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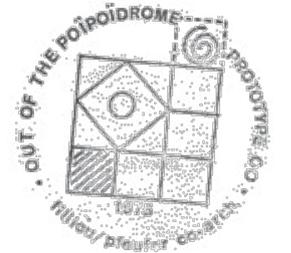


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**creativity exercises — spaces
of emancipatory pedagogies**



Creativity Exercises – Spaces of Emancipatory Pedagogies

How do people learn, what do they know, and how does it influence their personality, their behavior, and their position in society? These questions are in the focus of the exhibition entitled *Creativity Exercises – Spaces of Emancipatory Pedagogies* that displays historical and contemporary art projects experimenting with alternative forms of learning. The continuation of the project, previously on view at the *Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig* in autumn 2014, was presented in September 2015 at *tranzit.hu*'s open office in Budapest. The title of the exhibition was borrowed from Miklós Erdély and Dóra Maurer's art course held between 1975 and 1977. For a short time, this course labeled officially as amateur-training, independent of state art education, presented the opportunity to experiment with collective and process-oriented work and to transcend the boundaries of artistic thinking of the time.

In this project, we define creativity as a form of agency that is brought to life when the web of relations and roles surrounding the individual is dislodged. In other words, it is not a quality, nor an ability to be developed, but an interpersonal agency that enables critical, community-based learning. This does not mean the passive intake of information units, but the (inter)active shaping of personalities and interpersonal relations, the conscientization and the empowerment of groups and individuals, so that they can be critical and responsible social actors.

Active-passive Exercises in the framework of the Creativity Exercises course, 1976-77

Photo: Tamás Papp

By courtesy of Dóra Maurer and the Miklós Erdély Heirs

From the practice of Oskar Hansen (1922–2005), Robert Filliou (1926–1987), and Miklós Erdély (1928–1986), the exhibition, accompanying workshops and lectures show artistic concepts that create alternative learning situations or environments. The evoked methods examine the interplay of the individual and the community and the mechanisms of skills, methods, and approaches that are generated by these interactions. They are seeking to find the physical, mental, and social spaces that would enable the activation of creativity as the agency conjured by the interaction of the individual and the community.

Architect **Oskar Hansen** published his *Open Form* manifesto in 1959, which, in contrast to “closed” architecture's hailing of the almighty power and individualism of the designer, recognizes the everyday diversity of various individual idiosyncrasies, needs, initiatives, and their transmutations. As a professor at the *Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts*, he has influenced several generations of artists, who, in their own practice, have further elaborated the methods based on process and collectivity, as well as the radical humanist utopia that is manifested through them.

Working in Paris and New York in the 1960s, **Robert Filliou** was alienated from the ideals of both communism and consumerism, and imagined learning as a dialogical, performative process, in which the emancipation of not-knowing plays an important role. Instead of the coercion of useful work, he advocated play and poetry as tools of research and “permanent creation.” This approach led to the creation of spaces that turn the recipient into an active participant, such as in the *Poipoidrom*, presented in Budapest in 1976, which is now recreated for this exhibition by the **ex-artists' collective (Tamás Kaszás and Anikó Loránt)**.

Whether art can be taught at all, and if so, in what ways, were also central issues in the work of artist **Miklós Erdély**. His creativity and imagination-development exercises, much like the central ideas of reform pedagogy, mapped open, interactive forms of learning and knowledge exchange. Some of the defining themes in these exercises included the interplay of individual and collective actions, open processes, the role of ignorance, the deconstruction of teacher-learner relation, as well as the ways to turn concept and thoughts into acts and artworks. Erdély's pedagogical work resulted in collective creative processes, first in the framework of *FAFEJ (Fantasy Development Exercises)*, then the *InDiGo* group. We invoke the ideas of Erdély and his “students” regarding collective creativity and creation with the contemporary replicas of two works/actions. The **ex-artists' collective** recreates the environment *Bújtatott zöld (Hidden Green, 1977)*, while the *InDiGo* group's action *Művészkijárat (Artists' exit, 1979)* is restaged by the temporary group *MinDiGő*.

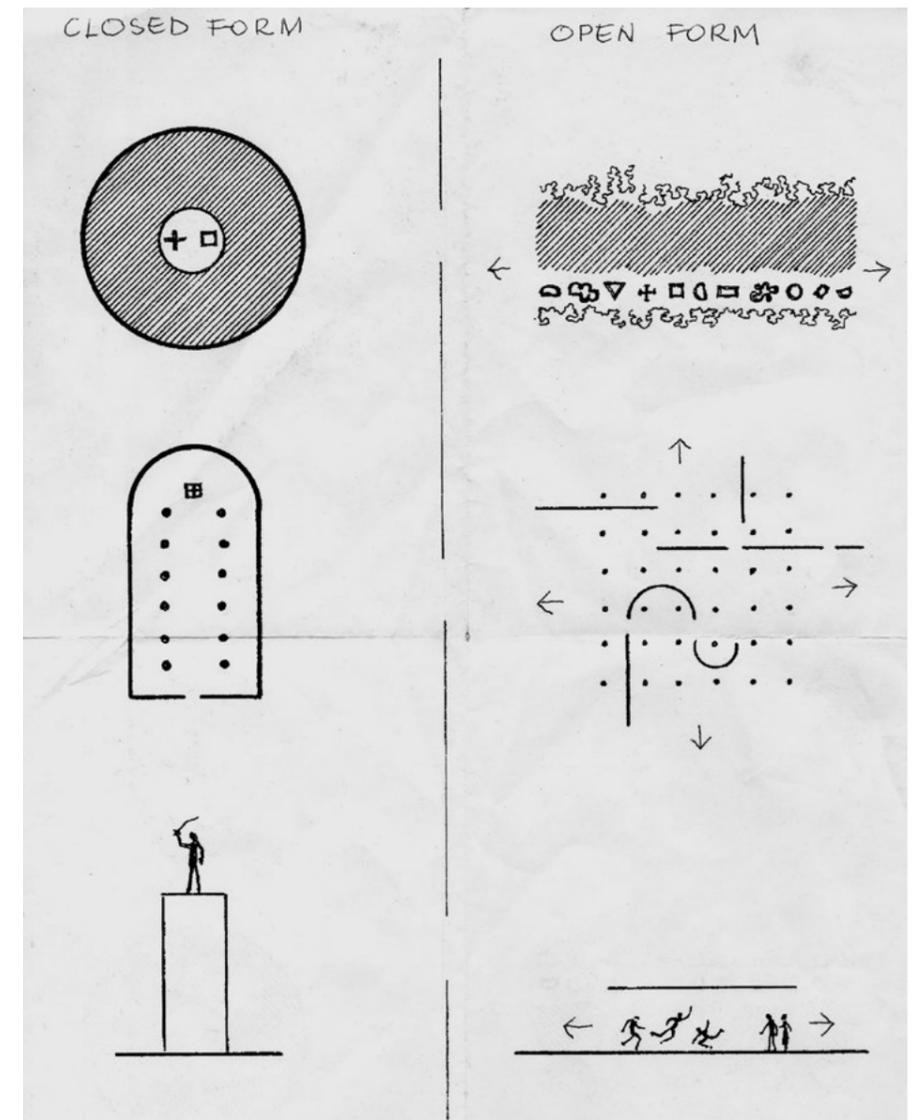
References – Poipoi-Store

Expanding the “space of references” of the Poipoidrom, the exhibition also presents a mind map, showing projects and documentations that contextualize the precursors and contemporary consequences of these artistic and pedagogical processes within and beyond the sphere of art.

Open form – Utopian Architecture

Oskar Hansen (Helsinki, 1922–Warsaw, 2005) was an architect, artist, urban theorist and pedagogue affiliated with Team 10 and the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts. As a student of architecture at the Warsaw University of Technology, he spent two years in Paris (1948-50) working as an assistant in the studio of Pierre Jeanneret, Le Corbusier's cousin and collaborator, and studied painting in the atelier of Fernand Léger. His uncompromising attitude towards architecture was revealed in 1949 when during the CIAM congress in Bergamo he boldly attacked Le Corbusier for becoming commercial by designing textiles. This audacious critique won him an invitation to the CIAM summer school in London. Together with other summer school participants he visited Henry Moore's studio, whose oeuvre along with works by Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński had an important impact on his understanding of space. Willing to get involved in the reconstruction of Warsaw after the WWII, he came back to Poland, but, reluctant to the imposed style of socialist realism, he turned to designing exhibitions, exhibition pavilions, as well as to painting and sculpture. In 1959 at the CIAM congress in Otterlo he announced the theory of Open Form, which became the conceptual basis for all areas of his activity. Active internationally as a member of Team 10 and Yona Friedman's Groupe d'Étude d'Architecture Mobile, in Poland he was mostly appreciated for his pedagogical practice at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts (1950s-1983).

