

May 2018

Preamble position papers WdKA

There are new, urgent issues for studying and practicing arts and design in the 21st century: limited resources & sustainable development, new ecologies & economies, new demographics & political struggles. These are not just themes to be addressed and reflected upon, but they redefine the very way artists, designers and educators work.

Old hierarchies and traditional notions of authorship and ownership crumble. They make way for new forms of collaboration and transdisciplinarity in which communities, self-organization and networks play a crucial role.

The majority of creative careers no longer exists in clear-cut and predefined professions. Creatives are increasingly required to invent their own, new fields of work along with the new practices and new forms of knowledge they develop.

This means that we need to educate students with artistic and designerly competencies that equip them with practical, intellectual and collaborative tools to position themselves in this open field.

In line with these paradigm shifts, Willem de Kooning Academy identifies fundamental changes in autonomous, social and commercial art and design practices:

- autonomous practices transition from studio art within the gallery and museum system to self-organized spaces and initiatives. Some of them are no longer easily identifiable as art or design projects, yet all of them radically experiment with what art and design is, what self-organization and autonomy mean and how they can be achieved;
- social practices transition from art as a means for conventional pedagogy and social work to social design as a political act that challenges and reshapes dispositions of power. In the new social practices, art and design projects become direct interventions into society and politics;
- commercial practices show a transition from designers employed in traditional companies to creatives as entrepreneurs in the “next” economy. Through experiments with making and designing and explorations into untapped markets and unknown audiences, this “next” design aims to create new values for future economic scenarios.

In all three practices, artists and designers enter a much larger playing field than the traditional artistic professions.

The difference art schools make to other forms of education (including most university design faculties) lies in the speculative and critical attitude of students and teachers and their artistic and aesthetic competencies.

We do not opportunistically embrace the changes described above; we engage in those changes with our own visions, designs and creations. We strive for innovation in the true, radical sense of the word.

WdKA Autonomous Practices Position Paper

January 2018

Authors: Simon Kentgens, Florian Cramer

The main focus of the Willem de Kooning Academy's (WdKA) Autonomous Practices is the shift from the traditional autonomy of fine art toward critical self-organisation.

The concept of autonomy has gained various new meanings in philosophical, political, scientific and technical contexts, particularly with regard to social independence and self-operating systems.¹ At the same time, the traditional concept of artistic autonomy – in its specific Dutch meaning – is being increasingly challenged, and has become untenable within the context of cultural globalisation.

- In the 19th and 20th centuries, the concept of autonomy within the Western European art context was related to non-applied visual art.² The broader art-philosophical meaning of autonomy within the arts is that art should not be defined by a client's assignment or be made for purposes of propaganda.
- Outside of the Netherlands, the concept of autonomy is not necessarily linked to the arts in the way that it is in this country – where “autonomous art” (autonome beeldende kunst) is synonymous with “fine art”.³ In non-Western cultures, there is traditionally no distinction between fine art and applied art.⁴

Artistic autonomy is still regularly discussed in the context of critical theory. This position paper examines the question of what exactly should be understood as contemporary autonomous art and design practices. This question in turn provides the incentive for a long-term research project focusing on five specific questions:

1:

What is the meaning of the term “autonomy” in relation to contemporary artistic and social developments? In which:

- Self-organisation is expected to play an increasingly important role in establishing bottom-up practices that position themselves as independent, self-directed, non-product-oriented and often without predefined goals.
- These self-organised practices require methods of working and interacting with the public that are not yet clearly delineated, and that will have to be (re)invented and tested in practice.
- Systems that operate in an increasingly autonomous fashion are expected to have a tremendous impact on future developments within the labour market.
- Autonomy is a catalyst for activist practices.

¹ Examples of this development cover a broad range of subjects, from activist squats (political autonomy) to life sciences (autopoiesis in systems theory) and self-driving cars (autonomous systems in computer science).

² This concept was first established during the Enlightenment and was further refined in the 19th century in the context of aesthetic theory as well as public policy (in the Netherlands by Johan Rudolph Thorbecke).

³ In English-speaking and French-speaking countries, the terms generally used for this type of art often emphasise its supposed higher aesthetic qualities (“fine art”, “beaux-arts”).

⁴ For example, “seni rupa” (Indonesian) which simply means “visual arts”.

2:

Who are today's autonomous makers?

