

THE ART OF PRACTICING

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ISSUE

"All creativity comes from the unconscious" says British actor and filmmaker John Cleese in one of his films on YouTube. According to him, and many with him, it is one of the most important notions about creativity. Creativity comes from the unconscious. It seems like a simple observation.

But the unconscious can not be handled. It silences when focussing on it. It exists in the absence of consciousness or thoughts. The question thus is how you can let the unconscious speak. And furthermore: how to teach others to do so.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Preliminary research led to the assumption that visual artists in the creative process explicitly give space to the unconscious and develop methods for this. The research questions concerned: What is the role of the unconscious in making art? How do visual artists give space to the unconscious in the creative process? What is the role of the unconscious in scientific research? How do academic and artistic research relate to each other? And finally: What are the implications of this for arts education? After all, a better understanding of making processes can lead to an improvement of the preconditions for arts education.

RESEARCH METHOD

As a research method, triangulation is applied when doing literature research, and qualitative and quantitative empirical research consisting of interviews, observations, film and text analysis, and a survey. The data are described or transcribed, encoded, categorized, printed out on paper and cut out, rearranged, analyzed and interpreted. From fifty films from the series 'Dutch Masters in the 21st century', an image and a statement have been selected for the backside of all pages of the thesis.

MAIN RESULTS

The role of the unconscious is generally considered great. For the interviewed scientists, intuition plays a clear role in clues and hunches about where new insights or relations can be gained. The interviewed artists create conditions in which a certain concentration can arise in which intuition can speak. There are clear similarities between the artistic and academic approach in looking for 'nothing' or 'space' to create 'something'. An important difference is that academics want to increase (objective) knowledge. The artists want to make something that is a reflection of the personal (subjective) experience of 'space' or that originated in 'space'. Concentration and time are considered very important conditions.

CONCLUSIONS

For a very large part we function unconsciously, on the automatic pilot, so to say. The role of the unconscious in general, and therefore also in practicing art or science, is big. Both scientists and visual artists create conditions in which something can arise. One speaks among others of the three b's: 'bed, bus and bath' that would promote creativity. The working methods of the artists are diverse and can also vary per person per project. One creates conditions for a form of concentration in which intuition or 'the process' can take place. Art education benefits from time, space and a direct environment that stimulates the experience of meaningfulness. Confidence and tolerating failure are crucial. Too much 'space' can also create confusion or resistance.