Open Form – Developed during 1950s and announced in 1959 at the CIAM congress in Otterlo, Oskar Hansen's theory of Open Form advocated for opening architecture for the activities of its users and turning it into a 'perceptive background' exposing the events of everyday life. Opposing the hierarchical, forever determined architecture, which was more a monument to its creator than a comfortable space for living, Hansen encouraged to leave a wide margin for individual expression. His theory not only reviewed the hierarchy between the architect and the user, but also investigated the relation of the individual and the collective, or the subjective and objective elements in



architecture. Forming a “passe-partout” for everyday life, the Open Form architecture was supposed to adapt easily to the changing needs of its users, but also stimulate their imagination, guarantee a diversity of spatial impressions and encourage them to relate actively to architecture.

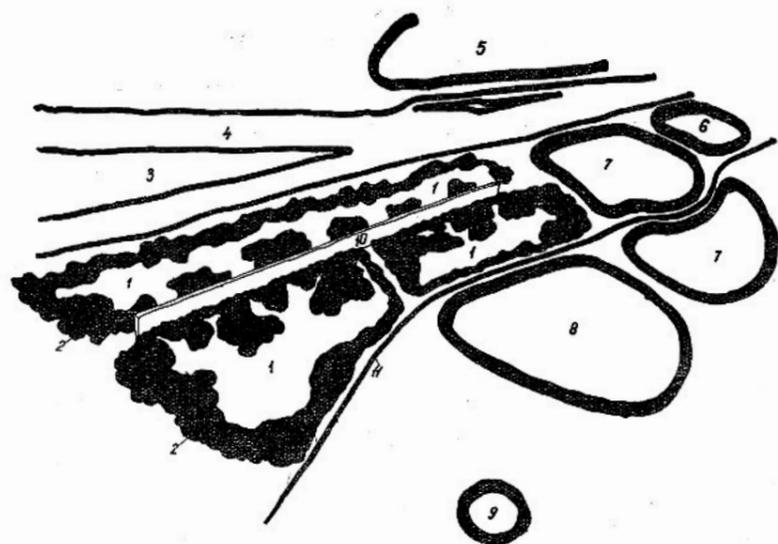
Yona Friedman (b. 1923), an architect of Hungarian origin, had a similar view on architecture's role and founded GEAM (Groupe d'Études d'Architecture Mobile) in 1957 as a response to CIAM's conservatism. The Mobile Architecture Group (of which Hansen was also a member) developed buildings for community-use together with their future inhabitants, taking into account their changing needs and also considering existing and stipulated waves of social transformation.

Hansen started developing the concept of the **Linear Continuous System (LCS)** in 1966, which can be seen as an application of the theory of Open Form on the macro-scale. In response to the prognosis of

Oskar Hansen, Closed and Open form, around 1975.

By courtesy of Igor Hansen

1. Sport-, játéktér; 2. Bútor (10–30 méter széles, átlátszóanyagból készült, 60–80 cm magas, az asztal felületén elhelyezhető); 3. Szociális szék; 4. Duna; 5. Újpest; 6. Földművelésügyi; 7. Csillaghegy; 8. Békáscsanak; 9. Nagykovácsi; 10. Széchenyi.



Poland's rapid demographic development, Oskar and Zofia Hansen proposed to replace old centric cities with four multifunctional settlement belts stretching from the Tatra Mountains to the Baltic Sea. The belts, combining residential, social, transportation and light industrial zones, were supposed to provide all their inhabitants with a good quality of life with equal access to culture and nature, as well as the possibility of individual expression. In the Western Belt project proposed for the city of Lubin and its surroundings, the inhabitants were encouraged to construct their houses by themselves on the terraces provided by the architects.

The international architectural movement's utopia, aiming to settle urban crowds in a just and functional way, was also present in Hungary. Similarly to Hansen's ideas, the "strip building" plan of Elemér Zalotay (1932), a Hungarian architect currently based in Switzerland, would have revolutionized urbanism of the '60s in the form of a modernist vision. Zalotay and his colleague Imre Böröcz imagined a three-kilometer long, 30–50-storey tall strip building by the Danube, uniting all architectural functions of a settlement and providing homes for 70 thousand people. The concept provoked fierce reactions in the 1965 editions of cultural magazine *Új Írás* (New Writing): its opponents rejected it as nonsensical, while director András Kovács supported the idea by mapping urgent housing needs in his 1966 film *Ma vagy holnap* (Today or Tomorrow).

Miklós Erdély, who also started his career as an architect, declared in an interview in 1982 that besides utopian architecture, he also saw great creative potential in dilettant architectural solutions that reflect personal utopias.

Elemér Zalotay: The Strip Building for 20 thousand inhabitants (Illustration to the article)
Source: Kortárs, 1961/ 6, p. 922.

Open Form as Pedagogy

The pedagogical application of freely variable geometrical blocks and play-based learning has a long tradition, which includes the 19th-century kindergartens, spread throughout the world, and initiated by German educator Friedrich Fröbel (1782–1852). To nurture children's desire for active engagement, manifested in self-directed occupation and play, Fröbel designed "the gifts", a set of instructional materials, "building blocks", enabling children to playfully experience for example the concept of fractions and the laws of geometrical relationships. Fröbel's method of combining abstract shapes inspired many modernist architects and artists, such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Le Corbusier.

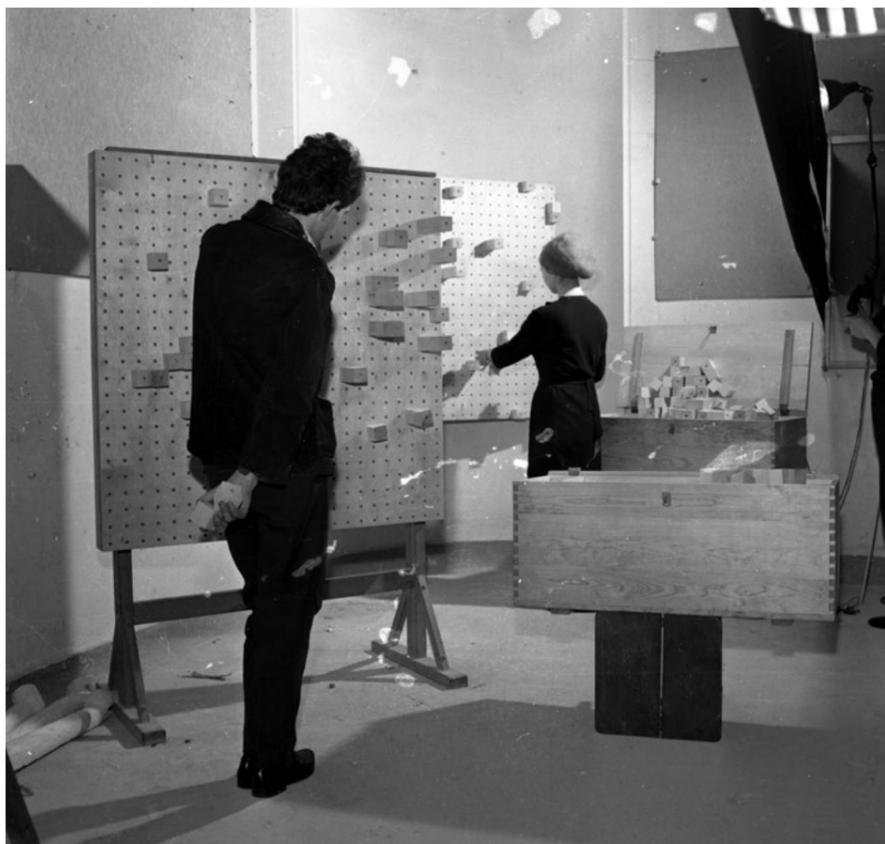
János Fajó (b. 1937) the former student of Lajos Kassák, member of Pesti Műhely (Pest Workshop), which also had influential pedagogical activity, made his toy *Nyitott Mű* (Open Work) in 1969. This is an educational device built on the active participation of the viewer, similarly to Umberto Eco's semiotically-grounded work from 1962 with the same title (it was translated to Hungarian only in 1976). Fajó's description of this Open Work was a response to the *Elképzelés* (Imagination) project of art historian László Beke (b. 1944) the 1971 'art-futurologist survey', whose inspirations included the architectural visions of Zalotay, and in which Beke asked contemporary artists to sketch a concept on an A4 sheet, regarding the concept i.e. the description as an artwork in its own right.



Another founding member of Pesti Műhely, Imre Bak (b. 1939) engaged with Bauhaus methodologies during his time (1971–79) in Népművelési Intézet (the institution for popular education). His approach was comparatively more progressive than the methods of academic art education of the period. Imre Bak's booklet from 1973 *Csináld Magad!* (Do it yourself!) challenges its reader-viewer to creatively and actively replace the given conceptual descriptions with a to be imagined visual creation. His 1977 alternative coursebook, *Vizuális alkotás és alakítás* (Visual Creating and Shaping) also does not offer readily-processed knowledge, but instead opens structures for its active recipient in order to reveal the grammar of visual language.

