CHAPTER FOR CONSIDERATION IN *LEARNING THROUGH ART: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES*.

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TITLE: Messy Democracy: The Art School as War Machine

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DEMOCRACY: THE ART SCHOOL AS WAR MACHINE

‘The only possible relationship to the university today is a criminal one’ (Harney and Moten in Edu-Factory Collective, 2011: 145).

INTRODUCTION

This paper offers a critical case study of an educational collaboration between the artists’ collective @.ac (www.attackdotorg.com), and the staff and students of the University of Central Lancashire, Preston, UK, 9th April - 2nd May 2018 (fig. 1). This pedagogical experiment saw the university gallery, Hanover Project, transformed into an autonomous art school whose curriculum and agenda was controlled entirely by the university’s students for the duration of the exhibition. This practice-based research project attempted to make visible the concealed power relationships operating implicitly within the teaching of art and design, and also participatory art projects. This artificial ‘democratisation’ of the art school within the institutional frame of the neoliberal university highlighted the extent to which the marketisation, commodification, and financialization (McGettigan, 2013) of HE art education have de-democratised the art school.

Fig. 1: ‘Messy democracy (2018) Installation View.

CONTEXT

In the UK context, the trebling of undergraduate tuition fees to £9,250 following the recommendations of the Browne Review (Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills, 2010) have directly restricted access to HE for many students, especially part-time students (Horrocks, 2018) and those from non-traditional backgrounds (Coughlan 2018). At the same time, funding has been divested away from arts and humanities subjects towards STEM subjects, which are presumed to be more economically productive and institutionally viable. As McGettigan (2013) has argued, one consequence of these neoliberal reforms to higher education has been the refiguration of the conception of the public university. Now institutions routinely refer to themselves as businesses and to their students as consumers. Before him, Readings (1996) recognised the neoliberal university was becoming increasingly bereft of any national cultural mission or values (*bildung*), and governed instead by empty

techno-bureaucratic notions of ‘excellence’, which measured success by performance management metrics. In the UK universities are currently ranked into league tables, according to results in the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework), and REF (Research Excellence Framework), with the KEF (Knowledge Excellence Framework) just around the corner. HE is no longer presented as an intergenerational investment in future talent, financed by the public purse, but instead as a private human capital investment in oneself, financed by a student loan. As the average UK student graduation debt now exceeds £50k (Binham, 2019), the relatively meagre earnings offered by a career in the arts make an ‘investment’ in an artistic education appear to be a very poor one indeed. Nevertheless, ‘employability’ remains a buzzword of art schools seeking to improve their score in the DLHE index (Destination of Leavers from Higher Education) to entice new recruits. Despite this propaganda push, the numbers of students enrolling on arts course under this increased fees regime is already starting to noticeably decline (Adams, 2017). Ideologically, what Jeffrey Williams has called a ‘pedagogy of debt’ (in Edu-Factory, 2011: 89-96) teaches that STEM subjects are more valuable than arts, but also reproduces neoliberal hegemony by insisting that ‘no realm of human life [is] anterior to the market’ (95), that nothing comes for free, and that one’s worth is measured ‘according to one’s financial potential’ (96). Writing recently, Wendy Brown (2015) has argued that neoliberalism depoliticises previously resistant cultural practices, reducing *homo-politicu*s to *homo-oeconomicus* (2015: 30-35). According to the instrumental logic of ‘economisation’, the art school is not only an unlikely proving ground for the future avant-garde, but perhaps not even viable as a going concern.

Williams (2011), Brown (2015), and Readings (1996) are all writing to the significantly more advanced ‘economisation’ of the US HE system. At the time of writing the trajectory of UK HE is under review (Bradbury 2019), and the commodified future of the US model is being tempered by both a student backlash and the renewed challenges of a socialist opposition committed to a publicly funded education system. It is an understatement to say the future of arts education is uncertain under the current regime. Against the current conjuncture, our

project aimed to reassert a political and emancipatory potential immanent to art school education. It also aimed to mount an internal auto-critique of the art school's current trajectory. Placing pedagogic and artistic control entirely within the hands of the student-consumers of the university not only radicalised the empty notions of 'inclusion' and 'widening participation' beloved by university bureaucrats and marketing departments, but also explicitly staged the subjectification of the art school *homo-politicus* beyond the quantifying logic of league tables, student loans, and performance metrics.

