

Giving Agency to the *Possible*. Notes on the world-disclosing and emancipatory dimensions of unlearning practices through an analysis of the art collective pKp

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Abstract

In the art world, experiments are being set up that question hegemonic forms of knowledge production and knowledge distribution, and that try out alternative models of living together. We speak about a dynamic of practices where arts, education and politics are thought of together, often described as 'self-organized gatherings of unlearning practices'. The essay aims to intervene in this tendency through a study of the emancipatory and world disclosing operations and tactics at work within a concrete artistic collective 'Para Institute for Arts and Precarity (pKp)'. Analyzing pKp as unlearning practice, the paper is not so much a critique against learning institutions, but a source of inspiration to reconsider knowledge production and distribution as a collective, sensitive practice.

Keywords: World-disclosing, Emancipation, Unlearning practices, Collective Art, pKp.

Agenciando o *possível*. Apontamentos sobre as dimensões reveladoras do mundo e emancipatórias das práticas de desaprendizagem através de uma análise da arte coletiva pKp

Resumo

No mundo da arte, estão sendo montadas experiências questionadoras das formas hegemônicas de produção e distribuição de conhecimento, que experi-

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mentam modelos alternativos de convivência. Falamos de uma dinâmica de práticas onde as artes, a educação e a política são pensadas em conjunto, muitas vezes descritas como “encontros organizados de práticas de desaprendizagem”. O ensaio tem como objetivo intervir nessa tendência através de um estudo das operações e táticas emancipatórias e reveladoras do mundo em ação dentro de um coletivo artístico concreto, o “Instituto para Artes e Precariedade” (**pKp**). Analisando o **pKp** como prática de desaprendizagem, o artigo não é tanto uma crítica contra as instituições de ensino, mas uma fonte de inspiração para reconsiderar a produção e a distribuição do conhecimento como uma prática coletiva e sensível.

Palavras-chave: Revelação de mundo, Emancipação, Práticas de desaprendizagem, Arte coletiva, **pKp**.

Agence du *possible*. Notes sur les dimensions révélatrices du monde et émancipatrices des pratiques de désapprentissage à travers une analyse de l'art collectif pKp

Résumé

Dans le monde de l'art, des expériences questionnantes sur les formes hégémoniques de production et de distribution des connaissances, qui expérimentent des modèles alternatifs de coexistence, sont en cours d'élaboration. Nous parlons d'une dynamique de pratiques où les arts, l'éducation et la politique sont considérés ensemble, souvent décrits comme des “rencontres organisées de pratiques de désapprentissage”. L'essai vise à intervenir dans cette tendance en étudiant les opérations et les tactiques émancipatrices et révélatrices du monde en action au sein d'un collectif artistique concret, “l'Institut pour les arts et la précarité” (**pKp**). Analysant **pKp** comme pratique de désapprentissage, l'article n'est pas tant une critique contre les établissements d'enseignement, mais une source d'inspiration pour reconsidérer la production et la distribution des connaissances comme une pratique collective et sensible.

Mots-clés: Révélation du monde, Émancipation, Pratiques de désapprentissage, Art collectif, **pKp**.

Self-organized gatherings of unlearning practices

Today, we are facing challenges that radically reshape our relationships with one another and with the world. In various places, prevailing frames of reference, classifications, forms of interaction and the associated exclusionary mechanisms and inequalities are being questioned (e.g. Black Lives Matter and decolonization manifestations, the climate movement, pride is a protest). The problem many voices draw attention to 'is that the meditative subject that is defining our worldview is specifically male, an unmarked subject, a pure locus that transcends what *matters for us*' (Stengers, 2015, p. 191). These voices plea for a radically new orientation and compass to recompose our relations to each other and the world in terms of knowledge production and 'public' engagement (cf. Latour, 2018). This has led to the development of feminist and other post-positivist epistemologies that challenge objective knowledge and the universal subject (e.g. Haraway, Harding, Hill Collins). What is more, activist interventions from movements such as 'decolonise the curriculum' enter these debates.

