

Art Critics and Art Historians in Schools

A Synoptic Report of an Interdisciplinary Research Project

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All photographic plates taken by members of the ACHiS Research Team.

PART 1

Aims, Context and Methodology

1. Background to the research

- 1.1 The Art Critics and Historians in Schools project (ACHiS) was initiated by an HE institution, the Institute of Education, University of London (IoE), in response to the overwhelming demand voiced by art educationalists to reconceptualise the current Art & Design curriculum in secondary schools along critical lines (Field 1970; Eisner 1972; Taylor 1986; Thistlewood 1989; Dawtrey et al 1996; Swift and Steers 1999). ACHiS created the opportunity to form an unprecedented partnership uniting HE institutions, secondary schools, the Association of Art Historians and Tate Britain. From this collaboration the action researchers shared insights into related theoretical positions and developed pedagogical strategies in alliance with teachers, gallery educators and university lecturers.
- 1.2 The ACHiS research project was proposed at a time when the critical dimension of the school subject Art & Design was found to be ‘fragile’ (Davies 1995). For some time art educationalists had been questioning the validity of the subject because it was seen to constitute an ‘outmoded’ set of insular practices that survived only because it was a popular part of the curriculum (Field 1970; Hughes 1999). By establishing a secure position for a critical, contextual and historical dimension in Art & Design educationalists had assumed that the emphasis on ‘unthinking’ making, transcription and pastiche (Taylor in Thistlewood 1989) would be challenged and a more relevant model put in its place (Swift and Steers 1999). A critical dimension was already being legislated in the various Art Orders for the National Curriculum (NC) although the terms ‘visual literacy’ and ‘knowledge and understanding’, initially used to identify it (DFE 1992 and 1995) were reduced to ‘knowledge and understanding’ for the NC 2000 (DfEE and QCA 1999). The fundamental place of a critical dimension was also reinforced in GCSE, GNVQ and ‘A’ Level syllabuses, specifically after the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) was given the responsibility by government to oversee all examination syllabuses. Increasingly the criteria for assessing the critical component focused on written evidence of understanding so that at ‘A’ Level, for example, it could be realised in the traditional form of a discrete essay or as a ‘critical studies diary’. Additionally, in the summer of 2001, one examination board, Edexcel, altered a section of the GCSE assessment criteria mid-course by adding the requirement that all sketchbooks be annotated.
- 1.3 In the late twentieth century, an era of post-industrial, multimedia communications, the need to acknowledge ways of meaning making other than language had become increasingly urgent (Kress and Leeuwen 1996); it was thought that art education might provide pedagogic models that could be replicated in other parts of the curriculum and assist in the development of a ‘creative’ workforce capable of producing a high-technology service economy (Blair in DfEE 1997). On the one hand, in the USA, art in secondary schools was divided into four related areas: aesthetics, criticism, history and studio practice, a taxonomy labelled *Discipline Based Art Education* (Smith 1987); on the other hand, in the UK, the call was for the integration of history, theory and practice. Slowly, but incrementally, the significant place of language in

the art curriculum was being guaranteed in legislation; in effect language was being promoted as a panacea, the means to effect change in art education, and at exactly the moment when its privileged status was being questioned elsewhere.

- 1.4 It is in this context that the ACHiS research team devised and implemented critical residencies in schools and it is with the official foregrounding of language as an object of assessment in Art & Design, particularly the written word, that the action researchers have analysed and evaluated their findings.

2. Aims

- 2.1 ACHiS was an action research project in which art critics and art historians worked alongside Art & Design teachers in secondary schools to develop Critical, Contextual and Historical Studies (critical studies) in studio education. The research team aimed to find explanations for the current fragility of critical thinking in the art classroom and through the introduction of art historical methodologies, highlighted the value of the discursive space that exists between studio practice and critical studies. One traditional location for this space is the museum and gallery and accordingly a pivotal visit was planned for each residency. By involving different sectors of art education in a collaborative partnership the team developed a pedagogic model that widened the current parameters of practice within the collaborating schools.
- 2.2 The school-based collaborations took the form of ten, five-day residencies over two academic years (1999/2000; 2000/2001). Each residency was recorded and evaluated by the action researcher in collaboration with the partner teacher. Additionally the partner teacher and an external observer conducted independent evaluations based on criteria negotiated by the research team in line with the project's identified aims:
- 1 Primary
 - To test and evaluate the significance of recent art historical methods for the analysis and interpretation of visual culture in secondary Art & Design to:
 - inform modes of investigation and contextualisation;
 - provide reflective tools for the evaluation of students' practice.
 - 2 Complementary
 - to question perceived divisions between theory and practice...
 - to encourage professionals in the field to engage with education at secondary level...

3. Research Methodology

- 3.1 It was considered that the issues to be addressed by the research were best explored through the use of qualitative research methods, consisting of action research-led residencies within the participant schools. Such methodology was seen as more suitable than survey methods for obtaining attitudinal data. However, a questionnaire examining existing practice and provision was also employed to gather quantitative data to complement the qualitative findings (the full data is stored in the ACHiS Archive: IoE).
- 3.2 The questionnaire was sent to 72 secondary schools most of which had already established a partnership with the Institute of Education through the PGCE in Art and Design. A selection of the data taken from the responses, analysed in tabulated and diagrammatic form, can be viewed in the ACHiS *Research Compendium* (2002).
- 3.3 The methodology employed during the residencies took the form of Action Research. This methodology is often called upon when there is a perceived 'problem', a lack or a need, but only in those instances where the causes of the 'problem' are not known or where the ways in which it can be met are unclear. It is thought that through careful participant observation a 'problem' can be identified and subsequently strategies for its amelioration formulated (Elliot 1997).
- 3.4 It is the evolving nature of action research that means team members themselves take part directly or indirectly in implementing research; and it is self-evaluative – modifications are continuously evaluated within the ongoing situation, the ultimate objective being to improve the practice in some way or another.
- 3.5 Action research tends to suggest research involving *insider* rather than *outsider* observers/participants, i.e. practising teachers (Elliot 1997:23-24); ACHiS, in attracting practising art critics and art historians as '*interventionists*' within the school curriculum (albeit in partnership with teachers), can be seen as something of a hybrid; the researcher was both collaborator and interventionist, a sort of 'critical friend'. Additionally, ACHiS appropriated the model of the Artists' residency, which is an interventionist strategy (Burgess 1995).
- 3.6 Although the mandatory status of critical studies is common to all schools in England and Wales, local resources, particularly human and material, condition the way it is interpreted and taught. Therefore, each researcher found it necessary to consider the specificities of their placement and, on a visit to the school and in conversation with their partner teacher, they discussed the needs and aspirations of the student body, the educational traditions fostered in the department and the examination syllabuses that had to be addressed. Once the action researchers were familiar with this educational context they were able to consider how the local needs related to the aims of ACHiS. Since the contexts were different in the first year each

researcher formed a research question during their residency, not prior to it; this ensured that research focussed on what actually happened rather than confirming an a priori hypothesis. However, in the second year a common research question was formed in relation to the initial aims of the project, both to ensure some consistency and convergence between residencies, but also to provide data that could inform more 'generalisable' recommendations.

4. Sample

4.1 The action researchers

4.1.1 Five action researchers were recruited for the first year of ACHiS. From these, three were researching for their PhD (two full-time) and two taught Art History in HE. One of the action researchers was also a part-time secondary school teacher of Art & Design, recruited to conduct a residency with a Year 8 group, many of whom had special educational needs. Three of the action researchers from the first year reapplied and were chosen to participate in the second year of residencies along with two newly recruited action researchers.

4.1.2

Researcher	Residency Year	Status at time of ACHiS	Specialism
Michael Asbury	First	PhD Student	South American Modernism
Pauline De Souza	First & Second	PhD Student; Teacher at HE level	Contemporary Practice; Cultural Studies
Maria Georgaki	First & Second	PhD Student	Design History & Design in Education
David Hulks	Second	PhD Student; Teacher at School & FE levels	Psychoanalytical interpretation
Grigorios Papazafiriou	First	Practising Artist/Critic Teacher at School level	Philosophy; Post- structuralism
Caroline Perret	Second	PhD Student	Representation of the body in France 1942-1952
Jane Trowell	First & Second	Teacher at FE & HE levels	Education for social justice

4.1.3 Each researcher produced a report following the completion of their residency together with appendices that included: a residency plan, partner teacher and external observer evaluations, action researchers' own evaluations and, in some cases, systematic student evaluations and written outcomes: all residencies have data in the form of audio and video recordings. These materials are available in full in the ACHiS Archive: IoE.

4.2 The schools

4.2.1 Of the 72 secondary schools already in partnership with the Institute of Education (IoE), 40 expressed an initial interest to participate in the project residencies, though funding dictated the actual number that could contribute on this occasion. The schools selected exemplify the major types of schools in urban state education in England and Wales: four inner city co-ed comprehensive schools, three inner city girls' comprehensive schools (one of

which is a Church of England school) and one selective co-ed ex-grammar school. With the exception of one school in Bristol all other schools were situated in Greater London.

4.2.2 During the first year of the residencies all but one researcher worked with groups of Year 12 ‘A’ Level students. At the end of this year the ACHiS team recognised that to intervene at this stage was perhaps too late to effect long-term change, since by Year 12 the current culture of school practice is already firmly embedded in students. In a conscious reaction to the findings of the first year, the action researchers worked predominantly with groups of Year 10 GCSE students during the second year of the project.

4.2.3

Type of School	Residency Year	Student group	Teacher’s Background	In Partnership with IoE PGCE
Girls’ Comprehensive	First	Year 12: A’ Level Textiles	Textiles	No
Co-ed selective Grammar	First	Year 12: A’ Level Fine Art	Painting Photography Art Psychotherapy	Yes
	Second	Year 10: GCSE Art & Design	As above	Yes
Girls’ Comprehensive (Church of England)	First	Year 12: A’ Level Fine Art	Fine Art Printmaking	Yes
	Second	Year 10: GCSE Art & Design	As above	Yes
Co-ed Comprehensive	First	Year 12: A’ Level Fine Art	Art History Fine Art	Yes
Co-ed Comprehensive	First	Year 8: KS3 Art & Design	Ceramics	Yes
Co-ed Comprehensive	Second	Year 7 & Year 9: KS3 Art & Design	Mathematics	No
Girls’ Comprehensive	Second	Year 10: GCSE Art & Design	Textiles	Yes
Co-ed Comprehensive	Second	Year 12: A’ Level Fine Art	Fine Art	No

5. Perceived Problems

- 5.1 Art & Design is often a hermetically sealed practice which rarely refers to the lives of students beyond some notion of their interiority or cultural identity, and only occasionally to the wider curriculum or broader social and cultural issues. Students are encouraged to follow either a perceptualist model, recording the appearance of things, or an expressive model, finding equivalents for feelings.
- 5.2 Few students recognise the possibility that skills learnt from one area of the curriculum can be transferred to others and that these skills can inform learning across the curriculum as a whole.
- 5.3 The 'critical' dimension of courses tends to be based on formal and mimetic analysis and appreciation in support of practices reproduced by demonstration and exemplification.
- 5.4 The historical and contextual dimension tends to be either didactic (taking the form of a short illustrated introduction) and/or taking the form of directed learning (student 'research'); in which students gather biographical information, conduct some formal analysis, make personal preferences and produce copious transcriptions.
- 5.5 The hierarchical distinctions between art, craft and design are historical and social constructs which are replicated and naturalised in the structures of art education and thus are invisible to its participants (both teachers and students).

