

Periskop Special Issue # 33: Fear of Knowledge? The studio and the study

Periskop – Forum for Art Historical Debate

Deadline: Dec 15, 2023

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Call for papers for Periskop Special Issue # 33: "Fear of Knowledge? The studio and the study".

Periskop – Forum for Art Historical Debate was founded in 1993. It is based at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen. Periskop is a peer-reviewed journal.

This special issue is edited by Louis-Antoine Mege (Sorbonne University/DFK Paris), Lejla Mrgan (University of Copenhagen), Anthi-Danaé Spathoni (Athens School of Fine Arts) and Paula Stoica (University of Basel/University of Kassel).

In his 1960 contribution to BBC Radio's prestigious Reith Lectures, art historian Edgar Wind provocatively proposed that knowledge impedes the artist's imagination. Confirmation of this idea can be found in Romanticism's ideal of the artist as an intuitive genius unmarked by the "touch of cold philosophy", as John Keats put it in his poem "Lamia" (1820). The Romanticist position broke with earlier conceptions of the artist as *doctus artifex* (Białostocki 1984)—one who transcended mere craftsmanship through intellect, erudition and knowledge of tradition—fostered by the Enlightenment program of encyclopedism and "complete knowledge" (Rudy 2014). At the same time, the birth of aesthetics challenged the idea of knowledge as the domain of the mind alone, even as this period also witnessed the professionalization and institutionalization of roles that divided knowledge into specialized fields, with the artist on the one hand and historians, critics, museum directors, and librarians, on the other.

Twentieth-century art paved the way for a reevaluation of the artist as a knowledge producer investigating the "absolute separation of mental or intellectual work from manual work" (Burn 1981). More recently, according to Tom Holert (2020), "politics and economies of knowledge" have become "urgent topics" for artistic practices in a globalizing world. A growing number of contemporary artists are using their practices to question the ways that knowledge is produced, distributed, and used, calling attention to infrastructural, economic, material, hierarchical, inequitable or postcolonial dimensions of knowledge. In a sense, these developments echo Lippard and Chandler's characterization of Conceptual art (1968): "the studio is again becoming a study", with artistic practices voluntarily rejecting craft in favor of a desk-based situation of research and theory.

Across these moments, some central questions arise: In what forms does the "fear of knowledge" still live on? Is there still a perceived divide between the desk-based disciplines of research and theory on the one hand and creative, studio-based practice on the other? Following developments

in the history of knowledge, we define “knowledge” in broad terms, as an expansive concept that is not only based in language (written and oral), but also travels in material and embodied forms. The concept of knowledge is thus not bound to writing alone; books represent only one type of knowledge carrier out of many (Sarasin 2011; Damm, Thimann and Zittel 2013; Lässig 2016). From this perspective, knowledge is not confined to individuals, but exists in knowledge collectives, in which it circulates itinerantly between people and groups—and in the process, changes. (Simonsen and Skouvig 2019).

We are therefore interested in exploring and discussing different notions of knowledge that also explicitly challenge the idea of objective, atemporal, immaterial knowledge which is today commonly associated with capitalism, colonialism, militarism and the white male hegemonic position. The concept of situated and thus partial (Haraway 1988), and finite knowledge and its specific historical dimension (Foucault, 1966, 1969) as well as the attempt at decolonialization of knowledge (Mignolo, 2008) open up new fields of inquiry.

Inspired by these propositions, for this special issue we invite proposals for essays that reconsider the relationship between art and knowledge. This issue of *Periskop* thus hopes to widen our understanding of artistic practices and education, and to open inquiry into broader questions regarding relationships between the history of knowledge and artistic practice—in the past and in the present.

This call invites contributions from all periods of art history on the following or related subjects:

- Artists’ book collections and libraries (material, digital and immaterial) as sources and vehicles of knowledge.
- Artists’ use of books: Strategies of quoting, reading, transcribing, artistic appropriation, transformation, dissemination, etc.
- Artists’ relationship to tradition as a source of knowledge.
- The artist’s desk or study as concept, object and place.
- Art as a form of knowledge production, artistic research, artists as researchers or archivists.
- Relation of artistic practices to self-knowledge (biographical, self-constituting, psychological, therapeutical) and knowledge inscribed in the artist’s body (internalized practical knowledge).
- Artistic attempts at decolonizing knowledge, epistemic disobedience.
- Connections between thinking, doing, and knowledge.
- Alternative forms of knowledge (aesthetic, material, situated, collective, embodied, etc.).
- History of knowledge, infrastructures, circulation of and accessibility to knowledge, itinerant knowledge, knowledge collectives and collective knowledge.

Submission:

Periskop invites scholars, writers, and artists to submit proposals for a variety of formats, including peer-reviewed articles (5,200 words), shorter essays, meditations, poems, short fiction, works of visual art. Contributions in English are preferred. Please send a proposal (300 words max) and a short bio in English to lejlamrgan@gmail.com no later than December 15th 2023. Notifications of acceptance can be given by the end of January 2024. The deadline for submission of final contributions will be June 30th 2024.

Literature and further readings:

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Code, Lorraine. *What can she know?: Feminist Theory and Construction of Knowledge*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

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Levaillant, Françoise, Gamboni, Dario, and Bouiller, Jean-Roch, eds. *Les bibliothèques d'artistes : XXe-XXIe siècles*. Paris: Presses universitaires de Paris-Sorbonne, 2010.

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Mavridorakis, Valérie. "L'artiste conceptuel à son pupitre." In *L'art médiéval est-il contemporain ? Is Medieval Art Contemporary?*, edited by Charlotte Denoël, Larisa Dryansky, Erik Verhagen, and Isabelle Marchesin, Turnhout: Brepols, 2023.

Mignolo, Walter D. "Epistemic Disobedience and the Decolonial Option: A Manifesto." *Transmodernity* 1, no. 2 (2011): 44–66.

Rancière, Jacques. "Thinking between Disciplines: An Aesthetic of Knowledge." *Parrhesia* 1, no. 1 (2006): 1-12.

Reed-Tsocha, Katerina. "The Studio As Study: Reflections On The Establishment Of Doctoral Programmes In Fine Art." *Porto Arte: Porto Alegre Revista De Artes Visuais* 19, no. 33 (November 2012): 181-186.

Rudy, Seth. *Literature and Encyclopedism in Enlightenment Britain. The Pursuit of Complete Knowledge*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

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