As a polemical strategy, but also as a dialectical image (Benjamin 1999) of art school radicality, the project appropriated tactics employed during the various student occupations at European art schools during 1968. The occupations at *L'École de beaux arts,* Paris and *Hornsey College of Art,* London were of particular interest because they suggested how an institutional critique of the art school could be synthesised with a broader revolutionary ambition to transform society. In the former occupation, the tenured *Maîtres à penser* were evicted from the ivory tower and the student run print rooms were transformed into production lines for agitprop to foment the revolution in the streets outside. In the latter, staff and students co-authored prognoses for the salvation of art education, under the *nom de guerre* of the Association of Members of Hornsey College of Art (1969), in a free rolling, radically open, 24 hour 'critical seminar' of militant co-research. Synthesising both of these strategies, our exhibition transformed Hanover Project into a non-hierarchical, collaborative art school; a nascent 'war-machine' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986; 1988) against neoliberal hegemony and 'economised' art education.

COLLAPSED STAGE: CRITICAL FRAME

Fifty years after 1968, @.ac envisaged the project as a quasi-occupation which attempted to rethink the social and political function of the art school once again. The occupation was informed by Jacques Rancière's conception of 'politics', raised within *Disagreement* (1999:

21-42), as the egalitarian claim of 'the part of those who have no part' [*sans-part*] (30) within the social order. Forged on the barricades of '68, where the student uprisings were stifled to the right and left by both Gaullist state apparatuses and Communist Party bureaucracies in turn, the 'politics' of the 'sans-part' exposes the 'police order' (30) of repression in all of its social, institutional, and behavioural forms. For the *soixante-huitards*, the tenured faculty of their art schools and universities were as complicit in the work of this 'police order' as state troopers. Rancière made this position explicit in his withering denunciation of his former tutor and mentor Louis Althusser, ***Althusser's Lesson*** (2011b). The exposure of the primary function of capitalist education as being the reproduction of the status quo (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Illich, 1971), and its more general equation with what Rancière would call 'enforced stultification' (1991: 7), has long been the ambition of critical pedagogy, especially those which would counter it with pedagogies of freedom and emancipation (Aronowitz 2008; Biesta 2006, 2013, 2017; Freire, 1970; Giroux 1983; Greene, 1988; McLaren, 1997). However, as the work of Ilan Gur Ze'ev (2010; 1998) has demonstrated, all pedagogies, even the critical ones, ultimately grant a privileged status to the expert educator at the center of the teaching scene. As Rancière argues, the 'pedagogical myth', which all educators are invested in, 'divides the world into two [stating] that there is an inferior intelligence and a superior one' (1991: 7). Instead, a truly emancipatory education would decenter, if not entirely remove, the 'master-explicator' (4-8) from the process, and assert the equality of the student as subject-author, not object, of both the learning process and the university or art school within which they are situated.

For Hallward (2006), the Rancièrean politics of the '*sans-part*' relies so much on the spectacular staging of equality that he has termed it 'theatocracy' - referring to the reclamation of an stake in the social order, in as dramatic and visible manner as possible, by the hitherto excluded or silenced. As well as staging political subjectivation at an individual or micro-level, 'theatocracy' also reveals what Rancière calls the 'democratic paradox' (Rancière 2009: 95-122) - a discontinuity between 'democracy as a form of government

[and] democracy as a form of social and political life' (47). The former, threatened by the anarchy of the latter represses or stifles it, in the name of its preservation. Put another way, the democratic impulse exceeds its management. This 'democratic paradox', and the benevolent violence which disguises and stifles it, occurs in all social, governmental, and institutional systems which claim to organise or manage inclusion or democratic rights. In the contemporary UK art school, the 'democratic paradox' is felt in the disconnect between its discourses of romantic individualism, and the instrumentalism of 'employability' oriented learning outcomes. Incorporated within the wider neoliberal university, lip-service is paid to democracy by (very selectively) capturing the 'student voice' through anonymous consumer satisfaction surveys like the NSS or end of module reviews. 'Inclusion' is set as a KPI of university governors, and as an abstract aim of all curriculum reviews, alongside 'empowerment'. Short of the macro-level social change required to difference the currently exorbitant fees regime of the neoliberal university which prevent many stratas of society even getting through its doors, 'inclusion' and 'emancipation' are not just the delusions of bureaucrats and marketing departments but can also be the ideological veil disguising the neoliberal university's anti-democratic and disciplinary function.

