

## **Letter of motivation**

### **To be a human who thinks independently, creatively and critically in the 21st century**

What is thinking? Is thinking something that you can do without feeling? Or without the awareness of feeling? To think independently, creatively and critically is especially important today, in a world where it is becoming more difficult to discern what is real. I think this is related to developments in technology but also because of the position of the individual within wider society. Within the Western world substantial focus is placed on the individual. Yet the fact that we are living in a society is largely ignored. It is not just a matter of independent, creative and critical thinking; it is also about how one can think as an individual within a collective and how one can find common ground. An open attitude is needed to learn how to connect thinking with feeling, to encourage an embodied cognition with a greater awareness of this connection.

### **The arts**

I am especially interested in the role of embodied cognition in the arts, and exploring what role embodied working methods could play within the Art Academy. Integrating a method, which allows artists to enter an artistic process in an unprejudiced, uninhibited and open-minded way, could offer greater space and freedom for discovery and the unexpected. What if we try to balance this with critical thinking? Art is not something we can measure. But we do live in a society where we are used to ascribing value by measuring things. Do we need to train artists to stay true to 'themselves', to not get distracted by their own, and society's expectations, but to instead to reflect on these thoughts and use these doubts as fuel to help them create? I believe there is a danger that the value of cognition and awareness overrules the value of intuition and unawareness.

To value intuition is to give value to inner knowledge and experiences. What if we could learn from embodied methods into the artistic process? The mathematician Henri Poincaré wrote in *l'Invention Mathématique* (1908) about his own thought process while he was working on the discovery of 'Fuchsian Functions'. He emphasised the alternation of conscious and unconscious thinking and how a sudden insight or illumination was often the result of a period of unconscious labour.

Is it possible that the Western society values utility so much that it has become coldly rational? Is this the utility that makes the artist think too much and stops our imagination? What could be the role of methodologies based on the theories of an embedded, extended and enactive mind within the artistic process of the artist today? As an artist going through a conscious and unconscious artistic process and as an artteacher, these are questions and topics which occupy my mind. This is why I would love to learn and do research about it at the training program ETC.

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