Especially in the art world, we see experiments being set up that question hegemonic forms of knowledge production and distribution, which try out alternative models of learning and living together (think of examples such as Bodies of Knowledge [BOK]³ or Documenta XV⁴). We speak about a dynamic of practices where arts, education and politics are thought of together, often described as 'self-organized art education' (Thorne, 2017), or more recently 'self-organized gatherings of unlearning practices' (cf. Angiama & Kalomamas, 2021). It is noticeable that these art projects do not eschew educational tools and methods, but use them to question the power relations that operate within the global market society, as well as how this society shape the world around us (O'Neill & Wilson, 2010). Yet, the focus is not only on dominant power mechanisms at play within the world. Education itself is also the subject of criticism in various places. Several artists and curators are looking for educational models that distinguish themselves from 'those encumbered by the daily practices and instrumentalized demands of education' (Graham, 2010, p. 125). Critics say that, since the end of the twentieth century, art schools have increasingly come to behave like corporations that adopt a logic of capitalization rather than experimentation. Or, as curator Sam Thorne (2017) describes it:

3 Information available on: <https://www.bodiesofknowledge.be/?lang=en>.

4 Information available on: <https://documenta-fifteen.de/>.

If a century ago, talent morphed into creativity, we are now seeing critical thinking recast – in the favored vocabulary of the Silicon Valley start-up: [...] building projects designed to attract larger year groups are coupled with the frictionless absorption of tech-industry rhetoric. (pp. 42, 44)

In other words, from a resistance against capitalist rhetoric, 'artist led practices' emerge that aim to develop alternative epistemologies. Art schools should promote 'thinking differently, and not in the Apple sense' (Thorne, 2017, p. 44). Without wanting to categorize all these 'self-organized gatherings of unlearning practices' under one denominator, it concerns initiatives that question the existing configuration of the (art) institution as producer and distributor of knowledge, based on a renewed relationship between art, education and politics. A relationship that does not function in terms of socialization and qualification – and thus as a form of fitting into an existing world, being capitalist – but as a 'form' of resistance and change. Not necessarily to dismantle the institution, but to create equal participation (Késenne, 2021).

At different places there are critics that accuse this educational turn, arguing that it starts a trend towards an instrumentalisation of the arts, whereby arts primarily serve to bring about solutions to social problems (cf. KIRAC⁵). It is argued that the ideological visions filled in by the artist or the curator, led to a loss of the visual power of the work of art or, of the autonomy of the image, and thus directly to a social loss of the possibility of imagination itself (cf. Hertmans, 2012). The production of rather literal images in the guise of moral messages or even the disappearance of the image in favor of participatory events is described as a part of a crisis in the arts. Critics also indicate that the educational turn recuperates education within the art market (cf. Allen, 2011; Bischof, 2012; Kalin, 2014). 'Education becomes exhibited; school becomes a spectacle. What remains less clear is the how the nature of learning provided by this type of exhibition-as-school differs from that experienced in more conventional settings. Often, they reproduce rather than rethink the idea of school, becoming easily absorbed and then quickly forgotten' (Thorne, 2017, p. 47).

This essay aims to intervene in this tendency. However, instead of a critical analysis of the educational turn and its impact on social challenges, in this contribution we want to investigate whether it is possible to develop a more positive argument. An argument in which education fruitfully interacts with the space of art in a way that does not destroy its imaginary potential, and enables to intervene in constraining

5 KIRAC is a Dutch collective. Their core business is making critical films about the contemporary art world, released as KIRAC episodes. The films are made by artists Stefan Ruitenbeek, Kate Sinha, Tarik Sadouma and other members of team-KIRAC. They also publish podcasts about culture, movies and books.

power frameworks, opening other spaces of thought and action. In other words, the question that interests us is whether these contemporary gatherings can inspire the development of discourse in which the relation between arts, politics and education is considered in terms of thinking *with* others and the world, instead of *for*.

The collective 'Para Institute for Arts ('Kunst') and Precarity (**pKp**)', initiated by Stijn Van Dorpe, one of the authors of the article and part of his doctoral research, will be the starting point of our analysis. Although **pKp** does not describe itself as a 'self-organised gathering of unlearning practices', it does have similar ambitions given the importance attached to social equality and the formation of cooperative practices. Describing operations taking place within the formation of **pKp** in the art-biennale in Zwalm (2021), this paper aims to investigate how to recompose the relationship between arts, politics and education in terms of world-disclosing and emancipatory practices.

