



## The Fine Art Forum

School of Architecture & the Visual Arts, University of East London, Docklands  
10 November 2004



Images © Stroud Cornock



**Chair:** William Furlong (WF)  
**Panel:** Shezad Dawood (SD), Mark Hampson (MH), Susan Stockwell (SS),  
Tamiko O'Brien (TO), Richard Wilson (RW), Gavin Turk (GT)  
**Invited Audience:** Stroud Cornock (SC), Pete Cobb (PC), Andy Yates (AY), Martin Barrett  
(MB), Sue Gollifer (SG), Tim Allen (TA), Polly Christie  
**Students**

## WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

PC: Welcome to the School of Architecture and the Visual Arts. The space that you're in, in a way epitomizes the thinking behind the merger of the School of Art and Design and the School of Architecture. And when we were planning this forum we felt that it would be useful to take advantage of this space. So the discussion will be visible by people passing through the studios in a way that's a parallel between the way that we're hoping to be working across disciplines from Fine Art, but also making use of the influence of the architects here .

Before I introduce the panel and the Chair I want to introduce Stroud Cornock from the CNAA Art Collection Trust who is one of the instigators of this forum and would like to say a few words about the Trust.

SC: It's exactly thirty years ago that a small but high quality art collection was assembled to mark the achievements of the art schools in this country. During the seventies and eighties that collection was seen by thousands of academics including the many professional artists who were advising on the validation of courses throughout Britain. In the nineties the collection was refurbished, it was catalogued and it was exhibited, and then it was placed in trust. And towards the end of the nineties there was a seminar in tandem with another exhibition of the collection to examine the idea that it should form the nucleus of a national collection whose aim would be to celebrate the history and the achievements of higher education in Fine Art practice in the UK. In June 2003 the national collection was launched as a web-based resource – [fineart.ac.uk](http://fineart.ac.uk). Now it's intended that the website should provide a focus for an exchange of ideas. The University of East London has taken the vital first step by hosting this forum, and its outcomes will be published, circulated to all the art schools and we intend that the issues that are identified. today should form the agenda for the next stage of the debate, the continuing debate. Now, all of those participating today have of course granted AHDS Visual Arts licence to publish their contributions to the discussion, and I've got to finish now by thanking not only UEL's AVA School for hosting the forum, but also the Fine Art Project. It's provided most of the funding and Polly Christie sitting over there, the Fine Art Project Manager, has provided a great deal of the energy and enthusiasm.

PC: Thank you Stroud. I also should thank the School of Architecture for letting us use this space which is normally an architecture studio. the panel. First of all, **Shezad Dawood** is a young artist beginning to establish a reputation with work that explores authorship and cultural translation. In addition to one man shows in London, Hamburg and Nottingham, his contribution to group exhibitions in the UK, Asia and Australia, he has also carried out commissions including for Channel 4 television, Hamburg U-bahn, and something he's working on now for London Underground. Next to Shez, **Mark Hampson** is a painter and printmaker whose imagery dissects masculine stereotypes and explores the imagery of popular culture. It exploits contemporary art language and comic book imagery and echoes the scurrilous cartoon tradition of James Gillray and William Hogarth. He exhibits internationally, recently in the USA, Japan and Korea. Mark is Co-ordinating Tutor in Printmaking at the Royal College of Art. Next to Mark is **Susan Stockwell**. She is best known for her large-scale paper works and her use of tea bags, coffee and maps. She has exhibited widely in the USA and Europe as well as at home, in small galleries as well as major institutions such as the V&A. Since 1999, Sue's week has been split between her studio and her teaching at Farnham, Surrey Institute of Art. **Tamiko O'Brien** is a sculptor who has in

recent years been working and exhibiting as part of a collaborative partnership 'Dunhill and O'Brien'. We have a particularly warm welcome for Tamiko, as she is a graduate of Fine Art at UEL. And she's recently been appointed as Head of Sculpture at Wimbledon School of Art. Next to Tamiko, **Richard Wilson**. He's been widely known as a sculptor who engages with architectural insulation elements. Since his oil piece '20:50' was first shown at Matt's [Gallery] in 1987, Richard has twice been short-listed for the Turner Prize, and has exhibited extensively. Additionally, from September 2002 to September 2004 he was Sculpture Fellow at UEL. **Gavin Turk**. Gavin became widely known when he was part of the Sensation show at the RA. He early gained some notoriety owing to his uneven relationship with the RCA when he was a student there. Gavin shows at White Cube and continues to make conceptually based works using a wide range of media, latterly bronze and film. The Chair, **William Furlong**, is editor of Audio Arts magazine which he established in 1973. He's combined this activity with working full time in art education, and is currently Visiting Research Professor at Wimbledon School of Art. His activities at Wimbledon include organising conferences at Tate Britain and the Agenda series of research events, which have included the last three Venice Biennales. He's also a panel member for the AHRB. Working primarily in sound and voice, he's recently exhibited at the Imperial War Museum, the Tate Gallery, the Serpentine Gallery, the South London Gallery and in Venice. Okay Bill, over to you.

WF: Let me first of all congratulate Peter and Stroud for initiating this event. There is too little debate and discussion about what goes on in the art school and what are the implications of institutions such as this which are practical art schools where students come with ambition, the desire to do something, which includes that of being an artist! They spend periods of time here, undertake a degree and move into the outside world.

Now for a number of years at Wimbledon, we held events at the Tate Gallery that were focused precisely around these issues of 'the artist as practitioner', and (that was a book) I edited a book of transcripts of the conferences entitled, 'The Dynamics of Now'.

The conferences held every year drew on practitioners, critics and theoreticians to discuss all of these issues. So it's really very welcome that it's also happening somewhere else now as well. Before I ask each artist to give a brief characterisation of their practice, I would like to just map out a few of the signposts along the way.

I would also like to emphasize my belief that the artist is absolutely central to this debate. The idea of the practising artist in the college teaching students is exactly what should be happening. And I know that Stroud, who curates the CNAAC collection, will echo that.

So there have been moments when this dynamic or model of student and artist-teacher has been threatened. It is interesting that it has persisted in spite of recent teaching and learning 'initiatives'. However there are many and other complex relationships that have developed between the student, the artist and the art school, which have been very rich and valuable in our understanding of the process and the student experience.

Initially, I will try to map out why this occurs. Why do artists teach in art schools? We know that a lot of young artists leaving college, as in my period in the late 1960's and early 70's taught in order to provide some sort of economic survival. So you could teach two days a week and then live on that. Then there's the idea of access to ideas and stimulus and a continuation of the supportive infrastructure of the art school environment, in other words the artist would get something out of that interaction. The other factor is that if an artist is in his or her studio day in and day out, then it can be quite a solitary and isolating experience. So going out a few days a week to an art school to interact with a whole range of people can provide a sort positive set of interactions or escape from that sort of solitude. And I think those who have studios and worked in them will often admit that there are times when it does become a very solitary and withdrawn experience. I mean it's a model that perhaps doesn't persist so much or apply universally. A number of contemporary artists don't have studios now, and I won't name names, but I was told

not so long ago that an artist in question, thought the next work up on Eurostar, on route to the venue for the exhibition!

Another positive benefit of going into the art school, apart from the students was always meeting other artists, who were in a similar boat to you who you would 'rub shoulders with', and would have the pub lunch that would lead to a very rich exchange and conversation and networking with people that would often continue later.

Then there are issues to do with the longer you're in an art school the more you get drawn into it. So the down sides are; yes you do sacrifice prime time for work, but not every artist, it would seem, needs to work every minute of the day, certainly not in the early days, because they're working for themselves. I know that as time goes on, we can work all the time because of the demands and the projects we get ourselves into, and the complexity of those projects. So you don't have the time very often to come out of the studio and work in the art school. Of course it disperses energy, it deflects attention and I know a few, well a few people who work for me now who are young artists who go into the art school and when they come and meet me, all they want to talk about is what they've done in the art school that day and the specific but 'local difficulties of one sort or another they have with particular students. I know because I did it myself. But it can become all consuming. And then what that can lead to is how that person gets more and more drawn in to the whole fabric of art education, and we all know about that. The numbers of issues and mechanisms that have to be dealt with, the 'quality assurance' processes, the 'validation' processes, the 'QAA processes' the endless meetings, and so on that require a considerable amount of energy and effort, then the extension to that is how it all becomes a 'reality', and becomes a substitute for making art. So people get so drawn into it that they are not making art, so much so that the art gets left behind. And there's nothing more than, nothing sadder than an example I heard a while ago where someone had been drawn in, voluntarily, and you know, drawn up the hierarchy and was a promising artist before that, and when he retired he wrote around to all his former colleagues after thirty years and said 'Now I want to pick up my career, what do I do?' So I don't know the answer to that.

British higher education in Art and Design is a brilliant manifestation, it has to be said. There's no other example anywhere in the world where I can think of where people come into a situation and are provided with space, help and resources and make their art. There are no prescribed curricula now, and as a consequence there are issues raised about what actually is being taught? And that's an interesting one because there was a time when there was a prescribed model of what was being taught, but now what do you as artists actually teach? I'm interested also in how is what you do transferred to the students? How do they absorb? Is it that you are creating an ambience for them to rub shoulders against and learn by almost osmosis which is a sort of a dirty word in higher education speak, but is that what happens? Is that how it happens? Or is it like a mix and match pizza where you give them the ingredients that they take away and put them together in their own head? Or I was thinking of a better example this morning – a Mongolian barbecue. I don't know if any of you have been to them, but you go into this restaurant and there's lots of little trays and you take out the ingredients and it's cooked for you, but it never seems right, because it's not discriminating, there's no recipe. There are lots of elements you can identify as ingredients but the final result is elusive as is a definitive list of ingredients, it is illusive, just like art itself. Once you try to define it, like art itself it slips away . . . it's a moveable feast.

So art education has changed, and not only has art education changed, but as a symbiotic relationship with the external world which often isn't acknowledged but it is there, students do read the art magazines, do read the newspapers, do see the news. And this is something Gavin might have something to say about later. But in the last ten years there's been an overwhelming Renaissance, in my view, in relation to contemporary art, and the artists of the Sensation generation are obviously part and parcel of this, Nick Serrota at the Tate is part of it, where art has moved from the inside pages of newspapers and magazines to the front pages. How often do you pick up a Metro magazine for instance or a colour magazine without seeing

Tracey [Emin] or Damien Hirst or blah blah blah in them to the point that art has become very much, in certain instances part of the celebrity culture. The up-side of this is that it has made contemporary art very visible and perceived as an attractive and lucrative profession. It has also opened up a public debate about art practice.

I won't go on much longer, but to say that in this book, 'The Dynamics of Now', I've got various quotes from people like Jake and Dinos Chapman, Tracy Emin, and Helen Chadwick, to name but a few, who all either reacted against their art school experience or found it rewarding or learned in other ways.. But a lot of people reacted against it, and we know art is a kind of an individual enterprise, even given the kind of collaborative activities of Jake and Dinos [Chapman] and Gilbert and George. You don't belong to a club really, and this is the reason why I think a lot of artists in the past decided not to belong to the Royal Academy. And alumni associations in art schools seem doomed as Chris Frayling points out or are never very successful and it was the Groucho Marks who remarked: "I refuse to belong to any club that will accept me as a member"

So I think at that point it would be good to get the artists who are here and who are central to today to actually do two things. They are asked to characterise their practice and then to say how that has related to the work they've done in a context such as this; in teaching contexts. And I think from what they say I hope we can draw out some pointers for the remaining part of the day. We want to get some really 'of the moment' observations and reflections on all these issues from you who are actually engaged in this interface between students and the artist. So I think, I'm going to have to marshal this quite fiercely, but I think we'll do it in the same way as Peter introduced it. And I should add that I know some of the artists, and I know their work quite well, others I don't. So Shezad, would you do that? And I think you can't have more than about five minutes.

