

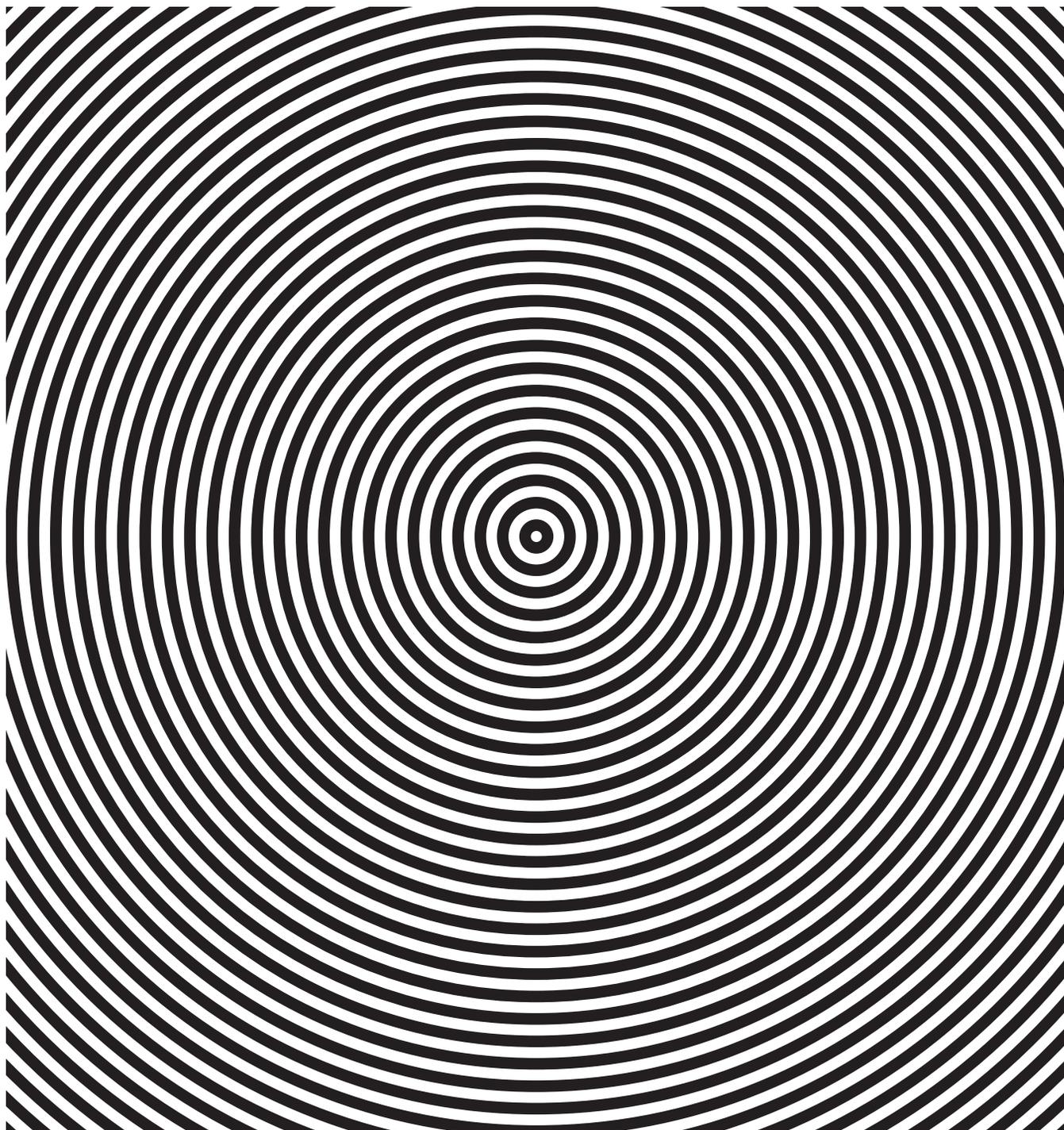
radar

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radar3 asks invited contributors:

1. How do you respond to, ignore or contribute to new narratives of activism?
2. If a proposal can be drafted for a new place of cultural exchange, what will it need to include?
3. Are the current, fast shifting educational models a concrete possibility for establishing sustainable sites for art and thought?

Responses

Alison Rowley / page 4

Rowan Bailey

Five steps toward a radical pedagogy / page 6

Alex Coles

A pilot for a series that may never happen / page 11

Sophie Slater

Preston bus station: an art school unlike any other / page 18

Catriona McAra

Intertexts on the edge / page 20

Juliet MacDonald

Creative activism found locally / page 22

Julian Satterthwaite / page 26

Suzi Tibbetts

Glossary of terms with reference to art education / page 28

Verina Gfader

Afterword: on the questions / page 30

How do you respond to, ignore or contribute to new narratives of activism?

To begin with I should say that I have an ongoing commitment to a longstanding narrative of activism in the form of involvement with feminist politics in art and education, which for me began in the late 1980s when I worked with a group of writers, artists, and curators associated with Fremantle Arts Centre Press (now Fremantle Press) and the Perth Institute of Contemporary Art in Western Australia, including writer Terri-ann White, curator Nikki Miller and painter Linda Banazis. At that time we were fighting to secure places for women in the survey exhibitions and associated events that were shaping the narrative of contemporary art in Australia. In England from 1993 to 2003 I was involved first as a postgraduate student and then as a teacher with an incredibly rich, though sometimes agonistic, experiment in the politics of feminist pedagogy established by Griselda Pollock as an MA in Feminist History, Theory and Practice in the Visual Arts at the University of Leeds. My encounter with what you refer to as 'new narratives' of activism began when I went to work as a lecturer in the history and theory of art at the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Ulster in Belfast in 2003. I arrived just as the School was establishing *Interface*, its Centre for Research in Art, Technologies and Design, under the directorship of Declan McGonagle. The Centre aimed to articulate the University of Ulster's emphasis on the vital role that art and cultural practice could play in the emergence of Northern Ireland society from thirty years of conflict and civil unrest. *Interface* provided a forum in which local artists embedded in long term projects with various communities in Northern Ireland met with invited, sometimes high profile, visiting practitioners active in other regions of the world with histories, or present situations of conflict. The question of the ethics of aesthetic activity in such situations was always at the centre of the discussions and debates. Belfast communities did not have much time for fly-in-fly-out celebrity art-world activism. During six years spent living in the city I began to understand some of the reasons for that resistance. For instance that the histories of religious and political sectarianism are infinitely more complex and nuanced on the ground than they appear in media representations beyond the Island of Ireland, and clumsy external interventions can upset in weeks the balance of local community politics that has taken years to achieve. This experience has informed my position on relations between art and activism. The most useful contribution I was able to make in that situation was in my role as a mainstream educator designing and teaching a cultural history and theory module open to students studying on a new MA Art in Public, devised and led by artist, activist and trained conflict mediator Susanne Bosch. We co-taught the module, a luxury no longer available under the current economic strictures. It looked historically and geographically at the development of current relations between art and activism and encouraged students to consider very, very critically the practices they were planning or involved with on the ground in the public sphere. Susanne is a trained Open Space facilitator and we all learned a great deal from the way she drew on these skills in a formal teaching situation. The module ran in this way for four years and it was the most creative and successful art-school teaching environment I've been involved with in terms of preparing artists to be able to engage intelligently and responsibly in the public realm.