Para Institute for Art and Precarity (**pKp**)

As part of a doctoral research project, **pKp** had its first formation on the art biennale Kunst&Zwalm, which took place in the Flemish Ardennes in the summer of 2021. Forty artists presented new *in situ* work along a walking route in the surroundings of the rural village of Korsele. Using various media, their work entered a relationship with the environment, the cultural heritage and the residents of the region. However, from the outset, the status of **pKp**'s contribution to the festival was different from other artists and art collectives taking part. Whereas the regular contributions unfolded into an artistic work in relation to the rural environment and the people who live there, **pKp** entered into a reflective relationship with the art space. Whereas the museum is usually seen as the ideal institutional protective biotope to give voice to art, **pKp** wanted to use a physical positioning to create and investigate a 'framework' where the world and its social fabric could be put at stake. This way, **pKp** formed its own practice within the festival as a 'para'⁶ institution that relates, in the general sense, to the formation of an art space and, in a specific sense, to how it settles and develops in the provincial rural environment of the Zwalm region. In this sense, **pKp**'s ambition was not to criticize the art space or the world, but to put into practice world-disclosing and emancipatory modes of actions and thoughts.

6 The Greek prefix *παρά* means from, besides, by, near, alongside (in the topological sense) and while, during (in the temporal sense) as well as, in the figurative sense, in comparison, in contrast, counter to, against (Sternfeld, 2016).

The logic of the art space as world-disclosing and emancipatory practice is strongly connected to the historical legacy of the modern museum (Groys, 2013). A history that goes back to the construction of the closed and luminous space that is clearly demarcated from the outside world. The place where the life of a work of art begins, where things from everyday life have a rebirth that raises them to a new life. Groys indicates that the modern museum thereby is a form of 'separation' in at least two ways. First of all, the objects are separated from the outside world, and secondly, the art space itself – its form, strategies and space – is different from what is happening in the world outside. In other words, the art space is that place where things from the outside world are collected, converted, exposed and illuminated, and where reality can be experienced aesthetically. But, at the same time, as Groys points out, it produces another immanent outer space through its constitution. The inner space separates the things from the constraints of severe production and function, becoming aesthetic objects. At the same time, it is marked by the new and by desires to incorporate what was not previously seen (as art). From this point of view, artistic subjectivity consists in transferring things from the outside world into the inner space of the museum, to contemplate and preserve it. This aesthetic space primarily installs an interruption or a break with the outside world, but does not imply an involvement or engagement with it. What is shown historically in the museum is in a radically passive state, disconnected from the cultural place to which it was once attached. Yet, as a space of distance, the art space is not 'really' empty. In Rancière's vision, the museum, and by extension, the mental art space, is already originally linked to an assumption from which interpretative thoughts and actions can take shape. This way, it is related to the axiom of equality: everyone has the ability to translate and interpret what is available and shown (Rancière, 2011). The viewer is actively encouraged, not only to connect the elements that make up the work, but also to relate them to the context of the world outside. Hence, the image exists in the space between its conscious proposition and the freedom of its applicability and interpretability (Rancière, 2011).

With institutional critique, we agree that within late-capitalist society, this form of freedom is put under pressure. An obsession for the new seems to have infected the art space's ability for renewal. The new is produced increasingly faster and to a greater extent, because art producers better understand what it means to be innovative. In this way, not only identities but also differences are technically produced (cf. Groys, 2013). Thus, notions of the new gradually become less suitable for thinking of the art space as a space of separation, and of world-disclosure. A tradition in which the new relates to the old has collapsed, leaving everything in competition with each other.

The meaning of an artefact is no longer obtained on the basis of its relationship to the old, but must constantly be invented. As a result, the art producer is addressed to give meaning to the new, and the need to interpret and make relations disappears. Instead of more, the consumer is hardly confronted with complex or contradictory readings, views, or ways of thinking, together with the possibility to look, hear, and think for him or herself (Groys, 2013).

