iJADE Conference
2013

ART FOR LIFE:
RACE, GENDER, DISABILITY AND CLASS – CRITICAL DISCOURSES AROUND PARTICIPATION IN ARTS EDUCATION

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 4th iJADE Conference considers the significance of social justice and social and critical practice in art education. The conference is also linked to the Tate exhibition Art Turning Left that will have opened the week before. The arts are simultaneously recognized for their universal and inclusive values as well as for the reinforcement of elite and exclusive practices. The development of new pedagogies for critical approaches to culture has impacted upon a broad and diverse range of learners at all phases of education. However, the arts studio or classroom, an apparently democratic space for the production of learner and artefacts, is also a space that is governed by assessment regimes and education conventions, and one which may also be characterized by reproduction, routine and a reliance on entrenched pedagogic practices. This conference aims to explore the ways in which current arts-based educational practices enable or disable, include or exclude. As a guide, here are some questions that authors may wish to address: To what extent do arts in education promote participation? To what extent does mainstream arts education engage with disability? Is the emphasis on arts education as a social and critical practice justified? What is the role of critical pedagogy in contemporary arts education? What about critical race theory in arts education? Can contemporary art engagement inform discourses around intersectionality? What are the developmental needs of artists and young people working collaboratively? What is the emancipatory potential of art? What role does art have to play in social cohesion? How inclusive are socially engaged practices? How can educational institutions be developed as participatory settings? 150 word abstracts to be sent to: e.goaling@chester.ac.uk no later than 31 May 2013

Conference registration and fees:
- Delegates (including all speakers): early registration by 30 June 2013: £150 (£110 NSEAD members); registration after 30 June 2013: £150 (£110 NSEAD members).
- Fee includes all day Friday and Saturday sessions, refreshments and lunch, but does not include accommodation or evening dinners. There is no single day rate.
- To make your payment follow link: https://bit.ly/i4j4yn
- For further registration and further information contact: e.goaling@chester.ac.uk

Rob KesselR DesignS a unique image and poster for AD
Dr Helen ChArman on Design Education and Agency

The National Society for Education in Art and Design magazine
Spring 2013
Issue 7
Advocacy, agency and awe: three words which define the work of educator artists, makers and designers - the authors in this issue. Artist Rob Kesseler’s article ‘Awe – a personal approach to looking’ describes a journey, a collaboration, an intersection between art and science, which has formed his unique approach to looking. Kesseler’s wonderful poster Green Man was created especially for AD: we are truly grateful for this gift.

Dr Helen Charman’s article ‘People who happen to things’ examines the quality of what she terms agency – defined as ‘the ability to act upon the world, to make a mark, to incite change and transformation, creatively, critically and productively’. Agency not only underpins the Design Museum’s Design Ventura competition, but it is essential for relevant twenty-first century design education. Charman explains why design education matters and how the proposal for the design & technology and art & design curricula fall short of such agency.

Lastly we turn to advocacy and to every author and article in issue 7 of AD. Even more than in recent years we need to advocate our subject – to shine a light on the subject and to communicate its value. This issue is filled with authors who demonstrate agency and inspire awe in galleries, museums, schools, studios and universities across the UK. Thank you for your inspiration and for providing the best possible advocacy for our subject.

Sophie Leach, Editor, AD
Twitter: @nsead_sophie
Facebook: http://on.fb.me/mOyeil

Please send article proposals or submissions to sophieleach@nsead.org
Between science and symbolism, Rob Kesseler describes the process of looking

Growing up in Solihull might not be considered the most propitious environment for the creative nourishment of a young artistic soul, but this liminal territory wedged between the post-industrial conurbation of the West Midlands and the bucolic landscapes of Shakespeare’s Warwickshire proved a more fertile territory than perhaps I realised at the time. Birmingham then was the home to three perfectly sized museums, whose collections presented a complimentary cornucopia of objects and images from which to understand the world. I was a frequent visitor to their galleries where in the Natural History Museum I would stand in awe in front of the giant spider crab: could such a creature two metres across really exist? In the Science Museum the might and power of Watt’s beam engine rhythmically pumping its polished and oiled steel arms with such effortless precision took on a balletic elegance. Both these articulated forms seemed to sit more happily with Graham Sutherland’s mildly surreal landscapes in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery than the obsessive paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites. What these museums with their encyclopaedic displays provided was an education through looking, an experience rich in form and colour embedded within a culture that transformed and celebrated life through the creation of things. In contrast to this arm’s length observation, my excursions into the countryside provided me with a hands-on experience where I could not only look but collect, identify, record and translate through drawing, painting and making.

At the age of 11 my father gave me a brass microscope made in London in the mid-nineteenth century. This beautifully engineered object not only reflected the ingenuity of industrial manufacture; it opened up a second world beyond the scope of my own sight. Every child should be given a microscope; it was an inspired and life-changing gift which was instrumental in opening the possibility for the collaborative work I have done with scientists during the past 12 years. Throughout my career I have always drawn hourly on the natural world to develop a wide range of projects in many different media, graphic works, sculpture, installation and design. The work has been explore modes of representation, reflecting the migration of plant imagery into many aspects of our daily lives. By 1999 I felt the work needed to move beyond what had become a comment on cultural consumption of nature and draw upon contemporary scientific practice to explore and reveal to a wider public the wealth of material that I knew existed at a microscopic level. My speculative proposal for collaboration with plant scientists at Kew Gardens drew just one response, that of Dr Madeline Harley, at that time head of research into pollen. Her own early career as an interior designer had given her an awareness of the powerful visual qualities of the images she was producing. Recognising the possibility that a collaboration might extend her work to new audiences, we started to work together and I was trained to use the Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM). A significant advance on my old brass microscope, the SEM is an extremely powerful instrument and capable of rendering highly detailed images at magnification of up to 5,000.

‘Colour acts metaphorically as it does in the plant, where its function is to attract an audience of insect collaborators for the purposes of pollination and seed dispersal’

Awe – a personal approach to looking

Rob Kesseler
It quickly became apparent that we shared common languages — wild-type mouse and for the plant scientist, Arabidopsis thaliana, a rather nondescript small plant that was catapulted into beta-gene fame for its strategic stability and like its fellow models an ability to reproduce reliably and quickly.

For my part I sensed how it might have been for Darwin and his world in such intimate detail. Indeed it was true, but through the daily habit of exploring the gardens I became aware that my fortune extended to having two astonishingly sophisticated lenses in my head which had not been used to full capacity. With this reawakened awareness, looking became the bedrock of my practice: it enabled balance with intuition and to develop ability to create work that could communicate my fascination for the living world in a way that resonated with my emotional response to it.