If a proposal can be drafted for a new place for cultural exchange, what will it need to include?

I find it difficult to imagine a 'new place' for cultural exchange. Maybe that's just a failure of imagination on my part. Cultural exchange happens in many places all the time, what tips it into visibility as such is a question of structures of definition and validation.

Are the current, fast shifting educational models a concrete possibility for establishing sustainable sites for art and thought?

It depends upon the particular 'fast shifting educational models' to which you refer. In England and Northern Ireland we have to find ways of working practically with the consequences of the present coalition Government's implementation of 2010 Browne Report, *Securing a Sustainable Future for Higher Education*. In effect it advocated the privatization of Higher Education with the phasing out of public funding for undergraduate degrees in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, coupled with massive increases in student tuition fees. The resulting precarious economic situation for the arts and humanities in the universities is creating a sense of insecurity that is, paradoxically, given the title of the Browne report, inimical to working out a strategy for the long-term 'sustainability' of educational environments hospitable to art and thought. The most visible cultural reactions to this state of affairs to date have been, on the one hand renewed attention to the historical conditions determining changes in British art education since 1945 and reactions to it, Lisa Tickner's study of the events at Hornsey College of Art in 1968 is an excellent scholarly example, and on the other the proliferation of events and publications exploring and discussing the 'educational turn' in art and curating. In other words, debating the value of artist led initiatives for exploring different ways of acquiring and using knowledge and information, for self organized pedagogical strategies and alternative art schools. Of course this is a transnational art-world development, which had a significant curatorial platform when in 2007 'Education' was one of the structuring 'leitmotifs' of *Documenta 12*.

In Britain, however, ideas circulating in art journals and at symposia about radical alternatives to, and locations for existing models of art education, coming principally from educators based in London art schools, have been criticized for the tendency to "wish" us out of a "crisis" while acquiescing to the imperatives of "now", as witnessed by the sudden Big Society-oriented academic research interest in "co-operatives".¹ In an article published in *Variant* John Beagles accuses this response to our present situation of paying insufficient attention to the problem of increasing class exclusion within art schools in Britain, and its homogenizing effect on the student body. 'This', he writes, 'is an old story but it's clearly getting worse and will continue to do so not least due to fee increases and as a project that has 'globalization' representing the imposition of neoliberal ideology on a transnational scale.'² Drawing on the work of David Harvey, Beagles understands neoliberalism as a project always aiming to restore class power to small elites, which he sees inscribed in the student selection process. His observations match my own experience teaching in English schools of art and design witnessing for myself the dismal effects of uniformity on creative activity. There are flaws in Beagles' argument, however I endorse his call for a 'renewed, reimagined core insertion of comprehensive values' not just into art education, into English education in general.

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Notes

1. 'In a Class all of their own: The incomprehensiveness of art education' by John Beagles, *Variant*, issue 39/40, Winter 2012, [online]. Available at: http://www.variant.org.uk/39_40texts/comp39_40.html
2. Ibid.

Five steps toward a radical pedagogy

Rowan Bailey

Step 1: Identify and understand the complex etymological character of the 'radical'

A 14th Century medieval term stemming from the Latin, *radicalis* 'of or having roots', from the Latin, *radix* 'root', reveals the etymological character of the radical. What is etymology other than the search for an origin point? A way of thinking back before moving forwards. The 'radical' is as much an attempt to describe the etymological root of all words, as it is a description of itself.

According to Karl Marx in 'A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*' (1843):

To be radical is to grasp the root of the matter. But, for man, the root is man himself. (Marx, 2009)

Let us unpack the implications of this sentence. The radical alludes to rootedness within oneself. The self is materially malleable; it grows and takes form, and is cultivated by the context of, if we follow Marx's line of enquiry, the historical life conditions within which it is embedded. The root is connected to the soil of history. In a world of shifting contexts the self fluctuates between emancipation and estrangement on a spectrum of politico-aesthetic possibilities; variable conditions determine the role agency can play in the materialisations of practice.

The visual imagery of the botanical root is a popular tool in philosophy and art theory. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's use of the model of the *rhizome*, for example, reveals a growth with no essential origin and which establishes its life force out of and onto pre-existing root structures (Deleuze and Guattari, 2004). The rhizome's potentiality is its capacity to render visible the contemporary condition of production practices in the 21st Century.

The translation of the shifting character of the radical into the space of artistic practice can be found in Nicolas Bourriaud's account of the *radicant*. Whereas *radicality* is associated with modernism's desire to produce a root condition (Bourriaud names the following movements as exemplary of this drive: Surrealists=the unconscious, Duchamp's ready-made=choice, Situationist International=lived situation, Fluxus=art+life), the *radicant* is, instead, a rhizomatic identity. The condition of the postmodern self in contemporary culture negotiates and struggles with the modernist radical ideal of beginning the world anew. Bourriaud writes:

The radicant develops in accord with its host soil. It conforms to the latter's twists and turns and adapts to its surfaces and geological features. It translates itself into the terms of the space it moves. With its at once dynamic and dialogical signification, the adjective "radicant" captures the contemporary subject, caught between the need for a connection with its environment and the forces of uprooting, between globalization and singularity, between identity and opening to the other. It defines the subject as an object of negotiation. (Bourriaud, 2009, p.51)

If we follow this route then, radical practitioners yearn for an origin or ground, whilst radicant practitioners embrace nomadism. They emphasise a condition 'without place' and adapt to the precarious and temporary character of each environment they encounter. The expansion or growth on the 'roots' of the radical, as a host soil, may provide opportunities to address pedagogy through the working practices of the radicant. In other words, in today's climate of post-industrial labour practices, how might we think the university, past and present, through Bourriaud's revised rhizomatic model?

What we start to witness with the etymological play of the 'radical' are the cultural shifts in the historical life conditions of the term itself. But what bearing does this notion, as a culturally

embedded and embodied term of self-reflexivity, have on pedagogy? What conditions, if any, prepare the ground, if necessary, for new modes of teaching and learning to take place? And, how might they become 'radical' in all of the above senses of the word? Such questions call for self-reflexive encounters with the cultural meanings of the very words and concepts associated with a potential pedagogy of radicality.