Oskar Hansen taught at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts between 1952 and 1983 and employed his architectural theory of the Open Form in the field of art education as well. One of his basic principles was creating balanced dynamics between group and individual and ensuring that group workings have an effect on individual action. Characteristic for his teaching practice were the didactic apparatuses, which aim was to help students investigate questions related to composition or perception of visual phenomena seen through Open Form principles. Together with his assistants Hansen designed several devices

Back-cover of the book "Reformelméletek és reformmozgalmak a pedagógiában" (Reform Theories and Reform Movements in Pedagogy) (1985)



Students in Oskar Hansen's studio doing the "Great Number" Exercise, no date

By courtesy of the Museum of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts

for exercising *Rhythm, Legibility of a Complex Form, Multidirectional Compositions, and Legibility of a Large Number of Elements*, among others. The program embraced also such tasks as the *Active Negative*—a sculptural study of impressions of a space, which was to serve as the tool for shaping the time-space relations of interiors.

In the exhibition we present a board inspired by Hansen's apparatus *Legibility of a Large Number of Elements*. On the original board, cubes could be placed in various compositions on a perforated wooden board. In our reconstruction the cubes can be inscribed with concepts and invite visitors to arrange ideas related to creativity according to their own views (for example between the proposed poles of individual / collective and knowledge / ignorance).

Study-Tracks

In the 1970s, Hansen's course at the Warsaw Academy was enriched with open-air exercises. In their film series *Open Form*, the artist duo **KwieKulik** (Zofia Kulik, Przemysław Kwiek (1971-87) experimented with creating didactic situations out of unexpected and open processes. The pure presence of the camera was often their most important tool in achieving this, as was the case when they appeared unexpectedly at a secondary school and started filming students' reac-

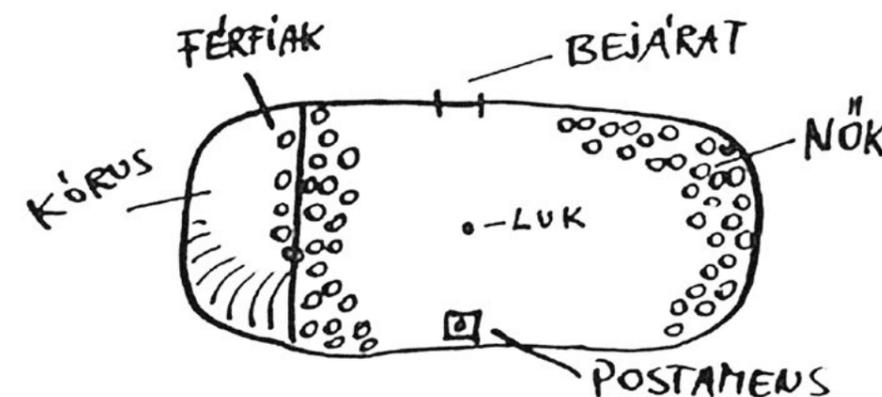
Sketch of Tamás Szentjóbby to the event entitled "Parallel Course / Study-track" - happening, initiation ceremony "A-B"

Source: *Aktuális Levél 5* (Artpool Letter), Summer 1983 p. 15.

By courtesy of Tamás Szentjóbby and the Artpool Art Research Center

tions. The group action entitled *Game on Morel's Hill* was initiated by Przemysław Kwiek in the framework of a "young creatives" workshop in Elbląg in 1971, after an argument, which fractioned the group. The outdoor game organized the next day placed emphasis on non-verbal communication: in the battle fought with abstract visual signs (white canvas, sticks), the "white" and "black" groups, later joined by the "reds" reacted to each other's movements and gestures.

At the same time in Hungary, Tamás Szentjóbby (b. 1944) was also experimenting with a pedagogical program, which had similar appearances. He defined his actions, action-texts and action-poems as part of an alternative educational, informational mission entitled *Paralel-Kurzus Tanpálya* (Parallel-Course Study-track). He first conceptualized the program in the visual poem *A kétségbeejtő jövő-gyakorlat* (The Desperate Future Practice) in terms of "the other world presented as a global strike", continued by the 1971 initiation ceremony in Balatonboglár (*A-B happening*), where participants went through various didactic and abstract sensory experiences. In response to László Beke's aforementioned call, *Elképzelés* (Imagination/Idea, 1971), Szentjóbby described the same program schematized to the relevant factors to be analyzed (individual, community, environment etc.).



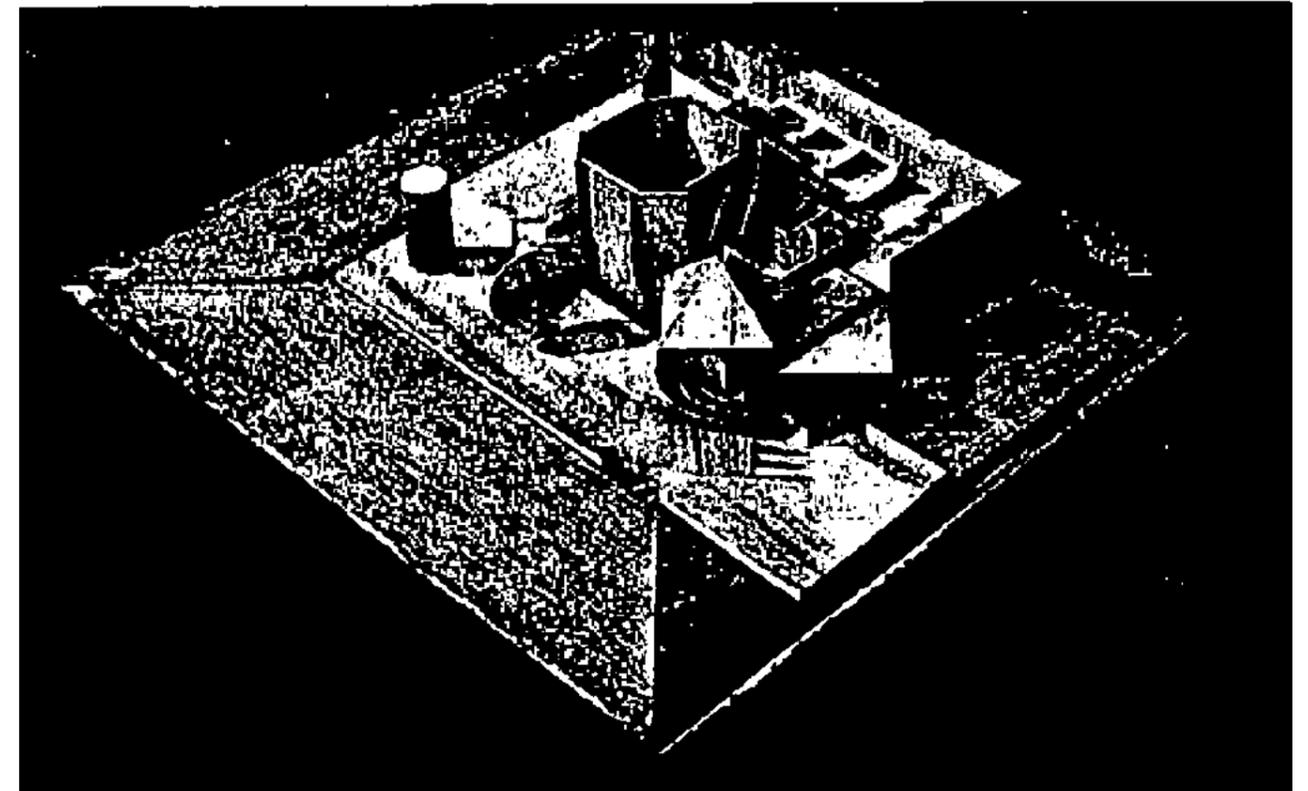
Robert Filliou (Sauve, 1926 – Les Eyzies, 1987) was an artist and economist, who also worked as a UN diplomat in the 1950's in South-Korea, Egypt and other countries. He got in touch with the art world in New York at the end of the 1950's. He cooperated with numerous Fluxus artists on a variety of his projects. Poipoidrom, a community space intended to enable the liberation of creative energies, was invented by Filliou and the architect Joachim Pfeufer in 1963. Filliou moved back to France at the beginning of the 1960's, and, together with George Brecht, he opened *La Cedille Qui Sourit* (The Smiling Cedilla), an open studio for making Fluxus objects and a showroom for ideas and games. He summarized his thoughts on art theory and art pedagogy in his book *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1970). In this book and in his whole oeuvre as well, Filliou fol-

lowed his principles of “permanent creation” and “poetic economy”. According to these, creative energies have to pervade one’s every pursuit, thereby making it possible for free and creative thinking to become a defining component of both society and economy.

In the second half of the 1960s, following on the work of John Cage, Joseph Beuys and the Fluxus artists, Filliou interpreted not only teaching, but also learning itself as a form of art praxis, as exemplified by his book *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1970). Taking the 1968 student protests as a starting point, Filliou claimed that “some of the problems inherent to teaching and learning can be solved - or let’s say eased - through an application of the participation techniques developed by artists in such fields as: happenings, events, action poetry, environments, visual poetry, films, street performances, non-instrumental music, games, correspondences, etc.” The book can be seen as both a manifesto and a Fluxus score of, but Filliou himself called it a “multi-book”. That is, a workbook that contains the reflections of Filliou and others (John Cage, George Brecht, Allan Kaprow and Joseph Beuys, amongst others) on art and education, but also gives space for the reader to become an author and co-creator. It was also in this vein that he developed *Poipoidrom*, an empty space for creation and imagination, whose first spatial realization took place in Budapest in 1976, inspiring generations of Hungarian artists until today.

