

'To have one's cake and eat it too'

16 September – 23 October 2012

Kunsthuis SYB

Evaluation participants

Paula Salas:

'We had serious and deep conversations not only about what it means to carry out artistic research, but what it means to be an artist within the contexts in which we move. For the first time in a long time of lonely work (writing the thesis for Artistic Research) I shared my doubts and ideas with others, reassessing them and gaining new perspectives. SYB was essential in this process, as it provided the motivation to start these conversations and also the physical space (a space that invites us to calm down, reflect and talk)

It was inspiring to see how all the participants engaged with the project and the space in a different way. It's always liberating for me to see that other people are confronted with the same questions as I am, and find their answers in totally different ways, especially in practical ways. For me, it is still a struggle to transform the abstract energy of 'philosophical' thinking into material realities that can be shared without verbal language, for example. I learned from projects such as Rosalie's and Weronika's that it is possible to combine conceptual and non-conceptual perception in one work'.

'Finally, in Beetsterzwaag you cannot avoid life, daily life I mean. The materiality, or one could say reality, of the house, the town, the forest, the weather is so heavy, so overriding that one has to confront it constantly. Personally that gave me a platform from which to think about what we do. The question of what do you do as an artist (researcher) becomes entwined with what do you do as a human being, and also as a member of a community'.

Pieter de Kok:

'The following quote from the book we used as a tool in our conversation piece at SYB is rather useful, I think, regarding the obligation to evaluate or judge our residency and symposium. On the the notion of quality and judgement Claire Bishop really writes some very interesting lines on page 7 of "Artificial Hells".

"In the field of participatory art, quality is often a contested word: rejected by many politicised artists and curators as serving the interest of the market and powerful elites, 'quality' has been further marred by its association with connoisseurial art history.....This book is predicated on the assumption that value judgements are necessary, not as a means to reinforce elite culture and police the boundaries of art and non-art."

I do agree with Claire Bishop, that it is necessary to judge. For me, this residency was about meeting and exchanging experiences with fellow artists. It was a stimulating experience.

The Master Artistic Research forced me to comply with academic standards in the many "regular" courses I followed to acquire the obligatory credits. However, it is like learning a foreign language, you will almost never become a native speaker. I'll never become a "native" academic writer. Is this positive? It is contextual of course. If you are interested in understanding the judgements of art critics, art historians and curators, you definitely need this academic training. It does not provide tutorship for artists in the beginning of their career. Something that one would perhaps expect from a master. This master more or less gives you the opportunity to find out if pursuing a Phd is something for you. But then it is of course a research master.

Weronika Zielinska:

I'm not sure if I've learned anything during my residency at SYB, which at the same time, I would not see as a disadvantage of the entire idea. Rather, I guess the time spent there offered me a space where I could realise some things I have been thinking about already, but was keeping in the back of my head. As Paula said, SYB's location is very specific and one cannot avoid that. I guess you just have to let it flow, and be as it is. And this puts me back on the track of AR/Art, I believe it is the same situation, it is only a matter of one being conscious of that.

Considering the AR programme, I guess I'm still very puzzled about the approach that Jeroen Boomgaard proposes, which is, it is the students who have to determine what AR exactly entails. I believe a programme within a university structure cannot be as open as this, and it could be helpful to have some subjects/problems/concerns determining it. Lucy Cotter mentioned that as of this year they (KABK) started working with MAR students regarding certain issues. I think that's a helpful solution.

Rosalie Ravensteijn:

'The residency period I experienced as great, as I was away from my own environment and obligations and was able to focus on my process and stay at SYB. The luxury of having the different spaces: making, eating / cooking and sleeping within reach made me use the time very efficiently, and made it possible to be very focused and productive. For this stay I gave myself an assignment to practice a 'micro' process of an artistic (research) practice and to document this. This way I reflected on the way I worked before and I wanted to connect situations to questions I expected at the symposium and 'to demonstrate' examples. This way I wanted to link the concrete to the abstract and vice versa'.

'I appreciated the artistic contributions as input for the symposium. The presentation of Esmé Valk was very inspiring and enlightening as an example for an artistic (research) practice. As she said so herself, she was very curious about how her work would be seen from the perspective of artistic research. The last part of the discussion in her presentation was about the educational / didactical aspect of her work: 'The installation could not be shown without the video'.

'In regard to artistic research practice I found the above mentioned statement very interesting to continue thinking about in relation to my work and to elaborate on it.

If and or how to present / integrate this educational / didactical aspect in the work?

I talked to a few people during the symposium and afterwards who were all very keen on continuing the discussion at another point in time. I think this day has been very fruitful in generating a motivated group of people that want to 'think together' and reflect and think forward about artistic (research) practices.

I am very happy the master Artistic Research has given me the tools to handle the discursive climate of the university and the arts and to rethink my artistic practice from this perspective. As Artistic Research is still 'young' (and also not at all at the same time) I think it is very important to discuss our practices as practitioners, whether it is Artists' Research or Artistic Research'.

Iva Supic Jankovic (Zolder Museum):

'Being invited for an artistic research symposium at the Kunsthuis SYB, I was intrigued and interested in what ways do other artists researchers connect to the idea of artistic research. Personally, I found the experience fruitful, not because of the subject but because of coming together in art and life. Artistic research is relevant for individual artistic practices and each artist differs in his/her definition, approach and usage of research. This is the reason why I don't find it problematic that we did not have any conclusions; why insist of ending the conversation? The dialog and sharing served the purpose of artistic research in a more subtle way than any conclusion might have given. I feel it is not necessary to meet again in the same context in order to conclude or finish our dialogs from the past. It

is, however, very important we met especially in connecting between MAR and UVA alumni and students in a more non-institutional way, to build firmer platform of researchers doing the work on one common ground. In that sense, it would be good to continue the dialog enriched with new topics, new artists and new ideas.

As far as my education at MAR goes, I have to say, in all my honesty, that looking back on my years spent on MAR, I am left with nothing but deep love and gratitude for the support and knowledge my teachers and my colleges provided me with. Make no mistake; I was, at times of my study, unsatisfied with the program, but finishing the MAR, I see the bigger picture and overall, I have no complaints. MAR is very much in the making, and I am happy I got to be part of its making in such early stage.'