Exploring connections:

Creative practice in academic education

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To those who are perfectly lost and looking for their place between theory and practice, body and mind, intuition and intellect.

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Abstract

Several students of art and culture studies at Radboud University wish for more creative practice in their current theoretical curriculum, while different educators of this university are exploring the benefits of working together with ArtEZ, the university of the arts. In this thesis, I research how creative practice can benefit university students of Art and Culture Studies that are being educated to possibly enter fields of the humanities, the arts and creative industries. Through literature research, I aim to provide an overview of the debates about the humanities, artistic research and the creative industries. I then introduce the method of actor-network theory since this method enables to reveal the connections between human and non-human actants and the agency of materiality and objects during research processes. Based on this method, I interview two of the four initiators from Radboud University who were involved in the development of the minor Create Space, a collaborative minor between ArtEZ and Radboud University. I then interview three university students of Radboud University that attended the minor. The interviews with the two initiators show the agency of political, institutional and educational actants in the development of the minor. The results from the interviews with the students show that creative practice enhances students' understanding of theory, helps them to place theory in a social or cultural context and makes students more empathic towards artists and non-academic members of society.

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Introduction

During my university bachelor in Cultural Studies, and later on in my work as a creative strategist in the field of the creative industries (advertising and digital communication), I have been looking for a connection between creative practice and academic theory. In the former, I experienced a significant focus on academic thinking without any room for creative practice. The latter contained a fulfilling amount of creative practice but provided no time or space to theorize or thoroughly analyze what I was creating and why I was creating it. In the master Creative Industries, for which I am writing this thesis, I attended the minor Create Space. In this experimental education project, educators and students of ArtEZ and Radboud University worked and learned together. I could finally apply my practical and creative skills to academic theory and my academic skills to practical concepts.

The minor, which took place from February until June 2020, was initiated by educators from ArtEZ and Radboud University: dr. Jeroen Lutters, holding the Professorship Art education as Critical Tactics (AeCT) at ArtEZ; dr. Edwin van Meerkerk, Associate professor at Radboud Institute for Culture and History; Cassandra Onck, Musictheatre maker, singer and teacher at the Music Theatre department of ArtEZ and drs. Thieme Stap, PhD Candidate "Innovation as learning" at Radboud UMC. Eleven students from these institutes were placed together in a so-called transdisciplinary research studio where we got the freedom to develop a biographical approach towards research and take ownership of their own research process. We explored the space between theoretical and practical research and discussed epistemology and artistic research.

Getting acquainted with artistic research made me eager to explore how practical art education can be implemented in university programs since I have been missing a practical and artistic education program that simultaneously entails academic theory and thinking during my education. Combining practical and theoretical education is challenging in The Netherlands due to the Dutch binary system of higher education, which separates applied education from theoretical education. The former form of education is taught at the university of the applied sciences and the latter at the academic university. In this binary system, the university of the arts belongs to the university of applied sciences. Although universities of the arts are often situated at institutes for applied learning, the development of universities of the arts in Western countries differs from nation to nation (Butt 2018, 48).

This binary system was challenged in the minor by bringing together artists and theorists and enabling theoretical students to conduct creative practice and use non-academic research methods. Combining theory and practice in the minor created the most fertile soil from which I have been thinking and creating thus far since my practical and theoretical skills complemented and enhanced one another. Some of my fellow students in the minor shared the need for more practice in the academic university program. I also noticed a need amongst peers, in other courses of the master, to gain more practical experience in and know-how about the creative industries. Fellow students commonly expressed feeling unprepared to enter the labor market of this field. Through these shared needs and experiences and through my own experience of merging practical and theoretical skills, I noticed that students of Art and Culture Studies in university miss out on the benefits of creative practice in academic education. I believe that implementing artistic research and creative practice into the students' curriculum can resolve this issue.

However, most literature about artistic research is concerned with artists conducting research, not with theorists conducting creative processes. Literature on the subject, for instance, focuses on how to merge research into the educational systems of art academies and how to design fitting PhD programs for art academies. This focus is linked to the Bologna Process, a series of ministerial meetings between European countries that aimed to equalize the standards and quality of higher education, as the website of the European Commission mentions (European Commission 2013). In 1999, the Bologna Declaration was signed by twenty-nine countries, of which the Netherlands was one. It demanded a more significant amount of research in higher education, thus in art education. Today, questions still arise about what research in the arts is or should be, and theorists, artists and creative practitioners continue to discuss the gap between art and science (Butt 2017; Candy & Edmonds 2018; Heikkinen, De Jong & Vanderlinde 2016; Coessens, Cripspin and Douglas 2010).

Although none of the definitions of artistic research explicitly mention that only an artist can carry out artistic research, the reoccurring emphasis on the artists' perspective made me wonder if the creative works I made during the minor can be considered artistic research at all. For instance, I do not merely create or perform in a studio or atelier, which according to Henk Borgdorff, who specialized in artistic research, is central to the artistic research process (Borgdorff, 2010, p. 45-6). Nonetheless, in Create Space I experienced how creating and developing ideas through practice opened up a pallet of insights and perspectives that would not have elevated had I merely turned to theory. In other words, it was through the creative process that new insights, understandings and products came into being (Borgdorff 2010, 46),

which would imply that my work could indeed be labeled as artistic research. But I do not consider myself an artist, nor do I feel the work I created is worthy of being called art. This raises questions: Who is an artist and who is a researcher? Who may conduct artistic research? And when does a theorized creative process become artistic research?

In this thesis, I explore the relation and the space between theory and creative practice and analyze how creative practice can be beneficial for education and research in the humanities, specifically Art and Culture Studies. I want to understand if and how creative practice influences the development of academic and creative thinking and doing and the development of skills required for those students who are to enter the labor market of the creative industries. This thesis aims to answer the research question: **What are the benefits of artistic and creative practices in the Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students according to participants and initiators of the minor Create Space?**

Chapter outline

In the first chapter, the theoretical framework, I delve into the epistemological debates about the humanities, artistic research, and the creative industries to determine the current state of affairs. This allows me to sketch out today's view on research and the relation between theory and practice in art and culture education at the university and the relation between culture and commerce in the creative industries, the field that the students will possibly enter after their graduation. The theoretical framework places the research question and the case study of Create Space in a historical, political, and educational context. I first research the position of the humanities in academia and the conception of academic research. I then focus on the rise of and debate about artistic research through the works of scholars who specialized in this topic: Henk Borgdorff, Christopher Frayling, Danny Butt, and Corina Caduff, amongst others. Finally, the first chapter provides an overview of the existing conceptions and definitions of the creative industries by using the works of Cultural Studies scholars David Hesmondhalgh (2013) and John Hartley and his co-writers (2013).

This thesis focuses on relations and connections between education and politics, art and academia, art and commerce, and theory and creative practice. In the second chapter, I introduce a method that enables me to explore these connections: actor-network theory. This method was developed from the 1980s onward by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law. They conducted sociological research in Science and Technology Studies by observing scientists in their working environment, such as the laboratory. The method focuses on the connection between *actors*, humans and non-humans that accomplish or undergo an act and

have agency (Dankert, 2003, p. 2). I use this method to determine which institutional, political, and educational actants had agency in developing the education in the minor since this education, in turn, influenced the research and learning process of the students. The method further allows me to bring to light how actants such as creative practice, materials, objects and non-academic research sources influenced the students' research and learning process in the environment of Create Space. In this chapter, I also explain how I process the interview results.

In the third chapter, I introduce the minor Create Space and share the process of its development. The chapter provides a glimpse into the learning environment of the participant in which they experimented with academic and non-academic types of research and with creative practice. I gained the information from the interviews with two of the four initiators of the minor Create Space: dr. Edwin Van Meerkerk and drs. Thieme Stap, and from my observations and experiences as a participant.

I elaborate on the educational theories and methods used in the educational design of the minor in the fourth chapter to understand the agency of these educational actants in the research and learning process of the students. I analyze this development according to the ANT method to map out the connections between different institutional and political actants and their agency in the development of this education. In the discussion section of this chapter, additional literature about the educational theories and methods is used to theorize the interview results. This section will also link the results to the literature about the debates in the humanities, artistic research, and the creative industries.

The fifth chapter shares the results of the interviews with three students from Radboud University who participated in Create Space and elevates the effects and agency of non-academic research sources, materials and creative practice on the students' research and learning process. These results give a first-hand insight into the students' needs and into the effect of creative practice on their understanding of theory. The chapter further exposes how creative practice alternates the students' perspectives towards research, the university as an institute, artists and non-academic members of society. I chose to only interview students of Radboud University since the aim of this thesis is to specifically look into the university's education system and the needs of theoretically schooled students, my peers. In this chapter, the interview results will also be analyzed via the ANT method and theoretically discussed by linking the interview results to the literature presented in the theoretical framework that revolves around the debates in the humanities, artistic research and the creative industries.

In the conclusion, I bring together the perspectives of the educators and the students and show where the interview results confirm the literature discussed in this thesis, which is to

reveal the added value of embedding creative practice in these students' education. The insights presented in this thesis may be helpful to improve academic Art and Culture education for future students who, like my peers and myself, feel eager to embrace more creative practice into their academic learning and research process. By exploring the space between theory and creative practice, I hope to strengthen the position of artistic research at the art academy, at the university and in the creative industries.

Chapter 1: Theoretical framework

This thesis explores the benefits of embedding creative practice in the humanities, specifically in Arts and Cultural education at Dutch academic universities. This chapter provides the historical, political and educational context in which the minor Create Space was situated and researches how the idea about what research is or should be changed over time. I first aim to understand the debate about the humanities and discuss its current position within academia. I then explore the debate about artistic research and reveal how international policy reforms have influenced the role of research in higher education and the university of the arts, which affected the development of artistic research. I finally discuss the debate about culture and commerce inherent to the field of the creative industries since students are likely to enter this field's labor market, either as researchers, policymakers or as more practically oriented creative workers. The chapter illustrates that the conception of research, art, and culture and who is to produce it is debatable. It also reveals how seemingly opposites are growing towards each other: the humanities and technology, research and art, doing and thinking, culture and commerce.

1.1. The humanities: an ongoing debate about research

This section shows how the position and meaning of the humanities have been challenged since the natural sciences entered the academic field. In Giambattista Vico's work *Scienza Nuova* (1725), a 'conceptual distinction' between the humanities and the natural sciences first appeared, however, 'his work was ignored for almost a hundred years.' (Bod 2018, 84). Bod argues that the Renaissance humanists considered the *studia humanitatis* as disciplines 'that not only described the human world but also transformed students into better human beings' (2019, 223). However, in the middle of the eighteenth century, some scholars saw the humanities as 'both too narrow and too self-important' (223).

Danny Butt argues that the late nineteenth-century conception of scientific knowledge argues that research must be objective, reliable, generalizable and transferable (2018, 80). Søren Kjørup writes a division between research conducted in the humanities and research conducted in the natural sciences began to emerge that during this period (Kjørup 2011, 29), which led to the distinction between faculties of the natural sciences and of the humanities.

The first Faculties of Humanities in European universities rose in the late nineteenth century due to 'institutional reforms and changed priorities within European universities' which led to a split between the faculty of philosophy on the one hand and the natural and

social sciences on the other (Bod 2019, 223). Bod writes that although the humanities split from the natural sciences, many forms of research in the humanities can share a methodological ground with the natural sciences since both fields search for empirical patterns and underlying theoretical principles (Bod 2018, 78-9). The beginning of the twentieth century saw the rise of positivism, in which objectivity and rationality were embraced. The techno-scientific university officially replaced the theological university of the Middle Ages and Renaissance (Butt 2018, 4), where the emphasis was on the objective form of research that was primarily conducted in the natural sciences.

This techno-scientific character is noticeable in the humanities today, where digitization and new technologies are beneficial for research in the field. According to Bod and his co-writers, it is currently an exciting time for the humanities due to this digitalization, the emergence of new fields, and the 'cross-fertilization between disciplines' (Bod et al. 2016, 1). Yet, they also mention concerns about the position of the humanities in the current academic field:

> 'At the same time, there is a sense of gloom, perhaps even crisis, among those who are convinced that the humanities are valuable, precious, indispensable. The number of students taking humanities courses declines, and humanities departments at universities worldwide are subject to severe budget cuts or abolition altogether. In a period in which the academic world is plagued by governments insisting on measurable results for the sake of short-term financial profit, the humanities seem most vulnerable.' (Bod et al. 2016, 1.)

Bod's description of the vulnerable position of humanities is relevant for this thesis since it shows that financial support provided by governments is of influence on the development of the humanities, which in turn influences the education of Art and Culture Studies students. As Butt puts it: 'there are many ways of knowing that exceed the narrow parameters of techno-scientific knowledge in a globally validated form that dominate the university sector under capitalism' (Butt 2018, 5). In this thesis, I research how embedding different ways of knowing into Art and Culture Studies, such as knowing through artistic research and creative practice, can be beneficial for the development of the humanities. I aim to reveal how this embeddedness of creative practice might improve the value of the humanities in this profit-driven academic world. By displaying how creative practice in theoretical education can reshape the definition of knowledge and art, I hope to strengthen the field's position.

Defining phenomena like knowledge and art seems to be an ever-changing process. The debate about what research is and who is to conduct it is ongoing (Butt 2018, 5; Früchtl 2019,

126), and 'in our western thinking, the relationship between science and art is subject to change' as Früchtl mentions (2019, 126). As Julia Klein states in her paper, determining and defining brings about 'normative judgments, which are mainly based only on what we want them to mean.' (Klein 2010, 6). Kjørup also highlights the difficulty of defining cultural phenomena like artists and art (Kjørup 2011, 33). Despite these difficulties, there seems to be a consensus amongst the scholars that research contains *new* information that adds to the existing field of *knowledge* (UNPD & UNESCO *n.d.*; Oxford Dictionary 2020; Butt 2019, 72; Kjørup 2011, 24).

Ontological and epistemological questions and the difficulties around defining phenomena, disciplines and fields are also present in the debate on artistic research (Kjørup 2011, 29). The field shows similarities with the humanities in the nineteenth century when scholars fought for acknowledgment of their research (Borgdorff 2011, 48; Kjørup 2011, 29; Coessens, Crispen & Douglas 2013, 45). Although Kjørup mentions that the humanities have secured their position in some fields (Kjørup 2011, 29), others argue that the gap between intellectuals in the sciences and the humanities is still intact today (Coessens et al. 2013, 45; Caduff 2017, 320; Bod et al. 2016, 2).

1.2. Artistic research: a debate on thinking and doing

In the field of artistic research, artists, scholars and educators have to prove the academic quality of their research. They are often struggling to receive recognition from scholars in the academic field. The academic university still holds power to decide what academic research is and who is to conduct it. The debate about artistic research focuses on the difference between research conducted and taught by different education institutes, namely by the university and the university of the arts. In this section, I show how research became more prominent in higher education and how this influenced the development of artistic research at the university of the arts.

In the 1990s, educational transformations of financial nature occurred since the state's role within education was becoming more and more economical (Butt 2018, 5). One of the results of policy reforms of multiple European countries in the 1990s is the Bologna Process. According to the European Commission's website, this process 'is a mechanism promoting intergovernmental corporation between 48 European countries in the field of higher education' and 'seeks to bring more coherence to higher education systems across Europe' (European Commission 2013). In line with the idea of the information/knowledge society, which

emphasizes the 'importance of research and development and science and technology in modern economies' (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 100), the role of research became more prominent in higher education, thus also in the universities of the arts. The educational transformations of financial nature led to an impulse in the development of artistic research at the universities of the arts, a research field in which the boundaries between thinking and doing are defied.

Although the rise of artistic research brought about questions and new ideas about the meaning of research, the field had yet to prove itself within the field of knowledge and research roughly twenty years after the debate set off (Coessens et al. 2013, 39). There was no general definition of the new research field (Solleveld 2012, 79), and there is still none today. Corina Caduff and Tan Wälchli write that the field is well established (2019, 1), but Joseph Früchtl argues that many speak and write about artistic research, yet 'nobody can say exactly what it is' (Früchtl 2019, 125).

Despite the different ideas about the status quo and the field's definition, scholars agree on some things. The first consensus stems from the works of Cristopher Frayling (1993) and Henk Borgdorff (2011). The writers agree that there are three main categories of relations between research and art; research *on* art: such as art history and cultural studies; research *for* art: for instance, exploring, testing or developing new techniques or materials; research *in* or *through* art: making creative work in the arts that brings about new knowledge. Artistic research fits in the last category; a research field in which creating art creates new knowledge. Many agree that in artistic research, it is *through* artistic practice and *through* the artwork that knowledge surfaces, making the artistic practice both the result of the research as well as the methodology of the research (Borgdorff 2011, 45-6; Coessens et al. 2013, 71; Kjørup 2011, 27; Caduff 2017, 314; Klein 2010, 2).

Second, these scholars agree that there is not one general method that applies to artistic research but instead a plurality of methods. Methodological pluralism is often identified as problematic by those eager to define one form of 'real' research in academia. According to Kjørup and Klein, however, methodological pluralism is not specifically characteristic for artistic research but instead present in many already established scientific disciplines (Kjørup 2011, 24; Klein 2010, 2).

Third, the literature agrees that artistic research both *explores* and *is* the space between art and science (Borgdorff 2011, 46; Caduff, 2017, 315). Caduff writes that: 'The aim is for science and art to fertilize each other and for artistic research to constitute an independent space between the two.' (2017, 315). Artistic research exists through the connection of these two worlds (314). Methodologically, an artistic researcher is thus moving in between the arts and

academia. Merely a small part of the field of the arts has entered the field of academic research and is considered to belong to both domains (Früchtl 2019, 129) as it moves around in artistic research.

The debate would not be a debate if it were not for disagreements. Caduff criticizes artistic researchers for not consistently referring to the work of their colleagues since they view their practice as artistic rather than scientific (2017, 321). Referencing, however, is essential according to Caduff since it 'aims at the formation and development of a discourse' that is otherwise questioned (2017, 321). It also provides the ability for peers in the community to assess each other on scientific criteria (321).

According to Butt, the written component inherent to academic research has been criticized by some scholars and artists of artistic research. Although the written component creates space for critical reflection of the artists, they question whether a proper level of criticism is guaranteed when the artist critiques one's own work instead of a viewer or a peer (2018, 85). Moreover, it is put to the question whether these reflections add to existing knowledge (85). Matcham argues that by validating art through the rules of the sciences, through the written component, art's authority to produce a 'truth' is undermined (2014, 277). Caduff additionally blames scholars, who are not active as an artist, for taking over the field or artistic research and shaping a discourse that does not refer to the projects carried out by artistic researchers. Scholars, she says, 'adorn' themselves with artists because of their status within the cultural sector (2017, 320-1).

These critiques focus on whether artists or academics are to shape the field of artistic research since both the field of art and that of academia produce knowledge around art, only in different manners. My hypothesis in this thesis is that when university students, who are future scholars and academics, get acquainted with and conduct creative practice and artistic research, they might better understand artists' work and their way of producing knowledge. This understanding could help determine what the discourse of artistic research should consist of and strengthen the ties between the two fields, enabling them to fertilize each other.

Another issue in this debate revolves around who is to conduct artistic research. Kjørup argues that it can only be undertaken by artists (2011, 24-5). Julia Klein contradicts this argument: 'Research is not then or only artistic, if carried out by artists […], but deserves the attribute 'artistic' where, when and by whom whatsoever [it has] been made to a specific quality: the mode of artistic experience.' (2010, 3). She elaborates on this by writing that research and art are not separate domains but are two dimensions that share a common cultural space. Coessens et al. confirm this viewpoint, mentioning that both art and science deconstruct

the world's raw material and reconstruct it in their own way (Coessens, Crispen & Douglas 2013, 40). Früchtl further explains that art and science share 'the epistemological basic elements of experience' such as perception, cognition and imagination and are distinguished by how they give shape to these elements (2019, 128).

These commonalities between the arts and academia correspond with the idea put forward by Frayling in his paper *Research in Art and Design* (1993). He writes that the practical and the cognitive are always connected: 'The brain controls the hand which informs the brain.' (1993, 4). Borgdorff shares this idea of a connection between thinking and doing: 'Doing is also thinking, albeit an exceptional form of thinking.' (2012, 21). Because theory and practice, and science and art supposedly share a common space and because doing and thinking are always happening simultaneously, according to the scholars above, I am curious what happens when academics start to gain knowledge from artistic practices.

In artistic research, thinking and doing, art and art theory, the university of the arts and the academic university are growing towards each other. Instead of being hesitant towards the other's way of doing research, artists and academic researchers see how the art world and the academic world can inspire and elevate one another. Within the field of the creative industries, there is also a dynamic of two seemingly opposites coming together: culture and commerce. In the next section, I show how the relation between them developed within the creative industries and explain how scholars began to change their ideas about merging culture and commerce.

1.3. The creative industries: a debate about culture and commerce

By practically working *within* the field of the creative industries as a creative worker, and by theoretically studying and researching it as a student *of* this field, I have experienced how *doing* helped me in *thinking*, and vice versa. Creative, practical skills such as graphic design and storytelling helped connect theory to experiences and examples from the working field. During this master and my participation in this minor, I noticed a need amongst students to gain practical skills and practical experience in the creative industries. Students commonly expressed a need to be more prepared to enter the labor market of the cultural and creative field. In this section, I discuss the debate about the creative industries to understand the characteristics of the field students of Arts and Culture Studies might enter after graduation.

According to David Hesmondhalgh, an influential scholar in Cultural Studies, defining the field of the creative industries has its complications (2013, 22). He writes that at the core of cultural studies lies 'the attempt to examine and rethink culture by considering its

relationship to social power.' (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 51) The creative industries 'deal primarily with the industrial production and circulation of texts' (2013, 16) in which he describes texts as all content and cultural works produced in the creative industries (3).

The field goes by a couple of names. An early one, *cultural industries,* finds its origin in 'the ideological critique of art and culture under industrial capitalism associated with the neo-Marxist theorists of the Frankfurt School' (Hartley et al. 2012, 77-8). Philosophers Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer created this term after the second World War to express their critique on the commodification of culture, a development that violated the sophisticated image that these scholars attributed to culture (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 22-3). The combination of Marxism and psychoanalysis inspired the critical philosophers (Rocamora and Smelik 2016, 10) who saw art and culture as expressions of extraordinary human creativity.

The focus on sophisticated culture shifted towards a focus on culture in day-to-day life. The emphasis on everyday culture derives from Raymond Williams, who sees 'culture as a whole way of life' (Rocamora and Smelik 2016, 9) and argues that 'culture is ordinary' (Hartley et al. 2012, 75). Williams questioned the lofty and elitist concept of culture (74-5) and his conception of culture as a whole way of life became a fundamental idea within cultural studies. Scholars did not merely delve into the canon of highly talented or influential artists and their well-known cultural and artistic products but instead focused more on ordinary everyday culture (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 7 & 51).

In the late 1960s, the debate about merging culture and commerce shifted as other theorists began to recognize that commodification does not by definition lead to lesser forms of cultural expression or to the downfall of quality in cultural products (UNESCO &UNDP 2013, 19-20). Scholars questioned Adorno and Horkheimer's conception that artistic autonomy was being replaced by cultural producers who were captured by the wants and needs of capitalism (Hartley et al. 2012, 79; Hesmondhalgh 2013, 82). The connotation of the term *cultural industries* became positive and was adopted by scholars in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century.

In the 1990s, the term *creative industries* entered policy-making by the effects of neo-liberalism. The policy of the information society influenced the creative industries profoundly in that policymakers and academics agreed that the creative industries would highly impact future economies (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 99-101). This growing economic influence was an often-used argument to fund research in and through the arts (Kälvemark 2011, 10), which affected the development and growth of artistic research.

Although the term cultural industries have a neo-Marxist heritage and the term creative industries is more connected to neo-liberalism, the creative industries are not merely engaged with material or economic growth. According to Hartley et al., the field also has a say in 'the individual and social structure of novelty and resetting the definition of the normal' (Hartley et al. 2012, 61). What is more, the field 'is valuable because it mainstreams the economic value of culture, media and design.' (Hartley et al. 2012, 59) The field provides a critical stance towards society, how society is formed and what society thrives on. The relation between culture and commerce developed from a hostile one into a more fertile one, which can benefit both the art and culture sectors and the economy.

Hartley et al., for instance, mention how the creative industries have the ability to bring together sectors that range from the culturally specific and non-commercial to the globalized and highly commercial (2012, 60). They also explain that the field contains a wide range of sectors that were previously not connected, showing the actual size of the creative industries and the part it takes up in the economy (60). No distinction is made between all these sectors since the field ranges from stage builders to digital content creators, from classical music composers to thigh-tech conglomerates, from academic researchers to autonomous artists. As Hesmondhalgh mentions, 'the core and the peripheral industries interact with each other in significant ways' (2013, 18). Small or big, commercial or culturally-specific, industrial or handmade, all texts and producers are part of the field in which creativity and commerce and research and practice meet in one way or another. Because of the overlap of and interaction between industries, I make no sharp distinction between the core and the peripheral industries in this thesis and use the term creative industries to refer to this broad and multidisciplinary field.

Although all players in the field of the creative industries have a certain amount of agency, which determines 'who makes things change and how' (Hesmondhalgh 2013, p. 77), some have more than others. Like the university in the academic world and the university of the arts in the artistic realm, influential players in the field of the creative industries hold the agency to shape the field. Powerful corporations such as big media conglomerates, which are simply said in it for the money, circulate the cultural products produced and consumed by society (Hesmondhalgh 2012, 5). In other words, these conglomerates have the power to determine who is to consume what.

The multidisciplinary character of the creative industries might make room for many different kinds of enterprises and creative workers. Yet, power relations between powerful corporations highly influence who is to produce and consume cultural and creative products.

The same goes for the university, which still has the most influence over who is to produce academic research, and the university of the arts, which has the most say in who is to produce art. New educational initiatives such as the minor Create Space challenge these power relations by embedding creative practice into the program and inviting professionals from the working field into the academic world.

Conclusion

This chapter provided the theoretical context in which I situated the minor Create Space by discussing the debates about the humanities, artistic research and the creative industries. I showed how seemingly opposites in these fields are growing towards one another more and more since scholars and artists began to see how these opposites can benefit each other.

I revealed that from the nineteenth century onwards, the idea about what academic research was and how it should be conducted began to change. The humanities had to prove the worth of the research and knowledge produced in this field to keep a rightful position in academia and be considered equal to the natural sciences. Although technology and growing interdisciplinarity bring many new possibilities for the field to develop, in today's academic world that is driven by profit and focuses mainly on measurable results, the humanities are also vulnerable.

In artistic research, similar struggles occur around proving the academic value of research as conducted in this field. Scholars of artistic research established the field as the space between art and science is characterized by methodological plurality and multidisciplinary. The field is still difficult to define and according to some scholars, there is still an ongoing debate about who is to conduct artistic research and who is to determine the field's discourse: artists or theorists.

I finally shared how culture and commerce started to fertilize each other in the creative industries. In all three fields, relations between powerful players have been influential in the ideas about who is to produce research and who is to create cultural and creative products. The development of the humanities, artistic research and the creative industries are closely connected to policy reforms. The fields dare to explore how opposite forces like commerce and creativity, art/culture and science, are connected rather than divided. The university, the university of the arts and the commercial field of the creative industries are growing towards each other more and more. Researchers, artists and professionals of the creative industries are crisscrossing between research, art and commerce.

In crossovers programs like Create Space, research and art, doing and thinking, culture and professional knowledge from the working field found each other. Together, the different perspectives can create points of view from which students, researchers and professionals can look at their own world and into that of others while having access to the specialized theoretical and practical knowledge of the other.

I use the theoretical framework in this thesis to analyze how embedding creative practice in the education of theoretical Art and Culture Studies can benefit the academic field of the humanities, for the field of artistic research and for the field of the creative industries. In the discussion sections of chapters four and five, I connect the interview results to the theory presented here.

In order to research the effect of creative practice on the theoretical education of Arts and Culture, I will need a method that reveals the relation between practice and theory in the current educational field and their relation in the learning process of students. The following chapter introduces the method that allows these relations to surface: Actor-network theory. I used this method to map out the connections between different actants in the educational field that influenced the development of this minor and highlight the agency of materials, objects, and creative practice on the learning and research process of academic students of the minor Create Space.

Chapter 2: Methodology: Actor-network theory

In the debate about artistic research, scholars argue that doing and thinking, theory and practice, art and science, are intertwined and both considered sources from which knowledge can rise when doing research (Frayling 1993, 4; Borgdorff 2012, 21). In this thesis, I focus on the relation between creative practice and theory at universities and research how students' learning and research process can be enhanced when this relation is fueled. Actor-network theory (ANT) is a sociological methodology that revolves around tracing and unraveling relations. The method reveals the effect and agency of materiality, objects and practice in the research process. I first introduce the methodology and then show how I will incorporate the method into the interview questions. Finally, I describe how I will process the interview data.

2.1. Actor-network theory

Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar first introduced ANT in the work *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (1979). Latour writes that ANT originated from a need for a new social theory that enabled sociological research on Science and Technology Studies (Latour 2005, 10). The method was further developed by Latour, Michel Callon and John Law in the 1980s and revealed the relevance of non-human actants in sociology (Latour 2005, 10). In ANT, the social is understood as an entanglement of interactions between human and non-human actants and seen as 'a movement, a displacement, a transformation, a translation, an enrollment' (Latour, 2005, 64-5). This focus on interaction and movement reveals the method's performative character.

From the domain of Science and Technology Studies, the method moved to many other fields (Latour 2005, 10). According to John Tresch, Latour's work created 'bridges between science studies and anthropology, history, literary studies, art history, and environmental studies' and philosophy (Tresch 2013, 302). The method became known for allowing social scientists to move between different research domains and fields (Latour 1999, 20; Latour 2013). Latour states that 'ANT was […] a matrix of semiotics, ethnomethodology, science studies – all with the idea of comparing the truth conditions in different regimes.' (Latour 2013). These regimes are the different domains of knowledge that each have their own ways of gaining knowledge and their own truth conditions.

Latour argues that it was 'ANT's job was to get rid of the rationalist discourse' (Latour 2013), which Latour rejects. He writes that 'it is utterly impossible to understand what holds

society together without reinjecting in its fabric the facts manufactured by natural and social sciences and the artefacts designed by engineers.' (Latour 1996, 371). In other words, to understand how our scientific reality and truth conditions are build, it is crucial to look at how objects and materials affect the research process and the outcome of the research. By researching the effect of materiality and practice in research, ANT critiques the objective, rationalist view of science. It challenges structuralist and post-structuralist theory in which matter and materiality mainly had been neglected and can therefore be placed under 'new materialism' (Rocamora and Smelik 2016, 13).

In this thesis, I want to understand how scientific reality, or truth conditions, were developed in minor Create space. ANT's focus on relations between human and non-human actants and its capacity to move between domains makes it suitable for analyzing this de-disciplinary and inter-institutional minor. Its emphasis on connections makes ANT useful to see the relation between the university of the arts and the university. The method's focus on materiality, objects, and practice further allows for the connection between creative practice and materials and the students' theoretical understanding to surface. For these reasons, ANT the method of choice in this thesis. I now elaborate on the different aspects of the methodology by explaining some key terms used within ANT.