Step 2: Embrace the value of 'institutional critique'

What is an institution? To get a grip on the roots of the institution – which a *radical-radical* pedagogue must do if they are to take the role and place of learning in the 21st Century seriously – institutional critique offers up an existing set of useful discourses and debates. Critique, in Immanuel Kant's sense of the word, is inextricably bound to the modes of reflective enquiry, articulated in response to the site-specificity of a given condition of experience and the disagreement that ensues in a call for a universal understanding of the very condition of encounter. Although this historical narrative stems from, and to some extent continues to be reserved for art institutions and museum contexts, institutional critique can be thought about, dare one say applied, to the context of the Higher Education sector. Similar to the museum or art gallery, the university responds to the practices of students, lecturers, all kinds of workers and activities, from technicians to administrators to catering staff, and positions these roles within the structure of its framework, sometimes positively and sometimes in a restrictive manner. A practitioner of critique therefore must seek to continuously question those modes and limits of practice operating within and contributing to the expansion of the institutional condition of the university. Participating in new ways to produce knowledge at the periphery, or within liminal spaces between inside and outside, allows for a cultural exchange that is neither resistant to nor totally consumed by the architectonic system of higher education.

The pedagogue, like the curator, must encounter the limits of a curriculum and enable a student to set his or her own limits from within that space. Fostering critique thus asks *everyone* to be self-reflexive and critically rigorous with methods of practice (within teaching, learning and our respective art, design and architectural specialisms). In the words of the performance artist Andrea Fraser:

It's not a question of being against the institution: We are the institution. It's a question of what kind of institution we are, what kind of values we institutionalize, what forms of practice we reward, and what kinds of rewards we aspire to. Because the institution of art is internalized, embodied, and performed by individuals, these are the questions that institutional critique demands we ask, above all, of ourselves. Finally, it is this self-questioning – more than a thematic like 'the institution' no matter how broadly conceived – that defines institutional critique as a practice. (Fraser, 2005, p.283)

Step 3: In a critical community, work with different disciplinary registers, but don't forget your roots.

In 2006, artist Liam Gillick wrote a paper entitled 'Denial and Function: A History of Disengagement in Relation to Teaching', which was published in the edited book *Notes for an Art School*. In it, Gillick describes a recent shift in the role of art education within the broader pedagogical shifts taking place in UK higher education since the 1990s. The effects of a post-92 climate, when university status was accredited to the polytechnic sector, challenged

pre-existing conceptions about the art school environment and brought students and teachers into contact with the requirements of the 'university'. This new condition raised the need for a critical space to be cultivated and embraced in discourses on art (and design) practices (see Step 2). Gillick makes a call for a new kind of art school where critical encounters are produced in tandem with the work of students:

Art school departments need to find ways to attract the best art historians and critical theorists and therefore put themselves in direct competition with dedicated art history and critical theory departments. This new venue for the best theorists would mean the possibility of new critical structures emerging alongside the work of the student-artists. (Gillick, 2006, p.3)

In order to realise these modes of encounter, a critical community must embrace different disciplinary registers of art and design practice; to seriously think theory in and through studio spaces and other kinds of working environments. This cross-disciplinary exchange between the so-called practitioner and the so-called non-practitioner; of considering 'practice' from a 'non-practitioner perspective', and vice versa, creates new openings and avenues for art and design production.

Cross-disciplinary encounters are not necessarily *inter*-disciplinary encounters. What an artist, or designer, or art historian, or philosopher should *know really well* is their own subject, which, although *informed* by other disciplines, nevertheless, reforms, in the act of engaging with existing methodologies and knowledges, a position relevant to their respective discipline. Without adapting pre-existing formations of knowing to the context of the disciplinary framework within which one works, there can be no contribution to knowledge. Through *coming to know*, a self-reflexive dimension to thinking makes visible that which is not yet known. In other words, the very act of adaptation is unique to the use of other theoretical registers. The practitioner adapts from the perspective of his/her own specialised training, whether in the arts, or design, the sciences, or the humanities. The problem of articulation thus always already requires, indeed demands, further analysis. The very practice of crossing into another disciplinary space and encountering there a difficulty in understanding is perhaps *the* critical opening which can aid the articulation of difference. Therefore, it is important to not lose sight of the root of the discipline we inherit and train within. Crossing simply allows for exchanges with, and negotiation of, the difficult problem of articulating what it is that we do, and how it is that we do it.

In effect, Gillick proposes some very practical suggestions for creating a model for a new kind of art school; proposals which *must* be negotiated in relation to whether they might serve as the conditions of possibility for a radical pedagogy:

1. Remodelling space (literal and intellectual) – working/teaching environments need to be analysed and discussed, and fairly represented by all who inhabit them.
2. Embrace the idea that it is both staff and students that can remodel learning environments and that this serves for producing a 'dynamic new working possibility' (Gillick, 2006, p.4).
3. Staff should present work alongside students - critical discussion may take the form of student critique and staff exposure to their own theory and practice, so as to generate non-hierarchical exchanges, debates and reviews of work.
4. Broad themes for critical discussion: articulating, at the beginning of the academic

year, issues for debate and development. With these themes, 'place the school in a critical framework' that, and this is a really important point Gillick makes, 'replaces the existential void that can often emerge in an art school environment, without suppressing the students' desire to find and propose new models themselves.' (Gillick, 2006, p.4)

5. This leads to the creation of concepts to work with/off: Gillick writes about the importance of avoiding an '*excessive focus on separation via critical theory classes pitched against an excessive focus on the work of the students themselves, as they attempt to find new models and ways of working.*' (Gillick, 2006, p.4)

In the spirit of Gillick's call, what are the benefits of changing the conditions of working environments in response to these critical encounters? What concepts or themes might we embrace and work with?

Step 4: Cultivate de-materialised media: social sculpture

Education, for Joseph Beuys, is a form of art. It is a social organism, shaped and moulded like a sculpture, and we are all capable, through participation, of carving out new cultural, political and economic spaces of exchange as practitioners. In the 1970s, Beuys' appeal to the avant-garde practices of the early 20th Century revealed, through the de-materialised media of lectures, classes and discussions, the potential for art and social/political life to coalesce, much like Friedrich von Schiller desired in the 18th Century and the Russian Constructivists performed in the early 20th. This socio-politico-aesthetic condition resurfaces in the context of more recent engagements with institutional critique in the 21st Century. The Slade School teach-ins of 2010, for example, allowed an important question to be voiced, namely whether the future of the university can distribute spaces of and for radical art production.

What if we were to re-enact Beuys' continuous performance, generating a 'permanent conference' between audiences (staff, students, technicians, administrators, care-takers, coffee-makers)? Would such a step bring us closer to experiencing the institution as a work of art, shaped and formed by us as a collective? Or, do we need to cultivate liminal spaces where a 'permanent conference' may be performed? Much like: the Free International University (FIU) (1973), the Momentary Academy (2005), the Centre for Possible Studies (Serpentine Gallery) and the Really Open University (Leeds, 2012). What do these spaces perform that others don't? And, how can we learn from them?

