

the floor in the right order (a procedure that seemed to come as a surprise to participants who were used to a more informal style of debate where you just join in when you feel the need to do so). But on the other hand, it was also to try to push the discussion gently forward, keeping track of the various positions that would turn up in the discussion and have them exposed one against the other, making room for or gently calling forth opinions from the more tongue-tied of the participants, and inviting the more talkative members to hold back a bit. As you will understand, this was actually a question of keeping your balance!

« 10 » Most important here is perhaps to ensure that the participants do not use all the discussion time for asking questions, but rather for agreeing and supplementing with examples or disagreeing with arguments, etc., and that the presenter does not feel that he or she has to comment straight away between all remarks from the other group members on everything that is said, thereby spending most of the discussion time on verbal ping-pong with just as few of the participants. The role of the group leader also comprised the task of making the presenter understand that having finished the presentation, he or she turns into a simple group member (nearly) on the same level as the others, discussing the interesting stuff that we have all just been introduced to.

« 11 » A final remark: If you want to know what lies behind the title of the short series of Sensuous Knowledge conferences, I can modestly recommend my own essay "Another Way of Knowing: Baumgarten, Aesthetics, and the Concept of Sensuous Cognition" (Kjørup 2006).

Søren Kjørup, educated in philosophy at the University of Copenhagen, was for many years professor of the history and theory of the humanities at Roskilde University in Denmark. Since 2000, he has also been attached to schools of art and design as an advisor for artistic research. His main area of research nowadays is museums as media for communication.

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The Design Conference Model and Its Learning Environment: A Construction Site

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> Upshot • As an echo to Verbeke's writing, I would like to propose the notion of a construction site as a constructive metaphor for dynamically revisiting the template of research conferences and events in the field of art and design.

« 1 » As Johan Verbeke points out, current models of art and design conferences are not always based on these respective disciplines in terms of form and content. In reference to his writings, I shall list a number of other points that require attention. These comments are open ended, i.e., they are to be understood as possible building blocks for future models for art and design conferences. We should, however, act with care when using the terminology of the model, which can imply an example to be followed or imitated as the expense of hitherto unforeseen possibilities. Instead, I offer the metaphor of the construction site as a continuous working and thinking process.

« 2 » I discuss reflections and findings from my work as a visual artist and art researcher. In practice, I work in the field of the visual arts, a field that functions with its own rules and laws, living alongside the academic landscape. I do not wish to distance these fields too far from each other, an approach that is not always accepted by actors within these two landscapes. I am nonetheless convinced that the two fields cross-fertilise each other, as in the programme of the Fondazione Antonio Ratti (for instance, consider the event "Tacita Dean – Comogardising: the benefits of creative indolence," <http://www.fondazioneratti.org/news/161>, as an example of a very well-known visual artist also subscribing to the *artist research laboratory*). As the Nelson Goodman (1960) put it, there are different ways to build a world. We generate experience and knowledge from all these construction sites.

« 3 » I propose constructing alternatives on the findings I collected through the fol-

lowing events in which I took part or that I depicted in my research and trajectory as a visual artist:

- By Design for Design (BDFD) events 1 and 2, compiled by the architect and researcher Marc Godts, Faculty of Architecture KU Leuven, Sint-Lucas Campus Brussels/Ghent, 2008/2009, <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/bitstream/123456789/483356/1/BDFD+XYZ+-+REFLECTIONS%2B17.pdf>.
- The Sensuous Knowledge Conference, Bergen, 2013, <http://www.khib.no/english/artistic-research/the-sensuous-knowledge-conference>.
- The Creative Practice Conference, ADAPT-r project, Faculty of Architecture KU Leuven, Sint-Lucas Campus Brussels/Ghent, 2014, <http://adapt-r.eu/creative-practice-conference>.
- Imaging and Thinking: A Construction Site, a seminar, compiled by myself in cooperation with the research group Photography Expanded, Intermedia unit, LUCA School of Arts, KU Leuven, <http://iselp.be/fr/evenements/journee-d-etude-1>.
- Collaborations and initiatives with Suspended Spaces, <http://www.suspended-spaces.net>, which is an independent collective, set up above all with the desire to work together and with other artists and international researchers.