In this sense, it is important that art institutions radically rethink their world-disclosing and emancipatory functions and take a step towards visualising and designing spaces that intervene within that space. **pKp** therefore attempts to reaffirm the world-disclosing and emancipatory potential that constitutes the museum, in such a way that it functions as a place of collecting and preserving, but also as a place where an engagement *with* the world is explicitly brought into play. This is a place to move and think *with* persons and things, rather than *about* or *for* them. Subsequently, what matters is not so much a search for the new, but the search for ways to relate to it. In other words, **pKp** primarily wants to create a place where objects from the outside world are not only collected, exposed, and transformed into artistic objects, but in which object and subject positions become part of the same generative movement (cf. Ingold, 2018). That is to say, what **pKp** wants to explore is not in the first place how to represent the diversity of the world, but where the diversity and the renewal of the world itself is activated. It aims at the formation of a space that does not evoke an experience of the new in the first place, but a space with sensitivity for what happens *within* and *through* an actual gathering of people and world. Hence, **pKp** wants to explore the possibility of reconsidering the art space as a sensory movement towards a landscape of diverging lines of thought and of capability.

In order to flesh this out, we will describe **pKp** through the concrete actions that brought into existence its formation. We start with a description of the concrete occasion that led to the initial formation of **pKp**, to move on to the concrete actions as part of the engagements with the surroundings it contains. The aim of this description is to identify the world-disclosing and emancipatory potential of self-organised gatherings of unlearning practices and to investigate whether it is possible to propose another form of art and learning in school.

The formation of a tent camp – as para-site

To conduct the research into the mental art space, a physical space in the form of 'a camp' was needed for suspending 'evident' coordinates and functions through concrete interventions. To understand the formation of 'the camp', it is important to

be attentive to the fact that Korsele is the only Flemish village where Protestantism continued during the reign of terror under King Philip II. While most Protestants, at the time, fled to the Northern Netherlands, the Protestant inhabitants of Korsele were driven back into the woods, where they resisted the Inquisition. Although we could speak of two camps opposing each other, it is rather about a camp as a group of people gathering despite power. As the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (2002) has analyzed, the fundamental articles of law that guarantee personal duties and freedom are rendered inoperative in the camp. It is a place where one can kill without committing a murder and being condemned for it. Although Agamben states that the camp, as an exception, is completely subject to political order – meaning that sovereign power can intervene there at will – regarding the formation of **pKp** in the biennale Kunst&Zwalm we would like to think of the camp as a state of exception, as a place where the existing political order is abandoned. But, with the intention of inventing other and new forms of politics that start from a thinking with, instead of thinking for others and the world. Thus, from a mutual dependence and situatedness, instead of normalization and remediation of social structures in function of a predefined political order.



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The camp, as established by **pKp**, did not function as a museum, a church or a school. The camp existed of three textile tents set up in the leased land of one of the farmers. The verticality of the tent poles by no means matched that of traditional institutional pillars. The tent camp was temporary, equal to the duration of the biennial. It functioned as a shelter to store food, to sleep, to meet, to talk, to pray, to work and to study and had no walls, lock, or entrance. It was a place where **pKp** gathered to perform actions or interventions, as well as a place where various materials and forces came together that helped to determine and shape the creation of an experimental and generative zone. In this sense, it was for instance impossible to

choose a meadow with cows. As cows are curious animals, they soon would occupy the tent camp, which forced **pKp** to search for another space. Or a need for sanitary facilities brought **pKp** to one of the neighbors, who later also provided water and electricity, but also started functioning as an 'attendant'. She became part of the camp and kept an eye on its activities. The camp also became a place where other artists or late-night visitors slept. In the camp, people ate, washed dishes, slept, mused, waited, thought, wrote, read, talked and drank with each other and with visitors of the biennial, the residents and the surroundings. The tent camp was also subject to the weather and other non-human circumstances. Not only did the water seep into the sleeping tent, but at times it rained so hard that the residents offered up their barns to prepare meals together. The nights came early because it was cold outside and there were no lights. Ants made the storage of food change places. In other words, the camp created conditions that made certain things (im)possible. The camp was constituted by 'a web of connections, infinite but locally fragile, with and among everything – all beings- including what we generally class as things, objects' (Le Guin, 2017, p. 15). This way, the tent brought into existence a life that depends on others and on things, or that kind of life that is often preserved for the backstage (of the world). This way **pKp** did not in the first place functioned as a space where art is made, but as a para-site that staged that part of the world that has no part in the (art)world. As such, as para-site, **pKp** restaged the art space in its twofold manner: i.e., in terms of interruption and of ability.