Over the past ten years this has evolved into a cycle of close and total engagement with the subject. My research process could be described as ambulatory and meandering, walking through landscapes, urban and rural, wild, some familiar places, some new. Looking, looking again through a magnifying glass or through a camera lens, looking for the new and unexpected, looking for variation in the familiar. Notes might be taken and specimens collected and checked against reference books back in the studio. It took a while to find a drawing process that complemented the macro imaging. Botanical drawing and sketching, normally useful for looking and recording, seemed too rooted in an academic skill; I needed something more immediate as well as the arduousness of the hours spent on the microscope and something which distills all the hours spent looking into a harmonic, resonant image. By chance I stumbled across a way of drawing with Indian ink and brush. Mining aniline dyes with the ink, solid silhouettes of the plants I collect are painted directly onto heavyweight watercolour paper without any preparatory drawing. For the scientist, the subjects and the popular audiences. Perhaps the reason for this comes back to the images have acquired a wide audience in both the science world, in arts and design communities and more widely with popular audiences. Perhaps the reason for this comes back to the images have acquired a wide audience in both the science world, in arts and design communities and more widely with popular audiences. Perhaps the reason for this comes back to the images have acquired a wide audience in both the science world, in arts and design communities and more widely with popular audiences. Perhaps the reason for this comes back to the images have acquired a wide audience in both the science world, in arts and design communities and more widely with popular audiences.
This year, for the first time, the museum is exhibiting shortlisted, commended and winning entries from the last three years of the project. Back at the podium, I invited the assembled crowd to turn around and look outside, through the glass and out to the exhibition Tank: a dark, solid cube set against the blackly sparkling Thames. Amidst whoops and claps and the chinking of glass, the crowd turned en masse and the Tank performed a touch of theatre in the night, lighting up to display its wares, a series of brightly, enchantingly lit enclosed vitrines studded around the inside of the Tank, each one proudly displaying the student teams’ products. The products are professionally exhibited for all to see, out in the public realm, on a par with the best of design education and transformation, creatively, critically and productively. It can change the way people behave. And in a world in which technology is, arguably, rendering us increasingly passive, and significant numbers of young people are choosing not to exercise their right of enfranchisement at an early age, design education becomes even more important. It fosters rich learning through thinking and doing, developing intellectual, creative and technical skills that enable young people to effect change in their world. The agency of design education involves embodied and experiential learning as well as theoretical learning. Deyan Sudjic, museum director, opened the Awards night by quoting Buckminster Fuller: if you want to change the world, design it. And he went on to explain how Design Ventura promotes the core quality that underpins the best design education: agency. By agency I mean the ability to act upon the world, to make a mark, to inculcate change and transformation, creatively, critically and productively. It can change the way people behave. And in a world in which technology is, arguably, rendering us increasingly passive, and significant numbers of young people are choosing not to exercise their right of enfranchisement at an early age, design education becomes even more important. It fosters rich learning through thinking and doing, developing intellectual, creative and technical skills that enable young people to effect change in their world. The agency of design education involves embodied and experiential learning as well as theoretical learning. Deyan Sudjic, museum director, opened the Awards night by quoting Buckminster Fuller: if you want to change the world, design it. And he went on to explain how Design Ventura promotes the core quality that underpins the best design education: agency. By agency I mean the ability to act upon the world, to make a mark, to inculcate change and transformation, creatively, critically and productively. It can change the way people behave.
The Design Museum puts learning and education at the heart of everything that we do. We see design as a way to learn about the world – so far, we are not only inspiring the next Jonathan Ive, or Zaha Hadid, we are also designing for young people. We don’t want the subject as being about presenting a collection of objects on plinths, or attempting to differentiate good design from bad. We are interested in helping everybody understand how and why designs come into being, and how they change us all.

Deyan Sudjic, OBE
Director, Design Museum

‘We could see all too well the kind of future these proposals were predicting, and it didn’t look at all good: a future fat on facts and thin on thinking’

The value of design and cultural learning is thus demonstrated, the decision to sideline these subjects simply didn’t add up. The CLA, the CLA, demonstrated, the decision to sideline these subjects as being about presenting a collection of objects on plinths, or attempting to differentiate good design from bad. We are interested in helping everybody understand how and why designs come into being, and how they change us all.

Deyan Sudjic, OBE
Director, Design Museum

Leonardo da Vinci on a ‘quotes about enterprise’ website, so be taken with a pinch of (quaint (recent) salt –

‘It had long since come to my attention that people of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.’

Da Vinci is talking about agency. The Design Ventura students and teachers went out and happened to things, and the fruits of their happenings are displayed at the museum.

What I ask of the DfE is this: let the new Art and Design, and Design and Technology curricula inculcate the same kind of real world agency and create a generation of young people who can design the kind of future we know we need.

Dr Helen Charnian Head of Learning at the Design Museum

ventura.designmuseum.org

The Design Museum Head of Trinity School in Lewisham, Top: Winning Students from

Bacc for the Future and Include Design

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plenitude of key statistics, facts, quotes and
evidence for the extrinsic value of cultural
learning. Key educational benefits relate to
improved attainment, cognitive abilities,
progression to HE, employability and civic
participation including the likelihood to vote
and volunteer. For a Department for Education
seemingly so keen on facts and sums, when

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as well as the finished couture pieces, an incredible series
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to her famous punk-inspired collection of 1977-8, decorated
using safety pins, lace, and silver chains.

Video tutorials with the designer and her studio staff also uncover
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handcrafted Zandra Rhodes piece, starting from
the designer’s use of sketchbooks, through to the koda trace
process, screen-printing, pattern cutting, and sewing.

To access more image collections for free non-commercial
use in education, see the Visual Arts Data Service (VADS),
hosted by UCA, at: vads.ac.uk

Amy Robinson
Project Manager, Zandra Rhodes
Digital Study Collection

Zandra Rhodes Digital
Study Collection

A new resource showcasing the private collection of Zandra Rhodes

The recently launched Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection: zandrarhodes.ucreative.ac.uk provides
unique online access to a fantastic 500 garments from the private archive of legendary British fashion designer, Zandra Rhodes.

The designer’s clothes have been worn by a host of eminent figures such as Diana, Princess of Wales, Jackie Kennedy Onassis, and Diana Ross. First and foremost a textile designer, Zandra Rhodes is renowned for bringing an innovative approach to garment construction by using her vibrant screen print designs to inform the cut and shape of the garment. The designer has kept a sample of each of her garments since the 1960s, now totally many thousands of pieces, which are held in trunks in her private studio in London. A selection of these exquisite vintage pieces have been presented, preserved, photographed, and catalogued and the images have been made available online for use in learning, teaching, and research worldwide.

The Zandra Rhodes Digital Study Collection was developed through a collaborative project between researchers and students at the University for the Creative Arts (UCA) and the team at Zandra Rhodes Studio, with funding from Jisc, and was launched online in March 2013.

As well as the finished couture pieces, an incredible series of fashion drawings are available online from the ‘Zandra Rhodes Style Bibles’ which have been used in the studio to document each of Zandra Rhodes’s designs since her first collection in 1969. The images of her work are further illuminated by online video interviews with Zandra Rhodes explaining the inspiration behind her key pieces. This ranges from her first collection influenced by knitting and stitching, to her famous punk-inspired collection of 1977-8, decorated using safety pins, lace, and silver chains.

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Amy Robinson
Project Manager, Zandra Rhodes
Digital Study Collection
The practice of all these makers translates well into the classroom as they employ accessible, often recycled materials and combine skills development with open-ended outlook.

With art, craft and design professional development opportunities in decline, the Skills in the Making programme has become a key element in the delivery of crafts-based training for trainees and teachers.