#### THE PANEL

SD: I work and collaborate both across cities and cultures and with other artists and often teach in other countries as well as in this country. My experience at art college was one of fighting with the tutors, with the institution, with the limitations imposed, which I still find sometimes in teaching and research cultures. One of the main things I find is that, because I'm often working, in my practice I collaborate with other artists, with other makers, like often with cinema painters in Pakistan, I've worked with Mills and Boon illustrators here. And that's quite central - to lose that sense of the artist as author. And even just through showing internationally and just dialogues with other artists. One of the things for me that's become very important is trying to create the conditions for equivalence, so you haven't got a hierarchical imposition. You know it's absolutely vital in order for my practice to take place to have that . . . and that's definitely something that I've taken back into my teaching. In fact it's one of the things that I think I saw as the main problem when I was taught was this lack of equivalence. With my students, I guess I'm quite young so that helps, but I can go in at a level and I try and immediately do away with any hierarchy. And even to see where I can explode that to challenge the students to have to engage more. One of the fears I definitely had coming to art education was how to maintain both a loose relation to it and yet be engaged. But I think one of the tricky things is having that freedom to engage. You have manage that quite tightly. I do know that. I teach at Westminster [ - ] both professional practice for the course and a studio practice module. But I'm very careful there when any of the people (who run the years for example) ask me to get involved or make announcements regarding say student reps or admin issues I just nod and then I don't make the announcements. That's very key that you know I draw the line there. But it's also quite nice to just sort of not engage at that point. I'm there for what I'm there for and it's that simple. And also [if] students are not willing to listen or to learn, that's their problem too. I think it's important to go in and engage and I really put a lot of energy into that. And generally it gets a really good response. I tend to end up with all the problem students as well, but I find that quite exciting, quite interesting. But I also have a research post in Leeds which is perhaps a totally different model in that at Leeds Met they have an institution, Interdisciplinary Practice in Art and Design,

which is a whole department which bases itself on immateriality and quite a Zen approach. And there I exist much more as a resource, and I really like that. You know I go up there twice a term and initiate projects, and then students can e-mail me and I'll just give them quick sound bite feedback, and they can take it away for their own practice or to work on the kind of projects that I might have initiated with them. But even with those projects I try and get them to work beyond their own practice. Because for myself as a sort of an artist in a loose sense, I'm a keen believer in expanded practice, so my practice extends into text, curating, dialogue and performance. And I think that's very vital. I like to perform even when I'm teaching. I think you know if you're an artist it should be an organic model, a synthesis. So teaching is part of my practice. Otherwise I would have to stop. And for me that's how I choose to engage. And, to end, [ - ] one of the main problems I find is administration, where artists get sucked into the institutional fabric I often find it's a way for the institution to cut corners, to not pay an administrator. You have a central administrator, but not an administrator for each course who should actually run that and centralise it so that other people can come in more as sort of satellite entities and actually create a more loose kind of dynamic where you get more energy, more consistent energy levels, more ideas bouncing around. And art education might actually shift to . . . new parameters, or do away with parameters in which it operates.

WT: Mark.

MH: I took a slightly different route, becoming involved in education, because it was definitely something that I never aspired to. I thought that could generate some discussion. I feel like to an extent you've stolen a lot of thunder Bill by talking about the things you were talking about, because that's obviously the bulk of this discussion as I understood it. So I'm going to wing it a little bit.

My first experience of education was in the good old bad old days of the 1980s, when it felt if you wanted to get hold of a lecturer in the afternoon you had to go and buy them a drink or knock on the door of the Chelsea Arts Club. And it was during this time that I was given the most extraordinary bit of career advice by John Hoyland, who said that the art world was like a sewer and only the rats and the pigeons survived. And you either had to become a rat or a pigeon or failing that you had to get into teaching. And that as a young student didn't feel like great career options. I didn't want to become any of those things. But upon graduation you think how do I survive? And I think this is still very current for students at the moment, that it's a very piecemeal existence for most people. And despite the emphasis that's placed on professional practice, despite the solid education that people get, it doesn't always equip for public life.

So artists have to become very entrepreneurial, opportunistic, and creative. Now my first experience as a teacher, [ . . ] I was hugely flattered. I didn't think that anybody would think that I had the skills, the ability and then capacity to deliver something that would be useful for other people. I still think that teaching offers me a social function, a function external to the studio which often feels like an isolated indulgence, something which is very self-serving. And teaching offers me the opportunity to contribute to other people's lives. And that's a massive . . . it might sound really romantically connected or it might sound kind of moralistic, but it's a big part of the motivations for me being involved in education. One of the most fantastic things for me is being involved in that transformation with people's minds. And you know a fantastic example: a few years ago there was a student whose every other word was 'fuck' and within three years this guy's vocabulary had expanded so much that he was able to quote Foucault and understand Foucault back. So from fuck to Foucault is a massive transition, and one which I think is important.

When I first started teaching it felt like sink or swim. I was really thrown in at the deep end. It was like 'Here's a room, here's a slide projector, here's fifty students, get on with it.' If there was any discussion about pedagogy or teaching philosophy I certainly wasn't party to it. And so how did I develop a strategy for teaching? It was based in an imitation of the good role models I'd had, particularly examples of artist, of teaching practitioners such as Helen Chadwick,

Terry Frost, Bert Irving, Tim Mara; people who were had a very committed approach to both attitudes of their life and managed to create a balance between those two things. Because balance I think is . . . I'm sure it will come up time and time today, is the biggest dilemma for anybody involved in teaching and in making. It's how do you carve out a path for yourself. I've recently heard this really dreadful term called 'commitment management' which is something that I think that art education's absorbed from the commercial sector. And it seems to come up in Fine Art appraisals all the time. And I think what it means is all the commitment. It's not about lack of commitment as is . . . I think certainly when I was a student the situation for education was one that was open to abuse. Now I think institutions run primarily on the good will and extra commitment which isn't recognised by management or government and their dedication to the students. So how do we deal with commitment management? How would you develop a career that isn't victim to the detriment of your teaching? And that's very difficult. I don't want to go on to a rant about how we're underpaid, overworked. But I think Shezad came up with some really interesting points that you put parameters on your own delivery, your own commitment. And you have to use the institution to good effect rather than become institutionalised.

For me, beyond the value of social function there's also the access to extended discussion. There's also the connection and ability to use equipment, which is a massive area for me because I'm a printmaker and actually to set up a studio which had all the equipment I need to develop a practice would cost hundreds of thousands, so on the up side and on my down time I get access to work and teach by example, but also develop images and ideas through the facilities which are made available.

What else did I want to talk about? One of the things that really worries me as an artist is the dilution of the culture; the dilution of the culture within the institution, because I think one of the things I'm really grateful for is that fact that when I went to college the institution was totally connected to the art industries, the creative industries and also that was the dominant discussion. Most of the conversations I have with colleagues about pragmatic things, they're about boring, drab things such as space norms and student numbers and stuff that shouldn't be top of the hierarchy of our discussion. But I think we also contribute to this dilution in culture. You know my warning lights go up as I hear people talking about e-learning, distance learning and a whole . . . and I think we forget cultural absorption, the fact that often it's not just the institution which delivers the education, it's the peer group influence. It's being alongside, it's making contact with fellow artists. You know I think we've seen that, we see connections and families and movements develop time and time again which is in spite of the institutions and in spite of what we do as lecturers. You know art schools have become pretty conservative spaces whereas once they were the last bastions of maverick thinking. I worry that we don't put enough emphasis and we don't fight hard enough to protect actually, to protect the subject and protect that passion.

WF: Thank you.

SS: Well my practice is a mixture really of working on my own in the studio, collaborating and making work that is site specific. So I might make a piece of work for a space in a tube station. I'll work with the space and with the history of that space. And that's quite important, that feeds back into my studio practice. But I would say that a lot of the work comes essentially from working with processes and materials and also I think that the materials that I use are often materials that are thrown away, that are products that are disposed of. So it might be paper, it might be toilet paper, it might be tea bags, it might be rubber inner tubes, but they're all things that we use that are everyday, that are taken for granted, and it's very much about really looking at those materials and going through a whole sort of process with that.

And the subject, the combination of the materials that I choose, the process of working with those materials and the subject matter; those three elements very much go together. It's quite important. So at the moment my subject matter's very concerned with mapping and global trade and global histories and drawing that together with processes of working with particular materials.

It's quite interesting for me today this conversation because I'm on sabbatical from my 0.5 teaching job, and at the moment I'm on sabbatical. So I haven't actually done any teaching since May and it's been incredibly liberating, I have to confess. So I've spent about ten years I suppose teaching in different ways; teaching sessionally, in America. I've kept up my practice. And for me it's absolutely central and the centre of what I do as an artist, as a person and as a teacher that I practice, that I make stuff whatever shape or form that takes. But that I constantly engage in that, even if it's just in a very minimal way at times, and other times in a very full and totally engaged way. And I think that that sort of coming back to that constant, and reminding myself of that practice like a GP practices, I'm an artist and I practice. And that's absolutely pivotal, central, the core of what I do. And that's where I teach. And I think that's why sabbaticals are incredibly important. But I think it is because it's sort of re-reminded me. I think perhaps when I used to do more sessional teaching it was different, but now I have a job that's incredibly bureaucratic and administrative, and I completely relate to what you were talking about with that, and keeping very strict boundaries about my time and the teaching time and other people's time and space within that. I think that although I thought I did that really well it's only since I've had the sabbatical that I've realised that I don't do it as well as I thought, and that I'm really just re-discovering myself and what I actually do and what my practice really is. And having a relationship with my practice that I've slightly lost. You know I hate to say that and I don't like to think of it like that, ... in the way that any relationship works, with my practice the relationship has become a little bit more removed because of the teaching. Whereas now I'm actually very engaged in my relationship with my practice. And I'm having a very intimate relationship with it again which is very wonderful. And ... it's difficult because to go to your studio five days a week when you haven't done that for a long time is quite a challenge. I'd forgotten how difficult that could be so it's not all wonderful and everything. What I'm saying is that it's engaging and it feels very sustaining. So I do think that's actually really important, but I also miss teaching and I also miss that contact with students, with young people, with ideas, with that sort of batting of ideas and process and work and that sharing, and seeing other people and what other people do and their ideas develop. So I really like it, but I think it's very much about what kind of teaching job you have and about how you manage that part of your life in relationship to your own practice and yourself I suppose.

One of the things that I've actually found, and I've also learned a lot from teaching in Higher Education. It's been very sustaining and fulfilling and certainly kept me engaged in the theory of practice and in the art world generally I've done a project for the last three years in Stockwell in South London with a school there working with kids, and working with them making work about the area and about mapping that area, and about their personal histories. Using mapping as a way of helping there, of enabling them to look at their personal histories but then making my own pieces of work beside that in and around Stockwell. So one of those pieces was drawing a line around the boundary of Stockwell with a huge line-drawing machine that I made with white paint in it. And so that the kids could see that, but it was me doing my own work as well. And in a sense doing that kind of work in a slightly different context to teaching was incredibly rewarding and rich, gave me the space to literally marry the practice and the teaching up as well.

And in art schools now ... I sometimes feel as though I have to fill out a form to say that I've filled out a form. It's incredibly administratively choking. And I think that means just the sheer amount of work and time that we have to put into that means that we lose sight sometimes of what we're actually here for. We're here because we're practitioners; we put that experience and that knowledge into the institution in with the students and in our teaching. And I feel it's incredibly important that we keep that as the forefront, as the most important agenda. But maybe we become more proactive in saying 'No, we don't want to do that.'