Putting something on the table: world-disclosure and renewal

A second action for **pKp** to be constitutive was the ambition to collect and re-assemble stories. The collection of stories was a way of bringing together the art biennial and the rural (social) environment in which **pKp** operated. The aim was to develop lines of thought and to make connections whereby the art event, the rural environment and the social dynamics of the place formed the material for research, interventions and discussions. The basic assumption of **pKp** was that authoritative stories of modern capitalism that define positions and relations between human beings and the environment need to be disclosed. The first aim therefore was to bring back curiosity, and as Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing (2015) writes, 'to redirect the gaze to the knots and pulses of patchiness that there are to explore, unencumbered by the simplifications of modern narratives of development' (p. 6).

The purpose of **pKp** was to create conditions in which careful attention and curiosity for what is said and done regarding the biennial, the rural environment of the Flemish

Ardennes and the formation of **pKp** formed the material from which singular lines of enquiry emerged, and from which controversies were brought into play. In other words, the purpose was to create conditions in which participants and audiences relate to the world as a happening rather than a status quo (Tsing, 2015). Because of this, audiences and participants of **pKp** were both seen as actors and recipients, whereby words and images, stories and performances in both directions could give rise to observing, listening, translating and speaking. One of the participants described the working method he used within **pKp** and within his interventions as follows:

I forced myself to always pass on what the person in front of me said, as material also because what I already thought changed every time and that I could motivate that by coming back to that previous encounter. My previous encounters always changed what I thought a little bit and so that material built up, which I found very interesting. (Unpublished letter of participant)

Examples of research lines were for instance the many houses and villas that are fenced off and protected by cameras. It made one reflect on forms of precarity among the well-to-do middle class in our socio-economic reality. Conversations with the small group of Protestants that still existed in the community of the hamlet of Korsele in the Flemish Ardennes led to the historical link with the 'bosquillons' – a group of Protestants who resisted the Spanish occupiers from the forests in the 16th century. It raised the question of what it means today to 'teach the people to read what is written', as well as what 'Protest-ant' could mean in connection with bringing dissonant voices into the debate. Another question that arose, concerned **pKp**'s presence at an art biennial that historically focused on the Flemish landscape in relation to the major issues facing many contemporary farmers today. From an interest in the meaning of the commons, **pKp** focused on public agricultural lands. Also, in relation to the biennial, participating artists became aware of invisible support structures and the significance of parents within the art scene. What is the significance of the place where someone comes from and grows up, and what influence does this have on the art world? In addition, very personal issues gave rise to research-based interventions.

The aim of the research lines was to create conditions in which facts do not stand alone, but are brought into relation with their capacity to act; where the shells in which the facts are housed are revealed and can begin to look different; can take on a different connotation and move in different directions, beyond their limits, so that a new set of actors can emerge.



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An example is the writing workshop on experiences of loss of property to which both people from the village and external 'experts in loss of property' were invited, and which resulted in a reading performance in a nearby garden. The invited writers formed dissenting voices within the wealthy environment of Korsele. These people were invited to engage in the project because of difficult personal experiences related to property (and thus specific forms of precarity) and their writing brought subaltern knowledge or stories into the village. The voice, for example, of Malik, a Syrian man who now lives in Belgium, who testified about loss and nostalgia for the family management of common property. Or the voice of Zehra, a young Kurdish woman who left behind the patriarchal structures within her motherland, who related not owning property to her freedom as a woman. Nevertheless, it was not the intention to problematize or solve distressing living conditions or the global economic logics that cause land loss. The stories did not judge or make comparisons between the rich and the poor from the point of view of an ideal distribution of property, but invited those who listened to follow, to point their attention to what is there to be noticed along the story as it unfolded. **pKp** created an opportunity to become attentive for sensitive forces of people. The emphasis placed on the voice, the silence and the special evening atmosphere in the garden of one of the landowners, corresponded with an exposure to the slowness, pauses, hesitations and repetitions with which the narrators articulate and reflect on their own (hi)story. This emphasis created a focus of attention to other kinds of rhythms and patterns than those induced through modern frameworks of efficiency, growth and expansion. In a way, the performance ensured that a story of difficulty and vulnerability acquired a potential of sharable sensory richness. The performance caused a poetic distance between the sayable and the thinkable. A specific aesthetic scene was created that made automatic forces in speaking, looking and listening tangible. You could say that the aesthetic perfor-

