

Janwillem  
Schrofer

# Plan and Play, Play and Plan

Defining Your  
Art Practice

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Artist in  
the studio

Artist in  
public space

Artist in the  
laboratory

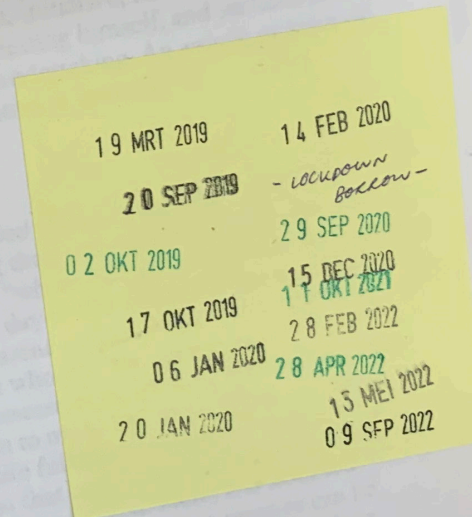
Artist on stage

Artist as  
a designer

Artist and  
writer

# PLAN AND PLAY, PLAY AND PLAN: Defining Your Art Practice

Janwillem Schrofer



Valiz

PLAN AND PLAY, PLAY AND PLAN: Defining Your Art Practice

The publication could also be useful for curators, critics and lecturers, managers in cultural and educational establishments for artists and art students, as well as policy-makers in government and funds. However, the material asks from parties other than artists an interest in and willingness to study in more depth the tasks they face, appealing to their ability to adapt the information for their own professional field. There are few if any direct tips for those 'others' in this publication. I do not, for instance, look at artistic practice from a policy-related perspective, and restrict myself to a few remarks on art education. I am not an artist, art critic, art philosopher or curator, nor a philosopher or economist, but a generalist interested in the connection between disciplinary fields; breadth rather than depth. The material is based primarily on personal experience, an empirically inductive approach. Individual experiences of artists in their practice always form the starting point, after which I examine the similarities and differences and, where possible, distil patterns, describing and analysing them. I make use of my personal network, accept subjectivity, but get the artists themselves and various critical readers to 'test' results. When theory is involved, it is mainly from a socio-psychological perspective, with occasional excursions into sociological and socio-economic concepts. My energy and attention are driven by an unlimited curiosity about the artist—I call it 'indecent' curiosity.

### *Structure and method*

Positioning means finding a place for yourself. Taking control and not leaving decisions to others. It is a circular process: make an approximate choice, carry out work, gain experience with partners, make a more precise choice, new experience, and so on. It is important not to invest too much energy, or too often, in something that ultimately offers too little material/immaterial return on investment. That does not mean that you should keep on the safe side, because risk-taking, dealing with uncertainties and the unforeseen go with positioning.

This handbook is in three parts. All relate to choosing and improvising: the two perspectives with decision-making which

are mutually reinforcing and vital to each other. The first part provides terms and reflections that augment the process of choosing and improvising. The second part contains the so-called building blocks which constitute a concrete elaboration on the terms and reflections. In the third part, 'Origins', readers are introduced to my career, and my reflections on it, to illustrate that overarching theme. Anyone wishing to know more about the author's background can begin with Chapter 9, 'A slice of life'.

Part I starts with 'Bonds and freedom', which addresses and challenges prevailing, sometimes mind-narrowing terms. The chapter 'Artists' positions—a large palette' takes us into the practice of art. Contrary to what one might imagine, an artist has several career options. It is essential to be alert to positioning if one is to have insight in and scope for one's own practice, but also to win respect from society and appreciation/acknowledgement from the 'art market'. The chapter dealing with that pivotal theme is the longest. It concludes with a peek into twenty-two artists' practices, combined with varying professional options.

In 'The artist and his environment, from victim to free spirit', I deal with the artist's capacity to understand the art world and, in particular, the art market, and gain control of it. The further growth and development of the artistic practice, the concomitant setting of priorities and the importance of mental and/or physical mobility are explored in 'Dynamic artishood, growth and mobility'.

'Fabric of knowledge exchange, collaboration and friendship' tempers the idea of self-reliance and the makeable world, by indicating, alongside individual possibilities of intervention and kinds of small-scale collaboration (the predominant focus in this publication), areas in which collective action helps in surmounting social barriers and promoting common interests.

Signals from artists' studios recur in the first part, when the findings of thirty-three artists are analysed, the positions of eleven artists are dealt with, as are the twenty-two sketches of mixed practices as mentioned earlier.

In the second part, which has the overarching title 'Building blocks', concrete examples are provided of the terms used in Part I. Chapters 6, 7 and 8 examine, in turn, the development and realisation of plans within an individual and a collective route, monetary matters and the curriculum vitae as a personal mirror and a data base.

In 'Origins'—Part III—I expose my career and track record, as well as giving insight into how to acquire 'hands-on' expertise, I also analyse several generally applicable career patterns. The writing of this publication was a process that took years, starting in the 1990s at the Rijksakademie (research residency) in Amsterdam. I tapped many sources and many people contributed to the contents of this handbook. Information on 'the making of' is given in the final chapter, which ties in directly with the description and analysis of my career and contains my acknowledgements.

The extensive table of contents following this introduction lists the subject matter; it constitutes a condensed summary for speedy reading.

Janwillem Schrofer, Heemstede, 2018

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*Gaba, Ryan Gander, Antony Gormley, Hama Goro,*

*Sigurdur Gudmundsson, Hans van Houwelingen, Joan*

*Jonas, Germaine Kruip, Matt Mullican, Michelangelo*

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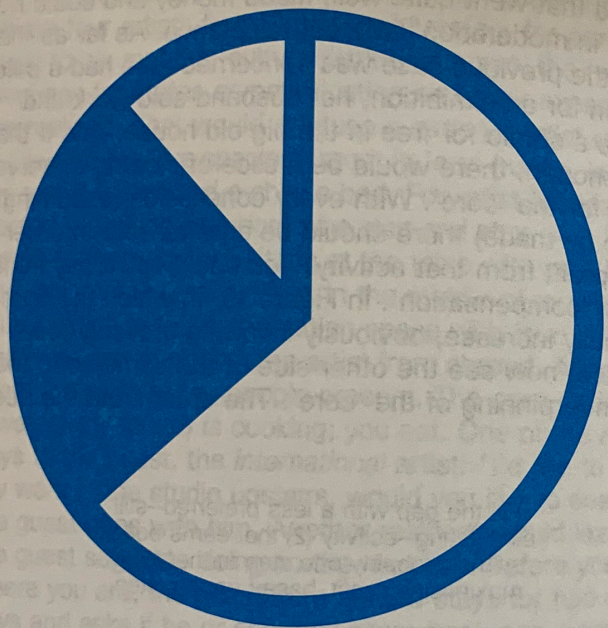
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## Building block: Not peanuts, but payment