Skills in the Making, coordinated on the crafts-based training initiative for teachers and trainees

Skills in the Making, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, is a professional development programme designed to improve the level of craft and design knowledge and skills among teachers. It enables primary and secondary teachers and trainees to work with some of the UK’s leading makers and explore the value of learning through making.

In its fourth year, Skills in the Making was launched in 2009 by The Making crafts-based development agency which handed over management to NEAD in 2012.

At its inception, Skills in the Making sought to address the short-comings identified by Ofsted (2009) which found craft and design were poorly taught or neglected in more than half the schools visiting. Stating that this was often due to insufficiently trained teachers, Ofsted called for continuing subject-specific professional development for art teachers at all levels. This view was echoed in the 2012 Ofsted report: “The impact of professional development on the quality of teaching and learning was profound” and recommended that teachers be supported to take advantage of contemporary crafts-based initiatives and build partnerships with arts organisations.

With art, craft and design professional development opportunities in decline, the Skills in the Making programme has become a key element in the delivery of crafts-based training for trainees and teachers.

We are currently working with four primary teacher-training courses, and one PGCE art and design course which form the core of five clusters in England and Scotland.

A workshop for trainees is delivered by a maker and is embedded in the course enabling the impact to be evaluated with reference to the participants’ reflections on coursework and their practice in schools evidenced by lesson plans and their explicit art work.

Two or three subsidised Saturday or twilight workshops are offered to teachers from the cluster regions drawn from the universities’ networks and NEAD’s expanding regional networks. These have taken place at local galleries and museums including Pitt Rivers Museum, Shipley Gallery, Gateshead and Stour Valley Arts, as well as in networks of schools, thereby contributing to the development of relationships between schools, galleries, museums and local creative industries and artists.

The workshops employ non-didactic techniques and processes summarised by Simon Taylor and Rachel Payne: ‘Active dialogue, interpretation, observation and hands-on participation; learning is viewed as a self-reflexive process where knowledge is discovered, not simply imported. Participation then becomes a collaborative process between the artist/practitioner and the assembled group.’

For teachers and ultimately their students, Skills in the Making provides contact with professional artists and makers, usually self-employed freelancers, who are vocational role models and who demonstrate a range of career paths in craft and design and direct experience of routes into creative industries.

The workshops focus on contemporary craft practice that is often issue-based and non-functional. Internationally renowned makers have led workshops in 2013. These include mixed-media textile artist Michael Brennan Wood (fig 1) and 2) whose work draws on historical textiles and contemporary social and political contexts, and metalsmith, curator, and slow-craft specialist Helen Carmac (fig 3). Her session at Glasgow Museum of Modern Art combined discussion and collaborative making to explore the three basic abilities described by Richard Sennett as: ‘the ability to localize, to question, and to open up’ that are ‘the foundation of craftsmanship’.

Lynn Satterington (fig 4) explores recycling and consumerism through stitched and constructed quilts often made by groups of people drawn together through common endeavour; as does Lucy Brown (fig 5), who through the reconstruction of old clothes asks questions about personal identity, consumerism and the social structures embodied in fashion.

Wire sculpture workshops delivered by Celia Smith (fig 6), Cathy Mills (fig 7), and Helaina Sharpley (fig 8) have provided inspiration for trainees and teachers who have found the techniques of bird, insect and object construction can be learned and applied in school with minimum expense and maximum impact.

The practice of all these makers translates well into the classroom as they employ accessible, often recycled materials and combine skills development.

While it is as yet too early to fully evaluate the impact of the workshops delivered in 2012-13 responses by participants to this year’s cycle of workshops include:

I realise the small amount of skill I have is enough to teach a scheme of work and expand upon. There is huge scope to deal with art concepts through textiles and approaching art projects through craft’. PGCE student.

The workshop was enjoyable and a different way to introduce drawing – drawing with wire. This activity could be used with primary school children in making it an enjoyable activity for all to progress learning.’ Primary trainee.

By June 2013 we estimate that over two hundred primary trainees, fifteen PGCE students and around 250 in service teachers will have attended a workshop.

Join Skills in the Making on Facebook on.fb.me/R6MiEK
In praise of failure

Howard Hollands on ‘failure’ and what this really means within teaching and learning

Speak to any teacher of the arts and they will talk about the success of their pupils in a language that is more about humanity and need, rather than league tables and celebrity status.

One of the many anachronisms currently facing those fighting for the arts in education is that we are fighting for a model we do not believe in, one that is not sustainable. We are fighting for the arts to have a place at the table of measurable outcomes and celebrity chef status, where the stark distinction between success and failure plays out in rooms papered with league tables.

We believe in the entitlement for all children to be taught the arts, not simply to have access to them, but sadly the teaching models we are permitted to employ do not grow out of arts practice itself but out of a predetermined and totally inapt product-based model that has nothing to do with the arts. As Allan Sekula demonstrated in his 1978-80 School in a Factory and quoting Elwood Cubberley: ‘Our schools are… factories in which the raw products [children] are to be shaped and fashioned… And that is the business of the school, to build its pupils according to the specifications laid down.’

So, what sort of pedagogic approach should we take, given that every model presented has an axe of one kind or another to grind? We might look at ‘failure’ and what this really means within teaching, learning and arts practice.

When it comes to the arts, and in fact for all areas of knowledge and experience, the notion of failure has not only to be acknowledged, but recognised and celebrated as integral to artistic practice and development.

For those of us who have been involved over the past thirty years in the development of endless new examination and assessment models with ever more complex criteria and procedures to ensure fairness and some degree of transparency, it has been a thankless task, as the achievements are swept aside by successive administrations. However, for the most part, I think youngsters themselves are aware of, and appreciate, what their art and design teachers have done on their behalf in almost impossible circumstances.

As with all curricular development, (I avoid the term ‘progress’) in education, in the context of the current, all-embracing appetite for novelty and competition the illusion of how those who fail are viewed and managed, receives greater attention than those who are successful. ‘Did they do well?’ says Brucke, when they clearly did not. The problem is that it boils down to a question of winners and losers, and, following an extraordinary Olympic year where it is the win-low statistic that really counts, then this is understandable. But for the art and design teacher it is a very different kind of challenge, as the significance of failure for their pupils lies in the way this might be seen as an essential, indispensable aspect of making and understanding art, craft and design. There is the tragic irony of the most successfully (in contemporary statistical terms) referenced, copied, pastiched, celebrated and financially highly prized artist, Vincent Van Gogh, being the supreme model of failure in his own lifetime.

As responses to the contemporary catastrophic failures in global economy, eco system, and social structures testify, we are in a blame culture and no more so than in education, yet speak to any teacher of the arts and they will talk about the success of their pupils in a language that is more about humanity and need, rather than league tables and celebrity status.

When a teacher sits down next to a child to talk about their drawing and how it might develop, it really does not matter if it is about the formal qualities of the drawing or about the meaning of the images. It is the mutual struggle to find visual-verbal meaning and connection through the drawn images that is both hard and easy. The moment we start looking for ‘outcomes’ then all is lost, along with any meaning.