2.2. Key terms

Latour describes that within ANT, an *actant* is 'something that acts or to which activity is granted by others' (1996, 375). Joanne Entwistle writes that actants can be many things, for instance, humans, tools, instruments, observations, or measurements (2016, 272), but also atoms and governments, according to Martin Müller (2015, 30). According to Müller, within ANT, 'all entities stand on equal ontological footing to begin with' and the associations, or the relations, between them 'determine whether one actant gains more power than another.' (2015, 30).

In ANT, this power to change other actants is called *agency.* Latour writes that in the early ANT research, he and his fellow authors realized that objects had agency on researchers and research processes and outcomes (2005, 87). Non-human actants such as objects of science and technology became 'socially compatible' (2005, 87) since they, for instance, showed the researcher things that were hidden, like a microscope that shows bacteria or a spreadsheet that enables researchers to predict certain profits beforehand (Entwistle 2016, 270). Entwistle argues that objects and instruments can be viewed as an extension of our body to which we are

connected (2016, 270). Non-human actants are not mere passive entities but instead greatly influence the research, blurring the distinction between human and non-human actants.

Latour uses Deleuze's concept of the rhizome to explain how the term *network* should be interpreted in ANT. A rhizome is 'a concept of an interwoven structure' (Bod 2018, 89) and 'works through connections and networks instead of a hierarchical structure' (Smelik 2016, 166). According to Latour, a network is not a flat, two- or three-dimensional surface but instead contains as many dimensions as connections (Latour 1996, 371). He further describes that the social and natural world are nothing but networks, without anything in between them; 'no surface, no space, 'no aether in which the networks should be immersed' (1996, 372). Spatial properties like far/close, small scale/large scale, or inside/outside are not the focus of ANT (1996, 372-3). Instead, ANT follows 'how a given element becomes strategic through the number of connections it commands and how it […] [loses] its importance when losing its connections.' (374) Its connectedness to other actants thus determines the importance of an actant in the network.

The process of human and non-human actants connecting is called *group formation*. Contrary to other strains of research in the social sciences, ANT argues that groups are constantly made and remade. The method rejects the idea of fixed groups and embraces the notion of constant group formation (Latour 2005, 34). Latour writes that: 'For ANT, if you stop making and remaking groups, you stop having groups.' (34). This process of the making and remaking of groups leaves behind traces that can be picked up as data by the researcher (34), leading to the actor-network.

Latour defines the term *actor-network* by arguing that ANT 'uses some of the simple properties of a net and then adds to it an actor that does some work' (1996, 372). An action is never carried out individually (Latour 2005, 44) and should be viewed as a node 'of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled' (2005, 44). Via this network of nodes and connections, actions are thus always influenced by the acts of other actants, either human or non-human.

Entwistle's interpretation of the term is that in an actor-network, humans and non-humans actants are networked or 'hooked' to one another (2016, 270), with which she taps into the relations between the different actants. Dankert writes that the ties between the actants are, in fact, the actions that actants perform on each other (2002, 4). Without these (inter)active connections, there is no network, and when actants establish connections, they have the agency to transform and displace each other (4). The work that is done to displace and transform actants in the actor-network is what Dankert calls *translation*.

According to Entwistle, Latour argues that science does not observe the world objectively, but instead assembles materials, *assemblages* in ANT, with which researchers 'actively construct and perform the world they apparently describe' (Entwistle 2016, 271). Research findings that are, in fact, 'the result of our ways of seeing' (2016, 271), formed by the objects researchers assemble through which they look at the world.

Some terms I presented here, such as actant and agency, are not unique to ANT but also used in other theories and methods that belong to new materialism. Before I explain how I will apply these terms and the ANT method to this thesis, it is helpful to summarize them:

- *Actants*: human and non-human entities, such as animals, objects, or concepts, that accomplish or undergo an act and have agency over one other
- *Agency*: the power of actants to change other actants
- *Network*: interaction and connection between actants that are at work
- *Group formation*: the dynamics of the making and remaking of groups
- *Actor-network*: groups formed by actants
- *Translation*: the work that is necessary to displace and transform actants
- *Assemblages*: the ordering of heterogeneous entities so that they work together for a certain time (Müller 2015, 28)

(Dankert 2003, 2-4)

2.3. Applying Actor-network theory to the case study Create Space

Latour writes that within ANT, the researcher has 'to follow the actors themselves' (2005, 12). The method of ANT is 'not particularly fancy or remarkable'; it simply follows the actants in their natural environment (Entwisle 2016, 282) by 'observing what they do, where they go and what objects they add to particular 'assemblages' to do research' (272). Latour describes that the researcher's 'travel' begins by picking up 'the traces left behind by their [the actants'] activity of forming and dismantling groups.' (1999, 29).

In this thesis, I pick up the traces left behind by the human actants involved in the minor Create Space by conducting interviews based on semi-structured questions with two initiators of the minor and three university students who participated in the minor. At the beginning of chapters 3, 4 and 5, I give a detailed description of how I developed the interview questions based on the ANT method. Chapter by chapter, I aim to discover which human and non-human actants have agency in and are part of the actor-network of Create Space.

By interviewing two of the four initiators of Create Space that were involved in the minor via Radboud University, dr. Edwin van Meerkerk and drs. Thieme Stap, I first try to reconstruct the development of Create Space and learn how institutional actants affected this development. I focus on power relations within the actor-network of national and international institutional actants to grasp how these relations influence the role of practice and research in Art and Culture education. I also try to understand which educational theories were used in the design of the minor and ask the initiators about the effect of creative practice on theoretically schooled students since I am curious about the intended learning outcomes the initiators had in mind when developing the program.

In the interviews with three of the participants from Radboud University, I follow them in their journey throughout the minor by mapping out what kind of materials and objects they used and assembled and how these influenced their research and learning process. I try to see how these altered their view on research and their relation with human and institutional actants that belong to the actor-network of Create Space. Through these interviews, I sketch out the experiences and perspectives of educators and students who are comparing truth conditions of different domains in this experimental collaborative minor.

2.4. Unitizing and coding

The semi-structured interviews that I conducted can be placed under qualitative research. According to Joost Beuving and Geert De Vries, qualitative research in the social sciences aims 'to describe, interpret and explain social reality through the medium of language' instead of through mathematics, as is done in quantitative research (2015, 19). In processing the transcripts of the interviews that I conduct with the initiators and participants of Create Space, I lean on some elements of the practical methodology of qualitative analysis as described by Joost Beuving and Geert De Vries in *Doing Qualitative Research: The Craft of Naturalistic Inquiry* (2015). Namely, I *unitize* the interview data, which means that I distinguish elements and create units from the material (Beuving & De Vries 2015, 162). I do so by attaching symbols to similar elements and topics in the data.

By using symbols in the process of unitizing, I deviate from the method as described by Beuving and De Vries, who use words to words and phrases to unitize data. During the process of unitizing the textual data of the interviews, I noticed that using words and phrases added even more words, or data, to the interview texts I was analyzing. This blurred the overview. I naturally turned to symbols as I have used these in my previous education to

process or summarize large amounts of literature and data, which I learned from mind mapping (see attachment no 1). Using symbols to unitize the data enabled me to create more visual order. Letting a methodological choice like this derive during the research progress correlates within artistic research, in which the methodology comes forward during the creative process (Butt, 2018, 85).

Some of the symbols or units represent multiple yet similar words or phrases because the interviewees used slightly different words to describe similar topics. Attaching various words and phrases to one symbol, to one unit, helped me not to interpret the data too soon. Since I unitized while re-reading the interviews, the order of the units correlates with the order of the questions and answers. Many units reemerged after their first appearance. The few that did not re-emerge are not taken into account in this thesis because of their low significance.

After unitizing the data, I divide the units 'into meaningful categories' and label, or name, these categories, a process Beuving and De Vries call 'coding' (2015, 163). I do so by looking at which units overlap 'to sort units of material' (163). These categories are then presented and shortly introduced in chapters 4 and 5 and form the sections of these chapters under which I share and analyze the data from the interviews.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explained that the method of actor-network theory allows the researcher to move between different research domains, which is suitable for researching the minor Create Space in which students from various institutes and disciplines, from various domains of research, were placed together. The method shows the relation between actants and their agency in the actor-network of Create Space, such as institutional, political and educational actants. ANT's focus on the agency of materiality and practice helps me understand the influence of creative practice on theoretically schooled students' learning and research process. The method serves as the base of the interviews that I conduct with two of the four initiators and three students from Radboud University.

Since I merely interview five of the many human actants involved in the minor, this research will not unravel the complete actor-network around Create Space. However, the aim is to highlight these students' and educators' experiences and needs and understand which actants influence or hold back the development of these needs in Art and Culture Studies. This way, I hope to show how creative practice can add value to the education of Arts and Culture Studies and how the curriculum can comply with their needs. In the following chapter, I share

how Create Space came into existence and sketch out the learning environment that the initiators and the students co-created.

Chapter 3: Introduction case study: the minor Create Space

Before analyzing the results of the interviews via the ANT method in the following chapters, this chapter aims to follow the journey of the development of the minor Create Space. I then provide a glimpse into the learning environment of the participant in which they experimented with academic and non-academic types of research and creative practice. I aim to answer the question: **How was the minor Create Space developed?**

The information shared in this chapter is derived from the interviews with two of the four initiators involved in the development of the minor from the university perspective; dr. Edwin van Meerkerk, director of education at the Faculty of Arts at Radboud University and drs. Thieme Stap, PhD Candidate "Innovation as learning" at Radboud UMC. I asked them about the development process of the minor, about the educational theories and methods that were at the base of it, and about their roles within the minor. Besides the interviewees' input, my observations and experience as a participant of Create Space are infused in this chapter to sketch out how this experimental form of education was put to practice.

3.1. Interviews

The four initiators of the minor were and dr. Edwin Van Meerkerk, dr. Jeroen Lutters, Cassandra Onck and drs.Thieme Stap. I interview the initiators of Create Space that were involved via Radboud University since I aim to reveal the perspective on creative practice in academic education. Their educational knowledge and experience provided a professional view from the university's perspective on the benefits of embedding creative practice into academic university education.

The interviews were conducted on September 17 and September 21, 2020. I interviewed the initiators individually to be able to go into detail. Because of the measurements taken around Covid-19, the interviews were conducted via the digital video call program Zoom and were planned to take thirty minutes. The interview with Van Meerkerk took thirty minutes, while the interview with Stap took one and a half hours, mainly since he asked me several questions at the end of the interview. The interviews are conducted in English since this was the main language in the minor and since I write this thesis in English.

In order to find out the history and rationale behind the minor, I asked the following three questions at the beginning of the interviews with Van Meerkerk and Stap

- *Why were you engaged in founding this minor and what was your role within it?*
- *Where did you notice a demand for an educational program like this?*
- *On which educational theories and methods is the design of the minor based?*

Through these questions, I try to discover the reasoning behind the educational choices made in the development of the minor in which I participated.

3.2. Development of Create Space

In spring 2018, the Board of Radboud University issued a Call for Proposals for interfaculty collaborations. Educators from Radboud University could send in proposals, from which The Board of Radboud University elected a winning proposal that was provided with the financial means to execute it. This inspired Van Meerkerk to propose an institutional collaboration project between Radboud University and ArtEZ.

Van Meerkerk said that for about fifteen years, teachers of the art academy ArtEZ and teachers from the Faculty of Arts at Radboud University have been collaborating on several educational and research projects. For instance, in the honors programs (Van Meerkerk 2020; Sonderen & Koksma 2017) and fashion research programs of prof. dr Smelik. Van Meerkerk and Lutters wanted to set up a new educational collaboration between ArtEZ and Radboud University. They called in Cassandra Onck, Music theatre-maker, singer and teacher at ArtEZ, and Thieme Stap, PhD candidate "Innovation as learning" at Radboud UMC. Because of personal circumstances, Onck had to end her work at Create Space. Fabiola Camuti, senior researcher and lecturer at ArtEZ and research affiliate with the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA), replaced Onck from April onwards.

The initial idea of the institutional collaboration was to enable students to follow courses at the other institution. However, Onck and Stap rejected this idea and instead suggested bringing students of both institutions together, creating a community of artists and theorists. Bringing together artists and theorists and moving away from the traditional distinction between their research and practices is a principle that is also found in design-based learning, which is an educational theory. After discussing this idea with Van Meerkerk, Lutters and several stakeholders, the four initiators wrote the subsidy proposal for the Board's call. They suggested an interinstitutional minor that encouraged students to take ownership of their learning and research process (Stap 2020).

Van Meerkerk said that when they proposed this institutional collaboration, the Board of Radboud University was surprised since it did not actually fit the rules and ideas of an

interfaculty collaboration within Radboud University. However, the Board was looking for: 'something new, which is after all what we want with these interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary collaborations' (Van Meerkerk 2020). Radboud University and ArtEZ already wanted to collaborate, so the Board of Radboud University agreed with the proposal, which was considered a pilot for collaborative projects between the two institutes. The Board of Radboud University granted the initiators €40.000 to develop the minor, provided that the Board of ArtEZ would chip in the same amount of money. Lutters convinced the Board of ArtEZ to do so. The total subsidy handed out by the Boards of both Radboud University and ArtEZ thus came down to €80.000. The subsidy was granted in September 2018 and the initiators held interviews with stakeholders until December 2018 to discuss the educational direction of the minor, which was used as input in the development of the minor.

During the development and execution of the minor, the initiators took on different roles. Onck and Stap situated themselves as the primary educators in the minor 'who were both in age and background quite close to the students.' Onck and Stap viewed themselves more as peers rather than conventional teachers. When I asked why this was important, Stap mentioned that the teacher-student relation is fixed in the traditional didactic model (Stap 2020). The teacher teaches and the student studies. In this minor, they wanted something else. The minor challenged the hierarchical relation by giving students a more active role in adding and sharing knowledge and experiences to the education, enabling the educators to learn from students too. This view is also present in design-based learning. To emphasize that educators were in the lead but simultaneously open to learning from students' input, the initiators adopted the term *leading learner* to address educators in the minor.

Van Meerkerk described that his role as the initiator of the program was 'to supervise, coach, advise, think along with Thieme [Stap] and Cassandra [Onck] in developing, designing and in the end coordinating the program and being somewhere in the background available as a leading learner that students *might* call upon.' (2020). He mentioned that there 'was a long list of people who were willing to engage in what you were developing yourselves, so from that point on, it depended on *your* questions, rather, what my role would be.' (2020). Taking ownership in developing one's education and determining which educators to invite in the learning process is another principle present in design-based learning.

From the interview with Stap, I learned that Onck and Stap experienced that the development of these new kinds of collaborative education thrives by students' input. Therefore, they developed the format of Spring School in 2019 that was attended by nine students, four of ArtEZ and five of Radboud University, who were asked to design their own

education. Onck, Stap and Marina Sasseron de Oliveira Cabral, a master student at both ArtEZ and the Radboud University who supported Onck and Stap with organizational elements during the set-up of the minor, were closely learning, creating and collaborating with the students during Spring School. Stap mentions that for about sixty to seventy percent, the format of Create Space is based on the educational concept that was the outcome of this Spring School, which eventually functioned as a blueprint for the introductory week of the minor.

In total, eleven students participated in Create Space: four students from ArtEZ in their third bachelor year from different art faculties, four third-year bachelor students of Radboud University and two master students of Radboud University. I was one of the two participating master students. By giving the participants official credits for the minor program and embedding it into the curriculum instead of making it into an extracurricular program like an honours program, Van Meerkerk tried to incorporate 'the non-normal within the normal' (2020). The idea of the minor was also to create something 'that sticks.' (Stap, 2020) instead of a one-time project outside of the curriculum. The minor consisted of 15 EC, which students could use as electives.

The minor took place in a research studio that functioned as an essential non-human actant in which students were to feel safe to experiment with new ways of doing research. The initiators wanted students to take ownership of their learning environment and provided them with a space that could be decorated and designed after their research needs. Because they brought artists and theorists together, the initiators looked for a neutral space that did not resemble the studios at the university of the arts too much, nor the academic classrooms (Stap 2020). They found such a space of neutral ground in the former tax office near Nijmegen central station, where two former office rooms were used as research studios. Some furniture was available: two tables, some chairs, two couches, a rug, a few plants, and a small bookcase with books and literature, mostly about art, philosophy of science and artistic research. In this research studio, the participants began their experimental research journey.

The initial idea of the initiators was that during this minor, students were completely free to create their own education and design their own research process. We had the studio to ourselves and decided how to decorate it, use it, and whom to invite. Although we were responsible for creating our own education, the two main educators mentored us, Onck and Stap, and later Stap and Camuti. They checked in with us and provided us with feedback on the research processes through several individual meetings and weekly group meetings. The research topics and groups were formed during the introductory week.

The next section describes how the students' research journey took off by elaborating on the minor's introduction week called the INCENTIVE week. The following timeline gives an overview of the development of the Create Space.
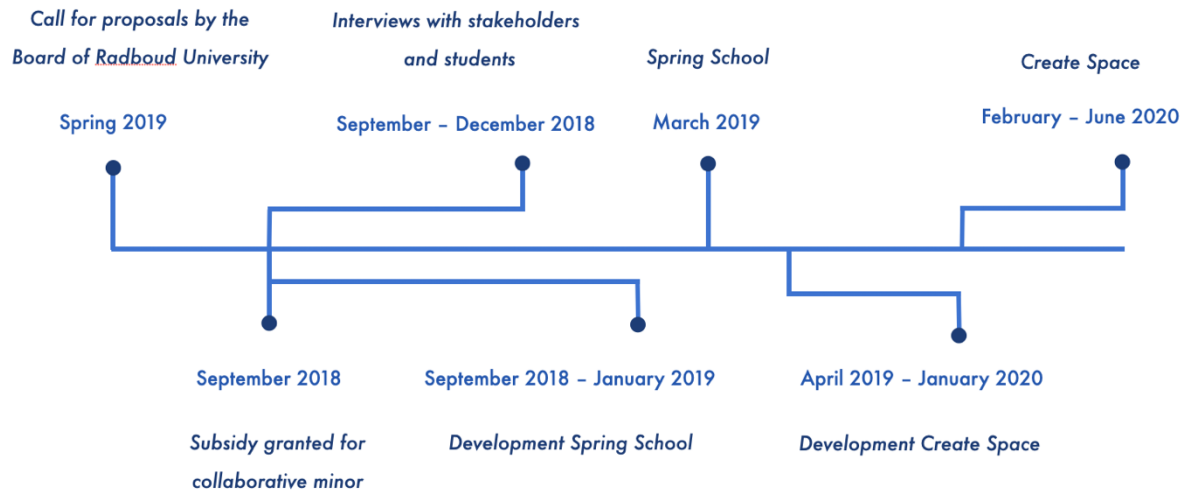

Figure 3.1. Timeline of the development of Create Space.

3.4. INCENTIVE week

The participants' mutual point of departure was the introductory INCENTIVE week. At their arrival at the research studio, the students were asked to arrange the furniture that was present and decorate the studio. They then shared their research interests related to societal, environmental or scientific questions from a biographical perspective. The interests and topics they presented were categorized and discussed according to Open Space Technology (OST), a working format that is based on Self-Directed Learning (SDL) (Van Woezing, Reuzel and Koksma 2019, 3). Van Woezing, Reuzel and Koksma argue that within SDL, many educational formats 'still involve some form of control by the teacher' and that instead, 'a format is needed in which control and responsibility can gradually be transferred to the learner.' (2019, 5). With OST, the authors introduce a format in which 'self-directed learners will benefit from having learning materials and teachers available at their request.' (5). OST 'provides a "marketplace" where participants move freely between "workshops" and shop for ideas, knowledge, and inspiration.' (5).

As a participant, I experienced how OST was performed during the INCENTIVE week. We placed all of our personal interests on sticky notes and pasted them on the walls. We were

asked to categorize these sticky notes. From this process of categorization, multiple topics of interest arose. According to the conversation that evolved, one participant was assigned per topic to lead a discussion around it and create a word web or mind map. The other participants were free to move around on this "marketplace" between the different discussions. To maintain an active, energetic flow, they could enter and leave the discussions as they pleased. This follows OST: 'The general idea is that you work on things you want to work on, with people who share your needs and ambitions at that point in time.' (Van Woezing, Reuzel and Koksma 2019, 5).

Figure 3.2. In the space of Create Space, the walls were filled with mind maps, brainstorms and sticky notes filled with ideas, words and drawings. Participants sat on the floor, tables and couches as they pleased.

Figure 3.3. Participants in one of the two rooms of the studio. I am present in this lecture as a participant (most left with black shirt).

Figure 3.4. Participants in the same room as the picture above, seen from a different angle and filled with different furniture. Furniture would move around in the two rooms almost daily, following the participants' needs.

Figure 3.5. Three of the topics that arose from categorizing the sticky notes turned into mind maps via the Open Space Technology: 'activism', 'bubble bursting' and 'fashion'.

After sharing their interests and research ideas in mind-maps, or word-maps, the participants created two groups based on their shared interests and ideas. The first group, named Color Bravery, researched anti-racism in The Netherlands and aimed at opening up the conversation with children about racism in The Netherlands. The participants of Color Bravery wanted to collaborate closely and collectively created a research and end product. The second group delved into the topics of life, death and mental well-being and was named Life by its members. I was part of this last group. We chose to work on the topic more individually and individually created a research and end product.

During the INCENTIVE week, Onck and Stap invited educators from ArtEZ and Radboud University and professionals from the cultural and creative field. They gave us lectures and workshops on different forms of research and artistic research. During and after the INCENTIVE week, the students developed their own research methods and creative process. They could invite or visit educators, artists, researchers, or other professionals according to the topic of study.

Figure 3.6. The mind-map was the starting point from which the group Color Bravery was formed.

Figure 3.7. The mind-map was also the starting point from which the group Life was formed.

Figure 3.8. During the INCENTIVE week, the lecture of 'leading learner' dr. Vincent Meelberg from Radboud University focused on forming a definition of 'research'.

The participants were given the agency to determine and organize their research planning and schedule for the duration of the minor. They planned meetings and time slots to work together in the studio for the group research and the individual research, which moved to online sessions because of Covid-19 measurements. Each student also planned around four individual meetings with one of the main educators to discuss the personal learning process. When students required additional guidance, they could schedule additional private meetings.

Besides these individual and group meetings, a weekly meeting was organized with all participants and the two main educators, Onk and Stap. In this meeting, named the META meeting, they researched and discussed what kind of community they were creating, one where artists and theorists experiment and work together to build a research bridge between the arts and the sciences.

After about three weeks of working creating our own education and developing our research process in the studio, the measurements taken around Covid-19 by Radboud University and ArtEZ declined access to the physical space and forced the education to continue in the online environment. Online meeting spaces and communication tools replaced

the shared physical space where students from ArtEZ and Radboud University could work together; the video software program Zoom, multiple Google tools such as Drive, Meets and Jamboard and a WhatsApp group.

Figure 3.9. The topic 'bubble bursting' was one of the core subjects that we decided to discussed and research in the META meetings.

In the minor, the students worked towards an end product that was to be showcased in a final presentation. During the last two weeks of the minor, the participants worked closely together to create this presentation. They invited educators and professionals involved in the minor and fellow students, friends and family. To summarize, the structure of the minor was as following:
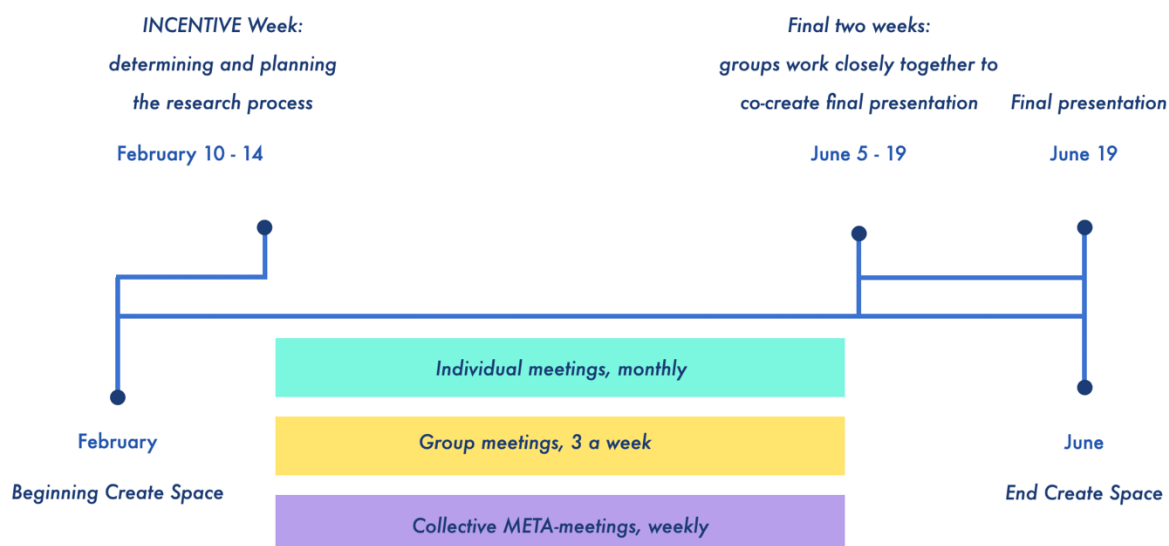
Figure 3.10. Structure of Create Space.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided an overview of the development and structure of the minor Create Space. The minor was the outcome of a winning proposal financed by the Boards of ArtEZ and Radboud University and functioned as a collaborative pilot between these two institutes. Van Meerkerk, Lutters, Onck and Stap collaborated to design a minor in which the importance of students' agency in the creation of their education was leading.

A non-hierarchical student-teacher relation was created by emphasizing that educators could also learn from students, which resulted in using the term *leading learners* to address educators. The role of the two main *leading learners*, Onck and Stap, was to support and mentor the research and learning process of the students. During the Spring School project, the initiators invited students to co-create the minor format. Create Space was highly inspired by the outcome of the Spring School project and the suggestions provided by the students who participated in it.

The research studio, the learning and research environment of the minor Create Space, challenged the traditional classrooms of both ArtEZ and Radboud University, enabling a neutral ground for students of both institutes to conduct research and creative practices. Students had the agency to create their own educational environment and determine their research and learning process. Apart from their main educators Onck and Stap, and later Camuti, the students were free to invite educators, artists and professionals of choice.

In the next chapter, I provide a detailed analysis of the educational foundation of the minor by researching the agency of institutional, political and educational actants via the method of ANT. I also reveal the initiators' perspective on the beneficial effects of creative practice on academically educated students.

Chapter 4: Initiators' perspective: the development of Create Space and the effects of creative practice on Art and Culture education

To reveal the agency of institutional and educational actants within the development of the minor, this chapter provides a more detailed analysis of the development of Create Space. Here, I present additional data results that rose from the questions I addressed in the previous chapter. I also share the results of the second set of questions in which I focused on the effect of creative practice on theoretically trained students of Radboud University. To answer the main research question, this chapter focuses on the following questions: **Which political, institutional, educational and human actants had agency in the development of the education of this minor? What are the benefits of creative practice in the Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students according to the two initiators of the minor Create Space that were involved via Radboud University?**

I first introduce how I built up the interview questions according to the actor-network theory. I then present the results of the interviews under the categories that emerged from unitizing and coding the interview transcripts. Lastly, I analyze the results in terms of ANT by linking them to the concepts I discussed in the theoretical framework.

4.1. Interviews

Although the minor was also developed by educators from ArtEZ, dr. Jeroen Lutters and Cassandra Onck, I chose to only interview the initiators from Radboud University, dr. Edwin van Meerkerk and drs. Thieme Stap. This thesis aims to reveal the academic perspective on the benefits of embedding creative practice into university education.

The interview questions can be divided into two sets that each revolved around a topic. In the first set of questions, I aimed to grasp why and how this education was developed and who had agency in that process. I already used some of the results derived from the following questions in the third chapter. In this chapter, I present more detailed results of these questions:

- *Why were you engaged in founding this minor and what was your role within it?*
- *Where did you notice a demand for an educational program like this?*
- *On which educational theories and methods is the design of the minor based?*

To provide a more detailed analysis of the development of the minor, I asked additional questions to get an insight into the agency of institutions and institutional policy and the role of creative practice in the minor's design:

- *How has institutional policy helped or held back the development of this program?*
- *What role did creative practice have in the process of choosing these theories and methods?*

The second set of questions explicitly revolved around the topic of creative practice. Through these questions, I aimed to discover if the initiators predetermined idea the effect of creative practice on a theoretically trained mind. This interest arose from my experience as a participant since using creative practice as a form of gaining and processing knowledge gave me a new understanding of my research topic and academic theory, which also emerged in the interviews with the participants, as the next chapter will show. I wondered if these effects were intended, or at least expected, by the initiators during the development of Create Space. I asked them:

- *What did you expect university students would learn from using creative practice and materials in their research? (On what levels; cognitive, practical, social, emotional, reflexive?)*
- *What effect did you expect creative practice to have on the thinking and learning process of university students? What did you expect it to do to a theoretically programmed brain?*
- *What part do you think visualization has had in that?*
- *How does creative practice add to the understanding of theory and how does it limit such understanding?*

I also delved into the initiators' ideas about the current amount of creative practice in university education and how adding creative practice could add value to the existing curricula of the humanities through the following questions:

- *What is your overall stance on integrating practice in university education of the humanities?*
- *What is missing the current curricula (of the humanities) in the university which creative practice can fill up?*

4.2. Results

In this section, I share the results of the interviews. To recap, the topics of the questions were:

- the development of Create Space; agency of institutional, educational and human actants
- the expected learning outcomes of creative practice on university schooled participants and ideas about embedding creative practice in the current curricula of the humanities.

Multiple categories surfaced during the coding process. I briefly introduce each category at the beginning of the sections in this chapter, which each share the interview data under multiple categories. In the discussion, I connect the results to concepts from the theoretical framework

4.2.1. Actants in the development of Create Space

In this section, I go into further depth about the development of the minor by highlighting different political, institutional, educational and human actants that supported collaborations between the academic university and the university of the arts. The first category, *Institutional actants,* reveals that the relations between institutes, faculties and researchers changed from a competitive one into a more collaborative one. This section then shares that human actants showed a need for a new educational program under the categories: *Perspectives and needs of educators and initiators* and *Perspectives and needs of students.*

Institutional actants

In The Netherlands, the binary education system splits practical education from academic education, which creates a power relation between the academic university and the university of the arts. In this relation, the former has the power and agency to produce academic research and to determine what academic research should consist of. This category shows how this relation is starting to shift.

Van Meerkerk explained that about a decade ago, people were still hesitant about a collaboration between the university of the arts and the university, mainly on the level of administration and politics. An ongoing political debate on a national level about the binary system of higher education in The Netherlands was taking place (Van Meerkerk, 2020). Some educators and researchers at the academic university feared that the universities of the arts and the university of applied sciences would take on the role of a research institute, too (2020). Van Meerkerk said that a couple of collaborations between the academic university and the university of the arts in The Netherlands did appear in the last ten to fifteen years but often failed to proceed, for instance, because of a political block. The agency of political actants thus influenced the connection between the institutes.

