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Itten, Moholy-Nagy, Bauhaus and  
My Interdisciplinary Education Marginalia.

Am I really interdisciplinary? As a child my spirit was fed with Catholic dogmas, my brain with Nordic Lutheran progressive schooling, and my heart with brush strokes and linseed oil. My artistic interpretation of the world came from Eudoxia Estrella, a famous watercolorist from the city of Cuenca in Ecuador, the country where I was born.

Estrella began her artistic education in the 1940s after several failed family attempts to have her conform to the conservative schooling discipline of this small village in the middle of the Andes as pointed out by Francisco Cevallos in his essay about her life<sup>1</sup>. When it was time to graduate she refused and stayed four more years until she was almost forced to leave. Her world was small and limited but she managed to

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<sup>1</sup> Agosin Marjorie. Allende, Isabel. Editors. A woman's gaze: Latin American Women Artists Fredonia, N.Y.; White Pine Press, c1998. 65.

visit foreign lands and art museums around the world through Art History books the early versions of the today's World Wide Web. She was a very well versed artist by the time she met Guillermo Larrazabal. Larrazabal was a Basque artist who traveled to Cuenca invited by the government to promote the Arts. Estrella and Larrazabal met and immediately developed a friendship that eventually evolved into an affair. When the two rebellious bohemian artists moved in together the conservative society showed its discontent. For a long time they had to face the consequences manifested through the simplest things: The baker refusal to sell his bread or people pushing them off the sidewalks of crowded streets.

As years passed the situation turned into oblivion and the couple adopted a child. This newly found motherhood inspired Estrella to found her own art academy for children. She believed that it is only through the artistic education of a child that society could improve. Eudoxia was my first Art Teacher. I spent many years of my life devoted to learning the art of the brush. I realize now that I neither knew my teacher nor would I ever wondered what her thoughts, gods, or tricksters were. Nonetheless I assimilated all of her energy and experience through her teaching and her discipline.

According to Joe Moran interdisciplinarity should be defined not only as a professional practice that embraces more than one discipline but as an ontological phenomenon as well. This scope renders the term difficult to comprehend as expressed in Interdisciplinary. The New Critical Idiom:

I want to suggest that the value of the term, "interdisciplinarity", lies in its flexibility and indeterminacy, and that there are potentially as many forms of interdisciplinarity as there are disciplines. In a sense, to suggest otherwise would be to "discipline" it, to confine it within a set of theoretical and methodological orthodoxies. (16)

Interdisciplinary is easier to define in theory than to accomplish in practice. The concept itself of fusing more than one discipline is not new as we can read early attempts of definition in stories from Aristotle and Socrates. The Socratic method is an approach to establish a "dialog" leading to a final understanding of a topic. It becomes a powerful form of scholarly inquiry when applied from different disciplines coming from different sources. Moran suggests that Interdisciplinary is "any form of dialogue or interaction between two or more disciplines."

I argue that the definition and scope of interdisciplinarity is currently in the making and its successful survival depends upon an open mind that acknowledges

the inquisitor's own limitations and the need of a multiplicity of inputs towards a single goal. Interdisciplinary then becomes a learning attitude that could evolve into a structured and disciplined, yet flexible teaching methodology. Interestingly enough, as I develop kinetic images for New York Filmmaker John Feldman's "Ten questions everyone should ask about evolution," I came across Darwin's theory of adaptability as a survival mechanism mode. Disciplinarity is about survival. Even the aphorism coined by Herbert Spencer in Principles of Biology in 1864 has evolved to survive from: "*survival of the fittest*" to "*survival of the most adaptable.*"

In 1859 Charles Darwin wrote: "It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change." Interdisciplinary is about change, adaptability and the acknowledgment of limits, real, constructed or imagined. In contemporary education Interdisciplinarity means opening a dialog that allows established disciplines to interchange information, knowledge, and experience. However, interdisciplinary is silently requesting boundaries, seeking discipline within disciplines, in need of structure and control.