Step 5: Allow for emergent terms of 'not-yet-known-knowledge' to...emerge

Finally, and perhaps most difficult, is the question of knowledge. It is not possible to begin to track the journey 'knowledge' takes as an historical and theoretical register in art education, although this is a necessary and worthy research project. Rather, what must be addressed in a post-radical radican pedagogy is an account of the academy as potentiality, what Irit Rogoff describes as a space which gives place to a set of 'emergent terms' that have not yet entered into a discourse of pedagogy:

Terms such as potentiality, actualisation, access and contemporaneity, which for me are the building blocks and navigational vectors for a current pedagogy, a pedagogy at peace with its partiality, a pedagogy not preoccupied with succeeding but with trying. (Rogoff, 2007)

References

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Rogoff, I. (2007) 'Academy as Potentiality' In. *Summit: Non-aligned Initiatives In Education Culture* [online]. Available at: <http://summit.kein.org/node/191> [Accessed: 01 June 2012].

As aspirational triggers these terms appeal to the complexities of knowledge, learning, teaching and education in a climate of change; of the Bologna Accord, of administration, bureaucratisation, and struggle. Such a pedagogy is linked to the complex question of access. For Rogoff 'contemporaneity' is a condition which allows for a critical process to emerge, and question how we communicate with each other about what we do and how we are doing it.

[...] how do we get to know things, how do we get to take part in them, how do we have a position, how do we intervene not as a response to a demand to participate but as a way of taking over the means of producing the very questions that are asked. That is theory as a practice, firmly situated in contemporaneity and that is possibly what I think criticality might be, at least for the moment. (Rogoff, 2007)

Might we not work to overcome the rift between theory and practice through access: how do we actually participate in the means and methods of producing critically reflexive questions, rather than being forced to blindly construct or answer them, depending on where we are positioned by the institution, and how do we in turn position ourselves? This trying is about working hard to perform a pedagogy that thinks about its own thinking; a practice that produces questions from the ground of knowing how it got there.

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A pilot for a series that may never happen

Alex Coles



In Los Angeles there has always been a productive symbiosis between pedagogical models and art practice. Leading LA based practitioners such as John Baldessari and Michael Asher are also important teachers and have been since the 1970s. Particularly in the UK, we don't have that model. Cuban born Los Angeles/Mexico based artist Jorge Pardo passed through the system invented by these figures, and so had always wanted to take part in it but was just waiting for the right opportunity. That opportunity came with this project, *Tecoh*.

Basically, Jorge and myself wanted to set a series of flexible parameters for a new type of curriculum for postgraduate students. Out of our discussion about the ambitions and scope of the class came the idea to use it to focus on a site in a small town near the city of Merida, the capital of the Yucatan in Mexico, which Jorge and his benefactor – who was commissioning the



work – had identified as a site for one of his sprawling architectural projects. So the site and along with it the issue of site-specificity was predetermined, and since both Jorge and myself would be teaching the class it almost went without saying that a discussion of art's relationship to design and architecture would also surface.¹ But Jorge was keen there be a series of visitors to constantly disrupt any prevailing attitude that developed because of our prior dialogue and proximity to one another. As a result two ex-members of Rem Koolhaas' practice came on board and also a number of visitors who could speak about specific issues, especially those pertaining to this particular site and its history.

We soon realised that there was no way to develop a syllabus since we didn't know how each week would be received and we were reluctant to predetermine what the content of the



following week would be. In the first week we made a rough outline of the project, established a date for the trip to the Yucatan, and set out the following scenario: the students would divide themselves into two different groups and each develop responses to the site and the problems it raised for Jorge and his benefactors. Possible problems included the inevitable issues arising from transplanting a principally North American cultural context into a Central American one (although the group was transnational in make-up), of operating as a fine artist but requiring resources of knowledge more closely associated with the fields of design and architecture in order to respond to the brief, and so on.



A number of historical texts were circulated, including Robert Smithson's 'Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan',² an artwork consisting of a series of interventions documented through photography and then supplemented by a critical text, and Kenneth Frampton's 'Towards a

Critical Regionalism',³ an essay that provides a series of suggestions concerning the problem of location and locality and how this plays in architectural scenarios.

The course ran for fifteen weeks: the first five were to be spent in LA discussing the initial details of the project and reading the set texts – this much we had decided by the end of the first session. Each meeting took place somewhere different in the city: one at a Milanese styled restaurant the Koolhaas architects had recently designed in Silver Lake, another at Jorge's studio in Alhambra, and one at his infamous house in Mount Washington, where we staged a Skype lecture from an Italian archaeologist who had been working in the area. The sixth week would be spent in the Yucatan.

The week on-site started in the morning with a lecture from an anthropologist on ethnographic methods; in the afternoon the students visited the site. From then on they were left to themselves, following their own noses, the two groups in their respective vans, as they each developed their responses to the vague brief in the form of a presentation that was to be aired at the end of the week. Both groups were headed up by a student fluent in Spanish, one Argentinean and the other Chicano.

The results were interesting. One of the presentations was fairly formulaic – a series of decorative interventions with Mayan overtones in the site. The other presentation was much more dynamic. The second group had decided to stage a football game with some of the local children who hung out at the site and who were wary of losing their territory to a series of people with funny accents who came and went in large black Lexus vans. During the course of the week, this group purchased a series of football shirts and filmed a short game they played



with the children, the rules of which they invented as they went along. Particularly interesting was the way members of the group passed the camera about between the children, thus losing some of the overpowering presence of their own predominantly ocular vision.

Talking on the return flight, Jorge and I realised there was a need for a greater degree of 'density' in our class debates. Back in LA, the next five weeks were spent reading more key historical texts, ranging from Claude Levi-Strauss' *Tristes Tropiques*⁴ to Rosalind Krauss' 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field'.⁵ The students were then given the remaining weeks to revise their responses to the site in preparation for a final presentation. The more reflexive ones in the first group cannily abandoned ship and joined the second group. Together they went on to do their final presentation in the form of a discussion of the key topics and problematics of participating in such an open ended and speculative class in the first place. They empowered themselves by inverting the whole class.

Given the energy that came from the class, and the inevitable mistakes that arise from attempting to keep things so speculative, we decided to pursue the idea further and develop it into a model for a small summer school sited in Merida in a building that Jorge's benefactors already owned. These benefactors have committed funding to the project and also to a book, which we are currently working on together.⁶ As so often happens with things generated in LA, what we did may only be a pilot for a series that never actually happens but as a dynamic transdisciplinary pedagogical model it certainly proposed some interesting suggestions.

Aspects of this text originally appeared in *Curating and the Educational Turn*, Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson (eds.), de Appel/Open Editions, 2010.



