

## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Gunhild Hamer: How is Cultural Mediation Conveyed – the Example of the “Kultur macht Schule” Programme

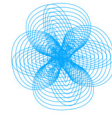
The programme → *Kultur macht Schule* [Culture is Making School] maintains and supports an extensive network of schools, artists and institutions. Interested schools can access a range of offerings emphasizing direct contact with artists and other people engaged with culture. Arts-related subject matter can be discussed and analyzed; content can also be collectively developed and modified by participants. This entails the use of formats which permit multiple and different participation levels: receptive (attending theatrical performances, concerts, literary events), interactive (tours in arts or history education) and participative (e.g. studio visits, workshops, project work with artists). The first time they sign up, teaching staff tend to choose receptive or interactive formats. If engagement with the artistic practice is taken to greater depth, schools tend to pick participative offerings or sign up for “combi-packages” (e.g. interactive tours in an art gallery or museum followed by a studio visit in an arts mediation studio or workshop on performance followed by attendance of a performance in the theatre).

→ *Kultur macht Schule* <http://www.kulturmachtschule.ch> [25.1.2013]

There has been increasing interest on the part of schools in partner projects with individual artists or cultural institutions. These medium- or long-term partnerships offer participants unusual opportunities for participation. Artist residencies in schools allow pupils to witness contemporary artistic creation and create opportunities for them to participate in the artistic process.

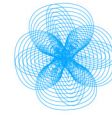
In this format, pupils develop their own opportunities to create and are encouraged to engage in their own artistic expression. They experiment with the effectiveness of their own actions, thoughts and feelings and develop new ways of seeing. Teachers benefit from art-making processes; they learn new methods and are inspired to channel art-related content into the daily school routine. Creative impulses emerging from these partnerships with artists can also be taken up by the school as a whole and contribute toward its evolution and the teaching in it.

The modules, which are specifically designated as introductory or more advanced, encourage teachers to get involved in the cultural mediation work. In this area too, engaging with artistic practices gives groups the opportunity to experience different levels of participation and learning concepts.



We plan to draw on the experiences gathered so far to improve the quality of the existing programmes, and in that context will seek to support participative approaches in particular.

*Gunhild Hamer is the Director of the Cultural Education Office (and the Programme "Kultur macht Schule") in the Department of Education, Culture and Sports of the Canton of Aargau and a director with professional and non-professional performers.*



## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Thomas Pfiffner: Musikkollegium Winterthur

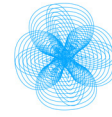
Designing interesting and varied concert programmes of high artistic quality is one thing. Getting people to engage with this musical diversity is another. The latter task has a great tradition at Musikkollegium Winterthur [Collegium Musicum Winterthur]. We reach out to a wide variety of audience segments on several different levels. This begins with free attendance of dress rehearsals for members of Musikkollegium Winterthur: the rehearsals let participants look into the “workroom” of an orchestra, enhancing people’s ear for and understanding of music.

Our youth projects are particularly important. Several times each year we hold events in our “Meet the Orchestra”, “Orchester hautnah” [orchestra close-up], “Orchesterlabor” [orchestra laboratory] and other programmes in which children and young people can have fun while being introduced to the world of classic music and its instruments. The highlight is the huge project “Winterthur schreibt eine Oper” [Winterthur writes an opera]. We have carried out that project twice now, both times with great success. A total of 750 children and young adults participated in it over a period of months, writing the libretto, composing the music, sketching the stage set and, finally, performing the opera themselves (supported in the orchestra pit by Musikkollegium Winterthur). This format, in which young people become creative themselves and begin to make music, is what you might call the ideal form of music mediation.

We also offer the “classic” formats of music mediation, i.e. pre-concert informational programmes, and sometimes post-format “Red Sofa” discussions, where audience members spontaneously come up on the stage and share their thoughts with the conductor and the evening’s soloists and ask any questions they might have. This is music mediation right in the heart of artistic endeavour.

Over time, Musikkollegium Winterthur has developed a music mediation programme with a form of music mediation tailored to every kind of audience (including potential audiences), whether young or old: from our loyal concertgoers to the ideal next-generation audience, from school children to families to companies. One format which is frequently under-appreciated in music mediation circles is what we call our client events, where we design music mediation for selected companies. This format brings together a group of people between the ages of thirty and sixty who would not ordinarily attend classical concerts. It combines an introductory talk on the concert, meeting with the artists and a glimpse behind the scenes to provide an up-close and personal experience of classical music.

*Thomas Pfiffner is the Director of Musikkollegium Winterthur, the Vice President of Fondation SUISSE and the Programme Director of the concert series Meisterzyklus Bern.*



## CHANGING PERSPECTIVES Meris Schüpbach: Project kidswest.ch – A Process of Art and Culture in the Social Context

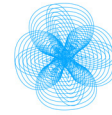
The project → [kidswest.ch](http://kidswest.ch) is an open art and cultural workshop in Bern West open to anyone aged 5–16 at no charge. Once each week children of various nationalities – almost all of them from low-income immigrant families – meet up to experience and create art and culture together. Public appearances are held on weekends and over the holidays, for instance, at [kkj.ch](http://kkj.ch), in the Bern Museum of Fine Arts Bern or in the City of Bern's Action Week against Racism. A core group of what is now 12 children has been meeting at kidswest regularly for years; others come for a year or two, a few weeks or just a single day. Since the art workshops are open to newcomers, the group composition is constantly changing.

