyone who is involved I also did a narration in the aesthetic framework they found. All produced data have the same value as I consider as meaningful for keeping open to the rich possibilities of inquiries. The space where media and information literacy can be described is as wide as the experiences we find as important for us. From these experiences the unpredictable findings can spread for the on-going processes of knowing. The student who started with the train story has applied the idea for the Silesian identity. We are filming the Silesian narrations of people we meet in the train. We just let people talk about what they want, making them a/r/togrpahers too, narration artists, Silesian researchers and our teachers about Silesia. The idea of other student was to ask in Vietnamese bar as it was correlated with his very personal previous experiences. The way we go in the project is always motivated by our previous experiences like Deway [5] states in his concept of art as experience. We practice inseparably with our daily surroundings whatever they are, we practice art.

Train. Vietnamese restaurant. My nails...

On-going as far as future

"...our understandings of practice-based research are informed by feminist, poststructuralist, hermeneutic and other postmodern theories that understand the production of knowledge as difference ways of living in the world..."[3]

The perspective of (art) education where knowledge is understood as fluctuactive and always undergoing change seems to me to be closer to what the future is going to bring. The attitude of taking a risk and supporting people in finding their own outcomes is about being conscious, reflective and responsible of our long-life learning future. As a work in progress it can always be described as a current state but thanks to that the next possible state of the project is the future state. "A/r/togrpahy calls for an inner collaborative relationship between my artist self, researcher self, and teacher self. Each role engages a critical hermeneutic, self-reflexive practice of art making and writing.

The a/r/tographic work is offered to the public as an interwoven tapestry of art/research/education/writing."[1]

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