

The Fate of Critique in Art Education

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Abstract

As the first comprehensive examination of institutional critique within art schools, this volume investigates why art education's critical edge has been blunted and asks if art is becoming just another form of intellectual labor. It argues that the increasing 'scientification' of creative practice, driven by the global expansion of the neoliberal knowledge economy, has systematically transformed institutional critique from a transgressive, anti-establishment force into an affirmative one. To dissect this paradigm, the book deliberately de-centers the dominant Euro-American model, employing a global methodology that presents international case studies—from pre-communist China and post-dictatorship Portugal to contemporary South Korea and Ghana—not as exceptions, but as the primary lens through which the model's universalist claims are refracted and dismantled. Structured in four parts, the volume traces the historical foundations of this crisis, examines key instances of pedagogical resistance, and stages a direct confrontation with the model's epistemic limits through decolonial critiques. Ultimately, this volume interrogates what forms of critique remain transformative today, championing a pedagogy that responds to systemic conditions and reclaims education as a practice of freedom.

Keywords

art education – institutional critique – art pedagogy – critique – artistic autonomy – Modernism – post-studio practice – culture industry – global art history

1 The Art School at a Crossroads

In the past several decades, art education has arrived at a critical juncture, shaped by a series of seismic shifts that have destabilized its purpose and function. The explosive growth of Master of Fine Arts (MFA) programs, coupled with soaring tuition costs, has created a generation of artists burdened by debt, forced to navigate a precarious creative economy. This professionalization has transformed the very definition of artistic labor, shifting the artist's role from that of a solitary

maker into what scholars have termed the “art worker” or the “artist as manager” (Bryan-Wilson, 2009; Molesworth, 2004). This new figure is compelled to manage their own circulation within what Pierre Bourdieu (1993) defined as the “field of cultural production”—a field controlled by established positions of power. Artistic practice thus becomes defined less by its critical autonomy and more by its subordination to institutional and market demands. This pressure towards professionalization is further intensified by the rise of “artistic research” and the scientization of creative practice—trends whose latest and most extreme manifestation is the practice-based PhD—which have introduced new pressures for measurable outcomes under neoliberal frameworks like the Bologna Process.¹ It is within this contested landscape—caught between market demands, academic institutionalization, and its own historical claim to autonomy—that the question of critique in art education has become more urgent than ever.²

Historically, this dilemma is rooted in the complex legacy of artistic autonomy. A defining conquest of the modernist era, autonomy granted art an unprecedented freedom from external purposes. Yet, as John Dewey warned, this very segregation from social contexts threatened to “rob it of its educative potential” (2005, p. 298). The result is the “current impasse that places arts education in the



FIGURE 1.1 Arthur Siol, A scene from the international symposium *art thinking doing art: Artistic Practices in Educational Contexts from 1900 to Today*, held at the Berlin University of the Arts in June 2023. With contributions from scholars from eleven countries, the gathering provided the foundational dialogue for this volume, exploring the interrelationships between art education, production, and institutional contexts from a broad historical and geopolitical perspectives. © 2023 Arthur Siol



FIGURE 1.2 Rosalie Schweiker, *Teaching*, 2023. © 2023 Rosalie Schweiker

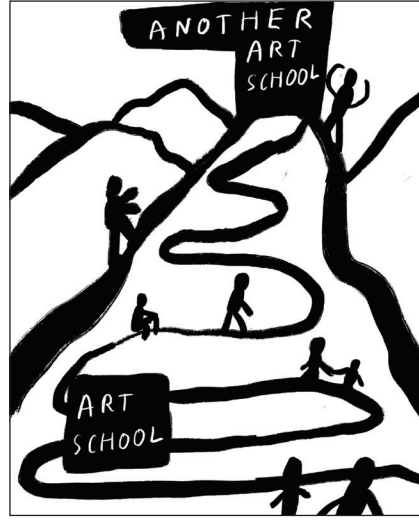


FIGURE 1.3 Rosalie Schweiker, *Another Art School*, 2023. © 2023 Rosalie Schweiker

service of upmarket commodity culture” (Schnapp & Shanks, 2010, p. 143). The faculty of criticism, once seen as a corrective to the isolating effects of autonomy, has itself been thrown into crisis. As Benjamin Buchloh notes, the critic’s claim to serve as a privileged mediator has acquired a “newly manifest problematic status” (2023) within today’s cultural and political landscape.