→ [kidswest.ch](http://kidswest.blogspot.ch) <http://kidswest.blogspot.ch> [25.1.2013]

I plan projects or activities addressing topics, techniques or forms of expression with the children based on sporadically compiled priority lists. Depending on the needs determined (and resources available), I sometimes bring in other artists or students, who then develop and implement a project with the kids. The final product is never the main focus; experiencing and creating collectively always takes priority. Once an idea or plan has taken shape, each child decides whether or not to participate in the project. When children commit to playing a major role, then their participation becomes obligatory; for instance, children who have agreed to play a part in a theatre project or to give a presentation. Usually the ones who have not committed themselves also work on the project with the group, but they have the option to work on their own on the current topic if they want to.

The children figure out what interests them as a group in sporadically held "postcard circles". They each receive a blank postcard, on which they write down, or draw, a topic or an idea for a project. Then the cards are sent around the circle, with the children adding their own thoughts on the idea to each postcard. In the end, the children read their own cards out loud, both their initial idea and the responses to it. After the discussion, they vote on which topics interest them most. A lot of projects develop spontaneously out of shared experiences as well, or through questions asked and answered in encounters with outsiders. The current priority list has inventing and creating stories, painting pictures, doing theatre.

Meris Schüpbach *has worked as an independent artist in the social work context since 1981. In 2012 she received the third annual Award for Visual Arts Education in Switzerland from the Swiss Art Association and visarte.Switzerland.*

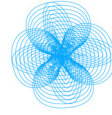


## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Claude-Hubert Tatot: Conveying Cultural Mediation

The mission of the degree programme Trans – Art Education at the University of Art and Design in Geneva is to train socially engaged artists and authors who are aware of political and social environments and are in a position to invent new forms of mediation fuelled by their own artistic experiences and their position as art-makers.

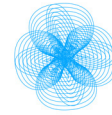
With respect to cultural mediation, the Trans programme seeks to equip its students for research and development. For that reason, it places great priority on both interaction in professional circles and implementing projects in partnerships with cultural institutions. These experiences promote learning, familiarity with current developments and the emergence of new forms of intervention. Instead of presenting students with a set of methods or prescriptions, the programme confronts them with concrete situations and questions. For example, how can one design, create and programme a Christmas market stand for the Théâtre de Carouge? How can spectators at the Les Urbaines festival in Lausanne be encouraged to move from one venue to the next? How can one create games which will enable a young audience to take a closer look at the works of Mamco (Geneva's Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art) or the MAC/VAL (Museum of Contemporary Art of Val-de-Marne)? How can one design a bus shelter during the Festival Art-Chêne which will invite passers-by to engage with it? How can one invite older amateur artists to come to paint at a neighbourhood social centre? What forms of interaction can take place in a public space between passers-by and the works of Thomas Huber?

The forms of collaboration, to which our students bring energy and commitment, adapt themselves to a variety of contexts and address a range of different population groups, depending on whether they take the form of local interventions or international campaigns, smaller projects or institutional partnerships. They represent forms of action research rooted in the reality of the territory explored by Trans. Theoretical approaches from various disciplines and practical activities interweave, bound up in a common desire to explore, propelled by the incessant back-and-forth between the two dimensions. While many decision-makers advocate the use of well-tested projects as models for new activities, we take the opposite approach, training Trans students to innovate. In this respect, we share the attitude expressed in the journal "Passagen" by Carmen Mörsch: "cultural mediation –



and in my eyes this is its most important function, one for which there is no substitute – allows space for a resistant cultural practice, removed from elite enclaves of art appreciation and populist strategies of audience development.”

*Claude-Hubert Tatot is an art historian, the Coordinator of the Masters programme Trans – Art Education at the University of Art and Design in Geneva, and the Editor-in-Chief of “Start”, a free contemporary art magazine for children.*



## **CHANGING PERSPECTIVES** Cultural Mediation Working Group, Pro Helvetia: Cultural Mediation as Exchange on an Equal Footing

One feature common to all the cultural mediation projects which Pro Helvetia supports is that they each involve an exchange in which all parties meet on an equal footing – an exchange with no predefined hierarchies, within which all partners are equally entitled to express themselves, bear responsibility collectively and listen to one another. The Swiss Arts Council aspires to a type of cultural mediation that is based on interaction among a variety of individuals and brings their varied experiences and knowledge into play, rather than limiting itself to the transmission of knowledge from an expert to an individual or group. The aim is for everyone involved to be both teachers and learners, though everyone does not have to be teaching or learning the same thing.

An equal footing in a relationship can be created when a cultural institution takes on an active role as a mediator that extends beyond the mere provision of content. Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne, for instance, increases the accessibility of theatre to blind people or people with impaired vision by providing live audio-description and hosting events where audiences meet with directors. These allow sighted and blind people to experience a performance together, and that, in turn, offers to the director and the theatre a valuable new perspective on their own work.

During the “Schulhausroman” [Schoolhouse Novel] project, a school class writes a story intended for publication with the help of a writer. Naturally, the young people are influenced and enriched by the writer in this process, but the reverse is also true: the same exchange opens up new worlds of ideas and language to the writer, which will flow into that person’s future work. Thus both the actual target group – the school class – and the writer each profit from the project, but the school as a whole can profit from the experience as well.

By supporting projects structured in this way, Pro Helvetia hopes to contribute towards increased awareness of the transmission of culture and cultural mediation and highlight interaction among all participants in that context.

Pro Helvetia’s interdisciplinary Cultural Mediation Working Group was responsible for developing the promotion criteria within the framework of the Arts and Audiences Programme.