A budget says much about plans, wishes and demands, it is a programmatic representation. For instance, in the section 'Creative process and money; Integral project budgeting' effectively reflects the connection between figures and the creation process. Not as a bookkeeping exercise, but as an approach that brings about awareness of investments, enhances self-respect, contributes to personal profiling, helps in the acquisition of financial resources, also stimulates the social reassessment of artists. Even though in 'Financial components' we take a closer look at practical matters like needs, income and expenditure, it is again a matter of considering essentials in depth, before going on to apply them to the artistic practice. The sections 'Pricing art works' and 'Transfer of work' establish a connection between the significance of the work for the artist and the prerequisites concerning (the moment of) its transfer to the buyer or person who commissioned it. The actual pricing is dealt with briefly and seen in the context of informative models, which, incidentally, only apply until market forces (be they positive or negative) put their relevance into perspective.

## Creative process and money

One of the most moving parts of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe) is when Eliza, clutching her baby Harry to her breast, leaps from one block of ice to another and, exhausted, eventually reaches the other side of the Ohio river. The final step after a long journey. That kind of leap forward is not the worst survival strategy, but it is impossible to keep on repeating a solution like that. Time and again, many an artist fails (or manages at the last minute) to realise a project, by always working with short-term perspectives (happy that he is 'allowed' to be an artist). "If I can just get financing for the final step, the project is finished." As such there is little wrong with incrementalising (step-by-step) financing models, like incidental crowd-funding, but with recurring, largish-scale projects it will not work, partly because willingness to invest in the same artist diminishes.

An example from a studio at the Rijksakademie: a resident artist approached me with an urgent question: "I need € 6,000 for my project, I've got 2,000, but how can I secure the remaining 4,000?" My question: "Have you got a few hours to spare? I want, must, know all about your project and how it came about." We got to work, and a summary (partly fictionalised) of our conversation follows.

- How did the plan for the art project originate, was the idea directly related to prior activities and acquired expertise?
- When was that? Four years ago. Did you immediately start working on it, a lot? A few hours a week perhaps? When did that increase, for example to a day a week? And in your studio before coming to the Rijksakademie for two years, one day a week—say, 80 days in two years, so 640 hours in that period. And this last year, three days a week, so another 120 days. Altogether 960 hours.
- That residency in Japan—was that also defined by this project, was it part of your research? And I gather that the Mondriaan Fund's contribution to your travel expenses was intended for developing networks focusing on the

presentation of this project abroad after its completion.

- Please show some documentation on the project. Did that prototype a few months back really cost € 500 in materials? What technical specialists advised and supervised you, did they spend a lot of time on it? And lucky you—that a friend was able to help you for an entire week.

- So this year you spent about 50% of the resources and infrastructure provided here at the Rijksakademie Research Residency on this project?

- You will be investing € 2,000 of your own resources and are still looking for another € 4,000. Correct?

Have I properly understood everything you have told me? OK, we'll make a fresh estimate, content-based and integral, not just one marginal component, not just the end.

### Integral project budgeting

Briefly, in seven steps:

1. Expertise acquired in previous projects, instrumental for this project.	p.m.
2. Development of idea (4 years ago)	p.m.
3. Exploration, research, models and design (640 hours and 960 hours) 1,600 hours (3 and 2 years previously) at € 25	€ 40,000
4. Residency in Japan (cost of participation, accommodation, residency and travel paid for by a fund)	€ 12,000
5. Travel allowance (network development for presentation)	€ 2,000

# 6. Prototype

- material via Rijksakademie (see 7) p.m.
- advice and supervision, artistic and technical, Rijksakademie (see 7) p.m.
- assistance from friend (40 hours at € 25) € 1,000

7. Rijksakademie: studio including energy, infrastructure (library, collections, Cantina, etc.), technical advice and supervision, research and production material, accommodation, grant, of which 50% used this year for this project € 33,000

# 8. Still to invest:

- from own means € 2,000
- from experiments fund € 1,000
- required (external) liquidity/ additional resources € 3,000

If we review the origin and history of this protect, the turnaround time and time spent, all expenses for research, everything—apart from very marginal items (which you include, pro memoria, because they would otherwise thwart the project)—you capitalise ‘everything’. Including all the residencies and grants financed by others, help from friends, we arrive at a total investment (regardless of where financing came from) of € 94,000 and not € 6,000 for a final ‘ice floe’. And I immediately promised help, as it was a good project.

Now he could approach a financier, fund or maecenas with head held high and say: “This project costs altogether € 94,000; I have already been instrumental in investing € 90,000. I was looking for € 4,000, but the director of the Rijksakademie has just promised me € 1,000 from the experiments kitty. So I still have only € 3,000 to go.” Many a financier will be favourably disposed to make a modest contribution to the success of a great project with such an impressive track record of personal input.

An approach like this has several benefits or values, in which I identify three levels:

– At the personal (micro) level you increase awareness of what you have already managed to do, how many people and resources you have succeeded in mobilising and the scope of your investment. It increases your self-respect and can contribute to your personal profiling in the art world.

– At a tactical-organisational (meso) level, this approach increases your chance of ultimate financing considerably.

– At a social (macro) level an approach of this type contributes to the emancipation of artists, to a social reappraisal thanks to greater awareness of ‘everything it entails’.

The essence of this account is that you are not ‘out in the cold’ with your work. Everything that is visible and less visible is collected, you have acquired it thanks to your individual qualities: your work, your personality, your reputation, your approach to a complex project, your dealings with professionals and friends, and, last but not least, your ability and willingness to speak the language your financier understands. You obtained or mobilised contributions that you went on to invest in a project: a residency in Japan for which you had been invited, assistance from friends who made an effort for you personally, you acquired a place at the Rijksakademie on account of your potential for development, et cetera. The artist is not out in the cold, but is a central figure who takes a decision to earn and a decision to invest.