When I completed my elementary education I made a mistake: I transferred from the coed Nordic Lutherans environment to the

Spanish Catholics male-only one. A simple switch of schools became an intricate mental shift. I was given the opportunity to choose, and I chose my parent's approval: "La Salle." This worldwide educational institution organized and administered by the Lasallian Brothers is a religious teaching order founded by French Priest Jean-Baptiste de la Salle (1651-1719). La Salle is a Catholic ordered priest who devoted forty years of his life to design a reformed educational model. He received the tonsure at age eleven and was named canon of the Reims Cathedral at sixteen. He was ordained to the priesthood at the age of 27 and at 29 he received a doctorate in theology. In 1679 he founded a new order: "The Institute of the Brothers of the Christian Schools." La Salle believed that: "To touch the hearts of your pupils is the greatest miracle you can perform" and his efforts are still palpable throughout the world obviously reformed from his original goal. When I joined La Salle my art education was abruptly terminated. There I was, sharing a classroom with my other seventy classmates trapped inside cages made out of glass, steel, and concrete inspired -I am positive- by Modernist architecture. Six hours per day, several hundred days per year, a lifetime. I had to wear suit and tie every Monday, sing the National Anthem, abide to the rules and respect everything. I was undoubtedly being disciplined.

According to Michel Foucault (Discipline and Punishment 1975) the prison emerged during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century as the main form of punishment and discipline. Foucault describes the concept of the Panopticon based on Jeremy Bentham's 1785 design for a prison building that allowed the guards to observe without engaging in a visual discourse with the prisoners. The result: A sentiment of continual presence, a brilliant tool of control.

Foucault explains how this elaborated way of societal punishment becomes a symbol of a refined form of discipline concerning minute details of the human psyche and personal as well as cultural identity. This sense of constant surveillance reconfigures society in every structure of its existence. Architectural, Symbolic, Cultural, Linguistic, expressed in concentric circles departing from the individual and expanding out to the family, society, community, moving outwards and inwards unstoppably.

Foucault argues that Modern institutions require a certain level of control to define a sense of place, identity, language, interaction, dialog, and ultimately a sense of power and control secured by respect to the discipline. Appropriately applied discipline creates docile bodies -and minds- ideal for every aspect of contemporary societies: Factory workers, service personnel, customer service representatives as well as students,

scholars, and professors. In my world "La Salle" took the form of the Panopticon and the professors the role of the guards.

As I mentioned earlier Interdisciplinary requires boundaries and this need constitutes a paradox about freedom: Boundaries must be defined for interdisciplinarity to grow, act, and expand. This principle enhances and illustrates in a better way Blackstone's Paradox on Freedom.

My high school years copy-pasted themselves one after the other. My six years of disciplined studies included: Religion, Chess Strategy, Marching, and Physics taught by a LaSallian brother who held a Doctorate in Pure Mathematics and had both arms branded -for real- with swastikas and Christian symbols. As graduation approached I had to face the everlasting dilemma of the educated human: what to become as a "grown up" as if we were not already something.

The Bauhaus, or "House of Building" was a Design School founded by the German architect Walter Gropius in Weimar in 1919. It was conceived as a learning center that combined crafts and the fine arts to respond a philosophical call of a new unity between Artist and Artisans as it was expressed on its manifesto<sup>2</sup> that called for action to promote and conduct interdisciplinary education and a work in unison among disciplines.

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<sup>2</sup> Annexed

The conscious collaboration of all craftsmen. Architects, painters, and sculptors must once again come to know and comprehend the composite character of a building, both as an entity and in terms of its various parts." (Walter Gropius 1919)

The concept of "building" for Gropius was that of a whole entity integrated to the daily life. The Bauhaus was conceived as a post-war product that attempted to rescue human values in the middle of a mechanically produced society. The roles of the disciplines found a class-based division where the "first class" was designated to Architects and Engineers followed by Fine Artists. At the bottom of this imagined pyramid sat the craftsman and their handmade products. The Bauhaus had a philosophical plateau in its manifesto that made a great difference in terms of educational approach. I may argue that the lack of a strong philosophical base in today's education has turned modern universities in "knowledge supermarkets" offering pre-packaged degrees sold as commodities to consume. The Bauhaus school is important to the World History -and particularly to the world of art education- because it became the model to mimic.