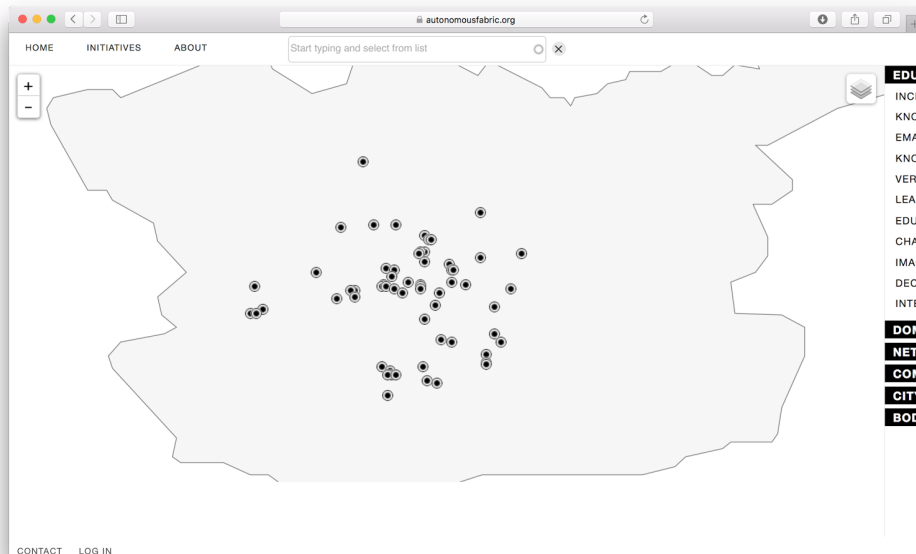
Within the visual arts, the concept of autonomy is no longer the exclusive domain of fine art, but can be applied to any artistic discipline: autonomous fashion makers, autonomous graphic designers, autonomous product designers, autonomous cooks / food designers, etc. The concept of autonomy also includes other critically driven, self-organised activities including non-institutional education, autonomous political activism, and critical engagement with technology (for example in hacker culture).

From the 1960s onwards there have been a variety of artist-run initiatives including schools, restaurants, shops, venues, day-care centres, etc.⁵ These should be seen as an essential component of autonomous practices, and not merely as a side job or failed artistic career.

The WdKA's Autonomous Practices are based on the understanding that art and culture no longer take place exclusively in recognised cultural institutions (museums, art galleries, art centres, etc.), but that the most interesting contemporary developments are now to be found in the capillaries of society, often in informal and underground settings. This is where experimentation takes place and where new initiatives arise; this is where new audiences can be reached, who have little or no access to the established system of cultural institutions.

Rotterdam is an ideal case study for this development. For some thirty years now, the city has played a pioneering role in self-organised artists' initiatives and activist practices. These have developed throughout the years into an active, extensive and intricate network. The WdKA's Autonomous Practices explicitly aim to play an active and connecting role within this network.

A component of this research is a cartography of current autonomous practices in the city of Rotterdam (see: www.autonomousfabric.org):



⁵ Examples include the restaurant *Food*, founded in 1971 by the artists Carol Goodden, Tina Girouard and Gordon Matta-Clark, and, in Rotterdam, the venue WORM (of which the co-founder and former artistic director is a WdKA alumnus).

3:

What does self-organisation mean within the Autonomous Practices curriculum, in which the 19th- and 20th-century concept of artistic autonomy has been left behind?⁶

- Self-organisation is a subject of ongoing critical artistic reflection.
- Self-organisation does not mean hyper-individualism, but is instead based on cooperation and solidarity.
- Self-organisation does not mean retreating from one's environment, but is rather embodied, and takes place within an integrated context, an ecology in which everything is connected: people, nature, materials, techniques.
- Self-organisation is open-ended and not necessarily focused on problem-solving.

4:

Key questions for autonomous practices are:

- How can one initiate an autonomous practice based upon a critical attitude?
- How can one develop an autonomous practice, in such a way that it can sustainably operate on economic, social and ecological levels while also remaining artistically relevant in the long term?
- How can artistic self-organisation and economic self-organisation be understood not as disconnected factors, but rather as one integrated process? How can autonomy be experienced as a way of experimenting with alternative economies and alternative models of living and working together?
- How can self-organised practices function within broader frameworks, locally as well as globally?
- How can autonomy be defined as being embedded, embodied, implicated? How can autonomous makers negotiate the contradictions between engagement and independence?
- Autonomous practices are first and foremost directed by the artists, designers or activists who initiate them. How do these practices relate to the social or economic challenges that exist in society?
- What is the status of production processes and making processes in autonomous practices that are not necessarily focused on generating art objects?
- How important is the "art" label for autonomous practices?
- How do self-organised artistic practices relate to activist practices?