MESSY DEMOCRACY (2018)

Our project sought to dramatise this 'democratic paradox' of the neoliberal art school by providing a 'theatocratic' platform for the political subjectivation of its student-consumers. This stage was set by announcing the transformation of the university gallery into a 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' (Bey 2017 [1991]) of student-led making and learning. Our ambition was that this T. A. Z. would self-generate an emancipatory model of education beyond all pedagogic models. To this end, it was important to us that the project also dramatised the complete withdrawal of teaching labour from the scene. At the same time as creating an interstitial space for independent learning, this spectacle of non-teaching also represented a political action, akin to an organised strike of university knowledge-labourers.

Reflecting on the project, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'the war machine' offers a complementary conceptual model well-adapted to conveying trajectories of counter-subjectivisation, or lines of flight established within the interstitial platform established by the project. For Deleuze and Guattari, such a platform is a form of assemblage that configures materials actions and passions and incorporeal modes of signification. Another example is a more standard lesson - a seminar room might be populated by subjects whose interests are organised into a distribution of roles (teacher/student), and whose bodies are organised by tables, chairs and whiteboard, etc., producing a milieu overcoded by module requirements and university policy. Such assemblages are always open to acts of re-configuration and as platform the point of 'Messy Democracy' was to be constantly open to such acts; a primary function of its critique of the neo-Liberal university. For Deleuze and Guattari ruptural processes upon such a platform manifest a 'war machine' as a force of metamorphosis mobilised by physical changes, irruptions of affect, or the re-coding of spaces. The key point we take from the reports given by participants, reproduced below, is that such metamorphoses initiated lines of flight, or nomadic trajectories that in some small measure changed their sense of their own possibilities and the ways they coordinate with others.

Though the 'occupation' of this institutional space was brokered by @.ac and UCLan faculty, its repurposing was determined entirely by the institutions' students. The curricula and activities of this autonomous art school were negotiated through a democratically elected steering group of students, who gave the project its ultimate title, and curated a revolving programme of independent exhibitions and events. The sole authorial gesture of @.ac was to provide the 'occupation' with its *mise en scène*, by cladding the university gallery in chipboard to change its 'white cube' aesthetic into one of raw functionality (fig. 2). This also allowed participating students to make responsive works directly on the walls, transforming Hanover Project from a neutralised environment of aesthetic display into a dynamic arena of live art production. The aesthetic traces of pop-up libraries, focus groups, impromptu political

discussions, painting workshops, and peer learning all contributed to the form of this unfolding art school as installation.

Fig. 2: ‘Messy Democracy’ Installation View

As the project progressed, any new artworks created in the space had to be produced in negotiation with extant artworks, and artists, previously occupying the space. As such, the project was not only a test-site of new forms of peer to peer pedagogic exchange, but also of ethical and democratic societal relations beyond the ‘conviviality’ valorised by ‘relational aesthetics’ (Bourriaud 2002). Rather than the forced harmony of what Rancière calls ‘consensus democracy’ (1999: 123-5) the project was instead characterised by antagonisms, disagreement, uneasy coalitions, and outright dissent. An initial planning session captured student perceptions of the deficiencies of contemporary arts education and their scribbled messages of dissent were transformed into banners displayed within the space to symbolise its occupation. A group of female activist-artists, simply calling themselves ‘THE FEMINISTS’ were formed during the project, staging a militant group action entitled ‘CUNTHOUSE’ (fig. 3); a reference to Judy Chicago and Miriam Schapiro’s 1972 exhibition ‘Womanhouse’. This exhibition attempted to redress the lack of feminist knowledge in the patriarchal art school by screaming feminist dissensus into the ideological vacuum of its ivory towers. Rousing as this may be, other students saw this as an attempt to hijack the project in the name of identity politics, and subsequently distanced themselves from it. Another student withdrew early in the process, directly attacking the whole purpose of the project, as well as the competency of his tutors and peers to resolve any exhibition to the standards that he considered professional. The clutter of some people’s production disrupted the display of other artworks and the gallery became an informal crèche seemingly without prior planning (fig. 4). These individual acts of dissensus, jarring with the imposed consensus structure of the group exhibition or the graduation ‘degree show’, demonstrate the problematic of democratic education.