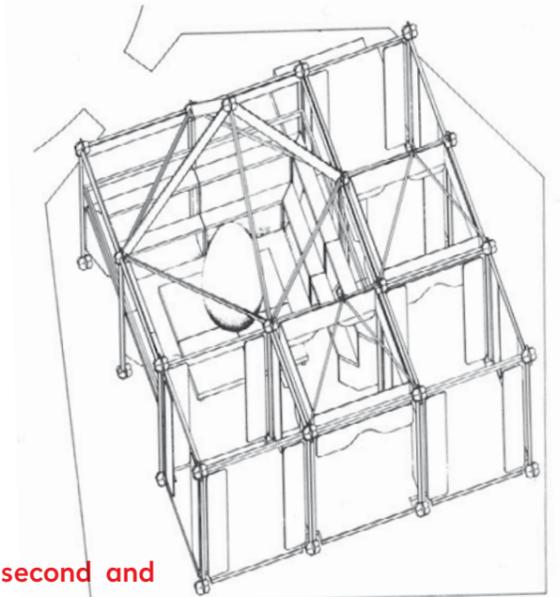
Poipoidrom

It was in the Parisian metro in the winter of 1963 that Filliou conceived the Institute of Permanent Creation, a fictitious institute that serves the ideal of free and creative thinking. Poipoidrom is essentially the spatial manifestation of this institute, designed in cooperation with architect Joachim Pfeufer. In Filliou’s words, Poipoidrom is a space in which humor, goodwill and wackiness can flow freely, while elements of the installation (photographs, texts, diagrams, drawings) compel visitors to take part in the creative process and actively contribute to the existence and operation of the Poipoidrom. In the language of the Dogons, a Malian tribe, “poipoi” means “very well, thank you”, while “drom” refers to the tent-like structure of the construction’s main community space, from the peak of which an egg hangs as a symbol of creation and fertility. One can reach this community space, the central room for thought and creation, by taking six poipoi “steps” that is, walking through six consecutive fields. The first one is the Pre-poipoi, the antechamber of permanent creation. The second one is the Poipoi, the space of permanent creation, in which visitors, upon their return, can place documents of their own creative lives. The third space, Anti-poipoi, is the space for folk wisdoms and proverbs, while the fourth one, Post-poipoi, gives room and verbal and visual material for experiencing and expressing the contradictions between



Poipoi model

Source: Robert Filliou: *Teaching and Learning as Performing Arts* (1970) p. 192.



personal and communal thought, represented by the second and the third space. The fifth area is the Poipoi-cabinet, in which creators of the Poipoidrom use a variety of documents to demonstrate what they mean by permanent creativity. The last, sixth space is the Poipoi-studio, that is, the visitor’s studio, in which s/he can unleash his/her creativity. The visitor has to take these six steps to reach the actual Poipoidrom, where s/he is greeted by the Poipoi-egg in the space for final meditation and contemplation. The first Real Space Time Poipoidrom was built in Budapest in 1976 at the Club for Young Artists in Budapest, with the cooperation of Hungarian artists. The 2015 version of the Poipoidrom is realized by the ex-artists’ collective (Tamás Kaszás and Anikó Loránt).

Prototype 00 of Poipoidrom, draft plan, 1963
By courtesy of the Artpool Art Research Center

Creativity and Alternative Art Pedagogy

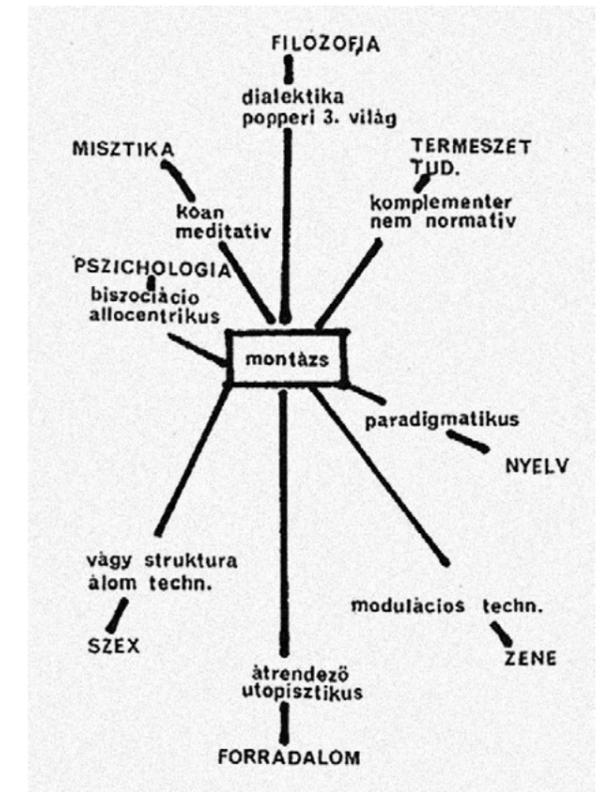
Miklós Erdély (Budapest, 1928 – Budapest, 1986) was one of the most significant artists of the Hungarian Neo-Avant-garde. He graduated as an architect from Budapest's Technical University in 1951, and started working for various state-owned construction companies. From the '50s onwards, he played an important role in the non-official, underground art world. In the '60's, he started to publish Avant-garde poetry, reviews and studies regularly. Besides writing, he was also interested in filmmaking; he shot his experimental films, investigating particularly sensitive topics (dictatorship, the Jewry), according to the principles of his own interdisciplinary montage theory. In this holistic approach, he combined and montaged ideas and theories from fine art, filmmaking, philosophy, psychology and physics. In the second half of the '60s, he also joined the Hungarian happening movement, and organized happenings and actions, which he later termed "scientific concepts", inspired by physics and cosmology. He realized his concepts from the late '70s onwards as large-scale environments (*Bújtatott zöld, A kalcedoni zsinat emlékére, Hadititok - Hidden Green, In Memory of the Council of Chaledon, Military Secret*), using unconventional materials (carbon-paper, tar, matzos) to confront scientific, religious and philosophical ideas with each other. In the same period (between 1978 and 1984), he also worked in intense cooperation with the InDiGo group, with whom they created numerous thematic exhibitions realized in the form of environments. The InDiGo group was essentially an extension of Erdély's work in art pedagogy. Starting in 1975, Erdély organized various art courses, in which he combined the that time current pedagogical and psychological theories with recent developments in contemporary art.

The scientific, psychological, pedagogical and cultural discourse around creativity was enlivened worldwide in the 1950s. In a radically new world order prognosticated as the outcome of space research and technological development, the key to survival was not going to be education or intelligence, but the society-wide fostering of a creativity able to deal with unexpected situations. In 1975, when Erdély took over the "sculpture course" at the Ganz-Mávag factory's cultural center, originally intended for the workers' education, he introduced new, democratic pedagogical principles in line with the conclusions of modern psychology as well as of the Fluxus and happening movements. Together with artist Dóra Maurer, instructor of the Ganz-Mávag drawing course, they named their curriculum *Mozgástervezési és kivitelezési akciók* (Motion Planning and Execution Actions), inspired by composer Mauricio Kagel's creative course in Munich, where participants had to improvise a performance on spot by repeating and continuing each other's movements. Within two years, Erdély and

One of Miklós Erdély's montage diagrams

Source: Miklós Erdély: "Montázs-gesztus és effektus" (Montage Gesture and Effect), 1975 in: *A filmről* (On Film), p. 159.

By courtesy of the Miklós Erdély Heirs



Maurer's initiative became a well-known, almost cultic workshop of art pedagogy, attended not really by workers, rather prospective artists. Unlike more traditional art courses, the aim of their lessons was to develop mental capacities and to place the emphasis on teaching how to think and not so much on how to draw or model. In line with Maurer's concept and curriculum, to counterbalance inner tensions and the differences in students' skills in traditional arts, the drawing studies were supplemented with interdisciplinary lectures, group dynamics and movement exercises, photographic and film experiments.

In 1976, the course leaders renamed the course *Kreativitási gyakorlatok* (Creativity Exercises), which was partly due to the fact that Erdély became acquainted with and acquired the increasingly popular methods of developing creativity through paradoxes, absurdities and far associations. Erika Landau's *The Psychology of Creativity*, which summarized the most recent findings on creativity from American and Western European literature, was first published in Hungarian in 1974, and became a compulsory reading material. Apart from a wider social understanding of creativity that extends beyond art and can solve unforeseen future problems, Landau also emphasized the inner freedom necessary for creativity.

In his 1976 study entitled *Kreativitási és fantáziafejlesztő gyakorlatok* (Creativity Exercises, Fantasy Developing Exercises), Erdély defined creativity as a hopeful and euphoric state, and highlights its difference from productivity. Although he agrees that art education is the most potent tool for developing creativity, he also emphasizes that the creative state of mind could be useful in every field of life, including both the private and public sphere.