5:

How can the WdKA serve as a university for the autonomous initiatives of tomorrow?

- The WdKA's Autonomous Practices operate from the perspective of art and design, based upon the vision that education should increasingly take place outside the walls of the academy.
- The WdKA's Autonomous Practices focus on critical self-guidance and artistic self-organisation. WdKA students learn to expand their artistic practice beyond their traditional studio work. Already during their bachelor study, they research and experiment with creating non-institutional, self-directed initiatives.
- The WdKA's Autonomous Practices require students to develop organisational abilities and communicative competencies, since the success or failure of all self-organised initiatives relies on day-to-day interaction with their public.
- The WdKA's Autonomous Practices must reflect upon self-organised practices, not only in the *educational content* but also in the *form* of its curriculum.

⁶ Etymologically, the terms "autonomy" (auto = self, nomos = law, direction) and "self-organisation" are closely related.

The above questions will be applied within new curricula for the Willem de Kooning Academy's Autonomous Practices, with an increased focus on self-organisation and engagement with the existing network of initiatives in Rotterdam.

Social Design as a Political Act



Urban Wasteland Remix, Zig Zag City
Rotterdam, Studio Iris Schutten 2012
Position Paper Social Practices WdKA

There are many different ideas about what social design is or should be. At Willem de Kooning Academy we do not prescribe one over another, we encourage our students discover and define their own position in relation to this field. Nevertheless, we've designed our education from a specific perspective. Living is a world that faces huge societal issues we approach Social Design as a political act, aiming to stir up the status quo and striving for positive change.

There are new, urgent issues for studying and practicing arts and design in the 21st century: limited resources & sustainable development, new ecologies & economies, new demographics & political struggles. These are not just themes to be addressed and reflected upon, but they redefine the very way artists, designers and educators work. Old hierarchies and traditional notions of authorship and ownership crumble. They make way for new forms of collaboration and transdisciplinarity in which communities, self-organization and networks play a crucial role.

The majority of creative careers no longer exists in clear-cut and predefined professions. Creatives are increasingly required to invent their own, new fields of work along with the new practices and new forms of knowledge they develop. This means that we need to educate students with artistic and designerly competencies that equip them with practical, intellectual and collaborative tools to position themselves in this open field.

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- commercial practices show a transition from designers employed in traditional companies to creatives as entrepreneurs in the "next" economy. Through experiments with making and designing and explorations into untapped markets and unknown audiences, this "next" design aims to create new values for future economic scenarios. In all three practices, artists and designers enter a much larger playing field than the traditional artistic professions.

The difference art schools make to other forms of education (including most university design faculties) lies in the speculative and critical attitude of students and teachers and their artistic and aesthetic competencies. We do not opportunistically embrace the changes described above; we engage in those changes with our own visions, designs and creations. We strive for innovation in the true, radical sense of the word.

Position Paper WdKA Social Practices: Social Design as a political act

Social Practices focus on design that impacts wicked societal or environmental issues. They are not only concerned with the aesthetics, the functionality and the conceptual meaning of their work, but also aim to (re-)design the encompassing social, economic or ecological systems and interactions in relation to political powers in a radical way. Within Social Practices good social design is considered to be a political act: How can artists and designers challenge and reformulate dispositions of power? How to design and make from a position of accountability for contributing to a more sustainable and equitable society?

Social design as political act

Social design is a political act. Artists and designers change the dehumanizing and polluting industries, challenge issues of representation and suppression, rethink the

usage of physical and non-physical resources and empower communities through design. The projects of WdKA Social Practices become direct interventions into society and politics that go beyond art as a means for conventional pedagogy and social work. They do not only visualize, aestheticize or serve social struggles in a subservient and docile way, but aim to innovate them in the true, radical sense of the word by redesigning underlying processes of design, production and interaction. This can take place within the context of design, but might as well take place within other sectors, using the skills, knowledge and attitudes of social designers to redesign processes and ways of production and interaction, with the aim to open up and influence the very systems that are shaping the current and future human condition.

