

Faculty Development Research Grant Report by Philippa Lindenthal

The Interconnection of Sound and Space in Art and Design

Below please find a synopsis of my research with the following interview subjects.

- 06/05/2018 interviewed curator Dr. Annabelle Görgen-Lammers at the *Kunsthalle* in Hamburg
- 06/06/2018 interviewed sculptor Doris Waschk in her atelier in Hamburg
- 06/07/2018 interviewed Prof. Hartmut Gudenau, artist, in his atelier in Hamburg
- 06/13/2018 Interviewed Prof. Klaus Waschk, Dean Emeritus of the *University of Applied Sciences*, School of Art and Design, in his atelier in Hamburg

My research began with a focus on the connection between music and creativity, building upon a prior research grant *Exploring the impact of music on fashion design*. I was interested in examining the interrelation of music and creativity, the influence of music on the brain, music as a tool of disruption and growth as well as tension, and how artists and designers use music. But in the course of the interviews, other concepts came to the fore, particularly how sound interacts with space and atmosphere, and how this impacts learning, perception, and memory. I thought it was important to be open-minded and follow the new findings which resonated with me and carried the initial concepts further. This parallels both my approach to teaching and designing, where the initial sketch is not necessarily the one executed.

My interviews began with Dr. Annabelle Görgen-Lammers, who stressed the distinction between physical space and digital space, and how the latter affects our perception: "It is more a way of searching in all directions simultaneously and more connectedly searching, which the Surrealists called a 'strolling in the unconsciousness.' The Surrealists did this by purposefully strolling through city landscapes." Dr. Görgen-Lammers framed our increased strolling in digital space as a problem in that "we get guided by marketing-related topics and it is not free anymore." We talked about how an improvement for the future would be to make these behind-the-screen processes more visible and transparent.

Dr. Görgen-Lammers' thoughts on this topic touch upon creativity and art and design. She sees our strolling space in the digital world as an *Echoraum*, where we "only receive reflections of

things I like, which I revealed that I like beforehand.” This is in opposition to creativity, which involves “getting out of what I already know and like...thinking about things in new ways and to question things, even if it is uphill.” Dr. Görngen-Lammers’ vision parallels my belief that in order to stay current and a leading institution, it is crucial to be open to change and train the listening/resonating senses. It is important to nurture this quality in order to create fresh, contemporary designs that pioneer the *Zeitgeist*. I have personally experienced, by teaching in various contexts and on multiple continents, that while it is good to give direction, we must maintain an openness to individual perceptions. As there are always group dynamics and more dominant personalities in an environment, it sometimes takes courage to speak. In order to cultivate more authentic and unconventional resonances, we must look for opportunities to disrupt the *Echoraum*.

In contrast to the *Echoraum*, Dr. Görngen-Lammers proposed the *Sinnesraum* (multi-sensory room): “In the 1930’s Surrealists tried to trigger processes with atmospheres. They created exhibitions that led to a confusion of the senses -hence no *Echoraum*, no confirmation of how I always thought a gallery space should look, but a complete new way of thinking and openness was created inside the visitor--an entirely designed *Sinnesraum*.”

Two other interview subjects, Prof. Hartmut Gudenau and Prof. Klaus Waschke, echoed these thoughts, but in a more intuitive or practical way. I was surprised that this subject reappeared in these interviews as well, as I had not raised it with either of them or Dr. Görngen-Lammers. While Dr. Görngen-Lammers takes a more conceptual and interdisciplinary approach to this subject, Prof. Gudenau speaks of it in his art practice, particularly in his collage work: “At some point I became interested in the figure skater Sonja Henie and accidentally found pictures of her and started to combine them. I used a head here and another piece of clothing from a different ice princess and so forth and that is how it is assembled. This collage always accompanies me, at times I work on it, then I let it rest for a while.” Prof. Gudenau’s collage methodology, similar to Dr. Görngen-Lammers’ concept, thus involves moving in different directions simultaneously and intuitively without a predetermined outcome.

My initial idea was to visit my interview subjects in their personal working environment, which I feel presents a special opportunity as these private and intimate spaces are not open to the public. The artist’s working space shows another facet of their personality; it adds another piece to the collage I have of a person. Prof. Gudenau’s space especially had an impact, as it

presented such a distinct, carefully selected aesthetic that was very consistent yet still possessed an openness and freshness. Doris Waschk's space was as well very useful in understanding her mindset and creative process. Her art exists in the context of the workspace, and by positioning the figure in different parts of the room, she changes and experiments with its expressive potential.

My interview questions originally concerned sound/music and creative process, but all my subjects independently raised the importance of space and atmosphere. This led me to pursue this new subject and explore its relevance to creativity, teaching and learning.

Three of my interview subjects have experience in teaching in addition to being practicing artists. Dr. Görger-Lammers stresses the importance of learning through a model and specific personality, and extends this to include the actual atmosphere of a studio or classroom. This atmosphere is created through voice, sound, and music. She calls this space "the second pedagogue."

"Every sound is a different sound in a different room. This should be kept in mind while teaching and learning. How do we make students more receptive by working more consciously with these elements and by making them aware of what is happening around them? This element of sound does something to my body which affects my attentiveness and memory. The more senses are involved in learning, the more sustained it is. Which means the more I can recall, the more I can access the information which was given to me in this context. So it is very important for learning concepts--music, sound, space."