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**Age of  
Artists**

Interview

**Ursula  
Bertram**

Mainz/Meissen  
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The interview was conducted by Dirk Dobiéy (Age of Artists, AoA) on 18 August 2014 by telephone after an introductory conversation on 21 July 2014. Professor Ursula Bertram was in Mainz, Dirk Dobiéy in Meissen.

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## Einleitung

Prof. Ursula Bertram ([www.ursula-bertram.de](http://www.ursula-bertram.de)) is visual artist with a traditional education in sculpture and an artistic focus on three-dimensional environments. She is professor at the Technical University in Dortmund Germany where her research focus is art transfer, more precisely the transfer of artistic thinking into other disciplines. Ursula Bertram is co-founder of the ID Factory ([www.id-factory.de](http://www.id-factory.de)), a cross-disciplinary community that focuses on how artistic thinking and action can be used for scientific insight and economic development. She is a known and well-respected author in her research field and truly passionate about her mission to put artistic thinking and action on par with established scientific and economic views on the world.

## Interview

**Age of Artists:** How have you developed artistically, respectively how did you come to art and which artistic practice do you pursue?

**Ursula Bertram:** I really don't know any more how I came to art. I only know that journalism and art motivated me. Looking back I represent the artistic position of pushing back your boundaries and continually trying to open new doors. In addition I had classical training in sculpture and plastic art, for example life-modelling and portraits, which was greatly dedicated to realism. Moreover I had a very, very good teacher. His name was Heinz Hemrich and he taught us the philosophical dimension over and above the manual work. I had only just left the university when I began to explore related topics, and these were architecture, music and journalism. I have attempted, sometimes painstakingly, to open one door after another. I always needed a few years until I could handle these new topics. When I had tried out all the related areas my curiosity took me to a new boundary, which was no longer artistic, and that was the boundary to management and economics. At this point a whole new outlook opened up for me which then led me, with a different perspective, into the sciences, as an area beyond art. This

is basically my personal way: always moving along at the boundaries. There are, of course, several special, personal pieces of work, which play a role in this process,

AoA: So your artistic work consistently reflects the new boundary experience?

URSULA BERTRAM: Yes. I believe it's the first adventure if you're technically good, that is you have the basis you need to begin with juggling more than two balls. After my degree course I simply occupied myself with architecture until I understood what architecture is and what matters here. I drew like an architect. I learned to draw up plans, to read plans, to work to scale and so on. Introducing a finished product, that is the sculpture or the object, into architecture and opening the dialogue changes both, the architecture and the product. That was the first adventure. I've worked in this area of situational art for years and I've never completely lost touch with this. Actually I've never worked independently of space, only that I now call space environment. What was previously my three-dimensional space is today my social environment. This led me to another adventure. I was given the task of converting a site, which exists here in Mainz, and which was used during the Cold War and then abandoned. This woodland area was to be given a memorial of the Cold War. This was a challenging assignment when you consider all the memorials you know. I took up this challenge and the social environment was very important in doing so: the space, the past, the future. I decided against creating an object as such for the three countries Russia, Germany and America, which played a large role in the Cold War, but instead I went on a documentary journey to these countries. To choose the destinations I took a large military map, closed my eyes and pointed to Russia, Germany and America, and the places that my fingers touched seemed to be selected. I continued to enlarge the scale of the map until I could see houses in the vicinity where I had pointed to. I left things to chance for I asked myself who it should be then? Who in America? A woman or a man, a boy, an old

person, an intellectual or somebody else? Handicapped or not handicapped - everyone was included. Next I travelled with a team to exactly these places and these houses and recorded these people because I wanted to set an example. I described where they lived. I wasn't interested in the Cold War. I simply portrayed these three nationalities in the woodland area. Finally glass stelae were erected, which can be still be seen in the woods today, with a photograph of the house residents, with a short description of where and who that is and what they are doing at that moment. This was a piece of work that moved along boundaries in both senses of the word.

