



**ART SCHOOL
DIFFERENCES**

Researching Inequalities and Normativities
in the field of Higher Art Education

Exclusion from inside out: The intersectional working of class in artistic education

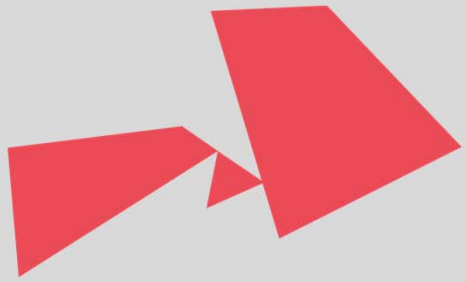
Educational Exclusion Strand

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PARSE conference EXCLUSION

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Faculty of Fine, Applied and Performing Arts, Gothenburg, Sweden



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Conditions

- ❖ Cooperation between 3 Swiss art schools
 - ❖ Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK)
 - ❖ Geneva: Haute école d'art et de design de Genève (HEAD – Genève) & Haute école de musique de Genève (HEM Genève)
- ❖ Duration: 3 years (2014 – 2016)

Initiative and leadership

- ❖ Initiated by the Institute for Art Education, ZHdK
- ❖ Research design by Carmen Mörsch and Catrin Seefranz
- ❖ Co-led by Philippe Saner and Sophie Vögele with their team and 7 co-research groups



Aim

- ❖ Inquiry into how social inequality is produced and reproduced
- ❖ Thereby make structures of dominance 'visible'
- ❖ Emphasis on structures of discrimination; esp. racist, sexist, and classist
- ❖ Initiate a process of self-critical reflexion on institutions
- ❖ Achieve more inclusive, pluralist and democratic structures (fields of action)



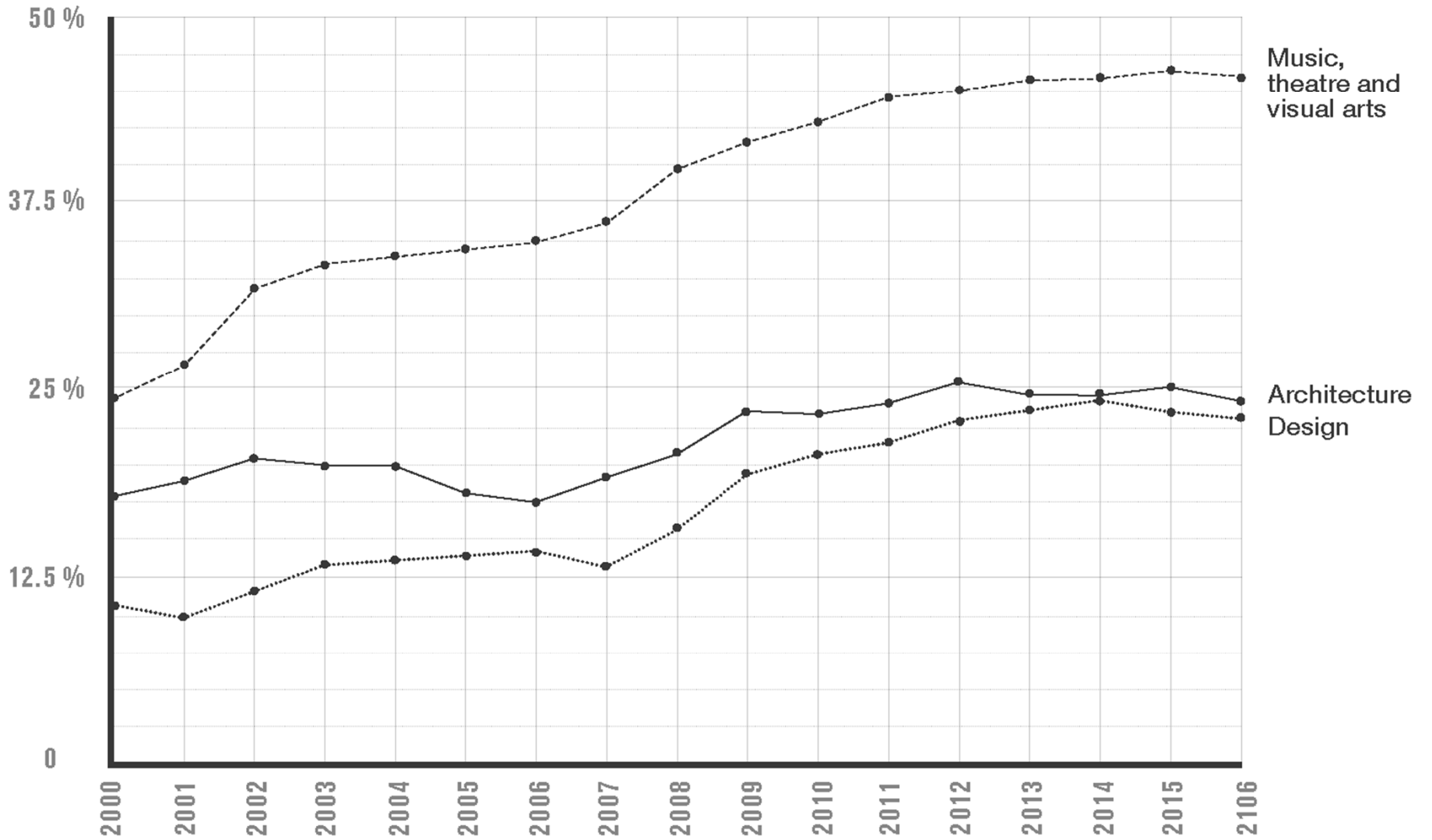
- ❖ **Statistical analysis (data of the federal statistical office FSO and of the schools' administration offices)**
- ❖ **Qualitative analysis (interviews, observations, discourse analysis)**
- ❖ **Findings**