Fig. 3: ‘CUNTHOUSE’: Installation View

It was always imagined that this project would be a live experiment, testing the central autodidact hypothesis of Rancière’s *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (1991). We produced a pedagogic scene based in Jacques Rancière’s assumption of an ‘equality of intelligences’ (Rancière 1991) that tested ‘what can be done under that supposition’ of equality (46). Similarly, it was also envisaged that this would represent a political dramatisation of the stultifying space of the contemporary art gallery. Furthermore, it also aspired to be both an institutional critique of the neoliberal university and a contribution, albeit an anarchic one, to scholarship concerning critical pedagogy and critical university studies. However, the greatest revelation of the project lay in how chaotically it demonstrated Rancière’s ‘democratic paradox’, or what Derrida (1993) would call the ‘autoimmunitary’ tendency of democracy, and democratic systems, to self-destruct. Though this project might appear as a purely negative attempt to destroy prevailing pedagogic method, we believe that the projects anarchic and dissensual character carries a propaedeutic function. For us, ‘Messy Democracy’ constituted a ‘counter-education’ (Gur Ze’ev, 2010) against all forms of

programmatic or institutionalised pedagogies; a Rancièrean politics of the '*sans-part*', which in this case includes students, feminist students, the academic precariat, perhaps even the art school itself, as '*sans-part*' to the neoliberal university.

Fig. 4: ‘Messy Democracy: Installation View’

Rancière argues that such a politics can only be recognised when it forces its way into public discourse as visibly and theatrically as possible. For this reason, ‘theatocracy’ is especially suitable as anarchic method, if it is even a method, within pedagogic space of the art school. However, it is less suitable to codes and conventions of an academic paper, and we are anxious not to recuperate this nascent democracy within the ‘police order’ (Rancière, 1999: 28-9) of academia. Similarly, we are wary of appearing to speak for the project’s participants in the manner of stultifying ‘master-explicator’ (Rancière, 1999: 4-8). We would like this paper to have the dissensus of the project written into the very form of this paper. Therefore, the following texts are completely unedited critical appraisals of the ‘Messy Democracy’ project written from the individual subject positions of those involved. These divergent perspectives will be supplemented by images of art produced during the project, hopefully creating a totalising account inseparable from the research process itself and not privileging a singular academic observer. These statements should also stand as radical other to the recuperated ‘student voice’ of the neoliberal at school.

HOLLIE BURGE

Fig. 5: Hollie Burge (2018)

The Messy Democracy project was a great way to explore an alternate environment to work in and exhibit. My proposal was to have live zine making in the project space, with the aim to provide a no stress/no pressure environment for those wanting to join in. The time of year that Messy Democracy took place, coincided with deadlines for the students studying in the building – as one of the students, it was a relief to make art without worrying about a deadline or assessment brief.

I wanted to propose the idea of creating zines, as they are one of the most mobile forms of artwork. As well as being works of art in themselves, they can also act as portable galleries. Historically, the zine has been a very personal piece of work, and the freedom to create them in whatever format, size, shape and in any context the creative decides makes them a perfect vessel for individuals to have the freedom to explore.