Because failure is central to the creative process then it should not simply be dismissed as a downside to success in terms of grading but as an inimical part of an engaged journey which itself is really the achievement.

The nineteenth century apprenticeship model of teaching and learning or ‘sitting next to Nellie’ has sometimes been dismissed as a one-dimensional and unsatisfactory-focused approach, yet the relationship between the experienced and less-experienced in the hands of a skilled communicator, can provide a forum to unravel the unexplored regions of failure, and what this means for us as developing individuals in a social context. This is where art is metaphor and art practice a great vehicle for creating a dynamic.

As a trustee for a London based gallery with both an education department and a collective of artists’ studios, I am aware of the way the divide that still exists between artists and education is often played out in this context despite the fact that they are mutually dependent upon each other. I am convinced that if the artists engaged more with artist-educators and examined what failure might mean within their own art practice, and how this relates to the more formalized context of art education then much common ground could be discovered. Artists are often less aware of their institutional constraints than art and design teachers, yet they are just as constraining. This is why the committed artist-teacher is such a force to be reckoned with. Not someone, as Shae says of the artist, who can and does, and those who cannot, who teach. This dense art teaching as a form of art practice and art practice as a form of pedagogy and encompasses a level of ignorance we could well do without.

In terms of the former then Joseph Beuys and John Baldessari are worth exploring and the notion of an embedded pedagogy within art practice in the terrain of Robert Morris, Francis Alÿs or Bas Jan Ader. They all have in common the Sisyphean ground could be discovered. Artists are often less aware of failure that they are mutually dependent upon each other. I am convinced that if the artists engaged more with artist-educators and examined what failure might mean within their own art practice, and how this relates to the more formalized context of art education then much common ground could be discovered. Artists are often less aware of their institutional constraints than art and design teachers, yet they are just as constraining. This is why the committed artist-teacher is such a force to be reckoned with. Not someone, as Shae says of the artist, who can and does, and those who cannot, who teach. This dense art teaching as a form of art practice and art practice as a form of pedagogy and encompasses a level of ignorance we could well do without. Howard Hollands
Middlesex University
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‘Failure... an inimical part of an engaged journey which itself is really the achievement’
Art matters

Hannah Hames, Senior Lecturer in Art and Design, on why primary schools need art and design Specialists

Wandering in to the art department for the first time, many of our undergraduate primary art specialists find themselves here for one of two reasons – they either thought that an art specialism would help them with their classroom displays and the development of attractive resources, or that art seemed like the easiest specialism to go for, all things considered. Very quickly they realise that they have signed up for something quite different, and that they are, in fact, going to have to develop an art practice all of their own.

From this quite revelatory moment onwards the value of their specialism becomes apparent. Firstly they are acquiring a number of quite impressive skills, so that by the end of their first year they are confident printmakers, junk sculptors, colour mixers, photo editors and mark makers. They can plan an excellent art lesson and can talk about why art matters to them (and why it should matter to others). But it is as the course progresses and they are encouraged to find their own way of working that, year on year, I am staggered by what takes place. Artists emerge, quietly but assuredly; and they mount exhibitions, not displays. When they talk about their work the language is not descriptive, but critical, articulated with clarity of intention and a passion for the subject that wouldn’t seem out of place on a BA fine art course. A few ex-students are now practicing artists and designers, having discovered that their art practice was something they were unable to relinquish upon graduating. Others have gone on to gain a practice-based MA in art education or have participated in the Artist Teacher Scheme. These are fantastic outcomes, and are a testament to the value of their specialism; firstly they are acquiring that ability to be truly creative.

Supporting the development of such philosophies has always been a crucial element of our course. Amy graduated as a primary art specialist three years ago, ‘Art as subject specialism taught me all about creativity and its relevance within the classroom. My class develop their thinking through the realm of art, it is still as relevant now as when I trained.’

Most of our students enjoy successful careers in primary education with many promoted to art coordinator within a couple of years. A few ex-students are now practicing artist and designers, having discovered that their art practice was something they were unable to relinquish upon graduating. Others have gone on to gain a practice-based MA in art education or have participated in the Artist Teacher Scheme. These are fantastic outcomes, and are a testament to the course and to the enduring impact of the subject.

Recruitment to our primary art specialist course was suspended in September for the second consecutive year. Our final cohort will graduate in 2015. But actually, none of this matters if you really understand what art is and what it does. Jenny, an ex-student and now a primary art and design coordinator, very concisely summed this up for me: ‘Art is exciting, engaging, hands on, diverse, thought provoking. It inspires, creates debate, motivates and provides an element of freedom. Restricting the arts restricts the ability to truly create.’

So why are we letting it slip through our fingers? Well, you take anything from this article, let it be this: art is all of the things Jenny says it is and more - but it is not safe. We must advocate for its value and its presence in the curriculum with everything we have if we are to secure its future as a primary subject.

The scarcity of the ‘art lesson’ witnessed by my students on placement demonstrates how marginalised art and design has already become as a result of a literacy and numeracy saturated curriculum. Without trained advocates for the subject as an approach to learning entering the primary curriculum in 2014. But actually, none of this matters if you really understand what art is and what it does. Jenny, an ex-student and now a primary art and design coordinator, very concisely summed this up for me: ‘Art is exciting, engaging, hands on, diverse, thought provoking. It inspires, creates debate, motivates and provides an element of freedom. Restricting the arts restricts the ability to truly create.’

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The scarcity of the ‘art lesson’ witnessed by my students on placement demonstrates how marginalised art and design has already become as a result of a literacy and numeracy saturated curriculum. Without trained advocates for the subject as an approach to learning entering the profession, primary education surely faces a dark and uncertain future.

Hannah Hames
Senior Lecturer in Art and Design, Newman University College

Artists emerge, quietly but assuredly; and they mount exhibitions, not displays'

'They see that art is a vehicle for ideas and expression, that it can be used to interpret and reinterpret the world; that art is a way to celebrate everything for its own sake'

Supporting the development of such philosophies has always been a crucial element of our course. Amy graduated as a primary art specialist three years ago, ‘Art as subject specialism taught me all about creativity and its relevance within the classroom. My class develop their thinking through the realm of art, it is still as relevant now as when I trained.’

Most of our students enjoy successful careers in primary education with many promoted to art coordinator within a couple of years. A few ex-students are now practicing artists and designers, having discovered that their art practice was something they were unable to relinquish upon graduating. Others have gone on to gain a practice-based MA in art education or have participated in the Artist Teacher Scheme. These are fantastic outcomes, and are a testament to the value of their specialism; firstly they are acquiring that ability to be truly creative.

Supporting the development of such philosophies has always been a crucial element of our course. Amy graduated as a primary art specialist three years ago, ‘Art as subject specialism taught me all about creativity and its relevance within the classroom. My class develop their thinking through the realm of art, it is still as relevant now as when I trained.’

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Recruitment to our primary art specialist course was suspended in September for the second consecutive year. Our final cohort will graduate in 2015. But actually, none of this matters if you really understand what art is and what it does. Jenny, an ex-student and now a primary art and design coordinator, very concisely summed this up for me: ‘Art is exciting, engaging, hands on, diverse, thought provoking. It inspires, creates debate, motivates and provides an element of freedom. Restricting the arts restricts the ability to truly create.’

