

‘Art and Sustainability Education’

*A course on fostering attention through arts-based open-ended approaches
in an age of ecological emergency and radical uncertainty*

7-9 October 2021

Intensive three day course offered by Department of Art Education at the Estonian Academy of the Arts,
in Arbavere Centre, Lahemaa National Park. Credit points: 3 ECTS, 24h.



This course, which involves intensive engagement of participating students, is about fostering attention through arts-based open-ended approaches in an age of ecological emergency and radical uncertainty. If we are to respond adequately to the rapid and deep changes taking place in the world in our current times, we may need to envisage a very different type of (art) education. In more open-ended modalities of education, learners tend not to know on forehand what the outcomes and expected deliverables will be. Such approaches may cause a sense of unease because of a presumed lack of control, of missing framing guidelines and clear target objectives. It is exactly in this space of vulnerability that it is essential that learners feel that their educational experience is safely contained and held by teachers and facilitators. A way of achieving this may be through employing arts-based approaches. Through such practices of artful

exploring, a sense of excitement, of curiosity and wonder may be prompted. By what Tim Ingold calls “thinking through making”, a feeling of being fully present may come forth among participants as they are attentive in and to the unfolding open-ended process. In such occasions, a new field of potentiality may open up, in which things are possible which were considered simply unattainable previously.

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of the concept of sustainability, both in a narrow and more holistic sense, and how artists and designers are engaging with it;
- have a basic understanding of how the convergence of contemporary developments in ecology and art can fruitfully be thematized in education;
- articulate a critical stance on the application of open-ended processes in art education and how these can be linked to a dialogue on the ecological emergency.

Literature

Full texts:

- Stephan Nachmanovitch (2007). Bateson and the arts;
- Jan Masschelein (2010). E-ducing the gaze: the idea of a poor pedagogy;
- Tim Ingold (2013). The maze and the labyrinth: walking and the education of attention;

Excerpts from the books:

- Linda Weintraub (2012). *To life! Eco art in pursuit of a sustainable planet*;
- Juhani Pallasmaa (2010). *The thinking hand: Embodied and existential wisdom in architecture*

In the morning of Thursday Oct. 7th, we travel from Tallinn to Arbavere by chartered bus. On Saturday October 9th we travel back to Tallinn in the afternoon.

Assignment

The writing of a short essay (about 600 words), which should be expressive of your reflections on the learning experience of this week and how it was meaningful (or perhaps *not* meaningful) in light of your own studies and research interests. In your writing, refer also to some of the writings or videos of lectures we used.

For more information: Jan van Boeckel, polarstarcentre@yahoo.com, cell phone: +31630283115.