Social design attitudes

Many of the tensions and conflicts which society is facing are socio-historically grown. WdKA Social Practices considers the combination of personal engagement & accountability, political awareness & shared responsibility and creative imagination & expression key to the (transdisciplinary) professional art and design practice. Social designers need to rethink what their own role is, even more to question their own interventions on the same terms as they question the status quo. Social designers explicitly choose to personally experience mentioned systemic changes in order to examine and question them, to alter or reinvent them. Social design is characterized by co-creation with non-artistic audiences – citizens, users, experts, people with economic, political or social power – by empowering each other to think in and to see alternatives, and by setting up critical interventions to catalyze change. Social designers use their capabilities of imagination, creation and expression to make a significant contribution to shaping a different common future by researching, questioning, proposing, visualizing, designing, testing and realizing its alternative possible manifestations which could be framed as utopias for realists. Social design is different from social work and social sciences in so far that it thrives on powers of imagination, creation and expression, is based on involving a broad set of non-artistic, professional disciplines, and it is aimed at longitudinal programmes rather than ephemeral projects.

Social design & the commons

This means that the position of social designers and the complex context in which they operate is the arena in which urgent

needs, desires and possibilities of transformation are creatively explored – including the search for alternatives to the paradigm of endless economic growth and for models that actually enrich the planet in its limited capacity. WdKA Social Practices embrace the commons as a new form of citizenship built on a deep attitude of caring for the planet and caring for the human beings who inhabit it.

Nana Adusei-Poku, Iris Schutten, Roger Teeuwen & Peter Troxler

Sources and Further Reading

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Key Questions

Upcoming years WdKA Social Practices will focus on the following questions:

SOCIAL PRACTICES STUDENTS

What is my position as a citizen, artist, designer or educator within society and what is the engagement and purpose of my professional practice?
Who is directly or indirectly involved in my practice, and how do I shape this involvement?

How does my practice affect others, the other side of the world, society at large, the planet and future generations?
How can I keep developing my practice into professional pathway of radical change in existing economic, social or ecological systems?
... more?

WdKA SOCIAL PRACTICES (theory program addresses one of underlying questions, every year new question, outcomes to be published at Beyond Social)

What are different ways to analyze and reframe positions of power? (see also Flor Avelino / researcher at Drift)
What are different ways to expand and strengthen the commons?
What are different ways of making / provoking change? (central question 2017 – 2018)
What are different ways to measure or discuss impact?
What are different ways to embed interaction with the other (experts, users, people of power) in the design process?
What are different ways to embed frame innovation in the design process? (see also Madeline Hagemann, Kees Dorst, Karim Bennamar)
What are different ways to analyse and visualize systems / powermaps?
What are different ways to do and visualize embedded research?
What are examples of 'good' social design and why? (per field 3 different examples per WdKA discipline + 3 outside WdKA-disciplines)
... more?

RESEARCH CENTER CREATING 010

What are different ways to analyse and reframe positions of power with art and design? (see Flor Avelino / researcher at Drift)
What are different ways to expand and strengthen the commons with art and design?
What are different ways to measure or discuss the impact of art and design?
... more?

Beyond Social is a publishing experiment based on MediaWiki software. The project is initiated by the Social Practices department of the WdKA and developed in collaboration with the Hybrid Publishing research group.

CONTRIBUTE

Feel free to contribute to Beyond Social. There are four ways to contribute:

CREATE a new article. Beyond Social is written and edited by its community. Contribute to this online publishing platform with an article (text, photo-essay, video, audio and so on) about your project, theory, event or initiative in the field of Social Art & Design.

EDIT this page, or any of the other ones. If there is any missing information or spelling mistakes in this article, please don't hesitate to change it. Other complementing work, such as including media files (images/video's/audio) is also very much appreciated.

TALK with the contributors and others by taking part in one of the discussions on the TALK-page of an article. These pages are the semi-hidden backside of articles, hence ideal for discussions about an article without changing the initial text.

PROPOSE a new editorial. Beyond Social invites guest editor(s) to emphasize a certain issue, topic or theme. Guest editors write an editorial, invite others to create articles by an open call and/or add existing articles.