László Beke, in his *Levél a Mozgástervezési és Kivitelezési Akciók résztvevőihöz* (Letter to the Participants of the Motion Planning and Execution Actions, also 1976) summarizes the most important results of the interdisciplinary discourse on creativity and the educational reform (Bauhaus, Arthur Koestler, Robert Filliou, Allan Kaprow, Joseph Beuys, Ivan Illich) and also refers to Szentjób's *Paralel-kurzus* (Parallel-course) that generates unexpected events in which "the course leader – if there is one – can learn as much from participants as they can from him/her." From the photos and films created during the course, Dóra Maurer made a film in 1980 entitled *Kreativitás-Vizualitás* (Creativity-Visuality).

Already at the time, contemporaries were inspired by the course's exercises; László Beke prepared a collection as an appendix to his study *Művészet/tanulás/utópia* (Art/Learning/Utopia, 1980) and the InDiGo group also worked along the lines of thematic exercises. The SPAC (People's School for Contemporary Art) run between 2010 and 2012 by Attila S. Tordai and others from the Protokoll Project in Cluj was a contemporary alternative art school initiative. SPAC also published a book containing exercises compiled by artists. SZAF's (AMBPA Artist of Mouth and Brain Painters Association) thematic set of exercises, *OLCSÓ KURZUSOK HÜLYEGYEREKEKNEK (Kis Etwas-ok) „kelj fel és járj!.....iskolába...“* (CHEAP COURSES FOR DIMWITS (Small Brains) "get up and walk!.....to school...") was also published in this volume.

On the closing day of the exhibition, visitors will be invited to rethink the original Creativity Exercises with the Virág Judit Galéri (Virág Bogyó, Judit Fischer).



Exercises in the framework of the Creativity Exercises course, 1975-77

Flash drawing, November 1975

Mirror movement in pairs, ca. March 1977

Planning the static relationship of a rope and a body by tying up the body, September–October 1975

Photos: Tamás Papp

By courtesy of Dóra Maurer and the Miklós Erdély Heirs

Collaboration / Collective Space – Individual Space

Besides fostering creativity, a great emphasis was put on cooperation and teamwork, through which Miklós Erdély attempted to deconstruct the authoritarian methods of conventional pedagogy. In 1977, the leader committee of Ganz-Mávag terminated the contract of Erdély, but he continued the work with his group, which by the time was forged to a community. That same year they adopted the name FAFEJ (Fantáziafejlesztő gyakorlatok, Fantasy Developing Exercises) and in 1978 they changed it to InDiGo Group (Interdiszciplináris Gondolkodás, Interdisciplinary Thinking). During his work with FAFEJ, Erdély was mostly engaged with epistemological and philosophical exercises, but InDiGo was first and foremost established to showcase the results of interdisciplinary and creative collaborations. Besides presenting and reflecting critically on conventional topics and artistic media (*Szén és szénrajz, Festmény, Akvarell, Papírművek, Rajzkurzus a Szépművészeti Múzeumban* – Charcoal and charcoal sketches, Painting, Watercolor, Works on paper, The drawing course at the Museum of Fine Arts), on occasions they also dealt with abstract concepts such as the faith (*Hűség*) the sacred (*Ami személyes, és ami szent – What is personal and what is sacred*) or the concept of meaning/semantics (*Művészkijárat – Artist's Exit*).

Artist's Exit

Művészkijárat (Artist's Exit) was the concluding exhibition of the year 1979 by InDiGo group and the interdisciplinary thinking course, inspired by the international conference on semiotic terminology organized in Budapest. Erdély's accompanying text states that the main focus points were the ideas of "sign" and "meaning", visualized not in the form of a traditional exhibition, but as a happening. Each element and moment of the display was formed at the group's brainstorming session, and they also built together the environment exhibited. Originally, the starting point for Erdély and the InDiGo group was the color white, which, for them, symbolized the alienated absolute meaning. Its material representation became milk, which appeared in the space in the form of 200 liters of curd. The lumps forming in the curd symbolized the words of a language, while the rainbow reflected on its surface by a prism became the symbol of the conceptual level. During the happening, participants performed various "actions" with these symbols to demonstrate the difficulties of understanding and communicating meaning. They attempted to line up needles that represented individuals on knots of thread dipped in curd and complicated the learning of the meta-language necessary for deciphering the conceptual level (or meaning itself) through symbolic actions. First, they covered the rainbow with carbon-papers, then sprayed the curd with black shoe polish, and, after removing the carbon-papers, thwarted higher knowledge



The door at the "Artist Exit" action and exhibition of the InDiGo Group, 1979

Photo: László László Révész

By courtesy of the Artpool Art Research Center and the Miklós Erdély Foundation

once and for all with “sacks of sand” sewn into milk packaging. For the current exhibition, the MinDigÓ (Always Him) group (Virág Bogyó, Adrian Costache, Miklós Erhardt, Gábor Erlich, Olga Kocsi, Virág Lódi, Zsigmond Peternák), coordinated by Miklós Erhardt, reinterpreted this “original” environment and used its documentation as a Fluxus-score.

Commissioned to redesign the seat of the Faculty of Sculpture in 1973, Oskar Hansen attempted to turn Open Form pedagogy into an official pedagogical method. His proposition, reviewing the hierarchy between students and teachers, offering individually-shaped curriculum, community-oriented way of teaching and learning, dissolving specialization or determined length of study, was introduced provisionally in 1981, but abandoned shortly afterwards.

Gregorz Kowalski, who started to work in the Academy from 1980, first as the assistant of Hansen, then of Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz, was among those who continued developing the Open Form method. He introduced a complex exercise called *Collective Space - Individual Space*, which builds on non-verbal group communication. This exercise is still running in form of a summer school.

After the regime change in the early 1990s Tamás Szentjóbby returning after an exile of 15 years to Hungary, introduced his pedagogical program (based on the principles he developed in the '60s) *Paralel Kurzus/ Tanpálya II - Anatómiai Halhatatlanság* (Parallel Course - Study Track II - Anatomical Immortality) at the Intermedia Department of the Hungarian Art Academy, which strongly connects to the legacy of *Creativity Exercises* and the InDiGo Group. In 1994, he introduced the practice of *Direkt Demokratikus Szavazás* (Direct Democratic Voting) since according to his experience, the institution failed to grant freedom of speech, to achieve economic transparency and equality between teacher and student. The parallel with Joseph Beuys' political Organization for Direct Democracy by Referendum (1971) is obvious, just as with his open university (FIU/ International Free University for Creativity and Interdisciplinarity), whose pedagogical program privileged a novel definition of creativity, which abolishes the distinction between expert and dilettante and refuses to acknowledge the omnipotence of the artist-persona.



Film still from the documentary of “Collective Space - Individual Space VIII”, 1992/93

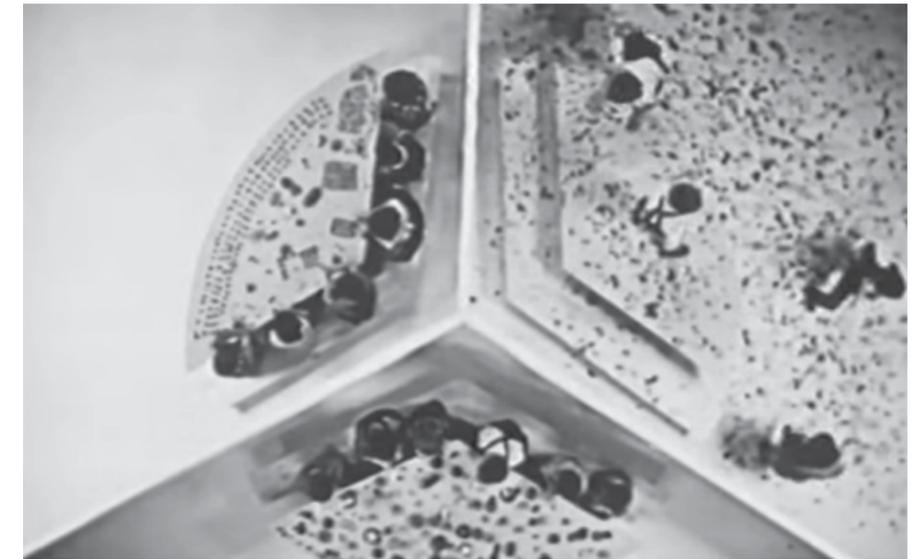
By courtesy of Grzegorz Kowalski



Film stills from the film “Methods”, 1969

Director: Judit Vas, Camera: Judit Herskó, Expert: Ferenc Mérei

By courtesy of the Hungarian National Digital Archive and Film Institute



Interlude: Individual and Community in Reform Pedagogy

In her analysis of FAFEJ workshops, Ildikó Enyedi describes the leadership style of the workshop leader as provocatively passive and teasingly whimsical, using an arbitrary evaluation system and methodology replaced with personality. Psychologist Ferenc Mérei (1909-1986), who, in 1976, personally paid a visit to the Creativity Exercises, has started his research in the 1940s among preschoolers to investigate internal group dynamics, the role of the leader and group formation. He published the results of his experiments in *Együttes élmény* (Togetherness Experience). An important outcome of the research is the recognition of a sort of experiential group surplus: “there is a certain surplus in human relationships that cannot be explained with the mere sum of the participating individuals' traits.” Despite mostly concerning himself with communities of children, both in the mentioned book and in his later works, Mérei also suggests a model of social organization on a much wider scale. With this, he opens a new perspective on the ideological debate dominating the reform pedagogical discourse of this period, polarized between the pragmatism of the American John Dewey (1859-1952) and the collectivism of the Soviet Anton S. Makarenko (1888-1939). They both subscribed to democratic and socialist pedagogical principles, but adapted to the needs of societies organized according to fundamentally different ideologies.