## Artist subsidises the community

Many of the items in integral project budgeting actually relate to virtual flows of funds. No tangible cash is involved and so misunderstandings can occur. I’ll give another example in which self-awareness, the acquisition of support and the realisation of an artist’s significance for society are reflected insufficiently. To paraphrase an old socialist emancipatory pronouncement, ‘workers do not have the hands of beggars’ thus stressing their social value and significance, and so you could say ‘artists do not have the hands of beggars’.

The executive councillor for culture of a big city had

spoken out, very positively, on the realisation of more live/work accommodation for artists and other creative people, co-financed by the municipality. Saying to an artist that five years after the project was started up, those spaces should become available for new cohorts—by then the municipality would have given enough support out of public funds. The artist explained to me that correct calculation would reveal that an artist contributes to the community with lectures, guest lessons free of charge or for a minimum fee, presentations with little, if any, recompense, defrays the cost of the development stage himself, makes art works available at non-commercial rates, and contributes to events that are important in economic, political, urban planning, social and cultural terms, without an allowance for expenses. Even with monumental projects, the artist invariably pays the final financing out of his own pocket. It then becomes clear that not the artist but the community is the gross earner.

### Financial components

Having reflected on “where do I stand, financially”, as addressed in the section on integral budgeting as a kind of wake-up call, it is now time to look at a few commercial approaches. Let us start with the professional practice with respect to needs and required expenditure on the one hand, and income to cover it, on the other hand. One of the expenses experienced in the practice relates to the ‘personal income’ item—work-related pay—which forms the basis of personal housekeeping. Income required to cover the artist’s private needs (and those of his or her dependents). The economics of the personal household and the professional practice, the ‘business’, are interwoven.

#### Professional practice

The facets of artishood that you activate in your practice influence income and expenditure alike. Positions in the studio, in the laboratory, with commissions, on the stage and as a

designer require means of investment (see ‘Artist’s studio’, investment pressure). With the professional positions of curator, organiser and adviser, the additional costs may be more favourable than expected and as the physical studio starts to play a more modest part, the pressure on expenditure for the studio also decreases. As an educator (if you are employed somewhere as a teacher) additional costs for that professional position are limited, perhaps travel expenses are not adequately met and you have to make up the difference yourself, and you also have some extra expenses for reading matter for study. If your studio also serves as teaching space, it might require a little more expenditure to make it suitable.

#### Expenditure mix in artistic practice

When you start up the business operations for a professional practice, it is worth consulting a financial adviser in order to obtain a tailor-made ‘model’ appropriate for your individual situation and one that is manageable for you. Obviously it is important for your artistic purposes, like being able to create work, being able to make headway with it and continue your own development. Here, a suggestion with a few main themes relating to the connection between professional and private expenditure.

Studio turnover	the outcome of your income mix
Deduct	practice costs: your own ‘labour’ costs, office costs (telephone, subscriptions, administration etc.), housing costs (energy, rent/mortgage for the studio), depreciation (fittings and fixtures and, possibly studio building)
Gross operating result	gross profit or loss

Deduct	tax allocation for investments in Research & Development like study, travel, research, etc. in the framework of practising your profession which are not offset by income, for example contributions from funds.
Net result	if available, to be used to pay off debts, develop new projects and/or increase your own income for personal circumstances, for example changes in balance of mutual position of breadwinner.

### Income mix artistic practice

- 211 First let us examine Figure 19 'Reinforcing basis', in which, with your priorities, in mind, you keep going a step further with 'additional income' to achieve your main goal, to realise the core facets. In the following questions the numbers refer to Figure 20. Which facet/facets of artishood is/are among your highest priorities (1)? What facets are not primary, but are still part of your artistic domain (2)? And so on, depending on each individual definition (broad or narrow) of artishood. What income is not covered but is still important on account of inspiration, relaxation, social contact, independence (3)? And what income is necessary if and when there is an 'emergency' (4)?

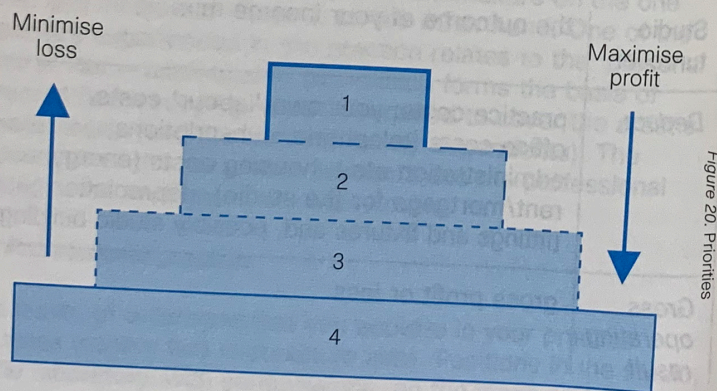


Figure 20. Priorities

Below there is a list of 7 income categories:

- *Income from the (art) market*. Sale of one-off-unique-work; sale of work in editions (multiples, artist's books); representation fees and art library fee; copyright (of visual material); remuneration for assignments and projects.
- *Other income from art*, if your practice is defined broadly, is grouped under 1 and, narrowly, under 2 or even 3. design assignments; payment for curatorship; fee for an organisational job; remuneration with committees, juries and company advice; income from teaching (art), socio-cultural work, museum education, occupational therapy; also earnings from seminars, lectures and publications, or your own activities in the studio or at home; income from a community project.
- *Sidelines*, not related to art, but relating substantively to your personal and/or professional life.
- *Income resulting from economic necessity*, if and as long as inevitable: casual/odd jobs, social benefits and other forms of income.
- *Support programmes* for art projects and artists: starting-, project-, travel-, production grants, and over 20 examples of income components: presentation subsidies, study and research grants, cost of living allowances, loans, contributions of materials; prizes artist residencies or studio programmes.
- *Income from capital* or 'past work': interest and dividend on investments; State pension or pension from the Artists Pension Trust, and sickness benefits.
- *Private and miscellaneous support*: from partner, family, maecenas; from subletting living space when temporarily absent; subletting studio when temporarily absent or 'needs must'.

### Personal circumstances

What do you need and what do you already have? It is wise to make two or three 'needs' scenarios: optimum and minimum, and possibly an ideal situation. It is more about awareness

of what is or can be important than exact, statistical data. Here too, I advise a (serious) approach. Are you alone, are there two of you, are there children—if so, how many, how old? Are you the breadwinner, or you a 'double-income' couple, or is your partner the breadwinner? Is there some social benefit? Do you have possessions, is there a likelihood that you will inherit something from the family at some stage and, if necessary, can you already lay claim to it? What about housing? Do you like what you have, do you share accommodation with others, do you rent or own it, with or without a mortgage or loan from the family? What are the fixed costs for energy, insurance and so on, and the variable costs, the housekeeping budget? Do you, or should you, set aside something for deferred income in illness or old-age?

