

Effectual Action, Cultural Empowerment, Mobility, and the Art School

To coincide with the Royal Academy's 250th anniversary the RA Schools is seeking collaboration and support to produce a short research project to explore the historical importance of art schools in mobilising social capital and engendering social mobility. We are seeking to design action research and enquiry that will develop individual narratives and case studies with key subjects to produce a range of evidence that can be disseminated in various forms to support future engagement with multiple audiences, including school age children. There is an aim to promote further debate and stimulate wider discussion.

We are pursuing research between March 2018 and May 2019. The intention is to look at art schools generally not the RA Schools in particular, however our own data as an institution could provide useful information. For example could a study of Royal Academicians since the 1950s tell us something about social mobility in the period of the second half of the 20th century and through to the 21st? This developing research will partner colleagues at University of the Arts, Central Saint Martins to capture similar data and feedback from alumni throughout the same period. The research will include detailed qualitative surveys with selected examples of private and fringe initiatives, such as art school alternatives, functioning as a means of widening the benefits of continuing art and design education.

This is a short research project, it is intending to capture data from lived experiences. What structures have been in place that have encouraged children from a range of backgrounds into schools of art and design? How has the idea of a future potential for art and design education reached its audiences? What has been the blend of formal, non-formal and informal experiences that has affected individual aspirations and offered confidence to the future Art School student? What has been the principle attraction of art and design education and how was the intelligence of making initially presented to the individual? What was the contextual impact of local and hyper-local social and economic geography and has this had a material effect on the developing perceptions of the artist?

Crucially, have Art Schools provided an effective wormhole through which people have moved into different economic, social, intellectual and cultural circles?

NAFAE Symposium 2018: Roundtable discussion of around 60 minutes to encourage debate around the theme of **“Effectual Action, Cultural Empowerment, Mobility, and the Art School.”**

Eliza Bonham-Carter (RA Schools)
Paul Haywood (UAL: CSM)