

**Department of Educational Studies**

**2012-13 MA Coursework Cover Sheet**

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| **“How can the ‘Pedagogy of Autonomy’ be enabled in the** | |
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**“How can the ‘Pedagogy of Autonomy’ be enabled in the praxis of the Artist- Teacher?”**

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**MA in Artist teacher and Contemporary Practice**

**Assignment: Independent Studies**

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**“How can the ‘Pedagogy of Autonomy’ be enabled in the praxis of the Artist- Teacher?”**

‘Autonomy is a process of becoming oneself, a process of maturing, of coming to be. It does not happen on a given date. In this sense, a pedagogy of autonomy should be centred on experiences that stimulate decision making and responsibility, in other words, on experiences that respect freedom’ (Freire, 2001, 98)

Introduction:

A critical consciousness that enables reflection about the way that we relate to others and to the world, that reflects on ourselves as a subject of our own reality, which is not a static reality but it is process, in constant transformation, is one of the most important ideas in the Paulo Freire’s conception of pedagogy, education and social transformation (Freire, 2007, 83). In his work, *Pedagogy of Autonomy*[[1]](#endnote-1) Freire analyses the teacher’s praxis and suggests that a democratic educational praxis should be the one in favour of the autonomy and critical consciousness of the learners (Freire, 2001). A pedagogy which men and women could assumes themselves as beings that ‘perceive critically *the way they exist* in the world *with which* and *in which* they find themselves’ (Freire, 2007, 83); who make history and also are made by it, beings of decision, of rupture, and opinions (Freire, 2001).

In O tema central da obra é “a formação docente ao lado da reflexão sobre a prática educativa progressiva em favor da autonomiIn In IIIIIIIthis paper I will discuss Freire’s pedagogy of autonomy and its relation with the artist teacher’s praxis and investigate its possible consequences. My main focus in this research is to investigate if we, artist teachers or educators, are autonomous to enable autonomy to our learners. The process is simple: you can just disseminate what you are aware about, therefore, for teachers enable autonomy and freedom to learners and create a dialectical space of learning, they must be aware themselves of their own autonomy and freedom. However, is our educational system enabling this autonomy to our teachers or are we only following norms, rules, assessment without questioning or internalising them? Are we, artist teachers, autonomous or heteronomous in the learning process? Can the ideas of Paulo Freire in ‘*Pedagogy of Autonomy’* be part of our praxis? Is our teaching underpinned by the pedagogy of autonomy or the heteronomy is the basis of our practice?

Thus, the examination of these questions is the main purpose of this essay. In the support with the critical reflection about a ‘pedagogy of autonomy’, besides Freire, I will also have an encounter with the theories of Foucault in ‘*Discipline and Punishment*’ who clarifies the notion of institutions and the power that they exert on our lives (Foucault, 1991); Wenger and the notion of ‘communities of practice’ which shows that we construct ourselves between participative experience and reificative projection (Wenger, 1998); Atkinson and the idea of ‘pedagogies against the state’ (Atkinson, 2011) and hooks proposal of ‘teaching to transgress’ (hooks, 1994).

**Autonomous or heteronomous?**

Before continuing to discuss the idea of pedagogy of autonomy and its implication on the artist teacher researcher praxis, it is worth reflecting on the notion of autonomy and heteronomy. Looking for the definition of the terms in the dictionary, I found that:

Autonomous: 'having its own laws', from autos 'self' + nomous 'law'’, meaning ‘the right or condition of self-government’, capable to make its own choices (Oxford online dictionary).

*Heteronomous:* ‘**UNDER OTHER LAWS** subject to other laws and rules imposed by other people or institutions’ (Encarta, 1999).