I think the other thing that I got from art college was very much a sense of . . . being able to change thinking, being able to change my thinking and being able to adapt my perception. And I think there must be a way that I could, and I can use that in my teaching now to shift the sort of

emphasis onto . . . what I consider the more important things. And role models as well, I think that's incredibly important in teaching, role models.

WF: We now go to Tamiko.

TO: I've been teaching on a regular basis since I left art school. So I'm probably the most immersed in teaching of all of us sat around the table here. I went straight from studying on an MA into a residency which involved teaching, into a job, which is actually 0.6. So in some ways my practice and my teaching have grown on a parallel line. And where there's been plenty of intersection. And I'd like to think they've kind of complemented each other. I sort of stumbled into teaching. I was quite surprised that I could do it, and that I could carry on doing it and I was also surprised about how rewarding it was. So in a way I remember having this critical moment when I was about twenty four when . . . I wanted to carry on waitressing and I wanted to carry on running a market stall and suddenly I'm doing this job which actually earns me less money. But the conversations were considerably more rewarding. And I think I'm actually a closet optimist and I think you have to be in order to be an artist, but also you have to be to be a tutor, because there are occasions when things can seem quite difficult, quite awkward, but actually there are these very stimulating conversations to be had. And I actually find it a tremendous privilege to be involved in teaching. It keeps me, it challenges me, it stretches me and it keeps me engaged in the discourse.

Oh, I mean the pleasure of seeing someone come to some compelling solution I have to say is tremendous. I think, rather as Mark was describing, you know that sense of someone turning a corner and things connecting, and that is actually something really exciting to be involved in. And in relation to the idea of practice and teaching I think it's absolutely necessary. It's essential in terms of having the necessary empathy to understand just on a practical level what students are going through and what are the mental processes that they're engaged in. I think that's absolutely essential to be part of that process oneself. I think, as Mark was saying, the subject is completely mutable, it's not a fixed subject, you're not imparting a cannon of knowledge. It's constantly changing and in a way you have to be immersed in that to understand that, to understand the subtleties of that.

I've been working collaboratively since 1998, and part of that was because it was actually necessary for me to question the basis of my own practice, and also to question the business of making things. So the way we work is to do with egging each other on. That's one of the things that I get a lot out of, in relation to working collaboratively, that we are constantly annoying each other, arguing with each other, and causing problems, and opening up the territory of the work, and pushing the work. And I think quite often that's something you do when you teach. Quite often you are exposing the work to the other trajectories of that work, the more absurd, the more difficult trajectories of the work. So that is another connection. The other thing is that in the collaborative practice we quite often refer to teaching, we've made works which have referred to giving slide talks . . . at the moment we're actually doing a video as part of a larger work about giving a slide talk about holes in sculpture. So it's this quite absurd subject which actually has some quite possibly profound implications. But, so that this is part of the work in a way. So I'd say that for me teaching has fed into my practice and my practice has fed into my teaching.

The other thing that I think I have to put my hands up to is the discussion around administration and kind of constructing a curriculum. And I have to say that I have been quite surprised at how much satisfaction I actually get from curriculum development. I've actually found that constructing a situation, constructing opportunities for students where they can thrive and can expand and surprise themselves, and surprise me as well has been really satisfying. And I'd say that. So I think I'd have to slightly take the stand from the side of the people who do a bit of administration. I like to keep the administration fairly minimal, but there is a certain necessity to have a structure for things to work.

WF: Richard.

RW: It was in 1971 that I applied to Hornsey College of Art to do a DipAD in Sculpture. In 1969 there'd been a sit in at Hornsey and there was a massive knee jerk reaction which was that none of the staff would teach you. It was up to you to become the artist. So on our first day we were gathered round and four tutors said to us that we'd made the decision to be artists, therefore get on with it. So I had an extraordinary three years of not actually talking to any tutor, but what developed out of that was an extraordinary apprenticeship situation in that you realised during the week it was up to you, but at weekends you earned your money by going and working for these tutors. What that gave you was not only money, but it also gave you the experience of socialising with practitioners, people who were successful artists. So I worked for Hubert Dalwood, a very young Martin Naylor, Neville Boden, various other artists. And you went to their studios and you watched what they were doing on paper, you worked with them with materials, you listened and eavesdropped onto their phone conversations, and you acquired practical skills about being an artist, not from the five days of the week, but the weekend moments. And this became quite extraordinary, because I think I'd gone into art school believing very much that it was rather like I was going to be given some extraordinary information that would allow me to blossom into an artist.

Unfortunately the Arts particularly the Fine Arts, well they're not blessed in the same way as musicians and sportspeople. If you're a golfer or a swimmer you'd have a caddy or a trainer who would advise you what iron to use, or what stroke to use in terms of being a sports person. It's the same way with musicians. You know you're good if you can play a Hendrix riff or you can do a [Keith] Moon drum roll. But in the arts, if you do any of that kind of copying it just doesn't work, because the idea is that one is attempting to be terribly original.

So I recognised that it was down to me, and that would actually happen is that I would have to glean as much information as I could from working with my lecturers at those weekends. After the three years I then secured a post-graduate course at Reading University, and that could not have been more different. It was a very monastic existence, but it allowed me to nurture that three years of skills I'd acquired from Hornsey to sit and take responsibility for my planning as an artist, the planning of an idea, the execution of an idea. And I it became a sense of monastic, dedicated research. You know you were in this very quiet existence and you were given just finance and space, and this seemed to be the perfect way for me to conjure up my ideas and put them out into the world.

I left in 1976 and had no idea what to do, and I refused to go into teaching, not that I was disillusioned with it, I think it had given me a great deal, but I went and worked for the BBC via several people and spent three years building Dr Who props. And this was just a way of funding my practice. And as I moved with my practice, so the phones started to ring and people said 'Where are you teaching? Would you like to come and teach with us?' And I explained that I wasn't a teacher, I didn't impart any information, that I was more of a researcher and I don't mind coming along for chats. This caused a slight bit of humour, but they said "Well come and chat to your students then." So between 1985 and 1996 I visited almost every art college in Great Britain on a one-off basis. I was never employed by any of them other than Reading University where I ended up doing a day a week.

But then in 1996 I made a very deliberate move in that I rejected being a teacher. I was actually caught talking to myself; all the students were out earning money, which is quite funny. And I realised that my ideal of a college didn't actually exist, that really I was working in a kind of a factory. But the factory was isolated, it was empty. The students were suffering, there was very, very little space, and it was getting cut back more and more. And they were having to go out and earn their own funding or financing, whereas I'd been privileged in being given that by a government. What that did, a knee-jerk reaction was that I withdrew completely. And it wasn't until 2002 when I saw an advert for a Research Fellow at the University of East London that I thought perhaps I might now think again about giving back something that I'd had in the early '70s. And I contacted the University of East London and first enquired as to whether I was too

old, found out I wasn't, and then said "I'm going to come for the interview" and at the interview declared that if I got the position it would be on my own terms. And they said, "Well what is that?" And I said "Well I refuse to actually do teaching. I don't think I've got any knowledge actually to spread, but what I'd like to do is collaborate. I'd like to work with students." And I think what that means is that I'm constantly trying to find new knowledge for my ideas, and the best way of finding new knowledge is actually to talk with other artists. And if I was told in 1971 "Okay, you've decided to be an artist." I was an artist at that point and that I would talk to artists who are often labelled as students.

When I arrived what that meant was I organised a project at the Wapping Pump Station, Wapping Project Space, the Director there is Jules Wright, and I put forward a proposal to her and, then once the proposal had been accepted, came to the University of East London, brought the students together and said "Would we like to work together on a project?" Twenty-two artists put their hands up, and we spent the next five weeks working together to make a situation where I didn't even know the end result. But as practitioners we were all working. And I think the value of that with the students was that they, alongside me, had to justify to a public that were coming into that space, because it was a public event that was taking place, or a process I should say, they were there justifying, not just on my behalf, but also on their own behalf, because they were all so involved in the project. I mean there's a certain safety in the distance of the studio, but if you take students out into the real world where they're making exhibitions I think they glean a little bit extra. And I realised that that sort of success of the Butterfly Project meant that I could get away with a lot more.

And so the students, some of the members of staff here and I - organised a big Sound Festival for students of London. And we had twenty artists who came and visited the site, installed their work, were assisted by the artists here to install that work, and for five days we ran a festival. And the other thing that I have done as a Research Fellow in this position, a privileged position, was to also bring in any project that I'd been involved with and bring that in as a drawing form, because it's a technique that we all share. I mean my world is one of drawings, models and materials and tools. And this seems to be the common denominator between me and what I see around me in this location. And so I bring in my drawings and I talk to the students about the particular plans and ideas I have for this proposal. And they hopefully digest something of my almost questioning to myself, and take that hopefully back to their own situation.

So in a way, as I say, I don't think I disseminate ideas out as knowledge that I have, it's more a case of me saying 'I wonder what would happen if I try this. And you can see the curiosity of the student taking a step closer to me by saying that. And they watch what I do, and in part some of them even come for, as it were, a kind of a placement to my studio, and will work with me for a day or a week or a couple of weeks. And just observe what goes on. And hopefully digest that and take that back to their own working base.

WF: Okay Richard, thank you. Gavin.

GT: So where do you start with all this? I suppose just thinking about my own experience of being a student, it was actually totally different to yours. I really did feel when I went to Chelsea from '85 - '89 (which is the same as Mark). Very much like there wasn't really much going on outside. Yes, there was the need to do part-time jobs to supplement the course, but in a way what I really enjoyed was the mucking in or being in the same space as other people who were making work. And whether that work was art I was never really sure. I think what everyone was doing was just kind of feeling around that area. I mean I don't want to say that it's not possible to make art, or to try and define what art might be, because I think then you are getting into ... difficulties as it is. And also that's why it's immediately difficult to teach art because you get into difficulties through saying that 'it is this or it is that' in terms of giving a definition to them. I think that for me being a student was very much a chance to play around.... and I agree with Mark about this, people taking courses from their homes, or doing sort of satellite courses. I do actually find the idea of that really difficult because I think that for me being in a studio with other

people who are making art I was as much ... I was making or involved in their art as well as my own art ... that what they were making was affecting the way I thought and saw my work. And I know that what I was doing in the studio was actually affecting what other people were doing.

I have to confess that in the very recent past I've done very little teaching. I've found it really difficult to afford the time. I've been very busy putting together a studio and trying to get my own work up to speed. And having to go and do days of teaching on a semi-regular basis I was difficult.

And now coming back to what Richard was saying about having people working for you. I now have a studio with about four or five people that are working for me who have recently graduated, so in a way I am offering a kind of apprenticeship. Although I myself didn't have any sort of apprenticeship I was lucky enough to go straight from my failed MA situation through one exhibition later, sold a piece of work, and was able to put that money back into keeping things going. I did do my time on the dole, but just scraped my way through and was able to have financial support. I did find myself working with a gallery that was up and coming, my relationship with the gallery was quite strange because I don't have the same ideas about what art should be. I think that I have quite a different kind of agenda working with the gallery is quite difficult, although obviously it has its benefits. It isn't something that comes easily to me.

I've always kept returning to this ideal European or American model where you get studios where people work under Professors. I've never experienced it, and I've never actually been into any of these colleges and seen what it's really like in practice, but I've always had this great idea that this is really a professional or proper way of organising it. And it's not something that happens here. Although obviously we're finding that what we are doing or what we're not doing is actually having some sort of value ... is actually working. I mean I think that there is heightened discourse, that there is a heightened conversation, that there is a heightened expectancy I think for younger artists, for artists that are at universities, colleges, art schools, that there is an expectancy that they can come out and have a place to communicate, to put work into. That there are spaces and organisations that can accommodate them in the different ways that they might be producing work.