So why are we letting it slip through our fingers? Well, you take anything from this article, let it be this: art is all of the things Jenny says it is and more - but it is not safe. We must advocate for its value and its presence in the curriculum with everything we have if we are to secure its future as a primary subject.

The scarcity of the ‘art lesson’ witnessed by my students on placement demonstrates how marginalised art and design has already become as a result of a literacy and numeracy saturated curriculum. Without trained advocates for the subject as an approach to learning entering the profession, primary education surely faces a dark and uncertain future. Hannah Hames Senior Lecturer in Art and Design, Newman University College
providing a recognised national qualification. The English Baccalaureate Certificate (EBC) was aimed at key subjects which the Department for Education has been sharing among educators we are responsible for setting up the learning that gives this inspiration. I have seen a child so caught by their finding learning exhilarating. It was exciting, and that is new found confidence, a driving passion, a experience that they visibly change. For some it was a brace is really painful.

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The first problem with his logic was that it was looking at the wrong end of the process of raising standards. It was about education and not about future needs for our pupils to be successful. Recognising that curriculum content is the skeleton over which teaching style and ethos grow. We have built in as many opportunities for inspiration as possible. The whole process has been incredibly creative. Creativity and risk-taking by our staff is encouraged and highly valued.

We call our curriculum the ‘Hump Bacc’. It involves eight compulsory areas of learning; English, Maths, Science, Humanities, Creative, International, Physical and Personal. At the centre of what we do is creativity. Our week contains ‘normal’ lessons. Pupils also have challenge lessons which are industry inspired and combine subject content as well as personal learning and thinking skills. Each week our pupils also self-select their ‘ electives’ a lesson to inspire them, with activities as diverse as building bicycles to running a business.

Our culture of constant learning for pupils and staff is developing a culture of innovation. As you would expect we give our pupils iPads to use freely in lessons and take home. We are not perfect and we make mistakes. We still have a long way to go: five more years of our eight-year plan. Focusing on what education is really about has had the right outcomes.

We took a blank sheet of paper and designed a curriculum to meet the question of the purpose of education. We looked at brain development as an end in itself. Education can be viewed as preparing the next generation for work, or shaping the society of tomorrow. There was one subject that stood out in which I have seen the same inspiration with many children. I have seen a child as being so inspired that they visibly change. For some it was a brace is really painful.

There remains an aspect in all this that still needs attention. The EBacc league table measure is still hanging around. This seemingly innocent measure still divides between those subjects that were to be the gold standard and keeps creativity out. If this becomes the standard measure for league tables it will erode the standing of creative subjects in schools. So come on Michael, get rid of this measure too.

It is clear that Mr Gove does want to raise standards. When we compare our current qualifications to what inspired pupils could achieve, he is right in that it is not fit for purpose. Often it is implied that creative subjects are not rigorous. Yet if you observe a professional dancer for five minutes and you will learn a great deal about self-discipline. Spend any time with a musician and see attention detail. Watch a basketball player demonstrate communication, or a designer employ critical thinking. These are traits that would have been handy for our bankers to have had a few years ago. Qualifications and assessment of creative subjects needs to be seen by staff, pupils and parents as just as rigorous as English, Maths and Science.

If you, like me, are inspired by creativity in learning and see that it lies at the heart of improving education in our country, then be inspirational to the children you work with. Provide the environment to empower your pupils to achieve beyond expectation and go about it all with creative vigour.

Peter Nutkins is a member of Heads for the Arts headforthearts.org
I teach at The Isis Academy in Oxford, a school for pupils with moderate and complex learning difficulties. Many of our pupils have emotional, social and behavioural needs and all pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need.

We started a collaborative project when we worked with the artist Dionne Freeman who ran an artist workshop with nine key stage 4 students (ages 14 and 15) – all are studying an Entry Level qualification. I wanted the project to have longevity and to have an impact on the school as a whole. Following discussions with the students we worked together to write up the project as a scheme of work (SoW) for key stage 3 students (ages 11-14). We had not set out to document the project and turn it into a scheme of work however the students were so engaged that I felt we should try to expose more students to Dionne’s work. We knew that new students to the project would not have been able to see the artist, hear her speak, or experience the workshop; however a film of the workshop and subsequently short videos made by students explained the tasks together with examples of their own work. These digital resources were collated into an interactive iBook, which formed the final SoW. The iBook was then made available to key stage 3 students, who could engage with the project as if they had been there on the day.

We have been using iBooks to promote personalised learning at The Isis Academy for some time and students use them regularly to support their learning. Using iBooks with digital video and images, supports students’ special educational needs and allows students to work independently at their own pace, listen to the task more than once and work, pausing the video when required. A lot of the content was photographed or filmed by adults and specialists, sharing their knowledge.

Session one in the artist workshop was brainstorming ideas and filming voiceover videos for the iBook. Students produced step-by-step instructions and top tips to accompany these resources and discussed how they wanted the book to look. Students took ownership of the content and this was highly successful. They wanted to share their experiences and analyse their learning. They talked about what they were doing rather than what they were teaching about and were able to disseminate their information in a professional format. With some support they produced a digital learning resource, which could be shared with others and students in key stage 3 will engage in learning delivered by their peers. This shows a shift in the power of the teacher and empowers learners to work collaboratively and to become specialists, sharing their knowledge. ■

Tom Procter-Legg

Tom Procter-Legg explains how students used iBooks to capture the experience of working with an artist, and how their iBooks passed knowledge and understanding on to their peers

The artist workshop itself, which formed the content of the iBook, was challenging and was held across two, two-hour sessions: the first with the artist in school and the second with us visiting Dionne’s studio and working alongside her. Session one encouraged the students to think about their own experiences and analyse their experiences and think about what they had learnt, what skills they had used and if another student were to engage with this activity, what they would need to consider?

It is clear that working with artists is beneficial however this can be a transient experience which impacts on few students involved, perhaps changing perceptions, but not always for a wider audience and for the school as a whole. We wanted to change this; we wanted the project to have a wider impact.

Initially the artist workshop came about through a city-wide art network group. One of the partners (Meadow Brook College) offered artist workshops through their ‘Visionz’ project and the chance to put on a group exhibition. We took this offer up and Dionne Freeman provided a stunning workshop developing paintings on Trace and Memory. Students used unfamiliar materials such as candles and teabags and worked on a much larger scale than they were used to.

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Cross-phase

resources and expertise across the region. We did not want a simple standalone event but rather use the opportunity to begin linking teachers in the county. We did not want a simple standalone event but rather use the opportunity to begin linking teachers in the county. We did not want a simple standalone event but rather use the opportunity to begin linking teachers in the county.

The Olympics provided the perfect backdrop for an exciting, large-scale arts collaboration. Ted Kennedy shares the project’s journey. This project responded to the work of Joan Miro at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. It linked visual art and music, Big Sing, in a performance/exhibition, forming part of Scarborough’s hosting of the Olympic Flame. The event was the hand-over point and was covered extensively by TV and press. Eight hundred pupils from 16 primary and secondary schools would take an active singing role with over 200 making sculpture. The Olympic link ensured a huge audience were present at Scarborough’s Open Air Theatre.