The realm of the norms, it is also the realm of the social institutions. According to the definition of social institution proffered by Jonathan Turner:

‘A complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organising relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment.’ (Turner 1997, 6)

I completely agree with Turner that we must have norms and rules to drive any society. However, as institutions are identified with a social reason, they must aspire for permanence and eternity. Despite their social purpose, they go beyond individual needs and intentions and place rules that govern our behaviour, minds, souls and bodies, transforming us in a ‘*docile bodies’* (Foucault, 1991). Foucault explained this notion that institutions, such as schools, are mechanisms of power that normalise our behaviour and judgment of the world.

The system of normalisation made by the institutions is proposed in such ideological discourse and practice that norms usually are not questioned, they are just to be obeyed, and we feel that they are natural, *normal,* as if they always have been there. However, as Atkinson infers: ‘What such norms do not question is the norm itself and how it is constituted within its specific focus of practice’. (Atkinson, 2002, 99)

Mostly, we are heteronomous while inside of institutions. Institutions such as schools, prisons and hospital make the use of discipline for ‘assuring the ordering of human multiplicities’ (Foucault, 1991, 218)*.* In relation to the question: are we autonomous individuals within institutions or completely alienated by them? Paul Oliver comments about the power and influence that they exert in our lives:

‘Some people simply could not avail themselves of the services provided by institutions because they could not understand the systems within which they operated. In such cases institutions can deprive people of their personal freedom and autonomy. In circumstances where individual citizens cannot successfully interact with institutions, then they can easily become alienated from them, and moreover alienated from society in general.’ (*Oliver, P. 2010*)

Often, we artist teachers inside the schools or other learning institutions do not question the norms itself, we are there just to obey it, we do not think as autonomous beings that could take actions that challenge the norms and bring any change, we act exactly like the system of power and domination wants us to be: ‘*docile bodies’*. Mostly, because we are afraid of the consequences of the autonomy and freedom might have in our lives or because we think that it is ‘normal’, for example, the norm of assessments. It is questionable how can we measure intentions, creativity, abilities, ideas, skills? Is it by filling in endless forms that we evaluate our teaching-learning process? Is it because the teachers and the learners are ‘good’ in obeying norms that they are good teachers and learners inside the institution?

I recently asked a question on an online artist teacher’s forum about our autonomy inside the institutions. One artist teacher answered: ‘the amount of autonomy we have depends on our school structures and head of department or middle manager’ (AT, 2013). Our autonomy as artist teacher depends on the others or is something that relies in us? Is it something that is given or is it conquered? Is it something that is allowed or it is our right? Is it possible that we become autonomous and responsible for make our own choices in teaching a subject such as art without being under the control of the institutions?

**Educational Institutions**

One of the most important contributions of Paulo Freire to the philosophy of education and critical pedagogy is the conception that education must be through dialogue (Freire, 1986, 2002). He criticised the conventional “*narrative educational system”* which he also called as a ‘banking’ concept of education, where the teachers are introduced as fulfillers and the students are mere objects, empty vessels to be full filled with knowledge (Freire, 1986). When we understand that education is dialogue and as dialogue it is conversation, an *exchange* of ideas, thoughts, feelings, emotions (Freire, 1986, 1992) among people sharing a time and a space, then, the educational process is seen as ‘reciprocal relationships with people, place and things’ (Sands, Carr and Lee, 2012, 553). Therefore, the teacher is not seen anymore as the subject of the learning process and the students his/her mere objects, but both are subject to each other. Through this encounter of subjectivities in a dialectical relationship a ‘new term emerges: teacher-student and student-teacher…they become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow’ (Freire, 1986, 80).

Talking about my own practice as an artist teacher, I am at all the time requiring autonomy from the ‘establishment’ to let the children lead the way; I sometimes open a range of possibilities, materials, options... but they are the precursor of the process. Curiosity and questioning takes us to discover the unknown and I am learning all the time with them. I am surprised with what our creativity and imagination can do, in what we can, together, invent, create and discover.

