



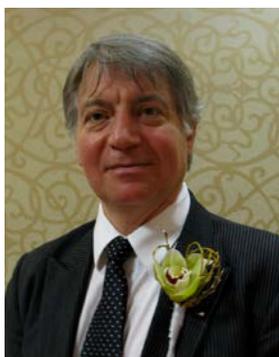
UNITED STATES SOCIETY FOR EDUCATION THROUGH ART

INTERNATIONAL ZIEGFELD AWARD 2012

Bernard Darras

It is a great honor for me to see my work associated with that of Edwin Ziegfeld and to join the group of colleagues who have been recognized by this prestigious award. I am grateful to the United States Society for Education through Art for this honor. But what you are rewarding today is in fact the interaction between research projects and the very fruitful intellectual cooperation that I have developed with my friends and colleagues in North and South America, Asia, Pacific, Africa and Europe.

I dedicate this award to them. It is indeed their experiences, practices, research, knowledge and our countless discussions that support and develop the arguments that I will now present.



BERNARD DARRAS

My message is simple and in many respects a continuation of the approach that Edwin Ziegfeld has defended all his life.

The world is changing dramatically; we are changing with it and are contributing to its change.

But I think that in many ways 'arts education' has fallen behind and that we must try to compensate for this by accelerating our transformation. (See Darras, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2006, 2009, 2011)

Firstly, I will provide you with a broad overview of the players that make up the world of art of which *arts education* is a part, then, after evaluating some of the

power relations that are at work in our institutional field, I will propose a shift in perspective regarding our habits and beliefs in order to offer a different vision of the creative fields.

I will try to convince those who are not yet convinced that the field of what one calls "high art", the art defined by art history, the philosophy of art, the art market and art museums has become cumbersome in 'artistic' education and that it slows us down when we need to accomplish a great creative leap to put creation, all types of creation, at the heart of our research, teacher education and teaching¹. I would like to refer here to the observation made by Christiane Herth

¹ In French and English, the word 'art' is rooted in the same ancient Latin world in which the semantic space of *ars* derived from the Greek concept of *teckne*. But over the centuries, the semantic space of 'art' took different turns in the Latin and Anglo-American worlds.

(2012)², who is carrying out research on the perception that teachers of the visual arts in Junior High school in France have of their profession. The substance of what she said was: 'most teachers that I have interviewed experience the same problems and seem caught in a trap. They were trained to introduce students to a high culture that has almost nothing to do with theirs and that does not respond to their problems. They realize they could be more useful to them by using creative techniques and processes for other purposes, but they are in fear of betraying their artistic mission if they change the field of reference of the creative process.'

Here is the main problem for the curricula that have the field of art as main or mandatory background.

The art world can no longer be the main reference because for a century and a half it has focused too much on its autonomy to enable us to address in a comprehensive manner, that is to say an anthropological manner, all the responses to change or to the desire for change that come together in the creative process.

We must take a broader perspective to embrace all types of creation: large collective creations such as the cities of Roma or New York; the human landscapes, the carnival of Rio de Janeiro, Hollywood and Bollywood, fashion, street furniture, Chinese food and fast food, all inventions and creations that changed the world and particularly today's world, digitization, personal computers, smart phones, media and social networking, entertainment, video and online games, etc.

We must also see the smaller and closer picture, without showing any condescension to ordinary and daily creations, as recommended by Edwin Ziegfeld. Thousands of interventions are available to improve our personal and collective lives, our school and family lives, a myriad of creative and thoughtful inventions and transformations can make life an art of living.

The invention of the 'artist'.

Let's start with an overview of the invention of the social type of the "artist".

During 19th century in the West, the world of art has settled and institutionalized itself in two areas.

Firstly, it has expanded its status of patrician treasure by accessing that of patriotic patrimony aiming at founding and defining nation-states and imperial ambitions. The use of national foundations by museums (and archives) has served the construction of the image of hegemonic powers and national identities in a context of the struggle for freedom, empowerment, democracy and social justice.