This was a significant investment in the arts for a Local Authority facing cuts back in funding. The LA showed both commitment and vision providing not only the finance, but expanding the role of Cathy Roberts, Educational Development Adviser, to cover creative and performing arts. The key roles played by Cathy and John Leaf, AST, demonstrated the importance of LA wide support for the arts. The event formed part of the North Yorkshire Children and Young People’s Cultural Olympiad to encourage provision in the arts in communities of Scarborough – Whitby – Filey coastal strip building on the good practice established within the LA and the Arts Council.

Through discussions we formed the view that this was an opportunity for some joined-up thinking to establish a CPD model that could become an entitlement for art and design teachers in the county. We did not want a simple standalone event but rather use the opportunity to begin linking resources and expertise across the region.

The National Arts Education Archive (NAEA@ysp) was identified as the preferred base for the initial CPD workshop. This was a significant investment in the arts for a Local Authority facing cuts back in funding. The LA showed both commitment and vision providing not only the finance, but expanding the role of Cathy Roberts, Educational Development Adviser, to cover creative and performing arts. The key roles played by Cathy and John Leaf, AST, demonstrated the importance of LA wide support for the arts. The event formed part of the North Yorkshire Children and Young People’s Cultural Olympiad to encourage provision in the arts in communities of Scarborough – Whitby – Filey coastal strip building on the good practice established within the LA and the Arts Council.

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The success and impact of this and other arts projects in North Yorkshire demonstrate the high value placed on the arts recognising the importance of engaging thousands of children and young people in high quality arts. The LA plan to run more projects across the county in 2013 taking inspiration from the forthcoming Yinka Shonibare exhibitions at YSP. Planning for these projects and supporting CPD events is underway and the LA confirmed they would support these initiatives with funding.

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It seems to me that there are six distinct areas of learning, thinking and feeling in the study of art, craft and design. The six areas are not separate, but overlap and support each other. We emphasise one or more of these six domains as we encourage participation and progression.

The areas are:

- **CONCEPT:** The formation of ideas and the values we as educators attach to originality, lateral and higher level thinking skills.
- **RESEARCH:** Searching for relevant information in books, the Internet, word of mouth etc.
- **EXPERIMENTING:** Taking risks, not worrying about failure, investigating new methods.
- **ANALYSIS:** Recording with curiosity and scrutiny, the visible world as fact.
- **TECHNIQUES:** Step-by-step thinking through methods, techniques and approaches.
- **EXHIBITING:** The arrangement of two- and three-dimensional visible forms in order to show our achievements.

What follows is a description and explanation of how students might encourage independent learning whilst developing their portfolios and sketchbooks. These areas when placed together spell the word ‘Create’ thought this is not to imply that they should be taught in that order, far from it, we can introduce them in any order and emphasis more than one at the same time as they overlap.

One technique employed to inspire independent artistic thought in our studios at Macmillan Academy is a wheel of six segments (fig1 and 2). It is designed deliberately to visually highlight the nature of the thinking. For example...

- **Concept** is blue, suggesting the imagination and blue-sky thinking; the brain deliberately shows the left cortex to initiate a conversational about right-brain thinking. Research is yellow-brown, the aged colour of books/papers and one letter is magnified, the magnifier a metaphor for searching and highlighting. Experiment uses green and red complementary colours, to see how they affect each other and I have dribbled and printed with bubble-wrap in the hope of discovery when applying paint. Analyst uses Leonardo Vinci’s Vitruvian Man, to emphasise analytical drawing from curious observation, the desire to calculate and use proportion. I have measured the lettering carefully. Techniques uses the technique of the gradual admixture of white to purple in steps to emphasise step by step thinking. Exhibit is a gold picture-frame with the word itself exhibited in it.

In my department at Macmillan Academy, we have the word Create emblazoned in gold on the front of student sketchbooks. It is used for self-reflection prompts and its signage is in the form of artist’s palettes displayed around the department. It will be the summer of 2014 before the year 9 (ages 13-14) who first use Create take their GCSE and I am keen to see how the portfolios and their sketchbooks will have developed over two years. My hope is that slower, more pedestrian learners are able to make their own checks on progress and be prompted into shaping bodies of work that are driven by their own thinking through the six areas.

Ian Lightfoot
Specialist Leader in Education for the Arts, Design and Creativity
Out with the old, in with the new
artist teachers and the National Curriculum for Art and Design

Carol Wild reflects on ‘unlearning’ and occularcentric art and design national curriculums

‘Please note that students wishing to pursue further and higher education courses will be expected to unlearn knowledge, skills and information from all previous key stages.’

These words were inserted into old copies of the National Curriculum for Art and Design (1999 version) by students on the MA Arts Practice and Education at Birmingham City University. Similar statements were inserted between each key stage. The brief task was to make an intervention that made explicit what was implicit, hidden, or null in how the document was understood in practice. The activity formed part of a day devoted to the National Curriculum as part of the ‘Histories of Art and Design Education Module’ as the new draft National Curriculum for Art and Design is under consultation it is useful to reflect on the past and to consider what the old curriculum might suggest about the new.

The idea that school learning is an inappropriate foundation for further learning in the arts is not new. Artist teacher Richard Hamilton who was instrumental in setting out the remit for foundation courses in art and design wrote:

The first aim of our course is a clearing of the slate. Removing preconceptions. People come to art school with ready-made ideas of what art is. We have to do some erasure. The beginning of a new stage becomes a blank slate. Our students are never empty vessels to be filled, but the idea of erasure and ‘unlearning’ is an interesting one. Piaget defined learning as a process of assimilation and accommodation. New experiences have to be connected into the cognitive structure we have already developed for learning to take place. At times, for this to happen successfully, structures require dismantling and reconfiguring. The willingness to ‘unlearn’ is essential to art practice, to hold intentions lightly, to be open to seeing the world in new ways, and to accept criticism. This is a true for teachers as it is for artists. A new curriculum, whether imposed from above, or developed internally, is an opportunity to engage in ‘unlearning’ ourselves, and should therefore feel challenging, exciting – anything but comfortable.

The statement ‘I’m no good at art’ is still too often heard and takes a lifetime to ‘unlearn’.