However, in the past ten years, the hierarchical relation between the academic university and the university of the arts began to change. The hesitant attitude of academic educators and researchers towards educators and researchers from the university of the arts is fading: 'We see that we can benefit from each other's perspectives and we benefit more if we start collaborating rather than competing.' (Van Meerkerk 2020). At the Faculty of Arts, Radboud University educators started experimenting with teaching processes that were not text-centered, such as visual essays. Van Meerkerk hoped that working together with ArtEZ would help 'to bring that a step further, to understand how that works and to use this expertise, this knowledge, to improve our own curriculum.' (2020).

Stap confirmed that the relations were changing and mentioned that he had some hostile conversations with three or four educators from both Radboud University and ArtEZ about educational reform and innovation. Those conversations revealed that educators were hesitant towards educational reform or innovative formats of education since the chance of losing students to new forms of education could cut back the financial means for educators to develop their own education and research. Stap described that for some educators, it is not just about creating the best learning environment for students but also making sure that they survive (2020, 5). He mentioned that financial security is a leading incentive amongst educators nowadays, making money an actant with an agency in the development and acceptance of new educational programs.

Van Meerkerk and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts were influential human actants whose agency on the development of the minor was connected to their institutional roles within the institute of Radboud University. As Director of Education of the Faculty of Arts, Van Meerkerk said he impacted the development of these kinds of collaborations. He mentioned that the Dean of the Faculty of Arts 'is also really supportive of these kinds of collaborations and opening up, say, the ivory tower of science' and improving and renewing the curriculum (2020).

Perspectives and needs of educators and initiators
This category shares the needs of some of the researchers and educators from both ArtEZ and Radboud University, who stressed the benefits of a collaboration between the academic university and the university of the arts. As Van Meerkerk mentioned, educators from both institutes shared a need to collaborate: 'we saw the benefit of bringing together the different perspectives from the university and the university of the arts, both on the level of research and teaching, and on the level of students learning, and student interaction, and student-teacher

interaction.' (2020). By exchanging knowledge on research and education, the human actants, the educators from both institutes, changed and deepened their relation, enabling a stronger connection to grow between the institutional actants, ArtEZ and Radboud University.

The initial idea of the minor was to enable an exchange of education between ArtEZ and Radboud University. Students from Radboud University would, for instance, be able to follow an artistic course at ArtEZ, whereas students from ArtEZ could follow an academic course at Radboud University. Onck and Stap, however, wanted to expand on this initial idea by bringing students of both institutions together in one collaborative project: 'what we wanted was to create a team, a community, people coming together and working together on a question or on a problem.' (Stap 2020) They wanted to help students develop themselves and give them the ability to have an impact on the world (2020). The initiators also wanted the participants to become practitioners, which made the focus of the minor more practical than theoretical.

Perspectives and needs of students

Both Van Meerkerk and Stap mostly spoke about a need for this kind of new education in the form of an institutional context and from their professional experience as educators, and in the case of Stap, from his personal experiences as a former student. But they had not mentioned the perspective of the students. I expected the initiators to have done some research on the students' needs for creative practice in their curriculum, so I asked about this during the interviews. This category reveals the needs of the actants for which this minor was intended: students of ArtEZ and Radboud University.

According to Van Meerkerk, there was no explicit request for this kind of education from the students, for instance, from a student body (Van Meerkerk 2020). Nonetheless, every time he organized a collaboration project between the institutes, students expressed an interest in a follow-up project. He saw a need amongst students for more collaborations and cross-pollinations between the two institutes (2020), showing a gap between the educational offer and the educational needs and desires amongst students.

Stap, however, did notice an ask from students when they interviewed students and peers in the development process. At the beginning of the development, Onck and Stap each had conversations with at least 15 students about a collaborative project. Some of them liked the idea, while others preferred the initial concept of an exchange between the institutes, which would enable them to attend courses at the other institution. These conversations confirmed that Stap and Onck were onto something. 'I think we jumped into a gap that is there.' (Stap 2020).

In developing the minor, the initiators aimed to close the gap between the students' needs and the current educational offer at ArtEZ and Radboud University. They already noticed this gap early on in the developing phase, which eventually led to the idea of inviting students from ArtEZ and Radboud University to co-create a collaborative educational format with Onck and Stap during Spring School in 2019. This format became the foundation of the minor Create Space, which shows that the participating students of Spring School were important actants in the development of the minor.

Educational theories

In this category, I elaborate on the educational elements, the educational actants, which were used to design the education of Create Space. In the early stage of the development, the initiators decided that this was to be an epistemological project that aimed for students to have a transformative learning experience. They implemented self-directed learning and tools from design-based learning in the minor to help students develop several 21st century learning skills as these were promoted and endorsed by the Boards of ArtEZ and Radboud University.

According to Stap, the epistemological base of the minor was constructivism. He explained that constructivism focuses on the constructs through which one looks at the world and enables the researcher to examine these constructs critically. Stap used the metaphor of glasses to explain constructivism: 'And the construct, the glasses in this case, can be broken and can be built up and can be more sharp.' (Stap 2020). As the educational base of the minor, constructivism was the epistemological actant with the most agency in the development of Create Space.

Keith Sawyer writes that constructivism is an influential development theory associated with learning. At the theory's core lies the insight 'that when children learn something new, they basically are creating or "constructing" that knowledge for themselves.' (2012, 70). The constructivist theory of psychologist Jean Piaget (1896-1980) entails that during their cognitive development, children construct 'new psychological entities or "schemas"' (2012, 70). The development process of children shows many parallels with the creative process of artists or scientists. According to Sawyer: 'Learning is more than just the continuous accumulation of new knowledge; it's a creative reorganization of thought.' (70). Learning, creativity in art and creativity in science thus entail similar psychological processes.

In line with constructivism, the educational format of Create Space was further based on the theory of transformative learning, another essential actant in the development of the minor. According to Stap, transformative learning enables students to challenge their belief

system and broaden their horizons, becoming more open and critical (2020). Van Meerkerk further explained that: 'Every type of learning, and the more so when you grow older, also means unlearning. If you learn something new, you also learn to do something different. Which also confronts you with habits and values you have which you have to let go of.' (Van Meerkerk 2020). Transformative learning triggers a process of becoming aware of one's habits of min and either adjusting these habits of mind according to newly gathered insights or completely letting them go.

It is an adult learning theory that is mainly associated with Jack Mezirow. Mezirow describes the theory as a meta-cognitive application of critical thinking that transforms a human's *frame of reference* (Cranton, Dirkx, & Mezirow, 2006, 124). A *frame of reference* is 'a mindset or worldview of orienting assumptions and expectations involving values, beliefs, and concepts' (2006, 124) and consists of two dimensions: *habits of mind* and *points of view. Habits of mind* are deeply rooted in our belief system and produced by our cultural, social, educational, economic, political or psychological background (Mezirow 1997, 5-6), which Van Meerkerk hoped the participants would become more aware of during this type of learning. *Points of view* are subject to continuous change because of our need to modify assumptions. They consist of feelings, beliefs, judgments and attitudes towards individuals or groups (1997, 6).

The initiators discussed how critical thinking, which is central to transformative learning and taking ownership of the learning process, could be embedded in other aspects of the minor. They introduced a question-based learning approach. Many of the students during Spring School advised problem-based education with preset topics. However, the initiators' intent was for students not merely to focus on solving preset problems and producing solutions. According to Stap, Lutters noticed that: 'a problem needs a solution and we don't want a solution, necessarily. We could also want more questions, for instance.' (Stap 2020) So instead of problem-based learning, the initiators introduced question-based learning. This educational actant would allow students to ask new social, environmental or research questions and give them the freedom to decide their research topic. The participant students were free to ask any question they liked in the research, as long as they could explain why it was relevant.

Self-directed learning was also an educational actant that was introduced to enhance ownership over the learning process and introduced to the students in the INCENTIVE week via Open Space Technology to direct students towards their topic of study. After this week, the students continued to organize their own lectures, meetings and research throughout the minor.

The educators found that design-based learning provided them with the proper tools to help students take that ownership. They were free to design and adjust the learning environment in the research studio: 'And with design-based learning, the idea is that the learning environment […] should be developed at least in co-creation, but maybe completely, by the participants themselves.' (2020). Stap said that the space was crucial for creative practice to take place: 'And to *do* practice, you need to have a safe environment, you need to have trust, you need to have the materials present to do it.' (2020).

The impact of space was noticed during the Spring School by Van Meerkerk, where he witnessed how replacing the classical classroom with a more open learning environment transformed the learning atmosphere. Spring School took place in the exposition space Expoplu in Nijmegen. Brainstorm notes, artworks and memos filled the walls of the room. During a discussion, a student: 'just walked to one of the things, added something, changed a few things, started looking at it, turned around, listened to our discussion, came back again and joined the discussion again.' (2020) He emphasized that these kinds of spaces make the learning environment more open, diverse and interactive and enable students to create their own knowledge. The results show that the learning environment turned out to be an actant that influenced the learning and research process of the students.

The educational actants such as transformative learning, self-directed learning and design-based learning were to help students develop 21st century learning skills or lifelong learning, which were promoted and endorsed by both the Board of Radboud University and of ArtEZ (Stap 2020). Douglas Bourn writes that the concept of 21st century learning was developed in the United States (2018, 65). European neoliberalist governments and international policy initiatives such as OECD, the World Bank and UNESCO took over the 21st century learning skills and included them in international policy documents and frameworks (2018, 1).

The ideas about and definitions of these skills vary and iterate over time. In 2006, The European Parliament and the Council of the European Union formulated eight competencies for the 21st century. They named these Lifelong Learning in the recommendation report 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning — A European Reference Framework' (European Parliament 2006). They listed the following eight competencies that are to help EU citizens, companies, and educational organizations to enhance human capital in society:

1) Communication in the mother tongue;

2) Communication in foreign languages;

3) Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;

4) Digital competence;

5) Learning to learn;

6) Social and civic competences;

7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship;

8) Cultural awareness and expression.

Based on these competences, the European Commission developed a new Skills Agenda in 2016 that aimed 'to ensure that people develop a broad set of skills from early on in life and to make the most of Europe's human capital, which will ultimately boost employability, competitiveness and growth in Europe', so the website states (European Commission 2016). Multiple competence framework documents and reports explain the European approach to both teach and learn these skills, which the initiators consulted during the creation of the minor (Stap, 2020). The initiators discussed how the epistemological and educational base of the minor could help students develop 21st century learning skills (2020). In developing Create Space, they primarily focused on competence number 5, Learning to learn; 6, Social and civic competences; and 7, Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.

In this section, I elaborated on the development of Create Space and the actants that influenced this development on the level of national policy (i.e., the Dutch binary education system), on the level of educators (i.e., their changing needs and the relations between educators and researchers from both institutes) and on the level of students (i.e., the input of student needs). It thereafter revealed the educational actants, educational theories and methods, that were at play in the development of the minor. With these educational actants, the initiators designed the education in Create Space to make students into critical, independent thinkers and practitioners. The following section presents the initiators' ideas about the effect of creative practice on theoretical students' learning process and education.

4.2.2. Creative Practice

The next categories show the results of the second set of interview questions that revolved around creative practice and its benefits for Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students. The first category, *Expected learning outcomes of creative practice*, reveals what the initiators expected the participants to learn from embedding creative practice into their research process. I then shortly highlight the educators' ideas about how visualizations add to the understanding of theory in the category *Visualization.*

Expected learning outcomes of creative practice

When I asked the educators about their thoughts on the effects of creative practice on theoretically trained minds, Van Meerkerk answered that he hoped creative practice would trigger new kinds of questions that did not 'even seem relevant beforehand.' (2020). He also hoped that: 'by doing things, that by embodying your own learning process, students would realize how fundamental some theoretical questions actually are.' In his view, 'under the surface' theoretical and practical learning processes are 'really, really strongly interconnected.' (2020) Van Meerkerk further mentioned that memory is embodied, something one only realizes when experiencing it. When asking Stap about the expected effect of creative practice on academic students, he answered: 'In educational theory, we are quite certain of the fact that tactile learning, learning through doing, basically, has a very big impact.' (2020).

Stap explained how in all scientific communities, a particular research frame of mind is present, which revolves around the need for a model to understand the world (2020). He shared his critique on this approach and mentioned that he did his utmost best to break up open this research frame of mind of the theoretical students during the minor. Since this is known to be impactful intellectual development, Stap expected Create Space to be a life-changing educational environment for the participants.

Van Meerkerk and Stap hoped that this kind of education would make the learning process more personal and make the students more critical and open. Rather than directly accepting facts and theories, Van Meerkerk expected that these kinds of learning settings would 'connect the learning process to your personal development process' and enable students to bring their values into the learning process (2020). By adding their values, students would be able to critically analyze the perspectives brought into the research process by other students, teachers, and scholars (2020). Connecting these to their perspective would help them become aware of and critically examine their position and stance towards their research topic.

In the final part of the interviews, I focused on what the actant of creative practice could add to the current curriculum of the humanities. Van Meerkerk mentioned that 'by using techniques, contexts, questions, materials, didactic strategies from the university of the arts, the curriculum can be improved significantly.' (2020). He said we should keep in mind that creative practice in art education studies at academic universities has a different function than in the universities of the arts or applied sciences: 'It does not have to meet the artistic standards. It is a tool, it is something to help experience, an aspect of what you are learning, to provoke the learning process.' (2020). Stap shared that in the current curriculum of the humanities at

the university, he missed space for learners to search their souls and ask themselves why they are doing what they are doing (2020).

Visualization

During the interviews, the participants often mentioned how visualization enhanced their understanding of theory. Therefore, I specifically asked if the initiators had an expectation of the effect of visualization on the participants' learning process.

Stap mentioned that visualization helps students notice connections and, more importantly, understand the relation between those connections: '**You** don't only learn to *see* the relation, but you learn to *understand* it, you learn to *work* with it.' (2020). To Stap, visualization is a significant first step in gaining clarity about a theory and making concepts more tangible. He referred to Ludwig Wittgenstein, who argued that visualization could work more effectively in transferring information such as emotions than language (2020). Van Meerkerk noticed that using non-textual media broadens the scoop in which learners can express themselves: 'But that is also why I think that different *media* other than text will *help* this kind of learning process because sometimes you need to use a color to express what you feel or what you think rather than a word.' (Van Meerkerk 2020). Both Van Meerkerk and Stap took a positive stance towards incorporating more creative practice into the curriculum of Arts and Culture Studies.

In this shorter section, I shared the results of the second set of interview questions that revolved around the topic of creative practice and its benefits for Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students. The initiators expected, or more so, hoped, that creative practice would help students realize that theory and practice are strongly interconnected. They shared that visualization allows students to grasp theories, understand connections better, and be used as expressive communication tools. I will now discuss the results in terms of ANT and link them to the concepts presented in the theoretical framework.

4.3. Discussion

From the interviews with the initiators of Create Space involved via Radboud University, I learned that political, institutional, human and educational actants in different areas and fields were involved in the development of the education of Create Space. I also learned that creative practice and visualization are considered actants that are beneficial for understanding theory, according to Van Meerkerk and Stap. They agree that more creative practice should be

incorporated in the theoretical Arts and Culture Studies. In this section, I analyze these results in terms of ANT and connect them to some of the concepts I presented in the theoretical framework. By theoretically interpreting the connections between the actants, I aim to understand those connections, the relations between actants.

Until about ten to fifteen years ago, the educators of Radboud University were hesitant about collaborating with educators from the universities of applied sciences since they were anxious to lose university's the monopoly of conducting academic research. Vice versa, a hesitant stance towards academic research used to be present amongst educators at the universities of the arts, as Frayling mentions (1993, 5). He wrote about this stance from the perspective of the art academy and shared that art educators were resistant towards research, which held back the start of the debate on artistic research: 'Once we get used to the idea that we don't need to be scared of 'research'- or in some strange way protected from it – the debate can really begin.' (1993, 5).

There is a discussion about the artistic and academic effect and quality of the research outcomes in that debate. Kjørup argues that artistic research can only be conducted by artists 2011, 24-5), while Klein emphasizes that artistic research can also be carried out by non-artists, provided that the research entails a 'specific quality: the mode of artistic experience.' (2010, 3). Van Meerkerk's thinking is more in line with Klein's, as he mentioned that creative practice in academic university education could be used as a tool to let students experience an aspect of the theories they are studying and use creative practice 'to provoke the learning process.' (2020) The artistic work 'does not have to meet the artistic standards' in academic university education since students are not educated to become artists (2020).

The implementation of creative practice in theoretical education is of importance, according to Van Meerkerk and Stap, who agree that theory and practice are strongly interconnected. This conception is also at the base of artistic research. The connection between thinking with the mind and doing with the body, between theory and practice, is shared by scholars of education and artistic research such as Frayling, Borgdorff and Dirkx (Frayling 1993, 4; Borgdorff 2012, 21; Dirkx 2008, 15). The split between theoretical and practical education in the Dutch binary system of education often holds back the possibility of practice and theory to strengthen each other. Nonetheless, in the last decade, educators from both institutes started to see the benefits of collaborating and made more connections with researchers from the other institute. They began to grow towards each other.

The initiators, particularly Stap and Onck, wanted to explore and strengthen these connections by creating a community of artists and academics. The initiators wanted to enable

the participants to change themselves and their ideas. In ANT terms, they wanted *translation* to take place: the work that is necessary to displace and transform actants (Dankert 2003, 3). This correlates with the idea about the humanities present in the Renaissance, which stated that the humanities had to transform students into better human beings (Bod 2019, 223). What is more, *group formation* was at play, which entails the making and remaking of groups (Dankert 2003, 3). In this case, the group of Create Space was created by bringing human actants from different educational and professional backgrounds together. The aims to transform the students and create a new community can be connected to the 21st learning skill of *Social and civic competences.*

The initiators did not merely want to change students; they also wanted to learn from them through collaboration, specifically during Spring School. Working closely with the people for whom the education was intended shows that the initiators were aware of the importance of a feedback loop in which 'producers', the initiators, learned from 'consumers', the students (Entwistle 2016, 278). While developing the minor, the initiators consulted the students and became aware of and reactive to their needs and opinions (2016, 278) even before the end 'product', the minor, was launched in the educational field. Students turned out to be actants with a lot of agency in developing this new type of education.

Besides the students, multiple actants whished for educational reform: the Board of Radboud University, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and the initiators of the minor. Van Meerkerk's position as the Director of Education and his connection and shared vision with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts made him a vital actant within the network of Radboud University. He also worked with educators from ArtEZ and was closely connected to dr. Lutters, who was in turn connected to the board of ArtEZ. Because of Van Meerkerk's institutional position and his connections with essential actants from Radboud University and ArtEZ, Van Meerkerk became 'strategic' (Latour 2020, 374).

In their ask for educational reform, the Boards of ArtEZ and Radboud University plead to implement 21st century learning skills. As Tara Ehrcke critically mentions, the concept of the 21st century learning skills was influenced mainly by free-market corporations operating in the knowledge sectors, such as Apple, Cisco, Microsoft, Adobe, Blackboard and IBM, to name but a few (2013, 64). The input of these companies influenced American education policy, and European governments and international educational policy initiatives (Bourn 2018, 1). These influenced the policy and needs of the Boards of Radboud University and ArtEZ. The agency of international commercial actants' in the knowledge industries and creative industries spread out to the educational field, bringing the connections between these fields to light.

The 21st century learning skills were designed to prepare learners to enter the labor market of today's neoliberalist knowledge society. The latest policy documents published by the European Commission emphasized the skills *Digital competence* and *Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship* (European Commission 2016). The initiators also focused on the skills *Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship*. Due to Covid-19 and the transfer to an online learning environment, the *Digital competence* skills were also covered. These skills are helpful in the creative industries, which develop and research cultural and creative products, technology and media. The workers in this field are primarily self-employed (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 254). A well-developed sense of initiative and entrepreneurship is useful to sustain oneself in this field. The focus of the European Commission and the initiators on these competences is beneficial for students of Art and Culture Studies who are potentially being prepared to enter the labor market of the creative industries.

In the minor, the initiators aimed for students to become more critical and aware of their existing belief systems and frames of mind. They wanted students to take ownership of their research process, with which they tapped into the 21st learning skill *Learning to learn*. Transformative learning specifically enabled the participants to undergo a process of translation and of opening up the frame of reference. Dirx writes that the theory of transformative learning 'involves the self in an intense process of meaning-making that reflects the person's relationship with both the self and his or her sociocultural context.' (Dirkx 2006, 19). This understanding of the relation between the self and his or her sociocultural context is an effect of creative practice that the initiators hoped for and connected to the learning skills of Social and civic competences.

Van Meerkerk further hoped that Create Space would inspire students to add their personal experiences to the research process. According to Dirkx, allowing personal experiences and feelings to enter the research process stimulates cognitive and intellectual growth: 'Whereas the curricula and instructional processes within higher and adult education have traditionally focused on using the course content to deepen our intellectual or cognitive capacities, consideration of the life of the inner world directs our attention to the imaginative and emotional dimensions of our being, of connecting with and integrating the powerful feelings and images that often arise within the context of our pursuit of intellectual and cognitive growth.'(Cranton, Dirkx & Mezirow 2006, 128). In other words, allowing personal experiences and emotions into the research process enables an additional layer of knowledge to arise. This broadens the context of a topic and forms multiple entry points via which students

can connect to the topic. Connecting personal experiences to the learning process and using creative practice allows non-academic and 'subjective' sources to enter the research process.

In this discussion, I revealed which political, institutional, human and educational actants had agency in developing the education of Create Space and showed the connection between these actants and international and national policy reform. Allowing creative practice, visualization and personal experiences into the learning process is beneficial for the understanding of theory since it adds a layer to the learning process.

Conclusion

In order to answer the main research question, this chapter first focused on the following question: **Which political, institutional, educational and human actants had agency in the development of the education of this minor?**

The Dutch binary system of education influenced the relation between the institutional actants at play in the development of the minor: the university and the university of the arts. The Boards of ArtEZ and Radboud University were important institutional actants in developing this minor, as they provided the financial means, the actant of money, to develop this program. The Boards shared a need for educational reform and endorsed and promoted the implementation of the 21st century skills, which influenced the initiators' choice of educational actants.

Constructivism, transformative learning, self-directed learning, design-based learning and question-based learning were the epistemological and educational actants used in the minor's design. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and Van Meerkerk, Director of Education at the Faculty of Arts, turned out to be human actants with many institutional connections and agency. As initiators and developers of the program, Stap and Onck were the human actants that most influenced and determined the design of the minor. They also pointed out that students should be granted agency in developing the program and therefore chose to work closely together with these human actants. The development of the minor and its outcome, the education, turns out to be an actor-network of many different actants: from international policy to commercial actants, from local institutional relations to students. These all had agency in the development of the minor, which influenced the experiences of the participants.

Bringing together the academic and the practical turned out to be beneficial for research and education purposes of both institutes since it enabled educators and students alike to tap

into the specialism of the other. Exchanging educational methods and ideas about educational reform between institutes and faculties brought about educational reform, which pleased the Boards of ArtEZ and Radboud University, who asked for this in the call for proposals. The educational actants were also to develop a couple of 21st century learning skills such as *Learning to Learn*, *Social and Civic Competences* and *Sense of Ownership and Entrepreneurship.* These were helpful for students of Art and Culture who are prepared to enter the labor market of the knowledge industry and the creative industries.

I then focused on the second question of this chapter: **What are the benefits of creative practice in the Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students according to the two initiators of the minor Create Space that were involved via Radboud University?**

Creative practice and practical educational theories like transformative learning, design-based learning and self-directed learning were to challenge students to become more critical about their research frame of mind and to take more agency in and ownership of their learning process. Creative practice and visualization were seen as tools that can help academic students better understand theories and enable them to see and understand relations between different theories and everyday society. The initiators' ideas align with some of the most well-known scholars in artistic research and in transformative learning, such as Frayling, Borgdorff and Dirx, who agree that the body and the mind, theory and practice, and thinking and doing, are intertwined (Frayling, 1993, 4; Borgdorff 2012, 21, Dirkx 2008, 15). The initiators agreed that it is beneficial to embed creative practice in Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students because of this interconnectedness.

These conceptions challenge the current Dutch binary system in which practical and theoretical education is split. The next chapter highlights the perspectives of three theoretical participants of Create Space to see if these conceptions correlate with the students' experiences.

Chapter 5: Participants' perspective on the effects of creative practice on their learning and research process

This chapter shares the results of the interviews with the participants of the minor Create Space. It revolves around the question: **What are the effects of creative practice on the learning and research process of three university students who participated in the minor Create Space?**

I first introduce how I built up the interviews and the interview questions. I then present the results of the interviews under four categories that have emerged from unitizing and categorizing the interview transcripts and discuss them per category via the ANT and the theoretical concepts as presented in chapters 1 and 2.

5.1. Interviews

The educational concept of Create Space is fueled by creative practice and differs from regular academic university education and art education. To highlight how this education affected university students' learning and research process, I interviewed three participants from Radboud University. I chose to interview the participants first and the founders second because I wanted to be free of preset knowledge about the intended learning outcomes. In doing so, I hope to create a fruitful feedback loop, as Entwistle calls it, in which the founders of the minor can learn from the experiences and needs of the participants (Entwistle 2016, 278).

During the minor, the students formed two groups. I was part of the Life group. To maintain a proper distance from the interviewees, I decided to interview the three participants from Radboud University that were part of the other group called Color Bravery. I interviewed the participants individually to go into detail and inspect how the effect of creative practice on the research and learning process differs from person to person.

The interviews were conducted on August 24, 25 and 26, 2020, via the digital videocall software program Zoom. Preferably, I would have completed the interviews face to face to read more of the interviewees' body language and not to be intervened by a digital interface during the conversation. However, because of the measurements taken around Covid-19, I decided not to meet the participants in person. We worked digitally in the minor from the third week onward, so we became familiar with this communication form. I planned for the interviews to take up about thirty minutes. They eventually took between thirty and forty-five minutes. The

interviews were conducted in English since this was the main language in the minor and since I write this thesis in English. At the beginning of the interview, I mentioned that the participants were free to switch to Dutch whenever they felt the English language stood in the way of expressing themselves appropriately.

In the first set of questions, I focused on materials and tools. Like Latour and his colleagues did in their research in the laboratory, I closely investigated the relation between non-human and human actants by interviewing the participants about the instruments and objects they used during their research. I aimed to understand how non-human actants, the materials and tools used by the participants in their creative research, have agency over the human actants, the participants, and over the research and learning process. I tried to elevate the performative function of non-human entities, what they *do* something to the researcher (Entwistle 2016, 270 & 273). The questions I asked around this topic were:

- *What materials and media did you work with and how did you choose them?*
- *How did these materials and media help and how did they limit you in expressing your ideas and thoughts?*

I then asked the participants how producing a research outcome that was non-academic affected their thinking and research process. I asked how it changed the way they gained, translated and processed knowledge and what new kinds of knowledge rose during this process. In other words, I checked how it affected their thinking behavior and researched if creative practice sparks a change in awareness when it comes to epistemological questions and ideas about research. I focused on what happens when these theoretical students found themselves between art and research, where artistic research is located (Caduff 2017, 315). By doing so, I hoped to bring forward the value of creative practice for art and culture university education and reveal what it can add to the current theoretical curriculum.

- *How did expressing your research results through creative practices instead of through academic formats change the research process?*
- *How did it help and how did it limit you?*
- *How would you describe the kind of knowledge that rose when you make a creative end product?*
- *How did this knowledge differ from the kind of knowledge you gained at university, the more theoretical and analytical knowledge?*

Finally, I researched how using creative practice and producing creative research outcomes changed the participants' views on the two involved institutions and how research is conducted

there. I closed the feedback loop by asking the participants if their needs for creative practice are met in their current curriculum.

- *How has using creative practice altered the way you look at research and the university?*
- *How has using practice altered the way you look at art and creativity and art school?*
- *What would the ideal combination of theory and practice in your university education be? More practice, more theory?*

To summarize, the topics of the questions were as following:

- materiality: the agency of materials, objects and practical skills;
- the agency of producing creative research outcomes on thinking behavior and knowledge gaining;
- the agency of creative practice on participants' opinion about educational institutions and research.

This chapter provides an overview of the different human and non-human actants with agency in the participants' research process. It reveals how these changed the participants' perspectives on research and education.

5.2. Results

I divided the units from the interview data into four categories that explain the relation between research, academic university education and creative practice. The order of the categories shows synchrony with the topics of the research questions:

- materiality: the agency of materials, objects and practical skills;
- the agency of creative practice on thinking behavior and knowledge gaining;
- the agency of creative practice on participants' opinion about educational institutions and research.

The categories are placed under four sections: *Materials, objects and skills*, *Visualization*, *Perspective on theory and the academic university* and *Empathy*. In the discussion, I analyze the results in ANT terms and connect them to the literature used in the theoretical framework.

5.2.1. Materials, objects and skills

This section shows the results of the first set of questions that revolved around the agency of materials, objects and skills in the research and learning process of the participants. The primary materials and media assembled by participants were paper, scissors, pencils, paint, the

piano, and digital media like photographs, videos, and PowerPoint. The students received a logbook in which they wrote or drew notes. This category reveals how using different materials and objects affected the students' confidence and their willingness to let go of preset thinking patterns and research methods.

Research sources

The participants shared that the first research sources and materials they turned to were academic literature. They did so before consulting non-academic sources and before starting creative processes since there was a common need for academic validation amongst the students before conducting creative practice. Next to academic literature, they later consulted non-academic literature, videos, documentaries and artworks as knowledge sources. Participant 1 describes: 'Well, the way we approached it in Create Space for our topic was to first read up on the discourse about racism. So, start academically and take in as much as possible. (…) You still need that academic stuff to know specific things before you go into creating yourself and being confident in thinking that: 'I know enough to start making things about this.'' (2020). He realized it would have also been possible, and maybe even better, to start looking at creative expressions and personal experiences in an earlier stage of the research: 'But during that process, we learned that looking at artistic works […] and personal experiences and that kind of stuff, is maybe even more valuable and gives you even more insights.' (2020).

Changing the research process by adding creative practice and using non-academic sources was not easy for participant 3: 'At first, it was very difficult because it broke through my patterns or things I was used to. But I think it was very interesting to see how those theories are actually based on reality. […] I think the experience of Create Space just broadened my mind in the way I think.' (2020). Participant 2 said that using other sources made her realize that academic research is not the only type of research that can contain truth or value.

Creative practical skills

The participants mainly chose drawing and images as communication tools and pencils and paper as materials to create them. When I asked why they chose these materials, all of them mention they had been drawing before attending Create Space, either in their spare time or during their education in ground school and secondary school. Their experience with creative practices like drawing and visualizing made them feel comfortable—the materials aligned with their skill set and interest.

However, at times, participants 2 and 3 felt uncomfortable using creative media. Participant 3 mentioned that being surrounded by art students sometimes made her feel insecure and both participants 2 and 3 experienced a lack of faith in their creative skills now and then. Participant 2 explained: 'No, my practical skills did *not* really limit me, but I had to start believing in them again.' (2020). For example, she chose the piano as a medium in her research, which she used to play at a younger age. She specifically decided to improvise on the instrument since it was a creative practice that made her nervous. By using this instrument again and by improvisational play, she wanted to challenge herself to step outside of her comfort zone.

Participant 2 looked for ways to express herself within the skillset she had already developed: 'You are going to think, "okay, this is what I can make, so this is how I can express this." Maybe, when I was a really cool game designer, I would have designed a really cool game. But since I cannot do that, then I know for myself to not come up with that idea.' (2020). Participant 1 did not experience any limitations in his creative and drawing skills.