There are two possible outcomes as regards needs. One is a worst-case scenario: under very high pressure of circumstances, with the material minimum required for your survival on your own or as a family. Another scenario is characterised by a reasonable balance between expenditure and income. When conducting an exercise like this you will discover what you already have and what you might get. The result of the exercise produces an indication of your private needs from income generated by work.

Your own costs from day-to-day operations contribute to three types of costs in your private situation:

- income from work required to cover your needs in accordance with the minimum or optimum scenario, and in favourable circumstances;
- investments in hobbies and your further personal development through study geared to your own interests, unlike R&D costs of the artistic practice and in even more favourable circumstances;
- extra redemptions and allocations for future, unexpected expenditure from personal housekeeping. Ideally, pension contributions are included in the first category

Two examples:

Figure 21a.  
Expenditure at private level (I)  
(minimum level)

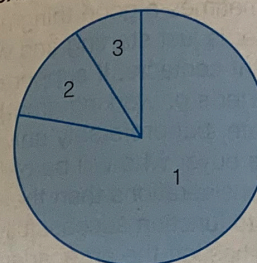
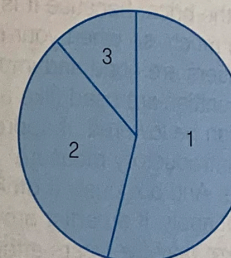


Figure 21b.  
Expenditure at private level (II)  
(optimum level)



In the left-hand diagram almost all income is needed to cover primary necessities of life (1), little is left for your own development (2) and there is hardly any scope to achieve a healthier financial structure with only a minimal buffer to provide for contingencies (3). The right-hand diagram presents a more positive picture, i.e. there is more income and, as a consequence, greater leeway for hobbies and personal development (2) and slightly more scope for unexpected 'incidents' (3).

## Pricing art works

The subject of pricing is somewhat shrouded in secrecy: evidently it is 'not done' to say much about it. You often hear artists say to one another: "'Just' decide on a price." As a budding artist you won't get far with that. Of course there are no hard and fast rules, of course you should ask around, deliberate and, above all, do not switch off your emotions when determining a price. A few pieces of advice follow.

### Price calculation

When prices are calculated, the following elements play a part: wage/hours invested, materials, rent, energy and studio maintenance, and miscellaneous costs.

Factors relating to reduction or increase in price can also be taken into account: stage of development; use of supporting artists' amenities; vulnerability and life span of work; expectations when sale is postponed, and also—tentatively—the extent of the

buyer's enthusiasm and respect for the work. It can be important to reduce the price, because it is sometimes a good thing not to charge too much, so when your career is just starting and when the purchasers are good and important contacts. If supporting artists' amenities are used (like a starter's or working grant), the price can be lowered, if appropriate, but preferably only as a tactical 'introductory measure' for a buyer who will be of future importance. And obviously if other considerations than the purely commercial apply. If an artist proves to function successfully in the market, say five years after he has left the art academy, he can raise the price—assuming the market permits. It can of course be sooner or later.

There are several approaches to the subject of pricing: "don't talk about it, better to keep silent". Or "trust the people with whom you do business, and leave it to them". That will be the gallery owner, collector or patron. Or "make sure you build up a good relationship of trust with your business partners and discuss prices openly, as good colleagues, familiarising yourself with the material and the vocabulary—as we saw earlier." In the latter case it is worth first finding out (rational inventory) whether you and your business partner have enough of a common basis (emotional observation), and also to study some reference material. Three approaches to calculation follow, stemming from the United States, the Netherlands and Germany.

#### Models

The first source is a quantitative model from the Working Artists and the Greater Economy (W.A.G.E.) in New York, founded in 2008 as an activist pressure group, the aim being: to regulate the payment of artist fees by non-profit organisations. They use a 'fee calculator' comprising fourteen price categories ([www.wageforwork.com/2/fee-calculator](http://www.wageforwork.com/2/fee-calculator)), namely: solo exhibition, solo project, two-person exhibition, group exhibition, 3–5 artists, group exhibition, 6+ artists, performance of existing work, performance, commission of new work, solo screening, event with multiple participants, artist talk or reading, lecture/seminar/workshop, existing text for publication, commissioned text for publication, day rate for performers.

The Netherlands developed the artists' fees Guideline, following discussions and negotiations between representatives of artists and presentation bodies, and possibly also fuelled by the W.A.G.E. fee calculator. It became effective on 1 January 2017 for 'non-selling' exhibitions at the participating institutes in the Netherlands. The complete guideline, checklist and calculator, in both Dutch and English, can be found at [www.kunstenaarshonorarium.nl](http://www.kunstenaarshonorarium.nl). Without mentioning sums, since they vary over time, it can be summarised as follows. A distinction is made between set remuneration for the production of new work (not counting expense allowance), modification of existing work and usage fee (representation fee) for existing work in an exhibition, including allowance for activities relating to the work, for example its mounting. The table with minimum remunerations also differentiates the allowances according to cases in which more than one artist is the 'supplier'.

The third model addressed here, the Pitz model from Germany, also has a quantitative focus. The artist Hermann Pitz included the Pitz Formula in his compilation *ABC der Klasse Pitz. Dictionnaire raisonné des arts* (2014) consisting of provisional calculations. It is based on five different formulas focusing on two- and three-dimensional 'one-off' pieces, installations, small sculptures in editions and two-dimensional work in editions. It is primarily intended for artists starting out on their professional careers before pricing ceases to be model-based and is 'taken over' by market processes.

#### The force of the market

The balance between supply and demand, the artist's track record with exhibitions, publications and actual selling prices, and his intersubjective reputation with professionals like inner circles of curators, collectors, patrons, art lovers and buyers, as well as the wider public, have been dealt with directly or indirectly in this publication, for instance in 'The artist and his environment: from victim to free spirit'.

When an artist arrives in the high-end art market by virtue of such factors, pricing models as described can be put aside and possibly looked back on nostalgically at a later stage as

the time "when everything used to be straightforward". The same applies for the artist in the low-end art market, who will occasionally take out the calculating models, looking longingly towards the future: "If only I no longer needed to feel like a beggar, but a worthy interlocutor."