COMMERCIAL PRACTICES

Next Economy, Next Design

Exploring the roles of artists and designers in the "Next Economy".

April 12. 2018

1. Introduction

2. Program

3. Fields

4. Design Skills

5. Design Research

6. Partners and new markets

1. Introduction

New economical contexts: The Next Economy

The Commercial Practices explore the meaning of new economical contexts, like the 'next' economy, for art and design practices together with possible roles of artists and designers in future market driven scenarios. The concept of 'Next Economy' refers to the redefinition of production, transaction, distribution and authorship /ownership in a constantly changing world, fused by technological disruptive innovations. This economical paradigm shift affects the way we relate to industry, nature and society, which is expressed in, among others, crises of natural resources (Rifkin's 'Third Industrial Revolution'), hierarchical changes between industries, producers and consumers (Von Hippel's 'Free Innovation', 2016), new modes of production and consumption (bottom up and 'sharing' economies) and new markets.

In this scenario of economical and industrial shifts, the roles between designers, producers, companies and consumers/ users are changing radically. What has traditionally been perceived as innovation (top-down strategies, highly structured innovation processes) is now changing into a more bottom up approach. An example is the emergence of the 'Maker culture', where both amateurs and professionals employ networks and accessible, high-end technologies (FabLabs, maker spaces) to create new markets for communities or individuals ('markets of one'). Another example includes the phenomenon of Jugaad Innovation, an approach based upon frugal and flexible innovation from emerging communities in countries like India, China, and Africa, which could provide new economical scenarios for innovation in Western companies (Radjou,Prabhu, Ahuja, 2012).

This changing landscape creates new opportunities and roles for prospective designers and artists. Creative input has never been so important within businesses, traditional and new ones, as today. We see large companies merging into monopolistic conglomerates on one side of the spectrum and on the other hand we witness the advent of bottom-up economical, social and cultural initiatives that intend to re-define production, transaction, distribution and ownership / authorship in the context of the next economy. Nowadays, 'creative industries' go hand in hand with creative communities that also contribute to the development of new economical scenarios, be it together with companies or more independently. These include initiatives that explore new markets internationally, in networked collaborations, (FabLabs), locally (Perpetual Plastic, waste2wear) or in hybrid scenarios, infusing companies and industries with local production (Superlocal). These projects show new ways of value creation, explore untapped markets and come up with designs, products and services that make a difference. They expose the exclusive and distinctive pioneering role of the designer/ artist: a visionary and critical key player.

Next Economy, Next Design

This movement will significantly alter the way people live and work together, and the social and cultural fabric of the public domain. Consequently, it will transform the way we design, what we design and for whom. As such, the Next Economy might require a form of 'Next Design', an artistic approach that relates and responds to this transformative society, culture and economy from a perspective that originates in aesthetics, imagination and critical reflection. It is exactly this background that makes the contribution of artists and designers valuable, if not indispensable in a transformative context.

In Commercial Practices, we believe that collaborations (with all stakeholders, clients, consumers, communities), an inter- and transdisciplinary approach (between several disciplines), contextual awareness (economical, social, ecological) and a critical view on innovation and new technologies (information, data, network) are crucial skills for the hybrid practices of artists and designers as instigators and collaborators in the Next Economy.

Key questions: How can artists and designers position themselves in this new economy? How and for which markets and audience will they design? How do we educate for their distinctive role and identity in a commercial context? What is the role of authorship and aesthetics; how resilient can an artist /designer be in this economical evolution? In which way will these developments change visual and design culture at large?

2. Program

The program of Commercial Practices explores these questions by focusing on the potential and roles of artists and designers and by developing a mind-, skill- and toolset for future commercial scenarios in times of omnipresent technologies and data, increasing geopolitical changes and new modes of production and consumption. Which attitudes, skills, methods, knowledge and technologies do we need to enable us to create value, give meaning and relate to this new economical context? The artistic approaches are not only experimental, imaginative, open and speculative but also real, proposing innovative and future scenarios to the market and consumers. These perspectives are reflected in the courses' approach, where concept development and art and design skills go hand in hand with commercial principles and new perspectives on markets, marketing and entrepreneurship.

Keywords: innovative products and services in the 'next' economy, new markets and audiences, collaboration (with all stakeholders: commercial clients, communities, consumers).