« 4 » Most conferences and other such events start with a subject and highlight a number of sub-subjects in order to frame the event. These issues enable a researcher to decide whether to delve into the matter, to reflect, to process his or her own research subject matter, and adopt a position. In the seminar Imaging and Thinking: A Construction Site, we started instead from a particular study and introduced it by having the participants read the concomitant texts beforehand, process them, and shape their reading into a material artefact. By perusing the selected text, participants explored new fields of knowledge. Transposing findings into an artefact enabled them actively to appropriate and give shape to the reading material, and then to mediate reflections. This introduction phase comprises a translation process that led the discussion during the whole event. The artefacts formed a starting point, whether they actually mediated

the reflections or not, creating a breeding ground for other perspectives from which to look at, feed, and give shape to one's own knowledge and ability.

« 5 » In this process, every author / researcher needed to ask concrete questions, because he or she must see some sense in his or her creation in order to make something. Once the event began, we set a second assignment, asking participants to adopt visual and textual stances based on the feedback during the event in order to crystallise it in a dictated format. Providing a moment that feeds back to the given texts, artefacts, and presentations constitutes a crucial point, because you connect a collective reflection to your first readings and its translations, whilst giving a perspective to the work that is being performed jointly. These new materialisations are presented and discussed collectively during the evaluation of the event. This second task made clear how the participants continued to think through and work during the event. It provided an opportunity to process the feedback, evoke certain insights, make *tacit knowledge* more explicit, and prepare a moment for evaluation.

« 6 » In my own research and practice, I show the value of reviewing productions such as drawings, photos, and films anew, each time on the basis of another *modality* (Krčma 2007: 17). The journey through producing representations provides an impetus for making and exploring depictions. Figures 1 and 2 show examples of how, from embodiment and location shoots, I transcribe my reflections on the idea of transition (based on the building *été 78* in Brussels) and its location, into drawings and writings, carrying the project towards a cinematographic survey. The resulting film follows my thoughts and the drawing in the making. At the end of the film, the image becomes a palimpsest of different thoughts, superimposed drawings and blurs the perspective of the exhibition space itself. This film is one of the travelogues I developed during my ongoing Ph.D. The first film in this series is entitled *A Journey Through N-Dimensions* and was first shown at Architecture Research Moments 2015, organised by Verbeke, at the Faculty of Architecture (KULeuven) in Brussels, see <http://arch.kuleuven.be/Nieuws/arm-2015>.



Figure 1 • Location shoot of the exhibition space *été 78*, Brussels, 2015. (Photo by Mira Sanders).

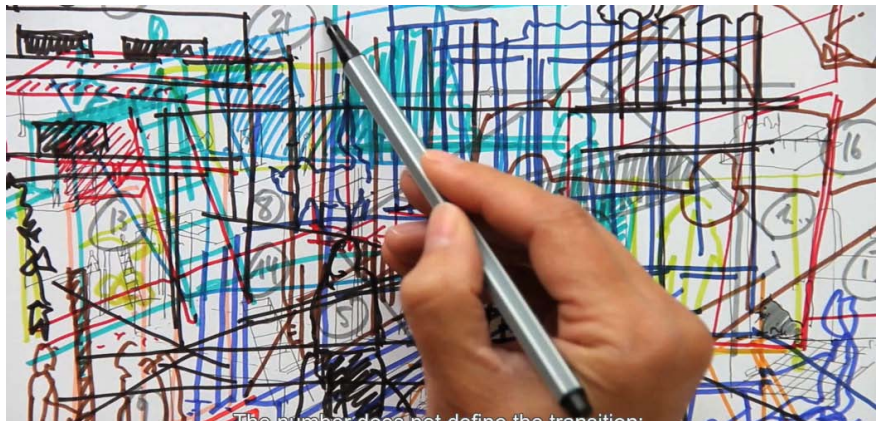


Figure 2 • Still from the film *An Attempt at Defining the Idea of Transition*, colour, French spoken, English subtitles, 00:11:44, 2015. (Photo by Mira Sanders).



Figure 3 • Design Vlaanderen Gallery meeting table, 2010. (Photo used with permission of Marc Godts).