If the latter kept the two meanings of 'art' as a cultural practice of liberal elites on the one hand, and as a set of techniques, skills and mastered practices on the other, the Latin world favoured the liberal version: the scholarly culture of the elite. The consequences of these two approaches are numerous and have an impact on the terms 'éducation artistique' and 'art education'. The first is mainly devoted to high culture, while the second has a much broader spectrum. Somehow, the new term 'artistic and cultural education' that has been used in France since 2001, is closer to the semantic and practical space of 'Art Education' and even has a broader spectrum. (See Darras, 2009)

² Lecture presented at a Ph.D course at Sorbonne University

Secondly, in the excitement of the industrial revolution, which contributed to the 'industrialization of change'³, society entrusted to the small world of academic art and that of art-crafts of the time, the mission to invent a new social type intended to embody the liberal individualistic and capitalist ideal of the industrial age. The 19th century invented the artist, gave him or her that name and defined his or her role and mission (although there were very few women artists' at that time). (See Heinich, 1993, 2005, Pommier, 2007, Menger, 2002)

The new artist was to be a free subject, unhindered by any constraint or rule; free to the point of being libertarian and libertine; individualistic and egocentric to the point of cultivating to the extreme his or her uniqueness and his or her difference in solitude; sensitive to the point of being hypersensitive; useless to the point of being futile; innovative in his or her field to the point of despising the past and of being misunderstood in his or her lifetime; creative by vocation and obligation; devoted to his or her art to the point of neglecting herself or himself and asserting the autonomy of her or his world and her or his work that he placed above all, hoping for posthumous glory as proof of her or his advance on ordinary men and women. (see Bourdieu, 1992)

The social role of this pioneer of the avant-garde of humanity was defined with the support of pioneers of usefulness such as captains of industry, discoverers, inventors, researchers and intellectuals, but also as a foil for the traditionalists and conservatives, the timid and the puritans. The artist has become the standard of creativity, the paragon of creation, the ideal type of the industry of change (see Max Weber 1922-1968 for the concept of ideal-type).

The triumph of the 'art' label imposes itself on all creations.

Avant-garde art and the social type of the 'modern artist' have imposed themselves so well on the beliefs of those times of triumphant and painful progress that many sectors of activity, many scientific disciplines have claimed this new 'art' label in order for their creations and productions to gain the valorized and valorizing status of 'art'.

This was the case in industry, which invented the applied and decorative arts, ancestors of design, but also of psychology and pedagogy that have transformed the basic creations of children into children's art. The impact has been huge in art education where it has produce and still produces huge confusions and mistakes. (Darras, 2004; Darras & Kindler, 1996; Kindler & Darras, 1995, 1997a, b, 2007).

Psychiatry has done the same with the works of its patients, ethnology and anthropology have transformed cultural and ritual works into primitive or tribal art, historians have invented art history and reinterpreted creations of the past with the new concepts of 'art' and 'artist', even those studying pre-history invented the art of cave painting.

Politicians have called their propaganda social or political art, and commerce has tried its luck with advertising.

With the support of certain artists, philosophy has also claimed its own artistic genre, which accounts for a large part of contemporary art. (see Danto, 2001). Sociology has done the same. All

³ From the 19th century, industrial processes were applied to change itself. Advertising, marketing, manufacturing, commerce, science, art and design systematized the taste for change by stimulating the public's interest for modernity, progress, novelty and the vanguards that have resulted in the consumer society.

emerging technologies and industries dedicated to capturing, recording and reproducing have campaigned for their creations and productions to become art. The cinema has left fairgrounds for theatres and photography has left newspapers and books for galleries. One after the other, all the creations in the field of the image, sound, movement, taste and entertainment have taken the more noble status of scholarly and legitimate arts or have been brought to the masses as popular art. Recently, video, computing, networking and gaming have followed this movement of generalized 'artistification.'

The dissolution of art

Reacting or interacting with this change and proliferation of labels, the world of art, that is to say the artists, critics, the art market and museums, has ingested, digested, retrieved, integrated, transformed, expelled or held at a distance these sometimes very annoying suitors. Some artists have even amplified this trend by declaring that everything the artist touches becomes art, that everything is art, that everyday life is art, that it is the viewer and institutions who make art, or even that everyone is an artist, etc.

Other artists fell back to fundamentals: uniqueness, shape, color, materiality, concept, process, the world of art, art history, etc.

Others have deconstructed these 'fundamentals' in seeking what is the essence of art, its limitations, its world, its definition and de-definition, and even its anti-matter, anti-art and the end of art. This is the endless deconstruction of art by its actors themselves.

Yet others have persevered in their incessant appetite by absorbing everything that was not yet art: technology, science, economics, business, evolution and life itself, etc.

However, the majority of 'art' makers perpetuate the values of modernism in their creation. They are probably numerically dominant, although their impact on art institutions is weak... except in the field of art education where it remains dominant.

