

Nicolas Siepen and Åsa  
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# Learning by Doing: Reflections on Setting Up a New Art Academy

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e-flux journal #14 — march 2010 Nicolas Siepen and Åsa Sonjasdotter  
[Learning by Doing: Reflections on Setting Up a New Art Academy](#)

## Theorem 1 (Nicolas)

The most basic distinction between state-run art institutions and so-called “self-organized” structures in the cultural field concerns the distinction between ways of working within them; between pre-existing positions to be filled, and unstructured, continuously reinvented positions. Beyond having a strong division of labor – a characteristic of “real” state-run and more corporate private institutions – it is this distinction that shapes all the others, producing a basic duality between paid professionals who have access to large budgets and the “not yet professionalized” paying students. Thus payment and the labor involved in its earning – the existence of a budget that brings together notions of resources and needs, and the indirect funding of these via student fees – are the cornerstones that distinguish these two spheres.

It is for this reason that earlier thinkers like Godard and Guattari claimed that the institutional is the political, or that claims were made in the 1960s for recognizing other modes of labor – suggesting the TV viewer should also get paid for his “work” of consumption, for example. While they had institutions like the media in mind, the analogy between who gets paid and for what kind of labor remains: self-organized structures are fundamentally shaped by a lack of payment or budget, which means that – with regard to institutional power relations – the distinction between those who pay and those who get paid is largely dissolved; we face the free market alone – but together!

It then becomes complicated to speak about education in the context of self-organization because, as there is little clear hierarchy, self-organized structures transform everything that you have to learn and every educational moment into self-education, a characteristic that is less due to a basic fragmentation than to a productive lack. When state institutions “suffer” from being underfunded, it is linked to what they are allocated or to their management and profitability. Perversely, a self-organized institution’s lack of funding is both its woe and its pride! In other words, when state institutions don’t function, they shut down, while self-organized “institutions” thrive, precisely because they “don’t function” (are not managed) to begin with.

People often organize their career prospects around a lack instead of a plenitude, mainly because they perceive a structural lack within institutions and their relation to the free market – in our case, the art market. In this sense, one could define self-organization as a social act of gathering “freely” around a lack of resources, gaining a distance from the logics of

the market. The notion of “choice” within a free market system begins in the educational world of art academies, but is extended into the art world itself through the capacity to curate all forms of activity. The “real” world (museums, galleries, media, etc.) follows the same logic, maintaining this basic duality between paid, managed labor and economies of lack. The proximity of self-organized initiatives to this duality is neither pure nor heroic. It comes in various combinations, necessarily mingled with the official framework of the *Institutional-curatorial-market-complex*.

### A New Academy (Åsa)

The Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø opened in the fall of 2007. It is located in the Subarctic, in the North of Norway. The institution is not built upon neutral ground – there is a specific history, with specific political and cultural struggles, and from the beginning the establishment of this academy was driven by a hope that it would become an institutional and cultural resource for the region and also an instrument for diverse and sometimes conflicting interests. Many different concerns were voiced as the Art Academy in Tromsø formed, and this discussion is important. For whom and for what reason is this institution here? What is the purpose of this new academy, and how does it reflect upon already existing institutions? Why were these other institutions established and what was the political drive behind them? What are their roles now, and how do they influence the power dynamics within the field of art and within society at large?

The demand for an academy in North Norway was preceded by a long history weighed down by colonialism, regional marginalization, and class struggle. Politically, the history of the area is deep red, and it was no accident that the University of Tromsø was established in 1968. The decolonization process of the Sámi, the proximity to the Arctic and its newly actualized geopolitical tensions, and the knowledge that the state-owned oil industry brings wealth to the country – these are only some of the complex topics that charged the representational significance of this new academy in different ways and brought hopeful expectations from the region.