During the day I was allocated, I created a simple set up with a table and chairs and scattered some basic materials for people to use. I didn't have any plans or expectations of the outcome. The zines I made varied widely; some were observational of works that were already left in the project space from other participants. I made some zines that reflected on past work that I had created, creating collages without much thought. One zine was a tally count of the amount of times I had to go and open the key-card door for other students. It was refreshing to make work without an agenda. Part way through the day I was joined by two other students who made some zines of their own. The two students created zines for about an hour, before leaving to go back to their degree show work. They both reported that they felt considerably less stressed than when they arrived at the studios in the morning. I created a total of 10 zines altogether, with the additions of others that had joined. We displayed them very simply by pinning them by the top left corner to the chipboard clad gallery walls. They sat next to the poster I created and the cover of a newspaper with a fitting headline stating, 'SAVE THE OPEN UNIVERSITY'. Happenings over the course of the day changed what I made. I had an interesting chat with another participant of Messy Democracy who was creating colour charts. After creating my own colour and adding to the chart I created a zine about colour – something very unusual to my practice as I usually work in black and white. I also received a postcard half the way through the day with a piece of text glued to the back – I responded to this too.

I learned to take time out to create work just for the fun of it. Moving to a different environment, out of the white walls of the studio is more inspiring and a less pressured environment. I learned to have more conversations with strangers, and that postcards are thought provoking. I learned that a flow can be more productive than a system and different experiences open up creativity more than uniformity.

