

The Habits of Artists - Research Context

The past decade has seen a rise in forms of art practice located at the intersections of art, teaching and learning. In the field of curation 'the educational turn' is the name given to this shift towards the aesthetics of the educational, through which the cultural politics of production are examined. Meanwhile, the introduction of tuition fees has completely re-contextualised those aesthetics and art and design curricula are shaped by new economic and political imperatives. The hidden curriculum, alternative art schools, communities of practice and the unofficial module proliferate at the margins of mainstream education, where decolonisation is long overdue and the new economy of teaching and learning has given rise to an increasingly urgent search for a future direction. At the same time, in a climate of economic and political instability, when the value of STEM subjects (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) dominates education policy, and where creative subjects are being cut back, devalued and marginalised, artistic practices are continuing to diversify.

As a result, artistic practice as research is commonly contested; the subject of continual debate in UK art schools and universities, it is often ill-fitted to the frameworks by which we currently recognise it. The present moment, therefore, seems to be a crucial time to consider whether we could devise more fitting academic frameworks than currently exist for understanding and communicating the complexities of art practice, in which often idiosyncratic and bespoke logics drive creativity. Building on a history of art and pedagogical practice, such as in the work of Joseph Beuys, Tania Bruguera and Yvonne Rainer and the discourses of contemporary thinkers and writers on research and pedagogy such as Irit Rogoff, Tim Ingold, Henk Borgdorff, Claire Bishop and Graeme Sullivan, Jo Addison and Natasha Kidd (Bath Spa University) situate their activities in direct relation to current educational frameworks.

Addison and Kidd have been working together under the collective name 'No Working Title' since 2009. Both already have over ten years of experience of working in galleries and museums, delivering workshops, contributing to museum public programming, participating in research groups and mentoring, before consolidating their collaboration, with performance strategies at its core. This multi-platform research project is predicated on their hypothesis that, for an artist, making in its broadest sense is an inherently scholarly act; however, the constraints of the current conditions of academia may be limiting our ability to recognise it as such. Addison and Kidd have begun this work by asking what actual behaviours constitute artistic creativity and what the pedagogic and cultural value of these behaviours might be.