AoA: Because different aspects of your training and your artistic development were combined?

URSULA BERTRAM: Exactly, and because the social context is very important since it is, so to say, going from architectural space into inhabited human space. Over time societal and social aspects became more and more important to me. Not in the way that you shape it and make portraits of people who have produced some sort of social achievement, but in that I go into society and actively develop something with the people. This was a milestone for participatory approaches in what followed.

AoA: I'm interested in the evolution of your work over time. How do you see this aspect?

URSULA BERTRAM: Time is an important aspect. It doesn't run on a linear path, of course. Looking back there is perhaps logic in this. But when you are in the process, you don't actively know what the next step is. Above all when you are searching for something. You can't assess this. Just as little as you can assess how long it will take. If someone had asked me how long do you want to examine architecture and art, I would have said it is my life and I'll continually develop it. Suddenly it's no longer interesting because you have completed it. But it's quite difficult to say how long that

will take. On the other hand if someone asks me today, "How long did you need for the drawing or the design?", then I've perhaps worked seven hours on it. But I would say I've worked 20 years and seven hours. Because it plays a part in what has developed.

AoA: So it doesn't make sense for a work of art to stand alone at a point in time?

URSULA BERTRAM: I don't think so.-I believe there are milestones where you have learned something fundamental. But I wouldn't say that it stands alone. Especially as it is connected with a person. I experience this with my students. I'm searching more for what there is in the person and what the characteristic features are. If I can crack that, then doors are opened for the students, who then suddenly realize, "It's about me, I can be myself and this is my particular characteristic." I believe that searching for a special characteristic is an important search which makes every single person that which they are.

AoA: Finding a position is important for artists. There was a report about the final papers of students of the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts in a local newspaper, and that too much content and not enough courage were in them. Is that your experience too?

URSULA BERTRAM: I'm not acquainted with the final papers in Dresden. However I do also observe a movement that you describe as a lot of content. A lot of information. Perhaps there is a lot of science in it. This is a new movement, which is clearly relevant and important. Art and artistic work contain a scientific contingent and in this sense they perhaps contain a lot of information to begin with. But I don't believe that this goes against innovation. Suddenly you are no longer searching yourself, like perhaps in the 1960s, but you are establishing the link to scientific work. I believe that this is innovative. I don't know whether this was rightly seen in the report about Dresden. I appreciate internal searching but also the inclusion of external input.

AoA: Not a loss of courage, but simply another trend?

URSULA BERTRAM: Not at all. I believe that courage was the same at all times and, after all, I can look back on a few years, to my teaching activity, which I began in 1992. There is one group, which just wants to have a profession and that as soon as possible. They simply pursue the goal of obtaining credit points quickly and getting through the Bachelor and Master degree courses as soon as possible. It's quite difficult to intervene here because you need an incredibly large lever to crack this. There has always been this goal-oriented group everywhere, and perhaps it has become rather larger due to the Bachelor and Master process and our current economic development. Around seven per cent of school subjects are concerned with art in the broadest sense. Seven per cent of artists, this is such a magic number, make a living from their art. And about seven per cent of first year students, who I have in front of me, are ruthlessly interested. This is my impression and my experience, about seven to ten per cent.

AoA: We also talk about ten per cent on the topic of high potentials, top talents and similar interested persons in the economy, even when we know that around seven per cent in Germany do not get a school-leaving qualification.

URSULA BERTRAM: That's extremely interesting. We can see that already in the first term. But of course this doesn't mean that one or another can't find a very good place in professional society, because it is not only innovators and inventors that we need. We also need shapers to creatively transform the material available. Another figure I invented was the wolpertinger, accentuated by its environment and strong in the social area. We all need these.

AoA: The aspect of artistic attitude is very important. Are the seven per cent you spoke of also the people who possess this artistic attitude?

URSULA BERTRAM: Yes. At the end of their training.

AoA: How does this attitude manifest itself to you? What does this attitude consist of?