mance created a condition that helped to free words, remarks and statements from their weight as information carriers, and helped to translate them into expressions that are actually said, thought, experienced and felt by somebody, which can give them a different power, and can create an urgency (Masschelein, 2021, pp. 106-107).

It could be argued that the 'reading' performance transformed difficult situations, even of suffering, into a cause for collective and sensory thinking (cf. Stengers, 2015). Through the reading out loud of the self-written story in an aesthetic context, the scene evoked a kind of symbolic table: something was placed on the table – loss of property. Organizing this performance in a luxurious garden re-creates and supports sensitivity for interweaving entities. It transformed the 'whom's (whose) property?' question into the questions: 'who wants property?' and 'how much property do we need?'. And also 'why do we want property?' and 'how, where and when?'. The reading performance in this sense embodied the distance needed to achieve 'objectification'. Not in the sense of becoming an object of knowledge and to address a particular problem, but in the sense of enabling 'to object' to obvious ways of speaking about something, of looking at something and of understanding it (cf. Masschelein, 2021). Here, the research does not distance itself from the matter at hand, but expresses itself further through the creation of 'sensitive' conditions in which surprising 'insights' can emerge. Or, as Latour writes, a 'controversial matter' can take place.

In this sense, **pKp** created a framework in which social or political challenges are not addressed, nor negated. The framework functioned as an occasion for something to happen or not. What **pKp** evoked is an occasion for sensory situated thinking. Which means that it is not in the first place about making a public aware of particular facts and problems that are happening in the world, but about trying to design a form (or a situation) that articulates and rests on capacities and thoughts that spring from engagements with audiences and with the environment itself and which are related to listening, looking and conversations.

Thinking and acting *with*

Whereas competition, independence and autonomous self-realisation often remain dominant in traditional art spaces, **pKp** put mutual dependency first, to bring about a different way of dealing with precarity, as the condition of our late-capitalist world. The formation of a collective played an important role in this. However, the formation of a collective should not be understood in a way that within the formation of **pKp**, there was one common voice. The initiator of the collective proposed a condition from which to work, but did not determine the tasks and practices to be carried out.

A milieu was created, from which the collective could take shape, but the direction in which it developed was not determined and defined beforehand. The only request was related to the assumption that the question of precarity and mutual dependency got the power to gather and to intervene.

Understanding the collective in this way, as a milieu of interwoven relations and movements, without a center around that organized the collective, was a way to put at stake the importance of the middle as a point of orientation. The collective lacked indeed any orientation and formed itself as a collection of singularities. Contrary to the idea that a collective arises out of present relations that form a network, the formation of the collective in **pKp** made the participants attentive to the question of how these relations are, but also how they could be made. This way, the formation of the collective itself underscored the constructed nature of relations in collective settings. Accordingly, various questions arose about the collectivity of the collective. What does speaking in, from and as a collective, mean? Which movements and materials bring the collective into being?

The invited participants agreed to build the camp, and to run it during the biennial. Consequently, the **pKp** participants were never purely authors in the sense that they were not only present in the capacity that they professionally ascribed to themselves, as educators, artists, art critics or even audiences. The participants constantly took on different, changing roles. Besides daily tasks, such as cooking, doing the dishes, maintaining the living space and keeping things dry when it rains, they also carried out administrative work, and supportive tasks for interventions and lines of research settled up by other participants. They took on positions as curator, organizer, author, assistant, visitor, cook and cleaner. The inclusion of these increasingly different roles ensured that a dualistic categorization of supportive and creative work faded, and a multi-layered idea of authorship of an artwork emerged. Which made the question arise: Who does the authorship of an intervention belong to? This led to an Open Letter⁷ in which this issue was put down. The letter united different movements, but did not result in clarity or a general agreement on authorship. More than that, the letter functioned as a point of passage that made present future possibilities to think about what it means to be a collective in a society that is built upon a permanent need to profile oneself as an investable product.

