

studio strategies

USERGUIDE

What it is and what it isn't

Studio strategies is a free flowing reflective self-assessment tool for artists and designers. It is meant as a non-judgemental system that aids and externalizes the internal conversation one has about ones day-to-day decision-making. It offers a way to discuss the continuous flow of value prioritization between all aspects that can be of importance to a practice and a life. Again, without being judgemental or instructive about what should be important. Rather, the method acknowledges that such things are always in movement and that the value we assign to the various elements of practice at different points in life and their prioritisation in time, effort and means can bring new insights to the practitioner. The method brings forth inconsistencies or points of attention through validating ones day-to-day decision-making..

How it is used

The practitioner places a value of 0-10 in the boxes next to each element. In the first box (<) retrospectively (e.g. looking back to the priority they estimate to have given this element in the past. In the last box (>) prospectively (e.g. the priority they feel they should give this element in the future) and in the middle box they estimate the priority given (in time, energy/effort and means) at this very moment. If needed, one can add a note (f.i. out of material or exhibit coming up) in the note section behind the boxes. Only factual information is needed here. After grading all elements on all three levels, it is time to analyse what it all means; can you make sense of this, are there inconsistencies? What are concrete actions to change and monitor them etc. You can make a plan of action for the short term and longer term. It is important to do this on a regular basis, say, 2-4 times a year, and use the outcomes to reflect critically on the results. Remember, you are not giving yourself 'grades', it is purely a system that you can use to 'critically think through what being an artist or designer means to you' (Butler, 1988, p. 7) and how you spend your time and attention with and around your work. This changes constantly, but it is good to make it a habit to take a step back and question your choices and priorities, rule out any underlying assumptions and unconstructive efforts. Also, it helps to commit to plans you make following this and evaluate them. Make sure you keep prints, notes and plans of your bi-annual or quarterly analysis, so you can look back on the various values and viewpoints you develop through the years.

About the author

Jolande Bosch is a Dutch visual artist and art school teacher in practice based research, professional attitude and critical reflection. During her practice-led PhD project at Northumbria University in Newcastle, 'The strategic studio: how to access and assess decision-making in visual art practice' (2009) she looked for ways to explain the entanglement of personal, artistic and social decision-making in day to day artistic practices and find ways to question such decisions reflectively. She developed and tested an initial version of the 'studio strategies' method, which was further refined in her own practice and teaching.

Any comments and experiences via the author's website www.jolandebosch.com are most welcome.

studio strategies

name :
date :

orientation

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notes

productive

creating / experimenting

☐☐☐

execution

☐☐☐

showing

☐☐☐

reflecting

☐☐☐

social

peers

☐☐☐

personal environment

☐☐☐

professional environment

☐☐☐

societal environment

☐☐☐

middelen

locality / space

☐☐☐

materials / money

☐☐☐

time

☐☐☐

knowledge

☐☐☐

(work)supply

☐☐☐