

SUMMARY OF THE HABILITATION THESIS

COORDINATES OF VISUAL RESEARCH -

FROM DRAWING TO NEW MEDIA

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The present *Thesis of Habilitation* is the outcome of an ample self-analysis process that I have decided to undertake after more than twenty years since the debut of my academic, artistic and scientific activity, being at a stage that I take the liberty to consider as one of fully mature professional and creative capacity. The standing from which I choose to examine my professional evolution is double-sided, representing a balance that implies both the good sides of my activity so far but also those that need to be improved, together with a projection into the future that identifies new strategies and goals and, as far as possible, a future professional development. In view of my widely varied activity during the last two decades that I use to characterize as kaleidoscopic, due to the multitude of disciplines and areas of interest I was attracted to and on which my activity was focussed, I have chosen to structure the present thesis along four main lines which cover, in order of their sequence, the area of scientific and theoretical interest, my academic background, my artistic activity under all its aspects and, last but not least, the managerial experience acquired all along these years.

The first chapter of the thesis devoted to my academic career and scientific experience is opening with an ample analysis of the theoretical research for my doctoral studies finalized in the year 2007 with a thesis entitled *New vistas and trends in digital media art* which was awarded the *Magna cum Laudae* honor. The subject under discussion is multi-disciplinary by excellence, standing at the confluence of visual arts, the area of scientific research and that of multimedia, the late being in full evolution and transformation and, which we are lucky to witness directly, hence an inciting theoretical investigation. As far as the habilitation thesis allows, I make a succinct review of the main ideas, of the main subjects researched and conclusions reached, stressing also my personal contribution as well as the degree of originality of the doctoral thesis in question. It is also worth mentioning that my Ph.D. research has been a point of departure for my course “*Computer graphics - Multimedia techniques*” addressed to the M.A. students of the Graphic Department of the Bucharest National University of Arts. Further on, the first session of the thesis dwells on my academic career with a length of more than two decades now, wherein I try to throw light on the multitude of positive influences and formative processes that have determined its progress. Here the areas of didactic interest come under discussion, the courses held along the years as well as the results obtained, altogether a wide range of preoccupations that also justify the title chosen for the present paper “*From drawing to the new media*”. To better illustrate the idea, an ample description is following of two of my present courses that I hope are illustrative for my entire didactic activity, namely “*Fine arts representation techniques - Drawing basics*” and “*Computer graphics - Multimedia techniques*”, the first addressed to B.A. students while the other to M.A. students. Their description will reveal that both courses have in my opinion a fundamental formative role, the theoretical notions as well as the practical themes and goals aiming to develop creativity and critical thinking of the students, offering them also the necessary technical skills alongside the indispensable conceptual elements that are required in their inner research laboratory. As a direct consequence of my theoretical interest combined with my didactic concern for the new media,

I identify my potential as a coordinator to be of future students in the doctoral cycle, both scientific and professional knowledge accumulated so far pleading to that effect. I conclude this first chapter dedicated to my academic and scientific career with a section treating my interest for the theoretical side, in particular for the new media, lately for other subjects too, by reviewing a series of articles published during the last ten years in specialist magazines and publications or in the framework of academic scientific sessions. I do hope that this sections will be eloquent enough in revealing the manner in which the ideas and the notions treated in my Ph.D. thesis expanded during the years to come, generating new ways and means of investigation and reasearch, permanently molding my cognitive horizon and allowing the formulation of personal viewpoints, of consequence for my academic activity as well as for my creative activity and artistic research.

The second part of the first chapter centered on the presentation and analysis of my activity so far refers to the evolution of my career in the creation and artistic research areas, an extremely important component that during the course of time has strongly marked both my didactic and scientific performance. I would like to underline that my artistic evolution and by extension the professional one have taken various forms as I have been equally drawn towards the artistic autonomous zone but also to the various genres of applied graphic arts. Therefore the section is structured along five main guidelines according to the specific of graphic art genres and not only, to those whereto my activity has been directed first and foremost and where I achieved works that are worth mentioning in the present thesis. As they come in order these are drawing, engraving, illustration, graphic design and editorial design, design for on-line media and multimedia design, photography and, last but not least, curatorial activity. Each domain of my artistic activity is examined in a specific section where I try to go into detail on the new inner mechanism or creative affinities that attracted me to that particular domain, the chronological evolution of the respective activity as well as the works, the exhibitions or significant events related to these particular fields. Mention is also made of the major formative institu-

