

Studio inside, studio outside: Elasticity

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Published version

CORAZZO, James, SHAW, Becky and HARRINGTON, Jerome (2017). Studio inside, studio outside: Elasticity. In: ELIA: Exploring Elasticity in Teaching and Learning in the Arts, Central St Martins, University of the Arts, London, 5-7 July 2017. (Unpublished)

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M Studio Inside. Studio Outside

SECTION 1

Introduction

1. Cover slide

Basic introduction – J.C J.H B.S

The beginnings of a piece of research – opportunity to share something which is very much in progress

2. 'Why?' slide

After several years of being spread across a University campus, Sheffield Hallam found and developed a new space that would bring together art and design disciplines back under one roof.

For the first time in many years we could see each other in situ, and see anew, what each of us 'were'. The arrangement of (roughly) a floor for each discipline offered a series of huge frames where our disciplines were being articulated through staging of space, materials and objects.

Slide 3 space

Starting again – emptying building – ordering furniture – occupying an empty space – potential to be much more aware of this process of moving from empty space to 'disciplined space'

How do decisions made at this stage (furniture – partitions – floors etc.) discipline a space? What decisions do you make at this stage? What do students expect? As a lecturer what impact can you have and what decisions are outside your control – made by the institution?

The fine artist's studio is well documented and theorised but in this staged 'dolls house' we began to think about how the studio cultures of specific disciplines are expressed, and how this interacts with the needs, and expression, of teaching process.

4. Spaces slide- some examples of our studios

Space is expensive and political in HE institutions and we began to realise that we are not always able to understand or express its significance, or make an effective enough argument for exactly how and why studio space in art and design is important.

Is the art and design educational studio the same as a classroom, or the same as a professional studio- if not, what is different, or how do these two frames of practice interact and can they be 'seen'?

5. 'What?' slide

Method

To start to grapple with this we wanted to find ways to do this that did not undermine or sidestep our own methods as practitioners- that took seriously art and design practice as research-and that didn't draw hierarchical distinctions between pedagogy, practice and research.

Who? We invited any art and design student to come and work with us, on a project that sat outside formal teaching and outside any discipline. We had a self-selecting group that initially included fine art, graphics, interior design undergraduates, plus some fine art MAs and some practice-based PhD students. This was funded by, and situated within teaching and learning funds, with the aim of both making visible, and building, the relationship between the student, their discipline, and the studio.

We undertook 4 processes:

1. The Tour
2. Models, Hybrids and Taxonomies
3. Reading our own studios
4. Robinson Crusoe

SECTION 2

Tour – Disciplinary difference – Disciplinary spaces

Slide 6

7. The Tour Slide: Disciplinary differences

Early eve, after formal teaching had finished, we walked around every teaching space and we asked the group to look at the spaces, prioritising the material. Given that there is a long heritage of unpicking the performative/theatrical nature of the studio, we wanted to move beyond a well-trod critique and use looking to actually show us what we could see.

8. Names slide

We asked the group to think about what other spaces our spaces reminded them of, and also to pick straightforward 'objective' characteristics through which to analyse the space- like sound, colour etc

Would it be worth making this much more visual – by using images of the type of associated spaces? Submarines Apple store etc. (we have these images from Politics of Place).

9,10,11,12 disciplinary spaces

When looking at the spaces its impossible to separate them from our internally held image of a studio- usually generated by representations of studios- the New York loft, the Scandinavian design studio, London fashion studio etc. Here are some of them aligned with our own version. Sometimes they are similar, often different in very interesting ways: its impossible to imagine a studio without these professional, mythic images.

13 BINARIES

Hard——Soft (screens/materials, gradual softening of edges)

Official——Unofficial (how students modify)

Owned—— Visited

Domestic——Industrial (graphics and their slippers)

Private——Public (compartmentalized space or open, ‘social’/

Amateur——Professional (the evocation of the client)

Simulated——Real (the outside)

Old——New

Noisy——Quiet

Some key points from the students on disciplinary difference: TO ADD

Production of Identity

The beginning of **Ignacio Farias and Alex Wilke’s 2016 book ‘Studio Studies’ ‘approaches the ‘studio’ as a key site for the production of cultural artefacts’**

So what do our studios produce? They do produce works, but these are not necessarily designed to enter the world outside the studio- they are for assessment and for learning. So what else is being produced? Learning- and something that is enmeshed in it: an artist or designers identity

Does the same process of identity construction happen in the professional studio and educational one?

Each of the disciplinary spaces enacts myths- of escape, purity, individuality, productivity, creativity- and in the construction of this space not only is the discipline represented, but these are the sets for ‘disciplining’- the steady training of the student to act like, **be** a designer/artist etc. We notice this most when we are in fashion. Unlike in other areas, fashion is still full of students working hard- being driven by present staff. Careers in fashion notoriously involve long hours, sacrificial working conditions etc and it seems the space becomes an arena for that to be rehearsed and embedded.

There are other myths and realities being played out in a whole host of ways:
Singerman

The studio as the first frame, the first limit, on which all subsequent frames/limits with depend'

SECTION 2

X4 Hybrids – Relationships between Professional and Educational spaces

Where studio and educational studio interlock and come undone (photo hybrids)- is the relationship elastic- can spaces change/move from one to the other in the 'flexi' use dream?

