

Call for submissions for the NAF AE Annual Symposium and Exhibition 2017

NAFAE are interested in socially engaged art practice and invite proposals for papers/artworks/creative responses for their up-coming annual symposium and accompanying exhibition.

Artist as Superconnector/Superconductor: pedagogical provocations

Deadline for submissions: 1st January 2017

Conference Date: Friday 24th March 2017

Hosted jointly by NAF AE and Coventry University

Venue: Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Coventry University, UK

Conveners: Jane Ball, Rachele Viader Knowles, Dr. Andrea Hannon, David Martin, Professor Jill Journeaux

Key words: cultural ecology, exchange, conversation, network, meshwork

“Creativity comes from being at a point of exchange”

Robert Hewison, Cultural Historian¹

In 2015 John Holden, proposed that we consider the interconnectedness of the various parts of the cultural world. In his report titled *The Ecology of Culture*, commissioned by the Arts and Humanities Research Council for their Cultural Value Project he suggests that we apply the metaphors of emergence, growth, evolution, complex interdependencies, systemic fragility, life cycles and webs to the worlds of culture and that rather than consider the cultural arena through the lens of economy it would be more helpful to examine it in terms of an ecology - a messy dynamic system of interconnecting strands.

This analogy could be broadened to consider the strands of interconnectivity that exist between the cultural arena and a diverse range of other fields too, including the scientific, economic, political, educational and social, bringing into relation a rich diversity of multidisciplinary activity. Frequently artists operate within such networks or ‘meshworks’¹ navigating such complex situations and events, creating lines of movement, growth and creative (ex)-change, becoming sort of ‘superconnectors’ or ‘superconductors’³

The NAF AE 2017 symposium seeks to investigate how artists engage in collaborative activities and shared investigations within this arena. We would like to encourage

debate on how Fine Art courses are working with cultural, commercial, social, public and private organisations to provide innovative learning opportunities for Fine Art students. How are our art educational institutions relating to the civic, social, commercial and cultural networks in which they operate and what are the implications of this for fine art pedagogy?

Proposals are invited for papers, presentations, workshops, artworks, exhibits or performative creative responses that blur the distinction between traditional academic papers and ‘*exhibitible artworks*’.

Some of the key issues are as follows, however we are open to other suggestions not covered here.

- Are students active agents in the shaping of the cultural ecology?
- The role of the artist in information networks.
- Designing learning strategies that engender transformative connections between students, or between students and external collaborators.
- How do we prepare our students for the role of ‘superconnector’ or ‘superconductor’?
- The social roles of art.
- What are the potentialities and limitations of these types of projects for arts education?
- Authorship and co-authorship.
- Performative strategies for collaborative engagement.
- What is the role of art and the artist in the wider social ecology?
- What educational projects are addressing real life problem solving- such as environmental and sustainability concerns?
- Where are these collaborations and conversations taking place? Outside traditional gallery/artists studios/web/café/PV/talk?
- How are these connections and collaborations impacting on the freedoms of creativity?
- What is the role of art educators in this? Tutor as curator?
- How do practitioners, tutors, students, curators, critics and audience relate.
- In what ways are Fine Art courses initiating or responding to key relationships with other external organisations or social groups?
- What new opportunities for learning are these experiences/relationships creating? How are they driving and or being driven by pedagogy and how are they responding to students’ pedagogical needs?

- The incorporation of human and informational connectivity in the fine art curriculum- locally, translocally, regionally, nationally, internationally?
- Artist as communicator or connector?
- How is this impacting on the Degree Show as a formal strategy for final assessment?

Proposals should be no more than 500 words and should include your title, email address and institution, along with the title of the proposed paper, presentation, workshop, artwork/exhibit/performance etc. All proposals will be peer reviewed and feedback given.

Proposals should be submitted to Andy Sheridan at admin@nafae.org.uk no later than 1st January 2017.

Cost: the event is free for NAFAE members, or £30 for non-members, £20 for artists and students.

Registration and payment details will follow in due course.

Subscribe on-line at: <http://www.nafae.org.uk/about/joining-nafae/>

Institutional membership: £150

Individual membership: £30 (artists, students or educators)

(please note: the institutional subscription fee of £150 entitles members to 5 free places at any of our conferences or symposia throughout the year)

1. taken from Holden J. (2015) The Ecology of Culture, AHRC
2. Ingold T. (2011). Being Alive
3. The term 'artist as Superconductor' appears in Regard F. (2003) A Philosophy of Magical Rhetoric p91 and was also the title of an exhibition by The Newbridge Project Jan-Feb 2012