This diagnosed paralysis of established critical forms makes the search for new forums and formats of critique all the more urgent. The critical dialogues that gave rise to this volume, initiated at the *art thinking doing art* symposium in Berlin in 2023 (Figure 1.1), resonate with a wider, urgent conversation about the material consequences of this impasse. Tellingly, at a symposium at the Art Students League of New York, for instance, this urgency was articulated with stark clarity when artist Doug Ashford stated:

The context of what art can do socially is dependent on its ability to be outside of the constraints of the precarity. [...] The social responsibility that we have on the institutional level is to change the economic conditions of those places. (Art Students League, 2024, 1:17:18)

The precarity Ashford describes is the lived reality of art students and the starting point of this inquiry. Significantly, the question that prompted his response

came from an audience member who identified as an “adjunct who tries to make art in the time outside of this work,” thus framing the central conflict for most artists today. Only a fraction of those with an MFA still work as artists after ten years, as most derive little income from their art. Why, then, has the MFA become such a sought-after, almost obligatory degree? The mfa, once a qualification for secondary-level teaching, has become a critical stepping stone for an artist’s career. This professionalization is now essential not only for the art market but also to secure limited professorships or positions in the cultural sector.

2 The Scientization of Art and the Erosion of the Aesthetic

The driving force behind this is a fundamental shift in the art world’s demands: the valorization of artistic thinking over artistic doing, accompanied by the necessity of research in production and curatorial work.³ This scientization of art, inextricably linked to the “Bologna Process” in Europe, is an expression of neoliberal pressure affecting the entire institution. This is not a purely Western



FIGURE 1.4 Unidentified photographer, *A life class for adults at the Brooklyn Museum, under the auspices of the New York City WPA Art Project*, ca. 1935. The scene captures the dual nature of the New Deal program: providing systematic art instruction while fulfilling a social mission of public enrichment and work relief. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. Public Domain



FIGURE 1.5 Lygia Clark, *Baba Antropofágica* (Anthropophagic Slobber), 1973. The photograph documents an intimate, therapeutic “proposition” in which one participant pulls threads from their mouth to envelop another. This act was designed to dissolve the subject/object dichotomy, modeling a form of embodied, non-institutional critique that stands as a radical counterpoint to formal art education. © 1973 The World of Lygia Clark Cultural Association

phenomenon; it reflects a hegemonic educational model whose structures and values have been exported globally, shaping artists regardless of their origin.⁴ While a few decades ago, artists chose a “day job” to protect their voice, these same market-driven constraints have now infiltrated art education itself. As critic Deborah Solomon noted presciently during the 1990s MFA boom, “the proverbial romantic artist [...] has given way to an alternate model: the university artist, who treats art as a homework assignment” (Solomon, 1999).

This shift towards a pedagogy of prescribed tasks has deep historical roots, yet its contemporary form represents a crucial departure from its precedents. A 1930s photograph from a Works Progress Administration (WPA) life-drawing class at the Brooklyn Museum captures this tension vividly (Figure 1.4). On the one hand, we see the seeds of a systematic, almost scientific approach to art instruction, evident in the anatomical charts and studies of geometric forms in the background. On the other hand, this scene is embedded in a New Deal ethos of art as meaningful social labor and public enrichment. The diverse group of adult learners is engaged not in accumulating credentials for a market, but in a practice afforded to them as a form of social relief and cultural

participation. This stands in stark contrast to the neoliberal framework that governs the contemporary “university artist.”

This transformation from social project to academic requirement, captured in Solomon’s “homework assignment” metaphor, is symptomatic of a profound epistemological crisis. The scientization of art—termed *knowledgization* by Tom Holert (2020)—does not merely add a new layer; it actively invalidates older models of aesthetic experience. Universalist theories like Lessing’s, which sought to ground aesthetics in reception, appear obsolete in an era where, as Sven-Olov Wallenstein (2010) argues, any “contemporary Laocoon” must acknowledge that perception itself is a linguistic and causal construct. The traditional triangulation of knowledge, affect, and experience is thus dismantled in favor of quantifiable outputs. At its core lies an irreconcilable conflict: the unruly nature of genuine aesthetic experience, which for Christoph Menke is the “failing and infinite attempt to understand” (2014, p. 244), is fundamentally incompatible with an academic system demanding standardized models of competence.⁵