Last year, at the playground, a girl of ten years old asked for help to develop an artwork around the notion of “horror”. She explained that she wanted to ‘cut out a head and put it in a tray’, maybe influenced by the story of John the Baptist. At first, I found this “weird”, but I totally supported the idea. So, we cut a big head sized knot made from an old rope and she brought a disposable tray from her home. The interesting thing it was that the tray was recently used to cook meat and had some fat left in it, also, it had a strong smell of barbecue. I said: “let’s wash it” and then she said “No, it is better and more realistic if we leave like that”. Then she placed the “head” on the tray, painted it, put some more rope fragments around symbolising viscera and brought it to her school. At the school, her art teacher was shocked but found the idea “brilliant”. I found very interesting the way that she symbolised the “horror” as a cannibalistic and sacrificial act. Because the playground is a non-formal educational institution, it is easier for the children to take risks and explore their own ideas.

**The Pedagogy of Autonomy**

In the ‘*Pedagogy of Autonomy’*, Paulo Freire has three basic themes to build the teacher’s praxis, which leads to emancipation and trans-formation of lives, they are: there is no teaching without learning; to teach is not to transfer knowledge and teaching is a human act (Freire, 2002).

With the idea that ‘there is no teaching without learning’ (Freire 2001), Freire conceives that teachers are at the same time teachers and learners. As mentioned before, he makes it clear that teaching is not only related to the teacher, as well as learning is not just linked to the student. "Teaching without learning,” the two are explained, and their subjects, despite differences that they connote, they are not reduced to the status of object one to another. Whoever teaches learns while teaching, and who learns teaches while learning (Freire, 2001).

Thus Freire justifies the thought that the teacher is not superior, better or smarter because *dominates knowledge* that the student has not yet discovered. David Little points out that: ‘It is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner’ (Little, 2000, 8).

Another aspect that the teacher is also an autonomous learner is because we are in constant search to improve our practice. Consequently, as a teacher we are learners and researchers as well. According to Freire, there is no teaching without research. Part of the process of teaching practice is to inquiry, search and re-search. É preciso pesquisar para se conhecer o que ainda não se conhece e comunicar ou anunciar novidades. Research is the necessity to know what is not yet known and communicate and announce the news (Freire, 2001, 35). In the field of being an artist teacher, the research must be embraced in our practice with the learners. We, as artist educators, are in the process of encouraging our children to investigate, to research, to create, having in mind that we are both part of the discovering process, which together we are ‘searching for signification of signifiers’ (Freire, 1992, p. 69).

Besides, Freire highlights, in the ‘*Pedagogy of Autonomy’*, the need of a critical reflection on our educational practice. The critical teaching practice involves a dynamic and dialectical movement between doing and thinking about doing. ‘In fact, this diminution of the distance between discourse and practice constitutes an indispensable virtue, namely that of coherence’ (Freire, 2001, 63). Whilst we are teaching, a key moment is the critical evaluation on our practice that becomes praxis. É pensando criticamente a prática de hoje ou de ontem que se pode melhorar a próxima prática. It is the practice of thinking critically today or yesterday that we can improve tomorrow’s practice (Freire, 2011). The critical reflection on one’s practice it is a fundamental aspect of one’s autonomy.

To improve my practice and research new approaches in contemporary arts, I took the challenge of doing a masters degree in ‘Artist Teacher and Contemporary Practices in art education at Goldsmiths College, although I knew that would be very difficult to cope with my work, my parental duties, my poor English…In the first instance, I thought that I would learn new techniques to work with the kids and what was my surprise when I realized that the course was based in the critical thinking which is involved in teaching research practice then I reconnected with the theories that had influenced me from my studies at Sao Paulo University and I became more reflective in my own practice.

As result of this critical reflection about my practice as artist educator, I started to take the children to local Art Exhibitions. Deptford is a very multicultural place, which fascinated me, and in the last few years a diversity of art and culture has been growing in the area. Now we have lots of Art Studios, two art galleries in the High Street; Utrophia and Bear Space, and an annual exhibition happening in October called Deptford X, where you can see art all around Deptford, including the local DIY shop and a charity shop and lots of art studios and galleries are opened to the public. When the children went to the Exhibition, for some of them, it was their first visit to a gallery, and in a mix of excitement and enthusiasm they wanted to touch everything. It is obvious that in several spaces we were not welcomed. It is important to notice how some art spaces were not prepared for children’s visits. However, in our process of discovering contemporary art, we found a very talented and patient artist that let them touch some of his works and their interaction with his artwork was phenomenal.