PART 2

Findings and Recommendations

6. Interim Findings

- 6.1 In relation to their curriculum planning each partner teacher welcomed the ACHiS project, freely admitting that critical studies was an area that required further development and thereby endorsing the principles of collaborative action research.
- 6.2 The use of art critical/historical method at each placement school and students' perceptions about both its role and that of critical studies were investigated. The findings confirmed both existing research and the ACHiS survey, namely: teachers felt insecure about their art historical knowledge and welcomed support; existing resources did little to advance an inclusive curriculum; students considered textual research alien to studio-based art education; a formalist/perceptualist orthodoxy exists and any theoretical basis to research is largely dependent on teachers' art college training.
- 6.3 Whilst the first year residencies showed some degree of success in widening the students' critical awareness, a limited degree of collaboration between the action researchers and the school staff left the partner teachers with the sense that their opinions were little valued and that the HE researchers considered partner teachers' time to be open indefinitely to plunder.
- 6.4 The action researchers had a mere five days to introduce new methodologies and approaches which they hoped would supplant existing practices. For this to be attained the concepts must be fully embedded, not just in the students' minds, but more importantly with the teachers, so that they would be able to sustain the new approach and develop it on their own. However, the hoped for collaboration, central to the design of the ACHiS project proved difficult to sustain and develop in some instances. One of the primary reasons for this was the lack of formal discussion with the partner teachers from the outset of the project, and the research team recognised the need to resolve this for the second year and involve the partner teachers in three of the five planning days, rather than the single meeting attendance of the first year.
- 6.5 Four of the five first year residencies had been conducted with Year 12 groups (sixth form), however it became evident that by the time the students had reached this stage in their secondary education, the culture of school thinking had already been so firmly absorbed by them that it generated a resistance to any attempts to override and transform existing ways of thinking. Sixth form students of Art & Design tend not to have memorised the chronological map that art historical processes require, nor do they feel they have the time to apply the research skills that they may have developed in other curriculum areas because it would take them away from making. In a change of strategy, the ACHiS researchers decided that for the second year residencies they would work predominantly with the 11-16 age groups (Year 7-11), believing that the younger students would be less conditioned by existing classroom practice.
- 6.6 This change in approach also had implications for the themes and methodologies that the action researchers could introduce to the classroom.

Working with Year 12 groups the action researchers had been able to utilise their own areas of interest as the main focus of the residency. At Years 9-11, the lessons are more directed, with the students working within set briefs and thematic units. This meant that the action researchers were restricted to intervening in a topic already established and, for those without prior secondary teaching experience, this revealed secondary art learning to be almost diametrically opposed to their own practice and expectations of student knowledge.

7. Key Findings

- 7.1 ACHiS, in foregrounding the historical and contextual dimensions of art production, encouraged students to consider their own practice both in relation to the past and as a mode of social practice.
- 7.2 ACHiS developed discursive practices in which students debated the status of different forms of production including their own. Skills of critical reflection and advocacy were notably developed.
- 7.3 ACHiS provided alternative forms of investigation including semiotics and discourse analysis, foregrounding the discursive analysis of artworks (in the form of primary and secondary resources) and the context of their presentation (galleries and reproductive technologies).
- 7.4 ACHiS, in developing skills of reflection and investigation, encouraged students to seek their own solutions to visual and creative problems.
- 7.5 ACHiS challenged student preconceptions, particularly about the functions of art, their own place in the continuum of practice and the relationship between visual and material production and written discourse.
- 7.6 ACHiS problematised the status of art production in society and in school by exposing its hierarchies and naturalised myths of creativity, this way students were encouraged to question their own practice in relation to broader social and cultural structures.
- 7.7 ACHiS provided partner teachers with the necessary reflexive space to develop pedagogic practice, and enabled them to utilise the opportunity, as classroom practitioners, to research complex theory, assimilate it into their teaching and apply it to learning in the classroom.

8. Recommendations

8.1 Curriculum and pedagogic development

- 8.1.1 A critical curriculum within the subject Art & Design can only be developed by building a discursive environment. This needs to happen from the first year of secondary schooling in order to habituate students to critical practice. In this way the current antipathy felt for text-based activity could be ameliorated and the opposition between word and image (unique to the subject) replaced by a dialogic relationship. The art critical/historical residency is one way in which such discursivity can be encouraged.
- 8.1.2 The emphasis on monomodality; language by art critics/historians, visuality by Art & Design teachers, must be challenged because it denies the multimodal nature of learning. Both disciplines ought to reflect on the limitations of their pedagogic means.
- 8.1.3 Art & Design teachers should be encouraged to participate in action research in order to review and revise both the curriculum and pedagogic practice. The ACHiS model, action research in partnership with an interventionist, deserves further research.

8.2 The contribution of art critics/historians

- 8.2.1 Art historical publications are rarely aimed at secondary school audiences. Art & Design teachers often have to reproduce the ubiquitous texts of old because the new art criticism/history is inaccessible on many levels. Art critics/historians might consider writing other forms of publication for this educational sector: publishers are beginning to realise that there is a market and teachers and students would welcome the support. (It could be that the RAE in its current form militates against this sort of participation.)
- 8.2.2 The ACHiS residency model might be adopted in an extended form by art critics/historians wishing to contribute to secondary school education: to develop the curriculum by working critically in between professional discourse/practices, to extend their own pedagogic practice and to provide continuity between educational sectors (breaking the cycle of misunderstanding).
- 8.2.3 Art critics/historians might constructively adapt the ACHiS residency model to inform curriculum subjects besides Art & Design, particularly those in which visual and material culture is central, e.g. Design and Technology, Media Studies, but also those where it can be overlooked, e.g. History, Citizenship.
- 8.2.4 Art critics/historians proposing residencies require training in pedagogy; HE education departments in partnership with schools could provide training programmes.

- 8.2.5 Art & Design teachers require INSET from art critics and art historians in order to keep abreast of recent developments.

- 8.3 Higher Education
 - 8.3.1 Following the lead taken by some universities, undergraduate courses in Art & Design and Art History could build in an educational module (including student placements) as many graduates pursue professions with an educational component.

 - 8.3.2 Models of critical studies teaching for undergraduates at art college and student teachers on Art & Design PGCEs could draw on the theories of engaged pedagogy to develop student participation.

 - 8.3.3 HE education departments should provide INSET for Art & Design teachers in which the development of subject knowledge and its application to classroom practice is explored.

PART 3

Residency Evaluations

9. Discursive Spaces in the Classroom

- 9.1 The main expectation of students across all year groups was that Art & Design would be enjoyable in the sense that it would allow them to ‘express’ themselves in paint and other traditional media and would not involve ‘writing’. Similarly it was puzzling to the students that anyone should question art’s function or role within society. At times it was very difficult for the action researchers to make any kind of connection between the style and fashion discourses (gleaned from TV and magazines rather than the curriculum) with which students were evidently quite conversant¹ and the art they ‘did’ in the classroom or that they saw in the books shown to them as stimulus for practical work. The action researchers were able to challenge students’ preconceptions of art, in particular the belief that art is an elitist practice detached from daily existence, by highlighting parallels between the media and magazine discourses and similar discursive opportunities in art practice.
- 9.2 All Art & Design syllabuses imply an enquiring environment, for example, KS3 students (11-14 year olds) are required to explore ‘a range of starting points for practical work including themselves, their experiences and natural and made objects and environments... [and investigate] art, craft and design in the locality, in a variety of genre, styles and traditions, and from a range of historical, social and cultural contexts’ (DfEE and QCA 1999: 21). And yet the director’s analysis (Addison 2003: 66-67) suggests that such an environment is rare. Although the singularity of the subject makes the status of writing deeply problematic, this need not necessarily preclude a discursive model.
- 9.3 Art & Design teachers frequently reduce the significance of verbal instruction in favour of demonstration and exemplification both of which demand visual and kinaesthetic attention before the aural; language takes on a supporting role. The place of discussion in Art & Design is secondary, so it is no wonder that sixth form students, habituated to the ‘rules’ of the subject, have problems deciding how to use language in what is for them a dislocated context. A critical curriculum within Art & Design can only be developed through the building and cultivation of a discursive environment; an environment within which students should be immersed from the first year of secondary education. If Art & Design is to develop critical perspectives teachers need to develop the subject’s discursivity. This is not to reject its traditional strengths, teachers must recognise and celebrate the power of its affectivity and referentiality, but they should do so in the context of the developing discourses around technology and media.
- 9.4 The term ‘engaged pedagogies’ (hooks, 1994) refers to a process where together students and teacher(s) explore and construct the meaning of their work. The learners and teacher(s) share mutual responsibility for the learning that goes on, and become articulate about the nature, purpose and broader

¹ This conclusion as to the source of students’ knowledge of fashion and style issues is drawn from answers to the questionnaires (ACHiS Archive: IoE).

social context of learning. A growing interest in civic discourse – in helping students gain the public rhetorical skills they need to be fully active members of a participatory democracy – simply increases the importance of classroom discussion as a place to learn and practise how to communicate in public.

- 9.5 The discursive environment of the classroom is made up of two discursive spaces: the physical space where learning takes place, in this case the classroom and the gallery; and the interpretative space where discussions and interpretations of work occur and students are encouraged to consider their own work as a mode of social practice.

10. Physical Spaces

Control of the physical environment is one of the tools available to teachers in all types of school to enhance the learning environment and use the physical organisation as a means to engage the students in new ways of thinking and relating to a subject. Hopkins urges teachers to forget about the traditional desk and chair placement and visit museums, libraries and other schools to identify different ways of organising learning space (in Shalaway 1999). As interventionists within the secondary art curriculum (outsiders to school culture) the action researchers were able to challenge the students' perceptions about the 'eco-system' of the traditional art classroom and question established beliefs about the organisation of learning spaces. Through this strategy they attempted to develop a new learning environment built on the foundations of critical thinking and contextual awareness.