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Notes

1. See Alex Coles (ed.), *Design and Art*. MIT Press/Whitechapel Gallery, 2007. See also Alex Coles 'American Spirit', *Jorge Pardo K21*. 2009 and Alex Coles 'Jorge Pardo Sculpture', *The Transdisciplinary Studio*, Sternberg Press, 2012.
2. Robert Smithson, 'Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan'. Nancy Holt (ed.) *The Writings of Robert Smithson*. New York University Press, 1979.
3. Kenneth Frampton's 'Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance'. Hal Foster (ed.) *The Anti-Aesthetic. Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Bay Press, 1983.
4. Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques*. John Weightman and Doreen Weightman (trans.) Penguin, 1992.
5. Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field'. *October*. 1979. Vol. 8. Spring. pp.30-44.
6. Alex Coles, Michael Govan et al., *Tecoh*, Sternberg Press, 2012. Also see my interview with Pardo relating to a second pilot event that took place at Princeton School of Architecture with David Adjaye and his students in *Authoring: Re-placing Art and Architecture*, Marc McQuade (ed.), Lars Muller/ Princeton School of Architecture, 2012.





Preston bus station: an art school unlike any other

Sophie Slater

Proposal for a new model of cultural exchange

In case you are unfamiliar with the bus station in Preston, Lancashire, it's big, it's brutalist and has a question of viability hanging over it. A quick web search reveals a story, judges, juries and a timely spoof pop video prior to its possible execution. Found on YouTube the song by Ed Petrie & London called 'Preston Bus Station' captures, I hope, the essence of my cultural exchange proposal.

Taking up the literal nature of exchange at a bus station, I propose that here we could find potential for an imaginary reconfiguration of the concept of 'art school' opening up restricted views of how the institution has to be. My inspiration is the mini revolution created at La Borde (a psychiatric institution) by Félix Guattari to embrace a rupture from the significations given by the new art schools of recent institutional expansions.

The art school institution becomes an object of experimentation within Guattari's ethico-aesthetic paradigm, in its new position at Preston bus station, it seeks to circumvent obstacles, in the usual top down formal structures of power. On offer: the building, the people, the location and buses, all form part of a constant flux of 'cultural exchange' – the site giving way to continuously changing strategies in the production of alternative subjectivities.

Guattari invites us to call into question our acceptance of individual and collective assumptions about responsibility, bureaucratic routines and passivity generated by traditional hierarchical systems. At La Borde work roles were turned on their head; cleaners were trained to give injections, doctors were doing the laundry, for example.

At the bus station, the concept of 'multiple activities' (the phrase Guattari uses for the radical changes of roles) helps re-appropriate the meaning and role of art student and lecturer. This will be key to our bus station battle to be 'active' in production of our own subjectivities. The 'art student' may be someone traveling in from Wigan and taking their new knowledge back to Barnsley. The lecturer may be the computer programmer Whytheluckystiff who carries the appellation of 'freelance professor' and states he only teaches by 'fated appointment', i.e. if he happens to encounter someone who wants to learn, in any situation.

The newly situated artists (students and teachers) could offer radical gestures of co-existence and transformations of hierarchies. Scholarship could go beyond the small self-referential economy of the existing system. As Simon O'Sullivan in his essay *Academy: The Production of Subjectivity* (Academy, 2006) suggests, pedagogy must not mimic top down structures and we must find creative pedagogical processes to counter them, i.e. active and participatory learning methods.

In the bus station we could find new roles and become animated – like animals, enacting unknown qualities of erratic behaviors surrounded by constant change/exchange, we would allow the chance of risk. Encountering things as well as other beings in this creative way, would enable us to access our own subjectivities or as Guattari describes, hitherto unknown 'universes of reference'.

The site would be made up of a 'multiplicity of refrains', some dominating (sound of diesel engines) or territorialising (bus queues); art practice would be the production of a particular kind of 'subject territory'. Guattari describes these affective refrains as kinds of 'mutant centres of

subjectification', they are a rupture throwing us onto another path, allowing us to break with old habits and form new ones.

By encountering new challenges through radical environmental change is an example of how we can find new ways to build confidence in the concept of chance and risk. A rupture from the security and comfort offered by the specialist environment of the new 21st Century art department building may feel hostile. The environment could enliven even politicalise students to place a new criticality on the constructs of their own education. Essentially an invitation to be involved in the production of our subjectivity's in an 'active' not 'passive' way (O'Sullivan, 1996).

As universities expand and investment continues into the constructs of art education how could Guattari's emphasis on the ideal institution as being 'unique' be evident in terms of process and purpose? What do the art educational institutional expansions signify in terms of the condition of art education and its current and future purpose?

Sophie Slater is an artist and PhD Student at the University of Huddersfield. Her PhD research centres on analysis of teaching critical thinking of art practice in undergraduate art education. The documentary trace of art education history held at The National Arts Educational Archive, Bretton Hall (Yorkshire Sculpture Park) has been pivotal in this early research.

She has a degree in Fine Art Textiles, and Masters in both Fine Art Photography and Fine Art Print-Making, all from the University of Bradford. Sophie has taught at further and higher education level, and is particularly interested in the location of learning, whether one's experience is affected by where one learns.

Intertexts on the edge

Catriona McAra

“You do not become a critic,” Gautier once said, “until it has been completely established to your own satisfaction that you cannot be a poet” (Tanning, 2004).

‘Reading is just as creative an activity as writing and most intellectual development depends upon new readings of old texts. I am all for putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode’ (Carter, 1983).

‘Woman must put herself into the text’ (Cixous, 1976).

‘The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try and find the sources, the influences of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas’ (Barthes, 1977).

‘I’m in the demythologising business’ (Carter, 1983).

‘I was interested in developing concepts we could all agree upon and use, in order to make what has become labelled “theory” accessible to every participant in cultural analysis, both within and outside the academy [...] I had so loathed the unnecessary impenetrability of many of the books of theory I had attempted to use during my student days that my need to make clarity a first principle overruled everything’ (Bal, 1997/2001).

‘the desire to know rather than the desire to see, an epistemophilia’ (Mulvey, 1996).

‘That discourse one might call the poetry of transgression is also knowledge. He who transgresses not only breaks a rule. He goes somewhere that others are not; and he knows something that others don’t know’ (Sontag, 1967/1979).

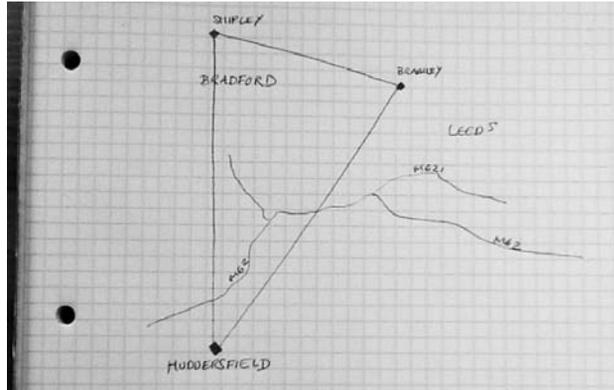


Based on 'Max Ernst's Favorite Poets and Painters of the Past' in *View Magazine: Special Max Ernst Edition*, Charles Henri Ford ed. Series II, No.1 (April 1942): 14-15.

