

## **NAFAE Event**

### **Austerity, Adversity, Art?**

*Fine Art education as a site of social and political resistance, initiative and engagement*

Friday, 23 March 2018

## **Paper Proposal**

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### **'State of Exception': Art Schools in Times of Austerity.**

The relationship between cultural infrastructure and creative practice has often been linked to audiences and mass media. It seems that, whereas in affluent times creative practice and institutions such as museums or universities can afford to keep their distance from the public (something that may be perceived as elitist), at times of financial crisis such as the present day, contemporary practice is held to account and has to foster a close relationship to the audience.

The 1980s are a good example of how the financial situation can have an important impact on the art world and creative practice, as a decade that Young British Art redefined the relationship to the audience and shifted themes. This shift has been described sometimes as trivialization and 'matter to fact air' (Stallabrass 1999, 3). The recent financial downturn and the financial cuts in the cultural sector might have a similar impact, considering the tightened grip on art schools with funding cuts and engagement agendas.

However, despite the state of increased public accountability, art schools have frequently described as a 'state of exception' where universities become a 'de facto and paradoxical dictatorship of freedom for its student-citizens outside the realm of the everyday' (Madoff 2009, 275). This paper will explore the claim for *exception* in the midst of an economic crisis. How can we considering 'illegality' and deviation from norms as an almost 'constitutional' right of art education and a prerequisite for artistic production.

#### **Works cited:**

Stallabrass, J., 1999. *High art lite: British art in the 1990s*, London: Verso.

Madoff, S.H., 2009. *Art school: (propositions for the 21st century)*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

#### **Bio:**

Christian Mieves is a painter and Senior Lecturer at Wolverhampton School of Art, UK. He received his PhD in Fine Art from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne (UK). Research themes in Mieves' work to date have included the beach and other border spaces as metaphors for semantically uncertain fields. His paintings have been shown in exhibitions in Germany, Mexico, Spain and the United Kingdom

Recent publications include journal articles on Luc Tuymans, Dana Schutz, Peter Doig and the Beach in Contemporary Art. He has been co-editor of the special edition of the *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 9.3 (2010). He is co-editor of the book *Wonder in Contemporary Artistic Practice* (Routledge, 2017).

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