10.1 Classroom space

Year 1: De Souza

- 10.1.1 De Souza divided her sixth form class into two groups encouraging them to explore art practice, methods and criticism through the making of installations. She chose installation because of its currency within contemporary practice and because 'the activation of the place, or context, of artistic intervention suggests a localized, highly specific reading of the work, and is concerned not only with art and its boundaries, but with the continual rapprochement, or even fusion, of art and life' (De Oliveira, Oxley, Petry 1994: 7) an approach that challenges the somewhat isolated status that the subject is afforded in schools. From the outset the students worked within clearly defined installation spaces (perhaps one of the most significant and universally applicable achievements of ACHiS). At the beginning of the project it was evident that the students found the concept of a 'studio space' novel and that they were unsure how to behave in a defamiliarised space; De Souza had simply reorganised the furniture so as to disrupt the normal expectations and conventions of the lesson (this was not surprising taking into account that they had always worked on tables or walls). Initially students were overly self-conscious and reticent to act. However, after a short time, they were prompted to examine their assumptions and to consider the possible uses of a less restrictive environment. If the stool and table are the usual anchors for the production of artwork the act of making is inevitably a very contained and personal one. In this residency these private spaces were replaced by a collective one, a space in which each individual action was recognised as having social implications and, for its initiator, added responsibility.
- 10.1.2 Although students did write about the finished installation, unfortunately there was little time to develop the potentially symbiotic relationship between making and writing. However, by working on this scale and in collaboration with other students a discursive space was created that encouraged the sharing of ideas and developed the students' use of

sketchbooks to record their visualisations of space through annotated drawings (ACHiS 2002).

- 10.1.3. White (1972) has identified the significant effect that the physical environment exerts on learning, claiming that whilst 75% of learning may come through memory, motivation and attention, the further 25% is dependent on the environment where teaching occurs. However, whilst a good organisation of classroom space can contribute to discursive practices in the art classroom, failure to identify the messages emitted from the room can cause opportunities for learning to be lost.

Year 1: Papazafiriou

- 10.1.4 Papazafiriou worked with a group of Year 8 students to explore the notion of the Canon (Gretton 2003) and its perpetuation through transcription and pastiche, practices that currently are common in the secondary art classroom. He chose portraiture as the vehicle through which to explore the possibilities of students developing critical skills and an understanding of art within the context of a dominant canon. During the residency the students were given access to both primary and secondary visual references in the form of printed reproductions, slides, museum exhibits and portraits painted both by their teacher and the researcher (see Plate 1).



Plate 1

The researcher found that the impact of the primary sources had a profound effect upon the students' appreciation of artefacts. However, by neglecting to consider how the physical arrangement of the classroom might confirm disciplinary separation, a valuable opportunity to relate discussion about artefacts to the making of studio work was lost. The project director notes a marked division in the classroom, where contextual information, visual references and subject-specific words were displayed on a wall opposite the window (so they could be viewed without distraction in bright light) while the material for the making of studio work was stored on the other side of the room (see Plate 2 overleaf).



Plate 2

In this way there was a clear demarcation between exemplary outcomes and means (ACHiS 2002: Director's Report). Instead of allowing the discussion and critical aspect of the lesson to be integrated with the making, thus enabling students to consider the critical dimension as part of that process, there was a clear demarcation between the discursive and the instructional domains both in terms of spatial orientation and in relation to mode. The physical structure of the classroom had become a reflection of how the critical dimension of the lesson shifted from the historical and contextual to the formal and technical. This shift is dependent on the teachers'/students' position in the room, and this is particularly significant if the students themselves have not realised that such disciplinary divisions are in place. Any critical learning and the potential to use writing and language as key tools in making were left behind on the other side of the room.

10.2 Gallery space

The classroom is not the only physical environment in which students learn about art and critical studies. Many teachers now include a series of external visits as part of their lesson planning, and each of the ACHiS residencies included a visit to at least one museum or gallery with their student group. But the degree to which students understand the texts and contexts encountered in a gallery space as an integral part of their art practice is open to question.

Year 1: Georgaki

- 10.2.1 The assignment for Georgaki's first year ACHiS placement was devised so that students would be introduced to the categorisation of art, craft, and design as a social and institutional phenomenon, that is something determined by external factors rather than properties inherent to the object. In this way she foregrounded the role of language in the formation of this discourse guiding students to consider the implications of such separation by using the same language to challenge its very premise. The brief for this assignment asked students to produce three short texts which would

attribute 'art', 'craft' and 'design' values to the same piece of textile work (ACHiS 2002: Year 1, Georgaki, Appendix 1).

- 10.2.2 The importance of context became evident during the group visit to the London Transport Museum where swatches of London Transport textiles were examined under the guidance of a curator (see Plate 3). It is noteworthy that students appeared reluctant to attach great educational value to this visit, possibly because it took place in the 'depot' of the London Transport Museum rather than the more conventional Covent Garden site.



Plate 3

- 10.2.3 Although it was not overtly expressed, Georgaki speculates that students' appreciation of the objects was influenced by the environment within which they were presented, and the assumption was made that since they were kept in the depot they could not be as significant as those artefacts on display at Covent Garden. This misconception could only be countered by a reconsideration of context where conservation is seen as the main focus. The curator and Georgaki led a discussion on the fragility of textiles in relation to other materials and the detrimental effects of exposure to sunlight; this justified current storage policy. The incident elucidates the significance of context and the cultural negotiations that surround curatorial decisions.
- 10.2.4 On a further visit to the Crafts Council students did not feel the need to contextualise the exhibited objects despite being encouraged to do so. Most were happy to accept Shelley Goldsmith's work as impenetrable and esoteric whilst a few expressed the desire to make connections with her research and find culturally-defined themes in her pre-occupations. This attitude appears to confirm the stereotype of the autonomous artwork that

speaks for itself². As one student later wrote, ‘fine art doesn’t have to be anything’ (ACHiS 2002: Year 1, Georgaki, Appendix 5), confirming that the self-referential nature of the work is acceptable as long as the object is presented in an art gallery context.

Year 2: Georgaki

10.2.5 Observing the various ways of learning and communicating through the faculties of the body, one cannot ignore the spaces within which these communications take place and the effect the environment has on the interaction³. This issue came into sharp focus during Georgaki’s second year ACHiS residency, during a visit to the Crafts Council (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Georgaki, Appendix 6). The group was exposed to two distinctly different spaces within the same institution: the space of the handling collection studio and the space of the exhibition gallery. As many theorists on museology and museum education have argued (Rose 2001), the sterile paradigm of the white cube where objects are placed on a pedestal, prescribes a strict behavioural mode, of which ‘no touching’ is perhaps the most obvious – and frustrating – example. The opposite is true of the handling studio where touch becomes the dominant modality.

10.2.6 The handling studio cedes power to the members of an audience, who can escape the austerity of a ‘pure’ gallery filled with ‘pure’ objects (both metaphorically and literally, since these are objects which should not be soiled by fingerprints). Yet it is not the gallery but the artroom back in school which plays the most important role in this group’s art education. It is a space governed by rules of authority that are similar to those of the rest of the school while at the same time it is often experienced as a ‘respite’, an escape from the more rigid behavioural parameters which govern other learning spaces (Dalton 2001: 109-135).

Year 2: Hulks

10.2.7 In the second year of ACHiS the only residency to take place outside of London was conducted by Hulks, working with Year 7 and Year 9 students at a Bristol Comprehensive school. In this residency the museum/gallery visit took place half way through the placement, and involved an ambitious programme in which the two groups were rotated between the City Museum and Artists’ Studios. The museum experience was devised by Hulks and the partner teacher in relation to the theme of landscape, and the education officer worked closely with the groups to extend the partnership and provide different perspectives⁴. The intention was not only to look at the pictures the museum had on display, but also to look at the museum itself and its institutional functions. The visit to artists’ studios was supported by the Director of the institute, whose function was mainly

² However, the lack of conceptualisation may equally be interpreted as an indication of the time constraints experienced throughout the ACHiS residency, which may have prevented students from pursuing further research.

³ See LeFebvre, H. (1991), *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell.

⁴ For example, Year 7 had a talk from a museum officer which included information on the museum’s function. Detailed discussions took place between the researcher and the Education Officer (in the form of several exchanges of email) well in advance of the visit so that all these elements would be in place.

curatorial since the studios also featured a large display space containing a contemporary art exhibition which was available to Year 9 at the time of their visit⁵. The visit was pivotal to the residency and defined a lot of what went on in the lead-up and follow-up periods.

10.2.8 Before the visit, the Year 7 class was given a slide show that introduced them to some of the exhibits they would see and demonstrated a distinction between ‘Classical’ and ‘Romantic’ forms in art. This stylistic distinction was made to enable students to look for similarities and differences between artworks in the museum and between the museum itself and its neighbouring buildings.⁶ The Year 9 group were not given a slide show, instead they were provided with handouts designed to contextualise the visit, inform their study and direct their activities in the museum; although the efficacy of such handouts did come into question from the partner teacher later in the residency. Nonetheless, the visit was generally judged to have been a success, especially the artists’ studios which were ‘a real eye-opener’ even though the contemporary art exhibition ‘went completely over their heads’ (partner teacher in ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Hulks).

10.2.9 The Year 7 lessons were ‘blown off course’ following the visit because the teacher (who was not able to come on the trip) felt that the class were not getting enough time for making. Consequently any opportunity for reflecting on what might have been learnt in the museum and gallery context and building on that knowledge was lost, and instead the students were involved in an exercise in the use of colour inks so as to make ‘skies’ based on one or two examples of Romantic painting. What the students learned from this exercise is difficult to determine. The lesson was devised pretty much on the spur of the moment, and, more importantly, it was based on a *feeling* that the students needed to spend a whole lesson being ‘fully occupied’ in ‘creative activity’. From the department’s point of view the primary objective of art is always to engage students in enjoyable, ‘colourful’ activity and this was certainly achieved. But, by pulling the students away from ‘thinking’ (linguistic, analytical, perceived as ‘passive’) back towards the safety of the more usual activity of ‘making’ (visual, non-linguistic, perceived as ‘active’) a tension had opened up between two ways of working, between the discourse of the researcher (as ‘art historian’) and the discourse of the partner teacher (as ‘studio practitioner’). Clearly both parties had something to defend, as became clear in the long debates which took place in the aftermath of each lesson. There was a sense that this practical class had rescued the students from some sort of danger. But the subsequent lesson, the final one, was then re-captured by the researcher and was, inevitably, all about language-based analysis and quantitative assessment, much to the partner teacher’s dismay.

⁵ The exhibition was the group show, ‘Humid’ held at Spike Island 24/2/01-25/3/01, Cumberland Road, Bristol, open to the public and featuring a range of artists including Christine Borland, Tacita Dean, Ann Hamilton and Pipilotti Rist.

⁶ The neo-classical style of the Museum and Art Gallery in Bristol can be sharply distinguished from the neo-gothic style of the University building next to it, for example by noting the pilasters used to decorate the museum facade or the gargoyles and crocketed pinnacles that feature prominently on the university building. On the day of the visit the students were escorted to a position where they could note the external features for themselves.