Photographs:

Explore each one: education/professional studio interface- look at each pic and explore

Juxtaposition / Provocation / similarity / Formal connections

Do first 2 examples suggest many similarities

- 1) **Fine Art painting space – solitary working practice** Many apparent similarities – previous works used to reaffirm – materials and processes of practice – own work and inspirations on wall. **NOTE: appearance of the table and plastic chair- the educational context appears.**
- 2) **Graphic Design studio**
Many apparent similarities – flexible working space – community – collaboration
- 3) **Burtynsky photograph in fashion studio** - a critique of a student from one discipline of another discipline (fine art of fashion) asserting their sense of freedom / individuality against a perception of forced / uncreative work. But this is as much about not understanding a different discipline – an 'othering' – did not factor in the creativity present. Not knowing another discipline within a reality small art school building.
In comparison to fine art space – there is a real lack of visible work – or inspirational images / lists etc.
- 4) **Liam Gillick New York studio next to Bingo Hall** – a critique of Gillick and his high status art life style? A comparison of this myth of a successful established artist against the realities of place for a student. Very much about where the art school is located within Sheffield – juxtaposition between inside and out

Gillick's image tells you nothing of what he actually does – he is successful because of where he is – this space is his. The institutional space does not belong to the student

THE USE OF IMAGES OF PROFESSIONAL SPACES WITHIN EDUCATIONAL SPACES WAS USEFUL WAY TO LOOK AT SIMILARITIES AND JUSTAPOSITIONS BUT ULTIMATELY THESE ARE DIFFERENT TYPE OF SPACES

WAYS IN WHICH PROFESSIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL STUDIO DIVERGE

- **Francis Bacon and the Barnacles**

Could Francis Bacon's studio exist within the art school/ If not, why not?

F.B's studio is not a temporary occupation, but an inhabiting of space – material builds up over time in comparison the intuitional studio these is a turn over – they are emptied for degree shows for example- space is leant to students

Are educational spaces designed / conceived to be inherently 're-set' – to be wiped clean and start over.

- **Student's home studios**

As lecturers we often get frustrated (and worried) by students who choose to work at home. Their decision to work at home often can be a sign of withdrawing / retreating from all that we as lecturers think is important about the institution: the interchange between students – their peers and staff – the potential of a collaborative, shared space – the ability to critique work / as it is developing (peer to peer student / staff), the use of resources / material / processes that the institution provides which are not reproducible off site. But we often assume what these working spaces are like and the reasons for the decision to work offsite – rather than knowing these things.

By asking 'where do you work?' – and not 'what does your studio look like?' we were able to see about expanded conception of a studio – which began to reveal what a single educational studio could not hold or accommodate.

Rachel talked about the difficulties of working in the institution – of the uncomfortable nature of being watched – she preferred to work in spaces where she was anonymous

Rachel's response to Where do you work – suggests mobility – flexibility – multiple spaces and activities – where home space – virtual space - social space and institutional space cross over one another

Joy's response to Where do you work – suggests the importance of storage – of accumulated material - an abundance of material that the educational studio cannot hold.

Joy – the sofa - a domestic comfort / relaxation – isolation which students often talk about when talking about their work spaces at home.

leave their names off?

- **Conflict between private studio and institutional demands**

Public – Private - Tutor and Peer observation (private space within a shared bay)

Social spaces – collaboration

Assessment

Institutional pressures on space (sign up sheet which says 13 max – has 16 names on it)

The MAC which is seemingly ubiquitous, but has been claimed.

Carpet – pink wall – used to define edges

Howard Singeman – Art subjects: Making Artist in the American University

'The image of the artist that we have inherited from the nineteenth century – a driven, alienated, and silent individual clashes directly with the idea of a university trained professional artist.'

The 3 points above reveal a lot about MATERIAL in the educational space:

- 1) That it is only able to be there for a short period and will be removed – leaving behind 'wipe clean' institutional materials
- 2) Students home studio's suggest an abundance of material that the educational studio cannot hold
- 3) In shared 'private- studios – students use material to identify (carpet – pint paint on wall – post it on computer)

SECTION 4

Conclusion

Conclusion: the ways that space in art and design is not just a part of, but IS our pedagogy- a spatial and material 'disciplining', so its significance must never be overlooked- its much more than marketing.

To separate them: (space with the social) as majority studies / approaches do – focusing on either the 'pedagogy' or the 'studio' – is to absent / other things. To reinstate a binary of sorts. Found this today –

“At first sight, nothing seems more banal and uninformative than to assert that social activity occurs in time and space. But neither time nor space have been incorporated into the centre of social theory, they are ordinarily treated more as 'environments' in which social conduct is enacted ... rather than integral to its occurrence”

Giddens 1979

By raising this now we open a huge tangle about how our disciplinary understanding of what a studio produces might sit against how a University understands a teaching space. In a teaching space separate skills and knowledges are being transferred- the role of education in identity creation sits less well with the capacity to break education down into quantifiable targets. Interestingly similar battles are going on in other disciplines, like nursing, although not so situated around a space.

Howard Singerman: *'Is the space the in-coming artist is given- which is in most schools no longer self-fashioned (and in Heron's description self-fashioning) but inherited from previous classes and artists or even, and increasingly readymade and professionally designed- still in any familiar sense, a studio? Perhaps it is only a room, an architectural space without qualities... This is of course the sort of space where the University schedules classes or assigns offices'*