One of the most remarkable accomplishments of Bauhaus was Gropius' ability to gather a group of leading artists and architects as the initial professors. In spite of himself being

an architect the school's first curriculum was aimed away from architecture and into an interdisciplinary one comprising Fine Arts, Crafts, and Performing Arts. (Wick 2002)

The Bauhaus creation and development happened in the midst of a historical context of much significance for the twentieth century that included the Industrial Revolution, Modernism, and Dadaism among many other less iconic ones. It stands in the tradition of efforts dating from Arts and Crafts (John Ruskins and William Morris,) Art Nouveau (Jugendstil), and Romanticism.

Rainer K. Wick describes the historical context for the Bauhaus in these terms: "To reconstruct the unity of art and the culture of production that had broken down as a result of industrialization, to reintegrate art and life, to undo the splintering of artistic genres, and thus to use art itself as an instrument of cultural and social regeneration."<sup>3</sup>

The Bauhaus was created to pursue the old idea of a "total work of art." It was conceived as the twentieth century Gesamtkunstwerk manifested through unity of disciplines with an important consideration: The Bauhaus attempt was to educate people capable of achieving interdisciplinary. Gropius idea to attain this goal was through the selection of a strong faculty

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<sup>3</sup>Wick, Rainer. Teaching at the Bauhaus. The Standard work on the groundbreaking pedagogical concepts of the Bauhaus. Germany c2000. Hatje Cantz Verlag. 16.

able to deliver his "Vision of Unity" between Artists and Artisans.

The Bauhaus is not a project conceived "from scratch," rather it is a cross-hybrid between the Grand Ducal Saxon Arts and crafts school an education project designed by Belgian Architect Henry van de Velde in Weimar (Germany, 1906) with the Weimar Academy of Fine Arts.

The German Werkbund is another strong precedent for the creation of the Bauhaus. One of its main figures is Hermann Muthesius whose ideas were integrated into the final idea of the school's social protest against mass production and dehumanization of objects. Muthesius recognized history as an "irreversible process" and believed that the reintegration of men's work into the production line could defeat the "repulsive effects of the machine" that caused him to conclude: "machine ornament is a mistake."

The school began on the first day of April 1919 without any official opening. Gropius called the painters Lyonel Feininger and Johannes Itten and the sculptor Gerhard Marcks. These three artists expanded the teaching staff already existing from the Weimar Academy. There were many tensions emerging from the blending of such strong characters but Gropius managed to implement his view: "To create a new gild of craftsmen, without

the class distinctions which raise an arrogant barrier between craftsman and artist." (Erffa 1961)

When I completed my High School diploma I found myself back at square one again. I knew that I didn't want to continue a career in Physics or Mathematics. I also had a strong prejudice about making a living out of Fine Arts so I immediately dimmed that option from my mental circuit. My "passion" was photography. I used to spend almost all of my English teaching salary in beers for my friends and film developing for my soul. There was no university that offered a career in artistic or commercial photography and unfortunately I was not aware of Photojournalism. With so few choices in front of me I made a wrong move again: I began studying Architecture. In 1989 my father was in his 30<sup>th</sup> full time teaching year at the State School of Architecture. He was a former Dean of said school and a strong figure among students and professors. I was named after him so as soon as I began attending my courses I had an identity crisis. I was no longer myself but the "son of the Architect Alvarez." Lost, unmotivated and incapable of filling up such a tremendous suit and tie I began to collapse. My imposed curriculum included Analytical Geometry, Physics, Mathematics, Drawing, and Basic Design. I couldn't continue. Filled with doubts I faced my father and let him know about it.

At first, discipline was imposed upon me. I was "asked" to try a second semester to make sure there wasn't an architect hiding inside. I agreed and I was ready for it. However, in the middle of summer my father took me to UDA (Universidad del Azuay) and showed me around. It was new and fresh. UDA was the first Design School in the region. It was founded by a group of architects who practiced Fine Arts along the lines of their professional practices and my father was one of them.