However, it is important to give a more positive rendering of what it means to think about the collective in relation to individual desires. Tim Ingold (2018) writes that a fluent dance has a rhythmic quality. But for rhythm to be there, movement must be felt. To form a collective, then, means that the participants must have a

⁷ Scroll down to <https://parainstituutvoorkunstenprecariteit.blogspot.com>.

feel for what the other is doing. This could refer to a kind of request to continually correct each other in response to an ongoing perceptual monitoring of the task as it unfolds. A request that addresses the participants to skillfully attune individual rhythmic gestures to the multiple rhythms of the environment. Any task, intervention or unease is then to be understood as a movement that takes place within a network of movements, within which the existence needs to be redirected in function of an ideal to be reached. As we indicated above, within **pKp** the emphasis did not lie on the efficiency to realize predetermined motions, but on the sensibility that enabled the participants to respond to environmental perturbations that would throw the performance 'off - course' (cf. Ingold, 2021, p. 157). In this sense, working together and taking up various positions meant that individual initiatives did not disappear. Their parts remained differentiable within the whole, but they shouldn't merge into one homogeneous whole of vitality. The collective work in **pKp** did not have to aim to evoke a collective 'project'. This, however, does not mean that **pKp** was constituted by a medley of individual initiatives: utterly heterogeneous. The work in **pKp** can better be described as polyphonic. Every voice or every instrument carried along its own melody line. Just like in music, the relation between parts and whole in **pKp** was not to be summative - neither additive nor multiplicative - but as Ingold (2021) writes, was to be 'contrapuntal' (p. 264). Therefore, the formation of **pKp** as a collective neither meant giving a voice to all potential participants, but meant participating in or connecting to a field of forces that make up our present. It meant that the formation of the collective complicated existing positions and relations. It meant that the scenography that is established through the formation of **pKp**, added to the political dynamics and operations, the force of profanation and the creation of a distance towards the operations and forces that make our present. It meant suspending existing forces, opening a space where relations, and positions itself are felt. Which is not to say that the work and actions that constituted **pKp** in the Biennale in Zwalm made the participants forget existing positions, but rather that their effect was disrupted and disengaged so that new ways of seeing, understanding and relating needed to be explored and tried out.

At this point, a second understanding of the formation of the collective comes in. In the way that the notion of the collective not only denoted the environment that one attended to, and that afforded the participants to perceive and act. It also opened the desire to describe and answer questions of interdependence. On what does the artist depend to be able to continue living? On which other living beings and mechanisms does the artist (and consequently the creation of art) depend? This led some participants to a study of the elders on which the artist depends and

resulted in a shift of the gaze from the question 'in which world do we live?' to 'who and what do we live from?' (cf. Latour, 2021, p. 82). An excerpt from the logbook of one of the participants (you could say students) phrased it as follows.

On the field where we held our camp, 80 signs were spread, each with a different statement by one of the parents we interviewed. A visual report with various, sometimes contradictory statements concerning experiences, feelings and opinions related to the relationship between parent and artist. Amidst the signs, a moderated public conversation takes place with some of them. In front of the microphone, parents take the floor, they speak, gesticulate, use body language that reinforces their discourse. Before and after the debate, they drink a glass and engage in conversation with each other. What resonates here are not the contents and meanings that usually circulate during public events or exhibitions in regular art environments. They do not speak from a position favorable to the constantly evolving art discourse. Contemporary art is not interested, for example, in the concerned testimonies about the precarious economic situation of their children. These are dismissed as all too profane concerns of those who do not sufficiently understand the almost religious/universal importance of art and therefore do not share the idea of progress that gives art its right to exist. It is not the experts who define what is part of art here, but a situation has been created that makes the arguments of the parents, based on experiences and feelings, audible and does not dismiss them as understandable but unimportant voices in the margins. In this way, questions are raised about what and who constitutes and participates in art. At the same time, the parents indicate that they recognize certain concerns, which creates a certain sense of commoning. Something is celebrated here. (Unpublished letter of participant).