Nowadays, I’m taking them more frequently to Utrophia, where a kind of partnership between us it has been developed. They had some drawing workshops, in a project called ‘Draw and be drawn,’ developed by Andrew Kerr. Their drawings were exhibited at the gallery for one week and that experience really empowered them to be more confident and take more risks in making art. Two of the children brought their parents to see the exhibition and they were very proud of their work. After that, the children are more enthusiastic in producing art, and we are more reflective in what we are producing. We are now planning in being part of Deptford X and have our own exhibition in our place. We are reflecting about the notion of place and identity and some ideas are already emerging from the process. We all are very excited with the possibility of our work being in the Deptford X art circuit and be seen by a large number of people.

With the conception that men and women are beings "meant to learn" and consequently to teach, intervene and act, that Freire understands educational practice as a constant exercise in favour of the production and development of our autonomy. Teaching is not transference of knowledge but creating conditions for its production (Freire, 2001), and it is rediscovering, constructing new meaning, giving new meaning to this knowledge, that teaching is a human act (Freire, 2001) and we became participants in our historical, personal, social and existential realities.

Accordingly, Para Freire, a Pedagogia da Autonomia deve estar centrada em experiências estimuladoras da decisão, da responsabilidade, ou seja, em experiência respeitosas da liberdade. Freire infers that to learn should be focused on stimulating experiences of the decision and responsibility, experiences of freedom and respect (Freire, 2001). Para isso, ao ensinar, o professor deve ter liberdade e autoridade, em que a liberdade deve ser vivida em coerência com a autoridade. For this, we, artist teachers, should have the freedom and authority, where freedom must be balanced consistently with the authority. Though, I agree with Freire that this is the most important challenge encountered by a democratic artist educator: to work in a way that the necessity of limits has to be assumed ethically by the freedom (Freire, 2001, 96), which means assumed with autonomy. Giuliana Vasconcelos in her article ‘*Segredos Confessos de uma Pedagogia da Indignação*’, states that:

‘To permit freedom and authority is a tense and dramatic decision, but live with lucidity this tension, is finding out that both are not necessarily antagonistic. Recognize the limits of each one is a utopian democracy practice[[2]](#endnote-2)'. (Vasconcelos, 2000, 2)

Respect, ethics and critical consciousness are fundamental to our teaching praxis. This implies that we must have to be conscious of our autonomy and conquer our freedom whilst developing our practices inside the institutions. It is in creating and re-creating*,* making the learning space an *open space* where everyone has the freedom to question, to investigate, to take risks and make mistakes that we will have accomplished our practice of educate. As Faundez points out, that it is asking questions, taking risks, making mistakes that we can advance our knowledge (Faundez in Faundez and Freire, 1989, 41). Throughout the questioning about autonomy done at the artist teacher’s forum on the Internet, one of my colleagues answered that ‘currently, I am thinking to claim absolute autonomy as an absolute right rather than a privilege’ (AT, 2013). Again, at the same forum, other artist teacher answered that:

‘I try to explore this by letting the children lead and not spoon feed too much information and direction but try to inspire, ignite and engage the kids. They essentially know I am 'in charge' but they also understand that it is a collective space for sharing ideas and exploration, there is a strong senses of flexibility and value in their participation in both process and outcome within the studio...’ (AT, 2013)

Despite the fact that as a teacher we must put limits, boundaries it is fundamental that we respect the autonomy and freedom of the learners. According to Freire: ‘respect for the autonomy and dignity of every person is an ethical imperative and not a favour that we may or may not concede to each other’ (Freire, 2001, 59). Therefore, the act of teaching it is also an act of negotiation, Atkinson explains that: ‘We negotiate existence every day and this largely conforms to established norms, customs, values and habits’ (Atkinson, 2000, pg.16).