Judith Vas documented a preschooler experiment of Mérei in her 1969 film *Módszerek* (Methods). This experiment investigated the influence of leadership styles described by the psychologist Kurt Lewin (authoritarian, democratic, laissez-faire) on group dynamics and learning. It was also Mérei who wrote the foreword to Erika Landau's book *Psychology of Creativity*, in which he placed the research on creativity within the context of the pedagogical debates of the Cold War period, also providing a critique of conformist institutional education that is stifling creativity.

After the 1968 student rebellions, the educational system of the West was facing a serious crisis. One of the most preeminent advocates of radical renewal was Ivan Illich (1926–2002), whose vision of the de-schooled society was published and debated in the 1975 issue of the Hungarian periodical *Valóság* (Reality), and in a collection of essays titled *A polgári nevelés radikális alternatívái* (The Radical Alternatives to Bourgeois Education, 1980).

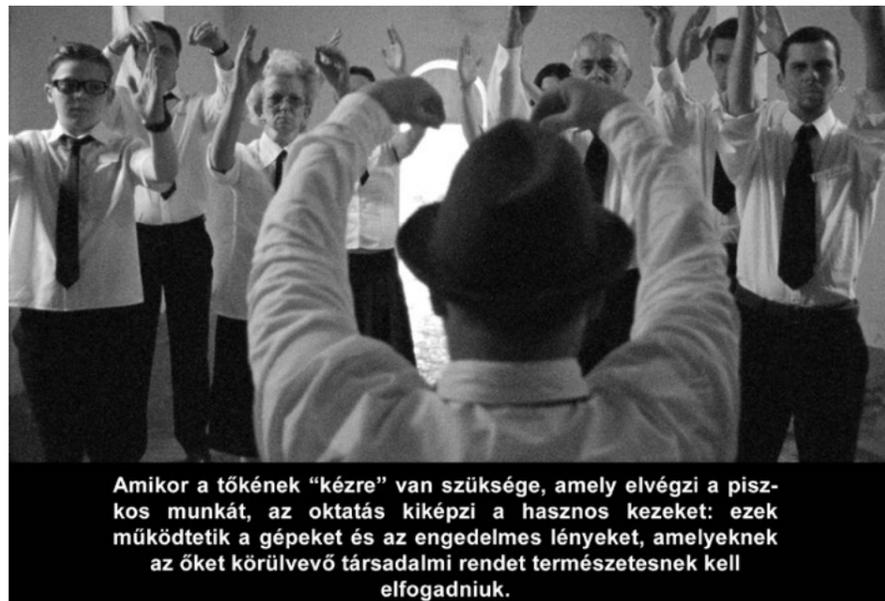
Paulo Freire's (1921–1997) seminal work *The School of the Oppressed* was also published in 1968, the year of the revolts. In this work, Freire argues that instead being the instrument of oppression, the school has to become the site of emancipation. He considers oppression the result of the "banking education" because it treats the student as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge, like a bank storing money. Freire calls for an education that is liberating and focused on problem solving, so that such a collective praxis can lead to critical consciousness (conscientização).

The *Közélet Iskolája* (School of Public Life) (founded in 2014, Hungary) follows the same principles. Through the organization A Város Mindenkié (The City for All), the initiators work together mainly with people affected by precarious living situations, and through this work they explore the potential of activist work to empower the oppressed. The school believes that everyone has to fight for social justice and solidarity, and people coming from different backgrounds can learn from each other.

The *Hacker Manifesto* by McKenzie Wark published in 2004 urges action and rebellion against the status quo of non-transparent political institutions and the power of their supporting apparatuses of surveillance. Igor Buharov (b. 1971) and Ivan Buharov (b. 1974), in their 2014 slide film, *A szűkösség ivadéka* (The Offspring of Scarcity), quote parts of this text, including the thesis about how formal education fosters submission to authority, leading straight into wage slavery. The hackers, who call themselves the "information proletariat" obtain their knowledge straight from the street, bypassing the system.

Slide from Igor and Ivan Buharov: *The Offspring of Scarcity*, 2014

By courtesy of the artists and the acb gallery



Hope, Optimism and Utopia-Critique as a Program of Radical Pedagogy

Robert Filliou in many of his concepts such as "Permanent Creation" (inspired by Charles Fourier's (1772–1837) utopia, described as "the constant creation of permanent freedom") demonstrated a social and pedagogical utopia thematizing the paradox and irony inherent in objectifying a utopia with artistic methods. His serial *Optimistic Boxes* (1968) manifests such paradoxes that are embedded in the Marxist belief invested in progress and social change. (We present the first *Optimistic Box* as a multiple by the Plágium2000 group.)

In 1977, during the Creativity Exercises, Miklós Erdély organized a lecture series on utopia and he invited philosophers, writers and artists to talk about the significance of utopia, ranging from theology through contemporary art, literature to the social sciences. Erdély's lecture entitled *Remény és lehetőség*, (Hope and Possibility) was about utopic philosophies, mostly inspired by texts by Herbert Marcuse (1898–1979), Ernst Bloch (1885–1977), and classics of utopian thinking as Thomas More and Joseph Fourier. His provocative thesis (largely built on Marcuse) claimed that both modern science and technology were a form of new religion, aiding the oppression of people, and the role of an avant-garde thinker was to change this. Erdély thematized, critiqued and developed further the principle of Bloch in his 1977 environment, *Bújtatott zöld* (Hidden Green), a complex installation, as he declares modern natural science to be the main source of hope.

The book, *The Principle of Hope* (written in the 1930s) by German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch had a huge influence on both Miklós Erdély and other Hungarian intellectuals of the 1970s. Just like the radical humanism of Oskar Hansen, Bloch saw in both art and culture the possibility of engineering and modeling the coming of a revolutionary social utopia. The first Hungarian review of Bloch's *Principle of Hope* was released right after 1968, in 1969, not independently from the discourse surrounding the future of communism, and the critiques of the communist utopia. An important document of utopian visions, and the thematization of utopic thinking of the time is the *Utopia* special issue of the periodical *Világosság* (Light) from 1975, which also published an excerpt from *The Principle of Hope*, the part where Bloch elaborates a theory of art as having the potential to create models, in the positive sense of the word, as having a utopic function.

Hidden Green

Miklós Erdély's first solo exhibition (which was on view in Budaörs at the Jókai Cultural Center, a rather peripheral venue in terms of artistic activity) was re-interpreted and "condensed into" tranzit's office by the ex-artists' collective (Tamás Kaszás and Anikó Loránt). Erdély regarded the exhibition as a single environment that reflected primarily on the utopic, educational, socially transformative potential of art. Following on the work of Ernst Bloch, Marxist aesthetics considered art as having the potential to imagine and plan a more hopeful, happy and more democratic future. Erdély, for his part, wanted to investigate the Blochian hope that is hiding or can be hidden in art; in other words, to define what kind of art is needed to achieve social transformation. As a symbol of hope, the whole room was bathed in pale green light, and in one corner, behind a panel resembling a deer yard, Erdély hid a bit of actual, physical green, a piece of green baize. The defining elements of the environment were, however, not these, but the hay that covered the whole room, in which he formed - as a space of contemplation - a white circle with a surreally elongated broom as the space of contemplation. The other central element was a cloud-like object supported by sticks. These two white objects in Erdély's interpretation, symbolized the relationship between art and scientific thinking, the most important modern trustees of creativity. The various greens (hay, light, baize) and the duality of a perfect white circle shining through from the hay and the strange, underpinned cloud were all meant to compel the visitor to understand the deeper dialectics of rationality and irrationality, proof and refutation, description and indescribability. The artist also considered it important to give the visitors, in a democratic vein, a chance to write down their hopeful thoughts right there in the exhibition space, with a green pen.

Miklós Erdély, Hidden Green, environment, 1977

Photo: László Beke

By courtesy of Artpool Art Re-search Center and Miklós Erdély Heirs



In his *Optimistic Lecture* (1981) - commenting on Herbert Marcuse's 1967 study, *The End of Utopia* - Erdély gave a detailed description of the kind of hope and optimism that modern science can give rise to. He was of the opinion that the paradox realizations of modern mathematics, physics and cosmology could be capable of changing people's generally naïve and pessimistic worldview rooted in the all-encompassing oppression of both capitalist and communist systems. Erdély believed that a new metaphysics could be created, with actually enlightened, democratic, and relativist foundations, and it can be used to change (revolutionize) the consciousness of everyday people.