Dr Catriona McAra is Research Assistant in Cultural Theory at the University of Huddersfield, and was recently awarded her doctorate from the University of Glasgow (2012). Her thesis offers an embodied intertextual theorisation of the work of the American artist and writer Dorothea Tanning (1910-2012). Catriona is particularly interested in feminist narratives of activism and how artistic and literary appropriation might be politicised in gendered terms. The above extracts trace a series of quotations which Catriona has selected as a reflection of her research profile, pedagogical motto, and participation in 'new narratives of activism' to date.

Creative activism found locally

Juliet MacDonald



The three questions seem to address the desire for transformation from different angles: political, social and educational. Somewhere in the overlaps between political activism, cultural encounter and art education there is the promise of individual or collective change. Rather than answering from the position of activist, artist or educator I am taking a view from the sidelines, as an observer, researcher or assistant. These answers are framed around particular events in three localities, points of reference that form a small triangle in the centre of West Yorkshire.

How do you respond to, ignore or contribute to new narratives of activism?

I'm not sure how new the narratives are. Activist movements, often highly creative ones, seem to emerge at times when communities feel under threat. Take for example a recent series of art events in Shipley, West Yorkshire, under the heading of *Ante* (5 – 6 May 2012). Drawing inspiration from May Day celebrations, the website for *Ante* declares its opposition to demarcation of social roles and its desire to retrieve lost identities:

It's a familiar format: a bookfair, some anti-art, a gig and hands on workshops. But in truth Ante (from the Latin 'before') is more than that. It's about the person we were until we became buried by work (or increasingly, 'no work'), by shopping, debts, television and the all the worries and stresses and strains of modern life. (Ante, 2012)

In the text from which RADAR3 takes its inspiration, 'La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other' (2008), Félix Guattari reflects on his experiences of working in a psychotherapeutic institution in which an experimental approach was taken toward institutional life: social activities were invented and adapted, creativity was encouraged, work roles were rotated and there was a continual process of negotiation of subject positions of and by both patients and staff. Guattari's description of the programme at La Borde has implications that reach beyond the therapeutic dimension to address the wider problem of 'serialized subjectivity' in industrial societies (Guattari, 2009, p.182). He summarises the clinic's aim as:

to make individuals and groups reappropriate the meaning of their existence in an ethical and no longer technocratic perspective. It was a matter of bringing forward the sort of activities that favor an assumption of collective responsibility and yet are founded on a resingularization of the relation to work and, more generally, personal existence. (Guattari, 2009, p.180)

Whereas *Ante* proposes digging up 'the person we were until we became buried', Guattari's

text stresses openness to different subjectivities – not so much *who we were* as *who we might become*, as being continually negotiable. However, both statements concern a loss of meaning that the authors argue is brought about by capitalist modes of production, which produces on the one hand, a hierarchical structuring of social roles, and on the other hand, a deadening effect on those who feel trapped in the lowest tier of the workforce (or those excluded from it altogether), such that a process of ‘resingularization’, as Guattari calls it, is necessary before any change in identities and relationships becomes possible.

The geographical location of *Ante* is significant; Shipley is part of the metropolitan district of Bradford, an area of West Yorkshire that has been badly affected by economic recession. The number of people who have claimed Jobseekers Allowance for a period of over 12 months has almost doubled in the last year (Bradford Economy, 2012).¹ Youth unemployment is particularly severe. Bradford already scores highly on the *Indices of Multiple Deprivation*; it is the sixth most employment-deprived area in England and the fifth most income-deprived area (Bradford Economy, 2011). 31.4% of its population live in areas defined as ‘most deprived’ across multiple measures. The effects of poverty and unemployment are likely to be exacerbated when the government’s programme of £18 billion of welfare cuts and changes to benefits starts to take effect next year and household income for many families is predicted to fall short of even the most basic outgoings for food, rent and fuel.

In response to this, *Ante*’s exhibition of political artworks included a collection entitled *Knit a Benefits Cut*. Here the daily choices of a family on low income were represented in the form of knitted items – a carrot, a mobile phone, a condom – along with their price tags, highlighting the difficulties of defining luxury versus essential in domestic expenditure. The significance of these items was registered by the investment of labour and skill in fashioning the objects. Use of craft skills (particularly those traditionally developed and kept alive by women) to make political statements, is a feature of current activist movements, Occupy² for example. In this case, the domestic knitting needle was used to make an uncomfortable point, and the soft woolly objects were an ironic comment on the hardships of household economics.

Ante also promoted the idea of creative activity as empowerment with its participatory workshop event, the *Ante-Art Factory*. While taking an oppositional position toward art market values, this event aimed to assert the value of time, effort and creative energies of participants, enabling them to become creative producers:

With all the talk about bankers and deficits, its worth remembering that Art forms part of the currency of modern Britain. Art is currency – its ridiculous value is created and used to lock away wealth and create status. Art also acts as the currency of class culture. Its mystification makes working people feel foolish and uneducated while those further up the pecking order smugly set themselves apart by understanding and articulating its ‘mysteries’ ... By producing art ourselves, we make it our own common currency. Its value becomes nothing more (and nothing less) than the meaning, the effort and the pleasure that have formed it. (Ante, 2012)

Arriving at the *Ante-Art Factory* I was encouraged to join in with on-the-spot screen printing, do a drawing for a wall of beer-mat art and print a word for a group sentence using letterpress. I was invited into a den of coloured fabrics and cardboard, and I was offered tea and cake. The atmosphere was relaxed, informal and welcoming. However, despite the inclusiveness and the evident value of such events for those who take part, the ethos of collaborative or rough-and-

ready making does not attract everyone. One-off events affirm the shared political identities of those taking part and foster a sense of community, but is it possible to extend the invitation of creative opportunity more widely?

If a proposal can be drafted for a new place for cultural exchange, what will it need to include?

Here's another example. Last year's *I Love West Leeds Festival* included lamppost art for dogs. Canine residents of Bramley in West Leeds were offered laminated photographs of items that might be of interest to them – bones, other dogs, sticks – fastened at nose height to a series of lampposts near the park.

Among other features of the Festival was a performance of Georg Friedrich Händel's *Water Music* by a full chamber orchestra situated on a specially constructed platform in the centre of Bramley's Edwardian public swimming baths. The orchestra performed beautifully with members of the pool-going public – young, old, big, small – floating, dipping and swirling around them. Audiences in the public viewing balconies overlooked the elegant scene while sipping dandelion and burdock.

