Territories of Practice and the Fall of the Studio

Martin Newth
Fine Art Programme Director, Chelsea
Expanding space for risk, collaboration and agency within a fine art curriculum and the studio
"The trouble with art schools is that there are too many people trying to make art."
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
<th>Level of Achievement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Research</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Systematic identification and</td>
<td>Fail</td>
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<td>investigation of a range of</td>
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<td>academic and cultural sources</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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<td>2 Analysis</td>
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<td>Examination and interpretation of</td>
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<td>resources</td>
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<td>3 Subject Knowledge</td>
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<td>Understanding and application of</td>
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<td>subject knowledge and underlying</td>
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<td>principles</td>
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<td>4 Experimentation</td>
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<td>Problem solving, risk taking,</td>
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<td>experimentation and testing of</td>
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<td>ideas and materials in the</td>
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<td>realisation of concepts</td>
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5. **Technical Competence**  
Skills to enable the execution of ideas appropriate to the medium

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6. **Communication and Presentation**  
Clarity of purpose; skills in the selected media; awareness and adoption of appropriate conventions; sensitivity to the needs of diverse audiences

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7. **Personal and Professional Development**  
Management of learning through reflection, planning, self direction, subject engagement and commitment

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8. **Collaborative and / or Independent Professional Working**  
Demonstrates suitable behaviour for working in a professional context alone or with others in diverse teams

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Experimentation

Problem solving, risk taking, experimentation and testing of ideas and materials in the realisation of concepts
You’re work is developing really well...

Yes, but what do I need to do to get an A grade?
“I guess the aspect that the unit was pass/fail - I think allowed for a greater level of feeling safe in experimenting. I also feel this made it more fair - as some people’s groups didn't work out (just because of chance or they thought they could work together and then didn't) - so for me I feel the pass/fail element was essential. But I think what you could learn from not being able to work together could be a lot - and make you have a greater definition of how you define yourself as an artist.”
BIG PROBLEM

TODAY

IDEA

HAMMER

WOOD

EMBELLISHMENT

COMPUTER

MEMORY

MITRE SAW

4 INCH NAILS

DRILL BIT

DRILL

PENCIL

REFLECTIONS

VINYLLettering

CRITICAL THINKING

ABOUT 5 WEEKS

THOUGHTS OF NEON

DEALING WITH THE WORLD

VARIOUS AMOUNTS OF FORCE
The Fall of the Studio
Artists at Work

Wouter Davidts
& Kim Paice (eds.)
The Principles

1. **The studio space is the most important learning environment for a fine art student.**

2. The studio’s main function is to support discourse and the exchange of ideas.

3. The studio should be a space where you can take risks with practice and experiment - a space where mistakes can be made in public.

4. Students should feel a sense of shared ownership of the studio space; when students refer to ‘my studio’ this should mean the whole of a space/room rather than an individual portion.

5. The studio space needs to be as flexible as possible to allow space to be maximised and to reflect the needs (often changing) of each student’s practice; ambitions should not be limited by the nature of the space.

6. The studio should foster communities that might become a blueprint for setting up sustainable, affordable studio collectives after college.

7. The studio should not be a space to hoard material in individual areas for long periods of time; work should be made, photographed, discussed or assessed (by tutors or students) and then removed.

8. Furniture should be used as sparingly as possible. If everyone has their own table and chair the spaces become full. This reduces the amount of space for making work and discussing ideas.

9. The studio space should be a safe working environment.
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Guidelines for the organisation of studios

1. Wall space should remain as free as possible – if tables are in the middle of spaces students will work while facing each other, opening up the potential for discourse to take place. If tables are against the wall students are likely to work facing the wall, cutting off the potential for group discourse.

2. Each room should have areas that reflect the needs of students’ practices, e.g. a large wall to make paintings or a desk area for laptop work.

3. Each studio should have an area designated for discussion – a table or a collection of chairs, perhaps including sofas.

4. Decisions about the best use of a studio should be based around the discussion of work and decided by the student groups.

5. Storage should be addressed collectively across the year group. The storage spaces are primarily for lockers and furniture to allow the studios to be cleared as needed.
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New studios in North Kensington.

ACAVA has just completed the conversion of a former nursery to create 24 studios under the Westway in North Kensington. With a 12 month lease, relatively low cost and a flexible layout, the building will provide studios for recent graduates and an exhibition/event space.