At the playground, we had reflected about us as subject of changing in our place, and we decided to paint the children’s silhouettes at the wall of the playground, as an attempt to portray the consequences of the dialectical relation between us and the place that surround us. The paintings were intended to express the dialogue with the place as a result of a relation of ownership: we own and belong to the place, the place is part of us, and at the same time the place owns and belongs to us, as we are now part of it. I went to discuss the idea with my manager and he immediately said no and explained the difficulty to remove the black paint from the wall, when we had to re-paint the place. I negotiate the idea assuming the responsibility to clear the walls when would be necessary. So we did the art work and the result was so good that the children’s “shadow” stayed on the wall for more than one year. Consequently, it is a mix of limits, authority, responsibility, ethics, respect, freedom, negotiation and autonomy that creates a democratic learning space.

**Autonomy and Identity**

‘The idea of identity is a fiction generated by a desire for wholeness, something which however is always incomplete’ (Atkinson, 2011, 67).

During the process of investigating autonomy, a controversial idea arose in this context: the concept of identity. In my point of view, the idea of identity is one of the most challenging and problematic notions of postmodernity. Which has given inspiration to many contemporary artists. Artists as Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman, Tracey Emin, Yinka Shonibare, Marina Abramovic, Nikki S. Lee, Tino Seghal, David Hammons, Alvin Lau and many others represent identity as a socially constructed image of self with a critical vision on themes of culture, gender, class, ethnicity, multiculturalism, globalization and politics. Mostly they challenge the way that these myths are dictating us.

We are questioning our identities every day. If on one hand, identity is seen as something fictional (Atkinson 2011), or on the other, it is very real tool of the institutions to stereotype modes of behaviour (Bernstein, 1996). If on one side, it is seen as the assumption of oneself in its social context (Freire, 2001), on the other, it is seen as ‘fragmented and fractured, never singular but multiply constructed across different’ (Hall, 2003, 4) contexts.

In *‘Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity’*, Kath Woodward (2000) develops some ideas around the theme of identity. While introducing the question, she points out that: ‘we choose to *identify* with a particular identity or group’ (Woodward, 2000, 6). Woodward opinion is that there is a ‘link between the personal and the social’ (Woodward, 2000, 8), that is to say that it a ‘tension between how much control I have in constructing my identities and how much controls or constraint is exercised over me’ (Woodward, 2000, 8). She also believes that we visualize ourselves through symbols, like when we identify ourselves with the emblem of our football team (Woodward, 2000). Contemplating the other side of the question, Wenger (1998) in *‘Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity’*, states that our identity is identity in practice ‘produced as lived experience of participation in specific communities’ (Wenger, 1998, 151). However, are we completely autonomous to ‘shape’ our identity? Is it our institutions, such as schools and galleries, enabling autonomous participation providing a participative dialogue between the institution and its public? In the aspect of choice it is relevant that the identity process involves an action that depends on us; and in the participation aspect, we must be autonomous in deciding to participate in common spaces and the common spaces must enable us to assume ourselves, so in both aspects identity is intimately linked to the conception of autonomy.

The notion of identity for Paulo Freire is also linked with the conception that it is socially constructed, it is through relationships with the others that I am constantly making who I am. According to him:

‘The fact that I perceive myself to be in the world, with the world, with others, brings with it a sense of “being-with” constitutive of who I am that makes my relationship to the world essential to who I am. In other worlds, my presence in the world is not so much of someone who is merely adapting to something “external”, but of someone who is inserted as if belonging essentially to it. It’s the position of one who struggles to become the subject and maker of history and not simply a passive disconnected object. (Freire, 2001, 55)