### Theorem 2 (Nicolas)

One of my favorite phrases in Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus* is: “nothing operates the way it was designed.” This insight matters when we think about how the logic of institutions and of self-organized praxis intermingle, how tight control and excessive management mix with the loose structures associated with self-organized

initiatives. It’s obvious that state-run art academies have ideals and goals, traditions and agendas, designed in advance and operationally regulated through a set of definitions of what art is and what art education should be. But these definitions are both vague and articulated differently from professor to professor, class to class. There is no fixed corpus of obligatory knowledge or technique that students must be grounded in, but an arbitrary chaos of possible directions. Aside from the regulatory procedures and routines, which shape the way the studies are formalized, this ideological framework or profile has a continuous impact on the fragile social and professional power relations between professor and student, which are embedded in this framework. Art education in Europe stages these power relations in a particular way because its presence is either downplayed, but nevertheless constitutes a powerful sphere of influence. For this reason, the “position” of the professor in art academies is often a strange combination of strength and the performance of an intentional weakness. Very often we still find the good old “master artist” model haunting the classes and big ateliers in the academies in Europe, combining authority with romance and reputation. But nowadays we see a considerable shift, not only because of the regulating impulse of the Bologna process but also because this model has become too narrow for the complexity of the art world. So this old model of art education (and art) was slowly unraveled by its own operations, because it could not sustain the multitude of possible articulations and models actually circulating out there in culture. Instead of going into the Louvre to study the “masters,” students go on YouTube, which means that the “master” can be any Tom, Dick, or Harry – and that makes sense!

The stance taken by the Bologna Accord to regulate the arts towards a market-dominated concept of efficiency (whatever that might mean in such an individuated education in arts and the undefined, unstructured, arbitrary, and “useless” profession of artist), it reveals in both its functional and ideological limitations by reducing this contemporary multiplicity to a single role model defined by a market. The duality between artists who never sell any work but have a reputation and a cultural/critical standing, and artists who have great market value but no cultural standing or presence within international, critical circuits (such as Documenta and the like), cannot be grasped by the simpleminded structures of the Bologna process. Nor can these structures grasp the numerous mixed models between these two poles, models that are always somehow subservient to the ideological hegemony and the

not-so-free forces of the “free” market. With the increasing power of the so-called secondary market (auctions, subsidiary activities, etc.), perhaps we might see a fundamental paradigm shift that will disperse the binary relations between the *market-art-value* and the *self-organized-cultural-political* to the extent that they detach themselves from defining each another by their opposition. Here there is a possibly interesting scenario in which the necessary “critical” stance of self-organization could be “liberated” from its yoke of having a necessarily negative relation to the market or the economies of spectacle, but could instead gain a semblance of autonomy, some common ground, and another relation to what constitutes reality. So no matter how much art education may be defined by utility, inutility, or efficacy, the old adage still holds sway: “Nothing operates the way it was designed!”

### The Very Beginning (Åsa)

In 2005, the political situation in Norway made it possible for the left wing party (*Socialistisk Venstreparti*) to get enough votes for a parliamentary decision to form an academy in the North of Norway. The academy was to be organized under the Faculty of Fine Arts, first under Tromsø University College, which became part of Tromsø University in 2008. The Tromsø-born Sámi artist Geir Tore Holm, who has a deep knowledge of both the region and of international art, was appointed to create the foundation for the academy. Together with an advisory board, he prepared a profile for the academy and outlined the initial BA Program. The very fact that a profile was written importantly signals that the institution made an effort to articulate its approach and position themselves within what was understood as a politically and culturally differentiated landscape of art and education. The profile stressed mutuality between art / art education and the society at large by defining art practices as an intrinsic part of Northern Scandinavia as well as positioning social topics within art practices. Through the profile (some of the core notions of the which were cultural, social, and ethnic disparities, connections between nature and culture, the potential for a sustainable practice of art, local and regional conditions, the complexity of place, global orientation), the academy in Tromsø positioned particularities as key to its founding principles.<sup>1</sup>

This awareness of particularity is not meant to isolate the academy’s activities solely within the local; on the contrary, it carries a potential for an informed and engaged participation within both local and international dialogue. By emphasizing particularity, the academy could make an interesting move away from a

hierarchical organization and definition of its activities – away from not only geopolitical international/national/local hierarchies, but also from the very traditional, patriarchal ideology of the master artist and the master works as central references for art education within the Bachelor/Master class systems). This allowed it to move towards a specified, and therefore diversified relation to art, knowledge, and institutional positions. However, the contemporary art field does contain a very broad range of specific fields of knowledge and ideological positions, and no educational institution can (or should) cover it all.

