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Public Programming? Pedagogical Practices in a Missing Europe

A Study Day at Middlesex University
Room C107, first floor, Main College Building
30 June 2016
12.00 – 6.00 pm

Contributors

Felicity Allen • Valerio del Baglivo • Jason Bowman • Ben Cranfield • Graeme Evans • Paul Goodwin • Janna Graham • Valeria Graziano • Alana Jelinek • Susan Kelly

The term 'public programming', in use at least since the 1990s, has recently re-emerged as a framework to speak about the pedagogical initiatives across various public cultural institutions in the European context and beyond. It continues legacies from gallery education, new institutionalism, and independent pedagogic projects, which have contributed to productions by, and formations of, art audiences. Reminiscent of the interventions of public programming in the 1970s and early 1980s, the re-vitalised form now also provides a space of intervention in public questions affecting the broader body politic. However, the democratic and critical premises that were the basis of a publicly produced culture are now being undone, caught in the paradoxes of post-democratic institutions and under the pervasive push of event economies. Moreover, the prospect of Europe as a space for a more just political organisation is deteriorating, leaving many with a sense of a missed opportunity and missing potential. Starting from these considerations, the study day will examine public programming from the perspective of its legacies and the current responsibilities faced by artists, curators and educators using this framework for their public intellectual activities. Through conversations and round tables, we will seek possible answers to the question:

Could public programme activities invent alternative trajectories for a European project building on our collective democratic aspirations?

The study day is free but space is limited. Please get your free ticket [here](#).

Organised by the [Socially Engaged Practices Research Cluster](#) at Middlesex University, in collaboration with [Nottingham Contemporary](#) and [Goldsmiths College](#).

SCHEDULE

12.00 – 12.30 Introduction: Valeria Graziano

12.30 – 1.30 Democracy, Discipline and Participation. Facilitator: Graeme Evans

Alana Jelinek: The relationship between the discipline of art and democracy

Can it be said that there is an inherent relationship between (the discipline of) art and the ideal of a (liberal) democracy, understood as freedom and equality? If so, what strategies can practitioners use to reassert or reframe our practice in these terms? With the recent and generalised internalisation of neoliberal values by artists (among others), can asserting our disciplinarity be used as a bulwark against the variously undemocratic institutions of which we are constituent? Perhaps more than a bulwark, can we understand disciplinarity as offering a way of navigating these pressures?

Ben Cranfield: After the Archon, or, towards a shared inheritance of the in-between

Much is made of Derrida's footnote in *Archive Fever* where he states that 'effective democratisation can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and the access to the archive.' But is it simply the technical accessibility of the archive that acts as guarantor and sign of democracy? Or might truly democratic spaces require non-authoritarian ways of configuring and engaging with the archive? Drawing on my work with the archives of arts institutions and an on-going collaboration with

the artist collective Fourthland, I want to explore how the archive might offer up examples of, and provide a space for, cultural practices of the in-between that defy singular ownership and authority.

1.30 – 2.30 Lunch

2.30 – 3.30 Disturbing Discourses. Facilitator: Valerio Del Baglivo

Susan Kelly: Publics and Publicness // The University vs the The Public Programme

One of the claims made for public programming is that museums and galleries can provide alternative spaces to the university in which to produce knowledge and test ideas. Indeed, Peter Osborne has suggested that museums and galleries are one of the only places truly public discourse can now take place. In my brief presentation, I would like to look at the relationship between the discursive spaces of the museum/ gallery and the art school & university. What notions of publicness, democracy and knowledge production are at work in this juxtaposition and how might the realm of public programming intervene or provide a supplement to the contemporary crisis of higher education?

Paul Goodwin: Public Programming and Caribbean Discourse

This presentation will address how critical thinking from the Caribbean has played a central role in contemporary art's engagement with emerging global modernities. Concepts such as 'creolisation', 'cross-cultural' and 'opacity' have a particular resonance and genealogy in what Edouard Glissant calls 'Caribbean discourse' – a way of thinking through world-relation and the de-territorialisations of race, history and identities that emerged from the maelstrom of the post Atlantic slave trade Caribbean as a laboratory of world cultures. I will tentatively speculate how certain concepts developed in the work of writers such as Glissant and Wilson Harris – in the context of critical epistemologies from the 'Global South' – have and can contribute to emancipatory perspectives in public programming, curating and museology in a 'missing Europe'.