URSULA BERTRAM: There is, of course, an artistic attitude, and also a scientific attitude. This manifests itself to me in the way that it has become like a skin. A skin has to grow. It's almost like a biological process. You can't remove a skin without damaging it and you can't put it on like a dress. This belongs to an attitude, and an attitude needs, of course, a certain process, a certain time and, of course, a strong will and constancy. Once you have an attitude, then you can easily apply this to other areas. This means that, with an artistic attitude, you can not only paint pictures, but also conduct processes in totally different fields. You can also go into science with this, into economics, everywhere.

However, if it is not an attitude but a result or products, then they remain singular. Perhaps I should also say about this that this artistic attitude, in a certain sense, is synergistically contradictory to scientific thinking and activity. Artistic thinking and activity lead to an attitude, which, at best, make thinking and activity options possible, and they in turn produce material or immaterial results. Scientific and artistic approaches are like oil and water. It's my opinion that they should not be mixed. If you mix colors, for example, you get grey. This doesn't look good. If you mix together all of the bright colors you have - as in shown by Goethe's color circle - you will always get grey. Just imagine, no matter which colors you mix together, you will always get grey. Different shades of grey, but still grey. And I believe that the approaches we have in economics, art or in science should not be a grey area. They should be oscillating, bright areas which are not mixed together like in impressionism, but which stand alone next to each other and perhaps result in one color when viewed from a distance, but unmixed and next to each other at close quarters. I believe we shouldn't apply a set theory here. We are quick to draw two circles,

which overlap, in the middle to obtain the wonderful mix of art and economics. This is not true in my opinion because this mixing only gives you a common denominator and this, you know, is the lowest, the lowest common denominator.

AoA: That means that, to maintain such pointillism, we have to keep the areas separate from each other. Does that relate to the attitude or the activity or both?

URSULA BERTRAM: In my view the approaches in the processes should remain separate. There is a logical, scientific, provable process, the science approach, which is based on justification, falsification and verification. In art there is quite a different approach, which relates to curiosity, chance, playfulness, non-linearity, and this is a separate approach. They can combine together in the product but they should remain separate in the processes.

AoA: That reminds me of the overview which you have also repeatedly used in your publications and which contrasts the areas of science and art. If the areas should remain separate, but be combined in the product, can we then maintain that artistic attitude is not applicable to all areas?

URSULA BERTRAM: It seems to me that this artistic thinking is not equally important in all areas. However I would say that it doesn't do any harm to think artistically and thus have the attitude available. It's the same with scientific thinking. It doesn't do any harm to think logically. It's useful to have two or more attitudes available, which you can slip back and forth between, or use one way or another. This is, however, far from being the case. We are unilaterally characterized by all of our training and the artistic attitude falls by the wayside. This is present for about one to ten per cent but definitely no more. In this respect it's my view that artistic thinking, innovative thinking, should be embedded in everyone, in order to be able to use it at the right time.

AoA: You have also described this artistic thinking in one of your publications. An attempt to capture this thinking, even though this is difficult. You also described how you can think artistically, but how can you act artistically?

URSULA BERTRAM: Just let me say one thing about artistic thinking. There must not be a misunderstanding so that people think artistic thinking is only to be found among artists. Sometimes you can't find it there at all. But it can often be found in non-artistic areas. This artistic thinking is in the minds of professional artists, and just as much in other creative minds. As you already said I have tried to grasp this, and have said then, that everyone who tries to think above and beyond set boundaries and enter new territories without knowing what lies in store for them, thinks artistically. Who pursue their thoughts even when they cannot be displayed immediately, at least not in a scientific or economic way. Who question patterns and conventions, observe intensely and can think above and beyond their disciplines. People who have doubts and can endure irritations. And also people who want to experience things subjectively and objectively and who consider both to be equally important. People who are able to link knowledge and experience, to find their own, non-prescribed positions and are also able, in a certain way, to think freely, to think clearly. Artistic thinking contains all this. When you look at these concepts you can see that art occurs in them not one single time. It doesn't even occur "visually" in them, or is something else that you associate with pictures or sculptures. This means it is the platform or the basis, which is actually that which defines thinking artistically. Taking this as the starting point we can either invent a product in the economy, organize a great conference, paint a picture or act artistically in any other way.

