

very conception, a few items like the prestigious position of the master, or a power infested position towards knowledge. Naturally, this does not mean that we completely relinquish the transferal of knowledge, but rather, that the emphasis and direction are different.

It is interesting to note that Lacan, who does not specifically refer to the teaching of art, poses the collage as an example. The professor's work, states Lacan, is analogous to a collage, as a work that coherently arranges and connects pieces without leaving any gaps between them. However, claims Lacan, this is exactly the place wherein the professor should act like the art collage, since the fine collage does not necessarily compose its parts into a neat and fit whole, rather, the combination of its parts surfaces a lack, and it is exactly this lack which grants the collage its artistic value.

Yet, for this lack to emerge, as is the nature of lacks, we are forced to relinquish the imaginary, the false and comforting image of a complete and whole knowledge, in order to give a space to what it is we do not know and have no certainty about – but will always continue - in a movement that does not

end with the acquisition of a certain degree, to search for it.

As the ones who both guided and accompanied you over the last few years, we know that each and every one of you, in his or her own unique way, will continue to explore and delve into the knowledge and thought that you have been developing in your art making; and thus, you will never stop asking, searching, exploring and finding new learning and growing possibilities.

<sup>1</sup> Greenberg, Clement. 1939. "Avant Garde and Kitsch". Partisan Review.

<sup>2</sup> Kant, Immanuel. 1952 [1790]. The Critique of Judgment. Translated by J.C. Meredith. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 170.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 171.

<sup>5</sup> Lacan, Jacques. 1963. The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book X: Anxiety. Translated by Cormack Gallagher. Lesson of 13.3.63, p. 154.

and to re-conceptualize that beating and vibrating thing which it hopes to transfer – while always hoping that we will be able to witness the invention of the new art form that we have yet been able to think about or even imagine. What is the thing, then, that can be transferred within the context of art studies, at least in its successful shape, a teaching that does not limit itself to the acquisition of a certain degree, but rather, open a gate to non-ceasing curiosity and learning? It seems that Jacques Lacan, who taught both within and outside the confines of the university, and who delivered the essential principles of his thought through the seminars that he taught, is able to shed some light on this problem in his tenth seminar, wherein he outlines the difference between the figure of the professor and that of a teacher. Lacan asks what is the teacher's desire, or passion, and answers that the very presence of this question testifies to the existence of teaching. The presence of the professor can be found where this question is not posed, that is, he appears every time that the question of the teacher's desire is absent.<sup>5</sup> Naturally, the teacher and the professor are not personas, nor do they relate to any academic position. Rather,

they are functions that act within a complete structure which employs both knowledge and desire.

It seems that, according to Lacan, the teacher, unlike the professor, bears his desire, his passion to know, which is intrinsically tied to what he does not know. The professor, on the other hand, is the one who transfers complete, solid and coherent knowledge. The professor is the authority, the self-assured knowledge, which you can pass on like you pass an object with a substance. The second teaching model, which belongs to the teacher, works in a different manner. The teacher does not merely transmit knowledge, but rather evokes desire. The moment the teacher's desire vanishes, or the moment it is satisfied and is therefore no longer a desire, the teacher disappears and is replaced by the professor.

This model is similar to the way Lacan conceptualizes love. Loving, according to Lacan, is to give what it is that you do not have. We love with what is lacking, with the thing that is always lacking and which we yearn for. The teacher's task then, is to transfer something much more complex, to generate desire. This teaching model relinquishes, from its

to learning, since the essence of learning is close to imitation, and "We cannot learn to write in a true poetic vein, no matter how complete all the precepts of the poetic art may be".<sup>3</sup>

Kant's conclusion, then, is clear: genius generates the art work, and it is interlocked with originality, one that cannot be imitated or taught. Is it still possible, then, to teach art? And if it is possible, what is the thing outlined through this impossible teaching? We could perhaps observe past art works, or as Kant puts it, "The models of fine art are the only means of handing down this art to posterity".<sup>4</sup> However, despite these reservations, Kant goes on to claim that in the face of these difficulties, something of the school has to exist within any artwork, since although the genius-artist supplies the material for the art object, a scholarly intervention is required to both process and shape the object.