Year 2: Trowell

- 10.2.10 Trowell worked with a year 10 group on the theme ‘animals’, a project that was run with her residency group but also with other first year GCSE classes within the school. This offered an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of Trowell’s intervention through comparison. With reference to the Hindu belief in re-incarnation, students were asked to select two animals, one embodying their ideal, the other inscribing a terrible punishment. This not only provided a stimulus for discussion but enabled students to take ownership through an exercise of choice, establishing a personal interest in the exercise.
- 10.2.11 This freedom of choice was also employed on the gallery visits. The student group visited both the British Museum and the National Gallery, and it was in the latter that, following a facilitated whole group discussion about Titian’s Bacchus and Ariadne (1523), students were asked to select three paintings that attracted their attention. It was stressed that they could make choices based on positive or negative reasons. They were later asked to write about one painting and to examine their interest in it.
- 10.2.12 The educational purpose of these tasks can be seen to encourage:
- personal engagement and a sense of choice, free range within the broad category ‘animal’;
 - personal engagement in a gallery context, within a very restricted range from the Wohl Room paintings; to encourage ownership through personal, written interpretation.
- 10.2.13 Trowell revealed the effect that the visit to the British Museum African Galleries had on one student: ‘[The] National Gallery didn’t really have an effect on me as it was mostly old paintings. The British Museum was good as it was from another culture and 3D and modern (things I like)’ and ‘I didn’t know much about African art (I didn’t think there was any). It made me acknowledge [sic] differences and the meaning behind the picture’ (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Trowell, Appendix C, questions 3b[i] and 6).
- 10.2.14 Through this written evidence, Trowell believes the student demonstrated an incipient engagement with issues in cultural politics, an openness to gaps in her knowledge and an interest in learning and exploring this area. By having a space to express this in writing the student was able to reflect on her motivations to learn. However, the extent to which reflective writing aids or hinders the making process was an issue that Trowell’s partner teacher was keen to examine.
- 10.2.15 Another student raised the issue of how difficult it was to find the relevant label in a crowded British Museum gallery (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Trowell, Table Bi). This touched on something very significant; students cannot ‘read’ the multimodalities of the gallery and its collections unless they are taught how its different elements: historical, material, spatial, textual, etc, work in conjunction with students’ personal histories to produce meaning.

Despite the students being given distinct tasks in the gallery, certain conventions of display cabinets, floor pieces and labels may have been new to some of them, and as a result, under difficult conditions, a little alienating. Teachers would be advised to remember this, and forewarn students of some of the detective strategies they might need if they are going to honour the ‘good’ practice of text-based recording: noting down the name of the maker(s), the title, the date, the media, and writing a synopsis of, or questioning, interpretative texts, as well as making visual records in the form of diagrams, mappings, sketches, etc.

11. Interpretative Spaces

- 11.1 In the museum/gallery it is hoped the affective power of the artefact/image may induce the 'illuminating experience' (Taylor 1986) or the traumatic conversion (Hargreaves 1983). But there is little evidence to suggest that either of these non-linguistic, instantaneous processes is commonly experienced in the formal pedagogic context where art exists mainly through reproductions. When art (rarely craft or design) is referenced in the form of reproductions it is usually to support students' understanding of technical and formal properties; thus the tendency to transcription and pastiche noted over a number of years (Hughes 1989). There has been much evidence to suggest that schooling in the UK is primarily concerned with cultural reproduction rather than cultural critique (Ball 2002). Art and design is no exception and the QCA survey undertaken in 1997 identified a limited modernist canon dominating reference materials at nearly all levels of primary and secondary education (QCA 1998).
- 11.2 The use of reproductions, slides and video in the secondary art classroom has increased in the last twenty years. These resources have been seen as 'back-ups' and are today a necessity in any art room (see Appendix 1: Teacher Questionnaire). Even though it is more instructive to look at an artwork in its original setting or in a gallery or studio, secondary resources are there to help the teacher in different ways. The use of slides, for example, can provide a valuable opportunity to see: 1) a breadth of art, craft and design works; 2) importantly, the time to examine in some depth a singular work, its multiple contexts, means of production, historical and contemporary meanings. Additionally, the critical language employed in discussing these historical and personal meanings can inform students' evaluation of their own studio practice.
- 11.3 However, young people may learn to imitate the surface appearance of such artists as Van Gogh or Kandinsky knowing very little about the technical and material processes employed, the possible motivations and intended meanings of the work (Taylor 1989). During Asbury's residency (first year), when approaching the reproductions of Russian Modernists, students immediately sought representational clues confirming that their analytical understanding of the formal properties of painting tends to be in the service of mimetic representation. More generally it can be stated that students who are encouraged to work in abstract ways rarely have knowledge of, or understand, the contextual, historical and philosophical discourse in which they appear to be playing a part, their making is one further example of imitation rather than meaning-making, or rather it is meaning reduced to surfaces.
- 11.4 Such imitation can be countered through the introduction of the specialised forms of knowledge contained within art criticism and art history as introduced by the action researchers into the secondary art classroom. For those art teachers who privilege *all* acts of making this type of knowledge is often seen as secondary, even dangerous, to the primary process of 'production'. For example, the multiple contexts of an artwork can be

drawn on in such a way that the artwork is seen to reflect an aspect of the society in which it was made, as such it becomes merely illustrative. In contradistinction, if the process of ‘making’ is valorised, the artwork itself can be seen as productive of society and culture. However, the insularity of school art ensures that student production is perceived as a pale imitation of art in the wider world and irrelevant to the development of artists and designers in society (Robins 2003). Aware of this view the ACHiS team promoted practices in which the interdependence of critical investigation and making was foregrounded. In developing this orientation they introduced students to an interpretative space which enabled them to become familiar with dominant cultural discourses (conventional and radical) and to negotiate their positions within them in both discursive and creative ways (ACHiS 2002).

11.5 Use of reproductions and artefacts: artwork as social product

Year 1: De Souza

11.5.1 De Souza elected to conduct her residency using a semiotic methodology. Art historians’ expectations of semiotics as a visual system in the composition of meaning can itself become part of the students’ strategy in understanding the visual language that they encounter everyday. She worked particularly with the theory of semiotics as developed by Charles Peirce (1955).

11.5.2 Peirce places all signs within a psychological and sociological framework. Signs consist of icons, indexes and symbols. Any sign that stands for something because it resembles that thing is an icon. The value of the icon consists in displaying the features of a thing regarded as if it were purely descriptive. When the interpreter considers the sign as similar to something else it becomes useful because the interpreter learns about the characteristics of the object.

11.5.3 De Souza decided that she would invite students to look for and discuss images that interested them in art books, magazines and exhibitions rather than determine the focus of the project by providing visual material rooted in her own concerns. However, in order for students to locate their interests within the historical continuum of modernism, at a later point in the project De Souza provided visual material, in one instance as a slide lecture. The focus of the talk was on installation (see 10.1.1) from the early 20th century to contemporary practice.

11.5.4 One image selected for discussion was Duchamp’s Bottle Rack (1914). In posing questions about this work such as: ‘Why is it automatically associated with a particular life style?’ ‘What is its relationship to manufactured goods?’ ‘Why is it problematic that various people perceived it to be a work of art?’ De Souza encouraged students to consider how art contributes to wider social debate and to move beyond intrinsic and formal meanings. In answering these questions students began to realise that when art enters discourse, meaning is not immanent (contained within the object) but produced (formed through social and historical interaction); meanings

proliferate in direct relation to who asks the questions and who answers them.

- 11.5.5 In a second slide talk De Souza addressed the construction of installations and the use of text within artworks. Students were able to observe how the particular interests of artists and the philosophical and social issues they wished to address have changed over the years.
- (ii) Year 1: Trowell
- 11.5.6 Trowell's first year residency developed from a genuine desire to think through how students see the benefits and disadvantages of 'writing' as a part of their education in Art & Design. This approach stemmed from the researcher's own commitment to engaged pedagogical practices, where actively listening to the assumptions, views and doubts of the group of learners about the nature of the upcoming and ongoing study is of central importance. In it she questioned what it is possible to learn from students' assumptions and views about the purpose of 'critical studies' diaries. She warned that if art theorists and educators had difficulties in establishing what the parameters and theories underpinning 'critical studies' should be then it was very likely that this doubt would be transmitted to the students.
- 11.5.7 Trowell identified two aspects to the critical studies diary:
- (i) 'collecting' material evidence such as postcards, programmes and reviews, which easily followed on from the childhood experiences of the scrapbook;
 - (ii) the 'diary' terminology which immediately evoked the sense of a personal, secret object and some consternation was caused that the diary would be publicly examined or even graded.
- 11.5.8 The students had not previously been asked to produce a critical studies diary, or even in some cases been asked to use the word 'critical', and yet they had been 'successful' in art. This led them to view the new activity of critical studies as additional, inessential and without a central purpose and placed student perception at odds with the educationalists who viewed critical studies as an integral part of the making process.
- 11.5.9 At various points during the residency several students commented on the purpose of art as a self-expression that was personal and therefore separate from influence or external stimulus. 'You just do art, you pick it up. You're not learning facts. You learn how to use the tools and then it's up to you' (ACHiS Archive: IoE). Whilst the use of reproductions and the practice of pastiche are activities commonly found in the secondary art class room, during this residency one student expressed concerns that 'influence' was a form of plagiarism: 'If they looked at other people's things that would be copying. If I knew that an artist was going around looking at other people's things and getting ideas from that, you know, that wouldn't be quite the same. I don't think they do that personally' (Ibid).

- 11.5.10 Most of the students did not see themselves as operating within a symbiotic social, cultural and discursive context. Rather, their school-led thinking, in which copying is deemed a form of cheating, forbidden throughout the rest of the curriculum, leaves them believing that art is an autonomous act. Therefore external stimuli and determining contexts appear redundant in relation to making.
- (iii) Year 1: Papazafiriou
- 11.5.11 The approach adopted by Papazafiriou during his residency addressed the controversial issues of ‘canons’ and ‘pastiche practices’. He identified that this was the background against which any strategies for the promotion of a critical/historical and contextual understanding were to be developed. Instead of rejecting or attempting to change the given context in which the art lessons were taking place (the limitations of the scheme of work [portrait/conventions in visual representation], the partner teachers’ methods of teaching and the particularities of the specific group of students) Papazafiriou set out to utilise the students’ existing experience of art lessons to introduce critical skills and a deeper understanding of art by formulating the research question: To what extent can pastiche be: 1) a means of access to the ‘canon’; 2) a critical practice?
- 11.5.12 During the residency ‘the canon’ was used as the basis for the selection of primary and secondary visual resources (museum artefacts, the researcher’s own paintings and transparencies, printed reproductions [see Plate 1]). By making continuous reference to them, Papazafiriou intended that the aesthetic conventions and cultural orthodoxies dominating the western tradition would be made explicit. Further it was hoped that students would make connections between this tradition and wider socio-cultural issues. Students were asked to respond by analysing, redefining and incorporating these references into their discursive, written and performative acts. Initially they were reluctant to participate, but a mixture of scepticism and curiosity motivated them to engage in what were unfamiliar critical and analytical processes. The impact that the museum exhibits had upon the students was evident in the excited way they referred to them back in the classroom. This excitement was channeled through a carefully teacher-directed discussion toward a better understanding of the artefacts’ historical background and social function (see ACHiS Archive: Examples of students’ work: 1. Notes taken during the visit to the British Museum and 2. Examples of worksheets: visit/homework/ evaluation).
- 11.5.13 In a similar way the original painted portraits, which were presented to the students in the classroom, had a far stronger impact on informing the students’ studio work (stylised self-portraits) in comparison to the reproductions of ‘canonical’ portraits on display, although the former were pastiches of some of the latter. On this occasion, pastiche was used successfully as a means of access to the ‘canon’. The initial intention was to present these portraits as exemplars of how canonical styles could inform studio work. The unintended result was the students’ reception of the pastiche portraits as:

1. a mediator that led their attention to the canonical portraits; and,
2. an initiator of the selection process for making such stylised portraits.