And obviously it's a totally ridiculous idea to teach art, it's a sort of oxymoronic thing. But I think that obviously you can say to people 'I can't teach you.' And that in itself is an interesting or an important thing to learn. I think it probably was the lesson that I learnt when I ended up at college which was that the person I thought was going to come in that day just didn't turn up. And in a way one of the things that was great about that was that what I realised was that I had got to a point in my own education where the education was my own. It was something that I had to construct and it was something that ... I had to see the possibilities that were there and in a way go and take those off the shelf as it were. I saw the department I was [moving] from where it had free materials when I started, to the students having to pay for all their materials by the time it finished, in three years. So on an economic scale it took an amazing shift. .... I wanted to ask a question really. If there are questions from students later on in the day, maybe this is something that will come up after lunch, where are we trying to get to with this panel?

PC: I should just say we have got a small group of students here already.

GT: Well the sooner the better.

WF: Well I feel that a number of really interesting and important issues have been raised by everybody and I think they should be indexed so we keep a grasp on some of the things that emerge from this morning's discussion.

GT: I've got something else I want to say. I just today I suddenly found myself thinking whether I might need to make a studio within my studio where I can go away and work on my own, because I'm working in public the whole time. I've got six people who are all continually

around me. Checking out my phone conversations and basically taking part in every decision I make. I just this morning found myself thinking yes, you know maybe I need to make another studio somewhere else where I could go and hang round. This was like a response to this thing about solitude. I need some of that. You were saying that some people maybe don't just teach because they need to get to meet people.

WF: That in itself is an interesting model where you're not in your studio on your own, you're working with other people collaboratively, or you're gaining advice or help from them. And just the thing I did earlier, a book about the Mike Smith studio, is another case in point where the artist's own studio wasn't sufficient to realise the work, so artists associated with the so called new 'Brit Art' such as Damien Hirst, had to go to this guy called Mike Smith to help them construct and get the expertise to do things. So that's interesting and I think we should talk about it, but shall we break now and then come back?

.....

## FORUM

WF: So welcome to more students that have come, and I think you complete the loop and we would feel quite deprived if you weren't here, so please feel free to chip in. But can I just say that the order of the afternoon will be that the panel have made their statements this morning and they were asked as artists/teachers to give an account of their practice and its implications and applications to teaching in the art school context. Now I want to just run round some points that they made and I think from then on it's open to everybody here.

So we went around the table and the first person who talked about his work was Shezad. I'm just going to summarise some of the key points that were made by some of our speakers. I'd like to think it will be open to discussion, and the first person I'm going to summarise is Shezad Dawood. And Shezad started to talk about his experience at art school as one of confrontation really, of fighting the tutors, I think he said, of it not being a simplistic relationship of the tutor/student. He was concerned with international engagements and the problem of the lack of equivalents which was that of people in the art school who shared his own desire to not be reduced by hierarchies and he wanted to engage in ways in which he wanted to. And Shezad didn't feel he wanted to engage in administrative activities which a lot of staff don't, who come from fine art practice. And he had other examples where he ended up being as interested in a relationship he had with Leeds College of Art, or School of Art, where he had a distance relationship where he (had) would give sound-bites on a mobile phone to students as an alternative to being in the studio on a day in/day out basis. But believing strongly in the idea of extended practice, so that the artist in his view is not someone who just did one thing and that's something that's important, I'm pleased that he's raised it, the multidisciplinary nature of practicing as an artist at this moment in time. He called it extended practice which incorporated performance, text, but also teaching. So teaching was part of the practice. Now that's interesting I think, and I'd like to think that that is registered strongly as a model, because I've heard this before as a concept. So it was the idea of the artist in the situation like this or other art schools being a loose dynamic and not being ground down by that of the administrator and the manager. But he talked about nevertheless providing professional practice to students. Now there's not much time now to go into that because I'm curious about what that means. But anyway, we'll come back to that.

Let's carry on to Mark Hampson and Mark came into art schools in the 1980s and complained, maybe it wasn't a complaint, but it was a characterisation of when you wanted to talk to tutors you had to make an appointment at the Chelsea Arts Club or the local pub. And then you could talk to people like John Hoyland who described being an artist as 'to survive you've got to be either a rat or a pigeon, or you get into teaching.' So apart from the joke there, there's a sense of the toughness that was the perception of being an artist if you did art in the 1980s and went

through art schools. However he enjoyed the role of teacher as having a social function, and how valuable it was to witness the transformation of people's minds. He cited a student he had who when he arrived could only say 'Fuck' to everything, but ended up reading Foucault. So there was a real transformation as an example. But also the idea of balance as being a primary factor in how you negotiate your way as an artist through teaching. And I'll get on to talk about the dangers, but with your practice it's very demanding, you leave college, you want to go and practice so you'll hopefully want to go into your studio, but then you get a day a week in an art school and the demands start to increase. And we all know staff who seem to be over-committed and the job becomes their life. So I think he mentioned this term which I hadn't heard before called 'commitment management'. So you had to know about commitment management which I thought might be to do with over-teaching. So the other thing is the idea of the art school not being a place where people's aspirations are diluted, also he mentioned the idea of art schools being quite conservative places, and I think that's interesting because I think they always have been in a way. And I think there was an idea suggested that there was a time when they weren't and when it was easier to be a maverick. I think you're probably referring to the '60s but I'm not sure when that was. But anyway. Speedily on to Susan Stockwell who's sitting at the end of the table here, who talked about..

GT: One thing that Mark said when he was looking for a model of how to teach (because obviously one of the things here is about how people teach), he said that the best you could do is just look at the teachers that had taught him that he thought were good, to sort of set his standards on.

MH: Another point I felt was quite important to look at which was about cultural absorption and the whole idea of peer-group influence, and how we don't just supply the teaching; the teaching is supplied by the student body as well.

WF: So now to Susan. And Susan talked about the way in which she used materials to begin with, and how she's interested in mapping global concepts and working with history. But she talked about enjoying the idea of a sabbatical. And quite apart from what she does in teaching this is interesting because there is a fund for sabbaticals for teachers supplied by the AHRB as well as by institutions. And one of the characteristics of that is how liberating it can be, as Susan described it, to actually move out of the constraints of the teaching situation and get back into the studio, and to get back in touch of the intimacy and involvement of her practice. So that's interesting in the way that the relationship between commitment in terms of the teaching situation, but then commitment in terms of practice, your own practice. So there's a tension there, not sure what the answer is, but anyway, it was raised by not only Susan but many other people. However, she also said that when she went into her studio I think she missed teaching, and the interaction with students, the dialogue and debate. And then you went on to talk about working with kids in Stockwell itself and how you got a lot out of that. And that immediately raised interesting ideas about working outside of the bricks and mortar of the art school and going into external situations and working. But finally there was a comment about we're here because we're practitioners and the idea of being able to change thinking is seen as being very valuable. And I think that's a key point. Tamiko at the end of the table... sorry, just going back to Susan, I thought there was an interesting tension building up between views coming from Susan and what would come later from Tamiko who I thought would say things such as she would articulate the position of being a full-time member of staff running a department.

TO: I'm not a full-timer.

WF: Well you're a Head of Sculpture. But the idea of Susan not wanting to engage any more than is absolutely necessary with the so-called admin and the ticking boxes and wanting to come in and do the teaching, engage with the creative job of teaching, but not doing anything more. And with Tamiko, she's grown up with teaching and with practice, and I thought this was a very optimistic and positive view. So there wasn't a tension between the two things necessarily, there wasn't 'I'm a practitioner or I'm a teacher'.

TO: Yes, maybe.

WF: The two things were very much one, which I thought was very interesting. So the two things had grown up together. So it's a very positive view. And she pointed out quite rightly that Fine Art and teaching Fine Art is not fixed subject, its not fixed canon. [?] And this comes back to issues I mentioned earlier which was to do with what you teach. What is the curriculum? Well there isn't a consensus about that. But the activities of annoying each other, arguing, collaborating on practice seemed to be where it resided in her view. And she cited, if I can name names, not wishing to embarrass anyone, Peter Cobb as a good role model, as a context where students and staff could work together and where students weren't inhibited and weren't restricted and could then function productively and creatively.

So then we went on to Richard Wilson who had a pretty good delivery I seem to remember. And Richard has had an interesting kind of relationship with teaching because he hasn't actually adopted the model of teacher as most others of us have. And he talked about how the most valuable moments for him were the weekends when he was a student at Hornsey when he actually went and worked with artists. And I think he made in 1996 a conscious decision not to teach. But he, like artists like Jake and Dinos Chapman, actually worked with artists at weekends and evenings and we're told that that's where their primary experience and knowledge came from. And I think that's interesting but also problematic because it raises issues about what they did during the teaching day in terms of what they got from it. But I suppose one argument could be that the context was created during the art school day, but at the weekends they got the 'meat' from the people they worked with as professional artists.

PC: Are you quoting Richard here?

WF: No. Richard in terms of having a relationship with students and he then engaged a project which was based here where he'd work with students having got the Fellowship I think, where he stated quite clearly at his interview that he wouldn't teach them but he would work with them on projects. And that's what I think he's done since. And I think he said he took students out into the real world. So that's another issue that revolves around this whole relationship between the teacher and student.

Finally Gavin, who talked about not having been full-time in art schools, and you will correct me Gavin, but you enjoyed I think the collaborative experience of working with others. And you described it as a chance to play around, and as a collective activity. And now you have... sorry just before I go on, in the notes it was interesting it was described as an 'uneven relationship' with the Royal College of Art. Yeah, well I thought it was a carefully chosen phrase. But then it moves into the idea of practicing artist where he has four or five people working for him in a studio which to them is rather like the students Richard's worked with: it is part and parcel of an education process.

GT: Well not, they are actually artists that work in my studio who have recently graduated. They are recent graduates who work in the studio. [ - ] I'm obviously able to benefit from their creativity in my practice, and it's possibly as difficult a situation as being a teacher and giving your creativity over to teaching and, possibly, not fulfilling some of your potential as an artist.

MH: Unless you'd like to stop that situation.

GT: I hope that most of them see it as a chance to get in behind the scenes. I don't see any of them staying in the studio forever. I feel that there is a turnover of people that will work at the studio.

WF: Gavin [also] cited the European [and] American models, of the Master so [ - ] the famous artist [who] comes in three times a month and just is a presence there and talks as much or as

little as he or she wishes and then otherwise you're left to your own devices or you have teaching assistants. The new culture of Research Fellows that the AHRB have funded has provided that to some extent.

So what we need to do now is open up to questions.

Student: I want to go back to the point about culture absorption and also I want to go back to the point about connection with commercial industries and galleries. And I would ask the panel to elaborate on that point in relation to your practice as an artist, and also how you engage with that relation as teaching in a typical art school context?

MH: My fear about cultural absorption is in the kind of ambitions of institutions and the people who write the structure of education is that it's very rarely spoken about. So we have buildings that are designed without the consultation of people who are going to be teaching in them as an example. We're cutting corners all the time in order that projects with ambition can't be facilitated. And I also think for me it's what we spoke about earlier that often you learn as much if not more from your peer group, from being around the subjects, seeing how someone else approaches it, just trying to see whether it suits, that it fits. And often one of the great things that art school offers is the luxury to fail within a culture structure, a support network. And I think we're in danger of losing some of those opportunities by questioning the site as a place of value, and I know this is something you were interested in Richard...