RACHEL COUSINS

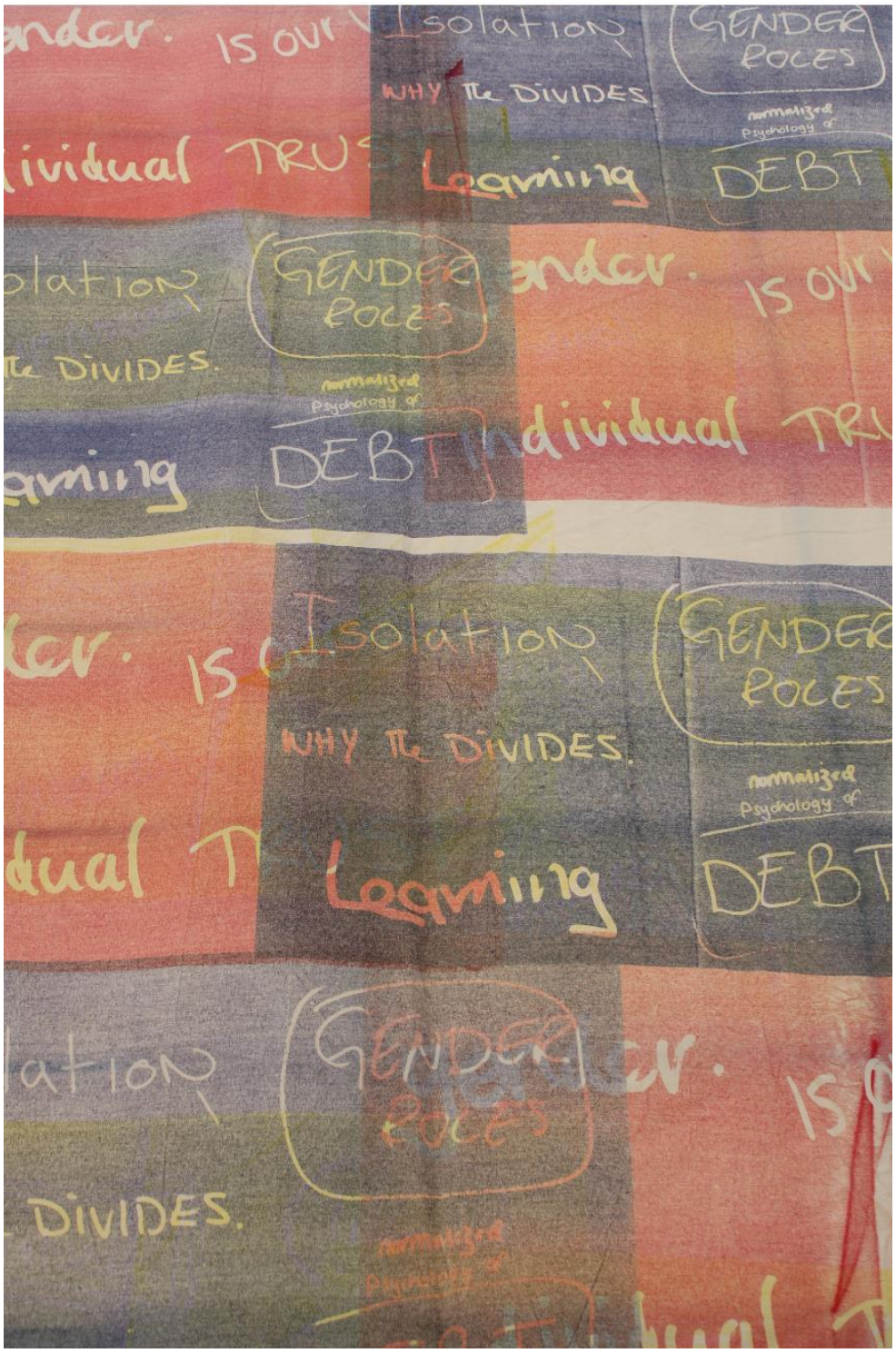

Fig. 6: Rachel Cousins

I responded to a call to be involved in the project run by @ac because I am interested in understanding collaboration and how it affects creativity. I was involved in the planning sessions, from which the banners were created.

Observations made during the process.

This project has a history and a future we are just involved for a small time, so our starting point of art education and issues surrounding teaching and learning in the university setting was already decided.

We made a choice to live with uncertainty. We have chosen not to predetermine what questions we are asking or what answers we are looking for.

The group is diverse, making it hard to understand where everyone is coming from. This creates difficulty navigating communication. Progress is slow, circling issues, feeling our way gently, seeking not to offend. Offence happens easily.

I can see within myself and others in the room that the choice to set no clear objective creates tensions, excitement, questions. We are affected by the room, and ownership of the resources found there, the power structures of hierarchy, teacher/not teaching, MA students, 3rd, 2nd and 1st year students, different departments, mature students and younger students.

The process of collaboration is a creative negotiation. Negotiation requires using your voice.

A willing exploration is critical for a positive outcome. Attitude is key. Questions of authorship, leadership & ownership need to be discussed and at least partially resolved early in order to minimise misunderstanding through assumption.

Lack of confidence in speaking ability and reluctance to write in public, vs strong opinions and splinter groups creates issues of control and ownership, within the group and frustration with each other. Andy's position as participant/teacher/not teacher adds another dynamic

I was often the scribe. This made me consider what voice the scribe has in condensing the contributions to a phrase put on the wall? What I heard, and how I interpreted what you meant, affected what was written and then acted upon at the next meeting.

I learnt that my immediate response was not always my considered response. When I had space to think about it and when I am not within your sphere of influence my answer would be different.

We were looking at big issues. I learnt that big issues always have small particulars.

The framework we created made space for initiators as well as responders. It made me realise that art education has historically valued initiators of ideas rather than responders to ideas. Both are valuable and not everyone is able to do both well.

Being involved in Messy Democracy raised some important questions that I am still thinking about.

How well do we need to know each other for collaboration to succeed? Could collaboration possible with people who have no obvious connection between their work? Do I need to understand all aspects of the work for it to be powerful? Can we say more individually or collectively? What drives creativity, individual or community?

LAURA JANE FOOKS

Fig. 7: Laura Jane Fooks

I am a parent, a parent studying a Masters in Fine Art and attempting to produce as much as I can on the one day where my children are in childcare.

There is such a barrier for parents in education; children are not allowed in studio spaces due to health and safety restrictions, only 15 minutes allowed in the library for picking up books and no real combined space where studying with children is encouraged.

As a participant of Messy Democracy and as part of 'The Feminists' collective, I was able to work alongside my child and dedicate time to a project without having to leave it dormant for so long until my next available free day.

I chose to address the theme of Motherhood, in particular how I could depict the personal journey of postnatal depression with sculpture and installation.

Influenced by the work of Vicki Hodgetts in *womanhouse*, where forms in the shape of eggs changed to breasts on the walls and ceilings of the kitchen, my finished piece featured an abundance of soft breast like cushions adorning a chair, whilst fabric draped against a wallpapered backdrop.

These fabric breasts were pierced with sharp nails, echoing my experiences with breastfeeding and how I felt my child was pinned to me, struggling with his dependency on me and what this meant for my mental health.

Messy Democracy provided an encouraging environment for this exploration to happen. Boards that covered the studio took the restrictions of a gallery setting away and working as a collective allowed a continuous flow of ideas and support.

