'Worlding’: Scaling Collaborations of Artistic Research and Transdisciplinary Methodologies

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Abstract
Multidisciplinary and artistic research teams collaborated in four case studies with a strong motivation to share and actively develop new approaches to knowledge, learning, and research, essentially creating different fundaments for worlding in the transvaluation terminology. It seems that such collaborations, where art methodologies play a significant role, have some luck not to fit the procedures of current day research evaluation. This paper attempts to show how scaling and comparing the uses of space, the time frame and the dynamics of energy, as interacting elements of the collaboration structure can create a model which reveals specific qualities.

The format for this model comes from one of the art based collaborations, the on-going project Size Matters. On the Scale and Size of Models at the Zürich University of the Arts’ Transdisciplinary Laboratory led by the artist Prof. Florian Dombois. It looks at this project as well as the first period of the ETH Zürich’s research institute Collegium Helveticum 1997-2004, the development of a unit for artistic research 2007-2012 by a group of mainly artists at Lucerne School of Art and Design, and the interdisciplinary project Future Laboratory CreaLab led by Prof. Patricia Wolf at Lucerne University of Applied Sciences and Arts.

The proposal shows that practice based arts and transdisciplinary methodologies and particularly their combination often lead to an opening of concepts and situations. Though arts do not alone change or dominate these contexts, they support structures that develop and function well outside organisational conventions and can avoid a laming institutional clutch.

Larger visibility of the key factors around the work of collaborations engaging in such activities would support their development with more authority.

Instead of attempting to establish evaluation processes that encourage rationalization and reproduction one should look for factors that create solid foundations for research and how these interact. The model developed here moves attention from post research efficiency or impact to an understanding of how certain variables shape settings and encourage intrinsic motivation. A common interest in finding the right scale or balance of these variables would be a basis from which to understand the potential and openly negotiate and invent future research environments.

Key References

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