

**Evaluation of the doctoral dissertation,
artistic and didactic achievements of Ms Charlotte Biszewski drawn up in connection with a
doctoral degree conferment procedure in the discipline of fine art and art conservation,
initiated by the Artistic Discipline Council of the
Eugeniusz Geppert Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław.**

Basic information

In June 2021 Ms Charlotte Biszewski submitted for evaluation her doctoral dissertation entitled: *Embedded in Print: Analogue Storytelling in the Digital Age* prepared at the Inter-Faculty Doctoral Study Programme conducted in English at the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław.

In order to discover the artist's reasons for delving into the structure of the analysed problem, we need to diligently trace her history, based on a series of experiences connected with both her artistic and didactic paths. Both paths in this case constitute an unbreakable monolith and foundation in the presented dissertation. My review will be based on the documentation prepared by the doctoral student, and at this point I will underline the fact that as a consequence of this I can feel a certain sensory insufficiency so much need to comprehend this in-depth and titanic work that the author has done to find answers to her questions, which I will address in the following subjective evaluation of the submitted PhD thesis.

Evaluation of artistic achievements and activity, as well as evaluation of teaching, organisational and popularising achievements in the field of art.

Ms Charlotte Biszewski, born in 1988 in Bristol in the United Kingdom, completed her Master study programme in the field of Multidisciplinary Printmaking at the University of the West of England in Bristol in 2015. Three years before starting her course at the Faculty of Graphics and Media Art at the Academy of Art and Design in Wrocław, she was already



active in the field of experimental printmaking, revealing her strong connections with the world of science and art. The starting point of her future projects was *TransSiberia*, an Interactive Book, completed in 2017. This interactive book brings together everything that will later become an interpretative field in the broader context of her scientific research.

Paper, print and electronics, and I would also add "process" and "error" which unexpectedly reveals itself in successive experiences and experiments in the artist's analogue-digital world and becomes equally important in the creation and pursuit of the set goal. She presented her works in such exhibitions and projects as, for instance, *Between Type and Cyan*, Eesti Truki-ja-paberimuuseum Tartu, Estonia (individual exhibition, 2018), the aforementioned exhibition *TransSiberia*, WCU, Spokane Washington, USA (individual exhibition, 2018), *Satellite Imagery*, TYPA Gallery, Tartu, Estonia (2020), *The 11th Kochi Triennial of Prints*, Japan (2020), *Exposure*, Open Out Festival, Tromsø, Norway (2020); *Prints into Space*, with *Muhu Print*, ACM Arts Space, Tallinn, Estonia (2020), *Reframing Southmead*, *We The Curious* (science museum), Bristol, UK (2021).

Reading the extensive and thorough documentation, one can observe a huge amount of creative empathy, mainly revealed in collective work and mutual interaction with inspiring authorities. The search for places, objects, new spaces, which due to their energy affect the author, become an inspiration and a driving force for her. This is why artistic residencies, in which the artist actively participates, occupy such an important place in the cognitive process.

Let me mention some of the important residencies here: *Cyanotype Residency*, *Interval*, Bristol (2019), *Estonian Paper and Print Museum*, *Internship* (2019); *Printmaking Residency*, *Integrated digital media* at *New York University*, New York (2020).

All these achievements are impressive, considering the fact that she reconciles research, organisational, and popularisation work while being involved in teaching at the Academy - an original programme offer for students of the Erasmus programme (2018–2021), and outside the Academy: *Spike Print Studio*, Bristol, UK (2018), *Cyanotype and Diazoprint*, *Interval*, Bristol, UK (2019), *Paper Speakers Workshop* *IDM*, at *NYU*, New York, USA (2020), *Letterpress and Papermaking Course*, *TYPA/ Estonian Academy of Fine Art*, Tallin, Estonia (2021).