But make no mistake, this vast proliferation of 'artistification', more or less serious or ironic, may well be the tricks to export the values of the prevailing social models that high art is promoting. They are notably today the social models of the creative class.

The creative class

Wherever human concentrations have developed, whether in cities where 50% of humans now reside or in the new private and public sphere, which is the Internet, a powerful creative class has emerged. This class embodies the *Homo creator*, it is stimulated by the 'industrialization of change', a type of change of which it is the most active class. It delights in change and has even adopted many of the values of the various avant-garde movements in art inspired by industrial and post industrial revolutions.

The *homo creator* has integrated art and its values into his or her cultural practices, lifestyle, communication, media and entertainment because they provide the creativity required in his or her daily work and life in response to the amplification of changes.

His or her culture is becoming the dominant culture and arts education is one of the tools used for its dissemination. (See Darras, 2011)

The social type that is privileged is no longer only the artist but the creative person who has to solve problems by constantly engaging his or her 'creativity of action' (Joas, 1996) and regularly undertaking creative leaps.

Art has become a sub domain of creation. It is no longer the sole paragon for the creative class which has added design, technology, media and the entertainment industry to it.

New issues, new attitudes, new solutions.

Nearly two centuries of 'industrialization of change' have brought many benefits to industrialized regions in terms of comfort and life expectancy but they have also triggered ecological, demographic and economic crises interconnected with each other.

It is hard to ignore that in many cases the growth of yesterday and today has been and is still undertaken on credit by mortgaging the future of generations to come.

Now we know that we must change differently and learn to co-manage the order and disorder of the world as the Western monopoly on controlling the evolution of the world is no longer valid.

While the small world of Western art that we mentioned previously entered expansion and change, the fall of empires, decolonization and the great migrations of globalization inaugurated a phase of doubts and post-colonial demands. Globalization has also helped accelerate the internationalization of issues, art works and markets, but also contributed to the recognition of the creative worlds emerging from the diverse cultures and 'ethnicities' of the planet. It has also challenged, although timidly, the monopoly on the control of the world of art and creation invented and held by the West. Today, we must accept that all the peoples of the world are active and interdependent. We must indeed act and interact together. Sharing is not regressing. (See Kindler, Darras & Kuo, 2000)

Imagination, creativity and creation that served growth and the consumer society must now contribute to the 'ecologization' of our communities and all sectors of education must join forces to create a new lifestyle with and within the world, as well as a new art of living together.

What contributions can our disciplines bring to this new life and this new art of living? Historically, arts education has inherited aristocratic, cultural and liberal practices. Sociologically, we belong to the creative class and we propagate its values, which derive from those of avant-garde movements. In practice, we are skilled at creating images, objects, spaces, etc., but also at discussing, comparing, evaluating, debating and above all interacting and fabricating with the tools of creation. (see Darras, 2008)

If art, design, media and entertainment often use the same materials, the same forms, the same digital tools, the same processes and sometimes the same semiotic and narrative methods, they have neither the same functions nor the same purposes and objectives.

Thinking and creating in terms of high art or thinking and creating in terms of design, communication or entertainment are very different processes.

For now at least, much of the intentions and destinations of artistic thought, as imposed by the field of professional art, remain egocentric and confined to the world of art. While the origin and destination of thought in design, media and even entertainment are everyday life itself and often the lives of everyone, every day. We must note that when facing the challenges of change, design, which is still one of its major players, has responded by making a radical U-turn to become inclusive design, participatory design, eco-design and social design.

If we consider that our educational mission is to prepare children and young people for the changes they encounter and will encounter as community members and individuals in today effervescent cultures, we must question ourselves about what is at the heart of this educational mission and what must be the fields of references.

Is it the exploration and knowledge of the artistic heritage, of contemporary art?

Is it the culture of ancient and contemporary ruling classes?

Is it the culture of the creative class or the *mainstream* culture of cultural industries?

Is it all the areas of human creation, including the creation in visual, material and interactive culture?

Is it the development of imagination, creativity and creation?

Is it creating for oneself or finding shared solutions?

In my opinion, it is all of these, but only if we can find a viable and smart balance between the domains of creation in high art, design, the media and entertainment where high art would no longer dominate. (see Darras, 2008)

But also to constructively use the differences and tensions that exist between these different modes of thinking, creating, acting and interacting.

After this rebalancing, education widely opened to all domains of creation could set itself the very philosophically utilitarian and pragmatic objectives of building a new art of living where the respect for life, cooperation and empathy would prevail over egocentrism, ethnocentrism, greed and blind competition.

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