

Working Group Education

In the recent ASEAN NEW MEDIA ART COMPETITION

www.asean-nmac.info the challenge is formulated thus: “One important role played by the recent new media technology is to bridge the differences by providing tools for information exchanges. Technological developments of this kind, especially generated by the use of computers and television, have further given rise to a new model of interaction. However, due to its global compulsion of uniformity, such as in the language and equipments, the new media also threatens to obliterate the diversity in the region.” These same technological developments are causing The Gates Effect in the USA, where “The world's biggest private foundation wants to fix American high schools.” (Fast Company, 102). “With a boost from Gates's money, 472 new small high schools have opened in New York, Chicago, and elsewhere. Almost 400 more will open by 2009. The foundation has also backed the restructuring of almost 700 existing high schools, often by breaking them up into smaller "learning communities" focused around such themes as science, art, or technology.”

In our Pacific Rim working group on Education we will be discussing these technological changes that cause so many paradoxical situations and scenarios focusing on concrete output: howto's. How to set up a new media curriculum. How to set up a media lab. How to make use of local expertise and transnational concepts. First we will discuss what kind of knowledge it is that we are talking about: “What should count as knowledge now? Perhaps I'm saying that while I also prefer lots of emphasis on the "how to", I suspect that major change will require arguing the abstract Why cogently and compellingly.” (Lynn Hughes). Then we will break down the questions into three themes.

Universities: curricula, establishing practice of 'making'

1. Clear identification of the problem. What are the characteristics of a context/program that would promote effective, relevant New Media education? Lynn
2. Installment of a ISEA Pacific Rim Education Consultancy Committee quality assurance committee for digital media education - linked to other regional (EU) efforts toward a GENERAL international standard. Kenneth
- 3.: “We are facing a huge gap between the technological developments applied

and reflected in contemporary media arts on the one side and the art educators at school and university level on the other side. together the people involved.

As technology develops very fast, it would be reasonable to get **a continuous transition of information on the media technologies** (from media arts/technologies to education), and its' dissemination.

- How to integrate the issue of programming as a new field of the creative processes? (e.g. using iconic programming tools e.g. (robotic/actuator- and sensor-based system development),
- the media specific extension and characteristics of the digital medium. What are the characteristics of the interactive media and aesthetics (e.g. the aesthetic of algorithm as addressed by Nake).
- The reflection of a methodology of identifying and evaluating the skills and competences which are both on the level of programming as well as on the aesthetic and artistic level (What are the skills we want to mediate?)
- Non-hierarchical order of skills linked to different disciplines: Programming is about developing digital models of the world, and therefore part of the creative process, not just a technical skill, as it is often perceived by art educators. (Iconic programming tools help mediating such skills and apply them from elementary school level on to upper academic secondary schools with interactive installations (e.g. based on microcomputers communication with each other)
- Changing the established learning culture to be found at the average school (teacher-oriented, single computer work place-based etc., classroom/computer room centred) Daniela

4. "the emerging hybrid educational trends under the "Essential

Strategies for Effective Arts Education". This model in

all of its variations seems to be adopted in widely diverging geographical regions today and actually I hope that discussion of these models will be included in the topics of our working group." Nina

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5. Are there any EU or Unesco calls we could put a proposal to? Daniela

Hybrids: key hierarchies of output and knowledge construction

1. Installment of ISEA Pacific Rim Creative Industry Consultancy Committee emphasizing the discourse of 'creative industries' (Trojan horse) . Kenneth

2. “And to the question of what counts as knowledge. What should count as knowledge now? Perhaps I'm saying that while I also prefer lots of emphasis on the "how to", I suspect that major change will require arguing the abstract Why cogently and compellingly.” Lynn

3. One way forward may be to maintain a clear commitment in the discussion (and in its documentation and representation) to the specificities of actual cases, seen as integral parts of local situations. To draw out the perspectives of the practitioners in those cases, and then to relate them to other perspectives and situations – articulating specific global/local opportunities in the process. We might think of this less as a road map (in the sense of having a clear idea, already, of where we want to get to), and more as a visualisation of needs and possibilities that can act at once as a set of good-practice exemplars, an argument maker for value and investment and a starting point for specific actions. All this leads me to wonder how as a group we might work, as Lynn does, both within and outside the universities, so that we can open up the infrastructure that exists in that context and have a chance of influencing the academic culture of knowledge recognition at the same time. Lizzie