Participant 3 stated that her imagination sometimes overruled her creative skills and she, therefore, felt limited by them. The creative outcomes were sometimes jokingly discussed by peers on their artistic or practical quality. But despite the lesser artistic quality of her creative works, she said that the function of the visualization, to communicate a thought process or idea, was still intact.

Using creative practice and materials helped the participants explore other forms of research and cross the boundaries of their theoretical and practical comfort zones. The next section describes the effect of this explorative way of doing research by elaborating on the participants' use of visual communication.

5.2.2. Visual communication

This section revolves around the second topic of questions in which I tried to reveal the agency of creative practice on the participants' thinking behavior and communication skills. The practice of visualization rose as was an essential actant in the interviews. Before sharing the interview results, it is first useful to explain the concept of the boundary objects. This concept was introduced to the students during the INCENTIVE week in a lecture provided by dr. Jeroen van den Eijnde, educator in Product Design & Interior Architecture at ArtEZ.

According to Nick Fox, boundary objects 'are entities that enhance the capacity of an idea, theory or practice to translate across culturally defined boundaries, for instance between communities of knowledge or practice' (Fox 2011, 71). They were first used in research on

scientific communities and organizations to cross the borders between 'bodies of knowledge, for example, between science and literature, or between science and 'pseudoscience' (Fox 2011, 71).

At the beginning of their group research process, the students of this group decided to produce boundary objects as a research and communication tool. These non-human, visual actants enabled communication, understanding and border crossing to occur on three levels; on an individual level, on a group level within Create Space and on a societal level.

Figure 5.1 Boundary object made by participant 1.

Figure 5.2 Boundary object made by participant 2 using paper, scissors and glue.
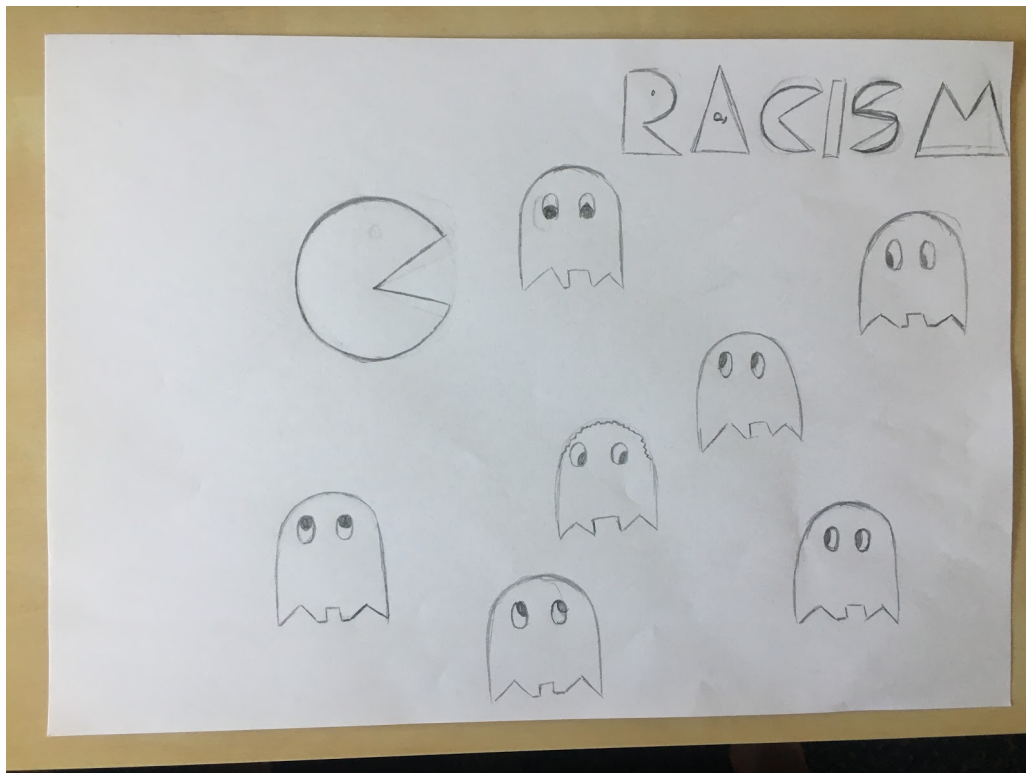
Figure 5.3 Boundary objection in the form of a drawing made by participant 3.

Individual level

All three participants said that visualizing felt natural to them since they think visually. Instead of describing them in words, visualizing ideas or abstract concepts was experienced as a more direct form of expressing how the world is internally perceived and how ideas are internally created. Participant 3 explained: 'I think in pictures and stuff like that. So it [visualization] is closer to how I perceive things.' (2020) Participant 1 shared a similar experience: 'I think very visually, so when I read something, I'll start creating ideas, and putting *those* ideas onto paper I think is really… another step in learning about that, and really maybe even a more efficient way than taking notes.' (2020).

Furthermore, the students used visualization to grasp complex theories or concepts. It was a way to sort out thoughts, as participant 2 describes: '[…] I need to get my head around this really abstract theory on music, let's just draw it. And now I get it, how it works, instead of writing it all down in words […].' (2020). Both participants 2 and 3 mention that they started using visualization to note ideas or grasp theories or concepts in other courses.

Group level

In the communication with other participants of Create Space, specifically within their group, visualization enabled the participants to convey ideas more directly since it removed the academic language barrier. The participants found language to be more interpretable than visuals and artworks. The latter were viewed as more tangible and easier to understand. They also made one's thought process clearer to explain to others: 'It is easier to for me to just put that [an idea] down rather than to turn it into words, put those down and then explain them again.' (Participant 1 2020). Visualization proved to be more beneficial than textualization in the communication with other participants since it enabled the participants 'to show things that are in our headspace.' (Participant 3 2020).

Societal level

Lastly, visualization fulfilled the need to share knowledge and communicate this knowledge with a non-academic audience, with society. The participants mentioned that making theory and knowledge accessible to a large group of people by presenting it in a visual, creative format simultaneously improved their understanding of the theory.

Rephrasing theoretical concepts into a non-academic and visual language improved their communication with non-academically educated people and people outside of their field of study. According to participant 3, this made daily conversations with people outside of the academic network easier because she could use pictures and non-academic words to help explain complex concepts. She further mentioned that visuals are inherent to the current media landscape: 'We are used to be exposed to social media and pictures and stuff like that all of the time, so it is a way to convey your ideas in a way everyone can understand them.' (2020).

Visual communication showed to be an actant in the learning and research process of the participants that enabled them to understand theory better and discuss theory in an accessible manner. The next section highlights how these effects of creative practice influenced the participants' ideas about theory and knowledge and about the institutes where research is conducted.

5.2.3. Perspective on theory and the academic university

In the last set of questions, I focused on the participants' views on theory and educational institutions and their views on artists. This section shares the participants' stance towards research and theory at the academic university and reveals how creative practice changed the

participants' ideas about knowledge and research. The end of this section shortly shares their need for creative practice in their curriculum.

Perspective on theory and knowledge

Instead of merely looking at theories and concepts from an academic perspective, the participants used non-academic sources and creative practice, which provided them with new entries to theoretics and research. Participant 3 argued that seeing where theory derives from in daily life made concepts more tangible and accessible. 'I did not expect that. I always thought, "I understand that theory," but it was actually clearer when you connect it to something that is close to reality or the way you think.' (2020). Participant 1 noticed that creative practice made him more engaged with the topic, which created a feeling of expertise and ownership. Using and incorporating theory instead of explaining it in an academic text brought about a different perspective. According to participant 1, creative practice made him: 'think about stuff in a different *way,* in a different *light*, than just reading it and remembering it.' (2020).

Participant 2 explained how conducting non-academic research enabled her to create a different idea about the concept of truth: 'It felt a little bit more like how you gain knowledge just as a human being, being in the sphere you are and in the space you are. It felt more like doing research like that than putting yourself away from that learning process [by stating that] only this is the truth because this is academic.' (2020). Through creative practice and using non-academic sources, she realized that there are multiple ways of gaining knowledge and determined that one should not be placed above another.

Choosing their research topics, designing their own research methods and presenting the research results in creative formats gave the participants a feeling of ownership, contrary to reading, remembering and making a test or writing a paper. They felt like they could create research products that contained their own intellectual input, whereas they often felt back by academic rules in their previous education. Participant 3 expressed the feeling of being: 'trapped in that cage of theory, you can't break out of it.' She had an urge to create something new, something coming from her own mind. When asking why it is important to create something new, she shared a need to leave her imprint on research.

Perspective on institutional actants

The participants' view on the academic university as an institution changed significantly during the minor. The academic university and the way research is conducted there was also criticized and named elitist by participant 1 and 3 since knowledge and research results are not always

made accessible to the public: 'I mean, I think that the value of knowledge and truly being smart lies in sharing it with other people. If you keep it to yourself (laughs), I mean, it is nice to know stuff, but […] I think it is even more powerful to be able to share that with people. And that is something I always struggle with at university (laughs) and I think it is a bit hypocritical or elitist or something.' (Participant 1 2020). Participant 3 said shared similar ideas:'[…] We still have *sooo* many things we do not do at university and we *should* do to also be closer to everyone else. […]. We are *all* part of society and *all* part of culture, so why make it such an elitist movement?' (Participant 3 2020).

As a participant, I noticed that other academic students shared this critique in the minor. However, besides expressing critique, participants 2 and 3 also emphasized and acknowledged the value and importance of academic research and theoretical education and shared that they enjoy the theoretical way of doing research and learning.

Concerning the need for creative practice in education, participant 1 wished for a more significant amount of creative practice in the curriculum than currently offered by the university. This would have helped him to understand topics better in art courses. He shared a need for a curriculum consisting of fifty percent theory and fifty percent practice. Participant 3 expressed a need for more creative practice too but stressed the importance of acknowledging the difference between the university and the university of the arts. She emphasized that the latter is a specialized place where talented upcoming artists can develop their creative skills and that this place should be maintained. Participant 2 was content with the amount of creative practice present in her courses but would have liked the curriculum to focus more on practical professional skills that would prepare her for entering the cultural and creative labor market.

In answering my question about their view on the university of the arts and artists, the participants all expressed to have gained more respect and understanding towards artists and their way of conducting research. A sense of compassion towards the other was a remarkable reoccurring theme in the interviews. Therefore, the next short section is dedicated to empathy as an effect of both creative practice and working closely with artists.

5.2.4. Empathy

During the interviews, answers with a social and empathic character rose rather often. This led me to ask follow-up questions in which I tried to unravel if this was a specific effect of creative practice or a result of the design-based learning principle of bringing together artists and theorists. The participants emphasized the agency of creative practice in this development.

Here, I share how creative practice developed a sense of empathy amongst the students towards other participants of Create Space and towards non-academically schooled members of society.

Empathizing with other participants

Using creative practice opened up room for the participants to start the conversation about the sensitive topic of racism. Visuals enabled the participants to create a common language, as they mentioned, through which they shared personal experiences and feelings. Adding personal experiences and feelings to the learning process was new to the participants since, in the academic environment, they did not feel like there was a lot of space for their subjectivity, nor for that of others.

The participants also specifically gained more respect for artists. Before the minor, participant 3 sometimes felt looked down on by art students when visiting the university of the arts. But this feeling changed entirely during the minor when she worked with them. She developed a deep respect for artists and for 'the way their minds work' (2020). Participant 2 mentioned a similar development. She referred to Ronald Barthes' theory, 'The author is dead'. Even though this theory was critically analyzed within her academic studies, it did make her less concerned about the view of artists. During the minor, this changed: '[…] during the minor I saw a lot more that the process [of creating art and conducting research] is much longer and more thoughtful than I thought it was. Then I gained more respect for that and I saw the importance of it more.' (Participant 2 2020).

Empathizing with society

Expressing feelings via creative practice was used to empathize with the other, as participant 2 described. As an example, she mentioned how her group came up with an assignment to use creative practice as a way to experience how others might feel. She used the piano to empathize with the emotional results of discrimination: 'I don't know how it is to be black in this society. I do not know, but I *can* try to empathize with that feeling. […] And I was trying to come to that feeling through the piano [by] improvising stuff.' (Participant 2 2020)

A sense of understanding one's own position within the academic world was noticeable in the interviews when participants 2 and 3 realized and corrected themselves when they used the words 'normal people' and 'human beings' when referring to people outside of the academic world. They immediately tried to rephrase or recontextualize their choice of words. One of the participants switched to Dutch to express herself more appropriately. They both excused themselves by saying they do not intend to place academically schooled members of

society above others. Instead, they wanted to express that they experienced doing research from a non-academic perspective. As participant 3 said, this non-academic perspective gave her an insight into society from *within* society.

Through this awareness of the other and of their place in society, the participants strengthened their empathic consciousness. Creative practice enabled the participants to grow a deeper understanding of the relation between art and theory and of their relation to other people in society. They learned that they, and the academic theories they study, are not separate from society or art but instead highly connected in a network of research and art, theory and practice.

5.3. Discussion

The interview results and the relations between creative practice and theoretical and social understanding are now analyzed here according to ANT terms and by connecting the results to concepts, I introduced in the theoretical framework.

On the individual level, the non-human actants such as pencils and paper enabled the participants to see what was hidden before (Entwistle 2016, 270), such as the connection between academic theory and everyday cultural life. They used materials and objects as an extension of the body (Entwistle 2016, 270), which helped the brain to understand theory. They used their hands, which are controlled by the brain, to visualize ideas and concepts that help the brain to process theoretical information. This is the process of understanding through thinking and doing that Frayling described (1993, 4).

The academic university-trained researchers had to adapt to new ways of researching within the educational group. They had to do 'the work that is necessary to displace and transform' to stay in the network of Create Space and the Color Bravery group, a process called *translation* in ANT (Dankert 2003, 3). By changing their research sources, materials, and methods and adding creative practice to the research process, the theoretically schooled participants changed from conventional theoretical researchers to practical researchers and practitioners. It challenged their ways of thinking and thought patterns and the participants learned to reflect on academic research and knowledge critically.

The students explicitly mentioned these changing thought patterns as an effect of creative practice. However, this translation can also be labeled as an effect of transformative learning since a transformation took place in a human's *frame of reference*, which is *'a mindset or worldview of orienting assumptions and expectations involving values, believes, and

concepts' (Cranton, Dirkx, & Mezirow, 2006 124). The students' beliefs about research and how it is to be conducted changed as they saw that knowledge could also be gained from non-academic sources or research methods. Creative practice gave them the intellectual and creative freedom they were missing in their current academic education and it fulfilled their need to create something new. This need is in line with the generally accepted idea that research contains *new* knowledge (UNPD & UNESCO *n.d.*; Oxford Dictionary 2020; Butt 2019, 72; Kjørup 2011, 24).

The changes in the participants' frame of reference correlate with Früchtl's notion that in our western thinking, the relationship between the academic and art is subject to change, and that there are many forms of knowing that have the same rights of existence (2019, 125). The results also align with Butt's argument that there exist many ways of knowing that exceed the measurements of academic research (2018, 5). By getting acquainted with and producing non-academic research and cultural product, the students better understood the everyday cultural life they were theoretically studying. By experiencing culture and creating cultural products in their research process, they made another step in Williams' tradition of researching culture as a whole way of life (Rocamora and Smelik 2016, 9).

The students alternated perspective on truth and on the thinking process that is inherent to creating art taps into Matcham's notion that art's authority to produce a 'truth' is often still undermined (2014, 277) By bringing together artists and theorists, by embedding creative practice in this minor, and by enabling theorists to explore forms of research that stretch beyond the borders of academic research, the minor challenged this idea and broadened the theorists' perspective on the truth that art contains. The students were becoming aware of the different truth conditions of other research domains (Latour 2013).

The results also challenge the existing ideas in the literature about who is to conduct artistic research. According to Kjørup, being an artist is a crucial element of the definition of an artistic researcher (2011, 24-5). The participants I interviewed were not artists but theorists. However, by traveling beyond the borders of their creative, practical and theoretical comfort zones, the theoretical participants accessed the unknown space between art and theory: the realm of artistic research that both *explores* and *is* the space in between art and science (Caduff 2017, 315; Klein 2010, 3; Coessens, Crispen & Douglas 2013, 40). In that space, the participants experienced how creative practice enabled them to express their ideas, even when they were uncomfortable or insecure about the artistic quality of their works. Through creative practice, they produced new knowledge and developed a better understanding of art theory.

Artistic practice and artistic research can thus be accessed via the perspective of the academic university and is beneficial for the research and learning process of theoretical students.

In the space between art and academics, the theoretical students connected with art students, which created more empathy towards artists. Caduff critiques scholars who 'adorn' themselves with artists because of their status within the cultural sector while taking over the field of artistic research (2017, 320-1). Bringing artists and theorists together and enabling theorists to conduct creative practice is a possible remedy for Caduff's observation because it created an understanding of and insight into the research process or artists, which enhanced a sense of appreciation for and empathy towards artists.

The participants also developed more empathy towards the other via creative practice and alternative research sources. They looked at a topic from new perspectives and empathized with real-life experiences such as racism. Mezirow writes that a process in which a critical reflection of assumptions takes place can emerge in two manners (1997, 7). The first one is *object-framing*: being critically reflective of assumptions or points of view outside of ourselves (7). This process emerged amongst the participants as they took a critical stance towards the university institute for not sharing research results with society in widely accessible information formats. They criticized the social power held by the universities around sharing knowledge and showed a need 'to examine and rethink culture by considering its relationship to social power' which is at the core of cultural studies (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 51). Some of these critical ideas about the academic university were already present amongst the participants at the beginning of the minor. However, creative practice and using different materials and research sources helped the participants investigate these ideas further and place them in a practical, theoretical and societal perspective.

The second way critical reflection can occur is through *subject-framing*: being critically reflective of personal assumptions through self-reflection (Mezirow 1997, 7). The participants' immediate self-reflective and nuanced reactions when they used phrases like 'normal people' and 'human beings' illustrates that they were critical about their use of words. This process of critical (self) reflection is central to transformative learning (Dirkx 2006, 19). Dirkx writes: 'To connect with the whole, we need to know ourselves, what we are and what we are about.' (Dirkx 2008, 129). The students became more conscious of their view on non-academically schooled members of society and became aware of their position and agency in the societal, cultural network to which *all* members of society are connected.

Conclusion

This chapter shared the results of the interviews with the participants of the minor Create Space and aimed to answer the question: **What are the effects of creative practice on the learning and research process of three university students who participated in the minor Create Space?**

By using academic and non-academic sources, materials, objects and creative practice, the participants moved in and out of their practical and theoretical comfort zones. They explored the space between art and theory where artistic research is situated (Caduff 2017, 315). Letting go of academic research methods and trusting in their practical skills was sometimes challenging for the students. However, when they did, they felt free to explore creative practice and artistic research and critically reflect on the theories and methods they studied and used in their academic education. The participant's view on the university as an institute and on academic research changed during the minor since welcoming creative practice and artistic research into their research process challenged their academic thought patterns. It made them more aware of their own beliefs. It opened their frames of reference and enhanced their critical thinking skills.

Creative practice was a beneficial tool to better understand and relate to abstract theoretical concepts. Visualization, in particular, created a deeper insight into the topic of research and created a feeling of ownership of the research process. Creative practice and visualization added an additional layer to the learning process, to their *under*standing, since they physically processed knowledge instead of merely thinking about it. They brought more *doing* into the learning process, which made it more performative. Students learned to see how theories are highly connected to the creative practices, creative products and the cultural society they study in academia. Practically working with theories and allowing non-academic forms of research and knowledge into the learning process created more awareness of the social and cultural context from which theories arise.

Visualization was also used as a communication tool the share ideas with peers in the minor and in other academic fields and with non-academically schooled members of society. Visualization functioned as a common language amongst the students from different disciplines and institutes that made them understand each other. Lastly, creative practice enabled students to relate to their feelings and those of others, which stimulated the development of empathy.

For visualization to fulfill these cognitive and communicative functions, the participants learned that the execution and the end result did not have to be of high artistical quality. Through its function as a common language, visualization connected human actants from the art and academic world. Visualization was an essential and influential actant with a communicative agency in the network of Create Space that is beneficial for understanding theory in Art and Culture Studies. In the conclusion that now follows, I provide a recap of the chapters and connect the results of the interviews to the theories I discussed in this thesis.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

During the master Creative Industries and in the minor Create Space, I noticed that my peers shared my personal need for more creative practice in academic art and culture education. In this thesis, these individual and collective needs motivated me to research the benefits of embedding creative practice into the curriculum of Art and Culture Studies. I, therefore, formulated the research question: **What are the benefits of artistic and creative practices in the Dutch academic university education of Art and Culture students according to participants and initiators of the minor Create Space?**

The answer is, perhaps not unexpectedly, that creative practice is highly beneficial for the understanding of art and cultural theory and for experiencing the interconnectedness between theory and practice. Additionally, creative practice and the use of non-academic research sources, materials, and objects enable theoretical students to connect to artists and their research process and non-academic members of society. It makes students aware of their frame of reference and research frame of mind and enhances critical thinking skills and a sense of empathy towards the other.

In order to obtain this answer, I consulted literature that discussed the current debates about the humanities, artistic research and the creative industries. I did so to understand how these fields gained their position in academia and society and to reveal how the idea of who is to create research, artistic research and creative products has changed over time. This theoretical framework provided the thesis of a historical, political and educational context. I then conducted semi-structured interviews with two of the four initiators of the minor Create Space involved via Radboud University and three participating university students. I based the interview questions on the method of actor-network theory, which enabled me to see the connections between human and non-human actants in different areas of the actor-network of Create Space and how these had agency in the development of the minor. The method further allowed me to see the effect of materials and creative practice on theoretically trained students.

In this conclusion, I will first recap the results of my research per chapter and then show how the empirical results connect to the theories presented in this thesis. Finally, I share further research recommendations.

Chapter recap

In the first chapter, I sketched out the debates in the humanities, artistic research and the creative industries to understand the current state of affairs in these fields. These fields belong to the research area of Art and Culture Studies and are possibly the fields that Art and Culture students will enter as professionals after graduation. I learned that seemingly opposite forces have challenged and critically reflected on one another. This process is intertwined with policy reforms that determine who is to conduct research and what is considered art, culture and research. The dynamic process turned out to be a fertile one since it motivates researchers, artists and creative workers to keep renewing and improving their work and their perception of research, art and culture and who is to produce it. The literature enabled me to see between the binaries and showed the open spaces where these binaries could benefit from each other. Methodological plurality and multidisciplinary are common in these fields, where researchers and artists dare to explore how opposite forces like art and academia and culture and commerce are connected rather than divided.

In order to validate the hypothesis that creative practice is beneficial for the education of Art and Culture Studies, I used the method of Actor-network theory (ANT) as developed by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon and John Law. I chose this sociological method since it was designed to research epistemological questions about research and to reveal non-human actants' agency, such as materials, objects, and practice, in the research process. ANT enabled me to follow the different institutional, political and educational actants involved in and influenced the development of the minor. The method further helped me to research how creative practice and materiality affected the research and learning process of the theoretically trained students of Create Space. ANT served as the methodological foundation on which I build the interview questions. I conducted individual, semi-structured interviews with five people: two initiators of the minor involved from the academic university perspective, dr. Edwin Van Meerkerk and drs. Thieme Stap and three academic university participants of the minor Create Space who desired to stay anonymous.

In chapter three, I introduced the minor Create Space and shared the process of its development to provide an insight into the learning environment that the initiators and students created. I based this information on the interviews with the initiators and on my observations and experiences as a participant. I shared that the minor was initiated after a call for proposals in 2018 by the Board of Radboud University, which encouraged an interfaculty collaboration. Instead of an interfaculty collaboration, dr. Edwin Van Meerkerk from Radboud University called in dr. Jeroen Lutters from ArtEZ to co-create an interinstitutional collaboration.

Cassandra Onck and drs. Thieme Stap were assigned to design the minor under the guidance of Van Meerkerk and Lutters. The four of them wrote the subsidy proposal, which was granted by the Board in September 2018.

Onck and Stap then conducted research into educational theories, interviewed students and educators and set up the educational project of Spring School in March 2019 to create the format of the minor together with students of ArtEZ and Radboud University. Based on their research and the outcomes of Spring School, they designed Create Space. During the introduction week of the minor called the INCENTIVE week, the students decorated their learning environment in a physical research studio. In this week, they were introduced to the method of Open Space Technology (OST) via which they determined their research topic. The students formed groups in which they conducted their research during the minor.

After sketching out the learning environment of the participants, chapter 4 shared the results of the interviews with the initiators of the minor that were involved via Radboud University, dr. Edwin van Meerkerk and drs. Thieme. In these interviews, I first unraveled which institutional and which human actants had agency in the development of the education of the minor and which educational methods and theories were used. I wanted to understand how political and institutional actants influenced the minor's design since the education, in turn, influenced the students' understanding of and perspective on the world. I lastly asked the initiators about their expectations of the influence of creative practice on the learning process of academic students.

The interviews with the initiators of Create Space taught me that the split between the university and the university of the applied sciences in the Dutch binary system of education resulted in a competitive relation between these two educational institutions and the educators working there. In the past ten years, this relation changed as educators began to see the benefits of collaborating, which created the opportunity to exchange expertise and knowledge. Changing the relation from a competitive one into a collaborative one enabled epistemological ideas about art and theory to rise and institutional structures, such as the binary education system, to be challenged by the institutional human actants. The Boards of ArtEZ and Radboud University, the Dean of the Faculty of the Arts at Radboud University and dr. Van Meerkerk, who is the Director of Education at the Faculty of the Arts, were human, institutional actants that had agency over the development of the minor because of their mutual strive for educational renewal and their agency on the policy within these institutes. Onck and Stap and the students who participated in the Spring School were human actants that influenced and

determined the design of the minor since Create Space was highly based on the outcome of this Spring School.

The educational methods and theories that were the base of the Create Space were constructivism, transformative learning, question-based learning, self-directed learning and Open Space Technology, and design-based learning. These were chosen to enhance critical thinking amongst the students and to encourage them to challenge their *frame of reference*: 'a mindset or worldview of orienting assumptions and expectations involving values, believes, and concepts' (2006, 124). The initiators expected that creative practice would help students understand the interconnectedness between academic theory and creative practice and help express themselves more broadly than merely in written texts.

Chapter 5 shared the results of the interviews I conducted with three theoretical students who participated in the minor. Creative practice and using non-academic research sources changed the students' thought patterns, or frames of reference, as the initiators hoped. Using research materials labeled as non-valid academic research sources in their previous education and seeing how these can contain a 'truth' made the students rethink, revalue and critically reflect on academic research and the concept of knowledge. They realized that there are more ways of doing research besides the academic way that was familiar to them. Producing creative products brought about a sense of ownership and expertise about the research topic, which the students had often missed in their academic education. These results affirm the initiators' expectation that the students' research frames of references would be opened and challenged in this type of education, making students more critical thinkers.

Furthermore, creative practice challenged the students to step outside of their theoretical and practical comfort zones. They dared to create, even when the outcome of that creation was not of high artistic quality, since they experienced the communicative benefits of creative practice. This result aligns with Van Meerkerk's remark that creative practice can be beneficial for theoretical education when it does not require the same artistic quality as in practical education. Instead, the participants used creative practice, mostly visualization, as a tool to provoke the learning process, as Van Meerkerk suggested. Visualization helped the students to understand abstract theories better since images and drawings were closer to the ideas and imaginations in their minds than words and therefore reflected their thinking and understanding in a more accurate manner. Expressing their ideas in images added a visual layer of understanding to the linguistic layer they mainly had developed in their academic education. This made communication faster and clearer, both in the process of understanding incoming

information such as theories and ideas, as well as in the process of externalizing information through visual communication with peers and other members of society.

Allowing creative practice and non-academic research sources into the research process created a feeling of being connected to the 'real world', to the cultural society that the students had been theorizing until then. This connection made them realize that theory and practice are deeply connected. By engaging with and experiencing cultural society through creative practice, the students experienced that the theories they were studying in their academic education derived from real-life situations, experiences and cultural products. As the initiators predicted, through creative practice, the students saw that theory and practice are highly interconnected under the surface and they learned to understand the connections between the two. Creative practice and bringing together artists and theorists enhanced the participants' sense of empathy towards peers and towards non-academic members of society. Space was created for emotions, feelings and personal experiences to enter the research process. Engaging with the feelings and experiences of others by stepping outside of their academic research frames of reference made the students conscious of their value system and their position in the social and cultural context. The students' empathy towards the 'other' grew on a societal, group and personal level.

Connections between theory and empirical research

The interview results confirm multiple theoretical concepts I discussed in this thesis. Firstly, creative practice resulted in more engagement with and understanding of topics, theoretical concepts, cultural phenomena and cultural products on an emotional and cognitive level. These results are in line with the literature about artistic research in which art and theory, doing and thinking, are said to be strongly interconnected since the body and mind are actively interacting with one another (Frayling 1993, 4; Borgdorff 2012, 21). Creative practice and materials became an extension of the body that was used to show the brain what was hidden before (Entwistle, 2016, 270). Non-human actants proof to influence the thinking, research and learning process of human actants and the outcomes of such processes (Latour 2005, 10).

Students acknowledged that there are multiple ways of gaining knowledge besides the academic way. They became aware that art cultural products can contain a 'truth' in themselves, ideas that are emphasized in the literature about artistic research and the humanities (Matcham, 2014, 277; Früchtl 2019, 125). The research findings confirm that theory and art are not separate domains but focus on similar topics from different perspectives and use other methods to understand the world (Borgdorff 2011, 44; Klein 2010, 3; Coessens, Crispen &

Douglas 2013, 40). Creative practice is beneficial for the cross-fertilization between disciplines and institutes as it opens up space for educators and researchers to learn from each other by exchanging knowledge. Such a cross-fertilization is a positive development in the humanities, according to Bod and his co-writers (Bod et al. 2016, 1). The embeddedness of creative practice in academic education can contribute to this positive development.

This embeddedness can also contribute to the development of artistic research. Caduff and Matcham expressed their concerns about the field having to adjust to the rules of academia and the discourse created by academic scholars (Matcham 2014, 277; Caduff 2017, 320). Artistic researchers would risk being undermined and overruled by theoretical scholars (Matcham 2014, 277; Caduff 2017, 320). The results in this thesis show that working with artists and getting acquainted with their creative and research process created a greater understanding and appreciation of art and artistic research amongst theoretical students. By working closely with artists and conducting creative practices, they gained respect for artistic processes and artistic research. This is beneficial for the field and its position in academia since these students will possibly become the scholars who co-create the unique discourse of artistic research from an understanding and respectful perspective.

Visualization enhanced the students' ability to communicate with others: their peers and non-academic members of society. This is helpful for the students, who live in, contribute to and will be working in today's knowledge society, which focuses on sharing and spreading information and knowledge (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 99). Their engagement with everyday culture through creative practice expanded their understanding of that culture, which is beneficial for engaging in the creative industries where everyday culture is studied and where texts, cultural work and content, are created (Hesmondhalgh 2013, 16). The empathy the students developed via creative practice for artists and their creative processes is beneficial for students who are to enter the labor market of the multidisciplinary creative industries where they will be working closely with creative workers and artists.

