



School: School of Art

Researcher: Jonathan Kelham

Project Title: *UGO*

UOA: 32: Art and Design

300-Word Statement

UGO is a pedagogical, practice-based, and curatorial series of contemporary art practice projects. The output contributes to progressive ideas on pedagogical risk taking [Hoekstra. 2018], artist-led project space pedagogy [Wakefield. 2013] and amateurism [Bryan-Wilson & Piekut 2020]. Uniquely *UGO*'s projects identify practice inadequacies as points for generative processes, in a public domain.

UGO Project Space [2016-17] was developed for the artist-led Associate Programme for the *British Art Show 8*, Southampton. *UGO* commissioned a series of new works for a large-format, site-specific public art programme presented on an underused billboard. Three commissions were shown in a high-exposure context, challenging the regional artist-led approach, with its often inadequately published conventional modes of display. A series of 3 artworks were shown on a large format public billboard in a deprived inner city. Significantly, the project was "risk-heavy", with new territories for all participants: first curatorial project, first major lead project, and first large format print-based project for all practitioners.

UGO Digital Project Space [2018-19] applied this risk-heavy research within a formal pedagogical structure [BA Fine Art programme], to identify knowledge gaps. A digital platform was devised to provide a broad and experimental opportunity for students to consider the potential of the internet as part of a holistic contemporary fine art education. The research theorised and tested the increased focus on digital production and curation of contemporary fine art practice. The space was a real-time website, allowing commissioned artists, students and curators to upload formal presentations. Artists/curators mirrored the ineptitudes identified and the research became a collective troubleshooting experience.

UGO explores the artist-led project space pedagogy as a vehicle for risk taking within formal frameworks. *UGO*'s aim is to critique the exploration of inadequacies and new territories in an unrefined practice-research [Irwin. 2017] approach, providing new and challenging experiences, outside of artist/curator/student specialist practice.