The program investigates the ramifications of interconnected paradigms:

- Today's 'smart' and networked technologies and data (big, open, hidden: the Internet of Things): how can artists and designers give meaning to these technologies and make us aware of the presence and effect of data streams?
- New definitions of markets and author/ownership in human /user centred contexts and the role of communities/the commons. "Innovation is rapidly becoming democratized. Users, aided by improvements in computer and communications technology, increasingly can develop their own new products and services. These innovating users - both individuals and firms - often freely share their innovations with others, creating user-innovation communities and a rich intellectual commons" (Von Hippel: 'Democratizing Innovation', 2005, 'Free Innovation', 2016). How do these 'bottom-up' roles affect the way we look at markets and consumers? Which new approaches are needed for branding / brand identities and customer journeys in times of changing author- and ownership?
- Shifts in production, consumption and innovation in times of information sharing and networks. In 'The Third Industrial Revolution' (2011), Rifkin emphasizes the potential of networked technologies for self-production and self-governance in order to create valuable societies. How could artists and designers instigate, develop, facilitate and design processes, systems or models for these imaginable futures? How could they be pioneers in economical contexts?

Focus in the program

Year 1: from Speculation to Innovation

In Year 1 students explore and experience the attitude of (critical and extreme) speculation as an imaginative driver for innovation in times of transformation. Speculation is not explored in isolation, as merely an artistic act, but in the context of the 'real world'.

This connection to real markets, consumers and clients is explored through 'What if / How Else' scenarios, Future Thinking and testing in reality. Students experiment with a radical speculative attitude to become aware of their pioneering potential: to challenge companies by showing extreme scenarios for future products and services. Examples of this commercial practice include SuperFlux (UK/India), the Near Future Laboratory (USA) and Monnik (NL).

Year 2: Future Storytelling / New Narratives

Year 2 of the Commercial Practice focuses on future storytelling and 'new narratives'. In the transforming context of new economies, markets and audiences we will focus on stories in digital networked media and value creation for stakeholders. Questions include:

What makes a story? Whose stories and values are expressed?

Media: How have digital / networked-media affected the performance, structure and impact of storytelling? Values: Which emerging storytelling approaches can we see and imagine as artists, designers or educators? We will explore stories in networked, open-ended and collaborative storytelling.

Year 3: Interactions

Year 3 focuses on establishing and designing with stakeholders: clients, consumers, users, citizens and communities. How do you design an interaction and collaboration in an inspiring way? How do you conduct market research aimed at individuals instead of masses and apply the research in your concept design?

Year 4: Appropriations

You learn to apply your knowledge to your minor and graduation: speculation, storytelling, interacting and bring your designs to the market.

3. Fields

Within the Commercial Practice, the goal is to give students the experience and knowledge of working for/with a company, a brief, a given (or yet undetermined) target group or a certain (or untapped) market within the context of the "Next Economy" through the fields of New Frontiers, Branding, Data Design and Service Design.

New Frontiers

Which possible new scenarios can we imagine for new markets, products and services of the future? What are the creative paradigm shifts?

New Frontiers challenges students to experiment, create connections, push the boundaries and speculate 'new futurisms'. It focuses on new ways of thinking and acting in innovative processes, in collaboration with other students and professionals and stakeholders from the field. Besides creating 'physical products'; students are challenged to identify opportunities and create models or systems for desirable and valuable futures.

Branding

How do we redefine markets in times of the "Next Economy"? How does branding relate to the increasing role of consumers and users in a networked society?

Branding used to be seen as merely developing a logo or brand, visual identity, advertising and/or marketing. Nowadays, branding is so much more. It refers to values, needs, ways of life, identities, expression and trust. Branding it is not – as interpreted by many policy makers – a 'soft issue'. Instead, it is the basis of quality of life. Partly as a result of the influence of 'the new critical consumer' (as expressed in, for example 'Brand-jacking", Waddington and Earl, 2012), brands are no longer primarily influenced by the masses, but sooner by the individual: by 'you and me'. This implies a shift from product and brand orientation to one that is more to human centred. A designer or artist facilitates this belief by giving this influence (visual) form in an authentic manner, telling compelling stories (participatory storytelling) and designing frameworks that involve the brand's stakeholders.

Data Design

How can artists and designers give meaning to data and data streams and make us (users, consumers) aware of their ramifications?