The students' changed views and ideas about research and knowledge and the enlarged awareness of their social values and preconceptions. A process in which a critical reflection of assumptions arises is inherent to transformative learning (Mezirow1997, 7). By using creative practice, non-academic research sources, materials and objects, students learned that their preset ideas and subjectivity had agency in the research and learning process and in the research outcomes they produced. This corresponds to the ANT notion that non-human actants like materials and objects have a significant agency in the research process because of their influence on human actants (Latour 2005, 10).

Recommendations

Further research into the topic could focus on the effect of creative practice on university students in other projects in The Netherland that allow creative practice and artistic research to merge with academic education. Comparing different educational formats embedded with creative practice would reveal a more precise distinction between the effects of creative practice and the effects of the educational methodologies and theories on which the minor Create Space was built. Conducting another round of interviews with the participants, I interviewed for this thesis would show how the minor affected their learning and research process in the longer run. Since the results showed that in understanding and discussing theory, the students proffered visuals over written texts, I wonder how the use of more visual material in the teaching process of Arts and Culture Studies can improve the students' learning process.

At the end of my research, I can advance the suggestion that the responsibility to provide education that enables students to research the field of artistic research lies precisely where this field is located: in the space between art and theory. As a former participant, I would like to state that further development of a collaborative form of education like Create Space would be greatly appreciated by students who feel stuck in between these institutes. The minor provided an environment that enabled us to become fertilized by both art and theory. My hope is that more projects like Create Space will be initiated. I envision the emergence of collaborative artistic research studios. Physical spaces can become the fertile common grounds between the arts and academia, which will be maintained and nurtured by students and educators of both the university of the arts and the academic university. In these environments, materials, objects and space for both the arts and academia will be accessible for those who love to learn in and through art and theory.

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Attachment 1: Lists of symbols
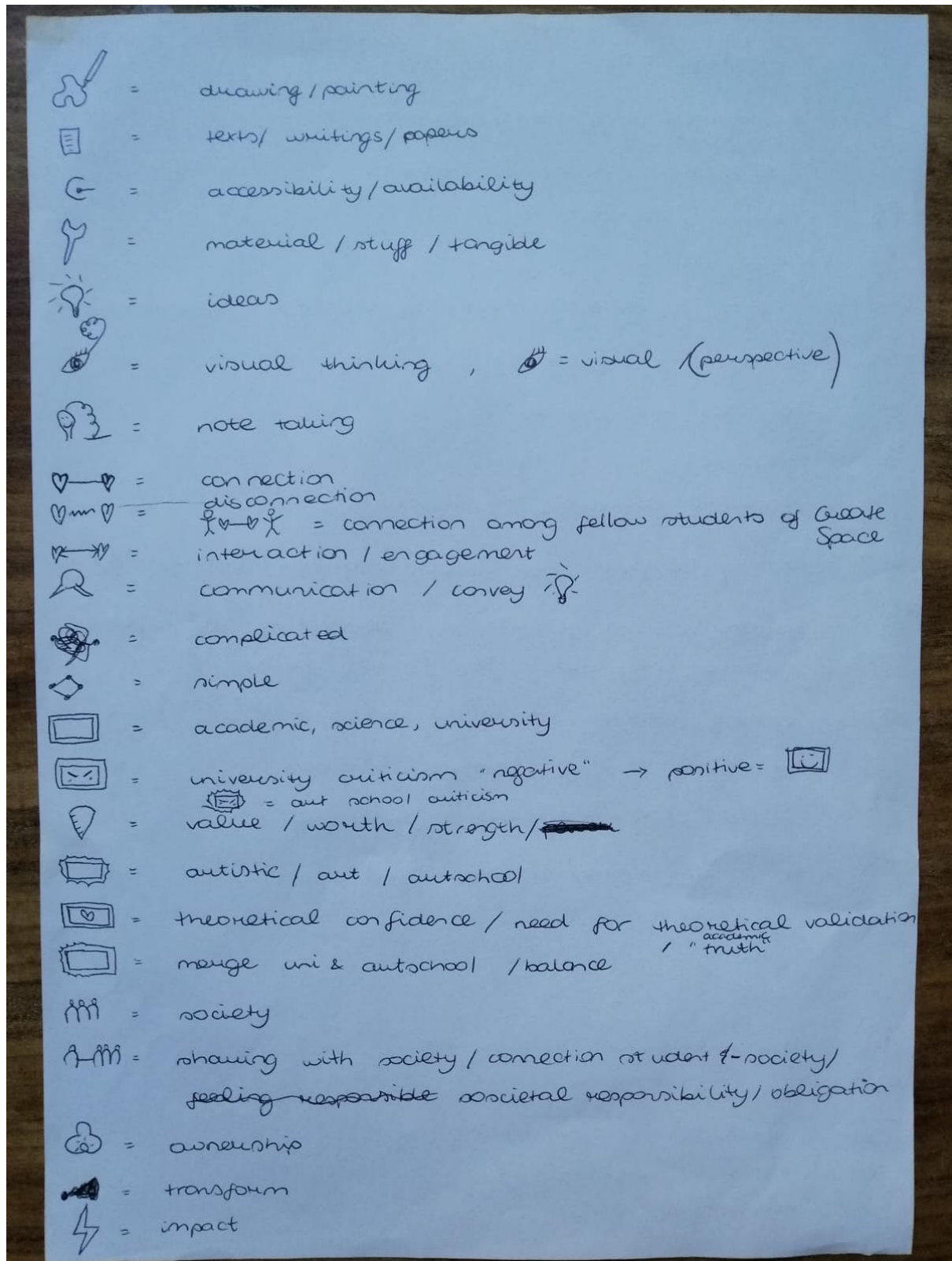
Figure 1.1. List of coding symbols, part 1

Figure 1.2. List of coding symbols, part 2

80

symbol = educator (@ university ; researcher)

symbol = student

symbol = design-based

symbol = space

symbol = demand / need

LL = leading learners / Thieme & Cassandra

symbol = change / develop

symbol = world

symbol = education

symbol = method

symbol = skill

symbol = place / position

symbol = power

symbol = hierarchy

symbol = research

symbol = experience

symbol = politics
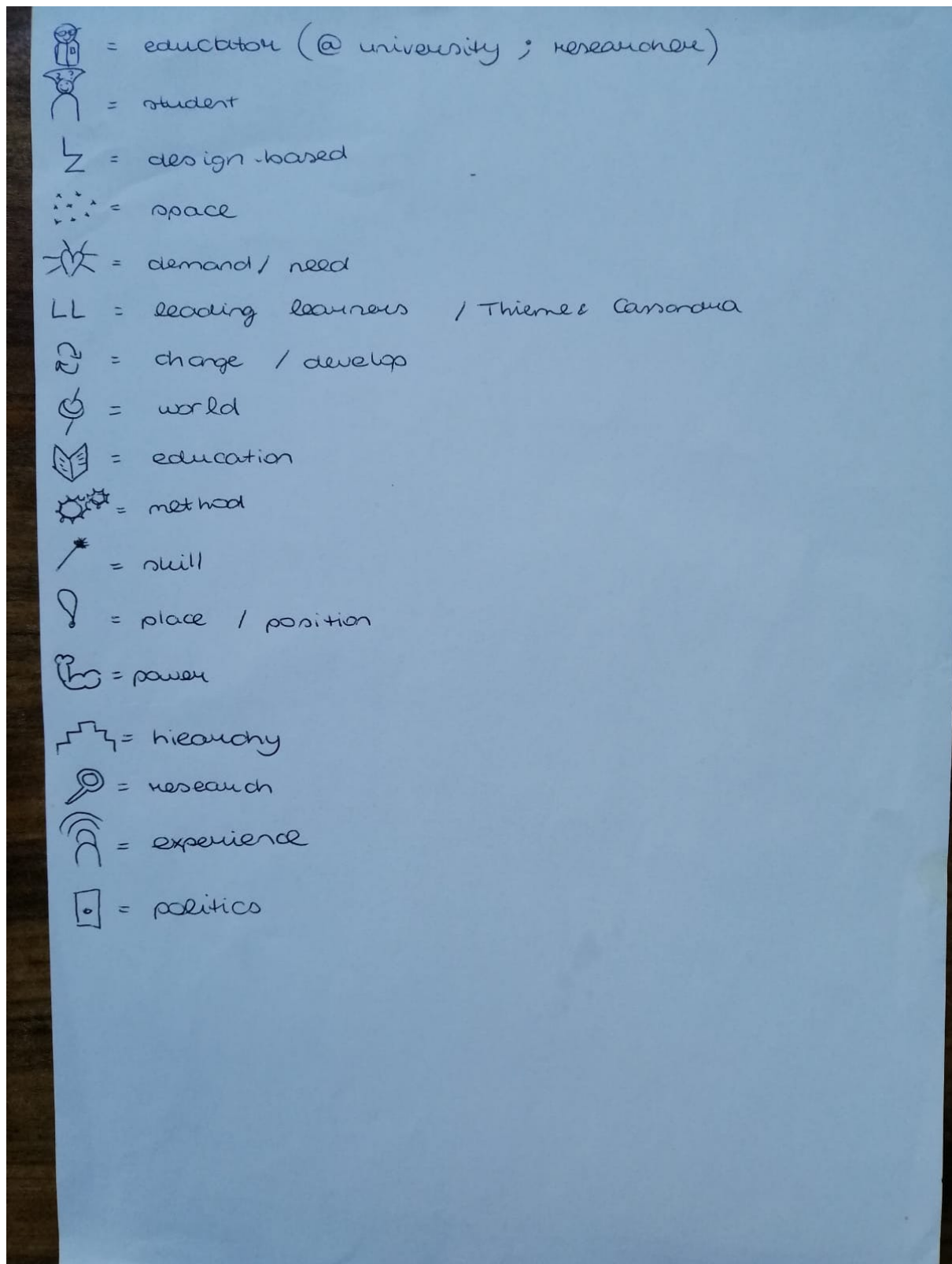
Figure 1.3. List of coding symbols, part 3.

Attachment 2: Interviews with initiators of Create Space

Interview with Thieme Stap. Semi structured interview with Create Space initiator.

Monday September 21th, 2020.

14:00-15:30.

Interview via Zoom.

Stops between brackets (…) indicate a pause.

Words in *italic* indicate the interviewee emphasized the word.

Researcher: Why were you engaged in founding this minor and what was your role within it?

Interviewee: Okay, why was I engaged is the first element, I think. Pf, let me think, that was already five years ago I think. I was still in my own studies, I studied philosophy back then and I was doing the honors program that was about the arts, the boundary crossing between the arts and the sciences. That was basically the idea of the subject I was following. And uhm (…). Yeah I'm not sure, but it sparked something inside of me. I have no idea why. I think it has something to do with the fact that my mother is an artist and that I myself have a very deep love for art. Uhm, art history and aesthetics were basically the two subjects I liked the most during my studies, to be honest (laughs). So I think that love was already there and it sparked, I think something about education. I like to teach, I like to develop people, help people develop I should say.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: (laughs) Yeah. Mould them into more complete human beings. That is something that I learned there. And I met Cassandra there with who I set up Create Space. And basically she said two years later, I have this possibility because Jeroen Lutters is going to work together with Edwin van Meerkerk to create a minor. And we want to make sure that that sticks. So I want to lead the project but I want somebody there with me from the science side. And that was two years after I was done with that program I did before and that is basically how it started. Yeah. And the first thing that we did together was write a subsidy proposal and we wrote a subsidy for I don't know, eighty thousand euros or something. That meant that she and I could get paid, Jeroen and Edwin could get paid, and that we had enough money to actually find a space, make it a design-based development instead of a onetime thing. All those kinds of things were there at the beginning. So I think my love for art and my love for education were the two sparks that came to flourishing I think.

Researcher: And you said you like to mold people, or give people the opportunity to mold themselves maybe, uhm,

Interviewee: (smiles) Exactly, yeah.

Researcher: that is what you immediately saw that was possible in making a program like this?

Interviewee: (…) Yeah, I was already quite convinced of that fact, I think. Uhm, but that also has to do something with the fact that I come from a care, I have a care background, I worked at a psychiatric hospital for two years. I know people can change, even when they are old (laughs). And I know people can, well basically, people never stop developing. And it's only what the environment gives them, that, you know, that has the most impact on the development. So if you can create an environment where people can mold themselves the best, I think that this program had that from the beginning. Yeah.

Researcher: And your exact role within the program?

Interviewee: Uhm, I think the word we originally came down to was project leader, but what the hell does that mean, right? (laughs)

Researcher: (laughs) Yeah, and what the hell did you do?

Interviewee: Yeah (laughs). I think my role in the end was, uhm (…) educator, uhm (…) yeah, project leader, I think that is the best way. Because I created the policy, well we created that together with the four of us. I made sure that everything was (laughs) possible, so practical issues like, I don't know what the term is for people like that,

Researcher: Production.

Interviewee: but I made sure that… Yeah, do you know a word?

Researcher: Yeah, we call it creative production.

Interviewee: Sure! I was a creative producer, awesome (smiles).

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: Yeah, and then last but not least, the *educator* in the program. We made sure that Cassandra and I situated ourselves from the *beginning* as the two main educators who were both in age and in background quite close to the students. And also, from the idea that, you know, we see, we still do, we see ourselves as *peers*. And not so much as *teachers.* Uhm (…)

Researcher: Why was that important? Also to be closer with age and (...)

Interviewee: Yeah age might not be that big of a problem, only that when you are older you are already molded in a certain way and "uitgehard", I don't know what the English word is. I think you're uh (…). The clay that is molded becomes hard slowly, I think. And that happens also I think with Edwin and Jeroen. I think Jeroen is a marvelous thinker, but the moment he steps into a room, he sets himself right back on the pedestal that he always was as a teacher. And that is not a problem. It's a strength, I think. But we wanted something else.

Researcher: Alright. How did institutional policy within the university or art school, how did that help or held back in the development of the program?

Interviewee: Oh, that's a good question. It, it. Pf. Uhm (…). We made a choice quite early in the program that this was going to be a minor. And the minor *structure* is something that is present in the university but is not present in the art school. So that always made it, at the art school, it made it problematic. But it was our choice that made it problematic. Because if we would have chosen a project based development, it would have had a completely different outcome at the art school basically. It would have worked, easily.

Researcher: What do you mean with project based, what would a project like that be called?

Interviewee: They also have subjects and those subjects can be project based and the idea is that you can take, I don't know, up to half a year for a subject and work at it at your own time. But what we wanted was to bring the group together, so we needed a much more rigorous and strict way of working. Because surprisingly at the art school, there is much more

crosspollination, they work together a lot more, but at the same time it is also very individual. And what we wanted was to create a team, a community, people coming together and working together on a question or on a problem. So it had a different idea behind it, and that was in the end why we choose for a minor system.

Researcher: But there was from a higher uh (…) uh, level or something like that,

Interviewee: Levels, yeah.

Researcher: people were not hesitant, or were they, was the project maybe too experimental or too new? Was there in that sense, uhm, were you in that sense held back?

Interviewee: (…) I had some quite hostile conversations with people, but because we fell under Edwin's Comeniusbeurs which is about educational reform and innovation. And because we already had the money, I was never worried. I could have these conversations with "gestrekt been", how do you say this? With some rigor and wouldn't be afraid of losing anything.

Researcher: Yeah exactly.

Interviewee: Because I think if we would have been dependent on those kinds of conversations, it would have been a lot harder. I am quite sure of that. But because we already had the money and we because were institutionalized, we fell under the *existing* innovation platforms that were present, it was not a problem. But for instance, what a good example is in this case is that there was this director of ArtEZ, I'm not sure if it was theatre production or something, and he was (…) conservative. And he didn't want to change anything. And that is basically because if he lost students, he wouldn't get the money. That was the reason, in the end.

Researcher: Wow.

Interviewee: So it is not about creating the best environment for the student but it's about making sure that I survive. And that's something, that conversation I had, I think, three or four times, also at the Radboud. If I wanted to have some students actually from the FNBI, Natuurwetenschappen, en informatica, uhm. And surprisingly enough, the philosophers were the ones who held back the most.

Researcher: So that's a common thing, you see that quite often, people, uhm, when there is not enough students they don't get the money anymore so they can't provide the education they want to provide?

Interviewee: (…) Uh, yeah, I think that that is a very big incentive today. A very leading incentive.

Researcher: So the demand for an educational program like this, where did it come from?

Interviewee: Basically, from my Cassandra and me. So what already the start was, the original idea of Create Space was to create a platform where students from the Radboud University that had some experience in, I don't know, guitar playing or piano playing, go to ArtEZ and have half a year fun and do some stuff there, and people who were interested in psychology could come here, come to the Radboud and work on psychology. That was the original idea. And my Cassandra and I came in and we saw this proposal and we said: "No, this is not what we are going to do. If you want this, you need to take other people because this is not why you ask us." And so from that moment onward we said: "Okay, we want to create something that *changed* people." That was the goal. That you, for the first time, basically in your whole academic, or, well yeah academic career, it's also an art academy, right? In your whole academic career, you had the feeling you would change something in the world. Because it is not present, at least in my study it wasn't present and I know in many more it's not present. So that idea was present from the beginning and then Jur Koksma, who is now my PhD supervisor, at the same time was teaching me a little bit about transformative learning theory and working design based and so on and so on. And then we said: "Okay, lifelong learning is something this university wants, it is also something the art academy wants, okay, what are the skills that we need to teach them?" The first idea was to make it problem-based, but then Jeroen for instance said: "No, it's not going to be problem-based because a problem demands a solution and we don't want a solution, necessarily. We could also want more questions for instance." So that became question-based and not problem-based. Uhm, and then we looked at how we could create a problem-based environment that fits the participants best? And the best way to do that is to let the participants make it themselves. So we created Spring School, that was the first round. And we let the participants of the spring schools create the education platform themselves. And the education that you experienced was, I think sixty to seventy percent theirs.

Researcher: So, but there was not a demand from students anywhere, it was just from your own experience as a student?

Interviewee: Of course, I think we jumped, absolutely, I think we jumped into a gap that is there. But it is not as if we did a marketing research (laughs)

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: and looked at how many people (laughs) want to do this, you know.

Researcher: Which is quite, I think that is quite surprising.

Interviewee: We already experienced something in our group, and when we talked to our friends they were like, wow, yeah, I want to do something like this, that we knew something was there. And, ow (gets an insight) maybe, what we *did* do was, we had a list, I'm not quite sure how we came to that list, I'm sorry, that's already three years ago, but there was a list of students. And those were students that worked for instance for the students' advisory board of the Radboud. And those people had the idea of doing basically the "uitwisseling", do some guitar lessons at ArtEZ and do some psychology lessons at the Radboud. And I had conversations with them and I said: "Do you know what this means? Is this really what you want?" And some of them were very rigorous in their own ideas and now quite disappointed that we didn't listen to them, and others were like: "Yes, this is a better idea." And they helped, they followed. And one of them was in the INCENTIVE week also present.

Researcher: And coming back to the idea that you wanted to create teams, very specifically, of bringing people together.

Interviewee: Yeah, a community, actually.

Researcher: And why, exactly? Same as some people just want some guitar lessons, why do people want that community, you think?

Interviewee: (…) I think it has something to do with those twenty-first century learning skills, livelong learning skills that I just mentioned. Because there are some elements present there, like critical thinking for instance, but also team-based learning is mentioned in those documents. It's European, it's a European ideal, also very much part of the GDP's. The whole idea is basically that there is too much, how do you say this, mensen worden teveel tegenpolen? You know,

Researcher: Yeah, opposites? Opposite forces?

Interviewee: yeah opposites but you know, politically, the landscape is (…)

Researcher: Dividing?

Interviewee: Dividing more and more and there are becoming bigger groups that are only in their own bubble and not listening to the other anymore. And the only way to go through that is to literally put people together. And that is something I myself have already experienced because I was the chairman of Buildung Nijmegen. I was one of the initiators of Buildung Nijmegen. I know that when you put (laughs) the math students from the Radboud together with the cooks from ROC, something happens. And that something can be directed a little more if you give them a question or a problem. But I already knew that *some*thing could happen. And I knew there was a demand for that, for working together. So yeah, it's basically the theoretical model of the twenty-first century learning skills coming together with my own experience and seeing that something could happen, coming together with the idea of question-based learning.

Researcher: And on what educational theories and methods is the design of the minor based? You already mentioned design (…)

Interviewee: Based learning?

Researcher: Yeah.

Interviewee: Exactly. (sights).

If we go back completely to the epistemological base of the project it is constructivist educational platform. And with constructivism, I don't know if you know the term?

Researcher: Yeah, the ANT network guy is also constructivist, so this matches.

Interviewee: Okay yeah, yeah, of course he is.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: (laughs)

Researcher: But please explain, I can learn from it.

Interviewee: What does that mean, I am just going to do it, I'm sorry, because it's my own thoughts complete. The idea basically is that you have glasses, and you put on those glasses, and those glasses help you interpret the world. (portrays glasses by bringing hands in circles around eyes) And the construct, the glasses in this case, can be broken and can be built up and can be more sharp and so on and so on. So that's the basis. The second step is that we want the people to make a change. And we call that a transformation. So we want them to become active learners. To go from *passive* learners to *active* learners. And we want them to become *practitioners.* Not just students, but create something in the world. Uhm, and that transformation we tried to facilitate using transformative learning, which basically aims at making those glasses sharper, so more critical, but also more open. So the horizon must become bigger. You must entertain the other perspective without accepting it, to quote Aristotle.

Researcher: Okay (smiles).

Interviewee: That is basically the idea. Yeah. So that is the second theory that laid, from the start, laid underneath Create Space. The third was design-based learning. And with design-based learning, the idea is that the learning environment, and that is *our* interpretation, that is not *the* interpretation I must add, the learning environment should be developed at least in co-creation, but maybe completely, by the participants themselves.

Researcher: Hm hm (affirmative).

Interviewee: Yeah? Uhm (…) And that is also, I think, the most important part of the learning experience that the participants have. The fact that they have *power*. Because it comes down to power in the end, I think. And it is only a model you can use to direct the power and develop the space for instance. You know, you went into the space and there was all this furniture. Make it into your own space! And I think the room changed at least four times in the first week and when I came back from my holidays two weeks later, it was changed again. I don't know how often it changed in between (laughs), but yeah. And the fact that you could assert that power and really have *your* space, makes the learning environment completely different than what you experienced normally in the classroom.

Researcher: And that,

Interviewee: So.

Researcher: yeah, sorry?

Interviewee: No no, go.

Researcher: And that is very literally design-based learning?

Interviewee: Yeah. So the other part of design-based learning is basically, what I said before right.

Researcher: Yeah.

Interviewee: We wanted the participants to design the learning environment at first. For instance, the environment is something we brought in from moment one, but *how* to work with it, we did not have that much furniture in the first round for instance (refers to Spring School). And the participants of the Spring School said: "You need more furniture. You need more (…) And you need a space that is," because during Spring school we were at the Expoplu, which is a very artistic place, still. Which some of them very much liked, because they like artistic spaces (smiles), but some of them did not like that much. So we went to find a place that was a lot more neutral.

Researcher: More in between.

Interviewee: And what is more neutral than the tax office, right?

Researcher: (laughs) Yes.

Interviewee: (laughs) Other elements were, something we didn't do for instance, is have the problems already clear. The participants of the Spring School said: "Make sure you already have ten problems that are clear, up front." But we were like "No, because then we are still imposing problems upon the participants instead of the participants coming up with the problems themselves." So that was something, those were all design principles we discussed and said yes or no to, basically.

Researcher: Yeah, so you made an own interpretation of (...). You picked out the things you thought were necessary or needed or handy.

Interviewee: Uhm (sighs) yeah, but not just like (sucks on thumb to express the Dutch saying: "uit de duim gezogen", meaning made up out of nothing). No. It was a discussion. And it was and that discussion was mainly between Cassandra, Jeroen, sometimes a little bit Nishant, you met him as well during the program, and myself. And some practical elements were discussed with Edwin, but a little bit less.

Researcher: And what role did practice have in the development of this, as in, uhm (...). Was practice a thing*, was it discussed as a* thing*? There needs to be this much practice in there, there needs to be this much theory.*

Interviewee: Uhm (…) It *was* discussed, but it was mainly (…). I think that this is something we should learn about. Looking back at the process right now, I think I am the one who put too much focus on the practice. (….) So, maybe because I missed it myself during my own, uhm, scientific education. It was never a thorough discussion I think, and the result in the end was that I think you experienced very little theoretical background. And I think that is a shame. Because it is an equal part of the minor, it should have been an equal part of the minor. You know, we primed you with three papers. We discussed one time the theoretical background

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behind the minor. And for the other parts, you had to do it yourself. And I think we should have structured the theoretical element more. But the focus on the practical was basically my spearhead. I wanted this minor to be as *practical* as possible. To be as focused on real world impact, and real-world questions or problems, or whatever word you want to use. And I *think* that was present from the beginning on. Yeah.

Researcher: And why did you focus so much on that?

Interviewee: Because that's where it happens (spoken in a quick pace). But, yeah, this is also my own overtuiging, my own conviction. I think that (…) I'm a very neo-pragmatist person.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: (does not respond to laughter but stays serious) And what I mean with that is that I know people who are doing philosophy who put fourteen different epistemologies next to each other and say: "Okay, now I can tell something true about the world." And I'm like, yeah, that's not what this is about (slightly agitated tone). They're doing a PhD on the word subject of a seventeenth century philosopher and compare it with an eighteenth century philosopher and they think they, they *think* they can really help the world. And maybe, yeah, of course (tone goes up and sounds more accepting, gentle again) in the long term, absolutely. I shouldn't bagitaliseren, I shouldn't make it smaller than it is, but (…) For me it is about the problems in the world. That is where it happens. As a scientist, you need to train yourself into having an impact on the world. As an artist, idem ditto. So that was the drive behind it. And that is also, I think, rooted in the theories we used. For instance, uhm, the twenty-first century learning skills, but also transformative learning is a theory that has a critical aspect in itself that focusses on real world problems. So, yeah, I'm not sure which came first. I think the practical focus was already present within me and I chose those theories to focus on already in my PhD because I am that person. But I am also quite sure that it was something that was lacking in my own education.

Researcher: What did you expect university students to learn from creative practice, and to learn from using materials in their research?

Interviewee: (…) What do you mean by expect?

Researcher: What did you think would happen if they would use materials? What did you think they would learn from materials instead of a paper or a theory?

Interviewee: (…) Yeah that is a good question. In educational theory, we are quite certain on the fact that tactile learning, learning through doing, basically, has a very big impact. Sometimes this is interpreted wrong, I think, I don't know if you know the pyramid that says: "Okay, if somebody tell you something, you only remember only this much,"

Researcher: <u>Oh, yeah.</u>

Interviewee: "but if you tell something and you write it down, you learn a little bit more." I disagree with that, that is just very bad science I think, but I am quite certain on the fact that if you put a theory into practice right away, it is something, actually my girlfriend always said that to me. I learn a theory in philosophy, I don't know, cultural theory of Marx, or whatever, and then I looked at the news and I said: "Ah, this is this, this is this." I applied it immediately, and that's the way I learned. I never, (laughs) don't hold this against me, but I almost never read the original texts of the philosophers.

Researcher: Okay (laughs), wow.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's a bad thing. I should not do this, but what I *did* do was read *about* it, read *about* it, and apply it. And that's how I learned it. And I am very certain, but that is my personal experience and then I looked at the medical literature and I said; "Hey, okay, here there are more people saying this. Practice works." And in order to *do* practice, you need to have a safe environment, you need to have trust, you need to have the materials present to do it. You need to have a safe net, so if something goes wrong, completely, you can still make the test basically. Those kinds of things, you need to think of up front. But, if those are present, the practice is the best way to learn. And what did I expect them to learn, that was your question, (laughs) I'm sorry.

Researcher: That's okay.

Interviewee: Uh. (sights). I did not expect anything, because this is, you know. It was a completely open program, I didn't know what you were going to do,

Researcher: We didn't either.

Interviewee: and that made it very easy not to expect anything. What I expected was that you would become more critical and you would become more open. Those were the very abstract things that I expected. *And* I expected that it would be, for the most of you, a life changing environment, educational environment. But yeah, I think those are all very vague terms and that is because I didn't expect anything up front.

Researcher: And maybe this is more into what I want to know, what the effect (…) What do you think, maybe that's also nothing you can answer, but what do you think practice does to theoretically programmed minds?

Interviewee: It, I notice because this is part of my research as a PhD, I have literally *seen* that it makes unsure. It makes feel unsafe, at first. And then it liberates, then it makes free. Those are the first two steps of the circle. And the third step, I think, is, as soon as you are made free, you can open up and do everything you like, and the fourth step is coming back to, okay, we should have a focus and we should try to make an impact on the world, there it is again. Those four steps, I think, happen. And I have seen the first two steps in a program I researched, another program called, *De kunst voor het kijken en zien voor de medische professie*, that's the Dutch terms but I'm not quite sure anymore what the English term is. Uhm, where we put medical students, IOS, young doctors who are already done with their bachelor and master, and we said: "Okay, you are going to work with an artist and you are just going to experience it." And what we saw happen was, for instance, one of the artists, Jan Rothuizen, great artists, great guy, said: "Start drawing. No matter what." And one of the participants said, after half an hour, hadn't drawn anything, we went to her and said: "What's going on?" And she said: "I don't know what to draw. I don't have a", how do you say, "a goal, a direction." And she completely got stuck. She didn't know what to do anymore. So that is the unsafety. Another example is that we said, and this is a *research*, this is actually a research frame of mind, so that is the interesting part. It was together with, what's his name again, I'm not quite sure about the artists anymore. Hans Aarsman was his name. He had 250 shields of Papua Guinea peoples. And those shields would say something about the people, about the community they were part

of. We had those shields and we put them on the ground everywhere and said: "Okay, now let's make a categorization. Which shields are part of which community and why?" And at the end, we said, the participants came to us and said: "Okay, now what's the right answer?" And we said: "There is no right answer, we have no idea. All those shields are way to interpretable and the details are way too small to notice."

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: And they felt, well, they felt angry (laughs), basically. They felt genept, I think the Dutch word would be. And rightfully so, I think, because we gave them an assignment that wasn't doable. But it also made something clear about their research frame of mind. There isn't a model for everything, and they are trained, as doctors, to always have a model. And I think that that is present in *all* scientific communities. You need to have a model to understand the world. And I am sorry, but that is simply not true. It's wrong!

Researcher: Yeah, it's weird.

Interviewee: It's a, I think it's an Enlightenment problem. I find the roots of this problem in Enlightenment. The idea that there is a modelization of the world and that we can, maakbaardheid, what would be the English translation, we can form the world in any way we want.

Researcher: Makeablility? (laughs).

Interviewee: Yeah exactly. It's bullshit! (indignant tone) It's bullshit from a point onwards. Up to a point, we can control it, I agree. But there is a moment that it's too complex.

Researcher: So you thought that that would be the effect, that we would get another view on that model that is still in our heads? Always trying to make a model, always trying to (…)

Interviewee: I think we, I did my utmost to break that model open.

Researcher: And if you could repeat again these four steps, what are these four steps again?

Interviewee: Panic. (laughs). Then freedom, so you become free. And then you stary creating openly, and then in the end you start focusing again on a problem or a question or whatever. But this is uhm (…) (laughs) invented right now, I would say.

Researcher: (laughs) Okay, so that is not yet a model?