At the same time, she actively participates in many workshops, e.g. *Carborundum Printing*, *Muhu Print*, Estonia, *Muhu*, Estonia (2020), *On-line Electronics Workshop* with *Synesthetica Studio*, Ukraine (2021). She has also published her research results: *Biszewski, C.*, *Bristol set in print. Publishing History*, 33-67 (2018); *Biszewski, C.*, *Lippa, P.* *Between History and Innovation*, a survey of print museums, *Acta Academiae Artium Vilmensis* (2020); *Biszewski, C.*,

Post-Digital Letterpress Printing, *Book of Abstracts*, *i2ADS – Research Institute in Art, Design and Society* University of Porto, ISBN 978-989-54703-0-3

(2020); Biszewski C., Exploring Paper and Print, Pressing Matters, Issue 10 (2020), Biszewski, C, Innovation in the Museum Context, TYPA (2021).

Ms Charlotte Biszewski has received numerous awards and prizes, e.g. at the Social Machinery Film Festival, Italy, Film Award (2018) and the Visegrad Scholarship, Open Society Archives, Budapest (2019). She was granted the prestigious Jerzy Grotowski Scholarship for Outstanding Achievements in the Arts as part of the Scholarship Programme for PhD students awarded by the Mayor of Wrocław (2019). She also received the Europa Nostra Heritage Award, Illucidare Special Prize for Heritage-led Innovation, TYPA nomination (2020).

Evaluation of the concept and execution of the dissertation

Techno-science and techno-scientific art are now an immanent phenomenon in the landscape of art using new technologies and new media. Ms Charlotte Biszewski introduces the viewer to the world of hybrid and transdisciplinary art. Its essence is the process of combining various media and types of creation into a new form of artistic expression, as well as crossing borders between art and research practice, art and socio-political activism. It is now a creation not quite precisely designating a set of specific phenomena of new media art, as Piotr Zawojski writes in his treatise, *Techno-culture and its artistic manifestations*, but it seems to be helpful to distinguish in the field of art activities represented by Ms Charlotte Biszewski.

A strong need for contact with the classical workshop also underlies everything the author does. She combines classic traditional forms of printing with the contemporary possibilities of electronic and post-digital printing. She tests laser cutting, uses a cnc milling machine, exposes, etches, solders and examines, gradually extending the range of transfer possibilities and printmaking tools. *Star Maps 40* is one of her experimental works whose elements are laser engraved directly onto paper, then washed and bleached. A sensory object appears, or perhaps a matrix? Or a print? The author reveals a new dimension in idea matrixing. It is a redefinition of the matrix, which in this case can be perceived as a form not only to be used for shaping and reproducing, but also an ultimately defined form.

The author's primary goal is to "create a generally accessible, reliable source of information for future artists working in the field of print, computer science and electronics". A data base/makerspace needed for the exchange of experiences, research results and online collaboration. A didactic flair makes the author share frankly with the audience all the knowledge she gathered from the cognitive process accompanying her numerous experiments. This sometimes makes reception slightly chaotic, but the sincerity of the message is captivating and justifies some of the shortcomings revealed in the accompanying blog.

However, the pro-social attitude and openness to artistic collaboration becomes the primary objective, rather than the form in which the information is conveyed.

In the documentation and portfolio, the information and message is already clear and facilitates the analysis of subsequent works. Each of them is accompanied by a reliable description and thorough analysis, giving us an idea of who Ms Charlotte Biszewski is.

The artist's path brings to mind a fractally disintegrating current beam. Subsequent branches expand and pile up, and some stop, having no further continuity. When a problem occurs, the experience is interrupted, the process halted, and a new challenge drives the artist in the opposite direction. The stage of experience and the many failures associated with this process become a very important factor in building the reality in which the final object is created.

A mistake during the creation of a project, a drawing, a flaw at the final stage, paradoxically stimulates the imagination and allows to penetrate previously undiscovered regions of exploration in search of hidden contexts more than a creative process controlled from beginning to end.

The author is ready to act outside the box and has a certain courage to take risks despite a potential failure; a courage that often leads her to non-stereotypical solutions. One can even state that Error becomes a great starting point for experiments with graphic matter and not only.