(iv) Year 2: Georgaki

- 11.5.14 In her second year residency Georgaki directly addressed the GCSE brief set by the teacher in which students were required to produce a bag based on the theme of ‘the bathroom’. Significantly the brief did not require the bag to be functional. Georgaki identified the theme of ‘transformation’ for her intervention which she introduced via a slide show. Students were asked to consider the ‘strategies of subversion’ that were employed by artists for each artwork. The two sessions were accompanied by worksheets that prompted students to investigate the cultural contexts underpinning the selected works of art and encouraged them to make links to their own work.
- 11.5.15 In response to this exercise the group contemplated the role of context (Duchamp, Magritte and Warhol), materials (Oldenburg and Koons), scale (Oldenburg and Koons) and language (Magritte and Kruger). These factors were presented in a more structured worksheet during the following session, where one single image by Claes Oldenburg was analysed in terms of five transformations, each supported by a key word (locus, utility, material, mass production, value – ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Georgaki, Appendix 4). The specific work Soft Toilet (1966) was chosen because of the obvious connection to the bathroom theme. Not surprisingly, the students responded enthusiastically to Oldenburg’s work where they found an immediate correlation to their set project.
- 11.5.16 The effort to reveal the submerged critical process became the focus for the residency. The investigation aimed to provide avenues through which value judgements could become manifest and be captured in language. The role of language was thus re-visited, no longer seen as an exclusive formative factor, but rather as a tool of un-concealment, a way of transforming the invisible into the visible. Apart from verbal expression, other modalities of communication, such as kinaesthetic responses and body language were used as methods of revealing the critical dimension of artwork.
- 11.5.17 The fluidity and flexibility of the idea of ‘transformations’ afforded a dialogue between making and language to develop. It enabled students to consider themselves as agents of transformation, taking materials and turning them into others, but also taking one concept and turning it into another. The word ‘transformation’ was appropriated because the action of transforming is akin to, and integral to, the act of creation. It is also useful on the philosophical/ontological level as it allows a person to transgress the static ‘to be’ and to draw attention to the dynamic ‘to become’.

(v) Year 2: Hulks

- 11.5.18 In the Bristol residency the Year 9 classes spiralled out of orbit largely due to conditions beyond Hulks' control. Solutions had to be found quickly, and lessons were revised without sufficient thought about the implications of what was being done or why. The original plan to open up issues of style and apply questions of cultural analysis were completely lost as the project degenerated into a simple mask-making exercise all about the use of bold colour, along with pattern and texture. Notionally, the students were expressing their individuality, but actually it was as much as the teacher could do to reign the project in sufficiently for it not to become a regressive kind of play (which might have been acceptable but for the fact that codes of behaviour began to be breached). Hulks' own concern became the extent to which the students were using stereotypical ideas about 'primitive cultures' in order to inform their 'mask-making'. His solution to this perceived issue was to introduce handouts (reproduced in ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Hulks, Appendices) that might introduce a basic level of information about mask production in South America and Africa so that some debate would be generated and assumptions could be questioned. However, the handouts were largely ignored by the students and rejected by the partner teacher, so there was never any opportunity for discussion or reflection to arise or refinement of the work to take place. Why had this happened? In part the problem arose because the students simply didn't know what to do with the handouts. But a more specific problem was identified with the handouts themselves. The staff were very critical and their remarks are, perhaps, a telling outcome of the residency. Essentially the problem was with the images used to illustrate the text: they were 'too small', not 'detailed enough' and 'colourless'. In other words they were not 'visually stimulating' and, when asked about the text, nobody had read it: 'weren't these just captions?' Surely the important things were the images, if these didn't stimulate the senses, then how on earth could you expect anyone to read the words that went alongside them? This is *Art* after all and *Art*, it seems, fetishises the visual so as to keep language at bay.
- 11.5.19 Initially Hulks expressed his concern not to come across as critical, at any time, of what the department was currently doing; conscious that he was working with an already highly successful department and that his views about how things should be done were not necessarily 'right' or even 'better'. However, he did feel safe in putting forward the idea that *discussion* and *reflection* (language use, in other words) were crucial components to be included in today's art lessons.
- 11.5.20 In reality the residency proved how much resistance there still is to language, and in particular to writing, in many secondary art classrooms. If the aim of the residency had been to use language so as to improve making, then the opposite seemed to have been demonstrated⁷. The results in terms

⁷ The original aim was to investigate 'how making can become a more critical and investigative activity through language', although this was subsequently altered to become the central question of the main report as it is now. We defined the terms of the first aim so as to arrive at the following definitions that would apply to this residency in particular: 'making' in the contexts of *art* (yr 7 painting) and *design* (yr 9 3-D); 'critical' in the sense of self-enquiry and discussion of the work of others; 'investigative' centred

of the students' work were disappointing and seem largely irrelevant to what ACHiS was trying to achieve. Language had intruded into the normal course of the Art & Design curriculum and had disrupted rather than provided inspiration.

Year 2: Perret

- 11.5.21 The students began with the study of resource materials specific to the representation of the body in France during the period 1942-52, the precise subject of Perret's research as an art historian. The emphasis was placed on analysing images in terms of their formal elements, the content of the artworks, the history and society of the period and on understanding the connections between these.
- 11.5.22 Once these methods were acquired through their application to this specific case study, they were extended to other artists dealing with the body, across time, cultures and societies. This research was supported by the art books available at the school (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Perret, Appendix 4: Catalogue Listing for Art, provided by the Librarian) allowing the students to investigate the connection between the artworks and wider historical, social and cultural contexts.
- 11.5.23 The first lesson of this residency was crucial in testing the students' existing critical skills and the frames of reference that they used in their interpretation of art (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Perret, Appendix 3a: Lesson Plan 1). They were shown a series of slides of works by Jean Dubuffet, Jean Fautrier and Germaine Richier, accompanied by a comment relating their production to the context of W.W.II. The students' task, to respond in terms of likes and dislikes, demonstrated their ability to express an artistic opinion. Yet their opinions were limited to the observation of formal characteristics, reinforced by their rejection of Dubuffet and Fautrier for not being mimetic/representational enough: they found them 'too abstract' and 'not easy to read' (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Perret, Appendix 5: Lesson 1 - Activity 2, Students' Responses).
- 11.5.24 Moreover, their lack of familiarity with the term 'formal' demonstrated that they had little awareness of methods for analysing art. Indeed, although they seemed to enjoy the revelation of the direct relationship between the subject matter of Fautrier's Hostages (1943) and their historical context, they approached the third activity with great difficulty. It consisted of exploring in groups the connections between formal elements and the context of a specific artwork selected from the artists mentioned above. Surprisingly, the students had little understanding of the term 'context'. After this initial difficulty had been resolved in the short term, the references of their analyses continued to be their own affective responses: referring to the reproduction of Richier's The Shepherd of the Landes (1951) which showed the sculpture in a natural setting, one student said:

around a visit (makers' studios, architectural artefact, museum); 'language' in the sense of key skills, written and spoken Communication and use of IT to prepare, process and present information

‘the height gives it the power, but the background gives the impression of a toy skidding in a bit of grass like a scarecrow.’

- 11.5.25 Perret had assumed that the students would have some knowledge about history and the cultural contexts of the visual material presented and this misapprehension was common to all of the action researchers who did not have previous classroom experience. The students had very little critical awareness of either their immediate cultural environment or engagement with wider socio-cultural issues. Also, the students’ ability to layer meaning was not developed enough for them to establish a transfer from one main ACHiS aim (to develop modes of investigation of artists, photographers and designers) to another (to generate tools for self-reflection).
- 11.5.26 However, in the final presentation (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Perret, Appendix 3e: Lesson Plan 5), the students did successfully link the formal elements and general context of their chosen artwork (history, society, politics, technology, other art movements of the time, and even philosophy in the case of Student 2), sometimes making interesting connections with other artworks of the same theme by different artists (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Perret, Appendix 9: Students’ Final Presentation). For instance, a comparison was made between Picasso’s Guernica (1937) and Rubens’s Horrors of War (1637-8), between Bacon’s Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion (1944) and Michelangelo’s Study for a Crucifixion (with the Virgin and St John) (1550-55). However, few students synthesised their findings and ideas in an essay, as Perret would have preferred. The use of bullet points, instead of formulated sentences, was a frequent occurrence and this indicated a lack of ease and confidence in formal writing (ACHiS Archive: Students’ Sketchbooks).
- 11.6 Informed student making: artwork as social communication
- 11.6.1 In terms of advancing the ACHiS research, simply pointing out that critical thinking underpins all types of creative making was not enough. The objective was to turn this observation into a realisation on the part of the students so that they could then use it as a tool in their understanding of their own and others’ making. The long-term benefits of this new found awareness would allow students to ‘realise’ themselves through their educational experience, in the way hooks (1994) has described this process.
- 11.6.2 It became important to foster an awareness in students that cultural context was already present in their art, irrespective of whether or not there had been a conscious effort on their part to refer to it. This in turn revealed the practical benefits that conscious engagement and reference to the cultural context offered the art student. Further, making the students aware of how artworks are interpreted awakened an understanding in them of how potential audiences might read their own studio work and allowed them consciously to control the presentation and communication of their own art.

Year 1: De Souza

- 11.6.3 To encourage the students to think about signs De Souza suggested they should first focus on those types of objects that would instantly clarify the meaning of their installation project. The students were then asked to examine the relationship between two objects and consider any likeness between them. Secondly, in a contrary approach, the students selected objects or texts to obscure the meaning of their installations. Objects such as balloons, spikes, string, fishing wire, a pillow, tiles, a curtain, red paint and white paint were used for both their indexical and symbolic status (see Frontispiece and Plate 4). In the students' sketchbooks drawings of feet, hands, ballerina shoes, chairs, gloves covered with barbed wire, balloons, the human figure, cotton wool balls and drawings based on works from the Crafts Council *Ripe* exhibition were deployed as iconic and indexical signs.