The philosophy behind this school was the same: "To unify Artisans and Artists in the cohesive practice of Design." The theoretical foundation came from Argentina presented by Professor Dora Giordano who was a former student of Argentinean Designer, Educator, and Philosopher Tomas Maldonado. Maldonado was the rector of the Hochschule für Gestaltung (Collage for Design) in Ulm between 1955 and 1967, also known as the New Bauhaus.

Slowly, I began to incorporate Design theory and practice into my life. I knew I was familiar with photography, drawing and sculpting figures in play dough but I wasn't really sure what I got into. Becoming a designer in Ecuador, back in 1989 wasn't clear enough. Was I supposed to become an artisan? An artist?

The first byproduct of this unique gathering of modernist thinkers in 1919 Germany was the VORKURS as a preparatory course prior the design courses. Known in the most Art and Design schools worldwide as "Basic-workshop," "Preliminary course," or "Foundation-Workshop."

Historically, the Basic Workshop approach constituted the first course in which the sole purpose was to develop and facilitate creative skills in the student. Johannes Itten (1888-1967) designed the basic workshop curriculum in 1918 in Vienna. Gropius called Itten to the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1919 and here the approach became the "backbone of the Bauhaus system" (Bauhaus 1919/28, p. 32)

Johannes Itten was a Swiss Artist, Designer, Teacher, Writer, and Theorist who developed the concept of the VORKURS. His career began as a School Teacher with his methodology derived from Fröebel, Pestalozzi, and Montessori. From Fröebel Itten incorporated the handling of materials and the use of them as an integral part of education. From Pestalozzi the vision of knowledge as a cohesive training of the head, heart, and hand, and from Montessori's philosophy the complete respect of the student and the patience not to intervene at all with the student's work allowing the development of self-discipline and true creativity.

Itten's main contribution in terms of pedagogy and the Arts was the amalgamation of these methodologies adapted into one cohesive, comprehensible methodology for Art Education.

We must, on the one hand, see to it that all young people are educated in a way that they can develop in an original, characteristic manner, so they remain creative; on the other hand, we must make them familiar with all the rules governing the means of artistic representation that they must master in order to be able to give shape to their new and original ideas.<sup>4</sup>

Itten methodology concentrated its focus in the development of the student's individuality. A high sense of respect to the individual creativity was the main focus of his methodology. It was a controversial approach since the lack of critical feedback left students trapped in limbo as some scholar suggest (Findeli 2001, Lange 1988). He was convinced that the worst outcome in art education was the student's development of his master's manners and ways of thinking. However, his method created a paradox as critics suggests by observing how Itten's students-adepts became disciples of his philosophy. His emancipationist pedagogy was stepping away from any form of discipline but its own. A non-declared discipline that eventually became a burden so heavy that resulted in his forced resignation as a Bauhaus master.

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<sup>4</sup> Itten, Zur Ausstellung 'Aus meinem Unterricht'" (1939), in Rotzler, ed., Johannes Itten p.243

Itten's pedagogy derived from the Ernst Schneider's<sup>5</sup> psychoanalysis classes. Schneider meant to reform the educational system by challenging the teaching approach of that time that praised memorization, structure, and discipline -even through physical punishment- through the proposal of a reformed method that focused on the emotions of the children as an integral aspect of their successful development as whole human beings.

Additionally, Itten's approach included a strong bias towards spirituality. He believed that the best way to develop a person as a whole human was through the encouragement of his spiritual development in tandem with his intellect.

Itten was deeply involved in Mazda Nan, a cult rooted in Zoroastrianism. Zarathustrians believe in one universal God - Ahura Mazda- creator of ASHA: Truth and order and DRUJ: Falsehood and disorder. The result of this juxtaposition is a complete universal conflict that expects humans to experience an active role in its making through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds to ensure happiness and keep chaos away.

Itten's spiritual input in his courses included scheduled daily meditations on the roof of the building an several attempts to regulate the School's menu with a strict vegetarian diet -the students lived in the school premises- to develop inner understanding and intuition.