AoA: If the points you have named as defining artistic thinking occur in other areas. is it still necessary for me to concern myself

with art by taking up art, or producing art myself in order to learn such a way of thinking, or are there other possibilities?

**URSULA BERTRAM:** That's an extremely interesting point which you find just as interesting as I do. This is also a central research point. I believe you can also achieve this otherwise than through art. We are doing trials with inventor workshops here. They have nothing to do with art in the proper sense of the word, and nothing at all to do with art products, but more with inventing. Of course art is a good field for having doubts, to learn without fear, to try things out, to work without pressure or the like. Art is really a great field for doing this. But if we can find possibilities to override norms, patterns, role models, prescriptions or standards, how we can avoid prejudices and not yield to pressure or fear or failure - if we can find, introduce, generate such practices or processes, then I believe we can manage without art. You are then in the middle of art, it's just that the results no longer look like pictures. I believe this is something quite crucial. If I take away a picture from an artist, the artistic thinking will remain, and that is the essence that I can apply to other areas if it has become an attitude. If I associate art only with pictures, then I will only have a very small island, which I can portray with a few colors, content and thoughts, but I cannot transfer it. I find this transfer possibility exciting. By the way not only in art, but also in science. What if I take words away from scientists? What remains then? There should be some scientific thinking remaining? How will that be realized? We have drawings, sketches, systems etc. I would also go so far as to ask what if you take money or figures away from the economy? What remains then? Economic thinking. If we take the three essences together, economic thinking without figures, scientific thinking without words and artistic thinking without pictures and objects, if we put these together, then we will get a super essence.

**AoA:** The super essence is the meaning of life or the search for truth and knowledge?

URSULA BERTRAM: At the end of the day it's the search for knowledge, in the philosophical sense, which drives us. With increasing knowledge you realize in yourself and in your environment that there are other perspectives. But I find this too general. I've just had grandchildren. When a child is growing up, it gradually discovers a natural ego and then, step by step, its environment. At some time it discovers that when the environment is thriving, he or she is thriving too. Later on the circles become wider and wider as the child discovers that when society is thriving, he is thriving too. These are thoughts which I would consider to be very positive in the economy. If people working with me thrive when I can get them to reach the peak of their abilities, then a lot will come across. Not if I take something away from them or build up competition, but like if, in a jazz band, I encourage the individual with glances, approaches and accompaniment to play a solo before it is passed on to the next one. If we could get that far, then I believe we will have done it. Of course manual skills and that which you have built up belong to this, but letting go and trusting other do too. These processes are not goal-oriented, but are an offer to play, swim, fly and navigate.

AoA: Would that be the play instinct as defined by Friedrich Schiller?

URSULA BERTRAM: I would rather quote de Bono than Schiller. Of course the play instinct belongs to this, but there is still more to it than that. It's like igniting, and you always need two to ignite. One to ignite and the other who is ignited. I can't motivate someone to play who doesn't want to play and, of course, trusting and endeavoring to establish such a situation, which gives rise to this, belong to playing. You need places of self-assurance and letting go.

AoA: What do you mean by place in this context?

URSULA BERTRAM: I'm not quite so sure there myself, whether we are talking about a space. It's definitely no bad thing to have spaces. But whether these are inner or outer spaces, I don't exactly know. Perhaps I never will know. But I'm working together, for example, with an independent art school for child and youth development. I consider this to be extremely important. These are real places. The ID Factory is also a real laboratory. I know other institutions too which are real places where you can get together. But there are also intellectual spaces. Our conversation just reminds me of that now. During my first conversation with you I realized that there is such a space. Although connected by telephone you can't speak of a proper space. This is then more of an intellectual space. I believe that, to begin with, we need real spaces to generate things such as, for example, the placement of artistic processes next to scientific and economic processes. Google, for example, has understood about creating spaces for its employees, which are really quite different. There are spaces with green dots and swings where you can just hang out, and small acoustic islands, which used to be there have been removed and replaced by others. They also have a rule that you can decide what to do yourself for part of the working time. This all takes place on ideal premises. People are attracted magically by this and so there should be more often such fields which facilitate the development of potential and enthusiasm.