Interviewee: No. And I think the differentiation between freedom and openness is already quite hard, so don't hold on to it.

Researcher: No no. I thought it was maybe in a theory somewhere, but it's the Thieme theory.

Interviewee: Naaah, yeah, it's a Thieme theory in so far that, for instance in the transformative learning theory, there is the disorientation. Well, okay, first there is the experience that doesn't fit in the frame of mind. So you look to the glasses and those glasses are not adequate for the problem. That is basically the first step of transformative learning. What you get then, is that there is a moment of, okay, it is not adequate, is it not adequate in so far that I need to change my whole believe system, or is it not adequate and is my believe system okay and I can just go on with my life? And then the third step becomes, okay, shit, I need to change something about my believe system and then there comes disorientation. Because those glasses are kaput, completely, they don't work anymore, you don't see your world anymore as it was. For instance, concretely, this means that someone who has worked in care for fifty years, then thinks: "I'm going back to school.", hasn't used a computer in those thirty years, and now needs to work with a computer in school, because everything is working with a computer in school. The paradigm that someone has, the way somebody *looks* at the world, needs to shift and change dramatically. And, you need to practice with this, take action, and so on and so on. So that's also that same circle. So its not completely (sucks on thumb again to portray the Dutch saying "uit de duim gezogen").

Researcher: What role or what part did you expect visualization to have? So people using visual and creative practices to express ideas, to learn, to, uhm, to put down as thinking notes.

Interviewee: I already came across the tacit learning, working with your hands and so on.

Researcher: Ow tacit, yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah yeah. It comes from an old Russian education, I think philosopher I would even say, he was also a psychologist and a researcher, Polanyi. I'm probably ruining his name completely. I can send you something if you want it. But his idea was: there are two forms of knowledge, theoretical knowledge and tacit knowledge, and those work in combination together. And I think that, again, visualization, is very much part of that tacit knowledge. Certainly when *you* are the one creating the visualization. My, I mentioned him already, Jur Koksma, he always says to me, put your knowledge in a graph. Put it in a visualization. Practice that. And why does he do that? Because when you do that, it makes much more clear how different elements of your theory are situated accordingly to each other.

Researcher: So connections?

Interviewee: It helps me very much and I expected it to do the same to you.

Researcher: In the sense of verbanden leggen, things like that?

Interviewee: Verbanden leggen, but also, uhm (…) seeing how those verbanden are related (…) You know, je kan een verband leggen tussen (puts both hands in the air to portray the next words) dit is een verband , hiertussen bestaat een verband (now puts hand slightly more away from one another) maar dit is een ander verband. So you learn to understand the relation. You don't only learn to *see* the relation, but your learn to *understand* it, you learn to *work* with it. You learn that some of those relations can be *used* and some of those relations, if you *change* the relation, can also be used to a different application. And you can only do that if you work with it. And visualization, for me, is a very big, I think the first step. That is also why I made you make maps. Visualization in that sense is (…). Getting (…), getting clarity in a theory can only be done, I think, through visualization. Ah, that's not true. I'm too rigorous because there are very clear theories that are only theories. If you think of Kant, for instance. Hegel as well, logically very, very strict, uhm.

Researcher: But do you know if they maybe also used visualization? For themselves?

Interviewee: I'm quite sure that Kant didn't. I'm not sure about Hegel. But uhm, yeah, Kant, (laughs), Kant is a story on itself because he learned to think in Latin, but it was also the same

time in the development of our great Western civilization (ironic tone) where we did not do all university education in Latin anymore, but also started using our own languages. And what that did was that he was educated in Latin, but he wrote his big books in German. So he still uses the Latin logic,

Researcher: Aaah, yeah.

Interviewee: but also uses the German words (laughs). And that gives a very, also a very structured way of thinking. But yeah, that's a different story.

Researcher: How do you think that, I think it already sort of came out, but how do you think that creative practice adds to the understanding of theory, and also where it limits it? If it does limit it.

Interviewee: (…) Yeah, the understanding I think is quite clear, right? It can help you work with it and make relations more clear and definitions as well I think. If you make a mind map surrounding a certain concept, you did that many times, it makes the concept more tested, tangible. So that is quite clear. But where it limits (…). I'm not sure. I don't know if it limits, I don't think it limits. (…) I'm, yeah, that's a good question. I'm not sure. (…) I think it limits in logic.

Researcher: Yeah, in thinking maybe. Well, no, also not.

Interviewee: Well, nah, not in thinking, thinking is too broad, but if you want to work with a strict, logical model, visualization becomes problematic. The only theoretical background that I would come up with to support this idea is, you know Wittgenstein?

Researcher: Wittgenstein?

Interviewee: Yeah, Ludwig Wittgenstein, a great philosopher, the only book that was published during his live is the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and it is a very structured book, I have it here in my kast. It is literally 1, 1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.1.2 and so on and so on, and then all the way to chapter seven. But later in his life, he found this problematic. And he came up, that first book was basically, the basic premise of the book is: the world is a language. That is the first

sentence. And the moment you step out of language, so if you start talking about ethics, what the hell is good, or the moment you start talking about mysticism, if you start talking about art, which is important for us, what the hell is that? He said: "You shouldn't talk about. You should experience it, have it, but that's it." Later on in his life he came back to this idea and said: "Maybe this is too rigorous," (laughs) and he came up with the language games, taalspelen in Dutch. And the best example in that case is basically that he is basically the founder of the emoji.

Researcher: (laughs) Okay.

Interviewee: This is maybe a bit of sketchy terrain, but what he did was, he said: "If we use drawings of faces, we can convey *much* more clear information then if we try to use it in many, many words. How to describe anger? That is very hard. But if we just make an angry face, everybody knows what anger is." So this is a good example, I think, for me, it's an example I would use to describe why it's problematic. Does that give an answer to your question?

Researcher: It does.

Interviewee: Somehow.

Researcher: Yes, exactly yeah. Not everything needs an exact answer, right? More questions. Well the last question actually already, it feels to me as already, what your overall stance is towards integrating practice in university education, specifically in the humanities, but I'm not sure if you should be so specific on the humanities since it is not really your field.

Interviewee: It is.

Researcher: It is?

Interviewee: I'm a philosopher.

Researcher: Ah yeah, of course, but it thought education is more, what is education actually, sociology?

Interviewee: Yeah, social sciences often, but I finished my master thesis in educational philosophy, philosophy of education.

Researcher: Okay, then in the humanities.

Interviewee: Sure. (sights). My stance is positive. I want it. (direct voice)

Researcher: And how much more would you want it then now?

Interviewee: A lot more. I think it should be at least fifty fifty. But,you know. I went climbing with a friend of mine last Friday and we were talking about how should we structure science. (laughs) Sure.

Researcher: (laughs) On a Friday afternoon.

Interviewee: Yes. Big ideas. And we came up with a division of twenty-five, twenty-five, fifty. Fifty percent of science should be focused on completely making the world better. That should be the focus of science. Fifty percent of it. Twenty-five should be on the theoretical models that are already present, and that are strong, and that are, well, workable with. For instance, the word subject, I think is a very good thing to think about and to work on, theoretically. Because the subject is also what lies behind the idea of liberalism, you know. It's something, it's a fundament of our society. So I'm coming back to the previous, negative connotation I put into it. The next twenty-five percent should be on doing whatever people want. Anything goes. I am a Paul Feyerabend fan in this sense. I don't know if you know Feyerabend.

Researcher: No.

Interviewee: Yes, you should know him because you read a text about him (playful strict tone), it's okay.

Researcher: Ow, sorry, in my head his name was different, Faberyant (makes it sound French) or something like that (laughs).

Interviewee: (laughs) Ah no, Paul Feyerabend (laughs). So yeah, you know, if somebody wants to research Brazilian rain dances and thinks he or she can change the world with it, go ahead. That's how I think science should be focused. So basically fifty percent applied. And maybe even more, if you look at the other twenty-five percent that can do whatever because that might be as well practical.

Researcher: And what do you think is really missing right now in the current curricula?

Interviewee: (…) Well. (…) Uhm (…) Your group worked very much on going inwards. (…) Maybe even so far inwards that there was no way out in some cases. I think we went too far. Up to a point, we went too far, I think. Uhm (…) But that is something I am missing. Really, really giving space to, uh, search your soul.

Researcher: Hmm. (confirmative tone).

Interviewee: Why you are doing what you are doing? And at the same time, I am realizing that that's not for everybody, but I think the way to create that space is to work question based and also leave people the room, if that question is personal, that that is okay as well. (speaks calmly)

Researcher: That is a beautiful answer.

Interviewee: (laughs) To end with a little bit of a, not to end, if you have more questions, please ask them, I have all the time in the world as I said, but to. I looked at mine, I cleaned my, how do you say this (shows hard drive). This is a hard drive, yeah it's a hard drive, right?

Researcher: Yeah.

Interviewee: Interviewee: I looked at my hard drive and I cleaned it a week or four or five ago and what I came across were all my old opdrachten, assignments I did during philosophy. And actually there are only three of the twelve subjects I did every year, for four years long, there were only *three* assignment that I am proud of. And all three of those assignments are focused on, well not *me* as such, but on something creative that came out of me. So one is a story, I wrote a story for one of my subjects, one is a research that I did in a very scary environment, namely Caïro. I looked at the koptische, it was a crazy research because there was an attack on

the Kopten the week before we left and then I had already decided to do my research on the Kopten (laughs). So that was, you know, I was sitting there in the church and thinking "Okay, is somebody coming in and shooting everything? That's going to be fun." That was basically the mindset I went into it with. So that I was proud of. And my work in South-Africa, working with people in very achtergestelde areas and teaching them computer stuff so that they could get a job at a good place. I love doing those things. And all three are focused on something that came out of me, instead of working on what emotion exactly is. Very interesting, I love doing it, not a problem, but yeah, come on, it's not something from me.

Researcher: Not something intrinsic?

Interviewee: Yeah, yeah. The fact that I could do it, I was very happy with because I found it interesting, so I *was* happy with it, but yeah.

Researcher: Okay, I'm through. Do you have questions for me?

Interviewee: Yeah (laughs). I definitely do, yeah, okay. But you need to record them and I want to see them as well (laughs). What did you learn?

Researcher: What did I learn?

Interviewee: In Create Space?

Researcher: Uhm, I learned that not all knowing is in my mind.

Interviewee: What do you mean by that?

Researcher: That some knowing truly comes from uhm, feeling, or expressing something, okay, not all knowing is linguistic*, maybe that's it. Not all knowing can be expressed with words. Uhm and not all knowing, uhm, has to evolve from words onwards. I had a conversation with Cassandra. I said: "I want to go from my mind to my belly." And she said: "I want to go from my belly to my mind more." So that you have more of a balance in that. And I think, uh, that is what I learned to do. (…) And I don't think, like, I learned a* lot *of things. A lot of insights, uhm, but I think the, sort of the ground on where it stands, is that, really knowing, you know?*

Interviewee: No.

Researcher: No? (laughs). Sometimes you get so caught up in your mind, you can go all over the place in your mind. Everything goes, in your mind. Everything is true, and false, but some things, you just feel are right. It is like, like it goes from the mind and then instead of being all over the place, it just settles in, het zakt neer zeg maar.

Interviewee: Hm hm, it becomes clear?

Researcher: Yes and I guess it becomes part, part *of you or something. Uh (...). It becomes something you live after.*

Interviewee: Okay. Okay, okay. Good answer. And practically?

Researcher: Practically I learned that practice is really hard (laughs). I uhm.

Interviewee: What do you mean?

Researcher: Well, I have all those things in my mind and in my mind it is all amazing, but then as soon as you go and make it, it doesn't correlate with your thinking or with your imagination, and that is very frustrating.

Interviewee: (laughs) Yes, I agree. The writing that I am doing now has the same structure (laughs).

Researcher: (laughs) Does it?

Interviewee: I have the idea, I write it down, I send it to my PhD supervisor and he is like: "Yeah, this is shit." (laughs)

Researcher: (laughs loud)

Interviewee: Okay great! (laughs)

Researcher: That it's also not doable*, like a lot of things you come up with are not doable. But what I also learned practically, like the visualization is a very big thing for me. I already did a lot of visualization, but it just, it's a very nice tool actually for me.*

Interviewee: Okay. And in Create Space you had the opportunity to develop that or something?

Researcher: Yeah to, there were no rules. I could just do whatever. And I now, in retrospective, I was still too caught up in the rules. I think, because they are so ingegroefd in your mind, like, you have *to do what the teacher tells you, you have, like it is so deeply imbedded from ground school on already. You* have *to do what the teacher says, it's good. Uhm, so I let that lose a* lot*, also trust the process and things like that, and I really struggled with it and I think I did quite a nice job in letting that go, but now I still see how much stress and how much, uhm, my mind got more narrowed down because I thought I had to produce something of quality, of, uhm. Like, you didn't, you gave me the freedom, all of you gave me the freedom to do whatever, but I didn't give myself that freedom.*

Interviewee: Hm hm.

Researcher: Because it is so *imbedded in our thinking and in our society, I guess.*

Interviewee: Yeah, exactly, the first thing that Edwin said to me after the presentations, was: "I could not see the quality in the products." And I miss-interpreted that in the beginning as he said there *is* no quality in the products. But that's not what he meant, but because there is so much freedom, it is very hard to find, also (…) an arca medic point through which you can decide whether or not it is worth it, worth something. Because everything is so loose, it becomes very hard. So the fact that you relied on the structure that you learned all those years, is a very healthy move. You understand what I am saying?

Researcher: Yeah.

Interviewee: So don't be too hard on yourself.

Researcher: Ah, okay, yeah, to not have let it go completely, yeah yeah.

Interviewee: Exactly. It is very hard to let go, because if you let it go, there is no solid ground to stand on.

Researcher: Yeah there is nothing, yeah.

Interviewee: Exactly. So you *need* a solid ground to stand on something, to work. So the fact that you, and the trick is that you can find that solid ground within your*self*. And say, okay, this is the standard that I want to live up to and it is the standard that I *can*, not only want to but I *can,* live up to, because this is a problem as well. I think, in society we want, we expect way too much of ourselves.

Researcher: Yeah yeah.

Interviewee: So let that become reality, basically, and not a dream. And I think that that is something you practiced a lot with (laughs).

Researcher: Yeah and I think that is also actually what I mean with the knowing in the head but then the knowing from your belly, you know? The intuitive knowing maybe, that that connects. Like, you have all these thoughts, and some of them can go down, because they are grounded and solid and good for you, and then the rest can just, yeah, be crazy in the mind.

Interviewee: Yeah. Exactly. Okay. Uhm (…) Was there a moment that you felt changed or developed or I don't know?

Researcher: Yeah, the moment I said I had to take a break. Actually, already the moment I came in the space. Because I knew I was finally doing something I really wanted to do (intonation goes up from in the phrase 'wanted to do'; almost makes it sound like a question) Uh, so I felt on my water (laughs), that uhm, that there was room for development, for exploration (intonation goes at the word explanation; makes it sound like a question again). But I think, mostly the moment when I stood up for myself in a very, uh, very rigorous way. I tried that quite more often, also with the group forming, that I didn't want to be too much in the group. That for me was also empowering. But I think the moment where I just said, no, it's too much now.

Interviewee: That changed you. And how did it change you?

Researcher: Uhm (…). I listened to my intuition. Instead of to: "Okay, you have to do this, you have to keep going, you have to create something amazing. I was trusting the process and trusting my intuition to say: "No, this is too much, take a break now." And when I did that, like, I took a break and it came back on its own again. I didn't go back to making because I thought I had to, but I came back, it came back to me through enthusiasm or through uh, need, or I wanted

Interviewee: Want.

Researcher: to do it. Yeah.

Interviewee: Well that is still not an answer of what it changed in you. It is an example of how you worked on that moment and with that moment, but did it develop something in you?

(…) I think that *only came at the end. (…) Uhm. The whole period literally changed in me that I opened up this part of me that I (…) always thought I shouldn't, I didn't really know if there was a part there, a creative part or a creative philosophical part maybe, because I was always so used to think in the structures. And I learned, it changed in me that that is okay for there to be and also that I* need *that, I truly* need *that, uh, in my life, to, get a grip on things.*

Interviewee: Hm hm.

Researcher: In that sense, I also said it to Edwin, it felt a bit like coming home, *actually. Also because there's space for me to do it in my own way, in the way I, after my needs. But also to see like ah okay, there is this part of me, and it is okay that it's there. It doesn't* have *to be inside a box, inside a system, inside nothing. It's just a part of me, I don't have to make my work out of it, there is nothing there that is pulling. It's just there and I can do whatever I want in there.*

Interviewee: Okay. And uh, *how* does that, how does that translate to your life now?

Researcher: I think I made a lot more space for that.

Interviewee: How?

Researcher: Sorry time, time and space, literally. I uh, you have your eight working hours a day, your sports, and that is a part of it now. I was already occupied with it, and I already did writing and drawing a little bit, but that was always something on the side, I had to quickly do it. But now I take time for it. I take an hour, two hours a day to just, yeah, do that.*

Interviewee: Produce.

Researcher: Yeah.

Interviewee: That's nice.

Researcher: And sometimes I also say that I have *to do it (smiles) so then it's not, then I'm in that system again (laughs).*

Interviewee: Yeah exactly, because there's a tension, right? I was thinking about that, if you put it into a structure, you're doing it (…) (laughs) again.

Researcher: Yeah, but at least I am implementing it in my daily chores or my daily, yeah, in the time, in my time actually, in my schedule.

Interviewee: Yeah, but then it becomes structure again,

Researcher: Yeah (laughs)

Interviewee: so how do you keep that balance? You know, that takes, how do you do that?

Researcher: Yeah it is hard, because it also really distracts me from other things. For instance, my thesis. Because that is also very much in the mind, so I quickly go from one into the other, so it's not controllable. Uhm, but I give myself, like if I chose to do my thesis in the morning,

and all of a sudden I am an hour into writing or into thinking about stuff, then I'll just (…) I'm learning to say to myself: "It's okay you did that, you'll just work a bit longer afterwards."

Interviewee: So you are learning.

Researcher: I'm not pushing it away anymore, I'm not: "No, you can't do this right now because it doesn't fit in the structure." I, on one side I make room for it so I think: "Oh, in the evening I can do this and this and that.", but when it comes popping up earlier, I also make time for it.

Interviewee: Okay.

Researcher: When I feel it.

Interviewee: Keep doing that.

Researcher: Yeah? (smiles).

Interviewee: Yeah, absolutely.

Researcher: Because I'm not doing my thesis hè?! (laughs while trying to put up a strict voice).

Interviewee: Ah, that's. No, no, but I'm serious, this takes a lot of practice. And the moment that you put it aside and think: "Okay, I need to do my thesis, come on, I really need to do my thesis." is also the moment that you, you will lose the, this very fragile, uhm, openness. I think.

Researcher: Yeah because it is also, it's still so small. I, eventually I want it to be way bigger part of my life. And that is also why I really liked Create Space and why the thesis right now, like, I'm back in that structure again. I have to play by the rules again. Uhm, well in Create Space there was so much room for, for what you said, for the soul searching, for me, for exploring, for connecting to other people, to society, what really *matters. And now you're back again in that "Well, just do this because everyone does this thing or something." So it's hard to.*

Interviewee: I'm very much part of that world.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: As you know (…). It's also, what helped me, maybe too finish up also, what helped me very much is I set goals for myself, not based on what society wants, but of what I want out of society. So I started doing that when I was quite young, when I was eighteen or something, with one of my best friends. And we said to each other: "Okay, we're going to change the world." (laughs). Whatever the fuck that means.

Researcher: (laughs loudly)

Interviewee: But that was the incentive. That was the incentive. We want to make the world a better place, that is actually the sentence we said to each other every time we talked about these kind of things. And right now, he is the duurzaamheids officer of the VU and I'm an education innovator. And that's, that's you know, the reason why we do what we do today is that we followed our hearts but we also said: "Okay, our hearts are worth it to make a change into society." And that also makes it easier to comply to certain structures.

Researcher: Yeah. Because you know what's in it for you.

Interviewee: Exactly. You know, you know that a structure will help you attain the goal.

Researcher: Yeah. Yeah. That, that, yeah. (thinking)

Interviewee: Uhm, but that does not mean that the structure necessarily, uh, you need to *follow* the structure. Because I often don't. The fact that I am doing a PhD is a *miracle* because I am a zesjes student, let's say it like this. But I do it because I followed my heart and my PhD supervisor *saw* that. And he is not scared to step outside of the structures as well. Because many, I am very fortunate to work in a team, in a PhD team where only one person needs to have structure, and the other people are very open-minded people. I'm very fortunate with that. But that's also I think because it was already how I worked and people see that and like that or don't like that. I had a very big fight with someone, who was actually an artist when I was in Buildung Nijmegen, who was an artist and also an artist educator who was trained at ArtEZ

and he said to me: "You want too much structure." And I was flabbergasted. Because, me, structure, really? (indignant and surprised expression) I started doubting myself very much. And I think, today if something like this happens, that was two or three years ago, today if something like this happens, you can get the wind van voren.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: (laughs) Because you cannot say to me that I need structure. That's bullshit. Yeah. Which is also a structure and then the power relation comes into play again.

Researcher: I was just about to say, sometimes structure is also nice, but never mind (laughs).

Interviewee: Absolutely. Structure is a necessity. I'm, (sights) here he comes again, Jordan Peterson has a metaphysical idea, although he says it's scientifically proven, which I disagree with, but he has a metaphysical idea that the way humanity thrives, *can* thrive, is by creating order out of chaos. That's his, that's the very fundament of his thinking. I agree with this. I agree with this. But (laughs), we also need to be able to step into the chaos. The pope has this encycliek it's called, I don't know what the English word is, it's basically a policy document if I say it a little bit, about education. And he says: "Education should do two things" basically, or actually, it should do one thing, and that's walk on a very tight rope with one food into the known, the order, and one food into the unknown. And be *completely* open about the unknown. And he, I agree with this. I am a big fan of this pope.

Researcher: I like him too.

Interviewee: Okay, I talk too much, sorry.

Researcher: No its actually very nice because it gives me a little bit more confidence to do exactly that, to walk in the structure with all the academic papers and do the method a bit more my way. I'm just going to do it.

Interviewee: Ow and please fail.

Researcher: Yeah I was also thinking, the graduating with honors, I was like, if I get a six and I did what I wanted to do, then fuck that whole honors system thing.

Interviewee: Exactly. I'm a six student. You know? Fuck the system.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: Yeah, no really (serious).

Researcher: Fuck the system yeah. But it's also what the thesis is about. Het klopt if I do it a bit weird, so yeah.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's a funny, okay one more story.

Researcher: (laughs)

Interviewee: When I did my bachelor thesis, yeah, I don't have to write anymore, I have all the time in the world (laughs), I'm saying that a bit cynical. (laughs)

Researcher: Yeah, poor thing. (laughs)

Interviewee: I did my bachelor thesis on the concept of parrhesia. And parrhesia is Michel Foucault, you know his name of course of the paradigms and so on and so on. He was gay, and in his last uhm, the last lecture series he gave was in the states, Berkley, near San Francisco, Berkley California, and he did that about the subject, a person, that spoke his mind against the commonly known. So he basically went against what was accepted. *That* person, he said, is the most important person for society and we need to create structures to protect him or her. That's in a nutshell the idea that he had. And then he had a whole idea of a historical analysis of these kind of people, of course Socrates was the first one drinking the fit beker, and so on and so on. And he had this historical analysis and very interesting, but basically that idea was important to people. And then I finished the thesis, I'm not even sure anymore what I did it on exactly, I think I said: "Are there parrhesiasten today? Are there people going against what is commonly accepted?" Something like this I think. And then the teacher said: "I don't know Foucault enough so I'm going to give this thesis to a second reader that *does* know Foucault. And the

second reader said: "You don't know Foucault." And he was supposed to be the big Foucault man of our faculty. And I started talking to him and I realized that he hadn't read the book.

Researcher: Wojow. (tone of disbelieve)

Interviewee: Yeah. And I said that to him. I said: "I don't have the feeling you read the book." And he said: "I don't have to read the book to know Foucault." And then I said: "Okay, but then this conversation cannot go on. Then this conversation must end." And he said: "I am not going to let you pass." Uhm, so I failed. And I was like, (makes angry face) like that, I was quite angry. The man and I still cannot see eye to eye. He is actually the educational innovator of the Faculty of Philosophy today. So he is someone I should be able to work with very easily, but I still want to bite through his strot. Uhm, but that also had to do with the fact that he was a bit of the gatekeeper of the system that was in place. So my thesis was about this, exactly as yours. And I finished, in the end I did another thesis about flow, and what flow is, because the guy who thought of the concept of flow, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, it's an Hungarian guy, a psychologist who did his research in the States, bases a lot of this concept of flow on Aristotle, so I did my second bachelor thesis on that. I thought: "I'm going to leave this all aside because I didn't want anything to do with you whatsoever ever again." Uhm, and I made it with an eight, I finished it with an eight. I knew, I was quite sure of myself that I was not a bad, uhm, I think I know that every time. I doubt myself *all* the time, completely, but the moment I finish something, I'm proud of it.

Researcher: Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewee: And you should do the same.

Researcher: I had that in Create Space, as well. I thought it was bullshit until the end actually.

Interviewee: What was bullshit?

Researcher: My whole product, my whole thing that I did.

Interviewee: Yeah, it's absolutely not (laughs). It's very profound.

Researcher: I red it again, I'm like aerh (tone of discussion or disapproval), if you haven't seen the process then you're like, what the fuck is this? But maybe not, maybe it's just my view on it, I'm not sure.

Interviewee: Yeah that's not true, that's not true. No, I think uh, I think you, how do you say this, verdisconteerd?

Researcher: (laughs loudly) I don't even know what that means in Dutch.

Interviewee: Okay, verdisconteerd betekend zoiets als het sijpelt erdoorheen, het zit erin gebakken.

Researcher: Ja.

Interviewee: The process is baked in to your final product quite clearly.

Researcher: (nods) (…) Alright, thank you very, very much for all your wisdom.

Interviewee: Not a problem. Are you going to send this to me?

Researcher: Yes, I'm going to transcribe it right away and then send it to you. One question. I transcribe quite literally, sometimes I take the so's and the okay's and the hm's out of it, but for the rest, almost literally.

Interviewee: Yeah that's great. Also do things, like put in brackets of how do you say, haakjes, laughing.

Researcher: Yes, I do that.

Interviewee: Okay because it is very important to have a bit of a feeling that was present there.

Researcher: Yeah, cool.

Interviewee: I also put in for instance if somebody says something with a very strict face, I also put that in there.

Researcher: Alright.

Interviewee: If I can do anything to help you, let me know. You know it.

Researcher: Thank you very much! Dank je wel!

Interviewee: Geen probleem. We hebben contact nog hoop ik. Kom jij nog in Nijmegen wonen of wat, was daar ook weer een idee van?

Researcher: Nee niet echt nee.

Interviewee: Oh nee dat zei ik toen en toen zei je: "Misschien wel."

Researcher: Ja, whatever ja, ik heb nu wel een baantje in Amsterdam, waarvoor ik heb gefreelanced ook, een creative agency voor twee dagen in de week gewoon to pay the bills. Dus ik ben ook wel weer in Amsterdam veel en zo, dus ik ben een beetje overal denk ik.

Interviewee: Ja, ik zal je in mijn hoofd houden als er nog leuke projecten hier ontstaan, dan stuur ik het je wel door.

Researcher: Super fijn, thanks. En jij, geniet van niet zo veel werken nu èh.

Interviewee: Oh ja ik ga nu, ik heb echt wel flink wat tijd nu weer nodig om het volgende project te starten. De *toekomst* van Create Space, daar hebben we het ook helemaal niet over gehad zit ik net te denken.

Researcher: Nee klopt.

Interviewee: Is dat belangrijk? Is dat bewust van niet?

Researcher: Ik wilde kijken wat het heeft gedaan, ik wilde een stoort reflectie hebben en dan wilde ik eigenlijk in mijn conclusie ook allemaal marketing dingen, of hoe je het kunt positioneren en zo, maar het is allemaal te veel. Veel te veel.

Interviewee: Ik ben benieuwd, we wachten het af.

Researcher: Dank je wel hè!

Interviewee: Doei.

Researcher: Doei doei!

*An addition to this answer, written on October 7th 2020.

I used creative practice as way to deal with my inner world, to try and understand it better and go deeper into it, into my thought and feelings, the good ones and the bad ones. It enabled me to enter a part of me that I always suppressed with my thinking mind, or where my thinking mind could not go to. There is more balance in myself and thus in my life since it showed me what direction I have to go into. When you compare it to a map, I have explored the lands and fields of the mind, with the mind, quite intensely in my previous education. Now, I consciously choose to design my life in a way that enables me to explore the lands of the intuition and the heart, with the intuition and the heart. And that balances me, that gives me proper peace. Not always of course, since the working of the mind-hear-intuition-body-interaction is massively complex. And it does not mean I have to or want to get rid of my mind either, but just knowing there is another place where I can go when my mind does not serve me is already a calming idea. And that place, I got to discover in Create Space. It's like I discovered an onbewoond eiland inside of me. Deep down I always knew it was there, and it felt like was calling for me, to explore it and spent time there. I knew it was there for me to come home to. And now I feel like the time has finally come to do that, to be free on my own island where I decide the rules, the way of life. I can decide what dark woods I will explore next or what calm beaches I will visit when I want to relax. It is a psychological island, or a mystic island, or a philosophical one. I don't *know,* since it's an island I cannot grasp with my mind or with words. That's why I need creative practice. It allows me to travel to that island and to make sense of it without fully understanding it cognitively. It is ungraspable with the mind, and that makes it so valuable.

Interview with dr. Edwin van Meerkerk. Semi structured interview with Create Space initiator.

Thursday September 17th , 2020.

15:00-15:45.

Interview via Zoom.

Stops between brackets (…) indicate a pause.

Words in *italic* indicate the interviewee emphasized the word.

Researcher: Why were you engaged in the founding of this program and what was your role within this founding?

Interviewee: It might become a long story so just cut me short when everything is going too sfar. But I have been working together with people from ArtEZ for many years. In many different contexts and with many different purposes, in research and education. But it has always been, uhm, well, on a very individual, personal basis, with people that I knew or people that I knew via people that I knew, and very coincidental really. And several other people have the same experience, the same feeling, that we *wanted* to work together because we saw the benefit of bringing together the different perspectives from the university and the university of the arts, both on the level of research and teaching, and on the level of students learning, and student interaction, and student-teacher interaction. But it never really got to a point where we could make it, for lack of a more positive word, institutionalize it (laughs). But then, over the past five years, things really started developing to a more concrete level, which I think in part also has to do with the fact that since a little more than three years, I have been the director of education of the arts in Nijmegen. Which means that I am sort of in charge (laughs) of things. And it makes me able to shift things as well. And the dean of our faculty is also really supportive of these kinds of collaborations and opening up, say, the ivory tower of science. The result was that we managed to convince the boards of both the University of Nijmegen and ArtEZ to agree to a further collaboration. First as a project, that was a call within the university of Nijmegen, for an interfaculty collaboration, and I proposed a collaboration that wasn't actually interfaculty, but between the Faculty of Arts and ArtEZ. At first, they were surprised because it didn't really fit the rules and then the board thought: "Well, this is actually something that will really bring us something new, which is after all what we want with these interdisciplinary or trans-disciplinary collaborations." So they agreed, so we got a little funding. And then I met up with Jeroen Lutters from ArtEZ and he managed to convince his board to chip in for the same amount of money. And suddenly we had quite a sum to appoint

people to actually start this up and coordinate it. So first we were the initiators and then we were just a little bit more on the background as Thieme and Cassandra were trying to gear things up and develop a program. And we talked a lot about the purposes of our collaboration and what kind of form and shape it should take. And we came up in the end with Spring School, you didn't participate in Spring School, did you?