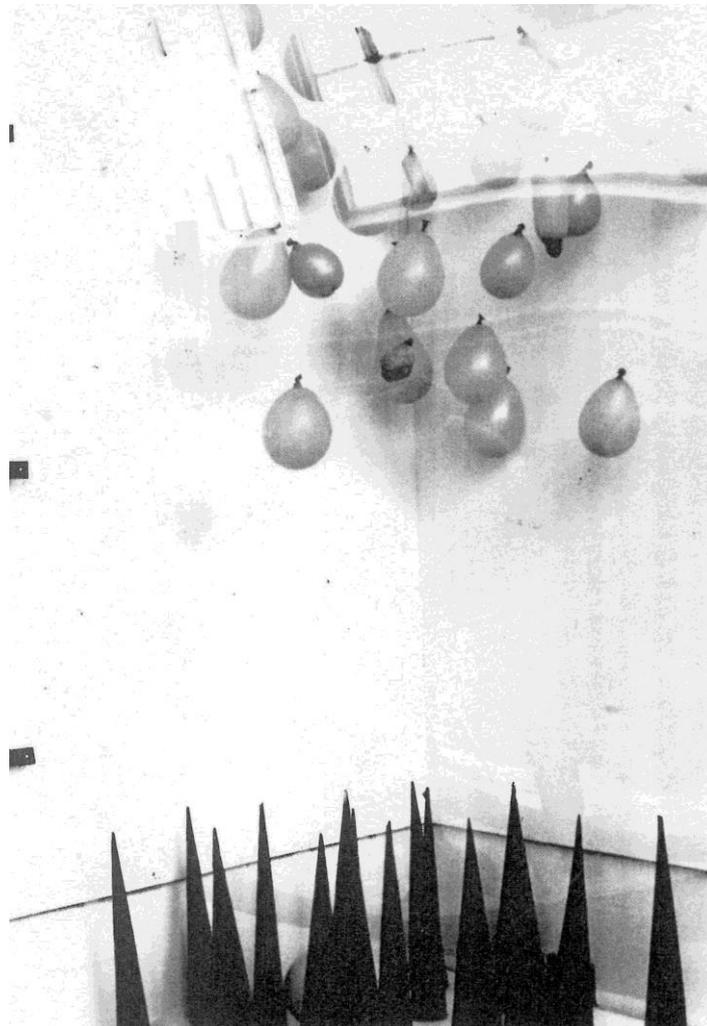


Plate 4

- 11.6.4 De Souza claims that once the installations were completed the students found it easy to associate the objects they had used with various meanings and definitions (image to word) but that they had found the process of visualising their language-based conceptions difficult (word to image) even though they had often worked this way before. De Souza thought that this

activity was difficult because students were being asked to visualise concepts which had a strong personal investment; ordinarily they were asked to visualise matter external to themselves. How could she overcome these difficulties? The distancing process involved in looking at work that is not your own rids the object of study of the personal investment that may inhibit public articulation, she therefore asked each group to visualise the other's installation.

- 11.6.5 During the residency students worked with various forms of writing. Through the production of academic text, narrative writing and interviewing each other about their installations, it was possible for the students to define and relate their ideas about the installation to previous art movements and to reflect on changes within their own working practice. Visits to the Craft Council's *Ripe* exhibition and to Mark Wallinger's show for the Turner Prize introduced the students to forms of art criticism where the mutual relationship between writing and practice was stressed.
- 11.6.6 Students were encouraged to look at artists' statements and in discussion were encouraged to verbalise how they felt. In general the students were open to experimenting with the different types of writing presented and discussed how to communicate their visual ideas in words. However, the process of writing about visual imagery from a variety of critical perspectives was difficult for some. At first, one resistant student, who had continual difficulty when writing, deployed a number of avoidance strategies. However, he did begin to participate after observing the importance that his peers began to place on the multiple means of expression afforded by different genres of writing.
- (ii) Year 2: Georgaki
- 11.6.7 Examination of the documentation of work in progress and, in parallel, documentation of students reflecting on their progress, provided Georgaki with data to examine the interconnectedness of the transformations central to this residency. More often than not language played an active role in rationalising and thus organising the act of making. Language was used to build an imaginary (albeit idealised) model of the piece before it was constructed. For example, it is through the student's eloquent description that the bag with the Barbie bathroom scene takes form in others' minds, and is possibly finalised in the student's mind as well⁸ (see Plate 5).
- 11.6.8 In another instance words played a consoling role, they enabled the student to rationalise past attempts and offered strategies to counter problems that occurred in the making of the bag, a process that neutralised the disappointment of failed action: 'It's the second time I'm making it – the first time it just kept breaking... so I put cardboard inside it this time... 'So that it would not collapse...' 'Yeah'⁹.

⁸ Audio-recording 16.2.01/41'10"

⁹ Audio-recording 16.2.01/34'27".



Plate 5

- 11.6.9 Regarding the ability to theorise the notion of transformation, evidence from the audio-recorded and the videotaped sessions confirms that students used the idea of transferable meaning from one area of cultural production to another. This became apparent with students who utilised the idea of transferred meaning as a way of legitimising their pieces as art. When asked how she would make her bag resemble the bathroom cabinet that was her inspiration, one student replied:

I'm thinking inside...I'm gonna put a few bottles and stuff...Damien Hirst... just a few...but then when I saw the clothes peg... [Refers to Claes Oldenburg's work shown in slide lecture]...I thought I was gonna put something odd in there...I don't know- a sardine tin or something like that. Something that doesn't make sense...to take it a different way.... I don't want it to be a cabinet...I want it to be art, so I am gonna change it a little bit...¹⁰

- 11.6.10 The student picked up the idea of subverting the audience's expectations of an object by juxtaposing it with something unfamiliar. In this case, she crafted her bag as if it had somehow adopted the guise of a bathroom cabinet, but its utility was subverted because the bag contained an 'object

¹⁰ Video-recording 23.3.01/18'20''

out of place', a bible, and thus signalled its status as 'art' (see Plate 6). She cited the work of Oldenburg as her inspiration, although it should be kept in mind that the students were also shown work by artists such as Duchamp and Magritte, while references were made to the power of the mundane object presented in an alien context.



Plate 6

- 11.6.11 When challenged about her intervention (it was suggested that the sardine tin would be lost among the medicine bottles and would not be an obvious statement), she agreed that it would be 'rewarding to the person who spent some time examining it'. Asked why she thought that was important she responded:

Because art is about enjoyment...it has to have something that keeps you interested; if it was just a bathroom cabinet it would just be so everyday that you wouldn't look - so you have to change it a little bit...¹¹

This illustrates the level of understanding displayed by the students at this point in the residency through their recognition of context and the desire to include a displaced object to provoke thought in the viewer.

¹¹ Video-recording 23.3.01/22'00''

11.6.12 Students were able to discuss confidently the indexical and symbolic meaning in their making with reference to materials: ‘it relates to the bathroom because it is quite shiny material’¹² while another student discussed how she used beads to represent water trickling down the shower curtain¹³. There is also evidence of functional elements being transferred from the bathroom to the realm of art (‘straps relate to chain of the bathtub’¹⁴ and, in another piece, to a shower hose [see Plate 7]) and finally technique: ‘inspired from the construction of the neoprene rubber bag by Annette Burrows at the Crafts Council’¹⁵ (see Plate 8). Another student showed her sketchbook in which she had copied the coiling technique seen on a basket during the Craft Council’s handling session, which she thought was reminiscent of a showerhead¹⁶. These responses show how the intervention did, at least in part, fulfil the set research targets, that is it informed investigation and contextualisation and provided reflective tools for making – despite the fact that students were not always able to recognise this.

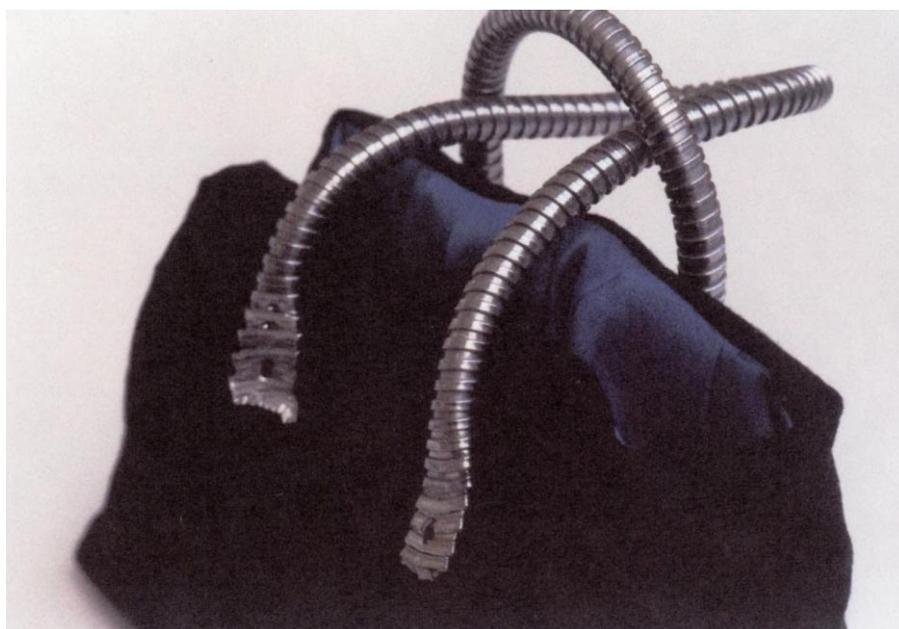


Plate 7

¹² Video-recording 23.3.01/2’17’’

¹³ Video-recording 23.3.01/25’00’’.

¹⁴ Video-recording 23.3.01/2’50’’

¹⁵ Video-recording 23.3.01/10’20’’.

¹⁶ Audio-recording 16.2.01/11’05’’.



Plate 8

11.6.13 This is particularly significant, for while Georgaki makes no specific claims towards a semiotic methodology, what the students were doing here relates directly back to how De Souza had used semiotics in her first year residency. Now though it was much more explicit that the students could identify, for themselves, how one material is representative of something else. The students quoted above have chosen shiny material and beads, not just for their aesthetic decorative qualities, but also for their value as connotative signs leading the viewer to think of bathroom enamel and water droplets. This obvious integration between language and studio work is also sympathetic to Georgaki's initial concerns that in order to support the critical/historical dimension of the curriculum it is necessary to approach it as inseparable from making.