### Theorem 3 (Nicolas)

That same statement from *Anti Oedipus*: “nothing operates the way it was designed” holds equally for self-organization – but with another dynamic, since here the relation between education and production plays a different role than that of market logics. In recent years I have randomly and accidentally been increasingly drawn into engaging the “problematic” of education, and this randomness made me think about the role “education” has played in my artistic, social, and professional life in the past, when it played a role at all. It began in winter 2005 with the invitation of Jan Ritsema and Bojana Cvejić to join the organizing team for the newly founded Performing Arts Forum (PAF) in France, or, more accurately, to become involved.<sup>2</sup> Then, I was invited by Irit Rogoff, Florian Schneider, and Susanne Lang to take part in the organizing team for the conference SUMMIT non-aligned initiatives in education culture, which took place in May 2007 in HAU in Berlin, and which made the fairly risky effort of bringing together the self-organized activist and art institutional world under the umbrella of non-alignment – and it was pretty explosive!<sup>3</sup> Third, I applied for a visual arts professorship at the university in Tromsø, where I have now worked for a year. (Last but not least, and maybe only indirectly relevant, I had a child who is now sixteen months old, and I did not think I had to entertain questions of education until I heard myself utter the word “no.”) My invitation to contribute in PAF owed itself to friendship, as well as my part in b\_books (a self-organized bookshop, publishing house, film production and meeting space in Berlin I have been part of for fourteen years now), and b\_books had to do with my participation in the SUMMIT. And it wouldn’t be completely misguided to suppose that, aside from my work as an artist, filmmaker, and writer, my connection to b\_books played some part in my appointment as an art professor.<sup>4</sup> So b\_books must be seen from the outset as a sort of qualification for education in theory or praxis.

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For this reason I began to reflect upon the possible connection between self-organized, collective, non-profit projects like b\_books and the term “education.” To be honest, I hadn’t previously been interested at all in education – its German articulation as *Erziehung* or *Bildung*, with their heavy ideological baggage, were simply not related to how we saw our activities. It is equally clear that the unconscious concept and problem at the heart of these activist activities was and is, in fact, precisely one of education or self-education. This due to the fact that the lack of resources, time, and money that I discussed previously necessitate a production mode of collective improvisation and experimentation grounded in this very lack. And what is improvisation and experimentation if not a sort of permanent education and self-education – which subsequently became fashionable to critique as the flipside of the capitalist ideology and reality of “lifelong learning” as forms of obedience and self-exploitation. There is of course a whole history of didactic concepts of art and activism, and here one finds the background of the *Self-organized-politicized-experimental-complex*.

### The Making (Åsa)

So how is the particularity of the academy in Tromsø to be carried out in reality? This was the question and task I found before me when starting as the first program leader.<sup>5</sup> I was already very interested in the circumstances I described above, and found them to be optimistic challenges. I also saw this situation as an opening and important possibility, especially in light of the major decline of progressive institutions in Scandinavia during the last decade. There were some basic concerns regarding how the academy should function. These concerns were less a set of conditions than they were questions for continuous discussion. The open situation brought the unique possibility for all involved to consider basic questions of what art is about or could be about, and I wished to preserve this openness as a basis for discussions that would become part of the educational process. I also see this approach as a continuation of the vision for the academy’s profile, or as my interpretation of how such visions could be carried out in reality: as a consideration of one’s own subjective approach within a larger context, as a responsibility both for one’s own interests as well as for those of a larger public. Practically, we started out by establishing a platform on which questions on all levels could be discussed between everyone involved. Every Monday morning, all staff and students met to go over topics that had come up during the week or were of more general