With this shift, aesthetic experience has been reduced to a form of “aesthetic alphabetization” (Mollenhauer, 1991, p. 2)—the acquisition of a learnable code. This process systematically purges the very elements that defy easy categorization: the affective, the phenomenological, and the sudden. It overlooks that which can liberate us from predefined cultural boundaries (Weiß, 2013, p. 115) and transform our sense of possibility (Seel, 2004, p. 76). The result is an instrumentalized aesthetic, one that replaces the critical “insincerity” and risk-taking of modernism—the artist “infected with exteriority”—with the “sincere” repetition of a learned script (Groys, 2010, p. 30).

3 A Call for a New Aesthetics

The erosion of the aesthetic leads directly to the central question of this volume. As Thierry de Duve asks, reflecting on art’s historical promise to “accompany or even anticipate the project of emancipation”: “Is artistic creation capable of maintaining a critical function?” (Duve, 2006, p. 21). This volume argues that the gradual scientization of art education has blunted this very capacity. This does not imply that critique has vanished entirely; rather, a specific form of it—one not rooted in institutional logic or reducible to linguistic frameworks—has been lost. Aesthetic experience, unburdened by pragmatic objectives, defies what Klaus Mollenhauer terms the “pedagogical box” (1990, p. 484). While institutional critique in the 20th century facilitated socially relevant art, its methods ultimately became absorbed by the system it sought to analyze.

The epistemological framework underlying Western aesthetic theory is neither universal nor exhaustive. A growing body of anthropological and art-historical

research has shown that in other cultural contexts—particularly in Indigenous and non-Western knowledge systems—aesthetic understanding is not primarily grounded in visual cognition or linguistic articulation, but in embodied, relational, and performative forms of knowledge. In such contexts, artistic practice is inseparable from bodily experience, collective ritual, and alternative conceptions of subjectivity and gender. While these epistemologies cannot be subsumed under Western aesthetic theory without distortion, their very existence exposes the historical contingency and cultural specificity of the model critiqued in this volume. They thus function less as alternative “examples” than as a structural challenge to the assumption that critique must operate within the parameters of Western logocentric thought.

This volume therefore investigates the diverse ways of questioning, resisting, and transcending the academy’s normative constraints. It offers a comprehensive, multi-perspectival approach, uniting art historians, critics, artists, and educators to explore how various forms of critique have spurred artistic evolution—and to interrogate where such critique may have been systematically undermined from the outset.

4 **Structure of the Volume**

To dissect this paradigm, the volume proceeds in a four-part methodological arc. It begins by identifying the foundational frameworks—historical, infrastructural, and economic—that shaped this hegemonic model from its inception (Part I). From there, it examines key instances of artistic and pedagogical resistance from within this system during its mid-century consolidation, revealing the inherent tensions and contradictions in its application (Part II). Subsequently, the book turns to specific pedagogical methods, contrasting a seminal Western model like CalArts with grassroots alternatives that challenge its premises (Part III). Finally, the volume stages a direct confrontation with the model’s epistemic limits through decolonial critiques and case studies of alternative epistemologies that operate outside its dominant logic (Part IV).

Part I: Frameworks of Institutional Critique

Part I establishes the historical and theoretical frameworks of institutional critique by tracing a clear trajectory—from foundational questions of exclusion and commercialization to the crisis of its key figures and, finally, to the complex systemic analysis required today. The part opens with Nicola Foster’s intervention, which poses a foundational question: is institutional critique even possible from outside art’s own confines? By centering her analysis on the