Finally, a third group of students made interventions that commented on the misuse of National Curriculum levels and how they map out the terrain the subject occupies, we stand on even when we are unaware of it. That is why it is important to discern whether anew curriculum provides us with enough ground to stand on and enough scope to interpret the curriculum creatively in localized ways. The new draft curriculum represents a rather severe retreat back into the comfortable ways. The new draft curriculum represents a retreat to reconfiguring it as a social endeavour, as seen in the participatory and collaborative work of many contemporary artists. Again, the new draft curriculum represents a retreat to reconfiguring it as a social endeavour, as seen in the participatory and collaborative work of many contemporary artists. This is followed by a sinister pencil drawn pop-up of a male teacher massaging the head of a young girl, and a page later by a boy spinning on a target whilst the teacher throws knives. A comment on the endless, thankless task of trying to demonstrate progress. If there is one area for ‘unlearning’ that the new curriculum should address it is that of assessment, particular invitation to the ‘levelling’ of individual students. No child should ask ‘What level am I?’ or see the value of their creative endeavours summed up solely in grade. For the last fifty years artists from Joseph Beuys to the collective Superflex have addressed the fundamental questions of who art is for and how should we measure its value or success. They have sought to answer these questions through working with specific groups of people, in specific contexts to create art that has relevance and power in particular contexts. The model presented in schools presents art as for the individual (myself) and for the teacher or exam board. The measure of success is whether it passes the grade or perhaps has some intrinsic therapeutic value. But outside the school, within the cultural sector, art making is almost always for someone else, the client or public audience and is often produced collaboratively at the outset. We need to ‘unlearn’ art and design as a lonely pursuit and reconfiguring it as a social endeavour, as seen in the participatory and collaborative work of many contemporary artists. Again, the new draft curriculum represents a retreat to reconfiguring it as a social endeavour, as seen in the participatory and collaborative work of many contemporary artists. Again, the new draft curriculum represents a retreat to reconfiguring it as a social endeavour, as seen in the participatory and collaborative work of many contemporary artists. Again, the new draft curriculum represents a retreat to reconfiguring it as a social endeavour, as seen in the participatory and collaborative work of many contemporary artists.

The new draft curriculum has pared down to the bone the structure we have been working with all along. What it leaves us with is a fossilised version of what learning in art and design should be. How should we respond? Through the joyful, sensual, inclusive, participative and immeasurable force of art.


Carol Wild
Arts and Education MA, Course Director, BCU
Exploring paintings using a range of arts practice for literacy work in primary schools

Anne Brown describes a project with the Stanley Spencer Gallery

In the spring of 2012 I was approached by the Stanley Spencer Gallery in Cookham, Berkshire to help them work with four local Primary Schools as part of the Gallery’s 50th Anniversary Exhibition, ‘Spencer’s Earthly Paradise’.

The Gallery wanted to explore new ways to encourage schools to visit and make better use of the work of their local painter. A project inspired by my previous work on the Creative Partnerships programme set out to change the way schools used the paintings for teaching and learning through the introduction of a creative practitioner to work alongside them to unpack the narrative and stories for literacy work.

The project started with a teachers’ twilight session at the Gallery exploring Spencer’s paintings, connecting with underlying themes. This was followed by each school bringing a group of 30 pupils for an initial half-day visit to the Gallery and to the nearby church and grounds that Spencer had used in his work.

Starters activities included developing imaginary names for colours painted on canvas strips and finding those in Spencer’s paintings; others looked for ‘visual clues’ in the paintings in order to understand more about Spencer and his art.

These collaborative learning activities built confidence and interest in Spencer’s work leading to questions and ideas about the paintings. Back in pupils’ own schools classes worked over four half-days in partnership with either musician Rob Harris or theatre practitioner Tina Muir. The aim to try to create a range of responses to a particular chosen painting.

Cookham Dean Primary School looked at colour in the painting ‘St. Peter’s’ and the ‘Bowls’ — using movement, music, recorded poetry and human shadow puppets; Herries Preparatory School researched Stubb’s Tomb and the Scarecrow Visitor using physical theatre to explore what happened in the lead up to the picture; Cookham Dean CE Primary School looked at ‘The Last Supper’ painting and how music could be used to tell a story by creating ambience, mood and emotion to express feeling.

Pupils from a fifth school, Priory Primary School in Slough, who were already employing drama and life of its most famous former resident. The project offered new opportunities for literacy through speaking, writing and listening skills; that gallery visits and response to paintings allowed pupils to bring their own ideas to artwoks and performance, and when learning is truly collaborative, everyone can bring something to the creative process.

A sharing event was held at the end of the project at the Holy Trinity Church in Cookham, enabling schools to see each other’s work and for the gallery trustees and their guests to see the outcomes.

The project set out to forge stronger links between Stanley Spencer Gallery and local primary schools and to inspire new approaches to the arts, literacy and learning. All the schools intend to use aspects of the project for future work in the gallery, with one school immediately following up their launch event with more class visits to research their own village and the work and life of its most famous former resident. The launch activities and the creative workshops enabled teachers and pupils to work in new ways and to try out different approaches to gallery work. Pupils said they had stronger feelings about the paintings through doing drama and by putting the song-story together. Teachers noted that the project offered new opportunities for literacy through speaking, writing and listening skills; that gallery visits and response to paintings allowed pupils to bring their own ideas to artworks and performance, and when learning is truly collaborative, everyone can bring something to the creative process.

Visit vimeo.com/50438078 to view the documentary film by students at Priory School.

This film follows the four Cookham schools as they participate in the project.

Grants for school trips

The Eridge Trust gives grants for trips to museums, galleries and centres of art at home and abroad. With art and design teaching now under pressure, it is more important than ever that pupils are given the opportunity offered by such trips to see and enjoy works of art. We urge members to consider applying to the Trust.

The Trust supports trips for pupils in the maintained sector. Its purpose is to encourage young people to look at works of art, especially paintings, and to enjoy and appreciate them. So that must be one of the objectives of every trip supported. But it need not be the only objective, nor must pupils be studying art and design. The Trust is keen to support trips for a wide range of pupils, which are not narrowly focused on a particular exam.

Grants can be used in whatever way organizers think most useful. They can reduce costs equally for everyone, sometimes even meet all costs. They can be used partly or wholly to give extra help to pupils who would not otherwise be able to afford the trip. They can pay for improvements which wouldn’t otherwise have been possible, a flight, for example, instead of a long coach journey, or an artist or guide to work with pupils.

This year’s grants have covered the usual wide variety of trips. A Bristol school, for example, is taking all year 7s (ages 11-12) to local art galleries. A Kendal primary is taking her key stage 2 pupils (ages 7-10) to London for three days to visit museums and galleries. A school from St Helens is offering assisted places on a trip to Rome for GCSE students, and schools from Liverpool and Penrith are taking GCSE students to Paris. All such trips provide eye-opening experiences for pupils and staff alike. They improve pupils’ self-confidence and maturity and their relations with each other and with staff. Sometimes they kindle enthusiasms that will enrich lives for ever.

Applications for grants for the next school year must be received by 31 May 2013.

More details and information on how to apply visit www.eridgetrust.co.uk.
It is a Friday evening in January. The ground outside is thick with snow, it’s freezing cold. I’m sat in the kitchen with my wife to be, a fellow art teacher, and we are both working. It’s around about now that I start to wonder whether it’s just art and design teachers that spend so much time outside of school working on their own practice or simply searching for things to inspire students.

I know that we aren’t alone in this, because I see all of the time on the various NSCAD Facebook groups, art and design teachers constantly looking for innovative ways of working, new and relevant ways to inspire, enabling techniques to try, the next big thing to use in the classroom. The majority of art teachers aren’t happy doing the same project rolled-out year after year. This way of working results in one major problem – resources. If only there was a way to quickly and easily group together images for use in the classroom. A twenty-first century way to searching for things to inspire your students. I’m sat in the kitchen with my wife to be, a fellow art teacher, and we are both working. It’s around about now that I start to wonder whether it’s just art and design teachers that spend so much time outside of school working on their own practice or simply searching for things to inspire students.