Even if Kant, the Professor from Königsberg, eventually supplies an exit opening for the question of the necessity and vitality of the art academy, it seems that Greenberg, who was greatly influenced by Kant and even drew from his works, and who

was not an academic in the full sense of the word, disagrees with him on that point, as is demonstrated by his distinct reservations from the modernist embodiment of the Kantian school in the various images of academicism. Indeed, the development of art throughout the last century seems to support Greenberg's claim, as it marks the academy as excess, or at least forces it to change its face, to adapt itself in order to create a space for art forms which, by their very nature, are constantly changing, unpredictable and indefinable.

Advanced art studies, pose, with an even greater urgency, the question of the necessity of academic art studies. Since, the artists that are entering these studies are familiar with, as Kant puts it, the "models of fine art", and have already grasped, within their studies so far, the essence of scholastic work.

Yet nevertheless, we continue to teach art, to guide, to show, to propose, to attempt and develop side by side with the students. It seems that every academic institution, which creates a locus for art studies in general and advanced art studies specifically, is required to constantly reinvent itself,

### The Collage's Lacking Object

The groundbreaking and alleviative qualities of a fine work of art seem completely unrelated to terms like academics and academicism, which poses a shady reputation within the discourse of art. The combination of the words "academic painting", for instance, has long become a derogatory term that marks a degenerated painting; one which lacks innovation, internal justification, freshness and inspiration. Thus, Clement Greenberg's innovative 1939 article "Avant Garde and Kitsch", positions academicism with the fixated and decayed art form. Whereas, on the opposite pole Greenberg positions the avant-garde – the revolutionary order that walks before the camp and brings

with it the unpredictable. This is the order that will later give birth to a new conceptualization of art<sup>1</sup>.

The rejection of academicism in its artistic context was articulated as early as Kant, who, towards the end of the eighteenth century, claimed that to a great extent, art, which cannot be based on regulations and rules, is impossible to transfer or teach. "Fine art" according to Kant: "must be clothed *with the aspect of nature*, although we recognize it to be art. But the way in which a product of art seems like nature, is by the presence of perfect *exactness* in the agreement with rules prescribing how alone the product can be what it is intended to be, but with an absence of *laboured effect*, (without academic form betraying itself,) i.e. without a trace appearing of the artist having always had the rule present to him and of its having fettered his mental powers".<sup>2</sup>

Kant tells us that the art work is true and precise – and yet, without our being able to recognize in it any obedience to carefully studied instructions, or a trace of a strenuous memorization of a certain theory. To produce such art work, true genius is required. This genius, according to Kant, is radically opposed

Haifa University has been, throughout the years, the only university in Israel wherein the Department of Art History exists side by side with the Department of Fine Arts, which educates and develops plastic artists in a variety of fields. Within the last couple of years, a Masters program - M.F.A. studies, has been added to the department. This program provides an exceptional studying framework wherein the student-artist is exposed to advanced art studies. Furthermore, this program also provides the best necessary conditions for the blossoming of the students' complex creative process, that is, the space for the development of the artistic workmanship combined with an excellent level of academic theoretical studies. The Dr. Reuven Hecht Arts Center offers the students the newest academic space, which we combined with the best teachers-artists in the Department of Fine Arts. We have constructed this unique framework in order to help the students develop as young artists with an original voice; and to provide them with the possibility of articulating and hence effecting their own particular artistic language.

I would like to congratulate the student-artists: Elad Armon, Lior Apel, Ruthy Ben-Jacob, Dvir Cohen-Kedar, Alona Friedberg, Tomer Katz, Revital Lessick, Hillah Nevo and Amir Pollak– the graduates of the M.F.A. program, who are presenting their works in the Re exhibition. This is a versatile exhibition wherein each of them presents his abilities with his own expressive tools ranging from painting, sculpture, installation to video. This exhibition is an impressive encompassing testimony of the students' academic and artistic accomplishments. May all of you experience success in the prolific and exciting path of your artistic activities.

Special thanks to the heads of the program – Dr. Efrat Biberman and Mr. Uri Kazenstein, who have dedicated their time and immense efforts to promote art studies in Haifa University. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Ms Sharon Poliakin, head of the Department of Fine Arts, who has supported and contributed to the success of the program.

Prof. Menachem Mor  
Dean of Humanities

**Re:**

M.F.A. Graduate Exhibition

Elad Armon, Lior Apel, Ruthy Ben-Jacob

Dvir Cohen-Kedar, Alona Friedberg, Tomer Katz

Revital Lessick, Hillah Nevo, Amir Pollak

17.6.2008 - 17.7.2008

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