4. "The challenge and the next step we should take is to involve more policy makers in this process, to express the need to re-consider (or even simply consider) the field of new media art, the different domains and fields it encompasses, the need to support this field beyond ministries' boundaries (education/culture/research etc)." Marie

5. "In the coming years, KMDI expects to strengthen our position as an authoritative voice for constructive, critical commentary and reflection on technology and society, and to take an active role in the shaping of public debate and the development of public policy around these changes." Nina

6. "I am currently working with a computer science professor who prefers to use opensource. That is great but we both have salaries and I also work with free lance individuals who don't (have salaries). I pay them -but rarely enough, and so I think that the IP question is a complex and urgent one. Institutes like Hexagram that "talk transfer" and problems like IP, raise more general questions. Hexagram teams now regularly include a motley selection of non-university participants and advisors. As you can imagine, some of these don't have formal training "in the field". Figuring out how to give these people status (and money) is related to the big question of the permeability of the university and the flexibility of formal educational structures." Lynn

7. Some of the questions that we will be dealing with in formulating this "digital art festival" are:

1. What intellectual substance can the Philippines contribute to that body of creative practices called "digital art" or "new media"?

2. How does the Philippine experience (specific problems of the economic, political and cultural life across the country) relate to the ideas and methods of aestheticizing media and technology?

3. If the "festival" was to be conceived as a "process" rather than as an "event", then what are the implications of such in terms of its topical and geographical scope, timetable, organization, funding, promotion, and evaluation?
4. What strategies responsive to and in congruence with local diversities and systems of knowledge must be developed in finding answers to these questions?
5. How do we know that these strategies are indeed "responsive" and "responsible"?
6. How do we know that the best of our intentions will not be corrupted in support of the very forces that have transformed cultures into global markets through "new media"? Fatima

Media Labs: -key alternative businessmodels

1. Radical alternatives to the current institutions –including suggestions about how they would survive, be funded, mesh with other systems. Lynn
2. After a political shift in 1998, social transformation started to happen & stimulates a friction in our society. Classic stories: the new emerging values/situation versus the old & established values. This made us think that the position of civic organization like Common Room are becoming more crucial because we need a new platform that can work to accomodate a different/new necessities/aspiration. Once you ask us about the "alternative business model" that can bring us out of this trouble. Yes, this is our biggest homework: to find an alternative business model that can accomodate our needs. So an organization like Common Room can work not only as a cultural institution that create new ideas,

but also can work as a business unit that can solve our economic needs. But the big question is "HOW?" Gustaff

3. "Shouldn't Medias Labs direct the future?!"

Encouraging and fomenting production and research.

How to make money?

How to accomplish auto-sustainability ?

- Publishing and selling books?

- Formatting international conferences ? (as usual?!)

- Producing restricted projects to large corporations ?

"Just what are we trying to create?"

Thinking of media lab in SP, here are some ideas:

"A media center/lab should indeed not only permit a open communication

channel between the independent and tactical initiatives and more

academic, theoretical approaches and/or projects as much as new

developments in theory, art, practice and action. The center should be much more a medium than an end in itself, enabling producers,

researchers, activists, artists and theoreticians to meet, exchange

ideas and join the production of projects together. The results of

such an undertaking would be disposable to the public in general,

through online and printed publications, conferences, exhibitions and festivals."

(what else?) Rough of ideas for a project to conceive a media lab in Brazil. Robert

Prior:

The proposal underlying the questions I outlined (for my own local use) is - in the context of PRNMS and education - a clear formulation by each member of the WG of the nature of knowledge / cognitive systems through which education/learning/behaviour/etc. is motivated.

I want to see how clearly each member of the team understands how their own local cognitive systems are structured (what are its principles and parameters, its values?).

Only from there is it possible (and ethical) to ask questions that attempt to explore across the diversity things like: models of cooperation, develop strategies, engage diaspora communities, establish networks, investigate responses, etc.

I think that from a clearly formulated set of diverse knowledge systems, it will become more possible to discuss "education", "media" and its problems as a group in the summit. Fatima

Although Fatima Lasay can not attend, she is participating and planning to take the discussion beyond this ISEA, using the Working Group as a hopefully sustainable vehicle for further discussing, advising (policy, education) dissemination of academic and artistic knowledge, and user generated content and context in the Pacific Rim.