

Escape the Grid

A Creativity Workshop with Sépànd Danesh & Johannes Jäger

"[C]reative people have moments in which they experience, in a controlled manner, a relatively free communication between their unconscious and conscious selves."

Eric Kandel, paraphrasing Ernst Kris in *'The Age of Insight'*, 2012

What is creativity? This is a question which is extremely difficult to answer. Creativity does not follow rules. It breaks and transcends them. It generates its own laws. What's more, the creative process is radically dependent on the context in which it occurs. Every situation—every moment in the history of the universe—is unique and requires its own type of action. Fruitful creative acts occur when we get pulled into an unknown but imaginable future through presence and deep engagement within our specific past and present.

Can creativity be taught? We are not sure. Can your creativity be liberated? Absolutely! Unleashing a creative process requires the right kind of ambient conditions, and a certain relaxed state of mind. Neuroscience shows that periods of mind-wandering are essential for the formation of innovative associations. Those associations have the power to move us out of the corners we tend to think ourselves into. They allow us to flex and stretch our mental joints. They provide an escape from the Cartesian grid of our logical constructions, lifting (or lowering) us into new dimensions of thought, where shapeless new ideas and their connections await to be discovered, to be formed, formulated, and fixed into our ever-expanding network of established knowledge and wisdom. This workshop is an expedition to the frontier of this territory of the shapeless unformulated unknown.

Today's high-pressure economic, social and academic environments focus on maximizing short-term productivity. This makes it increasingly difficult to experience the intermittent states of contemplative mind-wandering that are necessary for the dynamic interplay between our conscious and unconscious selves, an interplay that forms the basis for creative discovery. Art is a powerful tool for transporting us back and away to such states, temporarily unchaining us from our bond to preconceived notions, while maintaining a playful focus on the problems we are trying to solve.

This workshop uses a simple exercise in drawing to provide a hands-on experience of your own creative process. It will take place at Webster Vienna Private University on *Monday, September 23, 2019, from 3 pm to 8pm*. You will be guided on your explorative conceptual journey by an artist, Sépànd Danesh, and a scientist/philosopher, Johannes Jäger, both of whom have extensive practical experience with this kind of project.

The workshop requires no background, experience, or even talent in art or drawing. It is definitely *not* restricted to people who consider themselves creative. You will be expected to participate actively. Drawing materials will be provided, there is no need to bring anything. But *do* feel free to come with your favorite drawing tools, if you have any.

The teachers of the workshop reserve the right to scan and use your artwork for our documentation of the project, but nothing will be made public without your permission.