tions, the *National University of Arts in Bucharest* or the *University of Arts and Design Helsinki - UIAH* their role in directing my interest towards one or another domain of artistic creation, as well as the important institutions I worked with or was employed by along the years, such as *International Center for Contemporary Arts in Bucharest - CIAC*, *Center Education 2000+*, *Romanian Cultural Foundation Publishing House*, *Humanitas Publishing House*, *Humanitas Educational Publishing House*, *Curtea Veche Publishing House*, *Atelier 35 Gallery*, *UNA Galeria* or *Galeria Posibilă* to mention just a few and, last but not least, the outstanding personalities of the art world and not only that have influenced my activity during the last twenty years. The section on artistic creation is drawing to a conclusion with a description of six significant works belonging to each and every particular field mentioned above which are either artistic research projects, autonomous works or creations from the applied graphic arts field, all of them meant to define both my academic profile as well as my artistic interest and the complexity of the creative endeavours. In order of their mentioning the works described are my art research project and artist book "*Tristan Tzara - 5 poems*", my art research project and artist book "*Silent Views*", the catalogue and visual identity of UNARTE, the American photographic research project, the collective research project "*Petite Histoire*" financed by an AFCN grant, as well as the visual identity of UNARTE website.

To go further, the last aspect of my professional activity is examined, the managerial one, of coordination and evaluation in the field of higher art education, which during the last ten years has played an outstanding role due to various positions and jobs I held, that have widened my competence, also providing a deeper insight into the educational phenomenon. Four of the decision making positions I have held are analyzed, which are that of Director of the Graphic Arts Department of National University of Arts Bucharest for the length of two successive mandates in the period 2008-2012, that of Vicerector of the National University of Arts Bucharest also for two mandates, the second one unfolding now, since 2012 to the present day, the capacity of ARACIS evaluator since the year 2012

and that of CNFIS Grant Director “*i_unarte: Policies and strategies of internationalisation at UNARTE*” that was implemented during the year 2016. The subject is centered on the priorities I was faced with in the above capacities, the goals, the solutions reached, the achievements and results obtained together with the competence of coordinating smaller or bigger specialist groups, the knowhow acquired in the evaluation process and, last but not least, the favourable impact at institutional level of a great many activities undertaken.

Whether the first part of the *Habilitation Thesis* analyzes my professional activity so far in its ensemble, from a critical standpoint, in a systematic and quantifiable manner, the second section entitled *Career development plans* is putting forward a projection into the future of my professional itinerary, detailing possible directions of evolution alongside the objectives to be reached. It goes without saying that all these desiderata rely on a realistic appraisal of my activity so far, on my personal wishes as to my development and improvement, but also to the institutional requirements for evolution and transformation. The section is structured along three main development lines, namely academic, scientific and artistic; as to the managerial development, in my opinion this cannot make the object of such future projection, apart by assuming on my side to rise to the occasion, as a professional, whenever the case will be. Certain goals are then set for each and every area, which among others are identifying areas of competence in the coordination of doctoral students, the interest for raising the standard of B.A. and M.A. courses, holding of complex art research projects that imply students, working out courses in widely spoken foreign languages for Erasmus students, finding future subjects of artistic and scientific research for editorial projects purposes and, last but not least, finding major art themes to give new ground to my own artistic activity and creative purposes in the years to come.

As a conclusion to these *Habilitation Thesis* a last review, which is this time a synthetical one will reveal the positive aspects of my activity during the last twenty years, taking into account the aspects that need improvement and bringing into discussion the goals of my career evolution along certain guidelines of development.

This last chapter, as well as the *Habilitation Thesis* as a whole is a sincere attempt at describing the complex topography of my artistic, academic, scientific and managerial activity, a portrait which I hope is as truthful as can be of what I am now from the professional point of view and of what I want to become.

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