What makes the VORKURS so important to today's education is the interdisciplinary approach. Students were confronted with the challenge of learning the basics of material characteristics, composition, and color. The VORKURS

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<sup>5</sup> He taught psychoanalysis to educators. In 1907 he founded the Berner Seminarblätter, a renowned pedagogical journal that was later renamed Schulreform, which he headed until 1920.

acknowledged contrast as the pivoting point of meaning making (semiotics). Contrast generates a reciprocal influence and feedback between elements. Light and dark, juxtaposition of textures, planes, geometrical forms, emotions; all these contrasts -according to Itten- create a meaningful tension. Itten's courses presented a strong component in the study of old masters as well. All the mentioned aspects in tandem with the study of color, form, and the dynamics of the materials allowed students to fully activate their sensorium and to produce beautiful and meaningful pieces rooted in a well thought out semiotic analysis. According to Rainer Wick, Itten's three main intentions with the Vorkurs were:

- 1) To liberate the creative forces and thereby the artistic talents of the students by letting them lose from their original conventions.
- 2) To facilitate the students final choice of career (through the sensorial experimentation with different materials)
- 3) To present the principles of creative composition to the students for their future careers as artists.

I may claim to be a fourth generation of the Bauhaus method yet I did not have the opportunity of the Itten methodology itself. My undergraduate design education was that of a reformed Bauhaus curriculum. The reform incorporated a more structured and functional vision where no spirituality was even considered at all. My "Bauhaus" model included architects and painters, a Vorkurs and a fully develop form making methodology based on contrast -called: "Pares Semánticos" but with a lack of

intuition. It was by all means interdisciplinary. It was rich and fruitful yet the main goal by the end of the schooling process was to become a highly disciplined constructivist designer. I have been trying to break free from this approach both as an educator and as a professional designer ever since. This paper is meant to contribute to that need. Understanding the history behind provides a better context for self-analysis. Why was I educated as a constructivist? Why Jean-Jacques Rousseau was within?

It wasn't until I came across with László Moholy-Nagy that I fully understood the reasons behind my design process and I managed to better understand the power of education.

According to Professor Wick László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1943) was a "natural pedagogical talent" (131). Gropius discovered him in 1923 and brought him to the Bauhaus to replace Itten whose resignation came as a result of his ethereal methodology in times where the concept of "functionality" began to permeate in every aspect of life. Moholy-Nagy was a Hungarian artist who had no formal training in the Arts beyond his early years. He was "self-taught as a teacher and artist.

It seems it was precisely this lack of formal training that enabled him to go beyond artistic boundaries and expand the traditional concept of art. (Senter 1981)

Having defined Art as "career with no future" Moholy-Nagy's relatives encouraged him to pursue studies in Law. His Law studies were truncated by the war. Ironically, it was war that allowed Moholy-Nagy to find his inner voice as an artist. He authored thousands of drawing sketches while spending time in barracks and trenches. The end of the war became violently for him as he lost one of the thumbs during an explosion. Detail that I think has much relevance to the sensorial and functional approach to design that he developed later on. When he returned home he began developing his artistic sense in full blossom. He connected to Gropius thanks to his design work for the Avant-Garde journal "MA" (Hungarian term meaning "today")

Moholy-Nagy had the mind of an engineer sharing the vision of unity and complete art as Gropius and the other faculty from the Bauhaus did. Yet there was a major conceptual difference in the conceptions and definitions of unity. For Moholy-Nagy the locus to any design work is reality and constructivism. But he goes further into his conception as he takes the great challenge and mental shift of embracing technology as a central component of his vision. Gropius must have been extremely excited to hear these words. The Bauhaus finally found his new "spiritual-mechanical" guide as we can read in his own words from 1922:

Reality is the measure of human thinking. It is the means by which we orient ourselves in the Universe... And this reality of our century is technology: the invention, construction, and maintenance of machines. To be user of machines is to be of the spirit of the century. It has replaced the transcendental spiritualism of past eras. Everyone is equal before the machine... There is no tradition in technology, no class-consciousness. Everybody can be the machine's master, or its slave. This is the root of socialism.<sup>6</sup>

The contrast with Itten's approach could not be better expressed. In practice, however, Moholy-Nagy approach to education did not depart radically from Itten's but there was a major difference in terms of process. He acknowledged the need and great possibilities of the sensorial approach by developing what was later known as the "tactile charts."

