



Fig. 1—On KHiO's roof stands the permanent installation THIS IS IT. An American tourist who happened to pass in front of it, asked: "what is IT?" Is it wood? Is it wool? Is it paper? Is it in the detail? Is it in the semester-plan? How does a course-structure plan for the qualities that we look to in the work of our students? Is this what we call the artistic core?

This handout is dedicated to investigating the importance of *detail* in monitoring the progress of developments of the MA in design at KHiO. Hitherto, the organised exchange on matters concerning the progress of developments in the design-MA, have been limited to chart and plan courses that are managed separately by course-leaders. The quality-assessment, for which we have evaluation routines, are also carried out separately. Which means that in the professional exchange linked to planning there are, at this time, few opportunities to discuss the quality of the MA specifically.

The failure to do so adversely affects our obligations to NOKUT (the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education) simply because the real time-budget of our course-units is lower than the minimum stipulated by the agency for a full term: that is, 30 study points for which a minimum of 750 hours is set (at the rate of 25 hours/ects). The maximum being 900 hours (at the rate of 30 hours/ects). This problem is particularly acute during the autumn term; which was 17 weeks, but which is now set to 18 weeks. Requiring the students to work min. 40 hours/week throughout.

Which *never* corresponds exactly to when the courses are (on the course plan). It means that the MA is vulnerable to the perception that some activities—theory has been reported to the Dean in this regard—are eating *off* the time of others. Notwithstanding the point that the concept of the theory curriculum thus far was to eat *with* others (and *not* from others): under the previous structure two theory courses (one in the autumn, the other in the spring) of 5ects each, had a total of 60 hours allocated on the semester-plan. That is, less than half than the minimum requirement.

Under the new structure, the theory courses have been allocated 3 weeks, or 15 days. The courses are always within 09:00-16:00 hours, regularly with a 1 hour lunch-break. Which means that 90 hours has been set off for the course in the plan—in contrast to 60 hours previously—and



Fig. 2—Part of Sigveit Ringvold's MA process—exhibit at Spriten Kunsthall in Skien. Featuring movement, tracery, matrix and print (01.04-10.04 2022).

the students have to supply 30 hours: which, for a 3 week, adds 10 hours/week. That is, if the theory courses to be as self-contained as possible. When students also depend on side-jobs for to finance their studies, the realism of the plan is thin. All the courses appear to be in a similar situation.

Which basically means that we have to find another way of delivering the equivalent of each course's study points, than by summing up the hours: this, in turn, means that we have to move beyond the current paradigm of planning as logistics. *We have to find a way of producing our study-points with less time.* This may sound impossible and requiring the staff of producing by magic. But if we take into consideration that what we have discussed thus far is the *distribution* of time, and *not* production-time. We have only discussed the distribution of time, through the allocation of slots on the common semester-plan.

If we can shift our focus to the students' *production time*—with an operational scope on *how the students are doing* working in different course-environments—we can “slice” the *same* work into *different* deliverables to the courses that they are required to attend. The logbooks (so-called BlackBooks) that the students are required to submit in the theory course, in most cases, clearly *exceed* the framework of the theory-courses. They are relevant in aspects on which they receive feedback. However, the nature and quantity of work put in by the students is *richer* than the course.

One should think that this work can be cultivated, directed and designed for *other* professional pedagogies—according to the requirements of the studio-courses on the semester-plan—which is the window of possibility that has opened with the Dean's decision that a common delivery is likely to solve the time-squeeze discussed above, but also the challenges that the MA faces in developing a quality of the programme as a specific *whole*, the juncture between the studio- and theory-subjects, and finally in the sense of *parity* between the specialisations from year-to-year.

That is, moving away from a situation (amongst the staff) where we are attentive to the utility of consequences from the semester-plan in terms of *values* held by each course-leader, and move on to the course-leaders' awareness of the connection between the *courses* and their *specific results*. Or: moving from limiting turf-battles and zero-sum games, to shared concern with the quality of the MA programme as a whole. In which we take interest in specific results—featuring e.g. in concrete logbooks—rather than engaging with generic inferences *not* based on the knowledge we have.

Where does it go from here? We could imagine that reviewing the logbooks at different stages—or, at least, once a term—will give richer and more detailed impression of how the handover from one course to another (between studio and theory course mainly) has been working for each student, the specialisation and the class, learning from this and make choices that contribute to adjust/ tweak the conjoint work of the courses in the MA-programme; from this, work on the parity between our courses, till a fuller and shareable overview has been obtained for the MA-programme.

Of course, it means that we need to develop the tasks, occasions and arenas of encounter for this. Maybe an appropriate task for a joint leadership of the MA-course, which is presently appears limited to the studio-courses. From the vantage point of the theory-courses the focal value is not to expand, nor increase the importance of theory, but rather to make good use of what has already been achieved to insure that what is delivered, is indeed a 5 ects course for *Theory 1* and *Theory 2*, and 10 ects for *Theory 3* (second year). And contribute to give importance to the MA as a *whole*.



Fig. 3—If the MA was a Peacock Cabinet, these are the members (people who, in one way or the other, are involved in planning, teaching or tutoring): Sigurd Støm, Isak Wisløff, Kirsti Bræin, Theodor Barth, Ida Falck Øien, Andreas Berg, Pavlina Lucas, Patrick Grung, Maziar Raein, Peter Lochstoer, Christina Lindgren, Ane Thon Knutsen, Toni Kauppila, Sarah Kaurin Jonassen, Lotte Grønneberg, Bjørn Blikstad. The list lacks two colleagues who have only pink placeholders on the KHIO-web.

In my professional opinion, we have squandered time and resources in attempting to “solve” the MA, as though it were mainly a time-table; or, as though it were a budgeting exercise, similar in method and scope to a financial budget. The effect, in both cases, is that we focus on what we as staff have at our disposal (time and money), according to a managerial distributive logic. When what we could have done is to develop a common operational focus on how to help each and every student to progress in their work, *across* the course roster.

Though I am critical to the amount of time—or, actually the number of years—we have come to the point where we have the chance of doing something else. The best strategy may still lie in focussing on what is lying *ahead*. But in the light of societal and environmental developments, I would underscore the urgency of getting out MA up to speed, and *getting our message out*.