11.6.14 Using the concept of audience with the students also allowed them to understand the influence of an individual's culture on how they interpret signs and in the case of Georgaki's residency, students showed a conscious knowledge of audience manipulation through strategies of subversion – first provoking them to think of a bathroom by the form and material of the bag, and secondly that they might question the absurdity of an unexpected object within their creation.

Year 2: Trowell

11.6.15 The focus of this residency was to encourage students to broaden their approach to 'research'. As already discussed the chosen theme was 'animals', and the placement included a slide show, two visits, whole class discussions, and three short pieces of set written work, the first of which is discussed in 10.2.10. A second written task aimed to give students a chance

to apply more formal research skills, building on their motivation about the animals in question.

- 11.6.16 Within the complexity of the whole project, students were given a free rein on how they chose to interpret the written work in terms of evidence of specific modes of enquiry. It was felt by the collaborators that the main aim was to test if students would respond at all, given that written research was totally new in their experience of Art & Design. In other words, what would students write if they were given a distinct framework, and within that, a free hand? In the long term, this raw evidence was perceived to be useful for the future development of teaching methods and the teaching of written enquiry by students.
- 11.6.17 The identified aim was that the students would associate the writing with their visual research, i.e. developmental work, and not with the feel of written homework in their other subjects with its connotations of 'best' writing. It was intended that written work would be:
- a) in the service of students' making; i.e. useful to them;
 - b) similar to students' visual homework: assessed on their capacity to engage with the subject, make something of it and develop their ideas;
 - c) more to do with students taking ownership of 'the word' rather than presenting it as an object for assessment;
 - d) in effect more personal than analytical, although verbalised analysis could of course be expressed within and beyond the two paragraphs minimum requirement.

The students were encouraged to produce an artist/maker's sketchbook model where notes and written research could be employed as an integral part of development, not as something separable from it. This was in counter-balance to the previous model in the school where writing was not seen as part of Art & Design.

- 11.6.18 In the Evaluation Questionnaire, one student did not give much away about the value of writing aside from a reference to quantity: 'We haven't done much writing so it's all right. It's different and a change.' In answer to the question 'How has it helped or not?', the student was positive in relation to the role of writing for describing others' work, but neglected to offer an opinion about whether her own work had been informed in the same way (although these are connected). She simply wrote: 'more description and in-depth detail about the work' (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Trowell, Appendix C, 2a and b). In both instances she made no attempt to investigate why the paintings were created, nor was there any reference to the fulsome interpretative texts the National Gallery now supplies. Her interests, unmediated by the directing frames supplied by the teacher(s), were visual, technical and narrative (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Trowell, Appendix C).

However a different student was undoubtedly dependent on these official texts for when writing about Titian's Allegory of Prudence (1565) she twice asserted Titian's anthropomorphic strategies, a similarity 'between man and animal'. Such a direct process of identification was evidently appealing to this student who chose a placid panda as her own equivalent.

11.6.19 From the written pieces and the resulting artworks produced by the students during this residency, it can be concluded:

1. That a carefully judged amount of written tasks, distinctly but loosely framed, with an emphasis on personal choice and expression within a broad range of research strategies, can be accepted as broadly useful by students;
2. That there is evidence of students wanting to express themselves and that there is a need for somewhat greater input in terms of formal language and specialist art/craft/design terminology;
3. That students may not consciously know that such exploratory writing is aiding their making process, but the resulting artwork is evidence that it can.

Year 1: Papazafiriou; year 8 students

11.6.20 Through the use of pastiche, the students were able to identify the different styles in representation, connect them to works of art from different cultures, media and times and apply their understanding to their own studio work, styling their self-portraits in an informed manner both technically and contextually. For example, some students chose a purely technical stylistic convention based on personal aesthetic preferences such as graphic or mosaic styles. Others made connections between their own background and artworks from the same or related backgrounds and represented themselves in stylistic conventions such as that of ancient Egyptian painting (see Plate 9). Rather than leading to a 'sterile art exercise' the pastiche approach initiated a critical process. The students were able to identify (verbally) their chosen style and make connections to the work of artists on display and to justify their choice of stylised self-representation on the grounds of their own ethnic, cultural and social background or their own aesthetic preferences and projection of ideas and meanings.

11.6.21 Papazafiriou never intended to make a case for copying or pastiche practices. However, it could not fail to be observed that the employment of such practices presented possible ways to overcome problems specific to the student group (short attention span, EAL/SEN status, discontinued attendance) and establish a basic level of historical/critical and contextual understanding.

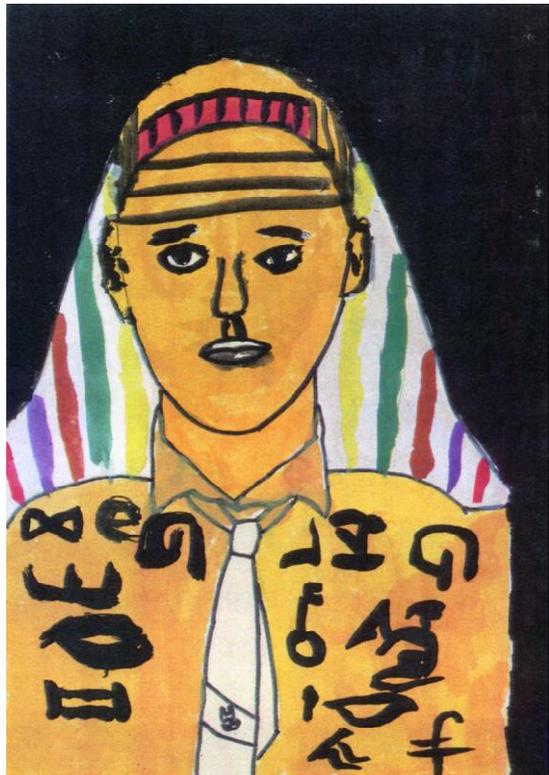
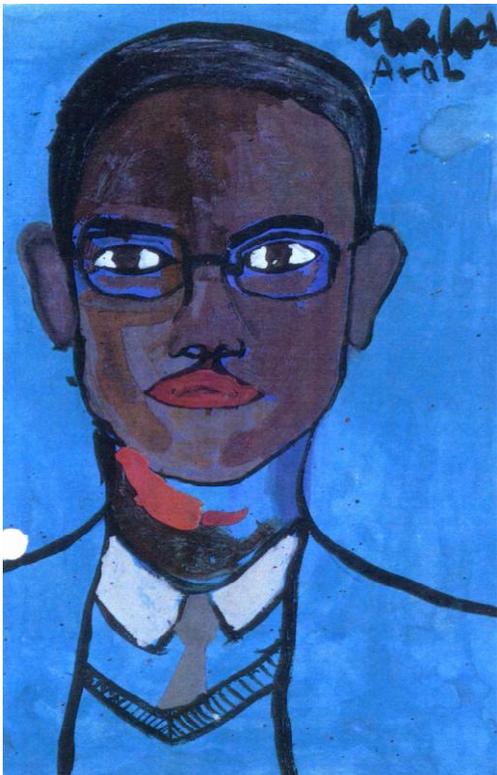
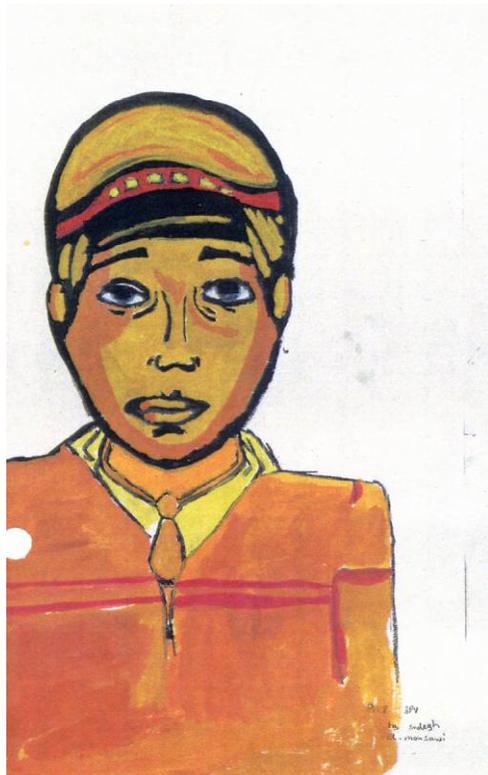


Plate 9

Year 2: Perret

- 11.6.22 Working in groups ‘was useful in that it helped develop confidence’ (Student 0 - Question 18), ‘consider other points of view’ (Student 5), and ‘to get different interpretations on the artworks’ (Student 7). For the students, this seemed to be part of the process by which they became aware of the importance of addressing a potential audience ‘by considering how they might read into the piece of work’ (Student 1 - Question 14), by ‘tak[ing] into account the different interpretations that different audiences will have’ (Student 7), ‘because it makes a stronger, more powerful project’ (Student 6).
- 11.6.23 Initially, the double aim of ACHiS (to develop modes of investigation and contextualisation, and to provide reflective tools for making) was combined in such a way that the students would operate a direct transfer from the former to the latter. This proved unnecessary: once they became aware of the different contextual methods adopted by artists, the students understood their own production’s power of expression as well as communication to a potential audience. For the students to comprehend what were for them new ideas during a short residency, it was crucial to centre the making process around their own individuality. This was only possible by favouring a mediation between the students’ experience of art as a means of self-expression and the wider world of ideas and their contexts.
- 11.6.24 This residency transgressed that paradigm of art education which considers art as solely a means of self-expression, instead investing the students with new forms of emotional and intellectual intentionality and responsibility, thus allowing a genuine communication with their audience and an active role in the critical dialogue of broader issues in democratic public life.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 It is evident from the ACHiS reports that some students had developed an understanding of art historical issues, improved their critical vocabulary, and succeeded in applying research skills to the specificities of the visual field. The practical application of their ideas in many cases exceeded the two-dimensional plane, presenting objects including unusual materials and even performances. Their ability to synthesise ideas remained largely limited to oral communication, but it can be assumed that their written skills could have been improved if the teaching time of the residency had been extended beyond five days (or equivalent).
- 12.2 From a questionnaire submitted to the students after the end of Perret's residency it seemed that, despite the newness and challenging aspect of the project, many students had moved away from a purely formalist analysis of their own and others' work to a more contextualised approach.
- 12.3 When asked: 'what was new to them in this project' (Question 2) Student 7 replied: 'having to look at specific artists' works and putting them in context', and another Student 3 in her answer to 'what she had liked most about the project' (Question 3): 'Learning that there is more to an art piece than just what you see'. Moreover, the students were conscious of the distinction between such formal and contextual analysis. When asked about former and new ways of approaching an artwork (Question 8), Student 0 stated: 'I have learnt to look at artists and their work in greater depth rather than what was just the surface meaning'. Student 3: 'mostly just looking at the aesthetics of a piece. I have learnt to research the historical, and social background of a piece also.' Student 4: 'I used to focus on the artwork itself and all of its connotations, I rarely looked at the bigger picture in terms of (historical) context'. Student 7: 'Now I look at all aspects including the society of the time of the work was made. Before this project I mainly looked at the visual aspects'. (reiterated in Question 16 about new techniques for researching). Student 8: 'by looking deeper into the work and understanding what it is about rather than just deciding if I like the look of the picture' (ACHiS 2002: Year 2, Perret).
- 12.4 Close scrutiny of audio evidence confirmed that the art lesson affords a space of relative freedom of communication: for example, in Georgaki's residency when one student was being interviewed, those who happened to sit close to him/her usually fell silent and were quite attentive, sometimes offering unprompted contributions. Yet outside the cluster of the students involved in the interview, a constant noise of background discussions suggested a number of other oral communication clusters, varying in degree of intensity from animated arguments to the odd exclamation heard amongst a predominantly silent group. This type of evidence begs the question of whether the ACHiS researcher might be interrupting, indeed disrupting, the critical process when he/she asks students to abandon their established methods of communication in order to concentrate on a

particular task, such as filling in a questionnaire¹⁷. Yet it is interesting to note that this culture of social chatter is deemed acceptable in the art classroom, but tends to be seen as inappropriate in the rest of the logocentric curriculum. Why should it be that Art & Design lessons seemingly require less concentration, or that language is regarded as so irrelevant to the making process that it can be freed up for the students to talk about any topic other than art?