Functionality and constructivism became prevalent and the incorporation of the machine in the design process became the Bauhaus itself. The foundational course was adapted to supply this new approach and students appreciated the changes as they moved more comfortably than before. As Moholy-Nagy continued his personal quest for the integration of the machine and technology into the curriculum, photography became prevalent in Bauhaus's education.

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<sup>6</sup>Quoted in Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, László Moholy-Nagy (Note 5) p 19 f.

The UDA Design School curriculum in Ecuador allowed me to experiment with airbrushes, color pencils, charcoal, circular saws and welding guns. As years went by the School vision moved away from the actual physical interaction with the materials and their constructive relational dialogs to the mimicking of such interaction via "model making."

Ceramics moved away from individual pieces to industrially "reproducible-ware" using casts and plaster models. Even the graphic design division slowly moved away from silk-screening and airbrushing to computer based art and its "real" environment with no inks to stain or scents to invade nostrils.

Slowly but firmly, the original vision of Moholy-Nagy's embrace to technology became overpowering. Technology began to suffocate the original creative approach and methodology conceived by the Bauhaus by creating a new discipline, a new way of looking at the creative problem solving. A new way of control: The computer.

Right after graduation from UDA I began running my own design studio. The central focus of my professional practice was 3D design. Real three-dimensional design though. I designed furniture and jewelry. The limits of the market and the volatile and fragile Ecuadorian economy pushed me into Graphic Design. It

wouldn't stop there. The increasing needs of the market turned me into a "corporate and advertising designer."

There was not much I could do but to exercise my adaptability to the evolving situations. This adaptation was possible thanks to my interdisciplinary education. Yes, I believe I am interdisciplinary.

Embracing interdisciplinary today is a double-edged sword. The term is the fashionable one but achieving a true interdisciplinarity is a different story. I have been teaching as a full time design professor for seven years now in three different universities and about twenty different subject matters have gone through my teaching timeline, from Design History, Digital Photography, Ceramics, Typography, Branding, Mixed Media, Basic Design, to Design Semiotics, and many others. As a result I have developed a sense of interdisciplinary that is one -if not the main- feature that I consider as an added value to my professional credentials. In contrast, now as a Ph.D. student myself going through the rigor of becoming disciplined within a "discipline-less" realm I have been experiencing first hand problematic situations that emerge from the lack of definition to the term and the clarity of scope of interdisciplinarity. I have been asked to drop classes for not

having either the seniority, the mastery, or the credentials expected in the discipline.

Additionally, I've experienced the frustration resulting from not being able to "play the game" with an appropriate level of mastery in other classes. As I cannot claim mastery on anything, the openness of my discipline becomes a burden. According to Golde and Gallagher a prominent and persistent critique to doctoral programs is that it "trains students too narrowly in a subspecialty, leaving new degree holders unprepared to conduct interdisciplinary work."<sup>7</sup>

Revisiting Moran's call for an open mind I believe a true interdisciplinary program should allow a high level of flexibility that encourages students to explore options without mastery being "an issue." Team work and experimentation should be the base to interdisciplinary education but above all I believe that what will make a program a true interdisciplinary one is open mind to experimentation and the acceptance of error and mistake as an integral part of its approach and that ultimately means the elimination of the Academic Panopticon: Grading.

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<sup>7</sup> Panel on Alternate Approaches to Graduate Education 1973; Boyer 1990; Committee on Science Engineering and Public Policy 1995.

