

## The Micropolitics of Publishing. Interview with Eva Weinmayr

<http://creatingcommons.zhdk.ch/the-micropolitics-of-publishing-interview-with-eva-weinmayr/>

EW: 00:40 Our main activity looks at publishing and at the politics of publishing, things, publication, not so much as an object, as a noun, but more as a verb, as a practice. And that has many implications on, on how we work. And so I started publishing because I thought publishing is a way of, artist's publication is a way to actually escape the art market and / or the restrictive politics which come with it, because you can circulate your ideas more freely outside the gallery. And I published with bigger publishing houses and with small independent presses and activist presses and came to a point where I thought that the infrastructures which are available are in a way just replicating the exclusionary power structures I was criticizing with my work, and started, or together with other people, started a publishing activity which looks at these politics and which tries to find different practices and different ways to approach it.

01:59 **"AND Publishing"** (subtitle)

EW: 02:04 Yeah, we found a name for ourself and our name is AND, A-N-D in opposition to "or", so AND is and and and, it's an accumulative process. And that also means that we are not only interested in making publications in the traditional sense, but to experiment and play and think through what making public is and for who is the public, which publics, why, how and for whom to publish. So it's, it's not just a big output, producing objects, but creating practices and collaborations and collectivities around these questions. How is knowledge validated? I mean, publishing it's interesting, because if you think of the term author, author is always connected to authorization and to authority. And this is the exclusionary point: who validates, who has authority and who is being authorized? And this is where our works is, and we are coming clearly from a feminist practice. So it, it looks at exclusionary mechanisms. AND started without mandate in an art school, Byam Shaw School of Art. And it was, an university indy press without mandate and we started to publish student's work, staff's and alumni's work. So we sort of levered the established hierarchies in the art school.

03:54 **"previous history"** (subtitle)

EW: 03:58 That was also the time where the library was shot by the management, or the management proposed to close the library because of a merger and AND together with other students and members of staff proposed to keep the library open as a self-organized space. And in these two years where we ran the library self-organized lots of projects were developed, which had to do with reading, reading and books and engaging with knowledge and making knowledge, like making collectively knowledge. And, and this was how AND started basically, this was also where the piracy project started, when there was no budget to buy new books. And Andrea Franke, part of the piracy project, did research into book piracy in Peru. We launched a call for contributions for pirated books. So people should select a book which is important to them and make a copy of it. And then all these different strategies of copying and reproducing and pirating and legally, illegally came up. I'm telling this because the piracy project as well as that time in the library, sort of was a moment where it's not the book as an object, but the book and the book collection of the piracy collection, as a starting point for debates, for workshops, for lectures, for discussions. So, it's what the agency of the books, it's what the book can trigger. I think this is how AND actually works, like it's very responsive. Like this is nothing where you sit at a table and plan but there's something happening and then something has to be done and then you come up with ideas. And this is actually for me, art is like you have to create the projects which are missing, you have to create the spaces which you need, and if the management proposes to close the library and the library was such an important social space of, a key space for the art college, then we turned it into a actually something quite different from an institutional library. We really expanded the concept what the library can be. Eventually after two years, they closed it and they sold it, the whole library, for 2000 pounds to a second-hand books seller, a move which we couldn't - we could reverse, but the second-hand book seller already came with his four wheel, with his SUV and took I think eight boxes with the most precious books with them. So, yeah, it's a disaster story.

06:56 **"network"** (subtitle)

EW: 07:01 It's a really interesting question about the "e" in the we, because the Valand working group where five people working at Valand Academy, AND publishing is Rosie [Rosalie Schweiker] and myself. But Rose is also working with an independent United, with the distribution platform, and Elle who runs X Mark the Bökship, she did the table share at the Whitechapel, so it's a constant shifting association of people who overlap and separate. So it's not a fixed institution or a fixed collective.

And this is so important because, with AND publishing it's also not about creating a brand. We are really trying to avoid this. Like, we are not a publishing house and then it's AND publishing and, but it's not even a collective, I mean collectives often have brand names too in order to be visible, but it's quite important for us to keep this really low key and flexible and not to claim ownership about things we are doing because claiming ownership always means that you are taking something which has been produced collectively. It's a very delicate practice and quite conflictuos at times, because sometimes people feel they have invested so much more work because for them it was a priority. So it is owned more by them than by others. So it's a constant negotiation of how authorship and ownership is being assigned.

EW: 08:49 Yeah, creating a support network for people who try to create different ways to create and pass on knowledge. I mean this is what publishing is about.

09:11 **"publication practice"** (subtitle)

EW: 09:15 Generally. I think our idea of publishing is that the book is not a finished object, which is then being circulated in the world as the authoritative object, but that the book is a, or the making of the book is an occasion to have a dialogue. This is a book which is, it was developed in the course of the piracy project where we developed a vocabulary of piracy. And the idea is that every term gets a chapter in the book. But then, we thought, how can we fund this, because it's a quite ambitious project and we call it for, we created a funding system where people who were interested in one specific term in one specific chapter could fund this chapter with 25 pounds. So these are the red dots, [inaudible] very popular,

Cornelia Sollfrank  
10:17

crowd sourcing

EW: 10:18 It's a sort of crowd funding, but it was a much stronger involvement of the reader because the reader could actually say what is the topic which is of most interest. So the reader had some sort of impact in the decision making of the book. And this version of the book is not finished. So there are only some of the terms explored, but some terms already have funders. So faking is, yeah, faking is written, but there're, like adapting is not, not yet written. So the book will evolve with the discussion the book triggers. That's an experiment.