Researcher: No, I didn't.

Interviewee: As sort of a testing ground. How does it work when you put these people together? What do we need? What kind of questions arise? And then we jumped forward to the minor program to really embed it in the curriculum. Because along the way, also, we found out, which is not a big surprise when you know the history is person to person collaboration between the two institutions, that there were more people collaborating between ArtEZ and Radboud than just us. But because it isn't institutionalized, it wasn't visible. There is not structure, no contact person, no website, nothing. So the honors program was also collaborating with ArtEZ.

Researcher: And you didn't know that?

Interviewee: I sort of knew it, but it wasn't really in the front of my mind and with ArtEZ, it was also sort of hidden. So we had a lot of talks with them as well, trying to bring it together. Thinking about how these initiatives should relate to one another and deciding in the end that it would be good to, at least as the pilot that we were actually doing with the minor program, the main difference being that this was an inter-curricular intervention. We wanted to give students credits, formal credits, within their program to do something out of the ordinary which is different, or might be different, this is a question in the end, from an honors program, which is non-credit. It's an extra and therefor, almost by definition, it's not normal for your program. So we tried to bring in the non-normal within the normal in a sense. So that is what we ended up with and my role mainly was to sort of supervise, coach, advise, think along with Thieme and Cassandra in developing, designing and in the end coordinating the program and being somewhere in the background available as a leading learner that students *might* call upon. There was a long list of people who were willing to engage in what you were developing yourselves, so from that point on it depended on *your* questions, rather, what my role would be. And there weren't really coming any my way so all I did was visit to just see things, see

the surroundings and taste the atmosphere and get online with the final presentations again, so that was basically my role.

Researcher: And the demand, the ask actually for a program like this, where did it come from? Did it come from the students particularly, because you already mentioned you had collaborationsd with teachers from ArtEZ, so it came more from the teachers?

Interviewee: There was no very explicit question from the students, other than whenever we *had* this collaboration and I took my students, mostly cultural studies students, to ArtEZ both in Arnhem and Zwolle, several times. And students from them came to us the same way. And it always ended with the question: "We should do this more often, can we have a follow up?" But then this group just moved on in their studies. Maybe there is some app group surviving somewhere [laughs]. But it never came further than that. We remembered. We knew that every time we did something, they were asking for more and for continuation and for an embedding for this kind of collaboration. So there was question but it was not very explicit in that sense. There wasn't a student body saying: "We want to change the curriculum, please bring in the arts." Or from ArtEZ: "We want to change the curriculum, please bring in science."

Researcher: And it was also because the collaboration was already there, that students got to see it and get introduced to it?

Interviewee: Yes.

Researcher: Okay. And you also mentioned this a little bit already, but I wondered how the institutional policy helped or held back the development of the program. Were they open for a merge? You already said they were open to the new *specifically?*

Interviewee: Yeah, and that is something that *has* changed the past couple of years. If you look back, let's say a decade or something, there was more of a, well, hesitance, almost fear of collaboration, because they are different. There was always something that was somewhere in the background, people on the floor seeing the benefits, but also on the level of administration, people were really hesitant. Because it is not very much on the forefront now, but there has been an ongoing debate on a political level, nationally, as to how sustainable our binary system of higher education is, because it's really an exception if you look at it internationally. But

there are interest and there are universities who get to call themselves universities. And only quite recently have universities of applied sciences obtained the right to call themselves universities, as long as they do it in English. What you see now is that all of their websites start with the English page rather than the Dutch one. So that it can start with saying: "We are a university." And then in small print: of applied sciences. And that was exactly what the universities, the real universities, or the research universities, which is I think the proper name, are afraid of. That they would steal our thunder. But that has changed. We see that we can benefit from each other's perspectives and we benefit more if we start collaborating rather than competing. Because competition would mean that we would become more like us and we would try to become more like them, us integrating more practical things, which we do not know much about. And them incorporating more research which frankly all of their staff know a lot less about. Which is not bad, because if we each stick to what we are good at, and if we collaborate, I think there is more fruit to pick. If you look back some fifteen to twenty years back, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Applied Sciences in Amsterdam purposed a merger which was blocked by politics. A couple of years later, the Free University of Amsterdam and the University of Applied Sciences in Zwolle, Windesheim, actually merged and it failed. So it has been tried and it failed, again and again. So people were hesitant, how does it work? How do we do that? Should we merge? Should we collaborate? And I think we were in a phase that a new step is coming. In Rotterdam, the university of the arts and Erasmus University are collaborating. The University of Amsterdam has this interdisciplinary program of Liberal Arts and Science in an interdisciplinary hub going on. So things are on the move right now.

Researcher: And Leiden I heard also, but they are not really merging but giving the opportunity to follow some courses, right?

Interviewee: In The Hague, with the Conservatory. That has been going on for quite a while and until recently it was the same thing in Rotterdam. It was a collaboration on paper and students just got two lists of courses which they could pick from. Which is not *real* collaboration, I think. You should actually develop something together.

Researcher: Create Space is built on, maybe this is not really where you came in now that I heard your role in the foundation, but the educational theories and methods it is based on, so

the design of the minor. I know that there is Design Thinking, Open Space, Transformative Learning. Can you tell me a little bit what it is founded on?

Interviewee: What we really benefited from is that our medical faculty has changed their curriculum not so long ago and Thieme was involved in that so he could bring in a lot of experience and knowledge from their side. They based themselves quite strongly on this Open Space idea where everyone brings in what they have and what they need and built from there. That was one of the elements we brought into the curriculum which really connected to developments that were going on within the Faculty of Arts, within our curricula. We were thinking along similar lines of breaking open the curriculum. An example is the thinktanks that we are offering right now to our third-year students, which are very open. There is, well sometimes an even rather vague question from an external party and students are forced, or would be forced, to draw up a plan for one semester, 280 hours each, times eight students. That is a lot of hours. And just to come up with an idea of what you want to *do* in half a year. Which is really open, there is no evaluation in the assessments in terms or numbers, you pass or you fail. And what you learn is up to you. And that is a development that was going on within the Faculty of Arts which really connected to this Open Space idea, which also connected to a more artistic learning approach which, obviously, is common within ArtEZ. In my own research, my research focusses on arts education and I have been looking into the development of regular teachers in primary schools working together with arts teachers, because there are no professional arts teachers employed *within* schools, they are always hired in for individual lessons. I was looking into the way the learning process with these primary teachers works, how they develop themselves. And that really connects to the idea of transformative learning. Every type of learning, and the more so when you grow older, also means unlearning. If you learn something new, you also learn to do something different. Which also confronts you with habits and values you have which you have to let go of.

Researcher: That is very recognizable.

Interviewee: It all really came together in our discussions.

Researcher: My focus is mainly on practice and creative practice. Of course, that was embedded in the growth of it, but (...) My question is actually, how big, how large was the

amount of thinking about practice and embedding practice in the education? Was there a lot of thinking about that, or was is more based on what you just explained to me?

Interviewee: We didn't discuss that a lot. We reached the consensus that all of us, Thieme, Cassandra and I, appose an idea of theory versus practice. We didn't see the opposition. Theory is what happens when you do practice, and vice versa. The one cannot do without the other basically. So we did not even have to discuss it.

Researcher: Okay. Then my next question is maybe a bit strange, but I am interested in the effect of practice, what did you expect that the effect was of practice? What did you expect from a theoretically programmed mind such as ours, who weren't occupied with artistic research, what the effect would be to all of a sudden be able to use our hands, to have practice instead of just writing a paper?

Interviewee: I was hoping that on the one hand, this would really trigger new kinds of questions. Questions that didn't even seem relevant beforehand. And on the other hand, that by doing things, that by embodying your own learning process, students would realize how fundamental some theoretical questions actually are. Because a lot of theories implicitly or explicitly even *refer* to these kinds of practices. And it always struck me as something awkward that we hadn't or haven't yet managed to incorporate that part of the learning process, especially in a curriculum like cultural studies or art history. Because art history is all about making art. But art history students never physically experienced making the art. And when art students see a Van Gogh painting, they think about how many colors he has had on his pallet. Art history students think about which era they can fit it in. It is strange. They have to get their fingers dirty, right? They have to know how long it takes to dry paint before you can imply the next color. Or to be impatient and imply the too soon and see what effect it has. The theories actually refer to these kinds of issues but we really didn't manage so far to incorporate that in our teaching. So I am glad we got the opportunity to try it out.

Researcher: That actually already answers my next question, because I was interested in how practice ads understanding to the theory. But you already answered that, but how do you think it might limit the understanding of theory? Can it?

Interviewee: Well it might in the sense that, uhm, if you take a more or less lazy approach to practice, you can be satisfies with any kind of product because it's a thing. You can touch it, so it's done, it's finished. And because it's art, it doesn't even have to function. But I wasn't afraid, I am not afraid that that is a big risk because we do involve people from ArtEZ. They know that this is a potential problem for beginning artists, that they are satisfied to soon. If you start at the art academy, you have to do it over and over and over again because it is never right. And then you learn that you shouldn't be satisfied with your product. That is basically it.

Researcher: And was there also a consideration about the effect of visualizing? I am going to add a little bit more to that, because I heard visualizing come back in the interviews a lot. Maybe I should not say that yet, but it was a very clear aspect. Visualizing thoughts, visualizing theories, having something that is not words or language. Did you think about that up front, about the effect of that?

Interviewee: We were already thinking about that a lot, especially within cultural studies, trying to come up with forms of, not just assessment, but also the teaching process that are not text centered. For instance, visual essays in the Vulgar Culture course and in other parts of the curriculum where we thought that it would be good to engage students in a different language in order to express their thoughts. And I actually hoped that this would help us to bring that a step further, to understand how that works and to use this expertise, this knowledge, to improve our own curricula. Either by bringing in people from ArtEZ or seeing how it works and incorporating it into our own curriculum.

Researcher: How did you think that changed the learning process, the literal process of learning?

Interviewee: That is quite hard, because I wasn't there during the learning process itself.

Researcher: But using creative practice.

Interviewee: Well one thing that maybe helps to give an impression of what I *think* happens (laughs), is that in the Spring School, the pilot for the minor program, I was there for one session and we were at the Paraplufabriek near the railway station. We had a room just like the kind of rooms you had. And I was there for a session with the students and the entire

atmosphere was fundamentally different from what I am used to during classes. And we were just talking and discussing and suddenly one of the students just stood up and walked away, and there were a lot of brainstorms slash artworks slash memos and other things hanging on all the walls. She just walked to one of the things, added something, changed a few things, started looking at it, turned around, listened to our discussion, came back again and joined the discussion again. And that is, I am *hoping* that that is the kind of process that is being encouraged in this type of learning where learning is not just the old-fashioned idea of "I know a lot and you're an empty vessel and I'll just pore it in." The more modern thought is that: "I offer you bits and pieces and you collect it together and you make your own knowledge out of it." It is far more open and far more diverse and interactive. Which is why we adopted the term of leading learner rather than teacher, for the teachers (laughs). But that is also why I think that different *media* other than text will *help* this kind of learning process, because sometimes you need to use a color to express what you feel or what you think rather than a word.

Researcher: With feeling, uhm, how did you think it changed people on a cognitive or emotional, or social maybe even, level, and how does that affect the learning process, or enhance the learning process? Or enhance the learning process or…

Interviewee: Yeah. Uhm (…) I don't know exactly *how* it changed, I do know what I *hope*. I *hope* it makes learning more personal. I hope it helps to connect the learning process to your personal development process. To bring in who you are and what you think, what your values are, into the learning process, thus contributing to other people's processes, but also, maybe even more importantly so, helping to connect what is being offered, or the questions that are being posed by other students, by your teachers, by literature, by society, to your own position and to make something out of that. Rather than accepting facts and theories and connections and face value saying: "Okay this is true and I will go with that", rather than thinking, "How does it connect to what I think and maybe I should change or maybe I doubt it and I should use this opportunity to express my doubt and discuss theories." So that is what I am hoping will happen in these kinds of learning settings.

Researcher: I think you are hoping for the good thing. The final question, but that also became quite clear already, is your overall stance on integrating practice in university education, for the humanities and especially for arts and culture, and also what is missing in that which creative practice can add.

Interviewee: First of all, I am absolutely convinced that learning is an embodied process. It is spatialized, it is embodied, it is a physical thing. And by using techniques, contexts, questions, materials, didactic strategies from the university of the arts, we can significantly improve our curriculum, just by using these technologies. Especially if we remember that we are not teaching students of cultural studies to become artists. It does not have to meet the artistic standards. It is a tool, it is something to help experience, an aspect of what you are learning, to provoke the learning process. And if in the process, you also learned something about the technique and the tools, that is only good. I don't think that should become the goal. I would be interested in a curriculum that doesn't exists in The Netherlands that actually combines the two. But that would also run the risk of someone becoming a mediocre theoretician and an average artist and no one is the better for it. But if you have an artist who is challenged in the right way to really theorize and to really under*stand* the theories and to really incorporate the logic of texts, which some artists have trouble with, into their own learning process, I think they *will* benefit. Even if they will never be able to write a true theoretical paper. But if you have helped them learn to *think* along those lines, they will be greatly helped as an artist. And the same way I think a cultural studies student who focusses on Donna Haraway or name one theoretician or another, will be greatly helped if they engage in different *kinds* of learning than just reading books and making papers and answering questions, in words, on exams. But using the tools that the two parties have to deepen understandings and to connect different aspects of the learning process, and to understand how, uhm, under the surface, the two processes are really, really strongly interconnected. That your memory is something that is embodied. And you will only understand that when you feel it literally.

Researcher: Wow yeah. That is actually what I experienced, I think. I wanted to ask more specifically, what exactly does practice do to you, but it is not very uhm, (…) well, analytical or, you cannot really say it, you have to experience it, at least in my experience (laughs). (…) That was a very interesting last answer. Also all of my questions. Do you have something you would like to add or something I maybe jumped over?

Interviewee: Maybe one question. You have chosen this as a minor program so it was optional, yet within your curriculum. And you can think of various pathways to bring this further. To say for instance, well, this is something you have to really have a background in, something to bring into the discussion. So this will be better fitted as a master program and then for an entire

year or for two years, for the *full* program to be all of this. Or you could say, "No, this is something that is so different, it is not for everybody. Not everybody will like this, not everybody would appreciate this, it is actually something that shouldn't be in the curriculum, it is an honors thing." Or you could say, "It is something for the curriculum, but it should be a minor, just like we did, or just one course that you can choose or that should be obligatory." Just have, say a five-credit painting course for all art history students to experience the thing and then move on, back to your books. How do you see that, what would you say, based on your experience, would be the way to go?

Researcher: For me, this felt like coming home,

Interviewee: [Surprised smile].

Researcher: like bringing both things together. I did Communication and Multimedia Design which is not art school, so it is not as philosophically loaden, but I didn't know why I was doing what I was doing. Uhm, and at university, I missed the connection, uh, to real life, to society, to my own creative thinking as well. So, and I always thought I was the weird one.

Interviewee: (Laughs).

Researcher: So also to learn and to hear what you say, it does bring, it brings this extra layer, this, okay, from your head, and sometimes you cannot resolve it in your head but it has to be laid down. That is where the real understanding is, the real. "Ah, now I get it." That is what I experienced in it. So to me, if this would have been my whole education, from the start of my first bachelor year, then I would have been actually way more happy *to be honest. Like literally, I would have been way more in my place. But I also know from the interviews that there is different ideas about it. Uhm, so I think I am a special case in that sense, but to me it would have been perfect if there was this. And I also think it is good, what you said, it shouldn't become a merge. Uhm, I think it is good to choose either the more academic side or the more artistic side, but the way it's split right now, no. I think for me it would be sixty forty, like sixty percent academic and forty percent art school for instance. But yeah, I am, all… I also really want to uhm, explore more in this field, I didn't even know you were so far in it. It is really (laughs) good to know there is already so much research and trials going on, so. Yeah.*

Interviewee: Okay thank you, that is interesting to hear.

Researcher: And I also only have three interviews with people from Create Space so it is a very specific and small amount which I find hard to generalize. But it is something, I guess. Alright, thank you very much.

Interviewee: You are welcome. Good luck with, well, making something out of these interviews.

Researcher: Yes, yes, I'll need that. I will also send you the transcript so you can check it to see if there are things in it you don't want. And then I'll progress very fast I hope.

Interviewee: Okay. And if you have any follow up questions, don't hesitate to ask, you have my email.

Researcher: That is very nice, thank you so much. Thank you for your time.

Interviewee: Good luck then!

Researcher: Thank you.

Attachment 3: Interviews with participants of Create Space

Interview number 1. Semi structured interview with Create Space participant.

Monday August 24th, 2020.

14:00-14:30.

Interview via Zoom.

Stops between brackets (…) indicate a pause.

Words in *italic* indicate the interviewee emphasized the word.

Researcher: What materials and media did you work with and how and why did you choose them?

Interviewee: Both theoretical and in practice?

Researcher: Manly practice actually, so the literal materials like drawings or paper. And maybe it is also useful to think before and after corona? But I'm not sure, just tell me what pops up.

Interviewee: I think most of the things I made were drawings and writings and a bit of painting as well. Before corona we were still in the space and used some more stuff, especially in the INCENTIVE week. But because of corona we did not have access to much more than that. And that is mainly what we used. But it would have been nice to have been able to use more stuff than that.

Researcher: Why did you like to use stuff?

Interviewee: Uhm, I do not know, it was just a different way of noting down what you were learning and putting down your thoughts on to something in a different way than writing it down or typing it on my computer. I felt like it was easier to convey certain ideas rather than using words. Especially when we were discussing our stuff together in our group. It was easier to connect to I felt like, and that was really nice.

Researcher: And where exactly do you think that lays? Why is it easier to connect to boundary objects instead of texts or words?

Interviewee: I think for me personally it is because I think very visually about everything. It is easier for me to just put that down rather than to turn it into words, put those down and then explain them again. So that is just a personal thing for me. I think many other people have that as well. I think for me that is the main reason why.

Researcher: Would you say that those things limited you in expressing your ideas, you already said it a bit, or did they expand possibilities?

Interviewee: I mean, I really like drawing and I think that did not really provide me of any limits. It is more so the materials themselves that were limited in availability, so I did not have access to many other things that drawing. But within that, I did not find any restrictions or anything. I could pretty much do anything I would have wanted.

Researcher: Did you miss certain skills in using your practice, or also no limits there?

Interviewee: Not really. I have always liked making artistic stuff. I did not really necessarily do it in school, or at university at least. I did in high school and before that, so the skills were already there for me, so that was nice and helpful.

Researcher: How did expressing your research results through creative practice, so boundary objects, how did that literally grant you more than thinking in terms of an academic format? What limits you in thinking in an academic format? Because you did not write a paper or anything, but made a zine.

Interviewee: I think it allows us to explain it *way* easier. To bring it to a much wider audience. That is something I struggled with in academics and at university. Everything feels overly complicated often. I feel like a lot of stuff can be made so much simpler and I think that is where the value really lies. If you can simplify something and be able to explain it to as many people as possible. I think that is really the power of using that artistic expression alongside the academic research we did beforehand. Which was still very valuable to us because it allows us to really understand it exactly how it is supposed to be. But that might not be as easy for everybody to do. So, turning it into art or a simplified magazine, I think that is really valuable and important.

Researcher: So, when you think about knowledge and what knowledge is, you find it important that it is not limited to purely academic reasoning and speech.

Interviewee: Yeah, no.

Researcher: Why not?

Interviewee: I mean, I think that the value of knowledge and truly being smart lies in sharing it with other people. If you keep it to yourself (laughs), I mean, it is nice to know stuff, but, I don't know. I think it is even more powerful to be able to share that with people. And that is something I always struggle with at university (laughs) and I think it is a bit hypocritical or elitist or something. That is just how I think about that.

Researcher: And could you explain to me the different type of knowledge that rose when you were doing this kind of research and creating boundary objects instead of the purely academic one? What is the difference between those two kinds of knowledge that rise?

Interviewee: I think, mostly, you interact with the theory way more than just read it and maybe make a test about it or write a paper about it. You really engage with the subject a lot more and I think that makes you far more of an expert about it and it makes you feel like you own that knowledge a lot more. And again, being able to transform it into art or into something else, I think that is what makes it even more something you become the owner of, you know? I feel like at university, when you learn or study something and then you make a test, afterwards you forget most of the time or you move on to something else. While what we did at Create Space, I still think about that stuff every single day and that stuff really stuck with me so far. I think that interaction and just literally working with that makes it much more valuable and important.

Researcher: And when you think in terms of, for instance, lets state that academic knowledge is more cognitive, uhm, is that the same for the kind of knowledge you gained here? On what points is it emotional knowledge as well or…

Interviewee: Ah, like that.

Researcher: What kinds of levels does it touch upon?

Interviewee: I think for our topics, and I think for your topics as well, I think we were all much more emotionally invested in what we studied at Create Space. That is also due to the fact that we could choose it ourselves of course. Definitely, that made a huge difference. I think it is also just mutual interest and actual passion. You choose your study program of course but you do not take every single piece of theory that you study at that study program at university, and not everyone in your classroom or study group or whatever likes everything as much as the other guy. And that was really the case in Create Space, everybody was very enthusiastic about it and that group dynamic I think was also really important. It is not just cognitive, you are really a part of a learning process, but you are also emotionally invested and in it *together* way more than at university I felt like.

Researcher: How did specifically practice have an effect on that? Was this effect more because of the fact that you were in the group with other people, or did the literal doing of things also affect that?

Interviewee: I think literally making stuff was really important in that as well. Not only because we then shared it with each other and saw how we transformed this knowledge into practice ourselves and how the other guy does it, how the other people do it. I think that it makes you think about it way more, but also, yeah, I do not know really how to explain it. You are just really working with that stuff then at that point. And it, yeah, I don't know, it connects you way more to the stuff you are learning about.

Researcher: Yeah, I understand you, but indeed it is hard to grasp…

Interviewee: Yeah, it is hard to put it into words. Yeah.

Researcher: Maybe I'll find a solution for that.

Interviewee: I guess it makes you think about that stuff in a different *light*, in a different *way*, than just reading it and remembering it.

Researcher: Yeah, it does.

Interviewee: I don't know if there is a way to explain it.

Researcher: Maybe that is what we still have to develop because it is so new. We already talked a little bit about this, but how has using practice altered the way you look at research at university?

Interviewee: I think it should be a possibility for students to engage with their topics creatively. Maybe in addition to learning about it in a traditional way, because that is obviously the focus of university. But I felt like restricting that possibility and shutting it out and not making it a possibility at all is very limiting for many students. I think many students at university are also very artistically interested and able and just made the choice to go to university because either it is a higher level than art school, or it is a topic they are more interested in than art school or whatever. I think artistic practice, not only at university, but in most educational institutions, should be incorporated more. Because it makes you engaged with topics in a much more effective way in my opinion.

Researcher: Would you know why it makes you so engaged?

Interviewee: I think, I don't know, maybe if you incorporate it in university and you make it in assignments, you still feel the obligation feeling, like you do not really want to do it yourself. I do not know if that will be the case, but for me, I *wanted* to put it into something different than texts. Not only for *me* to understand it better, but also to be able to articulate that specific topic better and just, yeah. It makes you more, like I said, more of an owner of that topic. And that is really the main value in doing that.

Researcher: Because you add something that you truly made; it comes from yourself?

Interviewee: Yeah. Yeah. And also, like I said, I think very visually, so when I read something, I'll start creating ideas, and putting *those* ideas onto paper I think is really … another step in learning about that, and really maybe even a more efficient way than taking notes. It is a bit different than that, but similar, I think.

Researcher: And uhm, how has using practice altered the way you look at art school? Or at art and creativity?

Interviewee: I have always had a lot of respect for art school. I considered going myself, but I had to make a choice eventually. But I think when a lot of people think about art school, it is just arts and crafts and making stuff, whatever. But it is much more than that. It is just as academic, in a way, as university is. There is so much thought behind everything and so much theory as well, and personal development within that discipline. I wish it was combined more often. That is the main thing I have taken away from Create Space.

Researcher: That is actually my final question, like, what would the ideal combination be for you between theory and practice in university?

Interviewee: Well, the way we approached it in Create Space for our topic was to first read up on the discourse about racism. So, start academically and take in as much as possible. But during that process, we learned that looking at artistic works in the same discourse and personal experiences and that kind of stuff, is maybe even more valuable and gives you even more insights. Maybe if we could have done our process again, we would have started with artistic stuff as much as academic stuff. I think it is mainly because I come from the academic background, but that is the way I approached it from the start. But in the end, I think artistic stuff was far more valuable for us. I think that is a very important focus, but you still need that academic stuff to know specific things before you go into creating yourself and being confident in thinking that: "I know enough to start making things about this." So, I think both are very important, but I would say that in the process we did, the artistic stuff turned out to be far more impactful. But after doing some academic stuff.

Researcher: And it was impactful because you could communicate on a different level?

Interviewee: Yes, and within our group, stuff we found online and other artworks, it resonates so much more because it is so much more personal to see that from other people and also to share it yourself with other people. And I think it makes it a lot easier for people to connect with the information you share through that.

Researcher: And if you could implement practice into the regular curriculum, if you could have this at university, what are the rates you would have wanted it? Maybe fifty/fifty?

Interviewee: I think for starters that would be ideal. I do not know how possible that is (laughs) for academics, but for me it is like, any incorporation of art would be nice. I remember we had American Art as one of our classes, that is like Art History but than in America, but there was *nothing* in that class we did on an artistic level ourself. I feel like that would have been so much more valuable to actually learn about different art styles through the years. I get that in academics, the actual academic stuff is very important and the main focus, but I think incorporating *some* artistic stuff would already be a great first step. So maybe then you could think about seventy percent academic and thirty percent artistic stuff. Or maybe make it a way to test the academic stuff. That, at the end of a period, the test would be to make an artwork or some creative outing about the stuff you learned about all year. Maybe in that way. But ideally, I would like it to be fifty/ fifty. Maybe even less academic than more, but that was our process. I would say that was thirty percent academic and than we dove into artistic expression.

Researcher: One last question about the use of the interface, because after corona you could not be in the room, in the studio. Because I remember one time, we were talking about boundary objects and you said that you liked it because it gave this physical touch to the process you were in. How was that for you?

Interviewee: That was really what happened. I remember in the beginning when we were talking about boundary objects and we were still reading into our topic, and we decided pretty early on we wanted to do something like a magazine or something to publish and bring to other people. When we were first talking boundary objects, I did not get it, I did not see the value in doing that because we wanted to make a magazine, so it was literally: learn stuff in text, put it in text and publish it. I did not see the need for boundary objects. But as we started to do it, it became very clear to me that this is so valuable. Also, something to share with people, that is what we did in the zine as well. Some of the boundary assignments we made for ourselves, we shared with people to go do themselves as well. I don't know, it really makes you think in a different way about the stuff you already read about. And it also makes you see from your group members in what way *they* think about this and how *they* understood certain things. I do

not think there is any other way we could have gotten that insight during our process. I would say the boundary objects and that kind of stuff was very, very valuable, even though I did not understand it at first. It started to become very important. I do not know if that answers the question (laughs), I forgot the question.

Researcher: No, it definitely does, thank you so much. I think I am good actually, that was all I needed. One more question, could I use some of the boundary objects you have on the Create Space drive?

Interviewee: Yes, can you access that now?

Researcher: Yeah, I can still access it, I looked at it earlier.

Interviewee: Yes sure, no problem.

Researcher: Do you have anything else I need to know, or do you have anything to add?

Interviewee: No, I think they were great questions. I do not know, maybe if I think of something I can still let you know.

Researcher: That would be great.

Interviewee: But it was nice, good questions.

Researcher: I was scared that I would, because, ik ga even op Nederlands over. Omdat ik zo ver eruit was, had ik gedacht dat ik niet meer echt zou weten waar het allemaal over ging.

Interviewee: Ik vond dat wel meevallen, ik dacht van tevoren ook, het is best lang geleden weer, maar dat valt op zich ook weer mee.

Researcher: Ik dacht misschien is het effect ook weg of zo, is die soort van hype die we hadden is misschien gone.

Interviewee: Nee ja dat is juist een onderdeel daarvan, dat het juist zo'n impact heeft gemaakt, die artistic side daarvan. Ja, ik vind het nog steeds super vet.

Researcher: Ik ook ja. Super, super super thanks, ik ga alles meteen transcriberen en dan stuur ik het je op. Heel erg bedankt!

Interviewee: Graag gedaan.

Interview number 2. Semi structured interview with Create Space participant.

Tuesday August 25th, 2020.

11:00-12:00.

Interview via Zoom.

Stops between brackets (…) indicate a pause.

Words in *italic* indicate the interviewee emphasized the word.

Researcher: The materials you worked with, why did you choose them and what kind of materials were they?

I think it differed. I think in the beginning I started a lot more with the theorists and reading papers, scientific papers, even though as a group we got a lot of input from other stuff like videos or just some articles of personal experiences people wrote down. We stared also with Ted talks for example. That was also in the beginning an input. And during the minor, well, I started working with different things. There was this project where we tried to come up with making boundary objects. Every week we asked ourself a question and we made something out of that. And then I started working with first some visuals, like paper and scissors and creating something out of that and later also music. I played the piano for a really long time so I started to use that. And then we were kind of forced to do a lot online of course, so I think that also limited us in a way, or at least myself, in the way we used material. And also since online is not my preferred, I don't know, I am just not good with technical stuff. It was not the way I preferred working in, but that had to do with the circumstances of course. So we were kind of forced to do a lot of stuff online which, I don't know, I would have preferred if we could have stayed in the space and work with the materials that were there. So I think that is it.

Researcher: And you worked with paper you said. Why did you choose to work with paper and the piano, I find that very interesting? What could you express with the piano and with the paper?

Well I think first I started to work with paper because kind of I feel like that….

- Connection got disrupted. -

Researcher: The connection got disrupted. I am sorry, it is not working. Are you here?

Yes?

Researcher: Could you repeat all of that?

So, I think the university forms you in kind of a way. Okay, you want to know something, you want to know something you are going to read papers, you are going to write an essay. And I think that is *kind* of the way my mind is programmed the last three years. Which is of course fine because that is why I study. And then during the minor I found it really hard to let that structure go and to make something, especially with students of ArtEZ who are trained to do that, doing research and make something out of that.

- Connection got disrupted *Researcher:.* -

Researcher: I am sorry, the connection is gone again.

Am I back?

Researcher: Yes, there you are!

Uhm, so what was I saying.

Researcher: You said that university teaches you to look at things in one way, and you have found it a bit difficult working with people from ArtEZ because they are trained in it.

