

Bjorn Norgaard lecture for CNAA

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The origins of the future began long time ago. The images we look at, the concepts we use to describe the world, our language, the different forms of cognitions, various disciplines developed in all kinds of areas and so on, everything has a beginning. Mostly, we start with our father and mother (here are mine in 1956) but the common human culture goes a couple of 10.000 years back (here in the Syrian desert with Peter Mortensen)

The amazing numbers of images, cognitions, language syntaxes, concepts, disciplines that we now take for granted, where did they come from, how did they appear and develop, and why did it end up this way?

In the past 30 years years – in what we could call the digitalized global market reality – we have been faced with two challenges. At least artists have.

We have been faced with cultural hegemony and cultural amnesia. Cultural hegemony because the market claims free market but ends up with monopolies, where we all listen to the same music, eat the same fast food, drink the same coke, copy

the same TV series, and in the art market, reward the same artist stars.

Cultural amnesia because the digital technologies atomize everything in the unlimited cyber-cloud and leave anything, anybody and all statement the same.

As scientist, philosophers, artists we must insist on taking the responsibility in our work to include history, tradition, memory, and for each and every expression we do, discuss from where it came and at where we aim it. The present is the point where the past meets the future.

I have some pictures, just as examples. Some we'll go through in a quick way, others I will speak about in the context of my introduction.

3. CAFA 中央美院美术 plaster-collection first time in 2002 ... the plaster liberated art.

4. Chinese signs for Tradition and Modernism, western letters, discussion with students at CAFA 中央美院美术 and the Chinese/European Dialogues 中欧

文化对话which this Academy was the Chinese organizer of.

5.New style / Old style, we shall not deny the progress of modern technology, but we have learned that any technology can be used for good purposes and for bad purposes. In these times of late modernism, we also know that the utopian vision from the early modernism that humanity is on a rising Darwinian progression which will make us more and more sensible and in the end rationality will solve all our problems.

Now after 100 years of modern development, people are as wise and as stupid as ever and we know that each time we solve a problem, we get at least two new ones.

6.When we look at our common global challenges, environmental problems, and many different conflicts, the digital opportunities and the digital problems, the growing population and how can we face those challenges in a constructive way and take care of diversity in nature and in our many different cultures.

7.How can our discipline, the visual arts, contribute to this, and should art actually contribute at all? That is the question.

8. The western notion of art which has developed since the renaissance, first recognized the arts as a special independent discipline, and with the classicist and the academies in the 16-1700 centuries, they defined aesthetic ideals and principles based on the antique art from Greece and Rome. During the Enlightenment Period, and especially during the Romantic Period, artists developed the notion that they would be able to create figures and imagination through their imagination.

9. In the end of the 1800 and the beginning of the 1900 centuries, art becomes modern in our understanding. After the First World War, the total independence of art and artist became a reality through many and different-minded art groups, as a reaction on the war, that killed millions of people and left the European civilization in ruins.

10. After the second disaster, the Second World War, the modernist movement claimed total freedom from any political influence. Due to fascism and Nazism, artists had lost all confidence in the political system and tried to define new principles for how to understand one self and how society could be based on new moral principles.

11.The sixties ... no more experience in shape, flat, line, color.

12.Some examples how I have tried to discuss what I just talked about in my own works.

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In his lectures and writings, Danish physicist and Nobel Prize recipient Niels Bohr (尼尔斯 · 玻尔)

mentions, that a scientific proof, requires a completely and unanswerable description of a phenomena. In my profession and in the institution that I represent, The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, we wish absolutely no completely and unanswerable explanation on anything at all.

Where the natural sciences in a unique humility accept a absolutely determinism, in order to find the truth about the universal rules for the phenomena, art seeks the truth *understood* as the beautiful in the human imperfection, and through that conquer the hubris, where we claims to set the human thoughts free, so it's us that create the world and in that way our own reality.

The image shows, what it shows, by the form itself, no matter if it's correct or not.

The sentence is an image of reality

The sentence is a model of reality, as we think it is.

In the artistic image, the image creates its own reality, in which the artistic fantasy can introduce elements which in the real world would never meet.

In the way, the artist includes these elements in combinations there, however impossible they may seem, we get the possibility to set them free from their established or conventional values, so we once again can acknowledge them. In other words, art becomes a vehicle to change our view on ourselves, and free the world from the conventions of the established truth.

Both the natural sciences and the arts strive for understanding beauty and in the imperfection. In such way they are both human realizations and driver of the curiosity for understanding ourselves and the world we live in.

In the need for this and our uncompromised quest, the curiosity of scientists and the artists will most often result in discoveries. Throughout history these discoveries have fostered technologically, culturally and socially wealthy societies, which provide people with lives and possibilities we may dream of but which we would never foresee the consequences of.

This means that life and society is not science, but an organism where all parts interact in an unpredictable network of combinations, and that is precisely why well-functioning societies possess the dynamics they have.

The society that in the strongest way meets the new global reality, is the society, that is best at setting the individual citizen's creative potential free.

In order to develop one's creative skills, each citizen must recognize himself as a whole human of flesh and blood with heads, arms and legs. In the digital world, it is essential, that we are able to train our own "computer", that is ourselves. This requires happens by knowing ourselves as whole humans, this is what the physical disciplines, and in particular the crafts contact with tools and material does, they train our own senses so we can form a independent image of reality.

Crafts is humanity's oldest method to acknowledge and form our world. Through development of tools and their use and knowledge of the material properties, has created a knowledge and a language that can describe and develop new ways in which to see and understand the world.

In particular since the 00es, this management system, which has been created to maximize and to streamline, whatever they administrate and built up defense-mechanisms against the actual conditions in the iron industry.

In this the administrators digital algorithms world of systems, professionals, researchers, artists, craftsmen and anyone working in the iron industry perceived as a irrelevant and disturbing element, and the last 10 years this political administrative segment has been directly aggressive towards any substantiated professional critic and academically valid proposals.

The Craft are in this world an unmanageable thing, when it in its sense are build on values , set and norms, which are strange to the administrative world.

In Craft its the experience-based knowledge, its the intuition, it is the talent and ability of the individual, that'

s the crucial thing, that's the limitation of the algorithm, all the scheme, all the test, all their values and efficiency measuring has to be scrapped. Until the day when democracies come to it senses and restore the individual citizen as the capital of the society, and reward the companies, which create

a sustainable production and workshops, the great qualities of the Craft have a chance.

The Art and the Craft has from the beginning of the Academies in Europe as a starting point the experience in common, but through the modernism we got further apart.

In this times we are living, where common sense, common habits, common values are all for questioning, the task of art, from work to work to create its own necessity, nothing is granted and nothing can be taken for granted.

And because our Darwinist modernistic belief that people will get more reasonable, and the sciences will reach a perfect and undeniable explanation on the state of the world, ... can still be an ethical Utopia, but at the same time we must acknowledge that every time we solve one problem, two new will arise.

Dear Academy I have been traveling and working in China since 2002, I have met wonderful people, outstanding artist, in those almost 14 years China have learned me many things, I have been inspired, I have been enlightened, and to meet another culture,

a different way, another tradition and a different way to discuss our mutual global future, learns you a lot about yourself, thank you to Professor Tan Ping 谭平 for many years of discussions, cooperation and friendship, and thank you to China to accept my presence.

And thank you for your patience.