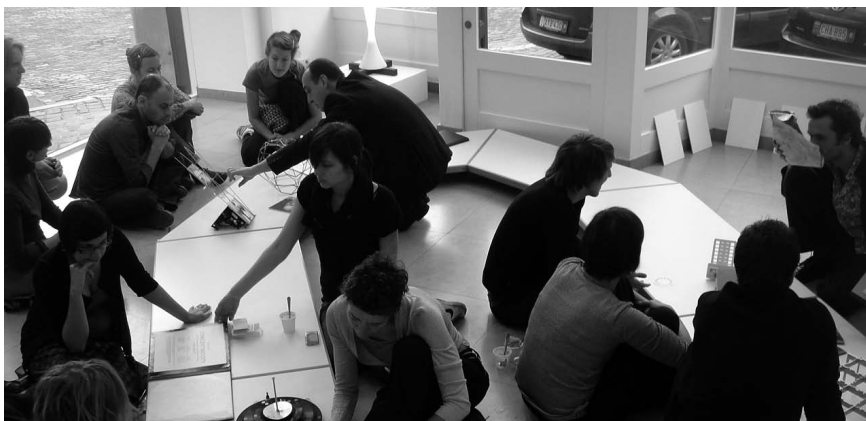


Figure 4 • By Design For Design 3: Reverse Research Design and Dumb Table.
Design Vlaanderen Galerie, Brussels, 2010.
(Photo by Ben Robberechts, with permission of Marc Godts).

« 7 » Shifting depictions in other modalities enables one to detect blind spots in lines of research. It does not entail any blurred vision but rather an act of zooming in on charted lines. As in a translation exercise with texts, one confronts the participants in this way with another translation exercise, which goes deeper into the research work. Simple and fast modalities can be chosen, such as creating new journeys in the research through drawing, photography, or film. Even if the participants are not familiar with the media, they can nonetheless chart a course in their lines of approach on a very rudimentary basis. The mediation of the researcher's findings can be discussed formally in the peer-review moments.

« 8 » During events, the set-up of the presentation environments is often still given little consideration. The work and presentation environment constitutes a parameter for the work of artists and designers and makes the choice of the setting crucial. Set-ups can be drawn on a true-to-life or smaller scale using models to make the logistics manageable. Delineating plots beforehand, as the architect and researcher Marc Godts did using a table in the By Design For Design 3 event for instance, contributes to constructive space constellations. Godts based his initiative of the Dumb Table on a critical observation towards research environments and revisited therefore the meeting table of the gallery Design Vlaanderen (Fig-

ure 3), where the event took place. Godts literally deconstructed the meeting table for the BDFD3 event (Figure 4). As a trace, he shows the two pictures together in order to show how the protocol of a meeting (in this case on research) can be breached.

« 9 » The choice of the panel members is another point often accorded little critical consideration. The choice best falls on personalities who have a link with the presented objects, taking form and content duly into account. Ideally, this panel group would bring together a mix of approaches and backgrounds: curators, philosophers, architects, historians, anthropologists, designers, artists, students, etc. Having the members of a panel in front of the audience can have a negative effect on active participation during peer-review moments. Each participant and special guest should meet on equal footing. It is necessary for every participant to take an active part, think about what is being said, and be given time to join in.

« 10 » Fully aware that things are not simple in practice or on the logistics front, I wonder whether it would be possible to operate with other time-space continua. If I stick to the idea of working with assignments during the event, then a time-space continuum should be considered so that the participants can process and produce the questions. Scenario models such as presentation and feedback moments come to mind in this respect; for instance, by introducing

shorter presentations and feedback time, alternating with longer presentations and/or work moments. This configuration aims at a dynamic approach during the event. It calls for a continuous focus on the specific content and on an interaction between the different work moments.

« 11 » Different fields interweave and define new lines to work on. Each field owns its expertise and background. As in Godts's act, we should not be afraid to revisit our own standards. We need to dare to deconstruct *models* and imagine learning environments that go beyond the known. To consider ways of world-building is to explore construction site perspectives. With enough empathy, engagement, and rigorosity, we can construct together sites that allow divergent ideas and crystallise different constellations of learning environments, taking into account the values of the concerned practices.

« 12 » I conclude by saying that we should be vigilant when using the terminology of the model. We need not think within the frame nor should we follow or imitate a given template. We need to view the model as a dynamic site that constantly considers physically and theoretically the content of an event.

Mira Sanders studied painting and multimedia at Hogeschool Sint-Lukas in Brussels. Her work (a combination of videos, drawings, and installations) is a constant research on places and on the people and stories that inhabit them. In 2007, she was one of the laureates of the Young Belgian Painting Award. Her work has been shown, among other places, in Galerie Lullin + Ferrari (Zurich), the ARGOS centre for art and media (Brussels), BOZAR (Brussels), deSingel (Antwerp), the Centre Pompidou (Paris), Huize Frankendael (Amsterdam), and CEAC (Xiamen). Mira Sanders is a lecturer at the Faculty of Architecture, campus Sint-Lucas (Brussels-Ghent) and KU Leuven, active in the mixed media department and in the Explorative Architecture trajectory (master's program). She runs her Ph.D in the arts "Traveling towards a Roman road, an inventive journey" at KU Leuven (Belgium).

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