Starting his independent art practice after working with the InDiGo group, János Sugár (b. 1958) initiated the **Fast Culture** series (1984-88) that functioned as an alternative educational forum and considered live discussion as a form of art. The first lecture of the series was entitled "Optimism as a Product of Radicalism". The participants: Sugár, Talán Sebeő, and Ferenc Gerlőczy held these discussions on topical social and philosophical issues, involving the audience and following Sebeő's principles of free, informal and "unideological" exchange.

Katarina Šević's (b. 1979) series **News from Nowhere** (2009-14) reconstructs the past's hope for the future from the perspective of a historical rupture that blurs and makes inconceivable the original function and meaning of objects inherited from the utopic projects of the '60s, '70s, or the 19th century. The series' title is borrowed from William Morris' novel from 1890, which describes a pre-Raphaelite, socialist utopia, an age after a revolution that puts an end to social disparities and replaces institutional, formal education with practical handiwork, thereby turning the England of the industrial revolution and history itself into uninteresting, undecipherable, melancholic and empty heritage.

Miklós Mécs' (b. 1981) project **Correction Class** (2014-) attempts to create a contemporary realization of the utopias regularly associated with reform pedagogy (equality of adult and child, indirect learning initiated by the student) and combines it with a critique of the hoarder, consumer society. We evoke spirit of his *Correction Class* that temporarily operated (and then was enforcedly shut down) in Mécs' former high school, with a ticker displaying the text "Start to hope, ye who enter here."



Film still from the video "Fried Earth" by Miklós Mécs made in the framework of the artist's project "Correction Class", 2015

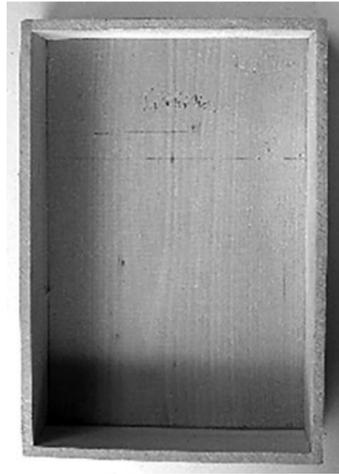
By courtesy of the artist

Empty Box, Empty Form, Empty Sign – The Emancipation of Ignorance and Participatory Learning

According to Erdély's 1983 memoir, the 1956 action that became known as *Őrizetlen pénz* (Unguarded Money), in which the Hungarian Writers' Association collected money for the families of the revolution's victims in open boxes placed around the city, was the manifestation of artistic thinking and the emancipatory hope that transcends everyday reality. An empty box in which everyone can individually and voluntarily place their values, thoughts, and participation, thereby making them common, became the demonstrative device of the thesis that "everybody is an artist" by Joseph Beuys, 1968 multiple, *Intuition* that was realized in thousands of copies. The genre of multiple also testifies to this theory and is re-enlivened by the *Plágium2000* group's activity, which serves as a critique of the way the contemporary cultural industry appropriates creativity as a product. Their work also reflects on the institutionalization and fetishization of Fluxus and conceptual art. Robert Filliou's *Optimistic Box* and Beuys' *Intuition* is presented as multiple editions of *Plágium 2000*. Similarly, the ex-artists' collective interprets Filliou's *Poipoidrom*, itself no more than an empty structure, as a form of a multiple or a Fluxus score. (See details above) In his 1976 interview with Filliou László Beke saw the idea of participation already as an expectation or a trend, whereas in 1963 at the time the idea of the *Poipoidrom* was born, it was still a novelty.

Building on the thesis of 19th-century philosopher of pedagogy Joseph Jacotot, stating that we all possess the same level of intellectual ability, and we are able to teach what we ourselves do not know, French philosopher Jacques Rancière (1940) stakes a claim for the liberating power of ignorance and non-expert point of view in his seminal book from 1987, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*. In Rancière's 2008 book *The Emancipated Spectator*, translated to Hungarian by artist Miklós Erhardt, he extends this emancipatory pedagogy to contemporary art, and actualizes Friedrich Schiller's concept of aesthetic education, and calls for a situationist rethinking of the boundary between aesthetics and politics.

Numerous contemporary artists, whose practice builds on peer-to-peer knowledge-sharing and cooperation, work with representing the voice and the experiences of marginalized social groups and emancipating non-expert knowledge. *Saját Szemmel - Inside Out* (1997-98) by Miklós Erhardt and Dominic Hislop explores the problematic dynamics between art's autonomy and social consciousness. During the project (influenced by 1990s new genre public art), Erhardt and Hislop asked homeless people to document their own lives with disposable cameras (in exchange for



Joseph Beuys, *Intuition*, 1968.
Plágium2000 Edition, 2008-2015.

a fee). They offered a vacant, yet emancipatory format, to be filled with meaning by the participants. Later on, these photos were inserted into the context of contemporary art, exhibited in galleries under the name of the homeless artists, together with the commentaries of the makers.

János Sugár developed the *Time Patrol* project, in which he also offered participants an empty format, for the public art exhibition *Moszkva tér (Gravity)* in 2003. Sugár placed the figure of the time patrol, borrowed from science fiction, in the context of participatory art; himself becoming a time patrol from the future, investigating the concept of art in the present. During the project, Sugár set up a camper on Moszkva square and offered a fee to participants who agreed to speak for at least an hour and to have their – often deeply personal – stories published, i.e. giving them a voice and keeping it for the future by making them public.

The projects of Artur Żmijewski and Paweł Althamer, who both used to be the students of Gregorz Kowalski, start out from the cooperative open learning process. In their works, groups who are not familiar with the contemporary art discourse get involved in unexpected situations where they, as participant, gain new experiences. The exhibition features *Einstein Class* (2005) by Paweł Althamer, where we can follow the process of a discharged physics teacher successfully motivating problematic children and class-skippers in his extracurricular classes. Artur Żmijewski, in his 2007 film *Them*, documents how a clash between groups with a different set of ideologies plays out in a creative workshop organized by Żmijewski, and what the participants could learn from this unpredictable process.

The ex-artists' collective's objects and constructions present "folk science" as an alternative survival strategy and form of obtaining knowledge. Their *Amphibian* (Notice Board/Yurt, 2011) can be seen as the didactic model or recipe for the amphibian - artistic and practical - nature of this empty format. The notice-board, a two-dimensional tool of art and propaganda, transformed to a yurt becomes the raw material for survival, and the space of creativity and imagination that stems from everyday experience. It also evokes Yona Friedman's mobile architecture and Filliou's space-time model for permanent creation, the *Poipodrom*.



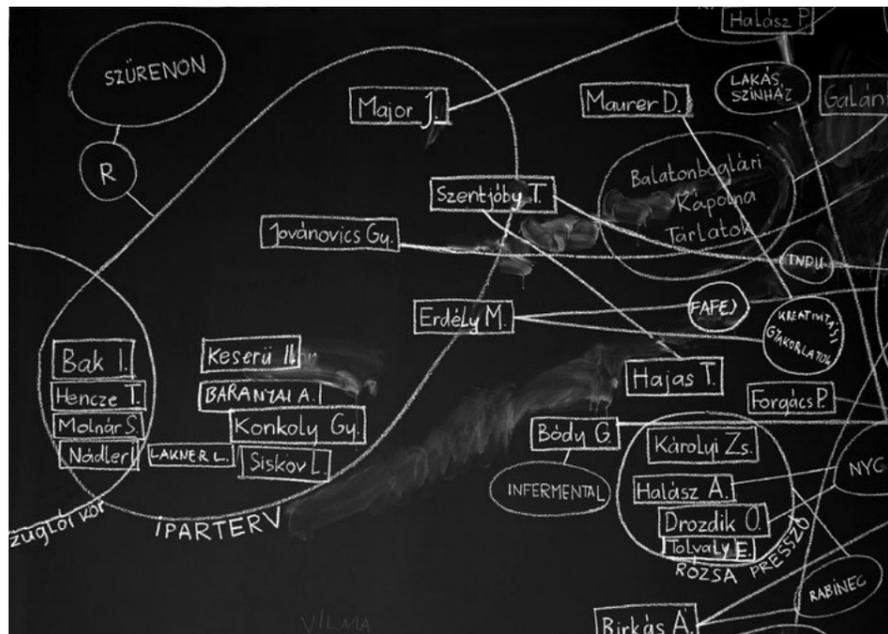
ex-artists' collective (Tamás Kaszás-Anikó Loránt), *Amphibian (Notice Board/Yurt)*, 2011