Statistical analysis

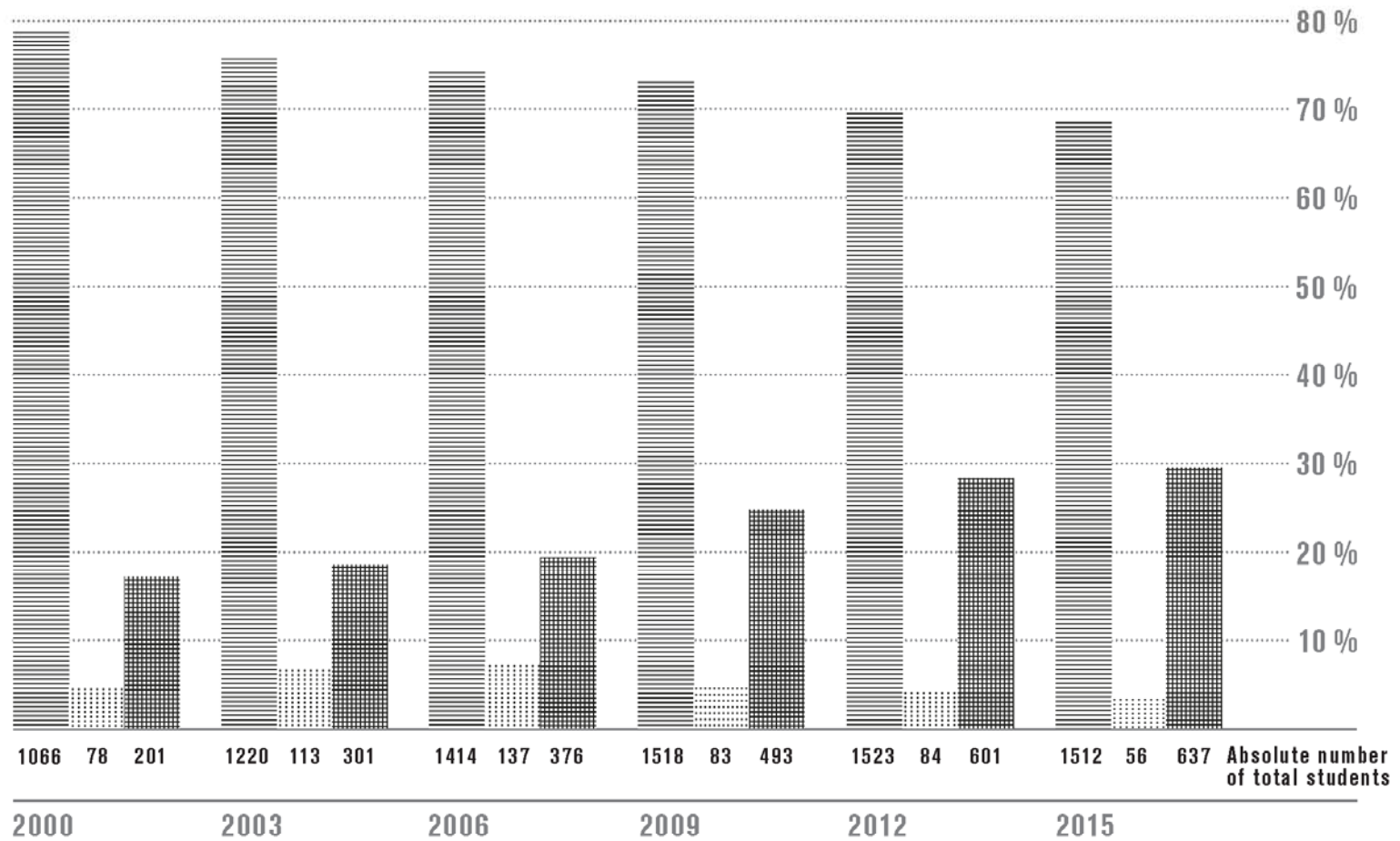
- ❖ There is a clear **closure** in reference to **social class** measured through the highest education degrees or professional positions of parents. Esp. students of fine arts and music are comparable to the ones of the elite Swiss science universities
- ❖ The field of the art school is highly «**internationalized**» ...
- ❖ ... however, members of the traditionally considered **groups with «migration experiences» are missing**