At the playground, we have been reflecting and symbolising our identities, as a consequence of these questions that has arose while we are reflecting on our practice as artist teacher. During the process we saw some works of Barbara Kruger, Cindy Sherman and Hélio Oiticica, we reflected about symbols, communities, country and different aspects of our identity. One of the kids represented her identity as one piece of a big puzzle, where she was one of the pieces, integrated with other pieces. When we spoke about what they have done, she said that she feels herself as part of a puzzle where she needs the others to be part of something bigger. Another girl represents herself with a lot of different things, like a cross, symbolising her church group, a trainers as she is always running away, a headphones showing that she loves music and a box. When I asked her about the box, she said that she feels herself as ‘being outside of a box’ or ‘not fit in any box’. We questioned on the idea of who put those boxes for us to be fit? They answered that: family, friends, school and also us. I just found a very good conception of identity: identities are boxes where we want or are compelled to fit in it.

**Cultural Identity and Social-Context**

Another aspect that requires our attention in the notion of identity and autonomy is the conception of cultural identity. In *Pedagogy of Autonomy,* Paulo Freire considers that is very important to the teacher’s praxis that we respect the cultural identity of our learners; respect the “baggage” that the learners bring to the institution. According to him:

‘There’s another question that cannot be overlooked either, namely, the question of cultural identity in relation to both individuals and classes among the learners and for which (in the context of forward-looking educational practices) respect is absolutely fundamental. It is connected directly to the challenge of assuming who we are, which is what a purely technical, objective, and grammatical vision of education cannot do or be.’ (Freire, 2001, 46)

Taking the same road proposed by Freire, Wenger states that ‘our identity includes our ability and our inability to shape the meanings that define our communities and our forms of belonging’ (Wenger, 1998, 145). Also Lisbeth Rebollo Gonçalves, in the article *‘As Identidades Culturais e a Comunicação’*, points that cultural identities are “connected to social identities in which individuals link themselves to a community, nation, civilization and define their ways of think, feel and acting collectively”[[3]](#endnote-3) (Gonçalves, 2004). At the same time, it is this sense of recognition and identity that makes us want to belong to any social group. It seems that identities within communities are fundamental to keep people together and enable actions that could challenge they own notion of identities and change themselves and their community’s space. Therefore, cultural identity is essential assumption of any social context.

Furthermore, Freire, in *Pedagogy of Autonomy* relates that once, at a school in São Paulo, where he was conducting a four-day meeting with teachers from ten local schools to coordinate their educational activities, he entered a room in which a display of photographs pictures from nearby school were exhibited, photographs of impoverished areas, muddy streets, pictures of ugly places that suggested sadness and difficulties. Pictures of bodies walking with problems, some were slow, others broken, faces undone, with a vague look. Behind him two teachers were making comments about what touched them most closely. Suddenly, one of them said: "Ten years teaching at this school. I have never known anything beyond its nearby streets that give me access. Now, seeing this exhibition of photographs, which reveals a bit of its context, I realize how precarious it must have been my teaching task during these years, if I don’t even know the social-context of the school (Freire, 2001, 121).

How to teach without respect the cultural identity of the learners? How to educate without being open to their geographic and social context? How to teach without being involved in their reality?

Desse modo, deixa claro que o ensino não depende exclusivamente do professor, assim como aprendizagem não é algo apenas de aluno, as duas atividades se explicam e se complementam; os participantes são sujeitos e não objetos um do outro.

**O professor como ser político, emotivo, pensante não pode ser imparcial em suas atitudes, deve sempre mostrar o que pensa, apontando diferentes caminhos, evitando conclusões, para que o aluno procure a qual acredita, com suas explicações, se responsabilizando pelas conseqüências e construindo assim sua autonomia.The school as a democratic space**

As we stated before, among the reasons for the “sterilization of autonomy” in our educational institutions is the expected achievement that should be performed by each teacher and learner. Our educational system had already set up levels of ability, grades of skills, marks for creativity and established a system that, like a ‘tape or boxes’, our learning capacity is measured or ‘fit in it’. From early year’s education to university levels, the learning process is policed, controlled and regulated. When we are assessing what someone has learnt in art, what are we usually assessing? Talents, skills, ability, techniques, capacities are words that we often find in an assessment sheet. On the opposite side, Freire believes that the learners should evaluate the learning process, should be done by them reflecting themselves on their achievements and progress (Freire, 2001); they should do it because it is most important to interesting of them, not to the institution.