I consider myself a brainchild of Itten and Moholy-Nagy. My teaching methodology combines several principles: The development of observation, intuition, and the senses as fundamental tools for artistic, practical and intellectual production. I truly believe in the unlocked power of the inner creative strengths of the individual. I also believe these strengths are underdeveloped, even handicapped thanks to traditional education. I think the best way toward a mental Gesamtkunstwerk results from a highly constructive functional approach to form making based in semiotics, symbolism, and linguistics. As Designer Massimo Vignelli states: Education pillars should form a triangle among History, Theory, and Criticism and it is only through a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach that such combination may be achieved. Interdisciplinarity is not utopia but instead demands limits, boundaries and a field to bloom and grow. Ultimately I think a possible way of approaching education while embracing interdisciplinarity is by adding the human factor to the equation. That way interdisciplinary education may be rewritten as a human dialog, as Moran claims, where the student gets to know the professor's experiences, values, jokes, anecdotes, and all sorts of meaningful pieces of information that do not compromise scholarly discourse or the quest for true knowledge.

I believe that the aforementioned elements are extremely important to any level of education and become even more prevalent at Doctoral level. I think the dialog in the class will change positively if both Professors and students would have the opportunity to know the details that create this intertextual dialog so rich for a true comprehensible education. What gods our professors ascribe to? What sports do they practice? What's their favorite food? If education cannot fulfill this human need for dialog it will continue to be more commodified and packaged as dehumanized products and online distance learning will become more prevalent and eventually the number one choice for new students who have been "naturalized" with technology.

Interdisciplinarity is healthy flexible dialog and I believe it is possible.

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## Manifesto

The ultimate aim of all creative activity is a building! The decoration of buildings was once the noblest function of fine arts, and fine arts were indispensable to great architecture. Today they exist in complacent isolation, and can only be rescued by the conscious co-operation and collaboration of all craftsmen. Architects, painters, and sculptors must once again come to know and comprehend the composite character of a building, both as an entity and in terms of its various parts. Then their work will be filled with that true architectonic spirit which, as "salon art", it has lost.

The old art schools were unable to produce this unity; and how, indeed, should they have done so, since art cannot be taught? Schools must return to the workshop. The world of the pattern-designer and applied artist, consisting only of drawing and painting must become once again a world in which things are built. If the young person who rejoices in creative activity now begins his career as in the older days by learning a craft, then the unproductive "artist" will no longer be condemned to inadequate artistry, for his skills will be preserved for the crafts in which he can achieve great things.

Architects, painters, sculptors, we must all return to crafts! For there is no such thing as "professional art". There is no essential difference between the artist and the craftsman. The artist is an exalted craftsman. By the grace of Heaven and in rare moments of inspiration which transcend the will, art may unconsciously blossom from the labour of his hand, but a base in handicrafts is essential to every artist. It is there that the original source of creativity lies.

Let us therefore create a new guild of craftsmen without the class-distinctions that raise an arrogant barrier between craftsmen and artists! Let us desire, conceive, and create the new building of the future together. It will combine architecture, sculpture, and painting in a single form, and will one day rise towards the heavens from the hands of a million workers as the crystalline symbol of a new and coming faith.

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*"The illiterate of the Future will be the person ignorant of the use of the camera as well as the pen."*  
László Moholy-Nagy.

**Itten, Moholy-Nagy, Bauhaus and  
My Interdisciplinary Education Marginalia.**

ABSTRACT

I see education as a dialog among Knowledge, Discipline, Professors and Students. Knowledge pretends to be fixed, unchangeable. Professors are there to make sure young minds are trained to abide to a given Discipline. As knowledge becomes fixed and accepted as truth the concept of Discipline plays a vital role in securing the continuation of this dialog. However, new times bring new visions and new visions new definitions. I see knowledge growth as a metaphor of marginalia. These notes, scribbles, and editorial comments made along the lines of what is consider truthful knowledge are vital to the Discipline's evolution. Marginalia challenges and questions the status quo, it incorporates the human factor to what is there, fixed, written, accepted. This paper aims to approach the complex emerging process of defining interdisciplinarity in the marginalia of my personal education in an attempt to clarify my own understanding of the concept of interdisciplinarity by

contrasting two Bauhaus professors: Itten and Moholy-Nagy that I consider constructed my teaching philosophy as an Educator as well as my professional practice as a Designer. In the process I am looking forward to posing thought provoking questions about contemporary Interdisciplinary Education.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> To begin with the last page has become a personal lifetime conceptual endeavor.