Fig. 1:
Internationalization of Swiss Art Schools
Share of Students without Swiss Citizenship (in %)



Source: FSO: Students and degrees in swiss higher education institutions

Fig. 2:
International status of students at the ZHdK 2000–2015



- ☐ Swiss citizens
- ☐ Foreign citizens who completed their previous degrees in Switzerland
- ☐ Foreign citizens who came to Switzerland to pursue a degree

Source: FSO: Educational degrees and certificates at swiss higher education institutions; own calculations

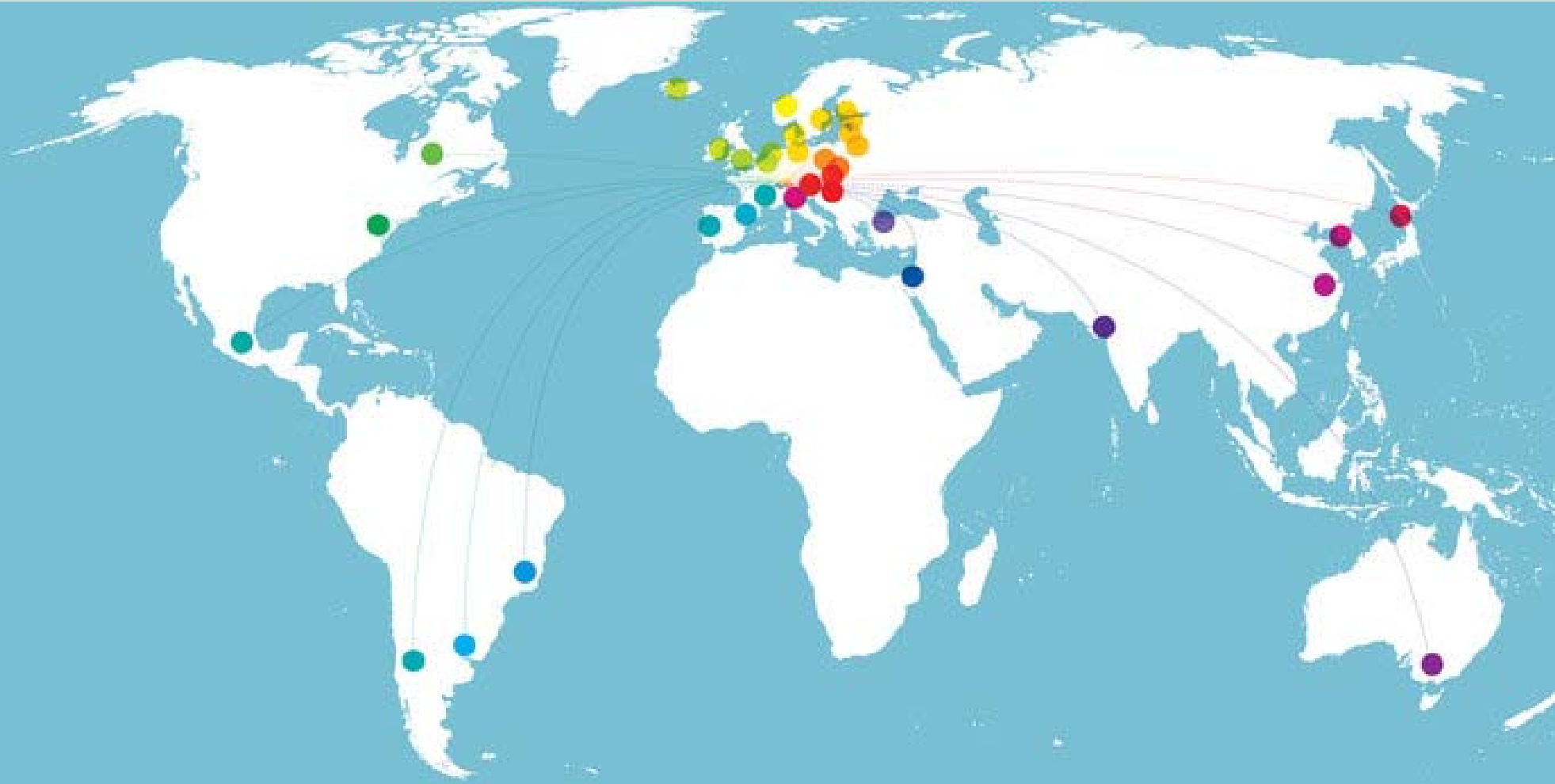


Effects of exclusion and inclusion

- ❖ Class matters
- ❖ Intersectional working of class with *race*/ethnicity and body
- ❖ → social class and with it education degrees of parents are the most important determinants, with a current increase in closure
- ❖ → specific ethnicities, certain kinds of bodies and sexualities are constitutive for an appropriate class adherence (middle-upper class white Swissness or a cosmopolitan internationality of a privileged background are favourable)



Internationalization





Results of the qualitative analysis

The admissions' process: Selection

- ❖ Actual 'Numerus Clausus'. Justifications are:
 - ❖ High costs of education
 - ❖ Market: «there shouldn't be too many artists»
 - ❖ Normative argument («not everyone should be enabled to study art»)

- ❖ The selection process allows for:
 - ❖ Search of the «ideal student»
 - ❖ Test of artistic abilities
 - ❖ To «choose the best» (reputation and international rankings)



- ❖ No questioning of the selection process per se
- ❖ The responsibility for the social closure of the art school is delegated to the «before»



The admissions' process: Unspecified Criteria

- ❖ Allows for considering «potential», «originality» and «motivation»
 - ❖ Allows for flexibility of weighing criterias
 - ❖ Selection is debated among jury members
- Great potential in of being able to avoid structural closures and exclusions
- ❖ «Sur Dossier»



Who takes profit of these unspecificities?

Unspecified criteria ask for a *decoding* of requirements

- ❖ Successful applications have to be familiar with the «rules» and «codes» not only of the field of study but also with the ones of the particular art school.
- ❖ The necessity of *decoding* leads to engaging in multiple attempts of applications: The more applications candidates experience, the higher the probability of them being accepted (makes significant financial investments necessary)



Who is included?

- ❖ Students who, beyond having artistic capabilities, prove to be socially competent and communicative, are well connected to the art field and know the codes and «rules». AND they have to have considerable financial means.
- ❖ Young students (although there is now official age limit)
- ❖ Students that are considered to get along well and «fit» into previous cohorts.
Students that will get along well with faculty