Data Design is connected to current developments like big, open and hidden data (Internet of Things). Do data tell the 'truth'? How are stories told with data? The program requires students to act it in a conceptual, enquiring and visual way. Students learn to recognize and interpret the various types of data and to work with them by examining them critically and thoroughly, using visual research methods. Various methods and tools are offered for data analysis and designing dynamic data.

Service Design

How can we design imaginative, convincing processes to guide users/consumers?

The premise of Service Design is that the design approach is of great value for setting up and designing – and the success – of services. How you relate to the stakeholders (client, users) is essential, and, accordingly, the way in which you design this process. Service Design offers artists and designers the insights, knowledge and the tools to be at the forefront of new, pioneering concepts of service provision.

4. Design Skills

The Commercial Practices program offers several design research methods aimed at gaining insights in new consumers and markets. Students are challenged to employ and appropriate these methods and, eventually, to identify or even develop their own research approach that reflects their identity as a designer in new economical contexts.

- Designing processes: design thinking - design intuition

How do you look at a design process strategically? How does human behaviour influence the decision making process? And how do you ask the right questions to come to the best concepts and designs? How does design thinking relate to design intuition?

Design Thinking is a familiar approach to designers but it is also a tool to lead, (re)organize and inspire companies. Design Thinking helps organizing thought patterns and proposes creative solutions to complex problems. It fosters participation of all stakeholders in order to understand their motives and interests in transformative processes (Stickdorn et al, 2011). Within the research-oriented design thinking process, the specific role of design intuition (making intuitive decisions without 'fact-checking', from the perspective of tacit design knowledge) will be one of the points of departure.

- Future consumers & new markets: scenario testing and prototyping

Within Commercial Practices, the goal of consumer and market analysis is not only to identify current target groups and markets but, more specifically, to discover future and new forms of target audiences and markets. How will future consumer and (unexpected)

user behaviour affect the way we consume, shop, live etc.?

What is the role of bottom-up markets created by the commons and communities?

The methodologies offered challenge the students to elicit responses and stories from consumers and users. Examples include cultural probes (Gaver, Dunne, Pacenti, 1999) or conversation / confrontation pieces for possible consumers, 'what if' scenarios (Dunne/Raby, 2015) for current products/ brands and testing these with new consumers, users or communities. Perspectives and insights like these will be employed for the conceptualization and design of new products and processes.

- Making Future: trend analyses & forecasting

How do we 'make' the future? What (weak) signals can be discovered and revealed among consumers, markets or different cultural groups? What does this tell us about society? How could these signals be employed as indicators for near future scenarios in 5 to 10 years and transformed into next trends or markets? These questions are the basis for the conceptualization and design of future products, processes, services etc.

- Data Stories: data mining and pattern recognition

In times of omnipresent data, designers are increasingly challenged to visualize complex data in order to make them understandable. How do you recognize patterns in datasets? (Rosling, Gapminder, 2006). How do you transform these into stories that people can relate to? Data collection/mining, data interpretation and storytelling with data embody the method and process of data visualization.

Design skills related to the Commercial Practice are:

- Visualization and speculation: future concepts, processes, data etc.
- Networked technologies: app and website development, data design
- Storytelling related to data, branding and processes.
- Creative consumer, community and user research: new market analysis, testing with stakeholders, rapid prototyping (digital fabrication)
- Design of open processes, products and systems for involving consumers, users, stakeholders.
- Physical & verbal presentation and communication skills, pitching.

6. Partners and new markets

Who are the strategic partners of the future? Commercial Practices seeks collaboration with **innovative companies** but also with partners that represent **new (bottom-up) business models**, for instance user – centric and platform styled businesses. Besides traditional forms of entrepreneurship, we will also explore other possibilities such as networked organisations, field labs, start- ups and scale ups.

Alternative financing models through "online marketplaces" will also be examined like reward-based crowd-funding, equity crowdfunding, peer-to-peer consumer- and business lending.

The Commercial Practice has several **strategic partners** with whom there is close collaboration so that the program under the "Next Economy" umbrella remains relevant and up to date. They include; Studio Wolfpack Venture Café, Rabobank, Tegenlicht, Municipality Rotterdam, Erasmus MC.

In addition there is also a "**Beroepenveld Commissie**": external art and design professionals that critically reflect on the education program. Their expertise lies in the fields of art and design, creative marketing, technology and new socio-economical scenarios.

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