

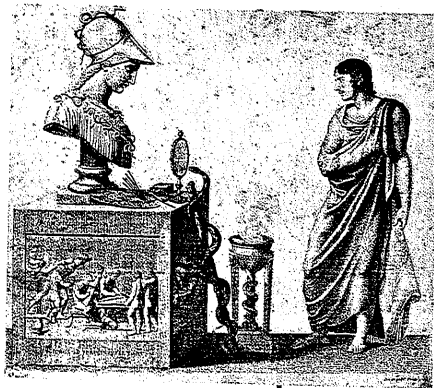
Performative Science and Beyond - Involving the Process in Research = Hans H. Diebner (Ed.), Springer-Verlag, Wien 2006

PREFACE

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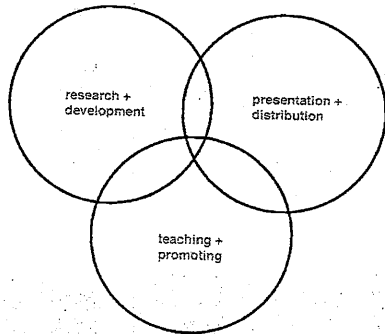
A Museum's Mission, by Peter Weibel

At the time I became chairman and director of the ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe on January 1, 1999, the ZKM hosted the Media Museum and the Media Library, an Institute for Visual Media and an Institute for Music and Acoustics. Responding to the needs of the time, I founded immediately an Institute for Net Development and an Institute for Basic Research. Net Art was becoming a new medium after film, video and the computer, as I had stated in 1995 at the first global Net Art conference and exhibition, "Welcome to the Wired World". This was the theme of the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, Austria, where I was then artistic director.



Jean Marie Leroux, L'art s'illustre par la science, la science se perpetue par l'art, copper engraving based on a drawing by Jean Galbart Salvage, 1812.

In establishing the Institute for Basic Research, I followed not only my lifelong conviction that "Scientia sine arte nihil est; ars sine scientia nihil est," as Jean Vignot claimed 1392, but also the statutes of the ZKM foundation. When the ZKM was conceived 1988 and realized 1989 as a foundation for the support of media art, three main activities and functions were defined.



In 1988, the ZKM was conceived as interdisciplinary institution in the fields of research and development, presentation and distribution, teaching and promoting.

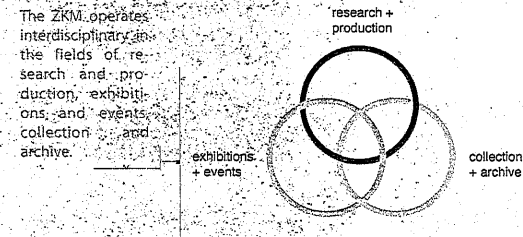
From the beginning, the ZKM was not only a museum with the traditional functions of collecting, exhibiting and conserving; it was also envisioned as a place for production (like a theater, an opera house) and research (like a scientific institute) and therefore called a "center". As a museum, the ZKM wanted to be a "museum for all

media" in the tradition of the German Bauhaus and the MOMA, New York, where painting, sculpture, photography, film, architecture and design meet as equal partners. Following the evolution of art, it was clear that video and digital art had to be added. Since video and film are time-based art forms, it was logical that the mother of all time-based arts, music, must also have its place in the center. This is especially valid because a moving image is not silent like a painting but is always accompanied by sound and since in the digital era computer music has played a pivotal role. Therefore the ZKM was the first museum in the world to include a music department, where production and research in acousmatic music could take place. Research and production is also a goal of the Institute for Visual Media. Both institutes work not only with their staff members but also with guest artists.

With this emphasis on production, development and research from the start defining the profile of the ZKM as competence center, I wanted to give a scientific basis to all this research and therefore founded the Institute for Basic Research. Here physicists and mathematicians could develop their theories in relation to topics that are also interesting to artists like interfaciology, observer experiments, dynamic and complex system theory, computer simulations, statistics, neurosciences and the like. Primarily intended as a think tank with its output in research reports, papers, symposia, lectures and publications, the institute could also produce installations in an artistic context. From a considerable amount of theory published in scientific magazines followed a lot of scientific and artistic projects and finally public presentations.

The head of the Institute was Dr. Hans Diebner, a mathematician and physicist of outstanding talents with a background in endophysics, molecular dynamics simulations and systems theory. Over the course of his six years, he has developed his own distinctive theory and field of operation, to which he gave the name "Performative Science," between art and philosophy.

With this "magic triangle" he positioned himself in the tradition of the Enlightenment, which is so central and basic to all my own activities and serves as the foundation of the ZKM, too. The relation of art, technology and science, as defined in the 35 volumes of Diderot's and d'Alembert's "Encyclopédie," became the basis for the Borromean Rings into which I have transformed the first three fields of activities since 1988.



In the context of this evolution it is clear why the foundation of the Institute for Basic Research was a logical and necessary step. The ZKM is the only museum in the world that is not only devoted to visual media and arts but also has a department for music and acoustics - and a department for science. The ZKM is the first and only museum with a residency program for visual artists, scholars, curators and musicians - and for scientists. The ZKM has guest artists and guest curators - and guest scientists. With this expansion of a museum's mission to include media and science, the ZKM is anticipating the future function of a museum. Therefore Hans Diebner and his team can indeed correctly be called "pioneers of the future" as happened when they got a "dot" software award in 2005. The ZKM is piloting an ambitious mission and thanks Hans Diebner and his team for the productive time they have spent on board the ZKM. This book is devoted to demonstrating their achievements within six years and to sharing their competence with the artistic and scientific communities.

Karlsruhe, April 2006

Peter Weibel