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By bringing up the dependencies in a visual report, without avoiding controversies or tensions, the issue itself caused a sensibility, and evoked the question what the art space could signify when it conceals underlying dependencies. The action gave the parents of the artists a sense of belonging to the art scene that was set up and that opened the possibility of engaging in this collective formation. However, not in the sense of becoming part of the existing artistic scene, but in partaking in a specific shared experience of dis-engagement. A dis-engagement that opened the door to the recognition of the competence of everything and everyone to speak, act and think instead of the formation of a unity that speaks in name of all the others (Rancière, 2007, pp. 90-91). In other words, in **pKp** the formation of the collective refers not only to the community of artists who are considered part of the art scene, but also to those who are not considered part of it.

Unlearning practices as giving agency to the *possible*

Although **pKp** does not describe itself from the outset as an educational practice, but rather as a tool with an educational bias, it provides interesting elements to think in another way about the educational turn in the arts, but also to conceive learning at school. In this sense, **pKp** provides a framework that enables us to reconsider the educational turn in the arts not so much as a critique against the art institute, but as an affirmation of its potential to shed light on evident roles and positions, by moving them to another space than the one in which they operate. This connects with the origin of the modern museum, but also with the origin of the school as it is described by Masschelein and Simons in their famous book *The Apology of the School* (2013).

Speaking about the reconsideration of the art space as a world-disclosing and emancipatory practice, then, does not mean establishing a space of 'free' learning. A space that stands in contrast to dominant performative forms of learning, and from which patriarchal and imperialist colonializing canons are deconstructively reinterpreted. We do not want to bring **pKp** in, in order to defend the educational dimension of the art space as that dimension that opens up a form of free thinking and acting. To reconsider the art scene as a space of free thinking and acting would, after all, be to ignore the practice of putting something on the table. The educational dimension of **pKp** ties rather in with a practical tool that evokes experiences of a world-in-formation: i.e. 'a world in which things appear not as bounded objects but as confluences of materials that have momentarily melded into recognizable forms' (Ingold, 2018, p. 159). This way, with an analysis of **pKp** as educational practice, we

did not only try to identify the art space and education as interrelated institutions, but as interrelated institutions that create the conditions in which objects are transformed into matter, and experts into participants. Yet, this does not mean that with **pKp** we want to identify the art space as neutral. **pKp** does attempt to address hierarchies and exclusivity within society. It starts from a desire to put something on the table. However, not to gain insight into subjugation processes. Rather, it is about awakening capacities for thoughts and actions of which one had no inkling. In fact, the tactics and forms created conditions that break the agreement between the expectations of society and the capacities of individuals (cf. Rancière, 2006). Breaking that agreement – which always implies the inability to conquer another space and time – is, in other words, how **pKp** tried to reformulate the relation between art, education and politics in terms of giving agency to the *possible*. It is how it brought about an experimental learning in the art space, or an (un)learning that is not based on a predetermined image of dispositions or outcomes, but that arises in a sensory interaction with others and with the world. It induces an inoperative learning (cf. Lewis, 2018) that, rather than developing to a particular point, can be read as a collective experience that has no predefined end point.

In this sense, the **pKp** can be understood as a framework that enables us to reconsider education and the educational turn in the arts as being a turn towards a time and space where something can come into being, where something new can arise, or something new can happen that we had not yet thought of, or imagined. This newness does not come from individual minds, although this is where it lands, but comes about in and through the arranged gathering itself, and is situated first and foremost in the gathering, and not in the individual. It is a middle that is created, in which a variety of thoughts, doubts and questions arise in relation to current social or other challenges. Hence, with an analysis of **pKp** we did not want to defend the educational turn in the arts for the political effect it might generate, but for its aesthetic form and arrangement of bringing together old and young people, bodies and souls, humans and non-humans around particular subject matters. This way, **pKp** enables us to reconsider the relation between education, arts and politics, and 'self-organised gatherings of unlearning practices' as a collective sensory adventure in which something is given the power to make a public thinking, to make a claim and to reclaim (Masschelein, 2021). These are conditions that contribute to the design of new configurations of the visible, sayable and imaginable and thus of a new landscape of the perhaps.

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