## Transfer of work

*Significance of the work.* The work can, for a wide variety of personal reasons, have such great significance for the artist, that 'ordinary' sale is not appropriate at that stage. There are several possible considerations:

- The work is important now, for this stage in development and "I want to keep it with me for now". You could then say to a buyer: "Please come back another time, then and then" or "You can buy it now, but I'll hand it over in four months or a year, for example, and you can pay the other half of the purchase price then" (delivery time).

- The work forms a turning point in the artist's development; he can conclude that a work like this should be purchased by a special buyer, for example, a museum—thus enhancing his reputation.

- The work is part of the artist's oeuvre that should definitely be kept intact and complete; in that case, it is essential that it remain in his possession for the time being.

- With its content or form, the work plays such a crucial role for the artist himself that he decides either not to sell it or to sell it to a very good personal contact, for instance a friend or good artist-colleague with whom he has a relationship of trust.

Incidentally, it is always worth agreeing on the following *four principles*, and specifying them in a contract of sale:

- The buyer will conserve (and insure) the work properly, in the interests of the work, the buyer and the artist. That may seem unnecessary, but the 'prudent person' principle is not always applied as a matter-of-course.

- The artist can avail himself of his own work for a period of five years after sale, for example, at most once every two years, for a loan for an exhibition, and after that period renegotiation is always possible. This is in the interests of both the artist and the buyer, as presentation in a museum usually increases the work's value and the artist's reputation.
- The artist will be consulted, or at least informed by the owner if the work is presented in public, and under which conditions.
- If the work is resold, the artist will be informed as to the new owner (and preferably the price of transaction). This is the most sensitive point, and quite a few buyers are very much against it.

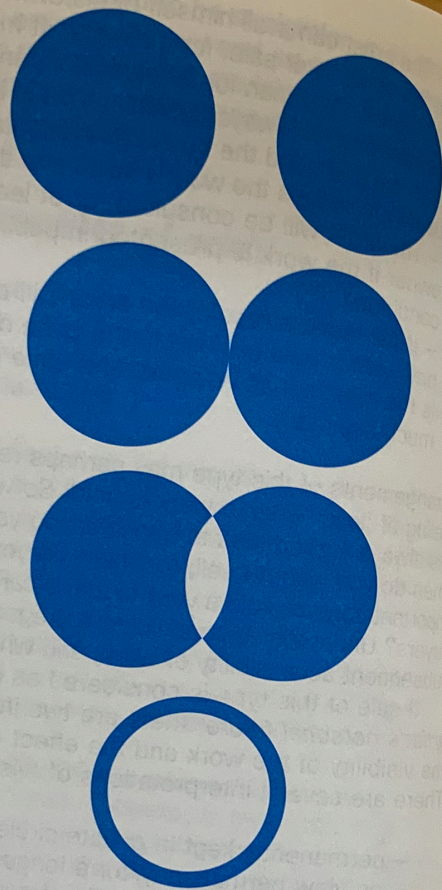
Arrangements of this type may perhaps reduce the unpleasant feeling of 'loss' when a work is sold. So when selling a work, it is always a good idea to consider: do you really want to sell; when do you want to sell; to whom do you want to sell: friend, important contact, with a view to future career, or also to 'ordinary' buyers? Under which conditions, as regards delivery time and subsequent accessibility of work, and what would that cost.

If sale of this type is considered as an *investment in the artist's personal future*, there are two important aspects, i.e. the visibility of the work and the effect on the artistic practice. There are several interpretations of 'visibility'. The work is:

- permanently kept in private circles;
- on view permanently/for a longer time, because it is a work in public space intended for a large, mixed audience;
- on view irregularly/hardly ever, for a specific audience, because the work is mostly in the storage premises of a museum or collector.

Sales affect the reputé of the artist when the work is displayed in interesting places, when one buyer tips off another, and when the work is sold to a collector whose name would not be out of place on the artist's CV. Even without public 'visibility', the work's and the artist's reputé can increase when the work features in a respectable public or private collection.

# 8



## Building block: Curriculum Vitae as synthesis

Curriculum literally means 'course' (of a race) and 'curriculum vitae' (CV) is a way of saying 'the course of (my) life'. The curriculum is also the equivalent of the learning process. The first meaning is retrospective, the second prospective. I will follow a similar approach to the one taken in the preceding chapters and not deal in this 'building block' with the curriculum vitae as something in the pluperfect, but as the synthesis between past and present, a future-orientated action plan. In this chapter the various functions of a CV are examined.

## Separate worlds: the artistic CV

Artists' CVs often omit background—personal—information, interests and projects during the individual's youth and life beyond the professional. Moreover, the CV covering an artistic career is frequently arranged chronologically, so 'autonomous' work first, followed by less autonomous, such as applied art, and lastly some fringe activities. If several artists' positions are involved they are often not reflected to best advantage. This chapter describes the added value of a more inclusive CV, as a representation of, and, primarily for yourself.

During 'Positioning' workshops at institutes of art education, I ask students to send me a CV in advance. They ask what that CV should look like. My answer is: "I'm not telling you, see for yourself." It is a callous test with a worrying outcome: a CV lacking the place and year of birth, starting on the first day at the art academy, as if nothing had taken place before that; projects, including quite interesting ones in the areas of music or writing outside the course programme, are not mentioned. Jobs, big or small, even when indicating competences which art education proudly note for its accreditation (think of collaboration and communicative skills) are entirely absent.

Nine out of ten artists' CVs have the same omissions, important components which receive too little attention:

- Name, website and e-mail address, as well as 'lives and works in' are usually included, but place and year of birth are quite often omitted. Personal background is very rarely mentioned, past life and family make-up are not referred to, and there is no personal profile.
- Education usually only relates to art education, other (university and higher vocational) studies are omitted, and secondary education is only rarely mentioned. However, residencies are fashionable and are noted.
- Exhibitions take the first place, usually headed by a list of solo exhibitions, followed by group exhibitions, then collections, prizes and grants.

- Assignments follow, lectureships often come as an afterthought, and projects and other activities hardly get a mention. Usually, the artist's own publications and a biography of the artist are not stated.

A CV featuring a ubiquitous hierarchy between 'non-commissioned (so-called autonomous) art' and 'low' art (with less prestige in the art market) is conformist and geared purely to the traditional museum segment of the art market. It is based on the idea of the 'autonomous' artist, waiting in the isolation of his studio, for the 'redeeming' gallery owner or museum curator. An artistic CV of this type barely works, if at all, in such a limited view of artisthood. What does the set, standard line-up of exhibitions tell about the artist? It contains no distinguishing tie-in, giving the reader the feeling of dealing with a format and not a person. A more inclusive CV can actually arouse the reader's curiosity, also about the exhibitions.