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character. These questions could range from basic practical issues such as disagreements over kitchen routines to more difficult questions on dynamics within the teaching structure or suggestions for external collaborations. Matters to be discussed in the Monday meetings would be sent to the coordinator, who would then announce them in advance. The chair and secretary always rotated in order to prevent the meetings from being consistently influenced by a single person. The notes were posted on our intranet archive. Decisions were made within these meetings, so if you weren’t there you didn’t have your say. We alternated between consensus and majority decisions, depending on the character of the topic. After a while we also established sub-groups, “reference groups,” in which various structural developments were discussed. These groups were organized around student and staff interests. It was not necessary to be part of such groups, and no student should feel any pressure to participate. With only thirteen students, it was also important that they be freed from the often-overwhelming situation of an academy in the making. In this way, we could combine broad and involved discussions on all the various aspects of this incredible and complex process. Conclusions amongst the reference groups were presented and discussed at the Monday meetings, and decisions were made when needed.



The meetings stirred important discussions on a variety of questions, both ideological and practical. Shared or separate study areas? The students agreed on a flexible solution in which it was possible to define individual or group workspaces. Open-source computers or Mac? We now have both, but if I could go back make the decision myself, we would have only open source. We have decided to collaborate with other institutions in Tromsø on more specialized

workshops. For example, we decided to hold a silkscreening workshop in collaboration with an artist co-op, who kindly share their graphic print shop. We have been able to use the facilities of the neighboring theatre to produce advanced plastic castings and house the advanced plotter, which is also available to the whole university.

The discussions and solutions on practical and structural matters often touched upon basic questions concerning understandings and approaches to art, art production, and to the nature of an art academy. Since the students had only just begun their studies, it was not always easy for them to form their own opinion and act upon it at the same time: study, make art, and participate in the making of an academy. As one student cleverly articulated, "It's not that I don't want to have an opinion, but I need the whole picture before I can make a decision." This is of course true in many ways, but at the same time the picture is never so clearly defined, and is rather something that appears through such discussions and attempts. However, I shouldn't understate my influence on the discussions and decisions, not to mention that of the students' own knowledge and experiences. Since we belong to a state-organized university structure with many set conditions, there were of course limitations to how much we could radically re-imagine the structure. In addition, I was only responsible for the development of the educational program, not for the staff and budget. Our decisions functioned as formal suggestions before the faculty, and in practice they were for the most part accepted and implemented. The importance of our self-defined and self-organized decision-making process could be seen in how the development of the Academy's vision came through discussions. Our suggestions were formulated in a way that gave them authority within the formal decision-making process, and they were often the only suggestions available. In this sense, we placed ourselves in a pro-active position in relation to the university structure's own decision-making process. The fact that our proposals were for the most part carried out contributed immensely to the learning, since this was the only way of finding out whether or not we had taken the right decision. At the end of the day this also taught us the basic and important fact that institutional structures are always composed of people, and in this sense they can always be changed.

#### **Theorem 4 (Nicolas)**

In the last seventeen years I have been involved in several collective, self-organized productions such as the film projects *Ping Pong d'amour* and *A-clip*, the artist groups *KlasseZwei* and *Bootlab*, the aforementioned *b\_books* and *PAF*, plus