AoA: So one characteristic of an artistic attitude is substantially influenced by the environment in which you work? In the light of your statements could we also replace the concept of environment with the concept of an open system?

URSULA BERTRAM: You've said something important there, with open systems. In short, without openness, no innovation. If I visualize this figuratively, that I spread my arms wide to be open, then the spears, spikes and weapons of the others naturally strike extremely central and are possible deadly. Everyone who has tried out such systems has experienced this. There are at least two

involved here. Because if there is no agreement, no structure, or someone has been forced into or prescribed an open system, then it can be very difficult. I've also experienced that. It's certain that there must be an agreement a structure, which makes navigation possible at all. Musicians can do this well, for example jazz musicians. When they play free jazz and one of them passes the notes on to another until he finds a point where he can take over. You also see this development in the glances. There are therefore tones and glances and then another person takes over. But someone who has no antenna, he doesn't notice that someone is passing the notes on to him, not will he take over voluntarily. The playing is therefore linked to rules. Unfortunately there is also a certain hardening, which often has something to do with a certain age, where it simply becomes very difficult. I don't know if that's your experience too?

AoA: As regards age I am rather more skeptical there because throughout my career I have profited from colleagues, no matter how old or experienced they were. I was able to learn from them because they set an example with their attitude, which helped me on my way. I find it much more significant how people of all ages at school and in training are led away from art, and that incentives are created in professions which tend to limit innovations rather than to encourage them. For many people this development leads to a limited view of things. For some people earlier, for others later.

URSULA BERTRAM: I believe we are working on a large process, which exceeds a lifetime. If we have wandered on the paths of Descartes for 500 years, who separated truth and logic on the one hand and magic on the other hand from one another, then such a paradigm shift will not occur overnight. I've noticed that in working with students there is a certain point beyond which it is very difficult to promote openness. Something existential has to occur for openness to be achieved. Therefore it's my opinion that you should begin with these processes very early. Starting at

school. It is really imperative that this happens very early and that we continually try out open processes. Just as we try out goal-oriented work and logic, we must also try out ignorance and illogicalness, but to quite a different extent from today. If you picture to yourself that it really wouldn't take so long if we confront a six-year-old with open processes today, then we will already have this new constellation of switching between free navigation and goal-oriented work ten years later at the end of training. I don't regard ten years as being very long.

AoA: So you are also of the opinion that there should be a balance between this free navigation and goal-oriented work. Does that hold for artists as well as for other disciplines?

URSULA BERTRAM: At the moment we have many people who can think in an incredibly logical and precise manner and this is very valuable. Our success in Europe in the last centuries is based on this. And we have people who are very good at navigating freely. It's my wish to combine both in one person, or at least to achieve an awareness and appreciation for others despite personal focus, and to enable excellent cooperation from this insight.

AoA: Above all, that you don't oppose the other person?

URSULA BERTRAM: That's right. It would be sufficient if you accepted it. You don't have to do it yourself, but have to accept it and namely on an equal footing. Therefore it's my opinion that a 50/50 concept makes sense in training. 50 per cent applying to goal-oriented scientific work as before, and 50 percent for navigating in an open system. That's my suggestion for optimal training.

AoA: How does pull develop then in an open system?

