

A different take on “The Hidden Curriculum” in Fine Art education –

“I still think that art can’t be taught. But on the way to not teaching, a lot of interesting things can happen.” James Elkins 2014 (*Artists with PhDs 2nd Edition New Academia Publishing Washington DC USA*)

Having been through various ebbs and flows of the tide not only of opinion regarding both the ‘best practice’ for educating students of fine art, but also of whether it any longer has a rightful place in a ‘creative *industries*’ (sic) curriculum at all, the question of its *hidden* curriculum might seem already too late.

That said, nothing lifts me from my near pessimism more than my utter unwavering belief in fine art education’s sheer persistence and resilience. If its curriculum becomes so hidden as to disappear, it will for certain re-appear even if somewhere else.

How this happens however may present some new whilst interesting challenges to institutionalised educators. It can be observed more than once that fine art courses are adapted, squeezed, morphed or in some cases ‘disappeared’ as part of new visions, often with ‘new building’ projects striking the right note for the new creative industries. I am not aiming at a nostalgic defence of poor quality venues for making and thinking or certain habits of practice that may have gone along with the draughts and the decay, but I am interested in how ‘alternative’ places for ‘education’ in fine art have been on the increase in these times of physical and ‘possibly’ intellectual displacement of the curriculum.

I would like to look in more detail beyond the occasional glosses so far in the educational or ‘learned’ press, in discussing the impact of these spaces for learning for fine art (for this is certainly how the students and other users of these spaces are understanding them) and how those of us ‘inside’ the institution may be responding or could respond to this interesting ‘other’ space which *for the student* may be felt as an alliance, albeit loosely or barely formalised with an ‘external’ partner for learning. This is to explore not just a different locale but what may be occurring precisely in respect of the issues of the subject itself and its pedagogies. Is this where “regulatory frameworks and systems may be subverted” and an intellectual not just physical space reside for “flexibility, experimentation, disruption or subversion”?

This hidden curriculum may have some, not only educational, but socio-cultural implications that we are perhaps not quite seeing at the moment...or not? It is open to debate...

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