numerous occasional events. In all these projects "we" struggled with this unconscious reference to education or didactics. Of course there was initially the uneasy condemnation of the term "didactic" when it is combined with "art." Very often people would say to us that what "we" do is interesting and politically righteous, but the art itself is bad for being too "didactic" – the ultimate proof that something is wrong with it: it's moralizing, troublemaking, perhaps elitist, and certainly formally bad and boring. Secondly, "we" indeed worked on a lot of projects that could be perceived as educational – informing the public and informing ourselves. But this educational aspect was not intended as such, but came as a symptom of a broader cultural praxis dedicated to questioning the very framework and structures of the work. This questioning in itself implies critique, and this critical distance is inevitably the site at which the didactic and the educational begin playing an involuntary role. The moment one steps out of conventional institutional frameworks and the logic of market relations – that is, through a productive illusion, as one can not really step out of it while within it, but can perhaps affect a step aside – then cultural production becomes an act of "resistance," and that mode of resistance becomes the artistic articulation. The price of this move aside is the complexity of relation to audience and distribution. While one can produce without resources still requires investment in order to find distribution and reception. So in a way this lack has to be compensated for with a didactic effort to legitimate the unconventional framework – the mode of distribution necessarily becomes a "creative" part of the production itself, and not just marketing. When the basic operation of the market is marketing – to connect the product and the consumer – the price you elect to pay for this distance from the market is a skewing of this very basic connection. And the effect of this dysfunction is an enforced exclusion from the fiscal cycle – very simple but effective. In a way, it becomes easy to find and organize a small public, but this public is more or less part of the production itself, and, as such, remains exclusive. One should not underestimate the value of this separatist quality, since the relation between a small public and the producers can be very empowering (especially before entering other arenas, and so forth), and it is not always necessary to have a big audience. Exclusiveness can be productive when the audience becomes *more part of the gang than an abstract public*.

#### **The Interaction (Åsa)**

Another important aspect of the Academy in Tromsø's development was its interaction with

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local and international contexts. During the preparation process, Geir Tore Holm held several open meetings for the local art scene. These meetings allowed for the city and the region to have a relationship with the Academy before it began. During our fragile beginnings, this was especially important for the students, whose many projects were generously supported outside the Academy walls (even to the extent that students sometimes felt pressure to live up to expectations they couldn't fulfill). We were invited to participate in several local and international projects and events, as well as a number of self-initiated collaborations.<sup>6</sup>

In the beginning, this interaction functioned as a way for us – both as students/staff and as an institution – to learn more about possibilities, sharing resources, and fields of interest/conflict for future engagement. As a continuation of the activities outside the Academy, and as a way to respond to the projects, we held Open Classes each Thursday, in which different artists or other experts were invited to give presentations. We initiated a practice period in which second-year students were encouraged to intern with an artist, artist group, or other practitioner within the field of art.<sup>7</sup> We organized a format that alternated between having lecturers from the region and from other places, depending on the topic and expertise. And for new students, we arrange a study trip in the region around Tromsø and in Finnmark, where the majority of the population is Sámi. The tour includes visits to various sites such as carbon industry complexes, fish factories, reindeer herding families, and to key figures and institutions in the cultural field. These trips have proven to be important both for students who didn't know much about the area and the Sámi, but also for students from the area.<sup>8</sup> Many of the students have also initiated self-organized projects or collaborations with other institutions. Several of these initiatives have already become important voices in the community and elsewhere, as well as important dynamics for the Academy.<sup>9</sup>

This direct interplay with the local community and international practitioners in the context of study produced several important questions for the students: What is my role and who is my audience? Where do I want to participate? Why? What is the effect of my participation? What do I not want to engage with? What is my role and responsibility? Through these questions, the students have been able to make lasting experiences from direct encounters with agents and audiences. They have seldom found themselves in the role of cultural producers waiting for an invitation, but are more often engaged participants. Their projects have always been tutored, discussed in

groups, and also later evaluated. It is through these interactions that the students have been guided and prepared before presenting their work in public.



### Theorem 5 (Nicolas)

A big self-organized project about self-organization and self-education like PAF is also defined by this logic: it is driven by the desire to maintain a low-cost, self-generating project that is almost autodidactic in its nature, and that ensures a degree of independence, which is to say that it will come about with or without funding. The lack of funding means the lack of certain professionalized possibilities, which in turn means that the end result will lack a certain effectiveness in the conventional sense. And that suggests the necessity of a certain didacticism, as these terms need to be explained, negotiated, and mediated – re-inscribing it within an “educational” mode. On the other hand, the lack of resources makes it impossible to just hire and pay experts or professionals to perform certain kinds of work. Instead, all the participants in PAF have to do everything themselves and constantly learn and share their skills. The development of this self-organized network and its structural advances are part of the goal of the project itself. Extension, flexibility, and renewal of this network become matters of its very sustainability because PAF's only source of income comes from the fees people pay for the rooms they stay in. The most stable and regular formats are the ten-day spring, summer, and winter academies: large gatherings of around sixty people from all over the world who themselves organize seminars, lectures, discussions, and performances. The rest of the year is open to all sorts of projects and working modalities. The content of these various educational, artistic, and theoretical activities represent a wide range of themes and

