

NEW DOSSIER: The art school as an ecosystem

In 2022, no conservatoire or academy in the Low Countries still exists in its original, autonomous form. During the 20th century, art colleges largely functioned as **independent institutions**, as they had been mainly established in the 19th century.

In the last 25 years, however, an institutional whirlwind of successive reforms, mergers and administrative shifts has swept through institutions of higher art education, causing them to be absorbed by larger entities of universities or colleges while also swallowing up smaller schools and studios. Liberalization and market ideology took art schools in tow through the choppy waters of **successive educational reforms**.

At the same time, research in the arts was introduced as a result of the **1999 Bologna Declaration**. The agreement led to the 'academization' of higher education, through which art colleges developed their own research practice from artistic practice.

After the growing pains of the early years, the young **research discipline** has matured and has profoundly influenced the mission and workings of higher art education, not least because it was accompanied by a remarkable internationalization of teaching and research.

What remains of the **original mission** of conservatoires and academies? What is the face of 21st-century art college? What has changed fundamentally and irrevocably, and what has remained immutable? What was gained; and at the cost of what losses?

This new dossier of FORUM+ collects contributions on **the art school as an ecosystem** in the 21st century. The editors explicitly welcome contributions on practices involving the relationship between research and the art school, as well as visual essays that can be linked to this theme.

The following (non-exhaustive) list of questions/themes serve as a guideline:

- + What role does the art school play in 2023? What image does the art school have in the 21st century?
- + (How) has academization innovated education? How does the circulation of research methods and insights into teaching and art practice come to pass?
- + In the 21st century, what remains of the original mission of conservatoires and academies? What is the balance between professional focus and academic depth?
- + Has the population of art schools changed, under what influences? And (how) has that affected the teaching and research portfolio?
- + How has artistic research influenced, threatened, transformed, ... the art school ecosystem? Has research in the arts changed the relationship between the artist and education; and between education and society?
- + Has the position of autodidact artists changed? How do they view these evolutions?
- + What challenges does the future hold?

The editorial board of FORUM+ welcome proposals in Dutch or English for articles (3.000 – 5.000 words) and visual contributions (approx. 3 spreads / 6 pages). Proposals are submitted by email to redactie@forum-online.be. They will subsequently be subject to peer review. Author guidelines and an article template can be downloaded at www.forum-online.be/publiceer-in-forum.