Nüshu (Chinese 女書/女书, Pinyin *nǚshū*) women in pre-communist China—a community that created a unique cultural practice by and for an excluded group—she reveals how the defining parameters of critique are often imposed retrospectively by the very institutions that first excluded such groups. Tracing these dynamics into the early 20th century, my own study of the Reimann Schule in Berlin examines how the institutionalization of art education was inextricably linked to the emergence of the cultural industry from its inception. In contrast to state-funded reform schools, the private and commercially driven Reimann Schule pioneered a pedagogical model that aligned artistic training directly with the demands of mass culture and the market, thereby revealing the commercial logic that has become a foundational, yet often unacknowledged, infrastructure of modern art education. From the institutionalization of the school, Benjamin Buchloh shifts the focus to the post-war crisis of a key institutional figure: the art critic. In a sweeping historical testimony, he charts the evolving function of the critic from that of a privileged ideological mediator to a mere functionary of communication. Buchloh shows how artists from Duchamp to Johns actively worked to dismantle the critic's authority, thereby challenging the very discursive hierarchies that governed the post-war art world. Tom Holert concludes this part by introducing the concept of “infrastructural critique.” Deepening the analysis of the Thatcher-era restructuring of British art education through the work of the Art & Language associates David Rushton and Paul Wood, he argues that effective critique must target the underlying systems—bureaucratic policies, financial reforms, and administrative language—that predetermine the conditions of artistic practice and neutralize critical potential. Holert thus provides the systemic framework for understanding the conditions against which the practices in the following chapter resist.

Part II: Practices of Resistance (1960s–1980s)

The second part shifts from theoretical frameworks to concrete historical instances of resistance, exploring how artists and educators challenged institutional norms. The part opens with Jeffrey Saletnik's essay on John Cage's *Musicircus* (1967), which analyzes a non-hierarchical pedagogy of total refusal. Saletnik reveals how Cage, through a logic of ‘equalizing abundance,’ created performative situations that sought not merely to challenge the institution, but to bypass its logic of assessment and value entirely, offering a model of critique predicated on radical non-participation. Where Holert provides the macro-level system critique, Jake Watts shifts the focus to the micro-level of practice. His study of the *Mask* project (1972) at St. Martin's School of Art analyzes the performative act of critique within the classroom itself. Watts reveals how tutors resisted bureaucratic functionalism not through policy analysis, but

by exposing its absurdity in the immediate, tensed power dynamic between tutor and student. Isabel Nogueira's study of Coimbra's Plastic Arts Circle (CAPC) reveals the ambivalent nature of resistance in the political vacuum of post-dictatorship Portugal. She shows how a new, experimental art education emerged, born of revolutionary freedom, yet simultaneously shaped by an inevitable opening to established Western cultural industries. The part culminates in Marie-Christine Schoel's critical analysis of Judy Chicago's Feminist Art Program. Schoel examines the radical act of creating a feminist space by physically withdrawing from the patriarchal institution. However, she complicates this narrative of liberation by questioning the politics of this separatism, highlighting missed opportunities for solidarity with the Black and Chicano civil rights movements then active on campus.

Part III: Methodological Critiques and Pedagogical Legacies

Subsequently, Part III delves into the core of pedagogical practice itself, examining the methods, legacies, and internal contradictions of specific educational models. The section contrasts a seminal Western institution, CalArts, with grassroots alternatives, culminating in a performative challenge to academic form itself. The section is anchored by Rebecca Sprowl's two-part investigation of CalArts's influential Post-Studio program. Her first essay explores the founding moment, revealing the "cross-pollination" between John Baldessari's own conceptual art practice and his non-authoritative, anti-didactic pedagogy. Sprowl's second essay traces the program's complex legacy through its next generation of artist-teachers. Drawing on extensive interviews, she reveals how these artists both adopted and critically re-evaluated the CalArts model, particularly its rejection of skill-based learning and its pioneering methods of group critique. In stark contrast to this hegemonic Western model, Sooyoung Leam's study of South Korea's Citizens Art School (Korean 시민미술학교, Romanization *simin misul hakgyo*) demonstrates how a grassroots art education can emerge directly from social upheaval. Leam shows how the school, rooted in the pro-democracy movement and the principles of people's art (Korean 민중미술, Romanization *minjung misul*), used the collective practice of woodcut printmaking to forge a unique pedagogy of self-learning and political agency. The section takes a performative turn with Bernard Akoi-Jackson's contribution, which is itself an intervention. Radically departing from the traditional academic essay form, his text embodies the very "disturbed methodologies" it advocates. Drawing on his teaching experiences, Akoi-Jackson presents a pedagogy rooted in disruption, spontaneity, and a profound critique of the colonialist canon. The essay thus functions less as a description of a method and more as a direct, performative demonstration of what a decolonized, critical art pedagogy can feel like in practice.