URSULA BERTRAM: Basically, pull develops in love when a man gets to know a woman or vice versa; a pull of attraction develops

and if you could transfer this to processes in open systems, I would consider this optimal. Therefore it's worthwhile to think about what attraction is and where it comes from, and also where enthusiasm comes from. It's really a matter of literally igniting the spirit. When enthusiasm emerges, then a pull develops. This pull doesn't actually emerge when you sit down together with document files just for a coffee, but often in a domain of encounters, conversations, experiences and happiness. Pull develops when you make music together. But you can also talk to each other in a creative manner. The environment has to feel right here. Therefore I'll repeat once again: I'm in favor of creating places, domains which enable you to interact with each other in an atmosphere of trust.

AoA: If we create these spaces, is it conceivable that people, who have already finished their training, will be able to find their way around such open situations and systems?

URSULA BERTRAM: I think that a lot is submerged by some circumstances or other, training and by day-to-day actions. If we open up possibilities to uncover that which is submerged, then quite astounding changes will even be possible for adults, for example through exciting processes in an open system, which are sometimes exhilarating, have a euphoric effect and generate enthusiasm. This can happen then very quickly. We've been researching this since 2003.

AoA: I agree with your assessment and was able to observe this, for example, when design thinking was introduced into a large organization and what enthusiasm was unleashed in many people.

URSULA BERTRAM: If we can now embed this enthusiasm, then we'll have done it.

AoA: From attitude to activity. How can you act artistically?

URSULA BERTRAM: Artistic activity cannot be separated absolutely from artistic thinking, therefore we will probably always keep coming back to this. How do you act artistically? Let's take the example of my students. Artistic activity means that I can take some action without knowing where it is going to lead me. I'm confident that I could also be on the wrong track. Artistic activity doesn't mean scientific activity, that I think about something, analyze it, aim for a result and then implement this. It doesn't mean that. With artistic activity the product is born at the same time as the process. Therefore there is no linear way, but a complexity of wrong tracks competing with each other and contributory streams which are in dispute with one another. It's similar to the internet. At some time I produce something where not logic, but my feelings tell me, "That's it." You can't actually even say what it is that you are going to produce. But when it is in front of you, you know it immediately. Then you say, "Yes, that's it." This is the very special thing about artistic activity. There is curiosity as a starting point, you need courage but there's no such thing as failure, but only interim products on the way to a "work of art." It could also be that you don't get a result. Picasso demonstrated this in a very outstanding way in a film by Henri-Georges Clouzot, namely that you sometimes have to, or be able to tear something up. I would consider all of these processes to be artistic activity.

AoA: I'll throw a few concepts at you now which we've frequently come across up to now. Doubts and the artistic crisis. What is your opinion on this?

URSULA BERTRAM: I can do rather do something with the word "doubts." A crisis, to quote Schumpeter, is firstly a form of creative destruction. These doubts about what is, about the norm, the pattern are important but uncomfortable. But first of all I have to know that I am in a pattern. I have to realize that there is a pattern and to be able to question this notwithstanding. This is only

possible if I have balance somewhere, self-awareness, a place of support or just a space where I can get support. Otherwise I will probably really drift into a crisis.

AoA: The place of support is then part of the attitude?

URSULA BERTRAM: When I've got to the point that I've found an attitude, then that is my place of support. Then I am, so to say, self-supporting. But if I haven't yet found my attitude, then I need protected spaces available where I can get orientation and confidence and subsequently assurance.

AoA: I get the idea that intellectual space could also include the artists who were on earth before us?

URSULA BERTRAM: Yes.

AoA: Picasso: "Good artists copy, great artists steal?" Find your own position by comparing and expanding that which was?

URSULA BERTRAM: Yes, precisely.

AoA: How do you see the role of criticism, which can go from being unfriendly to painful candor?