3.30 – 3.35 Break

3.35 – 4.35 Curatorial Contradictions. Facilitator: Felicity Allen

Janna Graham: The Problem with Platforms: Public Programming at the Juncture of Possible and Impossible Publics

This discussion will highlight contradictions linked with contemporary practices of public programming, which at once propose to enact the public sphere as a site for social change and at the same time pose a prime example of post-fordist dynamics in which spectacles of discourse are divorced from committed action, what theorist Paulo Virno describes as 'publicness without a public sphere'. How do we mark the difference between public programming's multiple genealogies in emancipatory adult education and in neoliberalism's proliferation of dis-ingenuous platforms for participation and discussion? How does this struggle manifest in contemporary practice?

Jason Bowman: Getting Engaged: betrothal, betrayal and equal marriage

This presentation will reflect on Jason E Bowman's experience of being commissioned, as an artist, by the Head of Public Engagement on behalf of Manchester's Whitworth Art Gallery, a university gallery. From 2009-10 Bowman employed quasi-curatorial and processual practices that sought to 'reach out' to Manchester's LGBTQ communities, as requested by the institution. In doing so he confronted multiple challenges that suggested divisionary ideologies in the apparatuses of the organisation. Bowman will think through the commissioning as a process of knowledge production; the implications of and for 'the curatorial' when implemented by an artist, and how the institution may struggle with the implications of both when the results of 'engagement' demand disengaging from the dominant practices of a university gallery.

4.35 – 4.40 Break

4.40 – 6.00 Final Considerations. Facilitator: Valeria Graziano

Group discussions and plenary.

Presenters' Biographies

Jason E. Bowman is an artist with a curatorial practice, writer, researcher and visual arts consultant. He is MFA: Fine Art Programme Leader at Valand Academy, University of Gothenburg. He is a member of the working group for PARSE (Platform for Artistic Research Sweden) for which he co-

edited an edition of the PARSE Journal on Value (2016) with Suhail Malik and Andrea Phillips. He was affiliated as a researcher to the EU project, NEARCH (New Scenarios for a Community Involved Archeology) (2013-15) and a researcher on the Swedish Research Council Funded Project, Trust and Unfolding Dialogue in Contemporary Art (2011-14). He edited the publication, Esther Shalev-Gerz The Contemporary Art of Trusting Uncertainties and Unfolding Dialogues (Art and Theory, Stockholm, 2014). His current research seeks to contribute new knowledge of Fine Art practice and its effects, through researching how artistic practice is assembled, expanded and stretched by the 'the artist-curator' within the cultures of self-organisation. This project, Stretched, is co-researched with Drs. Mick Wilson and Julie Crawshaw.

Ben Cranfield is a lecturer in Cultural Studies and Director of the PhD in Humanities and Cultural Studies, Birkbeck. He is currently working on a book project titled With Time: Curating the Contemporary in Post-War Britain. His work investigates the relationship between curatorial practice, the histories and politics of art institutions, archives and experimental art practice. Recent articles have been published in Tate Papers, The Journal of Visual Culture and The Journal of Curatorial Studies.

Paul Goodwin is a curator, researcher and urban theorist based in London. He held the post of curator of cross cultural programmes in the Learning Department at Tate Britain from 2008-2012. He is currently based at University of the Arts London, Chelsea where he is director of TrAIN, UAL Research Centre for Transnational Art, Identity and Nation.

Janna Graham is an educator, curator and researcher based in the UK. With others she founded the Centre for Possible Studies, an offsite arts education and research project supported by Serpentine Galleries where local groups come together with artists and university-based researchers to challenge aspects of the local development process. She is now Head of Public Programmes and Research at Nottingham Contemporary, where she is working with others to develop projects at the intersection of art and contemporary problematics including racism, environmental toxicity, institutionality and housing. Janna is a member of the international sound art and education group Ultra-red and was a founding member of the Another Roadmap for Arts Education network.