But what does it actually matter who in the art market asks the artist for a CV? Is it of consequence?

## Significance, value and content of a CV

As was indicated in Chapter 1, in 'Business know-how and promotion', artists do not by nature take care of their promotion and public relations themselves. You do not sell more with portfolios and CVs, you do not disrupt distorted market relations in which there is a large supply of art and a limited demand. There are exceptions: presentations of graduation work at art academies. In such cases it is worth having visual and verbal material at your disposal. Visitors are particularly keen to have information about artists in whose work they are interested.

### *Mirror, logbook, database and 'signpost'*

It is sensible to look for a new, strictly personal approach for the CV which tells more than the 'artistic CV' described above. I shall single out five values or functions.

- First of all, the CV is a *mirror, a logbook and a signpost*. A mirror which reflects you, your career and your life, a logbook of events, and a pointer for further, new steps.
- Secondly, the CV forms the *personal database of your network*, an overview of what you have done, where, when and with whom, in your artistic practice. Unlike a list of names in an address directory, your CV adds colour to your network.
- Thirdly, the CV in an integrated, complete form, is a basis for *data management* (e.g. on your own website); in a way, you are guiding what critics, curators, gallery owners, academics and others write or say about you, if only because you take the initiative yourself and do not passively wait and see. It is your move: "This contains information that I think is important, if you would like to know more, please ask me and tell what you make of it and what you want to do with it before making it 'public'."
- Fourthly, the CV is a necessary document when you enrol in a Master's programme, at a post-academic institute, artist's residency or apply for a grant.
- Fifthly—and lastly—the CV is a document that may be of use when you meet someone for the first time and are asked *for more details*. Also, it would not go amiss to have an informative, attractive CV on your website—but not too prominent and not too detailed. It does no harm to let others make an effort to get to know you: arouse curiosity and don't satisfy it too quickly!

#### *Content, a personal composition*

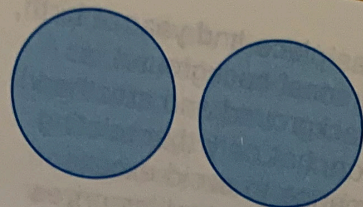
Obviously, the content of each person's CV is as individual as a fingerprint, but the composition or form also varies from one person to another. I make four divisions. Most require introspection, but it is not an easy matter to reveal personal aspects and relate them to your professional career. 'Interchange'—getting feedback—is important when drawing up a CV of this type. It can be a dialogue with a confidant from among your friends, a mentor or other interlocutor with relevant experience, but some people are able to achieve an approach like this in a dialogue with themselves.

1. *Personal*. Standard data such as place and year of birth, with a brief description of the personal background, as well as a concise link between background and artisthood.
2. *Learning*. Mention all education, not only that relating to art. If it is too complex, summarise to avoid excess of detail. Artist residencies and grants, as well as prizes and awards can be seen as 'learning moments' rather than separate prestigious events. Learning not only entails the acquisition of knowledge, but also passing it on. This section should also contain artist talks, lectures, seminars, written contributions, guest lectureships and teaching posts. If the teaching post is an important part of artisthood, it is more appropriate to mention it in the next section of the CV.

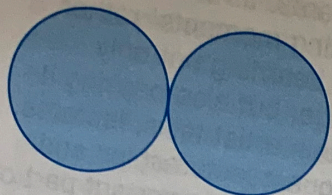
3. *Connecting*. Identify what your most important artist's positions are with respect to connecting your activities to the public. If two or three positions are dominant in the individual artistic practice, you should avoid ranking them hierarchically. So do not put the positions one below the other, but beside one another (in two columns).

Then something unexpected takes place: cross connections become more apparent to you: one inspires the other, or one contact generates another. And if there are three important positions, make two columns, for example, that end with a third position underneath, taking up the entire width. Admittedly that position comes after the other two, but is 'upgraded' to an equivalent position as the base for the other two (see example II).

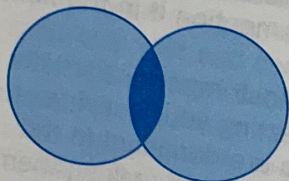
The different positions can relate to one another in various ways. You can choose between: noting them separately, touching with a relationship arising between the two positions, or partially overlapping with the possibility of a third area arising, or fully overlapping. See the following diagram:



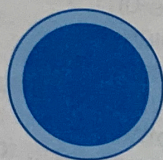
They exist side-by-side



They touch, energise each other without intermingling: osmosis (or horizontal induction)



They overlap partially, perhaps three domains come about instead of two



They overlap fully and become one (new) domain, two facets fuse and produce a new artist's position

It is not only important to denote the positions, but also to indicate them in keeping with what they have in common, the core of your artishood. That core is more likely to relate to the facets of artishood than to artists' positions within the professional, market-orientated practice. For example, if you think of the 'social dimension of an object' in public space Or: a teaching post energises you as you become acquainted with new, unexpected ideas and confronts you with your studio work, et cetera.

When you single out your professional activities in the art world in general and the art market in particular, there is always some form of collaboration. It is very important to be precise and, more especially, generous. Mention precisely

titles, locations and data concerning exhibitions, assignments, lectures and projects. Be generous in indicating who commissioned the work and which other artists participated, which curator played a part, particularly if it is someone your trust and with whom you have worked well. You can play around with the arrangement of that information: details in italics or in a smaller letter size whet the curiosity, and similarly, a modest footnote can have considerable impact.

4. *Remainder*. What happens to the work and the information on the artist and the art work? In this section, collections (including public collections) are listed with their names, and private collections are included anonymously or with just a few names. The same applies for a bibliography (with monographs, articles, reviews, television programmes and so on). Artist's books are more at home in the 'Connecting' section as art works that link up with the public, unless the book has the character of a documentary or catalogue.

## Basic portfolio and biographical notes

The main purpose of a CV as described here, is to document your own 'history', in both professional and personal terms, with a view to the future. This kind of chronicling also entails making and maintaining an image bank, so there is sufficient suitable visual material to draw up an overview of work in the form of a portfolio. It is not a bad idea to make and keep notes recording personal observations, experiences and opinions. Just think of reflecting on the work, the working process, sources that have or have not been used, artist statements and personal recollections that are, or have been of some importance for the work and working process.