URSULA BERTRAM: It's easier to go with the flow than to constantly be the target of criticism. Perhaps there's another word for this. I'm talking about the development of potential. Such processes can hurt, but are unquestionably necessary. This is also how it is handled in the academies. You have a position and defend this in an area under critical eyes. The critical questions posed serve the purpose that you can stand up for yourself in a world that is not only friendly to you. The artistic world is definitely not only simple. It also serves to examine whether your own arguments are sufficient for the position which you have just worked out. If they are not sufficient then that will lead to new concerns of the person

concerned who will then certainly - and this must be translated as positive - get a new chance to sharpen the position. This is a very critical moment, which can be successful when confidence is there. But this doesn't always happen without damage, and you're not always successful in doing it yourself. That is clear. Those who develop potential should take a lot of time here to find out how the criticism was expressed exactly, but not generate any sustainable frustration.

AoA: Do not cause damage to others but everyone should continue to develop further together?

URSULA BERTRAM: I don't wish to be romantic here. The art scene is ultimately an economic scene. The art market doesn't have much to do with artistic thinking. It's simply market, market activity and marketing. Everyone does just as he or she pleases and there is a great deal of competition. You can't see that as being romantic at all, and it's a cutthroat business. But even there it's been realized that you can't always make progress with this approach. There are a large number of groups of artists who mutually support one another. There are interdisciplinary conferences which do not set up barriers against one another, but where they attempt to work together with one another. The Falling Walls conference in Berlin, for example, in which many disciplines work together. I would not like to mix the art market and art marketing with artistic thinking. That would require a lot of backbone.

AoA: In the economy a lot is spoken about vision, mission, values and so on. We at Age of Artists believe in a future in which organizations pursue as their objectives things like sustainability, social responsibility and innovative strength on an equal footing with profit. To achieve this the persons acting must be very free, due to the variety of objectives when shaping the processes. Artistic processes could develop in this way. This development would lead to different visions, missions and values. Is there an equivalent to this in art?

URSULA BERTRAM: Artistic processes seem to have an incredible value for those who do these because everyone who works artistically knows that only seven per cent of them can live from this. But that doesn't stop them from doing so at the limit of economic feasibility, sometimes for their whole life. This way of living seems therefore to possess incredible value. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many of them. Otherwise many more of them would cease to do so. These are, so to say, the ideal workers. They work twelve hours a day for a minimum wage. This is the way it is, apart from the cases who can really earn money. It would be worthwhile to establish for once what the great value of this is then. I think that the value of this is, that I can also deal with myself in the reflection of my environment. I can, so to say, develop a very personal statement. This is definitely important. This leads first of all to a position. A position is defined for me by a magic triangle. This means that there are three things here. These are the person concerned, the environment and the idea. And these three things are inseparable for me. They are very important in order to pursue that which you perhaps call vision, but I call idea, and to consolidate it. The consolidation of the idea, the own person, what you consider to be valuable on the way to where you want to get. How can this be realized in my environment and what lies ahead of me? These are the three points which consolidate together into one position and at the same time, a long distance which is pursued in art.

AoA: If I picture this as three circles which overlap with one another, then a small space emerges in the middle. Is this the position, which emerges at the interface of person, environment and idea?

URSULA BERTRAM: No. I don't see it like that. That's set theory for me and that no longer applies. I know what you mean and that's even how we always draw it. I don't believe that it is an interface. It's another space, another level. If I take your image then I would

assume a higher level where the idea, the vision is, and then there would be the relationship points to those three other important things I've named. The image with the overlapping areas, that's all grey to me. Therefore we should go upwards and form a sort of pyramid. There's a model by Werner Preißing which I use. He calls it the "Spindelhub" (spindle stroke). It's a three-dimensional field which positions the idea at the tip of the pyramid and there is a circle on the material, formal and organizational area below where different factors can gather. The factors in this case are, of course, environment, persons and so on. There are other pyramids in the surrounding area, which are attached to it. In this way you can move up and down infinitely. But at the end it's important that each single factor of this interaction is ultimately connected with the overriding idea in some way. I believe it's imperative that it follows an idea.

AoA: I think we're actually talking about synonyms, for example vision and idea.