Yeah. So then I thought, okay let's start with something I feel comfortable with and that was paper and I got this image in my head and then I was like okay, I can make this. So, I started to work with paper and gluing stuff together, which was lot of fun, actually. Then later that week I tried to step more out of my comfort zone so the next day I started drawing. And then later that week, since I played the piano for a really long time, but then I kind of stopped with it. And now I am not as good as I was before and I find it really annoying to start playing the piano because I am like *aaaaeeeh*. I know I could do this better but now I can't anymore and that is frustrating. Then I thought, let's try to do something with the piano. And also because I find improvising really difficult, especially with music. So I started to try doing that so I

thought, well, make a progress in some kind of way.

Researcher: And you did that to talk about stuff you were dealing with in your group?

We did that to, because we were researching institutional racism in the Netherlands and we started to try and look like, okay, let's start with ourselves. The first question was really simple: What does racism mean to you? So, then I would try to visualize that and later that week the improvising was, how does… It was something with feelings and with how you experience kind of the feeling of being less than someone. I mean, we do not know that in an institutional, how it is to be, uhm… I don't know how it is to be black in this society. I do not know, but I *can* try to empathize with that feeling. How does that feel or maybe not similar but kind of similar situations, how does that make me feel? And I was trying to come to that feeling through the piano improvising stuff.

Researcher: With the piano, you can provide a feeling?

Yeah, I think so.

Researcher: And you cannot do that with theoretical words, or you cannot do that in an academic format?

Uhm (…). Not your personal feeling. Or well, at least, till some extend. I think you can perfectly say in an academic format that things made you feel a certain way, but then you need to give very good arguments why you got that feeling and why it is necessary or relevant for your research. Then I think it is fine to use feeling, but if you can just (…) I think that there is not much room for just feeling as a feeling in an academic format. So you cannot say in an essay, "This makes me feel like shit, okay, now it is shit." And you can also not, when you try to prove something, express your personal feeling because that would make your argument less true or more false or something like that.

Researcher: Do you see this as beneficial, that it is possible to add this to research?

Hmm (…). I don't know. I think it is really good that in academics you don't not take in someone's personal feelings. Also, I think science and scientific research means looking for

the truth and that is also still part of a system, bla bla bla, but that is also still something trying to be as most neutral, as most objective towards something. And that is also still with recognizing that you maybe are, by recognizing that, being more objective to it. With feelings, it really (..) it is not that objective anymore, I guess more subjective for me personally. So, I think it is good to leave that out of, or kind of leave that out, within an academic research. And by expressing (…). By expressing your own personal feeling, to do that as an artform of something that is considered art, I do not feel the necessity to add that to academic research.

Researcher: You already said it a little bit, but how did your practical skills help or limit you in the research process you did? You mentioned that you were a bit nervous to do that around art school people, which I can imagine. But did you have ideas you could not express because you lacked practical skills?

I am sorry, what did you say?

Researcher: Where there things, like visualizations or ideas you could not express because you did not have the practical skills to do so? Where you limited by your practical skills in any way?

Yes and no. Like, (…) hmm. Well, no, not necessarily. I think there are always some points where you… I think, when you start thinking "How can I express this?" then you are going to think within your own skills. You are going to think "okay, this is what I can make, so this is how I can express this." Maybe, when I was a really cool game designer, I would have designed a really cool game. But since I cannot do that, then I know for myself to not come up with that idea. So, within that, no, my practical skills did *not* really limit me, but I had to start believing in them again. Wow, that sounds so cheesy. (laughs)

Researcher: Yes, beautiful!

But I think it is true because I had to find uhm (…). It is just that I have some practical skills and I have some practical knowledge which I can use. My secondary school was at a Waldorf school, or a vrije school. When I was in secondary school I had a lot of practical lessons, I had three years of drawing, I did some stuff with textile, I did a lot of creative stuff during that time. So I know I am used to drawing, I am used to making music and stuff. I just had to find

that back. That was I think fun the part which (...) When I started to draw more, I also recognized that when I was taking notes during my lectures, I started to, instead of writing something down, so while was writing my notes, I started to draw some things. Because I was like, I can visualize this easier than writing things down. That was kind of coming back, so just make a really small drawing to explain something to myself. And I found that quite interesting because I did not do that for a really long time anymore.

Researcher: And so, in Create Space you started to do that again?

Yes. But then during the lectures of other classes of course. Then I started to like, I need to get my head around this really abstract theory on music, let's just draw it. And now I get it, how it works, instead writing it all down in words which, I don't know.

Researcher: Yes. That is very interesting because participant 1 said the same. He said he thinks very visually. I don't know, do you also have that?

Yes.

Researcher: You think in images instead of in words?

At least to some extent. When someone tells a story, I have the picture in my head, which I cannot sometimes deny (laughs).

Researcher: (Laughs) Yes, depends on the story.

Yeah (laughs).

Researcher: This question is a bit, I find it difficult to phrase it, but how did expressing your research results in creative practice instead of in an academic format, how did that change your research process?

Uhm (…). Well it changed a lot of course.

Researcher: Yes, exactly, that is why I think this is a difficult question.

Well, yeah. I think it changed everything. Because what you do when you write an academic essay, you are going to sit in the library and read a lot of articles and then wrap your head around it and write something hopefully interesting. While with this, we started to let go a little bit more of the reading part and the really academic reading part and we started to do research in another way so we could get a lot more input, which also turned out in the output. We searched for different input, because we wanted a different output. So, we searched for things which inspired us more, I think.

Researcher: And what kind of things were those inputs?

Well, from stories of people to, maybe even going to the Black Lives Matter protest, although we were doing this before that. Watching documentaries, watching Ted talks, reading articles which were written by people who we can trust but would not be considered academic. It felt a little bit more like how you gain knowledge just as a human being, being in the sphere you are and in the space you are. It felt more like doing research like that, than putting yourself away from that learning process, which is naturally. Which is like putting yourself in a really standard thing like, okay, only this is the truth because this is academic. Which I kind of also agree with (laughs). It felt a little bit more, what I got from it was that I understand that this is a lot more how you gain knowledge as (…) when you do not have academic research skills. That sounds really (…). That sounds not so good, but uhm (…) Wacht, ik ga dit even in het Nederlands doen als dat oké is.

Researcher: Tuurlijk, tuurlijk.

Want ik had altijd wel zo'n interne struggle omdat je ziet dingen in je dagelijks leven, die hebben invloed op je, daar leer je van, want je leert van alles om je heen. Maar als je academisch werk dan doet moet je jezelf daarvan distantiëren en vervolgens gaan zeggen; "Oké, maar dit zijn alleen maar de artikelen die geschreven zijn, dit is bewezen, dus dit, hier moet ik nu mijn conclusies uittrekken." En dan kijk je niet naar wat je in het dagelijks leven ziet, etc. etc. En bij deze manier vond ik veel meer dat je keek, wat zijn veel meer die bronnen die je in het dagelijks leven gebruikt dan dat hele hoge academische. Ook al hebben we die bronnen ook gebruikt hoor. Maar ook veel meer kijken naar, wat zegt zo'n documentaire. En daar wel kritisch naar kijken, maar wel, goh, wat zegt zo'n documentaire en wat zeggen die mensen over

dit onderwerp? Om *dat* mee te nemen. Dus er was een keer plaats om ervaringsverhalen mee te nemen in plaats van alleen maar "dit is zo want we hebben dit bewezen."

Researcher: Wat vind je daar de meerwaarde van?

Uhm, dan is het minder in een toren boven de wereld hangen. En dat klinkt een beetje stom, maar als je academisch onderzoek doet kun je best wel zijn van, dan krijg je ook wel die houding van: ik doe academisch onderzoek, ik weet hoe het *echt* zit en al die andere mensen doen maar een beetje wat, maar die weten *niet* hoe je *echt* onderzoek moet doen. En ondanks dat je af en toe wel een beetje die houding kan hebben als het gaat over de, weet ik veel, wetenschappelijk bewijs of wetenschappelijke dingen die echt wel bewezen zijn en mensen dan daarover zeggen "Nou ik weet niet of we nu de wetenschap wel moeten vertrouwen, hoor!" Daar word ik wel chagrijnig van want wetenschap is niet iets waar niet over nagedacht is. Het is echt wel iets, ow ik ga verder in het Nederlands. Maar ik denk dat het goed is om af en toe het besef te hebben dat dit ook manieren zijn van kennis opdoen. Zonder het een boven het andere te plaatsen.

Researcher: Dat sluit aan op mijn volgende vraag, sorry ik ga weer even over op het Engels, als je het in het Nederlands wil doen is dat prima. But how would you describe the kind of knowledge that rose when you were engaged with practice more? Could you describe the difference between the kind *of knowledge you gain when you do when you do academic research and the* kind *of knowledge you gain when you use practice?*

Uhm…

Researcher: You already mentioned it a bit with the ivory tower and the daily life?

Yes, I think that that is something you get from it.

Researcher: Very personal, what did you learn that you would not have learned in academic research? What kind of knowledge, maybe emotional things or social skills, I don't know?

Giving the feeling kind of a place, or giving emotions kind of a place, even though that is also something really tricky I still find. But giving them a place can also (…) Particularly in the

minor I thought okay, now we are going to talk about stuff we find interesting, but stuff which bothers us. So, you had a space to express that. And that is something which you *don't* have in academic research because the mindset is that everyone is able to go sit in the university library, read a lot of books without expressing any emotions you feel. Without even asking "Hey how are you today?" or "Hey, who are you, is everything alright?" I mean, with cultural studies you have some connection with your teachers because we are a small study, but in a lot of studies you haven't. And even then, when you have a personal problem, you are not going to go to your teacher and say "Hey, I am not doing well." You have to write an e-mail so that I am covered and can take a resit. It is, uhm (…). There is not a lot of space to…

- Connection disrupted –

Researcher: I am sorry, you were stuck again. Misschien zonder video?

Ja prima.

Researcher: My question was what kind of knowledge you gained at university and Create Space and you were talking about the fact that there is no space to talk to teachers and to know how everybody is doing.

What I was saying was, basically the more "scholige" or the more like (…) Just knowing who everyone is and what someone's interests are and what someone even persuades to do this study or what someone, I don't know. Just what someone's interests are, I think my teachers do not have any idea why I am studying this study. And that is a shame because then you don't know your teachers and you don't know your students. And within Create Space I think that was also the main goal, or one of the main goals, to get to know each other and to *know* who you are and what your interests are. From that energy I think, there is a lot more which can come from that than just from the teacher going to class with no circulation in it. And that is not the proper case in cultural studies because there are also a lot of questions. I think it would be nice if there is more like (…). Within university, when there is more like: you are a person and not just a student, who has her own way and has to see for herself how she is going to write that essay. Because no one is going to help you. And if you do not have the motivation or you can't find the motivation because there are some personal things, or there is just a lack of motivation. No one is going to say: "You have to do this right now.", which is kind of, in the

beginning I thought that was really nice because it has to come from yourself. But when you are further in your studies you need that motivation, sometimes just from teachers who say: "No, you've got this, you can do this, come on." And, I don't know, there is no help for that part. There is only help if you have a question about how have to do your research or about the materials or the theories, then you can come to us (teachers). But I think it would be nice if there is a place where you can go to, just for being human.

Researcher: So being human has a big part in this?

Yes I think so.

Researcher: And that brings you more knowledge? How does that help you in gaining knowledge?

I think it helps you in gaining knowledge because I think that if you are feeling well, you are a lot more open to gaining knowledge. And you are a lot more open to understand the things that people are trying to learn you or people trying to explain you. When you feel good, it is a lot *easier* to work on a paper for example, or to *read* all those articles. And you might even find them interesting and reading them with a positive vibe and be like: "Oh wow, this is so interesting, I have always wondered what this was!" instead of the "Oh, fuck, I also have to read this paper, oh no, it is sixty pages and I have to read them by tomorrow and bla bla bla…" Pfoe.

Researcher: That is very interesting. And how do you think practice has a role in that? What was the role of doing practical things or making creative things, how did that help in being more human and being more open to gaining knowledge?

Uhm, well I am not sure entirely. Because I think the part I was talking about was the part that we started dancing in the room for five minutes. We could all laugh and let it go and have this kind of break. To have a moment and be willing to continue. Those were the moments that were really helpful to me, and being practical helped in that I could sort out my own thoughts differently. That it was a new way of trying to gain knowledge from things or maybe to process the knowledge I gained in a different way. I think that was really helpful, the part that you

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process and that you, how to process the knowledge. But that was really practical for my own, to get rest of my own and in my own mind.

Researcher: So maybe it was a reflective role for you?

Yeah. I think.

Researcher: How did using creative practice and things like that, how did that change the way you look at academic research?

Uhm (…). It hasn't changed that much. And uhm, (…) Because I still feel like academic research, even though it has its limitations, you can search for the boundaries, I guess. But I still see why there are academic rules, why they are set up, why you have to go through so much sources, why you have to use the proven stuff. Even though this has its limitations, I still feel that I can understand why we would do it that way. I also do not know if I already see, or if I see a possibility to continue that search for the truth and combine that with practical and emotional knowledge. I still find that really hard and I wouldn't know how to combine that to continue in a kind of objective search for the truth. Does that make sense?

Researcher: Yeah, absolutely. For you, would you like to have more practical education in your academic education? Would you like to combine theory and practice more, or not?

No. Or at least, I have to make a note with that, not with the practical stuff we did in the Create Space minor.

Researcher: And why not?

I think it would be nice if the university and especially cultural studies was also a little bit focused on the work field. Like this is what you are going to do after your studies, so it is also nice if you also learned something about that. The practical stuff I would really want to learn in university. But I wouldn't like to combine it with the practice, like the art practice or the more creative stuff, because I also think that within cultural studies, we sometimes *do* have this more practical approach to assignments. I remember that within for example we had to make a video or kind of an art form to hand in, which was a more practical approach to the theory we

got. And it was a lot of fun. I mean, I laughed a lot. We did that also in the course on Romanticism, we also had to think of some more creative way to express Romantic ideals into an artform. And even though we weren't, because we are no art students, we weren't like graded on our practice, we were graded on the thought behind it. And then we did have this other approach to the theory which I enjoyed. So there is already I think some what practice in my studies.

Researcher: The last question I want to ask you, has using this kind of practice altered the way you look at art and creativity and at art school?

Yeah, it has. And that is, I did gain, this sounds so stupid, but I did gain a lot more respect for art school and for art students. That sounds really negative, but in the beginning, I think you also learn this within cultural studies, you start with a theory 'The author is dead' by Ronald Barthes. And from that, in the analyses you make, you never consider the importance of the other. And even though that point of view is also changing within the studies, uhm, I don't know. When you have this view of the other, what this artwork means is this and this and this. Then I was like okay, yeah, I don't care. And during the minor I saw a lot more that that process is much longer and more thoughtful than maybe I thought it was. Then I gained more respect for that and I saw the importance of more.

Researcher: That is beautiful.

Thank you.

Researcher: Do you still have some things you want to say? Maybe I interrupted you somewhere, maybe you still have some things on your plate?

Uhm, no not really.

Researcher: Well if there is something, please let me know. And thank you very, very much for your answers. Do you have some boundary objects in the drive of Color Bravery?

Yes, I think so.

Researcher: Are you comfortable with me looking at them and taking them I,n in the thesis?

Yes, that is okay. Expect, maybe, from my wacky piano play.

Researcher: Of course, and I will first show you which ones I would want to take in. Super thanks.

Interview number 3. Semi structured interview with Create Space participant.

Wednesday August 26th, 2020.

11:00-11:45.

Interview via Zoom.

Stops between brackets (…) indicates a pause.

Words in *italic* indicate the interviewee emphasized the word.

Researcher: The materials and the media you used and worked with, I am curious about how you choose those and what the effect of them was?

Interviewee: Do you only want to focus on Create Space or also on the rest of my academic study I did?

Researcher: Create Space would be great.

Interviewee: The media we chose as a group were PowerPoints and stuff like that. We also sketched some things on paper but due to the digital learning environment it was easier for us to use digital media, for instance PowerPoint or InDesign. We actually wanted to make things tangible so we also tried to create objects when we were on our own and create something for ourselves. I used paper, I sketched some things, I also made a video and took some pictures with my phone. Most of those were digital and when we were back in the space, we also only used paper and some sketching materials. But not really something like bigger objects or stuff like that. It was more in the digital environment.

Researcher: And why did you choose sketches and paper?

Interviewee: Because I am used to that. In my free time I like to sketch, I like to draw, I like to do that stuff, so I am more used to that. Also based on my prior academical education because during my school years I was part of an art lesson, so I learned that stuff and I am comfortable with that. It was still in my comfort zone, but also out of my comfort zone because it was a new thing for me to do, to create stuff and to make it tangible for myself. And it is the way I think. I think in pictures and stuff like that. So it's closer to how I perceive things.

Researcher: What do you find nice about that being so close, like, uhm (…). Why is does that flow more for you?

Interviewee: Uhm (…). I think what I just said, comfort. Hmm (…). Difficult to say. I think it is also a way to convey my ideas to others in an easy way, you know what I mean? If you have a 3D object, you have to show it in the camera. It is also due to the online environment, but I think, if I had the opportunity, I would also try to sculp things and to create 3D objects. But that wasn't quite possible. It is a thing that comes naturally to me. I like to doodle, I like to draw things and it is kind of a way we also think, visually. We are used to be exposed to social media and pictures and stuff like that all of the time, so it is a way to convey your ideas in a way everyone can understand them.

Researcher: And why did you like things to be tangible?

Interviewee: Uhm (…). Yeah (laughs). Actually, I was kind of scared to do that, but it was part of our educational process and it was part of a phase we wanted to explore and we needed to talk about the difficult term. Because when you have things based on language, everyone has a different idea about it, but when you try to make it visible or tangible, everyone can understand it, or it is easier to show your thought process in an artwork or an object that is visible and *simple*. We wanted to make it tangible and accessible also in that way. That you can communicate clearly so you can help each other out with more than just language, because language has boundaries and an object is clear. Even if someone else interprets it, you can still explain and you can show little items and stuff like that you made. It was a part of the process to make things accessible and tangible in a way we can find a common ground.

Researcher: That makes it clear. I think you already sort of expressed this, how the materials and media helped you and how did they limit you in expressing your ideas and thoughts?

Interviewee: The helping part was definitely that we were able to show things that are in our headspace. It is very difficult to express yourself in words sometimes and there are limitations, also for me for example when we speak Dutch. There is a limitation for me because I do not know every word. I think just that part, that language has a limitation in that way. You can write essays on an idea and still have not said what you wanted to say. That is definitely a thing, I also noticed it in other academic environments. And the limitations were definitely that I have

a bigger imagination and more creativity up in my headspace and I wasn't able to produce what I wanted to produce. And at some times I did not have the time to do that or the materials. But it was also due to the fact that I was at home. I know that, if we had the chance at Create Space, if we needed some other material, we would be able to get that. An alternative or something like that. But it's just my skills, were a limitation (laughs), definitely. And we didn't have the experience or we didn't have the, for university students, we don't have courses on that. So when I saw what groupmates did with PowerPoint I was like oh my god, teach me, I need that (laughs). So yes, that is definitely a limitation for me. I can't really put my mind or my thoughts into a 3D object or in an object I made because it is a limitation in skill.

Researcher: Yes, that is very recognizable. You have this thing in your mind, but you cannot visualize this thing in your mind.

Interviewee: Yeah. But when you do it and you sketch it and explain it and everyone understands, and they look at you: "That is a very basic sketch…" (laughs) Yeah, I know…

Researcher: But so, even though it is not exactly what you had in your head, even though it is more basic, it still works for you, to express?

Interviewee: Yes.

Researcher: That is quite interesting, isn't it?

Interviewee: Yeah it is, it is very interesting, because you can still kind of show in your sketch what you were thinking about in that moment. And sure, there are people that can do way better, but it is still a better way than just describing it because then you have something different in your head. For example, when you use the word 'speaker', it can be a speaker box or it can be a person or it can be like a megaphone or something. Or 'amplifier' is also very different for everyone. If you are in the music industry it is more like a box or a, yeah, it is so different. So when you sketch it, it is more tangible for everyone to understand what you actually mean.

Researcher: How did expressing your research results through practices, instead of through what you are used to in an academic format, how did that change your research process?

Interviewee: Oh wow. That is a difficult question. I actually thought about that a lot. Uhm, because I noticed change in my thought patterns. For example, I used color patterns or color schemes to make things more recognizable, also during my thesis writing.

Researcher: How do you mean?

Interviewee: I used some post-its for different topics. I used the colors, a more visible system. Not just one post-it color, but I used different colors for different topics to be sure about what topic I wanted to get out of that part. But for Create Space, how was that change (…). I think, I personally broke my thought process or my academic process down to a level that was accessible for people who *aren't* in the academic world. I wasn't tempted to use big words or academic words or things that are sometimes unavailable to people who are not used to working in the academic space. I did not use the theory, or I actually *used* the theories we learned during our study, but in a different way. It was more accessible, the way of working with it was that I made it accessible through creativity. I don't know if that makes sense, but uhm, we focused on children. Okay, the starting point was that we wanted to focus on children. To make things accessible and understandable for everyone because it is a very hard topic, racism and anti-racism. And we wanted to take it out of the academical context because there are so many academic theories about racism or about whiteness and stuff like that, and they are very, very difficult. And I also find it very difficult to approach them and to understand them. Sometimes you have to read an academical text three times and then you finally understand what point they made. I noticed that during my academical process or during my thoughts, some theories I learned in my prior academical education popped up and I used them in a different way. I integrated them and didn't have to explain in the academical sense what was behind them. They were just there, and we incorporated them, and I think that is the thing that changed quite a lot. You think in a *very* different way when you use objects and when you start to create things. You don't have to actually base everything on theory. You just do it and you use what is in your mind. So you *use* the theory you *know*, but in a very different way. You know what I mean?

Researcher: Yes.

Interviewee: I think it is a very vague description I just gave.

Researcher: No, no, I think it is very, uhm, I am just going to ask a bit more about it. If I understand it correctly, you have this theoretical concept and instead of having to uhm, explain it in words or with other theories, you just take the theoretical concept, you read a little about it, but instead of rephrasing it yourself, you use it in creative practice, in speech, in discussions, and learn about it through that, *instead of merely linguistically, uhm, developing it or researching it. Is that bit what you mean?*

Interviewee: Yeah, it is definitely what I meant. Because we had very big discussions and then we read research material from the academical background and then we had discussions based on those things we read and linked it to experience, to artworks, to things that *we* wanted to express or grasped out of those concepts. And then you have the theoretical background, but you don't have to rephrase it like you just said and you don't have to link it to other theories to explain why this is necessary now, in that context. You just talk about it and create something.

Researcher: And why did that uhm (...). What was different about that, how did you experience that in a different way? Was it more pleasant, or less? Or just different?

Interviewee: At first it was very difficult because it broke through my patterns or things I was used to. But I think it was very interesting to see how those theories are actually based on reality. When you read something, it is so far away. You understand what they mean and you understand where the concept comes from and what they are based on, because there are also always examples. But it can still be very detached from reality. And when you try to make it also accessible to yourself through creative practice or discussions, or relating it to experiences or something like that, it gets closer to reality, to society. You actually experience, or not experience, but you *see* where it comes from. That was definitely a thing that changed for me, that is was understandable or (…). The concepts were tangible for me. I did not expect that. I always thought, "I understand that theory", but it was actually clearer when you connect it to something that is close to reality or the way you think.

Researcher: Could you also, in line with that, describe the kind *of knowledge that rose in creative practice, or in doing it the way you did it in Create Space, compared to the knowledge that rises when you do an academic way of research. It is a bit of a vague question, I am aware of that.*

Interviewee: Well, I understand what you mean. I think the knowledge that I gained during Create Space is knowledge I can use in daily life or in my daily practice. I learned how to approach that concept or that idea we worked with in conversation, or just in a normal daily environment. But some of the theories I learned in my prior study, when I try to explain them to someone who is not in the academic context, who is not an expert in that field, it is very difficult to explain what I mean because I only have those big academical theories and only those big words, and I do not know how to express myself or how to make it accessible to someone who is *not* in that academical part of the research. You are very much into that theory at that moment, and then you switch to another theory, but during Create Space we have different things combined and we are so close to reality as I said earlier. So I know I can use that knowledge on a daily basis and I know how to approach different situations with that knowledge. For example, if something racist was to happen or something based on white fragility or something like that, I know how to approach it and I know how to talk about it in a way that is accessible for amateurs, that is not the right word, for the basic people, for 'normal' (uses hands to illustrate quotation marks) people. That is definitely a thing I noticed. That is very different to the way I worked earlier, because I also noticed when I talked about that with my parents, I was able to use words and stuff that they understand, I was able to use examples, I was able to show them pictures, I was able to communicate in a different way than I was when I writing my academical essays.

Researcher: Could you say that uhm, (…) the knowledge you gained makes it more communicable with the people around you? More connecting maybe?

Interviewee: Yes, I think it is more the connecting level. You can connect with people based on the creative thought process or based on creativity, because I think, I don't know if that is a personal thing, but art and creativity, or objects, are a way to connect to everyone, and everyone can understand what they see. So you do not have to be in that language that you use for an academical essay. You do not have to know *all* the theories behind it. You just have an object or something that has a common ground so you can talk about it and you can connect.

Researcher: So, you have more like an 'instap' something to…

Interviewee: Yeah, normally a starting point, but it is also that the creative object is the starting point for a discussion. You don't have a theory, you just don't throw the word discourse in there, but you have a picture with connections for example, something like that.

Researcher: How did creative practice alter the way you look at research and the university now?

Interviewee: (Laughs).

Researcher: If it did, I am not sure it did?

Interviewee: It definitely did. Uhm, I think, the way I look at university *now* is that it is a very limited world. Even though I thought it was a very open and very new, well not *new* way of thinking, but a way to expand your mind. And after Create Space I am more like: " Hm, we still have *sooo* many things we do not do at university and we *should* do to also be closer to everyone else. Because I study culture, I study art. It is something that should be accessible for everyone. We are *all* part of society and *all* part of culture, so why make it such an elitist movement? (Laughs) It is definitely a thing I think about. And also, when I think about accessibility, there are so many limitations at university, not only in writing and reading, because there are still some people who are unable to do that or they have disabilities or something like that. The learning environment is very limited in my opinion after I learned that there was a way to do it differently, to combine theory and creative practice. And also just, our minds work only in *one* straight line, you know what I mean? You just have *one* thing you have to do, you *have* to read a paper, you have to follow lectures and then you have to write your *own* academical essay which just incorporates some theories and then *maybe* some of your own thoughts. But often you have just a question you have to research and that is based on the materials you have during the lectures or during the course and then you just have to rephrase it. That is everything. In some of our papers there was an independent thought process, a thought process of my own, where I noticed those are *my* thoughts, that I connected the theory to something I read or an artwork or something like that. But often it is just rephrasing, reusing theory, looking at it from a different, *slightly* different angle, because you are still trapped in that cage of theory, you can't break out of it. You don't have a new theory, you don't create something new. You just reuse, reuse, reuse, that's everything you do. So I still think that our

creative process during Create Space used those theories, but we also created something new because the object was something new.

Researcher: What do you like so much about creating something new*? What is it in that?*

Interviewee: That you have your own imprint on that, that you leave your own thing, your own part. I don't know how to say it but I don't like to use *everything* that is used before. But I think that is also part of my personality, that I don't like to reuse things in the way someone else did. I just want to add something new, I want to make it my own, to show that that is my person and not just someone else's thoughts, because I have my own head, my own thoughts. That is a personality thing I guess (laughs).

Researcher: How did using practice alter the way you look at creativity and art and arts school, on the other hand?

Interviewee: I am just impressed by what they do, it is *so* amazing. I always had that thought, that I was like "Okay this is such a big thing, you have to have such amazing skills." But then again, I also thought, yeah, hmm… When you visit an art school, when they have an open day, there are so many people that are looking down on you because they are in art school and they made it and I am here and stuff like that, like "I am an artist", you know, those people (laughs). But after working with them and working with them so closely, I have *so* much *respect* for them, they do such great things and the way their mind works. To have this creative idea and to put it out there in the world and to make it in an object, it is, *wow* (laughs). It is an amazing thought process and I think, I would never be able to do that I guess. They also have training for that, but it is a whole different world and I am also kind of jealous because I think it would be a much better study for me. Without the educational part, because I don't want to be a teacher, but the way of thinking with the theories, the way of working with it, it was way more in a way that I *liked*, that I also *wanted* to do. I always thought our study was quite creative because you were able to pick your own topic and you were able to pick from a broad concept or something like that. But when you look at what they do, that they have to make something from scratch, or create something, it is just amazing (smiles).

Researcher: My final question is, what would the ideal combination be for you between practice and theory in university? Would you think it has to stay the same, or would you like more practice?

Interviewee: I would definitely say we have to change it up a bit, that we have to incorporate more projects, that you have to create an object about the concept or the theory and then have to explain it to the class or the course or maybe also for someone else, who is not part of the academical environment. I think that would be an idea to incorporate, definitely, in the academical environment. But I also think we have to keep the academic way of researching because there should be a difference between university and art school. Because you have that difference and I think it is a great way for people who have always been creative, who have always had those skills, to develop that even more in art school. To be able to have that practice, to be able to work on their skills. I think that we shouldn't put it on the same level, university and art school, definitely not. But be should definitely incorporate some creativity and some practice parts in the academical environment of the university. I would really like to have some seminars or workshops to also work with your digital environment. For example InDesign, PowerPoint, Photoshop, something like that, to be able to create presentations, to be able to create objects, to be able to create posters or something like that, to make the concepts accessible for everyone. Not just the higher academical space some people won't be able to access.

Researcher: And why is do you think that is important?

Interviewee: Uhm, because we research, every study, even biology, or I don't know, astrology, we research things that are important for *every* member of society and not just for members that are able to pay for university or are able to read those words or are able to access that sphere. I think that is maybe also my (laughs) cultural interest, but I think it is very, *very* important to make it accessible for everyone and make it accessible for everyone for different types of people. And that would be possible through creativity and objects that are tangible and understandable.

Researcher: One last question, you said reality, it is closer to reality. What exactly do you mean with reality?

Interviewee: Good point, because everyone has a different reality. I think *life*, just closer to life. Something that is closer to the way you experience the world.

Researcher: Just daily life?

Interviewee: Yeah.

Researcher: Do you have anything you have to share or to want to say, or any comments?

Interviewee: Yes, one thing. I think the experience of Create Space just broadened my mind in the way I think. That is an experience I don't want to miss; I don't want to not have done that because it gave me a broader perspective and I know that my ways of thinking have changed. Not only through the creative process, but also through self-reflection, which is always incorporated in a creative process because you think about the way you think. I think that will also help me in my future academic way of working or also in my work life, because I can relate those concepts to daily practice. That is definitely something I gained. It was a great experience.

Researcher: That is a nice addition. Well, I think I have everything I need. Thank you so much for your broad and well formulated answers, they were very specific and particular, so thank you very much for that.

Interviewee: I thought it was very vague at some point, but if you can work with it, I am fine with it (laughs).

Researcher: No, to me it was very interesting. I have one last question, would you mind if I look through the drive and look at the boundary objects you posted on the drive?

Interviewee: I would not mind, they are on the drive so you can access them, but I think there are some things that are not uploaded.

Researcher: I will ask you if I need something which ones choose if *I use them. Yes, dank je wel Participant number 3, echt super fijn, ik kan hier heel veel mee.*