However, the police control of the institutions dominates and oppresses our conduct and embezzles our capacity to grow. Although, when they rule the teachers and learner’s behaviour or ability for learning, they are stealing the growth from themselves. They are lifting the possibility to experience new challenges, to expand themselves and have a real progress.

On the opposite side, if the institutions enable autonomy, they would enlarge the educational experience and generate a different notion of institution, a democratic, a place where we all can participate, having a voice, freedom and being an important part of it. As I mentioned before, if we understand education as a dialogue (Freire, 1986, 1992), an encounter of subjectivities, the place where this encounter is realized, the educational institutions such as school, communities, museums, art galleries cannot be spaces of domination; on the contrary, must be spaces of freedom and autonomy.

Thus, it is time for us to rethink our ideas of institutions, making them more accessible to the public, opening the space to dialogue, to an active participation. The democratic participatory institutions would then promote the engagement of the public in their artistic, cultural and social space.

If we, artist-researcher-teachers, want to make the school a democratic space, then the change should come from us; we have to take the responsibility of our autonomy and disseminate this awareness. As I said before, and which is fundamental for our democratic praxis, we must create this ‘open space’ for learning, where the students can be autonomous, where their curiosity and questioning can be heard. Where their passion for discovering new approaches, techniques and media can be stimulated and increased to the point that they would not need us. Perhaps just for a gesture that reassures their progress. Moreover, we, artist teacher have on our side a significant matter to transform any space or reality: art.

Therefore, It is time for us to put in practice a transformative pedagogy and, as bell hooks suggests, transgressing the reality of domination imposed by educational institutions and ‘making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute’ (hooks 1994, pg. 39). It is time for us to announce what Badiou (2005) proposes as praxis as an event and what Atkinson conceives as:

‘Learning as a movement into a new ontological state where learning opens up new possibilities, new ways of seeing things, new ways of making sense of what is presented to us in our different modes of existence’ (Atkinson, 2011,14)

**Conclusion**

During the investigation on Freire’s idea of pedagogy of autonomy, we came across with the idea that the act of teaching is an action of valuing and recognizing learner’s knowledge, culture, experience and opinions. Furthermore, teaching is the recognition of the other and I as a process of being, of becoming; it is the recognition that we are constantly forming each other. We are teaching-learning together and together taking the responsibility of to be an autonomous being in the process. It is not dominating but liberating; it is not imposing but assuming, it is not alienating but creating and re-creating us through this experience.

Therefore, we, artist teachers, must take the responsibility in being autonomous and critically assuming ourselves as a subject of our praxis, seeing our praxis as transformative, which is not to conform to what is imposed by the institutions, but it is going beyond, sometimes disrupting, creating spaces where we can autonomously reflect on ourselves and on our responsibilities and freedom to act as a subject of our history. Thus, the act of teaching should be a commitment to social transformation, where we can act consciously and reflectively about our decisions. After all, Freire taught us that education is a form of intervention in the world (Freire, 2001) and the way we are committed to it will surely reflect in the future of our society.

Are we ready for disruption?!!!

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1. Although the book in Portuguese is called ‘Pedagogia da Autonomia’, Patrick Clarke translated as ‘Pedagogy of Freedom’, which I particularly think that it has lost significant meaning. In my point of view, Freire relates autonomy with freedom in a wider aspect. It is similar with what Kant defines as ‘autonomy of the will’ (Kant, 1964), where one will choose, with respect, ethic and responsibility. Therefore, I will keep the full meaning and literally translated as ‘Pedagogy of Autonomy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Translated by Luciana Duailibe. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Idem. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)