By courtesy of the artists and the Irokéz Collection, Szombathely

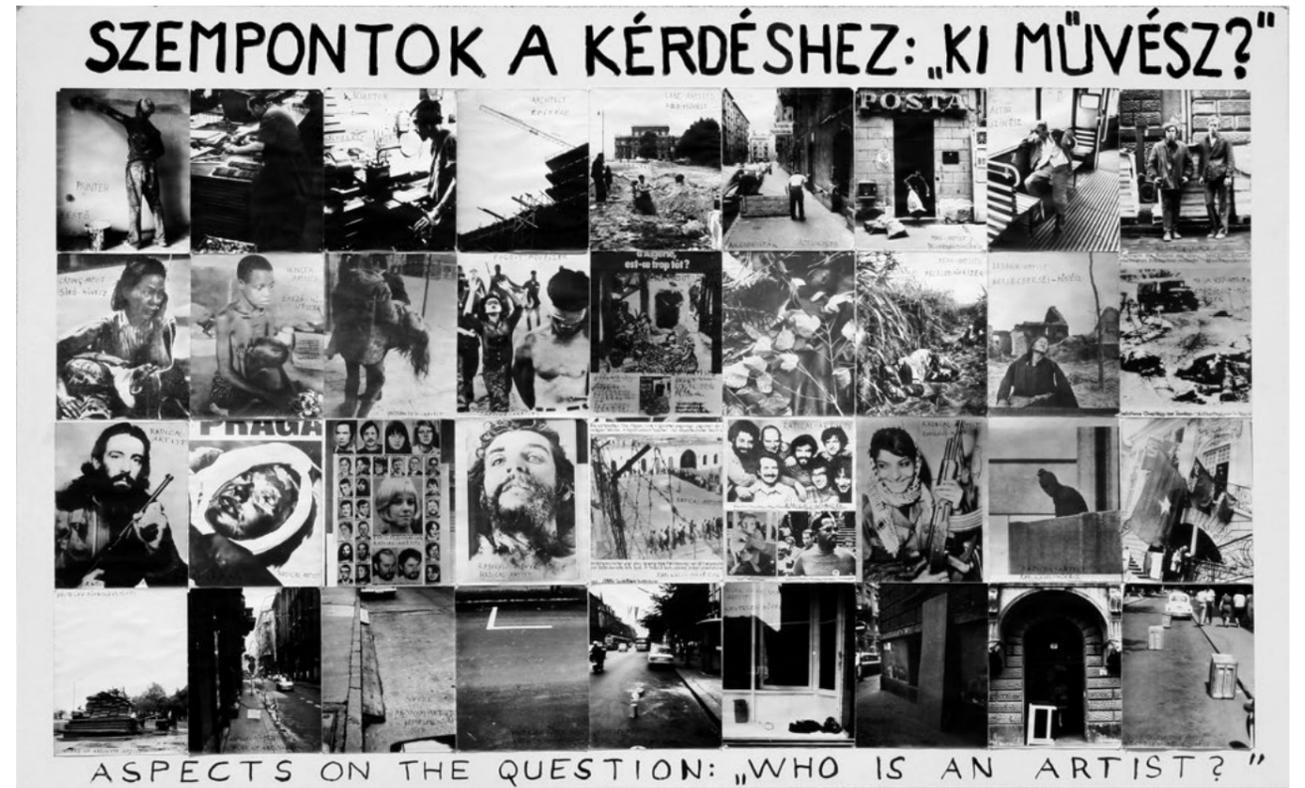
Post Scriptum: Who is an Artist? And Who Is Miklós Erdély's Best Friend?

Joseph Beuys, the most well-known promoter of the extended concept of art and creativity, phrased his emancipatory thesis that "everyone is an artist" in 1973. That same year, Tamás Szentjóbby, in his tableaux *Aspects on the Question: "Who is an Artist?"* already used some irony when he extended the new directions of Avant-garde art to include ordinary, political, or simply life-preserving actions seen in press photographs. This was a similar gesture to the way Erdély re-appropriated a 1956 act of charity as an artistic action. (Later on, Szentjóbby conceptualized the program of "non-art art" that would also do away with the hierarchy based on differences in abilities and possessions.) Erdély's 1983 re-appropriation might also signal the beginning of a process: from the 1980s onwards, the Neo-Avant-garde's extended and democratized definition of art gradually became institutionalized and created its own schools, heroes and legends, as demonstrated by Little Warsaw (András Gálik, Bálint Havas) *Only Artist* diagram (2006).

Nicolas Vass' one-night exhibition *Dialog mit der Jugend* (2007) also focused on Miklós Erdély's pedagogical cult and its contemporary reception. The dialogue, whereby Vass attempted to get in touch with Erdély's ghost with the help of a medium (the setting of which formed the exhibition itself), remained one-sided, much like in the case of Martin Kippenberger's 1981 painting - whose title Vass borrowed for this event - that depicts the painter with a bandaged face after he was beaten up by young punks.



Detail from the exhibition "Only artist" by Little Warsaw, 2006
By courtesy of the artists



Two artists from the Plágium2000 group, Orsolya Gaál and Kitti Gosztola, created a serial artwork in 2008 that specifically reflected on Miklós Erdély's cultic state (the "pope" of Hungarian Neo-Avant-garde). The multiple is a stamp, which, according to the title, is Erdély's stamp with the inscription "To my best friend". The work was inspired by an interview, in which Zoltán Sebők argued that Erdély himself expressed an ironic take on his own cultic position and role when he made such a stamp and used it in the circle of his friends and admirers. This "original" stamp, however, was never found, and is not featured in Erdély's canonized oeuvre.

András Tábori's multiple also evokes the paradox of the institutionalized Neo-Avant-garde. *Posthumous Mind Expansion* (2009) recalls and elaborates on Erdély's portrait photo and personal cult from the perspective of Dadaist praxis, specifically Endre Bálint's photo montage *Mindenkivel tudatom, hogy meghasadt a tudatom* (I am Letting Everyone Know that my Consciousness Has Split, 1958).

Tamás Szentjóbby, *Aspects on the Question: "Who is an Artist?"*

Photo collage, drawing, 1970

By courtesy of the artist and the Tragor Ignác Museum, Vác

Stamp of Miklós Erdély

Based on the research of Orsolya Gaál and Kitti Gosztola

Plágium2000 Edition, 2009

creativity exercises – spaces of emancipatory pedagogies

Exhibition, workshops, lectures

Opening: September 17, 2015, 6 pm

InDiGo (Interdisciplinary Thinking) group's 1979 action *Művészkiárat (Artists' exit)* by the temporary group MinDiGó (Virág Bogyó, Adrián Costache, Miklós Erhardt, Gábor Erlich, Olga Kocsi, Virág Lódi, Zsigmond Peternák)

Venue: Mayakovsky 102, the open office of tranzit. hu, 1068 Budapest, Király utca 102.

On view: September 18 – October 31, 2015

Thursday – Friday: From 2 pm to 6 pm

Saturday: From 10 am to 2 pm

or by appointment at office@tranzitinfo.hu

Works, films and project documentations: Paweł Althamer, Imre Bak, Igor and Ivan Buharov, Miklós Erdély, Miklós Erhardt – Dominic Hislop, ex-artists' collective (Tamás Kaszás – Anikó Loránt), János Fajó, Robert Filliou – Joachim Pfeufer, Friderich Fröbel, Oskar Hansen, InDiGo group, Little Warsaw, School of Public Life, András Kovács, KwieKulik, Grzegorz Kowalski, Dóra Maurer, Miklós Mécs, Plágium2000, Katarina Šević, János Sugár, AMBPA, IPUT, Judit Vas, Nicolas Vass, Artur Żmijewski, and others.

The exhibition is curated by Dóra Hegyi (tranzit.hu), Sándor Hornyik (Hungarian Academy of Sciences – Institute of Art History), Zsuzsa László (tranzit.hu), Franciska Zólyom (GfZK), in collaboration with Aleksandra Kędziorek, Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw

Assistant: Hajnalka Tulisz

Exhibition design: Virág Bogyó

Display joinery: Fanni Hegedűs

Partners: Artpool Art Research Center, Hungarian National Digital Archive and Film Institute (MaNDA), Museum of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts

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Programs during the exhibition:

October 9, 2015, 7 pm Boris Ondreička (Bratislava/Vienna): *The Abyss – Between Pampered Theory and Corrupted Practice*, lecture

October 15, 2015. 4:30–7 pm: Event with students of the Hungarian University of Fine Arts. *How to work in an exhibition?* Lecture by Elke Krasny, professor of the Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna. Host: Tünde Varga

October 16, 2015, 4–5 pm: Stamp action by Zoltán Berei and Viktor Kotun

October 20, 2015, 2:00 pm: Lecture by László Beke

October 22, 2015, 4:30 pm: Talk with the ex-artists' collective

October 28–31, 2015 Free School for Art Theory and Practice with Artur Żmijewski

October 30, 2015, 7:30 pm: *Critical pedagogy in practice* with the participation of the School of Public life and the Free School of Robin Goodfellow

October 31, 2015, 10 am–6 pm *Creativity exercises revisited* with the Virág Judit Galeri

Cover:

Miklós Erdély: *Hidden Green*, 1977, Photo: László Beke

Active–Passive Exercises in the framework of the Creativity Exercises course, 1976–77, Photo: Tamás Papp

Robert Filliou while building the Poipoidrom in Budapest, 1976, Photo: György Fazekas

InDiGo Group: *Artists' Exit*, 1979, Photo: László László Révész

Back cover:

Students in Oskar Hansen's studio doing the "Great Number" Exercise. no date, by courtesy of Igor Hansen

Robert Filliou and Joachim Pfeufer: *Detail of the Poipodrom in Budapest, 1976*, photo: György Fazekas

InDiGo Group: *Artists' Exit*, 1979, Photo: László László Révész

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