Part IV: Decolonial Challenges and Alternative Epistemologies

The final part stages a direct confrontation with the epistemic limits of Western art education. It moves from non-Western epistemologies to a searing critique of the ethical and political failures of Western pedagogy in contexts of conflict, culminating in a self-reflexive analysis of the Western avant-garde itself. Katharine Bruhn's study of the Indonesian *sanggar* system provides a foundational alternative. She examines a pedagogy rooted not in institutional critique but in the Minangkabau philosophy of *'alam takambang jadi guru* (nature as teacher). This model of collective, experiential learning presents an epistemology entirely outside the Western logocentric tradition. From this external vantage point, the section turns to a critique from within the Western sphere, yet at its margins. Erika Kindsfather's research on Canadian artist Evelyn Roth's recycling workshops explores a pedagogy of material practice and environmental activism. By centering her analysis on traditionally devalued materials—discarded textiles, videotape—and feminized “craft” techniques like crochet, Kindsfather shows how Roth's practice fundamentally subverts the distinction between “high art” and “low craft”, grounding pedagogy not in theoretical critique, but in the tangible, collective transformation of the everyday world. The critique intensifies and becomes explicitly political in Noa Sadka's raw and immediate study of photography education at the Bezalel Academy in Jerusalem. Written during the 2023–2025 Israeli assault on Gaza, her essay interrogates the profound epistemic violence of imposing a disembodied Western pedagogical model onto a site of perpetual conflict. Sadka reveals how an art education that ignores its surrounding reality—including the Palestinian neighborhoods of Sheikh Jarrah (Arabic *الشيخ جراح*, Romanization *ash-Shaykh Jarrāḥ*) and Issawiya (Arabic *العيساوية*, Romanization *al-ʿIsāwīyya*) right at its doorstep—becomes an act of ethical and political failure. Finally, the volume concludes by turning the critical lens back onto the celebrated Western avant-garde. Emily Ruth Capper's incisive analysis of Allan Kaprow's 1961 happening, *Night*, reveals the internal contradictions of supposedly radical pedagogy. She demonstrates how Kaprow's use of primitivism, while intended to be a critique of mainstream culture, ultimately reinscribed the very racialized fantasies and colonial logic it sought to escape. By ending with this act of self-interrogation, the section argues that even the most radical forms of Western critique remain incomplete without a decolonial awareness of their own inherent complicity.

5 Scope and Limitations

It is crucial to define this volume's precise scope and methodological approach. The anthology deliberately narrows its focus to a critical interrogation of a single, hegemonic model of critique: the one that emerged and was subsequently institutionalized within the dominant academic and artistic frameworks of

North America and Western Europe. To dissect this paradigm, however, the volume deliberately adopts a global methodology. The inclusion of case studies from South Korea (Leam), pre-communist China (Foster), Indonesia (Bruhn), and a powerful critique from a Ghanaian perspective (Akoi-Jackson) is therefore methodologically crucial. These are not included as token exceptions, but as the very lens through which the Western paradigm's claims to universality are refracted and ultimately dismantled.

This methodological approach extends to the volume's use of language and transliteration. To honor the linguistic origins of key concepts, this book employs scientific transliteration for terms derived from non-Latin scripts, even where simplified modern spellings exist in common usage. This inclusion of original scripts and rigorous transliterations is not a stylistic flourish but a core editorial commitment, intended to resist the epistemic erasure inherent in Western academic discourse. This practice becomes an overtly political act in Noa Sadka's essay, where the presence of the Arabic script for Palestinian neighborhoods—such as Sheikh Jarrah (Arabic *الشيخ جراح*, Romanization *ash-Shaykh Jarrāḥ*)—visually enacts the challenge to the institutional “cultural blindness” she critiques. This principle is, however, applied with critical awareness. A script is deliberately omitted where it would falsely equate a Western institutional category like ‘artist association’ with a culturally specific formation like the Indonesian *sanggar*. Similarly, terms from languages like modern Indonesian (Bahasa Indonesia), such as *mengajar* or *berguru*, are natively written in the Latin alphabet and thus require no additional characters. This editorial approach is best illustrated by its treatment of a single, pivotal loanword, guided by the principle of scholarly clarity and precision. For a term like *alam*, which is of Arabic origin (*ālam*, *عالم*) but now integral to Indonesian languages, this volume resists imposing a single, uniform spelling. Instead, it adopts a context-specific solution. At the key juncture where the term's etymological roots are discussed, the scientific transliteration and original script are employed to transparently acknowledge the word's deep history and its connection to a broader intellectual tradition. In all other contexts, where the term functions purely within an Indonesian framework, the established local spelling (*alam*) is retained. This ensures vernacular accuracy and respects the term's modern, embedded usage. This decision is thus a practical application of scholarly rigor, intended to serve the reader by balancing etymological depth with contextual precision.