RW: Are bricks and mortar of an art college actually of value, and is it possible to think about an art college without the building? I personally don't think it is. I've evaluated it myself and seen how it might run, but only for a couple of weeks or months. I think it's doomed as a failure because you need a nucleus where you can share, otherwise it's too disseminated amongst us.

SD: I think you need the institution but maybe to destabilise it? I think like you say it becomes a project-by-project basis. But I think to go to the second part of your question, relating it to Gavin's point earlier about the difficulty of defining art or what might be art practice, and I think that difficulty, like enshrining failure, you need to enshrine that difficulty, the very fact that it's problematic is for me the heart of it. And also what you were saying about how artists relate to it, the institution, to the commercial system. For me it's a whole series of negotiations with institutions, galleries, curators, collaborators, and those might be your colleagues on a staff or students as collaborators. I think that Richard made that point. I don't see students as students and me as a tutor. We're all artists, I might just have a bit more experience, or a different experience that I can bring to the table, and maybe that's why I'm in there. You know I really like your model of the Wapping project.

RW: I think there what was important to me is that it's fundamental that whenever I've been in any teaching situation it's the notion of conversation. And that sounds a little bit casual, a bit relaxed, but I think it's only in the casual and relaxed that you get the essence, the nuggets of the points. Because people are relaxed enough to divulge that information. So for me I've always felt the most important thing was how can I enthuse a student or an artist? And the best way of doing that is if I'm excited, number one. Therefore I've got to lay down the parameters by which I work best, and then I'm enthusiastic. And if I'm enthusiastic that's contagious. I know that, I can certainly get people motivated if I'm enthusiastic. I didn't feel coming back to Bill's summary about myself; I didn't feel by '96 that I was enthusiastic any more. And that was for a whole series of issues based on my own work and what I was seeing going on in art colleges. But I think for me the prime nugget is the sense of enthusiasm which has got to be somehow contagious enough to watch it being picked up. And as soon as you see it being picked up, I can perform better.

MH: You need to retain that enthusiasm by being connected to something beyond the institution don't you? And I think that's often the danger that the lecturers get into that they're so swamped by the experience of being here that they haven't got the energy to be participant in

something else. And then they've got nothing to offer. And that's where the protection of the balance of time and the protection of subject becomes crucial.

GT: I think also it's important for me to remember why I got into art, and it was possibly because there wasn't a lot of other things that I could do. And in a way it was also like something that I felt I could resist against. And I think I probably went down the Fine Art course because I hadn't actually made a decision to do anything else. In a way it was almost like an anti or slightly oppositional thing to do. And I think that I do try in my work to make oppositional... slightly antagonistic work, and this makes it very difficult because how can you teach antagonism and how can you construct a college that works collectively and well together homogenously if everybody is all the time trying to dismantle the constructions and the fabric of the institution.[?] And so it makes it very difficult and it makes it a very sensitive thing to teach. And I think it does probably rotate around issues like certain kinds of energy. And I think that it really is... I just think that you can't, you almost can't prescribe or you can't communicate in a succinct way the best way to operate on a teaching level with art. I think it probably does come down to quite esoteric things like it makes me energetic. I feel excited about certain issues. And I think that obviously it is a discussion. I think it is all a discursive....

MH: Something that can never be quantified is the personality of teaching. And often personality is the thing which can make all the difference between connecting and not connecting and influencing a student. But it seems that that's never taken into account in any assessment of the practice and the culture. I mean we don't see that in a PG Cert prescribed course. Most of the big personalities in teaching would rather stick pins in their eyes than go on a course like that. Because all it does is teach you how to deliver minimal information to large groups of students in small spaces. It's ridiculous.

MB: I'm Martin Barrett a teacher at UEL. A few years ago I went to a Fine Art conference and one of the questions that was asked was 'What is it that Fine Art courses do? What is their aim?' One of the classics statements was 'we teach artists?' And we had a long debate about this and one of the questions raised is whether you can teach artists or whether artists are born. From my experience of art schools it's like this kind of place where you pick up the vibe. It was a place where I was enabled to access my imagination in a way that no other type of experience had ever given me, certainly not a school. And I think that's... the whole idea of going to art school to access your imagination, and maybe in the fullness of time if you're really lucky you might make art. But that seems to me to be the role of that. And it's this whole area between what's art and what's education, and I think it's a blurred edge.

MH: The majority of people who come to art school aren't going to become artists, but they are learning lots of valuable transferable skills, aren't they? They're learning how to articulate, they're learning how to think, they're learning how to think creatively. And I think that's a major part of what we're delivering.

RW: I was going to agree with that, ... take the premise that everyone's born with an imagination which I believe they are, by the time they've decided to work within let's say the notion of the creative skills, what you've got to do is actually develop (it sounds very formal) but a series of exercises, which goes back to the subjective levels of enthusiasm, stuff like that. You can actually get that imagination to develop by allowing people to see into what it is they have through a series of exercises that you might give them. And I don't want it to sound formal because my premise on teaching wasn't of that stance that you would give subject matter to study, but if you can entice them into looking in a particular kind of way so they can discover they have this ability, then that becomes quite exciting. And that's where it goes back to the collaborative role again. Because I think energy in numbers and I think it's actually quite a brave thing to do. And I think just earlier on there was a mention about understanding failure. I mean the art school nowadays doesn't really look at that so much. I mean we're all human beings and we're all prone to a certain amount of failure. You've got to find ways in which people can be helped along through that.

PC: It's just a lot of people have been talking about students being introduced to the world outside or behind the scenes, having a studio. For example, Richard did the project at Wapping which I was involved with, which I thought was incredibly valuable. But the context for the students was also they have support and time when the discussions would focus on their work. And to me you seem to be slightly evading the kind of nitty gritty of how you teach Fine Art, how you actually engage with the student's own experience. Sure it's invaluable to be involved in other people and to develop that, but the point comes where we actually... personally I think that you can teach art and you do, and I hope ...we do it all the time.

TO: I just wanted to say something about really the business of the personality and actually I think that's really valuable but I also think we're slightly forgetting what the students are bringing to the table here. We're talking about what we're doing and our input but actually a lot of the time it's about listening, it's about drawing something out from somebody. It's not always about establishing the situation where... you see what I mean? I mean they actually come with something.

WF: I have this problem with this notion of personality.

SG: I'm a Principal Lecturer in Fine Art at the University of Brighton and I've been teaching Fine Art since the late '60s so I've been every kind of role model in that thing. But I do think that what we don't give ourselves credit for . . . is the way that we actually teach, because we have so many different learning styles. And in fact it suits all different types of students, because sometimes we're talking at them, sometimes they'll have their own voice, and sometimes it's a mixture. And I think that is one of the things that I don't think we ever give ourselves credit for.

SD: It's funny because I was almost thinking with your question: can it be said? Can it be taught? I think that relates as well because I think it's a very different dynamic to anything else that is taught within a specific science. You know what you were saying earlier Richard about somebody like a ...a sportsperson being told... Or an instrument yes, I mean you learn scales, there's a very set kind of . . . then you go off and be creative, but you're chucked in at the deep end with art education and how do you go about it. And I guess within that there's so many different models of teaching. Gilbert and George's famous quote about art tutors just being sounding boards was always a strong one for me. Whenever I give a lecture I try and end by saying 'totally disregard anything I say if you want to, but know why you want to'..

WF: Because clearly we're not talking about the transference of a bit of knowledge from one person to another, a sounding board is a nice, but 'Gilbert and George' idea, but the idea of personality is slightly problematic because it means that whoever can play to the gallery can teach and get the students,

SS: Personality can be useful at times, but you have to be adaptable and change your style of teaching, because it's also important to take your ego out of the equation sometimes and give that space to the student. Because if you keep saying 'This, this' and pushing yourself forward you're not giving them the space. So I think that it's really important to actually sometimes take yourself out of it almost to be able to stand back to give students the space to do that.

WF: But the student would have to submerge their ego while working for Richard.

RW: That's part and parcel of the experience of, say, coming to me - alongside the notion of the seminar, the workshop, the one-to-one etc. what one is giving is variety, a spectrum of teaching from which I think as adults one is picking - using the [methods] you feel necessary to further your imagination and experience of making work.

MB: I've got a quote: 'Happiness is somewhere [in] the space between your abilities and your ambitions'. Your ambition is to make something that you can never quite achieve. It's failure that you learn from.

Student: I can get what I want from different tutors and not just one personality. And when I have a bad tutorial; this can help me. That openness. My question is how do other schools work?

MH: I think most institutions in this country are on a similar model to UEL, where you are assigned a personal tutor and then you are exposed to a wider community of contributors. I can't speak for everywhere but it is certainly the case at the Royal College, and there are levels in the teaching, some of which is one on one, it's very personal. Then there is a wider seminar programme which is about extending the dialogue, and then there is a whole college wide programme which is actually lecturers delivering things to you, where it's not so much about an open dialogue, it's more about learning from what's offered to you. Yeah, and I think, just picking up on your point, I think one of the reasons that that's such a useful culture, is that rejection for a student is as important as kind of acceptance of ideas. You form your position by discarding some things offered.

SD: Gavin mentioned, the Professor system, and I was wary. Because the fact that one tutor could tell me that something I'd done was crap and someone else would be really encouraging. That space in between became the space for my own thinking to develop and to gain ground and to realise that I had the choices.

WF: But isn't there a problem being raised here which is to do with the fact that you know you have the institution, you have the bricks and mortar, you have the staff who are paid to come here day in day out. Then you have exotic bits on the edge that are wonderfully rich and wonderfully rewarding, and how are the two things reconciled? Because of course leaving the bricks and mortar and going to a practicing artist's studio is going to be wonderful, it's going to be a different experience, but then you come back and have to do things. So how are these extremes reconciled?

GT: I think that the educational space, we'll call it that is like a micro-culture and you just have to construct the right kind of ethos. Throughout the fabric of the building, to people that are mopping the floors and cooking the food. And if you have that then the right kind of learning takes place.

RW: Not just to justify my position, but I think what I attempted was a certain familiarity and safety [ - ] to dip yourselves into the situation which was less familiar. (Because you're going to be doing that anyway in the future). I felt that it was a moment where you're taken from what is familiar and what you know.

Another point I see it as incredibly democratic here when I chose to go to college you'd have a list of colleges around Great Britain [that] represented particular strata of thinking: if you went to Coventry you were going to be a conceptualist and work with a typewriter, if you went to St Martin's you were going to work with architectural off-cuts and weld them together for three years. There was a whole gamut of styles find. I think what's great now is that you can go to any college and they seem to have all of that under one roof. You know you can do whatever you want. There's a freedom, there's a democracy about making and playing with ideas.

TO: Tension's actually pretty important too, isn't it? Between my art practice and my teaching there's a tremendous tension all the time. And that's quite fruitful and useful to me.

WF: You seemed to live with both sides of that coin. Whereas other staff want to escape from the teaching scenario once they've got the sabbatical and they're relieved, you seem to have reconciled the two things,

TO: Well maybe on a good day, it's true, that is true, yes.

WF: I'd like to know a bit more about what's happening here.

PC: I think it's unquestionable that there's a fantastic value when a group of people get together and are working on a project, not necessarily a collaborative piece. For example the show that recently happened at Trinity Buoy Wharf or the Second Year Show that was in this space. All those kind of things where there's an energy generated by a group of people which does not happen in the same way individually. That's something happening within art schools in general, that is complementary to the things that Richard was talking about.

RW: [Yes.]

MH: There's a contradiction there though because one of the things we want to instil in the students is independence so they're able to operate in professional life. So it goes back to Bill's point about a contradiction between external and internal things, because a lot of practices aren't appropriate for working collaboratively.