My youngest child could paint, draw and interact with my Artistic cohort, showing what could be achieved if Mother Artists were allowed to work in this way more often in a University environment.

MEGAN CAMERON

Fig. 8: Megan Cameron

The feminists, as a result of participating in messy democracy, applied for the nasty women residency in Newcastle in commercial union house. We took residency in messy democracy, named CUNTHOUSE underpinned by a pivotal exhibition by the title of womanhouse we explored topics in relation to feminism today, including sex, work and motherhood, it was the first time the group had been involved in a exhibition together, as the driving force to form the feminists was the forming meetings for messy democracy, where a member was met with criticism from female students about the importance of feminism in the art department and further afield, we formed the feminists to tackle the attitudes that came within the department that is meant to be historically progressive.

The decision to apply for the nasty women residency came from how we worked together in messy democracy, we found that working in a flexible changing environment made us come together as a team and we wanted to do that again.

Four of us represented the feminists on our weekend residency at praxis gallery in commercial union house Newcastle run by nasty women north east, the work was to be exhibited on an artists head the “plenty up top” gallery, naturally we proposed a cunt hat as an extension of CUNTHOUSE made from material and hand stitched juxtaposing this seemingly harsh word with soft feminine colours and fabric, using a traditionally female craft to change the perception of the word cunt and for us to take back cunt as our word to use, the cunt hat was to be worn as a crown, adding an other layer of female hierarchy to the artwork, the idea of a strong female like queen or princess owning the right to her genitalia and using as the word she wishes and not seeing it as derogatory.

At the residency we made valuable connections with some of the artists and companies in commercial union house and spoke with the people who run vane gallery and talks of on going projects in the future, a positive outlook on this, is that the nasty women residency

would not of happened if we didn't take part in messy democracy, we gained confidence as individuals and as a group, the challenges that could of came with working in the way that messy democracy did, worked in our favour being interested in socially engaged art, working with people we usually wouldn't in a way that was unfamiliar was a chance to test a model for how our group interacts with the wider art community and has set a precedent for aims and goals a as group, messy democracy has been a very valuable experience for us.

SHONAGH SHORT

My contribution to Messy Democracy was a response to Mierle Laderman Ukeles' Manifesto for Maintenance Art (1969), and my own observation that fifty years on the UK art school model continues to privilege what she describes as DEVELOPMENT, "pure individual creation; the new; change; progress' above MAINTENANCE, "keep the dust off the pure individual creation; preserve the new; sustain the change". Does attributing status to the singular moment of (usually white, middle class male) individual genius rather than systems of care reinforce social class and gender disparity in the arts?

For the duration of the Messy Democracy exhibition, THE SCHOOL OF MAINTENANCE ART invited students and staff to consider, after Laderman Ukeles, their maintenance activities as art. Instructions were delivered to every studio space and displayed in communal clean areas (sinks, toilets, bins etc.) with the following text:

> *INFORMATION FOR RESEARCH TEAM*
>
> *Welcome to the School of Maintenance Art. You are now part of the research team. Your role is to reflect on the following questions:*

How much time do you spend cleaning, washing, shopping, organising, tidying, preparing, lifting, packing, unpacking in order to 'make' art?

Would your practice look different if you were to consider these maintenance activities as art?

The work was represented in the exhibition in the form of a School of Maintenance Art noticeboard, with further reading (including the Manifesto for Maintenance Art itself), relevant press articles, cleaning rotas and safety signs. My intention was to replicate the many department notices around the University so that the work was seemingly authentic but somehow incongruous within the exhibition context and the 'singular moments' on display.

This piece, as you might expect from a homage to Laderman Ukeles, was performative and dialogical and took the form of an invitation to a thought experiment, so while I could broadly assume that the flyers/posters had reached their intended audience, from that point the process was entirely out of my control, very much in keeping with the Messy Democracy ethos.

I had originally hoped to interview members of the maintenance team from the University and to invite them to join the research. Unfortunately I wasn't able to make a formal approach within the timescale of the exhibition because of the sheer difficulty in making contact, as it turns out the maintenance staff are disconnected from academic and administrative departments within the University, outsourced, invisible. The imagining then of a SCHOOL OF MAINTENANCE ART seemed all the more urgent.