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AccessArt began life in 1999 with the aim of inspiring and enabling high quality education in the visual arts. It was the vision of Paula Briggs and Sheila Ceccarelli, graduates of the Royal College of Art. They continue to guide and develop AccessArt, ensuring the quality remains high and relevant.

AccessArt has worked for many years to promote an open sharing of practice, as a means of helping to contribute to a positive climate in which creativity can flourish. Through a network of members across the UK and beyond we encourage our users to share resources and ideas too, and we work in partnership with artists and teachers to create resources for the site. Unlike larger repositories of resources, like TES, each resource on the AccessArt website has been created or edited by members of AccessArt, ensuring the quality remains high and relevant.

AccessArt now has over 400 resources on the site, which cover many aspects of visual arts teaching and learning. These include drawing exercises, drawing projects, sculpture and three-dimensional work, printmaking, painting, installation art, and design. Key to our approach, is that most topics represent practice which is transferable – that is to say that a resource which shares a drawing exercise which is practiced at the Royal College of Art, can be easily adapted to a group of seven and eight year olds. The resources on the site cover a wide range of ages from primary through to teenage and beyond to adult – but the reality is that any of these resources can be used with any audience.

The website contains a search box so you can search for resources by keyword, or you can use the drop down menus or tag cloud. To help busy teachers find their way through the myriad of resources, we’ve also created some themed pages with links to resources, such as Subject Matter for Thoughtful Drawings – accessart.org.uk/?p=10467, Drawing & Making Inspired by Artists – accessart.org.uk/?p=11918 and Drawing for Teenagers – www.accessart.org.uk/?p=4380.

A particular skillset of AccessArt is the way we’ve done on promoting and enabling sketchbooks in schools as a creative tool. Originally funded by the Eames Fairham Foundation, the AccessArt website contains more than sixty resources which explore how sketchbooks can be introduced in schools, developed and integrated into the school day.

Find out more at accessart.org.uk/?p=3820.

New resources are added every week – signup to the site to receive email bulletins when new resources become available.

An InSEA and International Arts Education week update

NSEAD is proudy affiliated to the International Society for Education through the Arts (InSEA). At a recent meeting in Rovaniemi, Finland, InSEA formally signed a Memorandum of Alliance with three other international art based societies representing dance, drama and music. Together, as the World Alliance for Arts Education (WAAE) there will be a stronger voice for the arts as well as developing the on-going interest and support of UNESCO. WAAE will soon have a website of its own.

The meeting in Rovaniemi, also saw over 100 art educators from more than 28 countries come together to review the progress made in implementing the Seoul agreement between UN member states in 2006 to promote and develop the arts (these are called ‘Roadmap for Arts Education’). Generally progress has been slow. The global political and financial pressures have often dominated thinking and arts education has been marginalised as a result. But here have been some important developments on the world stage – including one in which the UK has yet to become fully involved.

The second International Arts Education week will take place 20-26 May 2013. This will provide an exciting opportunity for arts educators – from early years settings to adult education classes – to reinforce the message that the arts are crucially important in education. By registering events, each celebration can be amplified across communities, nations and continents. Further details will follow in NSEAD’s e-bulletins but now is the time to start considering the kind of event that you could think about organising next year. Whether for learners, schools, parents, families, colleges, universities or whole communities, an event in your location could powerfully reinforce the message that the arts do matter.
The Leonardo Effect: Motivating children to achieve through interdisciplinary learning

Edited by Ivor Hickey and Delores Robinson
Published by Routledge, 2013, ISBN: 978-0-415-604840

By the time I began teaching in primary schools in the early 1990s, cross-curricular approaches to learning were becoming firmly marginalised in favour of the strictly timetabled, subject-specific approach preferred by secondary schools. I’ve often been told my former academic once informed me, ‘you’d have been taught in Art lessons, History in science lessons, and Science in history lessons.’

Had The Leonardo Effect: Motivating children to achieve through interdisciplinary learning been published a couple of decades earlier, I’d have had something pretty substantial to hit him around the head with. The idea that children’s learning should be firmly compartmentalised is one that Leonardo da Vinci – who was as compartmentalised is one that responses to the project from teachers, parents and children. Evidence from case studies informs the second half of the text, which features contributions from a number of artists, teachers, head teachers and student teachers. There are also implications for the subject-specific approach of initial teacher education; might there be a teacher education that is more holistic in nature? Why not?

Fraser Smith 1942-2012

Fraser Smith died at his home in Reading on 8 December 2012. We worked with Fraser from 1985 until 1996 at the University of Reading’s School of Education, where Fraser continued lecturing in art and design education until his retirement in 2007. We worked together on the PGCE Secondary Art & Design course, in 1985 one of only twelve such courses in the country. Fraser was a deeply important role model to us, mentoring our transition from school to university educators, initially as teacher-tutors and his influence remains with us to this day.

We were passionate about maintaining our personal art practice, as Fraser was, then mainly in ceramics and drawing, later gravitating more to paintings and constructions. Fraser’s deep knowledge and skill, together with the importance of practice, was passed on to his students. We always saw Fraser’s art as strong, assured and deeply expressive of his private self, of love and pain, infused with humour and characterised by a highly personal vocabulary of image and mark making. His work revealed the sensitivity he only rarely seemed to reserve for others; we both loved his work and still do.

Fraser attended Wolverhampton and Manchester Schools of Art before teaching art in schools in the north-west. Fraser began teaching at Liverpool College of Art, by then part of Liverpool Polytechnic, lecturing on the Art Teacher’s Certificate (ATC) course before it became the PGCE, moving to Reading in 1975. Fraser lectured at Reading University for 32 years, serving as course leader for PGCE Secondary Art and Design, and running an MA course, as well as holding a variety of other management posts which he performed admirably. A career-long member of NSEAD, Fraser regularly attended annual conferences and served for a number of years on the editorial board of LADE, including periods as reviews editor. One of the few collaborators to appreciate the theoretically and practically nuanced distinctions between art, craft and design, Fraser was closely involved in the ‘Making Work’ project, based at Reading Museum.

Fraser had great wit and wisdom, he was always willing to lend a helping hand, but also reflecting on insights into the difficult issues and ideas in art and education. He had a mischievous and playful side, as well as a facet to his self that was sometimes consumed with existential uncertainty. His loss will be deeply mourned by his family and friends and he will be widely and affectionately missed by numerous colleagues and the countless numbers of teachers of art and design he touched.

If you are not receiving this fortnightly (during term time) update please email info@nsead.org

32 Book review

Obituary

TEA revives you!

Join the “TEA Party” in the week commencing 1 July where the participants of the “Thinking Expression Action” programme would like to invite practitioners to collaborate using drawing in the classroom. We would like to involve as many young people as possible in open-ended drawing activities over the space of this week, and to share images and experiences via social media and a dedicated blog. Teachers who have been involved in the TEA programme so far have gained much from developing drawing approaches in their own practice in collaboration with each other, and through reflecting upon strategies to develop pupil skills. Participating schools will receive instructions on how to get involved. For more information contact Karen Gibbs (karen.gibbs@READINGMUSEUM.EVO-STAC.COM).