This methodological precision, however, necessitates acknowledging its own boundaries. The decision to concentrate on the internal logic and global radiation of this specific Western model means that other vital histories of critique are not centered. This is a deliberate choice, rooted not in disregard, but in recognition of the depth and specificity of these other genealogies. For instance, the foundational contributions of African American and Indigenous artists to institutional analysis constitute histories so profound that they demand their own

comprehensive study. The legacies of the Black Arts Movement, the long tradition of community-based art education as a form of resistance, and the principles of land-based pedagogy developed by Indigenous thinkers offer critiques that operate from distinct epistemological foundations. Extensive scholarship already exists in these fields, and to reduce these complex histories to a single chapter would be a disservice to their importance.⁶ That being said, this does not mean the volume avoids the critical issue of race. Rather, it approaches it from *within* the hegemonic framework by examining its racialized blind spots. This is evident in the contributions of Emily Ruth Capper and Marie-Christine Schoel. Capper's analysis of Allan Kaprow's engagement with racialized student rituals and Schoel's examination of the politics of feminist separatism in relation to broader civil rights movements both offer crucial critiques of whiteness and racial exclusion. Their work anchors the book's argument that critique must also address the internal contradictions of the dominant institutions, rather than focusing solely on alternative pedagogical models from *outside* of them.

The same principle of acknowledging established, complex histories applies to cornerstones of modernist pedagogy like the Bauhaus and Black Mountain College. While their pedagogical models have been the subject of extensive scholarship and monographs, this volume refrains from adding another chapter to that literature. Instead, their legacies are intentionally addressed only at the margins where their influence was refracted and transformed—the Bauhaus, for example, in my own study of the Reimann Schule, and Black Mountain College in Jeffrey Saletnik's analysis of John Cage.

Similarly, while the volume's intellectual debt to Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* is clear, readers will not find dedicated case studies from key sites of radical pedagogy in South America. This is because these practices often represent a profound model of critique that operates almost entirely outside the academic-institutional frameworks this volume dissects. The work of Lygia Clark, whose later therapeutic-pedagogical practice of 'structuring the self' has been extensively analyzed by scholars like Suely Rolnik, provides a model of embodied, non-institutional learning. This paradigm of intimate, process-based interaction (Figure 1.5) stands in stark contrast to even the socially-minded institutionalism of the WPA classroom seen earlier (cf. Figure 1.4), representing a model of critique so distinct that it warrants its own separate analysis. Likewise, collective actions such as Argentina's *Tucumán Arde*, whose legacy of art as direct political intervention has been deeply chronicled by leading scholars such as Luis Camnitzer and Andrea Giunta, represent a paradigm of critique rooted in social action rather than academic discourse. Given the robust and essential body of literature that already covers these movements, this volume chooses to focus on deconstructing the dominant Western paradigm in the hope that its findings may serve as a precise tool for others working within these vital fields.⁷

Acknowledging the importance of these other vital histories allows the volume to sharpen its focus. The rationale for concentrating on a later institution, CalArts, thus becomes clear. CalArts is not merely another case study; it marks the very historical juncture where the pedagogical impulses of the earlier European and American avant-gardes were institutionalized and systematized into the “post-studio” paradigm that is the central subject of this book’s critique. It is the crucible for the contemporary “university artist,” and thus serves as an indispensable case for dissecting the hegemonic model whose historical development and present-day consequences this volume seeks to understand.

Therefore, rather than claiming to be exhaustive, this volume hones in on its specific object of critique, using a global perspective to do so. The question persists: what forms of critique can we meaningfully articulate, and how can they maintain their transformative potential? Recognizing teaching as a performative act, as bell hooks does, offers a space for change, drawing on Paulo Freire’s insistence that education be “the practice of freedom” (hooks, 1994, pp. 10–14). It is this insistence on practice, on responding to systemic conditions—a practice embodied by students at the Berlin University of the Arts (Figure 1.6)—that this volume ultimately seeks to champion.