Alana Jelinek has been an artist for nearly 30 years, exhibiting in Europe, Asia and Australasia and working in variety of media including painting, collaborations, novel-writing, film and performance to explore colonialism, post-colonialism and neocolonialism. Her PhD, across Art History and Fine Art Practice, investigated 'art as a democratic act' and researched the first 6 years of Tate Modern's history to explore the effects of exogenous pressures applied to curators and institutions that militate against artistic and curatorial values. A much revised version was later published, as 'This is Not Art: Activism and other Not Art' (IBTauris 2013). Since 2009, Alana has been working with the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge on two consecutive long-term inter- and multi-disciplinary projects.

Susan Kelly is currently Lecturer in Fine Art and Course Leader BA Fine Art and History of Art at Goldsmith's University, London. Susan Kelly's research looks at relationships between art and micropolitics, rhetoric and practices of organisation in situations where questions are asked and answers are given. She makes performances, public time-based work, installations and videos, and writes and publishes and convenes events and performative investigations. She works both independently and collectively with the Micropolitics Research Group and the Carrot Workers Collective among others. Over the last nine years Susan Kelly has shown my work in Belfast, New York, Toronto, Helsinki, Prague, Dublin, St Petersburg, Krasnoyarsk, Tallin, Zagreb, and elsewhere.

Hosts' Biographies

Felicity Allen is an artist and writer whose practice traverses the studio, the social and the institutional. Her series of Dialogic Portraits projects, produced in a range of media, models this, including Life Painting commissioned in 2015 by Turner Contemporary. Leading the Education department at Tate Britain (2003-2010), she developed cross cultural strategies and conducted a durational project Nahnou-Together with colleagues in Amman, Damascus and London. 'Situating Gallery Education' came out in 2007 and, from her guest scholarship at the Getty Research Institute (2012+), several articles were published including 'What Does Globalisation Mean for Education in the Art Museum?'. Education (Documents of Contemporary Art) was published in 2011 by MIT/Whitechapel. In 2016 at Middlesex University she completed her doctorate, Creating the 'Disoeuvre': Interpreting Feminist Interventions as an Expanded Artistic Practice in Negotiation with Art's Institutions.

Valerio Del Baglivo is a freelance curator, educator and perennial collaborator based in London. He completed Curatorlab, an independent curatorial course at Konstfack University (2011), and is now completing a PhD Programme at Middlesex University with a research focused on public engagement and experimental pedagogy in self-initiated art institutions. He participated in international residency programs at The Banff Centre in Banff, ICC at Gwangju Biennale in South Korea, Wysing Art Centre in Cambridge, at Futura in Prague and at The Luminary in Missouri. He was curator at Isola Art Center in Milan between 2009-10, and since then he has curated exhibitions and projects for organizations such as, Apexart - NY, Kunstverein – Milan Konsthall C - Stockholm, Apexart - NY, Kunstverein – Milan, WUK- Vienna.

Graeme Evans is Professor of Urban Cultures and Design at Middlesex University School of Art & Design. He has held professorships at Brunel University (Design), LondonMet (Cities Institute) and Central St Martins. He also holds the chair in Culture & Urban Development at Maastricht University. Prior to academe he was director of an inner city arts centre, Inter-Action, and the London Association of Arts Centres. He has undertaken successive studies and guidance for the Culture Ministry, Arts Councils, Council of Europe and OECD on cultural policy, the creative industries and urban culture, including Culture's Contribution to Regeneration, Social Impacts of the Arts, Cultural Mapping, and Place Making. He is currently leading two AHRC-funded research projects under the Connected Communities programme.

Valeria Graziano is a cultural theorist, practitioner and educator whose research is mainly concerned with inventing postwork alternatives. She is currently a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Middlesex University. She holds a PhD in Critical Organization Theory (2014) from Queen Mary University London, which was supported by a scholarship by the same university. Her current research considers the various meanings of the concept of 'prefigurative practices' and the role of imaginal procedures within the organizational lives of collectives. Valeria co-directed Summer Drafts - Laboratories of Transversal Vivacity (2008-2012) and has been active within the Micropolitics Research Group and the Radical Education Forum.