An example of this can be the work entitled: *Galaxies and Cosmologies*, printed in Print Lab at the Tandon School of Engineering, which is a continuation of an earlier research on thermochromatic inks that change colour when exposed to heat. The emerging problem with the power of the heating circuit, which in effect does not finally reveal the full image but only a subtle part of it, becomes a kind of metaphor for the theme of the visualisation and simulation of the universe, which is still incomprehensible to us and still wrapped in mystery. Another work that is formally intriguing, but also important in the context of current problems of civilisation is *The Resonance of Waste*. The author presented it during the 19th Survival Art Review "Wasteland" in the Municipal Port in Wrocław in 2020. Seaweed from polluted sea basins becomes a base for paper production; the author embeds electronic beams in it, creating paper speakers. The project is completed by a melody line, which is the real sound of flowing sewage. Ms Charlotte Biszewski points out to us that this is a time when the traditional and egocentric practice of art should be replaced by social activism, persuasion, narrative building, changing social awareness. It is a time for the art world to establish a strong collaboration with the world of science, and for artists to activate their imagination, not only to awaken consciences, but also to penetrate and identify all aspects of economic, social and cultural problems.

This work also answers two questions posed by the artist: Why is electric printing worth researching? What is the significance of print and paper to this form of technology? I think the answer has been presented above. The answer to the last question: How has looking at the sky made it possible to understand who we are? can be found in the last set of works presented,

entitled *Harmonics*, which refer to ancient astronomy and interdisciplinary exploration of the universe. The idea of the movement of planets and stars producing noise or radio waves is for the author the basis for discovering new artistic spaces. This is illustrated by a set of 4 prints made in woodcut technique, as a noble and refined medium of contemporary expression. Japanese blotting paper gives the work an ephemeral character, emphasising the subtlety and artistry of the chosen technique. The set is supplemented by 4 graphic objects, hybrids of paper, paint and light. The music of the spheres and Kepler's law of planetary motion is embedded in the sound layer of the object, a collaboration with Patrick McGinley. This installation is the culmination of Ms Charlotte Biszewski's three years of work. The work is a tribute to the technique of paper extraction and production and to the grassroots manual work. However, by taking on the role of a scientist, the author also becomes capable of designing new graphic matter, creating further clones, transplants and hybrids in an endless process of new experiments. The author's work is very inspiring for me, but it is also close to what I teach my students. The assumptions of my studio are based on the belief that a traditional, classical approach to the workshop and a solid art education in this direction can and should strongly support current activities in contemporary art. Certain iconographic phenomena will come into being only thanks to knowledge and experience flowing directly from manual and technical workshop practice. The programme assumptions of the studio therefore result from the open character of the experience of the creative process in the relief print workshop. The aim is to reflect on concepts such as the repeatability of the image, the multiplication of the matrix, the aspect of the copy and the original, the need for a print, the role of the copy and above all the purpose of the matrix as the very origin of the image. Relief printing as a highly accessible and friendly technology favours an experimental attitude. It develops printmaking, enriching it also in terms of language with such terms as graphic object, graphic installation or graphic fabric. Therefore, Ms Charlotte Biszewski's work is close to the field of my own artistic experience, where experiment often becomes a stimulus for an original creation with a matrix.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the presented documentation, as a result of the process of education and improvement of her own knowledge and skills in the field of art, the doctoral student is a comprehensively prepared artist and academic worker. Ms Charlotte Biszewski's artistic, academic and didactic achievements are not only a significant contribution to the discipline of fine arts, but they also effectively translate into the sphere of science, didactics and the popularization of culture as well as the shaping of aesthetic artistic attitudes. On the basis of my analysis of the concept and execution of her dissertation, and taking into



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account her artistic achievements, I recommend that Ms Charlotte Biszewski be awarded the degree of Doctor of Arts in the field of art, in the discipline of fine art and art conservation.

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Yours sincerely,

dr hab. Sybilla Skałuba