A proposal for new places for cultural exchange would need to include lampposts and swimming pools. The places themselves need not be new (it could be on our doorsteps), just the exchanges.

Are the current, fast shifting educational models a concrete possibility for establishing sustainable sites for art and thought?

Events such as occupations of higher education institutions (in response to government funding cuts to UK higher education) produce interesting experiments. I doubt they are sustainable, as their effectiveness lies in being generated by a particular group of people at a specific time, but there is a value in students continually reinventing models of interaction, generating ad hoc sites for debate and immersing themselves in activities and events outside the institution. For me, anger was an education in critical thinking. I was already involved in political activism before I left school and spent a year in rural India, learning difficult lessons from grassroots organisations working to address inequality. Back in the UK, while doing an art foundation course in 1984, I stayed for a week at Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp near Newbury, and witnessed a creative form of activism meeting militaristic reaction, conducted at the level of bodies in makeshift encampments opposing barbed wire fences. The educational institutions at which I studied were tolerant of political activity and in many ways encouraging of critical thought, helping me develop basic analytical skills alongside those of art making, but they did not provide the experiential learning brought about by witnessing at first hand the operations and effects of power, and meeting those at the sharp end of it. Only extra-curricular, independently motivated activities enabled that type of learning.

Within structured educational programmes it is possible to present students with challenges to make external connections and contacts with communities they might not previously have encountered. Coming back to West Yorkshire and the third point of the triangle on my map, the *Outside* conference, held at the University of Huddersfield in January (2012) organised by Claire Barber and Penny Macbeth, highlighted the importance of such engagements. Curator June Hill spoke movingly about her work using cloth to make contact with marginalised people in her home town of Bradford. The conference brought together international speakers, including

the artist Betsy Greer, to share perspectives on the role of crafted textiles in political activism and community narratives, and members of staff at the University, for example Karen Dennis who discussed participatory clothes-making projects in Leeds. Conferences such as *Outside* and more recently *Insight Palestina* (which examined the theoretical and political complexities of visual and textual images relating to the Israel–Palestine struggle, organised jointly by Universities of Huddersfield and Leeds) offer a chance for both students and staff to address complex political and social questions.

Compared to such open formats as the *Ante-Art Factory*, educational institutions providing qualifications in art and design present a more formal and weighty promise of changing *who we are* by activating creative potential, developing new skills and re-forming subjectivities, by turning students into artists and designers. It is hoped that such longer-term transformations in identity bring about social and economic mobility for those from less advantaged backgrounds. However, in the UK, the model of student as consumer is now in operation whether we like it or not, and the vision of future opportunity is offered up as a product to be purchased, at an increasingly high price. The institutional emphasis is therefore on advancement of the individual as the payback for such financial outlay (or the adoption of such a debt) rather than on collective benefit or the re-thinking of social structures.

The non-hierarchical ethos in operation at La Borde seems far removed in the current context of higher education in which job descriptions, pay scales, departmental budgets and financial accountability are practical requirements that do not leave space for fluidity of relationships or swapping of roles. Growth in student numbers and constraints on space mean that universities are more likely to be places students visit rather than places in which they feel a sense of belonging. The student body has become the object of stricter attendance monitoring and regulation. Governmental auditing increases as funding shrinks. However, research and scholarship in art and design still have the potential to present students with alternative critical perspectives, with visions from distant times and places, and with models, however utopian, of what an institution could be like. Now as ever it is important to provide students with the skills to question the political, cultural and economic frameworks in which they attempt to find new versions of themselves.

Juliet MacDonald is a Research Assistant in Art in the School of Art, Design and Architecture at the University of Huddersfield. She lives in Leeds, a mile and a half from Bramley, seven miles from Shipley and 20 miles from Huddersfield.

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Notes

1. Figures from March 2011 to March 2012 (Bradford Economy, 2012).

2. Occupy is a world-wide economic and political protest movement. The first Occupy to receive extensive global media coverage was Occupy Wall Street in New York in 2011, however there are many other cities with an Occupy presence, for example London: <http://occupyls.org/>

Julian Satterthwaite

From: Julian Satterthwaite
Sent: 09 May 2012 15:37
To: Verina M. Gfader
Subject: Radar 3

Verina,

I am at a loss really to comment on narratives of activism. I have had to leave the country in 1996 after working for an Asian cultural organisation in Bradford, and with the Racial Equality Council. I was made open to abuse myself and assaulted twice, and had to leave my mother on her own, and also my son. Of course this might be called the effect of the BNP (British National Party) but it is also the simmering undercurrent of social unrest. I was lucky then to work in Maastricht (from 1996 to 1998) with Jean Fisher and other contributors to the journal *Third Text*. It is assumed that employment by, or involvement with, academic institutions is to some extent protection from such elements of society but further experiences returning home to look after both my mother, and son, have convinced me that the legal system also is infiltrated by similar cancerous growths, and lack of protection for the victims of crime. I think this may well be true also of the 'Bradford Riots' and the punishments meted out to young and impressionable Asian youth both male and female, who were involved. I worked with Pamajit Kaur who witnessed from her window what happened to provoke one of the riots, and consistent comments from voluntary service workers insisted that the riots were provoked also by the BNP. To my knowledge there has been no enquiry about the racial issues, only punishment.

Having lost my mother to a nursing home against her will, and my son being excluded from school for missing registration, I would feel happier living amongst refugees from greater Europe, fleeing from similar regimes, comforted by the thought that this could not happen in Britain, or as my mother said when removed by ambulance to the nursing home, "You cannot do this to me, I am English. Why are you doing this to me." She thought that having, with her brothers and husband, represented England in various ways, she would have some access to humanitarianism.

Maastricht offered both respite and intellectual freedom, and funding. It was difficult for English students to accept such commitment and they were clearly happier back in London, down the pub, but they also deprived themselves of much of European thought and solidarity. How are English institutions intending to participate in European solutions, or are we intending to remain Island lovers. And who or what is intending to propose a new era of thought?

Julian Satterthwaite
09.05.12

Biography

I was a student at Leeds College of Art, and before completing a teacher's diploma worked in Newham, London E15. After completion I worked at Leeds College of Art with Gavin Stuart and at Carlisle College of Art. I returned to Leeds to work at a Grammar School, before completing a film course at Middlesex University with Prof Roy Armes, subsequently worked for two years at the National Film School. I received funding from Yorkshire Arts and North West Arts to make two films, one on Shahid Malik, an escapologist, and *Roma*, a film about the Traveller community filmed in the French Camargue and Appleby Fair in Cumbria.

I started my research on art education at the University of Leeds and then Liverpool with Prof Thistlewood, completing an MPhil and moving to Maastricht to work at the Jan van Eyck Academie. I continued research at York University but I was forced to withdraw in 2007. The research was entitled 'Harry Thubron and his contribution to Art and Education' which I am currently completing at the University of Huddersfield.