- ❖ Students having normative educational path (college degree, preliminary artistic education, application to art school)
- ❖ Great interest in «internationality»



Fields of tension

- ❖ Finances
 - ❖ Age
 - ❖ Artistic excellence - versus – social competency, well networked within the art field, etc.
 - ❖ Market – versus – educational institution having to meet the public interest
 - ❖ Desire for international students – versus – no structures to enable living and studying at the new place
 - ❖ Desire for «diversity»; a very specific «exoticness»
Paradox: The more homogeneous the educational biography of the candidates are, the more «other» positions are desired – that unfortunately are more and more impossible on the grounds of the increased normativity
- Delegitimization of the cultural capital of students with «migration experience»: The few successful ones in tendency are from privileged backgrounds.



- ❖ The 'Openness for Others' in the process of selection eventually was replaced by choosing candidates deemed most likely to reflect the 'values of the institution'
- ❖ Students admitted are subject to a violent effect of normalization or to processes of Othering
 - Effect of re-instatement of the norm
 - Encouraging the normative body = tyranny of ability



Institutional normativity

- ❖ The art school as a «white space» with healthy, able, seemingly heteronormative bodies from privileged backgrounds.
 - ❖ Institutional normativity is an *active* process and is continuously produced and re-instated
 - ❖ It is a tendency to constantly re-instate a privileged group of students and faculty
 - ❖ Doing thereby has to be understood as something the included engage in, not the excluded ones
- Institutional normativity is a structurally and institutionally facilitated ignorance of processes of exclusion and inclusion



Conclusion of our analysis

- In the processes of exclusion classism is primordially at work and unfolds in its intersectional relationship with racism, ableism and sexism
- Institutional structures and processes are designed to secure privileges. This results in an institutional normativity, which constantly works to dissimulate itself and its contradictions.
- Inclusion is a process of normalization that camouflages exclusion



How to work towards inclusive and anti-discriminatory structures?

Critique from within

- ❖ With the structures; use them strategically: Teaching, action research, providing support for in-house initiatives, ...
- ❖ People within the institution on a general basis are not aware of institutional normativity but can be sensitized → However, institutional structures, managerial styles, and dominant modes of communication have to be addressed for an effective questioning of discrimination and institutional normativity



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Art.School.Differences Blog:

bit.ly/a_s_d