The w/k Question-Profile

by Till Bödeker - Wednesday, December 25, 2019

https://www3.hhu.de/wuk/en/the-w-k-question-profile/

This text requires you to be familiar with w/k in 5 minutes. Across all w/k sections we aim to achieve results which are comparable to one another. For this purpose each type of contribution receives a set of general questions. Each concrete contribution is then to answer its respective set of questions based on its type.

1. Individual studies in the sections 1–3:

- Articles by Artists
- Articles about Artists
- Art-Related Scientists

w/k's first main objective is to capture as precisely as possible the diversity of the individual connections between science and the visual arts through individual studies. The general questions an article should address depend on which category the respective artist falls in: a border-crosser, and/or a science-related artist and/or an artist who collaborates with scientists/engineers in specific projects. However, an individual study does not only consist of answers to the general questions relevant to that particular artist. It always also endeavors to take their distinct characteristics into account.

Most science-art connections are a matter of artists working science-related; sometimes, however, an artist encompasses two or even all three basic forms – many border-crossers rely on scientific theories/methods/results in their artistic practice and collaborate with scientists in specific projects.

Questions for border-crossers between the visual arts and science
To begin with, every border-cropper is asked to briefly present their scientific work in a way to be accessible to the general reader; the physicist, for example, who is also an artist, explains what his work as a physician entails. In addition are the following questions:

- How did the connection between science and the visual arts develop for you? What were your key development phases?
- As a border-cropper, which artistic goals do you pursue?
- What is the relationship between your scientific and artistic activity: how do they connect or interact?
- Has your artistic activity supported the production of a scientific theory – and/or vice versa?

Questions for science-related artists

- Which science, or sciences, are relevant to your artistic work?
- Which theories/methods/results of this science/these sciences do you refer to in your artistic activity?
- How did your interest in certain sciences emerge?
- Which artistic goals do you pursue in your examination with science(s)?

Questions for collaborations between the (visual) arts and science

At the current level of knowledge we distinguish between four different forms of collaboration; potentially there are more.

1st form of collaboration: At least one artist works together with at least one scientist – and in this context often also with engineers and companies – to gain new materials for their own artistic work. We then pose the questions:
What is the respective artist about?
What does the collaboration specifically entail, and how has it developed?
What influence does science have on the artist?
Which artistic results has this collaboration led to?

2nd
form of collaboration: At least one artist takes part in a scientific research project:

What is the research project about?
How is the artist influenced by science: for example, do they come closer to the respective science?
Which artistic or art-related activities are planned for this project, and which tasks do they fulfill within it?

3rd
form of collaboration: At least one scientist is involved with an art-project:

What is the art-project about?
Which scientific or science-related activities are planned for this project, and which tasks do they fulfill within it?

4th
form of collaboration: Novel connections between science and the (visual) arts: Some attempt to connect artistic methods of working with scientific ones in a way that generates a special kind of new knowledge:

What is this project about?
Which artistic or art-related activities are planned for this project, and which tasks do they fulfill within it?
Which scientific or science-related activities are planned for this project, and which tasks do they fulfill within it?
How do artistic and scientific activities work together?
Does a special kind of knowledge arise? If yes, please describe this in further detail.

w/k also presents and investigates positions of artistic research:

Set of questions for artistic researchers

- What do you understand by 'artistic research'?
- Do you rely on certain theoretical approaches of artistic research? If so, which ones?
- How did the contact to concepts of artistic research evolve for you?
- Which artistic and/or scientific goals do you pursue in your orientation to concepts of artistic research?

The above-mentioned pursuit of novel connections between science and the (visual) arts is also found in some approaches to artistic research.

2. Individual studies in section 4, which is split into three categories:

- Articles by Art-Related Scientists
- Articles about Art-Related Scientists
- Interviews with Art-Related Scientists

w/k's second main objective is to capture as precisely as possible the diversity of individual forms of art-related science, i.e. the recourse of artistic concepts/methods/results in educational classes and/or research processes and/or publications in individual studies.
To begin with, every art-related scientist is asked to briefly present their scientific work in a way to be accessible to the general reader. Using the article Vorlesungstheater (Theatre-lecture) as an example, below is a list of further questions addressing art-related scientists. The answers relating to this article roughly outline the connections:

- Which art forms did the lecture take on? - The entire lecture took place in theatre form.
- What kind of collaborations with artists did it come to? - Many students with acting experience, and in one case also with experience as a playwright and director, took part in the theatre-lecture. Artists (musicians, visual artists, dancers), both university students and externals, were also invited for guest appearances.
- Did the lecturer take part in the artistic activities, or were these just integrated into the course? - Both: The lecturer himself played in the theater, as well as integrating guest appearances into the lecture.
- Did the art reference only relate to the course, or did it also have an effect on research and publications? - The artistic reference was limited to the lecture and its publication in book form; it didn't apply to the research process - or at most in a vague, indirect form.
- What were the reasons for using the artistic reference? - The theatre-lecture was planned as a scientific-artistic activity limited to one semester. Together with the book publication, its aim was to motivate students whose research focus is on the interdisciplinary study of myths, ideology and methods, and to awaken their creative scientific powers.

If there are further contributions for the section Art-Related Scientists we will evaluate if it is necessary to broaden the range of questions.

3. Theoretical texts in section 5: General on 'Art and Science'

w/k's third main objective is to make progress in the advancement of knowledge regarding the formation of theory on the major topic 'art and science'. In contrast to the articles in sections 1 – 4, these texts do not have a consistent profile: Investigations with a general approach to all aspects of the major topic 'art and science' have their place in section 5. As the nature of this text is so heterogenous, it does not make much sense to distinguish a set of questions. However, the following questions remain:
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- How can your specific question be placed in the overall context of „art and science“?
- What significance do your results have for thinking about the topic „art and science“?
- To what extent is your approach relevant for w/k?

Theoretical texts in section 7: Aesthetics and art theory

In future, section 7 should only address questions of aesthetics and art theory which are directly or indirectly relevant to w/k. The article itself should clarify this relevance. In concrete terms, this means you should reserve around one of six A4 pages to explain the significance of the subject matter for w/k; as a general rule, the contribution should begin with this. The end of the article should link back to this connection. The questions are:

- To what extent are your aesthetic or art theoretical questions relevant for w/k?
- What significance do your results have for thinking about the topic „art and science“?

5. The relationship between the present article and The w/k Questions

The w/k questions were first published in the article The w/k Questions. The editorial text The w/k question-profile now expands upon this. It is necessary to expand upon The w/k Questions as the editorial supervision of contributions requires a text which is in a constant process of improvement, which w/k-readers can also contribute to. However, on an editorial basis the content of w/k contributions should not be substantially changed; we only allow linguistic corrections and formal adjustments.

Once a prospective contributor's concept gets the go-ahead – the required information can be found in Notes to Contributors -, we always inform them of the general questions relevant to their article on the basis of this text.