I have exhibited artwork at Tullie House, Carlisle, Abbott's Holme Kendal, Leeds City Art Gallery, and privately but I do not consider this an occupation.

I am currently showing a collection of photos of Roma, with Leeds Education, intended to be a travelling exhibition.

A proposal for an exhibition of the work of Harry Thubron at Grays Gallery in Hartlepool was originally intended for the Hatton Gallery, Newcastle.

Glossary of terms with reference to art education

Suzi Tibbetts

GLOSSARY OF TERMS WITH REFERENCE TO ART EDUCATION

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| ABSTRACT: | That which is not concrete. That which is extracted from the complex reality. |
| AESTHETIC: | Conventions of perception and belief. |
| BRIEF (the): | Presentation of information concerning action, objective and clear statement of intent and purpose outlining constraints etc. |
| COMMUNICATION: | An exchange of information, feedback. |
| CONCEPT: | General notion. |
| CONCEPTION: | Initial grasp of creative ideas. |
| DEVELOPMENT (personal): | Extension from initial research & responses from such extensions that are symptomatic of the individual. |
| DIALECTIC: | Logical dexterity, the art of argument, twin interacting arguments. |
| DIDACTIC: | Meant or meaning to instruct. |
| GROUP CONSCIOUSNESS: | Knowledge of a group unattainable by separate individuals. |
| INTUITIVE: | That which is lead by the inward consciousness without reference to common logic or understanding. |
| NEGOTIATE: | The approach path to problem solving. |
| ORGANISATION: | Relationship of parts to each other in certain orders. |
| PEDAGOGIC: | The art of teaching, education. |
| PROGRAMME: | Arrangement of parts, events, with time space. |
| RANDOM: | Apparently haphazard. |
| REALISATION: | Converting theory into fact. |
| RESEARCH: | Looking for the known and the unknown by formal or intuitive techniques. |
| SCHEMA: | Basic organisation or system. Can have roots in archetypes. |
| SYSTEM: | Set of collected things or parts. |
| SYSTEMATIC: | Employing a known course, or method of action. |

Taken from a draft *glossary of terms with reference to art education*, by Tom Hudson written for the InSEA Congress in 1969. This document can be found in the National Arts Education Archive at Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield (TH/PL/303 NAEA@YSP).

Both a practicing artist and art educator, Tom Hudson (1922-1997) often talked about the language of art, of gaining a visual literacy and of developing communication skills within the field of visual and plastic art. A founding member of what became known as Basic Design, Hudson and his peers helped change the entire structure of tertiary art education, bringing it into the 20th Century. It has become increasingly clear throughout my research into his legacy that, although radical and at the forefront of his art education developments, Hudson was also highly representative of the formalist tradition. His extensive notes, explanations, course guides and 'comments' reveal his need, to some extent, to rationalise what he was dealing with. He methodically lays out details, and while some found this to be constraining and restrictive, others saw it as something definite to react against, either positively or negatively.

While Hudson made his personal views clear through his writings and activities, he also allowed them to develop over time, and was not so stubborn that he would refuse to accept necessary developments. Students formerly under Hudson at Cardiff College of Art give contrasting opinions; many saw the value in his modern, formalist methods, and respected his ability to debate and accept varying opinions, provided a valid argument was made. Others were seen to crumble under his leadership, too weak to speak up and thus overpowered by his formidable character. Studying as a student under Hudson was no walk in the park. He expected long hours to be put in, highly developed work, and dogged perseverance through his master-classes, not to mention his four-hour lectures. But what is clear is that his concern was always for the student. He played the business-minded bureaucratic system, defending his students' rights to a quality education, as well as space, materials and cutting edge facilities.

There may be much to learn from this committed, passionate teacher, who laid down his views and welcomed debate within a dynamic, productive and active art department. One of the first to produce documentation about how art could be taught, learnt and practiced within the 20th Century, we can thank Tom Hudson for at least attaching to art education the importance and credence it deserves and for attempting to define what today could be labelled 'good practice'.

Having defined terms, such as Hudson often explicated, allows one to debate their validity and forms the basis of more penetrating discussions. The text on the opposite page is a selection from a glossary compiled by Hudson for the InSEA Congress in 1969, reproduced here in an attempt to begin such debate.

Since graduating with a Masters in Metalwork from the Royal College of Art, Suzi Tibbetts has continued as a practicing artist in residential roles throughout the country, exhibiting work internationally. Previous to this, her background lies within Film and TV prop making and set design. A graduate of the Royal College of Art, she has spent the past few years as a visiting tutor throughout the country, on various programmes of study, during employment as resident artist for various organisations. Through this freelance teaching Suzi developed an interest in art education, and this led her to begin her PhD, investigating the pedagogy of Tom Hudson, and the contemporary relevance of his ideas. Her research is initially based within the National Arts Education Archives at Yorkshire Sculpture Park.

Afterword: on the questions

Verina Gfader

As a theme and title for RADAR3, three questions have been drafted. These questions or provocations provide the frame for presenting the perspective of a number of staff and students in the School of Art, Design and Architecture. Selected contributors are invited to respond to the questions in relation to their practice, research, experience and affects.

In particular, RADAR3 asks the contributors to engage with three questions concerning recent institutional expansions and the relevance of established models of thought to become allies in this moment of a—possibly rhetorical—educational turn in art. Institutional expansion is here understood in manifold ways: in terms of closures of institutions, subsequent occupations and cultural activities such as teach-in or read-in sessions, and forms of self-organised schools; in the ways new sociopolitical formations ask for reconfigurations of existing institutional contexts; and in the potential of an imaginary institution or context that opens up restricted views of how the institutional has to be.

RADAR3 is a homage to Félix Guattari who in ‘La Borde: A Clinic Unlike Any Other’ (in *Chaosophy: Texts and Interviews 1972—1977*, 176-94) talks about the impossibility for institutional arrangements to deal with the “irreversibility of the sense of life” and he reminds us of an experiment in Italy in 1978, a moment when Franco Basaglia managed to establish Law 180, which meant the closure of all psychiatric hospitals in Italy. In the final paragraphs Guattari emphasises the uniqueness of any institutional setting, he writes “the institution could become ... a very elaborate instrument for the enrichment of individual and collective subjectivity and for the reconfiguration of existential territories concerning—all at once—the body, the self, living space, relations with others... Thus, the ideal situation would be one in which no two institutions were alike and no individual institution ever cease evolving in the course of time.”

Using the format of questions/responses this issue of RADAR is intended to maintain the singular voices within a shared or common environment, to establish a relational site for conversations and to avoid conclusions; in that sense to affirm the non-institutionalised or what can be thought of as the murmur and continually transforming constituent of institution.

Guest editor

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