- 12.5 From the action researchers' reports, it appeared that some students experienced verbal learning as somehow divorced from making and therefore identified a clash, while others were able to experience language and making as complementary and registered no conflict. The link between verbal communication and creative action has been extensively argued in educational theory. Vygotsky (1989), for example, was a great believer in the reciprocity between thought and language and the social nature of this interdependence.
- 12.6 With the role of the interventionist comes the danger that the researcher may be seen as intrusive interruption rather than a contributing and positive presence. This was one problem encountered by Georgaki (Year 2) when recording videotaped interviews during her residency. She claims one student to be particularly critical: 'Maria stuck a camera in your face and started asking lots of questions. It was kind of annoying cos [sic] you just wanted to get on with your bag' (ACHiS 2002:Year 2, Georgaki). Other students concurred through feedback questionnaires that discussion sessions had been 'disruptive' and 'clashed with the bag making project'; 'hindering us from making our bags' (ibid.). The slide show was condemned as 'particularly disruptive' (p.85) and by some as unhelpful. However, the students are betrayed by their own work for, despite this negative feedback, the actual pieces of work produced and the language used to speak about them, suggest that the slides and discussion groups had a much more profound effect on the students' critical and contextual abilities than they realised.
- 12.7 The practical and conceptual activities that together constitute 'Making' are social practices that are inseparable from the culture through which they emerge. Students and professional artists alike are exposed to similar cultural stimuli, they have access to similar information and share similar creative processes. But these commonalities are somewhat skewed, there is an asymmetry of practice, particularly in relation to 'studio time' and the 'space' in which production takes place: the art classroom is neither a laboratory of controlled experimentation nor an innocent creative paradise. It is a space dominated by educational structures and mechanisms which should be deployed to foster critical making and not hinder or suppress it.
- 12.8 De Souza's first year residency revealed that the typical classroom organisation of table and chair confines making in such a way that students have a limited notion of the potential of this space. To challenge this

¹⁷ The same could be claimed for the teacher's interventions but the role of the teacher in the art room is clearly beyond the scope of this report.

thinking by considering De Souza's installation work, not only brings the school art lesson in symmetry with professional practice, but also foregrounds the context in which students' work is being made and seen. Further it affords a degree of social awareness and the effects of individual behaviour on a collective space. Some teachers may find it impractical to pursue such a radical use of their classroom space, especially in consideration of the numbers of students and rapid lesson turnover, however, they should heed the warning raised in Papazafiriou's residency and be aware that the current organisation of their classroom may be yielding subconsciously perceived divisions between making and language-based activities within art.

- 12.9 In one case the actual implementation of the residency was fraught with difficulties. In the main, these were seen to be institutional spanners in the works, emphasising the importance of collaboration between the action researcher and their partner teacher if such residencies are to prove fruitful. In another instance the teacher who worked with the researcher only joined the project halfway through and was unaware of the project intentions and how she fitted in.
- 12.10 Teachers have reason to be extremely wary of the shift in values away from the visual and towards the written, but at the same time it is possible to devise imaginative, valuable and above all varied ways of engaging diverse students in exploring ideas through a range of modalities. In this way the opposition between word and image can be challenged and a more reciprocal relationship between image, medium and word can enhance student learning. This multimodal approach to learning and teaching was demonstrated through the ways that ACHiS challenged students' expectations of what might constitute an art lesson and their preconceptions about physical learning spaces. The action researchers provided alternative forms of investigation, including semiotics, foregrounding a discursive analysis of actual artworks and the context of their presentation to encourage students to consider their own making as a mode of social practice. By exposing hierarchies and challenging established myths about creativity and art, ACHiS has not just revealed a singular discursive environment rather it has identified the necessary tools to build discursive environments in every secondary classroom.

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APPENDICES

Teacher Questionnaire

Teacher responses to question 7 of the questionnaire: an extract from the director's report (ACHiS *Research Compendium* 2002)

Question 7:

Given the requirement to address the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of students, would you say there is an explicit political/ideological, religious or ethical basis to the way your department presents and investigates the art of others?

The statements quoted from the questionnaire are what teachers say they do, and I have no reason to suppose that they are false. But what is difficult to gauge is the extent to which reference to the work of others is an integrated part of the curriculum, whether the rules of distribution rely on reproductions, visits or residencies and the degree to which the pedagogic discourse is presentation/information-driven or discursive.

It is worth noting that in the pilot for the questionnaire (25 schools) this question was less extensively worded avoiding the reminder that reference to the work of others is a prerequisite; it was written: 'Do you believe the department's chosen methods [for interpreting art] have an ideological basis or do you think they are neutral?' Ideology is evidently perceived as a problematic word by Art & Design teachers and this question was clearly perceived as aggressive by some; 3 teachers avoided it, 1 responded negatively: ie. *'Long words- little meaning. Speak English'*; 7 teachers insisted on neutrality eg. *'definitely non-ideological – non-selective comp. We aim to make students aware and hopefully informed'*; 6 teachers provided alternatives ranging from *'logical'* through *'critical'* although three of them defined their practice as informed by *'personal preferences and individual beliefs'*; 7 gave responses acknowledging the possibility of an ideological basis, two of them from religious schools admitting that the framework of belief underpinning the delivery of the curriculum would be perceived as ideological by many outsiders and the other five providing an explanation in which their ideological position might loosely be described as critical, democratic, child-centred: eg. . Even in the final questionnaire for many teachers it is evident that they perceive the curriculum as an apolitical phenomenon and liberal, multicultural rhetoric as non-ideological. However, the term ideology may be being interpreted in its Marxist sense; ie. that ideology is the naturalised and thus hidden beliefs of the dominant class assimilated by the masses by means of the hegemonic control of the former, as is evident in the last statement quoted.

I have placed the statements outlining each school's approach in what I believe is a continuum between the acritical and/or celebratory towards the explicitly critical (which I have categorised as 'issue-based'). I have placed the four statements indicating that the approach of the department is prescribed by the religious denomination of the school (out of the ten schools with a religious affiliation) at the beginning of this continuum: however, this is not to deny the critical and hermeneutic traditions of the world faiths, only to suggest that in these responses such traditions are not acknowledged and I am presuming celebration based on revelation rather than proscription and/or iconoclasm. All responses are categorised and tabulated in Table 1; the category from which I have selected the exemplary statements is identified by a corresponding letter/number. The full responses can be found in appendix 2 question 7.

Table 1: Responses tabulated along an acritical/critical continuum

Category	No.	Response
A	3	Yes: no details
B	9	No, or Not relevant: no details
0	1	Formulaic, stagnant
1	4	World view prescribed by faith
1a	2	Eurocentric
2	2	Thematic variety
2-	1	As National Curriculum requires
2a	6	Liberal, multicultural, neutral
2b	1	Humanist, eclectic, democratic
2c	5	Inclusive, acknowledging diversity
3	2	Based on students' own cultural backgrounds
3a	2	Political when discussing meaning and purpose
3b	8	Issue-based, enabling pupil interpretation
0		<i>The department works together very well – However I find it monotonous when their SoW are already laid out for us (each year it's the same!) Students also have exams every term - The exam title has been the same for so many years! There is an explicit basis/way in which the department covers all areas, but its not very effective - It needs to give some freedom and exploration into cultures besides Egyptian and Aboriginal (co-ed. grant maintained)</i>
1		<i>[The] Art department presents all aspects of art in line with [the] school policy of providing awe and wonder and valuing the individual (Roman Catholic, co-ed. comprehensive).</i>
1a		<i>We do try consciously to incorporate the views and needs of all the ethnic groups (including Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Jains, Buddhists as well as Christians). Largely though, it has to be said, the syllabus is based around European traditions in art and ceramics (boys independent).</i>
2a		<i>Used as a springboard for developing personal expression - students encouraged to select appropriate artists. Selection of a variety of styles, cultures to encourage respect for difference (girls comprehensive).</i>
2b		<i>Humanist - eclectic – democratic (co-ed. comprehensive)</i>
3		<i>Use of students' own background cultures and experiences in their art work (co-ed grant maintained).</i>
3a		<i>Cultural - yes, occasionally religious - e.g. African/Asian. To some degree political/ideological when discussing purpose and meaning in Art (co-ed. comprehensive)</i>
3b		<i>The department's philosophy involves using resource based learning with all age groups and refers to artists of historical and contemporary traditions in all SoW. We also recognise the need to include books and artefacts in our collection which reflect the cultural identity, traditions and origins of all students who attend this single sex (girls) school. At KS4 and 5 students begin to investigate more personal issues through personal thematic enquires, where the teacher provides a wide variety of resources/books to facilitate the needs of an individual artist enquiry by each pupil (girls comprehensive, Church of England).</i>

- 3b *Yes - the GCSE is largely to do with introducing the students to established art works although we encourage a broader approach where possible - made increasingly easier through the Internet. At post 16 we run a series of five lectures raising the awareness of particular methodologies in approaches to looking at Art - students are given individual tutorials linked to their practical work in the upper sixth. The idea being to become familiar with the dominant culture and then gain various means of looking at it differently. Over riding ideology is theory into practice (co-ed. grant maintained).*

When discussing critical practice it is significant to find the degree to which respondents have used the rhetoric of multiculturalism and referential study. Examination of the work produced under its rubric tends however to display a dependence on transcription and pastiche. Hughes notably critiqued this orthodoxy as early as 1989 (in Thistlewood), before the introduction of the NC, but pastiche remains the popular visual answer to critical studies to this day.

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