PC: There's energy and commitment having work ready for a certain date a. And it does produce different kinds of results than when people are just working on their own.

WF: Can I bring in Andy and then Stroud.

AY: It seems possible that we're back in the situation we were in at the beginning of the last century. In other words, there is a consensus in our art schools that the subject to be studied is led by the students - the role of the tutors being either as a sounding board or reactive. If you look at the last century you would see various efforts to move away from that particular model. Two decades ago I met an HMI when I was teaching part time. At lunchtime I said 'How is it going? What do you think of the course?' And he said 'What course?' which I didn't think was a very promising, and I said 'But I think it's excellent' and he said 'There is no course here. Or if there is it walks around in the head of your tutors. If those tutors should fall ill there is no more course.' this was a completely new perspective. I said 'Well what's a good course?' And he said 'I think the best course would be something rather like a bus. If a particular driver is ill somebody else drives the bus.' Now that concept I think has failed. It's certainly not implemented anywhere, but it's an extreme way of posing the problem of having, a discipline which is, almost entirely dependent on the students saying 'Here's what I'm trying to do. Will you react to it?'

SD: A contradiction between institutional practice and outside Researchers or Fellows coming in and creating projects in a more expanded field comes into play there, because I think perhaps you might have... that's where the contradiction might be resolved... I have a similar post to Richard in Leeds and I was thinking about how to approach this they were open to more radical ways of interacting with students. The project I initiated there is recent I don't know if it will fail. I set them a project to set up an independent space within Leeds and to make networks with the local council, local property developers etc. they were suddenly having to deal with council regulators, property developers. To use me as a resource. They're phoning me or they can e-mail. If they have run into difficulty I can advise them based on my own very fresh experience of my own practice etc. I went up was to spend two days walking around Leeds. I think I did a few illegal things, like they broke into squats it was frontline teaching. For me was a really interesting way to take it forward.

WF: Okay, I'm pleased you've said that, but, certain questions were raised in my mind, because by spending the amounts of time that you have to spend dealing with planning, organisations and with bureaucratic situations you would be central to the administration of that course. But you seem to dismiss that and say that 'I'm a loose dynamic. I don't want to have anything to do with that.' But here you are talking about *doing* it. I don't think it's very positive or

truthful to separate out what we do as creative practitioners from those other things. It's hugely presumptuous to think that there's some line of people behind us to kind of pick up those pieces. And if you're setting up all those kinds of projects and all those issues and problems and then you distance yourself, who's going to deal with all that?

SD: I see it as loose and engaged. There are points where they can arrange when I'm up there to set up a meeting with a property developer. There are fallbacks like that. They have all their own staff to draw on, and it's a group of students who put themselves forward to be engaged on this. I was very interested in a democratic role by instigating it and then leaving it to them to make decisions.

WF: But other people might be doing the boring bits.

SD: But what are the boring bits here?

WF: The administrative bits that you say you don't want to do.

SD: I was talking about day-to-day administration in the institution. Should I be organising student reps?

WF: I wasn't seeing such a distinction between those two things.

SD: I teach the Professional Practice module at Westminster University. For me there it's very much about getting students up to speed with the realities of the art world. So I draw on visiting lecturers who work as curators, writers, as artist-curators, who to give students different ideas of possibility, openings, and to go back and question their own practice and its limitations.

WF: As I say I'm being devil's advocate.

SD: Being devil's advocate.

MH: It's the real deal in the contemporary climate. One of the things we're neglecting is a real hunger out there, within the student body, for fundamental skills. The institutions aren't often taking responsibility for the teaching of technique...processes...

WF: What fundamental techniques?

MH: Drawing, in processes, in paint techniques, applications, seeing . . . the arsenal of skills that artists are reliant upon.

RW: How to get from an idea to a reality.

MH: [Yes.] Richard said before how he felt connected to the student body through drawing and ways of looking at ideas, but I think it's neglected within art schools. When I taught here there were lots of students who [asked] 'When are we going to learn about technique?' I said 'Well what did you learn on Foundation?' And they didn't have the creative skills at their fingertips. They often don't at undergraduate [level] and they arrive at postgraduate [level] under-equipped in specialisms,

AY: One of the areas where the shoe pinches is attitudes to measuring what learning might go on it might be interesting to have the panel comment on the extent to which they have faith in systems of assessment and grading, [ - ] whether these are helpful for students or not.

WF: The panel.

TO: Modular systems which have assessment criteria/learning outcomes etc follows on from school where a lot of things are modularised and you get grades [ - ] attempts to be transparent. But the way, most of the people who delivering the courses have been taught, is where the assessment happened at the end and wasn't discussed much for the other three years. So there's this real shift in culture

RW: Hasn't that come through accountability [ - ] the fact that students now pay?

PC: I don't think it's the money. One's always been very accountable if one's failed somebody. It's something that's only ever been done with a great deal of discussion and concern.

RW: I can never remember it being so intense as it is now. There's more teaching about filling out forms.

WF: Stroud Cornock...

SC: Thanks Bill. One of the things that struck me about the discussion is level. Let's remind ourselves. If this were another subject like, say, Geology this conversation would be unimaginable. There is a curriculum and a syllabus for Geology. A body of text books with references. You go to Philadelphia university [and] it'll be the same as going to Preston University in this country. It will be. Maybe we need to think about the way you study them at undergraduate level. And then a change of gear to postgraduate level. What Gavin, Richard and Shezad [were] describing, is akin to the way you go about studying by research, very much at postgraduate level. It seems to me that if you were going to have a curriculum that says 'Let's teach people some of the fundamentals, the knowledge of printmaking, sculptural techniques, how to use Adobe Photoshop, drawing and so forth' I'd be interested not only to hear what the panel feel about this apparent gulf between the levels of practice in this subject, but also what the students feel about it.

WF: Do any students want to respond to that? Yes.

Student: Maybe you should be obliged to be giving us something to go away with apart from this kind of vague feeling that you've passed on an experience perhaps we should demand we come away with very good technical drawing skills or whatever we feel is appropriate

MH: What do you think is appropriate?

Student: You can't say everyone's going to want the same skills.

MH: Speak about your own interpretation.

Student: I do expect to have improved on with fundamentals of drawing and of composition, of colour theory and that kind of thing. And also just have the confidence to step into the different fields a little. We don't discuss the philosophy behind Fine Art.

WF: I hope the tutors are taking note.

TO: That doesn't sound familiar to me I have to say. A study 'A Curriculum for Artists' recently found a lot of consistency [ - ] in that most courses run Professional Practice very much as in the way it's being described, where curators are brought in and there's a discussion around the practicalities of how you make applications, how you document your work etc. And there are things about drawing that are discussed. There is a curriculum.

Student: Being in my third year, those things that I came into university thinking that I would need, I don't need them now. My practice has changed so significantly

Student: Another question is whether or not the profile of students has changed over the time that they have been teaching. Because as a mature student you come in with a set of different criteria perhaps.

WF: I think the point you raised is important

WF: At the end of the day it's about how to have exhibitions, how to externalise yourself. Okay, how do I have an exhibition at White Cube?

TO: I suppose what I'd say about professional practice which does get much maligned is it's at its best when it's laying out what the territory is and what the issues are. It's not saying 'this is how you do it, if you want to show here you do it like this'. It's saying 'well what are the issues around showing in a place like this? What are the arguments? What are these curators saying? What angle are they coming from?' So it's actually exposing you to the arguments and the discussion.

SD: When I inherited the professional practice course I teach it was straight down the line. What I've tried to do is put in questions like 'would you even want a show in White Cube?' what does it mean to show in White Cube beyond the fact of being a high profile artist ... who sells for a lot of money and might appear in certain gossip columns? What are the philosophical, or ethical implications? I'll bring in an independent curator who's maybe playing with more political ideologies just to show that you have the choice. You can do either. And it's up to each person to decide which way they might want to take it. But, I do try and put in a bit of 'If you do want to go down this route at least have a good set of slides, and don't turn up on the reception desk and go "Hi, I'm an artist"!

WF: We have a speaker over here.

Student: I was going to ask, how you relate your practice to the theory courses they're taking? Do you actually talk with art historians?

SS: In Farnham, the Theory staff do studio teaching as well, so that we each talk all the time about what the students have, what theory they're looking at and how that applies to the studio practice. The Theory tutors come and see what they're doing in the studio.

MH: You build up a network of contacts. We might have talked together, we might have been students together, we might have gone to the same institution. So it's a pretty small community. So I think we all recognise that you have to have a responsibility for a substantial awareness of what's going on within and around the subject. I haven't got an in-depth knowledge of Foundation courses, (I teach purely at postgraduate level), but I'm still curious, I still want to know what's going on.

Student: You're saying that a lot of skills have disappeared. Isn't that a part of what the Foundation course should be doing? And is it somehow a Postgraduate Professor's duty to have a discussion with Foundations as well and try to bring it back somehow into Foundation?

MH: Yes certainly, but it's how much influence as individuals you can have on the curriculum. Because at that Foundation level it's become quite an impoverished experience because they're crunching such massive numbers [ - ] it's about dilution of culture. Those courses haven't got time to really concentrate in depth on the grammar, on the foundation skills. So then it's expected that will be picked up at Undergraduate, and the ball keeps moving.

TO: How long will Foundation courses survive? Maybe we need to be having discussions with people who are delivering AS and A level?

Student: Education constantly is changing. It's confusing. Would you say that's true say with Art, how it's changed so much?

TO: Your question made me think about is a kind of audit culture coming up through school, [ - ] I'm having discussions now with students about 3% differences which I definitely didn't have six years ago. That there are people saying 'But why did I get 55 and not 57'? They're really picking up on things, and arguing 'Well why didn't I get a First for this?'

WF: It's here; we're in the audit culture!

TO: It's coming from above and from underneath.

WF: Everything is assessed in relation to norms it's a reality we have to live with.

MB: When I went to college there was one member of staff to nine students, and now it's twenty-five to one. They talk about mass education. Actually I don't think the two words go together. I think we're in a mass qualification culture because we are actually selling education abroad now. But I still think Fine Art offers the best sort of education funnily enough. I think, as a friend of mine who studied Classics once said, it's an education that teaches you nothing but teaches you everything.

Student: I left university thinking well I don't have any skills. And then I started thinking that I do have creative skills, I do have project management skills, I can work independently. Maybe because I was a mature student I could step out and objectively assess my skills. Those [ - ] intangible skills about thinking, and applying your thought process. Employers pay a lot for that. That's if you're not going to be a practicing artist. I mean that's how I justified my student loan and paying to do a Fine Art degree.

Student: Personally I don't want to go away with skills for employment; I want to go away with skills for my practice (and perhaps for teaching), because Fine Art is what I want to be doing with my life.

SD: When I was at college it was still that time when there was a lot more space for conversation. A lot of the time we'd sit around in the studio just talking. Very little making was done you'd then have a burst and make something as it came up to some show or deadline. That was a luxury. I really enjoyed it. But it didn't prepare me for a lot of things I now try and introduce into what I teach from the harsh realities of experience of trying to be successful as an artist, I probably bore my students when I teach them Professional Practice saying 'I wish I'd had this.' There's a lot of basic skills like preparing slides for submission, how to write statements about their work, how to give presentations on their work.

Student: That's what I was talking about.

SD: 'Skills' can veer from that into intangibles like project management, how to instigate something creatively which could pan out into all sorts of fields. I even tell people 'even if you don't end up being an artist learning to give a presentation on your work and ideas is a fantastic skill.' You don't do that in Geology I don't suppose!

