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### *THE LEARNING PROCESS*

In order to facilitate a creative learning process, both for us as individuals and as part of a group, a pedagogical model inspired by three elements of practical philosophy has been designed. This model is based on three pillars associated with three artifacts frequently used during the oasis sojourns: the Note Book, the Nomadic Chair and the Baltic Table.

#### Note book – Reflection

In the NUROPE oases we would like to support a concrete reflection, a reflection where everything starts with the participants themselves. A prerequisite for a successful process together is the nurturing of reflections that involve our own capabilities during the nomadic expeditions.

The word reflection originates from the Latin *re-flectio*, which means that a thought “bows” and returns back to itself. In order to provide opportunities for this kind of reflection where thoughts turn back on themselves, we have supplied all participants with Note Books, and everyone is encouraged to write extensively. The reason for providing every participant with this book is that we expect the thinking of the participants to be one of the most important resources for our nomadic reflections. This being the case, it is also an act of respect.

The activity of writing in the Note Book is meant to be a creative process, and as such a tool for further reflections. The Note book is not primarily about learning to write – rather it is about writing to learn! In order to take care of this process, and the dynamics of an internal dialogue stimulated by writing and thinking, a break will be taken now and then

during the program of each oasis in order to provide a moment for reflection, to cultivate meaning and make it possible to confront our own thinking processes. By writing in the Note Books we also aim to slow down the pace in order to discover the surplus of meaning, which in turn opens us up for surprises and a critical distance, not only towards the lectures, but also towards ourselves. Critical thinking is not just about being skeptical in general, but, according to Kant, critique is *the art of thinking everything a new*.

It is our conviction that our combined capacity of being able to be both a writer and a reader is a key to developing an internal conversation, an inner dialogue. Ultimately, it is all about interpretation and our aim is to read the world and to write the world.

Thus, our main reason for writing is to stimulate thinking. However, in the Note Books some of us will probably also find the seeds for further writings which will blossom into texts that we can share more publicly. We will gather these kinds of materials onto our website, although it is also our aim to edit publications and support exhibitions inspired by the oases.

### Nomadic Chairs – Dialogue

As we stroll around cities such as Åbo, Biella and Kassel, making stops for program activities in various places, it will certainly be good to have a Nomadic Chair, particularly in order to be able to sit down, reflect and write in our Note Books. All NUROPE participants will be awarded “academic chairs” and are expected to bring these chairs to the different oases. According to academic procedures, the chairs are all numbered, so you may find all the “chair-holders” on our website.

But, the possession of a chair also makes it possible to gather and meet with other people. If you move the chair closer to your neighbor, you can start up a dialogue with one, two or perhaps three, or even more colleagues. Hopefully, the use of Nomadic Chairs and

Note Books will prepare us as participants for creativity and innovation by sharing reflections together with other nomads.

During the nomadic expeditions the Note Book is meant to be a kind of “secret book”, configuring a private world that may, however, also provide a link facilitating communication with other participants. By making thoughts explicit in this book a connection can be established between our inner and outer dialogues.

### The Baltic Table – Communication

We may also bring our Note Books and move our Nomadic Chairs to gather together around the Baltic Table, where we sit down with our Note Books in front of us and unite in public communication.

The Baltic Table, created by Fondazione-Pistoletto for this specific purpose, became a symbol for our common communication when we met altogether during the Åbo/Turku oases in September 2006. In February 2007 during the second oasis (in Biella, Italy), we are going to gather around another table, the Mediterranean Table, also created by Fondazione-Pistoletto.

Water, as with the waters of the Baltic and Mediterranean Sea, has often been seen as medium that brings and binds people together. Water makes communication possible. For a long period of time, the Baltic and Mediterranean Sea have provided circumstances for building a shared world among people living along their coasts. We strive to explore these identities, similarities as well as differences, during the two first oases of our first expedition. Then, when we meet in Kassel in June, for the third oasis, Fondazione-Pistoletto will bring a third table designed to represent the South Chinese Sea. These three tables together – the Baltic, Mediterranean and South Chinese– will provide us with a framework for our common reflections during the Documenta exhibition.

### Learning dynamics

The Note Book, the Nomadic Chair, and the Baltic Table – these artifacts are tools meant to facilitate our learning process during the oases and expeditions. Although we have planned an existing program, the most important contribution to making the nomadic route successful as learning laboratories is the work each one of us undertakes as participants. A prerequisite for NUROPE to become a creative learning laboratory is that each of us will be able to instigate an internal conversation within ourselves. In brief, this makes us all responsible for the learning dynamics of the different expeditions of our Nomadic University!

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