

University of Pécs
Doctoral School of the Faculty of Music and Visual Arts

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ART - PLACE

Interaction between artwork and environment

Theses of DLA dissertation

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The topic of the doctoral dissertation

The artist, knowingly or unknowingly always works according to a system of correlations, which might be physical, that is to say built, or connected to the natural and social environment.

The environment in its entirety will have a decisive effect on the creation of the artwork, just as the act of creating the artwork will effect its environment.

The artwork might be influenced by its birthplace, the space where it will be exhibited in the future and the circumstances of its creation. Artworks are mostly born and publicized in built environments. Every element of our built environment naturally conforms to human proportions, meets and practically accomodates human needs, thus it bears anthropomorphic traits. The artwork and the space are two separate passive physical entities. The thing that creates the artwork, brings it to life and activates the space is the human component. The practice of creating art is diverse and complicated, hence it usually calls for particular spatial requirements. Nowadays, however, the everyday reality of the artist means that the artist works where he is able to. This is why - in most cases – the space where art is created cannot adjust completely to the needs of the task at hand. The reasons for this are to be found in the social position of the artist, his/her financial status and the lack of several other conditions. In case of most artists this can lead to a so called „deficit management“. The work itself and the artwork will inherently adapt to the space where it is being made.

Therefore I'm starting off from the following statements:

1. The artwork – beyond the artistic intent – is influenced by the environments physical factors.
2. The artwork is a sensible, context-dependent medium, which cannot be uprooted from the influence of time and space. As soon as it is removed from the context of its birthplace, we must accept it as constantly changing.
3. For as much as we accept the influence of the environment on the artwork as a fact, the opposite becomes a matter worth studying as well. Namely, creation involves a certain amount of destruction. The study of the ratio between value creation and the inherent destruction is the ethical responsibility of the artist.

The structure of the thesis

My doctoral thesis is guided by the questions that arose during my artistic career. I am examining these questions through the perspective of my own experience. While creating art, several practical problems concerning the artwork's creation and exhibition may arise.

However, I am not trying to present the studio or the practices involved – it would be impossible anyway – in their entirety. My assertion is precisely that the problems that I am discussing concern every artist in a unique way, and these result in unique solutions. In my doctoral dissertation I define each and every space where art is being created as a studio, may it be a permanent, temporary or completely ad hoc, may it be a built space, located in a natural environment, private or communal. In this regard any space can be considered a studio. The artworks presented in the dissertation do not follow a chronological order, however they do relate to the subject in the relevant chapters of the research. First I study the historical development, purpose, function, characters involved, inner-workings of art studios, researching the way in which they influence the artwork itself. Because the traditional studio is more than just the „workplace” of the artist, where paintings and sculptures are created, it might as well be a „hermit's cave”, or a representative space where meetings are held and where artistic life is coordinated from.

In my research I follow the evolution of the studio starting from the renaissance revolution – during which the artist distinguishes him/herself from the artisanal professions, thus the workshop becomes a studio – right up to the opportunities that serve as contemporary artists studios. I enumerate the determining studio options of contemporary artists, while taking into consideration their working mechanism. I put emphasis on Strobl Alajos's „epreskerti” studio, whose peculiarity lies in the fact that for more than a hundred years it encompassed the artistic views of several generations, I myself conducted my artistic studies in this space. Through iconic examples I present the studios of different eras as the theme of the artist and as a means of self-expression. Then I analyse the relationship between the space and the artwork, using the

approach that the influence of the artwork and the space on one another happens strictly through human perception and/or action. Therefore I chose to study sensation and perception from a physiological, psychological and social point of view. Although in my dissertation I define every space where art is created as a studio, in this chapter I focus on spaces built by humans. I examine these spaces in accordance with their effect of on the artistic thought, which is subjective, dependent on the culture and the individual. Next I discuss the active space from the rational and practical point of view of the work being done. The next chapter starts from the fact that the place of the artwork's creation may – indirectly – influence the artwork. This raises the question that if the artwork is moved from this place to a place of exhibition, what kind of connotational or perceptual changes will it go through. The artwork can be understood best within the context of its birthplace, the studio. The circumstances of its creation seem indispensable to get a more complex picture of the artist's persona, way of thinking and correlations between his/her works. Artists and museums alike recognised the importance of this and the different modalities of presenting the studio became common practice.

With reference to the artwork's connection to space and location it is necessary to review the artwork's concept and historical changes. Having this historical knowledge, I study how a contemporary artist thinks and what strategies are used in order for the artistic purpose to remain unscathed. The fifth chapter focuses on the artist's environmental awareness. The message of the environmentally conscious works of art targets the recipient and compels the viewer to self-reflect. Nevertheless, my interest focuses on the artistic attitude, which self-reflects on its own artistic practice from the perspective of its impact on the environment. I examine the topic in accordance with a framework of viewpoints that were formed during the course of my empiric research, yet I do tangentially mention the artistic mindsets which do not fit in, but nevertheless may be important from the perspective of the interaction between the artwork and the environment. The material, as the indispensable medium of the artwork is analyzed according to the following criteria: its social and environmental effects; the ethical concerns regarding the use of a living being as an inanimate object, the objectification of living beings, the ephemeral nature of the artwork and the acceptance of its physical transformation. Through my artistic practice and

the problems that arose along the way, I present the way by which I recognised the wider effects of my own solutions.

To end the dissertation I present my masterwork, through which I summarize the theses of my dissertation. The backbone of my concept, besides its conformation with the exhibition's spatial and curatorial context is defined by the principle of recycling the artwork, an economically sustainable artistic practice and avoiding negative environmental outcomes. I interpret my work rather as a method than an object. I regard it as an installation which is part of a process, an artistic attitude, a creative strategy. The title alludes to this as well: *Part time job*. The "job" refers to an action, an artistic gesture, through which I react to the given situation. I do not think of my creative work as someone who creates a work of art with the hope of it being everlasting, but rather as work-process, through which I assemble and disassemble so that I can assemble again.

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