

Collaborations between Arts and Sciences focussing Urban Public Space

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Abstract

The lecture will focus on historical and recent developments, approaches and decision making in interdisciplinary collaborations between art, design, media and scientists/scholars within various artistic and scientific disciplines. Rituals, myths, of collaboration will not be neglected, but mainly challenges, professional practices and future potentials in collaboration-projects of scientific and artistic research will be presented. The lecture will discuss Berlin local and international collaborations in research/exhibition projects I did and do at the moment together with our postgraduate students at Institute for Art in Context at Berlin University of the Arts together with research based programs of scientific universities (e.g. together with disciplines urban cultural studies, tourism, landscape-/cityscape-design, European ethnology, cultural anthropology and biomedical research). Recently these projects are situated between multi-, inter-, trans- and postdisciplinary approaches of collaboration.

Introduction

What might be the potentials of future collaborations? Is thinking and acting beyond still existing rigid academic systems and methods a perspective for artists and scientists collaboration with a focus on research and public presentations? Is it fashionable to work in such contexts? How artist and scientist can profit within these advanced studies between academic disciplines? – In changing teams we were following questions like: How to find out what characterizes a street viewing from the perspective of sensitive anthropology? What do we know about European migrants and minorities and their cultural activities of their everyday life in urban contexts? What kind of designed consumer objects individuals carry around to feel more secure in public space during day and night time? Which collaborations should be established to know more about life at risk or suicide rates in creative cities? By whom and why are such projects needed at all? How to represent cultural and social activities in city quarters under the condition of interurban competitions?

Disciplines, collaborations and Projects

With questions like these ones scholars, scientists, students, local everyday experts and artists started to collaborate in studying the city. Involved fields were archaeology, art sciences, biosciences, ethnology, history, image sciences, sociology, technology sciences and postgraduate artists practicing in traditional arts, design and media and performing arts within and outside of cultural and scientific institutions, initiatives or city administrations. In collaborative projects we started from the very beginning developing projects together

focussing similar unanswered questions in our collaborating working fields (e.g. "Sensing the Street" / www.sensingthestreet.de ", Arteaga & Knapp & Lindner, 2008; "Through Europe– In Berlin" Knapp & Lindner, 2000; "A touch of security – Representations of Shelter and Protection in private and public Spheres", Knapp, 1996; "Desire to die – Thinktank Suicide" / www.sterbenwollen.de, Blask & Knapp, 2010; "Missing Link - Art Meets Biomedicine", Knapp & Wenzel & Froemmel & Schnalke, 2000); "Istanbul - Berlin Globalization an Urban Connections in Urban Everyday Life" (Knapp & Knecht, & Soysal 2008).

We were starting in the 1990ies and continuing till now with projects like these, but there is still a rare opportunity, to combine questions and concepts of co-working, that could not be handled sufficiently in mono disciplinary approaches. Results were materialized in parallel presentations of working outcome of collaboration: conferences, publications, exhibitions (and in public spaces as well as in museums, galleries, administration buildings..., including film screenings or public debates and actions). This kind of parallel presence of scientific and artistic approaches and interpretation of knowledge in public space enables more people to get in touch with the outcome of our projects. What might be the consequences to follow questions about the knowledge of arts and sciences in collaborative contexts?

Potentials of inter-, trans- and post-disciplinary Collaborations

Scientists and artists could profit a lot during these working processes, sometimes one year to more than two years in a row) and by developing and realizing together final analogue or digital presentations: e.g. - learning more about the potentials in ones own discipline, - experiencing how to communicate professional knowledge in public space,- being invited after the projects ended, to consult public and private institutions in planning processes, - being much more in contact with everyday experts (we didn't even know about them before our public presentations), - learning how to built collaborative teams and structures of collaborations, that fit to the focus of the projects inside and outside ones own institution, - succeeding in exploring ways to leave ones own gated scientific and artistic communities and finally, there was more respect for other scientific and artistic disciplines (even beyond the concept of the genius self in arts and sciences).

During our project based activities, there was integrated a constant debate on decision making in artistic and scientific contexts that might represent and support cultural diversities, differences and minority views on the content of collaboration.

The aspects I will address in my presentation is though: - further concepts of professional interactions between social scientists and artists, potentials to work beyond reduction of complexity and quasi tribal, self-referential settings in scientific and artistic research, -recent budget risks in cultural sponsoring, - developing future collaborative knowledge in arts and sciences facing more and more infotainment, edutainment and city branding strategies in public space, - involving artists and scientist more in urban decision-making processes and positive effects for the city life, for sciences, for arts in the public spheres.

CV Vita Wolfgang Kapp

As a social and educational scientist and after graduating in Art/Visual Communication Wolfgang Knapp has been teaching and doing research since 1988 at Institute for Art in Context at Berlin University of the Arts. His main focus is in inter- and transdisciplinary research- and exhibition-projects on the interface of arts and sciences in international collaborations since 1995, art in migration contexts, cultural and social minorities in at and media as well as curatorial activities and publications. His projects and lectures led him to e.g. to China, England, Japan, Iran, Oman, Russia, South Africa, Turkey and US; publications in English, Chinese, Dutch, German, Polish and Spanish language

