

### **Studiomakers. Is a new approach to the fine art curriculum required?**

Rising living costs, lack of funding opportunities and enormous levels of debt mean that most fine art graduates face the economic reality that renting an individual studio space after College is not an option. The Artists' Workspace Study, commissioned in 2014, predicted the loss of 30 per cent of artists' workspace in London by 2019<sup>1</sup> leaving some 3,500 creatives without workspace in the capital.

Recognising that the loss of creative production could have a devastating long term impact on the social and economic welfare of the Capital, Sadiq Khan has set up the 'Creative Land Trust'<sup>2</sup>, which brings together a consortium of entrepreneurs and philanthropists called 'Studiomakers'. The initiative seeks to explore and fund models of affordable studio provision for artists and other creative practitioners.

However, this initiative is unlikely to have an immediate impact on those straight out of a BA or MA in Fine Art. In fact, early signs suggest that the benefit is likely to be felt more by creative practitioners operating as small businesses rather than fine artists at the early stage of their careers. The Fine Art Programme at Chelsea aims to develop models of practice and learning that establish networks and communities that can lead to sustainable groups of students developing studio practice after college. This presentation will describe how Chelsea is developing a new curriculum for its MA, which aims to shift the emphasis away from the individual towards the collaborative and socially, critically engaged. The presentation will provoke discussion about the role of a fine art course. This will include a consideration of its responsibilities to students on the course as well as to society more broadly. The presentation will describe initiatives where the course works with studio providers to set up networks and establish artists studios. The presentation aims to provoke discussion about how and whether traditional approaches to fine art curriculum are fit for the current political and economic context and ask whether a new approach is required.

Martin Newth

Fine Art Programme Director, Chelsea College of Arts. University of the Arts London.

<sup>1</sup> According to the Artists' Workspace Study, commissioned by the Mayor of London in 2014. This report predicted the loss of up to 3,500 artists' workspaces – equating to 30% artists' workspace/studio space – by 2019. The Artists' Workspace Study can be accessed here:  
[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/artists\\_workspace\\_study\\_september2014\\_reva\\_web\\_0.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/artists_workspace_study_september2014_reva_web_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/mayor-to-explore-setting-up-creative-land-trust>