

3.2 Artistic techniques as subject-matter

Learning to play an instrument or to sing in individual or some form of group instruction now represents the most common form of music mediation. All major cities in Switzerland have music schools or conservatories, but there are also a great many individuals who offer private instruction.

The situation with dance mediation is similar – one finds instructional programmes in private dance schools, where pupils can learn a wide variety of dance styles, spanning all epochs and genres, right up to the semi-professional level. This type of programme is distinctly more common than projects dealing with productions or individual works. The majority of programmes relate to social dance forms, i.e. to forms not primarily intended for the stage.

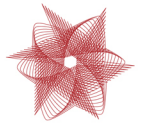
There are also private acting schools and schools whose programmes cover a range of disciplines. Some of them offer courses designed to prepare pupils for acceptance at state universities to continue their training.

In the domain of visual art there are fewer private instruction options available. There, most mediation programmes concentrate on instruction in analogue painting and drawing techniques, though it is not uncommon to see programmes providing instruction in digital and documentary media, such as film or photography, or interdisciplinary offerings. Less common are programmes designed to teach people techniques in the literary domain. In that field, the most common form of cultural mediation is offered by private individuals in the area of creative writing.

Outside of state-approved training centres, like the conservatories, cultural mediation in this area takes the form of a heterogeneous range of offerings on a free market. Accordingly, there is considerable variation in the level of professionalism of mediation providers. In many areas, independent instructors and/or schools have banded together in associations which engage in promotional activities as well as quality assurance.

In this context, the music schools are quite distinctive: existing throughout Switzerland, they represent an area of where the domains of cultural mediation and formal education overlap – both in the schools and in the universities.

Instruction in artistic techniques as provided by the majority of individuals and private schools does not cover the history of the arts or, most strikingly, the arts in the present day. One would hardly expect to find priority given to such subject matter at a dance class for instance, but its complete omission from the instruction of artistic techniques conceals a sort of tacit curriculum, in the sense of an implicitly communicated, often traditional understanding of art. The word tacit here is used to refer to instances when cultural mediation makes no reference to the fact that it is presenting only one of many possible perspectives, each of which



is associated with a set of choices regarding what is taught and what is not. In fact, one cannot learn to play an instrument or learn an acting or painting technique without at least incidentally acquiring some knowledge about music or the visual arts as a field of practice – however, in such cases this knowledge remains implicit and is not analyzed.