The Messy Democracy experience marked the beginning of my understanding of my own practice as pure maintenance, helping to clarify and frame that term and its implications. This was to inform and shape not only my final MFA project but also my ongoing practice.

The exhibition process – a relinquishing of control and levelling of power structures, multiple authors, the temporary, performative and pedagogical nature of the work – has continued to influence my own approach to making, with the realisation that socially engaged art IS messy democracy.

CONCLUSIONS

Messy Democracy generated a 'theatocratic' stage within the art department of UCLan. In the mode of Bey's T.A.Z. students interacted in modes of co-authorship and dissensus. Challenging the hegemony of the neoliberal university, its inequality of intelligences, and quantifying curriculum. The participants' testimonies indicate the exhibition generated alternate structures of action and coordination, but also disagreements, some of which found resolution within the project and some which spurred the formation of working groups around shared identities. The Hanover Project residency tested a Rancièrean model of politics in a chaotic and intermittent manner. Nonetheless, we can identify different moments in the 'theatocratic' event of the project which highlighted the 'democratic paradox' at the heart of the neoliberal art school's problematic. This 'democratic paradox' is not peculiar to the problematic of the neoliberal art school; fifty years ago Art & Language recognised that the UK art school was riven by conflicting ideologies of continental romanticism and British utilitarianism (Atkinson and Baldwin 1967). However, neoliberal 'economisation' has exaggerated these contradictions, alongside the more general contradiction between the 'use-value' and 'exchange-value' of artistic labour, threaten the auto-immunitary implosion of the institution. Certainly, one peculiarity of the persistent romantic art school discourses is that they tend to interpellate subjectivities which are naturally antagonistic to the processes of neoliberal 'economisation'. The testimonies above, alongside a range of political protests and occupations at UK and Irish art schools in recent years (Glasgow, 2016; St. Martins, 2015; NCAD Dublin, 2015) certainly seem to demonstrate that what Marx called the 'law of increasing immiseration' is producing a renewed militancy amongst a hopelessly indebted

generation of future artists. Speaking of these recent art school protests, both Critchley (2007) and Mahony (2016) have argued that they open spaces of 'interstitial distance' within institutions where power relations can be assessed, and spaces of opposition established. 'Messy Democracy' attempted to operate according to such a model, similar to the 'criminal relationship suggested by Harney and Moten (in Edu-Factory, 2011). Yet, it is perhaps fitting, given the anarchic character of the Rancièrean politics of the 'sans-part', that its participating co-producers established their own 'lines of flight', and spaces of 'interstitial distance', within, and perhaps against, the projects overarching message of institutional critique. We read these lines of flight as being non-curricular learning, co-authorship/collective production, solidarity, de-sublimated power relations and dissensus, the otherness of the other, shared labour (especially childcare) and the recoding roles and language. To this end, Deleuze and Guattari's model of the 'War Machine' serves as a useful supplement to the Rancièrean model of 'theatocratic' politics employed by this project. If art education, as Rancièrean politics of the 'sans-part', makes visible the miscount and elisions of the 'distribution of the sensible' (Rancière 2004) within the art school, then perhaps the 'war-machine' nascent within this project has the capacity to smooth its striated spaces (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 474-500)? To articulate this we borrow Hollie Burge's words; 'a flow can be more productive than a system'. To us they precisely capture the metamorphic functionality of 'the war machine' against the apparatus of the Neo-Liberal University.

Through our residency at UCLan we found that if it is possible to think of dissensus-as-learning-as-democracy it is through the optics of otherness opened through the collapsed stage of 'theatocracy' as interstitial platform and vehicle for the metamorphoses of 'the war machine'. In this mode the gallery as 'theatocratic' scene would enact the 'ignorant one's lesson' (Rancière 1991: 19-44) as the process of learning-as-democracy; the equal inclusion of the demand of 'the part who has no part' [*sans-part*] through the task of translation. In contrast to the lips-service currently paid to inclusion, 'theatocracy' radicalises inclusion as

an intention grounded in disagreement, indicating how learning and art might form practices of a democracy to come (Derrida 1994).

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