In short, there are three kinds of files:

- the CV, as dealt with extensively above;
- the image bank or basic portfolio;
- biographical notes and observations.

These three ingredients are important for:

- compiling personal documentation, for your own use as a mirror, logbook and database;
- enrolling or applying for follow-up studies, artist residency and grants from funds and authorities;
- producing printed information for potential collectors, gallery owners, patrons, critics, curators, interested parties outside the art world. Only supply that information on request. And do not forget the people in your surroundings, your friends and relations, who will be pleased to have this information;
- designing a website—nowadays an indispensable element of every artistic practice; it can also function as a base for Instagram and social media. Not that it is all that profitable, but it is considered unprofessional not to have one.

*Personal documentation* can be as extensive as you wish, but at all events includes a CV, biographical notes, records of work and working process, artist statements, as well as anything you think you need for your mirror, logbook etc. and applications or for interested parties.

*Applications* entail more. That aspect is not dealt with in this publication because it is only possible to provide relevant information after careful consideration of selection and matching processes in general and detailed examination (if possible) of the requirements that vary from one case to another, and the procedure in question. The minimum will include a selection of visual material, a CV, specific motivation and information on the plan or art project.

As the artist's career and reputation progress, the importance of the CV for interested parties will diminish; by then it is no longer a matter of a tabula rasa arousing curiosity about the beginner. When an artist finishes his studies and embarks on his career, information provided by the CV is at its most important, whereas not much can be said about his artistic achievements. I recommend that a concise information leaflet

of two pages at most be drawn up for graduation work, based on the CV. Think of a personal mix of CV, 'quote' from the biography and a selection from the portfolio (the same elements as used for the personal website). A printed leaflet of this type should be unpretentious, generous and informative as such—so not making do with a referral to the artist's website, implying the reader should 'see for himself'.

Following on from 'values' of a CV, one can gauge the difference in communicative intensity in the varying 'temperatures' when the new CV is used:

– on own initiative, unsolicited;	COLD
– through social media, with known recipients;	LUKEWARM
– on request, by a gallery owner, collector or when applying for a grant, a course, a residency;	WARM
– just for yourself, as mirror, database, 'signpost', etc.	VERY WARM

## Two examples of a CV, plus information leaflet

Here two different CV approaches that can be pinpointed from the infinite number of variations based on artists' positions. They are 'Artist in the studio and in public space' and 'Studio and educator and organiser'. Apart from the 'Personal' block, they have unconventional headings: Learning, Connecting and Remainder. The headings are intended only for your own use, and not for third parties—the person reading the CV will not have a clue what such headings stand for.

# I. Example: artist in the studio and artist in public space

## PERSONAL

Personal background: interests in the family home (or else developed yourself), father's and mother's work (for example, suggesting an international, nomadic youth), family with siblings (or in fact space for your own world as an only child), social, cultural and/or religious background (and what might, in a nutshell, be of interest for those 'reading' the work or working process), combining and connecting various cultural interests (for example, 'writing of prose and poetry had faded somewhat into the background, but have recently resurfaced alongside visual work'), studies (for example, if erratic: 'broad interest, apparent in a varied palette of programmes, some of which are incomplete'). Keep it short, but as complete as possible. It makes you 'human'.

### Personal

- name, website, e-mail address
- place and year of birth
- lives and works in

## LEARNING

- education, including secondary school/schools (and location)
- artist residencies
- prizes, grants
- artist talks, seminars, lectures
- guest lectureships
- own articles (about your own art or that of others), no artist's books, they belong in the next section on work and public (Connecting). No articles and reviews on your work, they belong in the bibliography (Remainder) and no literary work because that belongs in the next block (as a connecting position).

## CONNECTING

Provide an explanatory introduction to a multifaceted artisthood, as in this example: 'the studio forms the basis for the work on show in a gallery and museum, as well as for work—commissioned—in public space. Erroneously termed 'autonomous' work and more 'applied' work are complementary (sources of inspiration, of energy, widening of technical scope, interaction with varying types in different worlds) and mutually reinforcing (through integration and actually confrontation).' Consider and choose your words carefully.

### Presentations

Titles, locations and exhibition dates, solo or groups, supervision/ curatorship, etc.

### Commissions and projects

Titles, locations and dates, patrons, particulars if any (possibly grouping by theme instead of by date).

## REMAINDER

### Collections, bibliography

Collections, bibliography, etc. If one section takes up too much space: reduce and condense (so not 40 articles), set aside chronology (no list of date to start with), change your angle and go for content: themes, writers, media (in this part you could add dates and, in moderation put them in running text in brackets.)

## II. Example 2: artist in the studio, as an educator and as an organiser

**PERSONAL** (see previous example)

### LEARNING

If the position of educator is one of the two or three chief positions, omit from this section: artist talks, seminars, guest lectureships—include them in the following part (connecting) with lectureships and transfer.

### CONNECTING

The introductory text links up 'school', 'studio' and 'platform', for example: *'The work is linked to and derives from questions relating to the position of the middle-aged woman, my social involvement is shaped in my lectureship, inside and outside official programmes, namely in the platforms in my studio, in artists' initiatives, in my own publications. My studio work is not concealed in my lectureship, but is not always in the forefront.'* In this way you create cohesion, for yourself and for those who are interested in you.

*Educatorship/transfer*  
Where, when, with whom, particulars (special exhibitions, artist's books and so on).

*Exhibitions*  
If too 'scant' in scope (compared with lectureships) perhaps add further explanation, (e.g. special themes) etc.

*Platforms*  
If a third position forms an important mainstay alongside lectureships and exhibitions, such as organising meetings, artist residencies or other artist initiatives, the position can also be given a place, namely: self-organised (what, where, when), with others (why, with whom, where, when).

The platforms of 'the artist as an organiser' will 'support' the two columns above, before lectureship and exhibitions.

### REMAINDER

See the previous example. Perhaps say something about 'remainder' from the angles of both lectureship and transfer to future generations of young artists. Document using catalogues, articles and collections based on the 'exhibitions' component, and also define follow-ups you give based on your platforms and the feedback you get. So, specify the 'harvest' of your efforts.