WF: Even talking about slides is ancient history now isn't it? Now it's 'can you give them a CD

PC: I wanted to comment on the point made by Anne as a mature student, and you Andy, and also by someone, about learning skills. Mature students as well as younger students are very impatient to be able to quantify what they've learned. It actually takes a long time. The kind of time Shezad was talking about. There are times when things happen very quickly, in [a] linear fashion, . . . [a-b-c-] bingo! But very rarely. . I don't know if it's the same in other disciplines, but it's certainly something that students from other walks of life have to make an effort to learn.

SG: We talked a bit about bricks and mortar, [ - ] whether we need to be physically here, and also we talked about students with different attitudes. A lot of my students work as well so they may not always be here. As a full-time academic. I'm expected to be international - I'm not always here. But at the same time, what we have done is we've created new networks. I don't mind them [students] text messaging me, even if I'm in the States. I'm on e-mail. It's totally different to when I first started when I just wandered around the studios thinking they would be there because they'd be full-time students and they would be there. Now it's not like that. They have to make appointments to see me just as I make appointments to see them. And there is a kind of contract between us I think. I don't know whether anyone else feels it has changed the nature of teaching.

SS: I think the contract is really important because it is two-way. The most important thing is that you have the skill to be able to make a choice yourselves. Do I want to learn to weld or don't I? Will it be useful or won't it? Because there's no point in us teaching you all these things, because most of them you won't use. So it's a choice thing, and it's you being able to make those choices and actually sometimes putting yourself forward and meeting your side of the contract. If I have a tutorial that's arranged at a certain time and the student doesn't turn up then it's very difficult to engage with them.

Student: So isn't it an ongoing learning process?

SS: If you do decide you want to be a practicing artist then you make other decisions: well which way do I want to go? What media do I want to use? Do I need to do a post-graduate course? That constant questioning and reassessing yourself and your own practice, [is] very important. So you've got to have that if you're going to go and be an artist - I think you have to be able to have that.

MH: Lifelong learning, learning beyond college. We were talking this morning about the motivations to get involved in teaching practice, [ - ] I'm continually learning by my involvement in teaching. I think that's a big part of why we all do it [ - ] it allows us not only to formalise our own practice, it's mutually beneficial and we open ourselves up to new approaches and things that we've never thought about.

SS: Well we learn from you. We learn a lot from you. But ... can I just say having a sabbatical isn't a case of saying 'Right that's it, I don't want to teach any more, I'm now having fun.' It's given me a privilege to ask different questions and reflect on my practice teaching,

WF: That's a positive thing. Andy.

AY: The conversation can't ignore is a power relationship between an institution and its students. For example, it always strikes me as odd that institutions never, to allow students to get a degree on the presentation of the appropriate levels of skills. Someone mentioned earlier that the profile of students is changing, that there are people who've got a great deal of prior learning. Yet the most fundamental aspects of our system are the oddest in many ways. Why isn't the course one year long? Why is it three years and not five? In other words the courses carry the characteristics of some kind of initiation rite where you go a certain amount of time into the desert. When you've been through this you're deemed to be one of us.

Student: I feel I'm more of an artist some days when I sometimes don't come in and there's not the two-way connection you mentioned when I miss a lesson due to the fact that say Friday through to Monday morning at 2 o'clock I'd only slept ten hours.

MH: You need to take that up with your personal tutor.

TO: You need to sort out some time management skills and priorities.

WF: A good Fine Art course should be able to negotiate skills appropriate [to] you. This should have been sorted out on Foundation. Art and Design is the only area of education that has a Foundation course, where you should try out a lot of different things. Not just the physical handling of materials but the thinking around it, the concepts around it, the theories around those materials and activities. You should, by the time you start a Fine Art course have reasonable confidence.

RW: I don't think those techniques are ever denied. I think it's very much chicken and egg situation where do you teach someone how to weld and they then get an idea and weld it together or do they come up with an idea and find out that it's welding that's necessary to make the idea possible. Those things are available to anybody at art college; they would never, ever be denied. Unfortunately, there is a lot of demand on technical staff in all colleges now because there are so many students now entering into Fine Art based courses.

SD: You know there are a lot of artists don't actually make their work any more. I'm guilty of that on occasion and I'm quite proud of that. There are certain things where I don't have the skills.

WF: A studio called the Mike Smith studio provides expertise [ - it ] started with the Sensation generation who wanted to put big fish into big tanks and didn't know how to weld the tanks together, Mike Smith allowed them to do it.

SD: Operators are going to create a consultancy to artists to fulfil their ideas.

WF: But also able to solve problems, of a mechanical nature, do you remember Rachel Whiteread's plinth in Trafalgar Square? Enormously complex job technically to make that big resin plinth upside down, Mike Smith made it possible. Now Rachel didn't have that expertise of physicists, scientists in her studio. So she had to then use this guy.

Student: I've experienced the sort of thing where students constantly need to be pushed and reminded. Are all your students perfect?

MH: Even at post-grad level they still want to be led. And I worry about a hothouse flower kind of culture because one of the things we try and promote is independence. And I think the institutions do become quite insular and become little micro cosmoses where you have to check your every move. And that's a culture we need to break and something we need to resist.

SD: Courses are quite short. Most BAs are three years, and an MA is one or two. How are you going to survive beyond that? I think I'm the only person in my year still making art. And what? A lot of people they crash after finishing their BA. ... I teach that on professional practice that people crashing is a standard. - I get fewer and fewer students expecting to be spoon fed, but the ones who do I'm very tough with. And I've had one student once nearly in tears because he expected me to organise his whole second year for him.

MH: He's probably taken as an example the fact that somebody else is making his tutor's work though.

SD: Then he needs to get the plumbing sorted!

Student: The Foundation course I was on made me independent, it was a great advantage, because when we came into university you then had to stand on your own two feet. And it made it so much easier.

Student: I was just interested in what Richard was saying earlier about how in the '70s you went to Coventry to do 'x' and you went to somewhere else to do 'y', and maybe things have become more diffuse, that the personality was quite important at one point.

RW: I think students were very clear about where it was they wanted to go; there was kudos about certain colleges. I think there's a healthy situation in art colleges at the moment. We've got to remember it's still 'university'. For me that is a field of inquiry. Tutors, and students, expect that they've got to become artists [ - ] follow role models probably sat round this table or who they know in the real world. I'd rather see an inquisitive, enquiring mind that can take a visual idea and undo it and play with it and examine every aspect of that, and challenge the knowledge that's already gone before to see new ways of looking at that subject. I'd enjoy having those conversations. And I think one's got to remember that you are students, it is a university, it is about a field of enquiry. You don't have to just constantly stamp out product after product. I think three years of inquisitiveness is as valid in actual fact.

Student: I was studying medicine and I was going to be called a Doctor and whatever, and then I started doing art. It was great because I could just be myself. But I would like to bring up Warhol vs. Johns: Jasper Johns uses skills, painting skills. But Warhol, anybody can do it. You get those kind of fast skills nowadays, more like Andy Warhol. Sometimes I need the skills that Jasper Johns had when it comes to painting. And maybe there's this kind of longing in students now, and more of a longing now in students than before about skills [ - ] not for other people to do them for you, you know.

SD: I dispute that what Warhol did was not highly, highly skilled. Because his operation's across cinema, time, performance, media,

SD: Where that really shows is how more and more artists are being brought in into industry. Me and Richard were saying in the break, [that] artists are getting pulled in by advertising and media companies to give lectures on creative thinking. I was asked to do a lecture at J P Morgan, the investment bank, on the way I think, and how I work. Why is that happening? Why are local councils and governments pulling artists to advise on social and town planning? On areas that range so far and wide? Because there's an adaptability and a fluidity: I see that growing

WF: Historically this is APG's philosophy [Artists Placement Group] of course: the skills of the artists include intellectual skills, which of course is absolutely right. But I think when people were talking earlier about certain practical skills in an art school it always worries me. Because you can't teach the whole index of every kind of skill that's ever been used. But the intellectual and analytical skills are of course, that's what we really should be talking about.

*[breaks for tea]*

WF: I'm going to pose what I think are some of the key points that have come up that are still hovering as questions. There aren't many events that attempt to evaluate the current state of the artist as practitioner within an art college, art institution environment. So: What benefits do you derive by having the practitioner as teacher in the art school?

Student: Having, a practitioner, an artist, is a lot better than having somebody who used to be an artist, because they're dealing with problems on a day-to-day basis when they're creating things.

WF: I should have said a practitioner as teacher as opposed to say the professional teacher that doesn't practice. But does anyone else have any ideas about a response to that question about what are the benefits of having the practitioner teaching you?

Student: It creates less distance between the tutor and student... we can both learn from each other as tutors and students.

WF: I think this is what Shezad was saying earlier. That equality issue.

Student: I think they understand how good it feels when it works and how bad it feels when it doesn't,

WF: So they can feel when it happens, and they can feel it with you.

Student: Yeah, they have the inspiration I suppose, and I think that's very important.

WF: That's good. Any other?

Student: You know they're going to their studios and coming back refreshed having done their own thing. So they're not going to have that kind of hang up that they'll go on to the next level that they never reached.

WF: That they should be working rather than teaching.

Student: [Yes]

AY: If you shifted the discipline to say music, it would frequently be the case that the best musicians would not make the best teachers?

SG: Are we talking about people coming in for very short contracts or are we talking about proportional people? Is there a difference?

WF: Well, I think we're talking about someone that is at least 50% of their time in the studio. I mean the thing is that all full timers now are obliged to practice, and they're practitioners, so let's keep it simple. The people who teach four days out of five can be still as much practitioners as people who teach one day out of four in this particular definition.

Student: The reason why you're teaching me is because the bank will give me a loan, coming to an art institution gives me the ability, not have to work nine to five. So I feel as if one of the reasons for me being here is because the banks exist and will lend me money.

WF: The next question might be: What do we get for our money?

Student: Should you be challenging the teachers with that one really?

WF: Well you're the people who pay for the course.

Student: So we're asking what do we get for our money?

Student: I would say that we get a way of thinking, of critical analysis and a solid way of looking at problems and thinking about them from different angles, and a clearer way of thinking.

WF: That's succinct and very useful.

Student: Use of equipment (which Mark mentioned earlier). So even what we get for our money is actually good value.

WF: Very good, thank you. That's practical.

Student: I think we get intangibles [ - ] hard to quantify in terms of money, there's the shared experience and what we get not only from tutors but also from other students. And the luxury of talking, of having input from other students as well as tutors.

Student: In an institution because you're surrounded by people who think the same as you do, you can get a lot out of it, depending on how you use your time.

WF: Do you want to add anything to that?

Student: Personal growth. You grow and you learn about yourself, whatever age you are, when you come to university.

PC: I was just going to make to point out the fact that we get support to make art, it's a unique situation. Make the most of it. It doesn't happen once you leave. That support you will really value later.

Student: Yes, I just wanted to expand on Pete's thing there. For £1,000 we get a lot.

TO: I think the other thing I remind students of is I'm not going to walk away if I'm bored.

WF: The benefit of dedicated professionals.

MH: You also get access to experience and knowledge of content and context

SG: It's a journey and we go along with them really.

MH: We've all gone through a substantial amount of training and experience to get to this point.

WF: That's very important and I think it should be acknowledged that. It's actually hard to get a job teaching in an art school, and these are people with substantial track records. They're coming into this situation with a lot of baggage, a lot of experience, a lot of knowledge. So that's the benefit you're gaining from the staff in terms of value for money.

WF: Is there or can there be a Fine Art curriculum?

RW: I think there can be, but I think you could never be content with it because as soon as you've got it you've got to question it.

SS: You can have a structure but it has to be constantly challenged,

RW: One's driven by trying to transform it.