FIGURE 1.6 Collective performance by Klasse Ursula Neugebauer, *I wouldn't get out of bed for less than \$10,000 a day* at the Berlin University of the Arts, November 5, 2024. Forming a 40-meter-long sculptural barrier of mattresses, the piece provocatively bisected the university's public foyer, transforming it into a temporary habitat. This act of radical spatial intervention served as a direct response to systemic conditions of precarity while reversing the norms of intimacy and privacy to explore new forms of interpersonal action. Photograph: Finja Sander. © 2024 Klasse Neugebauer

Notes

- 1 The Bologna Process, initiated in 1999, is a series of agreements among European countries to ensure comparability in the standards and quality of higher-education qualifications. Its main innovation was the introduction of a three-cycle system (Bachelor, Master, Doctorate). For art schools, this meant adapting to a university model, which spurred the formalization of “artistic research” and the establishment of PhD programs in studio art, thus contributing directly to the “scientization” this volume examines.
- 2 For recent research into the wider question of the state and future of arts education, see, for example, the discussions on radical pedagogy and institutional frameworks in Colomina et al. (2022) and Nollert et al. (2007); the economic and professional realities of an MFA in Davis (2016) and Singerman (1999); and critiques of the art school curriculum in Tilley and Davis (2016).
- 3 The discourses on research in both artistic practice and curating are extensive. On the debate surrounding “artistic research,” see, for instance, Assis and D’Errico (2019), Balkema and Slager (2004), Bishop (2023), Borgdorff (2006), Dombois et al. (2012), Macleod and Holdridge (2006), and Schwab (2018). On the parallel turn in curatorial practice, see Lind (2012), O’Neill and Wilson (2014), Rugg and Sedgwick (2012), and Smith (2012). For key texts specifically connecting these debates to the context of art education, see Borgdorff (2012), Elkins (2014), and Slager (2021).
- 4 This hegemonic model spreads globally through two primary channels: artists from non-Western countries often attend art schools in Europe or North America, and institutions in their home countries frequently adopt these same Western pedagogical frameworks. For a critical perspective on this phenomenon, particularly focusing on design histories and pedagogies, see Mareis et al. (2021).
- 5 This volume’s approach, following Menke, is distinct from two other relevant fields. On the one hand, the field of ‘Artistic Research’ investigates knowledge production *through* art, a tradition exemplified by initiatives like the DFG Research Training Group *Das Wissen der Künste* (Berlin, 2012–2021). On the other hand, the German discourse on pedagogical mediation, or *Ästhetische Bildung*, approaches the topic from faculties of education, focusing on the successful mediation of aesthetic experience (see foundational work by Pazzini, 2018). Distinct from both, this volume interrogates the very conditions and inherent contradictions of aesthetic experience itself, rather than its successful application or mediation.
- 6 The extensive and distinct nature of these critical traditions is well-documented. The Black Arts Movement established a paradigm of critique rooted in community empowerment (cf. Neal, 1968), a legacy analyzed in comprehensive studies (Farrington, 2005) and powerfully enacted in direct institutional interventions like Fred Wilson’s “Mining the Museum” (1992). The critique from Indigenous perspectives is equally profound, grounded in land-based epistemologies that challenge the colonial foundations of the museum. Smith’s (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies* provides the foundational framework, with direct applications to artistic practice explored in recent works (e.g., Igloliorte, 2024). Both traditions operate from epistemological foundations distinct from the post-structuralist lineage this volume examines.
- 7 The robust scholarship on radical pedagogy and political art in South America, which often positions critique outside of formal institutions, is a field unto itself. The foundational text for liberation pedagogy remains Freire (1970). The specific case of Lygia Clark’s later work has been extensively theorized by Rolnik as a paradigm of critique operating beyond the institution; for her definitive analyses of Clark’s therapeutic, embodied, and non-institutional practice of ‘structuring the self,’ see her foundational essays in the MoMA exhibition catalogue on Clark (Butler & Pérez-Oramas, 2014). Similarly, the model of art as direct political intervention, exemplified by Argentina’s Tucumán Arde, has been deeply chronicled by leading scholars such as Giunta (2007) and Camnitzer (2007).

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