URSULA BERTRAM: What is interesting is that I am working with a visual system like Spindelhub, which comes from management, in art. Werner Preißing developed this from his research into company issues. I've projected this onto art and it fits absolutely. My students are great at handing the spindle and it helps them not to become linear, i. e. not to implement the first idea immediately. I find it a great misfortune if the first idea is implemented immediately where you don't really need a lot of time to produce a second, third, fifth, tenth idea. Possibly after the tenth or even the twentieth idea, because only when you're tired and have discarded the first layer of ideas, then the right ones come along. How long does that take? An hour, perhaps two. Then we can say for sure, "Aha, now I've been through everything there is as an alternative." and perhaps go back to the first idea, but perhaps also on to another one. In my opinion the method of alternative factor fields to gather ideas is really important and doesn't just stop at mind mapping. I'm no friend of mind mapping. It's so one-dimensional

and separates the fields and factors from each other. Those from Potsdam are clearly further on with their design thinking that we have developed further into non-artistic fields with artistic thinking.

**AoA:** What are your wishes for the future at the interface of art, science and economics?

**URSULA BERTRAM:** When we look each other in the eyes today, everyone usually knows what scientific thinking means. Everyone knows what that is. But if I talk about artistic thinking then first of all there is an aversion or many people reject it, and secondly no one knows what it is. We really have to do more work on this point so that we can get to the stage where we can talk to each other on an equal footing and that a community of people allows us to say that now we are thinking scientifically and now thinking artistically. What actually moves and drives me is that artistic thinking and activity will be established in equal measure alongside scientific thinking and activity and on an equal footing. The issue is not that creativity disappears in some slot or other of some science or other, because scientists and artists today are naturally already creative, but this is of no use to us here. We can't make progress if we use old words like creativity because that which we wish to describe is not an attribute but a whole way: scientific thinking and artistic thinking. The brain doesn't care about this at all. It neither thinks in an artistic way nor in a scientific way. It just thinks. It's more a question of an agreement we have in society. The agreements we made in the past led to certain rules and patterns, namely how I can, and should, think scientifically. I've been doing this for decades and at some stage highways have formed in my brain, which also functions like this. And on the other hand there is artistic thinking. No highways form here, at the most a highway network, but on the other hand there are fears that we could behave like a child, there are team problems, there are challenges, which are difficult to address. When we then begin to talk about creativity too, then it's all over because no one sees the necessity

to continue researching. Because we are creative anyway and we have the rather old-fashioned creative workshops. That summarizes apparently everything. Therefore it's really important to me to call this something different conceptually and to proceed from the Grundgesetz (Basic Law). Art and science are placed side by side in the Grundgesetz. By the way, it says, "Art and science are free." We concentrate on this "free" the whole time. But we should concentrate on the fact that the legislators, the creators of the Grundgesetz, have separated art and science from one another because they are apparently incompatible and because we apparently have the same value in one as in the other, otherwise they would not have been placed on equal terms. Although there are, at the most, ten per cent artists and 90 per cent scientists, the concepts are placed on equal terms. At this point we still have resources which are undiscovered and which are apparently being tested, searched for, explored and elaborated in a very great movement across all disciplines. This is an incredibly exciting area for me, just like speaking to you today since you come from the field of economics. And we're talking about such a topic. That would have been impossible 20 years ago. I think that's great.

AoA: Because we from the field of economics recognize that the established values, structures and processes are no longer sufficient to shape the future successfully. On looking for solutions over and above the concepts of creativity and innovation we are in the process of identifying transferable patterns, although art doesn't seem to allow any clear formation of patterns. And yet there is something there.

URSULA BERTRAM: It's that what I call the liquid matrix of possibility. We are trying to find a transferable pattern for something, which allows no norm. That was defined really well. Such a liquid matrix of possibility is constantly moving. It is a matrix but it is liquid and, in this respect, it cannot be exactly located, and is not quite tangible. It's a matter of possibilities. I

find this is a lovely image for a dynamic pattern, which looks rather different from set theory, or mind mapping or other linear systems.

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