WF: So the answer is no?

MH: There shouldn't be a curriculum.

WF: The simple answer is no. We know where we stand on that and people round the table have elaborated.

TO: I think it's complicated.

MH: There certainly has to be a structure. Su's point here is crucial.

TO: Definitely.

SG: Because if you're not careful you could end up by saying because you don't know what it is you're assessing you don't know what you've taught.

AY: You could say that you're concerned with achieving a balance between making and thinking skills. Both are important, it's problematic for a course to achieve the right kind of balance, because it changes from student to student and the balance is different on different kinds of courses. I think that it's a dynamic situation which courses must always assess and reassess to be sure they're not tipping too far in one direction.

WF: Right, I'm going to move onto the next point which my colleague, Stroud, may want to elaborate a bit. Is there a knowledge base in the contemporary art school? And when I say the contemporary art school I mean the here and the now, not twenty/fifty years ago. Is there a knowledge base that you can use to teach art in a contemporary art school?

SC: The reason you call it a university is the knowledge is universal. A 'knowledge base' is something you could put in an encyclopaedia [but] for Fine Art it's not going to be written down in words or numbers.

TA: Skills exist and can be described, but if they're described out of context... I mean a knowledge base without application of that knowledge is fairly useless. And the situation which those two things can be brought together has to be, as Richard's described, a dynamic one. And unless you have that dynamism it's, there's no point in having a knowledge base, and there's no point in having a curriculum. They work hand in hand, they have to be constantly developed and the polarity between them has to be constantly renegotiated.

SC: A quick footnote then. Dave Beech who was one of my students years ago, said that this was a problem of modernism, [ - ] there wasn't a knowledge base because we were in a state of constant revolution which was essentially what Modern Art was all about. It was constant overthrow. So move on twenty years to now, or looking ahead a bit, what's the position now?

TA: Isn't that a very concrete way to view the notion of knowledge base? that's really how we would now view academicism surely. That's what academic art means. So an academic approach, that you have a knowledge base which remains fixed. And I think what we're all saying is that isn't the case, that knowledge is constantly being expanded and renegotiated.. Earlier on I was thinking about what people were talking about in relation to the notion of practical skills. My mother was at art school during the Second World War in Manchester. they were taught all the kinds of separate skills. So she did Lettering, Life Drawing, Anatomy, Painting, Book Illustration, Typography, [ . . . ] all, very practically based and taught skills. Conceptually it was completely empty, there was no such thing. When I went to art school in the late '60s it was the exact opposite of that. There were no taught skills whatsoever and a lot of conceptualisation. Now hopefully we're in a situation where we can marry those things together. But it's a constant recycling and a movement between those two polarities. I think in an ideal art school you have a dynamic situation, which responds to students needs within a particular cultural environment and particular culturally focussed time.

WF: I just want a historical note. In the early '60s they were still taught. I went to Guildford School of Art where there was a day for Lettering, Calligraphy, there was a day for Life Drawing, a day for Painting, a day for how to use paint on the surface.

TA: Well it certainly wasn't what was going on in Newcastle at the time.

WF: Well , I'm talking the early '60s. So it's interesting though that's a line, a point at which things changed. And then of course in the '70s a lot of that was thrown out with conceptual art.

Student: I was going to say you're the knowledge base - around the table here? In our tutors and lecturers and practising artists?.

WF: I understood the knowledge base as being equally theoretical.

AY: I think the knowledge base is in the end ways of thinking and ways of making. But the difficulty with a simple formulation like that is that some are more relevant than others now. There are ways of making that almost no-one wants to pick up or examine.

MH: As a professional artist I tap into skills suggested to me and use them on a regular basis. I might not use them in an expected manner, but it's certainly helped me formulate new approaches.

WF: But the conceptual way of artists working now is practiced in the sixth form. So you might find students coming out of the sixth form finding it all a bit weird, that.

MH: But who's to say how long the situation's going to last?

WF: The idea of a prescriptive curriculum is interesting but I wonder how it would work?

MH: I don't think it should be prescriptive, I think they should be optional. I think skills should be there for people to opt into and that there has to be a broad arsenal of skills and delivery available to the students. And I think that's what this institution does very well.

AY: I think something fundamental has changed in the last decade which is the rise basically of digital media and the impact that has across most of the visual disciplines. We need to acknowledge that that's important and we also need to acknowledge, , the profound difficulties for courses that has also caused in terms of resourcing, [ - ] what is appropriate knowledge to deliver, and when and how.

MH: Do you not feel that before we've already gone over the hill of that and that actually there's a reaction against the digital now? That's certainly true of my experience of teaching in post-graduate printmaking where digital was everything five years ago and lots of other institutions threw out the old mangles thinking that digital had replaced everything and actually it hasn't. It's been another contributing factor to a longer lineage of knowledge. And actually I think that's true of film, that we're seeing lots of people who are interested in what 16mm offers instead of video . And artists are canny, they'll look for quality, they'll look for alternative routes that aren't always technologically led. So as important as digital is, it's not a replacement for anything that already exists.

WF: That's worth reflecting on because I belong to an institution where we recently threw out all the old mangles, the hand processes, the autographic litho etching, now it's just Apple Mac screens. ...

MH: But it's interesting that happened at the RCA a few years ago, and now they're buying back letter press and having to buy back etching presses!

WF: Okay, next generation of art tutors bear this in mind!

TO: Can I just say the idea about knowledge base, I think we're actually doing a disservice to our colleagues who teach in institutions on other subjects. But actually I think that all subjects at university are growing, changing, evolving. That you throw out last year's reading list and you start afresh. Maybe there are some things that you still use, but there are some new things. And surely that's what university means as well. So it isn't this kind of...

SS: Students . . . sometimes say 'I want you to teach me all this digital stuff and I will go and get a job.'

WF: does the institution enable you to learn or does it provide teachers to teach you?

Student: I much prefer, being treated as an adult.

Student: I would say I think it's an environment that enables you, definitely.

WF: But you nominate your fields of enquiry, your paths of enquiry in your learning journey?

Student: Yes, definitely.

Student: We are given choices, I mean obviously you have to be given choices, but definitely yes.

MH: Does that clearly involve teaching?

Student: Yes it does.

AY: Enable is a very passive word. If you replace that with 'encourage' back comes the role of the teacher and the institution.

WF: But it also comes back to the issue of there being no agreed curriculum.

WF: Two final points. Where and what is the site of the art school? Is it the bricks and mortar here? Or Richard's talked about his model off-site. Shezad's talked about the mobile phone. What do you think?

PC: If I could expand slightly on how Richard interfaced with the students. His first influence [was] the fact that he brought a light aircraft into the first year studio, and squashed it! So in a way he took us out but he also came in. And that had a big impact!

SS: You have to have a site, you have to have spaces in order to have all these activities going on. So you have to have a nucleus where we all come together, where there is space, where there are these things that you can dip in and out of. I think it's really important to have that. And only with that can you then go out and bring that back in.

WF: That's my view too.

MH: That building shouldn't exist in isolation, it needs to be connected to a larger cultural community.

SS: Yes, of course.

PC: A very important point that's facing art schools is the fact that Fine Art is very space hungry. It is constantly being clobbered for it. Having to make the argument as to why it's necessary

WF: Andy Yates is talking about another kind of space.

AY: The question I wanted to raise was how far it will be possible to continue with the trends that we're experiencing at the moment. The logical end point might seem to be the on-line art school which occupies no space. So the question I'm posing here is where such a proposition becomes absurd? the space and resources once afforded to art students at a time when only 8% of the population ever got into any higher education. [have] been changing with the goal of having 50% of the adult population in some form of higher education.

SG: I think that whole virtual learning environment is changing things, just like mobile phones or Internet. There is a change.

Student: My daughter's in Australia in university there, and when she comes and visits me here over her summer break she accesses all her grades and everything, she submits everything on-line.

PC: What course is she doing?

Student: She's doing Theatre Directing and Creative Industries it is.

PC: So it's a practical course.

Student: Everybody in the future might just be looking at everything on-line because art has changed to that direction.

AY: Are we talking about the ideal situation here [at UEL]? Because you're alongside Architectural courses who for obvious reasons can't produce buildings, they must produce models of buildings, or find other ways to explore their ideas at a student stage short of actually building a building and having tutors say 'Well it doesn't work does it?' Are we assuming there is some absolute difference in the case of the products of an art school which does not admit to the same sort of rationality?

AY: One can see the pressures on resources and if you like the direction of events means that the reasons why one is asking for certain minimum standards in terms of tutors to students, in terms of resources, those things must be properly articulated and explained or nobody will understand why you're asking for some special favours.

WF: Sorry, this seems like a very opportune moment to bring in Stroud Cornock who, apart from many other activities, has created with the Project Manager an on-line resource of art from art schools, or from practitioners in art schools over many years, but would you like to add?

SC: I hope that anybody that hasn't got familiar with [fineart.ac.uk](http://fineart.ac.uk), (Polly there is the Project Manager), is a website that represents quite a swathe of art education. But I asked if I could just make a brief footnote to Andy's question about an on-line art school. Polly and I the other day were up in Oxford where John Ruskin had teaching going on, teaching of Fine Art practice, not for would-be practitioners but for working men, because he had a deep belief in the need to bring art education and appreciation to the working man in Victorian Britain. And the intriguing thing about this is that he had great trouble in organising things to show students and he would say "Right, there's this, this and this. Now I want you to go away and I want you to draw this and I want you to paint that and so forth." on-line tools have reconstructed it as he really wanted it to be and it means that you can now look at these works in as much detail as you want, probably better than you were able to do at the Ashmolean Museum in 1870! And there's a kind of irony there so I was smiling earlier on. that's just a footnote.

TA: But you're not actually looking at the artwork, you're looking at images of the artwork.

Student: Facsimiles, yes.

TA: And that's a huge difference. And that really goes back to what Andy was saying before. A model of something is not the thing itself.

Student: But a lot of painting right now that I see around in museums is done in such a way that they look as good on Internet.

WF: Another big thing [when] working in sound, and video is the primary form, the digital representation is the primary form as well. But in terms of the hand painting of course you're right.

SS: I think that these spaces will carry on existing. if the government takes it away, somebody else will go and initiate it. So I don't see it as a space that is going to disappear.

WF: What?

SS: A space, an art, a school, a university, a place of learning.

WF: someone described it as a psychological or mental space.

MH: Artists have proved themselves time and time again, have been very inventive in finding new spaces, being site responsive and re-determining how we look at space. It's been one of the functions of modern art.

Student: The idea of the model and people coming from different... Coming back to my daughter, she's studying Theatre Directing and she's actually moving into installation, performance-based installation, and because of her theatre background she's making models and writing scripts and that is how she is hoping then to move into realising these. But this will be her practice, her method.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

WF: We need to wind up now, I think there's a private view next door Peter?

Thank you all for coming. it's been a very rich day. Thank you for the students particularly; you've really put a lot of very valuable insights into this. I'd like to thank the panel who have provided some lively and very diverse, divergent contributions. And thank Peter for co-organising this, Stroud for being the engineer behind it, Andy for writing some very valuable briefing notes which I must say I used when I was doing this morning's introduction, which seemed to me to pinpoint a lot of the issues. So it's been a good day, and I'd like to congratulate the University of East London for having the vision to support this.

Finally, thanks to AHDS, to Polly Christie, and the NEVAC recording staff. Thank you.

PC: First is to endorse the things that Bill has just said, but I would particularly like to thank the students who have helped with setting things up and, as well as your contribution to the discussion. So thank you Stroud, Polly, Bill and, of course, the panel.

### **END OF FORUM RECORDING.**