### *There is no standard*

If you have an artistic practice that presents itself as an 'organisation', you can, if you like, suffice with a more simple CV for the 'outside world'. In that case, the undertaking is 'displayed in the shop window', the personal details of the artist as the 'shopkeeper' stay inside. Banu Cennetoğlu (Rijksakademie, 2002–2003) makes choices what she reveals and what not. Her 'company' BAS (artist's space, books and artist talks) in Istanbul comes first; her personal life is normally concealed. However, the invitation to make an art project 'book of professions' challenged her to make another, compelling CV, in which she does not hesitate to mention various professional activities and her private life, with no urgent order of preference, in her own words, and in a repetitive style.

2015-2012 / Istanbul	mother, freelance artist, editor, director of a non-profit organisation, collector, accountant, organiser, adviser;
2012-2007 / Istanbul	mother, freelance artist, editor, director of a non-profit organisation, collector, accountant, organiser;
2007-2005 / Istanbul	freelance artist, editor, director of a non-profit organisation, collector, accountant, organiser;
2005-2004 / Amsterdam	freelance artist;
2004-2002 / Amsterdam	subsidised artistic practitioner;
2002-1999 / New York	coffee-shop manager who photographs;
1990-1996 / New York	professional photographer, barmaid, coffee-shop barista, coat-checker, babysitter;
1996-1995 / Paris	professional photographer, sales person, translator;
1995-1994 / Paris	photography student, photo darkroom cleaner, sales person;
1994-1993 / Istanbul	psychology student, professional photographer, fashion editor;
1993-1990 / Istanbul	psychology student, photographer's assistant, fashion editor;
1990-1989 / Istanbul	psychology student, tourist guide, translator, trade fair hostess, animator;
1989-1986 / Istanbul	high school student, private tutor.

Source: conceived for [www.bookofprofessions.blogspot.com.tr](http://www.bookofprofessions.blogspot.com.tr)

### *A concise information leaflet*

Divide up your CV in the way suggested: Personal, Learning, Connecting and Remainder. A few tips for fleshing out a scant CV.

**PERSONAL.** Consider adding a personal quote after having given standard information on where you were born, are currently living and working. For example "the road from the farm (or Protestant village) to the art academy was long and hard" (it tells that you are independent and can stay the course, motivated, strong-willed and courageous). Or "musical family, I opted first for the visual arts, for me music takes second place (tells: cultural background, makes choices for himself, wide interests, dual talent?).

**LEARNING.** All secondary education, even if only partially completed. Consider adding a sentence to precede 'education': "Because of widespread interests and somewhat unsettled family circumstances, a diversity of schooling prior to the serious focus on visual art and philosophy (or something else with which you have evidently familiarised yourself) during the last five years"(tells: self-assured, no fool, seeks and finds).

**CONNECTING.** Before listing your professional activities, for example in the relevant columns, provide a professional profile serving to overarch your activities, such as: "In the studio I generally work alone, and organise various activities together with others inside the art world and outside it." You might add a recent photo of yourself with a good likeness accompanying a project in the studio (a reminder for interested parties).

### So now...

If you are satisfied with your new CV approach, a considerable distance has been covered and much has been achieved.

The personal background has been examined and an effort has been made to condense and integrate it in the career path. Personal history and positioning in the art world and society as a whole have been compacted into one or two sentences.

The career has been reviewed. The artistic practice re-balanced by reassessing and interconnecting the individual positions, preceding them with a concise profile that unites those facets or positions. There is now order rather than disorder.

An overall picture is achieved by grouping the 'blocks'. A profile or 'pattern' may emerge that reveals the artist as a researcher, maker, scientist, interventionist, magician, host or hostess, or a helicopter pilot—crossing through the various facets.

This, broadly speaking, is what a different variation on the CV amounts to. The details are a powerful source of information. When names of curators, patrons and others are included, they will be with you for life.

It is a major exercise to draw up a CV like this, but it is worth while. You have:

- a mirror, logbook and signpost;
- a personal database of your network;
- a basis for data management, and
- a document for when the occasion arises, with application to an institute, or upon request.

# Part III.

## Colophon

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At the time I got a lot from your two workshops which I enjoyed at ArtEZ. I also benefited greatly from the way you saw to my CV [...]. I'm very enthusiastic about your e-mail: how splendid that there's a publication on its way! That's an achievement that would be worth my last euro; I still bear your lessons in mind in my practice. [...]. You've got my backing already!

Rosanne Jonkhout, graduating student ArtEZ –  
Arnhem (2017)

- Very generous sharing of non-intrusive, non-normative or prescriptive navigational tools;
  - Empowering, in the sense that it provided content that allows for agency, control and the avoidance of exploitation (the part on how to make a budget and how to be correctly compensated for your immaterial labour);
  - Allowing for space and providing concrete formulations on how alternative possibilities can materialise while being of significance, rather than formatting artists for the 'art' market;
  - Very happy to see the artist treated as worker and social agent rather than individualistic genius to be randomly selected by the market or not;
  - The part on how to 'smell' the air and figure out if you should commit in any kind of collaboration beforehand was also very clever; given its hard to read economic collaborations through an affective filter.
- Very educative and well designed, fitted a lot of important things to say and practice without feeling overwhelming or boring. Thanks!

Marika Konstantinidou, graduating student Academy  
of Fine Arts Vienna (2018)

Artist as  
a curator

Artist as  
an organiser

Artist as  
an adviser

Artist as  
an educator

Artist as  
a change  
agent

'Visual artist' is a term with untold interpretations, nuances and meanings. But how, as an artist (or designer, photographer, or other 'independent creator'), do you become who you are and who you would like to be? What fundamental questions, characteristics, dilemmas, ambitions, restrictions and realities play a part? How can you guide your artistic practice, the main criterion being to answer the question: "where do I stand and what do I stand for?"

*Plan and Play, Play and Plan* invites the artist to reach considerations, often based on analytical models, that will help to determine his/her position. This book has been written by Janwillem Schrofer, director of the Rijksakademie (Amsterdam) from 1982 to 2010, an esteemed international institute, where artists with a number of years' professional experience are provided with their own studios for two years. Schrofer knows from practical experience the complexity of the artist's questions and dilemmas, the many areas in which the artist is involved and how important self-reflection and self-determination are. He has scrutinized his considerations and, assembled notes—based on many interviews with a wide variety of artists—assimilating them into an appealing book in which terminology, background and questions requiring reflection form a cohesive whole.

This log-cum-reflective book is intended for artists and those who wish to become artists, as well as anyone who works with artists. The book does not provide 'recipes' or simple solutions, but delves into the very fibre of the artist's profession, and invites the reader to explore a sustainable artistic practice.

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