‘Your proposal does not fit in our editorial line’

Constructing A Dissident Researcher

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Abstract

We need to dissent. By the look of things, the world is in a status that politics of dissensus is the sine qua non for change. However consensus as a mode of government is an institutionalised gesture of being “democratic” in the so-called civilized world. Consensus in Ranciere’s word is to agree on ‘one unique reality’ despite acknowledging the differences of values and aspirations among people. That ‘unique reality’ evidently becomes the measure of judgment, values, actions, interventions and construction of the politics of exclusion and inclusion in different contexts. Here universities and institutions of knowledge production are not exceptions, but paradoxically in serious crisis; where the norms should be contested they have succumbed to the common pitfall of conformism; to academic consensus or ‘professionalism’ in Edward Said’s term. Within this discussion, institutions of art and architecture research and education are important to look at, through the lens of politics of dissensus. After all, art should dissent; it should ‘introduce dissensus by hollowing out’ that ‘unique reality’.

In this article I discuss the possibility and necessity of dissident researcher in academia. Investigating where a dissident stands in the debate of institutional critique, I argue for strategies of interruption as methods of engaging with institution through artistic approaches. I intentionally use artistic research and dissident research interchangeably to claim dissidence as the performative core of artistic research. Art as a dissensual activity turns artistic research to a dissenting machine that can...
question *academic consensus* instead of conforming its established structure.

The journey in this paper, hence, goes around the question of *dissenting*; taking artistic practice or artistic research not as a walking stick but as an axe to get us through uncompromising walls of institutions. It’s a cutting through the problems of eradication of politics of *disent* in the mistaken belief of institutional *loyalty*; and thereby investigating the possibilities of *dissensus* as a methodology in *artistic research*.

In order to construct a dissident researcher, this journey goes through three short architectural narrations of three places: a prison (as discipline), a school of architecture (as artistic research) and a library (as dominant discourse). These three narrations are combined with three formulae: *amateur, fiction, misperformance or disloyalty*; each enacts certain characteristics of dissidence that feeds to an ongoing micro-project explained in the article. The micro-project as an apparatus of event-arte-fact-discourse-dialogue tests the idea of *not fitting to* and thereby puts the evaluation questions on the table. When it comes to dissident research we should also reconsider evaluation strategies and set them up on the basis of politics of dissidence.

**Keywords:** dissident, amateur, misperformance, interrupting architecture, artistic research, fiction

**Key references**