



'Revisiting 'The Fine Art Graduate': The 'issue' of employability for fine art and other art and design graduates

Date: 15th September

Venue: London School of Mosaic, NW3 2HP London

The 'issue' of employability for fine art and other art and design graduates has accompanied our developments in arts education for a considerable time. There is evidence of lots of good practice in developing and making evident 'employability skills' for our graduates, that we should acknowledge and celebrate. However, the 'turn' to 'the professional employment of graduates, by the Office for Students, makes the issue an urgent one for fine art education to address. The Office for Students now sets part of conditions for registration that "The provider must deliver successful outcomes for all of its students, which are recognised and valued by employers, and/or enable further study." This puts a direct pressure on fine art and related subjects, with a potentially much greater 'threat' and greater challenge.

Considering the pressures driven by metrics surrounding fine art and employability as a topic and the context of the 'Office for Students' coming down on subjects which do not offer immediate employment (within 15 months of graduation). What is fine art's reaction to this complex situation and strategies that can be applied to this?

Is this about 'fight' or 'flight'-as it were? How do we make the case for fine art education's value in the increasingly starker context of what can be described as 'the monetization of higher education'? How do we still ensure our students do benefit in all ways and senses from the core 'fine art' education we seek to provide?

This year's NAFAE annual conference seeks to share existing good practice, initiatives and solutions that have been already put in place by colleagues nationally in a spirit of collegiality. The aim is to turn what could be perceived as a challenge presented by institutional pressures around employability into an opportunity for acknowledging how much the fine art subject area is proactively responding in ways that help individual students and society more generally.

National Association



Conference Schedule

9:30 AM - 9:45 AM: Introduction (15 mins)

Panel 1: Self-awareness

Self-Awareness: How are the often-tacit skills and knowledge of a Fine Art graduate made visible to students? How do they speak to their skills? What knowledge is transferable?

Groundings (2023): Outta the Box, Transferable Knowledge in Action, Student as Teacher, Innovator & Coach.

9:45 AM - 10:05 AM: Alice Bell (20 mins)

Fearless: Art Education and the Role of artist as Teacher

10:05 AM - 10:25 AM: Dr. Heather Galloway Vickers (20 mins)

10:25 AM - 12:40 AM: Panel (15 mins)

Chaired by Dr. Jenny Walden

12:40 AM - 11:15 AM: Coffee Break

Panel 2: Curriculum

Projects or examples of good practice in which employability and wider transferable skills are explored in the curriculum and beyond. What can Higher Education fine art courses learn from alternative provisions (galleries, alternative art schools, etc.) available to professional practice?

How do you get employability information to graduates when they most need it?

11:15 AM - 11:35 AM: Wendy Mason (20 mins)

The Business of Art: new curriculum developments

11:35 AM - 11:55 AM: Jane Watts & Steve Bulcock (20 mins)

Module A282 - 'Collaborative Creativity/Placement'

11:55 AM - 12:15 PM: Dr. Helen Smith & Dr Suzy O'Hara (20 mins)

12:15 PM - 12:30 PM: Panel (15 mins)

Chaired by Paul Hayward

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM: Lunch Break (1 hour)

1:30 - 1:50 PM: Dedication to Joe Woodhouse (20 mins)

Helen Baker and Dr. Helen Smith

1:50 - 2:20 PM: Keynote (30 mins)

Katrine Hjelde

Katrine is an artist, lecturer, curator and researcher. Since 2023 she is the Head of Department at The Art Academy, Faculty of Fine Art, Music and Design, University of Bergen. Until 2023 she was Course Leader for Graduate Diploma Fine Art and Senior Lecturer Theory, BA Fine Art at Chelsea College of Arts. Ongoing research focuses on the student exhibition, the role of the art school in society, and developing critical connections between the art school and society.

Panel 3: Ecology

Importance of the local community/economy in fine art employment opportunities. How does the time it often takes for a fine art graduate to 'find their place' that is at odds with an 18 month cut-off for 'Office for Students'? What 'fertile' ecology does a fine art graduate actually need and how does the curriculum prepare a student for this?

The political, the economic and the environmental: Three provocations exploring cross/inter/in/trans-disciplinary opportunities through Fine Art curriculum as an ecological expansion into the unknown.

2:20 - 2:40 PM: Professor Alistair Payne (20 mins)

Visitant Queens: a new model for postgraduate Fine Art students' collaboration with artist-run organisations.

2:40 - 3:00 PM: Dr. Assunta Ruocco and Daniel Sean Kelly (20 mins)

Finding your inner Precariat

3:00 - 3:20 PM: Dr. Paul Jones (20 mins)

3:20 - 3:35 PM: Panel (15 mins)

Chaired by Gabi Boiangiu

3:35 - 3:50 PM: Coffee Break (15 mins)

Panel 4: Metrics

How might we respond to the metrics? Are there optimum strategies to share and adopt as well as share with our students? What are ways to subvert a metric culture for ways that are beneficial to the fine art subject area and to Office for Students directives?

Graduate Stories: Undergraduate Strategies

3:50 - 4:10 PM: Lucy Cox, Sophie Hayes, and Simon Morrissey (20 mins)

Provocations

4:10 - 4:30 PM: Dr. Jackie Goodman (20 mins)

4:30 - 4:50 PM: Panel (20 mins)

Chaired by Matthew Macaulay

4:50 - 5:05 PM: Closing Words (20 Mins)

Paul Hayward & Jenny Walden