EW: 11:02 Yeah, the process of production, what the book actually can, is, and that's mobilized "What is Feminist Pedagogy?" It's a workbook which was published four weeks before the actually mobilization, which was a three day event at Valand Academy in Gothenburg and organized by a working group, consisting of students and members of staff at the Academy. And the workbook is, um, we found a format for the workbook, which allows that the reader compiles her own copy and we put out all the same sheets of this workbook one whole day in the lobby of the Academy, and everybody who passed by was curious and we explained this is the workbook for an event we are organizing in four weeks and have a look, if you want to make your copy, make a copy. So, that was a way to involve people in this process and make them interested in the propositions and questions and critique we had at current institutional pedagogies and infrastructures. So, people made their own copy and had a different ownership over the book than if they get this book just handed over. And at the same time we enlarged every page of this book to an A-zero poster and posted these posters across the building for three months. So one month before the event and two months after, which sort of the book was taking space in the building and the building turns into a walkable book and all these things triggered interests. So the book, this book has been used as course reading in courses at the Academy. So it really entered the institutional channels and structures. And this is a good example, like, what I long for, like what a book can actually create and start.

EW: 13:26 This ["Teaching For People Who Prefer Not to Teach"] is based on the little red school book, which was published in the 60s, and which was censored. And this is a, it's a pocket book. It's, it's really made for your pocket. So you can take it with you when you are working in one of these short-term precarious contracts. And it's a list of assignments, of teaching assignments, basically a virtual classroom, which helps you to deal better with this precarious situation.

CS: 13:59 So, what is the origin from the 70s? Can you say something about it?

EW: 14:04 Yeah,

CS: 14:04 It's a little red book?

EW: 14:05 Yeah, it's, it has been censored because of its anarchism and the way they talk about sexuality and it was just too challenging. We definitely have an aesthetic practice in so far that we work a lot with rituals, with text, with materialities, with formats. The format will shape how something is

received. So this is clearly aesthetics, the way how you receive an artwork and if I say, this is an artwork. There have been specific decisions being made about the material, the binding, the printing, how it's being edited and so on and so on. So in this way, I think we have, we might be, this might be described as an aesthetic practice at the same time, the way we organize, how we come together, how we host. So this might be seen as aesthetic practice as well.

EW: 15:12

It's an infrastructure of which developed through friendships and through supportive acts. So it's actually many people who work like us in London at the moment. It's UMK, it's Independent United, which is a shared distribution platform, it's X Mark the Bökship who, for example, very currently during the London art book fair last weekend at the Whitechapel art gallery, which charged 700 pounds for a publisher table, X Marks the Bökship did a table share where she invited many independent feminist presses to sell their books in a two hour slots. So around 15 different presses were in the London art book fair without paying. So this is the kind of support structure and the infrastructure around publishing, which is being built. But informally, and this is quite important because there's no authorship. We didn't build an infrastructure, I didn't build, it's a collective we, developed infrastructure. I think that's an important point. I would like to say that we are part of an infrastructure. So I'm not building an infrastructure which I provide for others, but it's a collectively built infrastructure and I feel so much more comfortable because then I'm not in this position to say I'm the author of this infrastructure which I give now to you and you can use it, but it's actually a truly collective, quite vivid and messy collaboration. I think this idea of a fixed institution of a universal infrastructure is obsolete. I think we need responsive infrastructures and we are working responsively, we respond to situations like with the library, like you're with the residency at Marabouparken and with the boxing. And being responsive always means working contextually. Like it's always conditional. There are certain conditions and then you work with them. It's not the idea that you create these amazing conditions for your project and then you have everything you need. This is not how our world works at the moment.

18:00 **"collaborating with art institutions"** (subtitle)

EW: 18:05

I think there are certain movements and there is not one art world, so it's already difficult to talk about one art world. But there are people working in art institutions who have a mindset and an understanding that the way we are working is important and it's urgent and needs to be

supported. So, we can hardly survive and you know, work and make meaningful work. But the problem working with art institution is still that they need to have public engagement and they need to have a name and they need to have a press release. And so all this framing of what you are doing through the institution is really difficult. So we started actually to say we, okay, we're invited, we like to work with you, but we need to first negotiate a terms and conditions paper, a document, which we both agree to. And this process took quite a long time. And then we agreed in this document that we are being visible on our own terms. And that was amazing because it really meant that we could steer the way we were described, and the images which were being used and also the publicness our boxing pro project had. So I think, institutions always talk about outreach, so they always want to reach out, and I think actually the artist's job is to enrich into institutions, like to actually change with their attitudes and their approaches the way institutions work.

19:58           **"feminist pedagogy"** (subtitle)

EW:     19:58           I can't pin this down on a specific tool set because it's too complex and it's – I'm always researching why the power structures are how they are, and then how you can confront them, and how you can do things in a different way. But this refers to knowledge transmission, references, how we meet, what are the power structures in the classroom, what are the roles of the teacher and the student? Because it doesn't help to say we are already equal because we aren't, there are power structures, so you have to be transparent about these, but still, create a situation where a dialogue can happen. And, and I mean, feminist pedagogy is quite wide, so you can pack or you can look at it from many different perspectives. Bell Hooks, Spivak, Nancy Fraser, Lauren Berliner as well. I mean, these are all really relevant positions.

21:06           **"knowledges"** (subtitle)

EW:     '21:14           Publishing is reducing and sharing knowledge. And that doesn't only mean fixed in a book, but through discussions, through un-box dialogues. So all these questions, how is knowledge transmitted? How is knowledge validated? Who validates knowledge, who is being cited and who is not being cited? So, are these questions of academic activism as well, where we're really at the core and then at the same, I mean, you create your course literature. What are the references? So how is knowledge which is not produced by western male authors, artists, etc. How can we bring this in? And what are the structures and the bottlenecks and the enclosures, which try to keep them out? I mean, this

refers to post-colonialism, to racism, to gender questions and so on. So this is where we really worked on.