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interests from a variety of participants and groups. This mix provides a forum and an educational potential that makes it possible to call PAF a free academy, or a free made up of some “positions,” collectivized private property, some division of labor, and an open development path, which together comprise a self-sustaining drive, fragile and stable at the same time. For me it was very interesting to compare my experiences with PAF and the academy “under construction” in Tromsø, since initially the institutional structures of the newly-founded art academy presented itself in a very pure form. Even the few new students were involved in the process of setting up its basic structural functions. In the beginning that gave the place a very chaotic charm, but it had the promise of slightly more order on the horizon to ensure some degree of continuity as the work progressed. While on some levels this might sound very similar to the experience of PAF, the difference between the state institution and the self-organized forum comes in the fact that the Tromsø academy cannot really be self-organized, and although self-organization – on the part of the students in particular – plays an important role, the fundamental distinction between professors and students can not and should not be abolished. A self-organized academy like PAF needs and provides only minimal institutional functions – it cannot and should not become an Institution as such. In each of these cases, a shift occurred between spheres; Åsa Sonjasdotter in Tromsø was to shift an institutional framework towards a self-organized model and Jan Ritsemas’ bold role at PAF was to connect self-organization with a large-scale and more sustainable structure. So far, I can say that I hope that both “institutions” can complement each other at the intersection of *self-organized and in dependent institutional frameworks*.

### The Real and the Ideal (Åsa)

My aim was to organize a place for study in which students would be able to consider artistic practice broadly and bravely, and where they could build sustainable ways of working that would stay with them long after their studies conclude.

An art academy is not an ideal situation, but neither is life as a practicing artist, and it is precisely here that things become really interesting – in the meeting between simple, practical, pragmatic solutions and the complex, conflicting, or impossible ideas. In this way, the process of making of an academy created a situation in which these positions came together perfectly. Clever, pragmatic, often effortless solutions could open up really interesting dynamics just as our own shortcomings or larger

institutional limitations could create an enormous frustration. The interesting combination between the need for practical solutions and the overwhelmingly open possibilities in the making of an academy formed a paradox that surely made us all hover between frustration and excitement. At the same time, this is a paradox that artistic practice can never escape, and also what makes it so urgent. While the unique opportunity to start something new was radical in itself, the chance to investigate the particularity of the site and turn it into an articulated position made sense in this specific place, but also as part of a broader dialogue on institutional positioning. The Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø is still incomplete, and will hopefully never be complete. When Nicolas Siepen was hired as our second professor at the beginning of 2009, the Academy had all three years of BA students in attendance for the first time. Even though the Academy is still very small (we have and will keep around thirty BA students altogether) there is now a more clear division of labor between administration, technicians, various ways of teaching, and the various interests and needs of the students. This makes it necessary for us to evaluate the experiences of our experimental beginning in order to develop them further. The discussions behind the joint writing of this text function as a part of this process. In the fall of 2009, the Academy transformed from being a program to an institution in its own right, which then gave us a stronger sense of independence. Curator Helga Marie Nordby is the new leader of our institute, and I am a teaching and researching professor. Nordby and other old and new staff members and students will continue to shape the Academy around their own their interests and concerns. We are already preparing for a masters program as well as a research program, with an even stronger focus on the political and ecological questions vital to the region as well as the international community. There is a great deal of specialized knowledge at many of Tromsø University’s institutions, such as The Polar Research Centre and The Centre for Sámi Studies, but it is important that cultural practitioners also work within the collective memory of the area’s residents. The Academy’s profile the subject of constant debate – it is a means of discussing the positions and goals of this density of politics and imaginations known as an art academy.

