

## Conduct and connectivity in socially engaged art.

A pedagogical artwork by Dr John Hammersley exploring expectations of the super-characteristics of contemporary artists.

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“An artwork is being commissioned for a local culture and community centre in your city. You are respectively the artist/s being commissioned, the director of the centre collaborating with the artist and the city councillor funding the project”

(Scenario from workshop handbook: *Conduct and Connectivity in Socially Engaged Art*).

### Pedagogical workshop and handbook as work of art.

This dialogical and conversational artwork investigates assumptions about the conduct of artists engaging in collaborative public artworks and projects.

As art education grows, evolves and adapts to the emerging complexity of the interconnectedness and interdependency of fine art in the current fragile cultural and social realm, this work examines expectations of conduct and connectivity of artists working in messy social contexts.

In the current cultural ecology of ‘city of culture bids’, art fairs, ‘impact’ and community engagement, counterpoised by the normalised landscape of austerity, this workshop examines how artists perform creative exchange in the multidisciplinary context of socially engaged art practice. It asks participants to engage in and reflect on a short role-play scenario which seeks emergent insights from improvised conversational exchange.

### Background and aims of the work

This proposal emerges out of my dialogical and pedagogical research and practice. It adapts an artwork/workshop I first performed with students of Fine Art and Philosophy at Duncan Jordanstone College of Art and Design in 2009.

Drawing on a counselling psychology method and social constructionist notions of language games as events of learning, the role play scenarios encourage participants to reflect on and debate how fine art courses can broaden their pedagogical approach for student artists seeking to work with diverse cultural, commercial, social, public and private organisations. It provides a framework for reflecting on the construction and performance of roles within socially engaged projects and examines what some of the implications of such experiential learning might be for fine art teaching. The artwork as workshop is underpinned by a dialogical transformational educational ethos that proposes that both students and teachers can be transformed by interaction and exchange as co-teacher/learners. Such an approach seeks to blur the boundaries between everyday conversational exchange, artistic practice/research and academic learning.

### Workshop format.

Duration: 45mins - 1 hour, consisting of role play, reflection and feedback session.

Location: Gallery or studio where flexible seating is possible.

Participant numbers: 6 -12.

Resources: Participants will be provided with a limited edition participant handbook as artwork for the workshop. The handbook/work can also be an artwork for inclusion in the exhibition.

The work also seeks to enact a dynamic of dialogical conduct and connection at conference. It provides a playful and creative platform in which people get to introduce themselves in a relaxed and engaging manner.

The workshop can also be offered to students at Coventry University prior to or following the conference, examining assumptions about their possible future role as artistic-superconductors.