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## New Media in Academia

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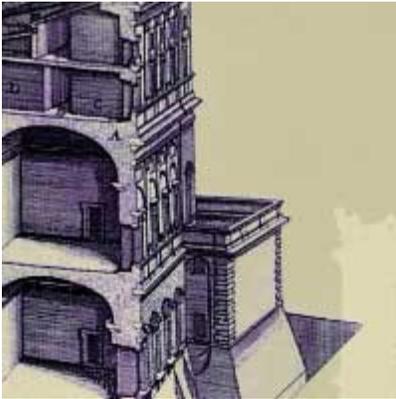
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Brett Stalbaum on Jun 14 2000

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### Classroom vs Studio by Jan Ekenberg

In New Media Art Education (and contemporary Art Education in general) two main educational models, and a range between the two, are in use: the classroom model and the studio model. When reflecting upon the interviews with representatives from a variety of academic institutions, it could be meaningful to keep in mind the differences and implications that the two models bring forth.

The studio model is generally typified by a less constrained situation for the student. The student works in a studio which is frequented by teachers based on arrangement. The student is responsible for arranging, and is often free to choose, the instructors that they wish to work with. Students are responsible for coming up with and executing ideas. This model is typically combined with, ( more or less voluntary), lectures, workshops and shared critiques.

In the classroom model, the educational structure is evidently similar to that of the "traditional" teaching situation where the student listens to, discusses, or works in a class room, laboratory or shared studio under the supervision of an instructor. On the undergraduate level, assignments are typically given to students. Often the two systems, in one way or another, are combined into hybrids.

The two models can be positioned within two general socio-economic, cultural and historic traditions:

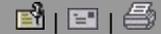
- The studio model can generally be said to have originated from a European tradition when the art educational institution often is/was separated from the University in a Academy. Many of these Institutions are many hundred years old, but the studio model as we know it today was not introduced until the 20th century when it coincides with the modernist idea of the artist. The European higher art education is highly competitive (at the Art Academies in Sweden and Denmark over 700 applicant might compete for twenty spots). This fits within a social idea of the welfare system: the education is often provided for free or inexpensively, and therefore the accompanying (political) consensus is that not everybody who wants to be an artist can become one. It would be too expensive, and thus the educational resources are directed elsewhere.

- The classroom model of art teaching, as we know it today, has its history from an art education that was developed together, or merged, with an already existing system (such as the University). It's therefore expected that in the North American system a student would typically earn a standardized degree (BA, BFA, MA, MFA) from his/her studies in art, something that is not necessarily true (though it's more frequently becoming the case), in the European system. In North America it would be typical to encounter more of

the classroom model as an undergraduate art student; ones responsibilities would later increase as one reaches "a higher level" as a graduate student, and thus something more akin to the studio model is not unheard of at this level. (Especially in the smaller, and usually private sector, art academies.) Acceptance into many art schools in North America is also very competitive, and even though it's often expensive to attend and the social safety nets if you fail are few, art education is popular and the number of students who pursue an art education is many times higher.

The classroom model can thus be said to be more of a pragmatic, more inclusive model, that is more often found in the US than in Europe. The studio model has its roots in higher European art education, with its more exclusive, romantic view of the artist.

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