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Nicolas Siepen is a Berlin based artist, filmmaker and writer. As an art critic he has written for Springerin, Texte zur Kunst, Frakcija, FAZ and Starship. He is co-founder of the bookstore and publishing house b\_books and member of the Performing Arts Forum (PAF) in France. Since January 2009 he has been Professor of visual arts at the Academy of Contemporary Arts in Tromsø Norway.

Åsa Sonjasdotter is a Swedish artist living and working in Tromsø, Norway and Berlin, Germany. For quite a while she has been analysing phenomenon in the world from what she calls a potato-perspective. Between 2007 and 2009 she took part in the construction of the new Academy of Contemporary Art in Tromsø, Norway, where she now works as a professor.

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The Study Plan and the Profile text is to be found at [http://www2.uit.no/ikbViewer/page/ansatte/organisasjon/artikkel?p\\_document\\_id=17120&p\\_dimension\\_id=88176&p\\_menu=28927&p\\_lang=2](http://www2.uit.no/ikbViewer/page/ansatte/organisasjon/artikkel?p_document_id=17120&p_dimension_id=88176&p_menu=28927&p_lang=2).

2  
See <http://www.pa-f.net>.

3  
See <http://summit.kein.org>.

4  
See <http://www.bbooks.de>.

5  
The first year's students were Geir Backe Altern, Anemarte Bjørnseth, Mathilda Carlid, Line Solberg Dolmen, Ingrid Forland, Heidi-Anett Haugen, Ane EleneJohansen, Espen Justdal, Ingeborg Annie Kristine Lindahl, Frank Ludvigsen, Vebjørn Møllberg, Margrethe Pettersen and Ida Walenius. Staff members were coordinator Irene Nordhaug Hansen, theory lecturer Tone Olaf Nielsen and lecturing artists Bodil Furu Geir and Tore Holm. In addition we had many visiting artists and other experts lecturing.

6  
The were students invited as festival artists at the Riddu Riddu International Indigenous Festival the summer of 2008. Together with the International Academy Of Art Palestine, we were invited to a workshop at Lofoten International Art Festival. Tromsø Kunstforening invited the students to use the building as they wanted for a weekend which resulted in the performance and exhibition project Home Alone (Hjemme Alene) Self initiated external collaborations were for example: An exhibition at Tromsø Public Library, screenings at the local non-profit cinema Verdensteatret, a project within the public space in collaboration with Tromsø Municipality's Department for Urban Planning, a seminar on Sámi Contemporary Art together with The Institute for Art History and Science at Tromsø University, a student exchange agreement with the Art Academy in Ramallah, Palestine (since Tromsø and Ghaza City are official Friendship Towns) and finally a collaboration on Sustainability and the Northern Scandinavia together with the academies in Umeå, Sweden and in Copenhagen, Denmark.

7  
As for example curator Veronica Wiman at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts in San Francisco and at La Vida es un Teatro in Nashira, Colombia; Capacete Entertainment Residence Program in Sao Paolo, artist Mary Beth Edelson in New York, the art group Fallen Fruit in Los Angeles, Capricious Publishing House in New York, artist John Kørner in Copenhagen and many, many others.

8  
We have for example collaborated with the university's Art History Department on a course in Sámi Contemporary Art. Duodji (Sámi craft) Master Jon Ole Andersen has given courses to students in his workshop in Karasjok. As part of our collaboration with the academies in Umeå and Copenhagen we have hosted a workshop on the 30-year memory of the for Sámi crucial Alta Case uprising.

9  
Self-organized initiatives are for example; the experimental art-space Kurant, the fanzine Trusø, the film club Kuk og Parfyme, the exhibition place the Kiosk and the printed matter store Mondo Tromsø. Collaborations have been made with for example Feil Forlag, Galleri Nord Norge, the municipality of Tromsø etc.